It is indeed my pleasure to welcome you again to the October issue of this newsletter.

Reminiscing on 12 months ago, I would like to provide a snapshot on a few activities that happened in this space. Westpac began supporting women market vendors through the Markets for Change (M4C) project. The project aimed to make sure that markets in rural and urban areas are safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environments, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. We have now completed 12 months of financial training and have trained approximately 1720 market vendors. We are looking forward to continue this partnership and training many more over the coming 2 years.

Westpac celebrated the “International Day of Rural Women” alongside market vendors in Sigatoka and Labasa, with the theme “Empowering rural Women to be Agents of Change”. This was a partnership with the Ministry of Women and UN Women.

Westpac also partnered with the Ministry of Women and Tanoa Plaza on Pinktober fundraising month. This event was a great success with a total of $15,500 collected and handed over to the Oncology Unit at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital.

Now on to current happenings for October 2015. This issue highlights:

- Brain behind Fiji Sugar Corporation’s Information Systems – Rajneesh Lata Charan.
- Asita Chand – Winner of the “2015 Pest Manager Award in the Pacific Island Category.
- Westpac Women’s Markets – connecting women through events.
- Westpac Continues to empower women.
- Upcoming events.

Brain behind Fiji Sugar Corporation’s Information Systems – Rajneesh Lata Charan.

It was great to have the opportunity to interview the woman who holds the position of General Manager, Information Systems at the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC), Ms Rajneesh Lata Charan. She was also one of the finalists for the Executive Woman of the Year awards at the Women in Business in March this year.

I joined Fiji Sugar Corporation in 1989 as Computing Trainee after completing my Diploma in Applied Computing from University of the South Pacific. I was one of first lot of graduates in the field of computing and Diploma was the highest level of qualification in IT available then. I completed my Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science and Information Systems a few years later when it became available. In year 2000, I graduated with Masters in Business Administration Degree.

I have achieved the highest-level of success in my profession as a woman in a highly male-dominated industry and in a very dynamic technological field. In 2005, I became the first woman in the history of FSC to have been appointed on an Executive Position.

My current role in the organisation is of a General Manager Information reporting directly to the Executive Chairman. The associated responsibilities with my role includes, managing the overall company-wide ICT operations with approximately 600 users. The position involves hiring, training, developing 20 technical staff and managing operations budget of over a $1M. The scope of the position is extensive and includes setting departmental direction and full design, installation, engineering, implementation, support, training, administration, and managerial authority for LAN/Wan Network services, ICT Support Desk Operations, Applications Systems, Database Administration, Web/Intranet Design Operations, PC Desktop Systems/Notebooks, Windows Server & Storage management, Security Systems and Exchange Server administration.

Who has been your greatest influence? My Mom has greatly influenced me in my life. Starting from early morning till night, she managed all the chores of the house with perfection and love. She took care of every little thing not only of the house but also of us and the community. This has taught me how to be a good leader.

What has been the driving factor to your success? The driving factor for my success has been my passion, simplicity, high degree of self-confidence, believing in own self and ability, working smart, persistence, good attitude, having a very positive
mindset and above all having faith in God.

Name 3 challenges you faced in your journey and how you overcome them?
I have a career span of over 25 years and have faced many challenges along the way. Major challenge in the beginning was adapting to men’s world back in 1989. Those days not too many professional women were around. I began my career at Rarawai mill. It was quite difficult for me in the beginning; it was a culture shock not only for me but also for the men around me. I realized that I was in the men’s world, they had their own jargons, and they could not talk without swearing and list goes on. Initially, I would be very intimidated when I would pass through the mill, the men would stop working and whistle at me, or make comments such as “Uro”, “Ba-Rewa”. I chose to ignore such things. I maintained my professionalism and integrity. In conversations when if they used swear words, I did not join them, I would reply professionally.

As time went by I gained more and more respect and kept on building a very good professional relationship with everyone. With time, I did not only succeed but paved way for other professional women to join the organisation.

Second challenge for me has been keeping up with technology. My field of work requires continuous learning since the technology changes at a very rapid speed. I have adopted a culture of learning. Technological changes are inevitable in my field. I have learned to embrace change and also learned how to communicate and manage these changes.

A bigger challenge for me as women has been juggling between family life, work, career, and studies. I had a very supportive husband, I am very grateful to my late husband, Raj. He helped me in everyday household chore, supported me to further my studies and allowed me to advance in my career. He was a great mentor and coach who always guided me with great business values and principles. His sudden departure in 2007 left me even more determined and strong.

As a GM Information System for FSC, name some initiatives that you have put in place for process improvement?
Some very recent and major Initiatives I have put in place are successful implementation of fully automated & integrated PayGlobal bio-metric Time and Attendance Payroll and HR Management System in 2013, Implementation of Sugar Industry SugarGIS (Geographical Information System) system and Development of Computerized Quality Cane Payment System and setting up of systems and networking Infrastructure to support NIR based Quality Cane Payment System in 2014, taking a challenge for my department to participate in journey towards excellence by entering in 2015 Fiji Business Excellence Awards. This year I have also began installation of state of art Technology One Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution for the company to replace legacy applications. I have plans to implement Information Security Management system based on ISO standards in 2016

Reflecting on your career, have you any regrets and please specify if you have any.
I do not have any regrets, I am grateful for all challenges and experiences does not matter good or bad as these experiences taught me great lessons in life and have molded me into becoming a great leader.

What advice would you provide young woman who is still trying to choose a career?
Learn as much as you can about your chosen field from every perspective. The better-rounded you are in your field, the more effective you will be at work and the more attractive you will be to the prospective employers. Be passionate about what want to do. It is very important to be focused. Of course, there will be many bumps along the way, but don’t get distracted. Also, as an employer and leader, I am most interested in the results people produce rather than whether they’re working long hours.

Other activities you are involved in.
I am the current Advisory Board Chairperson for the University of South Pacific Lautoka Campus Advisory Board, President of Fiji Association of Women Graduates - Western Branch, former Board member for FRIENDS Fiji, Board Member, Secretary and Trustee for The Golden Age Home Board, Executive Member of Reach For Your Future Foundation of Fiji, Education Convener for Sri Satya Sai Spiritual Education for Lautoka City Sai Centre, Founder member for Colour Explosion Fiji, an Assessor appointed by High Court, a Yoga, Pranic (Energy) Healing & Meditation Practitioner and Certified Basic Law of Attraction Practitioner.
Gender Diversity is a business issue and not just a women’s issue. And while some old school-tie Boardroom talk may publicly support women on boards, are we really only hearing echoes of a quota system that is reverberating long after the doors of the Boardroom are closed? Too often we listen to the words that have been bred on BORED thinking. That’s right – we are BORED to snores by well-worn motherhood statements and an archaic boys’ club culture that is well past it’s amuse by date. Directors today who fail to engage in diversity are often considered obsolete, myopic, irresponsible and largely commercially unsound. Not a good look for a company or Board that wants to be recognised for providing a high return to shareholders and more to the point – be seen as a company of high regard. Not a good look at all.

Smart boards on the other hand are now proactively engaging hearts, heads and hands of members who can best and continually serve the diverse roles their companies require. There is little room (and tolerance) for recruitment error or poor behaviour which is tantamount to either a tarnished reputation or financial disaster or both. Ugly stuff.

Yet here is a clear tipping point. Going from old ways to creating a true Board Wellness – a healthy, balanced Board encapsulating diversity in its truest form – including gender, disability, age and culture. Ask yourself if your Board is in or out when it comes to Diversity. If yours is in, write the new script with your children and grandchildren in mind – as they will be the recipients of the change in attitude and behaviour. The decisions you make today about the future make-up and behaviour of the Board –is in your hands now, but theirs later. However getting the Board Balance right is a conundrum in itself. While it is about women, in another sense it is not about women (alone). It is up to everyone to look at the significance of the contribution their Board makes as a whole so they can deliver the best outcomes and strategies.

But these strategies vary according to a variety of factors

For example,

a) women may not presently have strong sponsorship and endorsement by male leaders, and

b) may not always have the opportunity to expand their networks as vigorously as men due to greater family commitments and less time. Yet it is not enough to have support or time alone. Women today are at the crossroads of Board wellness and balance, and need to be their best ambassadors. Those who are serious have a unique opportunity to develop and illustrate their personal and professional brand and put it high on the gender agenda. Bottom line is… Be heard, be seen, be known for the value you bring.

But irrespective of where you are at, whether you are in high heels or just well heeled, here are suggestions to build your opportunities and profile and make a compelling and lasting difference.

1. Be a good historian and as well as a futurist to better understand the trends and future cycles of business, the company and Board you work with. This will help with forecasting the possible successes of the future, and avoid the pitfalls of the past. What you don’t know, ASK.

2. Determine whether you are (still) aligned with the companies values on a personal or professional level. Do they have the right integrity factor?

3. Make friends with the balance sheet. Understand the numbers. Do your homework before you do your mouthwork. Make your questions and statements robust and considered. Don’t be intimidated by discussions on figures. Participate and contribute by being prepared and up to date. Ricky Nowak, CAHRI, MAICD, CMC, CSP works with successful companies and people in developing their leadership focus and impact. She is an executive coach, facilitator and speaker with clients throughout Australasia.

4. While recent data suggests that the number of women directors have increased, only 5 ASX companies have three female board directors (Elaine Prior Citi Investments, 2011). This gap at senior level indicates the feeder from Middle management is low and is not being addressed or sponsored by male or other female board members. What is the gap for your business, and how can you help close it by helping other women?

5. Women who constantly learn and remain current and up to date with global issues as well as all things relevant to the business world can participate more rigorously.

6. Take an external look at other industries and people. Find a mentor, and develop your own Personal Board of Directors/MasterMind which is a highly valuable learning experience for getting feedback and learning. Who is on YOUR Personal Board of Directors? (Gail Wilson, NEM, 2011)

7. Help shape the workforce of the future as it will be constantly changing from local to virtual and dynamic. What will the workforce of the future be like in your company and how can you help prepare for it?

8. Network to improve the net-worth of your company, brand and your own authentic development. Many women typically face more scrutiny at events so be prepared, be proactive and be yourself. Gender Diversity is a business issue –and not a gender issue. It’s that simple yet sadly that complex. Without a true and fair representation of female thought leadership and directorship, not only is the thinking BORING but so is the capacity to deal with complex problems and decision making - the very thing that makes working on boards rewarding.
Asita Chand – Winner of the “2015 Pest Manager Award in the Pacific Island Category.

控制服务有限公司因获得“2015年度亚太地区 Pest Manager Award”，成为斐济的首个获奖者。该奖项由澳大利亚环境害虫管理协会每年在澳大利亚举办。该奖项旨在表彰害虫管理业务的卓越表现，奖品仪式在黄金海岸，澳大利亚举行。

作为澳大利亚环境害虫管理协会的成员，Fastkil Pest Control Services每年都会参加该会议和颁奖仪式。作为ISO、HACCP认证的公司，他们自己提出了并连续三年获得了奖项。2015年的大奖是“亚太地区 Pest Manager of the Year Award”。2013年，Asita也获得了西太平洋地区最具创业精神的女性奖，由Fiji Women in Business赞助。

Asita分享说，这个奖项将提升斐济和地区的害虫管理行业。我们期待着一个更光明的未来，为我们的宝贵客户和消费者提供最好的专业服务。她补充说，这是一个里程碑的成就，尤其是对于斐济人在害虫管理行业而言。这还激励了女性在所有领域中取得成功，因为我已经证明了在一个以男性为主导的领域中我是一个获奖者。

Asita Chand, Director of Fastkil Pest Control Services

Congratulations to our very own local business woman, Asita Chand, Director of Fastkil Pest Control Services

Control Services for scooping the “2015 Pest Manager Award in the Pacific Island category”, a very first for Fiji. The Pest Manager for the Year awards is organized by the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association every year in Australia. This award is to recognize business excellence in pest management and the awards ceremony was held in Gold Coast, Australia.

As member of the Australian Environmental Pest Managers Association, Fastkil Pest Control Services have been attending the conference and awards ceremony annually. As an ISO, HACCP certified company and a 100% Fijian owned company; they nominated themselves and won awards in the last 3 years. The 2015 award is the biggest achievement in the category of “Pest Manager of the year in the Pacific Island”. In 2013, Asita also won the Aspiring Entrepreneur of the year award with the Fiji Women in Business awards sponsored by Westpac.

Asita shared that this award will lift the pest management industry in Fiji and the region. We are looking forward to a brighter future to achieve more, provide the best professional service to our valued clients and customers with our professional staff. She added that this is a milestone achievement, especially for a Fijian owned company in the pest management industry. It also motivates women to excel in all kinds of field as I have proved this being a recipient to this award in a male dominated field.
As Westpac closes its financial book this year, we also had the privilege to host our Westpac Pacific Chief Financial Officer, Ms Sondra Leanne Cortis from Sydney.

Ms Cortis is responsible among other things for Financial Control and Governance across Pacific Region, provides strategic advice and insights, managing region investment profile and performance optimisation, productivity delivery.

We were able to organise a networking event for Sondra and invited few of our local women of influence for an opportunity to share some light discussions with her.

We are also supporting women entrepreneurs to have access to markets and this year, we are one of the major sponsors in the upcoming Fiji National Women’s Expo – Connecting women to markets and make it happen.

At the handover ceremony, we also renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and Westpac Banking Corporation.

The goal of the MOU is to facilitate access to high quality financial education to Fijian low-income women micro-entrepreneurs in order to manage wisely, gain access to savings/bank accounts and improve their living conditions. The term of this MOU is for twelve months and shall come to end on the 30th day of September, 2016.
The Assemblies of God Women’s Ministry organised a Summit for Women Ministry members in the Central/Maritime Divisions on Monday 17th September at Calvary Temple, Samabula, Suva. The main purpose of the Summit was to provide a forum where women from the Divisions can be encouraged and empowered both physically and spiritually. The speakers included, Dr. Seru Rokosawa, a Pastor and faculty at the South Pacific Bible College, who spoke on the topic, living a life of Integrity; Mrs. Sereana Qoro, a Businesswoman and fellow christian, shared on Kingdom Principles; and Mrs. Elenoa Nimacere, an Executive at South Sea Cruises and also a member of the Ministry’s Development Committee encouraged women on ways and means they can improve their lives and family’s welfare.

A record number of over 1,500 members attended the event. Women were thoroughly blessed and encouraged with messages, ideas and insights shared on the day. We thank Westpac for sponsoring Summit kits that were given out to our attendees. Westpac continues to partner with us as we strive towards developing and empowering our women in every facet of their lives, physically, economically and spiritually.
UPCOMING EVENTS:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events and Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 14th to Friday 16th October</td>
<td>National Women’s Expo at the Vodafone Arena</td>
<td>Maryangela Berwick on 9995 964 or <a href="mailto:maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au">maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 7th November</td>
<td>Westpac Prime Ministers Exporter of the year Awards</td>
<td>Jyoti Maharaj 991 2437 or <a href="mailto:jmaharaj@westpac.com.au">jmaharaj@westpac.com.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 14th November</td>
<td>Westpac Micro Entrepreneurs Day Market at the Sports City car park</td>
<td>Maryangela Berwick on 9995 964 or <a href="mailto:maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au">maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10th December</td>
<td>Westpac Micro Entrepreneurs Night Market at Suva Central Car Park</td>
<td>Maryangela Berwick on 9995 964 or <a href="mailto:maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au">maryangelahenry@westpac.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 5th December</td>
<td>Westpac Health Walk</td>
<td>Jyoti Maharaj 991 2437 or <a href="mailto:jmaharaj@westpac.com.au">jmaharaj@westpac.com.au</a></td>
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Hope that you enjoy this issue.

For any comments, feel free to contact Eseta Nadakuitavuki on 3217 627 or email fjmarketing@westpac.com.au