

**SPEECH BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY  
IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND  
FIRCA BOARD CHAIRMAN  
LT. COL. PIO TIKODUADUA  
AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF E  
PAYMENT SERVICES ON  
2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2010.**

Distinguished Guests

FIRCA Board, CEO, Executives and Staff

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to launch the E-Payment services to promote tax payments to be made from the comfort of taxpayers homes and offices.

As you know, the Fiji Islands Revenue and Customs Authority (FIRCA) has been embarking on a number of electronic services project since 2009. We are committed to modernize our business processes and improve services delivery by utilising technology that is available to us.

The Electronic payment facility will basically enable taxpayers and tax agents to **securely** access their bank accounts and make tax payments from the comfort of their homes and offices. Payments can be made via the internet and/or phone banking facilities from anywhere around the globe and at any time of the day or night using the ANZ and Westpac online banking facility.

The growing evolution and demand for online financial services will lead to greater digitisation of e payment services. While the use of cash and cheques will continue to be important, more consumers are realising the convenience and flexibility of electronic banking in meeting their daily payment needs. I know the FIRCA team has been discussing with ANZ and Westpac since last year on the provision of the electronic payment facility, and eventually signed an agreement with both the banks on **17<sup>th</sup> June 2010**.

I must commend the two banks for partnering with FIRCA on this project. On the same token, I invite other financial institutions to join us in this initiative.

FIRCA is the first Government agency to provide the option of paying electronically. This e-Payment facility will help improve efficiency and save costs, both for the taxpayer as well as FIRCA. This facility will also complement the e-lodgement project that is also underway, and would come into effect in the near future.

The initiative supports the Governments focus on improved service delivery and building streamlined systems based on technology.

I have been advised that tax payments can be scheduled in advance without the taxpayer worrying about if payment will be made on time.

Some teething problems can be expected during the initial stages but these can be minimized with the support of the banks and the taxpayers. Education and Awareness programs from stakeholders have commenced and will be ongoing for some time.

In conclusion, I would like to re-emphasise that FIRCA should continuously seek to educate and familiarise

taxpayers in the use of electronic and other technology based banking applications which are more efficient and cost effective. The occasion today is an important step towards maximising banking convenience that technology can offer to the consumers. I am delighted to take part in today's launch and would urge the participation of all financial institutions in this effort to promote the use of electronic payments in the country.

Thank you for your presence here today to witness and celebrate with us the official launching of FIRCA's e-payment services.

**THANK YOU.**