



# INSIDE FNU

## Welcome Home to FNU !

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First-year Diploma in Nautical Science student, Rachel Rose Vakacegu Vukialau at FNU's PCMS Campus during Orientation. Photo Credit. Penioni Kolinisau.

## Dad's profession inspires Rasese

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

In a field traditionally dominated by men, Akata Sova Rasese is making a splash at Fiji National University's (FNU) Pacific Centre

for Maritime Studies (PCMS) in Nasese proving that passion knows no gender boundaries.

Inspired by her father Sevanaya Rasese's passion for the ocean, she is determined to carve her own path

in marine engineering, proving that the waves of change are possible with courage and determination.

Hailing from the serene Yasawa Islands, the 19-year-old has been mesmerised by the sea for as long

as she can remember.

"Seeing my father work as a boat and dive master, I realised that the ocean is not just a body of water but a world full of opportunities," said Rasese.

It's this admiration for her father that inspired Rasese to take on the challenges associated with marine engineering.

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### What is TVET First?

Its **FIRST-EVER TVET FIRST Initiative for Year 11 (Form 5) students at Derrick Campus!**

It offers Secondary School Y11 Students the opportunity to explore a range of trade programmes available at FNU's College of Engineering & Technical Vocational Education & Training (**CETVET**).

#### Through this initiative:

- Students gain practical experience
- Build valuable networks with academic staff
- Receive academic counselling
- The goal is to equip students with the skills needed to enhance their employability and prepare them for a successful career.







At FNU, we believe in the power of knowledge to transform lives and communities.

CBHTS Students on the first day of school at Nasinu Campus. Photo Credit. Silika Damu



*Bula All,*

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I welcome you to Fiji National University (FNU). As you embark on this new chapter of your academic journey, I want to congratulate you on your decision to join our esteemed institution, where excellence in education, innovation, and personal growth is at the heart of everything we do.

At FNU, we believe in the power of knowledge to transform lives and communities. Whether you are joining us to pursue a diploma, degree, or postgraduate qualification, know that you are part of a vibrant learning community dedicated to nurturing the leaders, innovators, and change-makers of tomorrow.

Beyond academics, FNU provides a dynamic campus experience where you will engage in cultural exchange, leadership development, and extracurricular activities that will shape you into a well-rounded individual.

Our commitment to providing a supportive environment means that you will never walk this journey alone. Our faculty and staff are here to guide and support you every step of the way, ensuring that you have the tools and resources to succeed.

As you take your first steps at FNU, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity that comes your way. Challenge yourself, explore new interests, and build meaningful connections with your peers. This is a place where you will grow not only intellectually but also personally, and I am confident that your time here will be rewarding in every sense.

Once again, welcome to Fiji National University. We are excited to have you with us and look forward to celebrating your success in the years to come.

Vinaka  
**Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba**  
Vice-Chancellor





Savenaca Waqabaca takes part in the 2025 Fiji National University Orientation held by the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies at the Nasinu Campus. Photo Credit. Romeka Kumari.

# Visual impairment fails to deter Waqabaca's spirit

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Savenaca Waqabaca is a determined individual who has never allowed his visual impairment to hinder his pursuit of his dreams.

The young man from Moce, Lau, enrolled at the Fiji National University (FNU) during the Careers Expo at Moce Secondary School last year.

At 22 years old, Waqabaca is in his first year of studying for a Diploma in Office Administration and took part in the Orientation held at the Nasinu Campus on Monday, 10 February.

“Life is full of challenges, but I believe that every challenge is an opportunity in disguise,” Waqabaca said.

“Every day is a step forward. My journey is just beginning, and I am excited about the future.”

He describes his experience as “one of discovery and

hope.”

“When I learnt about the opportunities at FNU, I knew I had to seize them,” he said.

“Education is the key to opening doors, and I intend to unlock as many as I can.”

As the eldest of four siblings, Waqabaca feels a strong sense of responsibility—not only towards his own ambitions but also in inspiring others who face similar challenges.

“I want to lead by example for my younger siblings and all those who are visually impaired,” he shared.

“If I can pursue my dreams, then they can too. I want to show that nothing can limit us unless we allow it.”

Through every word, Waqabaca embodies resilience, reminding us that barriers can be overcome with courage, determination, and the will to succeed.

## Students Reminded To Persevere During PCMS Orientation



Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning & Teaching, Professor Jimaima Lako. Photo Credit. Penioni Kolinisau.

WATI TALEBULA

New students joining the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies were reminded that FNU prides itself on fostering an inclusive and respectful environment where diversity is celebrated.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning & Teaching, Professor Jimaima Lako, while addressing the PCMS students during their orientation today, expressed gratitude to their families and loved ones for their unwavering support.

“Our programmes are designed not only to equip you with academic knowledge but also with practical skills. We are committed to upholding the values of Care, Honesty, Accountability, Service and Excellence. These values will guide you not only during your studies but throughout your professional life,” Professor Lako said.

“I encourage you to reflect on how these values align with your goals and how you can contribute to the positive culture we have worked so hard to build here. Together, we can create an environment where every student feels valued, supported, and

motivated to succeed.”

The Head of the Department of Marine Simulator at PCMS, Captain William Mccaig, encouraged the students to persevere and never give up when faced with challenges.

“You are about to dive into a learning experience that is both challenging and rewarding. The knowledge and skills you will gain here at the Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies will equip you with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of the maritime world,” Captain Mccaig said.

“But beyond the technical expertise, there

are qualities you must cultivate to truly thrive in the maritime world. Discipline, resilience, adaptability, and leadership—these are the traits that will set you apart as you sail through your studies and your career.

“The challenges you will face, both inside the classroom and on the water, will test your limits. But rest assured, they will also help you discover strengths you never knew you had.”







Akata Sova Rasese during the Fiji National University (FNU) Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) Orientation in Nasese on Wednesday, 12 February. Photo Credit. Romeka Kumari

# Dad's profession inspires Rasese

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

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“Many see this field as a male-dominated space, but I want to show that women can thrive here too,” she said. Rasese aims to shatter the preconceived notions that often hold women back in engineering professions. Although her daily commute from Navua to PCMS can be tiring, she

embraces it as a testament to her resilience. “Every journey I take gives me insight into the dedication required at sea,” she said. “If I can handle this, I can handle anything the ocean throws at me.” Her experience at Rampur College in Navua, where she was the second eldest among her siblings, equipped her with the

tenacity needed to pursue such a demanding career. “I want to be a role model for young girls back in Yasawa island,” she added. “If I can succeed, they can too.” Empowered by her father’s legacy and driven by her own passion, she represents a new wave of women challenging the status quo in marine fields.

# Students Encouraged to Embrace Challenges



New and existing students during the 2025 Fiji National University Orientation Week held by the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies on Monday, 10 February 2025. Photo Credit. Penioni Kolinisau

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Embrace the challenges you encounter in university life as this will shape you into leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals who will lead in business, hospitality, and tourism. Fiji National University (FNU) Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching, Professor Jimaima Lako shared this message in her keynote address during the 2025 Orientation Week held from February 10 to 14 around the country. Professor Lako while congratulating the new and existing students on embarking upon a transformative journey that will shape their futures said, challenges are an essential learning experience. “Today marks the start of an adventure filled with growth, learning, challenges, and success,” said Professor Lako, “As you begin this journey, I want to emphasise that this is not just a place of learning—it is a place of growth.” “During your time here, you will encounter various challenges, but you will also experience moments of achievement and success.”

“Our programmes are designed not only to equip you with academic knowledge but also with practical skills that will set you apart in the competitive world of business and hospitality.” She expressed gratitude to families and loved ones for their critical support, emphasising that their belief in the students’ potential was reflected in their achievements. “The skills you learn here will go far beyond the classroom and will be valuable assets in your professional life,” she said. Professor Lako also highlighted FNU’s commitment to nurturing potential as new students were further encouraged to engage fully with the FNU community. “We want to see you grow not only as students but as individuals who can think critically, collaborate effectively, and create positive change in society,” she added. “This is a community, and you are now an important part of it. I encourage you to take full advantage of the opportunities available to you.”

# Let Us Toil Our Own Land: Dr. Ravuiwasa

BY ROMEKA KUMARI



Dean of the College of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) Dr. Kaliova Ravuiwasa during the CAFF Orientation Day. Photo Credit. Penioni Kolinisau

Let us toil our own land! This was the inspiring message shared by the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (CAFF) Dean and Associate Professor, Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa. While welcoming a new cohort of students during its orientation ceremony at the Koronivia campus. Dr Ravuiwasa emphasised the importance of seizing the opportunities available within the college. He highlighted the vital role that agriculture and environmental management play in Fiji’s economic and social landscape. “Whether you will be a farmer, exporter, policy maker, minister, or doctor, let us toil our own land,” said Dr Ravuiwasa. He underscored that opportunities are abundant within the college, but it is up to each student to embrace these possibilities. “Your presence here today reflects your commitment to your education, a commitment that many others may not have the chance to pursue,” he said. Addressing both students and parents, Dr Ravuiwasa called for a partnership in

navigating the challenges ahead. He encouraged parents to engage more closely with the tertiary education system to support their children effectively. “We want to build closer relationships with you,” he said, affirming the role of families in fostering a rich learning environment. The Dean also acknowledged the expansion of CAFF programmes, noting that enrolment this year has nearly tripled compared to last year. This surge reflects a growing recognition of the significance of sustainable practices in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry. “Together, we can change the face of these industries in Fiji for generations to come,” he added. He also urged students to develop resilience, identify genuine opportunities, and appreciate the support offered by faculty and mentors throughout their time at FNU. “Let us all work together to cultivate not just our land, but also our futures,” he concluded.





# Coffee Forward Initiative Veilomani Closet Veilomani Food Pantry

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contact the Foundation team at [FNUFoundation@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:FNUFoundation@fnu.ac.fj).





FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba with the Deputy Prime Minister Honourable Viliame Gavoka and invited guests at the newly opened Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security Building and Programme launch at the Namaka campus in Nadi on Monday, 17 February 2025. Photo Credit. Penioni Kolinisau



“The Centre for excellence is not simply for customs but also biosecurity, immigration, maritime enforcement and not just for public sector agency but private sector as well such as the custom brokers and freight forwarders. Effective border management plays a vital role in a country’s security and prosperity. It’s not just as many often think. It’s about protecting the company from the harmful goods, ensuring that those who enter the country do so lawfully, about facilitating trade to boost the economy inward investment and above all, protecting the nations sovereignty.”

**PROFESSOR DAVID WIDDOWSON**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
THE CENTRE FOR CUSTOMS AND EXCISE STUDIES AT  
CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA



“Fiji National University has once again demonstrated its role as the nation’s university by aligning programmes and initiatives with the priorities of the Coalition Government’s National Development Plan.”

**HONOURABLE VILIAME GAVOKA**  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
FIJI GOVERNMENT



“This Centre will play a pivotal role in ensuring that Fiji and Pacific nations have a highly skilled and professional workforce in border management, customs, security, and enforcement. The programmes offered here will prepare professionals to tackle critical issues such as transnational crime, human trafficking, drug smuggling, biosecurity threats, and illicit trade.”

**PROFESSOR UNAISI NABOBO-BABA**  
VICE-CHANCELLOR  
FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



We extend our gratitude to the Government of Fiji for recognising the need for this Centre and for your unwavering support in its establishment. This initiative aligns with Fiji’s National Development Plan and contributes significantly to strengthening border management, tackling transnational crime, and improving biosecurity measures.

The Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security is more than just a facility—it is a beacon of excellence in education, training, and research that will serve Fiji and the Pacific region for years to come.

**DR. ASaeli TUIBEQA**  
DEAN – COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, HOSPITALITY AND  
TOURISM STUDIED (CBHTS)  
FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# FNU Launches Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security Building and Programme

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

The launch of the Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security highlights collaboration, vision, and a shared commitment to enhancing security, trade, and regional capacity building.

The Fiji National University (FNU) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba stated this at the opening of the Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security at its Namaka, Campus in Nadi on Monday, 17 February.

The Centre reflects FNU’s Strategic Plan 2024–2026: “To serve the people of Fiji and the wider Pacific region through leadership that engages communities, respects partnerships, enhances excellence, and provides education and skills that promote sustainability through research with real-world impact.”

“Through this Centre, we are investing in education and training that directly impact national security, economic development, and regional stability,” said Professor Nabobo-Baba.

She added that FNU is proud to collaborate with the Centre for Customs & Excise Studies (CCES) of Canberra, Australia, and the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) to bring world-class training and expertise to Fiji.

“This partnership signifies a collective commitment to strengthening border security and trade facilitation, ensuring that our region remains resilient in the face of emerging challenges,” she said.

Professor Nabobo-Baba said that the Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security is perfectly aligned with Priority Area 5 of FNU’s strategic plan—Education for Employment and Internationalisation.

“At FNU, we are focused on enhancing the industrial readiness of our graduates, improving pedagogy, and embedding holistic values to ensure that our students possess the skills and competencies required for local and international workplaces,” she said.

“This Centre will play a pivotal role in ensuring that Fiji and Pacific nations have a highly skilled and professional workforce in border management, customs, security, and enforcement.”

“The programmes offered here will prepare professionals to tackle critical issues such as transnational crime, human trafficking, drug smuggling, biosecurity threats, and illicit trade.”

Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Viliame Gavoka the establishment of this Centre is a significant milestone, not only for Fiji but for the entire Pacific region.

“It represents a bold step forward in strengthening border management and security, which are critical to ensuring national stability, facilitating trade, and protecting our borders,” said Honourable Gavoka.

“As a regional hub, this Centre will equip Border Management Agencies and Discipline Forces with the specialised knowledge and skills necessary to address the complex and evolving challenges of our modern world.”

Centre for Customs and Excise Studies at Charles Sturt University, Australia, Chief Executive Officer, Professor David Widdowson emphasised that the centre is “not just for customs but also biosecurity, immigration, maritime enforcement and not just for public sector agency but private sector as well such as the custom brokers and freight forwarders.”

FNU’s College of Business Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) Dean, Dr Asaeli Tuibeqa extended the University’s gratitude to the Honourable Gavoka and the Government of Fiji for their support.

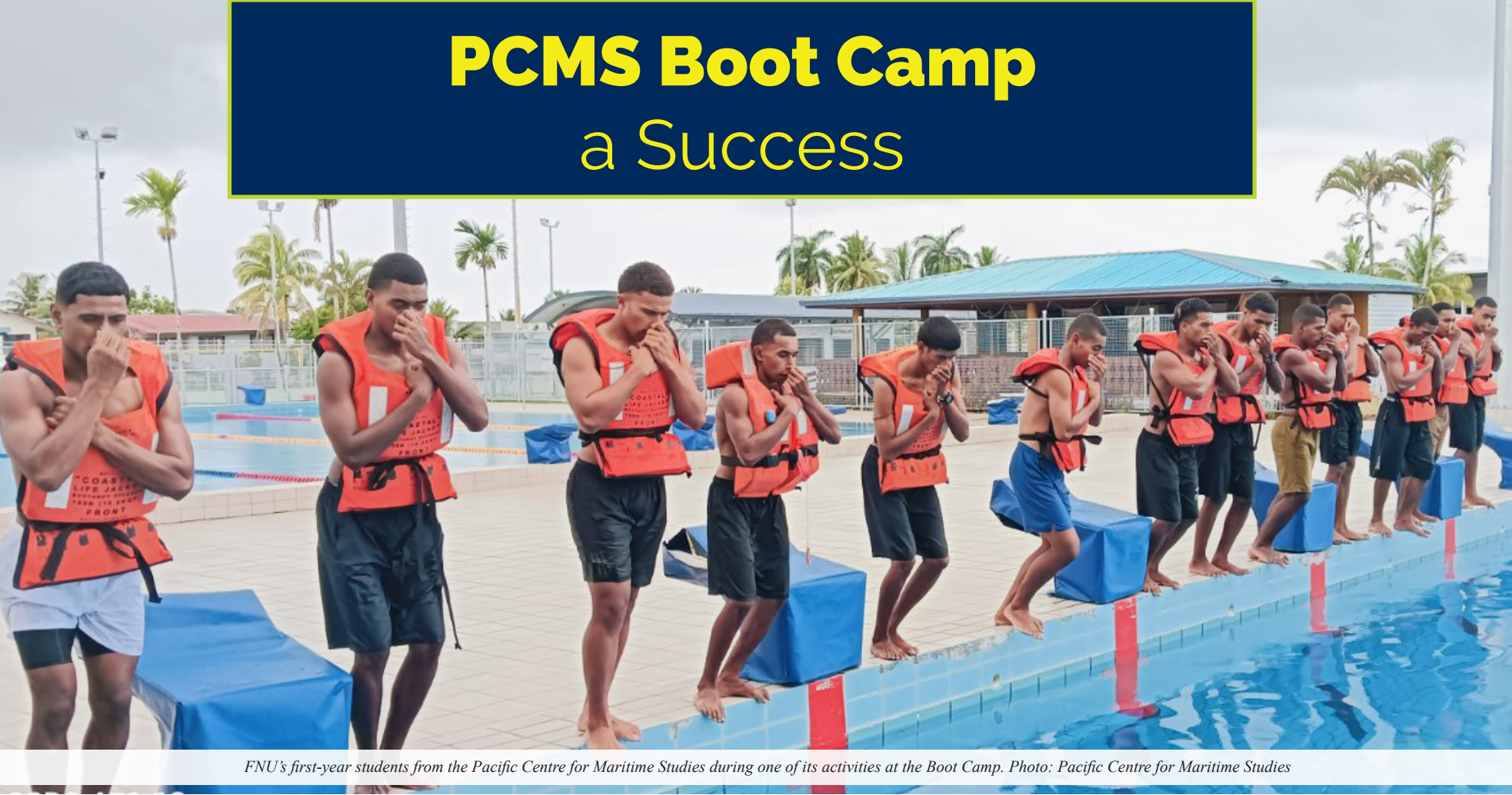
“The Pacific Centre for Border Management and Security is more than just a facility—it is a beacon of excellence in education, training, and research that will serve Fiji and the Pacific region for years to come.”

“Let us continue to work together, strengthen our partnerships, and drive forward the mission of this Centre to ensure a safer, more secure future for our region.”



# PCMS Boot Camp

## a Success



FNU's first-year students from the Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies during one of its activities at the Boot Camp. Photo: Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies

BY WATI TALEBULA

Ninety-eight first-year students participated in the Boot Camp held at Fiji National University's Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) from 3–14 February. These students underwent training in water survival skills, maritime communication, leadership, emergency response simulations, navigation systems (GPS and radar), practical seamanship, firefighting (theory and practice), conflict resolution, decision-making, and environmental awareness. The two-week boot camp aimed to prepare

students, especially those fresh out of high school, for their academic journey. PCMS Acting Director, Captain Vilivo Bolaciri Valenitabua, said the boot camp was designed to equip students with essential skills before the academic year began on 17 February. "Of the 98 students currently in the boot camp, 67 are enrolled in the Diploma in Nautical Science programme, while 31 are pursuing the Diploma in Marine Engineering," Captain Bolaciri said. "For maritime students, attending a boot camp offers several advantages, particularly

in acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in the maritime industry. Boot camps provide valuable hands-on experience and intensive training that can be challenging to achieve in traditional academic settings." He emphasised that the primary focus of the boot camp was to rapidly equip students with the practical skills required to thrive in the maritime sector. "Maritime boot camps deliver concentrated, hands-on learning experiences that give students a competitive edge in an industry that demands both

technical expertise and practical abilities." Diploma in Nautical Science student Anaseini Salaivalu expressed gratitude for her parents' support in her career choice. "This year, I decided to pursue my Diploma in Nautical Science because I aspire to become a captain one day. Although this field is traditionally male-dominated, I am thankful that my parents fully support my decision," Salaivalu said. "Through the two-week boot camp, I was able to acquire both practical skills and theoretical knowledge of the maritime industry."

## Safety and Survival at Sea short course, a demand



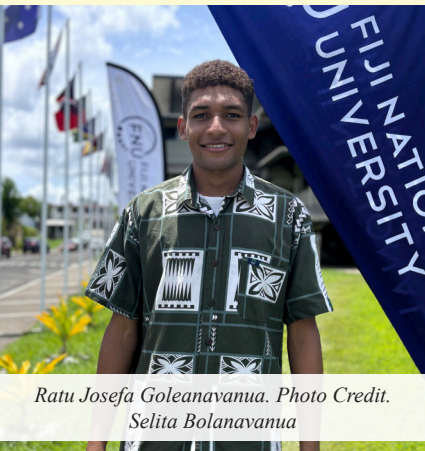
Safety and Survival at Sea course, a must for every seafarer.

BY WATI TALEBULA

The demand for the Safety and Survival at Sea short course at Fiji National University's Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) has been increasing annually. The course is now held every month to accommodate this demand. The Safety and Survival at Sea short course, also known as pre-sea training, is designed to prepare individuals for maritime safety. Acting Director Captain Vilivo Valenitabua said that PCMS can only accommodate 30 students each month. "The course consists of four units: Proficiency in Personal Survival Techniques, Proficiency in Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting, Proficiency in Elementary First Aid, and Proficiency in Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities," Captain Vilivo explained. "The course lasts four weeks, and it is open to individuals aged 18 years and older, with a minimum educational qualification of Year 10."

He said that the cost of the course is approximately \$746 per student. Upon successful completion, students receive a pre-sea certificate, allowing them to join a vessel. Captain Vilivo emphasised that completing this course is mandatory for anyone wishing to work at sea. "After completing the short course, students are eligible to work at sea for six months. They may then return to take the Deck Watch Rating (DWR) course. Additionally, those enrolled in the cadet programme are also required to complete the pre-sea course," he added. "All seafarers are now required to undergo this training before joining any vessel. We have reached an agreement with MSAF, allowing students to progress directly from pre-sea training to DWR. Once they complete DWR, they can work at sea for six months before receiving their Certificate of Competency (COC) from MSAF."

## Farming to Teaching- Ratu Josefa's Path to Success



Ratu Josefa Goleanavanua. Photo Credit. Selita Bolanavanua

BY SELITA BOLANAVANUA

Ratu Josefa Goleanavanua couldn't help but thank God when he received his offer letter to study for a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) in Maths and Physics at the Fiji National University. It was a moment of gratitude and hope, as he realised how far he had come. Ratu Josefa's journey wasn't easy. In 2020, he had to leave school in Year 10 to help his father with yaqona farming. He was studying at Savusavu Secondary School, but things at home were getting harder, and as the second eldest in his family and the oldest son, he knew he needed to help take care of his family and five siblings. He worked on the farm for two years, but he never gave up on his dream of

going back to school. His uncle, who lives in Suva, encouraged him to return to school. Ratu Josefa wasn't sure where to start, since he had only finished Year 10. He thought his chances were slim, but then he heard about the Matua School programme at Nabua Secondary. "I knew this was my second chance," he said, "and I couldn't waste it." So, he moved to Suva to live with his uncle and studied for two years at Nabua Secondary School -Matua Programme, completing Year 12 and 13. It was hard, but he kept going. Now, after two years, Ratu Josefa has been accepted to study at FNU's Natabua Campus to become a teacher in Maths and Physics. "At first, I was worried when my uncle suggested I study Physics," he said. "I always heard it was a tough subject. But I took the challenge, and I'm glad I did. Now, I really enjoy Physics, and I'm working towards becoming a Physics teacher." Ratu Josefa is thankful to the Matua programme for giving him a second chance and to FNU for turning his dreams to reality. "Age doesn't matter," he said. "There's no limit to education." As he packs his bags ready to join Natabua Campus, he says, "In three years, I'll leave that campus as a teacher." Congratulations, Ratu Josefa, and welcome to FNU!



# Health & Hustle

## Waidabu's Determination to Become a Fully Qualified Nurse

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Leaving her two children in Nauru to come to Fiji was not an easy decision for Jasmine Rose Waidabu.

However, she recognised that this choice would benefit both her family and her country.

Waidabu is a first-year nursing student who participated in the College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences orientation at Tamavua Nursing School on Friday, January 13.

With the support of the Ministry of Health Nauru Scholarship, after graduating with a Certificate in Enroled Nursing from the Fiji National University's community-based campus in Nauru, she secured a place at Tamavua Nursing School to pursue her goal of becoming a fully qualified nurse.

"I am willing to make sacrifices for the sake of my family and our people," Waidabu said.

"It's a challenging journey to leave my children behind, but I am doing all this for them. I am ready to take on this challenge

and make a difference in my community."

Waidabu has always been passionate about helping others, and after witnessing the impact of skilled nursing in her community, she knew this was the career for her.

"I have seen the impact that skilled nursing can have on people's lives," she said.

"Being a fully qualified nurse is crucial to assisting those in medical need."

Growing up, Waidabu watched her family face numerous health challenges and saw firsthand the difference that qualified nurses could make.

"I want to be able to provide better healthcare to my community back home," she said.

"I have witnessed the wonders nurses can do when they see people who are sick, and I also want to assist those in need of medical help."

The 28-year-old hails from Yaren District.



Jasmine Rose Waidabu during Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) orientation at the Tamavua Nursing School. Photo Courtesy: Romeka Kumari



FIJI NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY

2024 - 2026 Strategic Plan

Education for **Wisdom** and **Sustainability**

# Shaping Fiji's Future

Na Veituberi ni **Yalomatua** kei na **Sautu**



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

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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](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj)

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