



## **FIJI COUNTRY REPORT TO** **TO 18<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH PACIFIC NURSES FORUM**

### **Introduction :**

Fiji Nursing Association now continue to face challenges in Fiji but we are slowly getting back to normality as we have a new Minister and a new Permanent Secretary for Health.

Hopefully, there will be improvement in the Ministry of Health System. Nursing members of the organization have been at the forefront of fighting for improved employment rights and recognition of nurses in Fiji.

The FNA is trying to get back its strong and a vocal industrial advocate for nurses and women in employment in general and uses its affiliation to the Public Service International (PSI) as a leverage. As the trade union tradition goes, many senior members had fought for many of the benefits and working conditions that are enjoyed today by young nurses.

Money, unpopularity, victimization , frustration and finally calling quits or out migration is the cost of getting a longer term satisfaction , employment condition negotiated through the workers unions.

The year 2016 started off with a lot of anxiety to the association as doctors have received a huge pay rise and the nurses are currently working on their Fair Pay.

### **Nursing Workforce :**

The current nursing workforce in Fiji is estimated to be 2,848 plus including those in the private sector. At operational level, hospital nurses say that the number is never enough for ensuring quality nursing care.

In Public Health settings, community health nurses stretched themselves in trying to meet the demands of the public when more school children and babies have been immunized; also there is the public health cost of poverty on the population, due to high cost of living as all these require more compassion and understanding of our nurses.

In 2010, the Fiji government had approved the employment of all graduates from the Fiji National University and those from the TISI Sangam School of Nursing for the next five years. This move was welcomed as it at least will cover the short of manpower to provide nursing services, but also yet to re-engage the retired nurses as to continue to utilize their experiences in mentoring the young nurses as to encourage quality care.

### **Membership :**

The FNA membership is 1400 from within the Ministry of Health, Fiji National University, Private Hospital and those that work in the security forces.

### **Nursing Education :**

The College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, under the Fiji National University is responsible for the current basic trainings in nursing. The current courses undertaken are Bachelors in Nursing Degree and Post Graduate Diplomas in Public Health, Midwifery, Mental Health, Reproductive Health and Management for middle managers. Bachelor in Public Health Nursing has also been undertaken in the last four years and advanced Diploma in Nursing Practice which has been in Fiji for a while.

### **Nursing Division in Fiji :**

#### **Current Issues :**

1. Nursing Decree 2011
2. Nursing Regulation
3. Nursing Annual Licensing
4. Nursing Specialization
5. Scope of Practice

### **Nursing Specialization (strengthen Professional Capacity) :**

As the nurses are specialized into different nursing categories, there are more challenges required to be addressed in professional development through trainings provided by the Fiji Nursing Association and the College of Nursing under the Nursing Council of the Ministry of Health.

## **The Public Sector Reforms and Nursing Division :**

The government of the day continued with the Public Service Reforms. The economic situation was to cut costs. The focus to reduce the public workforce was at the top of the agenda. Reduction of this compulsory retirement age from 60 years to 55 years in 2009 is still a big blow for many senior members of the civil service more so in essential services.

Nurses were also happy with some changes. For a long time, many nurses had been acting in higher positions without being promoted and now all those positions are confirmed.

## **Nursing Leadership and Challenges :**

In Fiji, alike in other parts of the world, nurses have been the cornerstone towards the achievements of SDGs. Nurses have played a significant role in the coordination and implementation of various action plans which target the achievement of the SDGs. Nursing as a profession has been instrumental in shaping and delivering sustainable goals that are aimed at bringing about positive health outcomes beyond 2018.

Fiji has made some improvement in narrowing the gaps in the health indicator. Without the full support of government, it would be difficult to achieve the necessary target in goals 4, 5 and 6, if nurses are not given fair employment conditions and a living wage or even given incentives to better performance.

## **Conclusion :**

The Association continued to pursue other strategies to be explored such as that of mentoring of younger nurses, leadership training and research for evidence-based practice.

The organization will continue to work with government and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen the country's health system and create the conditions necessary to maximize the contribution of nurses in Fiji and the world.

**Fiji Nursing Association  
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