



PRESS RELEASE

Employers need 100% of their 1% FNU levy

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The recently launched National Skills Gap Assessment (NSGA) Survey has indicated that employers need to access 100% of their 1% FNU levy to attract and retain local workers.

While the report identifies about 95 different jobs that employers are finding difficult to fill with locals, employers indicated their preference to invest in local workers – upskill and re-skill current employees, re-engage retired workers and hiring locals – indicating that hiring foreign workers is not their first preference.

“Recruiting foreign workers is not the first preference of employers. This is because recruiting foreign workers is not relatively cheap – recruitment cost, airfares and bond alone can amount to an average cost of \$3,000 per foreign worker”, said Mr Edward Bernard, the CEO of the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF).

To invest in the skills of local workers, employers can only access 10% of their 1% FNU levy. From 2019 to 2024, about 4,800 employers contributed an average of \$25m a year but could only access an average of \$2.5m a year – on average that is about \$520 per contributing employer.

Mr Bernard highlighted that employers need to access 100% of their training funds and an independent institution led by employers needs to be established to manage the employers’ funds. This can spur more innovative schemes such as workplace exposure programmes for students and teachers, high quality internship and apprenticeship schemes and inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Cabinet recently made a decision to access a specific amount of the 1% FNU levy for Government training. What about the private sector?

This survey was led by FCEF in partnership with the Fiji Human Resource Institute (FHRI) and the Higher Education Commission Fiji and funded by the Ministry of Finance. This is Fiji's first labour demand survey that has been published.

The survey was conducted by the Fiji Bureau of Statistics from November 2025 to February 2026, targeting 410 companies and received a 91% response rate. The number of employers that responded employed 33.4% of the total formal sector. The survey was conducted using three reference years: 31 December 2022, 31 December 2024 and 31 August 2025.

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