

CELEBRATING MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



A Mother's Tears, A Brother's Pride

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

The air in Vodafone Arena was heavy with emotion on Thursday, 17 April, as families gathered for the Fiji National University (FNU) day three graduation ceremony.

Among them was Joanne Rymell, a mother whose heart felt like it had shattered into a million pieces. With tears streaming down her face, she held the certificate of her late son, Joseph Rymell Boleilovoni, who was meant to graduate that day.

Joseph, who passed away last December, had been awarded a Diploma in Quantity Surveying—a testament to his

hard work and dedication.

His spirit was very much alive as his elder brother, Epineri Boleilovoni, walked down the graduation aisle in his stead.

“My heart aches that Joseph is not here today,” Joanne whispered, struggling to hold back her tears. “But it makes us proud to celebrate his success.”

Joseph joined FNU in 2021 under an Australia Awards Scholarship. He worked tirelessly towards his dream, only to have it all tragically cut short during his final month of industrial attachment.

“It’s been really painful to see that while my husband passed away earlier, now my son has also died, but I’m still so proud of his achievement. We will cherish this

moment for life. Even though he is not with us anymore, he made us proud.”

Epineri wore Joseph’s pride on his sleeve, his own heart heavy with sorrow as he recalled late-night study sessions.

“He was the most hardworking amongst us three siblings. He prioritised education above everything. Holding his certificate reminds me of how much he loved Quantity Surveying—a profession he chose since childhood,” he said, tears rolling down his cheeks.

This day was not just a graduation; it was a beautiful tribute to a life well-lived. For Joanne and Epineri, it symbolised love, loss, and an unwavering bond that death could never sever.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Page 2

- Afghan National Graduates from FNU
- From Humble Beginnings to the Courtroom
- Mastering Nursing, Miles from Home.

Page 3

- Chaudhary Dedicates Achievements to Late Father
- Age is Just a Number for Gold Medalist Ali
- My Disability Doesn’t Define Me - Bainikalou

Page 4

- Pelenaisi Rauga Graduates at 30 Weeks Pregnant, Family’s First University Graduate
- Raniga Bags Double Gold Medal

Page 5

- Fuelled by Faith and Family
- A Journey of Second Chances and Triumph

Page 6

- A Rural Teacher’s Journey to a Master’s Degree
- From Curiosity to Career

Page 7

- Airports Fiji Limited Backs FNU Foundation’s Mission to Empower Students
- FNU Foundation Patron Opens Launch with \$10K
- Fijian Teachers Association Expresses Full Support Towards FNU Foundation

Page 8

- FNU Gym Instructor Claims Dual Victory



Afghan National Graduates from FNU

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

It was an unforgettable moment for Afghan national, Jamil Dehati to graduate from the Fiji National University (FNU).

The 28-year-old, who has been living in Fiji for the past three years, graduated with a Certificate in Graphic Design (Level 4) during the graduation ceremony held on Tuesday, 15 April, at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

Dehati acknowledged FNU for providing him with the opportunity to study something he is truly passionate about.

“Thank you, FNU!” Dehati said with excitement.

“FNU has a lot of opportunities available, and I chose this university for the chance to focus on my education in Graphic Design.

“During my education journey, I felt FNU was a welcoming place for international students like me.

“The highlight of my journey was the lecturers and tutors who always went out of their way to assist us students.”

While he already holds a Bachelor of Economics degree from a university in India, Dehati revealed that his heart has always been set on graphic design.

“My passion for art and design led me here,” he said.

“FNU has an excellent programme that allowed me to explore my creativity.”

In addition to his studies, Dehati is also a model, showing that he balances multiple interests with determination.

He also acknowledged his in-laws for their support throughout his educational journey.

“I owe a huge thanks to my wife and my in-laws for their endless support. They believed in me and encouraged me to follow my dreams,” he said.

Dehati’s success story shines a light on the opportunities FNU offers to international students.

“I encourage more international students to consider FNU for their studies. It is truly a place where dreams can become reality.”



Jamil Dehati
Photo: Luke Salababa

Chaudhary Dedicates Achievements to Late Father

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

This is for you, Dad!”

These are the heartfelt words that Moiz Chaudhary uttered as he celebrated his achievements at the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL) graduation ceremony on Tuesday, 15 April 2025.

Chaudhary proudly received a gold medal and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education.

Tragically, the 30-year-old lost his father and his greatest supporter, Mukesh Chaudhary, just a month ago.

“These achievements are for my dad. He was my pillar of strength. He taught me to never stop learning. I wish he could share this moment with me,”

Chaudhary shared, as tears rolled down his cheeks.

As a teacher at Sigatoka Methodist Primary School for the past nine years, Chaudhary felt compelled to continue his education.

“I returned to study at FNU in 2023 after a nine-year break,” he reflected, his voice filled with emotion.

“It was my dad’s encouragement that pushed me. He instilled in me the belief that education is a lifelong journey.”

He vividly recalled his father’s words: “There is no end to education,” speaking of his desire to use his qualification to shape the minds of future generations.

“My aim is to inspire young minds to learn and grow.”



Moiz Chaudhary supported by his mother (left) and wife and child (right) with his gold medal and Postgraduate Diploma in Education
Photo: Luke Salababa

In a poignant twist, a week before his graduation at FNU, the father of two completed a Master’s in Psychology from the University of the South Pacific (USP).

“My dad always believed that Psychology would complement Education well. He wanted me to understand the minds of children better,” he added.

Today, Chaudhary carries his father’s legacy forward, honouring him with every step he takes in his educational journey.

His heart may ache for his father, but his pride and love shine brightly, reminding us all that family bonds endure beyond the grave.

From Humble Beginnings to the Courtroom

By **ERONI NAVUNISARAVI**

Achaal Artika Pratap, a proud daughter of Vunivau Settlement, Labasa, has become the first lawyer in her family! Raised in a humble background, Achaal was inspired by a deep desire to make a difference and give back to her community.

Today, she dedicates her success to her mother and brother, whose sacrifices and unwavering support have fueled her journey.

“Looking back on my journey at Fiji National University, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. FNU was not just where I studied — it was where I discovered my strength, my purpose, and my voice. Every challenge, every late night,

and every sacrifice has led me to this moment. Today, I stand tall — not just for myself, but for my family and my community in Labasa.”

She was part of the group of FNU GDLP students that were admitted to the bar on the 23rd of April, 2025.

Achaal was accompanied by her mother and other loved ones who were elated and proud of her achievement and believe that other women in the family will now follow suit.

Achaal’s story is a shining reminder that with courage, resilience, and heart, no dream is ever too far.

The legal fraternity welcomes a passionate new advocate!



Achaal Artika Pratap
Photo: Aniket Prasad

Age is Just a Number for Gold Medallist Ali

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

At 50 years old, Shirleen Sofia Ali has proven that age is merely a number.

This was after Ali won a gold medal and graduated with a Certificate in Hairdressing at the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL) graduation ceremony held on Tuesday, 15 April, at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

“This is the first time I have achieved a university qualification, and I never imagined it would come with a surprise in the form of a gold medal,” Ali shared, her eyes shining with joy.

“This achievement goes to Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala (GOD) for giving me the strength to pursue my education.”

Ali revealed that initially she hesitated to embark on this educational journey.

“I saw many people older than me graduating, and then

I thought, why not give it a try?” she said.

“For me to graduate and win a gold medal is a powerful reminder that it is never too late to pursue our dreams. “Education is for everyone, regardless of age.”

The Nakasi resident’s decision was also influenced by her supportive husband, Taufiq Ali, who encouraged her to take the leap.

“It was my husband’s idea for me to pursue this certificate,” she revealed.

“He stood by me as a pillar of strength, ensuring that I prioritised my education.”

Despite the challenges of balancing family responsibilities and studying, Ali remained determined.

“I have been in the hair styling industry for years, and this course has enhanced my knowledge,” she added.

“I hope that my story motivates others to believe in their potential and strive for their goals, proving that dreams can indeed come true at any age,” she added.



Graduate and gold medallist, Shirleen Sofia Ali with her husband, Taufiq Ali during the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL) graduation ceremony on Tuesday, 15 March, at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.
Photo: Luke Salababa

Mastering Nursing, Miles from Home

By **SELITA BOLANAVANUA**

Two years ago, Rodney Tabi decided to leave his family behind in Vanuatu and move to Fiji in pursuit of a dream. Last week, that dream came true when he graduated with a Master of Nursing in Emergency Nursing from the Fiji National University (FNU).

The journey wasn’t easy. Adjusting to a new country, balancing advanced studies, and carrying the emotional weight of being away from home came with many challenges. But for Rodney, every struggle was worth it.

“Leaving my family behind was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” he shared.

“There were days I missed home so much, but I reminded myself why I was here.”

Rodney’s postgraduate journey was filled with long nights, tight deadlines, and complex

assignments. Data collection for his research was especially tough, requiring time, patience, and a lot of effort. But through it all, he remained focused.

“Despite all the challenges, giving up was never an option. I knew I had a responsibility to finish what I started.”

Now a proud FNU graduate, Rodney is looking forward to returning home to Vanuatu, where he will join the nursing school as a tutor. He wants to use the skills and knowledge he gained in Fiji to support the next generation of nurses.

“I’m thankful to the Fiji National University for giving me this opportunity. I’ve learned so much, not just about emergency nursing, but also about myself,” he said.

As he returns to his home country, Rodney carries more than just a certificate, he carries hope for the future of nursing in Vanuatu.



Rodney Tabi
Photo: Rusiate Vada

“My Disability Doesn’t Define Me” – Bainikalou

By **WATI TALEBULA**

At first glance, Melika Roro Bainikalou’s story is one of quiet strength. But listen closely, and it becomes a powerful symphony of resilience, determination, and unwavering hope.

On 15 April, Bainikalou received her Certificate in Music (Level 4) from Fiji National University, which is an achievement that resonates far beyond the notes and melodies of her studies.

Her story is not just about music or graduation. It’s about dreaming without limits.

And it’s only just beginning.

For Bainikalou, who lives with partial vision, the moment marks not just academic success, but the triumph of a lifelong philosophy: one’s disability should never be a reason to abandon their dreams.

“Music has always been a part of me, and no matter the challenges, I knew I had to follow that path.”

Her journey hasn’t been without its difficulties.

Navigating university life with limited vision presented a unique set of obstacles, but Bainikalou found strength in support and herself.

She credits the university’s Disability Resource Centre for being a vital part of her academic journey, providing resources and encouragement that helped her thrive.

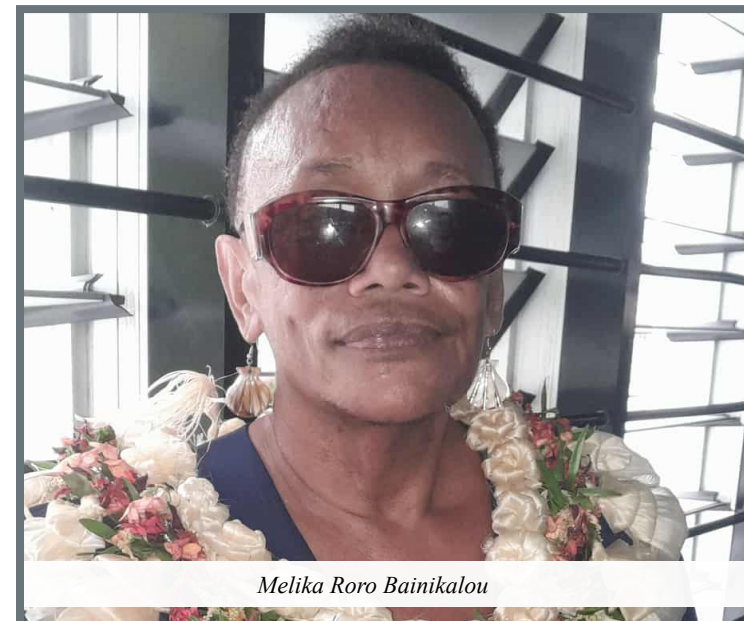
“They believed in me even on the days when I wasn’t sure I could do it.”

Now, as one chapter ends, Bainikalou is already setting the tempo for the next.

Her sights are set on joining one of the defence forces, where she hopes to continue serving with the same drive and dedication that has brought her this far.

“I want to keep pushing boundaries. My disability doesn’t define what I can or cannot do.”

In a world that often underestimates those who live with disabilities, Bainikalou stands as a bold counterpoint, an example of what can happen when perseverance meets opportunity.



Melika Roro Bainikalou

Pelenaisi Rauga Graduates at 30 Weeks Pregnant, Family's First University Graduate

By Selita Bolanavanua

For Pelenaisi Rauga, the journey to graduation wasn't a straight path. It came with years of sacrifice, unfinished dreams, and new beginnings, all while raising children and carrying the hopes of her family.

At 30 weeks pregnant with her fourth child, Pelenaisi walked proudly across the graduation stage to receive her Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management. The moment was emotional; it marked her first university qualification, and she became the first person in her family to graduate from university.

"Wearing that gown, I felt so proud. I've finally made my parents proud," she said. "I'm the first in my family to graduate, and it's rewarding."

Originally from Soso, Naviti, with maternal links to Fulaga in Lau, Pelenaisi's journey was one of quiet strength. Studying through an online programme meant late nights, juggling children, housework, and pregnancy. It wasn't easy, but she never gave up.

"I had to find my own time for classes. Sometimes when there is no babysitter, I'd take my son to school with me during my tutorials. It was tiring, but I knew why I was doing it."

She had once enrolled in an agriculture course but wasn't able to finish it due to personal challenges. That unfinished chapter stayed with her for years, until the

opportunity came again, this time with a leadership and management programme.

"I told myself; I have to finish this one. I didn't want to keep starting and stopping. And I wanted my kids to see that you can keep going, even if life doesn't go as planned."

For Pelenaisi, her children were at the heart of her motivation. Her goal wasn't just to earn a certificate, it was to set an example. She wanted them to know that even as a married woman with children, they could still dream big, push through, and succeed.

"I always remember what my parents used to tell me when I was small, finish your studies, become someone in life," she shared.

"Even after getting married and having children, I never forgot those words."

Her graduation ceremony was a turning point. For years, she had sat in the crowd at other people's graduations, clapping and quietly wishing that one day, she'd have her own moment on stage.

"Every time I attended one, I'd think, 'One day that will be me.' And when I finally walked across that stage, I couldn't stop smiling. I felt every step was for my parents, my husband, my children, and even for the younger ones in my family."

She dedicated her certificate to her family, especially the younger generation, encouraging them to aim higher and never stop learning.



Pelenaisi Rauga Graduates at 30 Weeks Pregnant
Photo: Rusiate Vada

By ROMEKA KUMARI

Ashaan Raniga celebrated dual milestones at the Fiji National University (FNU) graduation ceremony held at the Vodafone Arena on Wednesday, 16 April 2025.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Accounting and Finance, Raniga secured two prestigious gold medals—an achievement that left him both surprised and elated.

The first gold medal was awarded for his excellence in the Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Finance, while the second was bestowed upon him by Pherrus Pty (Fiji) Ltd as the Best Student in the same field.

"This is for my mum and dad," Ashaan said, as he wiped away tears.

"They have been my greatest support throughout these three years. I couldn't have achieved this without them. Winning the gold medals came as a complete surprise, I was shocked when my name was called out."

Reflecting on his journey, the 21-year-old acknowledged the challenges he faced transitioning from high school to university.

"At first, adapting to the university culture was quite difficult, as it was very different from the high school environment. However, I was fortunate to have an incredible set of lecturers who went above and beyond to support us," he said.

Eager to take his next steps, the Yalalevu resident from Ba expressed his aspirations to enter the workforce while also caring for his parents.

"My primary aim now is to secure a good job and take care of my parents," he said.

In a heartfelt conclusion, the former Xavier College student left current FNU students with an inspiring message: "Give your best and leave the rest to God."

His father, Sunil Raniga, beamed with pride as he spoke about his son's achievements.

"It's a joyous moment for our family. Ashaan is my only child, and we are incredibly proud of what he has accomplished. I always had faith in him," he said.

This double celebration not only marks a significant academic milestone for Raniga but also a testament to the unwavering support of his family.

Raniga Bags Double Gold Medal



Ashaan Raniga

Fuelled by Faith and Family

By WATI TALEBULA

For Vani Coa, graduation marked more than just a ceremonial milestone—it was a powerful celebration of resilience, sacrifice, and the unwavering strength of a mother's love.

Originally from Drekena Village in Rewa, with maternal ties to Lomanikoro, Rewa, Vani is the second youngest of four siblings and the first in her family to graduate from university. She earned a Bachelor of Science

in Fisheries from the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at the Fiji National University.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Vani described her achievement as "an exciting moment" and tearfully expressed her gratitude, acknowledging the strong support system that carried her through her academic journey.

"I thank the Lord for bringing me this far," she said, her voice filled with emotion. "My children are my biggest motivators," she shared.

Vani is a single mother of twins,

born during what was meant to be her final year of study in 2019.

Faced with the overwhelming responsibilities of new motherhood alongside the demands of academic life, she made the difficult decision to pause her studies. However, her story did not end there.

Encouraged by her supportive parents and fuelled by the love she holds for her children, Vani returned to complete her degree.

"My children are my biggest motivators," she shared.

"My parents really encouraged me to complete my studies, and my twins gave me the strength to keep going."

Her path was anything but easy, yet Vani believes that every challenge she faced served a purpose.

"Life is never meant to be smooth, and challenges are inevitable, but what matters is how you rise above them," she reflected.

Vani's journey is a testament to perseverance and the power of a

strong support system.

From sleepless nights as a new mother to long days spent in lecture halls, she defied the odds, not only for herself but for the little eyes watching her every move.

As she steps into the next chapter of her life, Vani's story stands as proof that with faith, family, and determination, no dream is beyond reach.

A Journey of Second Chances and Triumph

By CHRISTAL KAPOOR

Saverina Anastasia Kia'a Morris stands proudly as the first lawyer in her family.

A former student of Matua Programme (Nabua), Saverina's path to the legal profession has been shaped by resilience, courage, and a powerful second chance through the Matua Program.

"I want to dedicate my success to my family in Fiji and abroad, whose unwavering love and sacrifices carried me through," said an emotional Morris.

"The Matua Programme gave me a second chance, a chance to rewrite

my story and chase the dream I once thought was out of reach."

"FNU opened the doors that changed my life forever. This achievement is a reminder that it's never too late to rise, to fight for your dreams, and to make them a reality," added Morris.

Saverina's story is a shining reminder that with determination, faith, and opportunity, no dream is ever too distant to achieve. Today, she steps into the legal profession with pride, strength, and hope for a brighter tomorrow.

A Rural Teacher's Journey to a Master's Degree

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

For one rural teacher in Rakiraki, graduating with a Master's degree while juggling full-time teaching was not just a goal; it was a journey of resilience, purpose, and deep love for learning.

"When I stood on that stage, I didn't just see a certificate—I saw every early morning bus ride, every late night with a textbook, every quiet prayer whispered by my mother," said Zia Mehak Ali.

Ali's story began in the heart of Rakiraki, at Naria Primary School, where she discovered early on that every child learns differently.

"The more I gave to teaching, the more it asked of me," she reflected. This realisation sparked something within her, not just a desire for career growth, but a deeper urge to evolve as an educator and a human being.

"I wanted to understand the science and soul of teaching," she said. "I wanted to meet my students where they were, and for that, I had to grow beyond what I already knew."

Her pursuit of postgraduate study was a decision rooted in purpose. It was about becoming a better teacher, but also a better role model. Especially for the young girls in her community, she wanted her story to be a mirror reflecting what's possible.

The dual life of teacher and student was not without hardship.

"Juggling lesson plans with academic dead-

lines demanded immense discipline. I used to wake up before dawn to study and transform weekends into study retreats."

"There were days it felt impossible. But I kept reminding myself: progress, even when slow, is still progress."

Pursuing her Master's didn't just change how she taught; it reshaped how she viewed education entirely. Academic theories found their voice in her classroom.

"My rural perspective became my strength, compelling me to innovate with limited resources and engage more deeply with students' unique contexts," explained Ali.

"I realised education isn't about filling minds, it's about awakening them. In places where resources are scarce, creativity and empathy become your greatest tools."

Life in Rakiraki posed unique logistical and emotional challenges; unreliable internet, power outages, and the absence of academic networks made even the simplest tasks harder. Yet, every difficulty deepened her resolve.

"There were times I had to travel into town just to submit an assignment. But I've learned that resilience isn't about perfection, it's about persistence."

To other educators in rural Fiji who are contemplating further studies, Ali offers this heartfelt encouragement:

"Don't let geography define your destiny. You are enough. You are capable. Start small, start slow, but start."



Zia Mehak Ali

From Curiosity to Career

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

Unaisi Onoitonga, from Tubou, Lakeba in Lau, has always believed that life's most significant challenges come with equally meaningful rewards.

Recently graduating with a Diploma in Customs, she reflects on her journey with gratitude.

As the second youngest of four siblings, Unaisi's life has been shaped by the support of her family and her aspiration to forge an independent path.

Her decision to pursue a career in customs was inspired by a growing curiosity about the world around her.

"The news of what was happening in Fiji intrigued me. It sparked my interest, and I knew I wanted to be a part of it," she explains.

Financial constraints posed a significant concern, and she was uncertain how she would be able to afford her education.

"Financially, I couldn't manage it on my own. While my family could support me, I didn't want to burden them," she shares.

Fortunately, she was able to secure assistance through the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS), which enabled her to complete her studies without placing additional pressure on her family.

"When God leads the way, He guides us to the right path," Unaisi said.

It was this steadfast belief that carried her through difficult times, constantly reminding her that light awaits at the end of every tunnel.

Her advice to others, especially those facing discouragement, is both simple and profound: "Never give up. We all have talents. If I can do it, so can you. Always make the right decisions when you face challenges in life."

Having completed her Diploma in Customs, Unaisi now looks forward to applying her knowledge and skills to make a meaningful contribution to her field.

"Words can't describe how I felt when I graduated. It was a mixture of relief, accomplishment, and hope for the future," she shares.

Her graduation is not only a personal milestone but also a beacon of hope for others which demonstrates how the support of initiatives like TELS can transform lives and create brighter futures.



Unaisi Onoitonga

Airports Fiji Limited Backs FNU Foundation's Mission to Empower Students

By **NICOLETTE CHAMBERS**



Airports Fiji Limited CEO, Mesake Nawari and FNU Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, Professor Jimaima Lako

Airports Fiji Limited Chief Executive Officer, Mesake Nawari, has commended the Fiji National University (FNU) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, for her leadership in launching the FNU Foundation earlier this month at the University's Namaka Campus in Nadi.

The Foundation is a transformative initiative aimed at supporting underserved students across all FNU campuses in Fiji. Nawari, who was present at the launch, reflected on his upbringing in Nadi and the support he received during his educational journey.

"Personally, this is a great opportunity and having been born and brought up in Nadi, the challenges that I faced growing up – education, there were good people who were there, who supported me to be able to succeed in my education," Nawari said.

He went on to praise the University's leadership: "So, I see this as a great opportunity, and I thank the FNU Council and the Vice-Chancellor for

championing this initiative.

I would encourage anyone who wants to know more and wants to support, this is an opportunity that brings everybody together."

Nawari described the Foundation as an investment in the future of Fiji:

"I can't wait to see the stories that will come back, because that is going to be the receipt of our donations."

He urged all Fijians to support this promising initiative.

Also present at the launch, Dr Ronald Stone, Principal of Fulton Adventist University Church, echoed similar sentiments and highlighted the social impact of the Foundation:

"For me, this is 'justice at its best' where everyone can create equal opportunity for all people in education at FNU and for that we decided to come here and support this because we believe in creating equal opportunity for everyone in Fiji."

FNU has extended its appreciation to all stakeholders and individuals who pledged their support for underserved students at the University.

FNU Foundation Patron Opens Launch with \$10K

By **NICOLETTE CHAMBERS**

The Fiji National University (FNU) Foundation was officially launched by its patron and the Na Gone Turaga Bale, Na Tui Macuata, Ratu Wilame Maivalili Katonivere, who marked the occasion with a generous pledge of \$10,000.

The Foundation will prioritise several key initiatives, including Scholarships and Student Support, the Coffee Forward Initiative, the Veilomani Closet, and the Veilomani Food Pantry.

The launch event was held at FNU's Namaka Campus in Nadi.

In his remarks, the former President of Fiji highlighted the significance of the Foundation in supporting the holistic development and education of all Fijians.

"The FNU Foundation creates opportunities, breaks barriers, and offers all Fijians access to higher education and the ability to dream, to build, and ultimately to succeed," he echoed while delivering his address.

"The launch of the FNU Foundation stands firmly

in line with our national vision and international commitments, supporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which addresses 'Quality Education' and SDG 10, addressing 'Reduced Inequalities' as well as Fiji's National Development Plan, which prioritises human capital development and education as the foundation of our national progress."

FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, noted that the launch of the FNU Foundation was a historical one for the University and for Fiji.

"It is a day to praise God. Why? Because this is an event, and it's a cause that cannot happen if we do not believe that there is a God who has ordered us, that love is the most important," said Professor Nabobo-Baba.

"At FNU, we believe that we care for our people, that we remain honest, that we love, that we serve with excellence, we serve together.

"Students, you are the reason we are reminded every day that our job is to serve you."



Na Gone Turaga Bale, Na Tui Macuata, Ratu Wilame Maivalili Katonivere. Photo: Rusiate Vada

She added that the day embodied a commitment to include people, be equal, achieve equity and give opportunity to those who missed out.

"Education is about the opportunity to achieve better and to develop better," she highlighted.

The FNU reiterates its commitment to supporting underserved students by providing accessible, inclusive, and quality education that empowers them to achieve their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Fijian Teachers Association Expresses Full Support Towards FNU Foundation

By **NICOLETTE CHAMBERS**



Fijian Teachers Association (FTA) General Secretary Paula Manumanunitoga

The Fijian Teachers Association (FTA) General Secretary, Paula Manumanunitoga has assured the association's full support towards the Fiji National University (FNU) Foundation.

The FNU Foundation is the newest charitable heart of the university, championed by the FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba. The Foundation's purpose is to assist vulnerable students in all campuses, ensuring that their learning journey at the FNU is not affected by any means.

Manumanunitoga said the FTA was grateful for the initiative, pledging a total of \$10,000 yearly towards the FNU Foundation.

"There were so many ideas coming up, whether we at the FTA should provide scholarships for indigenous Fijians but since this has come up, we have pledged which we thought would probably assist the indigenous Fijians who come from the remote islands, and those children, who may have very little source of income coming from a low socioeconomic background," he said.

"The FTA is happy to make this pledge and make a commitment to assist those unfortunate children."

He added that the FTA always championed education in Fiji, and now with the introduction of the FNU Foundation, it has opened another door for the association to contribute towards a worthy cause.

Manumanunitoga also made a personal pledge of \$2000 yearly.

FNU Students' Association (FNUSA) Vice President of Natabua Campus and Bachelor of Education (Primary) third-year student, Ratu Jese Nabunobuno, said the launch of the FNU Foundation was a timely one for all students.

"I have been a student at FNU for three years now, and I have been part of the FNUSA since 2023. I have been working with underserved students, and I know the FNU Foundation will greatly help the students," Nabunobuno highlighted.

The FNU is committed to providing avenues for all students, enabling them to become successful in their academic journey.

SPORTS

FNU Gym Instructor Claims Dual Victory

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

In an absolute display of determination, Jope Kolinivalu, a dedicated gym instructor at Fiji National University (FNU), celebrated double success at his graduation ceremony.

The 31-year-old proudly walked across the stage to receive both a Diploma in Sports Science and a Certificate IV in Sports Science from the College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL).

The event took place on Tuesday, 15 April, at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

Kolinivalu hails from Mataso Nakorotubu in Rakiraki, where his passion for fitness and education ignited at a young age.

“Ever since I can remember, I wanted to upgrade my qualification and dedicate it to my parents back in the village,” Kolinivalu said.

“I did not just do this for myself; it’s for them, too. They’ve sacrificed so much for my education, and achieving this is my way of giving back.”

As the youngest of four siblings, Kolinivalu has often felt the weight

of family expectations. However, he has turned this pressure into motivation.

“When my parents allowed me to come down to Suva to study, they reminded me of the family name I carry on my shoulders and the importance of making that name proud. I truly feel that I have accomplished that today.”

Becoming a gym instructor was always my dream,” he said with pride in his eyes.

“Education opens doors, and now that I have these qualifications, I can deepen my understanding of the field I love, which is sports and gym.”

Kolinivalu also emphasised the importance of having formal credentials in an increasingly competitive industry.

“Having these qualifications will allow me to teach others better and contribute more effectively to the fitness community in Fiji.”

His journey to success is not a new one; Kolinivalu first graduated from FNU in 2017 with a Certificate III in Sports Science.

His perseverance and commitment have made him a respected figure among his peers.

As the president of the FNU Sports Science student association, he has also taken on a leadership role, advocating for fellow students and encouraging them to pursue their passions.

In reflecting on his journey, Kolinivalu offered advice to aspiring athletes and students alike: “Never underestimate your dreams. Every step you take, no matter how small, is a step towards your goals. Embrace the challenges, and you will achieve great things.”

Jope Kolinivalu with his Diploma in Sports Science and a Certificate IV in Sports Science during the Fiji National University (FNU) graduation ceremony on Tuesday, 15 April, at the Vodafone Arena in Suva. **PC:** Romeka Kumari



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, Navinesh Kumar.
Design & Layout: Penioni Kolinisau.
Division Head: Acting Director Marketing and Communications, Takena Alexander.
Writers: Wati Talebula, Nicloette Chambers, Christal Kapoor, Selita Bolanavanua, Romeka Kumari.

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      