

VAT monitoring system

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

CONCERNS about the implementation of the VAT monitoring system (VMS) and the cost of the associated equipment, to small operators was discussed at the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association's 54th annual general meeting in Nadi on Friday.

"We are in close contact with the Fiji Revenue and Customs

Service on this matter and we have been engaged in detailed discussions with them," Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association president Dixon Seeto said.

"They have committed to working with us to resolve this issue."

Mr Seeto added that while bigger operators would be better placed to handle the installation of VMS, smaller businesses

would face numerous challenges.

"With the introduction of this scheme, we have to be sure the VMS system works for all of our members — both large and small."

Mr Seeto acknowledged FRCS for the assistance it was providing in ensuring FHTA members were guided through the implementation process.

"We had a discussion with

FRCS and they have committed to help us have a seamless introduction of the VMS.

"They understand that the different types of resort and hotel businesses have different systems."

"Unlike a supermarket, the tourism sector is quite complex."

"The July 21 deadline for the installation and implementation of VMS is very tight."

"Given the difficulties and complexities — it was agreed that FHTA and FRCS would work closely to ensure that the transition to VMS is seamless and as economical as possible."

Mr Seeto added that implementation of the system was quite expensive and FHTA was looking at some economy of scale by tackling it on a group basis in a bid to reduce cost.

Seeto: We need greater discipline

By REPEKA NASIKO

THE Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association is looking to the 2019/2020 National Budget period to continue to promote the interests of its members.

"We recognise that in a time of global uncertainty and global downturn, the Government has had a pragmatic view of how they are going to structure the budget and you can see that the budget has been reduced by almost \$900 million," re-elected president Dixon Seeto said.

"I think that we need greater discipline and the Minister for Economy has said that."

"This will hopefully bring out more productivity, a lot more compliance and making sure that there is a buffer in our economy to withstand external shocks."

"As we all know that Fiji relies on the tourism industry as our main economic driver and we know that it is a very fickle industry."

"It is very much affected by external factors."

"We are mindful to work closely with Tourism Fiji, our national carrier and Government to make sure that our industry stays viable and sustainable but at the same time it develops."

He said in the absence of other industries, the tourism industry remains a constant economic earner.

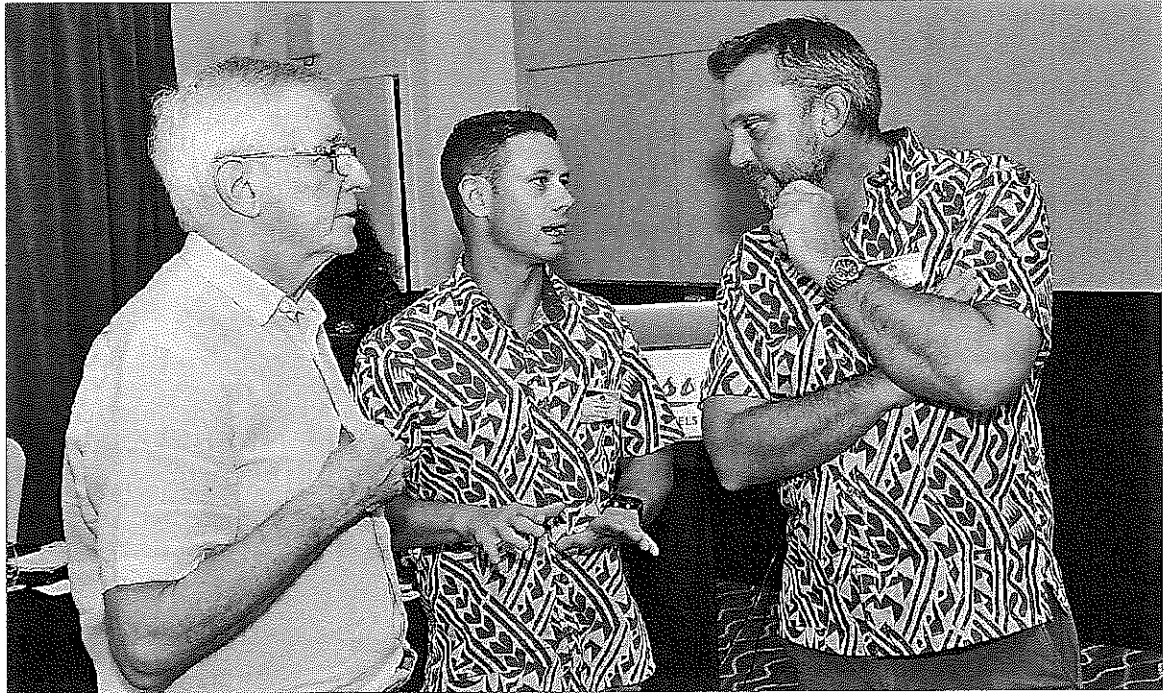
"So we were hoping that Government gave us a little more consideration."

"They have in certain aspects where they had given us some relief but we were hoping for more to make sure that we grow the industry faster."

"We were also looking to Government to reduce some of our taxes but we understand that Government needs to match its expenditure with its revenue and that is something that we will work with Government on."

The new budget was discussed during the association's 54th annual general meeting in Nadi on Friday.

Other issues discussed included issues of tax, new leave allocations, training levies and the investment climate, signing a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Fisheries, raising awareness for members on changes in legislation and best practices and highlighting the environmental damage of unstrained development and the need



Peter Gee from GPH (left) with Nick Darling from Volivoli Beach Resort and Anthony Acland from Captain Cook Cruises after the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association AGM in Nadi.
Picture: BALJEET SINGH

Re-elected FHTA president shares sentiments

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

IT'S not about me but the thousands of Fijians who go to work every day and give visitors to this country the best possible holiday experience.

This was the sentiment shared by re-elected Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association (FHTA) president Dixon Seeto after its members placed him back in the driver's seat during the organisation's 54th annual general meeting on Friday.

"It's also the board and membership that makes FHTA a very

strong association," he said.

"Everyone here is an owner-operator, we're in the private sector and passionate about what we do."

"We need to be profitable, we need to grow the business and this is what we are about because with one-in-three persons employed in tourism, we have a huge responsibility to our businesses, our employees and their families."

"There are a lot of people relying on us and we are focused on the long-term sustainability of our businesses and the tourism sector as a whole."

Mr Seeto added that having an experienced and vibrant board also made his job easier.

"We have four life members — Patrick Wong, Robert Wade, YP Reddy and Hafiz Khan."

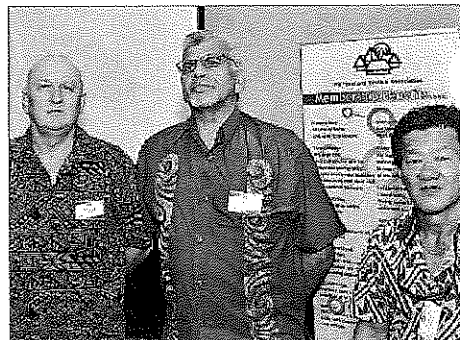
"We have a very active board made up of very clever people and I am very privileged and honoured to have a great team working with me as the president to achieve what we need to do for our members, hotel industry, tourism industry and economy of Fiji."

"We have a great role to play, tourism is a great platform for de-

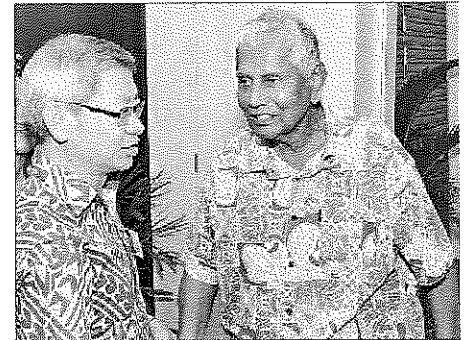
velopment because it is an industry that thrives when the development is off the beaten track places sometimes the more remote, the better."

"It's the greatest employer, there are a lot of people coming out of schools and universities now the need jobs."

"And it is also a great platform for investment and that is also something we also want to encourage Government to put in policies that will actually get more private sector investment and foreign investment into Fiji."



Left: Robert Wade, (left) Hafiz Khan and Patrick Wong after the Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association AGM in Nadi.
Picture: BALJEET SINGH



Right: Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association president Dixon Seeto (left) with YP Reddy after the FHTA meeting last week.
Picture: BALJEET SINGH

Police take drug suspects in custody

By FELIX CHAUDHARY

POLICE have taken in three people in the Western Division in relation to alleged drug-related offences.

Police spokeswoman Ana Nai-

Nadi, resulted in the discovery of dried leaves and cash in a white sack.

She said a search of the suspect's farm also resulted in the discovery of plants believed to be marijuana.

The search of his farm resulted

ing from 10cm to 50cm which were uprooted from his vegetable farm and sugarcane field," she said.

She said the suspect remained in custody as investigations continued.

Mr Naidoo also said the two

25 and 30 years were arrested in Tavua Town after being found in possession of dried leaves wrapped in newspaper and aluminium foil believed to be marijuana.

She said both men were in custody pending further investigations.