

CONNECTING YOU TO YOUR DREAMS

Rewriting Her Future

Natasha Makita Wright.

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

NATASHA Makita Wright is a mother on a mission! Despite the difficulties life has thrown at her, Natasha is determined not to give up on her dreams, setting an example for her four beautiful children, the youngest being just two.

The single mother was given the chance to rewrite her future at the Fiji National University (FNU) booth at the Fiji Showcase recently.

“As soon as I found out about the FNU booth at the Showcase, I immediately decided that I was going to start working towards my degree,” said Wright.

Growing up in the suburbs of Raiwaqa, Wright was raised by a strong single mother in a close-knit family with a history of fiercely independent matriarchs.

“My mother and grandmother were very strong women themselves and I feel that it has had a significant impact on me.”

“To this day, my mother and my siblings are my strongest pillars of strength, especially when life unexpectedly takes me through the valleys,” said Wright.

The 31-year-old completed her Year 12

education in 2010 at LDS College and, while taking a year off from schooling, found odd jobs to keep herself busy.

“In 2012, I was ready to pursue tertiary education and applied to pursue a Diploma in Front Office Operations (Level 5), but God blessed me with my first baby that year, and I decided to stay home to focus on raising my son.”

“Between 2012 and 2016, God blessed me with another son and a daughter. During this time, I was devoted to raising them but still had the desire to learn and be able to provide for my babies by pursuing higher education. I found a job as a receptionist at a law firm in Suva city and would search for online classes or flexible learning opportunities so that I could attain tertiary education,” said Wright.

Life was still not done testing Wright, as her daughter fell extremely ill with pneumonia, which led to her finding herself back at home.

“Being a mum simply means you have to be selfless at times, putting your dreams on hold to ensure your babies are safe and

cared for in the best way possible,” added Wright.

In July 2019, Wright joined Blacksalt Holdings as an administrative officer but had to resign a year later due to COVID.

“The pandemic was a difficult time for our family, but I was determined to provide for my children, so I was thankful to find a job at Vatis Communications as a communications Liaison Officer. It was at this job that I also found out about the FNU Levy and how it helped support numerous Fijians to attain higher education and upskilling opportunities,” revealed Natasha.

In 2022, she was blessed with her youngest child but lost her job due to unforeseen circumstances. “Life isn’t a bed of roses, that’s for sure! There were times when all I could do was cry in secret because I could not allow my children to see me break like that. There are so many mothers like me out there, who struggle with mental health issues, but we stay strong because our children need us,” said an emotional Wright.

After two years of battling tumultuous

situations, Natasha grew stronger and more determined to rewrite not only her future but the future of her children.

“When I visited the FNU booth, I came across a flyer for a Certificate in Contact Centre Operations (Level 3). I knew that this was the start I needed and immediately started preparing for my enrolment.”

“My mother and siblings are proud of me and are standing by my side to support me, and I am so grateful to them. My children are more excited than I am about me heading back to school and are even asking me if I am going to be wearing a uniform just like them!” she said.

“FNU has brought hope and joy to my family, and I am truly grateful that through FNU’s TVET programmes’ flexibility and affordability, mothers like me can pursue their dreams, provide for their families, and become good role models for their children,” stated Wright. “I hope that by looking at me, my four children will know that they should never give up on their dreams and keep fighting the good fight no matter what life throws at them.”

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Page 2**
- Navosa Lad's Childhood Dream Sets Sail
 - Kitchen Helper Turns Culinary Star
 - Obituary: Professor Tupeni Baba

- Page 3**
- Life After Completing TVET, Kumar's Leap of Faith
 - Talemaibau Gets Second Chance
 - Obituary: Dr Asinate Mausio

- Page 4**
- FNU's Ba Campus - Leading You to Your TVET Dream
 - FNU Continues to Champion TVET
 - Marayawa Rekindles his Educational Aspirations

- Page 5**
- Beyond the White Coat: The Human Touch in Healthcare

- Page 6**
- Zuber's Path to Success
 - From Guest Service Agent to Security Supervisor

- Page 7**
- Casual Conversation Cultivates Change
 - PNG's Panta Sets Sights on Captain's Chair
 - Fiji's Fishing Industry to get a boost from Women's Participation

- Page 8**
- Climate Change and Human Health in Fiji

Navosa Lad's Childhood Dream Sets Sail

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

HAILING from the highlands of Namoli in Navosa, Josevata Navatoga, had a rather peculiar dream for a highlander. He wanted to be a ship captain for as long as he could remember.

"I wanted to sail the seas and travel since I was a child. When I had to travel to Bua for my high school education, I looked forward to the journey by sea," revealed Navatoga.

Being brought up by a hardworking Yaqona farmer and a stay-at-home mother, Navatoga was duty-bound when his parents pushed him to pursue Civil Engineering at another higher education institution.

"I was upset, but my parents had done so much for me that I could not deny their request. However, I kept my dream of becoming a ship captain alive in my heart."

While accompanying his high school sweetheart and current Fiji National University (FNU) student, Elizabeth Grace Lati to register her units at the FNU booth at the Fiji Showcase, Navatoga could not deny the call of the sea and enrolled in the Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 5) at the Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS).

"I believe in myself, and the power of my dreams. I know I will become a ship captain someday!" beamed Navatoga as he received his instant offer letter.

"I know my parents will be surprised but I know they will understand because at the end of the day, all I want to do is to be able to provide for them and make them proud of me."

Elizabeth who met Navatoga at Naikavaki College, said that she was very proud of Navatoga's determination towards achieving

his childhood dream and would continue to encourage him every step of the way.

"He always talks about sailing and his dream of becoming a ship captain with South Sea Cruises and seeing him take his first steps towards his dream makes me very proud of him," said a teary-eyed Lati.

Navatoga added that he is excited and nervous about his new study environment at Nasese but is determined to achieve his childhood dream.

When asked about a dream destination that he would like to sail to one day, Navatoga proudly declared the Mamanucas without hesitation.

"I have heard it is stunning, I think it is about time I go see it myself!"

The Diploma in Nautical Science is part of the two TVET programmes offered by the Pacific Centre of Maritime Studies (PCMS) at FNU.

"I believe in myself, and the power of my dreams. I know I will become a ship captain someday!"



Josevata Navatoga.

Obituary Professor Tupeni Baba

His unwavering commitment to knowledge, his inspiring mentorship, and his compassionate spirit touched the lives of countless students and colleagues.

Professor Baba's contributions to the academic community are immeasurable, and his legacy will continue to influence future generations. His passing is a tremendous loss to all who knew him and admired his work.

We extend our deepest condolences to Professor Baba's family, especially our Vice-Chancellor,

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, friends, and all those whose lives he enriched. He will be remembered with great respect and fondness. May he rest in peace.



Professor Tupeni Baba.

THE Fiji National University pays tribute and wishes to honour the late Professor Tupeni Baba, an esteemed educator and scholar, who dedicated his life to the advancement of education in Fiji and the Pacific region.

Kitchen Helper Turns Culinary Star

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

RAMITESH Raman was only four months old when his mother passed away. Raised by his single father, Raman was amazed at how his dad managed to fulfil both parental roles so effectively.

Now 20 years old, Raman resides in Votualevu, Nadi, and is a student at the Fiji National University's College of Business, Hospitality, and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), pursuing a Certificate in Cookery (Level 4). Raman credits his inspiration to become a chef to his childhood, spent watching his father cook for their family.

Currently employed as a Commis Chef at DoubleTree Resort in Sonaisali, Nadi, Raman is the youngest of two siblings.

"When I was small, my mother passed away, and my dad had to take on the roles of both mother and father. Through that, I helped him every day, learned how to cook, and found the motivation to carry this passion with me in life," reflected Raman.

His father, Gopi Raman, works as a grog vendor at Namaka Market in Nadi, though he is a carpenter by profession.

"I live alone with my dad, and now I want to work and help my father with the finances at home and anything else we need," Raman added.

Raman acknowledges the role that FNU has played in his career success.

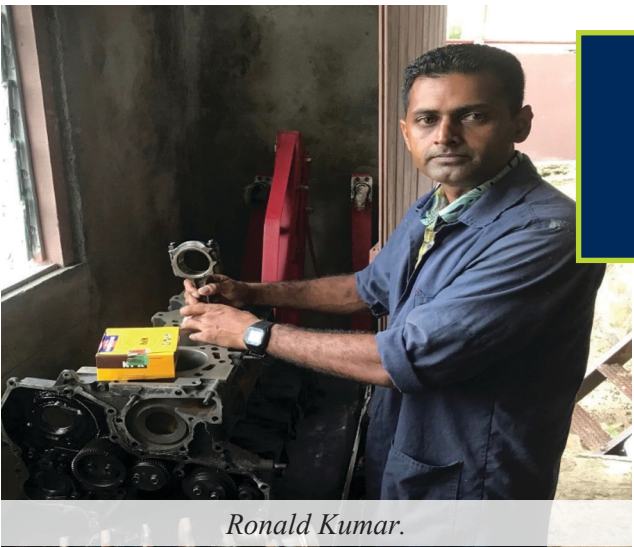
"FNU has helped me by providing this Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme that I am currently undertaking to achieve my dream," he said.

"My dad did not have the financial means to attend university as I do. I was supported by the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service (TSLs), for which I am very grateful."

His advice to young people wishing to follow in his footsteps is: "Do what your heart desires and what you truly want to do in life."



Ramitesh Raman.



Ronald Kumar.

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

Training programme at NTPC’s Naceva Campus in Lautoka in 2018. He said that the training programmes offered by FNU’s NTPC, through its TVET stream, played a significant role in his successful career as an automotive entrepreneur mechanic. He expressed his gratitude to NTPC’s Trainer, Tevita Baleira, for encouraging him to take up the course, which allowed him to balance his family needs with his education and make sacrifices to achieve the dream he was always passionate about. “I was previously providing transport services for the University of Fiji and doing minor repairs after hours and during weekends with the little knowledge and skills I had, as I used to assist a friend who was a senior mechanic,” he said. “I then decided to further pursue my career as a qualified automotive mechanic through training due to the opportunities it presented, and that is when I joined NTPC in 2017. With

“I believe that taking a leap of faith in life will surely bring one closer to their dreams.” These sentiments were echoed by Ronald Kumar, an alumnus of the Fiji National University’s National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC), who completed the Light Automotive programme under the Automotive Industry

Life After *Completing* TVET, Kumar’s Leap of Faith

“From being a mechanic to becoming a vehicle inspector with VTNZ, this is a great achievement for me, thanks to the coaching, skills, and knowledge acquired through training at NTPC”

my line of work, I also learnt that doing things safely and correctly speaks volumes as it markets my service. I am also finding it challenging to meet the influx of customers inquiring about my service.” Kumar has also secured a permanent work offer with full sponsorship from Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ) Ltd, the largest vehicle inspection service provider in New Zealand, which carries out Government-mandated warrants of fitness and other vehicle inspections in Auckland. “From being a mechanic to becoming a vehicle inspector with VTNZ, this is a great achievement for me, thanks to the coaching, skills, and knowledge acquired through training at NTPC,” he added. He said he considers himself fortunate to have attended a training institution such as NTPC, which provides a variety of TVET programmes and produces highly trained graduates who have gone on to become successful businesspeople. “I would like to see myself as a competitor operating a reasonably scaled automotive workshop with all modern equipment and tools, meeting all environmental standards and Occupational Health and Safety requirements too, providing a one-stop-shop service,” Kumar said. Students who wish to pursue a short course in Automotive Engineering or any other courses at FNU’s NTPC are encouraged to email - info.ntpc@fnu.ac.fj or call +679 2417779.

Talemaibau Gets *Second* Chance

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

20-YEAR-OLD Mosese Talemaibau prominent high school in the Central could not finish high school but found a second chance at life at the Fiji National University! The Totoya, Lau native with maternal links to Fulaga had made up his mind about changing his future by following in the footsteps of his older siblings. “My older brother and sister are both FNU Alumni, and seeing their success made me determined to make something out of myself as well,” said Talemaibau. “My brother was a student at the Derrick Campus in Samabula pursuing studies in the area of Occupational Health and Safety. He was the one who pushed me to visit the FNU booth at the Fiji Showcase with my documents so I could get enrolled for Semester 2, 2024.” His teenage years were not easy and getting himself involved in the wrong crowd proved very costly. “I completed my Year 9 to Year 12 education at Penang High School in Ra. For Year 13, I decided to attend a

Division and got involved with the wrong group of friends.” Mosese was unable to finish Year 13 due to negative peer pressure. With encouragement from his parents and siblings, Mosese has set his eyes on attaining a Diploma in Information Technology (Level 5) at FNU’s College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET). “I am excited about this new journey that I am undertaking, and I feel optimistic about my choice already. I am looking forward to creating life-long memories at FNU just like my siblings,” he said. He is also looking forward to joining the FNU rugby team as well as other on-campus activities to keep himself busy during his free time. Talemaibau’s message to high school students is to stay focused and to always listen to your parents as they know what is best for you.



Mosese Talemaibau.



Obituary

Dr Asinate Mausio

It is with heavy hearts that we come together to mourn the loss of Dr Asinate Mausio, who served as our esteemed Associate Dean of Research in the College of Humanities and Education (CHE).

Dr Mausio was a valued member of the Department of Ethics and Governance at Fiji National University since 2016. Her dedication to academia, her passion for teaching, and her commitment to advancing research were exemplary and inspiring to all who had the privilege of working with her.

Her loss is deeply felt by all of us at Fiji National University.

As we mourn her passing, let us also celebrate the profound impact she has had on our lives and the lives of countless others. Her legacy will endure, and her memory will continue to inspire us always.

On behalf of the entire university community, we extend our heartfelt condolences to Dr Mausio’s family, friends, colleagues, and students. May you find solace in the cherished memories you shared with her and may her spirit guide and inspire us in the days ahead.



Dr Asinate Mausio. Photo credit - Fiji Times.

FNU's Ba Campus - *leading* you to your TVET Dream



FNU's Ba Campus
(insert) Head of Ba Campus; Niraj Dharmendra.

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

FIJI National University's Ba Campus has provided essential Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, paving the way for many Fijians and enhancing their skills and knowledge applicable to Fiji's workforce over the years.

The Head of Ba Campus, Niraj Dharmendra, highlighted an increase in the number of students enrolling in various TVET programmes at Ba Campus.

He explained that this was due to the demand from industries facing a shortage of labour.

"After the pandemic, people realised that TVET courses are as important as higher education programmes," said Dharmendra.

"There has been a significant shortage of tradespeople worldwide, and to fill the gaps, we need to graduate more students.

"In the future, if we encounter another pandemic, these TVET students will be self-sufficient to run their own businesses."

He added that the Government has also placed more focus on TVET by providing TSLS (Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Service).

"There is a mass migration from Fiji to overseas countries in the TVET field," he said.

"If students want to advance in life,

TVET is the way!"

Ba Campus offers a wide range of TVET programmes from three of FNU's colleges – the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), and the College of Engineering & Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETVET).

The programmes offered in Semester 2 at Ba Campus include;

- 1) Certificate in Plumbing and Sheet metal (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 2) Certificate in Carpentry (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 3) Certificate in Joinery and Cabinet Making (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 4) Certificate in Electrical (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 5) Certificate in Auto Electrical (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 6) Certificate in Light Motor Vehicle (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 7) Certificate in Heavy Commercial Vehicle (Level 3) and (Level 4)
- 8) Certificate in Welding and Fabrication (Level 3)
- 9) Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3)
- 10) Certificate in OHS (Level 4)
- 11) Diploma in OHS (Level 5)

FNU continues to *champion* TVET



Students from Baulevu High School.

BY JENNIS NAIDU

"WE encourage students to pursue industrial arts, agriculture, or computing subjects to become skilled and potentially self-employed, contributing to economic stability."

"This will make them self-sufficient, and to maintain economic stability, like you have heard, the Government has offered scholarships for students to do courses in these Technology and Employment Skills Training

(TEST) programmes.

Baulevu High School Headboy Nikhil Singh was delighted to learn of the different opportunities available to students at the Fiji National University (FNU).

He was among the many students who participated in the information session led by the FNU team during the school's TVET and Enterprising Week.

Singh, who resides in Verata Village, wishes to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science at FNU next year.

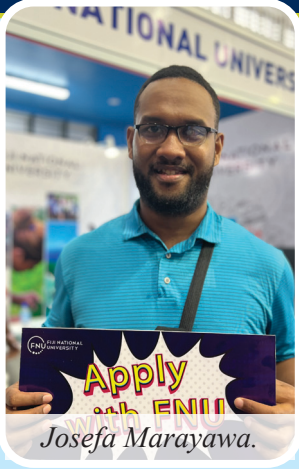
"I am an agriculture student, and my dream is to do animal science because working with animals is my passion," Singh said.

"The informative session by FNU was very helpful. I noticed several students asking questions, and that is an indication that the students were really interested and paying attention to the information provided by the University representatives.

"I would recommend FNU because the University has a variety of options and opportunities for students. The university also offers other facilities, such as accommodation and a library."

"TVET provides us with a lot of opportunities; it is a sector that the students need to consider as well."

Marayawa rekindles his Educational Aspirations



BY JENNIS NAIDU

JOSEFA Marayawa visited the Fiji National University's (FNU) booth at the 2024 Fiji Showcase and rekindled his educational aspirations.

The 29-year-old from Lau, enrolled himself into Certificate in Library and

Information Systems (Level 4), offered under FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS).

Marayawa, a former FNU student who graduated with a Certificate in Graphic Design (Level 4), expressed his desire to upskill himself in today's demanding job market.

The friendly staff at the FNU booth guided him towards the Information Systems programme, which he immediately applied for.

"I truly appreciate the helpful information provided by the staff," Marayawa said.

"I am excited to start studying this new course and take my career to the next level."

He also praised FNU's lecturers for their well-rounded teaching style, which incorporates both theoretical knowledge and practical application.

FNU's Certificate in Library and Information Systems (Level 4) is a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme that equips students with the expertise needed to thrive in the ever-evolving field of information technology.

Beyond the White Coat: The Human Touch in Healthcare

“While in labour, we visited the hospital as ordinary Fijian citizens. The medical staff, unaware of our identities, instructed my wife to change into a gown in a non-private setting. This severely compromised her dignity.”

Dr William May

BY PRAVIN NARAIN

WHEN patients entrust medical professionals with their health, they are not merely seeking advice or treatment; they are placing their deepest trust and utmost confidence in those who are seen as their last hope.

In these critical moments, doctors and healthcare providers are regarded almost as deities, holding the power to heal, save, and provide solace in the face of suffering and mortality.

The Fiji National University’s College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) hosted a Health Professionals Education Symposium at the Pearl Resort in Deuba, where examples of unacceptable behaviours and actions of health professionals were shared.

A Broken Trust: A Personal Story

During a panel discussion at the Symposium, Raymond Keshwan, Head of the School of Health Sciences, recounted a personal experience. He described his wife’s treatment while delivering their second child at a hospital. Keshwan expressed shock at the communication and care his wife received.

“While in labour, we visited the hospital as ordinary Fijian citizens. The medical staff, unaware of our identities, instructed my wife to change into a gown in a non-private setting. This severely compromised her dignity,” he said.

He emphasised the need for medical professionals to improve communication and service delivery.

“When my wife communicated her increasing pain during labour, she dismissively received a response that was inappropriate and hurtful, downplaying the pain she was experiencing”.

Keshwan also noted that professionalism and empathy are crucial among health

professionals, and it is not enough for leaders to just talk about these things but to live and teach them.

“Healthcare professionals earn well-deserved respect for their knowledge and experience, but they themselves sometimes do not respect their patients nor their colleagues. We have disconnected the person from the patient reducing them to bodies or parts of it without emotions,” he said.

“There is also an unspoken hierarchy, especially in the Pacific, where the medical profession is seen as superior to other professions. The issue of lacking professionalism and ethics is not limited to one field but cuts across all disciplines.

“I have provided examples from various areas to highlight this broader concern. Healthcare professionals need to respect each other’s professions and understand the value of all professions,” he said.

Workplace Culture and Negative Mentorship

Dr William May, an experienced physician and Associate Professor in Internal Medicine at FNU’s College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), emphasised that fostering a positive workplace environment and ensuring effective mentorship from senior health professionals are crucial for shaping positive behaviours among health professional students.

“Students are quick learners, readily absorbing what they see compared to what they’re told or taught. This is why it’s crucial to model the acceptable behaviours – that are acceptable beside etiquettes, language, verbal and non-verbal cues, contextual health communication strategies etc,” he said.

“Unfortunately, when students enter the workplace, they encounter variable and

inconsistent practices, depending on what’s being practised and modelled in real life. There is a hidden curriculum out there in the workplace, not only in Fiji. Senior health professionals have a responsibility to patients, junior staff and learners. We need to be mindful of how we conduct ourselves among other colleagues, patients, students and the entire population we serve. The tone is set from the top at these workplace learning environments”.

“Unfortunately, healthcare professionals may exhibit unusual conduct in the course of their duties when interacting with other people. These interactions, witnessed by younger professionals, can be misinterpreted and perceived unintentionally to be acceptable,” he said.

Dr May expressed concern that aspects of interactions between healthcare professionals, colleagues, patients and students may have become “normalised” over time because we remain silent. This culture needs to change. That can only happen if we have a safe space and functional systems that take care of the fluid intersection between learning and service.

“It’s crucial for young professionals to find their voice and become agents of change when they experience deviations from expectations. However, this is not always easy. Bullying, rudeness, and microaggressions are unacceptable, and professional groups must actively address these issues to foster a positive learning environment.”

Dr May highlighted the critical role of empathy and humanism in contemporary healthcare delivery. They are demonstrably linked to improved patient care and positive health outcomes. He mentioned that these qualities are often eclipsed by the technical aspects of medicine and the culture at the

learning sites.

“The role of humanism in healthcare and health professional education is crucial. Curriculums and practice should demonstrate these qualities. Regardless of a student’s inherent good personality and positive attributes, the pressure and conditions of the working environment sometimes force them to behave in a particular way. The question is how do we effectively teach and model appropriate behaviours to our students at the workplace and beyond? Health Professional Educators overseas struggle with this too,” Dr May said.

The trust patients place on the medical professionals is huge. It’s built not on medical expertise alone but on a relationship that upholds compassion, respect, and a commitment to maintaining human dignity. The stories shared at the Fiji National University symposium serve as a stark reminder to address work-based learning issues. Stakeholders and medical schools have an obligation to co-create standards in our learning and service sites and remain open to dialogue.

By prioritising empathy, mentorship, and a culture of professionalism, Fiji’s healthcare system can ensure that every patient receives the care they deserve – care delivered not just with skill but with the understanding that behind every illness lies a human being in need.

Let this be the turning point where the immense trust placed in medical professionals is met with unwavering respect, unwavering care, and a renewed focus on the human touch that is so vital to healing.

Zuber's Path to Success

BY PRAVIN NARAIN

Zuber's journey began in 2014 when he joined Fiji National University's (FNU) National Training and Productivity Centre's National Apprenticeship Programme at the tender age of 18.

This decision marked the start of a path filled with both challenges and triumphs.

"I started an apprenticeship programme in 2014 when I was 18 years old and graduated in 2018 with a Certificate 4 in Fabrication and Welding with the Fiji Sugar Corporation. I have been with FSC since 2014," Zuber said.

The apprenticeship not only provided Zuber with technical skills but also molded him into a versatile professional.

"FSC also gave me an opportunity to be trained as a sugar boiler trainee for one year, and soon after I graduated, I became a Sugar Boiler Operator," he shared with pride.

Zuber's expertise extends beyond sugar boiling. His trade experience spans across various domains, including Sugar Boiler Operator, Fabrication, and Welding.

This diverse skill set makes him a valuable asset in his field and a role model for aspiring

"I urge students to join FNU's Apprenticeship Programme. It is beneficial and it will also support the family. You will become more in demand in your trade field," Zuber emphasised.

"FNU is playing a very important role in shaping our futures. In our family, I have been telling them to move

towards the trade field, and the majority have completed and some are nearing completion."

Zuber's professional achievements are even more remarkable when viewed against the backdrop of his personal life.

He lost his father when he was just three months old, leaving his family to navigate life without their patriarch.

Despite this early loss, Zuber found strength in the bond with his siblings and his mother. The real test of his resilience came during his apprenticeship when he lost his mother in his second year of training.

"When I was in the second year of the apprenticeship training, that's when I lost my mum as well. My siblings supported me," Zuber shared.

"I stayed alone, and it was very hard for me to do the home chores."

Amidst the hardship, Zuber found a new source of strength when he got married.

"My wife has been very supportive and has been the pillar of support," he shared.

As Zuber continues to excel in his career and encourage others to pursue technical education, he embodies the spirit of resilience and determination.

His life story serves as a reminder that with hard work, support, and a steadfast commitment to one's goals, it is possible to overcome even the most daunting obstacles.

In Zuber's words, "Join FNU's Apprenticeship Programme. It will support your family, make you more demandable in your trade field, and shape a better future."



Mohammed Zuber

IN the quiet corridors of Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) in Labasa, where the hum of machinery and the scent of raw sugar fill the air, one man's story stands as a beacon of resilience and determination.

Mohammed Zuber, a name now synonymous with hard work and perseverance, embarked on a journey that transformed not just his life but also inspired many around him.



Fashion Incubation Centre

List	Prices
Men's Bula Shirts	\$20
Long Dress	\$20
Short Dress	\$15
Adult Sulu Chamba	\$25
Mumu Dress	\$25
Ladies Short Skirt	\$10
Ladies Long Skirt	\$15
Ladies Top	\$12
Kids Sulu Chamba	\$15
Kids Bula Shirt	\$15
Kids Dress	\$15

We are now also accepting orders for Group Kalavata.
Bring your own material and we'll suit you right for your next event or function.

xPrices vary depending on additional embellishments and style components.

Jerusalem Road,
FNU Nabua C Block

Shehana.Hussein@fnu.ac.fj

951 0041 | 338 4777 Ext: 4307

www.fnu.ac.fj Care | Honesty | Accountability | Service | Excellence

Follow us on: f i x e y t i n d

From Guest Service Agent to Security Supervisor

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS



Charles Bevu

CHARLES Bevu was always determined to do more in life.

Bevu, originally from Lomaloma Village on the island of Vanuabalavu, in the Lau Group, is a first-year student with the Fiji National University's National Training

and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Namaka Campus in Nadi, pursuing the programme - Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management.

Bevu joined the tourism industry with a vision of becoming a security officer and worked his way up to finally become the Security Supervisor on Double Tree Resort, previously known as Sonaisali Island.

He has been an employee on the island for 14 years.

"I came for an interview to be a Guest Service Agent in 2010 and worked my way up; now I am the Security Supervisor on the island. The journey has been a challenging yet rewarding one," he said.

"I was here when it was formerly known as Sonaisali Island, and when it closed and reopened as Double Tree Resort."

He is married with three children and his appreciative to his wife, who is also involved in the tourism industry.

Bevu is currently part of a 24-member team that is responsible for the safety and security of all guests and employees on the island.

His advice to others is 'Sky is the limit, set your goals and aim towards it'.

Casual Conversation Cultivates Change



Plant Health Clinic Short Course Graduates

IMAGINE a new programme that empowers graduates to safeguard crops, combat the impact of climate change, and ensure food security. The seed for such an impactful initiative was sown over a casual cup of coffee eight years ago.

Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa, the Dean of the Fiji National University’s College of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (CAFF), recounts his encounter with a Professor of Plant Physiology, Professor Michael Fuller, a key player in plant health advocacy, eight years ago. This conversation would mark the beginning of FNU’s involvement in Plant Health advocacy.

“It was a very brief conversation where he (Professor Mike) advised me about plant health advocacy. This sparked my interest and was to be the beginning of FNU’s involvement,” said Dr Ravuiwasa

“At the time, FNU was not participating in plant health advocacy. We started off as observers and we recognised the potential of the plant health clinic concept and actively sought ways to contribute. We then became contributors and now we are major players.”

Today, FNU’s CAFF stands as a proud institution, offering the Plant Health Clinic Short Course for the Pacific region.

The programme’s success is already taking root, with 20 plant health technicians from Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, graduating the intensive three – week programme.

“This programme addresses a critical need – food security in a changing climate. By equipping graduates with the knowledge to combat pests, diseases, and the challenges posed by climate change, the programme

BY GRACE WAQAWAQA

empowers them to become expert advisors for farmers and growers. This translates to sustainable, climate-smart agricultural practices that ensure food security for all,” said Dr Ravuiwasa.

“This programme is also a testament to the power of collaboration. I acknowledge and look forward to continuing our work with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), Fiji’s Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, and the Pacific Community (SPC) to build a more resilient future for Pacific agriculture.”

Senior Research Scientist of the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, Faaiuga Tavita, expressed his appreciation for the hands-on learning held in Suva.

“We had the opportunity to run plant health clinics with farmers in Waituri and Wainibuku. This collaboration with our fellow plant health advocates from the Pacific has been invaluable. This knowledge will be instrumental in improving plant health clinics back in Samoa,” said Tavita.

Leah Maesiu Aota, who works in agricultural extension for the Solomon Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, described the past three weeks as a whirlwind of learning. She believes the knowledge gained will significantly improve plant health clinics and advocacy efforts back home.

What began with a simple conversation has now flourished into a programme that empowers Pacific communities and will help in would safeguarding food sources for generations to come.

PNG’s Panta Sets Sights on Captain’s Chair



Hannah Panta

BY JENNIS NAIDU

“Our company selected PCMS for us, and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn more here. The teachers are fantastic at helping us understand the subjects,” says Panta

Outlining her plans, the Pacific Towing (PNG) Ltd cadet, states “I will soon be completing my short courses and Advance Solas, sit for my orals to obtain my ticket and return home to PNG.”

Her ambitions extend far beyond obtaining her qualifications. She dreams big, setting her sights on the captain’s chair.

“As a woman in this industry, I want to see how far I can go. This industry is full of possibilities, and I am determined to explore them all. Becoming captain is just the first step!”

GONE are the days of calm seas and predictable horizons for Hannah Panta. The young woman from Papua New Guinea has traded the familiar shores of her homeland for the unpredictable waters of the maritime industry, a traditionally male dominated field.

Fueled by a legacy passed down through generations of her family, Panta sets her sights on the captain’s chair, a position as coveted as it is challenging.

Fiji has become Panta’s temporary home for a year of focused study as she pursues a Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 5) at the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS).

Her message to other women and girls considering a maritime career is one of encouragement.

“Do not be afraid to try it! It is completely different from aviation or any other job on land. You get to experience exciting things, travel the world, and gain hands-on experience. There is so much to do and learn onboard a ship; you become a jack of all trades!”

Only time, the unforgiving ocean, and Panta’s determination will tell if she will be able to achieve her dream. One thing is certain, the maritime industry is about to witness a force to be reckoned with.

Fiji’s Fishing Industry to get a Boost from Women’s Participation

BY JENNIS NAIDU

IN Fiji, the tide is turning as 22 extraordinary young Fijian women are defying tradition and stepping into the fishing industry through the Basic Sea Safety and Deckhand Fishing Course.

The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) are leading the charge with the Basic Sea Safety and Deckhand Fishing Course for the all-female group. This initiative equips these women with the skills and knowledge to thrive at sea.

Course facilitator, Captain Charles Pickering stated that this was an exciting opportunity for PCMS hosting its first all-female participation in deckhand fishing.

“We at PCMS are thrilled to have our first ever all female deckhand class. This short course goes beyond learning to cast a net. From watchkeeping and seamanship to understanding bycatch and sustainable fishing practices, these participants are building a strong foundation for their careers,” said Captain Pickering.

“It is a good foundation for careers that will not only challenge the status quo but also ensure the future health of our oceans.”

For Aachal Singh, the only Fijian of Indian descent in the group, the course is more than just a training. It is an opportunity for personal growth for the student of FNU’s Diploma in Customs (Level 5).

“This is about expanding my horizons. The knowledge I gain here can complement my studies in customs and border security.”

Mere Loga Salabiau, a caretaker on Interlink Shipping’s MV Ohana, echoes Aachal’s sentiment. She has her sights set firmly on the crew deck, and this course is her stepping stone.

“I want to be part of the action, this is my chance to make that dream a reality.”

PCMS has been steadily increasing women’s participation in the fishing industry through deckhand training for the past three years. This targeted initiative towards women on fishing vessels is a partnership with FFA to further women’s advancement in this industry.



Basic Sea Safety and Deckhand Fishing Course Students.

Health & Hustle

Climate Change and Human Health in Fiji

BY PRAVIN NARAIN



CMNHS Acting Dean Dr Amelia Turagabeci

CLIMATE change, once a distant concern, now casts a long shadow over the globe. Fiji, a nation intrinsically linked to its environment, is no stranger to its consequences.

While rising sea levels and extreme weather events dominate headlines, Dr Amelia Turagabeci, Acting Dean of the College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS) at the Fiji National University, highlights a critical, often-overlooked aspect: the significant impact climate change has on human health.

“The environment is not separate from human well-being,” emphasised Dr Turagabeci.

“We are intricately connected, and alterations in the natural world have profound consequences for our health, impacting everything from the microscopic level of microbes to the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.”

This cascading effect disrupts ecosystems, resulting in ramifications throughout the food chain.

“Environmental changes can lead to scarcity of marine life,” Dr Turagabeci said.

“Fish populations may migrate or dwindle, compromising access to healthy food sources for Fijian families.”

“The impact extends beyond the ocean. Climate change can significantly affect crop yields,” added Dr Turagabeci.

“Unpredictable weather patterns, including increased droughts and erratic rainfall, create challenges for cultivating essential root crops and other staples. This scarcity can lead to malnutrition and increase the risk of diet-related diseases.”

Dr Turagabeci said that climate change can create ideal conditions for the spread of specific plant diseases.

“This not only threatens food security but can also exacerbate respiratory problems as allergens and irritants become more prevalent.”

While lifestyle choices directly link to some diseases, Dr Turagabeci emphasises how climate change can exacerbate existing issues.

“Technological advancements, while offering

convenience, can contribute to a more sedentary lifestyle,” she shared.

“Combine this with rising temperatures that stress the body’s regulatory systems, and you have a potential recipe for an increase in cardiovascular problems.”

Dr Turagabeci cites a local study that strengthens this connection.

“A study suggests a correlation between changes in weather patterns and the prevalence of certain diseases, including skin ailments and hypertension,” she revealed.

However, Dr Turagabeci is not one to shy away from solutions.

“While easier access to processed foods can contribute to health concerns,” she acknowledged. “The environment plays a significant role. In Fiji, urbanisation and modern conveniences have led to a more sedentary lifestyle.”

“By neglecting healthy lifestyle choices, we become more susceptible to the health problems climate change can exacerbate. This emphasises the importance of individual choices in mitigating the impact of environmental changes.”

Dr Turagabeci said people need to adapt to the change and look after their health.

“Climate change is a persistent reality! While we cannot control nature, we can adapt. Through informed dietary choices, increased physical activity, and support for sustainable practices, we can build resilience to the health challenges posed by a changing environment.”

“We are integrating climate change considerations into our curriculum. Future healthcare professionals need a comprehensive understanding of the inextricable link between environmental and human health. This will equip them to educate their communities and advocate for environmental protection,” said the Acting Dean.

“Climate change presents a complex challenge, but by working together—individuals, communities, and healthcare professionals—we can adapt, build resilience, and ensure a healthier future for ourselves and generations to come.”



FIJI NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY



FNU Gym Opening Hours

Monday to Friday, 5am to 9pm
Saturday, 6am to 6pm
Sunday, 6am to 2pm
Public Holiday, 6am to 2pm

Multi-Purpose Court Operating Hours

Monday to Thursday, 5am to 9pm
Friday, 5am to 10pm
Saturday, 6am to 10pm
Sunday, 6am to 6pm
Public Holiday, 6am to 6pm

For any enquiries contact the team on 3394000 | Ext: 2339 | 2340 | Email on courtreservation@fnu.ac.fj
or visit the link: <https://courtreservation.fnu.ac.fj/booking-form/>

INSIDE FNU is a monthly newspaper which aims to promote the University's activities to the wider community.

This newsletter is produced by the Public Relations and Communications team at the Division of Marketing and Communications.

Publisher: Fiji National University
Editor: Manager Public Relations and Communications, Ropate Robi
Design & Layout: Vetaia Dakua & Luke Salababa
Division Head: Director Marketing and Communications, Karen Lobendahn
Writers: Jennis Naidu, Pravin Narain, Nicolette Chambers, Grace Waqawaqa, Christal Kapoor

INSIDE FNU wants to HEAR FROM YOU

INSIDE FNU 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

Follow us on

