



Tackling the Challenge of Maintaining a Cleaner Pacific Amidst a Pandemic and Disaster Situation

WEBINAR Coping with double crisis from a waste management perspective : The case of COVID 19 and TC Harold in Lautoka, Fiji June 19, 2020



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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

1. Background of COVID 19 in Lautoka, Fiji
2. Challenges in Dealing with Waste Management Amidst COVID 19 and TC Harold
3. Councils strategies during COVID 19 and Post TC Harold
4. Lessons from COVID 19 and TC Harold



Mobile fever clinics

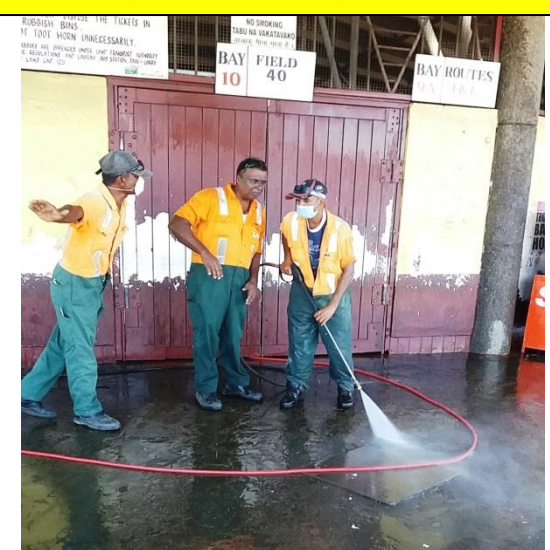


TC Harold destructions



Vunato Landfill Site

Cleaning and sanitizing public areas



1.0 Background of COVID 19 in Lautoka, Fiji

- COVID 19 has definitely caused unprecedented negative impacts on mankind globally and PICs is no exception.
- Negative impacts on economy, unemployment, lifestyles, health, food security, social issues, crimes, violence, education, poverty including waste management.
- **Fiji recorded its first COVID 19 case on March 19 from LAUTOKA – imported case from USA (flight attendant)**
- **Fiji recorded total of 18 positive cases from March 19 to April 20, 2020.**
- **Lautoka city recorded 7 cases** and all linked to index case
- Fijian Government undertook immediate proactive responses:
 - ✓ Lockdown of Lautoka, followed by Suva and then Soasoa community in Labasa.

1.0 Background of COVID 19 in Lautoka, Fiji

- ✓ Schools closed from March 20 to June 30, 2020
- ✓ Businesses closed down except for essential services
- ✓ Curfews from 8pm to 5pm
- ✓ State of disaster declared under NDMO
- ✓ Activated Emergency Operation Centres and Divisional Taskforce teams
- ✓ Amendment to Public Health Act in regards to preventive measures and increased fines for offences
- ✓ Special COVID 19 Response Budget
- **Fiji finally achieved 100% recovery on June 5, 2020 with zero fatalities**
- **TC Harold struck Fiji on April 7, 2020 which caused widespread destruction, claiming 1 life and injuring 26 people with estimated damages worth \$ FJD28.4 million**

2.0 Challenges and Impacts on Waste Management Amidst COVID 19 and TC Harold

- Diversion of waste to Sigatoka from Nadi Town during Lockdown
- Unavailability of spare parts for waste management plants and machinery
- Unavailability of PPE's for SWM frontline workers due to global effect of rush shopping
- Reduction in commercial/industrial waste generation / disposal amounts eg disposal amount in April 2020 was 1696 tons compared to 4762 tons in April 2019
- Perceived risks to frontline SWM workers
- Reduction in SWM revenue eg tipping fee
- Challenge of managing increased TC Harold disaster waste amidst COVID 19 pandemic
- Though zero COVID 19 fatality, there are Risks from Communicable diseases (LTTD) post TC Harold (33 dengue cases (1 death), 4 leptospirosis and 1 typhoid) from Lautoka City

Challenges and Impacts on Waste Management Amidst COVID 19 and TC Harold



TC Harold damages at coastline settlements



TC Harold destructions



TC Harold Storm Surge



TC Harold destructions



SWM machinery repairs

3.0 Councils strategies during COVID 19 and Post TC Harold

- LCC prepared and embraced itself first for the worst – set up task force teams
- Played pivotal role in ensuring that citizens of Lautoka city are secure from risk of COVID 19 transmissions as well as Post TC Harold impacts on environmental health.
- Council as custodian of all citizens of Lautoka actively represented at the District COVID 19/TC Harold/LTDD Taskforce team.
- Provided all the necessary logistical support in terms of setting quarantine centres, cleaning of hospitals, conducting mobile fever clinics, mass awareness etc
- Cleaning and sanitizing of public facilities was a crucial step taken by LCC (bus station/market/malls/conveniences etc priority)
- This also included mass awareness to essential businesses as well as house to house mobile fever clinics reaching out 58,000 population in 5 days.

3.0 Councils strategies during COVID 19 and Post TC Harold

- It was utmost priority of Lautoka City Council to provide uninterrupted SWM services throughout the term of both COVID 19 and TC Harold mitigation and response efforts.
- Awareness for frontline SWM workers was paramount in terms of hygiene and safety as well as physical/social distancing.
- All wastes from quarantine and isolation centres were safely handled by Ministry of Health and incinerated at hospital.
- LCC cleared, safely disposed and managed 2227 loads / 2260.62 tons of disaster waste from April 8 to May 29, 2020
- Council condemned and destroyed more 550 kg of food post TC Harold.
- LCC also effectively carried out LTDD disease investigations, awareness, clean up campaigns, perifocal spraying etc to minimise the diseases from spreading post TC Harold.
- Rural areas were also assisted in terms of **free disposal** of clean up wastes at councils landfill

Councils strategies during COVID 19



Taskforce meetings



Hand sanitizing



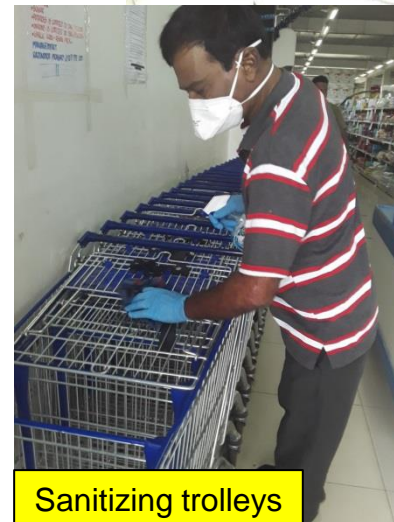
Awareness fro SWM Workers



Awareness



Awareness



Sanitizing trolleys



Thank you once again LCC Health Team for going to the people and making the announcements.
pc The Fiji Times 28/3

Lautoka City Council's senior health inspector Shalon Singh creates awareness on COVID-19 at the Shop N Home Supermarket in Lautoka, Province of Viti Levu

Councils strategies Post TC Harold



Councils strategies Post TC Harold



Community cleanup post TC Harold



Food condemnation Post TC Harold



Distribution of wash kits



Sale of compost



4.0 Lessons from COVID 19 and TC Harold

- Frontline workers faced unprecedented social, health and psychological challenges
- Increase in incidence of social issues from unemployment like domestic violence and crimes
- Barter trade popular as Fijians opt for cash less trade – back to colonial practices
- There is more risk of COVID 19 transmission from social distancing and poor personal hygiene than handling wastes.
- Fiji Government appreciates enormous support from other nations and donors.
- Most noticeable change being growing interest in backyard gardening and composting due to more family time and food security.
- Council promoted total of 21 compost bins during COVID 19 and sold 4.37 tons of market compost. Opportunity for disaster green waste recycling.
- Despite massive seriousness of issue and many initiatives – citizens complacent
- Waste management authorities can manage waste effectively under any circumstances **ONLY IF established SWM systems are working well during normal situations**



Thank You for your attention Vinaka

Ever Green, Ever Clean,
Lautoka City



Awareness



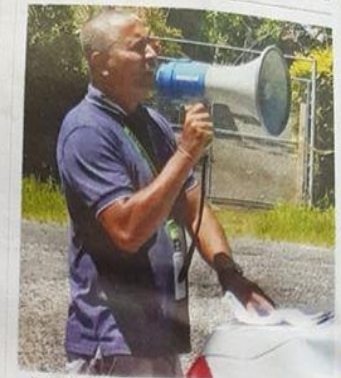
Disaster waste



Damages post
TC Harold



Awareness for SWM workers



Lautoka City Council Senior Health Inspector, Shalend Prem Singh.

COVID-19

'Fighting Virus is like Being in a War'

SHALVEENCHAND
SUVA

The COVID-19 experience has been likened to being in a war by Lautoka City Council's Senior Health Inspector, Shalend Prem Singh.

Mr Singh, 44, was part of the COVID-19 taskforce team assigned to the Western Division.

"It was like representing our country in a war against invisible enemies not knowing when, how and where the enemies may strike," Mr Singh said.

He said the whole experience also allowed him to grow professionally and personally.

According to Mr Singh, being away from family and not being able to be with his two children was the hardest thing of all.

"It has definitely motivated me to work harder and strive towards changing the hygiene practices of citizens as well as businesses so we prevent similar hardships brought by COVID-19

in future," he said.

"I had a feeling that this pandemic needed everyone to play their role and give 100 per cent if we are to fight this war."

It has been a pleasing experience as well for Mr Singh. He said with an external threat it was heart-warming to see the spirit of brotherhood and togetherness.

He said small things like washing hands could be the difference between life and death.

"This COVID-19 has sent a clear message for us all. Most significantly to practise proper personal hygiene that will not only protect us from deadly COVID-19 but many other common communicable diseases linked to poor hygiene practices," he said.

"This is unusual times and I urge all to cooperate by adhering to preventative advisories of the government to ensure a speedy recovery and freedom from COVID-19."

Edited by Ivamere Natara