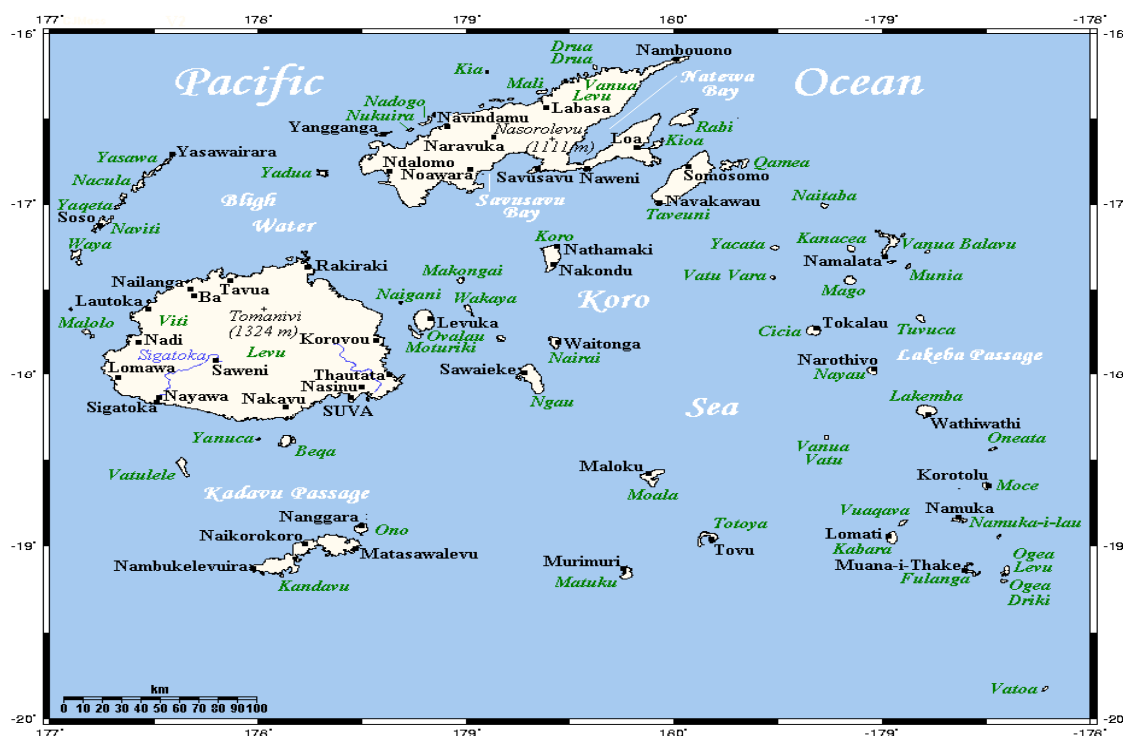


SOUTH PACIFIC NURSES FORUM (SPNF)

FIJI - COUNTRY REPORT 2026



The Fiji Nursing Association – (FNA) - HISTORY

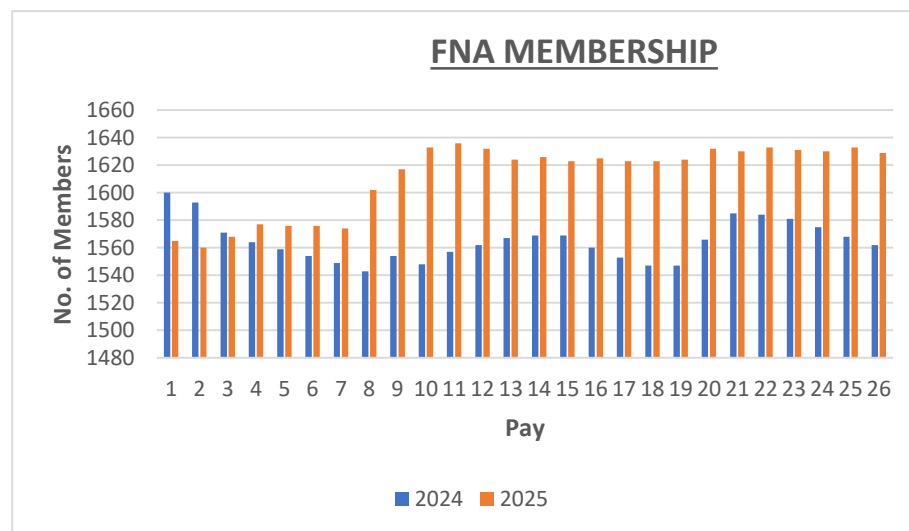
- Established 27th October, 1956 – mooted by 6 nurses and after a membership drive, 25 members were recruited.
- 1st Annual Conference in Suva – 5th January, 1957 – 97 members (60 of these members attended the conference)
- 23rd of March, 1977 – the Government of Fiji officially gave the FNA recognition for collective bargaining purposes under the provisions of the Trade Unions (Recognition) Act, 1976. With this recognition the Fiji Nurses Association was recognised, as the only trade union in Fiji that can legally bargain for nurses.
- One of the core objectives of the FNA then was to establish improved working conditions for nurses.
- In 1977, 87% of nurses were members of the FNA and almost always would come out victorious with their collective bargaining campaigns.

The Fiji Nursing Association – (FNA) - TODAY.

- VISION – “Nurses working together to advance nursing, health and welfare.

- **MISSION** – The FNA is the national voice of nursing personnel, advancing the practice of nursing and the profession to improve health outcomes, and advocating for better welfare for nursing by:
 - ❖ Unifying the voices of nurses;
 - ❖ Strengthening nursing development;
 - ❖ Promoting nursing excellence and a vibrant profession;
 - ❖ Promoting quality health practices;
 - ❖ Serving the public interest;
 - ❖ Advocating for better working conditions;
 - ❖ Promoting socio – economic activities for members; and
 - ❖ Business arm of the association.
- FNA membership to date (June 2026) stands at 1,783, which is 59.57 % of the 2,994 nurses issued employment licence by the government of Fiji.

Comparison of membership 2024 & 2025:



67th AGM Group Photo



Overview of the changes, challenges and opportunities within nursing and midwifery since the 2024 SPNF report:

Since the 2024 SPNF Country Report, Fiji's nursing and midwifery profession has experienced significant developments driven by workforce shortages, industrial negotiations, and ongoing health sector reforms. The Fiji Nursing Association (FNA) has continued to advocate strongly for improved remuneration, fair employment conditions, workforce retention, and recognition of the profession through collective bargaining and engagement with the Government.

Changes:

- Continued engagement between the Fiji Nursing Association and Government on salary reviews, overtime payments, allowances, and long-standing employment issues.
- Greater recognition by Government of nurses and midwives as key stakeholders in strengthening Fiji's health system through ongoing consultation and negotiations.
- Progress towards reviewing nursing legislation and strengthening professional regulation to better reflect the evolving roles of nurses and midwives.
- Continued expansion of postgraduate education and specialist nursing programmes to support advanced clinical practice and leadership.

Challenges:

- Persistent migration of experienced nurses and midwives overseas, resulting in critical workforce shortages across public health facilities.
- High workloads, staff burnout, mandatory overtime, and increasing demand for health services continue to affect staff wellbeing and quality of patient care.
- On-going challenges relating to remuneration, payroll discrepancies, career progression, and retention remain priorities for the Fiji Nursing Association.
- Recruitment and retention of nurses in rural and maritime areas continue to present significant workforce planning challenges.

Opportunities:

- Strengthened partnership between the Fiji Nursing Association, the Ministry of Health, and other stakeholders to address workforce issues through social dialogue.
- Increased investment in specialist education, leadership development, and continuing professional development to build a sustainable nursing and midwifery workforce.
- Opportunities to strengthen workforce planning, improve retention strategies, and develop clear career pathways for nurses and midwives.

- Continued advocacy provides an opportunity to achieve improved remuneration, better working conditions, and greater professional recognition, supporting the long-term sustainability of Fiji's health workforce.

This period has highlighted both the resilience of Fiji's nurses and midwives and the critical need for sustained investment in the workforce. While workforce shortages and retention remain the most pressing challenges, ongoing collaboration between the Fiji Nursing Association, Government, and key stakeholders provides an opportunity to strengthen the profession and ensure the delivery of safe, quality healthcare for the people of Fiji.

Significant issues that impact on nurses and midwives in Fiji Today.

Nurses and midwives in Fiji continue to face a number of significant workforce and professional challenges that affect their wellbeing, job satisfaction, and the delivery of quality healthcare services.

1. Workforce Shortages and Migration:

The most pressing issue remains the continued migration of experienced nurses and midwives to overseas countries offering more attractive remuneration and working conditions. This has created critical staffing shortages across public health facilities, particularly in specialised clinical areas and rural and maritime health services. Current estimates indicate a shortage of approximately 600 nursing positions nationwide.

2. Heavy Workloads and Burnout:

The shortage of nursing staff has resulted in increased workloads, extended working hours, mandatory overtime, and staff fatigue. Nurses and midwives are required to manage increasing patient numbers while maintaining safe standards of care, contributing to burnout and reduced staff morale. In response to workforce shortages, temporary 12-hour shifts have been introduced at some facilities to maintain essential services.

3. Remuneration and Employment Conditions:

Fair remuneration remains a major concern. Outstanding overtime payments, salary disparities, limited allowances, and delayed implementation of employment benefits have been ongoing matters of negotiation between the Fiji Nursing Association and the Government. While progress has been made in resolving some overtime payments, broader issues relating to competitive salaries and employment conditions remain unresolved.

4. Recruitment and Retention:

Although new nursing graduates continue to enter the workforce, recruitment alone has not kept pace with attrition. The loss of experienced nurses reduces mentorship opportunities for junior staff and places additional pressure on those remaining in the health system. Long-term workforce planning and retention strategies remain critical priorities.

5. Professional Development and Career Progression:

Access to specialist education, postgraduate training, leadership development, and clearly defined career pathways remains limited. Expanding opportunities for continuing professional development is essential to strengthen clinical competence, improve retention, and prepare nurses and midwives for advanced practice roles.

6. Resource Constraints:

Many nurses and midwives continue to work in environments with shortages of equipment, supplies, and infrastructure. These resource limitations increase operational challenges and affect the efficiency and quality of patient care, particularly in rural and remote settings.

7. Growing Demand for Health Services:

An increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, communicable diseases, mental health concerns, and an ageing population continues to increase demand for nursing and midwifery services. These changing health needs require an appropriately staffed, skilled, and supported workforce capable of delivering high-quality care across all levels of the health system.

8. Workforce Wellbeing:

The cumulative effects of workforce shortages, high workloads, and increasing service demands have negatively affected the physical and psychological wellbeing of nurses and midwives. Supporting staff wellbeing through improved working conditions, occupational health initiatives, and employee support programmes is essential to sustaining the profession.

Overall, addressing workforce retention, improving remuneration and working conditions, strengthening professional development opportunities, and investing in workforce wellbeing remain the highest priorities for ensuring a resilient and sustainable nursing and midwifery workforce in Fiji.

Recruitment and retention strategies for nurses and midwives in Fiji.

Fiji continues to implement a range of recruitment and retention strategies to address the growing shortage of nurses and midwives and to strengthen the sustainability of the health workforce. These efforts involve collaboration between the Ministry of Health, the Fiji Nursing Association (FNA), educational institutions, and development partners.

Recruitment Strategies:

- Continued recruitment of newly qualified nurses and midwives from local nursing education institutions.
- Expansion of nursing and midwifery training opportunities through increased student enrolment and support for pre-service education.
- Streamlining of recruitment processes to reduce delays in appointing graduates to vacant positions.
- Promotion of nursing and midwifery as rewarding and respected professions through career awareness initiatives and public engagement.

- Recruitment to underserved rural and maritime areas through targeted workforce planning and deployment.

Retention Strategies:

- Ongoing negotiations between the Fiji Nursing Association and the Government to improve salaries, overtime payments, allowances, and overall employment conditions through the Collective Agreement.
- Advocacy for competitive remuneration and benefits to reduce migration and improve workforce retention.
- Development of clear career pathways, including opportunities for specialist practice, postgraduate education, and leadership development.
- Expansion of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes to strengthen clinical competencies and support career progression.
- Improvement of workplace conditions through safer staffing levels, manageable workloads, and enhanced occupational health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Recognition and reward of professional excellence through leadership opportunities, professional recognition programmes, and support for advanced nursing and midwifery practice.
- Strengthening workforce planning to ensure an appropriate skill mix and equitable distribution of nurses and midwives across urban, rural, and maritime health facilities.

Fiji Nursing Association's Role:

The Fiji Nursing Association continues to play a central role in advocating for policies that improve recruitment and retention. Through constructive engagement with Government and key stakeholders, the Association promotes:

- Fair remuneration and timely payment of salaries and overtime and allowances.
- Safe staffing levels and improved working conditions.
- Professional recognition and protection of nurses' and midwives' rights.
- Access to education, leadership development, and career advancement.
- Long-term workforce planning to ensure a sustainable nursing and midwifery workforce.

Despite these initiatives, retention remains a significant challenge due to the continued migration of experienced nurses and midwives to overseas employment. Sustained investment in remuneration, professional development, workplace wellbeing, and career progression will be essential to retaining a skilled and motivated workforce capable of meeting Fiji's current and future healthcare needs.

Current initiatives in Fiji to uphold the professional, social and economic position of nurses and midwives.

In Fiji, several initiatives are undertaken by the Fiji Nursing Association (FNA), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Fiji Nursing Council, educational institutions, and other

stakeholders to strengthen the professional, social, and economic position of nurses and midwives.

Professional Initiatives:

- Advocacy by the Fiji Nursing Association for high professional standards, ethical practice, and the advancement of nursing and midwifery.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes to support lifelong learning, maintain clinical competence, and meet professional registration requirements.
- Promotion of postgraduate education, specialist nursing programmes, and leadership development to enhance clinical expertise and prepare future nurse leaders.
- Collaboration with the Fiji Nursing Council on professional regulation, nursing standards, licensing, and the ongoing review of nursing legislation to ensure it reflects contemporary practice.
- Support for research, quality improvement initiatives, and evidence-based practice to strengthen healthcare outcomes.

Social Initiatives:

- Professional networking through the Fiji Nursing Association, branch activities, conferences, scientific symposiums, and professional forums that promote collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Recognition of excellence through awards, celebrations of International Nurses Day and International Day of the Midwife, and other initiatives that acknowledge the contribution of nurses and midwives.
- Wellbeing initiatives that encourage peer support, staff welfare, and work-life balance, recognising the importance of maintaining a healthy and resilient workforce.
- Community outreach programmes and health promotion activities that strengthen the visibility and public recognition of the nursing and midwifery professions.

Economic Initiatives:

- Collective bargaining by the Fiji Nursing Association to negotiate improved salaries, overtime payments, allowances, and other employment conditions under the Collective Agreement.
- Ongoing advocacy for equitable remuneration, improved employment benefits, and fair conditions of service to enhance workforce retention.
- Engagement with Government on workforce planning, salary reviews, and policies that support the long-term sustainability of the nursing and midwifery workforce.
- Advocacy for improved career pathways, promotional opportunities, and recognition of advanced qualifications and specialist practice.

Role of the Fiji Nursing Association:

The Fiji Nursing Association continues to be the principal advocate for nurses and midwives in Fiji. Through representation, policy advocacy, industrial negotiations, and professional development, the Association works to:

- Protect the rights and welfare of nurses and midwives.
- Promote safe and supportive working environments.
- Strengthen professional leadership and governance.
- Advance the status, recognition, and influence of the nursing and midwifery professions within the health sector and wider society.
- Advocate for sustainable workforce policies that support recruitment, retention, and quality healthcare delivery.

These initiatives collectively contribute to enhancing the professional standing, social recognition, and economic wellbeing of nurses and midwives while supporting a resilient and sustainable health workforce for Fiji.

Preparedness in the event of a disaster:

Fiji is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, including tropical cyclones, flooding, storm surges, landslides, droughts, and public health emergencies. Nurses and midwives play a critical role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, working closely with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), the Fiji Nursing Association (FNA), and other emergency response partners.

Disaster Preparedness:

- The Ministry of Health and Medical Services maintains national emergency and disaster response plans that include the mobilisation and deployment of nurses and midwives during emergencies.
- Health facilities have disaster preparedness and business continuity plans, including emergency communication systems, evacuation procedures, and continuity of essential health services.
- Nurses and midwives receive training in disaster management, emergency response, infection prevention and control, mass casualty management, and public health emergency preparedness.
- Regular disaster simulation exercises and emergency drills are conducted to strengthen preparedness and inter-agency coordination.

Emergency Response:

- Nurses and midwives are deployed to provide emergency clinical care, triage, maternal and new-born services, disease surveillance, immunisation, mental health support, and community outreach during disasters.
- Emergency medical teams are activated to support affected communities, particularly in rural and maritime areas where access to healthcare may be disrupted.

- Collaboration between government agencies, humanitarian organisations, development partners, and professional associations ensures a coordinated response to disasters and public health emergencies.

Role of the Fiji Nursing Association:

The Fiji Nursing Association supports nurses and midwives by:

- Advocating for the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of frontline healthcare workers during disasters.
- Providing communication and coordination with members during emergency situations.
- Supporting professional development in disaster preparedness and emergency nursing.
- Collaborating with national stakeholders to strengthen the resilience of the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Future Priorities:

To further strengthen disaster preparedness, Fiji continues to prioritise:

- Building a resilient and adequately staffed nursing and midwifery workforce.
- Expanding disaster and emergency preparedness training, including climate change adaptation and public health emergency response.
- Strengthening health infrastructure, emergency supplies, and digital communication systems.
- Enhancing psychosocial support for healthcare workers affected by disasters.
- Strengthening partnerships with regional and international organisations to improve emergency preparedness and response capacity.

Fiji's experience with frequent natural disasters and public health emergencies has reinforced the essential role of nurses and midwives in protecting the health of communities. Continued investment in workforce preparedness, education, and resilience remains fundamental to ensuring an effective and coordinated national disaster response.

Goals of the Fiji Nursing Association

The Fiji Nursing Association (FNA) remains committed to advancing the nursing and midwifery profession by promoting professional excellence, protecting the rights and welfare of its members, and contributing to the strengthening of Fiji's health system. The Association's key goals are to:

1. **Strengthen Advocacy and Representation**
 - Advocate for fair remuneration, improved terms and conditions of employment, and safe staffing levels through effective industrial relations and collective bargaining.

- Ensure nurses and midwives have a strong voice in national health policy and workforce planning.
- 2. Improve Workforce Recruitment and Retention**
 - Support strategies that attract, recruit, and retain qualified nurses and midwives within Fiji.
 - Advocate for competitive remuneration, career progression, and improved working environments to reduce workforce migration.
- 3. Promote Professional Development**
 - Expand access to continuing professional development (CPD), specialist education, leadership programmes, and research opportunities.
 - Encourage lifelong learning and evidence-based nursing and midwifery practice.
- 4. Enhance Leadership and Governance**
 - Develop strong nursing leaders at branch and national levels.
 - Strengthen organisational governance, accountability, transparency, and member engagement within the Association.
- 5. Support Member Welfare**
 - Promote the physical, mental, social, and professional wellbeing of nurses and midwives.
 - Strengthen member support services and recognise excellence within the profession.
- 6. Strengthen Partnerships**
 - Foster collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Fiji Nursing Council, educational institutions, trade unions, regional organisations, and international nursing bodies.
 - Strengthen engagement with the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF) and other regional partners to address common workforce challenges.
- 7. Advance the Nursing and Midwifery Profession**
 - Advocate for modern legislation, expanded scopes of practice, and greater recognition of advanced and specialist nursing roles.
 - Promote nursing and midwifery as respected, valued, and rewarding professions.
- 8. Build Organisational Sustainability**
 - Strengthen the Association's financial sustainability, governance systems, membership growth, and digital communication.
 - Enhance the capacity of branches and improve services delivered to members throughout Fiji.

Through these strategic goals, the Fiji Nursing Association aims to strengthen the nursing and midwifery workforce, improve the wellbeing and professional standing of its members, and contribute to the delivery of safe, equitable, and high-quality healthcare for all people in Fiji.

FNA aspirations and suggestions for the SPNF?

The Fiji Nursing Association (FNA) values the South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF) as an important regional platform for collaboration, advocacy, and professional leadership. As Pacific Island countries continue to face common health workforce challenges, the FNA

aspires for the SPNF to play an even stronger role in advancing the nursing and midwifery profession across the region.

Aspirations:

- Strengthen the SPNF as the leading regional voice advocating for the interests of nurses and midwives throughout the Pacific.
- Promote greater regional collaboration on workforce planning, education, leadership development, and professional regulation.
- Advocate collectively for improved remuneration, safe staffing, decent working conditions, and workforce retention across Pacific Island countries.
- Support the development of nursing and midwifery leadership to increase representation in national, regional, and international health policy and decision-making.
- Facilitate the sharing of best practices, research, innovation, and successful models of care among member countries.
- Strengthen regional preparedness and collaboration in responding to disasters, climate change, and public health emergencies.
- Promote gender equity, professional recognition, and the wellbeing of nurses and midwives throughout the Pacific.

Suggestions:

- Increase opportunities for regional education, leadership programmes, mentoring, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), including virtual learning platforms to improve accessibility for all member countries.
- Develop a regional nursing and midwifery workforce strategy to address common issues such as migration, recruitment, retention, workforce mobility, and succession planning.
- Enhance advocacy with Pacific governments, regional organisations, and international partners for greater investment in the nursing and midwifery workforce.
- Strengthen collaboration with regional organisations, educational institutions, the Pacific Community (SPC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) to support workforce development and capacity building.
- Facilitate regular forums, webinars, and technical working groups to encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration between member National Nurses Associations.
- Support research initiatives and the collection of regional workforce data to inform evidence-based policy and advocacy.
- Continue to strengthen the organisational capacity of member National Nurses Associations through governance support, resource sharing, and leadership development.

The Fiji Nursing Association looks forward to continuing its active participation in the SPNF and working collaboratively with member associations to strengthen nursing and midwifery across the Pacific. Through a united regional voice, shared learning, and collective advocacy,

the SPNF can play a pivotal role in building a resilient, sustainable, and highly skilled nursing and midwifery workforce that improves health outcomes for all Pacific communities.

CONCLUSION

The Fiji Nursing Association is honoured to present this report to the South Pacific Nurses Forum, reflecting the progress, challenges, and priorities of the nursing and midwifery profession in Fiji during the reporting period.

While significant strides have been made in advancing workforce advocacy, professional development, and engagement with key stakeholders, we remain mindful of the ongoing challenges affecting the health workforce, including recruitment and retention, workforce shortages, equitable remuneration, safe staffing, and the increasing demands placed upon nurses and midwives. Addressing these issues requires sustained collaboration between governments, employers, professional associations, and regional partners.

The Fiji Nursing Association remains steadfast in its commitment to protecting and advancing the professional, social, and economic wellbeing of nurses and midwives. We will continue to advocate for safe working environments, fair employment conditions, quality education, strong leadership, and policies that strengthen the nursing and midwifery workforce for the benefit of the people of Fiji.

As members of the South Pacific Nurses Forum, we value the spirit of regional solidarity and the opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices. Through continued partnership and mutual support, we can collectively strengthen nursing leadership, enhance workforce resilience, and contribute to achieving universal health coverage and improved health outcomes across the Pacific.

The Fiji Nursing Association looks forward to continued collaboration with our fellow National Nurses Associations and regional partners as we work together to build a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable nursing and midwifery workforce for the Pacific.

Vinaka Vakalevu.



Miliakere Nasorovakawalu (Mrs)
President, Fiji Nursing Association
29.6.26



Filomena B Talawadua (Mrs.)
General Secretary, Fiji Nursing Association
29.6.26