

GIRMIT CELEBRATIONS PRESS RELEASE:



Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Outreach at Giritmit Celebrations in Labasa a Resounding Success

The Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission (FTRC) successfully engaged community members during the 146th Giritmit Commemoration held at Subrail Park, Labasa, from May 10 to 12.

Invited by the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, the FTRC was represented by chairperson Dr Marcus Brand, Commissioners Sekove Naqiolevu and Rajendra Dass, along with four Commission staff members.

The Commission's presence was strongly felt, drawing interest from members of the public, senior government officials, and invited guests from the diplomatic corps, many of whom visited the FTRC information booth. The booth provided face-to-face engagement and distributed key resources, including brochures and the English version of the FTRC Act 2024.

Commissioner Brand emphasised that this year's Giritmit theme, "*Preserving the Past, Envisioning the Future*," aligned with the Commission's core mission.

"Our work is grounded in truth-telling, healing, and reconciliation. The Giritmit celebrations reminded us of the power of dialogue, memory, and identity in building a more united and inclusive future. Most of all, our face-to-face conversations reinforced the importance of human connection in fostering trust and understanding," Commissioner Brand said.

Commissioner Naqiolevu highlighted that although adverse weather conditions led to the cancellation of Sunday evening's program, the Commission's outreach was seen as a strong success.

Public engagement exceeded expectations, with a noticeable increase in follow-up enquiries via phone, Facebook Messenger, and email, he noted.

Many attendees, he stated had also requested contact forms, highlighting a growing interest in the Commission's work and strengthening awareness of its role in the national reconciliation process.

Commissioner Naqiolevu noted the community's enthusiasm: *“Despite the bad weather, we had a good turnout at the FTRC information booth. The level of interest from the public was encouraging, with many asking thoughtful questions about the process and the work ahead.”*

Commissioner Naqiolevu shared that brochures and A6-sized booklets of the English version of the FTRC Act 2024 were distributed during the celebrations and added that Hindi and iTaukei vernacular versions will be made available soon.

Commissioner Brand, on his first visit to Labasa, called the experience powerful and inspiring.

“The quality of the cultural performances on the first day reflected the vibrancy and authenticity of Indo-Fijian identity, which is a significant asset to Fiji’s cultural legacy,” he said.

“I was especially moved by the presence of senior Giriti survivors and the powerful oratory of local high school students.”

The FTRC he said remains committed to engaging communities across the country as it fulfils its mandate to examine the past political upheavals since 1987, support national healing, and foster social cohesion.

Meanwhile contact forms will now be available at Post Fiji outlets across Fiji.

About FTRC:

The FTRC is an independent entity set up for truth-telling, reconciliation, and national healing. The mandate of the FTRC is to examine past political upheavals and their impact on people’s lives. The Commission is looking at the physical and emotional harm, loss of life and property, and systemic injustices on people.

The purpose of this work is to foster unity and social cohesion in a society where everyone feels safe, equal, included and able to thrive. The Commission seeks to honour the lived experiences of survivors by providing a platform for voices to be heard, validated, and acknowledged.

The Commission emphasises that truth-telling is not about retribution. It is about recognition, healing, to ensure that history is not repeated. Through reconciliation, the Commission aims to build a stronger, more just, and peaceful Fiji for future generations.

Note: The Commission is encouraging members of the public to contact us in relation to any of the above. We look forward to hearing from you.

Reach us by phone, email, or through our Facebook page, where a contact form is also available.

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