

**Commodore J. V. Bainimarama, CF(Mil),OSt.J,MSD, jssc, psc**

**Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, the Public Service, People’s Charter and Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

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SPEECH AT THE HANDING OVER CEREMONY FOR ILIESA DELANA’S HOUSE

Lot 18 Ura Place **Thurs. 31st Jan. 2013**

**VALELEVU 0930 Hours**

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**Cabinet Ministers;**

**Governor of the Reserve Bank;**

**Chairperson and Members of the Housing Authority Board; Management and Staff;**

**Mr. Iliesa Delana;**

**Reverend Isireli Kacimaiwai;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today. I have the privilege of presenting one of our national heroes – Iliesa Delana – with his new home.

Mr. Delana;

On behalf of the Government and the people of Fiji, I once again convey to you our profound gratitude for the great honour you have bestowed upon Fiji with your Gold medal performance at the Paralympics in London.

As all Fijians are well aware, sports and athletics have a remarkable ability to inspire. But just as importantly, they have a remarkable ability to unite.

Mr. Delana, you have done both for Fiji. You have inspired us with your accomplishments and you have united us in a pride for our country.

By becoming the first Fijian to win an Olympic medal, you delivered to your fellow Fijians a great national moment, the kind of moment that occurs so rarely in a lifetime. As Fiji’s national anthem played for millions across the world, we - as a nation - all felt enormous pride and emotion. Moments like that are truly special.

But it is not only the victory itself that we are here to celebrate. We are here to acknowledge the challenges you have overcome and the sacrifices you have made. We are here to celebrate the years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance that went into winning that Gold medal. You are a shinning example of these virtues and a worthy role model for our youth.

This house – therefore – is a token of Fiji’s gratitude for what you have given to us. For the inspiration and the pride certainly, and for the lesson that with determination and resolve, no feat is impossible.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of both the RFMF Engineers and Housing Authority staff who collaborated on this project. I would also like to thank all the Fijian companies who contributed building materials, furniture and machinery.

Together, we hope you find a happy home here and wish you many future successes. (Pause for applause.)

While we are on the subject of homes, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would also like to take this opportunity to officially announce that my Government’s focus on providing access to affordable

and quality housing for every Fijian has resulted in a 25 million

dollar loan facility provided by the Reserve Bank – as I first flagged in the 2013 Budget.

Through this facility, the Housing Authority will now be able to provide housing loans – called the *“Gold Package”* – at the initial rate of 3.5 per cent to grow home ownership for those families earning below 16 thousand 5 hundred dollars a year. Details of this program will be provided to the media.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is now with the deepest pride and gratitude, on behalf of the Fijian people, that I officially hand over the keys to Mr. Iliesa Delana’s new house.

Thank you. Vinaka vakalevu.