



Lautoka
City Council



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Lautoka City

Voluntary Local Review 2025





JOINT
SDG
FUND

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Contributors:

This Voluntary Local Review (VLR) was made possible through the dedicated efforts of a task force established by the Lautoka City Council — including Mr. Mohammed Khan (Chief Executive Officer), SA Chair Mr. Taitusi Rasoki Kata, SA Mr. Manasa Draki, Mr. Shalend Prem Singh (Head of Services and VLR Lead), Mr. Daniel Harish Chand (Acting Director Building and Engineering Services), Mr. Mithun Prasad (Team Leader – Health), Mr. Sairusi Bulai (Head of Finance and Administration Services), Mr. Charley Saukuru (City Ranger), Mr. Patrick Kamea (Assistant Rates Officer), Ms. Swastika Samujh (Prosecutor), Mr. Vikash Maran Naidu (Market Manager), Mr. Intiaz Sahib (Landfill Supervisor), Mr. Shivneel Chand (Maintenance Supervisor), Mr. Maika Niudamu (Senior Health Inspector), and Mr. Peni Sagata (Litter Prevention Officer).

This review was undertaken in close collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government, the Lautoka Chamber of Commerce, and the Department of Town and Country Planning. Valuable inputs were also provided by Mr. Alex O'Connor (Lautoka Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Apolosi Lewaqai (Commissioner Western), Mr. Joseva Ratabua (Manager Western, TLTB), Mr. Krishnesh Mani (Acting Programme Manager, Fiji Roads Authority), Mr. Kishan Prasad (Assistant Statistician, FBoS), Ms. Zoya Nisha (GIS Officer, Ministry of Agriculture), Mr. Rovil Kumar (GIS Officer, Fiji Meteorological Office), Mr. Ravneel Chand (Registered Valuer, Ministry of Agriculture & Waterways), Ms. Aleen Prasad (Geospatial Analyst, UNOSAT), and Ms. Paulini Matadradra (Branch Manager, Land Transport Authority).

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Image 1. Lautoka City Council VLR Initiative Launch Workshop, Source: Lautoka City Council 2025.

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Forewords

It is with great honour I present Lautoka City's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR). This landmark document represents our commitment to sustainable development and our dedication to improving the lives of all Lautoka residents.

Lautoka, known as the Sugar City and the first landing site of our ancestors, has long been a cornerstone of Fiji's economy and culture. As we face the challenges of the 21st century, it is crucial that we adapt and grow in a manner that is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient. This VLR is a testament to our resolve in aligning our local efforts with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our focus on nine key SDGs reflects the unique needs and aspirations of Lautoka. From promoting good health and well-being to ensuring clean water and sanitation, from fostering decent work and economic growth to taking urgent action on climate change, we are addressing the most pressing issues facing our city.

This review is not merely a report; it is a call to action. It highlights our achievements, acknowledges our challenges, and sets a clear path forward. The collaborative process that led to this VLR, involving government agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector, and our citizens, embodies the spirit of partnership that is essential for achieving the SDGs. I am particularly encouraged by the innovative projects and initiatives outlined in this review. From rainwater harvesting to job seeker programmes, from improving market accommodations to enhancing our waste management systems, these projects demonstrate our practical approach to sustainable development. As we move forward, this VLR will serve as a guiding document for our policies and actions. It will help us track our progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that no one in Lautoka is left behind as we strive for a more sustainable future. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to this review and to the ongoing work of making Lautoka a model of sustainable urban development. Together, we can build a Lautoka that not only meets the needs of today but also safeguards the prosperity of future generations. Let us embrace this opportunity to lead by example and show the world what a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive city can achieve.



Hon. Maciu Katamotu Nalumisa
Minister for Local Government

Bula vinaka,

As the Chair of the Special Administrators for Lautoka City Council, I am honoured to present our city's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR). This review demonstrates our commitment to the UN's Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aligns our local efforts with national priorities and international commitments.

The purpose of a VLR is to examine and understand the opportunities and challenges for Lautoka as the city continues to grow in the face of an ever-changing world. To provide the best future for all, Lautoka City Council must keep delivering on our Sustainable Development Goals and focus our organization and planning on key priorities.

The VLR reflects the hard work and dedication of our council staff, the insights of our community leaders, and the aspirations of our citizens. I am particularly proud of how this review process has strengthened partnerships within our community. The engagement of local businesses, civil society organizations, and residents has been crucial in shaping our understanding of Lautoka's needs and potential.

This VLR is not just a snapshot of where we are; it's a roadmap for where we want to go. It will guide our decision-making, help us allocate resources more effectively, and ensure that our development efforts leave no one behind.

To the people of Lautoka, your participation in this process has been invaluable. Your continued engagement will be essential as we move from planning to implementation. This is our collective vision for a sustainable Lautoka, and its success depends on all of us working together.

Together, we can build a Lautoka that serves as a model of sustainable urban development for Fiji and beyond.

Vinaka vakalevu.



Mr. Taitusi Rasoki
Chairman of Lautoka City Council
Board of Special Administrators

Executive Summary

The 9 Sustainable Development Goals

Lautoka City's first Voluntary Local Review (VLR) measures the city's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The VLR empowers the council to assess the current state of Lautoka City, evaluate ongoing initiatives and accelerate action in sustainable development.

The VLR aligns with four key frameworks: the Lautoka City Council Strategic Objectives, the Fiji Voluntary National Review, the Fiji National Development Plan, and the 2030 Agenda. The actions, priorities, and targets are informed by a comprehensive analytical process, incorporating qualitative and quantitative descriptive data analysis, key official government reports, national statistics, municipal records, stakeholder and community-led feedback consultations, and surveys.

38 out of 87 SDG targets measured.



Source: Select United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Lautoka City Council's 5 thematic strategic objectives



Source: Lautoka City Council Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

Lautoka City Council's role in delivering SDGs

This report does not claim to be exhaustive of all council, government and non-government activities or all potential improvements, as some actions and evidence may have been missed. Lautoka City Council remains committed to evaluating its strategic plans and budget and aligning them to the SDGs.

The SDGs represent key pillars that will drive sustainable growth, health, livability and sustainability. Council recognises that it cannot address all relevant actions and recommendations alone. Some actions may need to be taken by different stakeholders or levels of government and are outside the scope and resources of Council. To illustrate this, the matrix below defines Council's ability to influence and act, and how stakeholders and community will also need to play a role in delivering sustainable action.

Key areas we need to accelerate action in partnership with others include:

Role of Council	Definition	Role of Community	Role of Key Stakeholders
Deliver (areas with high ability to influence)	Council will fund, arrange and deliver projects directly. E.g market shade structures, bus surface rehabilitations and the botanical garden cafe.	Bring awareness and ideas through consultation.	Align projects and partner as necessary.
Facilitate	Ensure there the right tools and environment exists for SDG projects to succeed. E.g. Training opportunities and hosting strategic meetings.	Identify, needed tools, training and opportunities that community can utilise.	Engage with council and contribute to strategic meetings and alignment
Partner	Support relevant organizations and stakeholders to deliver projects together. E.g. private, public partnerships UN Market for Change, working with ministries on projects.	Organise and engage with council and stakeholders on projects such as Clean Up events.	Identify opportunities and collaborate with council to ensure efficiency and alignment.
Advocate (areas with lower ability to influence)	Raise awareness and demonstrate the need to higher level decision makers in government on key issues and projects. E.g: Advocating the Fiji Government to redevelop and relocate the Vunato Landfill.	Propose ideas and suggest areas were more focus is needed from the government.	Join with council to support advocacy on likeminded issues and projects.

Key stakeholders

- Commissioner Westerns Office
 - District Officers
 - Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management
 - Fiji Commerce Commission
 - Consumer Council of Fiji
 - Department of Town and Country Planning
 - Fiji Police Force
 - Fiji Roads Authority
 - Housing Authority Fiji
 - Koroipita model town
 - Lautoka Chamber of Commerce
 - Lautoka Market Vendors Association
- Ministry of Housing
 - Ministry of Health and Medical Services
 - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways
 - Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection
 - Ministry of iTaukei Affairs
 - Public Rental Board
 - Ratepayers Association
 - Social Innovation Fiji
 - iTaukei Trust Board (TLTB)
 - Water Authority Fiji
 - Waste Recyclers and Pacific Recyclers

Recommended Focus Areas

Goal 3 Health and Well-being

Promote health service accessibility and awareness.



- Environmental Health & Pollution Control**
 - Strengthen wastewater and stormwater systems and enforce anti-dumping to protect waterways and public health.
- Vector-borne & Communicable Disease Control**
 - Scale up disease surveillance, community awareness, and prevention programmes.
- Community Health Facilities & Emergency Care**
 - Improve access to medical services, especially in rural areas, and install AEDs in public areas.
- Substance Misuse Prevention & Youth Support**
 - Expand youth outreach and community programmes to reduce drug use and support at-risk young people.
- Healthy Lifestyles & Public Spaces**
 - Enhance parks and recreation facilities, and promote healthy lifestyles and non-communicable disease prevention.

Goal 5 Gender Equality

Promote friendly and safe, accessible and connected urban space for all genders.



- Safe & Inclusive Public Spaces**
 - Ensure safe, inclusive public spaces with sanitation and breastfeeding facilities for women and mothers.
- Empowerment & Economic Participation**
 - Expand training, entrepreneurship support, and pathways for women and informal workers to secure livelihoods.
- Fair Work & Shared Responsibility**
 - Promote safe, equitable workplaces and increase childcare support and parental leave responsibilities.
- Safeguarding & Child Protection**
 - Strengthen child protection services and anti-harassment mechanisms, especially for market vendors and working parents.

Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

Provide accessible, clean and connected water and sanitation services for all.



- Wastewater & Sewerage Infrastructure**
 - Expand wastewater treatment capacity; modernize systems; advance Western Division masterplan.
- Drainage & Stormwater Management**
 - Upgrade drainage; implement integrated stormwater systems; support flood-resilience works.
- Solid Waste & Pollution Prevention**
 - Strengthen anti-dumping enforcement; improve waste management systems.
- Access to Sanitation Services**
 - Improve sanitation facilities for workers, women & parents; vet youth-serving providers.
- Water Conservation & Resilience**
 - Encourage rainwater harvesting & water-sensitive urban design.
- Partnerships & Integrated Planning**
 - Coordinate with agencies on upgrades & master planning.

Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote an inclusive and active economic and social environment with vibrant and well-designed spaces for all.



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|--|--|
| Economic Diversification & Tourism | ▪ Advance sports tourism; promote cultural & sugar heritage tourism. |
| Youth Development & Inclusion | ▪ Expand youth skills programs & civic inclusion. |
| Business & Entrepreneurship Support | ▪ Support MSMEs, digital IDs, and responsible business training. |
| Skills Development & Financial Literacy | ▪ Expand vocational training and access to finance. |
| Monitoring & Governance | ▪ Establish strong economic monitoring within Council. |

Goal 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Promote innovation in local businesses, culture and inclusion.



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| Innovation & Research Ecosystem | ▪ Explore a Sustainable Development Innovation Hub with Ministry of Education. |
| Value-Added Local Manufacturing & Industry | ▪ Promote value-added agriculture & local production capacities. |

Goal 11 Sustainable Communities and Cities

Align Local Master Planning with SDGs and ensure the urban centre is inclusive to the needs of youths, people with physical challenges, the elderly population and people of marginalised communities.



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| Affordable & Inclusive Housing | ▪ Audit valuations; develop resilient housing upgrades for informal areas. |
| Urban Planning & Resilient Development | ▪ Embed SDGs in planning; apply climate-resilient & inclusive urban design. |
| Transport & Public Space Accessibility | ▪ Improve public transport, pedestrian infrastructure & shaded spaces. |
| Clean City & Public Realm Maintenance | ▪ Expand street cleaning, enforcement & Clean Lautoka initiatives. |
| Waste & Stormwater Management | ▪ Upgrade waste & recycling systems; improve drainage. |
| Public Safety & Citizen Feedback | ▪ Improve lighting, CCTV; expand community policing; run satisfaction surveys. |

Goal 13 Climate Action

Safeguard and improve infrastructure and services in old subdivisions through infrastructure upgrade and integrated waste management.



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|---|---|
| Disaster Preparedness & Resilience | ▪ Conduct drills; strengthen emergency planning & response. |
| Climate-Resilient Infrastructure & Water Systems | ▪ Upgrade drainage & climate-proof infrastructure; protect wetlands. |
| Early Warning Systems | ▪ Improve early-warning technology & community-based disaster risk reduction. |
| Climate Awareness & Behavior Change | ▪ Promote climate education & reduce harmful practices (e.g., cane burning). |
| Support for Vulnerable Households | ▪ Subsidize upgrades for low-income homes in high-risk areas. |
| Climate Finance & Partnerships | ▪ Mobilize public-private-community climate finance. |

Goal 14 Life below water

Preserve and protect water quality and oceans within proximity to Lautoka.



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|---|---|
| Water Quality & Pollution Control | ▪ Strengthen water quality monitoring; prevent marine pollution. |
| Sustainable Marine & Port Management | ▪ Support sustainable port development & climate-safe maritime strategy. |
| Marine Conservation & Stewardship | ▪ Partner with communities to protect marine resources; raise biodiversity awareness. |
| Climate Awareness & Behavior Change | ▪ Partner with communities to protect marine resources; raise biodiversity awareness. |

Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Partner with local stakeholders to ensure a crime-free Lautoka city.



- | | |
|--|--|
| Civic Participation & Community Cohesion | ▪ Expand civic pride, civic education & youth leadership programmes. |
| Crime Prevention & Public Safety | ▪ Increase CCTV, faster police response, and central command monitoring. |
| Substance Abuse Prevention & Rehabilitation | ▪ Strengthen partnerships for drug prevention & recovery services. |
| Government Capacity & Talent Retention | ▪ Improve staff development, training, and institutional capacity. |

Draft Projects for Lautoka City Council Strategic Plan 2026 - 2031

Some key projects were identified through the research and consultation process in developing the VLR. The early project ideas below represent possible projects that can be included in Lautoka City Council's Strategic Workplan to support its delivery of SDGs.

Projects	Detail
Lautoka City Masterplan	Lautoka's City Masterplan will holistically consider wide range of factors that contribute to the sustainable development and growth of the City. This will include residential, community, economic, environmental and infrastructure needs and constraints.
Economic Development Strategy	An Economic Development Strategy will investigate current economic trends and the opportunities and challenges that they bring. The Strategy should detail key actions needed to achieve long term economic prosperity and employment for Lautoka.
Workforce Strategy	A workforce strategy will identify the skills and personnel needed to deliver key projects and programs. It should consider plans around attracting and retaining talented staff and succession planning for critical leadership roles.
Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	Develop guidelines and processes to engage with community and stakeholders. This strategy should help the community set reasonable expectations and a scale of what and how they will be engaged, based on the impact of a given project or plan.

Key Progress and Critical Issues of SDGs



- +** In 2021, the Western Division reported a lower neonatal mortality rate at 0.8% compared to the national average of 14.9% per live births.
- From May 2024 to April 2025, 3.9% of the urban population was reported to be in possession of illicit drugs. There is currently no rehab centre for drug users in Lautoka urban centres. From January to June 2024, 27.3% of HIV cases were reported in the Western Division. Unreported figures may be higher for both cases.

3 out of every 10,000 individual in urban area had suicide related death in the previous 12 months (April 2024 – May 2025). These figures reveal an alarming challenge regarding mental health and sexual health.



- +** In 2017, the Tikina of Vuda recorded 4.8% of individuals aged 15-19 years as married or in de facto relationships. In the urban centre, this figure stood at 4.3% for the same age group. In 2017, 3% of women were employers or self-employed in urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka.
- In the previous 12 months (April 2024 to May 2025), Lautoka urban centre recorded 168 male and 91 female victims to criminal offences. Lautoka urban centre is challenged with criminal offences.



- +** Access to metered drinking water inside dwelling varies across the region. As a baseline, in 2017, Lautoka urban centres had 91% and the Tikina of Vuda had 81.5% households with metred water within dwelling.

87% of the local residents and business in Lautoka Public Survey responded they would support rainwater harvesting project.
- By 2033, it is forecasted that the demand for water in Lautoka will increase to 142.05 ML from 96.0 ML in 2013.

As a baseline, the 2017 census data reported 38.1% of the household's water sources drying up. This indicates significant access and infrastructural challenges with water supply.

The current sewerage plant in Lautoka has exceeded it capacity by 5,000 m³/day



- + As a baseline, in 2017, the unemployment rate was 2.9% in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas. This figure is lower than the national average of 4.3% indicating Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas have an active economic market.
 - In 2017, 7% or 68 out of every 1,000 youths aged 15 - 29 are not in education, employment or training.
- As a baseline, 7% of youth aged 15 to 29 were not in education, employment or training in 2017. This figure indicates the need for further investigation into the reason for disengagement.



- + In 2025, 95% of the roads in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas are sealed.
- As a baseline, 45.6% of the Lautoka urban and peri-urban population
- 42% of the respondents for public survey reported they did not have access to financial support to start a business in Lautoka.



- + As of 2025, 85% of the population in the Lautoka urban area has access to transport, suggesting a relatively good level of mobility for most residents.
- While the transport sector presents positive trends, the operating hours of the public transport and services to the greater Lautoka area is limited. 13% of the population face difficulty accessing transport from urban centres.
- In 2017, urban area's population density stood at 43 people per hectare, indicating moderate urbanization. By 2027, it is projected that this number will increase to 59 people per hectare. This anticipated growth underscores the need for proactive urban planning and infrastructure development.
- 16% of the land in urban Lautoka is allocated for parks and open spaces.
- During the 2025 public survey, 44% of respondents were dissatisfied with the safety in public transportation.
- For the period 2015 to 2024, Lautoka has experienced a rise in the median price of houses. This creates issues surrounding affordability.
- As of 2025, 51.3% of the vehicles in Lautoka use petrol.
- As a baseline, 5% of the building walls in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas had poor condition walls in 2017.
- The Vunato landfill in Lautoka, is located along the mangrove area, with a 50 acre capacity. As of 2024, the council collected approximately 110 tonnes of waste daily.
- The site experiences multiple cases of landfill burning.



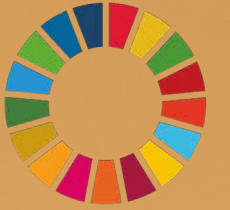
- + 70% of the residents in Lautoka supported the increase in littering fines from FJD\$40.
- Lautoka faces very high environmental challenges, as evidenced by its hazard exposure score of 8.2 and risk index of 6.3 on a 10-point scale. These relatively very high scores indicate that the Tikina of Vuda is vulnerable to various natural and man-made hazards, with a considerable risk of adverse impacts on its population and infrastructure.



- + In 2009, plastic waste accounted for 13.6% of all waste. This was the second largest household composition after kitchen waste. In 2022, this figure reduced to 10%.
- Vonu and Mamanuca Environment Society has launched a turtle conservation programme in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund to conserve sea turtles.
- In the previous 12 months (April 2024 – May 2025), Lautoka urban and peri-urban centres reported 8 cases of offenses against the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012.
- The council faces significant challenge with illegal dumping near rivers and creeks.



- + The council plans to partner with the local businesses on a CCTV plan.
 - In the previous months (April 2024 – May 2025) Lautoka urban area reported:
 - 2.6% of urban residents' victim to crime or violence.
 - 0.4% of the urban population engaged in possession and cultivation of illicit drugs.
 - 6.7% of households in urban and peri-urban areas experience offences against property.
 - 139 cases of crime (sexual and physical violence) against children.
- This figure represents a serious violation of children's protection, rights, and safety and suggests underlying socio-economic issues that require urgent attention.



Section 1

Understanding Lautoka

— People, Place and Purpose



1. Introduction

Purpose of the VLR in Lautoka

Lautoka, a coastal city on western Viti Levu, holds significant historical and cultural importance as the first landing site for Indigenous Fijians. The city faces unique challenges due to its geographical location, including higher temperatures and vulnerability to sea level rise and extreme weather events.

Economically, Lautoka is defined by its sugar industry, housing Fiji's largest sugar mill, and its port activities. The Lautoka port serves as a crucial hub for cargo and cruise ships, though the brief duration of cruise visits limits their economic impact. These two sectors have shaped the city's development and continue to dominate its economic landscape.

Despite its established industries, Lautoka grapples with economic diversification challenges and environmental vulnerabilities. The city must balance economic growth with cultural preservation and social equity, presenting complex tasks for urban planning and policymaking.

In response to these multifaceted challenges, Lautoka aims to conduct a baseline assessment of its progress towards sustainable development goals*. This initiative is vital for addressing data gaps, identifying economic vulnerabilities, highlighting infrastructure needs, and promoting social equity and cultural preservation. Through this assessment, Lautoka seeks to plan for a more resilient and sustainable future.

The Lautoka VLR is an alignment with UN policy and resolution framework that resulted in the 2023 Fiji Voluntary National Review. Lautoka's VLR will complement and align with the targets, outcomes and measurements at the National level whilst also identifying local actions that can deliver meaningful and sustainable impact.

This is important because it enhances Lautoka's access to national and international support mechanisms, expertise, and funding opportunities, thereby strengthening the city's capacity to address its unique challenges while participating in broader sustainability initiatives.

Municipality

The last extension of the boundary for Lautoka was gazetted in 1991 and 2007, respectively, expanding the city's land area to 1,607 hectares. Lautoka City is speculating whether an extension of its city boundary is required. This has been proposed due to the increase in residential development in the peripheries of urban centres.

The visible and continuous growth in residential development on the outskirts of Lautoka competes with the vision of a polycentric city design and challenges traditional rural-to-urban livelihoods. This expanding suburban sprawl prompts urgent consideration of the underlying economic drivers and potential consequences, necessitating a careful balance between urban expansion and sustainable city planning. Priority must be given to addressing the needs of low-income groups, ensuring that urban development strategies promote inclusivity and equitable access to opportunities and services.

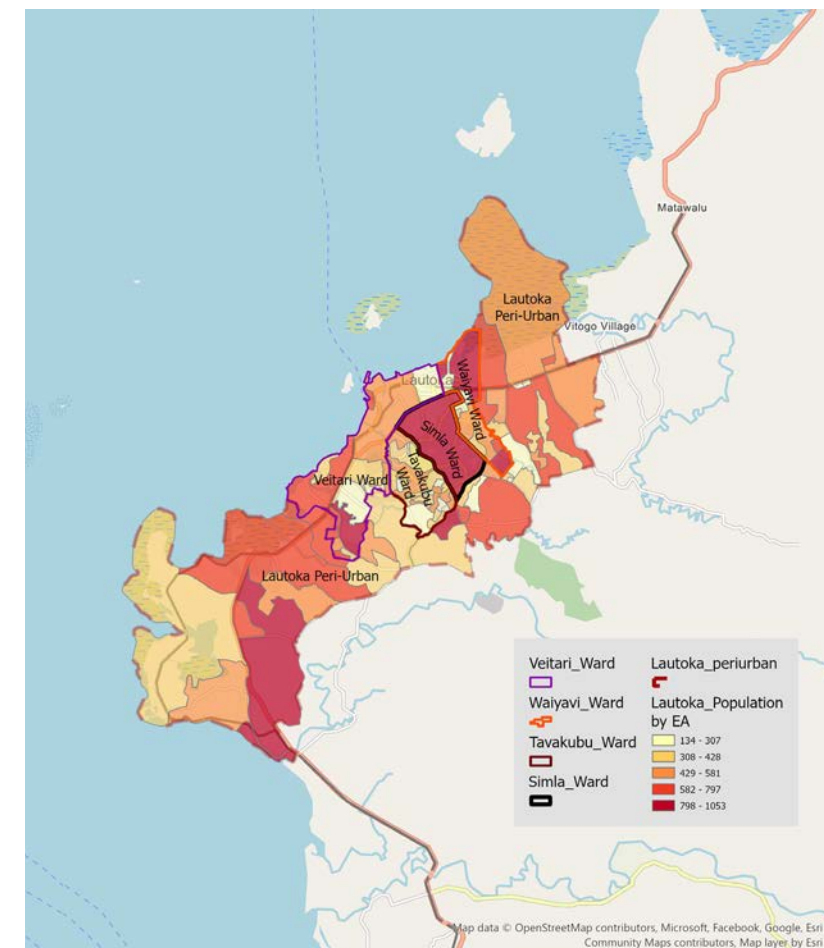


Figure 1. Lautoka City Population Density Map, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017.

* The VLR report is a product of the 2015 UNGA Resolution "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", the 2023 Fiji Voluntary National Review, which aims to localise and ensure that no one is left behind. The 2030 Agenda considers the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, 2015) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (United Nations, 2015a).

Summary of Lautoka City in numbers

Topics	Numbers
Town area	1,670 ha
Tikina* area	40,340 ha
Estimated Vuda Tikina population	72,653 (2017 Census)
Vuda Tikina Population Density	180 people/ km ²
Estimated urban and peri-urban resident population	71, 103 (2017 Census) 45, 047 (2017 within urban boundary) 85, 555 (2025 Total Estimated) 97, 937 (2027 Total Projected)
Lautoka Urban population density	2, 697 people/ km2 (2017)
Number of urban households	15, 711 households (2017 Census)
Number of informal households	950 without legal title (2017 Census) 631 using vakavanua* arrangement on iTaukei Land (2017 Census)
Number of rate payers	8,164 (2024) 8,019 (2017)
Peri-urban Median Age (2017 Census)	Total: 45 – 49 years old Male: 50– 54 years old Female: 50 – 54 years old
Urban boundary median age (2017 Census)	Total: 45 – 49 years Male: 45 – 49 years Female: 45 – 49 years
Total urban and peri-urban median age (2017 Census; and 2027 Projection)	Total: 45 – 49 years (2017); 45 – 54 years (2027) Male: 40 – 44 years (2017); 40 – 44 years (2027) Female: 45 – 49 years (2017); 45 – 54 years (2027)
International visitors per year in the Western Division	19,603 (March Quarter 2025) 17,372 (December Quarter 2024) 24,100 (September Quarter 2024) 23,913 (March Quarter 2024) 17,898 (December Quarter 2023) 29,114 (September Quarter 2023)
Residence outside of Lautoka urban areas in 2012	10,480 individuals (urban and peri-urban boundary) 7,222 individuals (urban boundary)
Rented households	3, 775 (urban and peri-urban) 2,950 (urban boundary)

* Subdistrict of a province is called a Tikina.

* Vakavanua arrangement uses social and traditional arrangement directly with the land owners and villages.

Establishments (zones)	23.7 ha Commercial 336.5 ha Industrial 667.9 ha Residential 200.1 ha Civic 191 ha Open Spaces 185.8 ha Roads
Bank branches	11
Lautoka- Yawasa Primary and Secondary Schools	109
Total parks	111
Highest point	The National Heritage Park, Mount Koroyantitu at 1,195 meters above sea level, translates to the village of the spirits in Fijian. It is a biodiversity hotspot for the region managed by local landowning communities. It has endemic bird species such as Masked Shinning Parrot and the Giant Forest Honeyeater.



Image 2. Residents and visitors enjoy the Lautoka foreshore in the afternoon, Picture Credit: Chethna Ben 2025.

Demography of Lautoka

Lautoka is Fiji’s second largest city, where a growing number of the population (38%) is seen to be living in the peri-urban areas. This trend is expected to rise by 2027. In the urban wards, there is a significant proportion of people living at the southwest of the central business district.

The Lautoka City Council is responsible for managing the areas within its municipal boundaries, and as stipulated under the Town Planning Scheme, but the population growth along peri-urban areas is placing pressure on extending basic services and infrastructure to these areas. Areas beyond the peri-urban areas fall under the Ministry of Rural Authority and the Ministry of Health. The council works with the respective ministries and organizations to ensure essential waste management services are provided to businesses and households beyond the urban boundary. The National Development Plan of the government has a direct linkage between rural, urban and its peri-urban and larger regional areas.

Lautoka Population Trend, 1996 - 2027



Figure 2. Lautoka Urban Population Trend 1996 - 2027, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics Census Data 2007 and 2017.

Household Distribution by wards

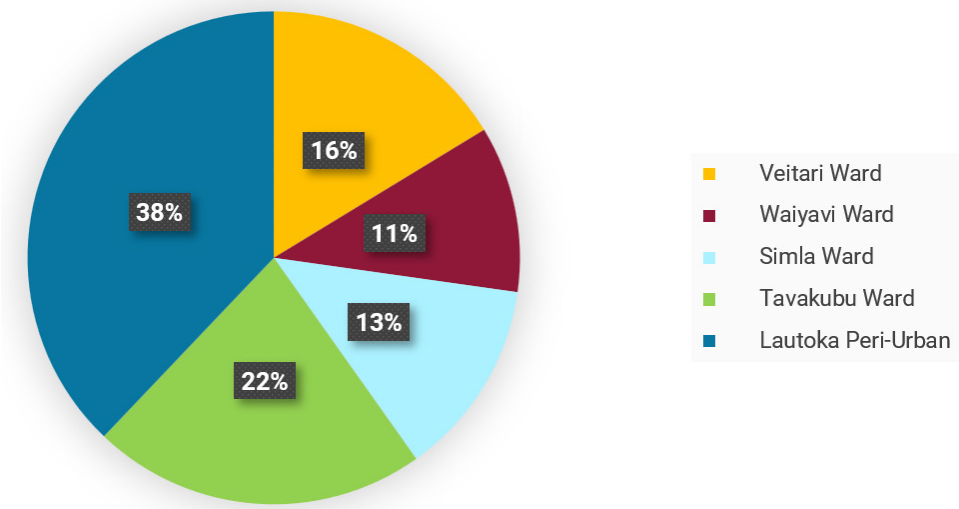


Figure 3. Household Concentration by wards, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2017.

- In 2017 Census the peri-urban population rose by 33% compared to 2007.
- In 2025, it is estimated 85,555 people will reside in urban and peri-urban areas.
- The estimate growth rate for Lautoka is 2.34% per annum.

Estimated Population 2018 - 2025 by weighted average growth rate

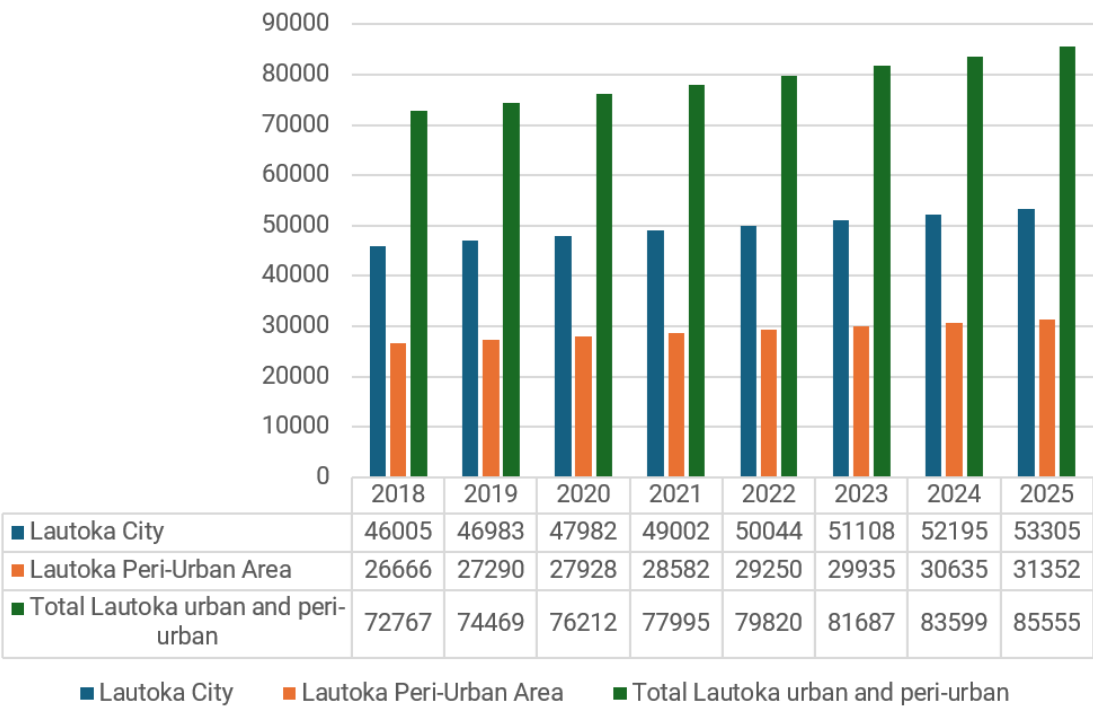


Figure 4. Estimate Urban Population 2018 - 2025, Source: Projected by author by weighting 1966 – 2017 FBoS Census Data.*

*The 2018-2025 estimates was calculated using a weighted percentage growth from 1996-2017 FBoS data. The 5-year interval method helped project 2027 population (undertaken by the Author).

Projected Population by 2027

- Is it estimated that by 2027 that the total population of the urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka will have a population between 89,605 and 97,938.
- This represents a growth rate of between 26% to 37% since 2017. This is a dramatically higher rate than the expected 3-4% increase in population for the entirety of Fiji in the same timeframe.
- Given that this population and demographic analysis is occurring near the end of the Census cycle, there is an increased need to consider a range of population estimates. The range

There is evidence of natural increase in population and migration of the younger population (aged 0 – 25) to the city (see Figure 4: 2027 Projected Population for Lautoka City). Consequently, the trends observed from 2007 to 2017 are assumed to be similar for the period from 2017 to 2027.

2027 Population Projection

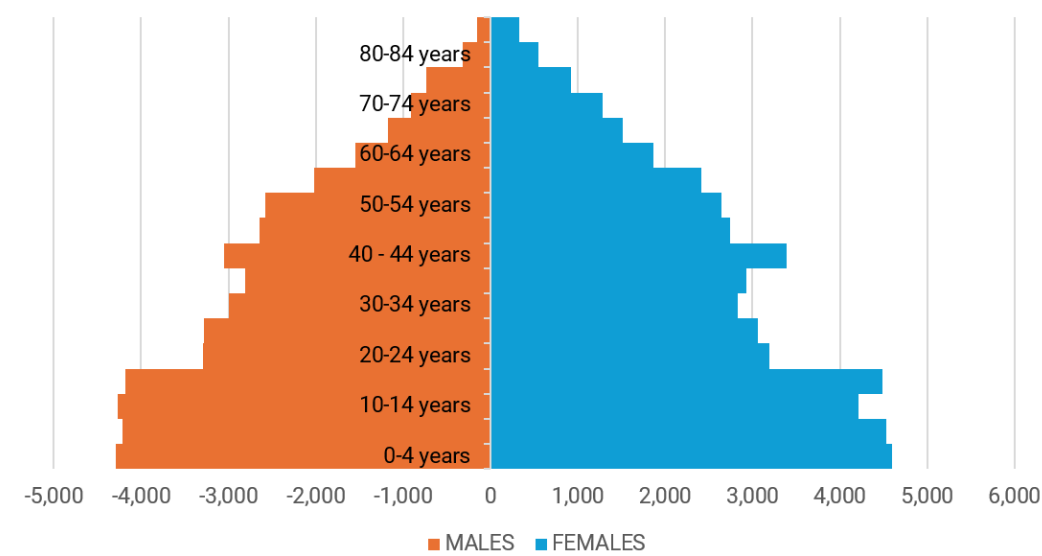


Figure 5. Projected Population for Lautoka Urban and Peri-urban areas 2027, Source: Five-year interval modelling from 2017 Census Data.

- Younger and older age groups are likely to outpace the growth of the adult or working population in the 2027 projection compared to the 2017 data.
- Adults and the working-class population in the urban centre may also likely experience increased caregiver responsibilities.
- The 2027, projected data also shows median age of females from 40 – 54 , which means the workforce and domestic duties need to consider inter-gender dynamics, especially after the population recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The change in demography of urban centres requires special attention to planning for the needs of children and elderly populations in areas of education, employment, financial inclusion, health care, housing, security, and water and sanitation.

About Lautoka City

Lautoka, located in the province of Ba, Tikina of Vuda and on the western side of Viti Levu. Fiji's second-largest urban centre, has undergone significant urbanization and growth over the decades. The city is known for its first sugar mill, but before being known as the Sugar City, it served as the first landing area for the iTaukei people at Veiseisei village. Later, during World War 2 it served as the defence ground for Fiji at the Lomolomo Battery Site.

Officially declared a township in 1929, Lautoka grew quickly. During the period between 1966 to 1976, Lautoka experienced high rates of rural to urban migration due to development disparities due to the centre's rapid expansion and growth (Fiji Census Report, 1997). According to the 1997 Fiji Census report, Lautoka's growth rate later reduced post-independence. Lautoka is the administrative capital of the Western Division.

Freight and cargo are the major sources of revenue through the ports in Lautoka. The city's strategic location on the western coast of Viti-Levu makes it an important port and commercial centre, facilitating trade and transportation. According to the Fiji Sugar Cane Corporation Annual Report 2024, there has been a 7% decline in cane production since the previous year. The industry has also been known for its cane burning, and this has implications on the air quality, environment and industry. There has been a declining trend of burnt cane from 2019 (58%) to 2023 (51%).

Over the years, a decline in sugar production and a shift to the tourism sector meant that decentralised efforts for development will require a change in urban planning, rural-urban linkages and infrastructure and services development.

Establishment History of Lautoka

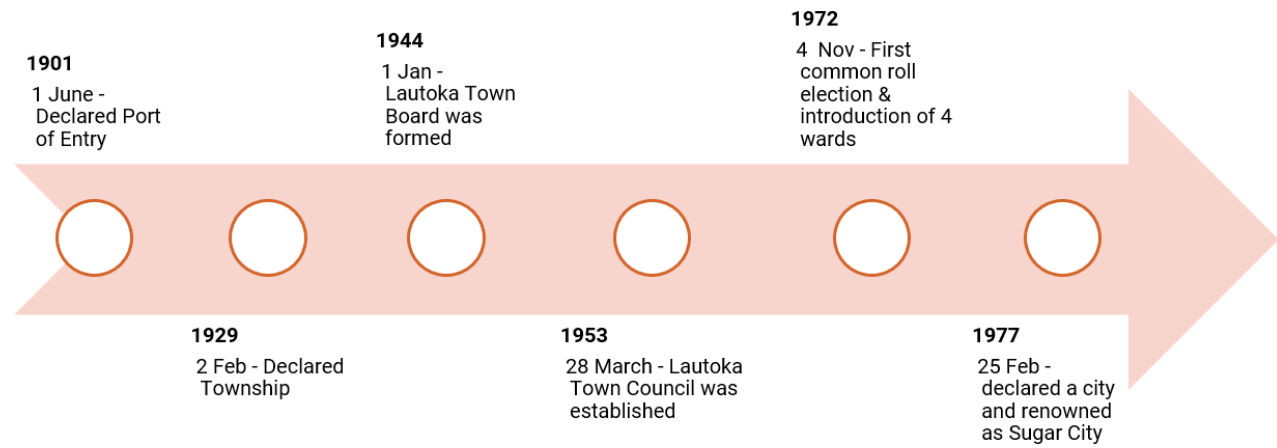


Figure 6. Establishment History of Lautoka Urban Centre



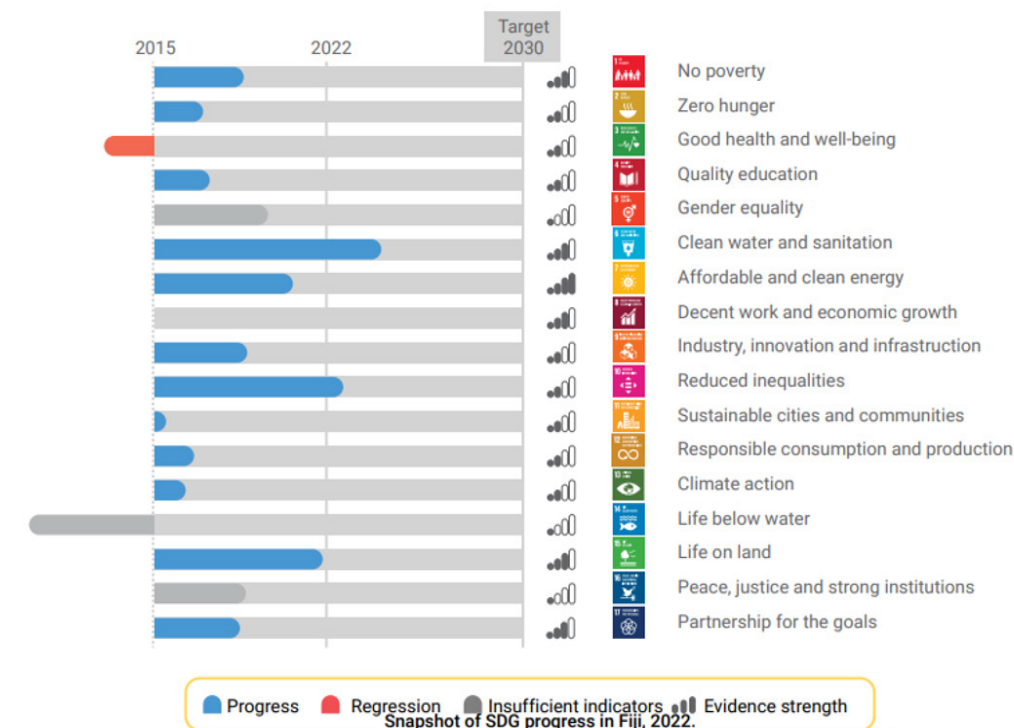
UNITED NATIONS

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD.

THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 2015, Fiji led the world as one of the first Countries to incorporate SDG planning into national planning and to ratify the Paris Agreement (2016). The government remains committed to delivering on these goals through SDG planning, measurement and reporting.

Fiji's Voluntary National Review (VNR) considered Fiji's progress towards the SDG goals in three strategic clusters. People and Partnerships, Planet and Prosperity and Peace. The VNR recognised progress had been made against most SDGs but also highlighted areas of concern and need for greater focus, namely SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being.

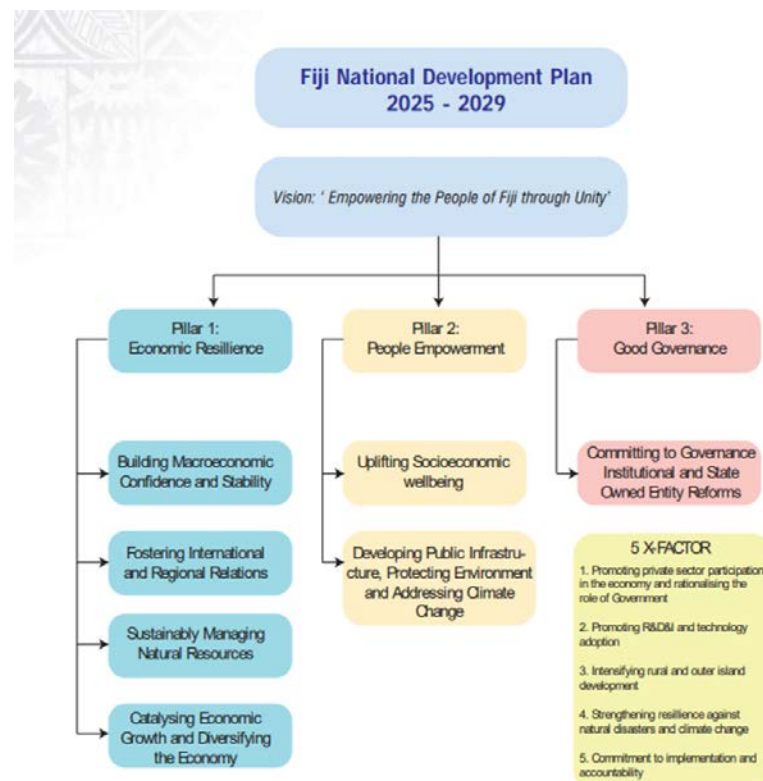


Source: ESCAP & Ministry of Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics



Fiji National Development Plan (2025)

The FNDP sets the agenda for growth for the entirety of Fiji and aligns this with Fiji's Vision 2050. The support his vision, the FNDP focuses on the three pillars of economic resilience, people empowerment and good governance and various focus areas underneath these pillars. These pillars also have defined and measurable targets to achieve by 2050. The FNDP provides a scaffold for Lautoka City Council to follow and provides an opportunity for target and outcome alignment.



Lautoka City Council Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

The Lautoka City Council is a key regulator and enforcer of development within the municipal area. This means SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities requires a place-based approach to “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable development”, through urban and rural-urban linkage. Urban level leadership is required to safeguard the environment, reduce exposure to pollution and disaster, provide access to basic services, improve safety and security and waste management.

How will this review inform what the Council does?

Municipal councils play a crucial role in translating global agendas into local action within urban and greater urban areas by fostering urban-rural linkages, promoting sustainable growth, and mitigating the negative impacts of development.

The Western Region covers 15 districts (Tikinas) covering, Nadi, Lautoka and the Yasawa Islands. Lautoka urban centre is a key contributor to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a central hub for business, education, healthcare, sports, transport, tourism and water and sanitation services. These areas not only drive economic growth but also significantly influence culture, social development and environmental sustainability.

By focusing on nine key sustainable development goals, Lautoka City Council aims to partner with the local stakeholders to deliver people-centred cultural, economic, environmental, infrastructure and services. Addressing challenges of sustainable development at the urban level is important to ensure:

- Climate resilience
- Cultural integration
- Economic productivity
- Environmental Protection
- Innovation
- Quality Infrastructure
- Resource efficiency

The National Government of Fiji aims to support the infrastructure upgrades at the Fiji ports after the Lautoka Foreshore Feasibility Study, which is funded by the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific. For urban centres, Blue Town Framework was quoted as an important tool for planning, but this was not privy to the authors during the writing of the report. Therefore, the VLR will be instrumental in designing councils strategies and plans for 2027 – 2031.

We will conduct a VLR review every five years in the lead-up to each new strategic plan.



Lautoka City Council Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026

Lautoka City Council set 5 themes for their Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026. They are for Lautoka to be:

1. Vibrant and well designed
2. Accessible and connected
3. Clean and green
4. Active and healthy
5. Friendly and safe

2. Vision and Background

VISION

Lautoka to be the Health, Cultural and Sports Tourism city in the South Pacific.

MISSION

With sugar being synonymous with Lautoka City, the council will continue to promote and facilitate:

-  Clean and Healthy Environment
-  Safety and Security of People
-  Prosperous Investment Opportunity
-  Better Well-Being of Ratepayers

Lautoka City Council aims to become a dynamic hub for the Pacific Region. With a strong cultural identity rooted in the first landing history and the sugar production, Lautoka is embracing a future that combines economic growth with community well-being.

The current vision and strategic path for Lautoka is centred on:

- Culture
- Health
- Industries
- Regional Recognition
- Sports Tourism

The vision is supported by key pillars outlined in the mission by making Lautoka:

- A clean and healthy city
- Attracting investment potential
- Enhancing quality of life for its residents.
- Providing safety and security

The vision and mission of the city sets a clear direction for inclusive and progressive urban development.



Image 3. Aerial view of Lautoka during 1946, Picture Credit: Lautoka City Council.

Lautoka Vision 2030

"Lautoka to be the best Health, Cultural & Sports Tourism City in the South Pacific"

To effectively localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensure their relevance to the specific context of Lautoka City, the VLR Task Force, with support from UN-Habitat and the Australian Volunteer Programme, undertook a comprehensive review of its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. This review process was guided by three key objectives:

1. Target Framing: LCC carefully examined the global SDG targets and adapted them to align with local priorities and circumstances. By adjusting the targets to reflect the unique challenges, opportunities, and aspirations of the city.

2. Indicator Identification: To effectively measure progress and track the implementation of the localized SDG targets, measurable indicators or proxy indicators tailored to the local context was identified. These indicators serve as benchmarks, enabling the council to monitor and evaluate the impact of its strategies and interventions, facilitating data-driven decision-making and course corrections when necessary.

3. Strategic Integration: LCC critically analysed its existing strategies, plans, and policies to identify areas where modifications or additions were required to fully integrate the localised SDG targets. LCC ensured that the localized targets resonated with the community and local stakeholders and addressed their most pressing needs.

Council Administrative Services

Laws and bylaws

The Lautoka City is guided by the Local Government Act 1972, standard operating procedures and its associated by-laws. These by-laws cover a wide range of areas, including public health and safety; environmental management; food safety; waste management; urban planning and developmental control; and community development. The council is responsible for enforcing these by-laws within its jurisdiction, ensuring that the city maintains a clean, safe, and well-organised environment for its residents and visitors.

The Local Government Act and other key legislation also define key roles for Council, which have been itemised as the list of operations in Figure 8. It is important to acknowledge that these operations contribute to key objectives alongside other key stakeholders and partners organizations.

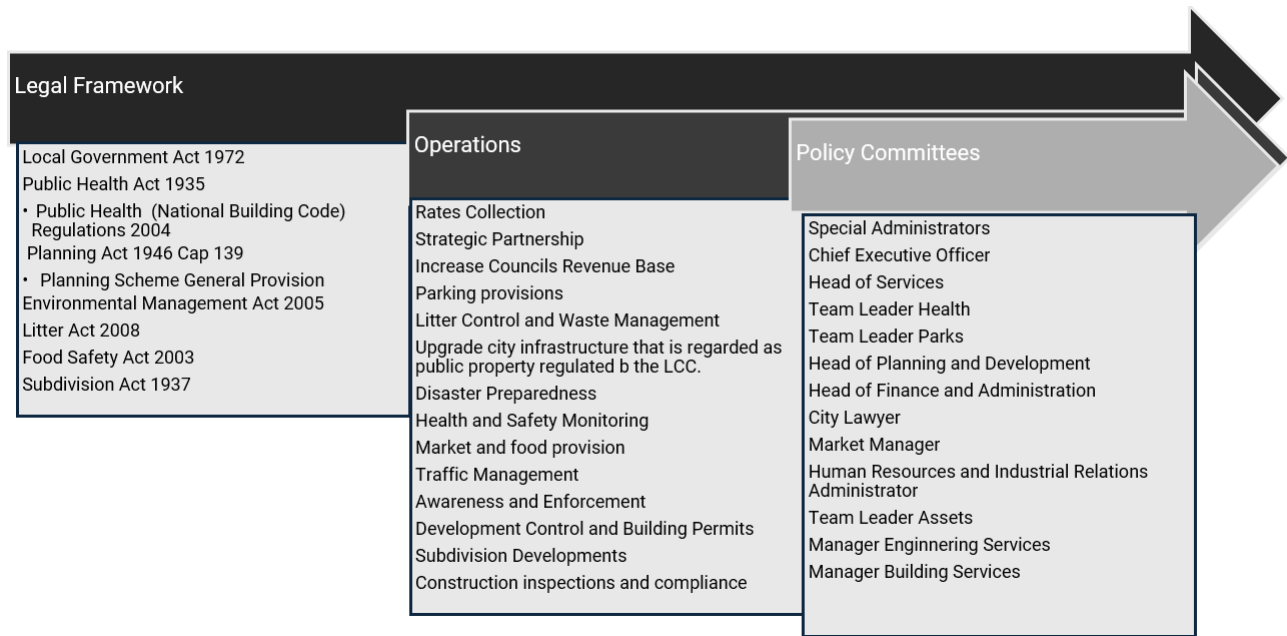


Figure 9. Core Business of the Council, Source: Lautoka City Council

The four key areas of concern and challenge for the council in terms of operation include:

- **Workforce management:** Retaining quality staff and providing capacity development training.
- **Project Delivery:** Cost-effective and timely completion of the projects and revenue generation potential. Addressing internal control issues to reduce high-risk anomalies.
- **Enforcement:** Improved enforcement regulations to ensure public response and promotion of civic pride, for example, in anti-litter campaigns. The project currently addresses accessible and friendly access within the bus station for the physically challenged population, but the buses' onboarding facilities are not accessible for mothers with strollers and people with physical challenges.
- **Contingency Plan for Rate Recovery:** Establish contingency plans post COVID-19 for registered ratepayers within and outside the country for managing rate obligations effectively. This can include rate recovery programmes, flexible payment options, partnership and resource sharing with non-government and government agencies.

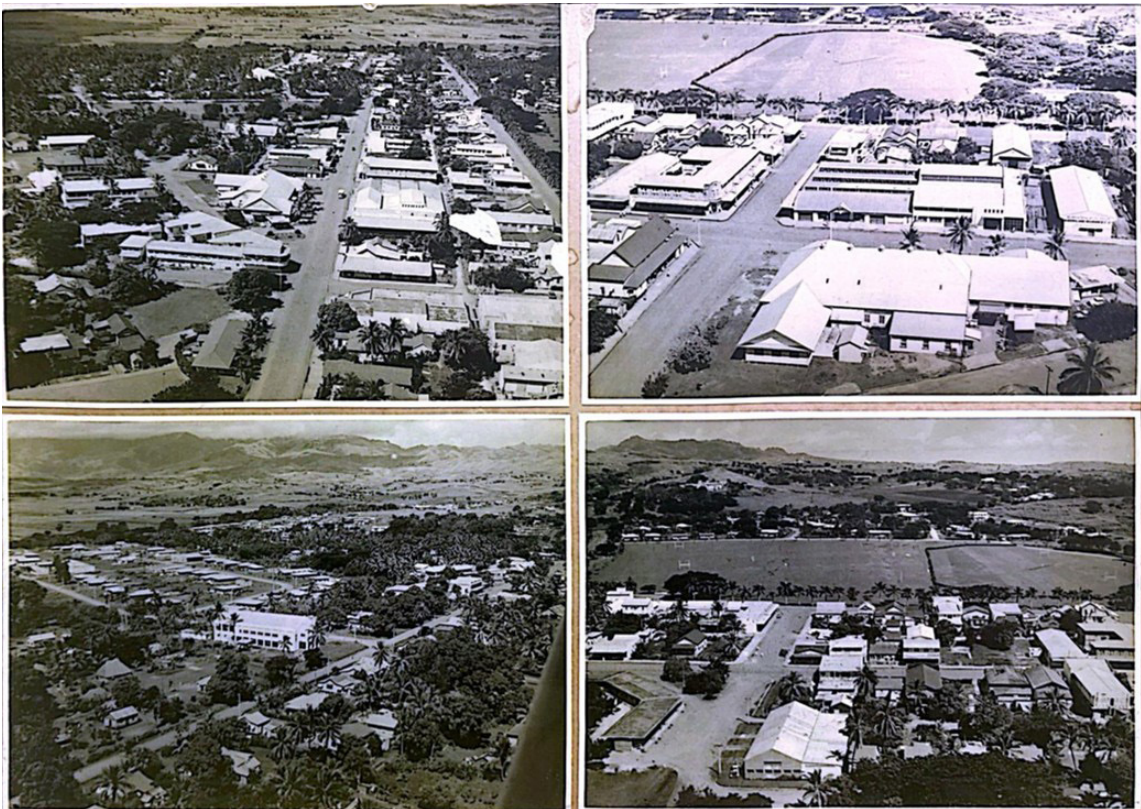


Image 4. Early Pictures of Lautoka, years unknown., Picture Credit: Lautoka City Council.

Current Strategic Plan of the Council

Workforce

As of April 2025, the council employs a workforce of 205 employees

- There was 10% increase from the 2018 Annual report.
- The vacancy rate for the council as of April 2025 is 22.2%.
- 1 female staff holds senior or leadership role.

Within the unestablished category, there is a gender imbalance, with males comprising 94% of the workforce. The difference can be attributed to the nature of the work, which often involves manual labour. On the other hand, the established division within the council exhibits a balanced gender ratio, with 30% of the staff being female.

Division (as of April 2025)	Total	Female	Male
Unestablished	139	8	131
Established	66	20	46
Total	205	28	177

Summary Review of the 2022 – 2026 Lautoka City Council Strategy

Lautoka City Council's 2022- 2026 strategic plan demonstrates an alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to sustainable urban development, economic growth, and social inclusion. The council's strategies are organised under five overarching themes, with a significant emphasis on SDG 11.7, which aims to provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces.

Goal Alignment with Council Strategies

Vibrant and Well-Designed



Clean and Green



Active and Health



Friendly and Safe



Accessible and connected



The council's 5-year strategic plan is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals, (see Annex Alignment of LCC Strategy 2022 - 2026 to SDGs).

The current thematic areas of the LCC Strategy 2022 - 2026 lack clear definitions, making them challenging to evaluate progress. Although the plan specifies completion timelines, there is a lack of baselines and benchmarks. To strengthen the strategy, the council will plan to:

- Clearly define ambiguous thematic areas to ensure measurability and accountability.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current situation, identifying gaps and opportunities.
- Establish measurable indicators and targets aligned with the SDGs to track progress effectively.
- Incorporate impact analysis for proposed projects, considering their potential cultural, economic, social, and environmental implications.
- Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the strategy's implementation and outcomes periodically.

By addressing these areas, the council plans to enhance the strategic plan's effectiveness, transparency, and alignment with the SDGs going forward.

Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the local governments, including the Lautoka City Council. The council experienced a net decrease in total budget, revenue and expenditure during the 2020 – 2021 period, which can be attributed to the economic challenges faced by households and businesses. During this time, households naturally defaulted on rate payments due to financial constraints. The year 2021 recorded 42% defaulters. This highlighted a lack of council's financial contingency plan to assist residents in managing their rate obligations and effective rate recovery post pandemic.

Moreover, the Council has faced challenges with a decrease in revenue from various sources beyond the pandemic, including reduced development application fees, removal of base fees, repeal of the Business Licensing Act 1976 by the Business Licensing (Repeal) Act 2020, and lower rates recovery as ratepayers experienced financial difficulties. To mitigate this revenue reduction, the Council, during the COVID-19 period, implemented cost-cutting measures:

- Staff were asked to take annual leave.
- No new capital projects were initiated.
- Virtual meetings were adopted to continue providing services while minimising expenses.

Despite the setbacks, the Council notes adjusting their operational expenditures to ensure essential service to the community continued.

3. Governance and Administrative Structure

Lautoka City Council's active participation in the Pacific Urban Forum 6, 2023, prompted a voluntary review of their development strategies. The assessment gauges alignments of the councils' strategic objectives against the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Fiji National Development 2025 – 2029, recognises Fiji's commitment to the PACIFIC Urban Forum 5 (2019), as a signatory to the New Urban Agenda 2030: UN Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for all (2016).

The Lautoka City Council, after the review, aims to replicate international good practices at the local level. By learning from successful initiatives and best practices implemented in other parts of the world, the council plans to adapt and implement strategies that have proven effective in addressing similar challenges faced by urban centres. The governance of land use and development in and around Lautoka involves recognition of local needs, and support from multiple authorities, each with distinct jurisdictions.

The Lautoka City Council and the Ministry of Local Government are the primary regulators of urban development within the municipal boundary, guided by the 2007 Lautoka City Planning Scheme. The city council is limited in authority to regulate some areas. These are:

1. iTaukei villages, both within and outside the municipal boundary, are governed under the iTaukei Affairs Act, which provides a framework for indigenous Fijian community administration.
2. Peri-urban areas adjacent to the town are overseen by the Central Board of Health.
3. Rural lands fall under various jurisdictions: the Ministry of Rural Authority for general areas, the Ministry of Health for health-related aspects, the iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) for indigenous land, and the Ministry of Lands for state-owned property.

The TLTB's Master Plan employs a "ridge-to-reef approach" for land use demarcation and management at the district area or Tikina level. This aligns with SDG 11's focus on sustainable cities and communities, emphasising the need for a place-based approach to "inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable development" through rural-urban linkages. This comprehensive governance structure underscores the importance of coordinated efforts in achieving sustainable development across urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.

The Ridge to Reef project in Lautoka faces a complex challenge as industrial and tourism development along the coast increasingly competes with traditional land use values. This tension highlights the delicate balance and tension between economic growth and cultural preservation as industrial and tourism expansion plans drive economic development, but encroach on land traditionally used for subsistence and cultural practices.

Greater Western Division Master Plan

The Greater Western Division Master Plan developed by the iTaukei Land Trust Board was approved by the Department of Town and Country Planning in July 2020 and has been published as the Greater Viti-Levu Plan. The North-West part of Fiji is recognised as a Tax-Free Region to advance sustainable economic growth, mostly in areas leading to Ba.

The Urban Growth Management Action Plan (UGMAP) sets the intention of the urban regional development plan, with an emphasis on aligning capital projects, guiding developments, identifying investment areas and land use planning. Of particular interest are the growth centres identified in the report, which assume the investments to develop new or currently small centres and provide decentralised urban services.

- The areas outside the Lautoka urban centre have been identified as residential and mixed-use zones.
- Coastal areas leading to Nadi have been zoned for tourism development.
- Area near Vakabuli has been recognised as neighbourhood centre.
- Lomolomo and Lauwaki contain small nodes of commercial and residential development.
- An existing local area plan has been identified above Vitogo Parade.

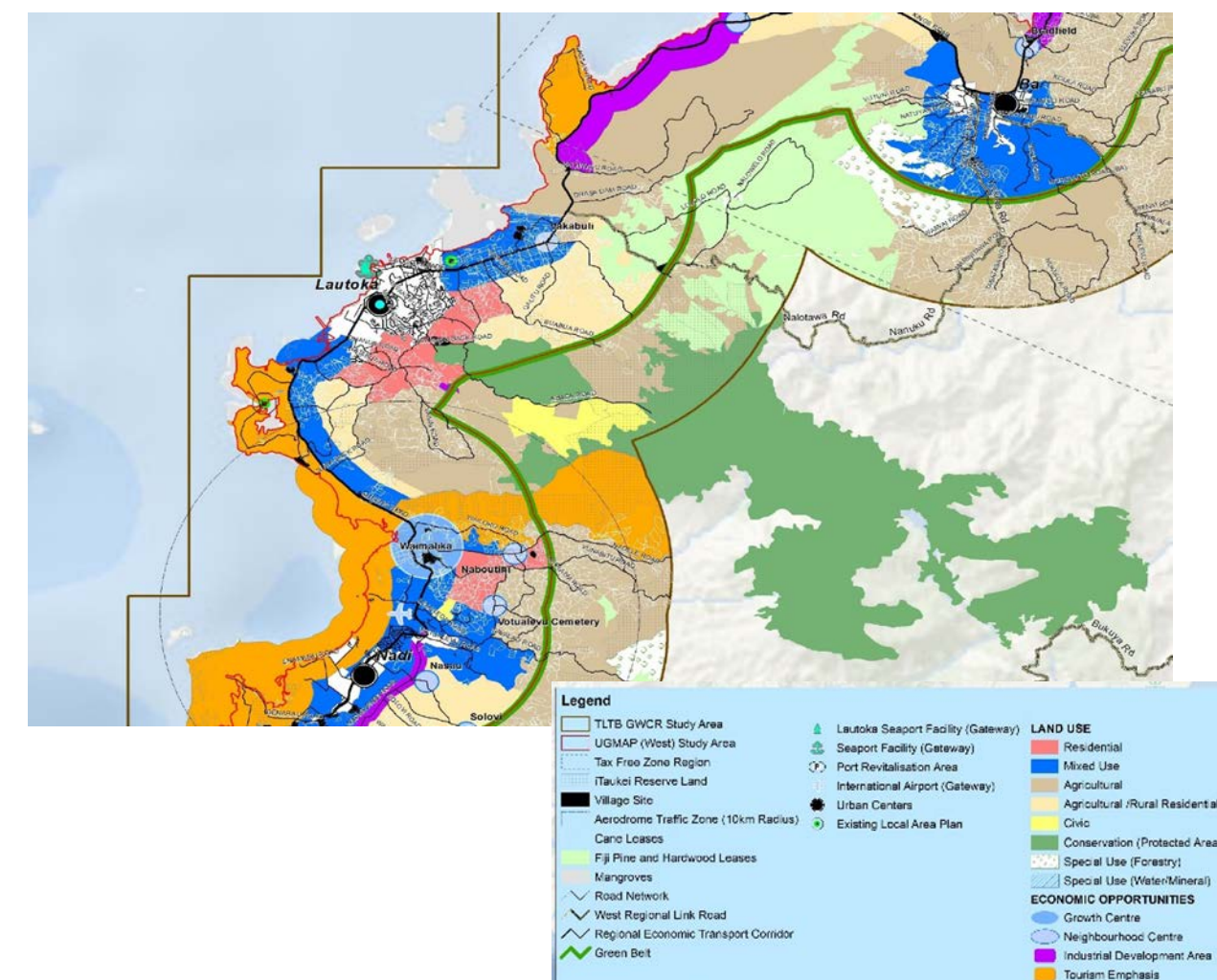
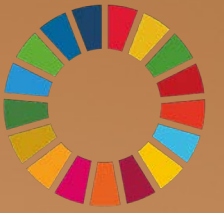


Figure 10. 2019 Regional Release Plan for Greater Western and Coastal Region, Source: TLTB 2020.



Section 2

Tracking Progress

— Insights and Evidence



4. Progress and Recommendend SDG Focus Areas

Caveat

This report primarily draws on the 2017 census data, supplemented by published reports and stakeholder consultations. Given the 10-year gap until the next census in 2027, readers should interpret the figures

cautiously. Significant demographic changes have likely occurred since 2017, and the data presented may not fully reflect Lautoka's current situation. We have made efforts to address this data gap through stakeholder input and estimates, but acknowledge the limitations in providing a completely up-to-date demographic picture. The lack of a census by the council is due to limitations in time and resources. The key priorities for Lautoka City Council are based on the following values (translated in iTaukei and Hindi language):

- Personal Integrity (Na Yalodina Vakataamata, Vyaktigat Eemaanadaaree)
- Service through leadership (Veigaravi ena veiliutaki, Netrtv ke maadhyam se seva)
- Respect for workers and customers (Dokai ira na tamata cakacaka kei ira na kasitama; Shramikon aur graahakon ke prati sammaan)
- Creativity and innovation (Na veibuli kei na veivakavoui, Srjanaatmakata aur navaachaar)
- Continuous learning (Vuli tikoga; Satat seekhana)



Recommended SDG focus areas

A comprehensive analysis of relevant data and close consultation with key stakeholders has resulted in a number of key focus areas. These key areas must be addressed through a collaborative and coordinated approach as they are relevant to a number of organizations. The strength of the VLR has been to draw out these focus areas and start a discussion on tackling these complex challenges. The areas below will be pursued by relevant stakeholders and Lautoka City Council where appropriate.

Goal 3 Good Health and Well-being



Whilst specific localised data is hard to find, it is safe to assume that Lautoka shares many of the same public health challenges as much of Fiji. Namely, a high rate of death from diabetes, stroke and heart disease. In addition, a recent study by researchers from the University of South Pacific (2020) noted that the air quality in Lautoka nearly always surpassed safe levels. The broad but preventative nature of these health impacts require a multi-faceted and multi-agency approach.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Environmental Health & Pollution Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve sewerage systems and stormwater drainage, especially in informal settlements. Strengthen enforcement against illegal dumping and littering near waterways. |
| Vector-borne & Communicable Disease Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand dengue and disease surveillance and prevention programmes. Improve community awareness on hygiene and disease prevention. |
| Community Health Facilities & Emergency Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to mobile and community health services, including rural areas. Install and maintain AEDs in public places and markets. |
| Substance Misuse Prevention & Youth Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with youth services and police to address drug misuse and support at-risk youth. Deliver school and community awareness programmes on substance abuse risks. |
| Healthy Lifestyles & Public Spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve and maintain parks, walkways, and recreation spaces for exercise. Promote public health awareness on nutrition, fitness, and non-communicable diseases. |

Goal 5 Gender Equality



Women are the nucleus of the urban design and planning but are vulnerable to crime and harassment. Public safety for women is recognized as an urgent need for Lautoka, which requires support from all relevant stakeholders. For men, the council is addressing the often-overlooked need for accommodation for male market vendors and children of accommodating parents. This approach recognizes that gender equality benefits by providing safe spaces and support systems for men and children. By working to break the cycle of neglect and unaffordable accommodation and public safety for vendors of all age groups, the council is taking steps towards a more inclusive and equitable city.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Safe & Inclusive Public Spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure safe, accessible and gender-responsive public spaces and facilities (markets, transit hubs, public toilets). Install and maintain breastfeeding rooms and sanitation facilities for women, market vendors and mothers. Implement public anti-harassment measures, awareness and reporting channels. |
| Empowerment & Economic Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand training, financial literacy, and enterprise support for women and youth entrepreneurs. Support pathways for market vendors and informal workers to enter formal and secure livelihoods. Promote inclusive hiring and leadership within the council and public institutions. |
| Fair Work & Shared Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote childcare support and shared caregiving responsibilities in workplaces and communities. Support workplace gender-equity policies, safety training and fair representation. Strengthen legal literacy for women on property rights, land access and finances. |
| Safeguarding & Child Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide safe childcare facilities for women market vendors and working mothers. Require gender-sensitive and child-protection training for workers and service providers. Expand access to family support and early childhood care services. |

Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

All level of government are prioritising the modernization of its water and sanitation infrastructure as a key strategy to enhance urban resilience. This forward-thinking approach recognises that upgrading and innovating existing systems is crucial for addressing current challenges and preparing for future environmental and demographic pressures.



- | | |
|---|--|
| Wastewater & Sewerage Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for increased wastewater treatment capacity and services. Expand wastewater treatment plant capacity for population growth. Transform wastewater management near creeks and estuaries. Advocate for action on the Western Division Wastewater Masterplan (JICA). |
| Drainage & Stormwater Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner to upgrade drainage and stormwater systems. Develop integrated stormwater management systems. Create awareness on rain gardens in flood-prone areas. Strengthen critical infrastructure for flood resilience. |
| Solid Waste & Pollution Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create awareness and programmes to prevent waste entering rivers and creeks. Reduce illegal dumping into waterways through campaigns and enforcement. Improve overall waste management systems and facilities. |
| Access to Sanitation Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require child-protection certification and vetting for youth workers and relevant service providers. Provide support facilities for children of market vendors and working parents. |
| Water Conservation & Resilience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce rainwater harvesting initiatives for development projects. Promote water-sensitive design in urban planning. |
| Partnerships & Integrated Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with government and development agencies on water and sanitation upgrades. Align with JICA wastewater masterplan for the Western Division. |

Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

The council is investing in upgrading and expanding sports facilities to international standards, making Lautoka an attractive destination for regional and international sporting events. This includes enhancing the city's stadium, developing multi-purpose sports complexes, and improving supporting infrastructure such as accommodation and transportation links.



- | | |
|---|---|
| Economic Diversification & Tourism Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Economic Development Strategy, leveraging sporting and sugar heritage. Attract diverse sports tourism and promote cultural tourism. Measure GDP contribution per municipal area. |
|---|---|

Youth Development & Inclusion

- Develop youth civic pride, inclusion, and drug-use prevention programmes.
- Deliver youth employment and skills pathways.
- Support social reintegration schemes (e.g., homelessness-to-employment).

Business & Entrepreneurship Support

- Promote micro-enterprise support and local business growth.
- Implement a digital ID system for micro-entrepreneurs.
- Facilitate training with Chamber of Commerce on responsible business practices.
- Promote partnerships with MSMEs and local entrepreneurs.

Skills Development & Financial Literacy

- Invest in vocational training and job-readiness programmes.
- Increase access to financial literacy and adult education services.

Monitoring & Governance

- Establish an Evaluation & Monitoring Unit at the Council.
- Support evidence-based economic planning and reporting.

Goal 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



The Lautoka region has a great opportunity to embrace innovation and entrepreneurship in key sectors such as tourism, agriculture and climate adaption and resilience.

Innovation & Research Ecosystem

- Partner with Ministry of Education and stakeholders to explore establishing a Research & Innovation Hub for Lautoka for Sustainable Development.
- Use the hub to pilot and showcase SDG projects and outcomes.

Value-Added Local Manufacturing & Industry

- Encourage manufacturing of value-added agricultural products.
- Advocate for expanding local production and enterprise in key growth sectors (tourism, agriculture, climate resilience).

Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities



Key government agencies share the responsibility for delivering safe and sustainable cities and communities. The coordination and long term planning of various infrastructure and development organizations should be centralised and strategic. Greater support for enforcement and alignment with planning tools such as the Planning Scheme is needed. For growth to be sustainable and managed effectively, a strong collaborative approach is needed.

Affordable & Inclusive Housing

- Conduct an independent audit of real estate valuation to strengthen fair pricing and support affordable housing.
- Develop phased upgrade plans for informal settlements, prioritising access to utilities and disaster-resilient housing standards.

Urban Planning & Resilient Development

- Integrate SDG targets into city and village planning, strengthening coordination across the wider Western Division.
- Apply resilient urban design principles (e.g., CPTED, inclusive zoning, climate-resilient development).

Transport & Public Space Accessibility

- Improve public transport accessibility, reliability, and safety for elderly people, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities.
- Expand shaded footpaths, seating, lighting, and safe pedestrian routes in key public areas.

Clean City & Public Realm Maintenance

- Expand proactive street cleaning, litter enforcement, and maintenance programmes.
- Launch and sustain a “Clean Lautoka” programme including civic pride campaigns, green spaces, and animal-management initiatives.

Waste & Stormwater Management

- Upgrade waste collection and recycling systems, including replacement of public bins and community engagement on proper disposal.
- Improve drainage and stormwater systems to reduce flooding and pollution in waterways.

Public Safety & Citizen Feedback

- Expand safety measures in public spaces, including lighting, CCTV, and collaborative policing.
- Conduct regular resident satisfaction and service-quality surveys to guide improvement.

Goal 13 Climate Action

All level of government recognise the importance of a Climate Resilience and Adaptation plan that focuses on protecting coastal infrastructure, enhancing flood management systems, and promoting climate-smart urban development.



Disaster Preparedness & Resilience

- Conduct regular disaster preparedness drills and training.
- Raise community awareness on disaster preparedness and emergency response.
- Strengthen local implementation of the Municipal Emergency Plan.

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure & Water Systems

- Upgrade and climate-proof urban water and drainage systems.
- Implement resilient infrastructure strategies in high-risk areas.
- Develop riparian buffer zones along creeks, wetlands, and estuaries.

Early Warning Systems & Risk Reduction

- Develop comprehensive early-warning systems for climate and disaster risks.
- Promote community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Climate Adaptation Awareness & Behaviour Change

- Educate communities on climate adaptation practices.
- Advocate for reduction of cane-burning and other high-pollution practices.

Support for Vulnerable Households

- Provide subsidies and support to upgrade low-income homes in disaster-prone areas (e.g., roofs and walls).

Climate Finance & Partnerships

- Facilitate public-private-community climate financing partnerships.
- Secure grant and programme funding for household and community adaptation projects.

Goal 14 Life Below Water

Lautoka Port is a critical piece of infrastructure for Fiji. The opportunity and challenges the facility faces needs key stakeholder involvement and coordination. The Lautoka Port Masterplan is scheduled for completion by June 2025, which will enable Fiji Ports and the Fiji Government to undertake a detail design plan of Lautoka Port with the aim to commence construction end 2025 / early 2026.



Water Quality & Pollution Control

- Monitor and improve water quality in Lautoka rivers and coastal areas.
- Reduce waste entering waterways and enforce pollution control around port and city areas.

Sustainable Marine & Port Management

- Advocate for a maritime strategy that safeguards the port from climate risks and prevents environmental damage.
- Support sustainable port development aligned with ecological protection and climate adaptation.

Marine Conservation & Community Stewardship

- Partner with traditional communities to protect marine areas and resources.
- Promote awareness on sea turtle conservation and broader marine biodiversity protection.

Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

The development of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is critical to the ongoing delivery of SDGs and the continued growth of the quality of life in Lautoka. Greater investment and talent retention is needed to attract and retain key staff in public roles that drive critical public projects and services. The role of civic participation and pride should also be encouraged and developed as Local Councils look to the return of democratically elected Councillors and Mayors.



Civic Participation & Community Cohesion

- Partner with local organisations to promote civic pride, volunteerism, and youth leadership.
- Support civic education campaigns that encourage participation in city governance.

Crime Prevention & Public Safety

- Expand CCTV coverage in key public spaces in partnership with local businesses.
- Improve police response capacity for urgent cases through resourcing and coordination.
- Establish a local police command and monitoring centre for real-time surveillance.

Substance Abuse Prevention & Rehabilitation

- Strengthen community partnerships to reduce alcohol and drug-related harm.
- Increase access to recovery programs, awareness campaigns, and support services.

Government Capacity & Talent Retention

- Advocate for investment in public sector staff development and retention.
- Support training and capacity-building programmes for council and local institutions.



SDG 3

Good Health and Well-being

8 out of 13 targets measured
10 out of 28 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

Whilst specific localised data is hard to find, it is safe to assume that Lautoka shares many of the same public health challenges as much of Fiji. Namely, a high rate of death from diabetes, stroke and heart disease. In addition, a recent study by researchers from the University of South Pacific (2020) noted that the air quality in Lautoka nearly always surpassed safe levels. The broad but preventative nature of these health impacts require a multi-faceted and multi-agency approach.

Environmental Health & Pollution Control

- Improve sewerage systems and stormwater drainage, especially in informal settlements.
- Strengthen enforcement against illegal dumping and littering near waterways.

Vector-borne & Communicable Disease Control

- Expand dengue and disease surveillance and prevention programmes.
- Improve community awareness on hygiene and disease prevention.

Community Health Facilities & Emergency Care

- Increase access to mobile and community health services, including rural areas.
- Install and maintain AEDs in public places and markets.

Substance Misuse Prevention & Youth Support

- Partner with youth services and police to address drug misuse and support at-risk youth.
- Deliver school and community awareness programmes on substance abuse risks.

Healthy Lifestyles & Public Spaces

- Improve and maintain parks, walkways, and recreation spaces for exercise.
- Promote public health awareness on nutrition, fitness, and non-communicable diseases.

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka City notes the provision of 1 mile footpath and stretch facilities along Marine Drive seawall promoting healthy living, the availability of fresh market produces and seafood at the municipal market and the easy accessibility of government health facilities within the municipality.

SDG Indicators:

- From April 2024 – May 2025, Lautoka urban areas recorded 3 out of 10,000 deaths due to suicide.
- In 2024, Western Division had 18 out of 10,000 individuals with HIV infections.
- In 2021, Western Division neonatal mortality rate was 8 deaths per 1,000 births.
- Approximately 39 out of 1,000 individuals have been taken into custody for possession of illicit drugs.
- In the previous 12 months (January – December 2024) Lautoka reported 6 road fatalities. Victims were aged 19 to 75 years.
- Lautoka Hospital reported 13% unplanned readmission rate within 28 days of discharge (Ministry of Health and Medical Services Annual Report 2020-2021).



Context

Aspen Medical and Lautoka Public Hospital is the second largest hospital in Fiji and a major medical hub for the western division. The Western Division Health Services are divided as:

- **One** divisional hospital, located in Lautoka.
- **Six** sub-divisional hospitals.
- **Twenty-eight** health centres.
- **Twenty-four** nursing stations.

According to the Hospital Utilization Metrics, Lautoka Hospital has the highest occupancy at 75 percent after Suva (Ministry of Health and Medical Services – Health Status Report 2017). This figure underscores the high demand Aspen Medical and Lautoka Hospital plays in healthcare needs for people from the Western and Greater Western Division as the primary tertiary provider. At present there are 205 beds at the Lautoka Hospital, with average length of stay per patient recorded at 5.2 days.

53 elderly people reside in Golden Age home in Lautoka.

(Ministry of Women, Children and
Social Protection Annual Report,
2019)

As the primary tertiary referral centre for the division, the Aspen Lautoka hospital provides medical services for a population of more than **152,171** individuals (Ministry of Health and Medical Services – Health Status Report 2017). It is also expected, given the archipelagic nature of the islands, that inter-island medical concerns are also referred to Lautoka. It also serves as a crucial healthcare facility for travellers requiring medical care entering or leaving Fiji, as the Nadi International Airport is situated approximately 22 kilometres away.

While disaggregated health indicator data is privy during the writing of this report, the divisional data has been utilized to assess Lautoka's progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being). This is also due to the hospital's role in providing medical services to both urban and rural populations within its catchment area.

Target 3-1 Reduce Maternal Mortality

- Lautoka Hospital accounts for over **20%** of the country's birth and for the region (Vital Statistics, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2021).
- The national and western division statistics show **100% skilled attendance at birth** (Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Data from 2021 indicate that the Western Division of Fiji has made significant progress in promoting skilled birth attendance. Compared to 2016, the number of reported community births, which can pose higher risks, has decreased substantially. In 2017, only one community birth was recorded, marking a notable reduction from the previous year's figures.



Target 3-2 End all preventable deaths under 5 years of age

- According to the Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the Western Division reported an **Under-5 mortality rate of 23 deaths per 1,000 live births** for the seven-year period preceding the survey.

This rate is higher than the national average of 18 deaths per 1,000 live births and the urban areas' rate of 19 deaths per 1,000 live births.

- The Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, 2021) data for the seven-year period preceding the survey indicate that the Western Division experienced a **neonatal mortality rate of 8 deaths per 1,000 live births**.

This rate is higher than the national average of 7 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births, suggesting persistent challenges in the region.

One potential contributing factor could be the limited access to tertiary healthcare facilities from outer and remote regions within the Western Division.



Target 3-3 Fight communicable diseases

- **Approximately 18 out of every 10,000 individuals in the Western Division have an HIV infection** (151 cases reported, estimating there are 83,599 people in 2024). (Ministry of Health Press Releases Updated HIV/AIDS cases, August 2024). (SDG 3.3.1)



Target 3-4 Reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health

- During the period from April 2024 to May 2025, 22 lives were tragically lost due to suicide (Crime Statistics Unit Fiji Police Force, May 2025). (SDG 3.4.2).



Target 3-5 Prevent and treat substance abuse

- Approximately **39 out of every 10,000 individuals** in Lautoka have been taken into custody by the police for possession of illicit drugs over the past 12 months (Crime Statistics Unit Fiji Police Force, May 2025). (SDG 3.5.1).

A drug rehabilitation centre in the Fiji Corrections Service is operative. The council is advocating more surveillance and control of cases related to substance abuse.





Target 3-6 Reduce road injuries and deaths

- In the past **12 month** (Jan – December 2024), Lautoka reported 6 road fatalities. Victims were aged 19 to 75 years old, with 4 reported to be male and 2 females. Major cause of road fatalities was speeding (Fiji Police Force, Traffic and Transport Division, 2025).

This translates to **7 individuals per 100,000 population** being at risk of sustaining injuries or losing their lives due to road-related accidents in Lautoka.

The locations with the highest incidence of road fatalities in the past 12 months, were Drasa Avenue, Visesei Bypass, Naviago, Navutu, and Naidu Road in Lautoka.



Target 3-7 Universal access to sexual and reproductive care, family planning and education

- According to the Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics), the demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods among married and in-union women in the **Western Division is 53%**.

While this rate is higher than the national average of 50%, nationally urban areas' lags behind at 50%. Addressing the demand for family planning and delaying pregnancy remains a significant challenge in Fiji, as it is a culturally sensitive issue. Certain household and social characteristics may conflict with the concept of delaying pregnancy, which could potentially lead to substantial resistance, particularly in urban areas, where the implementation of family planning initiatives may not fully align with the traditional Fijian ethos regarding family size.

- The Western Division reports an **Adolescent Fertility Rate of 23 births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19**, which is lower than the national rate of 31 births per 1,000 and the national urban rate of 28 births per 1,000. However, there is a lack of pattern analysis to identify trends over time. Addressing the issue of adolescent births remains a significant challenge. Currently, there is no reliable way to measure how many of the reported cases involve girls below the age of 18. (Indicator 3.7.2)



Target 3-8 Achieve universal health coverage

Continuous Improvement of Patient Safety and Service Quality

Unplanned Readmission Rate within 28 Days of Discharge: Lautoka Hospital reported a 13% unplanned readmission rate within 28 days of discharge (Ministry of Health and Medical Services Annual Report 2020-2021). This was higher than those recorded in Suva and Lautoka.

Occupancy Rate and Length of Stay: The occupancy for Lautoka is reported to be 75%, with average length of stay of patients reported to be 5.2 days. This length of stay and readmission cases are higher than the average western division (Ministry of Health and Medical Services – Health Status Report 2017). (Indicator 3.8.1)

According to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2019-2020 (Household Income and Expenditure Report Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2020, p.67), the data for indicator 3.8.2 on annual average out-of-pocket expenditure on health as a percentage of household consumption or income is as follows:



- Western Division: 0.7%
- Urban Areas: 0.6%
- National Average: 0.5%

The Household Income survey (2019-2020) revealed insights into expenditure patterns and coping mechanisms in Fiji. In the Western Division, the annual non-food consumption per household was primarily spent on household and utilities, accounting for a substantial 51.7% of expenses. Notably, health expenses constituted the lowest expenditure category among all expenses for households in this region.

On a national level, the urban data indicated that 3.1% of the population reported reducing expenditure on essential services like health and education as a coping mechanism. However, this national urban data did not provide a classification or breakdown between urban and rural populations, limiting a comprehensive understanding of the situation across different geographic areas.

How is the Council achieving this goal?

Council Strategic Objectives	Council Activity
- Clean and Green - Active and Health - Friendly and safe	- Public Health and Hygiene - Solid Waste Management - Community Participation (Meetings & Consultations) - Licensing & Permits - Disaster Preparedness - Establishment of Markets - Recreation spaces and Parks - Enforcement and Compliance
Concerns for the Council	- Sewerage Overflow - Litter Control - Illegal dumping near rivers and creeks (related to SDG 14) - Landfill

LCC enforces the Public Health Act 1935 and by-laws to ensure the public safety of citizens. The council, in partnership with the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission, regulates and monitors public hygiene and safety by grading the quality of restaurants and ensuring compliance with established standards. This collaborative effort aims to maintain high levels of cleanliness, food safety, and consumer protection within the food service industry. In the previous 12 months, LCC has successfully issued:

- 60 food safety abatement notices.
- 50 illegal food business operation notices.
- 360 litter infringement notices in a year, with a number of cases ending up in legal proceedings.

This proactive approach ensures that local businesses and restaurants operate within the legal framework and maintain consumer protection standards.

In addition, the council has 15 clean-up campaigns and awareness campaigns focusing on areas such as waste management, reducing the incidence of dengue and leptospirosis. As an example, LCC implements proactive measures to combat mosquito-borne diseases, particularly before the wet season. For example, in October, the council conducts a comprehensive clean-up campaign focusing on:

1. Eliminating mosquito breeding sites
2. Raising public awareness through:
 - Demonstrations of larval survey techniques
 - Information on disease investigation processes
3. Conducting targeted anti-mosquito spraying in dengue outbreak hotspots

The key areas where the clean-up has been conducted include: Lomolomo and Saweni Beach, Marine Drive, Shirley park, IYC park, Balawa Subdivision, rural informal settlements and schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. These initiatives not only promote a clean and sustainable urban environment but also raise awareness among communities about their social and environmental responsibilities.

The council has an active Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee with 32 trained first aiders within the department. This commitment to employee well-being and safety sets an example to prioritise the welfare of their workforce.

Furthermore, the Council collaborated closely with the Ministry of Health to implement a comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation plan. This strategy encompassed several key measures:

1. Postponing non-essential gatherings
2. Regulating market operations through physical distancing
3. Enforcing mask-wearing in public spaces
4. Implementing crowd control measures
5. Limiting entry and exit points in public areas

Additionally, strict protocols were enforced for staff and visitors, including conducting temperature checks upon arrival at the office; verifying the use of the CareFiji App and ensuring staff wore masks in the workplace and public spaces. To raise awareness and promote adherence to COVID-19 protocols, the Council installed informative billboards, distributed circulars and made public announcements to promote adherence to COVID-19 protocols. These proactive approaches aimed to safeguard residents' and staff well-being; slow the spread of the virus; and ensure the continuation of essential services throughout the pandemic.





SDG 5

Gender Equality

5 out of 9 targets measured
7 out of 14 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

Women are the nucleus of the urban design and planning but are vulnerable to crime and harassment. Public safety for women is recognized as an urgent need for Lautoka, which requires support from all relevant stakeholders. For men, the council is addressing the often-overlooked need for accommodation for male market vendors and children of accommodating parents. This approach recognizes that gender equality benefits by providing safe spaces and support systems for men and children. By working to break the cycle of neglect and unaffordable accommodation and public safety for vendors of all age groups, the council is taking steps towards a more inclusive and equitable city.

Safe & Inclusive Public Spaces

- Ensure safe, accessible and gender-responsive public spaces and facilities (markets, transit hubs, public toilets).
- Install and maintain breastfeeding rooms and sanitation facilities for women, market vendors and mothers.
- Implement public anti-harassment measures, awareness and reporting channels.

Empowerment & Economic Participation

- Expand training, financial literacy, and enterprise support for women and youth entrepreneurs.
- Support pathways for market vendors and informal workers to enter formal and secure livelihoods.
- Promote inclusive hiring and leadership within the council and public institutions.

Fair Work & Shared Responsibility

- Promote childcare support and shared caregiving responsibilities in workplaces and communities.
- Support workplace gender-equity policies, safety training and fair representation.
- Strengthen legal literacy for women on property rights, land access and finances.

Safeguarding & Child Protection

- Provide safe childcare facilities for women market vendors and working mothers.
- Require gender-sensitive and child-protection training for workers and service providers.
- Expand access to family support and early childhood care services.

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka is a multi-ethnic & multi-religious society which is underpinned with mutual respect and trust amongst its people. The Market for Change Project an initiative funded by the UN Women is the key project currently addressing SDG 5.

SDG Indicators:

- From April 2024 to May 2025, 168 male and 91 females over 10,000 populations are victims to criminal offence in Lautoka urban centre.
- In 2017, 88% of the male are identified as economically active, compared to the 20% female population from Lautoka urban and peri-urban centre.
- In 2017, 21 males and 167 females out of the 1,00 population were involved in unpaid employment or home duties.
- In 2017, 43 males and 11 females out of the 1,000 population were in employer or self-employed roles.
- In 2017, 144 males and 146 females have access to information through online means.

Context

The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection, and the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre are key national organizations responsible for coordinating and overseeing the well-being of women, children, and persons with physical challenges. Although there is no specific goal that directly addresses special needs, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 will provide data on the proportion of the population in Lautoka with special needs.

SDG 5 on gender equality aims to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls, eliminate violence and harmful practices, ensure their full participation in decision-making, and guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health. Factors such as access to education, employment, financial independence, the internet and marital status play an important legal and social role in enabling or restricting freedom to practice autonomy. This was highlighted in the 2019 International Labour Organization Convention and the meeting of the Standing Committee, Parliament Precincts on 10 March 2020.

The socioeconomic character of Lautoka provides insights into various aspects of gender equality. The five factors listed below provide a multidimensional nature of gender equality.

1. Education
2. Access to Bank Account
3. Internet Access
4. Ratio of male and female in labour force.
5. Proportion of elderly population over 55 with no partner (divorced, widowed or never married during date of census).

Education

According to the 2017 Fiji Bureau of Statistics Census Data, the Tikina of Vuda had a population of **99,264**, with a concerning **6%** having never attended school, while **32%** were enrolled in education institutions in 2017. Gender disparity is evident among those who have discontinued their education, with the ratio of females to males being 48:52, indicating a slightly higher proportion of males leaving school prematurely compared to their female counterparts. However, from the data, females have fewer opportunities to attend school.

This gender gap in educational attainment highlights the need for targeted interventions to address potential barriers and challenges faced by girls and women in accessing and completing their education. By promoting gender equality in education and empowering girls and women through initiatives such as improving access, providing financial support, and raising awareness, Tikina of Vuda and Lautoka urban centres can work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of quality education (SDG 4) and gender equality (SDG 5), ensuring equal opportunities for all

Access to Bank Account

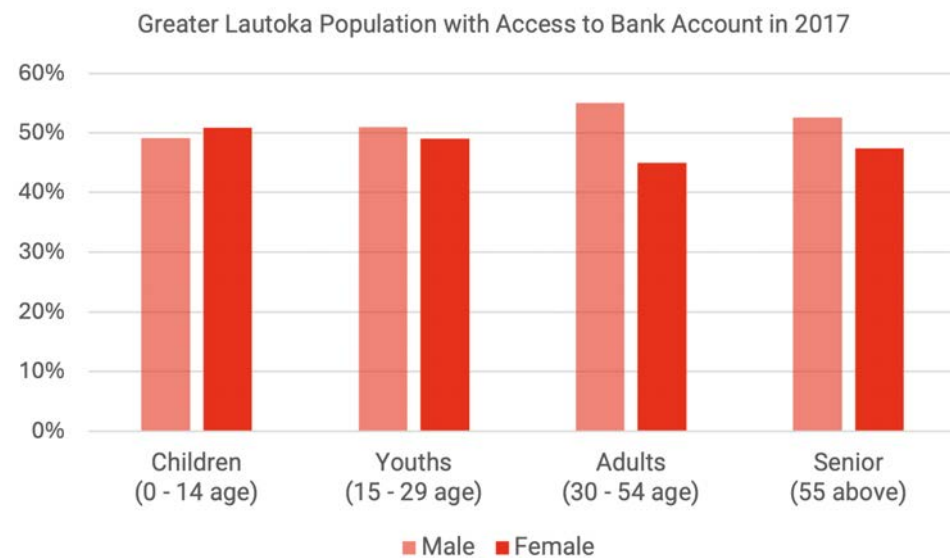


Figure 11. Access to Bank Account, Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017

- **55.5%** of the total urban population in Lautoka have access to banking services.
- Males aged 30 and above have a higher ratio of population with a bank account, compared to other age groups. This indicates a potential age and gender disparity in financial inclusion and autonomy.
- This situation indicates a higher reliance on male figures for financial authority within households, which can limit women's economic empowerment and decision-making power.

There is a need to conduct targeted awareness campaigns on financial literacy campaigns, especially for women aged 30 and above, to open and operate bank accounts. The council recognizes the need to promote equal access for women in financial resources, property resources and inheritance rights, which can enable economic independence. A key policy opportunity emerges from the need to enhance financial literacy among women aged 30 and above in Lautoka. This requires advocacy for the "Financial Empowerment of Women", combining targeted awareness campaigns with practical support for opening and operating bank accounts, microfinance and digital wallets for market vendors.

Internet Access

- According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2017) data, Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas have approximately **43.4%** or **496 out of every 1,000** individuals have access to the internet.
- More residents from Tavakubu and Simla Ward (**48%**) have access to the internet compared to other wards in Lautoka.

The data indicates the ability of residents to access the internet financially and socially. Having said that, digital literacy needs to increase in all wards of Lautoka for males and females alike.

Labour Force

Access to Employment Opportunities

- The 2017 Fiji Bureau of Statistics data reveals a significant gender gap in access to formal employment opportunities, particularly in peri-urban areas, where fewer females (1,042) have access compared to males (2,325).
- This disparity could be due to cultural and social factors; but it also represents opportunities to promote equal opportunities for women in the labour market and address barriers to their economic empowerment.
- The council advocates for the establishment of accessible childcare facilities and the provision of enhanced paid leave benefits, specifically targeting women in blue-collar jobs to support their family care responsibilities and health needs.

Economic Activity and Participation

- A higher proportion of males (1,171 or 88%) are reported as economically active compared to females (623 or 20%), indicating lower female participation in the workforce.
- Increasing women's economic participation and ensuring equal opportunities for productive employment are crucial for achieving gender equality (SDG 5, Target 5.4).

Unemployment Disparities

- In peri-urban areas, more females (21.7%) are unemployed compared to males, with 507 females to 397 males recorded as unemployed.
- Addressing gender-specific barriers to employment and providing equal access to decent work opportunities are essential for empowering women and promoting gender equality (SDG 5, Target 5.5).

Geographical Distribution

- While there is no significant geographical disparity between male and female unemployment rates within the city wards, the concentration of the economically active population in specific wards within and outside the city boundary may indicate localized challenges or opportunities for promoting gender equality in employment.

To achieve SDG 5 and promote gender equality in Lautoka, targeted interventions and policies may be required to address the identified disparities in access to employment, economic participation, and unemployment rates between genders. Empowering women economically and ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market are crucial steps towards achieving sustainable development and gender equality.

Marital Status

According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census Data, more males than females choose to remain unmarried, with a ratio of 1.5 males to 1 female. **42%** of the urban population in Lautoka are legally married, with more females (1 female to 0.9 males) being legally married. There are significantly more widowed females (2,934) than widowed males (725) in Lautoka. Widowed women, many of whom live with extended families or manage on limited budgets, face significant challenges in meeting financial obligations such as city rates, housing rental payments, and accessing affordable support care services. Some of these women depend on social networks and traditional land rights to access land in urban areas. The above statistics signify the need for economic empowerment programmes and social safety nets for widowed women to reduce incidences of increased poverty and marginalization.

Target 5-1 End discrimination against women and girls

The Fiji Constitution 2013, section 26 (a) and (b) guarantees the right to equality and freedom from discrimination, explicitly recognising sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression as prohibited grounds. According to the Asia Pacific Transgender Network (2022) the legal system currently identifies with two categories or binaries of gender, male and female that cannot be amended.

Current data reveals persistent challenges in eliminating discrimination against women in the workplace.

- A study conducted in 2016 by the Fiji Women Crisis Centre identified that **11%** of women in Lautoka's workforce reported being victims of sexual harassment.

Nationally, certain job requirements, such as serving the public, working at night, or attending office parties, further exacerbated the risk of harassment, which often manifested in verbal, gestural, and physical forms. While the public service and tourism sector's growth in Lautoka presents economic opportunities, it also highlights the need for active bystander laws and procedures to ensure safety for women in the workplace, community, and public spaces.

- Nationally women aged 30 years old (25%) and those from the iTaukei community (29%) are considered being the most vulnerable, while the reason for these figures are privy during the writing of this report. Addressing workplace-based discrimination requires a multi-faceted approach, including strengthening the implementation of existing legal frameworks, promoting awareness and education, and fostering a culture of respect and equality in all spheres of life.



Target 5-2 End all violence against and exploitation of women and girls

The SDG target 5.2 aims to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

The national data indicates that 3 in 5 ever-partnered women experience physical violence, 58% experience emotional violence, and 1 in 3 experience sexual violence (Fiji National Service Delivery Protocol for Responding to Cases of Gender Based Violence 2018).

- From a total of 2,220 cases reported in the past 12 months (April 2024 – May 2025) in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas:
 - 106 offences were related to sexual misconduct
 - 38 cases were reported as breaches of the Domestic Violence Act 2009.

This statistic indicates that **17 out of every 10,000 individuals** in the urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka are at risk of experiencing sexual violence or harassment. When comparing the national data to the local crime statistics, it is clear that there is a large amount of crime that is not being reported.



Target 5-4 Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities

- In Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas reveals 16% of women and 2% of men are engaged in unpaid work, and home duties (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2021).

This statistic indicates that **18.7% of the population** in the urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka are in unpaid employment or home duties, from which **2.1% of individuals** are male and **1.67%** are female.

Recognising and valuing this unpaid work is crucial for achieving shared domestic responsibilities and promoting sustainable urban development in Lautoka. There is currently no reliable study in Lautoka and Fiji to forecast how unpaid work can hinder women's ability to participate in social and political activities, but it can be assumed that females depend on males economically in these cases.

To address this challenge, a multi-faceted approach is recommended, including encouraging equal sharing of domestic responsibilities, providing support services for women engaged in unpaid work, offering flexible work policy, investing in creative urban infrastructure and services for domestic in unpaid work, collecting comprehensive data, and promoting gender-responsive urban planning and design.



Target 5-5 Ensure full and effective partnership and equal opportunities

- In Lautoka City Council, 1 female has been recognised for her role in senior position, and has a 28:177 ratio of male to female staff.

Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment, especially among women, presents a significant opportunity to achieve urban sustainability in Lautoka.

- 3% of women and 11% of men are employers or self-employed in urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017).

This statistic indicates that **538 out of every 10,000 individuals** in the urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka are in employer or self-employed roles, from which **43 out of every 1,000 individuals** are male and **11 out of every 1,000 individuals** are female.

Additionally, self-employed individuals and small businesses often operate within their local communities, providing goods and services tailored to urban residents' needs, reducing environmental impact through minimised transportation and promoting innovation in sustainable solutions. However, addressing the gender disparity in entrepreneurship rates is crucial, requiring targeted support, access to financing, business training, mentorship programmes, and policies that promote equal opportunities and address gender-specific barriers faced by women



Target 5-B Promote empowerment of women through technology

The Ministry of Finance, National Development Plan recognises gender disparity exists with land ownership, and this is partly due to the existing systems and processes and cultural norms.

More females compared to males have access to internet.

- A ratio of **144:146 (per 1,000 population)**, males to females, have access to information through online means (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2017). The council advocates for targeted digital literacy programmes for women, establish community internet hubs with dedicated women's hours, and partner with local providers to offer subsidized internet packages, supported by regular assessments to measure impact and adapt strategies



How is the Council achieving this goal?

Council Strategic Objectives	Council Activity
- Friendly and Safe - Accessible and Connected	- Employment (Male & Female) - Service Provided (Market) - Enforcement and Compliance - UN Women Market for Change

The 2023 – 2024 National Budget allocated FJD\$250,000 to the construction of an aged care facility. With the 2025 – 2026 budget allocating a further \$212, 787 to provide for the rental of the temporary aged care home. The 2025-2026 Budget has allocated FJD\$490,000 to the upgrade and enhancement of the Multi-Cultural Centre in Lautoka through the Minsitry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs. This development ensures appreciation of the local culture and diversity of Lautoka.



Image 5. Lautoka Market. Photo Credit: Chethna Ben 2025

Lautoka Market/ Women Vendors' Facilities:

281 Male Vendors

445 Female Vendors

60 beds for women

2,955 stalls

- The objective of the UN Women Market for Change Programme is to provide accommodation facilities for women vendors and protect them from harsh weather conditions and dust from roads. However, men and boys do not have adequate provisions for accommodation.
- The UN Market for Change Project aligns with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG Target 8.8, which aims to promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including women, migrants and those in precarious employment.
- 35 CCTV cameras are installed in the market and along the bus station, Tavakubu Satellite Market. Police have access to cameras from the market managers office only, posing a

security concern. The council has called for tenders to install an additional 32 cameras in the market area, which will assist in addressing criminal activities.

- The council has established a crime prevention committee comprising the Lautoka Market Vendors Association, wheelbarrow boys, police, and council representatives to address crime in the market.
- One challenge faced is that the heat within the market often causes spoilage of vendors' products. To address this, the council has replaced all defective industrial fans and installed 15 new fans in the new wing market to improve ventilation, and plans to place additional 6 fans by 2025.
- The UN Market for Change project conducts training and empowerment for women through financial literacy training, contributing to the progress towards SDGs.

The projects also align with the National Development Plan, focusing on income-generating opportunities, reducing violence against women and children, and developing suitable financial products and services for target sectors.

Progress

There is a reported high sense of safety among Lautoka market vendors. However, women face increased demands in domestic, childcare and elderly care duties. This progress identifies that the gendered role in societies identify to the different models of success. Women play an important role in communities, as much as men and there needs to be equitable empowerment opportunities, social safety and acknowledgement of the varied non-financial and subjective (for example, caretaker, sense of belonging, nourishment) contributions made.

Challenges

The Lautoka market vendors raised concerns that currently there are no dedicated vendor bathrooms, which makes sanitation an issue. There are also calls to introduce the accommodation for men, but this needs to be culturally and socially evaluated and designed. The 2019 – 2022 period marked a shift in the role and definitions of gendered productivity, roles and responsibilities. Currently there is little research on how the pandemic affected gendered roles, and how lock-downs and services offered in urban centres affected women disproportionately in Fiji (see Dean 2020; Cliffe 2020; Hamilton 2020 as examples).

Next Steps

To align with SDG goals and improve service delivery, LCC plans to transition from its current gender-neutral ratepayer records to a comprehensive system capturing both gender and marital status, enabling more targeted interventions and data-driven policy decisions.





6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



SDG 6

Clean Water and Sanitation

3 out of 8 targets measured
3 out of 11 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

All level of government are prioritising the modernization of its water and sanitation infrastructure as a key strategy to enhance urban resilience. This forward-thinking approach recognises that upgrading and innovating existing systems is crucial for addressing current challenges and preparing for future environmental and demographic pressures.

Wastewater & Sewerage Infrastructure

- Advocate for increased wastewater treatment capacity and services.
- Expand wastewater treatment plant capacity for population growth.
- Transform wastewater management near creeks and estuaries.
- Advocate for action on the Western Division Wastewater Masterplan (JICA).

Drainage & Stormwater Management

- Partner to upgrade drainage and stormwater systems.
- Develop integrated stormwater management systems.
- Create awareness on rain gardens in flood-prone areas.
- Strengthen critical infrastructure for flood resilience.

Solid Waste & Pollution Prevention

- Create awareness and programmes to prevent waste entering rivers and creeks.
- Reduce illegal dumping into waterways through campaigns and enforcement.
- Improve overall waste management systems and facilities.

Access to Sanitation Services

- Require child-protection certification and vetting for youth workers and relevant service providers.
- Provide support facilities for children of market vendors and working parents.

Water Conservation & Resilience

- Introduce rainwater harvesting initiatives for development projects.
- Promote water-sensitive design in urban planning.

Partnerships & Integrated Planning

- Coordinate with government and development agencies on water and sanitation upgrades.
- Align with JICA wastewater masterplan for the Western Division.

Progress Snapshot

High access to metered drinking water, but wastewater treatment capacity has exceeded.

SDG Indicators:

- 381 in every 1,000 households in Lautoka urban and peri urban areas reported their waters to dry up occasionally (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census 2017).
- The current population connected to the sewerage plant is 45,000. This exceeds the current plant capacity of 40,000 inhabitants.
- 87% of the local residents and businesses in Lautoka (n = 63) during the Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, responded that they would support rainwater harvesting projects in Lautoka.

Context

Water Access and Wastewater Services



Image 6. Clean Water and Sanitation, Picture credit: Chethna Ben, 2025.

Urban centres rely on proper treatment of their waste water. The current system uses a separate segregation system for stormwater and wastewater treatments. The Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) is the key agency responsible for delivering improved water access and wastewater services in Fiji. However, aging infrastructure and a rising population in the upper topography of the urban centre led to frequent water losses and inequitable access.

- **381 in every 1,000 households** in Lautoka urban and peri urban areas reported their waters to dry up occasionally (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census 2017).
- From the ratio of houses in the wards, Veitari has reported the most significant (48%) water dry-up in their area. Followed by Lautoka peri-urban area (44%).

WATER EVER DRY UP IN LAUTOKA

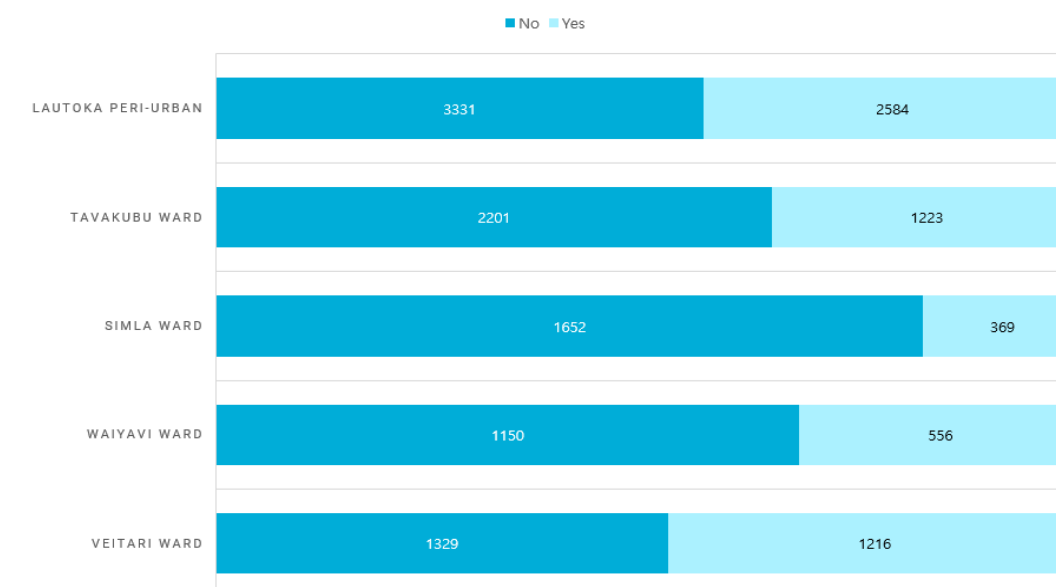


Figure 12. In 2017, Did water every dry up in Lautoka by ward? Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 2017.



Challenges faced by Water Authority of Fiji

According to the 2024 Annual Report, one of the key challenges faced by the Water Authority of Fiji is the overflow of wastewater caused by increased flooding and sea-level rise, which negatively impacts local flora and fauna. This issue is further complicated by the challenge of low rainfall levels. Implementing water detention systems and basins in Lautoka, along with promoting rainwater harvesting, can help address both flooding and water scarcity in the region.

WAF experiences **200 bursts / 100km** of water mains, while the global benchmark is 13 bursts/100km in a good condition.

Stormwater and waste management

Lautoka reported an annual rainfall of 2,809.4mm in 2024, with an average monthly rainfall of 234 mm (Fiji Meteorological Office, 2024). During rainy seasons, stormwater runoff carries litter from roads, such as oil, grease and even dog faeces, which ends up in rivers and creeks. The sewer and stormwater lines are separate in Lautoka. However, sewer lines often combine with fatbergs, where baby wipes, diapers and calcium from concrete transform into solid masses. This situation necessitates newer sewers and education on proper disposal practices, as the current pipes are not large enough to carry these fatbergs and all the flushes. The installation of larger pipes for improved infrastructure is expensive, and some separate approaches do not account for treatment.

Target 6-1 Safe and affordable drinking water

- **910 in every 1,000 households** in Lautoka urban and peri urban areas have piped water within their dwelling (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Population and Housing Census 2017).

The provision and increasing use of water tanks serve as a crucial contingency measure, enables residents and businesses to maintain access to water supply during electricity outages or water main breaks.

While no data is present on the number of households with water tanks, 4% of the households reported access to standpipes outside their dwelling. This means provision of water supply to the remaining 5% of the population in Lautoka is either through boreholes, neighbouring properties or unprotected means.

Inadequate Wastewater Treatment and Management

Inadequate wastewater treatment and management can lead to increased mortality rates and the rise of public health issues, with immense repercussions. According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census, out of the total number of households in Lautoka:

- **53%** of households in Lautoka are connected to sewer systems.
- **43%** rely on septic tanks.



Target 6-3 Improve water quality, wastewater treatment and safe reuse

The Lautoka Sewerage Treatment Plant has an oxidation compound system.

- There are 11 water treatment facilities in the Western Region and 4 wastewater treatment plants.
- According to the Fiji Low Emissions Strategy 2018 – 2050, 45,000 population are connected to the sewerage plant. This exceeds the current plant capacity of 40,000 inhabitants.

As of 2018, **789 out of 1,000 household** is connected to the wastewater in the Western Division.

WASTEWATER CONNECTION IN THE WESTERN DIVISION

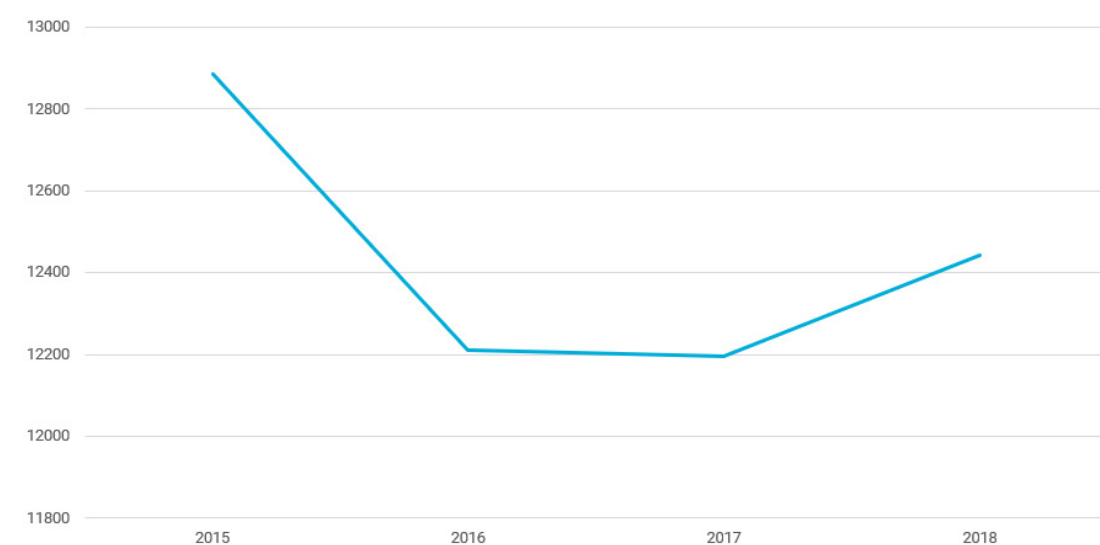
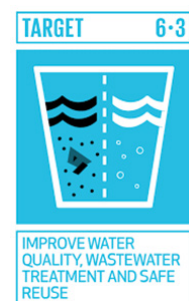


Figure 13. Number of connections to Wastewater, Source: Water supply and wastewater sector report, JICA 2020, p.2-16.

From a national point of view, other urban centres are functioning well while Lautoka is exceeding its capacity at present. Despite efforts to contact the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) during the preparation of this report, no response was received. Consequently, the specific reasons for Lautoka's lag in wastewater treatment remain undisclosed. However, based on common urban infrastructure challenges, it is presumed that ageing infrastructure is a significant contributing factor to this issue. The current statistics reveal the need to research and work with increasing the capacity of the treatment plant. Failure to address this will lead to untreated or partially treated sewage being discharged into the environment, leading to water pollution and potential health hazards.

Environmental Concerns

Namoli urban village, V.M Pillay Road, Lautoka City Council Carpark, and other areas have been noted to have leaking septic tanks that require desludging. This situation poses a risk of wastewater flowing into nearby coasts, creeks, rivers, agricultural land, and open drains, creating an environmental hazard. Overflows have also been linked to the dumping of household items like rags, sanitary pads, and diapers and rubbish illegally at nearby rivers and creeks.





Water Demand Forecast

Target 6-4 Increase water-use efficiency and ensure freshwater supplies

The June 2025 – 2026 National Budget has further allocated **\$284 million to Water Authority of Fiji (WAF)** to support major upgrades to water sources, treatment plants, pipelines and pump stations across the country.

- The 2020 Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) report on Water Supply and Waste Management Sector in Fiji forecasts that by 2033 demand for water in Lautoka will increase to 142.05ML from 96.0 ML in 2013. As of 2018, 789 out of 1,000 household is connected to the wastewater in the Western Division.



Target 6-B Support local engagement in water and sanitation management

- **87%** of the local residents and businesses in Lautoka (n = 67) during the Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, responded that they would support rainwater harvesting projects in Lautoka.

The Lautoka City Council health department through their responsibilities and functions, actively investigate sanitation control management, solid waste management, wastewater and management and are regulated through the Public Health Act 111, Litter Act 2008, garbage bylaw, and the Environmental Management Act. Currently, they are empowered to investigate public health complaints, including issues related to litter, improper disposal of wastewater, and sewerage overflows. The actions they can take include issuing respective intimations, statutory and fixed penalty notices, and instituting legal action upon non-compliance.



How is the Council achieving this goal?

Council Strategic Objectives	Council Activity
▪ Clean and Green ▪ Active and Health ▪ Accessible and Connected	▪ Public Health and Hygiene ▪ Solid Waste Management (garbage collection service, Landfill, 3R Promotion) ▪ Community Participation (Meetings & Consultations) ▪ Licensing & Permits ▪ Disaster Preparedness ▪ Enforcement and Compliance ▪ Stakeholder engagement – WAF/DoE

Government Initiatives

In the current national budget for the 2025–2026 period, the Fiji government has allocated \$284 million to revamp water and wastewater management. Additionally, WAF plans to increase utility charges, which may positively influence the need for repairs to old and aging infrastructure. In 2024, the Parliament of Fiji proposed a budget of FJD \$397 million in the water sector for Nadi to Lautoka area, and FJD \$1.22 billion for sanitation by 2050. This decision was made to account for the current population and the growing tourism sector in these areas. An additional \$47 million is reported to be budgeted for water and waste water management and upgrades. These fundings were aligned to the Fiji Water Strategy 2050, and alignment to the section 35 and 36 of the Fijian Constitution.

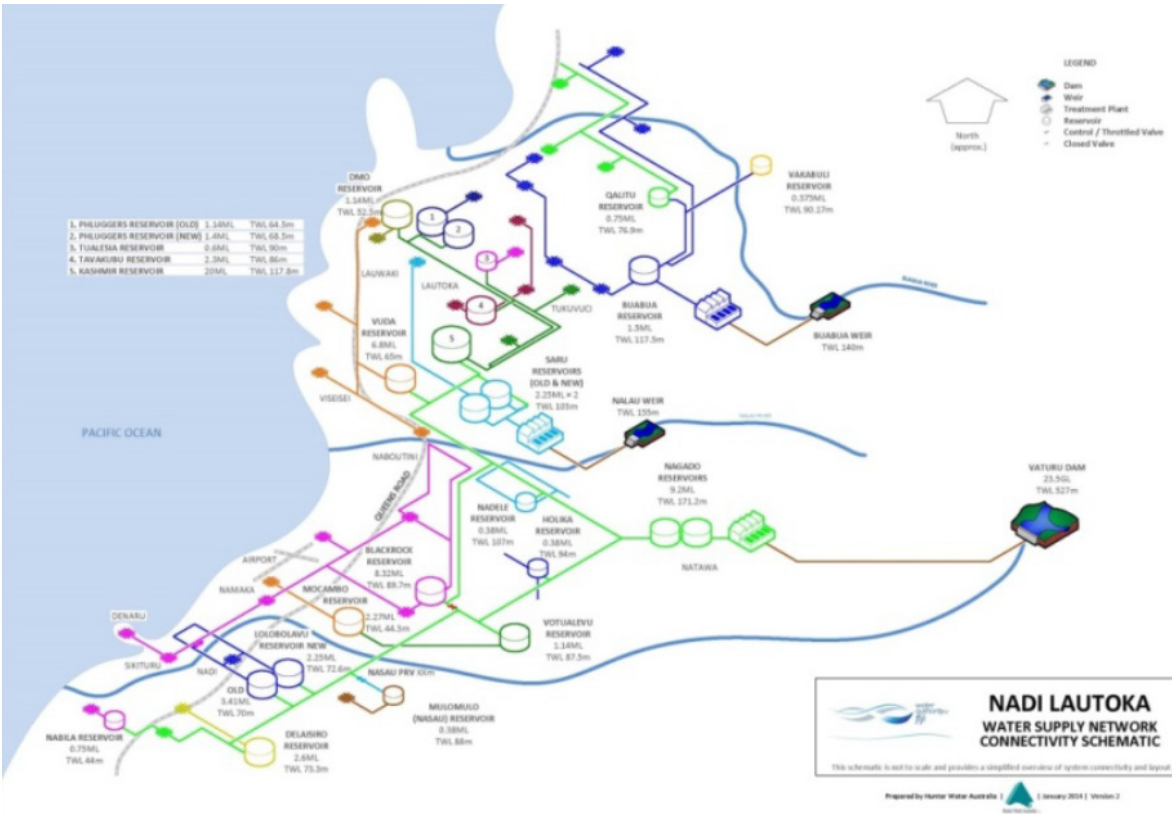


Figure 14. Outline of Nadi/ Lautoka System, Source: Data Collection Survey for the Water Supply and Wastewater Sector in the Republic of Fiji, JICA, 2020.

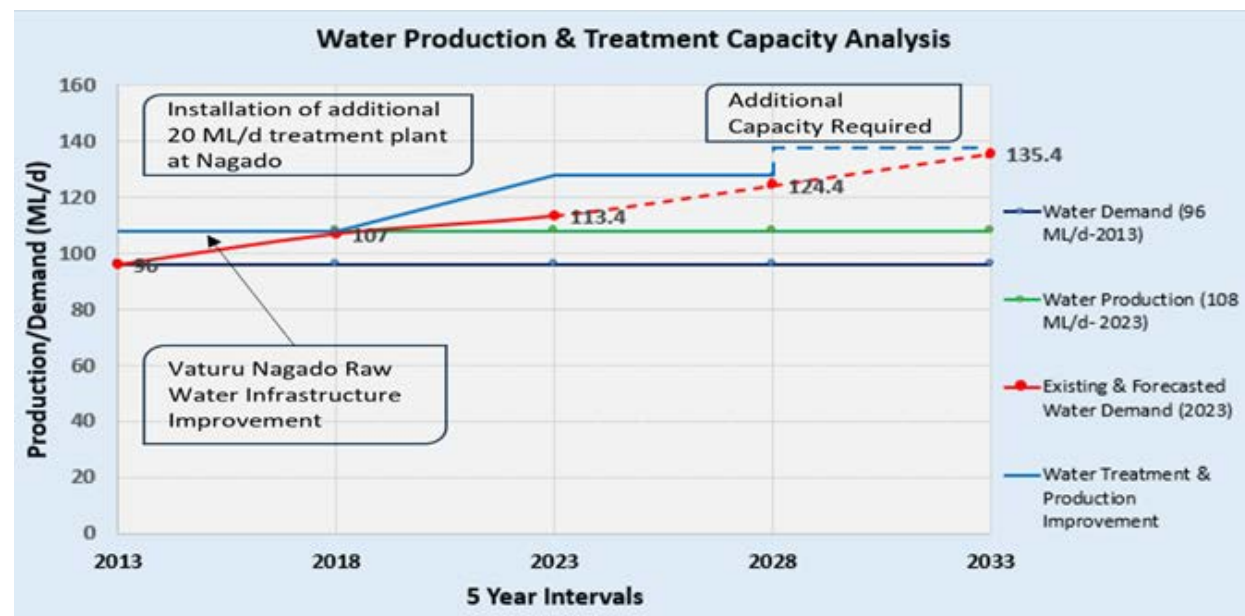


Figure 15. Water Production and Treatment Capacity Analysis Nadi/Lautoka, Source: Water Authority of Fiji Annual Report 2024.

Cost and Partnerships

The cost of repairs is expensive for WAF, necessitating public-private partnerships to address concerning needs. A lack of action can potentially lead to raw sewerage contaminating waterways, harming aquatic life, and posing health risks to communities. The exact nature of this expense to Lautoka is not clear during the writing of the report.

The Government of Fiji has requested Japanese assistance in the improvement of the main trunks, augmentation of the Nagado WTP and Vaturu Dam. The Varage Dam and Saru wastewater treatment plant was first established in 1959, and there is records that it has not undergone sustainable upgrades since (Water supply and wastewater sector report, JICA 2020). However, prospects for augmentation of Saru WTP and Buabua WTP and development of new a WTP is low. The report concludes that further surveys and examination are required.

The 2024 budget had allocated a project cost of FJD\$9.4 million to design and upgrade the pipes with robust material by December 2024. While JICA in 2023 – 2024 allocated in kind approximately FJD\$3.095 million for capacity improvement of non-revenue water reduction and formulation of wastewater treatment master plan in western Division.

Multi-level Action and Collaboration

Accelerating multi-level action in the areas of waterways and sanitation requires collaboration of the executing agency Water Authority of Fiji, with implementing and related agencies, including:

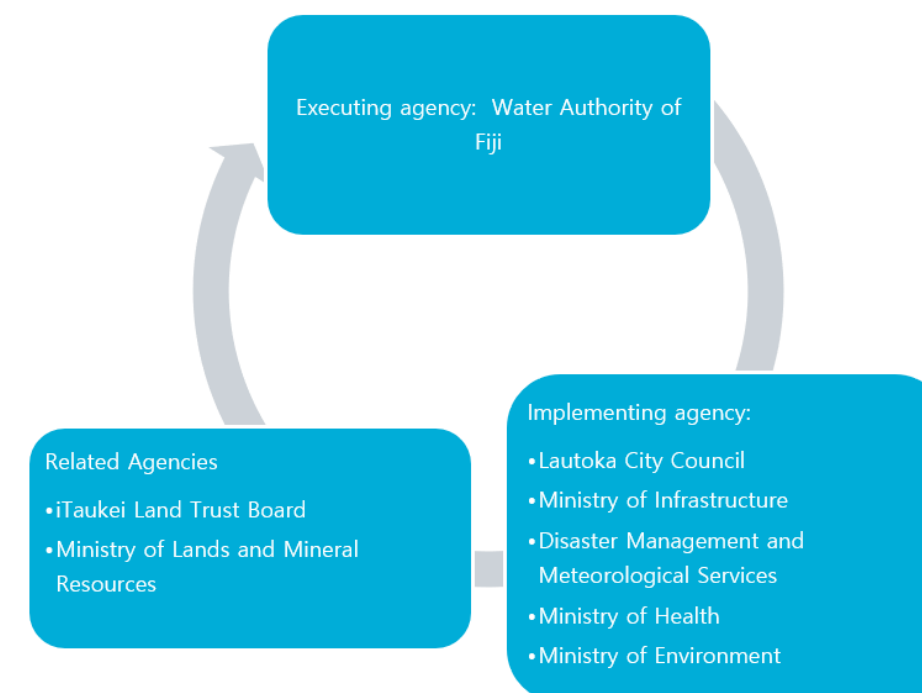


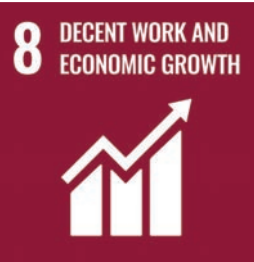
Figure 16. Multi-level Action and Collaboration Pathways, Source: Chethna Ben 2025

Lautoka city council works in collaboration with WAF to ensure delivery of water and sanitation services within their jurisdiction, through maintenance and management.

A possible recommendation is to leverage Public Private Partnership arrangements with private sector entities for the development, operation and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure. Successful projects from the Pacific include:

- Econ-San Toilets in Tuvalu, which was a community led project on ecological sanitation systems to reduce water usage and prevent ground water contamination.
- Majuro Water and Sewer Company Solar Project in Marshall islands, a public-private partnership that installed solar panels to power water pumps.

The operational policy and procedure for the participation of local communities in water and sanitation management in Lautoka aim to foster active community engagement and ownership. By encouraging community participation, the council aims to promote sustainable practices, enhance accountability, and ensure that solutions are tailored to the specific needs and concerns of residents.



SDG 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth

6 out of 12 targets measured
4 out of 17 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

The council is investing in upgrading and expanding sports facilities to international standards, making Lautoka an attractive destination for regional and international sporting events. This includes enhancing the city's stadium, developing multi-purpose sports complexes, and improving supporting infrastructure such as accommodation and transportation links.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Economic Diversification & Tourism Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop an Economic Development Strategy, leveraging sporting and sugar heritage.▪ Attract diverse sports tourism and promote cultural tourism.▪ Measure GDP contribution per municipal area. |
| Youth Development & Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Develop youth civic pride, inclusion, and drug-use prevention programmes.▪ Deliver youth employment and skills pathways.▪ Support social reintegration schemes (e.g., homelessness-to-employment). |
| Business & Entrepreneurship Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Promote micro-enterprise support and local business growth.▪ Implement a digital ID system for micro-entrepreneurs.▪ Facilitate training with Chamber of Commerce on responsible business practices.▪ Promote partnerships with MSMEs and local entrepreneurs. |
| Skills Development & Financial Literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Invest in vocational training and job-readiness programmes.▪ Increase access to financial literacy and adult education services. |
| Monitoring & Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish an Evaluation & Monitoring Unit at the Council.▪ Support evidence-based economic planning and reporting. |

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka urban area is the Administrative Capital of the Western Division and hosted a Port of Entry, Divisional Government Departments, Major industries such as sugar, pine, distillery, textiles, fertilizer, etc.

SDG Indicators:

- In 2017, out of every 10,000 individuals in Lautoka urban and peri-urban area (aged 15 to 64), 6,230 are economically active, of which 4,152 are male and 2,078 are female.
- In 2017, **137 out of every 1,000 youths** aged 15 to 29 are not in education, employment, or training, with **76 being male and 61 being female** out of the 1,000 youths.
- **In 2017, 41 children (aged 15-19)** in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas were recorded to be engaged in child labour.
- **3 out of every 1,000 children (aged 5 – 14)** are engaged in child labour, with 3 being male **and 4** being female.



Context

The Gross Domestic Product in Fiji is currently calculated nationally, and there is no data to measure this at the urban level. It is recommended that urban-level GDP contributors be introduced to measure productivity, competitiveness and measure impact of policy and intervention at the urban scale.

The Lautoka and Rarawai sugar mills continue to support socioeconomic growth in Lautoka and Ba respectively. Through the government efforts to strengthen the sugar industry, FSC has witnessed a steady growth of 16% in the last cane production season.

Target 8-3 Promote policies to support job creation and growing enterprises

- In 2017, Total economically active population was **27,730 people (53%)** in Lautoka Urban and Peri-Urban Areas.
- out of every 10,000 individuals in Lautoka (aged 15 to 64), **6,230 are economically active**, of which **4,152 are male** and **2,078 are female**.



The 2021 Annual Paid Employment Statistics report identified **34,397 people** in the Western Division in paid employment. The private sector is recorded to be the

WESTERN DIVISION

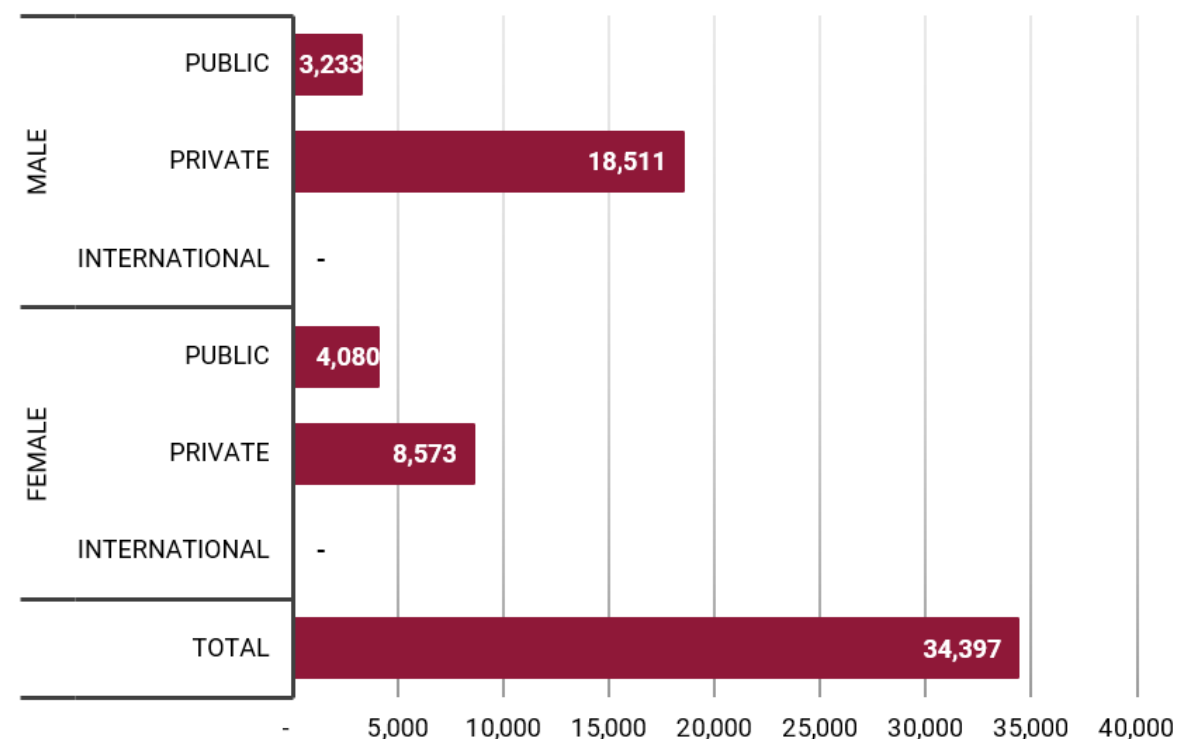


Figure 17. Distribution of Paid Employment in Western Division, Sector and Sex, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2021, Annual Paid Employment Statistics

Target 8-4 Improve resource efficiency in consumption and production

National assessment of industries that contribute to carbon emissions notes that the “manufacturing of textiles, garments, footwear, sugar, tobacco, food processing, beverages (including mineral water), wood-based industries, cement and construction activities generate **16%** of total CO2 emissions. This is the second largest source of emissions after transport (Fiji Low Carbon Strategy 2018). The Lautoka sugar mill is the city’s main industrial sector. The council advocates for strategies to reduce cane burning, improved biomass cogeneration, energy efficiency upgrades, and advanced emissions control technologies.



Target 8-5 Full employment and decent work with equal pay

- Unemployment rate in Lautoka is 2.9% of the population (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2017).
- The major source of income for households in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas is through regular salary.
- The employment statistics from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2021) report that nationally, more employees earn wages than salaries.



MAJOR SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

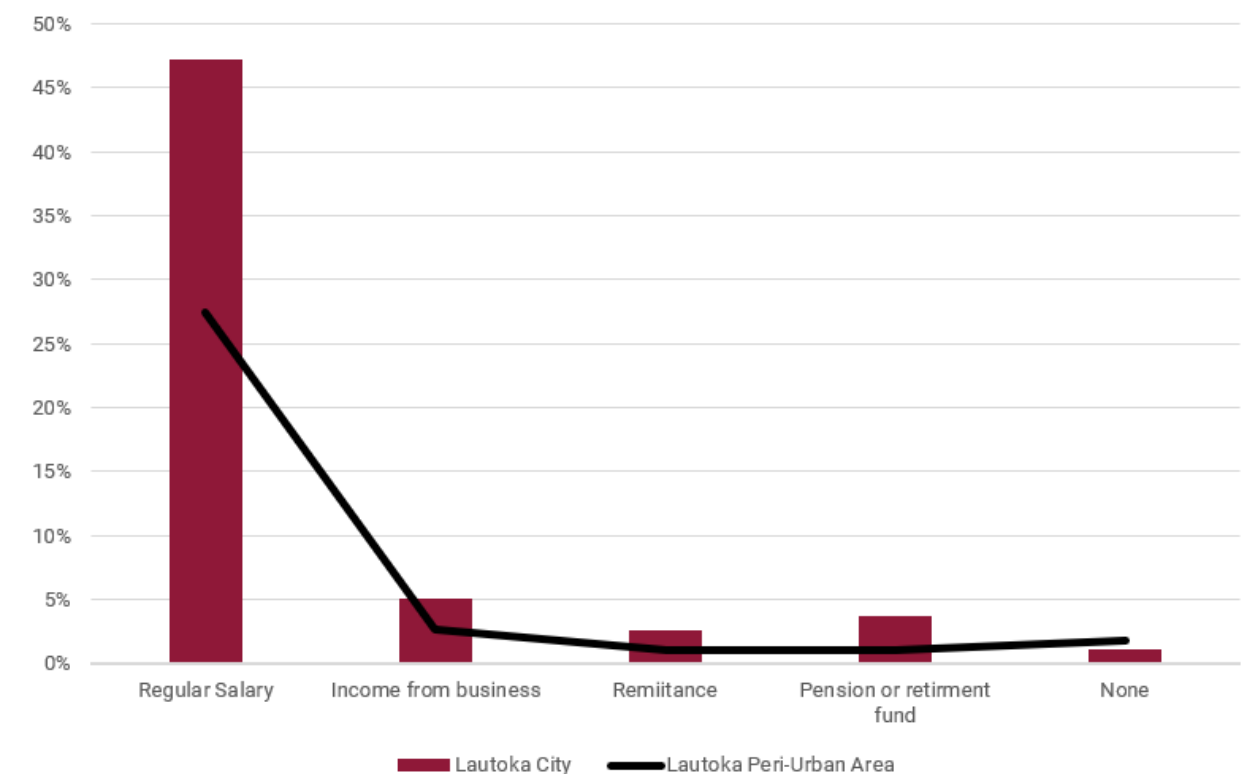


Figure 18. Major Source of Household Income in Lautoka Urban and peri-Urban Areas, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017



The mean wages and salaries data is not provided for the Western Division specifically, but the national figures can provide some insights. Industries with higher mean salaries nationally (2021) include:

- Mining and Quarrying (\$57,337.54)
- Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management & Remediation Activities (\$45,049.53)
- Construction (\$45,049.53)
- Financial and Insurance Activities (\$37,181.36)

In reference to the national data, industries with lower mean wages or salaries, such as Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Manufacturing; Accommodation and Food Services sector, may require attention to improve decent work and income opportunities in the Western Division.

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025 (n=67) in Lautoka reported the following business needs:

- Food, restaurant and catering services **(29%)**
- Retail shops **(24%)**

Target 8-6 Promote youth employment, education and training

- In the Lautoka Urban and Peri-Urban areas, **68 out of every 1,000 youths** aged 15 to 29 are not in education, employment, or training, with **76 being male and 61 being female** out of the 1,000 youths.
- This is higher than the national average where **1,249 youths (7%)** aged 15 – 29 were not in education, training or employment (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017).



Target 8-7 End modern slavery, trafficking and child labour

The UN defines child labour as those aged 5 - 17 engaged in the workforce. This unfortunately does not align with Fiji's Census age intervals and so the age bracket of 5 - 14 has been used as a proxy.

In 2017, Lautoka Urban and Peri-Urban areas had:

- **3 out of every 1,000 children (aged 5 – 14)** are engaged in child labour, with 3 being male and 4 being female.
- **41 children (aged 5-14)** in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas were recorded to be engaged in child labour.



A recent report on homelessness (Tuicaumia and Volavola, 2025) highlights the need to invest in employment skills and vocational training programmes to enhance workforce productivity and employability, as well as introduce youth employment programmes and support hubs for Medium, Small, and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs).

Target 8-9 Promote beneficial and sustainable tourism

- In the previous 12 months (March 2024 to March 2025), Lautoka recorded **85,963 rooms** sold per night from 216,381 rooms available (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Provisional Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Statistics March Quarter 2025).
- The occupancy rate in Lautoka was **39.7%** in the previous 12 months.

According to the Fiji Bureau of Statistics' Provisional Hotels and Tourist Accommodation Statistics for the March Quarter of 2024, the room occupancy rate in the region experienced a modest decline, dropping from 43.1% in 2023 to 39.7% in 2024. Due to this the area reported a reduction in total hotel receipt by \$145,000 from the period from March to December 2024 compared to 2023.

Fiji's tourism industry plays a vital role in the nation's economy, generating significant revenue and employment opportunities. However, efforts are needed to ensure the sustainability and inclusivity of this sector in line with Target 8.9. While tourism receipts and room occupancy rates indicate a demand in the industry, fluctuations highlight the need for policies that promote resilience and diversification for Lautoka urban centres.



Target 8-10 Universal access to banking, insurance and financial services

Achieving urban sustainability and decent work in Lautoka requires strengthening financial inclusion, as outlined in SDG 8.10.

- There are **11 bank branches** in Lautoka urban areas, and this limits access for residents in Greater Lautoka, Western Division, and rural areas. This hinders economic opportunity for small enterprises, informal workers, and marginalised groups.

Based on the 2017 Fiji Bureau of Statistics census data, here are the key points regarding access to bank accounts in the Lautoka urban and peri-urban area:

- **Out of every 1,000 individuals, 555 have access to a bank account.**
- **For every 1,000 females, 516 have a bank account.**
- **For every 1,000 males, 594 have a bank account.**
- **Upto FJD 10,000 per transactions can be made through MPaisa, with no card charge.**

The overall low rate of access to banking services (55.5%) in Lautoka, coupled with the gender gap disfavours women, exacerbates financial exclusion and impedes progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5 and 9 (SDG 5.4 and 9.3) of gender equality.

Addressing this necessitates expanding financial institutions' outreach, tailoring services to community needs, and promoting financial literacy. Collaboration among stakeholders is crucial to ensure accessible, affordable, and inclusive financial services aligned with decent work and urban sustainability principles. By fostering an inclusive financial ecosystem, Lautoka can unlock sustainable development, economic empowerment, and decent work opportunities for all residents, regardless of location or gender.



Target 8-B Develop a global youth employment strategy

The Ministry of Youth and Sports, in collaboration with the Fiji National University has launched a Men's Barber Training programme. The initial programme trained 20 unemployed youths. Other organizations like F.R.I.E.N.D.S. and Commonwealth of Learning have partnered with communities to offer practical and entrepreneurial skills.



How is the Council achieving this goal?

The Voluntary National Review (2023) recorded government's plans to establish the Navutu area in Lautoka as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The role of this area is to provide all necessary infrastructure and utilities for development and a 'Plug-and-Play' approach. However, this area is also noted for their informal coastal households and therefore there seems to be a complex environment for urban planning, economic growth and disaster management activities.

Council Strategic Objectives	Council Activity
Vibrant and Well Designed	- Utilization of Council open spaces for developments - Networking with investors, government agencies and NGO's to attract potential investors - Development of foreshore area to attract tourism - Creation of Food Market at Namoli Green, for dual purpose of day and night food vendors. - Extension of city boundary to cater for increasing needs - Formalization/relocation of squatter settlements - Review of city scheme plan - Expansion of utilities /services

Current Project Highlights by the Council

A number of Council projects by the council are aligned to Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and the Fiji National Development Plan. These include:

- 1) Namoli Green Night Food Market
- 2) Market Triangle Shade Structure Project
- 3) Botanical Garden Coffee Shop

The Namoli Green Night Food Market



Image 7. Namoli Green Food Market, Picture Credit: Lautoka City Council 2025.

8 Male Vendors 7 sweet carts
120 Female Vendors 160 stalls

- The project aims to provide shelter facilities for night vendors in the market to improve small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The stalls are designed with a 1m x 1m capacity and include benches. It aligns with SDG Target 8.3, which focuses on promoting policies to support job creation and growing enterprises.
- It aligns with SDG Target 8.10, which focuses on increasing access to banking, insurance, and financial services. Currently, all vendors make direct cash payments, but plans are in place to enable mobile money and online bank transfers in the future.
- As of February 2024, the project has been completed, with 62 food stalls operating both during the day and night, and 7 sweet cart vendors operating during the day until late evening. However, the council's 2024 audit report noted a lack of internal control measures to address anomalies in revenue and capital aid grants.
- Additionally, security is hired from 6 am to 6 pm in the night food market to provide security for the women vendors.
- The project demonstrates women's empowerment, with 120 women and 8 male vendors participating. It is considered a positive post-COVID initiative for microenterprises.

Coffee Shop (Café) with Associated Facilities at Botanical Garden Project



Image 8. Coffee Shop at Botanical Garden, Picture Credit: Lautoka City Council, 2025.

- The construction of the coffee shop building at the botanical gardens is complete and is currently awaiting compliances from relevant authorities. This facility will be outsourced for additional income generation for the council.
- The project aligns with SDG Target 8.2, which focuses on achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation.
- The council has installed a 750kVA transformer at the Botanical Garden site that will service the coffee shop, garden office, and the swimming pool.
- The project aligns with Pillar 1: Economic Resilience, Focus Area 4: Catalysing Economic Growth and Diversifying the Economy of the National Development Plan, which aims to measure the contribution of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to GDP and employment sectors.

Market Triangle Shade Structure Project

- The project has increase the capacity of the site from 98 to 185 market stall spaces to be accomondated under a formal shade structure that will protect vendors from rain and sun. The project also included painting works to improve the Market facade.



SDG 9

Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

2 out of 8 targets measured
2 out of 12 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

The Lautoka region has a great opportunity to embrace innovation and entrepreneurship in key sectors such as tourism, agriculture and climate adaption and resilience.

Innovation & Research Ecosystem

- Partner with Ministry of Education and stakeholders to explore establishing a Research & Innovation Hub for Lautoka for Sustainable Development.
- Use the hub to pilot and showcase SDG projects and outcomes.

Value-Added Local Manufacturing & Industry

- Encourage manufacturing of value-added agricultural products.
- Advocate for expanding local production and enterprise in key growth sectors (tourism, agriculture, climate resilience).

Progress Snapshot

Related to SDG 8, Lautoka aims to foster investment and development opportunities. The decentralization of the Namoli market has enabled easy accessibility to fresh produce.

SDG Indicators:

- 95% of the roads in Lautoka are tar-sealed
- In July 2025 residents were asked if they had access to financial support or loans to start a business (n=67), only 28% of respondents felt confident in their access to financial support to start or grow a business in Lautoka.

Context

The National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) 2022-2030 by the Reserve Bank of Fiji highlights key barriers to accessing loans and financial support, such as gender disparity, low population density, and remoteness of populations from urban centres. However, an analysis of urban and peri-urban populations' access to banking services does not reveal a stark difference compared to rural and maritime communities, as the latter face greater challenges due to their distance from banking services (typically more than 15 kilometres away).

Bank Access by Gender in Urban vs Peri-Urban areas	
	Ratio (Urban: Peri-Urban)
Total	56:53
Male	29:29
Female	27:24

Table 1. Bank Access by Gender in Urban vs Peri-Urban Areas, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017, Census Data

The financial landscape in Lautoka and broader Fiji presents significant challenges and opportunities for improvement. The 56% coverage of banking services in urban areas is concerningly low, suggesting a substantial portion of the population lacks access to essential financial services. This underscores an urgent need for targeted interventions to expand banking infrastructure and digital financial solutions.

Furthermore, the financial sector requires a focus on enhancing both institutional capabilities and financial literacy programmes. These initiatives should be tailored to address the diverse needs of various demographic groups, including those in both urban and rural areas. The strikingly low 2% utilization of remittance services among Lautoka's urban and peri-urban population indicates a vast untapped market for financial products. This presents a prime opportunity for advocacy on financial institutions to diversify their offerings and launch awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of various financial services.

While the gender-based data on bank access in urban versus peri-urban areas appears balanced at first glance, a more nuanced analysis is necessary to uncover and address the specific barriers faced by marginalised groups, such as low-income households, informal workers, or persons with disabilities. By addressing these multifaceted issues, Fiji can work towards creating a more inclusive and robust financial ecosystem that serves all segments of its population.



Target 9-1 Develop sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructures

According to the Fiji Roads Authority (2025) high percentage of sealed roads (95%) in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas suggests a well-developed road infrastructure, which can facilitate efficient transportation and mobility within the area. However, the presence of unsealed roads (4%) indicates the need for further improvements or maintenance to enhance accessibility and connectivity in certain areas.

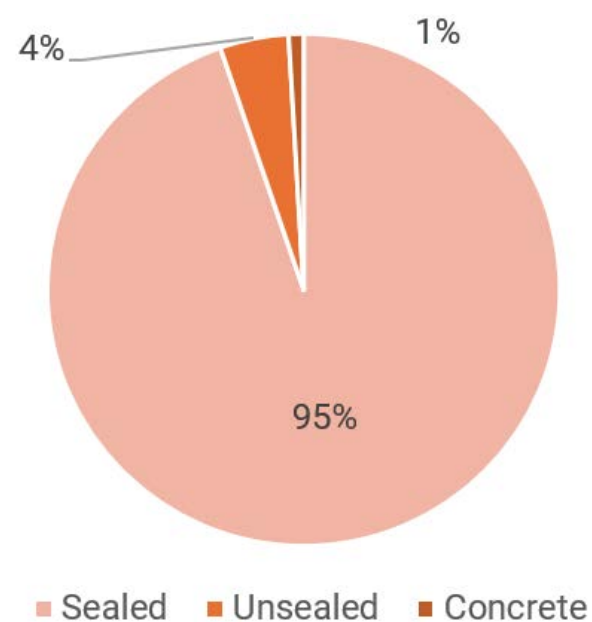


Figure 19. Lautoka Road Surface type by area, Source: Fiji Roads Authority, 2025.

Target 9-2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization

Industries with the highest employment in Western Division include (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2021):

- Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles (**49.9%**)
- Manufacturing (**1.2%**)
- Accommodation and Food Services Activities (**0.7%**)
- Administrative and Support Service Activities (**0.6%**)
- Other Service Activities (**0.6%**)



Target 9-3 Increase access to financial services and markets

- There is a total of 3,542 industries in Lautoka.
- The Pareto analysis below by number of industries assumes 20% of the industries in the sector (see Figure 16: Industries in Lautoka 2025) account for 80% of the employment and business.
- The largest is the wholesale, retail, trade and repairs sector (34.4%), followed by the manufacturing sector (11.9%) and then the transport and storage sector (10%).



INDUSTRIES IN LAUTOKA

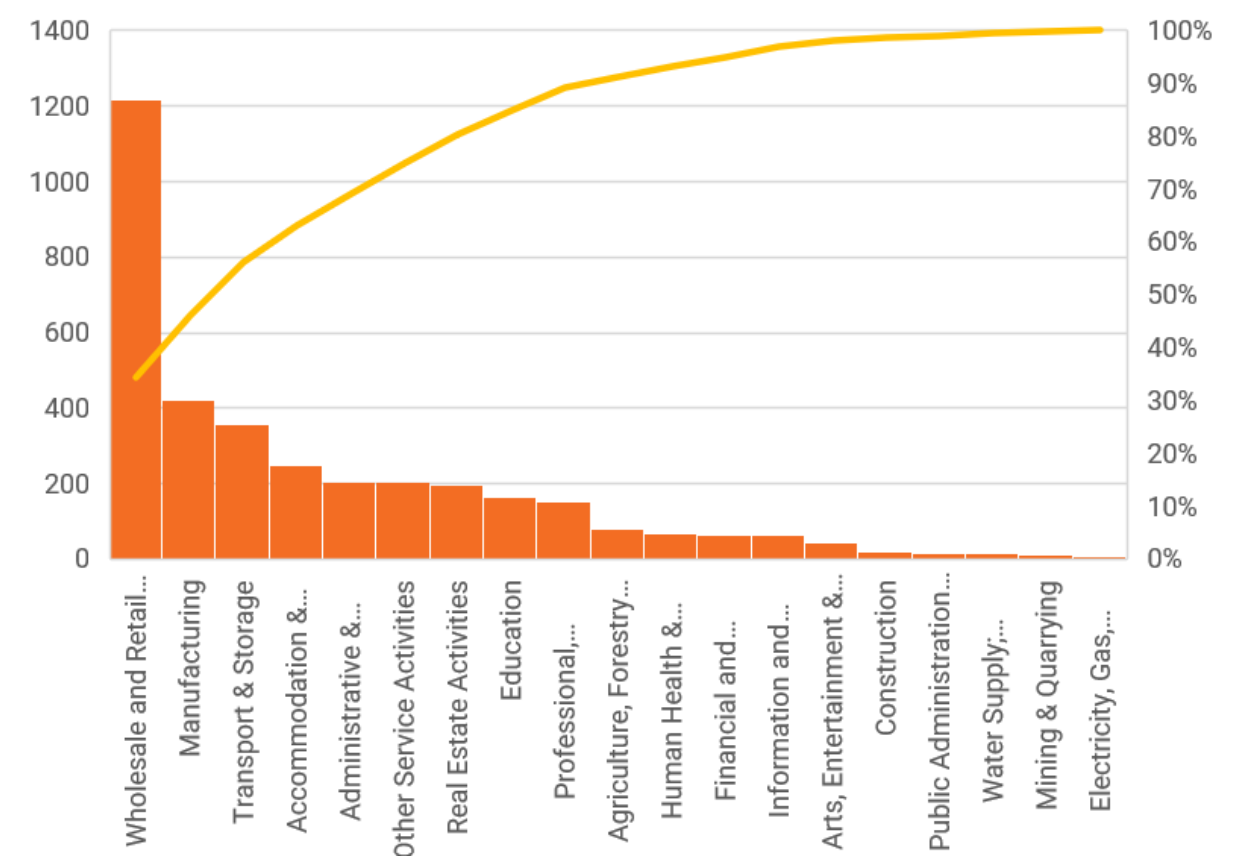


Figure 20. Industries in Lautoka 2025, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2025.

The above chart helps clarify the main sectors for Lautoka that would have the greatest positive impact on employment and economic growth.



Target 9-A Facilitate sustainable infrastructure development for developing countries

Indicators:

- JICA's 3R (Reduce, re-use, recycle) project provided \$2M in value to Lautoka City Council in 2012.
- Through this project, JICA provided: \$225,000 excavator, \$250,000 weighbridge, \$84,000 multi purpose truck, \$114,00 woodchipper, \$5,000 compost bins, \$5,000 market waste composting facility, \$20,000 model landfill area improvement, \$100,000 WACs surveys, \$50,000 training both locally and in Japan, \$7,500 for 10 brush cutters, \$10,000 3R Pilot Project in Field 40.



Target 9-C Universal access to information and communications technology

In 2017 Census, **456 out of every 1,000 individuals** in Lautoka urban boundary had access to internet, from which 226 are male and 229 are females. The ability to access internet is less in peri-urban areas compared to urban areas, where **373 out of 1,000 individuals** in peri-urban area have access to the internet (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2017).



How is the Council achieving this goal?

Council Strategic Objectives	Council Activity
- Vibrant and Well Designed - Friendly and Safe - Accessible and Connected	- Facilitate prosperous investment to reduce unemployment. - Foreshore protection against natural disasters - Installation of more CCTV's at strategic locations to improve surveillance and security. - The development of Botanical Garden to incorporate coffee shop and swimming pool - The decentralization of market for easy accessibility to citizens - Foster investment and development opportunities

Data Gap: Industry Sector and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)

While the available data provides insights into the employment landscape and prominent industries in Lautoka, there is a lack of specific data directly related to measuring progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) in the industry sector. The following data gaps have been identified:

- Access to finance and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs):** SDG 9 aims to promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, which necessitates supporting SMEs. The current data on access to finance is derived from the Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, and the 2017 census, which may not comprehensively reflect the economic landscape and financial needs of urban residents in Lautoka. To address this gap, there is a need for more robust data collection mechanisms that capture the evolving financial ecosystem and challenges faced by SMEs and urban residents. Additionally, efforts should be made to enhance financial literacy programmes and advocate for improved banking service provision tailored to the requirements of small and medium enterprises and residents in the urban areas. This will enable a better understanding of the barriers to accessing finance and facilitate the development of targeted strategies to support inclusive and sustainable industrialization.
- Research and development (R&D) expenditure:** One of the indicators under SDG 9 is the research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP. Current R&D appears to be concentrated in the Agriculture and Sugar sector. This information is essential for assessing the commitment to enhancing scientific research and technological capabilities, as outlined in SDG 9.5. While urban-level research may be available, there is a need for more contextual assessment for urban sustainability.
- Remittance flows:** The Reserve Bank of Fiji monitors personal remittance, where households depend on family and relatives working abroad as a source of income. Current composition of inward remittance is measured nationally, and it would be interesting to see regional, urban and rural composition of the same. This is important as remittance has implications on cultural, social and rural-urban migration, lifestyle choices and aspirations of recipients.
- Infrastructure development for key industries:** The data highlights the importance of sectors such as wholesale, retail, trade, repairs, and transportation. However, there is no specific information on the state of infrastructure supporting these industries, such as transportation networks, logistics facilities, or communication infrastructure. Data on the quality, reliability, and sustainability of infrastructure catering to these key sectors would be crucial for evaluating progress towards SDG 9.
- Adoption of sustainable and clean technologies:** SDG 9 emphasizes the need for sustainable industrialization and upgrading technological capabilities. Further research on the adoption of sustainable and clean technologies by industries in Lautoka is needed to collate this information. Information on the use of resource-efficient processes, renewable energy sources, and environmentally sound technologies would be valuable in evaluating progress towards sustainable industrialization.

Access to the respective data will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving sustainable industrialization, fostering innovation, and developing resilient infrastructure in Lautoka.



SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities

2 out of 8 targets measured
2 out of 12 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

Key government agencies share the responsibility for delivering safe and sustainable cities and communities. The coordination and long term planning of various infrastructure and development organisations should be centralised and strategic. Greater support for enforcement and alignment with planning tools such as the Planning Scheme is needed. For growth to be sustainable and managed effectively, a strong collaborative approach is needed.

Affordable & Inclusive Housing

- Conduct an independent audit of real estate valuation to strengthen fair pricing and support affordable housing.
- Develop phased upgrade plans for informal settlements, prioritising access to utilities and disaster-resilient housing standards.

Urban Planning & Resilient Development

- Integrate SDG targets into city and village planning, strengthening coordination across the wider Western Division.
- Apply resilient urban design principles (e.g., CPTED, inclusive zoning, climate-resilient development).

Transport & Public Space Accessibility

- Improve public transport accessibility, reliability, and safety for elderly people, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities.
- Expand shaded footpaths, seating, lighting, and safe pedestrian routes in key public areas.

Clean City & Public Realm Maintenance

- Expand proactive street cleaning, litter enforcement, and maintenance programmes.
- Launch and sustain a “Clean Lautoka” programme including civic pride campaigns, green spaces, and animal-management initiatives.

Waste & Stormwater Management

- Upgrade waste collection and recycling systems, including replacement of public bins and community engagement on proper disposal.
- Improve drainage and stormwater systems to reduce flooding and pollution in waterways.

Public Safety & Citizen Feedback

- Expand safety measures in public spaces, including lighting, CCTV, and collaborative policing.
- Conduct regular resident satisfaction and service-quality surveys to guide improvement.

Progress Snapshot

The city plans to focus on improving affordable housing, reducing homelessness, enhancing transport accessibility, and further strengthening resilience to natural disasters. While there are some positive indicators, such as the provision of public spaces, overall progress towards SDG 11 appears to be limited and requires significant attention and resources to improve.

SDG Indicators:

- 367 out of every 1,000 individuals are estimated to be living in the peri-urban centres of Lautoka (Estimated Population, 2027).
- 220 out of 1,000 individuals are classified to live in informal dwellings (UNESCAP, 2023).
- In 2027, 131 out of every 1,000 individuals will face difficulty accessing affordable transport, assuming the supply the volume of vehicles remains the same and available options may be inaccessible or overcrowded.
- 43 out of every 1,000 buildings Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas have weak structure, are at risk of being damaged or destroyed from a severe cyclone.
- Lautoka urban centre has 121 passive and active parks and open spaces for recreational and leisure activities.

Context

MEDIAN PRICE OF HOUSING/ LAND IN LAUTOKA

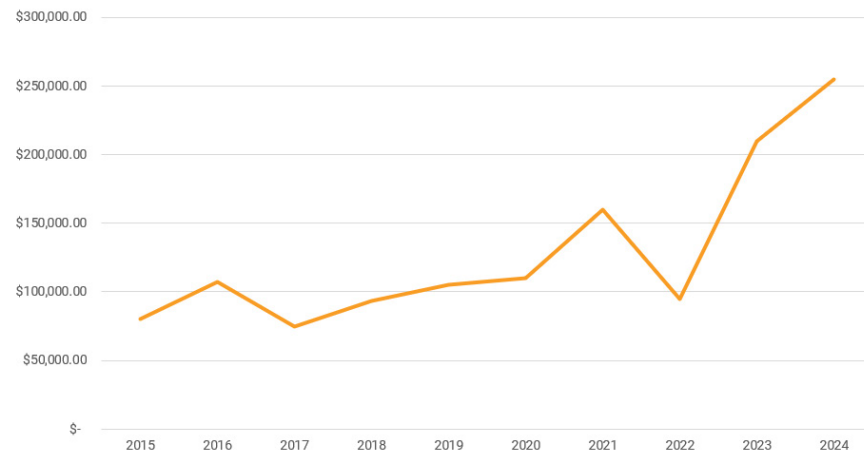


Figure 21. Median house sale price in Lautoka, Source: Ravneel A. Chand Registered Valuer. Reg 130 (2025)

Lautoka's appeal lies in its access to industries, climate, and sports tourism opportunities, making it a hub for migration and growth.



Image 9. Old pictures of Lautoka, Source: Lautoka City Council, 2025

Target 11-1 Ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing



Household Density

- **367 out of every 1,000 individuals** are estimated to be living in the peri-urban centres of Lautoka (Estimated Population, 2027).
- **220 out of 1,000 individuals** are classified to live in informal dwellings (UNESCAP, 2023).
- 685 out of 1,000 households own their dwelling outright
- 217 out of 1,000 households rent from a private landlord
- 49 out of 1,000 households occupy government or institutional housing
- 25 out of 1,000 households rent from the public rental board
- 14 out of 1,000 households are caretakers

In Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas, the **minimum sale prices** (light blue bars) show a **steady upward trend**, culminating in a dramatic peak in 2024, where the value reaches approximately **\$40,000**, marking the highest in the observed period. In comparison, the **maximum sale prices** (orange line) are characterised by a sharp **spike in 2019**, followed by a steep decline and relatively flat performance afterwards. This spike appears to be an outlier, as the **green dotted trendline** indicates only a modest upward movement in maximum prices over time.



Figure 22. Residential Sales in Lautoka 2015 – 2024, Source: Created by Ravneel A. Chand Registered Valuer. Reg 130 (2025)

Meanwhile, the **red dotted trendline** for minimum prices reflects consistent growth, suggesting that lower-end sales are increasing in value at a stronger and more sustained pace than high-end sales, potentially signalling a narrowing price gap or rising demand in the lower market segment.



LAND TENURE

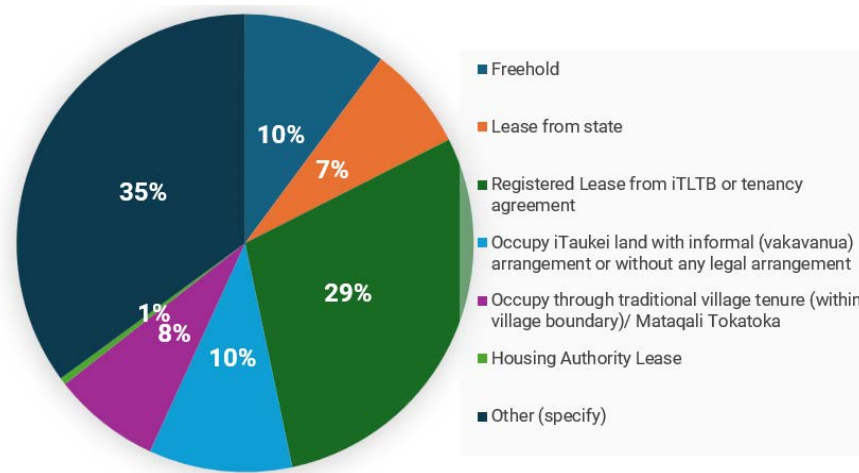


Figure 23. Land Tenure in Lautoka and Peri-Urban Areas, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017

In terms of informality or extra-legal arrangement to access land in urban and peri-urban areas of Lautoka, the Ministry of Housing and Community Development Annual Report (2018 – 2019, p.15), identified 13 informal settlements with vaka-vanua* arrangement to land. These are: Field 4, Tore, Lovu Sea Side, Delaisaweni, Nabare, Tukutora, Tore Stage II, Delainamasimasi, Tulutora II, Tomuka, Varavu (aka Sauyaro), Lauwaki and Togabalavu (Tovilavila).

Homeless Population

One of the key concerns within Lautoka has been the rise of youth unemployment, street dwellers and beggars. Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection in 2025; undertook a mapping and consultation activity to identify existing services, assess gaps and gather input from stakeholders to inform future programming and policy recommendations (Tuicaumia and Volavola, 2025).

The survey included individuals aged 5 to 83 who were identified as experiencing homelessness, including both children and adults (Tuicaumia and Volavola, 2025). The total number of respondents is privy to the author, but they were based in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas.

The report (Tuicaumia and Volavola, 2025) summarises important gaps, including:

- **11.5%** of the respondents identified as living on the streets, with no access to shelter services or homes.
- **89.7%** of the respondents were not attending school despite having previously been enrolled
- **The highest level of education** was form 4 or 6
- **33.6%** of the population have been on the street for less than three years
- **90.4%** of the respondents lacked access to sufficient food and clean water.
- **Over one third** of the respondents have experienced abuse, threats or violence predominantly from landowners.*
- **92.2%** of the respondents require medical care

*Occupying native land through consent from the village or landowners. This often means extra-legal arrangement beyond the formal system, usually through some form of social recognition and payment.

*The report by Tuicaumia and Volavola (2025) does not explain the reason for the violence from landowners.

The above data signifies a humanitarian crisis in urban centres. Especially since the urban areas are seen as places of refuge for those escaping social and economic crisis. This has potential implications for the National Development Goals of Fiji and requires specific attention to facilitate the provision of services to the most marginalised population through an integrated approach with respective stakeholders.

One of the key recommendations from the report by Tuicaumia and Volavola (2025) identifies the need to enforce land rights and protection laws to prevent threats and abuse by landowners. This recommendation aligns with the principles of the New Urban Agenda and SDG target 11.1 and 11.3. Furthermore, limited access to education and employment perpetuates the cycle of marginalization, which is reflected in SDG 8.6.

In Samoa, as an example, the 'agia' (extended family) system has been used to provide housing and support for those who might otherwise be homeless. We see a similar trend in Fiji informal settlements for migrants from rural and inter-islands.

Instead of relocating settlement, Fiji has invested in the Informal Settlements Upgrade Programme. The Koroipita model town is a low-cost housing project that ensures climate resiliency and design of spaces using communal and traditional systems.

Target 11-2 Affordable and Sustainable Transport Systems

- As of 2025, approximately 69.3% (15,178) of the total vehicle registrations in Lautoka are privately owned.
- In contrast, public service and commercial cars account for 30% of all vehicle classes (noting that some families have 2 cars or more), while buses, carrier trucks and minivans will have the capacity to accommodate up to 39% of the population by 2027.

This means by 2027, **131 out of every 1,000 individuals** will face difficulty accessing affordable transport, assuming the supply the volume of vehicles remains the same and available options may be inaccessible or overcrowded.



PASSENGER CAPACITY BY VEHICLE TYPE IN 2017

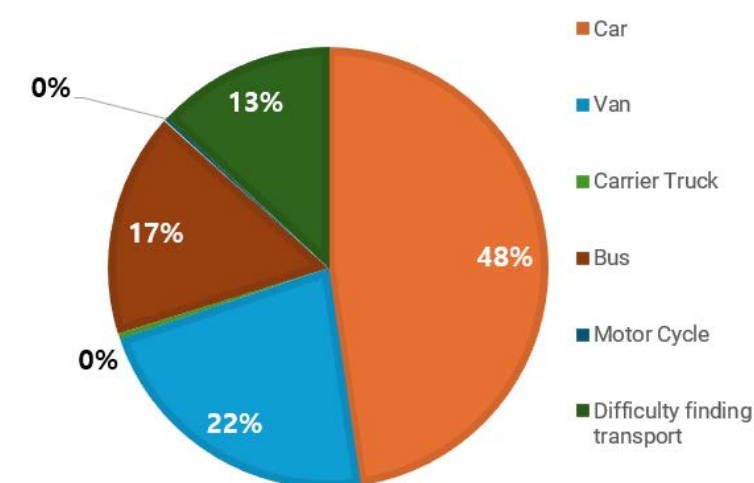


Figure 24. Passenger Capacity by Vehicle Type in 2027, Data Source: Land Transport Authority 2025.

- While investment in public transportation is upcoming in Lautoka, residents shared dissatisfaction in areas of public transport quality and reliability, safety of vehicles, and fare levels.
- The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, showed that only 26% of respondents (n=63) perceived public transportation safe for women, the elderly, and individuals with physical disabilities (with a further 30% perceiving it neutrally and 44% perceiving it as unsafe).
- Additionally, dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the maintenance of public access infrastructure, for example, roads, footpaths, street lighting, and bus stops. From the total responses, 70% of respondents indicated that all public access infrastructure requires improvement.
- This figure highlights the need for “Adopt a street” initiative by involving residents in minor street works. Or subsidy programmes for local shops for contracts to maintain nearby bus stops and footpaths.
- Lautoka’s increasing density strains water infrastructure, inflates housing costs, necessitates transit-oriented development for peri-urban migrants, and demands revised building codes to ensure accessibility, climate resilience, and diverse housing options, including communal solutions for traditional and informal settlers.
- The urban village is currently regulated under the Ministry of iTaukei affairs, while the informal households with the Ministry of Rural Authority.

PERCEIVED SAFETY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

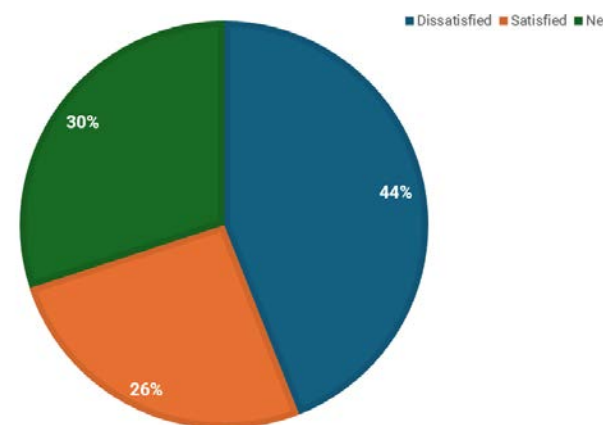


Figure 26. Perceived safety of public transportation for women, the elderly and individuals with physical disabilities, Source: The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, July 2025.

Furthermore, respondents shared:

- The operating hours for public transportation ended early (14%).
- There was a lack of services available for work, school or healthcare needs (11%).

Target 11-3 Inclusive and sustainable urbanization

- The projected increase in population density in Lautoka **59 people per hectare by 2027**, coupled with the existing housing, infrastructure, and traffic issues, raises significant concerns about the city’s ability to achieve SDG 11.3 on sustainable and inclusive urbanization.
- In the 2017 Census, the population density was 43 people per hectare of land, on the basis the land area for Lautoka boundary area is 1,670 hectares (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data, 2017).



Target 11-4 Protect the World's cultural and natural heritage

A heritage site exists on Native Reserve land, where the Town Planning Act is not effective. Currently, the development of land is subject to traditional processes and protocols. It is advised that any development proposals near the area be consulted through the Fiji Museum Office regarding potential impact.

Did you know:

Viseisei Village, near Lautoka is considered the first landing site and village of the iTaukei in Viti Levu. The Koroyanitu Heritage Park in Lautoka is considered protected, as it hosts Fiji’s Natural flora and fauna.

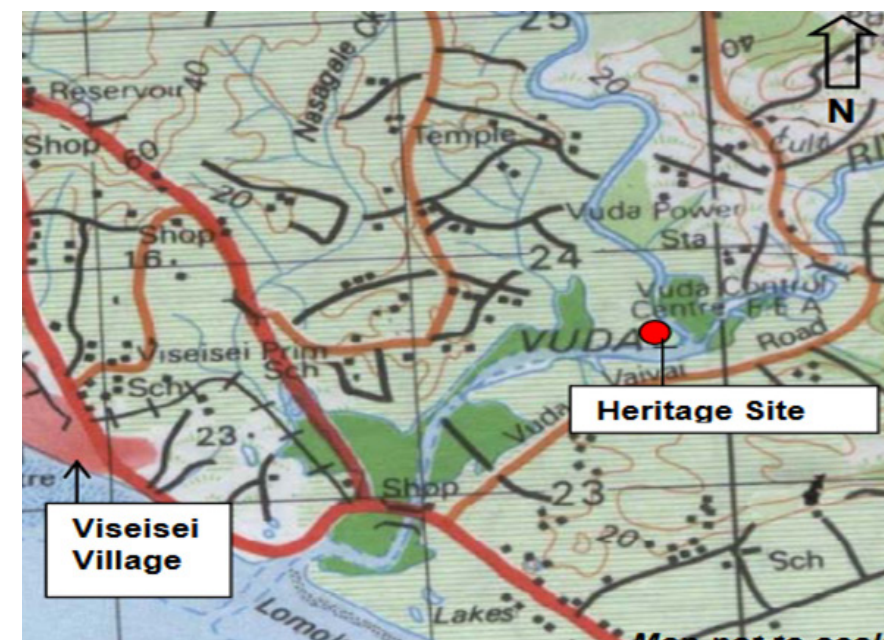


Figure 27. Archaeological Site Map: Viseisei, Source: Fiji Museum 2008, derived from DTCP Vuda and Sabeto Advisory Plan 2009.

Sites	Details	Type of Significance
First Landing Resort	Claimed to the landing site for the first iTaukei.	Cultural/ Historical
Viseisei Village (In Lautoka’s Rural area)	Claimed to be the first village to be settled by the iTaukei people.	Cultural/ Historical
Lomolomo Battery Site	The Lomolomo site was a key defence for Fiji during the Second World War when much of the Pacific was under threat.	Historical

Name of Place	Reason
Viseisei Village	- A foundational Fijian historical site - Significance: One of the oldest settlements in Fiji
Lautoka Sugar Mill	- Symbol of the sugar industry’s legacy - Nickname origin: Earned Lautoka the title “Sugar City”

▪ Girit Centre	▪ Dedicated to Indo-Fijian labour history and heritage ▪ Importance: Preserves the story of indentured labourers
▪ Gurkul Primary School	▪ Represents early Indian education in Fiji ▪ Historical value: One of the first Indian schools established in the country
▪ Sri Krishna Kaliya Temple	▪ Notable for its vibrant religious architecture ▪ Cultural significance: Important Hindu place of worship
▪ Colonial Houses	▪ Showcase scenic colonial-era architecture ▪ Historical interest: Reflect Fiji's colonial past
▪ Lautoka Jame Mosque	▪ A majestic Islamic architectural landmark ▪ Community importance: Central to Lautoka's Muslim community
▪ Koroyanitu National Heritage Park	▪ Offers nature, hiking trails, and cultural immersion ▪ Ecological value: Preserves native flora and fauna ▪ Cultural aspect: Provides insight into traditional Fijian village life

Lautoka offers unique blends of cultural richness and is surrounded by indigenous villages that are the traditional custodians of the land. Of significance are the crafts, storytelling and ceremonial practices.

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, July 2025, asked respondents to rank what Lautoka City can do to better support cultural and heritage preservation. Thematically, the priorities evolved around participation and inclusivity, access to education through infrastructure and preservation of history are most valued priorities, but less urgent than people-focused initiatives.

Top Priorities	Lower Priorities
▪ Score 39: Involve youths and cultural leaders in decision-making. ▪ Score 39: Creation of cultural centres and museums. ▪ Score 38: Establishing cultural heritage trails and signage	▪ Score 20: Restore heritage building ▪ Score 24: Cultural business activities

Table 2. Respondents priority for cultural and heritage preservation in Lautoka, Source: Lautoka City Council Public Survey, July 2025.

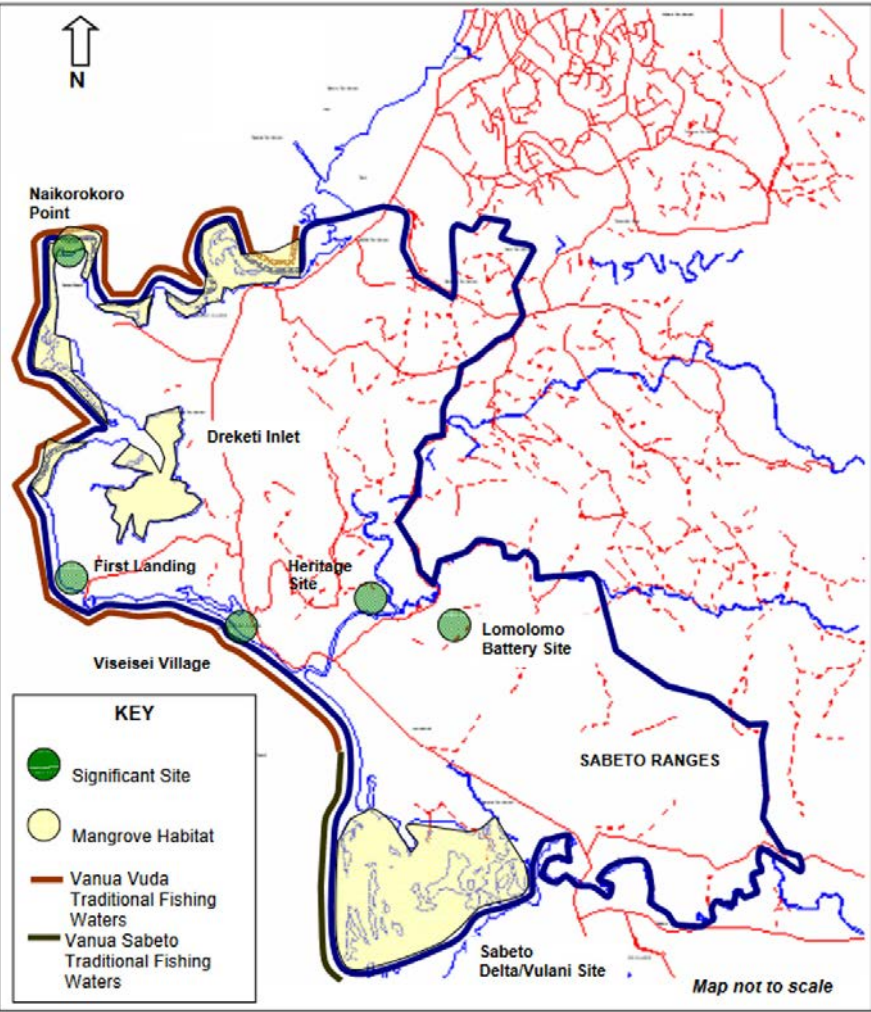


Figure 28. Places of Significance in the Vanua Sabeto and Vuda area, Source: DTCP Vuda and Sabeto Advisory Plan 2009

Target 11-5 Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters



The Tropical Cyclone Winston (2016), the worst to affect Fiji in decades, made landfall at 06:30 UTC (18:30 local time) on the north of Viti Levu, the main island in the Fiji archipelago. UNOSAT analysis of building assessment using very high-resolution satellite imagery from Pleiades (Source: Airbus D&S) identified:

- **43 out of every 1,000 buildings** in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas have weak structure, and are at risk of being damaged or destroyed from a severe cyclone.

Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017 Census, which happened after the tropical cyclone Winston, reports the wall conditions in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas to be of average to good quality. Which means **49 out of every 1,000 households** have a poor condition of the wall.

Condition of Wall in Lautoka Urban and Peri-Urban Area

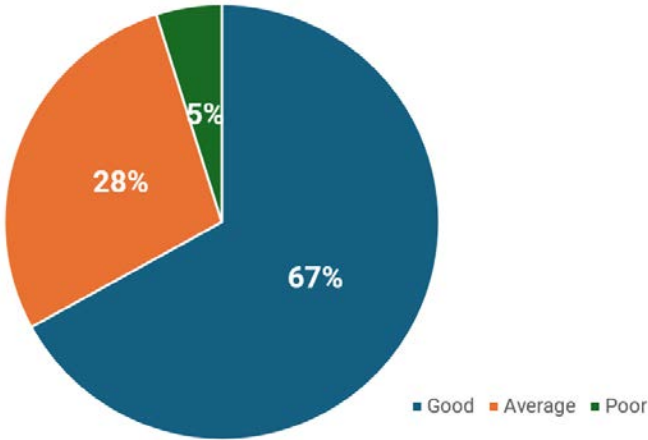


Figure 29. Condition of the wall in Lautoka urban and peri-urban area, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics, Census Data 2017.



Area	Housing Stock by Type of Wall Material by Area					Total No. Units
	Concrete	Timber frame/ Wood	Time frame/ Tin Iron	Bure	Makeshift/ Other	
▪ Western Division	▪ 27,271	▪ 9,600	▪ 23,600	▪ 1,409	▪ 790	▪ 62,730
▪ Lautoka Urban and Peri-Urban Areas (2017)	▪ 8,535	▪ 2,394	▪ 4,670	▪ 1	▪ 177	▪ 15,777

Table 3. Housing stock by type of wall by area, Source: Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2017; Government of Fiji Post Disaster Needs Assessment 2016.

The above data has policy implications highlighting the need for cyclone-resilient housing codes, community shelters, insurance schemes for low-income groups. Housing is critical to climate adaptation and urban planning. Especially since the responsibility of approving building permits is undertaken at the council level. Furthermore, the target aims to substantially reduce direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations. This is partly due to the lack of insurance coverage for the poor and marginalised communities.

Lautoka City Limits	
▪ 13,788 Total number of Buildings in Lautoka City	▪ 35 Building Destroyed ▪ 71 Building with Severe Damage ▪ 327 Building with Moderate Damage

Lautoka Greater Area	
▪ 17, 587 Total number of Buildings in the Greater Lautoka Area	▪ 74 Buildings Destroyed ▪ 152 Building with Severe Damage ▪ 674 Building with Moderate Damage

Target 11-6 Reduce the environmental impact of cities

In Lautoka, the Vunato landfill waste disposal facility, commissioned in 1968, raises significant sustainability concerns.

- The landfill has six cells developed in the mangroves facing the sea.
- The total land area of 50 acres.
- The site is managed by an Open Aerobic Evaporation System.
- The landfill caters to Lautoka city, Nadi town, rural areas, and the Yasawa, Malolo, and Mamanuca Islands.
- Waste Disposal Rate:
 - Pre-COVID 100 tonnes per day;
 - During COVID 75.5 tonnes;
 - Post COVID 110 tonnes per day;
- Whilst the disposal rates were reduced in 2020 and 2021, the overall waste generation and disposal rates remain high.

The location poses a substantial risk of environmental degradation and pollution, potentially impacting marine ecosystems (SDG 14 - Life Below Water).

There has been incidents of burning in the dump yard and a lack of proper personal protective equipment (PPE) for waste collectors (collection pillar of recycling CPRs), exacerbating environmental and occupational health and safety concerns. (This is related to target SDG 12.1 in municipal waste collection)

Lautoka City Council, Residents and Lautoka Ratepayers Association have called on the relevant ministries to consider relocating the dump site. However, at present, the council faces significant challenges in identifying and securing a potential site, as availability and terms of negotiations are constrained due to various factors.

Target 11-7 Provide access to safe and inclusive green and public spaces

By 2050, Lautoka city plans to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

The Lautoka City Council Strategic Plan (2022-2026), thematic area three, focuses on ensuring a walkable city, with lush green environment and sustainable solid waste management system. In order to conserve the flora and fauna of the area, the council is engaged with the ministry of education and department of environment to organize a clean school programme.





At present, Lautoka City has **111 dedicated parks, with a total land area of 26.747 hectares (Lautoka City Council, 2025).**

- The urban forest cover, as seen in Table 4 below, shows a **54%** decrease in Lautoka from 2005 to 2021.
- Green spaces play a crucial role in promoting physical and mental well-being, providing recreational opportunities, and enhancing the overall quality of life in urban areas.
- The 2021 data reveal 30.34 ha of forest cover and 27.7 ha of mangrove cover, in 2019, per 1,000 hectares of urban area (Ministry of Forestry 2025).

▪ Forest Cover	▪ 2005: 105.28 ha
	▪ 2021: 48.55 ha
▪ Mangrove Cover	▪ 2019: 44.38 ha

Table 4. Forest Cover Change Lautoka, Source: Ministry of Forestry (2025)



Figure 28. Forest Cover Map Lautoka City, Source: This map was created by Zoyha Nisha (2025) Ministry of Forestry

To ensure access to universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, SDG Indicator 11.7.2 measures the proportion of persons of physical or sexual harassment and the place of occurrence in the previous 12 months.

- From April 2024 to May 2025, a staggering **2,220 criminal offences** were reported in Lautoka within the previous 12 months (Fiji Police Forece, Crime Unit 2025).
- This means **2.6% of the people** (estimating the population in 2025 is 84138) in the Lautoka urban and peri-urban area are at risk of harm or danger.

These offences occurred in approximately **76 hotspot areas**, primarily located near parks, seaside areas, residential neighbourhoods, and alleyways, raising concerns about the safety and accessibility of public spaces.

Solutions to public safety in parks include urban lighting, community policing, and activation of public spaces with cultural programming.

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, highlights the growing sense of insecurity among Lautoka's residents in their neighbourhoods.

- **58%** expressed feeling unsafe when walking alone after 6 pm.
- **40%** felt unsafe in quiet and unlit areas.
- **60%** of respondents reported feeling unsafe even during daylight hours and in busy areas.

Perceived Safety by Ward

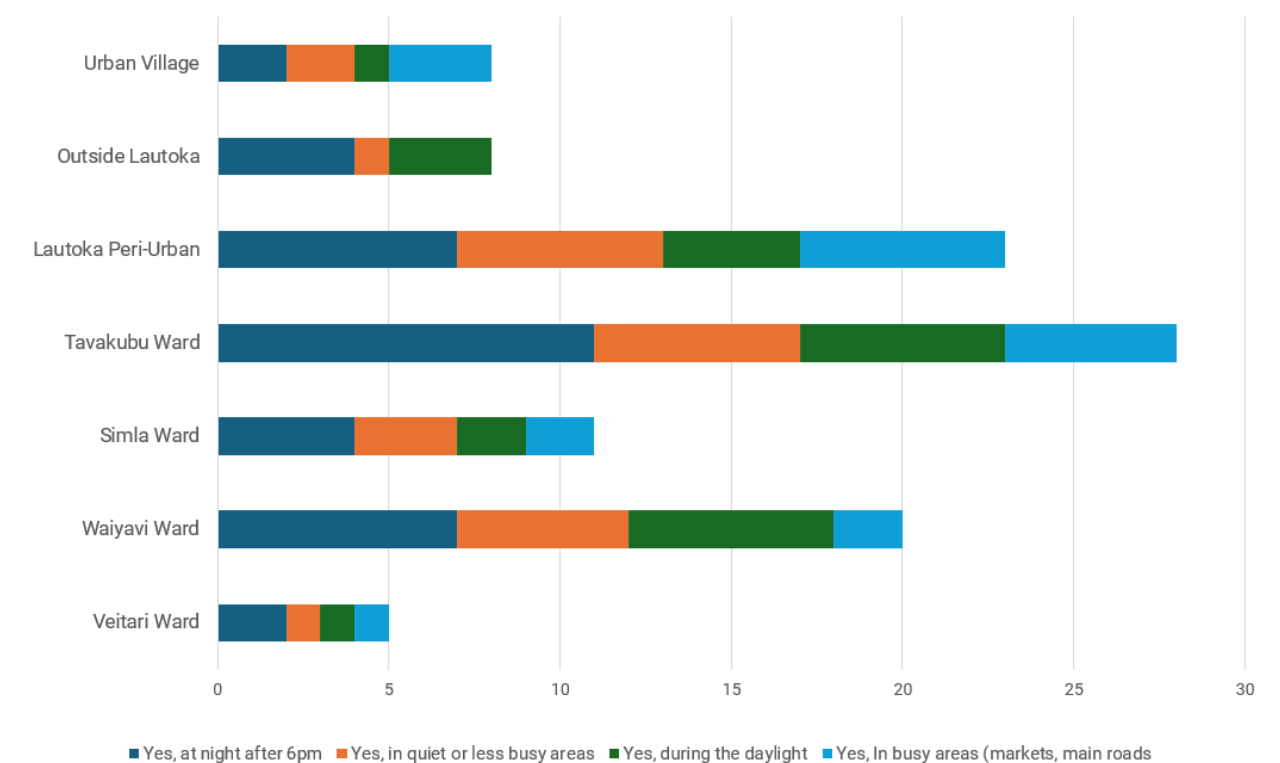


Figure 29. Perceived Safety by Ward, Data Source: Lautoka City Council Public Consultation Survey, July 2025.



Target 11-A Strong national and Regional development planning

The urban planning approach in Fiji, led by the Ministry of Local Government's Blue Town Framework and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2025-2029. These initiatives, including Vision 2050's Pillar 2 and Focus Area 5, prioritize integrated planning, urban governance, balanced rural-urban development, and improved urban infrastructure. While comprehensive in scope, this approach risks overlooking the nuanced needs of local communities and may not fully address the diverse challenges faced by cities like Lautoka.

The top-down strategy, while providing a broad national framework, often struggles to capture the unique socio-economic dynamics and cultural contexts of individual urban areas. This can lead to standardized solutions that may not be optimally effective or sustainable when implemented at the local level, potentially resulting in misaligned resources and community disengagement.

This approach would involve extensive community consultations, participatory budgeting for infrastructure projects, and place-making urban design practices.



Target 11-B Implement policies for inclusion, resource efficiency and disaster risk reduction

The International Court of Justice on 23 July 2025 has declared nations have an obligation under international law to prevent climate change, and that they will be liable to pay compensation if they fail to do so. There is a growing imperative to integrate **vulnerability assessments, climate change projections, and natural hazard** considerations into infrastructure and urban planning processes.



Target 11-C Support least developed countries in sustainable and resilient building

The Lautoka City Council receives external funding and support from national and international organizations, climate funds, and donor agencies to enhance the city's climate resilience and address infrastructure-related challenges. However, cultural and historical values are as significant to the material input in advocating for a sustainable and resilient city.



How is the Council achieving this goal?

Name of Place	Reason
- Vibrant and Well Designed - Friendly and Safe - Clean and Green - Active and Health	- Public Health and Hygiene - Solid Waste Management (garbage collection service, Landfill, 3R Promotion) - Disaster Preparedness - Enforcement and Compliance - Stakeholder engagement – WAF/DoE - Decentralization of operations – e.g. Markets, Shopping Malls, Bus Terminal.

Informality

Instead of relocating settlement, Fiji has invested in the Informal Settlements Upgrade Programme. For instance, in partnership with UN-Habitat, through the Adaptation Fund since 2018, the Ministry of Housing aims to increase the resilience of informal urban settlements that are highly vulnerable to climate change and disaster risks. The Fiji communitybased vulnerability assessment noted six settlements in Lautoka corridors as most at risk to climate vulnerabilities. These are: Naquiroso, Taiperia, Navutu, Vunato, Veidogo and California. Major actions for the areas include improvement in sanitation facilities that are resilient to floods, rainwater harvesting tanks and waste management linked to improved livelihoods. These sites were located along the coastal and mangrove areas.

In addition, the Koroipita model town has been commended for its project in Lautoka. The town represents a low-cost modelthat ensures climate resiliency and design of spaces using communal and traditional systems. The council advocates for further support to the project.

Disaster Risk Reduction

The Fiji National Development Plan aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), which emphasizes the critical role of stakeholders and advocates for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. This inclusive approach resonates with the consultative and participatory process adopted in the Voluntary National Review 2023 and the Voluntary Local Review for Lautoka. However, securing comprehensive stakeholder engagement and support at the local level remains a challenge.

Several factors contribute to this challenge. Firstly, there is a lack of locally relevant and urban-scale data available at consistent timeframes across relevant stakeholder groups, hindering informed decision-making and effective collaboration. Secondly, national governments outside the urban planning domain often struggle to recognize how integrating Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets at the local level can catalyze effective resource and skill mobilization across different urban centers. This perceived inability to appreciate the unique role and challenges faced by urban areas can impede progress.

Furthermore, competing financial priorities, driven by varied visions and mandates across sectors, limit the ability to fully comprehend and address the specific needs and challenges of urban areas. Reconciling these competing priorities and fostering a shared understanding of the importance of sustainable urban development remains a significant obstacle.



To overcome these challenges, it is crucial to enhance data collection and dissemination mechanisms at the local level, ensuring consistent and relevant data is available to all stakeholders. Additionally, raising awareness among national governments and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration can help bridge the gap between urban planning and other domains, facilitating a more holistic approach to sustainable development.

Effective stakeholder engagement and capacity building are also essential, enabling stakeholders to appreciate the unique challenges faced by urban areas and the potential catalytic impact of integrating SDG targets at the local level. By aligning financial priorities and leveraging synergies across sectors, resources and skills can be mobilized more effectively to address the specific needs of urban centers like Lautoka.

The urban development strategy is guided by the Urban Policy Action Plan (UPAP). Some of the key projects the Ministry of Finance Strategic Planning is undertaking under the NDP include:

- Private-Public Partnership Projects to provide homes to 3,000 low and middle-income families;
- Formalization of informal settlements;
- Strategic Master Plan for Viti-Levu;
- Concept Master Plan for Fiji Urban regions.

Sustainable Transport

To ensure sustainability and accessibility of the transport sector under SDG Target 11.2, three priority areas for the Lautoka urban and peri-urban transport sector were identified:

(1) Subsidise accessible vehicle and infrastructure design. This incorporates features such as low-floor entry, wheelchair ramps, priority seating areas and audio-visual announcements to accommodate passengers with various disabilities. This also includes clear pathways and appropriate height for charging and fuelling vehicles.

(2) Implement surveillance and monitoring regulations in public transport. This includes the installation of CCTV and surveillance cameras, introduction of anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies and response mechanisms to ensure the safety of women and children.

(3) Introduce demand-responsive service hours. This requires the adjustment of service hours to accommodate flexible and responsive scheduling and weekend service expansion for work and non-work related activities.

The above priority areas align with the Fiji National Development Plan 2050 (p.161), which plans to decarbonise government vehicles, and introduce 3 electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and reduce travel time during peak hours for busy corridors by 10% by 2027.

Forestry and Green Space

Council has partnered with Ministry of Forestry and other stakeholders in tree planting at Fenner Park, Botanical Garden, Marine Drive, Namoli sea shore, Vomo Street, M N Naidu Road.

Churchill Park Upgrade Project

- The project aims to construct a rooftop camera platform on the Grandstand Pavilion to enable the telecasting of rugby and soccer matches internationally and also construct corporate boxes on both sides of the Grandstand Pavilion, corporate stand (hospitality facilities) on the east end embankment and advertising billboards.
- Phase 1 – The tender submitted for construction of the roof top camera platform on the Grandstand Pavillion is currently being reviewed.
- Phase 2 & 3 - corporate stand (hospitality facilities) on the east end embankment, corporate boxes on the side of the Grandstand Pavillion and advertising billboard are at planning stage.
- The project aligns with SDG Target 8.2, which focuses on achieving higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation.
- The project aligns with Pillar 2: People Empowerment, Focus 5: Uplifting Socioeconomic Wellbeing of the National Development Plan, closely aligned with the strategy to maximize Fiji's potential to host international sporting events. There is a projection to host 15-20 Super Rugby, NRL matches, and the Pacific Games in Fiji, nationally, in the next 5 years.
- Churchill Park has been attracting international games and events, such as Super Rugby matches featuring the Drua team, which has promoted Lautoka globally as a venue for international events. This has required the council to undertake necessary upgrades and asset development of the facility. Hosting of Drua games in Lautoka provide both direct and indirect economic spinoff effect to economy of not only Lautoka but Fiji as a whole. Hotels, transport, clothing industry, local media and the broader tourism industry benefits enormously through such events.



Image 11. Churchill Park Lautoka; Source: Fijivillage.com, 17 Jan, 2025



Reconstruction of Lautoka Bus Stand Pavement project

- The project aims to reconstruct the bus station pavement to allow better flow of passengers and traffic to and from the market, as well as reduce dust and water puddles during different weather seasons. The construction work commenced in May 2025 and is expected to be completed in 7 months and the project is progressing well. The project encompasses three phases where the main bus station pavement is Phase 1. The market loading and unloading area pavement reconstruction is Phase 2. The access road from Sugar City Mall to Yasawa street will be reconstructed with new pavement which is Phase 3. The project also includes the installation of new 16 CCTV surveillance cameras. The entire bus station will be painted by the council during the term of this project. Once completed, the project will provide a major facelift of the area.
- The project aligns with SDG Target 11.2, which focuses on providing 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, women, children, persons with disabilities, and older persons.
- The project aligns with Pillar 2: People Empowerment, Focus Area 6: Developing Public Infrastructure, Protecting Environment, and Addressing Climate Change of the National Development Plan, with a policy to ensure adequate maintenance of infrastructure assets.

The National Government aims to reduce traffic by **10%** in the next 2 to



Image 12. Reconstruction of Lautoka City Bus Stand Pavement, Source: Lautoka City Council 2025

Next Steps

Significant strategies relevant to the recommendations of this report from the NDP include:

1. Increasing private sector participation in Lautoka to facilitate development and investment in the provision of transportation and essential services.

The Lautoka City Council emphasises the need for partnership in environmental management and stewardship. Security concerns are a rising concern for residents and businesses alike, as reflected in the Voluntary Local Review (VLR) report. This can be best addressed through a whole-of-system approach and inclusion of the private sector as key players and partners for promoting sustainable design of businesses and delivery of wastewater and stormwater management plans, including the partnering in protecting flood-risk areas through sponsorship of rainwater tanks for harvesting and nature-based solutions.

2. Continue the identification and extension of certain urban boundaries.

The council's primary revenue source is derived from ratepayers within the existing city limits. However, as urban areas continue to grow and populations spill over into surrounding areas, the council needs to explore the possibility of extending its boundaries to incorporate these peri-urban centres. By doing so, the council could effectively expand its ratepayer base, thereby increasing its revenue potential and enabling it to invest in essential infrastructure, services, and development initiatives that cater to the needs of the broader community.

Nonetheless, urban expansion is a complex undertaking that requires careful consideration of various factors, including the costs associated with extending infrastructure and services, the potential impact on the environment and existing communities, and the capacity of the council to manage and govern a larger area effectively. Comprehensive planning and stakeholder engagement will be crucial to ensure that any decision to extend city boundaries is well-informed, sustainable, and aligned with the long-term vision for the Western division's growth and development.

3. Capacity building and community engagement.

Capacity building and community engagement are vital for Lautoka's sustainable urban development, fostering a sense of ownership and ensuring that local knowledge informs decision-making processes.

This approach not only benefits the community but also addresses critical staff needs within the City Council. By investing in comprehensive training programmes, staff members can enhance their skills in participatory planning, project management, and community facilitation.

Moreover, integrating placemaking and community projects into this approach can significantly enhance its effectiveness. For instance, the Council could initiate neighbourhood-led placemaking initiatives, where residents collaborate to redesign public spaces, reflecting local culture and needs. Community gardens, street art projects, or pop-up markets could be implemented as pilot programmes, allowing citizens to actively shape their urban environment.



SDG 13

Climate Action

2 out of 5 targets measured
0 out of 8 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

All level of government recognise the importance of a Climate Resilience and Adaptation plan that focuses on protecting coastal infrastructure, enhancing flood management systems, and promoting climate-smart urban development.

- Disaster Preparedness & Resilience

 - Conduct regular disaster preparedness drills and training.
 - Raise community awareness on disaster preparedness and emergency response.
 - Strengthen local implementation of the Municipal Emergency Plan.
- Climate-Resilient Infrastructure & Water Systems

 - Upgrade and climate-proof urban water and drainage systems.
 - Implement resilient infrastructure strategies in high-risk areas.
 - Develop riparian buffer zones along creeks, wetlands, and estuaries.
- Early Warning Systems & Risk Reduction

 - Develop comprehensive early-warning systems for climate and disaster risks.
 - Promote community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives.
- Climate Adaptation Awareness & Behaviour Change

 - Educate communities on climate adaptation practices.
 - Advocate for reduction of cane-burning and other high-pollution practices.
- Support for Vulnerable Households

 - Provide subsidies and support to upgrade low-income homes in disaster-prone areas (e.g., roofs and walls).
- Climate Finance & Partnerships

 - Facilitate public-private-community climate financing partnerships.
 - Secure grant and programme funding for household and community adaptation projects.

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka City Council's disaster-resilient waste management strategy exemplify the region's proactive approach to urban resilience and environmental sustainability. Proper waste management and drainage are crucial for public health, especially in disaster scenarios, showing the strategy's focus on community wellbeing.

SDG Indicators:

Table 5. Tikina of Vuda Exposure to Hazard, Source: UNOSAT 2025

Hazard Indicator	Risk Index Score	Source
▪ Riverine Flood	▪ 6.3	▪ UNOSAT- Derived from FABDEM using Height Above Nearest Drainage (HAND)
▪ Coastal Flood	▪ 7.8	▪ UNOSAT – Derived from FABDEM
▪ Earthquake	▪ 9.6	▪ Pacific Risk Information System
▪ Tropical Cyclone	▪ 8	▪ Pacific Risk Information System
▪ Storm Surge	▪ 8.2	▪ UNOSAT – Derived from FABDEM

- During public survey in July 2025; 70% of the residents agreed on the need to increase the existing FJD\$40 fine for littering.
- 79% of the respondents requested for improved drainage systems
- 65% respondent prioritised need for planting trees and restoring mangrove and wetland.
- 55% respondents requested strengthening sea wall and coastal protection.



Context

Lautoka experiences a mean temperature of 27.4°C, with a decadal change of 0.30 °C over the last 10 years (Fong et al. 2022).

According to Fiji Meteorological Department 2025, in the past 12 months (Jan – December 2024) Lautoka reported:

- An average annual rainfall of 213 mm.
- Mean annual temperature of 26.3°C

The city's sewerage system, a mix of centralized networks, water seals, and septic tanks, faces concerns of environmental contamination if not properly maintained, with overwhelmed sewer lines and water tables in low-lying areas cause sanitary issues and the discharge of untreated wastewater into open waters during heavy rains and high tides. This relates to SDG 6 and 11 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sewer failures can lead to the release of untreated wastewater into the environment, potentially causing outbreaks of waterborne diseases. Raw sewage can contaminate water sources, soil, and ecosystems, leading to long-term environmental damage and biodiversity loss. Sewer systems are often interconnected with other urban infrastructure with can closure of essential infrastructure compounded by disaster. Addressing the critical urban infrastructure challenges through strategic investments, sustainable practices, and community engagement is crucial for enhancing Lautoka's resilience to disasters and supporting its sustainable development.

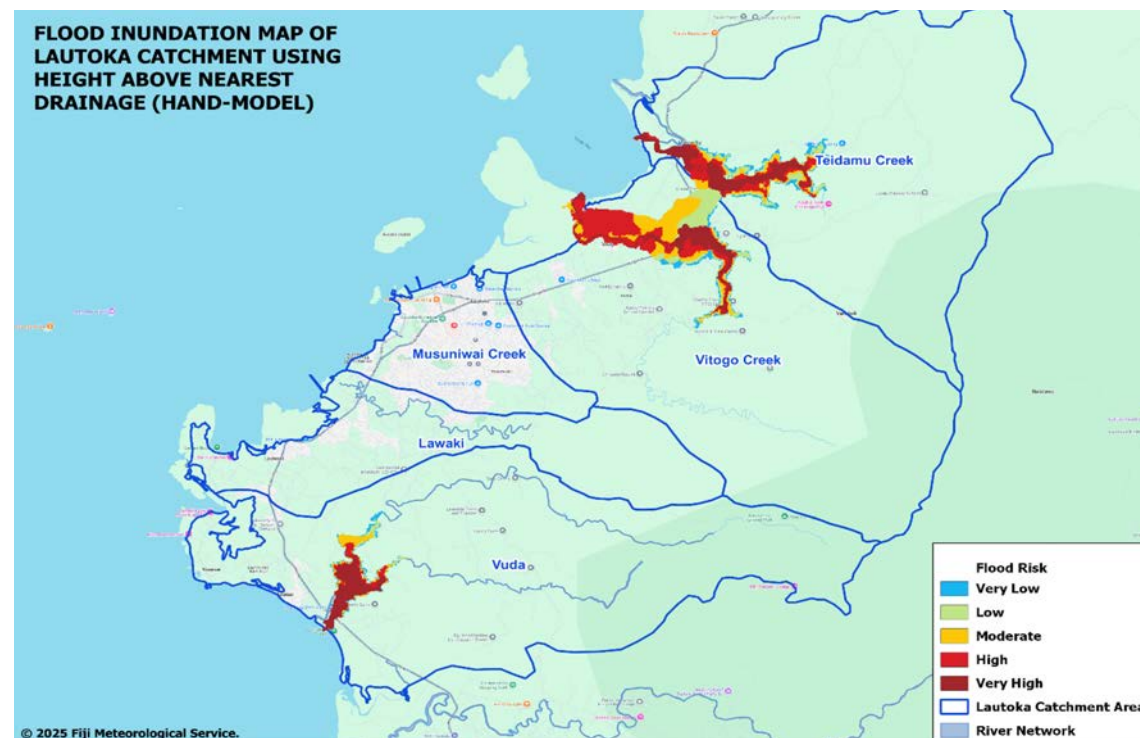


Figure 30. Flood inundation map of Lautoka catchment, Source: Map was created by Rovil Kumar, Fiji Meteorological Service 2025

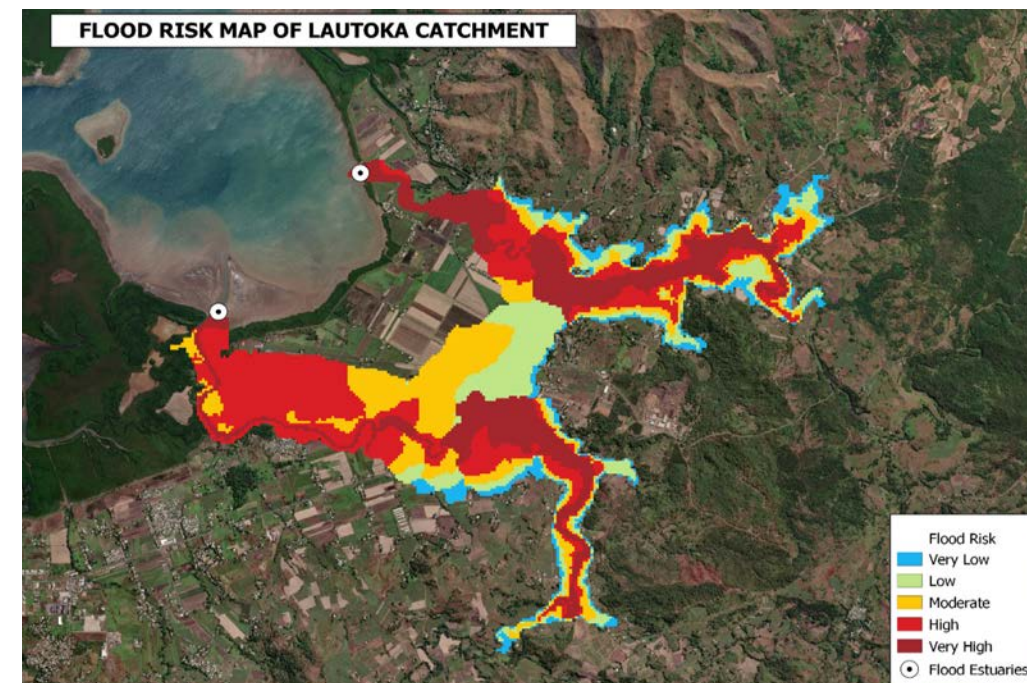


Figure 31. Flood risk map Lautoka, Source: Map was created by Rovil Kumar, Fiji Meteorological Service 2025

Target 13-1 Strengthen Resilience and Adaptive Capacity

Data reporting

The Fiji Decision Support System (FDSS) provides contextual analysis for various hazards, risks, vulnerabilities, and socio-economic data. However, it's important to note that the data is recorded at the Tikina level, which is an administrative subdivision larger than urban areas. This approach of aggregating data at a higher geographical level may not accurately capture the nuances and specific conditions within individual towns or cities. Where the urban level is not available, the Tikina boundaries of Vuda have been referenced for measuring SDG 13.

Scores:

The risk index is assigned a score ranging from 0.0 to 10.0. **Lower values** on the index indicate a **favourable performance**, while **higher values** signify a **less effective performance** in terms of handling humanitarian risk.

The risk index for the Tikina of Vuda is currently assessed as **very high** with a score of 6.3 out of 10 (FDSS UNOSAT, 2025).

- The Exposure to Hazard Risk is **Very High** for the Tikina of Vuda with a score of 8.2 out of 10.
- The highest hazard risk is from earthquake at 9.6, storm surge at 8.2, cyclone at 8 and coastal floods at 7.8.
- The Vulnerability Risk is **High** with a score of 5.7 out of 10. This is intended because the taking has a high aid dependency index at 8.5 out of 10.
- The Lack of Coping Capacity at the Tikina of Vuda is **Low** at 5.4 out of 10. This is a good indication that the Tikina is doing well.
- Two of the key coping indicators that need improvement are the health facility





density which is scored 10 out of 10, and the road density which is scored at 9.3 out of 10.

- **314 out of 10,000 buildings** in Lautoka were damaged or destroyed by Cyclone Winston in 2016 (UNOSAT, Airbus D&S 2016).
- **512 out of 10,000 buildings** in the Greater Lautoka were damaged or destroyed by Cyclone Winston in 2016 (UNOSAT, Airbus D&S 2016).

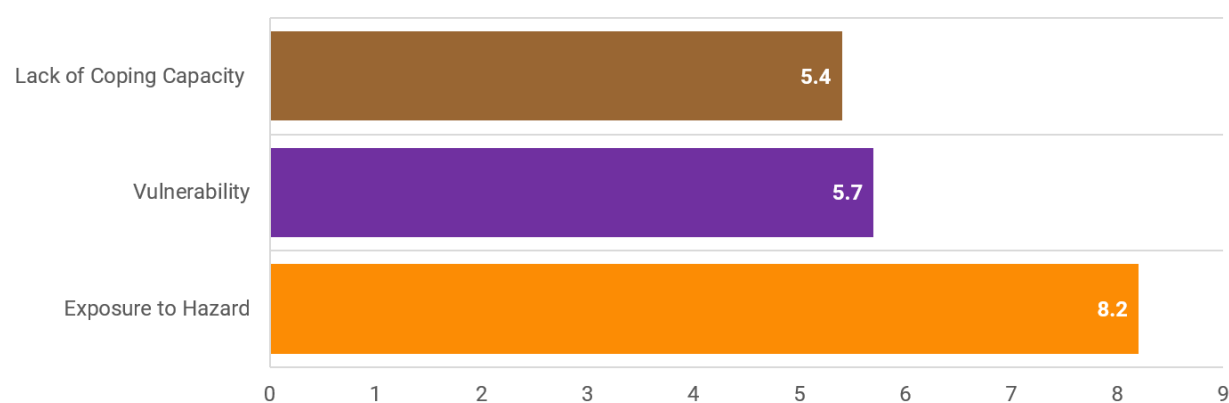


Figure 32. Climate Risk Index for Tikina of Vuda, Source: FDSS UNOSAT, 2025.

Target 13-2 Integrate Climate Change measures into policies and planning

According to the Fiji Low Carbon Strategy 2018 – 2050 (p.145), the mangrove stands in the Western Division will not have the same biomass as other mangroves in the country. This was because several environmental factors would influence the ability of mangroves to store carbon, for example, salinity, hydrology, and frequency of tropical cyclones.

The Lautoka City Council aims to partner with existing programmes spearheading mangrove restoration initiatives by forging strategic partnerships with Department of Environment, Fiji Airways, local and international NGOs, and community groups, leveraging diverse expertise and resources to enhance coastal resilience and biodiversity.

Target 13-3 Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change

The Fiji National Climate Change Policy and the Climate Change Act 2021, section 12 (i) endorses education programmes for industry groups or the general public related to the Act or the National Climate Change Policy. While section 25 promotes the integration of evidence-based learning into a variety of subjects of the Fiji National Curriculum framework.



Lautoka City Council has implemented a comprehensive School Environmental Partnership Programme, collaborating with local educational institutions to deliver interactive workshops, hands-on training sessions, and practical projects focused on the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and sustainable waste management, empowering students to become environmental stewards in their communities.

Public Response

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, on climate preparedness among residents (n = 63) noted that the fastest to respond in the event of a disaster were their immediate neighbours (44%), followed by their family members (34%).

When asked if the emergency plans catered for the needs of people with physical challenge and other vulnerable groups:

- 39% of the respondents remained neutral.
- 44% disagreed that it had consideration.

During the visit to Lautoka, illegal dumping remains a significant issue within the community. During public consultation in July 2025, residents shared concerns about how the cleanliness of the city has been compromised. To improve the nature of impacts from disaster, residents have provided infrastructural suggestions, which align with the coastal geology of the urban area. Respondents' needs in Lautoka included:

1. Improving drainage systems (79%).
2. Increasing the existing FJD\$40 fine for littering (70%).
3. Planting trees and restoring the mangrove and wetland (65%).
4. Strengthening sea walls and coastal protection (55%).
5. Providing covered bins at collection points (31%).
6. Increasing the frequency of waste collection by the council (25%).
7. Prioritise vulnerable and elderly population in their disaster mapping and planning activities (22%).
8. Setting up a proper waste management segregation system (19%).



How is the Council achieving this goal?

COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	COUNCIL ACTIVITY
Clean and Green	- Public Health and Hygiene - Solid Waste Management (garbage collection service, 3R Promotion) - Landfill Rehabilitation and relocation - Community Participation (Meetings & Consultations) - Planting of trees - Disaster Preparedness - Enforcement and Compliance - Stakeholder engagement

Disaster Waste Management Contingency Plan

The preparation towards disaster in Lautoka is largely focused on ensuring an integrated waste management system. Lautoka City Council has prepared a Disaster Waste Management Contingency Plan (2024). The plan proposes practices before a disaster strikes (preparedness phase), during and post-disaster phases (recovery phase).

The effective operationalization of pre- and post-disaster plans for waste management and collection is crucial. To facilitate this, the council has been responsible for ensuring 100% waste collection, 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) promotion, awareness campaigns, landfill management, public cleansing services (street sweeping, grass cutting, drain/creek cleaning), quarterly cleanups, and vegetation management. This ensures that the environment and public health, resources, livelihoods, and administrative efficiency is improved. The plan aims to achieve this through improved communication and coordination among stakeholders.

The Council has partnered with Pacific Resiliency Facility (PRF), to establish recycling drop-off centres at Churchill Park and IYC Park. It provides weekly garbage collection services to densely populated rural areas, covering 4,734 households (21,324 population), with an average of 127 tons of garbage collected monthly. The Council promotes recycling of organic waste by subsidizing compost bins, resulting in 595 residents practising home composting. It actively composts market organic waste and has sold 155 tons of compost from 2011 to 2025. The Council also partners with PRF for informal recycling collection pillars and regularly collaborates with youth, NGOs, faith-based organizations, and stakeholders for community clean-ups.

The Lautoka City Council is currently subsidising organic compost bins where 595 residents are actively practicing home composting. Council buys compost bins at cost of \$135/bin and sells at subsidized cost of \$31.65 (as of 2025).

Infrastructure and Disaster Management Plan

In Lautoka, infrastructure services such as water mains, power lines and telecommunication cables are usually installed along roadsides or under road carriageways. Houses near the coasts and creeks are sewerred, while informal communities have septic tanks, and some drainage lines run under existing properties. Disruptions to the pumping station due to several factors, including mechanical problems and flood damage or planned maintenance, and heavy rains, are noted. When maintenance is required, the authorities access these lines and cables by digging the verges and roads.

Reclaimed and highwater table land near the coasts poses significant challenges as they are currently considered highly vulnerable to flash floods, king tides and lack a coordinated early warning system. During heavy rains and swelling tides, the sewer lines and water tables in these areas cause sanitary issues that impact household waste disposal, some of which end up in the open waters.

To address the issues mentioned, the council recognises the need to rehabilitate aged pipes and damaged sewer lines in the short term, and by ensuring regular maintenance of the pumping station. In the long term, it aims to improve stormwater runoff, relocate utility lines away from vulnerable areas and implement coastal management strategies; regular maintenance of the pumping station; improve stormwater runoff; relocate utility lines away from vulnerable areas; and coastal management strategies.

Drainage works

Lautoka City Council had conducted dredging of the Waiyavi and Saru creek in 2012 through funding from the Ministry of Waterways.

The council has drain cleaning contractors who are required to periodically clean drains by removing debris. Significant effort is also made raising awareness among citizens about littering in public spaces, as this ends up in open drains, creeks and rivers. The key enforcers in the field for the council are litter prevention officers. All these efforts are aimed at reducing flooding in Lautoka City.

Lautoka Urban Estuaries

In the context of Lautoka, the impact of climate change on estuarine ecosystems is a pressing concern. The city’s estuarine environment plays a vital role in supporting local biodiversity, providing nursery grounds for various fish and shellfish species, mud crabs and acting as a natural buffer against coastal erosion and flooding.

The Lautoka coastlines are facing increasing pressures from industrial development, informal housing, pollution, and the effects of climate change. The coastlines are shifting inland with rise in water levels.. Rising sea levels and more frequent and intense storms pose a significant threat to the delicate balance of this ecosystem. Saltwater intrusion into the freshwater sources can disrupt the salinity gradients, potentially impacting the reproduction and migration patterns of aquatic species. Additionally, coastal flooding and erosion can lead to the destruction of valuable estuarine habitats, such as mangrove forests and wetlands, which serve as natural barriers against storm surges and wave action.

To address these challenges, the Lautoka City Council aims to partner with Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Fisheries to incorporate these areas as priority sites for their climate adaptation strategies, including:

- The construction of living shorelines and the implementation of green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff, which can enhance the city’s resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- By taking proactive measures to safeguard the Lautoka coastlines and creek estuary, the city aims to preserve its rich biodiversity and ensure the long-term sustainability of this vital natural resource, which plays a crucial role in supporting local livelihoods, tourism, and coastal protection.



SDG 14

Life Below Water

2 out of 10 targets measured
0 out of 10 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

Lautoka Port is a critical piece of infrastructure for Fiji. The opportunity and challenges the facility faces needs key stakeholder involvement and coordination. The Lautoka Port Masterplan is scheduled for completion by June 2025, which will enable Fiji Ports and the Fiji Government to undertake a detailed design plan of Lautoka Port.

Water Quality & Pollution Control

- Monitor and improve water quality in Lautoka rivers and coastal areas.
- Reduce waste entering waterways and enforce pollution control around port and city areas.

Sustainable Marine & Port Management

- Advocate for a maritime strategy that safeguards the port from climate risks and prevents environmental damage.
- Support sustainable port development aligned with ecological protection and climate adaptation.

Marine Conservation & Community Stewardship

- Partner with traditional communities to protect marine areas and resources.
- Promote awareness on sea turtle conservation and broader marine biodiversity protection.

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka Port serves as the central hub for trade, transport, and services in the region. Its strategic urban location, adjacent to a sensitive coastal ecosystem, presents a unique set of environmental challenges. This situation calls for plans on appropriate urban marine spatial planning instruments and environmental legislation.

SDG Indicators:

- In 2022, a study by SCOPE Pacific showed that plastic accounted for 10% of household waste.
- From April 2024 to May 2025, there were 8 reported cases of offences against the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012.



Context

Lautoka's urban location, adjacent to a coastal ecosystem, faces marine pollution from stormwater runoff and informal waste dumping. The Blue Pacific Strategy 2050, the Framework for Nature Conservation, guides conversation planning, and strategic pathway to ensure all members are connected and their urban, rural and outer island communities to have access to safe, reliable affordable and culturally sensitive air, land and sea transport and ICT services. Within Lautoka City Council, community and government-based cleanups have begun, but policy enforcement remains weak.

Lautoka Port

- Largest port in Fiji.
- Cargo centre for bulk of sugar, molasses, woodchips, petroleum, and gas.
- The Lautoka port services the shipping needs for the Western Division.
- It is the base for the Blue Lagoon and Nai Cruises.
- Rehabilitation of the seaport has been advanced.

Target 14-1 Reduce Marine Pollution

Waste composition studies in Lautoka City reveal a potential decrease in plastic waste over time. In 2009, a study conducted by WesEng under the JICA 3Rs project found that:

- Plastic comprised **13.6% of municipal waste**.
- More recently, in 2022, a study by SCOPE Pacific, funded by JPRISM II, showed that **plastic accounted for 10% of household waste**.

While this suggests a reduction in plastic waste, it's important to note the difference in scope between the two studies (municipal vs household waste), which may affect direct comparability. Nonetheless, this data indicates a possible positive trend in plastic waste reduction, potentially due to an increased awareness or improved waste management initiatives in Lautoka City.

- The Vunato landfill site is located near the coast and poses a significant challenge of being a contributor to marine pollution. The landfill site also faces challenges of fires at the site, which contribute negatively to public health challenges and the marine environment.

Target 14-4 Sustainable Fishing

- From April 2024 to May 2025, there were **8 reported cases** of offences against the Offshore Fisheries Management Act 2012, indicating that **10 out of every 100,000 individuals** were prone to engaging in offences related to marine law violations (Fiji Police Force, Crimes Unit 2025).
- Lautoka Fishermen Market and Municipal market has increased from **278 to 330 vendors** since 2021 (Ministry of Fisheries Annual Report; 2021 – 2024).



This figure illustrates the growing formalization of the local fishing economy, new job creation, and pressure on existing market infrastructure. On the other hand, an increase in fisherman vendors indicates rising fishing activity that requires careful monitoring for sustainability.

Target 14-5 Conserve Coastal and Marine areas

Integrated Threat to Coastal Environments

Lovell et al. (2004), in writing about the status of coral reefs in the Southwest Pacific, including Fiji, reported on the integrated threat index for Lautoka.

Although this index is outdated, and there is no explicit quantifiable data, the paper by Lawson et al. (2023) has been used to analyse any changes to the status of the marine environment in Lautoka and the Greater Western Division of Viti-Levu.



Reef area	Integrated Threat Index					Overall
	Coastal Development	Pollution	Sediment Damage	Over-fishing	Destructive Fishing	
▪ Lautoka (Lovell et al. 2004)	▪ Medium	▪ High	▪ High	▪ High	▪ Medium	▪ High
▪ Western (Lawson et al. 2023)	▪ Mostly tourism-centred	▪ High due to waste production	▪ From logging and clearing the nearby land	▪ An increase in fishermen is noted Ministry of Fisheries Annual Reports (2021- 2024)	▪ Not known	▪ To be tested

Table 6. Integrated Threat Index, Source: Lovell et al. 2004; Lawson et al. 2023.

The coral reefs in the region are under significant stress due to various factors. Based on current information provided, the impacts of coastal development, poor waste management, industrial pollution, unsustainable agricultural practices, and habitat loss on marine life in Fiji and the Western Division can be summarised as follows:

- Coral bleaching on outer reef slopes, likely caused by rising ocean temperatures and climate change.
- Coastal development can lead to sedimentation, nutrient pollution, and physical damage to coral reefs.
- Tourism and rural development, coupled with inadequate waste management facilities and sewage treatment plants, result in the discharge of untreated waste and runoff into the marine environment.
- Industrial pollutants are flowing directly into the reefs, introducing harmful chemicals and contaminants.
- Poor agricultural practices, such as upland logging, land clearing, and the construction of marinas in mangrove areas, contribute to sedimentation, nutrient loading, and habitat destruction.



Additionally, the rise of coastal population and urban migration has led to the over-exploitation of natural ecosystems, further straining the marine environment. The use of traditional fishing methods, such as Duva (derris roots), which is now banned in Fiji*, combined with chemical poisons like chlorines and fertilisers, can have detrimental effects on marine life and ecosystems.

Climate change is also predicted to decrease the habitat suitability for mangroves and seagrasses towards the westernmost edge of Fiji, potentially impacting these important coastal ecosystems and the species that depend on them.

The mangrove and forest cover map created by the Ministry of Forestry (2024) shows a reduction in forest cover from 105.28 hectares in 2005 to 48.55 hectares in 2021, as noted in SDG 11.4, and this can have significant impacts on marine life. Deforestation and habitat loss can lead to increased sedimentation, nutrient runoff, and decreased water quality, which can negatively affect coral reefs, seagrass beds, and other marine habitats. Additionally, the loss of mangrove forests, which serve as nursery grounds for many marine species, can disrupt the life cycles and populations of various fish and invertebrates.

*Dakuidreketi and Vuki (2014)

Land and Sea Transportation

- There are approximately 13 fuel stations in Lautoka.
- The Fiji Ports Limited recorded **41,841 exported containers (TUE) in 2024**; this was 1,513 containers less than the previous year.
- The year 2024 recorded **39,814 imported containers (TEU)**, recording a fluctuating trend since 2020 (see figure 9, Imported Cargo in Lautoka by TEU 2020 – 2024).

Fluctuations in cargo volumes may also influence the demand for coastal development, such as the expansion of port facilities, the construction of new infrastructure, or the establishment of additional industrial or commercial activities near the coast. These developments can contribute to habitat loss, pollution, and other environmental impacts that can negatively affect marine ecosystems.

Imported Cargo in Lautoka by TEU (2020 - 2024)

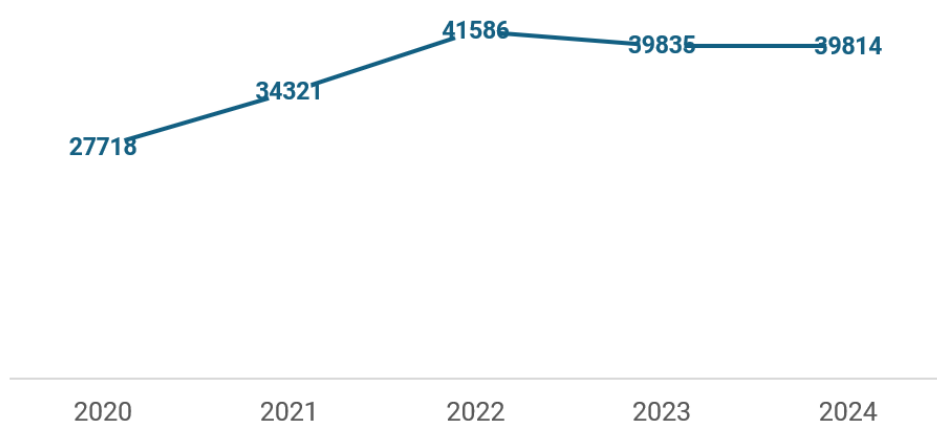


Figure 33. Imported Cargo in Lautoka by TUE (2020 – 2024), Source: Fiji Ports Limited (2025)

Target 14-A Increase scientific knowledge, research and technology for ocean health

Overall, the combination of coastal development, pollution, unsustainable practices, habitat loss, and climate change poses a significant threat to the marine life and ecosystems in Fiji and the Western Division. Addressing these issues through Integrated Coastal Management; Green Port Initiatives and Traditional Governance channel and structure integrated into urban planning, environmental regulations, and conservation efforts is crucial for preserving the region's rich marine biodiversity.



Target 14-C Implement and enforce international sea law

The COP23 in Bonn successfully launched the Ocean Pathway Strategy in 2020. It has been 5 years since the launch, however, it lacks specific, localised implementation strategies at urban levels. The marine protection partnerships included: Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP); Blue Pledge; Pacific Islands Transportation Forum, and the Blue Carbon ecosystem in policies. Fiji has made 17 voluntary commitments towards the protection and sustainable management of the Ocean.



The key pieces of legislation currently regulating marine environments include; Fisheries Act 1942; Ports Authority of Fiji Act 1975; The Marine Spaces Act 1978; Marine Act 1986; Sea Ports Management Act 2005; Maritime Safety Authority Decree 2009; National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2017 – 2024; Offshore Fisheries Management Decree 2012; International Seabed Mineral Management Decree 2013; Tuna Management Plan (2010).



SDG 16

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

4 out of 12 targets measured
2 out of 24 indicators assessed

Recommended Focus Areas

The development of Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions is critical to the ongoing delivery of SDGs and the continued growth of the quality of life in Lautoka. Greater investment is needed to attract and retain key staff in public roles that drive critical public projects and services. The role of civic participation and pride should also be encouraged and developed as Local Councils anticipate the return of democratically elected Councillors and Mayors.

Civic Participation & Community Cohesion

- Partner with local organisations to promote civic pride, volunteerism, and youth leadership.
- Support civic education campaigns that encourage participation in city governance.

Crime Prevention & Public Safety

- Expand CCTV coverage in key public spaces in partnership with local businesses.
- Improve police response capacity for urgent cases through resourcing and coordination.
- Establish a local police command and monitoring centre for real-time surveillance.

Substance Abuse Prevention & Rehabilitation

- Strengthen community partnerships to reduce alcohol and drug-related harm.
- Increase access to recovery programs, awareness campaigns, and support services.

Government Capacity & Talent Retention

- Advocate for investment in public sector staff development and retention.
- Support training and capacity-building programmes for council and local institutions.

Progress Snapshot

Lautoka urban areas have high rates of drug possession, property crime and crimes against children. The council aims to counter the issues through local business partnership and monitoring with the police. Community-led neighbourhood watch zones have been noted as effective in keeping residential communities safe.

SDG Indicators:

- In 2017, out of every 10,000 individuals in Lautoka urban and peri-urban area (aged 15 to 64), 6,230 are economically active, of which 4,152 are male and 2,078 are female.
- In 2017, **137 out of every 1,000 youths** aged 15 to 29 are not in education, employment, or training, with **76 being male and 61 being female** out of the 1,000 youths.
- **In 2017, 41 children (aged 15-19)** in Lautoka urban and peri-urban areas were recorded to be engaged in child labour.
- **3 out of every 1,000 children (aged 5 – 14)** are engaged in child labour, with 3 being male **and 4** being female.



Major Crimes in Lautoka (April 2024 to May 2025)

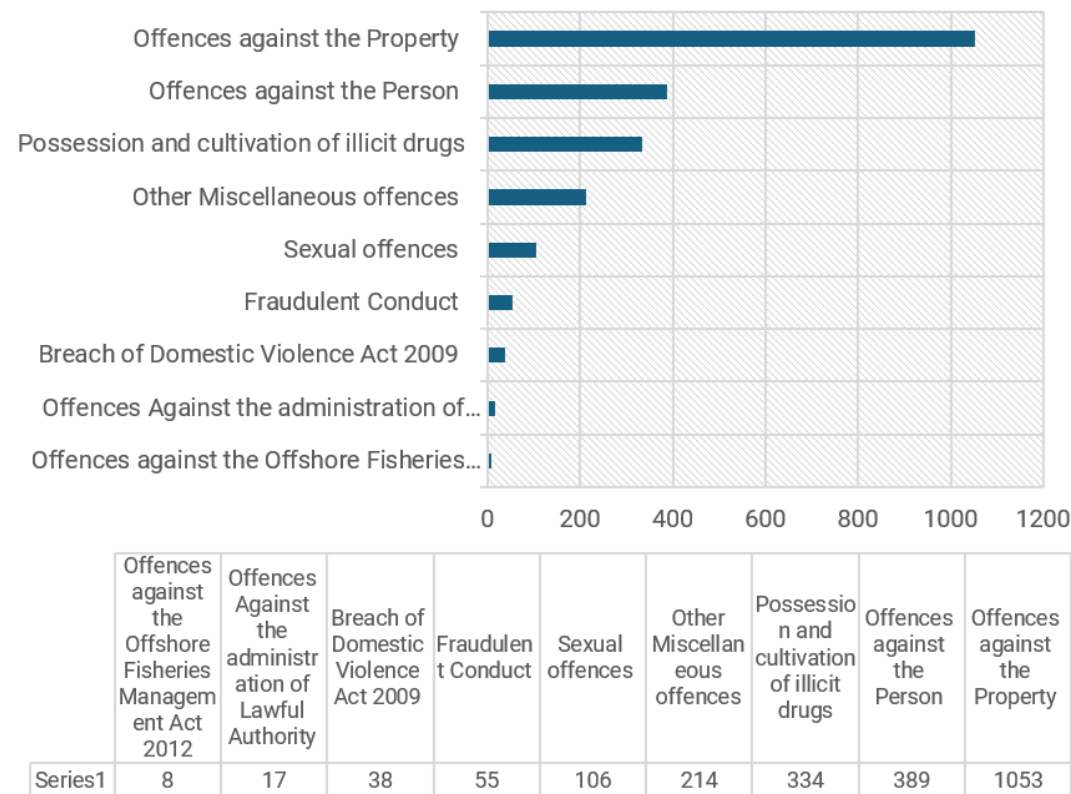


Figure 34. Major crimes in Lautoka (April 2024 to May 2025), Source: Fiji Police Force, Crimes Unit 2025

Context

In Lautoka City Council Special Administrators play a significant role in local governance; their powers and responsibilities may vary depending on the specific legal framework and governance structure in place at the municipal level. There have been plans by the Ministry of Local Government to review the role and job description for the position of the CEO and revive the position of Mayors. The current absence of Mayors reduces democratic representation and public engagement.

SDG 16 aims to assess the peace, justice and institutions that are regulated in Lautoka. The data provided in compiling this section of the report has been supported by the Fiji Police Force, with details on how Lautoka City Council partners on ensuring law and order at the local level.

The key focus of SDG 16 is to build connections and foster an integrated governance system to achieve cross-sectoral and multi-level sustainability by incorporating lessons on strong institutions. The stakeholder engagement and conversations during the writing of the report identified ways Lautoka City Council can leverage their position and address stronger connections in order for the council to deliver its services and partner with key agencies in delivering sustainable urban development goals.

Target 16-1 Reduce violence everywhere

- From April 2024 to May 2025 about **26 per 1,000 individuals** in Lautoka have been victim of violence or crime (estimating urban population of 85,555 in 2025).

According to the Fiji Police Force (April 2024 to May 2025), in the previous 12 months Lautoka reported:

- 1 case of possession of explosives was noted in Lautoka
- 38 reported cases of breach of the Domestic Violence Act 2009.
- A total of 220 women aged 18 and above were exposed to physical and sexual violence. The highest incidence was reported in December.

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, identified **58%** of the respondents feeling unsafe walking alone after 6 pm in their neighbourhood.



Target 16-2 Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence

The National Child Helpline in Fiji is 3125. While there is no Lautoka based specific organization working with child abuse and neglect, traditional family structures, healthcare providers and schools have been seen as important in facilitating child protection safeguards.

In the past 17 months (January 2024 to May 2025), the Fiji Police Force, Crime Statistics Unit, recorded;

- 139 cases** of crime against children (below the age of 18), including sexual and physical violence.
- In the previous 12 months, **753 cases** were reported for crime against children, youths and adults aged 0 to 31 years (April 2024 to May 2025).



Target 16-4 Combat organised crime and illicit financial and arms flows

The Illicit Drug Control Act 2004 regulates and controls cultivation, manufacture, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession and use of illicit drugs.

- From April 2024 to May 2025, **334 cases** were reported for possession of illicit drugs in Lautoka urban areas. This means **39 out of every 10,000 individuals** in Lautoka are engaged in illicit drug possession (estimating the 2025 population at 85,555). (Fiji Police Force, Crimes Unit 2025).





Target 16-5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery

Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) is the primary national anti-corruption agency in Fiji. Public officials in Lautoka are bound by national code and ethics guidelines. For the council, they are audited by national government bodies, and an internal financial audit exists to ensure transparency.

- From April 2024 to May 2025, 1 case was reported of bribery of a public official and 1 case of abuse of office in Lautoka.
- A total of 17 cases were registered for offences against the administration of lawful authority. The highest category of crime was false information to a public servant and escape from lawful custody.



Major Crimes and Impact

- In the past 12 months (April 2024 to May 2025), Lautoka has recorded **389 offences** related to persons and **1,053 offences** against property. The high rate of offences against property, such as burglaries, thefts, and vandalism, not only results in financial losses for businesses and individuals but also undermines the sense of safety and security among businesses and across the broader community. Businesses may be reluctant to invest or expand their operations in an area perceived as unsafe, hindering economic growth and development. This could also signal the growing income and social inequality in urban centres.

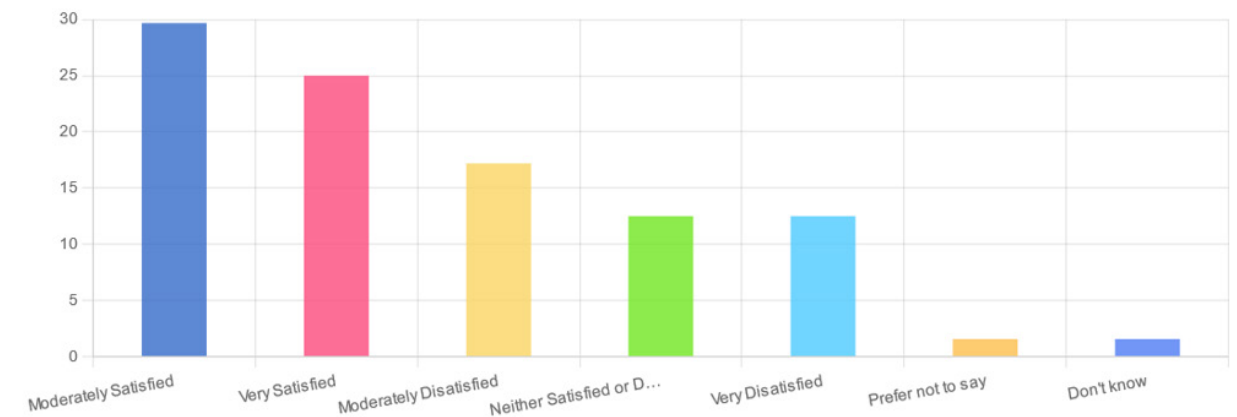
Similarly, the prevalence of offences against persons, including assaults, harassment, and other forms of violence, can have a profound impact on the well-being and quality of life of residents. Individuals may feel unsafe in their own neighbourhoods, limiting their freedom of movement and participation in community activities.

Target 16-7 Ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision making

Lautoka City Council recognizes that achieving sustainable urban development requires a collaborative and inclusive approach that values the voices and perspectives of local communities.

The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025, asked the community to comment on how satisfied they were with the projects undertaken by the council. This included the Namoli green market, carpark extension in Narara Parade, and services including approval of building plan, waste management, maintenance of parks, markets, health inquiries to support urban living and the economy.

From the responses (n=63), **55%** were satisfied while **30%** were dissatisfied. The main grievances were centred around, quality of infrastructure and service provided, timeliness of service delivery, high cost association with projects and the cleanliness of the city.



Value	Frequency	Percentage
Moderately Satisfied	19	29.69
Very Satisfied	16	25
Moderately Dissatisfied	11	17.19

Figure 35. Public satisfaction with the works undertaken by the council, Source: The Lautoka City Council Public Survey, in July 2025.

The council aims to ensure that its initiatives are responsive to the unique needs and priorities of the local population through feedback and surveys. This inclusive approach fosters trust and accountability, empowering communities to take ownership of the urban environment, contributing to long-term urban sustainability and resilience.

How is the council achieving this goal ?

Lautoka City Council recognises that criminal activities, violence, and drug offences are occurring within its jurisdiction. To address these issues effectively, the council plans to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy and action plan in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and community groups for a safer community.

The Market for Change project drafted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Fiji Police Force and the Market Vendors Association. This agreement aims to combat crime in market areas by empowering the police to enhance surveillance and improve overall safety measures. The MOA is expected to be formally adopted by the end of September 2025, marking a crucial step towards creating a safer environment for vendors and customers alike. This collaborative approach demonstrates a commitment to addressing security issues and fostering a more secure marketplace for the community.



Section 3

Localizing the SDGs

- Means of Implementation,
Policies and Recommendations



5. Means of Implementation for Urban Development and Strategic Planning in Lautoka

Drivers

- Cultural preservation, education, tolerance and diversity, free market principles, consumer protection, resource management, democracy, political pluralism are shaping urban development and strategic planning in Lautoka.
- Urban planning requires strategic and data-driven decisions based on in-house surveys, spatial analysis and place-making opportunities. The shifting data gaps over the years exemplify the phenomenon of lack of alignment, posing a specific challenge in measuring data-driven trends.
- Demographic Changes: The projected increase in population density, coupled with the rise in the elderly and younger populations, necessitates targeted interventions in age care, clean environments, and medical services.
- Urbanization and Informal Settlements: The growing number of informal settlements, particularly in coastal and climate-vulnerable areas, demands urgent attention to improve sanitation facilities, rainwater harvesting, waste management, and livelihood opportunities.
- Climate Change and Environmental Degradation: The impacts of climate change, such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, exacerbate the vulnerability of Lautoka's urban areas, requiring comprehensive adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- Economic Transformation: The transition towards a more service-based economy, with a focus on tourism and related industries, presents opportunities for sustainable economic growth and job creation but also poses challenges in terms of environmental protection and resource management.

Signals of Change

Identifying and engaging with signals of change is crucial in responding to new threats and opportunities.

- Outward migration of the working class from Lautoka and Fiji is observed.
- Increased supply or sale of housing infrastructure and rising aged care needs in urban areas.
- Water disruptions, sewerage issues, storm water runoffs, and aging infrastructure are prevalent.
- A shift in renewable energy conversations and low negotiation power for land acquisition.
- Flooded residential areas and estuaries due to improper planning provisions and control.
- Government regulations on phasing out gas-powered cars and increasing EV infrastructure, such as charging stations.
- The rise of youth unemployment and drug cases presents multiple challenges, with drug cultivation and consumption profoundly influencing policies, societal norms, and systems going forward.

National Alignment

- Policy and Regulatory Reforms: The implementation of national and local policies, such as the Fiji Low Emissions Strategy, the Climate Change Act, and the Urban Policy Action Plan, signals a shift towards more sustainable and resilient urban development.
- Technological Advancements: The adoption of clean technologies, renewable energy sources, and innovative waste management solutions aims to drive positive changes in Lautoka's urban environment and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. There is insufficient documented evidence regarding Lautoka's progress in technological advancement and its associated improvements in urban services and infrastructure.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships: Increased collaboration among government agencies, private sector entities, civil society organizations, and local communities facilitates knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, and coordinated efforts towards sustainable urban development.
- Cultural Preservation and Heritage Conservation: Initiatives to preserve Lautoka's rich cultural heritage, promote traditional practices, and integrate indigenous knowledge into urban planning and design can foster a sense of identity and community ownership.

Trends

- Increasing Demand for Sustainable Infrastructure: The growing recognition of the need for resilient and climate-adaptive infrastructure, such as improved drainage systems, coastal protection measures, and renewable energy sources, is driving investments and policy changes in Lautoka.
- Emphasis on Participatory Urban Planning: There is a growing need for inclusive and participatory urban planning processes, involving stakeholders from various sectors and communities, to ensure that development initiatives address local needs and priorities.
- Focus on Sustainable Transportation: The promotion of sustainable transportation options, such as public transportation, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and electric vehicles, is required as a means to reduce carbon emissions and improve urban mobility.
- Transition towards a Circular Economy: The shift towards a circular economy, with a focus on waste reduction, recycling, and resource efficiency, is being planned as a sustainable approach to urban waste management and resource utilization.
- Integration of Nature-based Solutions: The incorporation of nature-based solutions, such as green infrastructure, urban forestry, and ecosystem-based adaptation measures, is emerging as a trend to enhance urban resilience and promote sustainable urban development.

Engaging with Change

- To make Lautoka a thriving city, urban planners within the council, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Lands and iTaukei Land Trust Board must partner to recognise and value compact city development and protect cultural diversity in urban centres.
- The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Board together with the Ministry of Rural Authority can engage with urban villages, who are levers can act as levers for conservation, protection, and historical nuances for compact city design instead of barriers if engaged well.
- The iTaukei Affairs Board needs to partner with urban villages in hosting and expanding business services to allow local villages and communities to participate in social and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Urban informal settlements are utilising main roads for the sale of produce and food. There is currently no urban inclusive economic development tool to bridge formal and informal sector businesses and recognise the extra-legal business opportunities
- Implement an integrated approach linking water, sanitation, and waste systems.

These drivers, signals of change, and trends highlight the complex interplay of factors influencing Lautoka's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Addressing these challenges and capitalizing on opportunities will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving all stakeholders, leveraging innovative solutions, and fostering a culture of sustainability and resilience within the urban context.



6. Policy and Enabling Environment

Alignment with Strategic, National and Regional Frameworks

Lautoka City's development priorities align closely with the Lautoka Strategic Plan 2022-2026, which outlines the city's goals for inclusive service delivery, climate-resilient infrastructure, housing, and urban planning. These provide a natural foundation for SDG localization and will be central to developing Lautoka's Voluntary Local Review (VLR).

Lautoka's VLR aligns closely with Fiji's national development priorities. It references the National Development Plan (NDP), the 2023 Voluntary National Review (VNR), the National Housing Policy, the National Adaptation Plan, and the NDCs. The city's work in waste management, housing, and public space aligns with SDG 11, while resilience and infrastructure upgrades support SDG 13 and 9. The VLR recommends identifying indicators relevant for the council for monitoring future strategic plan outcomes.

At the regional level, Lautoka's priorities align with the Pacific New Urban Agenda (PNUA), 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, and the Pacific UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027. Common themes emerging across these frameworks include climate resilience, inclusive urban development, mobility and connectivity, green infrastructure, and responsive governance.

Creating ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals

Lautoka City Council is working to embed SDG ownership across both staff and citizens. The VLR proposes a communication and civic engagement strategy that leverages existing community forums, civic groups, and digital tools to raise awareness and co-design local solutions. As municipal elections return, the VLR recommends integrating SDG literacy into councillor orientation and community briefings. Elected leaders can be held accountable by establishing committees comprising elected officials, civil society representatives, the Commissioner Western Office, and experts to oversee SDG implementation. Beyond elections, governance mechanisms should include community scorecards and quinquennial municipal surveys for monitoring local progress, stakeholder forums, and community engagement mechanisms—supported by a long-term VLR implementation plan.

Integration of Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development and the Principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)

Lautoka City Council is already demonstrating a growing commitment to sustainability. Current efforts in waste diversion and informal settlement upgrading can be scaled and reported as contributions to SDG 11 and 13. The VLR aims to address environmental (e.g., drainage upgrades, climate adaptation), social (e.g., informal settlement improvements, accessibility), and economic (e.g., property management, local financing) dimensions of development. The integration of these themes reflects both the Strategic Plan 2022–2026 and regional goals under the Pacific New Urban Agenda and the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

Lautoka's inclusive development approach is highlighted through its efforts to upgrade underserved communities, reduce infrastructure gaps, and improve public service delivery. The VLR supports further focus on vulnerable populations including informal settlement residents, persons with disabilities, and youth. It also promotes targeted urban improvements to address areas historically underserved by infrastructure investment.

Governance and Institutional Mechanisms, Financial and Planning Instruments, and Strategic Action

With elected representation returning to Lautoka, the VLR outlines institutional capacity gaps and proposes actions such as integrating SDGs into Council operations, establishing inter-departmental coordination on VLR goals, and enhancing human resources through training and retention. It also identifies opportunities to embed the SDGs into the next Strategic Plan (2026–2030).

Lautoka's fiscal landscape presents both constraints and potential. While property rates and lease revenue provide a baseline, they are insufficient for major infrastructure investments. The VLR could recommend improved financial planning tools such as performance-based budgeting, integration with NDC finance streams, or strategic partnerships for SDG-aligned capital projects. Embedding the VLR into Council's Long-Term Financial Plan or Capital Works Plan and including monitoring and accountability mechanisms every quinquennial at urban level institutionalise SDG considerations across budgeting cycles.

The local efforts have been linked to the SDGs with the aim to identify strategic actions to accelerate sustainable urban development. This process reinforces the value chain that interconnects financing, knowledge, implementation, planning and policies for effective impact against the Voluntary National Review, National Development Plan and the proposed Blue Town Framework. A phased roadmap that builds from the current Strategic Plan into future iterations (e.g., the 2026–2030 plan) can be a key deliverable of the VLR process, aligning local realities with broader development frameworks.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Lautoka VLR has laid a strong foundation for local urban realities and priorities. It has highlighted local priorities, challenges, and opportunities that will shape the city's sustainable development journey. Key conclusions include:

- 1. Prioritised SDGs:** The workshop identified Nine SDGs 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 16 as particularly relevant to Lautoka's context, demonstrating the need for focused efforts in these areas.
- 2. Local Challenges:** Issues such as health service accessibility, gender equality in market accommodation, waste management, and ageing infrastructure emerged as significant local concerns.
- 3. Cross-sectoral Collaboration:** The discussions revealed numerous opportunities for collaboration between public, private and community leaders, highlighting the importance of partnerships in addressing issues with crime, homelessness, and infrastructure challenges.
- 4. Community Engagement:** The need for improved civic pride and participation was identified as a cross-cutting theme that could address multiple issues, from littering to crime prevention.
- 5. Economic Transition:** The changing role of sugar in the agricultural sector and the potential for tourism development indicate a shift in Lautoka's economic landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the workshop outcomes and subsequent analysis, we recommend the following actions to enhance Lautoka's VLR process and SDG implementation:

- 1. Develop Targeted Action Plans:** Create specific, measurable action plans for the prioritised SDGs, incorporating the proposed projects such as rainwater harvesting and the job seeker connector programme. This plan needs to be spearheaded through the leadership of the Commissioner Westerns Office.
- 2. Enhance Data Collection:** Improve quinquennial household data collection and analysis capabilities, particularly in areas where gaps were identified during the workshop discussions.

3. Strengthen Partnerships: Formalise collaborations between local government, civil society organizations, and the private sector to implement SDG-related projects effectively in the urban waste management, housing, youth and sports tourism sector.

4. Inclusive Infrastructure Development: Prioritise inclusive infrastructure projects, such as the proposed men's market accommodation, to ensure equal access to facilities for all community members.

5. Climate Resilience: Integrate climate action and resilience measures across all development plans, with a particular focus on improving drainage and sewerage infrastructure.

6. SDG Awareness: Implement SDG training programmes, starting with the Lautoka Chamber of Commerce, and expand to other key stakeholders and the broader community.

7. Youth Engagement: Develop targeted programmes to address youth health, employment, drug prevention, vocational training, and engagement issues, collaborating with relevant ministries and local organizations.

8. Economic Diversification: Support initiatives that promote economic diversification, particularly in tourism and value-added agricultural products, to ensure sustainable economic growth.

9. Continuous Stakeholder Engagement: Maintain ongoing dialogue with the identified key stakeholders to ensure their input is incorporated throughout the VLR process and subsequent implementation phases.

10. Localise SDG Indicators: Develop localised indicators for measuring SDG progress, taking into account the specific context and priorities of Lautoka.

11. Regular Review and Update: Establish a mechanism for regular review and update of the VLR, ensuring it remains a living document that reflects Lautoka's evolving sustainable development journey.

By implementing these recommendations, Lautoka can strengthen its approach to achieving the SDGs, ensuring that the VLR process leads to tangible improvements in the lives of its citizens and the sustainability of the city. The collaborative spirit demonstrated in the workshop should be maintained and expanded upon to drive Lautoka's progress towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.



Annex

Conducting the review

- Approach Tool and Voices

A. Methodology

Definition of Sustainability

The findings of the VLR was guided by the principles of evidence-based, inclusive, transparent assessment towards the commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. Inter-agencies and communities were invited to a workshop organised by Lautoka City Council to speak about indicators that were most relevant to them. Later they were requested to map measures within their organization not available as part of the SDG. The definition of sustainability borrows from the United Nations definition, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.”

Strategic Coordination with Stakeholders

This VLR was initiated by the Lautoka City Council, who contextualised targets, and validated the indicators. A dedicated task force was convened to ensure alignment, co-ownership and progress tracking. The taskforce compromised of representatives from academic institutions, civil society organization, development partners, municipal councils, and government ministries.

The VLR followed a decentralized consultation to capture subnational voices, thematic working groups under the pillars of people and partnership, planet, peace and prosperity. The Task Force met weekly to provide feedback on the report and validate findings and included members from Lautoka City Council, Australian Volunteers International and Lautoka Chamber of Commerce.

Data Collection, Gaps and Institutional Collaboration

Data for the VLR was officially requested through the respective national, subnational ministries and agencies. Non-state actors including communities and civil society organizations were consulted for their input on the issues and needs of the urban centre. Where possible data was gathered and validated through existing census and GIS datasets and administrative records and boundaries to enhance accuracy and coherence.

Recognising the data gaps, the process also incorporated qualitative inputs to complement quantitative sources, ensuring a holistic understanding of local development realities.

Public Consultation

A voluntary public consultation forum was conducted in Lautoka, with a live stream of the event on social media. The forum was themed “Our City, Our Future: Community Voices for a Sustainable Lautoka”. The forum targeted 100 people, which included youths (aged 18 – 24 years), women, people with physical challenges and informal residents. The consultation was organised by the Lautoka City Council.

To ensure inclusivity, an iTaukei and Hindi translator was resourced to translate the event to the target audience. The survey was designed to measure households’ perspectives on community participation, culture, energy poverty, public safety, transport mobility and waste, water, sanitation and urban planning needs. Residents of Lautoka urban, Greater Lautoka and urban villages area were informed about the consultation through agencies working in the sector, faith-based organizations, social media, LinkedIn, and flyers. The public consultation identified narratives and context relevant to measuring progress for each selected SDGs.

To gather feedback from underrepresented groups, the Lautoka City Council conducted targeted outreach by meeting with people with physical challenges at their office. This approach ensured the inclusion of perspectives that are often absent from traditional public forums.

The survey questions and polls created were nuanced, they include contextualised and localised questions to the issues previously identified with state actors and aligned with the strategic objectives of the councils. This reduced the survey fatigue on residents and is the first survey of such nature undertaken at urban level in Fiji.

Contextual Adaptation of SDGs

Given the limitation of granular level data for several official SDG indicators ⁹, the task force adapted global targets to reflect local priorities and capacities. Where applicable, proxy indicators and narrative assessments were employed to reflect local progress.

Efforts were made to maintain alignment to the Fiji National Development Plan, Fiji National Voluntary Review and the 2030 Agenda, while emphasizing the distinct roles and needs of Lautoka city.

The Voluntary Local Review (VLR) process adhered to the Asia-Pacific Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews (2020) and the Pacific VLR Handbook (2023), ensuring alignment with the United Nations’ framework and best practices for conducting comprehensive local-level assessments of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In urban areas, Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) on Sustainable Cities and Communities serves as a crucial framework for aligning relevant SDG targets and goals. The research conducted by Osman et al. (2021) provided the necessary framing to guide this process effectively. This is particularly significant given the rich cultural association to land and shared responsibilities for urban planning and management across different ministries, and authorities in Fiji. Coordinating efforts and ensuring coherence among these entities is essential to achieve sustainable urban development and address the multifaceted challenges faced by cities. By specifically mentioning SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Osman et al. (2021) narrows the focus to urban sustainability issues, which are particularly relevant for a city-level VLR. This enabled a more integrated and holistic approach to implementing the SDG 11 and its associated targets within the local context.

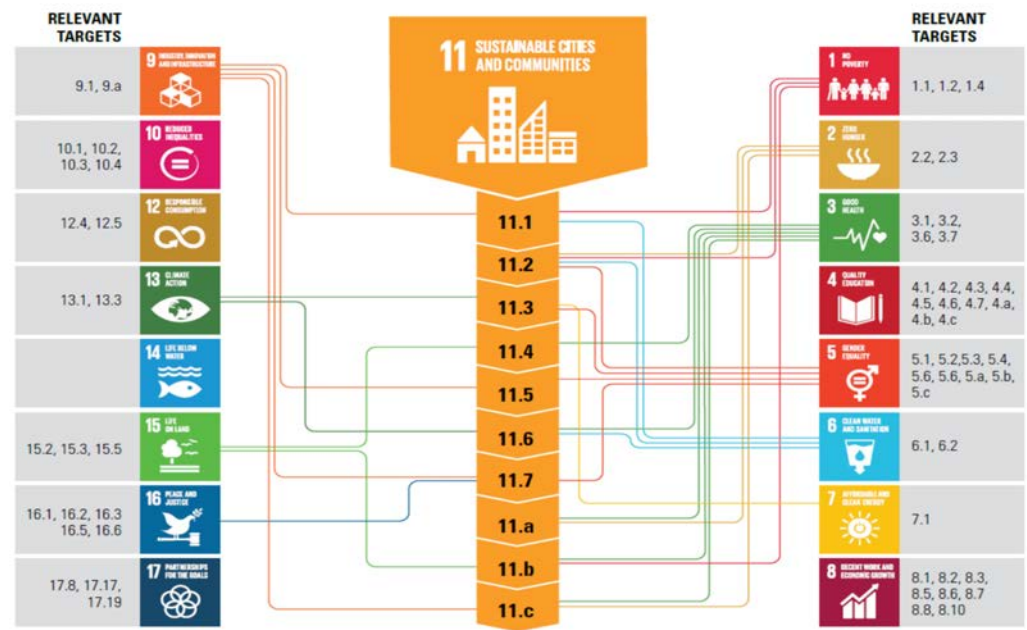


Figure 36. Framework to monitor and evaluate SDGs, Source: Osman et al. 2021.

Drafting, Validating and Reporting

There is currently no specific format or official format that urban centres can follow if they choose to undertake the VLR. The VLR prepared for Lautoka City, has adopted the Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews (2020), not as a prescriptive tool but as a context towards aligning its findings to the global Agenda 2030. The VLR draws heavily from existing resources and aims to use the SDG as a common language to localize it in its local context through co-production with national and local authorities.

The New Urban Agenda is an important component of the VLR analysis, since 65% of the Sustainable Development targets requires urban and local actors. Draft reports were developed and consulted through the Task Force. The report incorporated data analysis, stakeholder feedback and policy alignment. Validation sessions were organised to review and refine the drafts and recommendations with key stakeholders on August 18, 2025, at the Lautoka City Council Chambers. These sessions served as accountability mechanisms, enabling communities and institutions to reflect on progress and co-create recommendations.

B. Lautoka City Council 2022 – 2026 Strategy and progress to date

Thematic Area	2022 – 2026 Anticipated Strategy	Adjusted SDG Targets	Measurable Indicator Y/N & Source	Progress
Vibrant and well-designed city	1. Utilization of open spaces for development: Percentage of open spaces identified for development	11.7	11.7.1 11.7.2 Y (GIS Mapping) Y (Fiji Police Force)	Part of Shirley Park has been rezoned for Special Use Hotel development. Similarly, the iconic Tappoo Complex was developed in part of Churchill Park. MOA is being negotiated with Kaiviti Silktails Rugby League Club for development of High Performance Gym in Ground # 3 of Churchill Park
	2. Continuously review the plans for extension of city boundary for development	11.a	11.a.1	N (Gap with including urban villages in the corridor)
	3. Networking with investors, government agencies and NGO's to attract potential investors. Lautoka City currently has 5,000 operating businesses.	8.3 8.8	8.3.1 8.8.2	Y (FBOS, 2017) N (Increase protection of casual and retail worker rights) LCC is collaborating with Lautoka Chamber of Commerce and other key stakeholder agencies like Investment Fiji, utility service providers and both local and foreign investors on potential investment projects in Lautoka District.

	4. Development and reclamation of the foreshore to attract tourism	11.7	11.7.1	N (EIA Impact Assessment Required)	There is future plan of Marine Drive foreshore reclamation subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Consultations.
	5. Expansion of residential estates. Lautoka can host an extra 30,000 households.	11.1	11.1.1	Y MoRA (Access to affordable housing Valuation).	There are residential housing projects currently in progress with Housing Authority, for example the Tavakubu Subdivision (Kashmir), Tavakubu Infill subdivision, Field forty tramline road housing subdivision (Challenge Engineering), Model Town Charitable Trust (Koroipita Town) housing expansion project
	6. Formalization and relocation of Squatter Settlements	11.1	11.1.1	Y FRIS, MoHousing	Ministry of Housing has identified informal housing upgrade projects in areas such as like Lovu, tore, Field 4
	7. Review of City Scheme Plan	11.3 11.a	11.3.2 11.a.1	N (DTCP Consulta-tion)	Government through support of Singapore government is working on urban master plan for greater west.
	8. Expansion of utilities/services	11.1 6.1 6.2	11.1.1 6.1.1 6.2.1	Y (Water Authority and FBoS)	WAF, with the support of JICA, is formulating a Sewer Master Plan for the Western Division. EFL is upgrading its existing energy capacity with the inclusion of renewable energy technologies.
Accessible and Connected City	1. Enhancement of public transport operating hours to meet increasing demands.	11.2	11.2.1	Y	Comments from the Fiji Roads Authority could be reached during the writing of this report.
	2. Review of business trading hours	8.5	8.5.1	Y	Presently, most businesses are permitted to operate until 1.00 am in the morning.
	3. Improvement of traffic flow with a Traffic Impact Assessment.	11.2	11.2.1		No data on this. This is required needs to partner with FRA. Council does not own the roads.

	4. Decentralization of operations – e.g. Markets, Shopping, Malls, Bus Terminal	11.a	11.a.1		Council has Tavakubu Satellite market in operation as well as other decentralized shopping complex like Waiyavi Hub, B L Naidu, Natabua Shopping Complex, True Mart in Lovu etc
	5. Creation of Food Market at Namoli Green, for dual purpose of day and night food vendors	8.3 8.8 8.10	8.3.1 8.8.1 8.10.1	Y N Y	This project has been completed and offers an extension of market services to Lautokas population.
Green and Clean City	1. Conservation programmes for natural flora and fauna	15.1	15.1.1	Y (MoForestry)	Council initiates fortnightly plant exhibition and sales during Arbour Week on an annual basis. Council also ensures 20 additional trees are planted for every tree cut. Council has planted trees along Vomo Street, M N Naidu road and Marine Drive
	2. Creation of Native Trees Cluster at Fenner Park	15.1	Proxy		Preservation of Fenner Park (5.05 hectares or 24,711 sqm), which has a number of native trees and a forest reserve area within the urban boundary.
	3. Creation of more buffer zones and development of open spaces into recreational parks and gardens	11.7	11.7.1		5% of every housing subdivision is dedicated as open reserve
	4. Expansion of solid waste management initiatives by involving faith groups, settlements, villages and interested parties along with provision of more recycling centres.	11.6	11.6.1 11.6.2 12.1	Y (Council and FBOS)	This will need to delivered through the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs Board.
	5. Provision of compost bins to all households to reduce organic waste.	11.6	11.6.1	Y (Council)	As of 2025, 599 compost bins have been promoted within the city at subsidised rate of \$31.65. The actual cost is \$135.00

Active and Healthy City	1. Increase seating capacity and flood light improvements, with relevant facilities at Churchill Park to cater for International sanctioned sports.	11.7	11.7.1		Council endeavors to work with Drua Rugby, Government and its partners to realise this improvements.
	2. The provision of Olympic standard public swimming pool with relevant facilities at Botanical Gardens.	11.7	11.7.1		The project is at planning stage. Once the tender documents are ready it will be advertised seeking reputable contractors for construction purpose.
	3. The development of Nadovu Park with sheltered seating and enclosure fence	11.7	11.7.1		The project is shelved for now due to other priority projects.
	4. The development of Botanical Garden to incorporate amusement facilities and botanist centre	11.7	11.7.1		On hold
	5. The decentralization of market for easy access to citizens	11.7	11.7.1		Completed with Tavakubu Satellite Market
Friendly and Safe City	1. Maintain networking with faith groups and communities, groups in the provisions of sporting and recreational activities to keep the unemployed and youths occupied.	8.6	8.6.1	Y (FBOS)	Currently council maintains 111 open spaces.
	2. Facilitate prosperous investment to reduce unemployment	8.5	8.5.2	Y (FBOS)	Projects like the Namoli Food market, coffee shop, swimming pool, bus station project etc helps provide opportunity for employment.
	3. Foreshore protection against natural disasters	13.1	13.1.1	Y (SPC)	Mangrove planting at Namoli village, Natabua and Saweni and a mangrove nursery at Lovu.
	4. Installation of more CCTV's at strategic locations to improve surveillance and security	16.1	16.1.4	Y (Consultation)	Council will work with its partners.

Table 7. Lautoka City Council Strategy and Progress to date

C. Snapshot of Lautoka VLR Progress

Code Book

The SDG Progress has been scored in nine levels, as illustrated below. The symbology is borrowed from the SDG Index and Dashboards levels and trends document.

●

Major Challenges

●

Significant Challenges Remain

●

Challenges Remain

●

SDG Achieved

●

Data not available/ accessible

*

Refers to proxy indicator, this is an unofficial indicator not recognised by SDG.

↓

Decreasing

→

Stagnating

↗

Moderately Increasing

↑

On Track

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being												
3.1	3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	30.2	2023	■	↑					●	
3.1	3.1.2	Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	99.8	2021	■	→		100		2021	■	
3.2	3.2.2	Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	14.9	2023	■	↓		8		2021	■	
3.2	3.2.1	Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	29.1	2023	■	↓		23		2021	■	
3.3	3.3.2	Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 population)	66.0	2023	■	→					●	
3.3	3.3.1	New HIV infections (per 10,000 uninfected population)	0.4	2023	■	↓		18		2024	■	
3.4	3.4.1	Age-standardized death rate due to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease in adults aged 30 - 70 years (%)	37.9	2021	■	→					●	
3.4	3.4.2	Mortality attribute to suicide in the previous 12 months (per 10,000 population)					3			2025	■	
3.4	3.4.2	Life expectancy at birth (years)	67.3	2023	■	→					●	
3.5	3.5.2 *	Prox: Proportion of individuals taken into custody for possession of illicit drugs in the previous 12 months (per 10,000 population)					39			2025	■	
3.6	3.6.1	Total fatalities due to road-related accident in the past 13 years (per 100,000 population)	38	2023	■		206			2023	■	
3.6	3.6.1	Traffic deaths (per 100,000 population)	5.3	2021	■	↑	7			2025	■	
3.7	3.7.1	Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% of females aged 15 to 49)	54.5	2024	■	→		53		2021	■	Related to SDG 5.1
3.7	3.7.2	Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 females aged 15 to 19)	31.1	2019	■	●		23		2021	■	
3.8	3.8.1	Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage (worst 0 - 100 best)										
3.8	3.8.1	Divisional Proxy: unplanned readmission rate within 28 days of discharge	58.3	2021	■	↓		47		2023	■	
3.9	3.9.1	Age-standardized death rate due to household air pollution and ambient air pollution (per 100,000 population)	119.0	2019	■	●					●	
3.b	3.b.1	Surviving infants who received 2 WHO-recommended vaccines (%)	99.0	2023	■	↑					●	
Subjective well-being (average ladder score, worst 0-10 best)												
						●	●				●	

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
SDG 5 - Gender Equality												
5.1	*	Prox: Proportion of female exposed to workplace based sexual violence (%)					11			2019	■	
5.2	5.5.2	subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of					17			2025	■	
5.2	*	Prox: Proportion of female to male victim to criminal offences in the previous 12 months (female to male ratio per 10,000 population)					91:168			2025	■	Related to SDG 16
5.3	5.3.1	Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 (per 10,000 population)					0			2017	■	
5.4	5.4.1	Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location (male to female ratio per 1,000 population)					21:167			2017	■	
5.5	5.5.1*	Prox: Ratio of female to male mean years of education received (%)	101.2	2022	■	↑						Related to SDG 4.5
5.5	5.5.1*	Prox: Proportion female to male currently attending school (female to male per 1,000 population)					407:411		160:158	2017	■	
5.5	5.5.2	Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (%)	50.2	2024	■	↓	31			2017	■	
5.5	5.5.1	Seats held by women in national parliament (%)	9.1	2025	■	↓						
5.5	*	Females in leadership role within the council					0.5%			2025	■	
5.5	*	Prox: Male to female in employer or self-employed roles (male to female ratio per 1,000 population)					43:11			2017	■	
5.b	5.b.1	Proportion of individuals who have access to internet services (male to female ratio per 1,000 population)					144:146			2017	■	

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 6 - Clean Water Sanitation										
6.1	6.1.1	Population using at least basic drinking water services (%)	95.5	2022		→	96			2017		
6.2	6.2.1	Population using at least basic sanitation services (%)	93.0	2022		→	96			2017		
6.3	6.3.1	Anthropogenic wastewater that receives treatment (%)	36.0	2015		●	62			2018		
6.4	6.4.2	Freshwater withdrawal (% of available freshwater resources)	0.3	2022		↑						
6.4	*	Proxy: Scarce water consumption embodied in imports (m³ H₂O eq/capita)			●	●					●	Related to SDG 12

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth										
8.1	*	Adjusted GDP growth (%)	54.1	2023		●					●	
8.3	*	Proxy: Economically active population (per 10,000 population)					6,230			2017		
8.4	8.4.1	Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint of manufacturing sector (%)	16	2018								
8.5	8.5.2	Unemployment rate (% of total labor force, aged 15+)	4.3	2025		→	2.9			2017		
8.6	8.6.1	Youths not in education, employment or training (per 1,000 youths)					68			2017		
8.7	*	Victims of modern slavery (per 1,000 population)			●	●					●	
8.7	8.7.1	Child Labour (aged 5 to 14 per 1,000 population)	167	2021		●	0			2017		
8.8	*	Proxy: Fundamental labor rights are effectively guaranteed (worst 0 - 1 best)			●	●					●	
8.8	*	Fatal work-related accidents embodied in imports (per million population)			●	●					●	
8.9	*	Occupation rate of hotel room (%)					39.7			2017		
8.10	8.10.2	Adults with an account at bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider (% of population aged 15 or over)			●	●	55.0			2017		
8.10	*	Proportion of males with access to bank account (per 1,000 population)					594			2017		
8.10	*	Proportion of females with access to bank account (per 1,000 population)					516			2017		

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities										
11.1	11.1.1	Proportion of urban population living in slums (%)	9.4	2022		→	36.8			2017		
11.6	11.6.2	Annual mean concentration of PM2.5 (µg/m³)	6.3	2023		↑					●	
*	*	Access to improved water source, piped (% of urban population)	98.4	2022		↑	91			2017		Related to Target 6.1
11.2	11.2.1	Population with convenient access to public transport in cities (%)	19.2	2020		●					●	
11.2	11.2.1	Population with convenient access to public and private transport in cities (%)					86.9			2025		
11.3	11.3.1	Population density (per hectare)					43					
11.3	11.3.1	Projected population density (per hectare)					59			2027		
11.5	*	Damage to buildings (per 1,000 buildings)					43			2016		
11.5	*	Households with poor condition walls (per 1,000 households)					49			2017		
11.6	11.6.1	Waste collection per tonnes per day					110			2024		
11.7	11.7.1	Average share of built up area that is used for parks and open space (per hectare)					47			2025		

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 13 - Climate Action										
13.2	*	CO₂ emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production (tCO₂/capita)	1.2	2023		↑					●	
13.2	*	GHG emissions embodied in imports (tCO₂/capita)			●	●					●	
13.2	*	CO₂ emissions embodied in fossil fuel exports (kg/capita)	0.0	2023		●					●	
13.1	*	Risk Index (0 Low to 10 High)							6.3	2025		
*	*	Exposure to Hazard Risk (0 low to 10 high)							8.2	2025		
*	*	Vulnerability Risk (0 Low yo 10 High)							5.7	2025		
*	*	Lack of Coping Capacity (0 low to 10 High)							5.4	2025		

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 14 - Life Below Water										
14.5	14.5.1	Mean area that is protected in marine sites important to biodiversity (%)	16.5	2023		→						
14.1	*	Proportion of household waste plastic (%)						7.9		2016		
14.1	*	Ocean Health Index: Clean Waters score (worst 0 - 100 best)	77.4	2024		→						
14.4	14.4.1	Fish caught from overexploited or collapsed stocks (% of total catch)	9.0	2018		↑						
14.4	14.4.1	Fish caught by trawling or dredging (%)	0.0	2019		●						
14.4	*	Fish caught that are then discarded (%)	7.3	2019		→						
14.4	*	Offences in violation of the Offshore Fisheries Management Act in previous 12 months (per 100,000 individuals)						10		2025		
14.2	*	Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	0.3	2018		●						

Target	Indicator	SDG Goal	National Value	Year	Rating	Trend	Lautoka (Urban and Peri-Urban) Value	Western Division	Tikina of Lautoka	Year	Rating	Related SDG
		SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions										
16.1	16.1.1	Homicides (per 100,000 population)	2.2	2020		→	1			2025		
16.3	*	Crime is effectively controlled (worst 0-1 best)			●	●					●	
16.3	16.3.2	Unsentenced detainees (% of prison population)	19.9	2021		↑						
16.9	16.9.1	Birth registrations with civil authority (% of children under age 5)	86.6	2021		●						
16.5	*	Corruption perceptions Index (worst 0 - 1 best)	55.5	2024		●						
16.5	*	Registered cases against administration of lawful authority (per 10,000 population)					2			2025		
16.2	*	Children involved in child labor (%)	16.7	2021		●	0.3			2017		Related to Target 8.1
16.4	*	Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100,000 population)	0.0	2024		●						
16.1	*	Possession of explosives in the previous 12 months (per 100,000 population)					1			2025		
16.4	*	Possession or cultivation of illicit drugs in the previous 12 months (per 10,000 population)					39			2025		
16.10	*	Press Freedom Index (worst 0 - 1 best)	71.2	2025		↑						
16.1	*	Offences against property in the previous 12 months (per 10,000 population)			●	●	123			2025		
16.3	*	Access to affordability of justice (worst 0 - 1 best)			●	●					●	
16.3	*	Timeliness of administrative proceedings (worst 0 - 1 best)			●	●					●	
16.6	*	Expropriations are lawful and adequately compensated (worst 0 - 1 best)			●	●					●	

D. List of Acronyms

CC	Climate Change
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CWM	Colonial War Memorial Hospital
EEL	Energy Fiji Limited
FBoS	Fiji Bureau of Statistics
FCCC	Fiji Competition and Consumer Commission
FCOSS	Fiji Council of Social Services
FEA	Fiji Electricity Authority
FLMMA	Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIES	Household Income Expenditure Survey
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JPRISM	Japan Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management
LCC	Lautoka City Council
LMVA	Lautoka Market Vendors Association
MoF	Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TLTB	iTaukei Land Trust Board
VLR	Voluntary Local Review

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The Lautoka City Council is committed to ensuring the sustainable development of its municipal boundary. In order for us to do this we would appreciate feedback to this report, this will help us to understand what is happening in the urban centres, continue to build network of people, organizations and ideas to progress towards the SDGs.