

# FNU NIKUA



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## Towards a Sustainable Future



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**FNU ACHIEVES**  
TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION (THE)  
IMPACT RANKINGS

**SETTING THE PACE**  
TOWARDS GLOBAL  
RECOGNITION





# FNU ACHIEVES TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION (THE) IMPACT RANKINGS



**Dr William May**  
Acting Vice-Chancellor

**T**he Fiji National University (FNU) has for the first time been ranked in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact rankings that measure an institution's research, outreach, teaching and stewardship against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We were one of 1,525 universities from 110 countries/regions worldwide to participate in the 2022 Impact rankings.

To be included in the ranking, universities must be actively involved in achieving the SDGs. We are pleased that our application explaining the strategy and steps we are putting forth to accomplish the SDGs was recognised. The result exceeded our expectations, especially as a young but dynamic institution in its 12th year of providing quality learning, teaching and research to our students.

FNU's position of #801-1000 is attributable to excellent research, outreach programmes, teaching, and our firm commitment to the UNSDGs.

I appreciate the hard work and dedication of all staff and students who have contributed to the University's success. I also acknowledge the THE Steering Committee, FNU's Senior Leadership Team and the Council Members' vision and efforts to move FNU to the next level and fulfil the essential goals outlined in our Strategic Plan 2021-2026.

FNU aims to provide education for employability whilst providing an excellent student learning experience. We are committed to ensuring that all our graduates are empowered with education and skill sets that make them workforce-ready. We are also focused on skills development and turning job seekers into job creators.

Our mission as the national University is to assist Fiji's people, economy, society, and the Pacific region. We provide people with high-quality education and training that will help them find work, conduct research with a real-world impact, and provide education aligned to national priorities and relevant around the world. We are also proactively engaging stakeholders in our communities, nation, and region and being a leader in sustainability.

This is highlighted by our most recent partnerships with the University of Auckland and Monash University, which emphasise FNU's commitment to furthering stakeholder engagement and collaboration to ensure that our research makes a lasting impact in the world. These partnerships allow us to provide holistic learning for our students and that research conducted has global relevance.

The University has been aiding students through its Student Bursary Scheme, which allows students to benefit from tuition assistance. This means a lot to many students because it will allow them to follow their dreams and give them a steady job.

Last November, FNU developed a Sustainability Plan within the same timeframe as our Strategic Plan that is based on international best practices for universities to accomplish sustainability objectives and positively affect society.

FNU has created frameworks to assist Fiji's National Development Plan and guarantee that our graduates are fully aware of the importance of sustainability when they enter their respective industries.

As a result, our Sustainability Plan exists to help our students and staff make better decisions and achieve the goals of sustainability through the three pillars of social cohesion, environmental protection, and economic performance.

The Sustainability Plan forms an interdepartmental plan and a partnership between staff and students to support the University's objective of integrating sustainability under the University's Strategic Plan 2021-2026.

FNU's Sustainability Plan will incorporate sustainability ideas into the University's operations and policies. The plan is divided into four major sections:

- Administration & Governance – Integrating sustainability in University's administration and governance, including policies, programmes, and resources.
- Stakeholder Engagement – Focusing on engaging, sustainable practices in its campus and community engagements to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Operations – Operational solutions for sustainability display the institutional effort of conserving natural resources, enhancing operational efficiencies, and minimising carbon footprints.
- Education & Research – Utilising the FNU campuses as a living lab. Embedding sustainability in the University's curriculum and research will increase understanding of the immediacy of environmental responsibility and drive knowledge on sustainability giving the students real-world skills to improve the planet.

The recent THE ranking has undoubtedly set the standard for the University, and we will continue to strive for excellence for our students and the country.

Vinaka!



# Setting The Pace **TOWARDS** **GLOBAL RECOGNITION**

**T**he Fiji National University's 801-1000 Times Higher Education (THE) Ranking is indeed a milestone given this is the first time the University has been ranked against other reputable institutions worldwide.

We appreciate the efforts of staff and students involved in enabling the University to be ranked internationally. The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Sustainable Development Goals provide a common international framework for concrete action. Fiji National University is committed to working towards these goals both within the country and with its partners abroad.

Although the University is fairly young, FNU's Strategic Plan 2021-2026 clearly outlines initiatives that will place FNU as a comprehensive research institution that provides a holistic learning environment, one where educators and students work collaboratively with communities, the private and public sector in creating a knowledge base that can produce real world solutions.

The University also promotes sustainable campus management which includes energy-saving measures, such as the Solar PV Project implemented at the Namaka campus in Nadi, resource efficiency and waste management reduction which includes

the sustainable water management system installed at the Sports and Wellness Centre at the Nasinu campus which utilises rainwater for non-portable use providing environmental and social benefits.

FNU's SP 2021-2026 is a whole institution approach. It requires all sections of the University as well as external stakeholders to be actively involved in realising the sustainable goals.

The FNU Council understands that strong universities are a crucial part of civil society and are integral promoters of both local and global partnerships. The Council has high expectations of FNU and the university's dedication to providing Avant Garde research, high-quality education, and ground-breaking innovation as per the THE Impact Ranking is applauded.

FNU will continue to support students in developing a scientific mindset with a spirit of curiosity and entrepreneurship needed to produce the necessary resolutions needed for sustainable development.

The vision for FNU is to ultimately build a legacy of excellence, one that is enriched in research and promotes entrepreneurship and economic development.

The FNU Council extends a hearty congratulations once again to all staff and students involved in enabling this excellent achievement and encourages the continued commitment from all stakeholders to reinventing the wheel and taking the University to greater heights.



**Tessa Price**  
Chancellor and Chair of FNU Council.

## THE Ranking **IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR FNU** – Prof De Marco



*Professor Roland De Marco.*

**A** global University ranking is crucial to the internationalisation of Fiji National University (FNU), positioning it on the world stage as a globally connected institution capable of tackling grand global challenges.

FNU's Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Professor Roland De Marco believes the inclusion of the university in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings will open new opportunities for partnerships that will strengthen the university's commitment to the promotion of the UN (United Nations) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in learning, teaching, research and engagement.

"This is wonderful news not only for FNU but for the wider community and the nation. As the national university, we are committed to making a real-world impact through our learning, teaching, research and engagement," said Prof De Marco.

Prof De Marco played an important role in meeting all the requirements and submitting the application to the THE Impact ranking, where FNU was rated for the first time.

"Under the global sphere of the FNU 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, the University is seeking to make progress toward inclusion in international university rankings, with a clear pathway to entering a THE ranking by 2030. This is the reason why FNU is proud of its inclusion in 2022 THE Impact rankings via its first submission," Prof De Marco proudly said.

The Impact rankings assess how well an institution's research, stewardship, outreach, and teaching contribute to the achievement of the UN SDGs.

All institutions that participate in the THE ranking must submit for SDG 17 on Partnerships for the

Goals, which investigates how colleges teach the future generation to embrace sustainability and the institution's best three SDGs.

FNU chose three more SDGs for its 2022 submission: SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being (rated 301-400 out of 1,101 universities), SDG 15 Life on Land (ranked 201-300 out of 521 institutions), and SDG 13 Climate Action (ranked 201-300 out of 521 institutions) (ranked 401-600 out of 674 institutions).

"The research adds significantly to the pillars of knowledge at any university. It has helped Fiji National University (FNU) achieve the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact rating of #801-1000 on the international stage," Prof De Marco stated.

As part of the FNU's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan under Sphere 4 Global, the university will adopt a strategic approach to entering major international university rankings by 2030 by establishing select international teaching and research partnerships, aligned to national priority areas.

FNU will measure our success via the following deliverables:

- Achievement of measurable progress towards the threshold metrics for inclusion in international university rankings, with a clear pathway to entering the THE and/or QS world rankings by 2030;
- Achievement of demonstrable outcomes from carefully targeted international teaching and research partnerships.



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**FOR THE FIRST TIME**  
**IN TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION (THE)**  
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# Courses to Highlight **SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE**

## – Prof Plange

**D**iscussions on climate change solutions, mitigating response and strengthening climate resilience must be embedded into educational programmes as part of the global effort to address the crisis. The Fiji National University’s (FNU) Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies and Sustainable Development Director, Professor Nii-K Plange said the effectiveness of these courses provided by higher education institutions could be valued through its provisions of sustainable adaptation and resilient strategies.

“When we discuss and disseminate climate change resilience approaches that benefit our communities and national development, then we have made an impact,” Prof Plange said.

“Having such programmes also enable us to produce a generation of learners who are both climate conscious and climate literate citizens.”

He said this was a key reason FNU developed the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Diploma and Masters programme in Climate Change Resilience and Mitigation.

“Until recently, FNU’s various Colleges have provided programmes that deal with climate change or have focused on climate change and its impact on specific sectors, such as health or agriculture,” Prof Plange said.

“What we then did was merge units from these courses to make a composite programme at FNU that discusses climate change from the perspectives of agriculture, health, environment and business and

engineering sustainability.”

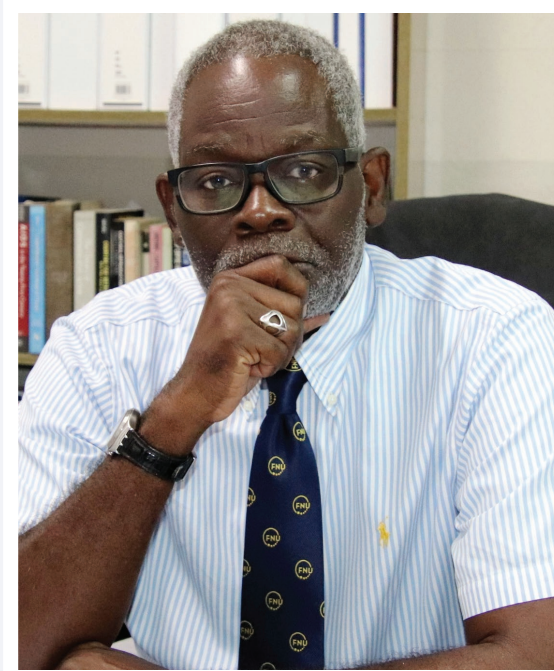
“Another important note is that the programme emphasises the impact of climate change on cultures and indigenous practices.”

Prof Plange added that because climate change affected all aspects of society, a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach to the issue was crucial. He said this was highlighted through his added role as the Co-convenor of the Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network (CCRN) of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). The Network was established by ACU in partnership with FNU, the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the University of the West Indies (UWI), to link universities directly affected by climate change with those that have expertise in building resilience.

In addition, CCRN aims to directly address the needs of universities and communities whilst providing its members with a platform to connect with policymakers and discuss disaster preparedness and resilience.

“In addition to educating graduates who would then contribute and become allies in addressing climate change issues, FNU through the CCRN has maintained connection and collaboration with other Commonwealth universities whose people are also at the forefront of the environmental impacts,” Prof Plange highlighted.

“Most recently, FNU through the CCRN co-hosted an International Webinar on Climate Change, Security and Sustainability of Ocean States last



*Professor Nii-K Plange.*

month that brought together academics from Fiji, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Seychelles and West Indies.”

The webinar was co-convened by Prof Nii-K Plange and MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Director, Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva.

## Sustainable Agroforestry System Will **SAFEGUARD AND HELP OUR ENVIRONMENT**

**T**here is a need to nurture more stewards who can protect and conserve the natural environment. These sentiments were expressed by the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Agriculture and Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) PhD scholar, Tiraon Taioti (*pictured*).

Taioti is pursuing his PhD studies after securing a scholarship under the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) Pacific Agriculture Scholarship and Support – Climate Change (PASS-CR) program.

The ACIAR PASS-CR enables research collaboration in research and capacity building to address common production issues and opportunities. This includes projects addressing biosecurity, climate-resilient livelihoods, and opportunities for stronger agribusiness development.

The collaboration with ACIAR PASS-CR is in line with one of the key pillars of FNU’s Strategic Plan 2021-2026 – Research with real world impact and underpins one of the objectives, which is to build partnerships with overseas universities, governments, NGOs and funders to finance international competitive, collaborative, challenge-based research.

FNU’s research framework is further aligned with one of the SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) targets – sustainable management and use of natural resources.

Taioti is currently pursuing research on the Contribution of Agroforestry Towards Rural Livelihoods and Forest Restoration, which is part of a project led by Professor Helen Wallace of Griffith University in Australia. Having gained a Masters with Distinction from the University of West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago in 2019, Taioti felt the need to continue research on biodiversity and sustainability, which influenced the decision for his current research.

“I am interested in the natural environment and



how to preserve and conserve our forests,” he said.

“Deforestation and degradation in the name of development and expansion are the main causes of unsustainable agriculture and this places a lot of risk on our natural resources, especially our forests and biodiversity.”

He added that agroforestry initiatives could potentially assist in ensuring issues like deforestation are mitigated.

“Traditional practices of agroforestry in our communities have slowly eroded. Unsustainable activities are slowly destroying our forests, so we need to encourage the concept of agroforestry.”

“We need to influence and encourage people to be more economical and plant trees that are socially and ecologically important, ones that provide fruits and herbal medicine for instance, and those that retain soil and provide shelter and habitat.”

Taioti, an FNU lecturer who is currently on study leave, seeks to revive traditional practices of conservation and believes these measures could assist in the sustainability efforts of the University and wider community.

After attaining his PhD, Taioti hopes to return to the University to be able to impart learning and help motivate the younger generation toward forest conservation.

## Our Sustainability **CHAMPIONS**



**Pardeep Lal**  
Lecturer  
Head of Campus  
Labasa.

“Sustainable change starts with a small act, be it in your family or community. Everyone should be empowered to identify environmental problems around them and work towards addressing them in an environmentally friendly way. As an FNU Sustainability Champion, I am responsible for promoting and undertaking green initiatives on campus with students, staff and stakeholders. One of our recent campaigns involved planting trees along the Labasa river to prevent soil erosion and bank undercutting due to severe floods. We also plan to conduct another tree-planting initiative at our Naduna campus, Labasa in the coming months. As members of the University, it is imperative that we all take a proactive approach in employing sustainability practices in our learning, teaching and research.”



**Lia Julie Katalaine Dabea Bogitini**  
Assistant Lecturer  
College of Engineering, Science and Technology.

“Putting environmental protection, climate change adaptation and resilience at the heart of the University’s operations allows us to achieve our sustainability goals. As a Champion, I endeavour to drive change in my College to convert its environment into a smarter, more prosperous, and more sustainable one. Our College and campuses have conducted clean up campaigns, recycling initiatives, tree planting exercises and energy and water audits for our campuses. Everyone can contribute to a greener environment through simple actions such as reusing washing water to clean the driveway or porch, using energy-efficient lighting and reducing the number of resources used in your homes, which then reduces your expenses. If you start small, you will see that eventually, all those small tasks lead to big achievements.”





# A Green and SUSTAINABLE FNU

The Fiji National University's (FNU) Sustainable Initiatives Committee (SIC) Chair, Niranjwan Chettiar is of the firm belief that ownership and active participation of the University's staff and students will result in a deeper commitment to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Chettiar (pictured below), who is also the Director of Capital Projects and Infrastructure at FNU, leads the SIC in promoting sustainable practices at all FNU campuses and centres.

Established in 2021 through the Sustainability Plan 2021-2026, the SIC spearheads FNU's aim of encouraging its family of staff and students to become more climate-conscious members of society. The SIC provides a guided and consolidated approach across the university functions which includes administration and governance, stakeholder engagement, operations and learning & research.

"As with all ambitious plans, we have maintained a steady and sure approach in how we hope to achieve our targets as set out in the institution's Sustainability Plan," Chettiar said.

"The Plan is an evergreen document that has been translated down to our Colleges and Divisions to ensure our goals are implemented, monitored and reported on."

"To foster staff engagement, the University has appointed various academic and support staff as Sustainability Champions, who are agents of change working to make the world a healthier and greener place."



"A young university like FNU, which has been able to gain recognition in the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings is a testament that Sustainability has been engraved into our day-to-day functions and will continue to make an impact within the university, and on the community."

"The Sustainability Champions will be the key conduit between the SIC and our various sections in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Chettiar added that due to FNU's role as the national tertiary institution, it was crucial that

the University utilise its unique position within society to promote sustainability.

"This includes providing knowledge and solutions, creating current and future SDG implementers, embodying the principles of SDGs through organisational governance, operations and culture and providing cross-sectoral leadership in the implementation," he stated.

"Therefore, each individual within the University community has a role in ensuring FNU leads the charge in achieving the SDGs in Fiji and the Pacific."

He said this was evident in FNU becoming a signatory of the SDG Accord with The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges Education (EAUC). The SDG Accord is the University and College Sector's Collective Response to the global goals spearheaded by EAUC, which is the environmental and sustainability champion within Further and Higher Education in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

As a Signatory of the SDG Accord, FNU has issued its first SDG report to EAUC this year on FNU's progress toward the SDGs.

Chettiar highlighted that FNU had also declared a climate emergency in light of COP26 and has oriented itself to become low carbon and environmentally sustainable organisation through the targets below from now until 2026;

- Achieve a \$300,000 reduction in power consumption over five years.
- Implement the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle initiative at all FNU campuses.



Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr William May planting a tree at the Koronivia campus.

- Establish a programme for student projects related to sustainability.
- Encourage and support research that addresses social, economic and environmental challenges.
- Integrate sustainability within various programmes and courses.
- Achieve 71% of clean energy over five years.
- Divert 20% of waste from landfills through recycling.
- Reduce carbon emissions by 25% and
- Harvest 40% rainwater for non-potable use.

The University has already rolled out a few rainwater harvesting projects, tree planting exercises, recycling bins, community cleaning initiatives, electrical conversation and efficiency projects. A Sustainability Week Campaign is earmarked for October to engage, create awareness and showcase the sustainability efforts amongst staff and students.

## CBHTS Holds a BLOOD DRIVE

Soko Kina was on his way to his Year 2 Bachelor of Laws (LLB) lecture when he came across the Fiji Red Cross blood drive mobile unit at the Fiji National University's (FNU), Nasinu campus.

Without much thought, Kina (pictured right) decided he had time to donate blood before his class started. After registering and undergoing preliminary health checks, Kina eventually headed onto the bus for a final test that would determine if he was eligible to give blood at that particular time.

Once cleared, he settled into an armchair opposite fellow FNU staff member Roshlyne Lata and a needle was inserted into his arm to begin the process.

After a few minutes, Kina was advised that the process was complete and headed outside for refreshments to regain his energy.

"I didn't think twice when I saw the blood drive happening on campus," Kina said.

"I immediately decided that I would donate blood because I know the life-saving importance of this act."

"This is my second time donating and knowing that this would help someone in dire need is a great feeling."

A few minutes after Kina, Lata completed her donation process and left the mobile unit feeling content.

"Anyone who is able to should consider donating

blood," she urged.

"We never know when hospitals will require blood transfusions during emergencies and such so it is important that we contribute to maintaining our blood banks."

The idea to hold the drive was proposed by FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) Head of School Economics and Finance, Bimal Krishna, who also coordinated the initiative alongside College staff.

The blood drive was held simultaneously at the Nasinu campus and Namaka in Nadi. Staff and students from nearby campuses were encouraged to participate in the drive.

CBHTS Dean Professor Arun Elias said the initiative also aligned with the College's corporate social responsibility (CSR) and emphasises the institution's mission and values.

"CSR initiatives are a vital part of any organisation as it helps develop our people and communities in various aspects of our living," Prof Elias said.

"Blood drives are an important part of this as blood is needed in our hospitals for patients to survive from traumatic injuries, surgeries and chronic illnesses."

"These needs arise on a daily basis, however, due to unstable supply patients and their relatives have to look for donors when needed. This can delay treatments which can lead to serious complications

and even death."

"We have witnessed this and as the national University, we felt obliged to contribute towards this noble cause."

The College has planned to conduct another blood drive in September and encouraged staff and students to participate in the drive.







# FNU and Monash University Establish A CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH CENTRE



*FNU’s Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr William May (left) with Fiji’s Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development and the Minister Responsible for Climate Change Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum (centre) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Professor Roland De Marco (right).*

The Fiji National University (FNU) and Monash University have begun co-creating a range of collaborative research projects following the formalisation of the development of the Pacific Island Countries Climate Change Research Centre (PIC CCRC).

On April 1st, the Monash University and FNU Vice-Chancellor’s signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Research Centre.

The PIC CCRC, which will be jointly based at the two institutions, is designed to support collaboration and provide exceptional research leading to policy advice on a range of climate change mitigation and adaptation issues.

It will also provide high-quality training and capacity building for policymakers in Pacific Island Countries.

Through the PIC CCRC, researchers will have direct engagement with wide academic networks and better opportunities to collaborate with key industry leaders, donor institutions and world-leading practitioners.

FNU’s Acting Vice-Chancellor Dr William May said there is an already growing pool of climate researchers within the University, and the partnership

ensures a greater scope for growth within the area of study. “Fiji and the entire region are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts,” he said.

“This collaboration can assist Fiji and the Pacific in human capital development, producing graduates ready for a job market that will need to respond to climate change realities into the future.”

FNU’s Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, Professor Roland De Marco said the partnership will provide a massive injection of capacity to FNU’s and the region’s push to develop internationally competitive research in Climate Resilience and Adaptation to shape policy and practice within the region.

“Climate change is the greatest challenge facing the globe, with the Pacific Islands region on the precipice of the impacts of climate change. The Monash University-FNU research alliance, which will marry our complementary research capabilities in science, technology, social science, business and economics, is expected to create impactful climate action within the region.”

“At the FNU, we are delighted and excited to be forging a research alliance with the world-class and research powerhouse of Monash University, which will help us to realise our goal of creating evidence-

based research in Climate Change to inform policy and practice.”

The partnership was formally launched by Fiji’s Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development and the Minister Responsible for Climate Change Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum.

Honourable Sayed-Khaiyum said the establishment of the Centre is aligned with the Government’s objective for FNU to become a premier University that has international recognition and credibility.

He added that the Research Centre would give an opportunity to local and regional students to work with leading academics at Monash University on a matter that is of global concern.

“This Research Centre that is critically important to bring to the table not only those people who are the coalface of climate change but to bring people from all different schools of thought and different facets, from academia, from practitioners, from researchers to address climate change holistically,” stated Hon. Sayed-Khaiyum.

Minister Sayed-Khaiyum said the partnership between FNU and Monash also offers significant advantages for Fiji and the region.

## Creating a Strong Culture OF RESEARCH AT FNU



Dr Ronald Kumar.

As a future-focused, dual-sector tertiary education institute, the Fiji National University (FNU) undertakes research with real-world impact, aligned to national priorities and with global relevance.

The university supports research in a broad range of areas relevant to Fiji in partnership with the government and industries to grow our research activities and achievements for the transformation of our societies and economy.

FNU’s Director of Research Dr Ronald Kumar said that guided by the Strategic Plan 2021-2026, the University is building a strong foundation to promote and support research work in all its cognate disciplines.

“The focus of our research at Fiji National University is applied research, addressing issues pertinent to national development,” said Dr Kumar.

FNU is an institution of influence fostering a research community defined by global connectedness and networks with national and international research peers.

“Research is an important pillar for all universities and we at FNU are providing adequate support to ensure we enhance not only our research portfolio but also form partnerships or collaborate with reputable universities to undertake joint research which not only is beneficial to researchers involved but also lifts our profile on the international stage,” Dr Kumar explained.

“Research is a never-ending process of discovering new things at multiple levels creating new knowledge or using existing knowledge in new and impactful ways. Our researchers are deeply

committed to their work which has helped us achieve an Impact Ranking.”

FNU’s PhD and Masters by Research students form a valuable part of the University research community. Research students can work on real and important issues for Fiji, as they drive a significant percentage of the University’s research output.

“FNU will continue to identify a small number of key interdisciplinary themes that are aligned with national priorities and have international relevance, where FNU can develop strength and depth in research in areas such as climate change adaptation, e-commerce, low-input agriculture, sustainable and eco-tourism, noncommunicable diseases, artificial intelligence, and inclusive education,” Dr Kumar stated.

“Through training and mentorship programmes for research supervisors and early career researchers, we will build our research capacity. We will also invest in our research facilities, infrastructure, and culture by providing targeted assistance to priority areas and staff development.

“We are highly focused on creating productive research partnerships with local and international universities, governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and funders to support internationally competitive, collaborative and challenge-based research. We will also aim to recognise and reward research that informs policy and practice via new initiatives.”

FNU aims to be the premier national University providing relevant higher education, technical and vocational education and training, and research and development in Fiji.







## FNU Works with Villagers on a CLIMATE CHANGE PROJECT

Nadaro village, located 20 kilometres from Suva City, is one of the many villages that has been severely affected by the impacts of climate change through flooding and soil erosion which is experienced in the village.

However, the villagers have not lost hope as they work together with the Fiji National University (FNU) to fight climate change.

FNU's College of Humanities and Education together with members of the Climate-U Project has made the village a research site. As part of this project, it is aiding the villagers with the knowledge, skills, and equipment to lower the impact of climate change.

As a future-focused, dual-sector university, FNU undertakes Research with Real World Impact, aligned to national priorities and with global relevance, as stated in the FNU's Strategic Plan 2021-2026 under Pillar 2. The work undertaken by FNU is testimony of its commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), particularly through Goal 4 Quality Education; Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and Goal 13 Climate Action.

Recently, the work of FNU brought smiles to the faces of the villagers, with the connection of piped water supply to every house in the village.

The Climate-U Participant Action Research Project (PARG) has been designated as a research hub by FNU's Team Climate-U. Since last September, some of the university's community projects include planting trees, adding to water sources through boreholes and pipes, working on alternative water sources and making them better, improving drainage, installation of solar lights and water tanks. The team has organised workshops co-jointly with Government and the provincial departments on climate and life improvements.

The Climate-U Project is part of an international alliance in which 13 universities collaborate on climate projects, directed by Professor Tristan McGowan of University College London (UCL).

Heavy rains have led to flooding in the village, which has caused soil erosion and made many parents worry about their children's future and that of future generations.

Isei Tuvou, the head of the Nadaro Development Committee, said that

climate change had a big effect on the hamlet because he had seen negative changes for the people who live in the village.

"Climate change has impacted the villages in various ways, as I have personally witnessed. The village grounds are swamped with water whenever it rains, even if it only rains for a few minutes," he explained.

"Seeing the impact left us with no options as to what we could do until Fiji National University stepped in to help decrease the impact and teach the locals through traditional means to fight climate change."

"We have three water tanks in the village where 30,000 litres of water can be stored, and we will put two more tanks into service so we will have 50,000 litres of water to meet the needs of all the villagers."

The villages have not lost, according to Tuvou, and they are working with the FNU team to combat the effects of climate change.

"The FNU team assisted in connecting taps to every village home, which had never been done before. They also provided us with spades and forks to dig up the drains so that they could be dredged, preventing water from entering the village."

He also said that plants such as bele (*Abelmoschus manihot*) and vetiver grass had been planted to stop the soil from washing away.

"We appreciate how hard the FNU team works and how much they want to help the village deal with the effects of climate change."

According to Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Dean of the College of Humanities and Education, the total available budget for this UCL-funded study is FJD \$78,000, which comprises \$48,000 for the climate change project and \$30,000 for additional funding for research on traditional knowledge that supports community resilience, adaptation and sustainability.

"The institution is committed to combating climate change through measures that empower individuals to do the right thing and provide them with the necessary information and skills," she said.

"The FNU team has been recording local Nadaro and Vugalei tribes' traditional knowledge and values regarding climate change mitigation and resilience. The project recognises the numerous positive outcomes that can be achieved through strong enabling partnerships with multiplier effects for our people."

## Minister Applauds FNU's Fight AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

The Fiji National University (FNU) has been commended for its role in the fight against climate change by the Minister for Rural, Maritime Development, and Disaster Management, Honourable Inia Seruiratu following the visit to a project site at Vugalei in Tailevu.

Minister Seruiratu (*pictured left with garland*) visited the FNU's Team Climate-U Participant Action Research Project (PARG) research site at Nadaro village in Tailevu, where university staff have been engaged since last September in community projects which include tree planting, water source enhancement via borehole and piping, alternative water sourcing and improvement work, drainage improvement, solar light installations and water tanks installation.

"Climate change affects all of us, and we all have to take responsibility for it as well. Academic institutions like the Fiji National University (FNU) play a significant role in combating and coming up with innovative ways to fight climate change," said Honourable Seruiratu.

"It is good that FNU has been given that responsibility, not only for Nadaro but also for the Tikina

Vugalei, and we hope that this partnership can be strengthened. People can also be empowered with the knowledge, skills, and innovative ways to fight climate change."

"For us, every village, every community, is our priority because the government wants to ensure that no one is left behind. There are a lot of challenges in terms of development and the environmental issues we face, such as climate change and disasters, and we need to empower the people so that they can be more resilient and be in a better position to adapt to the changes," added Minister Seruiratu.

One of the villagers, Eliza Qereqeretabua, said it was important for everyone to work together to find solutions to the global challenge of climate change.

"I am pleased with the work carried out by the FNU team at the village as their hard work and knowledge sharing to every village, and the youths will help the village to become sustainable," she said.

"We must find solutions which can help us lower the effect of climate change, even a small contribution from every individual can play a huge role in the fight."

The Climate-U Participant Action Research Project (PARG) is expected to be completed in early 2023.

## Taufetee is Keen to ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE SDGs

Talimeli Taufetee, a medical student at Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, feels it is her duty to fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and contribute to a healthier society.

Taufetee (*pictured*), is in her third year of the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme and hopes to help Pacific people achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 which is to "Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for all at all ages".

The 26-year-old aims to promote healthy lifestyles, physically and mentally, in all age groups within Pacific communities.

"By doing so, I believe that achieving the health aspect of the Sustainable Development Goals will pave the way as a nation for us to achieve its overall aims," said Taufetee.

"I'm determined to take part in the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes by increasing awareness and informing people about prevention methods. The acquired knowledge and skills will help us prolong and save many lives in the Pacific."

The Pacific islander is happy to study at FNU under a scholarship.

"FNU's medicine programme is well known and I am convinced that FNU will prepare me to be an eligible and a competent doctor."

"We'll use the skills and knowledge that we've learned and

developed throughout the years of studying medicine and practising in clinics to help my people in American Samoa."

Taufetee also served as the flag bearer for American Samoa during the CMNHS's flag-raising and regional students' welcome ceremony last month.

"Raising my country's flag in a strange land was a proud experience for me, and I will remember it for the rest of my life," she said.

"I'm also grateful to the FNU for providing us with the best resources so that we can learn while also giving back to the community."

"It is a highly gratifying field, and you can assist people in making the proper choices for their health."

FNU aims to continue to enhance learning and teaching, embedding global best practices in pedagogy and assessment, building resilience in delivery, and maximising the benefits of digital technologies.







SCAN TO REGISTER

# Talanoa with our Alumni



## Advocating Healthier Lifestyle IS PUGEVA'S PASSION

**B**arry Mataisau Pugeva set out to pursue tertiary studies that would enable him to play a critical role in the promotion of health, prevention of diseases, prolonging life and the empowerment of individuals and communities in managing their health through education, policy making and research for disease and injury prevention.

The Solomon Islander diligently completed his high school studies at the Betikama Adventist College in East Honiara, Guadalcanal Province before researching tertiary-level study opportunities available to him.

"I have always been passionate about public health and health promotion and being in a field that allowed me to work with communities, across different sectors and emphasise the proactive and simple but effective measures they could take in maintaining their health and wellbeing," Pugeva said.

"This was the main reason why I decided to study public health and health promotion and I figured that the Fiji National University (FNU) was the only viable option for me as it had programmes that aligned with my career interests."

### Education

This was the beginning of Pugeva's academic journey at FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' (CMNHS) undertaking the Bachelor of Public

Health (Health Promotion) programme.

"I fondly recall having a great student life experience at FNU," he shared.

"During my studies, I forged lifelong networks and friends with colleagues from various parts of the Pacific region and Tamavua Campus was my home away from home for three years."

"Having stayed on campus as a hostel student, I thoroughly enjoyed the College's annual welcome functions, picnics and other social and student events as it gave me the opportunity to meet fellow students and academic and support staff."

Pugeva also took up several student leadership roles whilst at the College and this ranged from being class representative to senior resident lead of the Tamavua Campus.

In 2019, Pugeva graduated with his degree and also received the Dean's Honour Award for academic excellence.

"The qualification and recognition from FNU boosted my career prospects in the profession and certainly enhances my competencies and capability to deliver on my roles and responsibilities," he said.

"As an FNU alumnus, I have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies that are complemented by my student life experience and these give me an edge in securing prestigious opportunities both in employment and education."

### Career

After serving in various part-time, research and student leadership roles, Pugeva began his career as Managing Director of RM Metal Recycling Trading Limited in Honiara before becoming a Senior Health Promotion Officer with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services in 2014.

"As part of my role, I was responsible for consulting and assist in the formation of the provincial policies and guidelines strategies on health promotions," he explained.

"I also prepared operational plans and budgets for the health promotion division at provincial and community levels and coordinated community setting profiling in collaboration with health workers and health committees at the village level."

Pugeva said he also coordinated training with communities and stakeholders.

Currently, he is the president for Avaiki Rugby Club, a local championship rugby club in his home country where he volunteered his expertise to promote health through sports.

In January last year, Pugeva began work in his current role as the COMBAT-AMR Project Coordinator (Solomon Islands). The project seeks to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Pacific Island countries.

"I am the in-country focal point and support the implementation of the COMBAT-AMR Project in collaboration with project managers at the Burnet Institute, the Project Technical Steering Committee, senior executives from the Ministry of Health, National Referral hospital, National medical Stores, other health development partners like the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock and partners in the region and country," he said.

Pugeva's work is linked to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG) 3 on ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing at all ages.

### Motivation

Pugeva was quick to highlight that his parents and family were a great support system that invested in his success from the start of his studies.

"I also credit the Almighty and acknowledge my parents for believing in me, for respecting my choices in life and for giving me the freedom to think independently."

### Words of Wisdom

"To the current students of FNU, believe in yourself and always strive for excellence," Pugeva said.

"If you encounter challenges in your studies or personal life, always reach out to your families, friends, and counselling services available at the University. Don't be afraid to acknowledge your mistakes or ask for help."

"I also strongly recommend that students get involved in volunteer and community work."

### Alumni Connect

Graduates of FNU and its former institutions can register to be part of the exclusive Alumni Connect portal and remain connected to their classmates and the University.

Registered alumni can receive news and updates on key University activities, read alumni success and feature articles, scholarship and upskilling opportunities, networking events and professional development and training seminars.

To register, please scan the QR code at the top left corner of this page.

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**Division Head:** Director Marketing and Communications, Karen Lobendahn  
**Writers:** Pravin Narain, Charlene Lanyon, Kalesi Mele  
**Contributors:** Chancellor and Chair of FNU Council, Tessa Price  
 Acting Vice-Chancellor, Dr William May

FNUNIKUA wants to HEAR FROM YOU

FNUNIKUA welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the newsletter. Please send your suggestions, comments or articles for consideration to [mprc@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj)

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