



The Ministry Of Infrastructure & Transport

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MEDIA RELEASE No.7

4pm Thursday 18th February 2016

SEVERE TROPICAL CYCLONE – WINSTON (CAT4)

- A Tropical Cyclone Alert is now in force for Lau group.
- A strong wind warning remains in force for Lau waters including Koro Sea.

At 3pm today, Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston (953hPa) Category 4 was located near 17.1 degree South latitude and 171.2 degree West longitude or about 890km east-northeast of Ono-i-Lau and about 820km east of Lakeba. It is currently moving west at 5km/hr (about 03knots). Close to its centre, the cyclone is estimated to have average winds of 165 km/hr (about 90 knots) with momentary gusts up to 230 km/hr (about 125 knots).

On its projected path, TC Winston is expected to maintain its Category 4 intensity, briefly intensify to category 5 intensity and then weaken to category 4 again as it tracks westward towards Fiji. On this forecasted track, the cyclone may bring damaging gale force winds over the Lau group from Saturday afternoon.

For the Lau group: Moderate southeast winds, fresh and gusty at times. Winds becoming strong with average speeds of 45km/hr and momentary gusts of 80km/hr from tomorrow afternoon. Later on Saturday, winds may further increase to damaging gale force with average speeds of 65km/hr and momentary gusts to 90km/hr. Occasional showers, becoming frequent from tomorrow afternoon. Isolated heavy falls possible. Moderate to heavy southeast swells.

For the rest of Fiji: Moderate southeast winds, fresh and gusty at times. Winds becoming strong with average speeds of 45km/hr and momentary gusts of 80km/hr from Saturday. Occasional showers and isolated thunderstorms. Isolated heavy falls possible.

The following information is especially for the Mariners:

Lau Waters and Koro Sea: Southeast winds 20 to 25 knots, increasing to 35 knots with momentary gusts to 50 knots from Saturday afternoon. Rough to very rough seas with moderate to heavy southeast swells.

For the rest of Fiji waters: Southeast winds 15 to 20 knots, increasing to 25 knots with momentary gusts of 40 knots from Saturday. Moderate to rough seas with moderate southeast swells.

For Rotuma: A strong wind warning remains in force for Rotuma waters.

An active trough of low pressure with associated cloud and rain continues to affect Rotuma.

Over Waters: Strong northwest winds, 20 to 25 knots, easing to 15 to 20 knots later today. Rough seas, becoming moderate later today. Moderate northwest swells.

Over land: Moderate to fresh northwest winds. Occasional rain, heavy at times and few squally thunderstorms. Rain easing to showers from tomorrow.

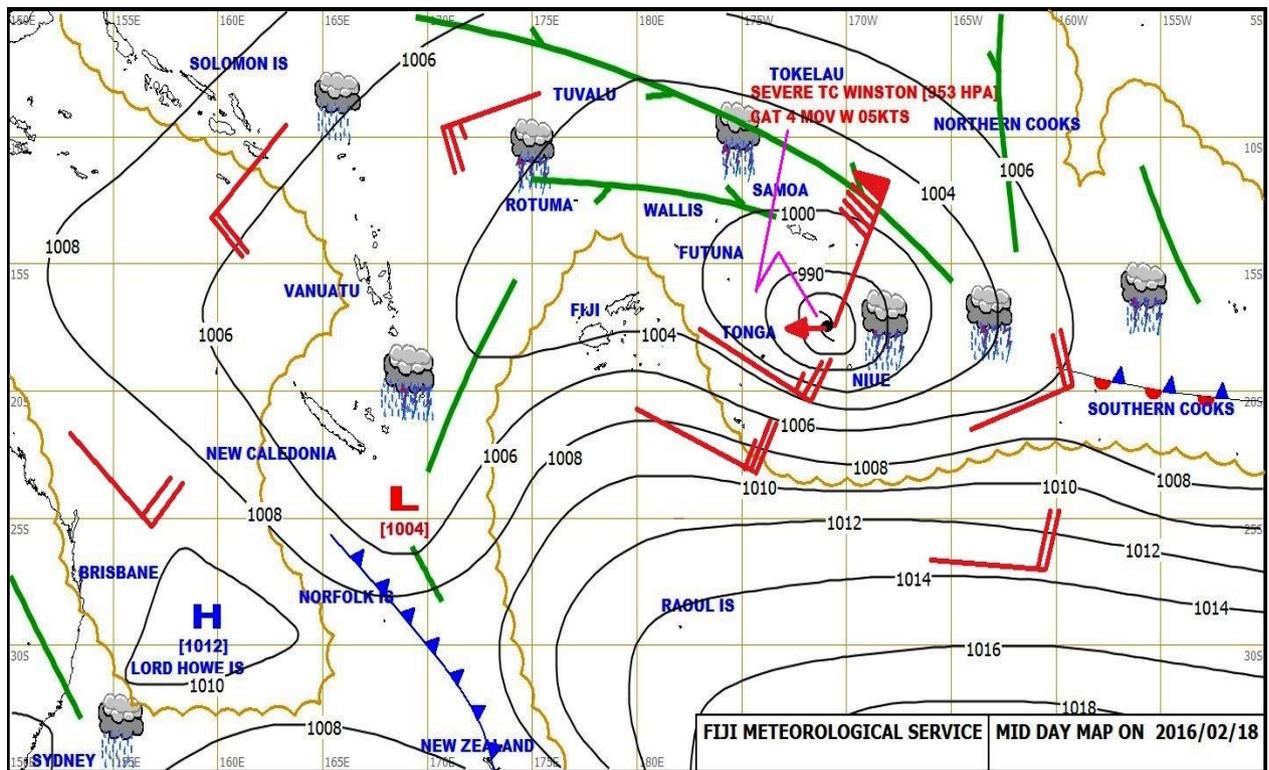


Figure 1: Mean Sea-Level Pressure chart issued from RSMC Nadi at 12:00pm on Thursday 18th February, 2016.

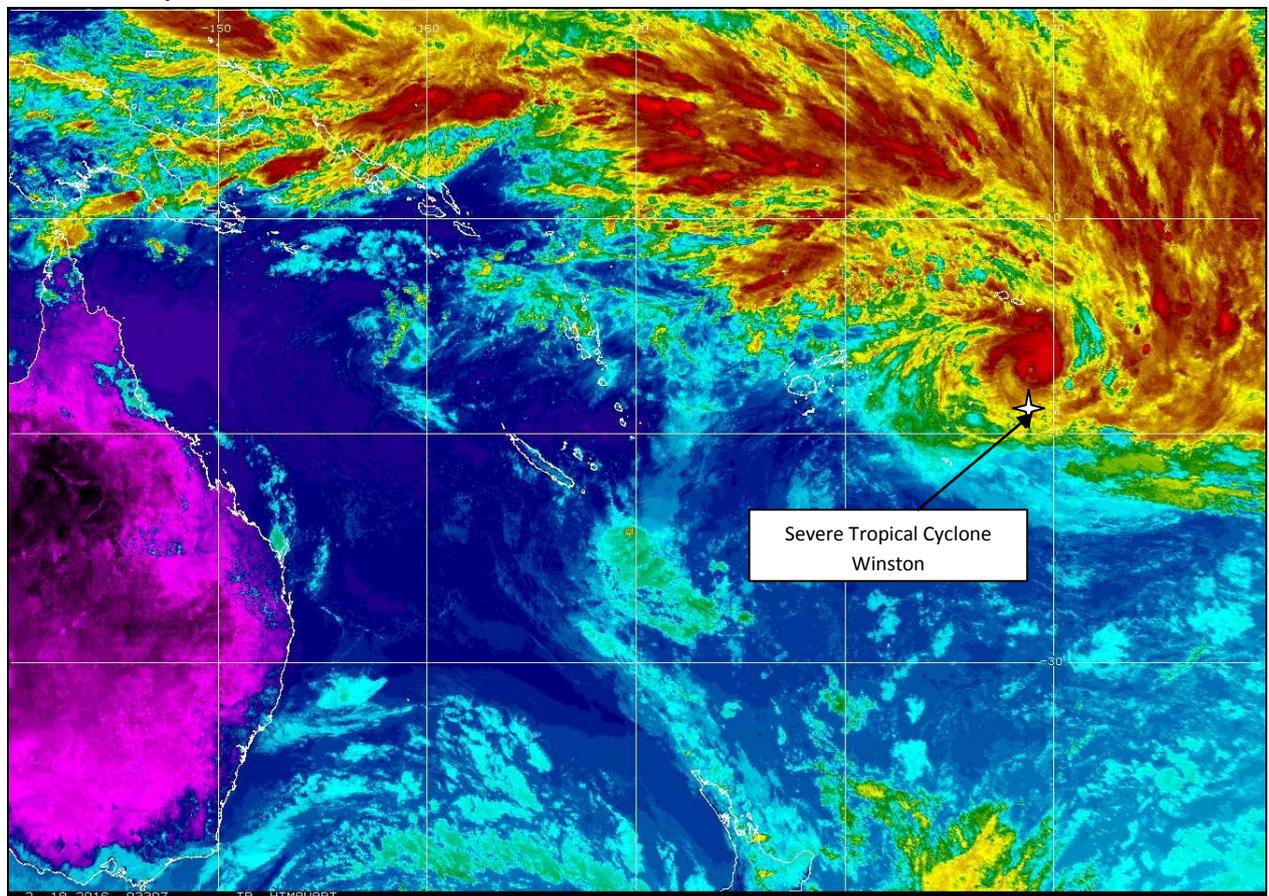


Figure 2: Colourised Infrared satellite imagery at 3:30pm on Thursday 18th February, 2016. (The darker red is indicative of areas of heavy rainfall in a rain band).

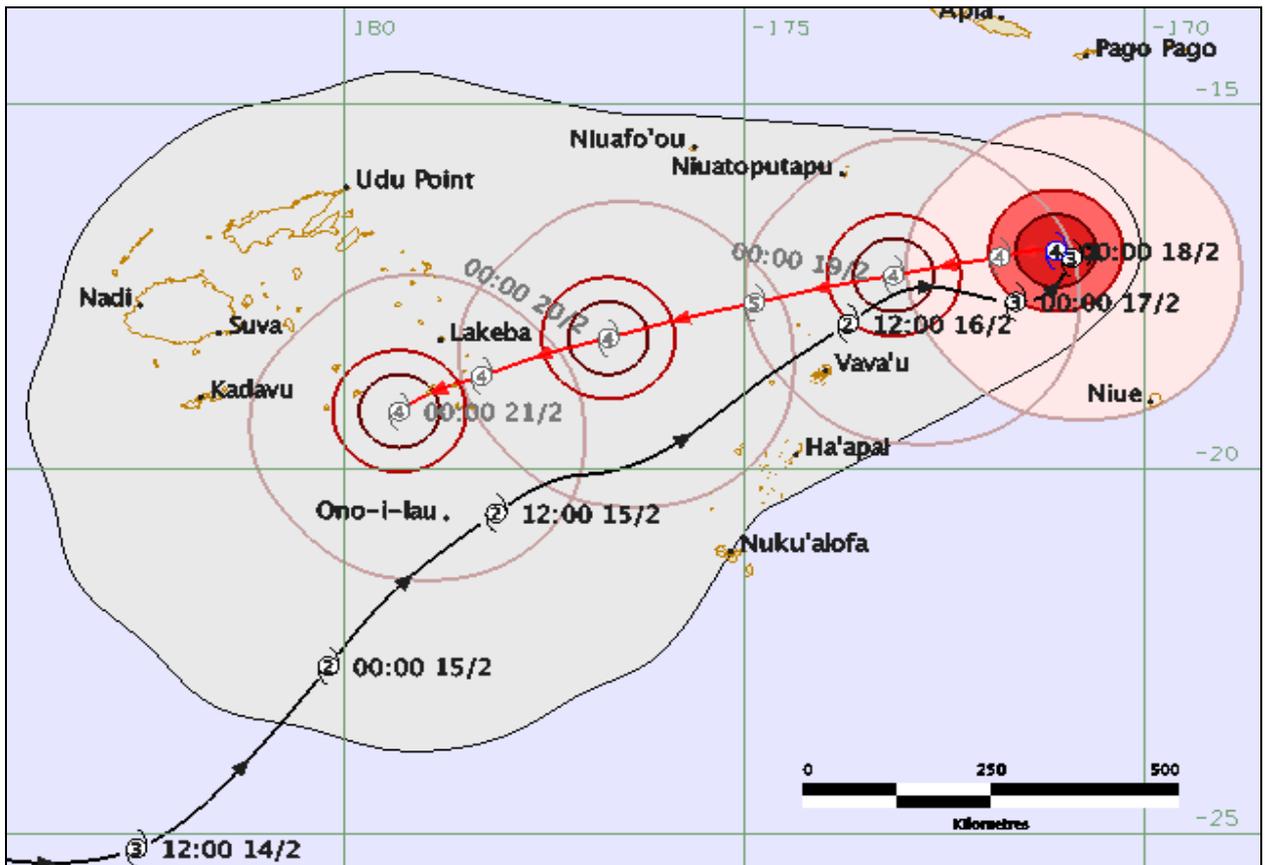


Figure 3: Tropical Cyclone Winston Forecast Track Map issued from RSMC Nadi at 1:00pm on Thursday 18th February, 2016.

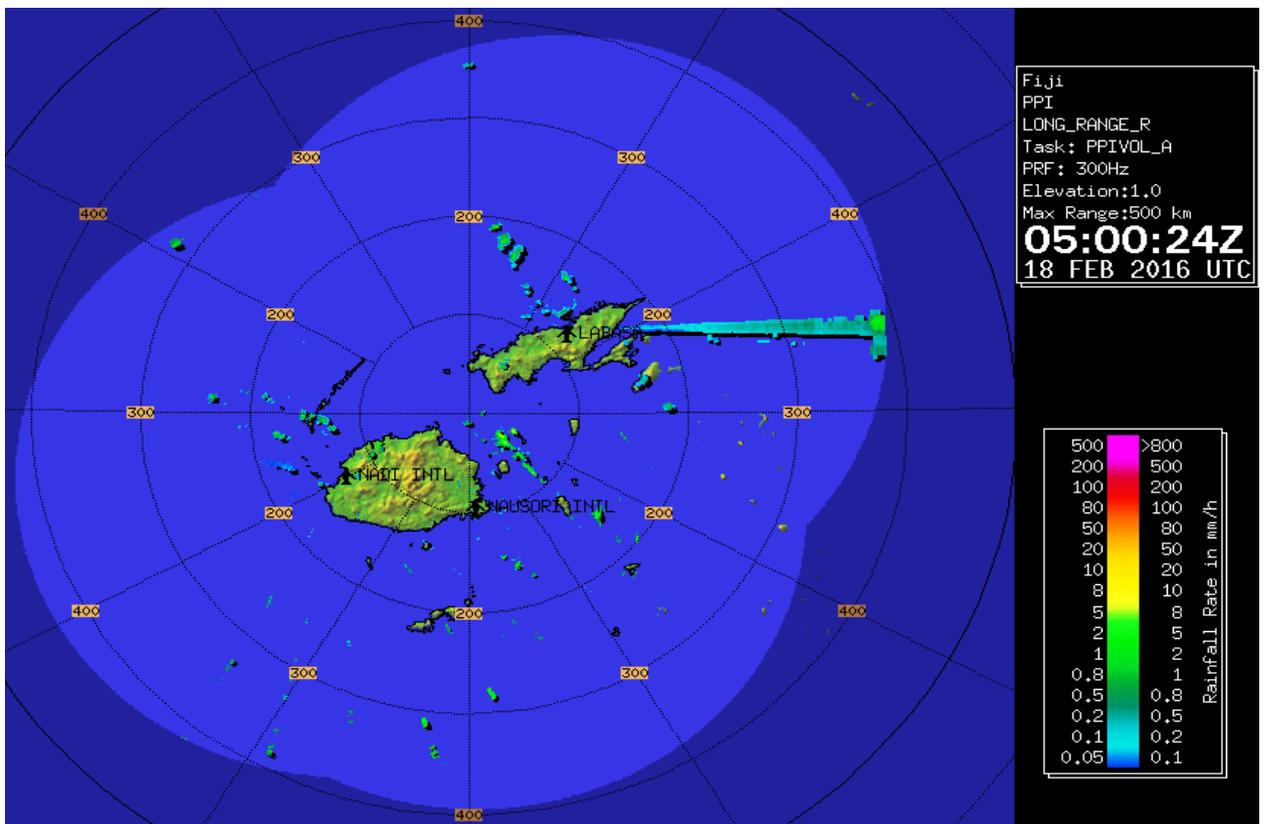


Fig 4: Radar Image at 5.00pm on Thursday 18th February, 2016.

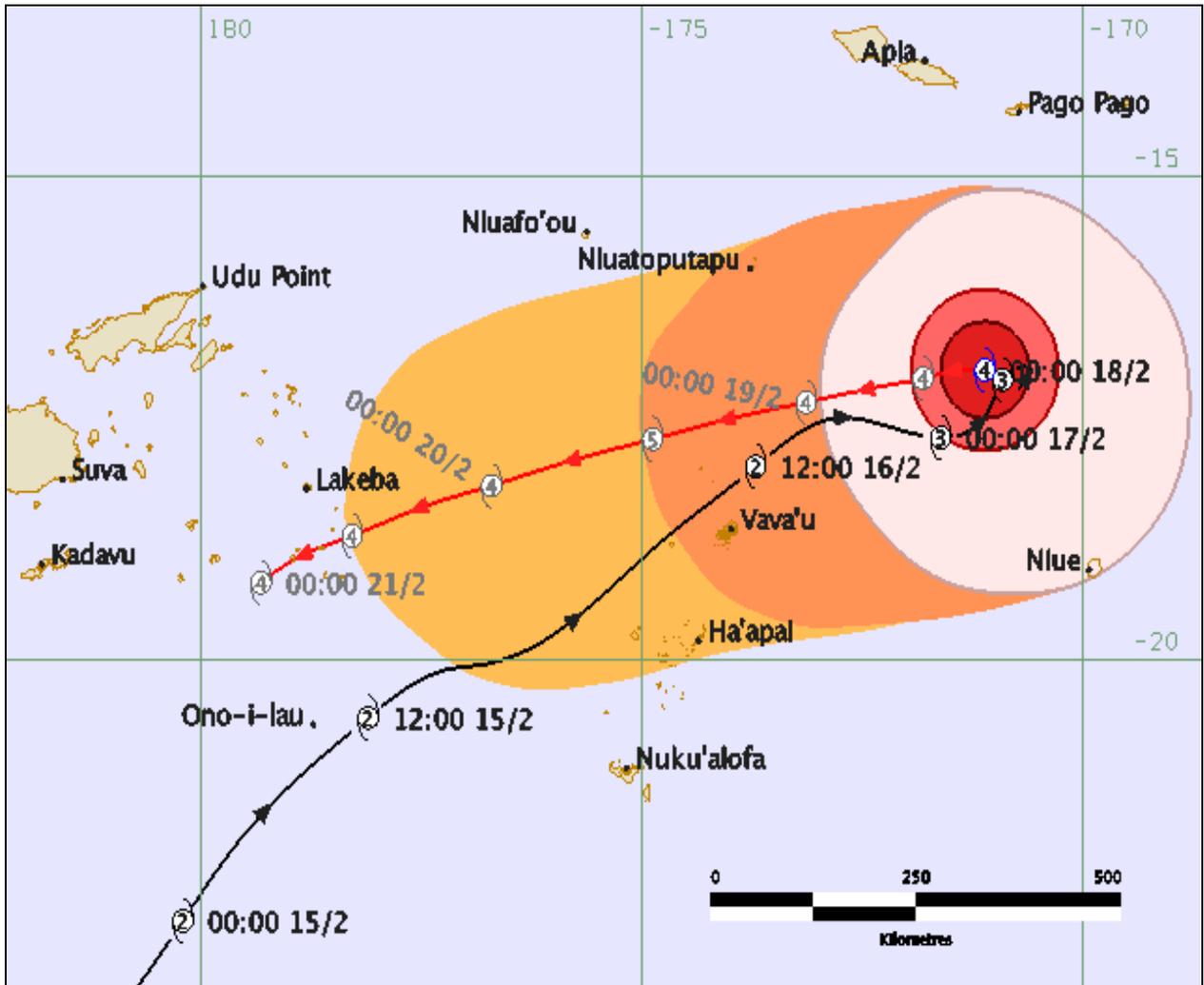


Figure 5: Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston Threat Map issues by RSMC, Nadi at 1:00pm on Thursday 18th February, 2016.

It is advisable that people are to remain prepared at all times and keep updated with the latest weather bulletins. Keep listening to the radio for the latest information and take alerts and warnings seriously whenever they are issued.

For more details and the latest on weather, please contact the Tropical Cyclone Warning Centre on 6736006, 9905376 or visit the Fiji Meteorological Service's website, www.met.gov.fj

ENDS.

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 for Permanent Secretary Infrastructure & Transport