

MEDIA STATEMENT

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FUND ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO ITS HOUSING WITHDRAWAL POLICY

The Fiji National Provident Fund has announced changes to its Housing Assistance withdrawal policies as it continues to meet members' housing needs and to safeguard their interests and retirement savings.

The revised policy aims to secure members' interests through loan/mortgage arrangements that ranks their interest ahead of the commercial lenders. It has also been designed to reduce the processing time for applications; whilst requiring stringent documentation evidence from members.

In terms of Village Housing, the policy has been broadened to include detailed qualifying conditions for various assistance pertaining to the Village Housing scheme. These include a minimum housing eligibility requirement of \$8,000 for the construction of a new home and \$5000 for upgrading and extension.

The Fund's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Aisake Taito, said the changes are an affirmation of the Board's plans of realigning the Fund's services back to its core function. "Our members' interests remain paramount in this review," he added.

"The Board needs to ensure the FNPf conforms to its role despite the challenges that arise," Mr Taito said.

He said that withdrawal figures have reduced significantly since the last review of the partial withdrawal policy in April this year.

"This is a positive indication that members are taking heed of our advice to save their funds.

"It is also only fair on all stakeholders to adhere to the primary purposes for which FNPf was established," Mr. Taito added.

He stressed of warnings by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the International Labour Organization, who conducted actuarial valuations on the Fund, to guard against excessive withdrawals by members as this was a deviation from FNPf's core function.

"As such, the FNPf policies will continually be reviewed through the period of our Strategic Plan timeframe," Mr Taito said.

The Housing Assistance policy change comes into effect as of Monday, November 02, 2009.

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