

## MEDIA RELEASE

8 March 2019

### **Joe Johnson: A legacy of lifelong learning and skills**

When you have worked as long as Joseph Wilfred Johnson, who initially dedicated thirty-five years to FSC, retired and got recalled, after working practically his whole life for the company, you tend to marvel at the immense level of dedication and commitment he's built over the years for Fiji's sugar miller.

"I am a second generation FSC employee and I started working in the Lautoka mill in 1982, at 19 years of age", says Johnson. "I was already a qualified welder when I joined but through this job, I received a lot more on-the-job training".

Johnson has been involved in most of the capital projects undertaken by FSC for the last three decades. And he has seen the company transition from the good old days of a flourishing sugar industry to today's challenging times.

His positive outlook on life keeps him upbeat and hopeful that the wind of change is coming for the industry. "We are on the right track, we may need to make the mill run a bit more efficiently but we are on the right track", says Johnson. "Last year, we ran out of cane, which is a good sign for the mill. Previous years, we would run out of bagasse", he continued. According to Johnson, as a miller, it's always a good indicator to have ample supplies of bagasse, the fueling agent, which sugar mills run on.



**Above:** Joe Johnson seen here at the Corporate Engineering workshop

In the 1980s Johnson was part of the team of FSC engineers who built the baggage silo at the Lautoka Mill. Back in the day, all fabrication work was done internally at the FSC's Corporate Engineering workshop. The project engaged around eighty employees, made up of plumbers, fitters and welders.

A decade later, in the 1990s, they built the Thompson boiler. "FSC engineers were on lease to Bundaberg Engineering who were contracted to build the boiler and under their engineering guidance we put the structure together". He credits a lot of his knowledge and skill to the training he received on the job from the Australians through Bundaberg Engineering.

Johnson moved across to Labasa for five years in 1995, for more capital project work. "We built the boilers, condenser tank and the power-house during that time", he said. And they also built the largest molasses tank in the South Pacific, based at Malau.

More training opportunities eventuated for him in 2000 when his then supervisor Manigam Sami proposed he attend Rigger training. Johnson is one of the few qualified Riggers in Fiji, who trained under Australian standards. A rigger is a person who specialises (and directs) the lifting and moving of extremely large or heavy objects, with the assistance of a crane or derrick or chain hoists.

He retired in 2017, at years of age but he got recalled in early 2018 because of his specialist skills. "I was actually working somewhere else by then and earning more, but when they called, I just couldn't wait to come back! FSC is my first love and part of my family. Everything I own today, I owe to the FSC", Johnson passionately says.

Having started in the period when FSC was constantly building and developing, Johnson has found his working experience at FSC extremely rewarding and considers himself fortunate to be involved in numerous capital projects over this time.

Johnson has five children and six grandchildren who all live and work in Hamilton, New Zealand.

**ENDS**

---

***For more information, please contact:***

Elenoa Korovulavula | Head of Strategic Communications | Fiji Sugar Corporation |  
Email: [elenoa.korovulavula@fsc.com.fj](mailto:elenoa.korovulavula@fsc.com.fj) | Mobile: 999 6009