



# FNU NIKUA



## FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE SEAS

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FIJI MARITIME ACADEMY –  
A SEAFARING JOURNEY

FMA EMPOWERS WOMEN TO BECOME  
SUCCESSFUL SEAFARERS



## Fiji Maritime Academy- A Seafaring Journey



### Honor Through Discipline

Jonas, (pseudonym) in his first appointment on a foreign-going ship, was over the moon. Having joined the ship in Lautoka and a few weeks at sea, the ship berthed in Jakarta, a port in Indonesia. Excited to be in a foreign land, Jonas was issued with a shore pass to go ashore. Having indulged himself with a little shopping, he stopped for some refreshments in a local bar.



The young man then got carried away with some seafaring fun; finally, when he made way to the ship, it was gone. Strict schedules and rules meant that it just could not wait for one person.

Then the dilemma began for the young man. He was stranded on a temporary shore pass, illegal in a country, not speaking the language and limited money. He also had spent his dough in the bar. Nights in immigration detention, expensive flights home, and his young seagoing career was finished.

Not having the discipline and work ethics to return to the ship in time had cost him his career and caused a headache to the company and the Fijian government.

I often relate this real-life story with the fictitious name to students of Fiji National University's (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

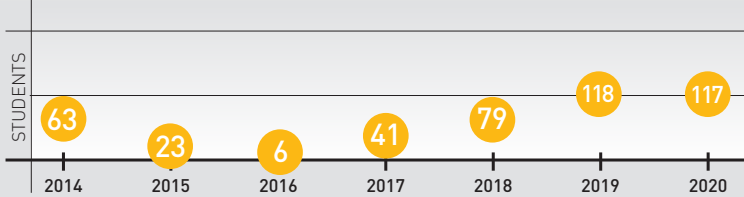
Our students learn how to navigate a ship or repair an engine and more importantly, how to stay safe on board. Without discipline, those skills are useless as they will not survive at sea.

If they cannot arrive on time to the Academy and be present every day, then there is no point in continuing. Like Jonas, they will one day be stranded somewhere without help. At FMA, student discipline and attitude is a priority without compromise.

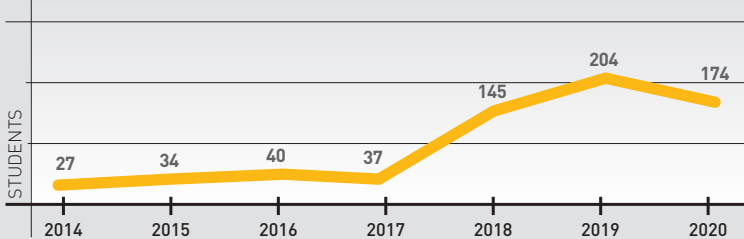
The Cadet program starts with a residential boot camp which instils the necessary ingredients for a seafarer to survive a career at sea. The daily parade ensures that they are on time, dressed in uniform with a clean shave and a neat haircut.

### Rise of the Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA)

Marine Engineering Students



Nautical Science Students



Numbers tell the tale for the main Programmes. In addition to the Diploma and Upgrading career paths, FMA also conducts Rating courses for Able Seafarer Deck and Engine, Engine Watch rating and Deck watch rating.

FMA also does the same for the local boat drivers, owners, and operators and Boat Master.

### Champions in Pioneering Maritime Training and Education

Fiji Maritime Academy achieved several milestones for the first time in Fiji.

- An increasing number of female participants
- Fisheries training with scholarships
- Record Number of regional students in 2020
- Proposed Maritime rating training centre in the Island of Vanua Levu



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## Female Students at FMA

Recognising that only 2 per cent of the worlds 1.2 million seafarers are females<sup>1</sup>, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), launched the Gender Programme – Women in Maritime in 2019. The theme “Empowering Women in the Maritime Community” cemented the void that existed for centuries of seafaring.

In 2014, just three female students enrolled at FMA. At present, 40 females are enrolled in various marine disciplines. This brings the total to 110 female students.

## Regional Students

There have been a number of regional students at FMA over the years. Most are sponsored by the Governments of Tuvalu, Solomon, and Kiribati.

In 2020, two Papua New Guinea (PNG)-based shipping companies sent 21 students to complete their Class 3 Certificate of Competency (COC) in Fiji.

The fact that the companies chose FMA despite PNG having an established Maritime college in Madang, illustrates the quality of the Maritime training that FMA provides and the respectable reputation it upholds in the region.

## Swire Group

This international group of companies only consider cadet officers recommended FMA. The shortlist of candidates goes through a stringent selection process including aptitude tests and interviews by the company representatives.

China Navigation Co (CNC Co), the shipping arm of the group, currently employs 64 Fijian seafarers of diverse skills and ranks. One of the major sources of foreign exchange remittance for Fiji, these foreign-going seafarers also pave the way for new entrants to the industry.

There are many more FMA students on other Foreign Shipping companies.

## Fisheries Scholarships

Fijians are renowned for being traditional fishermen.

While the boat skipper (Captain on a fishing vessel) and one or two senior hands were FMA students with upgrading COC, the deckhands had no qualification or certification at all. However, this changed in 2016. With New Zealand aid, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) sponsored 43 students for the Deckhand Fishing Programme at FMA and a further 21 students to continue to qualify as skippers.

Fiji now has a Fisheries training programme developed to international standards.

## Rating training centre

Although Fijian ratings are very much in demand with overseas companies, there is no dedicated programme to train seafarers working as “hands-on” workers on a supporting role onboard. The proposed training centre in Vanua Levu with the assistance of the Ministry of Youth and Sports will add another dimension to maritime training.

## Appreciating our presence

From Viti Levu to Vanua Levu then to Taveuni and beyond to Rotuma or a visit to Kadavu or one the other 300 islands, Fijians have been travelling across the Pacific for decades.

FMA provides crew training with all the necessary competencies to keep passengers and cargo safe across the sea passage.

Without FMA graduates, there will be no ships for the islanders to visit family, and they will have to rely on aircraft, which has luggage restrictions.

**Mahesa Abeynayake**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Fiji Maritime Academy**  
(Managed by CINEC Campus, Sri Lanka)

<sup>1</sup><http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/TechnicalCooperation/Pages/WomenInMaritime.aspx>

# Kasnari shares dream

Fiji National University (FNU) student Lisa Thea Molkhai Kasnari is determined to become a Ship Captain. Originally from Papua New Guinea, she’s inspired by her father Gerad Kasnari who has been a Captain for 30 years.

“My father has earned a name for himself, and I’ve always wanted to continue his legacy,” said 25-year-old Kasnari (*pictured right*).

“I don’t have any brothers, and I’m aware that the maritime industry is male-dominated, but I’m determined to make a difference,” said Kasnari.

Kasnari, born in a family of five girls, is currently undertaking the Class 3 Deck Watchkeeper course at FNU’s Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

She joined PNG’s Maritime College in 2016. She gained employment in several prominent shipping companies such as Pacific Valkyrie, Pacific Duchess and Pacific Towing (PNG) Limited and had the opportunity to voyage overseas.

“The best part was getting the opportunity to travel overseas. I was able to travel to the Philippines, Singapore, Denmark and Scotland. Now I’m in Fiji, and I love it,” added Kasnari.

“While I love travelling by sea, I’m also keen to learn new things. Travelling to various places allows us to learn more about a particular country, its people, location, culture and lifestyle. So far, it has been a marvellous experience.”

Kasnari, who is a single mother of two kids, is studying in Fiji under a scholarship program funded by her current employer, Pacific Towing (PNG) Limited.

“This is a good opportunity for me to upskill myself in the maritime field.

Coming to Fiji has been one of the best decisions. I am delighted to be part of an institution which offers internationally recognised maritime courses.”



The FMA student believes jobs at sea is an extremely demanding yet rewarding career.

“Apart from qualifications, you will also need to know about public safety and security, transportation, customer and personal service, administration and management; you need to be well-versed with geographical locations which include land and air mass and also remain ethical.”

“I count myself lucky compared to my colleagues as I have my dad, who is always there to guide me. At times it is tough to leave my family behind. I miss my children a lot but I try to remain in contact through video calls.”

# Determination steers Prasad



Sitting confidently in his crisp black and white cadet uniform, Prasad (*pictured left*) was proud to state that his plan worked out in the end.

He is currently enrolled at the Fiji National University’s (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA), pursuing a Diploma in Nautical Science.

Excitedly, Prasad dives right into the details of his decision to pursue a career in maritime.

“No one in my family is a seafarer,” he explained. “But my older brother is a pilot. He is a Flying School Ground Instructor and commercial pilot.”

“When he decided to be a pilot, I thought of doing the opposite. If my brother will be flying in the air, I will be on the sea.”

To emphasis his commitment of getting into FMA, Prasad said he would visit the Academy during the school holidays over the past two years.

“When I first came, I didn’t know anybody so I would sit at the cafeteria and wait for people that I thought I could get information from,” he said.

“One of the lecturers, Master Rusiate, was sitting at the cafeteria and I started asking him about the Academy. After our talk, I was even more interested in joining FMA and decided to enrol in the Nautical Science programme.”

Prasad said being committed and prioritising his studies helped him overcome minor challenges at the beginning of his studies this year.

“Challenges will surely arise during your studies, but it all depends on how you tackle them and manage your time.”

He encouraged students to plan out their career and do their research before deciding on tertiary studies.

“It’s the rest of your life you’re dealing with, so you need to think seriously about what you want to do.”



## Simoi sets high goals



After a three-year stint at sea, Papua New Guinean national Emmanuel Simoi decided to further his studies at Fiji National University (FNU’s), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

Simoi (*pictured left*) was a Deck Cadet at the Pacific Towing (PNG) Limited, a leading provider of marine services in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific region, before coming to Fiji in February this year.

He is one of the 21 students from Papua New Guinea, sponsored by Consort Shipping and Pacific Towing Limited to undertake his final stage course at FMA before proceeding to complete the Certificate of Competency (CoC) at sea.

“Getting trained to become a deck officer is the next step of my career. I am appreciative to my employers who have provided me with a full scholarship, including health benefit while studying in Fiji,” Simoi said.

“FMA is a recognized learning hub for seafarers in the Pacific, and this is the reason why we are here in Fiji.”

“The courses have an international recognition since it is approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We also have an excellent learning atmosphere with proper facilities and training equipment. It’s exciting to learn in a professional environment.”

Pacific Towing Limited in partnership with Swire

Pacific Offshore, Simoi was sent to do his sea time on offshore supply vessels. His role was to assist and understudy the ship’s deck officers in their duties. He has spent most of his time on-board receiving structured training and building up experience.

“Becoming a deck cadet is the first step to reaching an officer ranking on-board. And one day, I hope to become an officer,” said the student.

Despite missing his friends and family back at home, Simoi said maritime offers a lot of adventures.

“As a deck cadet, I have travelled to several countries in the South-East of Asia, including Singapore, Japan, Vietnam and Thailand. It was an overwhelming experience and a great opportunity which I will cherish my entire life,” he mentioned.

“This industry is perfect for those who want to explore more than the usual ‘nine to five’ routine,” he highlighted.

“In some shipboard operations, we would work from 12 am to 4 am and then we have four hours rest and work for another four hours. This can be a bit challenging, but it’s fun and I’ve learnt a lot,” Simoi added.

The student believes that decisiveness, self-reliance, discipline, being a team player and commitment is the foundation for a successful and rewarding career at sea.

## Yaya shares engine cadet experience

Discipline and dedication have kept young Patrick Elia Waqasokonibogi Yaya focused on having a successful career in the maritime industry.

Earlier this year, Yaya was travelling the Asia-Pacific region as an engine cadet onboard a foreign-going vessel.

Nowadays, the 22-year-old has swapped the high seas for terra firma as he completes his theory courses at the Fiji National University’s (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

Yaya (*pictured right*) is enrolled in the Academy’s Diploma in Marine Engineering programme and revealed that the apple did not fall far from the tree.

“I am the eldest of six. My dad was a sailor,” he said. “I’m following in my dad’s footsteps. He gently guided me into this field after my high school studies.”

“I grew up at my maternal place in Rotuma before coming to Suva. Given my father’s influence, I always knew I would be in this field.”

As a teen, Yaya envisioned himself joining the US Army and commenced physical training to get him ready. However, after a conversation with his father following his Fiji School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) examination, Yaya altered his ambitions.

“We spoke about the requirements and realities of me being joining the US Navy. He encouraged me to still follow my passion for going to sea, and so I decided



to enrol at FMA. Engineering was also something I was always interested in, so it did not take me long to figure out what I wanted to study and become. I began my studies in 2016, and I’m proud to say that today I’m right where I planned to be.”

Yaya, who gives off a quiet but

confident nature, said after enrolling in the programme, he immediately outlined the steps he would take to achieve his dream job.

“My dream is to be the Chief Engineer on a foreign-going vessel in the next five-seven years,” he said.

“I am very ambitious, and I do not want

to mess up my plans. Right now, I am in Year 5 of my studies and completing my theory before I go on sea-time again by mid-2021. I’m glad I only have one more semester of studies left here at the Academy.”

Yaya’s dream could be a reality in a few years, as he has been an engine cadet on Swire Shipping vessels since 2017.

“I have been with the company as a cadet during each of my time at sea, and it has been a privilege learning and working on a foreign-going vessel.”

“The company has some of the latest technology in the world, on board its vessels and to be able to learn those as a cadet has added to my knowledge and experience.”

“For one of the ships, there is technology on board that cannot be found in any other ship around the world.”

As an engine cadet, Yaya assists engineering officers in maintaining the ship’s main engines, and running and maintaining all mechanical equipment, including the operation and maintenance of other machines.

Yaya said with the help of his agent Alpha Pacific Navigation Ltd, the CEO of the Academy and Instructors; he has been able to keep aligned to his career plans.

Yaya’s next step is obtaining his Class 3 Watchkeeper certification.

## Glossary of Maritime Terms

**Certificate of competency (COC)** – A form of license an officer needs to work on commercially operated merchant navy ships.

**Certificate of proficiency (CoP)** – This is issued to ratings stating that the relevant requirements of training, competencies or seagoing service recommendations have been met.

**Ratings** – Non-officer ranks in the merchant navy. Holders of Certificates of Proficiency (CoP).

**Merchant Navy vessels** – A commercial vessel that transports cargo or carries passengers for hire and is not used for military purposes.

**Consignees** – The person or company to whom goods

or documents are officially sent or delivered to.

**Ship Chandler** – A retail dealer who specialises in providing supplies or equipment for ships.

**Watchkeeping** – Is the assignment of seafarers on routine rotational watches on a 24-hour basis.

**International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW Convention)** – Sets minimum qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel on seagoing merchant navy ships

**Flag state** – The flag state of a merchant vessel is the jurisdiction under whose laws the vessel is registered or licensed and is deemed the nationality of the vessel.

**Pilot (Port/Sea)** – Takes over the navigation of the ship in ports and waters unfamiliar to ship’s crew.

**Salvage** – To save/rescue a ship and its cargo/

passengers.

**Master** – A qualified sea captain in charge of large commercial vessel holds a Class 1 Certificate of Competency (CoC).

**Ship Owner** – Owns ships but may not manage the ships.

**Shipping Companies** – May manage ships but often does not own ships.

**Crewing Company** – Supplies crew to the ships but may not own or manage ships

**Maritime Administration** – The organisation appointed by the government of each country to maritime to regulate shipping and maritime affairs. The administration often referred to as the local administration also regulated maritime training and education in the country. For Fiji, this is the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF).



## FMA partners with WWF to offer bycatch training

To create greater awareness and education on sustainable offshore fishing practices, the Fiji National University’s Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) has incorporated a bycatch training module into its Deck Hand Fishing and Offshore Skipper Fishing programmes.

The bycatch training manual titled *‘Protected Species Bycatch Mitigation for the Fiji Offshore Fisheries’* was launched last year in collaboration with WWF-Pacific’s *‘Developing Sustainable and Responsible Tuna Longline Fisheries in Fiji’* project, which is funded by the New Zealand government through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and a project partnership currently being implemented between the FMA, the Fiji Fishing Industry Association, the Ministry of Fisheries, and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

This collaboration has paved the way for FMA to be able to, for the first time,

train longline fishing crew and support the professionalization of an occupation that is vital to the economic future of the nation.

Wild fishing and, in time, ocean-based cage aquaculture offers an alternative solution that is healthier and more sustainable. But to benefit from these opportunities, our fishermen need to be highly trained and environmentally responsible, so that we can coexist with nature and our ocean’s resources.

Bycatch is fish or other marine species that is caught unintentionally while catching target species and target sizes of fish.

According to the Fisheries Policy Officer at WWF-Pacific’s Sustainable Fisheries & Seafood Programme, Vilisoni Kotobalavu Tarabe, the most common bycatch species caught accidentally by Fijian longline fishing fleet includes sea turtles, sharks and sea birds.

Tarabe (pictured right) said the

collaboration with FMA ensures that students learn about bycatch before they commence their sea time internships.

“Students who are going to be trained at the Academy are going to be the future seafarers and we want to make sure that they learn the theoretical components of bycatch before boarding the fishing fleet,” said Tarabe.

“When they are out at sea for their practicals – they will know the basics and will get hands-on experience in terms of the best practices on safe handling and release of bycatch species such as sea turtles, sharks or sea birds, whether alive or dead.”

“This ensures the protection of other species apart from the target species as anyone who wishes to join the fishing vessel has to go through this training.”

To strengthen the components of the bycatch training module, Tarabe highlighted that they have conducted surveys with the students who have gone



through the training.

“Through survey questionnaires, we have gathered information about the strengths of the training as well as the areas that require improvements,” Tarabe added.



## Ranks and Duties In Merchant Navy Vessels

### On Deck

#### Master or Captain

The Master or Captain of the ship is responsible for the ship and the passengers on board.

#### Chief Mate, Chief Officer or First Mate

Reports directly to the master and usually oversees cargo operations and crew management. The “mate” is also in charge of maintenance of the ship and is a day worker.

#### Second Mate or Third Mate

This is an operational level role where the main duty is watchkeeping and navigating.

#### Boatswain (Bo’sun)

The boatswain generally carries out the tasks instructed by the Chief Mate, directing the Able seaman and Ordinary seaman in deck work and watchkkeeping duties.

#### Able Seaman (AB Deckhand)

Carries out work on deck including cargo securing, gangway watch, assisting in anchor stations, and mooring.

#### Ordinary Seaman (OS Deckhand)

An apprentice to the Able Seaman and responsible for cleaning and repairing deck equipment, the general

maintenance, and cleaning of the deck department.

#### Deckhand

The Deckhand is an entry-level position and is responsible for performing general maintenance to the ship interior and exterior.

### Below Deck

#### Chief Engineer

A Chief Engineer will be responsible for all machinery onboard and the engineering crew. Additionally, he reports to the company of the machinery condition and availability for operation through the master of the ship.

#### First, Second Engineer

These are the Chief Engineers right-hand persons. He/ She is a hands-on person in charge of the engine room daily operations and maintenance of machinery.

#### Designated Duty Engineer (DDE)

This is the engineer on the watch for the day on a ship.

#### Third, Fourth Engineer

This entry-level position is an operational level role and engineers will help the rest of the crew to perform repairs, maintenance tasks, as well as perform watchkeeping duties.

### Ratings

Ratings perform support level roles in the engine room and duties can vary from attending to maintenance and repair work and watchkeeping duties.

#### Leading Hand/Engine Room Bosun

The leader of the ratings onboard with formidable skills and experience engine room hand come up from the ranks. The go-to man in emergencies and repair work.

#### Oiler/Wiper

On days of the steamships, an oiler oiled the parts moving parts of reciprocating engines. There are many moving parts and many oilers on a typical steamship. A wiper wiped the parts oiler had oiled or clean the engine parts for dust, oil and other residue.

#### Deck Cadet/Engine Cadet

Apprentices or trainees from Maritime Academics/ Schools gaining seetime in their respective field. They maintain a training record book to ensure that the learning on board is well documented.

Source: Adapted by FMA from <https://www.cruisejobfinder.com/members/maritime/types-of-jobs/>



# Fiji Maritime Academy empowers women to become successful seafarers

**B**orn in Ireland in 1530, Grace O'Malley was a legendary female seafarer. Cutting her hair so she looked more like a boy, she joined ships and proved herself to be a strong leader and fighter eventually being known through history as a great female pirate.

There have been many female sailors who have successfully single handedly circumnavigated the world.

## Laura Dekker the New Zealand-born Dutch sailor

In 2009, Laura Dekker announced her plan to become the youngest person to circumnavigate the globe single-handedly. A Dutch court stepped in, owing to the objections of the local authorities, and prevented Dekker from departing while under shared custody of both her parents.

In July 2010, a Dutch family court ended this custody arrangement, and the record-breaking attempt finally began on 21 August 2010. Dekker successfully completed the solo circumnavigation in a 12.4-metre (40 ft) two-masted ketch named *Guppy*, arriving in Simpson Bay, Sint Maarten 518 days later at the age of 16.

Last year, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) initiated the campaign "I am on board with gender equality," to coincide with its World Maritime Day theme of "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community."

These emphasised the importance and rightfully highlighted the opportunities for women, as well as the contributions they are making, in a wide range of maritime careers and professions.

Of the estimated 1.2 million world seafarers, only two per cent of are women. It is not surprising that from that meagre number, 94 per cent are in the cruise industry in catering and hospitality.

The Fiji National University's (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) continues to advocate for women who intend to join this prestigious industry to follow the many other women who have paved the way through some of the heavy and toughest swells, in a traditionally male-dominated field of employment.

In the past two years, the FMA has seen steady growth in women joining the Academy. Female students flocked not only to the Diploma Programmes in Nautical Science and Marine Engineering but the Fisheries Programme (Offshore skipper) as well.

These capable women have proved themselves in the industry. I have personally gone out to the docks and spoken to their Operations Managers and Skippers who work with them. There was nothing but glowing reports and praise of their work ethics and dedication.

These young women were outstanding in all roles given to them. They are real go-getters and filled with enthusiasm. They have survived the high seas and completed sea time on fishing vessels despite the International Labor Organization (ILO) notion that fishing is among the most dangerous of all professions.

Women in this industry have proven themselves and have moved up the ladder of success steadily. It is important to stress to our young women that there are a lot more options in this industry apart from being a seafarer.

There are many courses out there to enable one to move ashore when the time is right and venture out into the other interesting fields available within the maritime industry. In addition, they must do courses alongside sailing to qualify in due time and in both areas; offshore and onshore.

Women are known to be very good at multi-tasking; therefore many women excel in the maritime industry, particularly seafaring, as this is one of the qualities most needed onboard vessels. Because of this, the maritime trade needs more women to maintain its sustainability.



In recent times, some of our female cadets have been selected to join foreign vessels. We anticipate the day they complete all relevant sea time and courses to enable them to get their first Certificate of Competency (COC). It is encouraging that our female students on the local traders have been successful in gaining their COC and paving the way for the many others. They are serving onboard as Officers and Ratings, proving themselves in the industry as astute seafarers.

Other than the two mainstream departments on a ship, there are female chef(s), steward(s), and spa workers(s) also excelling and showcasing their expertise onboard local and foreign ships.

The seafaring profession is not without challenges for females. Working in a male-dominated field often in unfavourable conditions, our women have handled it well. Females students are counselled regularly to maintain self-respect and carry out work on board with dignity and diligence.

FMA staff continuously stress and guide our students by highlighting the importance and commitment to work and staying motivated to their career goals.

The reality is that there can be many distractions along the way for all seafarers, especially for females, that is compounded and often complicated. Many may get caught up in the web of challenges and need guidance.

The establishment of the Steering Fiji Women Association has proven to be the right vehicle to motivate and impart confidence unto female cadets so that they come back to complete their programmes, attain their COC and become leaders of the future. With encouragement from female officers at the Association who have achieved their goals, the future female will go back to sea stronger than before.

Women who intend to take this up as a career must be strong and committed all the way. They should not settle for less. A well rewarding career awaits. Benefits include a lucrative pay but also a chance to see the world for free.

The experience of working alongside different nationalities, learning different cultures and experiencing the food of other nationalities are also part of life's learning curve.

As a Fijian female who has proven to the industry that it is possible to achieve and survive as an officer, it is my dream to see the Fiji Maritime Academy branch out and offer many other courses to accommodate the growing maritime industry here in Fiji.



**Sheryne  
Rosalia  
Lutuni  
Kanawale**

## Biodata:

*Kanawale started of her sailing career straight after high school when she joined the then School of Maritime Studies (which was under the Fiji Institute of Technology) and sailed around Fiji as a Deck Cadet on various ships around the country. She joined a foreign-going company to do her Stage 4 sea time (travelling the Northern and Southern hemisphere), before returning to complete Stage 5 with the School of Maritime Studies.*

*As soon as she completed her orals with then FIMSA (Fiji Islands Maritime Safety Administration), she rejoined the foreign-going company as a third mate and worked herself up the ranks, specialising in gas tankers.*

*Despite her busy work schedule as an officer on foreign-going tankers, she still conducted part-time lectures for the National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) in short courses/ pre-sea training, Deck Watch rating and Class 6 courses when she came ashore for her leave.*

*Kanawale attained her Bachelor of Applied Science (Nautical Science) from the Australian Maritime College under the University of Tasmania, making her the first Fijian female to receive a degree from the College.*

*She is currently the only female lecturer at the Fiji Maritime Academy in the Simulator Department. Kanawale is living testament to her belief that education does not end and one must keep pursuing it until they attain their goals. She challenges female seafarers to do the same.*

*She was appointed as the first President of the Steering Fiji Women Seafarers Association in 2019 and served with distinction. To encourage self-development and women empowerment, Kanawale has passed on the baton to allow other women an opportunity to explore leadership roles.*



# Wak excels in his job



Fiji National University (FNU) student William Luis Wak has a reason to be a proud cadet officer and believes others in this field should also display outstanding bravery to encounter ordeals while out at sea.

Wak, who is originally from the Madang province in Papua New Guinea (PNG), showed brilliant courage when he and his colleagues rescued three men stranded in the sea, in Bouganville waters two years ago.

The incident occurred in 2018 when Wak worked as a Deck Cadet on aboard a Consort Shipping Limited vessel.

“It was in August, two years ago, when my colleagues and I were sailing from East New Britain province to Autonomous region. It was raining heavily, and in the wee hours of the morning, we witnessed someone flashing light to us. Immediately, we made our way to the distress call and rescued three men from a small boat which was sinking,” mentioned Wak.

The young officer said this incident had taught him that life is precious, and we should always help people in need. As a sailor, Wak believes we should be well equipped when travelling by sea.

“We were told that the three men went to attend a funeral. While they had a Global Positioning System (GPS) with them, they were still unable to find the right track.”

“They had been in the boat for the entire night and were shivering with cold when we reached for their assistance. We took them to the nearest safe place and provided them with warm clothes, food and water,” added Wak.

He said people in the maritime industry are required to display courage and be ready to work outside of their comfort zone.

The aspiring deckhand officer, while reminiscing his earlier days, mentioned ‘being different from the rest of the family members’ led him to select a career in the maritime industry.

“I always wanted to be exceptional, and that is when I realised that I do not have anyone in my family who is in the maritime area. I must say this is the best decision of my life,” he added.

“During my role as a Cadet, I have been involved in inspecting all lifesaving and safety equipment. Under the supervision of the officers and captains, I have also undertaken navigation responsibilities while at sea,” informed Wak.

“The Deck Watchkeeper Class 3 course at FMA has enabled me to learn how to engage traffic negotiation with other ships while at sea. All these skills are a very important step towards becoming an officer,” he stated.

Wak hopes to complete his Certificate of Competency this year and further his sea career.

# Rounds eyes career at sea

Fond memories of going on short fishing trips with her grandfather and uncles during school holidays at her village in Serua initiated Laura Hannah Rounds’ love for the sea.

According to the 18-year-old, the excursions and continued encouragement from family members strengthened her vision and desire to work on a vessel after completing high school.

The former Natabua High School student said she had mapped out her career path that merged all her interests.

“In high school, I had wanted to study in the field of medicine, and so I planned to pursue that and then join a vessel, as that was my end goal,” Rounds said.

“I always knew I wanted to work in the maritime field in one way or the other. I loved going out fishing with my family, and I have a grandfather and two uncles in this field.”

“However, I would be the first female from my family in this field,” she shared excitedly.

Rounds said she has a cousin to thank for steering her straight to the Fiji National University’s (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) earlier this year whilst sending out her tertiary applications.

“My cousin suggested that I apply to FMA since my family knew I wanted to work in the maritime field eventually and so I looked through the programmes and decided to enrol in the Diploma in Nautical Science.”

“I’m glad I did despite my initial plan as now, through the course I am doing both theory and practical attachments on a vessel for my sea time.”

“Nautical Science deals with the study of the basic academic and practical devices required to safely navigate and operate marine vehicles, such as a ship.”

“We learn how to handle a ship and navigate it safely from one point to another. We also learn about cargo handling, vessel’s safety and so forth.”

Rounds is in the first year of her three-year course and said beginning with a boot camp programme at the start of this year helped the students familiarise themselves with the Academy and its lecturers.

During the boot camp, students spend about ten days at the Academy, are provided with basic training, physical activities, and go on tours to organisations in the industry such as Fiji Ports.

“By the end of the boot camp, we are familiar with everyone in our programme as well as our lecturers,” Rounds said.

She said being a female in a traditionally male-dominated field did not hinder her studies and was pleased to hear the Academy report that it had enrolled the highest number of girls this year.

“This is a good field to study and work in. You have to be focused as it takes years to complete both the practical and sea time. You need to be prepared to make some sacrifices and remain dedicated.”

“My goal is to one day work on an international vessel. Of course, you need to have the drive to achieve whatever you want in life,” Rounds added.



## FMA 2020 Highlights

### Inaugural Online Short Course

Over 30 students completed the first-ever online short course in Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities (PSSR) which was hosted by Fiji National University’s (FNU) Fiji Maritime Academy earlier this year. The course was specifically developed and delivered during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The two-week programme focused on safety measures while at sea. The

PSSR course was structured in modules, and the final assessment was done under supervision in the Academy. Students were also provided lecture slides and reading materials to assist with learning.

### Collaboration with the Fiji Police Force

Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA), through a partnership with the Fiji Police Force recently organised an awareness

session for students to ensure student cadets are vigilant of illegal activities they may counter while at sea. The interactive session was conducted by officers from the Criminal Investigation Department’s (CID) Drug Enforcement Unit. It also highlighted the catastrophic consequences involved in such illegal activities. Students were briefed on various procedures, including actions to be taken before port entry and while in port and the steps to take when drugs are found onboard.



## A Captain's Tale



Growing up in the beautiful Koro Island, Captain Samisoni Komainaiqoro’s love and appreciation for the sea was ‘automatic’, and he relied on his parents and elders to gain more knowledge about his surroundings. The sea was a key source of food and catching a bounty daily was the norm for young teenagers. Going for a quick swim and playing touch rugby along the sandbanks was a favourite pass time.

It was here that Captain Komainaiqoro’s love for the sea strengthened as he realised that it could be a pathway to something bigger.

“I knew I had to start looking for work after high school so that I could earn money and support my family. I loved the sea and saw it as a potential to mould my future.”

Second eldest of eight siblings, Captain Komainaiqoro (*pictured*) was born and raised in Nacamaki Village. After completing Year 10 on Koro Island, he moved to Suva to attend Lelean Memorial School.

**Tertiary Education and Career**

“After completing school, I was looking for employment. While attending a family gathering, someone suggested that I check Patterson Brothers Shipping Company Limited. I joined the company on the vessel, MV Ovalau on 16 March 1996,” he shared.

After a few months, Captain Komainaiqoro joined the Deck Apprenticeship programme at the Fiji Institute of Technology’s (FIT) School of Maritime Studies, now known as the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) under the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

He completed the Stage One Deck Apprenticeship in December 1996 and returned to the vessel to finish the practical training. Stages Two and Three were served onboard ships where he was required to complete 12 assignments.

He continued to study and managed to complete Stages Four and Five as well. His excellent overall grades saw him graduate with a Gold

Medal in 2000. “I am grateful to Patterson Brothers for taking me in as one of their fully sponsored Deck Apprentice.”

In 2001, Captain Komainaiqoro was promoted to Chief Officer and served in that position for one year.

He then moved to Neptune Shipping Line (NSL) Auckland as a Third Officer for one year before being promoted to Second Officer.

Feeling the need to further his studies, Captain Komainaiqoro left full-time employment in 2005 to undertake the Advance Diploma in Nautical Science programme from the Australian Maritime College. “After completing this programme, I attained the Chief Officer’s License, which is issued by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA).”

In 2006, he became a Chief Officer and served for three years. In 2008, Captain Komainaiqoro attained his Master’s License after which he was promoted to Master – a position he currently holds.

In the past eleven years, Captain Komainaiqoro has been the Master

of several vessels. He is currently the Master of MV Southern Pearl, which is a container ship serving Pape’ete, French Polynesia from Auckland, New Zealand.

“I enjoy the challenges this role brings and the opportunity to travel the world and getting paid for it. I’m also thankful to have a job during the COVID19 pandemic, said Captain Komainaiqoro.

“Being responsible for the lives of 20 crew members and millions of dollars’ worth of cargo as well as playing a role in transporting much-needed supplies around the Pacific is satisfying. I’m grateful to NPL for the opportunities they have been giving me over the years.”

Captain Komainaiqoro credits his success to his family and his first employer.

“First and foremost, my Heavenly Father for His protection over the years especially when I strayed from the straight and narrow path. Secondly, my wife, who was there from the very beginning when I had nothing to offer or provide for her. My parents and my late Uncle Tomasi Pekamu for my upbringing and support. Last but not least, to Emertt Pecham and to Patterson Brothers Shipping Company Limited for opening the door to an interesting and successful career.”

Reminiscing his FNU days, he said, “I was living at Raiwaqa during Stage One and Three studies, and I walked to and from school every day. Lunch was always a cup of tea and three pieces of scones which cost \$0.90. We used to play touch rugby straight after lunch, the best way to lose weight, then would head straight back to the classroom for Morse code and Rules of the Road, the worse combination with the afternoon sea breeze,” reflects Captain Komainaiqoro with a smile.

FIT provided me with the knowledge and skills to pursue such a wonderful career. My lecturers were very supportive. We could go to them for help anytime and always knew that our questions would be answered.”

**Words of Wisdom**

Captain Komainaiqoro’s advice to students is to believe in themselves and accept wherever fate leads them.

“You have a purpose in life, accept your destiny and be grateful to those who cross your path and help you.”

His top three tips for graduates starting their career is to be humble and honest, seek experience before money and always work hard.

“Humility and honesty will take you places and treat others as you want to be treated. Seek to gain experience before money. The money will come at the right time. Always work hard and even harder when no one is looking.”

**About Neptune Pacific Line**

*NSL was renamed to Neptune Pacific Line (NPL) in 2009. NPL is part of The Wonderful Company, a US\$4.6 billion international company headquartered in Los Angeles, CA. Its other companies include FIJI Water, Justin and Landmark Vineyards, Vintage Nurseries, Wonderful Citrus, Wonderful Pistachios and Almonds, Teleflora, POM Wonderful and Suterra.*

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