



**“DEVELOPERS, BOTH LOCAL AND OFFSHORE, ARE BUOYED BY A SURGE IN FOCUS AS FIJI TAKES ON THE MANTLE OF A SAFE HAVEN.”**

PHILIP TOOGOOD, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND PARTNER, BAYLEYS FIJI

“By April 2022, just four months after our border reopened, occupancy was at 68 percent, rising to 75 percent in May, then 82 percent and 85 percent for June and July respectively so we’re tracking incredibly well.

“It’s due reward for resort and tourism-experience operators who worked incredibly hard through the pandemic-affected period to keep their properties and amenities in prime condition.”

Tourism is Fiji’s economic backbone and while the pandemic stifled thousands of jobs, and many skilled staff were enticed to bigger economies like Australia, Fijians are returning to careers in the tourism sector in numbers.

“Fijians are truly remarkable people with inherent resilience, happiness and a joy for living in the moment – invaluable traits when providing visitor hospitality.

“It’s testament to the Fijian way of life that the country has regrouped so quickly and is now back on track to economic growth.”

While Fiji’s borders are open to travellers from every country, 92 percent of visitors are from the core markets of Australia, New Zealand and USA, however, Hill notes changing visitor profiles.

“We’re seeing more multigenerational travel and more people celebrating

milestone anniversaries and events they missed out on when global travel was halted.

“We’ve also seen a strong increase in female travellers, solo travellers and first-timers to Fiji which is encouraging.

“It’s also exciting that Fiji Airways will operate direct flights on the Nadi-Vancouver route from late November, and we look forward to welcoming more Canadians here.”

Hill says the Meeting Incentives Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) segment of the visitor market is being actively promoted, and corporate travel is back on the agenda.

“Also popular is ‘low tourism’ with boutique properties in areas that are underserved by traditional hotels and resorts such as Maui Bay, Savusavu, Taveuni, the Coral Coast and Sun Coast doing very well.

“Fiji can offer everything from premium luxury products to more cost-effective and off-the-beaten-track adventures across our 333 beautiful islands.”

There are a number of new accommodation projects currently underway in Fiji, and Hill believes there is room for more.

“Tourism Fiji actively seeks and encourages investment in the tourism sector as supply will struggle to keep up with projected demand.

“We’re working with Investment Fiji and the Fijian Government, who have recently rolled out a number of welcome initiatives to ease the path for investment.

“Major tourism brands are interested in Fiji, and we’ve hosted representatives looking for greenfield sites and new-build opportunities, existing properties for acquisition, or add-value options.

“We are open to all scenarios, as we want to keep Fiji’s sustainable recovery going.”



**DESPITE EXPERIENCING ONE OF THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC CONTRACTIONS GLOBALLY, FIJI IS HAVING ITS TIME IN THE SUN AS THE WORLD RELAXES.**

WHEN THE FIJI GOVERNMENT committed in October 2021 to reopening the country’s border on December 1st that year, it was akin to a light being switched on according to Bayleys Fiji managing director and partner Philip Toogood.

“The relief was palpable as the pandemic had stifled the Fiji property and tourism markets.

“While in New Zealand and Australia, COVID-19 and expatriates returning in droves resulted in significant property price increases, that scenario didn’t play out in Fiji.

“There was no growth in property values and sales activity was severely curtailed, but now Australian and New Zealand buyers have the opportunity to pursue well-priced leisure and tourism-related property opportunities in Fiji.”

Toogood acknowledges that while there is currently a value correction occurring in some sectors of both the New Zealand and Australian property markets, the shortage of residential property continues to provide stimulation for growth.

“Therefore, leisure buyers are battling to realise their dreams of acquiring a holiday property in their home countries and Fiji offers very good value.

“Additionally, as some properties in Fiji can have an element of income to offset outright investment, there are some really compelling opportunities to explore here.”

Given ongoing long-haul travel uncertainties, Toogood says there’s considerable interest in Fiji property from private investors, developers and established accommodation operators.

“Developers, both local and offshore, are buoyed by a surge in focus as Fiji takes on the mantle of a safe haven that’s easily accessible to New Zealanders and Australians in particular.

“Development entities are scoping out new projects targeting the managed investment buyer allowing for a mix of private use and investment return, along with opportunities for the sole-owner condominium occupier wishing to come and go as they please.

“Australia’s eastern seaboard has thousands of condominiums, many owned by New Zealanders and Australians, and Fiji is now competing with several exciting developments in the pipeline.”

Fiji’s leisure property inventory is growing, and Toogood predicts a surge in enquiry from buyers looking for a tropical island bolt hole.

“The Nawi Island Marina development currently being marketed by Bayleys is designed to cater for investors looking for an alternative to the established Australian hotspots,” he explains.

“With upcoming development on Nawi Island to include a world-class resort and spa, marina apartments, villas, home lots and a high-spec yacht club facility along with a boatyard planned across the bay at Balaga, there are very real options for buyers.

“Fiji offers well-priced home and condominium opportunities and, for developers, magnificent sites for project development.”

Toogood says income-producing properties like the Sea Winds Villa in

Maui Bay, and Savasi Island Resort provide food for thought for astute investment buyers while other opportunities exist in the outer islands.

“Islands for private ownership or development, like Tilagica and Mai Islands, or Dolphin Island which boasts an existing exclusive resort, which could make the perfect private retreat or fractional ownership opportunity for a group of friends.”

Tourism Fiji chief executive officer Brent Hill says the teamwork demonstrated between the Fiji Government, the tourism industry and key overseas tourism partners from Australia, New Zealand and the United States in safely reopening the Fiji border was outstanding.

“We’re also delighted with the success of our deliberately ambitious ‘Open for Happiness’ marketing campaign which resulted in 307,393 tourists visiting Fiji in the period from December 1st, 2021 to July 31st, 2022.

“With mandated post-arrival testing no longer required, visitor numbers are expected to keep rising and the broader tourism sector in Fiji is geared up for this.”

Fiji’s hotel occupancy is the best barometer of visitor activity and Hill says it has rebounded quickly.