SUVA CITY, FIJI VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW 2025

A City of the Future: Smart, Safe, and Resilient

SUVA CITY COUNCIL

Acknowledgements

PUBLISHER: Suva City Council (SCC), Fiji.

CONTRIBUTORS

This Voluntary Local Review (VLR) report would not have been possible without the core contribution of the following SCC staff:

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- Ms Sholeen Anand – SCC Assistant Financial Controller
- Ms Mereani Marama – Senior Town Planning Assistant (Acting)
- Mr Albert Wong – Systems Analyst (Acting)
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- Mr Waisake Raiubi – Legal Officer
- Mr Jasneel Singh – GIS Officer

In addition, the following United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) team members have played vital roles in the compilation of this VLR report:

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The SCC VLR team also had the support of external partners such as the Pacific Urban Partnership, the Melbourne Centre for Cities (University of Melbourne), particularly Dr. Alexei Trundle and Ms. Chethna Ben, and the Sustainable Development Management Solutions (SDMS).

This VLR greatly benefited from the contributions of numerous government agencies in Fiji, particularly the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics. The VLR report received meaningful contributions from civil society actors, whose insights, data, and expertise enriched its' development. Their dedication to advancing sustainable urban development in Suva and commitment to the VLR process have been invaluable. While they are too many to name individually, their collective efforts have significantly shaped the outcomes of this review, and we extend our sincere appreciation for their active partnership.

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Message from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Honorable Maciu Katamotu Nalumisa

I am pleased to see Suva City's Voluntary Local Review – Suva's first, and the first VLR for Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries. I commend Suva City Council, and its partners ESCAP and the Pacific Urban Partnership for this milestone.

Suva, besides being the Capital City of Fiji, is the Hub of the Pacific Island countries. Historically it has hosted the highest representation of UN agencies, regional agencies and diplomatic missions in all the main cities in the Pacific.

This VLR comes shortly after Fiji's second Voluntary National Review Report (VNR) which was presented at the United Nations High Level Political Forum in New York, in July 2023. Like the VNR, the VLR was a product of a "whole of government" and "whole of society" approach to the SDGs, in recognition that all of society (government, civil society and private sector) contributes towards the attainment of the SDGs.

The government firmly believes that as a nation, we must stand united in our conviction that the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders are fundamental to achieving the SDGs. Through the collective efforts of the government, civil society and the private sector, we can build a smarter, safer and more resilient city. Thus, the efforts of SCC in bringing all the different sectors to contribute to this VLR, as they contribute to the life and prosperity of this city is commendable.

The Suva City Council's strategic objectives respond to the community's aspirations for the future, these being: economy of the future; Suva's unique identity and place; culture, heritage and tradition; the climate and biodiversity emergency; access and affordability; and safety and wellbeing.

The VLR provides a discussion of progress that Suva City has made in many important areas of development and identifies areas for priority actions. The VLR would assist my Ministry and Suva City Council in understanding where we are and pave the way forward for the city through its findings and discussions, arising from consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.

This VLR deals with only eight of the seventeen SDGs. Other SDGs may be considered in other iterations of the report. Still, this significant review shall pave the way in establishing a five-year development plan for Suva City Council which shall become the principal document in adjusting SCC strategies and operation plans. The city certainly requires this planning and development exercise to put in place a set of desired outcomes.

The Ministry for Housing and Local Government acknowledges the support of development partners. Suva City has been growing and will continue to grow in population, which in turn would require growth in its administration and lead to growth in employment, industry, business and commerce.

Message from the Suva City Council Chairman & Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Tevita Boseiwaqa

This first Voluntary Local Review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the Suva City Council (SCC) has set the pace for the City of Suva to align strategies and policies with the SDGs. SCC has found this exercise to be very valuable, as it has allowed an internationally approved framework to be used to measure the city's current conditions and set strategies to move the city forward in the right direction.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Melbourne Centre for Cities, and the Monash Sustainable Development Institute have been invaluable in preparing this report, with the support of Sustainable Development Management Solutions.

SCC took this exercise seriously from day one and established a technical working committee under the Acting Chief Executive Officer. The committee have worked tremendously to support this initiative.

A preliminary assessment drew a conclusion that the following Goals form the framework for Suva's VLR:

- Goal 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing.
- Goal 5 – Gender Equality.
- Goal 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation.
- Goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.
- Goal 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.
- Goal 11 – Making Cities and Human Settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 13 – Climate Action
- Goal 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

A review noted that all these SDGs were relevant to the city, and the SCC would consider every aspect of these SDGs. The VLR relied heavily on SCC data. SCC expressed its appreciation to all the data provided by the various Government Ministries, the Fiji Bureau of Statistics, and other agencies.

There would be focus on sustainable healthy living, safety, sustainable transport, good environmental practices, an improved digital platform, management of informal settlements and improved farmers' market spaces.

This project has had two consultations, one with stakeholder groups to discuss the exercise, and another was technical in nature, to discuss the availability and accuracy of data. The final stakeholder consultation was held in December 2024, before the document was made public.

On behalf of the SCC staff, I thank everyone who has been part of this program.

Executive Summary

The Suva City Voluntary Local Review (VLR) 2025 represents a significant milestone for Suva, being the first of its kind in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. This review is a collaborative effort supported by the Suva City Council (SCC), ESCAP, and the Pacific Urban Partnership, aimed at aligning local strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The VLR emerges as a crucial tool for assessing progress and planning future actions in response to community aspirations and global sustainability frameworks.

The VLR identifies several strategic objectives that reflect the community's vision for Suva's development. These objectives encompass:

1. **Economic Resilience:** The SCC aims to foster a diverse economy that adapts to global changes by promoting local businesses, attracting investments, and enhancing job opportunities.
2. **Cultural Preservation:** Recognizing Suva's rich heritage, initiatives will focus on celebrating local traditions and enhancing community identity through cultural events and educational programs.
3. **Environmental Sustainability:** The council commits to sustainable practices that address climate change impacts, protect biodiversity, and develop climate-resilient infrastructure.
4. **Accessibility and Affordability:** Ensuring essential services are accessible to all residents, particularly marginalized groups, is a priority, along with improving housing affordability.
5. **Safety and Wellbeing:** Enhancing public safety and health services is critical for fostering a thriving community.

The VLR focuses on eight of the seventeen SDGs, including Goals 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). This targeted approach allows the SCC to concentrate efforts on areas most relevant to Suva's context while laying the groundwork for future iterations of the review.

Key initiatives stemming from the VLR include:

- Establishing a Research and Development unit within SCC to continuously evaluate city programs.
- Developing a five-year strategic development plan focused on sustainable living, improved transport systems, digital connectivity, and enhanced public spaces.
- Engaging stakeholders through consultations to refine strategies based on community feedback.

The Suva City Voluntary Local Review 2025 not only reflects Suva's commitment to sustainable development but also sets a clear pathway for future growth. By aligning local strategies with international frameworks like the SDGs, Suva is positioning itself as a smart, safe, and resilient city. The collaborative approach taken by SCC ensures that all sectors of society contribute to achieving these goals, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for all residents while preserving Suva's unique cultural identity and natural environment.

INTRODUCTION

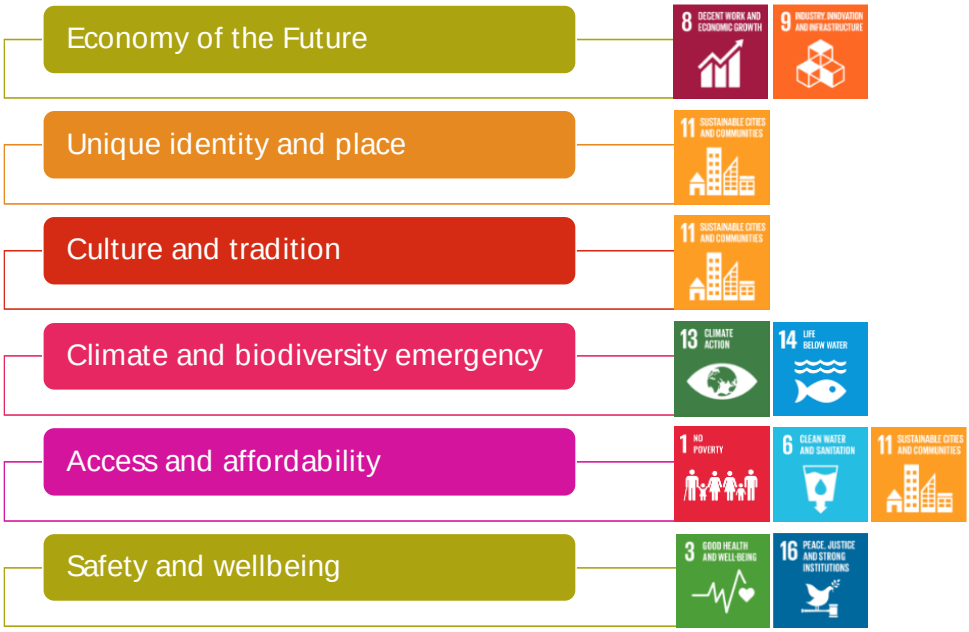
1. Introduction

The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of Suva aims at measuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the areas and communities managed by the Suva City Council (SCC). However, it also aims at contributing to the reflections and inputs necessary for the finalization of a Five-Year Strategic Development Plan of Suva.

This VLR is structured in six chapters. The first one introduces the vision for Suva and key information on the city. The second one illustrates the process of the VLR, including the data assessment and the stakeholder engagement activities. Chapter 3 illustrates the progress on the achievement of the 8 Goals selected as priorities by SCC. The fourth chapter identifies the policy and enabling environment that can be created or reinforced to improve the performance of the city and the living conditions, the environment of the city. Finally, chapters 5 and 6 discuss the challenges that the City faces and how we can move forward, listing also a number of recommendations.

1.1 Visioning Suva

Suva, the capital city of Fiji, has made significant strides in providing its citizens and residents with a functioning urban environment. However, there is room for improvements regarding living conditions and services. Suva City Council has established strategic objectives that align with the aspirations of its community, reflecting a vision for a sustainable and vibrant future. These objectives encompass several key areas like:



The following sections elaborate further the potential actions to implement to achieve these strategic objectives.

Economy of the Future – Link SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)

Citizens want Suva to be a thriving location for businesses and industries. Suva needs to become the place where businesses want to establish themselves. The council aims to foster a resilient and diverse economy that can adapt to changing global trends. This includes promoting local businesses, attracting investment, and enhancing job opportunities to ensure economic sustainability for all residents.

- City zoning needs to be prioritized. Industrial, commercial and residential zones need to be clearly demarcated. The different zones would have different needs that could only be adequately satisfied if such zoning is adhered to.
- Competitive and green industrial and commercial zones could attract new investors to Suva.
- The council, working with other government entities, would improve on the 'ease of doing business' indicators. It would improve the timely delivery of services (permits/licenses) for businesses and residents.
- Suva would promote efficient and clean mobility. Electric Vehicles (EVs) would dominate both public and private transport.
- In partnership with Fiji Development Bank (FDB), Suva would initiate roof-solar schemes for industrial, commercial and residential buildings. This would contribute to the achievement of the city's emission targets.
- There would be fast digital connectivity and increased opportunities for online services increasing transparency of council information through its website and other online services
- Water and electricity upgrades would be implemented.
- Municipal markets would continue to be supported to be clean, accessible and well connected for its' vendors contributing to decent work and food security.

Suva's unique identity and place – Link to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Citizens want Suva to be an attractive city for residents. Recognizing Suva's rich cultural heritage and unique geographical features, the council seeks to preserve and promote the city's identity. This involves initiatives that celebrate local traditions, architecture, and community events, fostering a sense of belonging among residents.

- Development of more open spaces, biodiversity rich gardens and pedestrian zones starting with the CBD and moving to establish similar in other suburbs.
- Key historical buildings would be restored.
- People would be provided with incentives to beautify and upgrade their homes.

Culture and tradition – Link to SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Citizens want Suva to be the choice city to host cultural events in the Pacific. The council emphasizes the importance of cultural preservation and promotion. By supporting local arts, festivals, and educational programs, Suva aims to strengthen community ties and enhance cultural awareness among its citizens.

- Annual events (such as the Hibiscus Festival) will find their place on the city's calendar.
- SCC will work with cultural and art organizations to have regular cultural, music and artistic events in the city.
- The council will promote clean leisure establishments as an alternative to drinking establishments.

Climate and biodiversity emergency – Link to SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water)

Citizens want Suva to contribute to mitigation and adaptation efforts and contribute to addressing the biodiversity crisis. Considering increasing environmental challenges, particularly those related to climate change, the council is committed to implementing sustainable practices. This includes protecting natural habitats, promoting biodiversity, and developing climate-resilient infrastructure to mitigate environmental risks.

- Suva will develop an emissions inventory and set emission reduction targets.
- New and upgraded infrastructure will be climate-proof, including with enhanced access to climate finance for SCC.
- Using citizen power, Suva will encourage and support its residents to create biodiversity-friendly gardens capitalizing on citizen power.

Access and affordability – Link to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)

Citizens want Suva to be accessible to and affordable for all people, irrespective of their condition and income. Ensuring that all residents have access to essential services—such as housing, transportation, healthcare, waste management and education—is a priority for the council. Efforts are being made to enhance affordability in these areas, particularly for low-income and vulnerable families.

- All public buildings and public transport will be accessible to people with disabilities.
- Houses would be available for people of all levels of income.
- Informal settlements will be upgraded or people relocated with adequate compensation, free, prior and informed consent to other areas and given opportunities for ownership of land titles.
- SCC will promote waste minimization, and a recycling and safe disposal plan would be implemented.

Safety and wellbeing – Link to SDG 3 (Good Health) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)

Citizens want Suva to be a crime-free and healthy city. The council recognizes that safety is paramount for a thriving community. Initiatives aimed at improving public safety, health services, and community well-being are essential components of their strategic objectives.

- SCC will engage with its' youth to improve their safety and health, including from HIV/AIDS and other health crises.
- Suva will use digital technology to help monitor and control crime.
- SCC will promote healthy nutrition education and establishment of home gardens.

1.2 About Suva

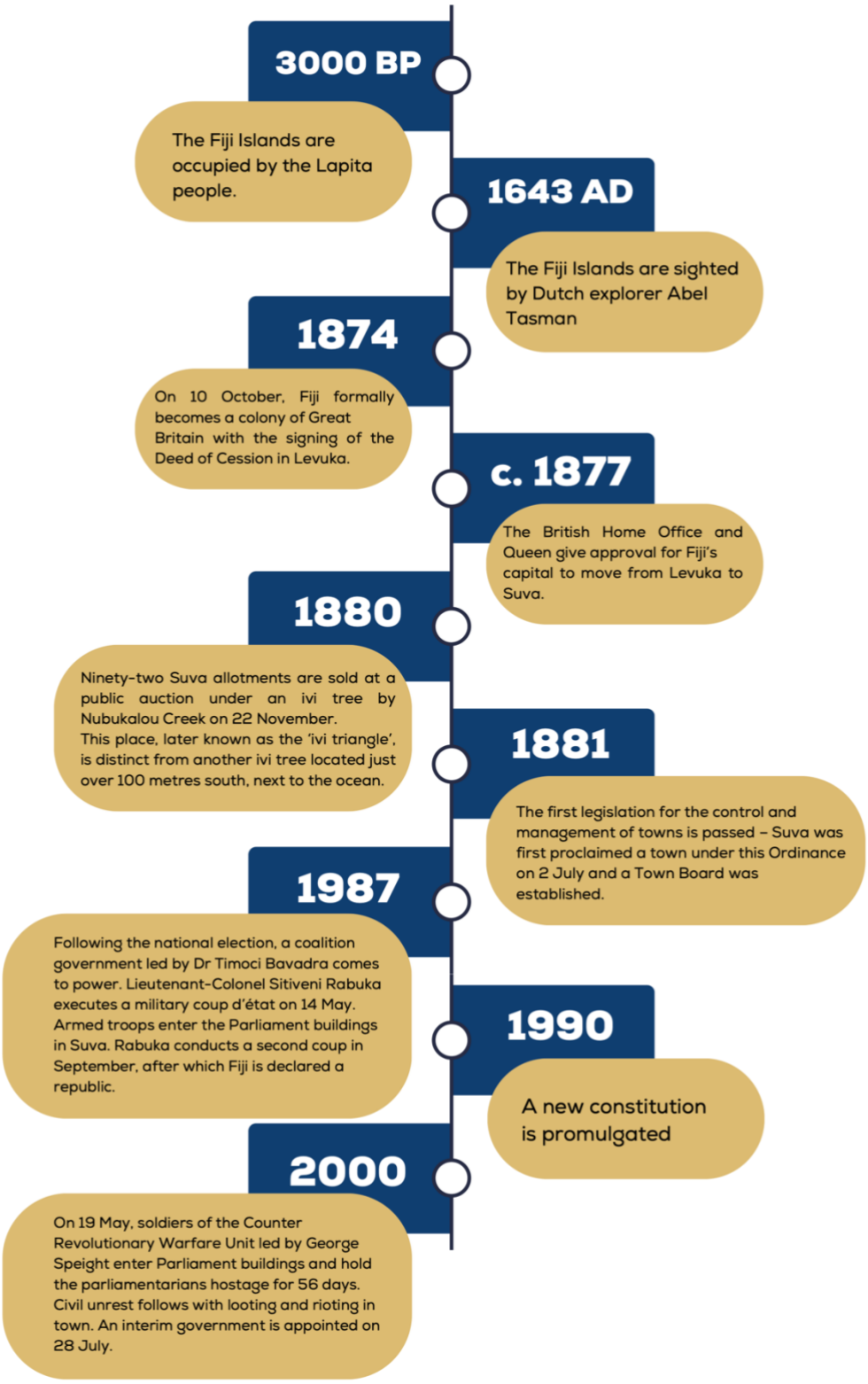


Figure 1: Suva Timeline. Source: (E Weber, 2023)

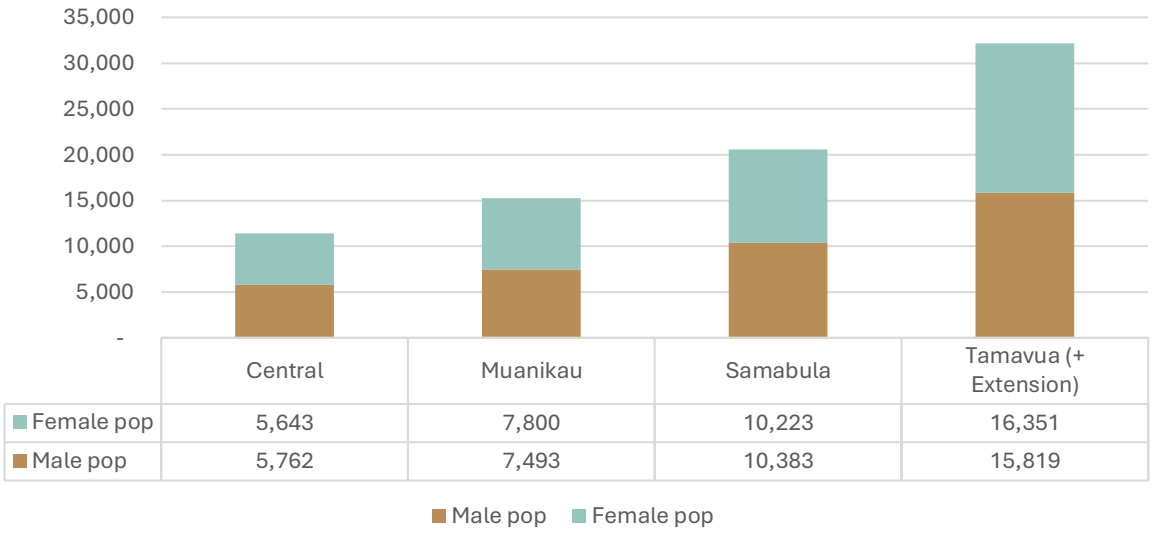
Suva has undergone significant reclamation since it was chosen as the European capital. The expansion of the town involved reshaping the land through deforestation, mangrove clearance, river dredging, and soil placement along the shores to facilitate colonial development. This transformation has rendered much of the land unrecognizable from its original state. For instance, Muanikau, initially dense with trees, was cleared for farmland and is now valuable real estate near the city center.

The gradual reclamation of the shoreline from Nubukalou Creek to Thurston Gardens altered the landscape, starting at the original market site and extending to locations like Ratu Sukuna Park and Suva Grammar School. In the central business district, a few remaining Ivi trees stand as markers of the ancient coast, now concealed by concrete and rock. Present-day reclamation efforts persist in Suva, particularly in Vatuwaqa suburbs, where mangroves are cleared to accommodate urban expansion.

In response, concerned residents engage in counter-reclamation endeavors, aiming to reclaim and restore natural spaces from urban sprawl. These initiatives include individual gardening for subsistence and organized efforts like planting mangroves along My Suva Park's shoreline and cleaning the polluted waters of Suva Harbor. Disturbingly, reports indicate that 66% of fish in the area now contain micro plastics.

Figure 2: The Ivi Tree, corner of Renwick Road and Scott Street

The City of Suva had a population of approximately 70,000 in 1974 and now stands at 97,501 (2021). Population data by ward is available from the last population census run in 2017 (see Figure 2). The populations in the four wards vary significantly, with the Tamavua (+Extension) ward being the most populous, and Central ward the least. Although there are no clear delineations between residential, commercial and industrial zones, we find that Muanikau and Tamavua wards are mostly residential, whereas Central ward has a higher concentration of commercial activity. Samabula ward is a mix of all these three, whereas Extension has a mix of both residential and industrial properties.



	Central	Muanikau	Samabula	Tamavua (+ Extension)
Female pop	5,643	7,800	10,223	16,351
Male pop	5,762	7,493	10,383	15,819

Figure 2: Suva key population data per ward (Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics Census Report 2017)

Suva's Administration

Suva City's administration is the responsibility of the Suva City Council (SCC). The SCC was established as a municipal Council in 1910 and declared a city on 7 October 1953. The Council is headed by a chairman and has two board members. The Suva City Council is governed under the Local Government Act[1] and carries out its duties through its by-laws. The Council has both a mix of young and senior workforce, with educational background that ranges from master's degrees to semi-skilled labor. The Core Business for Suva City Council are to:

- Administer Local Government Act, Building Code, Town Planning Act Cap 139, Public Health Act 111, Environmental Management Act, Litter Promulgation, Food Safety Act, Business License Act Cap 204
- Service Delivery Management
- Rates Collection
- Promote Strategic Partnership with Investors to increase Council's revenue base.
- Promotion of Tourism Activities
- Create a Safe and Healthy Landscape
- Maintain and Sustain a Physically Clean Environment
- Upgrade City Infrastructure and Fixture

Council policy decisions are made through the following Board committees:

- City Development Committee
- Finance Committee
- Human Resource and Industrial Relation Committee
- Strategic Planning

[1] Fiji Local Government Act 1972 (n. 4 of 1972) and modification https://laws.gov.fj/Acts/DisplayAct/98

- Health and Market Committee
- Works and Infrastructure Committee

Suva City Council currently holds $147m[2] worth of land and building assets. Some of the principal properties include Civic Tower, Civic House, Civic Centre, the Civic Administration Building, Suva City Carnegie Library, Albert Park Pavilion, Victoria Memorial Hall, the Handicraft Centre, Samabula Works Depot, Suva Municipal Market, the Suva Bus Station, Mini markets, My Suva Picnic Park, Suva Olympic Pool and total of 83 other recreational parks.

Suva Peninsula had an area of approximately 10 square miles in 1974 which increased in 2012 to 2,624 hectares. Suva is administratively divided into four wards – Central, Muanikau, Samabula and Tamavua (plus Extension), as shown in Figure 4. There are plans for Extension to become a separate ward, but, currently, this is legally still part of the Tamavua Ward.

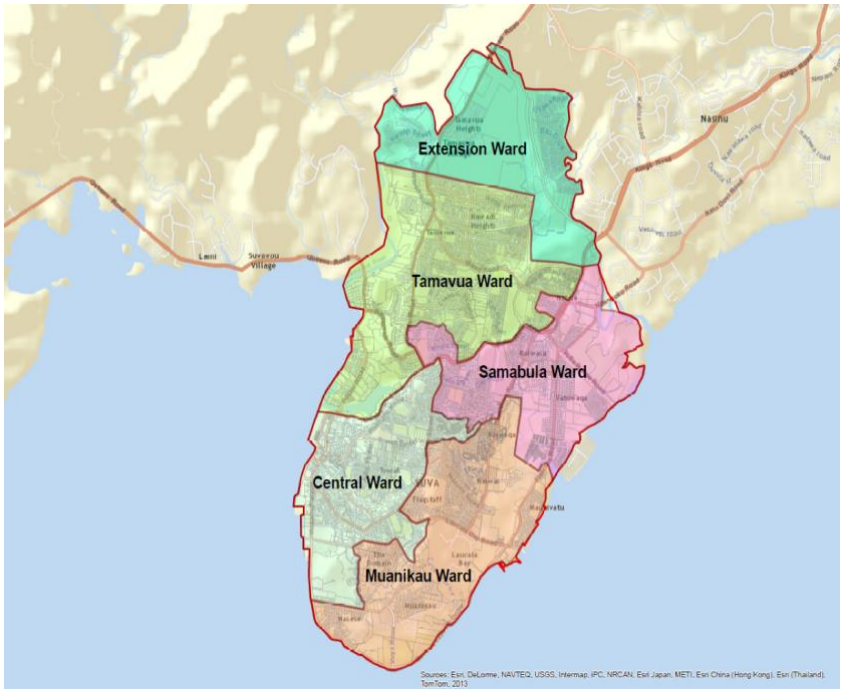


Figure 3: Administrative division of Suva in wards. Source: Ersi Delome NAVTEQ, SSGS, IPC, NRCAN, Ersi Japan, Meti, Esri Chian (hong Kokng)Seri thailand) tomTom, 2013

Suva City and Greater Suva Area

The Greater Suva Area (GSA) comprises Lami, Nasinu, Nausori, and of course, Suva. Many of the residents of the GSA live outside the Suva City boundaries, but many of these contribute to the economy and development of Suva. The Greater Suva Area (GSA) plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of Suva itself. The developments within Suva City are significantly influenced by, and in turn influence, the broader GSA. Many essential services for Suva residents originate from outside the city, including the Naboro landfill, Nausori Airport, Kinoya

[2] Based on Valuation carried out by Lomara Associates.

water treatment plant, Monasuva hydrodam, Sovi Basin watershed, and Naboro prison complex.

Conversely, residents from surrounding areas utilize various services provided in Suva, such as healthcare (notably at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital), educational institutions, and a range of entertainment and sporting events. A significant portion of the workforce employed in Suva resides outside the city limits, particularly in Nasinu, Lami, and Nausori. Many commuters rely on public transportation or private vehicles to travel to Suva, contributing to the city's traffic congestion. This congestion was anticipated as early as 45 years ago; the City of Suva Town Planning Scheme (1979) (Suva City Town, 1979) noted that the "Ring Road" comprising Stinson Parade, Princess Street, Marks Street, Renwick Road, and Victoria Parade was designed to facilitate essential traffic flow around the city center. The scheme also highlighted that peak-hour traffic congestion prompted the adoption of a Decentralization Policy by the City Council.

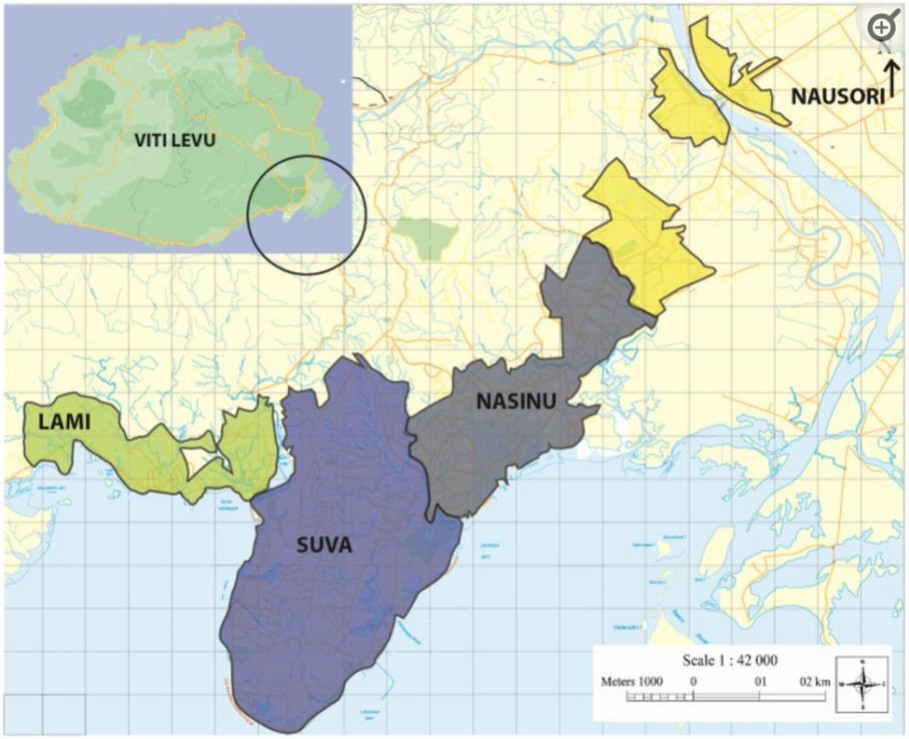


Figure 4: Map of the Greater Suva Urban Area. Source: (Shiiba, et al., 2023)

The map below shows that Suva and Nasinu have the densest populations within the GSA, with Nasinu, however, having areas sparsely populated, whereas Suva has hardly any such areas.

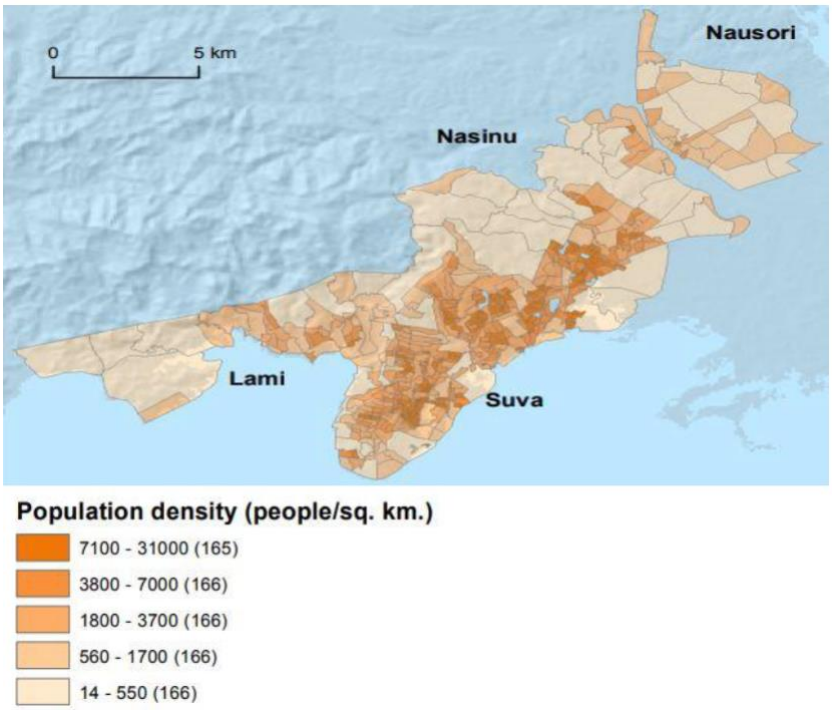


Figure 5: Suva Population density map, based on the 2017 Population Census (source: SCC-GIS Report on Demography and Properties Within The Suva City Boundary)

1.3 Suva's Place in Fiji and the Pacific

Figure 6: Suva City and its important places, slowly developing. Source: ILO Asia-Pacific

Suva is the Capital of Fiji, but also in some ways, it is the capital of the Pacific islands. As the Capital city of Fiji, Suva is the base of the Fiji Government, with the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial branches of government located in the city.

The Fiji archipelago consists of 330 islands, a third of which are inhabited. The two main islands are Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, the former being the biggest of the two, and the one that hosts the Capital Suva. Fiji has been inhabited for approximately 3,000 years upon the arrival of its first inhabitants, now known as the 'Lapita people' after their distinctive pottery style.

Suva Central serves as Fiji's administrative and economic hub, providing employment opportunities for many who live outside its boundaries. The city boasts numerous shopping and retail areas, with Cumming Street being a historically vibrant shopping district characterized by original colonial architecture and narrow roads. In addition to these traditional areas, modern shopping centers such as Tappoo City, Suva Central Shopping Mall, Mid-City Mall, MHCC, Damodar City, Garden City, and Sports City have emerged, enhancing Suva's contemporary urban landscape.

Overall, the interdependence between Suva City and its surrounding areas underscores the importance of coordinated urban planning to address challenges such as transportation congestion and service provision effectively.

Suva is also home to several embassies, consulates, and high commissions of several countries, including most of the Pacific Island countries[3]. The EU Pacific delegation also is headquartered in Suva, from where it covers a number of Pacific island countries. Similarly, the UN has numerous agencies based in Suva and serving other Pacific Island Countries (PICs) from there. Other development partners include the World Bank Group and the Asian Development Bank, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Korean Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), USAID, etc. also have offices in Suva. Australia, New Zealand, the UK, China, India and Indonesia deliver their development assistance through their high commissions and embassies in Suva.

Suva is also the headquarters of several regional organizations - the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO), the University of the South Pacific (USP), and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF). The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) also runs most of its programs from its Suva offices. Suva is also the base for the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO) and the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO). Several international civil society organizations active in the Pacific also have their offices in Suva, for example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), Conservation International (CI), World Conservation Society (WCS), Oxfam, etc.

Suva has six commercial banks: HFC, BSP, ANZ, Westpac, Bank of Baroda and Bred Bank. All these banks have their Fiji headquarters in Suva's Central Business District and some of them have branches in other parts of the city. Suva is also home to several important financial and investment institutions.

Fiji has only one other city besides Suva; this being Lautoka in the Western Division. It has numerous towns, some incorporated as municipal bodies, governed by Town Councils(Ba, Labasa, Lami, Levuka, Nadi, Nasinu, Nausori, Rakiraki, Savusavu, Sigatoka, and Tavua), while others are unincorporated and not municipally organized (Korovou, Matei, Nabouwalu, Naqara, Navua, Pacific Harbour, Seaqaqa, and Vatukoula). The five cities and towns with the largest populations in Fiji, by order of magnitude, are Suva (97,500), Lautoka (53,000), Nadi (42,000), Labasa (28,000) and Ba (15,000).

[3] Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, USA, France, Spain, Germany, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Cuba.

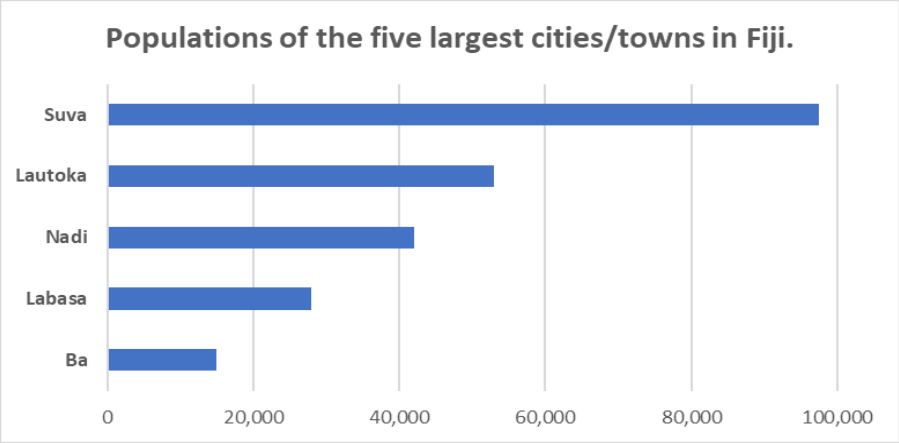


Figure 7: Populations of the five largest cities and towns in Fiji. Source: Fiji Population Census

Suva also has one of the highest populations of the Pacific capitals, surpassed only by Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea (with a population of over 400,000). Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, has a comparable population with 92,000 residents. Other Pacific capital cities have smaller populations, e.g. Port Vila, Vanuatu (49,000); Apia, Samoa (36,000); Nuku'alofa, Tonga (22,000); and Tarawa, Kiribati (70,000).

Demography and Housing

Suva Ward

2515 houses. Urban core, mix of residential/commercial.

Muanikau Ward

3165 houses. Upscale area, embassies, University of South Pacific.

Samabula Ward

4510 houses. Diverse neighborhood, industrial areas present.

Population (2021): 97,501

Area: 2624 Hectares

Urban Infrastructure

Transportation

Suva relies on a network of taxis, mini vans, and a bustling bus system, with approximately 68,898 monthly bus trips.

Public Facilities

Suva boasts a main market, 5 mini markets, and 11 public conveniences, serving the needs of its residents and visitors.

Properties

Suva has 11,409 ratepayers, with 923 commercial properties and 9423 residential properties.

PREPARATION OF THE VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW

2. Preparation of the Voluntary Local Review

2.1 The VLR Process

The SCC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had expressed interest in developing a VLR to ESCAP and the Pacific Urban Partnership (PUP)[4]. The work undertaken in this VLR is aligned to four pillars (Figure 8) identified in the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), adopted by the 5th Pacific Urban Forum in 2019, while being guided by the SDGs and their targets.

Figure 8: Working pillars of the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA)

To undertake the work needed to prepare and compile the VLR, the SCC established a VLR team consisting of the following SCC staff:

- Mr. Azam Khan – SCC Chief Executive Officer (Acting)
- Ms. Sholeen Nair – SCC Assistant Financial Controller
- Ms. Mereani Marama – Senior Town Planning Assistant (Acting)
- Mr. Albert Wong – Systems Analyst (Acting)
- Mr. Wally Atalifo – Senior Health Inspector – Sanitation
- Mr. Jone Naqoli – Human Resource Officer
- Mr. Waisake Raiubi – Legal Officer
- Mr. Jasneel Singh – GIS Officer

[4] The PUP helps enable the implementation of actions arising from the Pacific Urban Forum and the Pacific New Urban Agenda by supporting the countries of the region to achieve sustainable urban development. It seeks to rally implementing partners, to mobilize resources for regional and cross-country learning and development across different sectors to achieve better integration and synergies. The partners include the ESCAP, UN Habitat, the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne, Monash University, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), ICLEI Oceania (originally International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; now Local Governments for Sustainability), and the Eastern Regional Organisation for Planning and Human Settlements (earoph). https://pacificurbanpartnership.org/

The SCC VLR team had the support of external partners, including ESCAP, the Melbourne Centre for Cities (University of Melbourne), the Pacific Urban Partnership and the Sustainable Development Management Solutions (SDMS).

The Voluntary Local Review exercise has been prepared from a participatory approach. The review process followed these steps:

1. Concept Note approval by the ESCAP and the Suva City Council.
2. Establishment of a Suva City Council steering committee under the Chief Executive Officer.
3. Mobilization of the support technical team, including the engagement of Melbourne Centre for Cities.
4. Organization of an inception stakeholders' workshop, during which the VLR process was launched by the Minister for Housing and Local Government.
5. Organization of technical workshop.
6. Presentation of the first Draft VLR in the Second Stakeholder Workshop.
7. Endorsement of the Final Draft by the Suva City Council and ESCAP.

2.2 Greater Suva and Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the efforts at inclusivity in this VLR preparation process, the SCC organized two stakeholder meetings:

- Inception workshop (30-31 May 2023).
- Technical workshop (20 July 2023).
- Validation workshop on (5 December 2024)

Consultations were also held with the councils of the other towns that make up Greater Suva, i.e. Lami, Nasinu and Nausori.

Figure 9: Participants of the Inception workshop May 2023 Source: Fiji Government Facebook page

2.3 Data sources and gaps

Data gathering was carried out through the support of the SCC VLR team and the technical team, as well as the Fiji Bureau of Statistics.

The analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Suva City reveals significant data gaps that hinder a comprehensive understanding of the city's progress. One major issue is the reliance on data from various government ministries and agencies, which may not be consistently updated or standardized across different sectors. This inconsistency can lead to discrepancies in reported figures, making it challenging to draw accurate conclusions about the city's performance against the SDGs. Additionally, the limited availability of disaggregated data, particularly concerning marginalized populations, restricts the ability to assess inequalities and target interventions effectively.

The data and analysis provided in this document is close to accurate and is a product of literature review of grey literature, and where appropriate academic literature, official government and intergovernmental agency websites of publicly available data, media release of information, parliamentary briefing, reports, and formal retrieval of data from relevant Ministries in Fiji. All sources have been clearly referenced.

The primary data source for the Suva City Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is the 2017 national census, a collection of data that is already 7 years old. While the census provides a foundational understanding of demographic trends and socio-economic conditions, relying on data that is several years old limits the ability to accurately assess current needs and challenges faced by the city. Population dynamics, economic shifts, and social changes can

evolve rapidly, and using data from 2017 may not reflect the present realities of Suva's residents, particularly in light of recent global events and local developments.

For SDG 11 and SDG 13, the VLR heavily relies on the GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A) to fill the data gap.[5] However, it has to be noticed that this database uses the Urban Centre definition (DEGURBA), and the area of Suva might not match the city boundaries. Total population for the Suva Urban Centre is 242,909 estimated for 2025.

Moreover, the lack of updated data poses significant challenges for effective policy-making and strategic planning. Many indicators related to key areas such as health, education, and employment are critical for monitoring progress towards the SDGs. However, without more recent data, it becomes difficult to identify emerging trends or urgent issues that require immediate attention. This gap hampers the Suva City Council's ability to implement targeted interventions that address current community needs, potentially leading to ineffective or misaligned strategies.

To enhance the effectiveness of future SDG analyses and ensure that policies are based on accurate and relevant information, it is essential for the Suva City Council to prioritize regular updates to its data collection processes. Implementing a system for continuous data monitoring and engaging with local research institutions can help bridge these gaps. By establishing a more robust framework for data collection that includes time series analysis, the council can better track progress over time and make informed decisions that align with the evolving needs of Suva's population.

Another critical concern is the lack of time series data, which is essential for tracking progress over time. Without longitudinal data, it becomes difficult to identify trends, measure the impact of specific policies or initiatives, and make informed decisions based on historical context. The absence of time series data also complicates efforts to forecast future needs and challenges, as stakeholders cannot rely on past performance to inform their strategies. This limitation is particularly pronounced in areas such as health, education, and environmental sustainability, where ongoing monitoring is crucial for understanding dynamic changes in urban settings.

To address these gaps**, it is imperative for the Suva City Council (SCC) to prioritize the establishment of a robust data collection and management system.** This system should focus on integrating data from various sources while ensuring that it is regularly updated and accessible. Furthermore, enhancing collaboration with local universities and research institutions could facilitate the development of time series datasets that capture critical indicators over time. By improving data quality and availability, SCC can better align its strategies with the SDGs and effectively monitor its progress towards achieving sustainable development in Suva City.

[5] https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/download.php?ds=ucdb

SUVA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SDGS

3. Suva's progress towards the SDGs

Suva City is the first in the South Pacific to undergo the Voluntary Local Review. During the two-day VLR workshop on May 30, 2023, at the Suva Civic Centre, key stakeholders identified eight Sustainable Development Goals as priority areas for Suva.

Figure 10 Priority SDGs for Suva

Representative actors included government officials, police officers, Suva Retailers and Transport Sectors, Non-government organization and UN delegates. Each of the targets were reviewed and a focus group discussion with invited stakeholders enabled a discussion for which targets to keep, remove, or adjust either as minor or major and which targets to advocate only. The focus group discussions were then presented to the rest of the groups and key data to identifying baseline indicators for Suva City was identified.

The data collection and analysis process were a step forward to identifying the indicators at local level which forms a basis for the VLR report. A review of the data needs and gaps were made over multiple consultation with the Suva City Council taskforce and team. Table 1Table 1 Summary of Localization of SDG Targets below provides a summary of the Goals, Targets, and decisions from the workshop.

Table 1 Summary of Localization of SDG Targets

Goal	Target	Decision		
		Decision	**Total**	**Aligned Indicators**
3: Good Health and Well-being	13 targets and 27 indicators	Advocacy Only	3	(3.3.1 – 3.3.4); 3.4.2*; (3.9.1 -3.9.3)
		Keep Target	5	3.4.1*; 3.5.1*; (3.7.1 – 3.7.2); (3.8.1- 3.8.2); 3.a.1
		Major Adjustment	2	3.c.1; (3.d.1 – 3.d.2)
		Minor Adjustment	3	(3.2.1- 3.2.2); 3.5.2*; 3.6.1
		Remove Target	1	(3.1.1- 3.1.2) (3.b.1 – 3.b.3)
5: Gender Equality	9 targets and 13 indicators	Advocacy Only	7	5.3.1; 5.4.1; (5.5.1 -5.5.2); (5.6.1 – 5.6.2); (5.a.1 – 5.a.2); 5.b.1; 5. c.1
		Keep Target	0	
		Major Adjustment	0	

Goal	Target	Decision		
		Decision	**Total**	**Aligned Indicators**
		Minor Adjustment	2	5.2.1 – 5.2.2; 5.4.1
		Remove Target	0	
6: Clean Water and Sanitation	8 targets and 11 indicators	Advocacy Only	0	
		Keep Target	7	6.1.1; 6.3.1; 6.4.1; 6.5.1; 6.6.1; 6.a.1; 6.b.1
		Major Adjustment	0	
		Minor Adjustment	1	6.2.1
		Remove Target	0	
8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	T12 targets and 16 indicators	Advocacy Only	5	8.1.1; 8.2.1; 8.8.2*; 8.9.1; 8.a.1
		Keep Target	4	8.3.1; 8.7.1; 8.8.1*; (8.10.1 – 8.10.2)
		Major Adjustment	3	(8.5.1- 8.5.2); 8.6.1; 8.b.1
		Minor Adjustment	0	
		Remove Target	1	(8.4.1 – 8.4.2)
9: Industry and Innovation	8 targets and 12 indicators	Advocacy Only	0	
		Keep Target	8	(9.1.1- 9.1.2); (9.2.1 – 9.2.2); (9.3.1 – 9.3.2); 9.4.1; (9.5.1 – 9.5.2); 9.a.1; 9.b.1; 9.c.1*
		Major Adjustment	0	
		Minor Adjustment	1	9.c.1*
		Remove Target	0	
11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	10 targets and 16 indicators	Advocacy Only	0	
		Keep Target	1	(11.6.1 – 11.6.2)
		Major Adjustment	8	11.1.1; 11.2.1; 11.4.1; (11.5.1 – 11.5.3); (11.7.1 – 11.7.2); 11.a.1; (11.b.1 – 11.b2); 11.C
		Minor Adjustment	1	(11.3.1 – 11.3.2)
		Remove Target	0	
13: Climate Action	5 targets and 8 indicators	Advocacy Only	0	
		Keep Target	2	(13.2.1 – 13.2.2); 13.3.1
		Major Adjustment	2	13.a.1; 13.b.1
		Minor Adjustment	1	(13.1.1 – 13.1.3)
		Remove Target	0	
16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions	12 targets and 24 indicators	Advocacy Only	3	(16.1.1 – 16.1.4); (16.2.1 – 16.2.3); (16.4.1 – 16.4.2)
		Keep Target	5	(16.3.1 – 16.3.3); (16.5.1 – 16.5.2); (16.6.1 – 16.6.2); (16.7.1 – 16.7.2); 16.b.1
		Major Adjustment	0	
		Minor Adjustment	0	
		Remove Target	4	16.8.1; 16.9.1; (16.10.1 – 16.10.2); 16.a.1

Note: In the table some target total will not give the same value as the universal number of targets in the SDGs. The reason for this is more than one decision was made for the target and its corresponding indicator (e.g. to keep one or more of the target indicators but after major adjustment).

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Suva City faces several challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3), which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Key obstacles include:

- **Healthcare Access and Equity**: Despite some progress, disparities in healthcare access persist, particularly among marginalized communities. Economic and social inequalities hinder equitable health service delivery, making it difficult for vulnerable populations to receive necessary care.
- **Urbanization and Infrastructure Strain**: Rapid urbanization has led to increased demand for healthcare services, placing significant strain on existing infrastructure. Many residents live in informal settlements with inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and health facilities, exacerbating health risks.
- **Climate Change Impacts**: Suva is vulnerable to climate change, which poses threats such as rising sea levels and extreme weather events. These environmental challenges can disrupt health services and worsen public health outcomes by increasing the prevalence of diseases and limiting access to care.
- **Funding Limitations**: Insufficient funding for health initiatives hampers the ability to implement comprehensive health programs. Budget constraints restrict investments in critical areas such as maternal and child health, disease prevention, and health education.
- **Emerging Health Issues**: Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are on the rise due to lifestyle changes, while infectious diseases continue to pose a threat. Addressing these dual burdens requires a multifaceted approach that integrates prevention, treatment, and health promotion strategies.

Addressing these challenges will require coordinated efforts from government, civil society, and international partners to create a resilient healthcare system that can effectively respond to the needs of Suva's diverse population. It must be noted that in the 1950s the life expectancy in Suva was about 53.4 years (1950/51 average), whereas in the 2020s it has risen to an average of 67.8 (2021/22/23 average).

3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

The analysis of child mortality data for Suva City cannot rely on data for the city area, but insight can be derived from the data from the central division at urban level. This reveals significant insights into the health outcomes for children under five years old. The data primarily focuses on two key indicators: the under-five mortality rate and the neonatal mortality rate, as reported in the Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Under-five mortality rate

• Central Division (2021):_The under-five mortality rate is reported at 15 deaths per 1,000 live births. This figure indicates a lower mortality rate compared to national averages, suggesting effective healthcare interventions in this region.

• Urban Areas (2021): The urban under-five mortality rate stands at 19 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is slightly higher than that of the Central Division and the national average.

• National Average (2021): The overall national under-five mortality rate is 18 deaths per 1,000 live births. This statistic provides a benchmark for evaluating regional performance[6].

The Central Division shows a 20-23% lower rate of under-five mortality compared to national averages. This disparity may be attributed to better access to healthcare services and maternal health resources in urban areas of Suva compared to more rural regions of Fiji.

Neonatal Mortality Rate

- Central Division (2021): The neonatal mortality rate is reported at 5 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- National Average (2021): The national neonatal mortality rate is higher at 7 deaths per 1,000 live births.

The lower neonatal mortality rate in the Central Division reflects positively on maternal and newborn health services available in urban areas. The difference calculated using the formula *(Central data−National data)/National Data* indicates a significant advantage for the Central Division in terms of neonatal care.

[6] https://data.unicef.org/country/fji/

3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

The analysis of HIV infection data for Suva City is not possible, but information can be derived for the Central Division. Data highlights significant public health challenges.[7]

Infection Rates by Gender: In the Central Division, **the rate of new HIV infections among uninfected women is 93 per 1,000, while for uninfected men, it is slightly higher at 95 per 1,000.** This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution in new infections but reflects a concerning prevalence in both sexes.

Antenatal Care: Among women attending antenatal care in Central Division, the new HIV infection rate is 61 per 1,000. This lower rate suggests effective screening and intervention strategies in maternal healthcare settings, yet it still points to the need for enhanced preventive measures to protect both mothers and infants.

National Trends: Nationally, younger women (ages 15-19) show a high rate of new infections at 98 per 1,000, with rates gradually decreasing in older age groups (e.g., 92 per 1,000 for ages 20-24 and 89 per 1,000 for ages 25-29). This trend highlights the vulnerability of younger populations to HIV and underscores the necessity for targeted educational and preventive initiatives.

Rising Infection Rates: **The Central Division has seen a dramatic increase in HIV cases, with reports indicating a 573% rise since 2017**. This surge is attributed to factors such as increased unprotected sexual behavior and the prevalence of injectable drug use. The government has recognized this alarming trend and is implementing the National HIV Surge Strategy for 2024-2027 to address these issues comprehensively.

Access to Treatment: While antiretroviral therapy (ART) is available, only about 40% of individuals living with HIV have access to treatment[8]. Barriers include stigma, lack of awareness about testing and treatment options, and insufficient healthcare infrastructure in certain areas (Sudhakar, 2024).

Socioeconomic Factors: Economic disparities contribute to health inequities, limiting access to healthcare services for marginalized populations. The stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS also hampers individuals from seeking necessary medical care and testing (The Republic of the Fiji Islands, 2016).

[7] https://www.health.gov.fj/updated-hiv-aids-stats-fiji/

[8] https://www.health.gov.fj/hivaids/

Youth Vulnerability: The high rates of new infections among young women indicate a critical need for targeted interventions that address sexual health education and access to preventive measures like condoms and PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis).

Public Health Infrastructure: The healthcare system faces challenges related to resource allocation and service delivery. There are reports of stockouts of essential testing kits and medications, which can impede efforts to control the epidemic effectively.

3.6 By 2030, halve the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

The data on pedestrian injuries in the **Greater Suva Area** highlights the critical need for interventions aimed at achieving Target 3.6, which seeks to halve the number of deaths and injuries resulting from road traffic accidents by 2030. Unfortunately, the last available data on this refers to 2013 and trend analysis is not possible (Figure 11).

The age group of 4 to 10 years shows the highest number of pedestrian injuries, with 46 incidents reported. This indicates that children are particularly vulnerable in traffic situations, underscoring the need for enhanced protective measures and educational programs aimed at both drivers and parents.

Notable injury rates are observed among young adults (ages 16 to 33), with a total of 67 injuries across these age groups. This demographic often engages in higher-risk behaviors, such as increased mobility and potentially reckless driving or walking habits.

Injury rates for older adults (ages 60 and above) are relatively low, with a combined total of 24 injuries. However, this group may be more susceptible to severe outcomes from accidents due to frailty, emphasizing the importance of targeted safety measures for elderly pedestrians.

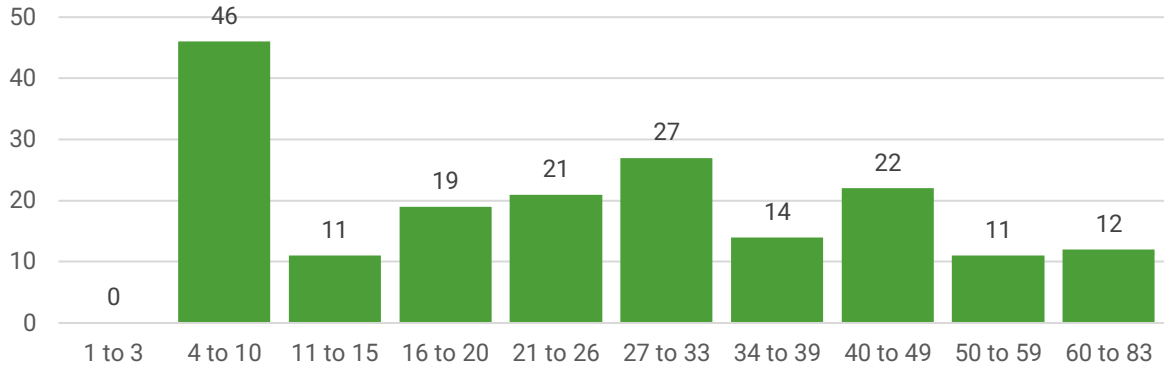


Figure 11: Number of pedestrians injured in crashed by age group in GSA (2013) (source: Source: Fiji Roads Authority, Greater Suva Transport Strategy Report 2015 – 2030)

SCC action to achieve the SDG3

The SCC and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services have had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) since 2021. The MOU aims to ensure that both entities remain consistent with their respective policies, aims and priorities and to cooperate to facilitate urban development projects under the promoting cities initiative in Fiji, and address areas of health disparities that are consistent with regional and global healthy city guidelines. The MOU established a Healthy Suva City Task Force (HSCTF) vested with the responsibility of the Healthy Suva City initiatives. The SCC also agreed to offer for free the use of its parks for the Ministry of Health to conduct its awareness programs under the Healthy Cities' Initiative. It also agreed to offer the Healthy Suva City Task Force full proprietorship of its billboard sites.

Untapped potential of coastal promenades

Coastal cities are privileged in being able to provide citizens with coastal promenades that allow them to exercise and undertake healthy activities that contribute to their wellbeing throughout the day, and at night, if security is also provided. If paved and maintained, these promenades would be used for walking, jogging, and providing meeting points for people, especially for families and young people who need cheaper modes of entertainment. Suva may not be capitalizing enough from its advantageous location. It is unfortunate that despite its coastal nature, there are currently no swimmable beaches in Suva, with the nearest beach being several kilometers away. There are many good examples around that the SCC could emulate, including some in the Pacific (e.g. Nouméa in New Caledonia).

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The 2017 Census data for Suva provides critical insights into the labor force participation of women, highlighting both progress and ongoing challenges.

Key Data Points

- Total Female Labor Force in Suva: 35,565
- Proportion of Females in Labor Force: 70.05%
- Total Number of Females in Labor Force in Greater Suva Urban Area: 60,079
- Proportion of Females with Functioning Challenges: 0.49%

Data for the Urban Centre of Suva shows also that the mean year of schooling for women has reached the one for men in 2015 and exceeded it in 2020, showing a positive trend (Figure 12)[9].

The proportion of females in the labor force at 70.05% is relatively high compared to global averages, indicating a significant level of engagement among women in the workforce. This figure suggests that many women in Suva are actively contributing to the economy.

With **35,565 women employed in Suva** alone and a total of 60,079 in the Greater Suva Urban Area, it is evident that a substantial number of women are part of the labor market. However, this also highlights the need for policies that support their employment conditions and career advancement.

The proportion of females with functioning challenges stands at only 0.49%, which raises concerns about inclusivity and accessibility within the labor market. This low percentage may indicate barriers faced by women with disabilities in accessing employment opportunities.

[9] Data are extracted from the GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A) https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/download.php?ds=ucdb please note that this database uses the Urban Centre definition (DEGURBA), and the area of Suva might not match the city boundaries. Total population for the Suva Urban Centre is 242,909 estimated for 2025.

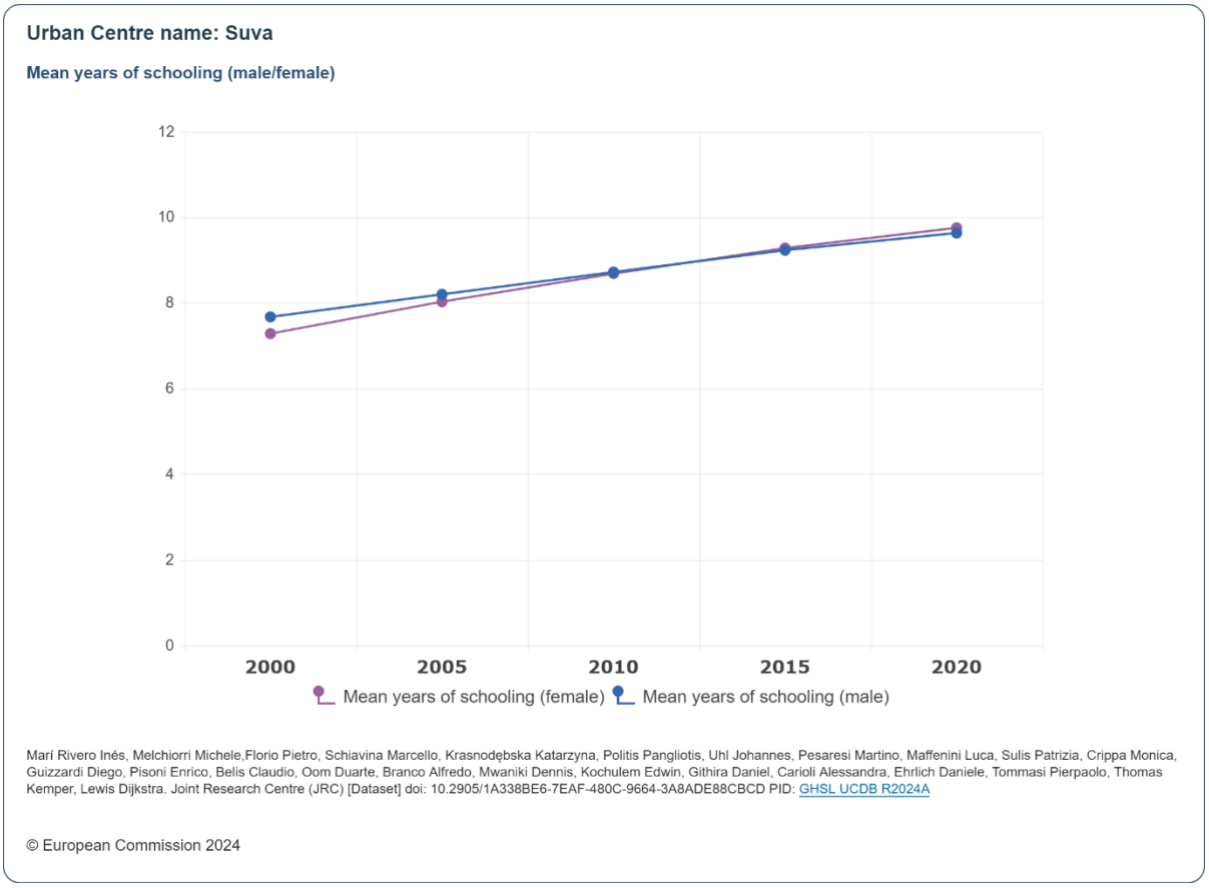


Figure 12: Mean years of schooling (male/female) (Source: European Commission 2024)

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage

The specific indicators relevant to this target include 5.3.1 and 5.3.2: Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and 18.

The objective is to reduce this figure, in accordance with the Human Rights Council four resolutions on child early and forced marriage, the negative legacies of colonialism, a democratic and equitable international order, and the death penalty, adopted in 2021 and voted by Fiji.[10]

According to the 2021 Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS):

- Proportion of women aged 20-24 married before age 15: **National average of 0.5%**
- Proportion of women aged 20-24 married before age 18: **National average of 4%**

10 https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/10/human-rights-council-adopts-four-resolutions-child-early-and-forced-marriage

- Proportion of women aged 20-49 married before 18: **8% for the Central Division**
- Proportion of women aged 20-49 married before age 18: **National urban average is 9%.**

The reported rate of 4% for women aged 20-24 (National) and 8% for women aged 20-49 (Central) who were married before age 18 indicates a subtle but concerning prevalence of child marriage in Fiji, although it is below the national urban average of 9%. This suggests that while there is some progress, significant work remains to be done to eliminate this practice entirely. The data highlights that a notable proportion of young women enter marriage or unions before reaching adulthood (under 18 years). This can have profound implications for their education, health, and overall well-being. Cultural factors play a significant role in the prevalence of child marriage in Fiji. Arranged marriages are particularly common in certain communities, such as Indo-Fijian groups. These practices may be driven by gender inequality and economic considerations, where families perceive marrying off daughters to alleviate financial burdens or secure better prospects. The legal age for marriage in Fiji is set at 18 years, with no exceptions allowed for parental consent, as per the Marriage (Amendment) Regulations 2009[11]. However, enforcement of this law can be inconsistent, particularly in rural areas where traditional practices may override legal stipulations.[12]

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as appropriate to Suva City

36.82% of females aged 15 and above in Suva City are engaged in unpaid work, home duties, and subsistence work (source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census Report).

The statistic aligns with broader findings in ADB data, which highlights that Pacific women carry an unequal burden of unpaid care work. Women in Fiji spend approximately three times as much time on unpaid domestic chores and care work compared to men, which limits their opportunities for paid employment and economic advancement (Asian Development Bank, 2023). The fact that over one-third of women in Suva City are involved in unpaid care and domestic work indicates a substantial burden on women's time and energy. This high percentage suggests that many women are dedicating a significant portion of their time to activities that, while crucial for family and community well-being, are not economically recognized or compensated. With such a large proportion of women engaged in unpaid work, there are likely implications for women's participation in the formal economy. This could contribute to lower female labor force participation rates and potentially impact women's economic empowerment and independence.

[11] Marriage Act Amendment Decree 2009 (No 26 of 2009) https://www.laws.gov.fj/Acts/DisplayAct/916

[12] https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/fiji/

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

For this target, the suggestion was to monitor women's representation quota at all levels including management in the city[13], according to the information published on the SCC website (2023).

Table 2 SCC city managers by gender

City Managers	2023	2024
Men	31	22
Women	8	4
Total	39	26
Share	21%	15%

[13] 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions

SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

SDG 6 aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. In Suva, significant progress has been made towards achieving the targets of this goal, though there are still areas for improvement, particularly in certain wards.

Access to Clean Water: Suva has made considerable strides in providing clean water to its residents, with approximately 93,970 people estimated to have access to safe drinking water. The 2017 Census data shows high coverage rates across various wards in Suva, with Suva Central leading at 96.06%. However, Samabula has the lowest rate at 89.82%, indicating a need for further infrastructure improvements. Samabula experiences occasional water shortages. Despite these issues, most residents report stable water availability, with over 65% of respondents in urban areas stating that water does not dry up.

Sanitation Services: Sanitation services in Suva are generally robust, with around 94% of the population having access to safely managed sanitation. The highest coverage is found in Suva Central (97%), while Samabula reports the lowest at 92%. This indicates overall strong infrastructure for managing wastewater, though there are areas—especially in informal settlements—where on-site solutions like septic tanks are still common, and illegal wastewater overflows are reported.

Handwashing Facilities: Access to handwashing facilities in Suva is lower than that of water and sanitation services, with only 61.3% of the population having access to handwashing facilities with soap and water. Suva Central again leads with 69%, while Samabula has the lowest at 56.1%. This highlights a significant gap in hygiene infrastructure, which is critical for preventing the spread of diseases.

Water Use Efficiency and Wastewater Treatment: Suva is also working to address challenges related to water-use efficiency and wastewater management. In 2022, 10 million liters of wastewater were treated annually, though increased investment is needed to upgrade and expand wastewater treatment capacity. There is also ongoing concern about water wastage due to leaks in the aging water reticulation system. As a tropical city, Suva experiences frequent rainfall, but climate change impacts, including droughts, could affect water supply, making efficient water management even more critical.

Policy and Investment: The government has shown commitment to improving water and sanitation infrastructure through policies like the National Water Resources Management Policy and a capital expenditure budget of $780,000 for improving water services. However, several key policies are still in draft form, underscoring the need for timely policy finalization and stronger community engagement in water management.

Challenges and Opportunities: Despite overall high coverage, disparities remain across different wards. Suva's informal settlements, in particular, face challenges with access to both water and sanitation services. Continued investment in infrastructure, along with community

participation, will be essential to meet SDG 6 targets fully. Climate resilience will also be a crucial factor moving forward to ensure long-term sustainability of water resources.

SDG target 6.1 By 2030 achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

Fiji's National Development Plan, aligned to the ***SDG target 6.1 By 2030 achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all,*** aims for 100% access to clean and safe water by 2021 in urban areas and by 2030 in rural areas, indicating a strong governmental commitment to improving water services.

The data regarding the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services in various wards of Suva, Fiji, is supported by the broader context provided by the **2017 Fiji Population and Housing Census**. This census offers valuable insights into demographic trends and infrastructure, which are essential for understanding water service accessibility.

The data indicates that all wards have high coverage rates (see Figure 13), with Suva Central leading at 96.06%. This suggests effective infrastructure and management practices in urban areas. Samabula Ward shows the lowest percentage at 89.82%, highlighting a potential area for further investment and development to meet national goals.

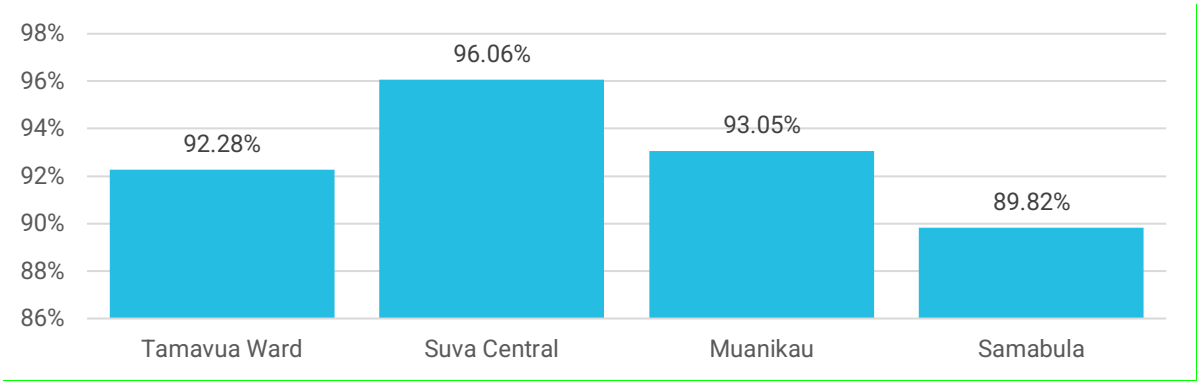
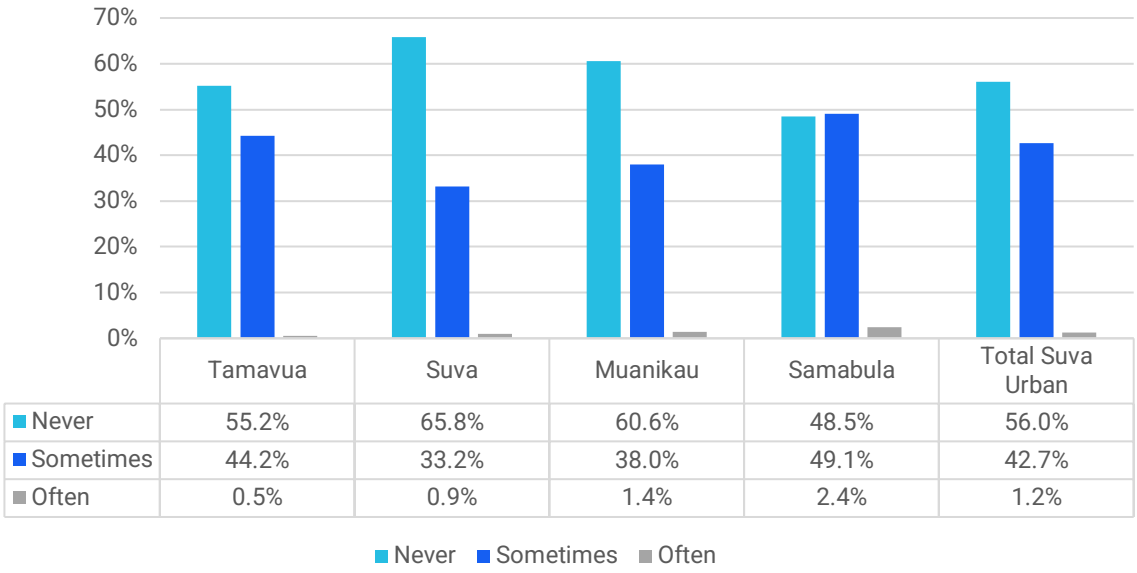


Figure 13: Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water service, by ward (2017) (Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2017 Census Data)

In some areas of the city, water pressure must be maintained at low levels, to avoid water pipes bursting. In fact, old reticulation is one of the major concerns of the Water Authority of Fiji. The data presented in *Figure 14* reflects the perceptions of residents in various wards of Suva regarding the frequency of water supply issues, specifically whether water ever dries up. Most respondents across all wards report that water does not dry up, with the highest confidence in Suva at 65.8% stating "never." This suggests a relatively stable perception of water availability among urban residents. Tamavua and Muanikau show similar levels of confidence, with approximately 55-60% indicating that water never dries up. Samabula, however, has the lowest percentage (48.5%) stating that water never dries up, coupled with the highest percentage (49.1%) indicating that it dries up sometimes, highlighting a potential

area of concern for water management. The "often" category shows very low percentages across all wards (ranging from 0.5% to 2.4%), indicating that severe water shortages are not a common experience for most residents.



	Tamavua	Suva	Muanikau	Samabula	Total Suva Urban
Never	55.2%	65.8%	60.6%	48.5%	56.0%
Sometimes	44.2%	33.2%	38.0%	49.1%	42.7%
Often	0.5%	0.9%	1.4%	2.4%	1.2%

Figure 14: Share of population that experience Water Dry up (Source: Population census 2017)

Fiji uses forms of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) practices along the catchment areas that serve Suva City. In 2022, 26,763 million liters of water were extracted from Fiji's freshwater sources. As a tropical country that experiences many days of rain, this has been within Fiji's ability to sustain. However, with climate change and particularly in El Niño-years that brings periods of relative drought, this could become problematic. Continuous campaigns to use water wisely would be appropriate. Additionally, there are grave concerns about water wasted through leakages in the reticulation system, due to construction work that damages the pipes or due to the presence of very old piping that still has not been replaced.

Currently, 10 million liters of wastewater are being treated annually (2022 figures). This figure could be increased with much-needed investment in upgrades.

SDG target 6.2, aims to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations by 2035.

This target is measured with an indicator composed of two parts: the first refers to the access to safely managed sanitation services, the second to handwashing facilities with soap and water. The high percentages of safely managed sanitation services are crucial for reducing health risks associated with poor sanitation, such as waterborne diseases. Access to handwashing facilities is critical for reducing the spread of infectious diseases, particularly considering health challenges posed by COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. Data

available for this target in Suva come from the Fiji population census and are available per ward but not disaggregated by gender or age.

The total proportion of the population in Suva urban areas using safely managed sanitation services is 94%, indicating a strong infrastructure for sanitation management in the region. Suva Central has the highest percentage at 97%, suggesting that this area has the most effective sanitation services, likely due to better infrastructure and management practices. Muanikau and Total Suva Urban both report 94%, indicating a solid level of service. Tamavua follows closely with 93%, while Samabula has the lowest at 92%. These figures suggest that while all wards have high access to safely managed sanitation, there may be room for improvement, particularly in Samabula.

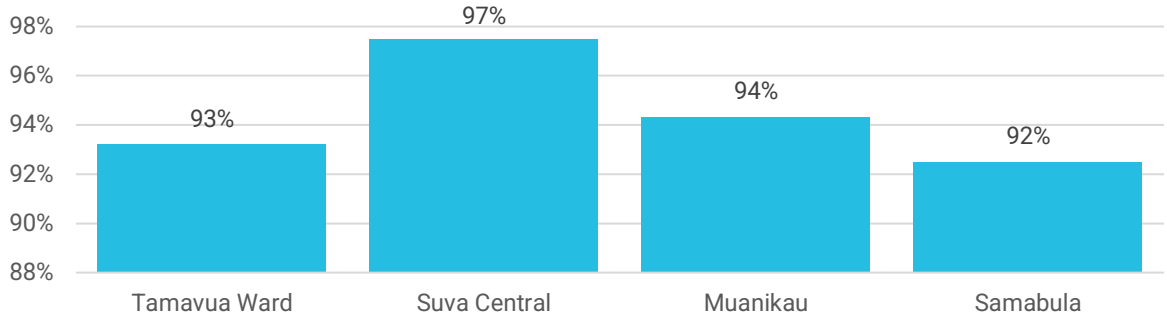


Figure 15: Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services by ward (Source: Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census Data)

The total proportion of the population in Suva urban areas with access to handwashing facilities is 61.3%. This indicates a significant portion of the population has no means to practice proper hygiene, which is essential for preventing disease transmission. Suva Central leads with 69.0%, suggesting that this area has better access to hygiene facilities, likely due to higher infrastructure investment and urban planning. Tamavua and Muanikau show similar access rates at 62.0% and 61.2%, respectively. Samabula has the lowest access rate at 56.1%, indicating a potential area for improvement in public health infrastructure related to hygiene practices.

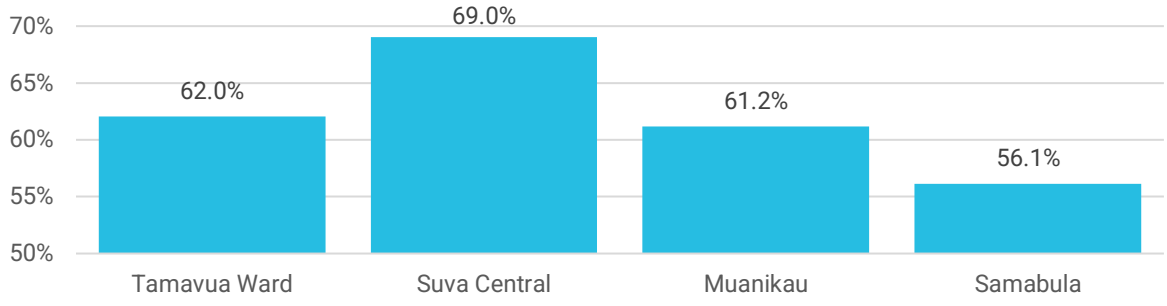


Figure 16: Proportion of population using a handwashing facility with soap and water (Source: Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census Data)

Fiji's 2023 Voluntary National Review (Fiji, 2023) observes that the Central Division has the lowest access to basic sanitation, with 16 percent of the population lacking such access, 4

percentage points higher than the national average. A Leave no-one behind (LNOB) analyses determined that people without access were found among those with the lowest 40% of wealth distribution living in urban areas.

Not all of Suva is yet connected to a sewer system. In fact, only 46% of properties are currently connected to the sewer system whereas the remining 54% of properties deal with their liquid waste on site (e.g. through use of septic tanks). SCC also estimates that about 1% of total liquid waste generated is illegally allowed to overflow into streets and creeks. In informal settlements there is as much as 95% on-site management, and there are also overflows into creeks.

WAF estimates that there are currently 174 Institutions, 1,073 commercial and 1,282 Residential properties with safely managed sanitation services in Suva.

SDG Target 6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

The data presented in ***Error! Reference source not found.*** relates to SDG T arget 6.4, which aims to substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors, ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater, and reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity by 2030. The indicator for this target is the level of water stress, defined as freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources. To understand the level of water stress in Fiji, it is crucial to compare these withdrawals against the total available freshwater resources. This ratio provides insight into how much of the available freshwater resources are being utilized. The data shows a substantial reduction in freshwater withdrawal from 26,762.8 mega liters in the first half of 2023 to 13,093.52 mega liters in the same period of 2024. This may indicate improved water-use efficiency or a response to changing environmental conditions or policies aimed at reducing water stress. The significant drop in freshwater withdrawal could be a positive sign of effective water

management strategies being implemented. However, it is essential to ensure that this trend continues and is not merely a temporary fluctuation due to seasonal changes or other factors.

Figure 17 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resource. Source: Fiji Water Authority (2023)

SDG Targets 6.A and 6.B: Water and Sanitation Cooperation and Community Participation

Target 6.A, which focuses on expanding international cooperation and capacity-building support for water and sanitation-related activities, and Target 6.B, which emphasizes the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.

This budget allocation is part of a government-coordinated spending plan aimed at enhancing water and sanitation infrastructure in Suva, reflecting a commitment to improving service delivery through targeted investments.

The allocation of $780,000 for capital expenditures (CAPEX) indicates a proactive approach by the government to address water and sanitation challenges in Suva *(source: Fiji Water Authority (2023))* [14]. This funding can be utilized for various projects, including water harvesting, wastewater treatment, and the implementation of recycling technologies.

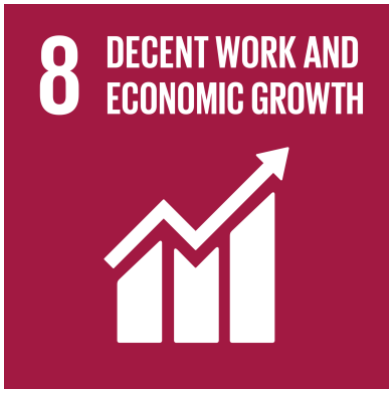
[14] The estimated cost for Fiji reticulation upgrading is FJD 174.17 million over the next 10 years. The cost includes a major water pipeline replacement program; Increase of storage capacity (Flagstaff, Nasinu, Wainibuku and Tacirua); a non-revenue water (NRW) program (new meter replacement, pressure management and air valve replacement); main (trunk) water pipe replacement program; upgrading and optimization of Walia and Tamavua water treatment plant); refurbishment of the wastewater pump station; and replacement of sewer lines.

With respect to Target 6.B: Community Participation in Water Management it has to be noted that The Department of Water and Sewerage is in charge of drafts governing policies for the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF), which include:

1. National Water Resources Management and Sanitation Policy (in draft).
2. National Sub-Division Policy (in draft).
3. Wastewater Management Policy for Informal Settlements (in draft).
4. Water Caring and Rainwater Harvesting Guideline.
5. Compulsory Water Storage Tank Policy (in draft).

It is to be noted that four out of five of these policies are still in draft form, and their finalization and approval needs to be given some priority.

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



The status of Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) in Suva City reflects both progress and challenges in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.

As of 2017, 26.94% of the workforce in Suva was engaged in informal employment, indicating significant challenges in achieving SDG 8.3, which encourages policies that support decent job creation and the growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises. This high rate of informal work suggests that many individuals lack access to regulated labour protections and benefits, highlighting the need for targeted policy interventions to formalize these jobs and improve working conditions.

The overall unemployment rate in Suva stood at 4.38% in 2017, suggesting a relatively stable labour market. However, disparities exist:

- Gender Disparities: The unemployment rate for women was notably higher at 8.40%, compared to 4.90% for men, indicating barriers to decent employment opportunities for women.
- Persons with Disabilities: The unemployment rate for this group was low at 0.56%, potentially reflecting successful integration efforts but also possible underreporting due to social stigma.

Data from 2014 indicated no reported child labour among children aged 5-14 years, aligning with SDG 8.7's objective to eradicate child labour[15]. However, a significant 66.85% of youth aged 15-19 were engaged in work, raising concerns about their educational opportunities and potential gender disparities, as 75.95% of males worked compared to 57.53% of females.

Financial access remains a challenge in Suva:

- There are approximately 2.14 commercial bank branches per 10,000 adults, indicating limited physical banking services.
- The proportion of adults with bank accounts is only 15.75%, highlighting barriers to financial inclusion that impact economic participation and entrepreneurship.

[15] Population and labour force estimate of 2014 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2015)

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro, small and medium sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

The analysis of the **proportion of informal employment in Suva City, reported at 26.94% in 2017** *(source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017*), provides critical insights into the labour market dynamics and the challenges associated with achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8.3, which promotes development-oriented policies that support productive activities and decent job creation. Informal employment encompasses various forms of work that are not regulated or protected by national labour laws. This includes subsistence activities, self-employment, and home duties. The significant rate of 26.94% indicates that nearly one in four workers in Suva City is engaged in informal employment, reflecting broader trends observed in Fiji's labour market.

8.5 By 2030, increase productive employment and decent work by 30% for women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities

The analysis of employment data in Suva City, particularly focusing on the unemployment rate and its implications for achieving target 8.5, which aims to increase productive employment and decent work by 30% for women, men, young people, and persons with disabilities by 2030, reveals several important insights.

Unemployment Rate: The overall unemployment rate in Suva City is reported at 4.38% for 2017. This figure indicates a relatively stable labour market; however, it masks underlying disparities among different demographic groups.

Unemployment by Gender: The unemployment rate for females in Central Urban areas is significantly higher at 8.40%, compared to 4.90% for males. This disparity highlights the challenges women face in accessing decent employment opportunities, which may be influenced by factors such as gender discrimination, societal expectations, and limited access to resources.

Unemployment Among Persons with Disabilities: The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities in Suva City is notably low at 0.56%. This figure may reflect both successful integration efforts and the potential underreporting of unemployment among this group due to social stigma or lack of awareness regarding their employment status.

8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, including child labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking by 2030

This data provides valuable insights into child labour and workforce participation in Rewa Urban Central, Fiji, as of 2014. Here's an analysis of the key findings related to SDG target 8.7 on eradicating child labour.

Ages 5-14: No child labour reported for ages 5-9 and 10-14, which is positive. Only 11 children (all male) in the 10-14 age group were in the labour force, representing a negligible 0.00% of this age group.

Ages 15-17 (partial data for 15-19 age group): Significant labour force participation: 66.85% of 15-19 year-olds engaged in work. Gender disparity: 75.95% of males vs. 57.53% of females in this age group were working.

The data suggests very low rates of child labour for children under 15, aligning with SDG 8.7's goal to eradicate child labour. High workforce participation (66.85%) for the 15-19 age group raises concerns about potential interference with education and development. The legal working age (15) and compulsory education age (6-18) in Fiji should be considered when interpreting this data. Significant gender disparity in youth employment, with males more likely to be working than females in the 15-19 age group.

8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

The analysis of financial access data for Suva City in relation to target 8.10, which aims to strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to expand access to banking, insurance, and financial services for all, reveals several important insights regarding the current state of financial inclusion.

Commercial Bank Branches: The number of commercial bank branches per 10,000 adults in Suva is approximately 2.14. This indicates a relatively low density of bank branches, suggesting that access to physical banking services may be limited for a significant portion of the population.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs): The number of ATMs per 10,000 adults in Suva is reported at 10.19. This figure reflects a more favorable access to cash withdrawal and transaction services compared to bank branches, indicating that while physical banking locations are sparse, electronic access points are more prevalent.

Bank Account Ownership: The proportion of adults aged 15 years and older with an account at a bank or other financial institution is recorded at 15.75% in Suva. This low percentage

highlights significant barriers to financial inclusion, as a majority of the adult population lacks access to formal banking services. **When broken down by gender, 70% of males and 65.26% of females in Urban Central have bank accounts.** This gender disparity indicates that while both sexes face challenges in accessing banking services, men are slightly more likely to be included.

Figure 18: Suva city market

Potential areas for improvement of SDG 8

Efforts are underway to enhance energy efficiency and promote renewable energy solutions, including the adoption of LED street lighting and energy-efficient bulbs in homes and businesses. However, more comprehensive measures are needed to reduce Suva's carbon footprint and promote sustainable energy practices.

In summary, while Suva City has made strides towards achieving SDG 8 through market development and energy efficiency initiatives, significant challenges remain regarding informal employment rates, gender disparities in unemployment, financial inclusion, and youth employment that need to be addressed through targeted policies and community engagement.

Markets

Suva has vibrant markets that support local vendors, with the Municipal Market being a key site for small-scale agricultural sales which adjoins the city's main Bus Terminus. On Fridays and Saturdays, the busiest market days, the Municipal market would have an average of 1,700 vendors and an estimated 55,000 pedestrians. Recent upgrades (2023) to this market include an investment of FJD 510,000 for roof refurbishment, and an investment of FJD 30,000 for the upgrades of the flower and juice sections of the market.

Other smaller markets are found in other parts of the city, providing opportunities for vendors to sell their produce. Many farmers sell their produce directly to consumers at these markets. Suva is also one of the major fisheries landing sites, with nearly half of Fiji's total landings from coastal commercial fisheries being made in the city.

As a policy, the SCC views the development of markets as critical to empower Fiji farmers and agricultural MSMEs by providing them locations where they could sell their produce directly to consumers. Many of the vendors at these markets, being farmers, are of course not residents of Suva and make their way to Suva everyday (and especially on Saturdays) to sell their produce. With markets established in various parts of the city, this also ensures that Suva citizens have access to fresh, healthy, unprocessed food contributing to the Healthy City campaign objectives.

Box 1 Renovation work of the Raiwaqa Market

Figure 19: Renovation work of the Raiwaqa Market

The Suva City Council, in its ongoing efforts to support and enhance the welfare of local vendors, began renovation work at Raiwaqa Market in October 2024. While this is happening, temporary marquees have been set up nearby, allowing vendors to continue selling their produce for the next three weeks. The dedicated team at SCC Works Depot is working diligently to ensure a seamless transition and a revitalized market space. The Council extends its appreciation to the vendors and the surrounding community for their patience as we strive to improve the market experience for everyone.

SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Suva has made notable strides toward achieving SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), particularly in developing resilient infrastructure, promoting industrial growth, and improving access to information and communications technology (ICT).

Under Target 9.1, Suva has been working on building quality and sustainable infrastructure to support economic development and improve human well-being. Public transportation plays a crucial role in Suva's infrastructure, with buses accounting for 46% of the total transport volume, indicating a robust public transport system. The taxi fleet of 7,000 vehicles further enhances mobility in the city, and on-street parking is regulated to manage congestion, reflecting efforts to improve urban mobility.

In terms of industrial development (Target 9.2), Suva contributes significantly to Fiji's manufacturing sector, with 52.3% of the region's total manufacturing value. This makes Suva a central hub for various industries, from food processing to textiles, underscoring its importance in driving sustainable industrial growth.

Regarding Target 9.C, Suva has made substantial progress in ICT access. In 2017, the city reported high mobile access rates, with nearly 99% of residents having mobile connectivity. However, internet access remains a challenge, with a significant portion of the population still lacking reliable internet, particularly in more peripheral areas. Efforts like Project Semata aim to bridge this digital divide, particularly in schools, by improving internet access and digital literacy.

While energy efficiency initiatives, such as the adoption of LED street lighting and the growing use of renewable energy solutions in the private sector, are contributing to Suva's sustainability, more action is needed to reduce the city's carbon footprint and promote renewable energy adoption at a larger scale.

Overall, Suva is on a promising path to achieving SDG 9, but continued investment in infrastructure, industry, and ICT access is essential for realizing long-term sustainable development and fostering economic growth in the city.

9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

Target 9.1 focuses on developing quality, reliable, and resilient infrastructure that supports economic development, human well-being, and equitable access for all. The data provided, primarily from the Greater Suva Transport Strategy Report 2015-2030 by the Fiji Roads Authority (Fiji Road Authority, 2014), sheds light on various aspects of transport infrastructure and accessibility in the Greater Suva area.

The data on passenger and freight volumes by mode of transport is presented through several key metrics:

Bus Transport Passenger Volume: **46% of the total transport in Suva is by bus.** Public buses account for a significant portion of the transportation in Suva, indicating that buses are an important and widely used mode of transport. This could be a sign of a relatively robust and affordable public transport system that serves a large portion of the population, which supports economic development by providing affordable and accessible transportation options.

Taxi Fleet Number of Registered Vehicles: **There are 7,000 registered taxis in Suva.** The large number of taxis suggests that private transportation is also a significant part of Suva's transport infrastructure. Taxis provide an essential service, especially for individuals who need flexible, door-to-door transport options. This could point to an economic reliance on small-scale, informal transportation services.

Total On-Street Parking Spaces with Meters: **628 parking spaces are controlled by parking meters.** Suva has a formalized on-street parking system in place, which can help manage urban traffic and create orderly access to parking spaces in busy areas. However, this also suggests potential congestion issues, as limited parking spaces could lead to over-demand for public and private vehicles.

Average Occupancy of On-Street Metered Parking Spaces: **80% of on-street parking spaces are occupied.** High occupancy rates (80%) indicate that Suva's central urban areas face significant parking pressures, which is typical for cities with growing populations and high traffic volumes. This could reflect both a demand for vehicle access in the city and potential challenges related to urban congestion. High occupancy rates suggest that there might be a need for improved urban planning, including the creation of additional parking spaces, or the promotion of alternative transport modes like public buses or cycling.

9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries

Target 9.2 focuses on promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and improving access to affordable and equitable industrial infrastructure. One of its key indicators (9.2.1) measures the manufacturing value added (MVA) as a proportion of GDP and on a per capita basis.

Manufacturing in Suva accounts for 52.3% of the total manufacturing value in the Central Eastern Division (which includes Suva)[16]**.** Suva, as the capital and economic hub of Fiji, contributes more than half (52.3%) of the region's manufacturing value. This highlights Suva's dominant role in Fiji's industrial sector. The Central Eastern Division, where Suva is located, encompasses a range of manufacturing activities, including food processing, textiles, chemicals, and electronics, among others. The fact that Suva holds such a high share of the manufacturing value indicates that the capital is a central point for industrial development in Fiji.

9.C Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2030.

The analysis of internet and mobile access, based on the Fiji 2017 Population & Housing Census, in Suva City reveals significant disparities across different wards, highlighting both strengths and challenges in digital connectivity.

Suva Ward shows the highest proportion of internet access at 73.17%, with 8,633 individuals having access compared to 3,166 without (Figure 20). This indicates a relatively strong digital presence in the central urban area.

- Tamavua Ward follows with a 65.89% access rate, where 18,331 residents are connected, while 8,438 remain offline. This suggests that suburban areas are also benefitting from decent internet connectivity.
- Samabula Ward reports a lower access rate of 59.41%, with 9,698 connected and 6,625 without access, indicating a need for improved infrastructure or outreach in this area.
- **The Suva Peri-Urban zone has the lowest internet access at 51.52%, with 18,331 individuals online and 5,564 lacking connectivity**. This highlights a critical gap in digital inclusion for residents living on the outskirts of the city.

Mobile access is significantly higher across all wards (Figure 21):

[16] Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Report 2017. National Manufacturing Value Added (MVA): $1,164,631.49 thousand (or approximately 1.165 billion USD) for 2022 (source: World Bank 2023)

- **Suva Ward boasts an impressive 97.25% mobile access rate**, with only 325 individuals lacking connectivity.
- Tamavua Ward leads with a near-total mobile access rate of 99.28%, indicating that mobile networks are robust in this area.
- Both Samabula Ward and Suva Peri-Urban have similarly high rates at 98.98% and 99.51%, respectively.

The overall high mobile access rates suggest that while fixed internet connections may be limited in some areas, residents can still rely on mobile technology for connectivity.

Recent initiatives like Project Semata aim to enhance internet access in schools across Suva, particularly targeting underserved areas to bridge the digital divide. This initiative aligns with broader goals to improve educational resources and digital literacy among students and teachers.[17] However, challenges remain, particularly in addressing outdated infrastructure within local government services that could hinder further digital transformation efforts. The Suva City Council's plans for a comprehensive digital platform transformation highlight the need for modern systems to support efficient service delivery.

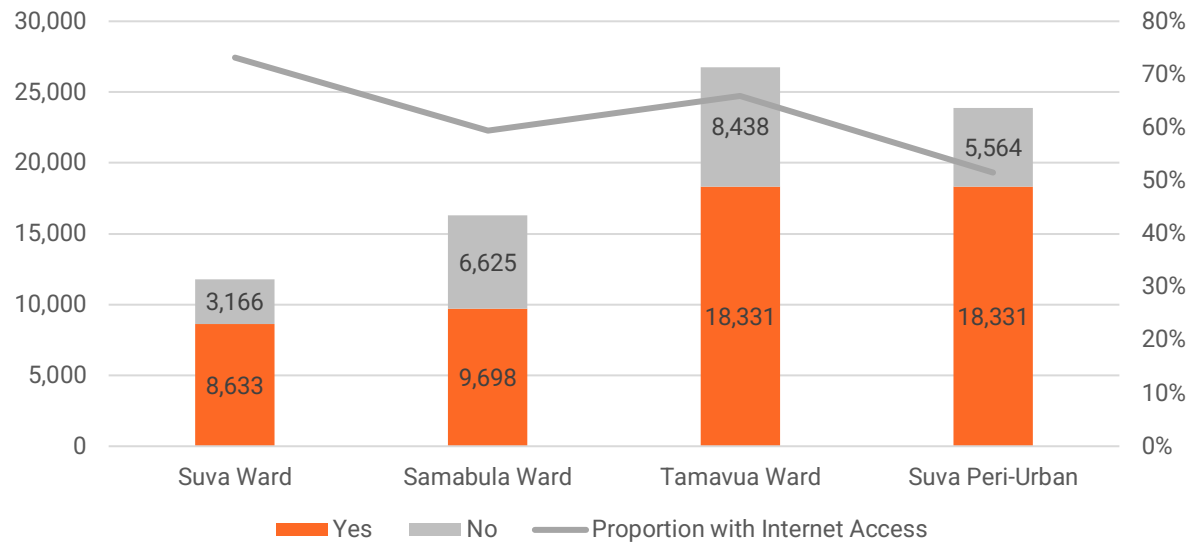


Figure 20: Internet Access (source: Fiji 2017 Population & Housing Census)

[17] https://www.intelligentcio.com/apac/2024/06/05/digicel-fiji-ciena-and-southern-cross-bring-high-speed-connectivity-to-more-schools-in-fiji/

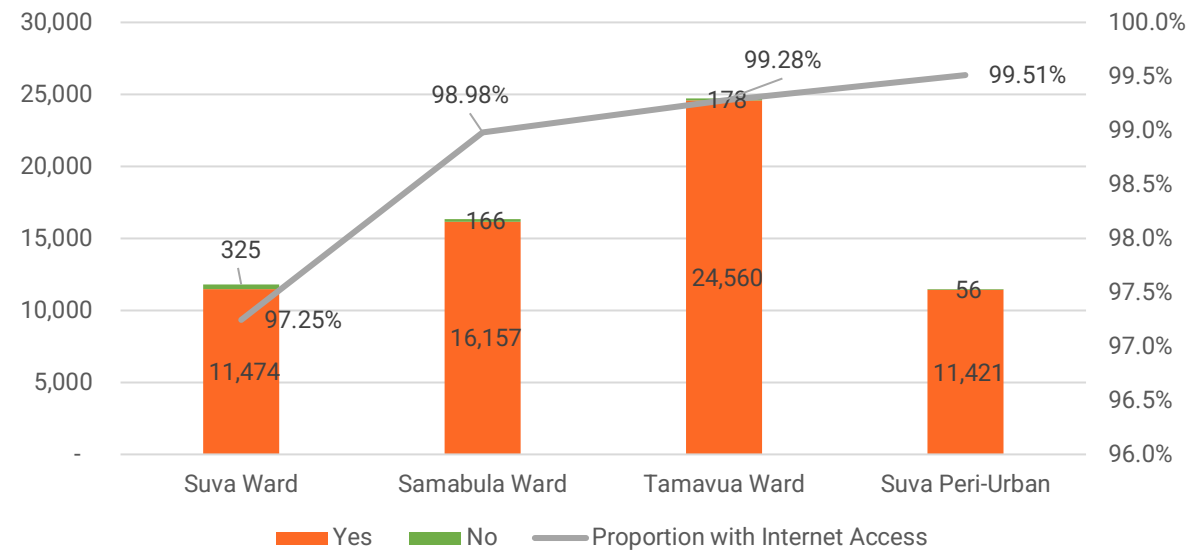


Figure 21: Mobile access (source: Fiji 2017 Population & Housing Census)

Energy Use

Some small but impactful steps are taking place in this area. Many have adopted the use of energy efficient lighting in both businesses and residential properties. Energy efficient lighting is readily available in shops and supermarkets. These have been readily taken up by people in the knowledge that they would make considerable savings through the simple action of replacing their bulbs with energy efficient bulbs.

Streetlamps in Suva are outfitted with LED lights, guaranteeing both cost savings and reduced carbon emissions. While street lighting currently falls under the jurisdiction of the Fiji Roads Authority, there is a possibility that it may eventually become the responsibility of the Councils.

The private sector is adopting renewable energy solutions around Suva. This is certainly not enough, and more could and should be done in this area.

As Fiji's major city, Suva is a high carbon emitter, in Fiji standards. As a city there are ambitions to reduce its climate footprint through measures targeting electricity generation, transport and waste minimization and management. To achieve these mitigation outcomes, Suva city wants to promote roof solar PV for home electricity generation, through partnership arrangements with donors. Energy Fiji Limited, the Department of Energy, the Banks (including Fiji Development Bank) and other private sector entities through a genuine Public-Private-Partnership. Such a scheme could make renewable energy accessible to most residents in Suva, contributing to the city's sustainability efforts in energy and climate change.

Industry

Industrial zones of varying sizes are scattered across the city, with heavy industry concentrated on the east (see Figure 22). In accordance with the Town Planning Act, *General Industrial Development* means development for bulk storage, sales of new and used motor vehicles and all other industries not being classified as either heavy industrial development or noxious industrial development. *Heavy Industrial Development* means development for the purpose of carrying out industrial processing or storage of such a nature as would reasonably be expected to have a detrimental effect on the normal enjoyment or peace and amenity of the surrounding inhabitants if such development, effects as aforesaid may be caused by noise, glare, dust, smoke, odor, unsightliness, vibration or other such detrimental causes emanating from the site of land used or proposed to be used for heavy industrial development.

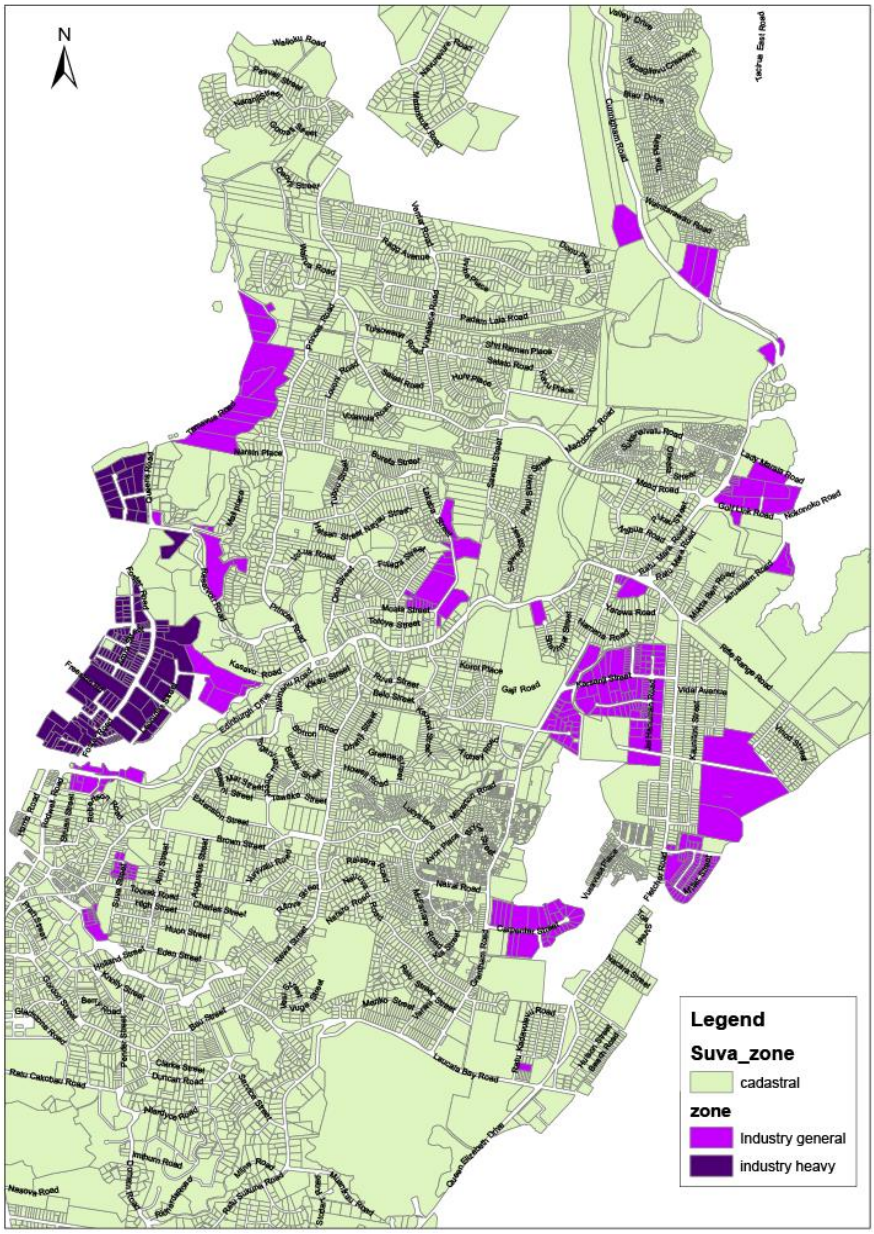


Figure 22: Map of the industrial areas (Source: SCC)

SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

It must be recognized that to effectively achieve this Goal, the Suva City Council (SCC) has to coordinate with various national ministries. The SCC developed an Asset Management Strategy in 2022, recognizing its substantial assets valued at approximately FJD 135 million. The council operates on an annual budget of FJD 23 million, with asset-related expenditures of FJD 1.8 million for buildings and FJD 400,000 for vehicles. The coordination with national ministries, includes:

- Ministry of Local Government: Oversees local government services.
- Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP): Develops environmentally compliant urban planning policies.
- Ministry of Hosing: Responsible for strategy, policy, funding assistance, monitoring and regulation of Fiji's housing system.
- Ministry of Waterways: Manages drainage and environmental protection.
- Ministry of Finance: Provides financial advice and funding support.
- Climate Change Division: Implements national climate policies affecting urban areas.
- Ministry of Public Works: Guides infrastructure and transport policies.
- National Disaster Management Office (NDMO): Coordinates disaster management efforts and resilience building.

11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade informal settlements

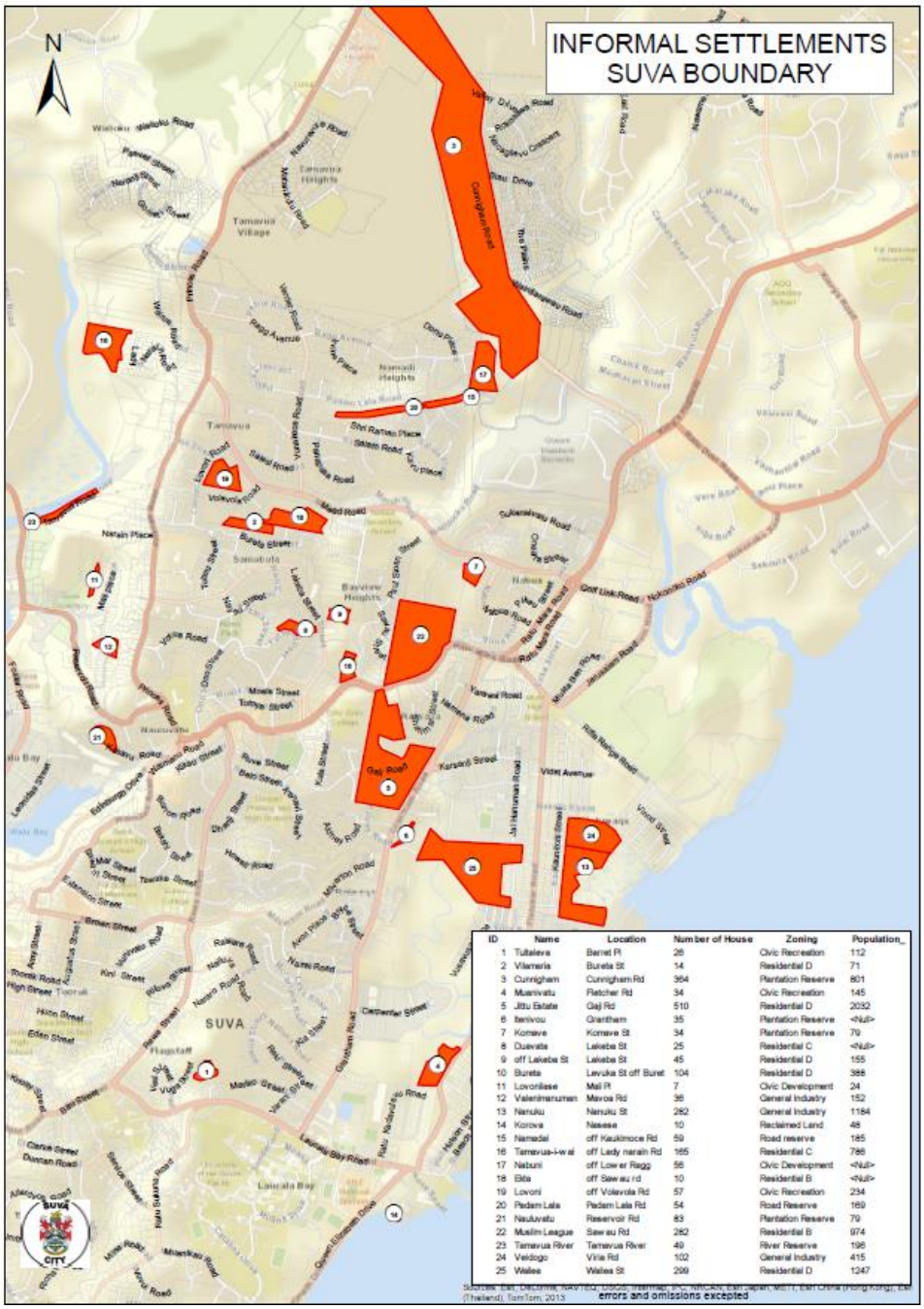
For much of its history, Suva has functioned as an urban area, with informal settlements playing a vital role in its social and economic structure, stemming from the city's historical ties to colonialism. There are numerous reasons to believe that this trend will persist; however, there remains a significant need and opportunity to enhance these areas to ensure they can offer healthy living conditions for a substantial portion of Suva's population (E Weber, 2023). According to the Data on Informal Settlements collected by the District Office Suva and Habitat for Humanity 2023, and the Government of Fiji, **16.6% of the population of Suva lives in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing**, corresponding to more than 16,000 people.

In a profiling exercise conducted in 2023 by the Ministry of Social Protection, together with civil society organizations, it was found that there **were some 200 street dwellers nation-wide, 155 (78%) of these in Suva**.

Table 3 Informal Settlements - Greater Suva Area. Source – Suva City Council 2023.

City Or Township Area	No Of Informal Settlements	No Of Households	Population
Suva	23	2,663	10,080
Nasinu	20	1,948	10,449
Nausori	10	672	8,100
Lami	16	2,100	9,600
Total	**69**	**7,383**	**38,229**

The Ministry of Housing actively engaged in formalizing settlements, with the goal of granting residents formal leases and property ownership. Formalization of these settlements is carried out right to the stage where residents are allocated lots and given ownership and a title for the property. The initiative is significantly subsidized by the government, tailored to the income levels of the residents in these informal settlements. Furthermore, the Ministry collaborated closely with other relevant government agencies, to ensure that Fijians received the best possible housing assistance.



ID	Name	Location	Number of House	Zoning	Population_
1	Tuliaeva	Barnet Pl	26	Civic Recreation	112
2	Vilamaria	Bureta St	14	Residential D	71
3	Cunnigham	Cunnigham Rd	364	Plantation Reserve	801
4	Muanivatu	Fletcher Rd	34	Civic Recreation	145
5	Jittu Estate	Gaji Rd	510	Residential D	2032
6	Ilenivou	Grantham	35	Plantation Reserve	<Null>
7	Komave	Komave St	34	Plantation Reserve	79
8	Duevata	Lakeba St	25	Residential C	<Null>
9	off Lakeba St	Lakeba St	45	Residential D	155
10	Bureta	Levuka St off Bure	104	Residential D	388
11	Lovonilase	Mal Pl	7	Civic Development	24
12	Valenimarumari	Marova Rd	38	General Industry	152
13	Nanuku	Nanuku St	282	General Industry	1184
14	Korova	Nasese	10	Reclaimed Land	48
15	Namadai	off Kaukimoce Rd	59	Road reserve	185
16	Tamavua-i-wai	off Lady naraln Rd	165	Residential C	786
17	Naburi	off Lower Regg	56	Civic Development	<Null>
18	Ebia	off Saw au rd	10	Residential B	<Null>
19	Lovoni	off Volevola Rd	57	Civic Recreation	234
20	Pedam Lala	Pedam Lala Rd	54	Road Reserve	169
21	Nauluvatu	Reservoir Rd	83	Plantation Reserve	79
22	Muslim League	Saw au Rd	282	Residential B	974
23	Tamavua River	Tamavua River	49	River Reserve	196
24	Veidogo	Vitia Rd	102	General Industry	415
25	Walea	Walea St	299	Residential D	1247

Figure 23: Informal Settlement Boundaries Source: SCC

Fiji has 89 percent of the land recognized as native tenure, from which 30.2 percent of the population occupy land through traditional villages. According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2019 – 2020 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2021) nationally, 76.3 percent of the population have owner-occupier housing on varied tenure systems. Similarly, in the Central Division approximately 59 percent of the population have outright ownership of houses, the majority of which are concentrated in the Tamavua area.

The estimated national poverty rate of Fiji (2021) is 29.9 percent, where residents earn less than $41.91 average per week. Most of the poor population are concentrated in rural areas (62.2%). In urban centers however, urban poor appear to be concentrated in the eastern

(44.2%) and western areas (23.3%). The Central Division has 17.9 percent of the poor located in the central urban areas while 16 percent in central rural areas.

Most of the poor population (42.2%) occupy land through traditional village tenure, while the non-poor population occupy freehold, state (known as crown land in Fiji) and native (indigenously owned) leased land. The near-poor population are those that are living above the poverty line but may be at significant risk of becoming poor in the future. On average, 46 percent of the near poor population occupy land without legal arrangement, state, or freehold land.

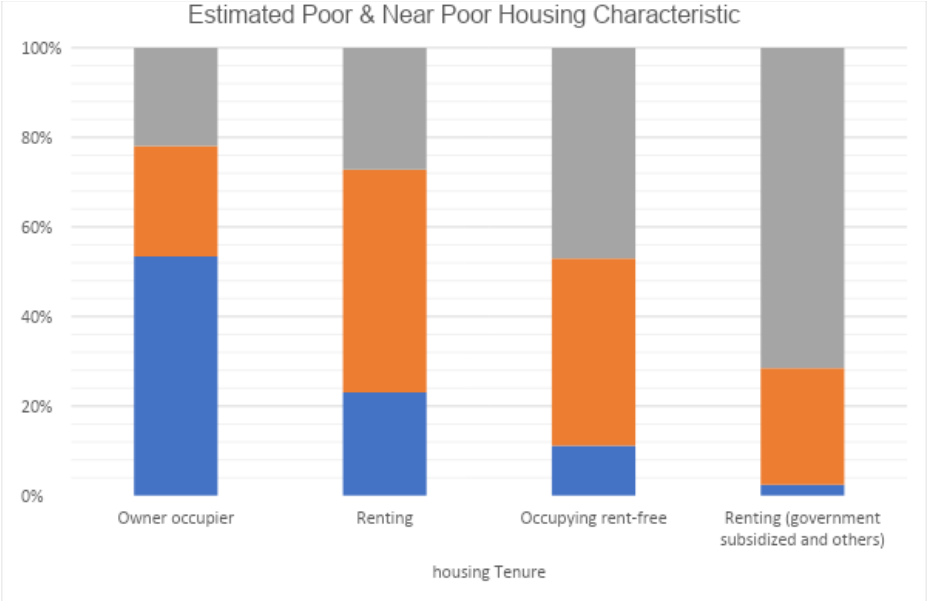


Figure 24: Distribution of estimated poor and near-poor population over the different housing characteristics nationally. Source: SCC

Many Fijian informal settlers on indigenous land live with the consent of landowners under informal agreements, which may involve rent payments or other forms of exchange. These agreements, commonly referred to as 'vakavanua' in Fiji, are often verbal in nature. Informal settlements in Fiji have been steadily expanding for several decades, beginning with the first settlements around Suva City in the 1940s and 1950s (Habitat for Humanity Fiji, 2023).

The Ministry of Housing announced a comprehensive 12-year development plan aimed at transforming informal settlements into sustainable and thriving communities. This initiative should improve the living conditions of thousands of citizens residing in these settlements. Regulation and control of land development takes place within the framework of town planning schemes and by-laws. Suva has an approved town planning scheme but having been produced in 1979 this is now extremely dated and is desperately in need of an update.

This is also one of the recommendations of UN Habitat's Greater Suva Urban Profile. In addition, UN Habitat recommends that the town planning schemes of Lami, Nasinu and Nausori (in addition to Suva) should also be updated at a combined estimated cost of FJD

200,000-250,000. This would also include a revision of the Greater Suva Urban Growth Management Plan (2006).

11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety notably by expanding public transport with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations

Unfortunately, there is no comprehensive and updated data on access to safe transport for Suva City.

The most recent Greater Suva Transportation Strategy (2015-2030) (Fiji Road Authority, 2014) highlighted the reliance on public service vehicles (bus, taxi and minibus) as they accounted for 57% of all trips in the Great Suva Area, although it must be considered that the last available data is from 2001. However, the number of cars on Suva's roads has increased significantly over the past two decades, leading to severe traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. Despite infrastructure improvements, the situation remains challenging due to the continuous addition of vehicles.

This strategy outlines key improvements needed for public transport, including:

- Dedicated Bus Lanes: To enhance bus efficiency.
- Bus Terminal Upgrades: Specifically targeting the Suva and Nausori terminals.
- Traffic Signal Management: Implementing a vehicle-actuated system for better traffic flow.
- Intersection Improvements: Identifying 31 intersections for short-term upgrades, primarily for safety.
- Pedestrian Safety Concerns: Analysis from the Fiji Police Force indicates that pedestrians are disproportionately involved in traffic accidents. Recommendations include:
    - ❖ New pedestrian crossings.
    - ❖ Improved lighting and footpaths to ensure safety and accessibility.
    - ❖ Emphasis on proper footpaths to support those with disabilities and promote walking.
- Bicycle Infrastructure: The strategy advocates for dedicated bicycle lanes to encourage healthy living and reduce car dependency.
- Data Collection and Traffic Rule Enforcement: Enhanced data collection is essential for future planning. Improved enforcement of road rules is also necessary to manage traffic flow and minimize accidents.
- Parking Facilities: The Suva City Council (SCC) manages 890 public parking meter bays, with 94 located in the Central Business District (CBD).

The shift to e-mobility, in an effort for Suva to rid itself of most of the pollution created by motor vehicles (with benefits to health of people and the planet, and in line with Fiji's nationally determined commitments), is one that has been problematic in Fiji. There is a clear need for

a plan for the country to do so. The Land Transport Authority is keen to see progress in this area and has been exploring ways to encourage this shift to e-mobility. There are several hurdles that need to be addressed, including the higher prices of EVs compared to their ICE counterparts (and thus the need for financial incentives), the need to install EV charging infrastructure, and the need for an end-of-life plan for EV batteries.

Although the promotion of e-mobility would be better coordinated through national efforts, city authorities could aid this transition. As observed in the National Economic Summit of March 2023, in transport, Fiji is not and can't be in a position of technological leadership[18]. For this reason, it needs to ensure it is well prepared for the shifts happening in those parts of the world that are leaders in transport technology. Suva City can also learn from these efforts, particularly in areas that are directly under its control, that is, its own vehicle fleet and the provision of EV fast charging stations around the city, particularly in SCC parking spaces.

11.3 By 2030 enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

Land Use efficiency is the ratio between the Land Consumption Rate and the Population Growth Rate: values <1 indicate where the rate of population growth has been greater than that of spatial expansion of that area (Melchiorri, Pesaresi, Florczyk, Corbane, & Kemper, 2019; UN-Habitat, 2018). The provided data on Land Use Efficiency (LUE) across different decades indicates significant variations in efficiency over time (Melchiorri Michele, 2024).[19]

The LUE increased from 0.5404 in the period 1975-1980 to 0.8902 in 1980-1990. This suggests a significant improvement in land use efficiency, possibly due to better urban planning and land management practices during this time. **A dramatic drop to 0.0914 occurred between 1990 and 2000.** This decline may reflect challenges such as rapid urbanization, population growth, or insufficient infrastructure development, leading to inefficient land use. **The most recent period, 2010-2020, saw a further increase to 0.7347, suggesting ongoing improvements in land use efficiency, potentially driven by advances in technology, policy changes, or increased awareness of sustainable development practices.**

[18] https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FINAL-2023-NES-RESOLUTION.pdf

[19] Data are extracted from the GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A) https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/download.php?ds=ucdb . Please note that this database uses the Urban Centre definition (DEGURBA), and the area of Suva might not match the city boundaries. Total population for the Suva Urban Centre is 242,909 estimated for 2025.

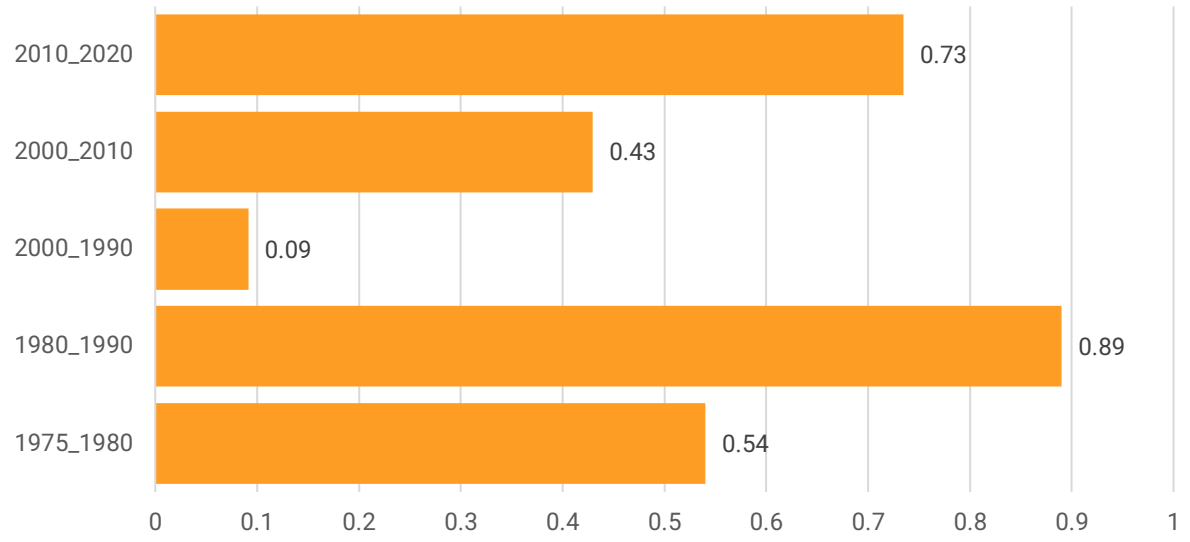


Figure 25: Land use efficiency in Suva Urban Centre – 1975-2020 (Source: European Commission 2024)

The fluctuations in Land Use Efficiency over these decades highlight the impact of socio-economic factors and urban planning policies on land utilization. The initial growth followed by a decline indicates that while advancements can be made, they can also be reversed by poor planning or external pressures such as economic downturns or population surges.

11.5 By 2030 significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations in line with councils' disaster management plan.

This target is directly linked to specific disasters. Table 4 illustrates the number of hazard event per type.

Table 4: Hazards events

Hazard type	2004-2006	2009-2011	2014-2016
Extreme wind	1	-	1
Tsunami run-ups	3	5	2
Heat wave	-	-	2

Suva City Council has included a disaster management plan to address the issue of disaster vulnerability. This will be done in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

Waste management

Suva City generates approximately 65–68 tons of waste per day, which is managed through a structured waste collection system operated by the SCC.

Collection Frequency: Municipal solid waste is collected three times a week in most areas, while central city areas receive service six times a week. Green waste is collected monthly to encourage home composting (Asian Development Bank, 2014; J-PRISM II Project Office, 2022). Data for 2022 show the types of waste handled by the SCC[20] as follows:

- Household Waste: 12,830 tons annually
- Green Waste: 9,929 tons annually
- Bulky Waste (e.g., white goods): 291 tons annually
- Skip Bin Waste: 5,753 tons annually.

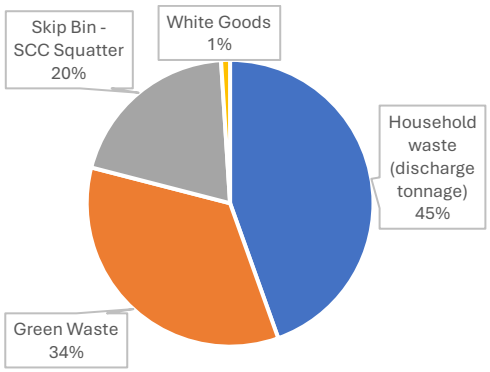


Figure 26: Waste Composition for Suva.

SCC operates within a framework that divides the city into four Solid Waste Management (SWM) wards, further segmented into ten sectors. Each sector is serviced by private contractors under four-year contracts for waste collection and transportation. SCC employs **a fleet of 19 refuse collection vehicles**, including 9 garbage compactor trucks, 1 septic bailout, 4 open trucks and 1 utility vehicle.

Waste collected from Suva is transported to the **Naboro Landfill, located 24 km from the city**. This landfill serves not only Suva but also neighboring municipalities, Suva City Boundary, Nasinu Town Boundary area and Extended Delegated Area. The landfill has reached capacity limits in its initial stages, necessitating plans for expansion and improved management practices

Controlled Facilities: The proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed in **controlled facilities is reported at 94.5%,** indicating a strong adherence to regulated waste management practices

Most of the waste collected by SCC is categorized by SCC as Household waste, Green Waste and waste collected from Skip bins. However, data obtained from different sources available

[20] Residents store municipal solid waste in small bins (approximately 60 liters), or plastic bags placed on the curb for collection.

only for certain years reveals significant trends in household garbage and total waste generation. Household garbage decreased from 18,009 tons in 2015 to 12,830 tons in 2022, indicating a potential shift towards improved waste reduction practices or changes in population behavior. Total waste generation fluctuated over the years, peaking at 28,803 tons in 2022, with an average of 79 tons per day. Notably, green waste collection saw a marked increase to 9,929 tons in 2022, reflecting the city's efforts to promote composting and reduce landfill contributions. Overall, while there are positive signs of increased awareness and participation in sustainable practices, ongoing education and infrastructure improvements are necessary to address the persistent issues of illegal dumping and inadequate disposal methods.

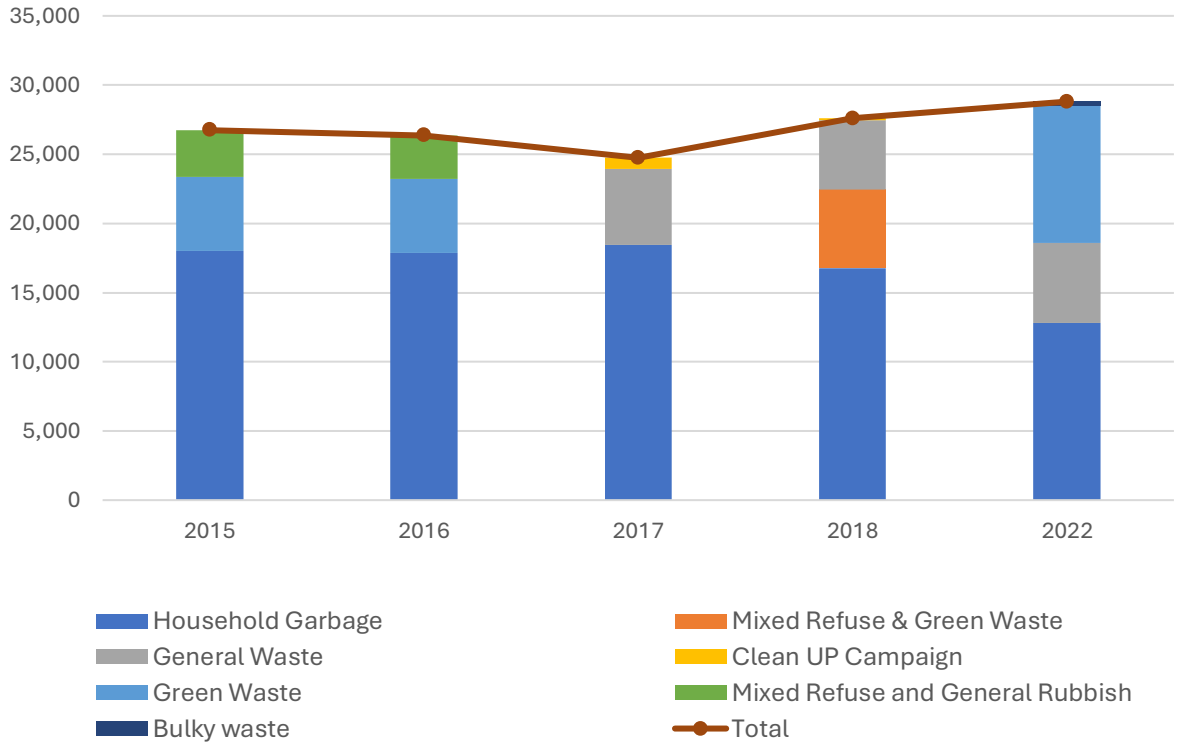


Figure 27: Waste collected per type. Source: SCC

Box 2: Home composting campaign and Waste Minimization Initiatives

Figure 28: Compost bins used in the SUVA campaign

SCC launched the Home Composting Campaign within the Suva City Council Waste Minimization Program. The program, initially supported by the Global Environment Fund's Small Grants Facility, aims to reduce the volume of green waste and kitchen scraps transported to the landfill. Residents can buy home composting units for a subsidized price of FJD 30 (USD 14). Source: https://suvacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/HOME-COMPOST-BOOKLET.pdf

The Council is reviving its Waste Minimization Initiatives by composting vegetable waste from the Suva Municipal Market. This project, led by JICA Volunteer Mazafumi Kanazawa since July 25, 2023, involves collecting about 1 ton of vegetable waste daily and processing it at the Composting Facility in Samabula. The Council aims to gradually increase production and expand collections to other satellite markets, viewing this sustainable practice as a long-term strategy to lower waste management costs. These savings initiatives can then be redirected to enhance beautification projects and improve overall services in the city. (*Source: Suva City Council*)

Air quality

While specific data on particulate matter levels (PM2.5 and PM10) in Suva is not collected regularly by the City, air quality remains a crucial factor in assessing urban environmental impact. The collection and management of solid waste directly influences air quality through emissions from landfills and waste incineration processes. Continuous monitoring and improvement of these practices are essential to mitigate adverse health effects associated with poor air quality. Figure 29 illustrates data on the population-weighted average concentrations of PM2.5 (particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers) over a series of years for the Suva Urban Centre. PM2.5 is a key air quality indicator, as these fine particles can have significant health impacts when inhaled.

To estimate $PM_{2.5}$ exposures for people living in a specific area, scientists combine:

- The number of people living within that area, and
- The $PM_{2.5}$ concentration to which they are exposed.

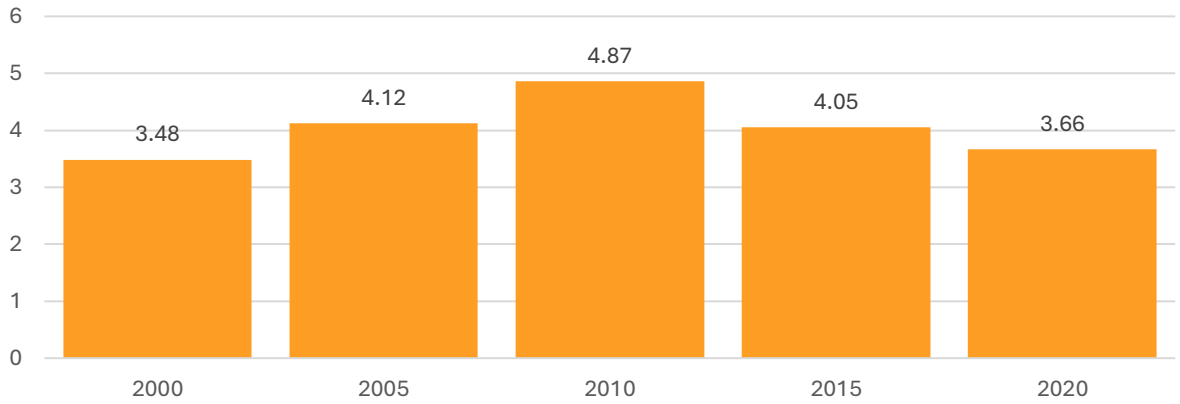


Figure 29: PM2.5 population weighted average concentrations (µg/m3) Source: European Commission 2024

The increase from 3.48 µg/m³ in 2000 to 4.87 µg/m³ in 2010 suggests worsening air quality, potentially due to factors such as increased urbanization, industrial activity, or vehicular emissions, which are common sources of PM2.5. The overall trend from 2000 to 2020 shows a fluctuation but still a slight decrease in average PM2.5 concentrations by 2020. This may suggest that while air quality worsened during the early 2000s, there have been some positive steps taken toward cleaner air since 2010.

11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular for less fortunate

By 2030, the objective is to ensure universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces, particularly for disadvantaged communities in Suva City, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 11.7.

Data from official sources is not available, so here a proxy is presented: Share of population living in the high green area Figure 30.[21] Data from 2000 to 2025 (projected) shows a decrease (from 63% to 49%) that can be explained both with a reduction in the green areas, both with an increase in the total population.

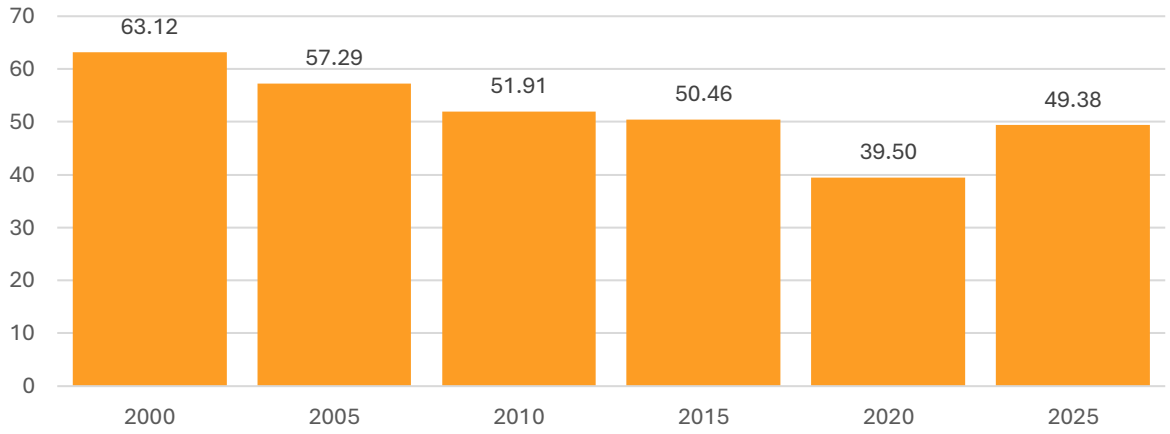


Figure 30: Share of the Urban Centre population living in area of high greenness (source: European Commission 2024, GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A))

The Suva City Council (SCC) currently manages an extensive network of parks encompassing over 47 hectares across the city. However, many neighborhood parks are underutilized and in need of improvement, an area the Council is actively addressing. The City of Suva Town Planning Scheme (1979) recommended the establishment of additional visual amenity parks on land deemed unsuitable for development due to steepness or other factors. Unfortunately, it has been noted that children's playgrounds are often situated on less desirable land, typically near creek valleys or on steep slopes (Figure 31, for the complete list with relative area, see Table 7 in annex).

[21] Data are extracted from the GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A) https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/download.php?ds=ucdb please note that this database uses the Urban Centre definition (DEGURBA), and the area of Suva might not match the city boundaries. Total population for the Suva Urban Centre is 242,909 estimated for 2025. Methodology: Sequence of masking and zonal statistics. 300m buffering of the built-up domain, masking of the built-up and population grid with 3 years average NDVI (greater equal than threshold); zonal statistics of the population in the obtained mask; ratio between zonal statistics population and urban centre population. Thresholds for high greenness are estimated by UN-Habitat for agro-ecological-zones, from a sample of 700 cities. Agro-ecological zone values are obtained by averaging observations within the cities in each zone. (Melchiorri Michele, 2024)

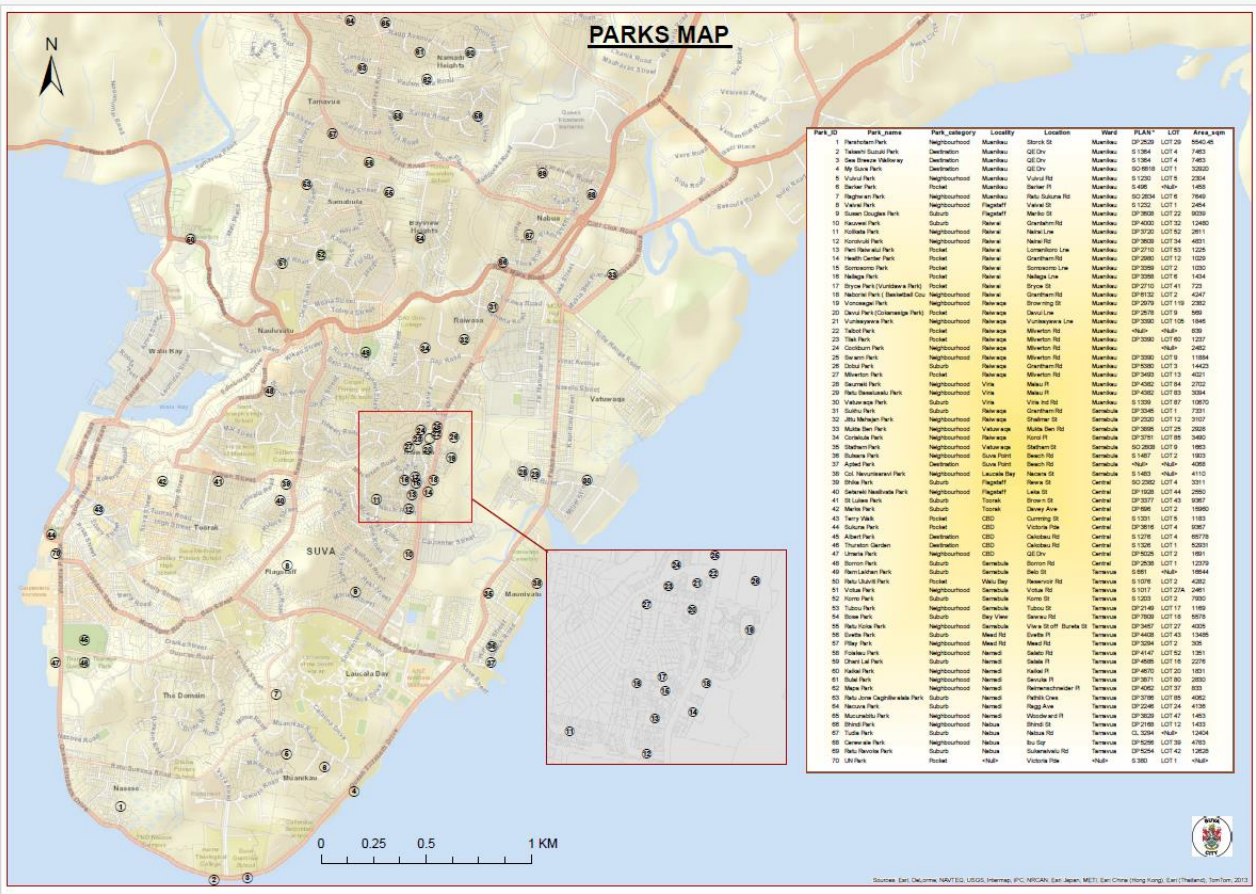


Figure 31: Suva Parks map (Source: SCC GIS data)

Suva's public parks are categorized into several types:

- Pocket Parks: Small amenity spaces providing immediate access for residents in high-density areas, totaling 14 parks with an area of 28,388 m².
- Suburb Parks: Larger parks that offer diverse recreational and social experiences for residents within a suburb, with 18 such parks covering 174,103 m².
- Neighborhood Parks: These parks serve as local recreation spots within walking distance for surrounding communities, numbering 32 and covering 97,922 m².
- Destination Parks: Designed to attract visitors from afar for specific purposes, there are 6 destination parks with a total area of 170,623 m².

In total, Suva boasts 70 parks, amounting to 471,036 m² of green space. SCC is committed to enhancing these areas through various initiatives. For example, the redevelopment of Ratu Sukuna Park (Figure 32) aims to improve landscaping and accessibility while ensuring inclusivity through the provision of facilities for disabled individuals. This project reflects a significant investment in creating a smart city environment that prioritizes safety and community engagement through features like CCTV cameras and improved lighting.

Figure 32: Ratu Sukuna Park. Source: SCC

Ratu Sukuna Park underwent an FJD 6.5 million redevelopment, for which it had been closed since 2022. It opened again in 2024. The redevelopment included a multipurpose, state-of-the-art podium, overlooking the harbor, and more seating for the public. It also has Wi-Fi connectivity and CCTV surveillance, making the park safer.

Transport

Another area that the SCC would like to see progress in is that of transport and transport planning. In the last two decades, the number of cars on Suva's roads increased dramatically, causing traffic congestions particularly during peak hours when workers are coming into the city for work in the morning and returning home in the afternoon. Despite some infrastructure work that had been carried out to widen several roads leading into Suva, the situation has not improved much as additional vehicles are added to Fiji's roads every week. The SCC is considering several measures including the establishment of a pedestrianized area in the city center, and a greater focus on public transport.

The Greater Suva Transportation Strategy 2015-2030 (Fiji Road Authority, 2014) lists several improvements that are needed to improve the public transport situation in the city. These include the need to introduce dedicated bus lanes; improvement of the bus terminals (specifically the Suva and Nausori bus terminals); the linking of traffic signals using a vehicle actuated system that should improve the management of the available road capacity; and intersection upgrades with 31 intersections having been identified needing improvement over the short term, predominantly on road safety grounds.

The Strategy refers to an analysis of crash data from the Fiji Police Force traffic division that revealed that pedestrians are over-represented among crashes. For this reason, it suggests that pedestrians be better protected through new pedestrian crossings, improved lighting and adequate footpaths. The need for proper footpaths could not be over-emphasized. As SCC aims for Suva to be a healthy city, it promotes physical exercise, and walking is an important element of this (many people do walk out of necessity in Suva). Proper footpaths are a necessity. Currently people risk twisting their ankles or having even worse injuries when walking on roads without footpaths or footpaths which are broken or uneven. This is an important element for making the city accessible to people living with disabilities. Wheelchair bound people and those who are visually impaired need proper footpaths to have better access to the city and services. In addition to this, proper bicycle lanes would also be imperative for a city that promotes healthy living and less dependence on cars for transport. Even the *City of Suva Town Planning Scheme* (1979) had observed that footpaths were an essential part of the city, particularly in the hillier parts as there is a very large pedestrian element in the population.

The Strategy also suggests that further planning be conducted to design a more efficient bus network and for road capacity upgrades to be budgeted for. Data collection was another important need as a basis for future decision making. Another observation regarded the need for improved enforcement of road rules, to improve traffic flow, reduce fatalities and benefit health, wellbeing, and the environment through lower polluting emissions.

Historical buildings

The status of its historical buildings is important for a discussion on Suva's livability. Schedule I (A) of the Town Planning Act determines that historic buildings and sites would be classified into 2 grades – Grade A and Grade B buildings. Grade A buildings are those of 'natural' importance because of their architectural and/or historical interest, and these shall not be demolished except in special circumstances wherein the demolition relates to an unsympathetic addition or extension which if demolished would go towards restoring the original building. Grade B buildings are those of local importance, and any proposal to demolish these buildings shall be classified as a conditional development.

Figure 33: Suva City Carnegie Library. Source SCC

SDG 13 – CLIMATE ACTION

SCC has identified the following SDG target as a priority:

- 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning
- 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Suva City has witnessed frequent extreme weather events in recent decades, including severe tropical cyclones, droughts, and excessive rainfall. These events impact sectors, neighbourhoods, and ecosystems. Growing population demand for land resources, coupled with climate-induced effects such as coastal erosion, inundation, saltwater intrusion, and intensified extreme events, contribute to arable land degradation, endangering future food security. Government ministry buildings in low-lying areas face risks due to the potential rise in sea levels, threatening administrative records stored on ground floors. Rapid urbanization has led to informal settlements on the city outskirts, increasing vulnerability to climate hazards in poor neighbourhoods lacking resilience. Critical coastal ecosystems in and around Suva, including intertidal zones, coral reefs, and mangrove forests, are significantly affected by climate-related disasters, sea surface temperature changes, and extensive shoreline development. These combined impacts pose a serious threat to vital natural systems, crucial for protecting coastlines and supporting the local economy.

No official data for this SDG can be retrieved by national or local authorities. Therefore, data elaborated by the European Commission are presented here. It has to be noticed that the area of reference is defined as Urban Centre and might not correspond to the legal boundaries. Information about the methodology, the sources and other details for the datasets visible in this tab can be found in (Melchiorri Michele, 2024).

Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability profile of Suva

A Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability Index (CORVI) for Suva was produced and published in March 2023 by the Stimson Center and the Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Shiiba, et al., 2023). CORVI is a decision support tool that compares a diverse range of ecological, financial, and political risks across 10 categories and nearly 100 indicators to produce a holistic coastal city risk profile.

The CORVI risk profile highlights Suva's high exposure to extreme climate-related events. The CORVI underscores notable climate risks affecting key industry sectors, neighborhoods, and the coastal environment, exacerbated by unintended consequences of urbanization. Major industries are the second highest scoring category, indicating that Fiji's major industries are vulnerable to climate and ocean risks. For example, an increase in frequency of natural hazards, including sea-level rise, coastal inundation, and tropical cyclones pose a high risk to the tourism and food industry. Medium-high category risk scores are distributed across Climate (7.24), Major Industries (6.73), Stability (6.03), Geology/Water (5.85), Ecosystems (5.71), and Economics (5.54).

Suva Risk Profile

CORVI Category Scores: **Low Risk** 1 - 2.5 **Medium Risk** 2.51 - 5 **Medium-High Risk** 5.01 - 7.5 **High Risk** 7.51 - 10

Ecological Risk		Financial Risk		Political Risk	
Climate	7.23	Major Industries	6.63	Stability	6.01
Geology/Water	5.88	Economics	5.61	Governance	5.19
Ecosystems	5.67	Infrastructure	5.07	Social/Demographics	4.80
Fisheries	4.29				

Table: Stimson Center

Figure 34: Suva risk profile (source: (Shiiba, et al., 2023))

Increased rainfall

For the last 50 years, Suva experienced a mean of 3,041 mm of rain annually (readings taken at the Laucala Bay weather station). These vary from month to month, with the highest rainfall months being March to May. The chart below demonstrates rainfall across the twelve months for the year 2020.

Heavy rainfall (forecast to increase with climate change) presents problems to Suva's roads, some of which become flooded. Suva City's stormwater system comprises a combination of piped and open channels. The SCC holds responsibility for:

- Drainage within SCC land.
- Public drains connecting properties, established under easements on private property.

While the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) has legislative responsibility for drainage from the road network, SCC maintains this network through a Memorandum of Understanding with FRA. The Ministry of Waterways and Environment (MWE) is responsible for drainage in rural areas and natural streams and rivers in urban areas.

Certain challenges in the network's performance arise, particularly in poorly drained low-lying areas, due to:

- New developments not adhering to the Building Code or occurring in unsuitable low-lying areas, with limited enforcement of requirements for developers to provide or upgrade primary drainage downstream.
- Limited maintenance funding and activity; and
- Historically under-sized assets that were not designed for the current urban form and rapid urban development.

The stormwater network lacks centralized mapping, and there is no comprehensive information on overall quantities or locations aside from the original subdivision plans. While FRA maps culverts and pipes crossing roads, adjacent road drains are not included. SCC intends to develop a Stormwater/Drainage Master Plan in coordination with the Ministry of Lands, FRA, and MWE.

Increased precipitation Figure 35, often leading to flooding of certain city areas, wreaks havoc on Fiji's roads and Suva's roads are no exception. For this reason, constant maintenance is required to fix potholes and address landslides, particularly during the rainy season or after particularly heavy rains and storms.

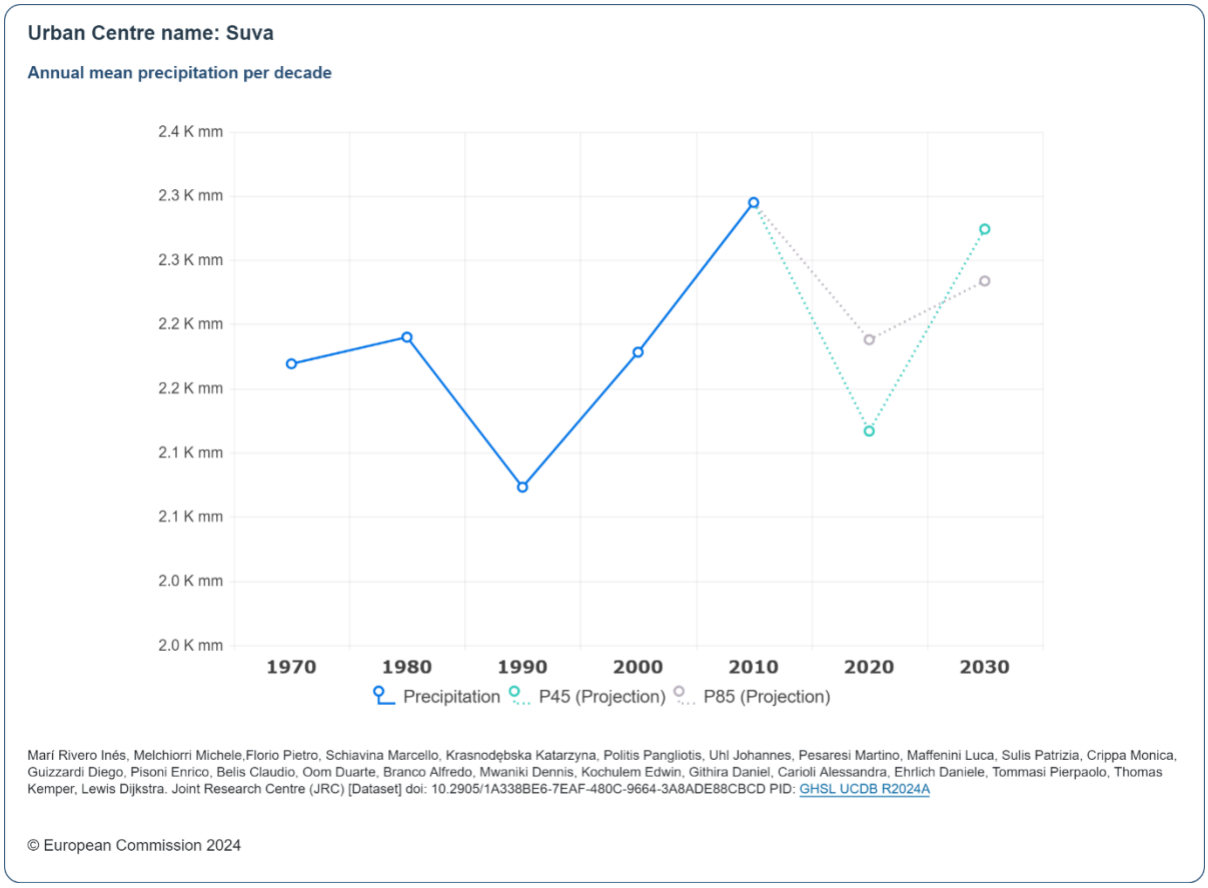


Figure 35: Annual mean precipitation per decade (Source: European Commission 2024)

Work on climate proofing several of Suva's roads is underway, with assistance from development partners such as the ADB and the World Bank.

An example of such roadworks is the work on Suva's Queen Elizabeth Drive, one of the most panoramic drives in Suva. The road has been upgraded and significantly raised. Upgrades in existing stormwater lines, subsoil drainage, flushing of existing cesspits and culverts and other improvements have been carried out.

Developing climate-risk-informed urban planning for Suva is imperative, given its exposure to severe climate-related disasters like tropical cyclones, droughts, intense rainfall, and landslides. The key drivers of these risks include increasingly intense rainfall events, rapid urban population growth, and the expansion of informal settlements. Urgently needed is a modern, climate-resilient GSUA urban plan at the metropolitan level, incorporating current and future risks and climate adaptation measures. This plan should integrate climate change projections into infrastructure and spatial planning, engaging stakeholders through broad consultations. Additionally, relocating certain government and business functions to less vulnerable locations on Viti Levu island is considered an effective adaptation measure.

Citizenship Action

During 2023, over 4,000 Suva citizens have taken part in 39 clean-up campaigns (figures until August). Sites targeted for these clean-ups included the foreshore area, popular parks in Suva and the Colonial War Memorial Hospital. SCC encourages this citizenship action and believes this contributes to raising pride in the city. However, an education campaign to discourage people from littering their city needs to accompany these citizenship clean-up efforts.

Figure 36: Clean-up campaigns in Suva

Clean-up campaigns have become a popular way for companies and social groups to express their social responsibility. Similarly, SCC will encourage citizenship action in another two important areas of environmental conservation – tree planting and biodiversity conservation.

13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

This target is measured with two indicators. For Indicator 13.2.2: Total greenhouse gas emissions per year data is not available, but here two proxy indicators are presented[22].

Figure 37 illustrate the Total CO_2 emissions in all sectors, from 1975 to 2022. Annual values are not available; however, data shows significant fluctuations over the years. There was a steady increase in CO2 emissions from 68,292.60 metric tons in 1975 to a peak of 196,316.06 metric tons in 2010. This growth may be attributed to urbanization, industrial development, and increased energy consumption in Suva during these years. After reaching its peak in 2010, emissions dropped significantly to 126,768.43 metric tons by 2015. This decline could indicate a shift towards more sustainable practices, improvements in energy efficiency, or

[22] Data are extracted from the GHS Urban Centre Database - Stats in the City (R2024A) https://human-settlement.emergency.copernicus.eu/download.php?ds=ucdb please note that this database uses a Urban Centre definition (DEGURBA) and the area of Suva might not match the city boundaries. Total population for the Suva Urban Centre is 242,909 estimated for 2025.

economic factors that reduced industrial output. From 2015 to 2020, emissions remained relatively stable around 126,421.47 metric tons, suggesting a period of stabilization in emissions levels. In 2022, there was a slight increase to 132,066.00 metric tons, which may reflect renewed economic activity or population growth post-pandemic.

The trend of increasing emissions followed by a decline and stabilization suggests that Suva City has experienced significant changes in its economic activities and energy consumption patterns over the decades. The peak in emissions during the late 2000s could be linked to rapid urban development and industrialization.

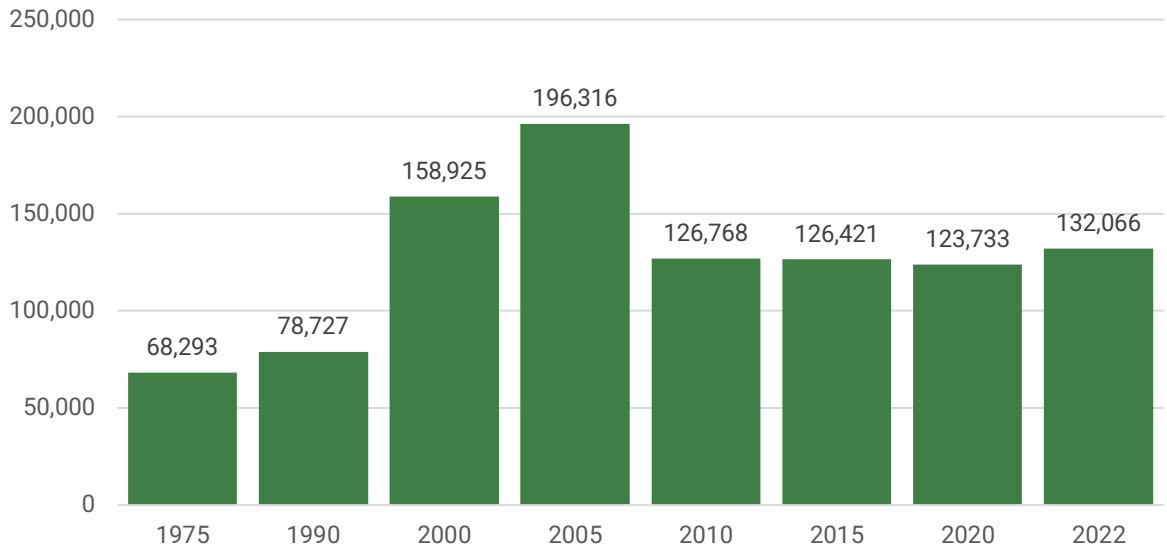


Figure 37: Total emission of CO_2 in ton (source: European Commission 2024)

Looking at the emission per capita, the CO_2 emissions per capita decreased from 0.5986 tons in 1975 to 0.5734 tons in 2020, suggesting a general downward trend over the long term. However, the data shows some fluctuations in between. The emissions per capita were lowest in 2000 (0.4937 tons) and highest in 2010 (0.9650 tons). After 2010, emissions began to decline again, reaching 0.5734 tons per capita by 2020, with a rebound in 2022. This reduction could be due to cleaner technologies, more efficient energy use, or a shift towards renewable energy sources.

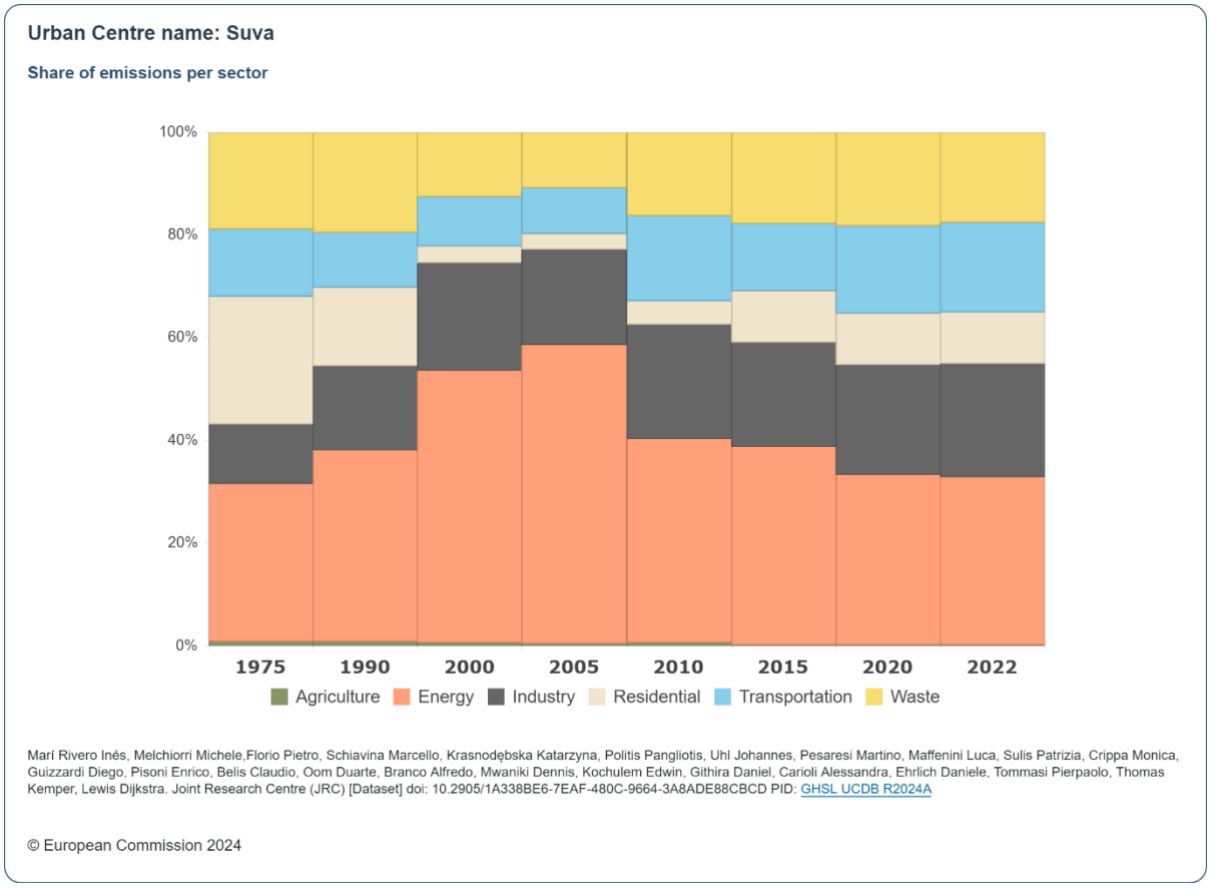


Figure 38: Share of emissions per sector 1975-2022 (Source: European Commission 2024)

Figure 38 illustrate a breakdown of emissions per energy sector from 1975 to 2022. The most significant changes occurred between 1990 and 2005, with major shifts in the energy and industrial sectors. The more recent years (2015-2022) show a trend toward more balanced distribution across sectors, suggesting possible implementation of emission reduction strategies or structural economic changes. This analysis indicates that Suva has undergone significant structural changes in its economy and energy usage patterns, with a general trend toward lower industrial emissions while maintaining relatively stable contributions from other sectors.

The energy sector has consistently been the largest contributor to emissions, showing significant growth from 1975 to 2005, where it peaked at approximately 55% of total emissions. **After 2005, there has been a gradual decline in its share, settling at around 35% by 2022.**

Industrial emissions demonstrate a bell-shaped trend over the period. They increased substantially from 1975 to 2005, reaching their peak around 2005, before declining steadily through to 2022.

Transportation's share has remained relatively stable throughout the period, typically accounting for 10-15% of total emissions. There was a slight decrease in the mid-2000s followed by a recovery in recent years.

Agriculture's contribution to emissions has been minimal throughout the period, showing a slight presence mainly in the earlier years and maintaining a very small share by 2022.

Residential emissions have fluctuated but maintained a relatively consistent share of around 10-15% throughout the period. There was a slight increase in the most recent years, related to growing urbanization.

The waste sector has consistently contributed 15-20% of total emissions. Its share has remained relatively stable with minor fluctuations over the years, despite the increase in population.

People living in densely packed housing in informal settlements across Suva face increased risk from fires and landslides and are considered the poorest, with limited access to resources and assets. As recently as January 2024, properties in Suva suffered from landslide damage and it is predicted that such incidences would increase as rainfall increases with climate change. These incidents have compelled the NDMO to issue SMS messages for people to contact the police or the National Fire Authority in cases of landslides.

As a rapidly developing city, Suva must address ecosystem degradation by integrating conservation and restoration into urban development along the coast. Stakeholders should explore a balanced mix of green-grey infrastructure and nature-based solutions, including blue carbon solutions, to reduce flood risk, restore critical ecosystems, and access climate finance.

To enhance climate resilience in Fiji's economy, particularly the tourism sector, measures should focus on promoting climate-resilient infrastructure through enforcing building codes, adopting LEED certification, and improving airports, roads, and resort facilities aligned with disaster risk management. Income diversification strategies can strengthen tourism sector resilience, and consideration should be given to diversifying the use of the Environmental and Climate Adaptation Levy on prescribed services for visitors to scale up climate-resilient tourism initiatives.

SDG 16 – PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SDG 16 aims to promote peace, justice, and strong institutions. Suva has an active civil society. Most national and international CSOs active in Fiji operate from Suva. Besides contributing to employment opportunities in important social sectors (particularly active in social, gender, environmental, ocean and climate change issues), this provides an opportunity for SCC to make use of their expertise and skills to improve the city in these important areas.

The last local government elections in Fiji were indeed held in 2005. After that, the local government system in Fiji was significantly restructured following the 2006 military coup. Since 2005, municipal councils (including those for cities like Suva and Lautoka, and others) have been run by appointed special administrators rather than elected representatives. These appointments were made by the government, and there have been no local government elections since then. The next local government elections are now expected to take place in 2025. The Fijian government has indicated its intention to hold elections for municipal councils, although the precise dates are still to be confirmed. This upcoming election will mark the return of elected municipal councils after nearly two decades of appointed administrators and will be a significant milestone in Fiji's democratic processes at the sub-national level.

The data provided here offers insights into homicide rates, manslaughter, and illicit arms control in Fiji. However, it's important to note that specific data for Suva city are not available in this context, as the data provided is for the entire nation of Fiji.

Homicide and Manslaughter Rates

The intentional homicide data for Fiji (Fiji Bureau of Statistics) in the most recent reporting period reveals a total of 34 homicide cases, broken down as follows: 23 male victims, 8 female victims. This data suggests that men are disproportionately affected by homicide in Fiji, as they account for about 68% of the victims. With Fiji's population in 2017 recorded at 919,019, the homicide rate can be estimated as approximately 3.7 homicides per 100,000 people. While this is a relatively low rate compared to global averages, it still indicates a significant issue for a country of Fiji's size. Additionally, the data highlights that men are disproportionately affected by homicide, with 68% of victims being male.

Further breakdown of homicide cases by age group shows:

- Infants: 1 case
- 18-24 years: 2 cases
- 25-31 years: 12 cases
- 32-38 years: 5 cases
- 39-45 years: 2 cases
- 46-52 years: 2 cases
- 60+ years: 5 cases

The highest number of homicides occurs in the 25-31 age range, representing 35% of all homicide cases. This suggests that young adults may be particularly vulnerable to violence in Fiji. However, with no regional breakdown, it's unclear whether Suva, as the largest urban center, contributes disproportionately to these statistics.

In addition, manslaughter cases arising from breaches of duty are reported as:

- 2 cases of manslaughter arising from a breach of duty; and
- 1 case of manslaughter from other causes.

These figures indicate that the issue of manslaughter, although present, is less common than intentional homicide.

Arms Control and Illicit Arms

Data on arms and ammunition control under the Arms and Ammunition Act of 2003 (Parliament of Fiji, 2003) from August 2022 to July 2023 shows some key violations, which reflect ongoing challenges in controlling illicit firearms and ammunition:

- Failure to declare arms and ammunition to customs officers: 1 case
- Possession of arms or ammunition without a license: 1 case
- Importing ammunition without a license: 1 case

While the total number of cases is relatively low, this points to a persistent issue in Fiji concerning the illegal importation, possession, and failure to properly declare firearms and

ammunition. The presence of unlicensed firearms and ammunition, if widespread, could contribute to violence, particularly homicides, in the country.

Homicide Rates: The homicide rate in Fiji, while showing a significant number of cases, is not disaggregated by geographic location, and there is no available data for Suva specifically. The data indicates that males, particularly in the 25-31 age range, are the most affected.

Manslaughter: Manslaughter cases, though fewer in number, reflect ongoing issues of violence resulting from breaches of duty or accidents.

Illicit Arms: The presence of illegal firearms and ammunition, while limited in number, represents a security risk, and ongoing enforcement challenges in controlling arms remain.

Suva's Data Gaps: Although the data provided offers a national perspective, specific figures for Suva city are missing, which makes it difficult to assess how the capital city fares in comparison to other parts of Fiji. Suva, being the most populous and economically significant area in Fiji, may face unique challenges related to violence, crime, and illicit arms that are not captured by the national figures alone. Local law enforcement efforts, as well as community-based initiatives to reduce violence and improve security, are essential for addressing these challenges at the city level.

POLICY AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

4. Policy and enabling environment

4.1 Alignment with National Government on SDG Implementation

There are obvious linkages between Fiji's 2023 Voluntary National Review[23] and Suva City's VLR. Suva, though the most important city for Fiji as its capital, is still a microcosm of Fiji as a nation. They of course deal with the same SDGs, even if the Suva VLR has a narrower focus, opting to focus more on those SDGs that the SCC and city stakeholders found to be more relevant. Importantly, progress made in the achievement of the SDGs at the national level contributes to progress at the local level and the opposite is also true - progress made at the local level contributes to progress in the SDGs at the national level. The SCC is very cognizant of this fact and is committed that through its work, it contributes to the SDG progress in Suva and thus makes its contribution to the SDGs at the national level. An obvious distinction between the two, is that the VLR deals strictly with an urban environment, whereas Fiji consists mostly of rural areas and outer islands (over 100 of Fiji's over 300 islands are inhabited), noting however the growth in the ratio of the urban-based population. The kind of developments needed to address SDGs at the different geographical locations would vary, as would also costs. The advantages of an urban environment are that one could offer services to citizens at a lower per capita cost.

The realization of the SDGs requires the coordination of actions of different levels of government. In most cases, the achievement of specific targets in each national context depends on the aggregation of subnational, often local, outcomes, making coherent action a necessity. Targets related to pollution reduction, waste management, public transport use and greenhouse gas emissions are typical examples that require coordination across government levels. In addition, gains in one SDG could contribute to gains in other SDGs.

There were several government policies and legislations that guided the work of the SCC. Legislation included the Fiji constitution as well as laws such as the Local Government Act, the Building Act and the National Building Code, Occupational Health and Safety at Work Act, the Land Transport Act, the Environment Management Act, the Public Health Act, the Business License By-Law. Important national policy documents included Fiji’s National Development Plan, the National Gender Policy, the National Climate Change Policy and the Nationally Determined Contributions Report.

The SCC is committed to making a greater impact through targeted communication efforts. There are several communication needs in a number of areas - for this reason the SCC would need to develop a comprehensive communication strategy that would support SCC's planned

[23] https://hlpf.un.org/countries/fiji/voluntary-national-reviews-2023

Suva Development Plan. Citizen education through the implementation of a robust communication strategy is paramount for building an informed and responsible citizenry.

4.2 Suva's Sustainability Efforts

The SCC has only recently started considering SDGs in its planning and reporting process and would be initiating a process to capture and report on its contribution to Fiji's progress on the SDGs. In order to do so, the SCC plans to employ additional human resource in areas that are of particular importance to the council.

The SCC is also keen to improve its IT platforms. Improved online services would reduce the need for residents to visit the SCC offices and at the same time reduce traffic on Suva's roads, reduce transport costs to residents, reduce SCC's costs on staff (and releasing staff to focus on other tasks), and give better access to people with disabilities.

SCC has already demonstrated that it is keen in improving its sustainability efforts through its composting program. The SCC appreciates that these sustainability initiatives would also reduce costs dedicated to waste collection and management.

4.3 Institutional Mechanisms

An important development in the short-term is the re-introduction in Fiji of municipal elections. These are planned for August 2024, and this would be a return to democratic representation in Fiji's municipal bodies after a lapse of 18 years. The last municipal elections were held in 2005. Following the 2006 coup, municipal bodies were run by appointed administrators.

Municipal elections

On 31st January 2023, Fiji's Cabinet of Ministers approved the process to be adopted to facilitate the election of municipal councillors for town and city councils, including Suva. A working group was established to prepare a detailed plan and a budget for these elections. The Working Group would be expected to formulate recommendations on the municipal boundaries, the demarcation of wards for each municipality, the number of councillors for each Municipal Council, and the necessary amendments to existing legislation. A bill to amend the Local Government Act 1972 is currently in draft and being discussed. Municipal elections will bring back democratic representation but will also require programmes of support for elected officials, following such a long absence of municipal elections. Similarly, after such a long lapse of local elections, citizens would have to be again sensitized on the importance of local democracy and encouraged to participate. Turnout in local elections has never matched those of national elections and therefore a program of citizen sensitization on local elections would also be required. Such a program would help educate citizens on the importance of their participation in local elections as voters or candidates, the modes of participation, the procedure to become eligible for voting and to cast their vote, and the ways to assess the poll-

worthiness of a candidate. With elections, it is expected that municipal bodies would be more responsive.

Staff capacity and retention

The SCC wants to make improvements to its staff capacity and improve its staff retention. It also needs to invest in attracting well-qualified staff to fill new positions and positions that become vacant.

4.4 Suva's Financial Overview

SCC has two main sources of income - the collection of property rates and payments collected from the lease of SCC properties. The earnings from these two income streams are not sufficient to meet the aspirations reflected in this VLR. SCC needs to both add its revenue streams as well as reduce its expenditure, freeing funds that could be used for sustainability efforts. The city has 11,389 ratable properties.

Figure 39: Civic Towers is one of SCC's properties, overlooking the Suva Olympic Pool. Source: SCC

4.5 Suva's Continued Challenges

Most of Suva's current challenges will continue. Many of these can only be addressed with the right levels of investment. Infrastructural problems, particularly, will need high levels of investment that the city does not currently have access to. The income that SCC makes from rental of its properties and from the collection of city rates are sufficient to finance ongoing expenses but would not be sufficient to finance the capital costs needed to address some of the city's perennial problems.

As highlighted in the SDG discussions, Suva requires significant capital to tackle its water-related issues. With Suva's growing population and Citizens and residents alike want to be living in a beautiful and liveable city. Unfortunately, the city can look rather drab and dreary. This is not uncommon for cities in tropical countries, as the climate necessitates even greater efforts to maintain buildings and properties in a well-maintained condition. This needs to be reflected in asset management plans that still need to be developed for Suva.

FACING THE CHALLENGES AND MOVING FORWARD

5. Facing the challenges and moving forward

Urban population growth is fuelled by natural population increase, land conversion and urban expansion as well as migration. Push factors like under-employment, rural poverty, and poor agricultural and local environmental conditions, along with pull factors such as better education, access to health services and job opportunities, drive this migration. This has resulted in the spread of informal and unplanned settlements with inadequate infrastructure and housing, and a lack of formal tenure rights.

The analysis highlights the local government's role in implementing the SDGs at the grassroots level. The Local Government Act emphasizes promoting health, welfare, and convenience of inhabitants. To advance SDG implementation, recommendations include establishing a Local SDG SCC unit, securing resource support for financing and administration, partnering for a 5-year development plan, reengineering Council systems, and preparing financing papers aligned with SDGs. Additionally, professional consultants in city planning, structural engineering, and architecture are proposed to support these efforts.

The analysis including assessments has revealed the Councils responsibility to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals at Local level. The Local Government Act which had been in place as an Ordinance from early 1920's states that "*A Council shall promote the Health, Welfare and Convenience of its inhabitants and to protect the assets thereof…*".

As a way forward to progress implementation, the following steps have been recommended:

1. The establishment of a Local SDG SCC unit to progress work. Resource support is required for financing, administration and partnership support including the development of a 10-year development plan, reengineering Council systems and processes and preparing financing papers for sustainable City Council projects aligned with SDGs.
2. The support of professional consultants in the areas of City Planning support (2 years) and professional Structural and Engineer short term support (6 months) and professional Architect support (6 months).

In the short term it is suggested that an SDG team be established within SCC, that would work with the Ministry of Finance's SDG Unit. The team would focus on addressing the SDGs through local action and ensure integration of the SDGs in all the work of the Council. The SDG team would manage the many partnerships that would be needed around each of the SDGs. It would also be responsible for securing funding for these efforts, either through donor support or by working together with the private sector.

A Smart City - What is needed?

A smart city is a highly connected place where intelligent decision-making enhances infrastructural efficiencies, economic growth, good governance, sustainability and greater safety and security to enhance the quality of life of citizens. For the Suva City Council, a people centered Smart City aims at improving the lives of people living within its boundary, and nearby communities. The primary guiding elements that should be considered are:

Smart Infrastructure

SCC needs to utilise technology and creativity to develop a sustainable and effective urban setting. Establishing a smart infrastructure that acts as the backbone of a smart city is one of the key elements in creating a smart city. Smart infrastructure integrates cutting-edge technology, sensors, and data analytics into existing infrastructure to increase its effectiveness, safety, and sustainability.

In addition, the Council's building and planning approval processes used by the Engineering Division shall include guidelines which will ensure that a high level of infrastructure sustainability and building integrity are maintained within Suva city.

Open Data & Interconnectivity

Suva will need essential elements such as connectivity and open data. Open data enables people, companies, and government organisations to create new services and enhance current ones, fostering openness, cooperation, and innovation. On the other hand, interconnectivity enables systems to interact and exchange data, enabling smart city technologies to operate in unison. By enabling various technologies to communicate with each other, Suva can improve its transportation systems, energy efficiency, increase public safety, and provide various other benefits to its stakeholders and residents.

SCC needs integrated a data collection system and analysis technical support. The Council needs this robust system to support the SDG monitoring, be it financing or target implementation progress. SCC's digital platforms must be upgraded to spearhead the need for decisions to be data driven. The Council has a 5 Year strategic IT Transformational Plan in place that could be the basis upon which the integration may be built.

Smart Governance & Citizen Engagement

SCC's vision for a smart city must have smart government and public involvement. Relevant technology will be used to enhance government operations and decision-making. At the same time, citizen engagement ensures that residents have a say in the creation and execution of smart city programs. To guarantee that smart city programmes are adapted to the requirements and preferences of local communities, smart governance and citizen participation are crucial since they assist in establishing trust and confidence among residents.

SCC to identify informal sectors that can be surveyed to provide socio economic baseline, which could help the Council better understand the informal sector. Collaboration with external donors may be sorted to fund such initiative. This should be done so that citizen are timely and well informed about the Council's activities that could impact their lives. Citizens will be included to give them a sense of being heard and belongingness to Suva.

Smart Mobility & Transportation

Suva city must have intelligent mobility and transit. To promote sustainability and lower carbon emissions, SCC shall incorporate technology to increase mobility, decrease congestion, and improve transportation efficiency. Intelligent traffic management systems, which utilise data and predictive analytics to improve traffic flow, smart parking systems, which use sensors and data to assist drivers in discovering available parking spots; and autonomous cars are a few examples of smart mobility and transportation solutions.

Traffic and transport specialization engineers can be consulted to provide a traffic design and management plan. The last one, which was part of the Suva Town Planning Scheme was made in 1979.

Smart Environment & Sustainability

The Council have been and will continue to promote sustainability. A sustainable environment uses data and technology to encourage sustainable behaviours and lessen environmental consequences while maintaining liveable and attractive cities for residents. Further, SCC shall employ smart waste management systems that use sensors and data to optimize collection and reduce waste, and green public spaces that promote biodiversity and offer recreational opportunities for citizens.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Suva City Council will encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. This involves actively encouraging and providing support for startups and concepts that aim to tackle urban challenges and enhance the overall quality of life.

These elements are needed to create a robust and well-functioning people-centered smart city. Additionally, SCC considers it necessary to create a resilient city that can withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Suva's socio-economic and cultural aspects are expected to be largely impacted by climate-related risks in coming years. The strategy of the Suva City Council in addressing climate change is designed to achieve both mitigation and adaptation outcomes, to improve the city and its residents' resilience.

Suva's adaptation efforts are mostly aimed at addressing sea-level rise, extreme weather events, coastal inundation, and ecosystem degradation. As a coastal city, Suva would be highly impacted by these climate-induced events, as the impacts of climate change worsen in the coming years and decades. In the face of these threats, creating a resilient city that can withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change and promote sustainable development

should be guided by a holistic approach, encompassing stakeholders from the government, the private sector, civil society organizations, and international institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Recommendations

This report shall be used as a base to commence acceleration of SDGs within Suva City. The following recommendations aim to create a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable city for all residents of Suva while aligning with global commitments to the SDGs.

Establish an SDG implementation committee

Finalize the Comprehensive Five-Year Development Plan

Prioritize the City Council Farmers Market and Bus Station Project

Promote Sustainable Transportation Initiatives

Enhance access to essential services

Foster community engagement in cultural preservation

Implement a research and development unit

Initiate budget for sustainable development

Establish an SDG Implementation Committee

The Suva City Council (SCC) should form a dedicated SDG Implementation Committee responsible for overseeing the integration of SDGs into local policies and initiatives. This committee will ensure accountability and facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, and private sector partners. Quarterly reports should be submitted to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to track progress and share outcomes.

Finalize the Comprehensive Five-Year Development Plan

Finalize the five-year strategic plan that prioritizes sustainable urban development, incorporating goals related to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity. This plan should include specific targets for improving infrastructure, enhancing public services, and promoting community engagement in decision-making processes. This plan will prioritize projects that align with SDG objectives, focusing on infrastructure development, public services enhancement, and community resilience. Engaging with development partners will be crucial to secure necessary funding and technical assistance.

Prioritize the City Council Farmers Market and Bus Station Project

The City Council Farmers Market and Bus Station project should be designated as a priority initiative due to its significant potential impact on SDG 8 implementation. The SCC

should explore external funding avenues to support this project, which aims to improve local food accessibility, promote sustainable transportation, and enhance community engagement.

Promote Sustainable Transportation Initiatives

Implement policies that encourage the use of electric vehicles (EVs) and develop infrastructure for sustainable transport options. This includes expanding public transport networks, creating pedestrian-friendly zones, and establishing bike lanes to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality in Suva.

Enhance Access to Essential Services

Ensure that all residents have equitable access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing. This can be achieved by upgrading informal settlements, providing affordable housing options, and implementing programs that support vulnerable populations, including those who are physically challenged.

Foster Community Engagement in Cultural Preservation

Actively involve local communities in cultural events and heritage preservation initiatives. By supporting local arts, festivals, and educational programs, the SCC can strengthen community ties and enhance cultural awareness, making Suva a vibrant hub for cultural exchange in the Pacific.

Implement a Research and Development Unit

Establish a Research and Development Unit within the SCC to continuously assess city programs and policies related to SDG implementation. This unit will work in partnership with development organizations to identify innovative solutions and best practices that can be applied in Suva, ensuring that local strategies are informed by global standards and successful case studies.

Budgeting for Sustainable Development

The SCC's budgeting process is intricately linked to its strategic objectives. By prioritizing funding for projects that align with the VLR findings, including climate finance, the council can effectively allocate resources towards initiatives that promote sustainable development. This includes investment in infrastructure that supports clean transport options, enhances public safety, and improves access to essential services.

ANNEXES

Annexes

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List of Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAPEX	capital expenditures
CBD	Central Business District
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COVID	COronaVIrus Disease of 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EV	Electric Vehicle
FDB	Fiji Development Bank
GCOM	Global Covenant of Mayors

GSA	Great Suva Area
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSCTF	Healthy Suva City Task Force
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MVA	Manufacturing Value Added
SCC	Suva City Council
SWM	Solid Waste Management
USD	US Dollar
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Table 5: Key Figures

Variables	
Population	97,501(2021)
Area	2,624 Hectares
Suva Ward	2,515 Houses
Muanikau Ward	3,165 Houses
Samabula Ward	4,510 Houses
Tamavua Ward	6,634 Houses
Suva Peri-Urban	2,874 Houses
Commercial properties	923
Industrial Properties	490
Residential Properties	9,423
Civic Properties	259
Special Properties (Educational & Others)	314
Informal Settlements	27 [2,665 households]

Table 6: Stakeholders invited to the workshop

Stakeholder	Organization
Government	Bureau of Statistics Fiji
	Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation
	Ministry of Health & Medical Services (Fiji)
	Ministry of Employment, Productivity & Industrial Relation
	Ministry of Environment and Waterways
	Water Authority of Fiji
	Ministry of Local Government
	Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism & Transport
	Ministry of Economy
	Ministry of Information/Telecommunications
	Fiji Chamber of Commerce & Industry
	Fiji Competition and Commerce Commission
	Fiji Elections Office
	Ministry of Housing & Community Development
	Nausori Town Council
	Lami Town Council
	Nasinu Town Council
	Housing Authority of Fiji
	Fiji National Disaster Management Office
	Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources
	Fiji Police Force

Development partners	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
	UN Resident Coordination for Fiji (to invite all interested UN agencies, funds and programmes)
	Embassy of Australia
	Fiji Development Bank
	University of the South Pacific
	Fiji National University
	Fiji School of Medicine
	Fiji School of Nursing
	Habitat for Humanity (Fiji)
	Embassy of New Zealand
CSO	Pacific Islands of Non-Government Organization (PIANGO)
Women	The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre" (FWCC)
	Women Entrepreneurs Business Council (WEBC)
	Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG)
	International Women's Association (IWA)
	Methodist Women's Fellowship Department
	Fiji Muslim Women's League (FMWL)
	Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Wing
	Rotuma Women's Association
	Salvation Army Women's Ministry
Grassroots	The Pacific Islands Association
	Suva Rotary Club
	Foundation for the Peoples of South Pacific International
	Counterstroke Fiji
	Informal Settlement Representatives
	Revitilizing Informal Settlements and their Environment (RISE)
	Community Rehabilitation Programme
	The Fiji Redcross Society
	Fiji Council of Churches
	Pacific Theological College
	Caritas Archdiocese of Suva, Fiji
	FEMLINK Pacific
	Fiji Disabled Peoples Association
Youth	YWCA - Young Women's Christian Organization
	Fiji Girl Guides Association (FGGA)
Business	NEWWORLD IGA (Suva City, Central)
	Suva Retailers Association
	Fiji Buses Operators Association

	Fiji Taxi Association
	South Pacific Business Development (SPBD)
	Wood & Jepsen
	Consumer Council of Fiji
	Marine Industrial & Structural Engineering
Local Markets Association	Suva United Market Vendors Association

Table 7: Suva Parks and their area, by category (Source: SSC)

Pocket	Neighborhood	Suburb	Destination
Barker, 1,458 m^2	Parshotam, 5,540 m^2	Susan Douglas, 9,039 m^2	Takashi Suzuki, 7,463 m^2
Peni Raiwalui, 1,225 m2	Vuivui, 2,304 m2	Kauvesi, 12,480 m2	Sea Breeze Walkway, 7,463 m2
Health Centre 1,029 m2	Raghwan, 7,649 m2	Dobui, 14,423 m2	My Suva Park, 32,920 m2
Somosomo, 1,030 m2	Vaivai, 2,454 m2	Vatuwaqa, 10,670 m2	Apted Park, 4,068 m2
Nailaga, 1,434 m2	Kolikata, 2,611 m2	Sukhu, 7,331 m2	Albert Park, 65,778 m2
Bryce (Vunidawa), 723m2	Koroivuki, 4,831 m2	Bhika, 3,311 m2	Thurston Garden, 52,931 m2
Davui, 569 m2	Naborisi, 4,247 m2	St Lukes, 9,367 m2	
Talbot, 830 m2	Vonosagai, 2,382 m2	Marks, 15,960 m2	
Tilak, 1,237 m2	Vunisayawa, 1,846 m2	Borron, 12,379 m2	
Milverton, 4,021 m2	Cockburn, 2,482 m2	Ram Lakhan, 16,644 m2	
Terry Walk, 1,183 m2	Swann, 11,884 m2	Komo, 7,930 m2	
Sukuna, 9,367 m2	Saumaki, 2,702 m2	Bose, 5,578 m2	
Ratu Uluiviti, 4,282 m2	Ratu Bausalusalu, 3,094 m2	Evetts, 13,485 m2	
UN Park	Jittu Mahajan, 3,107 m2	Dhani Lal, 2,276 m2	
	Mukta Ben, 2,928 m2	Ratu Jone Caginilawalala, 4,062 m2	
	Coriakula, 3,490 m2	Nacuva, 4,136 m2	
	Statham, 1,663 m2	Tudia, 12,404 m2	
	Bulsara, 1,903 m2	Ratu Ravoka, 12,628 m2	
	Col. Navunisaravi, 4,110 m2		
	Setareki Nasilivata, 2,550 m2		
	Umaria, 1,691 m2		
	Votua, 2,461 m2		
	Tubou, 1,169 m2		
	Ratu Koka, 4,005 m2		
	Pillay, 305 m2		
	Foiakau, 1,351 m2		
	Kaikai, 1,831 m2		
	Bulai, 2,830 m2		

	Mapa, 833 m2		
	Mucunabitu, 1,453 m2		
	Bhindi, 1,433 m2		
	Cerewale, 4,783 m2		

The Suva City Voluntary Local Review (VLR) 2025 represents a significant milestone for Suva, being the first of its kind in Fiji and the Pacific Islands. This review is a collaborative effort supported by the Suva City Council (SCC), ESCAP, and the Pacific Urban Partnership, aimed at aligning local strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The VLR focuses on eight of the seventeen SDGs, including Goals 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).