



THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Speech by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Christopher Pryde, at the Sealing of the ODPP Time Capsule on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of the ODPP, Friday, 9th October 2020.

Fellow Colleagues;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Welcome to the first of two events to commemorate Fiji's 50th anniversary of independence from Great Britain which also coincides with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of this office, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Today's event is the sealing of a time capsule and the other event will be a book launch at a later date.

The time capsule contains items of interest donated by the staff of the Office and which are representative of life at the ODPP and Fiji in 2020. The inscription requests that the capsule is opened again on the 100th anniversary of Fiji and the Office's independence in 2070. It is hoped that some of us here today may still be around to attend that event, or at least our descendants!

We commissioned the Department of Corrections to construct the capsule which as you can see more resembles a box than a capsule and it contains the crest of the winner of our competition engraved on it.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who worked on and submitted designs. The vote for the best entry was mixed since a high standard was offered by all but the captain's call in the end went to the entry submitted by our Media Liaison Officer, Farisha Ahmed. We also had a pendant made to

commemorate the occasion and this was designed by our acting assistant accountant Michelle Singh.

I would also like to thank the Department of Corrections and the people who made the box and completed the engraving. It was a job very well done! And there is no truth in the rumour that the work on the engraving was delayed because of an early parole! Nor is it true his parole was delayed in order to finish the capsule!

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the ODPP 50th Anniversary Committee, the chair, Elizabeth Rice, and members Charlotte Nambiar, Farisha Ahmed, Jayneeta Prasad, Juleen Fatiaki, Shirley Tivao, Sadaf Shameem, Saif Shah, Nunia Bogi, Kuini Radrodoro and Shalen Kumar for making today possible and for their commitment and dedication to the project.

This time capsule represents a particular phase in Fiji's development, and we are now into our 50th year of independence. In thinking of our future, it is important to acknowledge the past, not to live in it, but to reflect on it from time to time and to remind ourselves from where we have come and to appreciate the progress we have made as a young nation and a young office. Our mission is clear and our faith is strong.

Before I seal the capsule, I thought I might read aloud the letter I penned to the future DPP.



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7th October 2020

The Director of Public Prosecutions
Gunu House
25 Gladstone Road
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Dear Director,

DPP'S MESSAGE FROM 2020 AND BEST WISHES FOR 2070

1. I am writing this correspondence shortly before we seal the time capsule in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (the ODPP).
2. As I write, we are in the midst of a global pandemic which is devastating the world and has forced most international borders, including Fiji's, to close. We are seeing our economy contract by as much as 20% for 2020 and this continues to cause great hardship for everyone, not least those of us who have lost jobs as a result of the collapse of the tourist industry.
3. We remain resilient however and Fiji has been fortunate to avoid the worst thus far with only 2 deaths, 32 current cases, and 28 recovered cases. This compares worldwide with over 1 million deaths, 35.7 million current cases, and 24.8 million recovered. We are maintaining restrictions on large group activities and continue a nightly curfew from 11.00 pm to 5.00 am which, if nothing else, keeps the crime rate down.
4. For our part, the ODPP and her officers have been stoic and our motto "Keep Calm and Carry On" has never been more apt. Early on in March 2020, we installed sanitiser devices outside all entrances to our buildings around the country, encouraged social distancing at all meetings, and campaigned, where possible, for good hygiene practices. As an added precaution against sickness, we also now take everyone's temperature when they enter the buildings.

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5. I hope the contents of the time capsule have survived the passage of time. We tried our best to preserve the items being aware that a tropical climate can play havoc with property for even a short time let alone 50 years. The items were donated by each officer (legal and administrative) who was employed at the ODPP in 2020 and reflect something of life at the Office in 2020 and something personal to each officer. There was no restriction and all items were gladly received. There should be a list in the capsule with the name of the officer and the item.
6. The time capsule, which is really a wooden box, was handmade by inmates at the Naboro Correctional Facility (Maximum Security Prison near Suva) and the crest was designed by Farisha Ahmed. We also created a commemorative pendant for the occasion designed by Michelle Singh and which is also in the capsule. This time capsule represents for us and for you a snapshot of life in 2020 and also the continuity of the ODPP as an important independent State institution.
7. We intended the capsule to remain in State, as it were, in the ODPP library at Lomanikoro House opposite our administrative building, but it is probably too much to expect that this old prefabricated building has survived; it was on its last legs in 2020! I wonder if the DPP still sits in Gunu House?
8. I hope that when the time capsule is opened in 2070 some of the staff of the Office or their descendants, at least, would have been able to attend and take a moment to reflect on what will be then 100 years since the establishment of the ODPP. Perhaps the contents could be returned, and other items representative of 2070 could be added, and it could be sealed again for another occasion? I will leave the decision to you.
9. We cannot know what world awaits you in 2070 but it is our hope that it is a world that has continued to build, support, and enhance democratic institutions such as this Office that help to maintain and continue a strong rule of law in Fiji.
10. I finally wish to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Office for their good work, loyalty, and stoicism over 2020. I have enjoyed the great honour of having worked with an exemplary team of officers. I hope and trust that in 2070 the staff of the ODPP are equally up to whatever challenges you may be facing.
11. All the very best and no matter what, keep calm and carry on!

Thank you and kind regards.

Yours sincerely,



Christopher T. Pryde
Director of Public Prosecutions

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