

FRIEND Connects To Solar Energy Power



fjijisun.com.fj

Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) is pleased to announce its commissioning of solar energy this week.

A total of 45 solar panels, each of 275w capacity have been mounted on roofs of its various offices and about 62 KWH of energy is being generated each day. To ensure that the power is available at night when sun light is not available, batteries have been installed and they supply power during the night hours.

With this system in place, FRIEND has gainfully employed renewable energy to address its power needs making it one of the first environment friendly organisations in Fiji. FRIEND's own solar energy will also increase their efficiency from being affected by frequent power cuts.

FRIEND chief executive officer Sashi Kiran said they had to put back the system in place after it was destroyed in Tropical Cyclone *Evan* in 2012.

"While most of the panels had survived, the other components were damaged with the office building. Over the years we tried working with a local contractor to fix the equipment, however this has now eventuated with the help of a highly experienced solar engineer and environmental consultant from India, Prasanna Krishna," Ms Kiran said.

Mr Krishna said the world was in a 'make or break' situation because of our over-dependence and over-usage of fossils.

"This cannot continue for long. Now is the time to act, else it will be too late. We need to embrace the

abundantly available renewable sources of energy like solar, wind, etc. and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels,” he said.

“FRIEND has taken this step of using solar power to run its day-to-day to operations. I would like to congratulate FRIEND on leading the way on this environmental friendly initiative.”

Mr Krishna hoped this would inspire many more organisations in the region to explore such environmental friendly measures.

Meanwhile, Ms Kiran said they would still be connected to the Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) as a backup need.

She said FRIEND was hoping to work with authorities for cleaner and cheaper energy for rural communities.

Source: Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) *Feedback:*

jyotip@fijisun.com.fj