

## Disaster costs to exceed \$200m

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The cost of natural disasters that hit this year is estimated to be more than \$200 million.

However, Tropical Cyclone Mick that hit Fiji last week has been considered as a relief by the Disaster Management Committee (DISMAC) office since the cost of the cyclone was lower than what the cost of the drought could have been.

This was revealed by DISMAC's acting director Pajiliai Dobui, who said a larger amount of money would have been used in carting water to islands and the Western Division than repair works after the cyclone.

The January floods early this year cost a total of \$174,891,791 and about \$20 million has been estimated for the damage caused by Cyclone Mick.

"The Lau Group was asking for water, similarly the Western parts of Viti Levu. Monasavu was reported to have a low water level and critical for electricity in Fiji.

"The cyclone relieved the Government of most cost that could have been borne by the drought. It would have taken a big sum of money to allocate water if Monasavu was not able to pump water, and also cost a lot of money to cart water to the Lau Group and the Western part of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu.

"The cyclone solved our electricity problem that could have resulted from low water level," Mr Dobui said.

"The cyclone is much cheaper in terms of drought, which could have resulted in activation of generators in Kinoya and other stations, and this would have cost FEA (Fiji Electricity Authority) millions of dollars."

Individual households would have borne the cost triggered by the generators, Mr Dobui said. However, the damage of root crops and livestock were inevitable consequences of cyclones, he said.

Meanwhile, the cost of the latter natural disaster Cyclone Mick was far less than the January floods, Mr Dobui said.

"Even though we haven't finalized the damage caused by Cyclone Mick, it should be between \$20 and \$30 million. This is far less than the cost of January's flood, which was an extensive one."

According to Mr Dobui, the loss sustained by the Nadi Chamber of Commerce during the January floods was about \$200 million.