

# Vice-Chancellor's 2024 International Women's Day Message



*Dear All,*

As we celebrate International Women's Day, I am deeply honoured to reflect on the theme of "Inspiring Inclusion", a principle that lies at the heart of our mission here at the Fiji National University. Today, as the first female indigenous leader of our esteemed Fijian university, I am deeply aware of the significance of this occasion and the responsibility it entails.

Inspiring inclusion is not merely a slogan. It is a commitment to fostering an environment where every individual, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, feels valued and empowered to contribute fully to our academic community. My journey as a woman, and particularly as an indigenous woman, has been marked by challenges and triumphs. Yet, it is precisely these experiences that drive my dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion in all facets of university life.

As we strive for gender equality, it's imperative to recognise that women's inclusion is not just a matter of fairness - it is a catalyst for the success of society as a whole. Research consistently demonstrates that diverse teams are more innovative, productive, and resilient. By ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate and lead in academia, we not only unlock their potential but also enrich the intellectual landscape of our institution.

Moreover, women's inclusion is not confined to the walls of our university; it reverberates throughout society, shaping attitudes, policies, and outcomes. By championing gender equity in education, we lay the groundwork for a more just and equitable future, where every woman and girl can fulfil her aspirations and contribute to the advancement of society.

On this International Women's Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to inspire inclusion, not just in words, but in deeds. Let us celebrate the achievements of women in our homes, villages, communities and around the world, while also acknowledging the barriers that still lie ahead. Let us continue to strive for a world where every woman is seen, heard, and empowered to reach her full potential.

*Vinaka*

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