



## Press Release

29<sup>th</sup> November 2007

The Fiji Islands Revenue and Customs Authority (FIRCA) Board Chairman, Mr. Filipe Bole, wishes to reply to the numerous media coverage on the tax affairs of certain individuals; more particularly with the recent allegations being leveled against the Authority.

Mr. Bole has stated that this is not the first time such allegations relating to tax affairs of certain individuals have been reported in the media. Despite FIRCA's assurances that all cases reported to it are fully investigated and appropriate action taken, certain people are using the media as a means to get political mileage.

Mr. Bole said that the Authority stands firm in its resolve to protect taxpayer information. This is a **LEGAL REQUIREMENT** under **Section 4 of the Income Tax Act and Section 7 of the Value Added Tax Decree**.

**Sections 4 and 7 requires the officers of the FIRCA to refrain from disclosing, in any manner or form, information that is received or comes to ones knowledge during one's term of employment with the Authority.** Related to this statutory obligation of officers within FIRCA is the additional requirement to undertake an **Oath of Secrecy** before a magistrate **before** one commences employment with the Authority. Additional obligations of officers within FIRCA

include the fact that officers cannot produce or communicate to any court on any matter coming under his notice in the performance of his duties except as may be necessary for the purpose of the carrying into effect the provisions of the tax Laws.

Any officer of the Authority, who is found to have breached the obligations mentioned above, shall be guilty of an offence and faces up to \$1000 fine or 3 years imprisonment or both.

Mr. Bole explained that any information that may now be in the public domain for whatever purpose was neither, under normal circumstances, divulged nor communicated by the Authority.

\*\*\*\*\*END\*\*\*\*\*