

RESEARCH & RISING STARS



Mereseini Nabusa (middle) as a first Fijian Nurse in the Rugby World Cup

MERESEINI NABUSA: A TRAILBLAZER IN FIJIAN NURSING AND MEDICAL EXCELLENCE

By ROPATE ROBI

TAKING aim at setting new benchmarks in healthcare, Mereseini Nabusa, a 49-year-old trailblazer in the field of nursing, has proudly established herself as a pioneer for aspiring healthcare professionals in Fiji and on the global stage

Recognised for her incessant determination and remarkable achievements, Nabusa aspires to be the first in everything she pursues, embodying a culture of excellence that shapes her professional journey.

With over two decades of experience in nursing, Nabusa made history as Fiji’s first-ever flight nurse. Her visionary contributions to pre-hospital and emergency care have significantly enhanced the medical landscape in the Pacific region. Recently, she also became the first Fijian nurse to be inducted as a medic by World Rugby, serving as a medical observer at prestigious events in Hong Kong, which underlines her commitment to medical excellence and patient care on a global stage.

A proud alumnus of the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, formerly the Fiji School of Nursing in Tamavua, Nabusa credits her rigorous education and

training as fundamental pillars in her journey. Fuelling her passion for healing and community service, she aspires to inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals to push beyond boundaries.

“I have always believed that striving for excellence and being the first to do something is not just about personal achievement; it’s about paving the way for others to follow,” Nabusa stated.

“I want every Fijian nurse to understand that they can achieve whatever they set their heart to. Our contributions can create ripples of change in the communities we serve.”

As she sets her sights on further milestones in her career, Nabusa continues to advocate for innovation and dedication in nursing practice, enhancing the quality and accessibility of healthcare in Fiji and beyond.

“It is a passion for me. I was an athlete back in high school. That passion grew until now. I also love nursing. Why not combining your passion with your profession?”, she said.

Nabusa’s distinguished appointment with World

Rugby underscores her dedication and contributions to sports medicine, particularly in the rugby-playing nation known for its athletic prowess. As a medical observer, she provides critical support and expertise in ensuring player safety and well-being on the global stage.

“I have always believed in pushing boundaries and striving to be the first in everything I pursue,” Nabusa said.

“It is an incredible honour to represent Fiji in such a pivotal role and to contribute to enhancing medical standards in sports.”

Nabusa’s pioneering work has opened doors for future generations of Fijian nurses, inspiring them to explore cosmetic and opportunity-seeking paths that were seldom journeyed before. A proud advocate for elevating the profession, she often engages with local communities and medical educational institutions to promote nursing as a promising career, particularly for women

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All Must Take a Proactive Role in Children’s Early Childhood Education – PS Education

“WE must all take an active and proactive role in supporting our children and Early Childhood Education (ECE).”

This was the sentiment expressed by the Permanent Secretary for Education, Selina Kuruleca, during her address at the 2024 Fiji Early Childhood Teachers Association Conference, held at Fiji National University’s Natabua Campus in Lautoka.

The conference, held in partnership with the Ministry of Education, OMEP Pacific Island Nations, Fiji National University, and the University of the South Pacific, focused on the theme, “Towards Quality Early Learning: A Passion in Action.”

“Supporting children and ECE begins with the provision of adequate resources, the establishment of standards, and ensuring that early education is accessible to all families, irrespective of their financial circumstances,” Kuruleca emphasised.

“It is a collective responsibility to advocate for and support policies that prioritise ECE,” she stated.

“For ECE to reach its full potential, it requires support from all sectors of society; communities, parents, educators, and policymakers must work together to create and sustain high-quality programmes.”

The Permanent Secretary further stressed that the Ministry is committed to delivering quality ECE, ensuring that all 873 centres across the country provide a nurturing environment for children to develop essential skills, thus setting them on the path to success both in school and beyond.

Kuruleca also noted that the conference’s theme aligns with the Coalition Government’s and the Ministry’s vision of empowering Fiji’s future.

“Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often enter school with fewer resources and less support at home. High-quality early education can level the playing field, providing these children with the skills and opportunities they need to overcome obstacles and reach their full potential,” she added.

It is a collective responsibility to advocate for & support policies that prioritise ECE - PS Education

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

Tongan - Fijian Researcher Pioneers Indigenous Bioethics Framework

By JENNIS NAIDU

perspectives to meet in a meaningful way.

“When researchers with Western paradigms interact with participants holding indigenous values, there’s often a disconnect.”

“I aim to bridge this gap, ensuring that research is both respectful and effective.”

Central to Lovo’s work is the use of the talanoa method, an indigenous research approach that emphasises heartfelt dialogue and mutual understanding.

“In indigenous research, sharing knowledge happens in a heart-to-heart manner. When paradigms align, the research outcomes are far more successful.”

Lovo conducted a constructivist collective case study methodology to explore how Western and indigenous research principles can co-exist in Tonga and Fiji.

Her research led to the development of two distinct ethical guidelines, one for each country that reflect their unique cultural values.

“My goal was to create a Pacific Human Research Framework that respects Tongan and Fijian values while aligning with international standards. By identifying commonalities and integrating these into a unified framework, I hope to offer a model that will guide ethical research practices across the Pacific.”



IN an effort to reconcile indigenous values with Western research practices, Tongan-Fijian researcher, Etvina Lovo is forging a new path in bioethics.

As a Research Fellow at Fiji National University’s College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS), Lovo is dedicated to integrating traditional wisdom with modern research practices.

Originally from Tonga, Lovo now calls Suva, Fiji, home after marrying an i-Taukei man. At 60 years old, she balances her role at the university with her academic ambitions, currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at James Cook University in Australia.

Lovo recently shared the culmination of her extensive research at the 2024 Pacific Islands Health Research Symposium (PIHRS). Her paper, titled “Integrating Indigenous Principles of Human Research Ethics—Tonga and Fiji” reflects her commitment to harmonising Indigenous perspectives with contemporary research ethics.

Her work represents a significant step towards decolonising research ethics and ensuring that indigenous voices are integral to the scientific process.

After completing her studies in bioethics at Melbourne’s Monash University, Lovo returned home with a vision to integrate her newly acquired knowledge with indigenous perspectives.

“My studies in Melbourne exposed me to internationally accepted research practices, but upon returning to Tonga and Fiji, I noticed that our ethics reviews were solely based on Western approaches,” Lovo added.

“This discrepancy motivated me to seek a way to incorporate our indigenous values into the research process.”

Her quest led her to collaborate with James Cook University, which provided support for her groundbreaking work towards her PhD candidature.

Lovo’s approach seeks to harmonise Western and indigenous paradigms, recognising the need for both

The Role of Research in Strengthening Resilience

By JENNIS NAIDU



Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Environment & Climate Change
Dr Sivendra Michael

AS a researcher deeply engaged in both indigenous and Western scientific paradigms, Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change, Dr Sivendra Michael, highlighted the transformative potential of integrating diverse knowledge systems.

"Research plays a key role in addressing gaps in knowledge and providing a platform to draw baselines from. Over time, as a researcher myself, there has been a whole paradigm shift in integrating indigenous and traditional research-knowledge systems with Western science."

Dr Michael was one of the panellists in the panel discussion titled, "*Climate Change and Human Health: The Role of Research in Strengthening Community Resilience, Through Genuine Engagement*" held during the 2024 Pacific Islands Health Research Symposium (PIHRS).

The symposium provided a valuable platform for discussing the intersection of climate change and health.

Dr Michael pointed out the shift towards incorporating indigenous and traditional knowledge alongside Western science, underscoring that no single knowledge system holds superiority.

"This integration is vital for shaping effective policies and funding proposals, particularly for Pacific Islanders, where traditional knowledge plays a crucial role in policymaking and research."

"Integrating Indigenous knowledge with Western science not only enriches our research but also ensures that policies and funding proposals reflect a comprehensive understanding of our communities' needs."

He emphasised the importance of creating platforms for sharing research findings in spaces traditionally dominated by Western scientific journals.

"As a non-indigenous scholar, I have found it challenging to capture lived experiences of climate-induced events."

"The talanoa-based research methodology, which emphasises trust and reciprocity with the community, has been instrumental in integrating Indigenous voices into my work."

Dr Michael acknowledged the contributions of pioneers, one being the current Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, who has developed and refined research methodologies that incorporate indigenous practices.

Dr Devi Warns of Alarming Surge in HIV Cases Linked to Drug Use

By JENNIS NAIDU

IN her recent keynote address at the 2024 Pacific Island Health Research Symposium (PIHRS), the Ministry of Health and Medical Services' Head of Family Unit, Dr Rachel Devi, delivered a stark message about the escalating Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection crisis in Fiji.

Dr Devi, a prominent advocate for HIV and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) awareness and treatment, began her speech by reflecting on her long-standing commitment to the cause.

"When I look back at my early days managing the Sexual Reproductive Health Clinic in Fiji's Western Division, I remember the hope and determination we had," she said.

"Now, nearly 15 years later, that determination is needed more than ever as we face a growing crisis."

Recent statistics reveal a dramatic increase in HIV cases in Fiji. According to Dr Devi, the country saw 552 new cases in just the first half of 2024 alone.

"Since the first HIV case was reported in Fiji in 1989, we have now surpassed 2,600 diagnosed individuals," she reported.

"This surge in cases is alarming and reflects a broader regional and global trend where progress in controlling HIV has stalled."

"One significant factor contributing to the rise in HIV cases is the increase in injectable drug use. For the first time in Fiji's history, we have identified nearly 92 injectable drug users, representing about 15% of the total HIV-positive population."

"Moreover, there are concerning reports of individuals using shared needles to inject drugs, which exacerbates the spread of HIV."

"This practice not only reflects severe financial constraints but also indicates a broader public health crisis."

"Expanding our efforts to address both HIV and drug use is essential. We need to focus on prevention, treatment, and support for those affected by substance abuse to mitigate this dual crisis."

Dr Devi emphasised that the rise in HIV cases is not merely a result of increased testing.

"Enhanced testing and greater awareness are part of it, but we are also witnessing a genuine increase in new infections. Our data shows that the number of cases is rising, particularly among males and younger populations."

"Stigma continues to be a major barrier; many individuals, especially those from



Participants at the 2024 Pacific Islands Health Research Symposium

marginalised communities, face significant hurdles in accessing care. This not only delays diagnosis but also contributes to higher mortality rates."

"We need to strengthen our leadership and governance structures, increase funding, and improve our health information systems."

"Moreover, expanding and training our healthcare workforce is essential to providing effective care and support."

Dr Devi also pointed out the importance of public-private partnerships and international support in tackling HIV.

"Fiji has developed a National HIV Strategy Plan and a Narcotics Strategy Plan, which show our commitment to addressing both HIV and drug use," she said.

"However, we need more robust collaboration and resources to scale up our response."

"The fight against HIV requires everyone's involvement. We must start with knowing our own HIV status and advocating for those who are marginalised or affected. The change begins with each one of us."



RERIPA Call 4 Stakeholders Workshop participants.

By PRAVIN NARAIN

PARTICIPANTS recently convened at a pivotal workshop hosted by the Fiji National University’s Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT), titled “Collaborative Pathways: Enhancing Pacific Education and Innovation for Climate Resilience,” under the European Union-funded RERIPA Call 4 Project. The workshop focused on strategies to protect coral reefs, essential for marine biodiversity and coastal protection, from the impacts of climate change.

Discussions centred on the pressing challenges faced by coastal communities, such as rising sea levels, erosion, and other climate-related threats, and explored innovative approaches to sustainable development. The workshop also addressed the profound social, economic, and cultural transformations occurring in Pacific Island communities as a result of climate change. Participants examined ways to support adaptation and resilience, ensuring that communities can thrive despite these challenges.

Dr Jimaima Lako, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Learning

“This project seeks to harness research, innovation, and collective wisdom to create resilient educational pathways and sustainable solutions to climate change impacts in our Pacific region,” Dr Lako remarked.

“The workshop covered four key areas: Climate Change Adaptation for Coral Reefs; Climate Change and the Future of Coastal Communities; Transformations in Sociality, Livelihoods, and Lifestyles; and Decarbonised Energy Production and Innovative Solutions for Managing Coastal Erosion. Additionally, it focused on establishing a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (CCAM) Community of Pacific Research and Innovation, incorporating local entrepreneurs.”

Project Manager, Timaima Racule, acknowledged the significance of this EU-funded project for FNU, noting its potential to revolutionise climate-resilient educational frameworks across the Pacific region.

“With the range of experience, knowledge, and skills among stakeholders, the workshop aimed to foster collaboration among government officials, civil

FNU Workshop *Drives* Climate Resilience in the Pacific

and Teaching at FNU, highlighted the importance of Living Labs, describing them as platforms for both scientific research and the development of practical, scalable solutions that directly benefit local communities.

society organisations, non-governmental organisations, corporate entities, regional and international institutions, local communities, and small and medium enterprises,” Racule explained.

“The workshop also evaluated the instructional materials and programmes presented by subject matter experts to ensure their effectiveness and relevance. It aimed to enhance capabilities through collaborative discussions and activities while building sustainable partnerships to maximise the project’s outcomes.”

The event included participation from villagers in Nataleira and Silana (Dawasamu) and Naivakacau (Nakelo), who contributed their firsthand experiences and recommendations on the presented materials. Their insights provided valuable perspectives on the practical implications of climate change and the need for tailored solutions.

The EU-RERIPA Call 4 Project is a collaborative effort between FNU and a consortium of regional partners, including the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), Solomon Islands National University (SINU), and key non-governmental organisations such as Conservation for Corals (C4C) and Environmental Law Oceania Conservation (ELOC).

By fostering collaboration, developing innovative educational materials, and leveraging the expertise of local communities, this initiative seeks to equip the Pacific region with the knowledge and tools necessary to build a more resilient future in the face of climate change.

Livestock Feed-Making *Training* Empowers Fiji Farmers

By GRACE WAQAWAQA

A weeklong training on livestock feed making has equipped Fijian farmers with the skills to reduce their reliance on expensive commercial feeds and improve their livelihoods. The training, held at the Sigatoka Research Station, brought together 36 participants, including lead farmers and livestock extension officers from across the country.

The initiative, funded by the ACIAR Fiji Landcare project and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways, Fiji National University (FNU), and TeiTei Taveuni, was facilitated by an expert from the South Pacific Institute for Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development through the School of Agriculture of the Papua New Guinea University of Technology.

The training addressed a critical concern raised by farmers during the Landcare baseline study and consultation workshops which was the high cost of commercial livestock feed. By learning to formulate their feed rations using locally available ingredients, participants can significantly reduce feed costs.

Ovanalagi Susuwai, a poultry farmer from Namatakula, Nadroga, expressed her enthusiasm for the training, saying it had significantly broadened her understanding of livestock feed production.

“We have so much available resources around us that we can use as livestock feed. I am so grateful for this learning experience and will surely practice what I have learnt during the week,” said Ms Susuwai.

Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Honourable Vatimi Rayalu, in closing the workshop emphasised the importance of reducing reliance on commercial feeds to alleviate the financial burden on farmers. He noted that feed costs account for a substantial portion of livestock production costs, impacting farmers’ livelihoods.

“Since feed costs in livestock production are about 60-70 per cent of the total production cost, this critically affected their probability and thus progress in livelihood endeavours and thus farmers wish to trial out alternative feed sources to reduce feed costs and improve profitability,” said Honourable Rayalu.

The training aligns with the Land Care Project’s goal of extending its activities to other Pacific Island countries and fostering regional collaboration. It also supports the broader objective of enhancing smallholder farmers’ knowledge and skills to ensure food security and increase household income.



Celebrating achievement! Participants of the Livestock Feed-Making Training proudly showcase their certificates.

PNG Student Eyes *Maritime* Career

By GRACE WAQAWAQA



Jack Petrus Mingi

PAPUA New Guinean, Jack Petrus Mingi, has set sail on a remarkable journey towards a promising career in the maritime industry.

Mingi is pursuing a Diploma in Nautical Science at the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS).

Supported by his employers, Pacific Towing (PNG) LTD, Mingi’s mind is set on obtaining his Class 3 certification, a crucial milestone that will open doors to exciting opportunities in the global maritime sector.

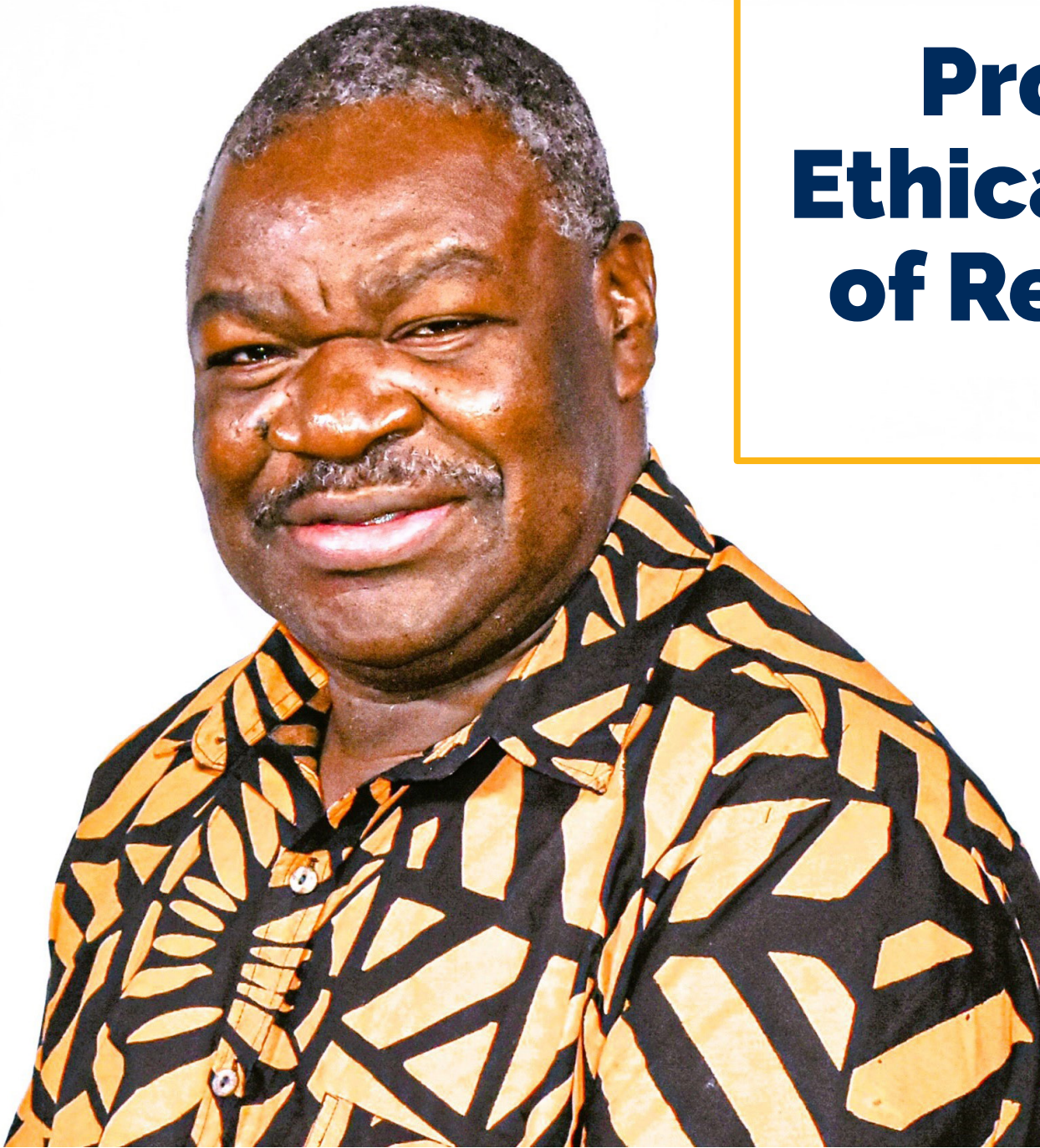
Mingi’s maritime journey began in Papua New Guinea, where he completed six months of training and the necessary sea time to lay the foundation for his future.

“Having completed five years of sea time in Papua New Guinea, I aspire to earn my Class 3 certification and embark on a career in the international maritime industry. Thanks to the support of my employers, Pacific Towing (PNG) LTD, I am able to pursue my studies here in Fiji,” said Mingi.

“PCMS offers a truly inspiring learning environment. The state-of-the-art facilities, coupled with the warm and welcoming atmosphere, make Fiji feel like a second home.”

As Mingi diligently works towards his Class 3 certification, he envisions a future where he navigates the vast oceans, contributing to the global maritime industry. His determination and passion are evident in his focus and dedication to his studies which he will complete this year.

Pacific Towing (PNG) LTD has a long-standing tradition of investing in the development of its talent. Over the years, the company has sent numerous cadets to PCMS, including five individuals who are currently undergoing their cadetships at PCMS.



Promoting Ethical Conduct of Research at FNU

“ In the past four-and-half years, FNU published nearly 500 research papers, including books and book chapters, but excluding conference presentations, and general reports to government and industries. More than half of the publications were in highly-ranked journals or were book chapters. ”

By PROFESSOR PAUL IJI

THE FIJI National University (FNU) definitely punches above its weight, and I am proud to lead the research portfolio of this young university. In the past four-and-half years, FNU published nearly 500 research papers, including books and book chapters, but excluding conference presentations, and general reports to government and industries. More than half of the publications were in highly-ranked journals or were book chapters. Our researchers have proudly returned to the conference circuit, following the abatement of COVID-19. Of course, they continue to make their contribution through webinars and other virtual channels.

However, this article is not about our achievements in research but about an important issue surrounding research - the ethical conduct of research. From the very beginning, FNU has guided its researchers towards ethical behaviour in the conduct of research, ensuring that if they have to get involved in research, they need to do it right.

Ethical conduct of research revolves around the protection of human and animal subjects, which are often studied. Researchers should be aware of the ethical protection of certain human and animal tissues, so consideration is not limited to the whole animal or human.

In general, it is the most vulnerable individuals that are studied in research, be they animal or human. Animals are not able to represent their own interest when they are used for research but most of the human groups that are often studied are vulnerable, typically children, students, the aged, females, indigenous people, poor people, and all kinds of groups that fall between these groups. It behoves on researchers to treat these subjects in an ethical way when they are studied. As one of the famous quotes of Mahatma Gandhi goes, “the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.” This is a strong statement. Around the world, it is easy to see major differences between developed and underdeveloped societies in how vulnerable people and

animals are treated.

Exactly what constitutes research ethics? Research ethics follows the general definitions and principles of ethics in other realms. Ethics can be loosely defined as a set of moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conduct of an activity. Research consists of activities, and for a researcher to behave ethically, the subjects must be fairly treated; they should be provided with choice; the researcher must do what is morally right; be honest; have a conscience; be responsible for the welfare of the subjects; value the subjects, and generally do the right things.

Research ethics are guided by principles or elements, including the social and clinical value of the research; research validity; fair selection of subjects; benefit of the research; informed consent, and respect for potential and enrolled subjects. Although integrity is often considered as a component of research ethics, ethics committees do not often assess it when they consider applications for ethics approval. The key focus of research ethics seems to be the protection of the human or animal subjects that are studied. However, research integrity is a vital entity, and will be examined in a future article.

At FNU, we have three committees, which manage our research ethics. We have committees in charge of human health research; animal research, and general human research. It is important to note that the three committees have adopted the global best practices from older institutions in other parts of the world. The three committees examine the design and implementation of the research plan; respect for the subjects; the economic use of inputs and research outcomes; proper conduct, and anything that may hint on scientific misconduct.

Although the committees vary slightly in operation, they are similar in many respects. For example, applications must be in plain language, devoid of technical jargon; consider the qualifications and experience of the researchers; justify the sample size; consider cultural

issues; describe how data will be managed, and consider the end-point of the research.

At FNU, we currently expect researchers to apply for approval for all general research which involve animals or human subjects, and research for postgraduate qualifications. We will require an application for research for undergraduate teaching depending on several factors, including the involvement of animals. Approval for such teaching activities will be issued for three years rather than the one year for other research categories. For teaching activities, the committees may also consider the number of subjects involved in the research; the source of the subjects (team or non-team members); level of risk to the subjects, and end-use of the data that would be collected.

We strongly advise researchers to contact the committees and the Research Office if there are doubts as to whether approval is required or not. It is important not to violate the university policy on research ethics but some research activities are also subject to national legislation. The Research office will continue to amend the relevant policies, to simplify processes but it is not appropriate to entirely remove the requirements for ethics approval. We need to demonstrate responsibility to the subjects that are tested and to the community. We will continue to educate the academic community to do the right things. It is important for researchers to plan well ahead, noting that approval must be obtained before the research activity commences. It is not appropriate to seek for retrospective approval; we aim to protect the human and animal samples from the beginning of the study.

Professor Paul Iji is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Innovation & Research at the Fiji National University



The FNU Natabua Campus Choir

FNU Natabua Campus Choir, *Bringing* the Spirit of Music to Life

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

THE renowned Fiji National University (FNU) Natabua Campus choir continues to bring people from all walks of life together with their angelic voices, showcasing the passion they have for music.

The choir, which is currently made up of between 40 and 50 students and teachers, was passionately created by the FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.

Within two years of staging live performances for mostly students and staff of the University, the choir has already won many hearts bringing the spirit of music to life.

They have performed for many University events in the presence of Government delegations, local artists and the wider community.

FNU Music Education Lecturer, Lasarusa Daveta is leading the choir alongside, Assistant Lecturer, Waisake Rabuatoka, a former Physical Education and Music student of the FNU. They are both talented singers as well.

“The choir started two years ago thanks to the support

and encouragement of the then Head of Natabua Campus, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba with the thought of reviving old Fijian songs,” said Daveta.

“Choir members change every year due to students graduating and new students coming in. However, we have a lot of outstanding vocalists and musicians that help boost the sound of the choir.”

Daveta composed and released on radio a few original numbers, and even composed the new FNU Anthem which was recorded at the choir’s small music studio at the Natabua Campus.

Rabuatoka also composed original Gospel songs and continues to perform at resorts and private functions.

“A few students have musical family backgrounds where they either sing or play a certain instrument,” added Daveta.

“Considering the initial objective of reviving old Fijian songs, our selection of songs is mostly the old Fijian

classics, which appeal to the more senior staff members and bring pride to our choir members, who are mostly iTaukei.”

“Any additional songs, whether iTaukei, Hindi, or English, are chosen based on their relevance to the event where they will be sung. Preparation involves hours of practice and is usually done at our Na Werelevu Lecture Theatre.”

He added that music was a shared interest, and it was also a form of escape from other commitments.

“These students are going to be teachers, and it would be good to see these songs taught in the schools they will be posted to,” he said.

His advice to students – “If you want to study music or if you are interested in joining the choir, then go for it. Follow your passion and be smart about choosing your career path.”

Ba Campus Students and Staff Bring Joy to *Veilomani* Boys Home



FNU Ba campus students at the Veilomani Boys Home.

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

THE 11 children residing at Ba’s Veilomani Boys Home had their spirits lifted by a visit from the Fiji National University’s School of Transport team based at the College of Engineering, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETVET).

The group, comprising students and staff from FNU’s Ba Campus, embarked on the visit to deepen their understanding of the importance of community engagement. The visit followed a workshop conducted by the team and was part of their broader efforts to educate students on supporting local charitable organisations.

Rusila Cagi, an Assistant Instructor in the Department of Automotive Engineering, shared that the students and staff were encouraged to contribute donations such as fresh vegetables, non-perishable groceries, and money for the purchase of additional items.

“During the visit, I took the opportunity to discuss with the boys the various programmes offered at FNU, as well as the scholarships available through the Government,” Cagi stated.

“Sharing this information inspired the residents by highlighting the educational and career opportunities that are available to them.”

She noted that the visit was a valuable learning experience for the students.

“It provided them with an insight into the challenges faced by their peers and underscored the importance of community service,” she added.

“By engaging with the children and hearing about their lives and aspirations, our students gained a deeper sense of empathy and understanding.

Ms Cagi also emphasised that the School of Transport remains dedicated to fostering community engagement and supporting organisations that make a positive impact.

“We look forward to organising further initiatives in the future to help our students develop a sense of social responsibility and extend our support to the wider community,” she added.

Dr Bhai's Commitment to Oral Health

By **PRAVIN NARAIN**

KRITESH Bhai, a Dental Specialist by profession and an alumnus of Fiji National University, is making significant strides in the field of dentistry. His unwavering commitment to his craft and his patients has propelled him to become a respected Prosthodontist.

Dr Bhai's journey to success began at Fiji National University, where he honed his dental skills and developed a passion for his profession. After graduating from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, he pursued further studies to specialise in the field of prosthodontics, equipping himself with the advanced knowledge and techniques necessary to excel in his field.

Dr Bhai is a registered Prosthodontist in Australia and New Zealand. He received his specialist training from the University of Melbourne from 2018 to 2021 and was awarded Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics.

He has worked in both public and private practices and has held teaching positions at the Fiji National University and University of Sydney. Apart from having a strong clinical background, Dr Bhai was also a recipient of research grants from various organisations such as the Australian Prosthodontic Society, the Australian Dental Research Foundation Inc. and the Melbourne Dental School which enabled him to carry out and publish his most notable research project in the prestigious Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry.

Dr Bhai specialises in prosthodontics, a branch of dentistry that focuses on restoring and replacing teeth. His expertise lies in repairing damaged natural teeth and crafting custom-made dental prosthetics to replace missing teeth.

“Regular dental check-ups every six months are crucial for preventive care. By prioritising prevention, we can minimise the need for more complex treatments. This involves basic hygiene practices, such as cleaning and check-ups, and educating patients about the importance of oral health, which in turn directly affects one's general health. Regular visits can help identify potential issues early on, preventing them from becoming more serious,” he said.

Dr Bhai recently conducted block teaching for the Year 4 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Dental Surgery at the Pasifika Campus.

“While my family and career are based in Australia, I always cherish returning to Fiji. It's a wonderful opportunity to give back to my home country in any way I can. I believe that this should be a priority for all professionals who have the chance to contribute to their place of origin,” he shared.

“The FNU's dental clinic has experienced significant growth, doubling in size and capacity. This expansion has led to an increase in staff, dental chairs, and the number of students participating in clinical training. As a result, the clinic is now able to see a larger number of patients.



FNU Alumnus, Kritesh Bhai

“This growth is a positive indicator of the increasing prioritisation of dental healthcare in the community. The clinic has made substantial investments, not only in building this new facility but also in supporting dental education initiatives.”

His dedication to providing exceptional dental care is evident in his approach to patients. Dr Bhai takes the time to understand his patients' unique needs and concerns, ensuring that their treatment plans are tailored to their individual circumstances. His gentle and compassionate demeanour puts patients at ease, making their dental visits a positive experience.



Zakariya Ali

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

ZAKARIYA Ali's passion for nursing began during his childhood, shaped by his experiences as a patient.

“I saw nurses as the pillars of support and care,” Ali reflects. “Their presence and dedication inspired me, and I knew this was a path that would bring me immense fulfilment.”

Ali's choice to study at Fiji National University (FNU) was driven by its pioneering role in nursing education in Fiji.

“FNU is a trailblazer in this field. Being part of such a distinguished institution and learning from the best has been a remarkable experience,” he says.

The journey hasn't been without its challenges. Balancing academics and practical experience required Ali to master time management.

“Self-directed learning was a big shift,” he admits. “Managing my own schedule and meeting deadlines was tough, but the support from lecturers and staff made it manageable.”

One of the most poignant moments of his training came during a hospital rotation.

“Assisting in the delivery of a newborn was an unforgettable experience. Welcoming new life into the world was profoundly moving and reaffirmed my

Embracing the Calling: Ali's Nursing Journey

commitment to this profession.”

Ali also highlights the comprehensive approach of FNU's nursing programme.

“Our curriculum is tailored to the unique needs of Fiji and the Pacific region,” he explains. “We benefit from cutting-edge clinical simulations and real-life scenarios that prepare us for the diverse challenges we'll face.”

His involvement in the recent inter-tertiary debate competition organised by Rotary Pacific Water Foundation and FNU showcased his growth.

“Representing the School of Nursing and securing the 1st runner-up position was an incredible boost to my confidence and research skills,” he revealed.

The Suva lad's advice to future nursing students is both heartfelt and practical: “Be passionate about helping others. Nursing is demanding but profoundly rewarding. It requires empathy, dedication, and resilience. If you're ready to commit, it's one of the most fulfilling careers you can choose.”

Ali's journey exemplifies the heart and soul of nursing—an inspiring blend of compassion, dedication, and unwavering commitment.

 **FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**



Don't miss out on the 2024 FNU Open Day. To all our food lovers, we have got you covered. Treat yourself to a variety of delicious food, drinks, snacks, fruits, and more at the



See You There!

Venue: Nasinu Campus
Date: 04 - 05 October
Friday: 8am - 4pm
Saturday: 9am - 3pm

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OPEN DAY

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

NASINU CAMPUS | OCTOBER 4TH - 5TH

 **FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

Fijian Drua Partners with Fiji National University 2024 Open Day

By ROPATE ROBI

THE Swire Shipping Fiji Drua is proud to announce its partnership with Fiji National University for an exciting Open Day event, taking place on October 4-5 at the Nasinu Campus. This collaboration guarantees a weekend of engagement and interaction between students, families, and some of Fiji’s finest rugby talents.

Fijian Drua CEO, Mark Evans and renowned Strength and Conditioning Coach, Naca Cawanibuka, will be guest speakers at the first day of the event, sharing their insights and experiences. Also making their appearances are Rooster Chicken Fiji Drua Women’s Player of the Year, Vani Arei, alongside star Drua Men’s players, Mesake Doge and Philip Baselala.

The excitement continues on the final day with appearances by returning Drua star Joe Tamani, along with Vilive Miramira and Motikiai Murray.

Both days will feature the players walking through the Open Day Village, mingling with visitors, and creating memorable experiences for students and their families.

Speaking about the flagship event, General Manager Commercial, Shane Hussein said “We are thrilled to partner with Fiji National University for their Open Day. This collaboration underscores our commitment to nurturing local talent and promoting the synergy between education and sport. Our players are eager to engage with the community, share their stories, and inspire the next generation. It’s going to be an exciting and enriching experience for everyone involved.”



SEE YOU AT THE 2024 FNU OPEN DAY!

Come on down to the FNU Nasinu Campus from the 4th to the 5th of October and meet some of your favourite Drua players.



FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



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.

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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

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