



**Press Release: Fiji Business News, Letters  
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## **Opinion Piece: An Unyielding Year**

Unprecedented, devastating, unyielding. For billions around the world, the year 2020 has stamped its mark in the first quarter of the 21st Century, as one that will not be easily forgotten. In the South Pacific and within our very own Fiji Islands, the novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) has significantly changed life as we used to know it. While 2020 draws to its end, the challenges we faced this year are very likely to stretch on. Reflecting upon the past nine months is so critical at this juncture to enable us to attempt a steady move forward.

If there was ever a year that we could benchmark to discuss setbacks and lessons for growth, it would be this year. For such a small country, we were relentlessly hit by TC Harold then the pandemic and then TC Yasa, all back-to-back. We hadn't been given a chance to recover from the category 4 cyclone and the COVID calamity before being struck again with a category 5 tropical cyclone which has again caused enormous damage to lives and property.



PC: Nick Hobgood [www.localguidesconnect.com](http://www.localguidesconnect.com)

Fiji, like many Pacific Islands, is no stranger to national emergencies. Pacific Island countries are among the most exposed to the risks and adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters globally including cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods and tsunamis - according to a November 2020 UNICEF Report. Similar organisational reports have recently highlighted a surge in community resilience where locals have banded together, Government agencies, civil society, private sector, the business community and others – adjusting to a new norm in order to move past the tough times.

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For property investors and joint venture partners, Hari Punja & Sons and Pacific Building Solutions (PBS), reflections of this year (2020) have revealed both trials and triumphs. As industry leaders in their respective disciplines, they have worked hard to help thousands of Fijians cope under the pressure of a tumultuous year. Investments in manufacturing, construction and property development has enabled our investment group to keep a lot of people employed. We have continued to literally 'build' in various parts of the country, creating jobs, minimising poverty for a lot of families and individuals and aiding our economy.

Recently completing construction of Fiji's latest luxury apartment development at Uduya Point in Lami, the joint venture group shares overwhelming gratitude for reaching this milestone despite the very unstable economic year experienced around the globe. It's safe to say that 2020 didn't turn out the way we expected but we strategised and planned our property development projects around the pandemic and we are grateful to all our partners, banks, suppliers and clients for the continued support and shared vision through 2020. We look forward to sharing the same resilience and positive feedback as we approach 2021 with our upcoming Nasese Waters project, Suva's first gated community.

We are rolling with the blows and working on remaining resilient, ensuring that measures are taken to allow the continued employment of over 2,000 employees employed by the joint venture partners. We are actively contributing to assist fellow Fijians with food and essential supplies and other community contributions for TC Yasa relief.

This festive season, we raise a toast to celebrate a triumph for each and every individual and the community in general in Fiji and across the world. A toast to our resilience, as a 'people' and to the remainder of our journey in 2020. We're still making changes and adjustments as the world changes around us, and that's okay. The bright side, although sometimes hard to see, is the growth we have all experienced. While we are so much more vulnerable to the climate crisis, intensifying political division and widening economic inequality, we continue to be referred to as one of the happiest and most resilient people on earth.

It is this happiness and resilience that we choose to champion this holiday season and hope that you have a similar place of bliss to celebrate in some small way with your loved ones. Merry Christmas to all Fijians and may we continue to uplift and help each other however we can.

Mark Acraman  
Director  
Blue Horizon Property Group Joint Venture Representative

**ENDS**

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