



### Keeping Our Border Safe and Secure

Protecting our Borders –land, air and sea from illicit activities such as smuggling, human trafficking and illegal trading is vital to our homeland security, as well as economic prosperity. The Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) is committed towards border security. The Service continues to collaborate with other border agencies to strengthen border management.

One such initiative is the Coastal Watch Program (CWP). CWP adopts a multi stakeholder approach, including agencies such as the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF), Provincial Offices, iTaukei Affairs, Fiji Police Force, Fiji Navy, etc. and FRCS to address border control issues. This programme also involves strategic stakeholders, NGO's, international partners and the Fijian communities as security and economic prosperity is everyone's business.

#### Engaging with Maritime Communities

FRCS in collaboration with BAF, Fiji Navy, Fiji Police Force, iTaukei Affairs Board and Nature Fiji embarked on a three (3) week coastal watch programme to some of the remotest maritime coastline villages and settlements in the Province of Cakaudrove in Vanualevu. In the first week of the coastal watch awareness program – the team visited 19 villages including Yasawa, Nagasauva, Tawake, Wainigadru, Korotasere, Nailou, Karoko, Vunikura, Loa, Sese, Naboutini, Saqani, Lakeba, Buca, Tukavesi, Koroivonu, Kanakana, Nawi and Dakuniba and created awareness on a number of pertinent issues. Some of these issues included:

- I. **Border security** - the need for coordinated border management and effective collaboration between members of the communities and law enforcement agencies towards reporting any suspicious activities along the maritime coastal areas. Our coastlines are part of Fiji's border, and criminals can use them to bring drugs into our country or conduct other illegal activities. Maritime communities need to be alert to the signs of cross-border crime and report any suspicious activities to FRCS and/or partner law enforcement agencies who were part of this coastal watch programme.
- II. **Invasive Alien Species** - the need to secure and conserve our biodiversity and endangered species by preventing introduction of invasive alien species as these are a major threat to biodiversity and ecosystems.
- III. **Yacht clearance** – yachts and leisure craft need a full clearance to sail freely in Fiji waters.
- IV. **Border patrol** - search and rescue processes by the Fiji Navy.

Surveillance in coastal communities and seas are an ongoing challenge for FRCS and partner law enforcement agencies; however, with the Coastal Watch Program we have partnered with coastal villages/settlements to assist us in monitoring and reporting illegal or suspicious activities along our shores and shorelines.

Villages visited in Cakaudrove thus far collectively agreed to collaborate with the law enforcement agencies to protect our borders.

## **How can people help?**

Local knowledge makes members of maritime and coastal communities ideally placed to identify any unusual or suspicious activities. They can play a vital role in helping us protect our communities from international crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, extremism, smuggling and other illegal activities.

Some of the things to look out for includes:

- Exotic birds, animal and plant smuggling
- Unusual aircraft movement or activity on remote disused airstrips
- Meeting at sea or signaling to the shore
- Attempting to land in remote or unusual locations
- Vessels and other crafts operating at night without lights
- Ships signaling ashore or being met by small boats
- Two vessels transferring things between them at sea
- Unusual objects floating at sea or found underwater

All Fijians have a responsibility to help Fiji grow and report any illegal/criminal activities at our borders.

Members of the public can report what they have seen and or suspect through this toll-free line 1539 which is with Fiji Navy or through any of these mobile numbers – 9060710, 9905141, 9905113, 9904091 and 99225764.

For more information or assistance please email us on [info@frcs.org.fj](mailto:info@frcs.org.fj).  
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