

Retirees invest savings in businesses

Retirement is an entitlement event for Fiji National Provident Fund members and one that is often anticipated.

It's the culmination of years of employment and a time that most members look forward to so that they can enjoy their hard earned savings with their families.

Although retired, many of the Fund's retirees and pensioners are still in their prime.

One such person is recent retiree – Mika Cabelawa.

He retired early this year and has quite the colourful career.

He used to meet and greet tourists but later became a law enforcer and sports commentator.

Mika withdrew his FPNF savings and established his dalo business on Taveuni, purchased a piece of land in Labasa and built his house.

He is also constructing a shop in Navakawau Village, Taveuni and plans to include a restaurant in the same structure.

"I started my career at the age of 21 working at the hotel on Mana Island then to Tradewinds in Lami and straight to the media at FBC Radio Station for about 3 years. My FPNF savings also started then and I am indeed grateful for that."

"From Suva I moved to Labasa and started with another media company and my FPNF savings continued until I joined the Fiji Police Force as their PRO in Labasa. I stopped working in 2014."

Although his FPNF savings was not much because he changed careers while working, he ensured that whatever funds received after his retirement would be put to good use.

Mika owns and operates a dalo business – all possible through his FPNF retirement savings. He buys directly from some 300 farmers – all of whom benefit from the income earned from the sale of dalo.

"In the shop that I am building in my village, I will include a restaurant for farmers who work all day in their farms and return home hungry. So instead of waiting for the food to be cooked, they can stop by the restaurant and order their cooked meals," Mr Cabelawa said. "I have not seen this type of business in any village so I am going to do this to assist farmers."



Taveuni dalo supplier Mika Cabelawa buying dalo from his farmers in Navakawau Village.

While working, Mika used his FPNF savings to repair the house in his village following cyclones over past years.

"I have seen the good things about savings with FPNF as it helps me during difficult times like fixing our village house after many cyclones and I have also reaped the rewards today.

"In fact, many families are benefitting now through my FPNF savings because we buy dalo from them," said Mika.

Grateful for FPNF savings

Never take for granted the little amount of money deducted from your wages and paid to your Fiji National Provident Fund account while working. It definitely goes a long way.

This advice was shared by Nemani Yavitatoga, a Republic of Fiji Military Forces personnel who turned 55 last year and purchased a 1.8-acre land from his FPNF retirement scheme on the hills of Sabeto.

"FNPf has given me a new ray of hope," Mr Yavitatoga said.

"This is the best retirement package I have received and I will finally be able to re-live my farming passion."

"I did not realise the deductions going into my FPNF account all these years would allow me to purchase my second property where I will enjoy my retirement with my family."

Nemani is from Matuku, one of many islands in the Lau Group. He knew that he would have to purchase a property for his children's future.

He said the FPNF allowed him to turn his plans into reality and he would be forever grateful to the Fund for making this dream possible.

Today, Mr Yavitatoga is the proud owner of a small farm land on Sabeto overlooking the sleeping giant.

He also owns a piggery and a few cattle which he described as 'the missing puzzle' that has completed his life.

He continues to share the good news of saving for retirement with FPNF, adding that it is a testimonial worth sharing because he has reaped the benefits of being a dedicated member of the Fund.

Nemani believes that if it wasn't for his employment, he wouldn't have been able to fully pay off \$34,000 to

the TLTB and \$10,000 in goodwill to the landowner.

He joined the Blackrock camp in 2015 from the Force Training Group in Nasinu.

The Qalikarua gentleman has always had a passion for farming but his career didn't allow him to pursue his dream.

While he slowly works on completing his \$70,000 farm house, he says his new home has given him and his family more hope.

"It would not have been possible if it was not for the compulsory savings with FPNF in the 38 years of my career.

"I am humbled to share this to let people know of the importance of your retirement savings with the Fund."

"It has given me the retirement package I have always dreamt of and I am living my dream on this land."

"Thank you the FPNF for allowing me to achieve my dream of purchasing a farm and a perfect family home upon retirement."

(Source: FPNF)

Nemani Yavitatoga and his wife Arieta in front of their soon-to-be completed home on the Sabeto highlands.



Nemani Yavitatoga and his son Nemani Jr attend to their cattle and piggery farm after a day's work.

