



MINISTRY OF WATERWAYS

Press Release

318 TOORAK ROAD, BALI TOWER, SUVA

P O BOX 1292, SUVA

Phone: (679) 3383155 Fax: (679) 338354 Email: waterwaysfiji@gmail.com

October 2021

Desilting Works Commissioned for Nawaka River

Efforts to safeguard the Nawaka community from flooding was boosted today following the commissioning of desilting works at two retention dams along the Nawaka River.

The desilting works at the two Nawaka Dams are also expected to mitigate flooding for Nadi Town and communities living along the river.

A total of 1,000m of river desilting works will be undertaken by the Ministry of Waterways at the two dams under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement with Selva Earth Works & Nagaga Trust.

While commissioning the desilting works at Vatutu village in Nawaka today, Minister for Agriculture, Waterways and Environment Hon. Dr. Mahendra Reddy said that these desilting works would ease the water flow of the river and its adjacent creeks during heavy rain.

Minister Reddy reiterated that the Ministry of Waterways would continue to be vigilant in clearing waterways throughout the country so that water could be discharged well to negate potential flooding and damages to infrastructure and protect communities.

Dr. Reddy further noted that failure to clear the waterways from silt and debris could result in major infrastructural damages or in some instances the complete washing away of houses, lead to loss in business, and could be a threat to thousands of Fijians, particularly in the Nadi district during adverse flooding.

"The government is committed to building resilience amongst the communities and we will do this carefully addressing issues pertaining to waterways, through increasing the conveyance capacity and releasing the free flow of water," he said.

Dr. Reddy further acknowledged the private sector partners who had committed to conducting the desilting works under the PPP agreement as it would enhance the economic activity in the vicinity through the provision of proper drainage services.

Mataqali Nagaga Trust member Panapasa Nawai expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Waterways as the villages' livelihoods had been constantly and adversely affected by flood waters.

"I want to thank Government for working with us to ensure the desilting works for the Nawaka dams begin, because we are talking about our livelihoods here, we are affected and we can at least be at rest knowing that works have begun to address this long standing issue," said Mr. Nawai.

Sharing the same sentiment, 45-year-old Vatutu villager Mr. Talaiasi Labalaba said during the annual rain season, the village farm is constantly flooded and is washed away.

"The works here were done about 8-9 years ago. From the past few years when the rainy season comes, the village farm gets washed away because of flooding affecting close to 20 full-time farmers whose farms are close to the river," he said.

"Not only this, but some houses get flooded in the Nawaka and Vatutu villages," he added.

Mr. Labalaba further acknowledged the work done by the Ministry of Waterways that will mitigate flooding and will safeguard their farms and homes.

The desilting works will be carried out at the Nawaka Dam 1 & Dam2 with 500m of the upper stream of both dams. The de-silting works will include clearing of all the culverts on the dams, removing of debris and silted materials from the dams.

-Ends-