

Response to the Fiji Times on Unemployment Rate

The Government's so-called 5.5% unemployment rate is laughable. It is suggesting that Fiji's unemployment rate is similar to that of the United States or the United Kingdom.

The Economy Minister and his associates need to get out of their air-conditioned offices and travel to the rural areas and squatter settlements and ask the thousands of idle or under-employed young people what they think.

If there are so few unemployed people, why does the Government have to increase welfare payments? Why does the Prime Minister run around the country handing out so-called \$1,000 "small enterprise grants"? If there are so many jobs and so few unemployed people, then employers would be paying high wages to attract the best people to their companies. If that is so, why is the minimum wage still below \$3 an hour?

The Government claims that the economy is so well managed that Fiji has nearly full employment. This means that it really has no idea of what is happening on the ground. We call their claims laughable. But the many school leavers and poor people who are struggling to find work will not see the joke.



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