



HEAD OFFICE
Please Address All Correspondence
To The General Manager

Suva
Fiji.
Tel: (679) 322 9505
Fax: (679) 331 2014
Email: info@nlb.com.fj
Web: www.nlb.com.fj

PRESS RELEASE

The Native Land Trust Board wishes to issue the following in reply to the various media statements made recently.

- **NON-RENEWAL OF LEASES IN NAVOALEVU, LABASA**

The case is unfortunate, as the landowners are in dire need of land themselves since all their available lands have been leased out and none was reserved for them during the NLC sittings. Under Section 9 of the Native Land Trust Act, the Board must first consult with the native owners to verify their current and future land needs before a decision is made whether to renew a lease or not.

In this case, the needs of the landowners are there and the Board is therefore duty bound to honour that, hence the intended reversion of the land when the lease expires in November.

One of the co-lessee, Mr. Mehi Lal has already vacated and removed his house from the land. Contrary to media reports, the landowners were not involved in the eviction of Mr. Lal. He had bought an adjacent cane farm and had voluntarily removed his house to build on his new farm.

The other co-lessee, Mr Indar Deo is currently in occupation and the Board has offered to relocate him to another area when the grace period expires in November this year. They are currently harvesting their last standing cane from the leasehold property.

- **CALL TO END NLTB MONOPOLY**

The Board is not aware of such reports and will only issue a comment or statement after viewing the document.

- **CALL FOR RENEWAL OF LEASES**

The Board has already made known its position that it stands ready to renew all expiring leases. First, we will have to verify the current and future land needs of the landowning unit as governed by Section 9 of the Native Lands Trust Act. If they agree to the renewal of the lease then we will proceed to renew the lease. If not then we will relocate the tenant to another land of his choice.

We are also committed to seeing that more native land are made available for leasing on fair and resonable terms not only to sugar cane farmers but for other agricultural activities, commercial and residential developments. On that, we are working closely with Government to develop and open up vacant native land such as Navovo in Sigatoka, Narara in Navua and other potential areas.

-/2

-2-

This will not only optimise rental to landowners but also provides opprtunities for others to lease and develop native land.

- **RENEWAL OF LEASES - FIJI HARDWOOD CORPORATION LTD**



HEAD OFFICE

Please Address All Correspondence
To The General Manager

Suva
Fiji.
Tel: (679) 322 9505
Fax: (679) 331 2014
Email: info@nlb.com.fj
Web: www.nltb.com.fj

The Board wishes it to be known that the purported renewal of leases to the FHCL on all mahogany plantations as highlighted in the media had been reversed and the agreement terminated when the new management team of the Board took office this year.

However, as we have reported some times back, a new committee comprising of Fiji Hardwood Corporation Limited and NLTB have been formed to review the terms of the leases, rent and stumpage payments on hardwood plantations. Meetings are currently in progress and we anticipate to standardise all leases before the end of the year. Landowners will be fully informed of developments in due course.

[N Naivalumaira]
Public Relations Officer

Friday, October 18, 2002