

EMBRACING GROWTH, FINDING PURPOSE

FNU to Honour First iTaukei PhD Graduate

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

History will be made next month when Fiji National University (FNU) confers a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) degree to its first-ever iTaukei student.

The soon-to-be 'Dr Kasanita Nayasi' who hails from the Yavusa Korolevu in the Village of Barotu, Saivou in Ra, said her milestone achievement was one to celebrate.

This marks a significant achievement not only for the university but also for the broader academic and indigenous communities in the country.

Nayasi shares maternal links to the Yavusa o Lai'oa in the Village of Naivu'u in Tokaimalo, Ra.

FNU'S First PhD Student

Around this time last year, FNU made history by conferring its first-ever PhD degree to a local student, Dr Jasmine Hussein. Now, history is set to be made once again.

Nayasi said, to be the first iTaukei PhD graduate and the first from FNU's School of Education was an honour.

"This achievement is nothing short of a celebration of the goodness of God and the fulfilment of His promises of provision, protection and faithfulness for me – so in all things, I give honour where it is due," she said.

Continues on Page 5

WHAT'S INSIDE

Page 2

- FNU FOUNDATION - A Groundbreaking Initiative to Empower Future Generations.

Page 3

- From Naitasiri to Nasautoka: Sakaraia's Quest for Certification.
- Couple Builds Brighter Future through FNU's Free Education Programme.

Page 4

- Vice-Chancellor's Message for Graduating Students.

Page 5

- FNU to Honour First iTaukei PhD Graduate.
- The Oceania Planetary Health

Forum Aims to Foster Healthier Planet.

Page 6

- 500 Women Breaking Barriers.
- Kelera Breaking Barriers in Traditionally Male-Dominated Field.

Page 7

- The FNU Project with TFL Hailed a Success
- FNU's New Agreement Expands Opportunities for International Students.

Page 8

- FNU Student from Vanuatu Excels in Both Sports and Studies.

Kasanita Nayasi
Photo: Nicolette Chambers.

FNU FOUNDATION - A Groundbreaking Initiative to Empower Future Generations



Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.
Photo: Luke Salababa

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

The Fiji National University (FNU) is set to launch its highly anticipated FNU Foundation, a transformative initiative aimed at expanding educational opportunities, funding groundbreaking research, and strengthening community partnerships. Designed to drive long-term growth and innovation, the Foundation will serve as a significant platform for scholarships, grants, and development projects that empower students and faculty alike.

The official launch of the Foundation will take place on 2 April 2025 in Namaka, Nadi, with Na Turaga Bale Na Tui Macuata and also the patron of the Foundation, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere as the chief guest, highlighting the national significance of this initiative. This launch will mark a pivotal moment in the university’s journey towards expanding access to quality education and strengthening its support for students.

FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, emphasised the importance of investing in education.

“Education is the greatest equaliser, and through the FNU Foundation, we are creating opportunities for students to achieve their dreams, regardless of financial challenges. Every contribution, big or small-makes a meaningful difference in shaping a brighter future,” said the Vice-Chancellor.

The Foundation focuses on several key areas, including:

- **Scholarships and Student Support** - Ensuring students from disadvantaged backgrounds have

access to education without financial burdens.

- **Research and Innovation** - Funding groundbreaking research that addresses pressing issues in the Pacific region and beyond.

- **Community Engagement** - Strengthening partnerships and outreach programs to foster sustainable development.

Professor Nabobo-Baba reiterated the significance of community involvement, adding, “FNU is not just an institution; it is a catalyst for change. When we invest in education, we invest in the future of Fiji and the Pacific. The Foundation is a bridge that connects generous individuals and organisations to the dreams of our students.”

The Foundation welcomes contributions from individuals, businesses, and alumni who wish to make a lasting impact. Supporters can contribute through direct donations, sponsorships, or volunteering their time and expertise.

“When we come together, we create ripples of change,” Professor Nabobo-Baba said. “I invite you to be part of this journey with us. Your generosity will transform lives, create opportunities, and build a better future for all.”

For more information or to donate, contact the FNU Foundation:

- **Phone:** +679 339 4000
- **Email:** FNUFoundation@fnu.ac.fj
- **Website:** www.fnu.ac.fj/foundation/
- **Address:** 5½ Miles Kings Road, Nasinu, Suva, Fiji.



Scholarship and Student Support • Coffee Forward Initiative • Veilomani Closet • Veilomani Food Pantry

Empowering Futures. Building Tomorrow

Follow Us:      

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

For more information on how you can contribute, please visit www.fnu.ac.fj/foundation/ or contact the Foundation team at FNUFoundation@fnu.ac.fj or scan the QR Code.





From Naitasiri to Nasautoka: Sakaraia's Quest for Certification

By **SELITA BOLANAVANUA**

Sakaraia Baleibuca, 30, from Naloto, Verata, with maternal ties to Nasautoka, Wainibuka, has always been driven by a desire to better himself and his community.

For nearly a decade, Sakaraia has worked as an admin officer, but despite his years of experience, he had never received formal certification for the work he was so passionate about.

After working at two schools, he is currently an admin officer at Nailagobokola Primary School in Nadovu, Wainimala, Naitasiri.

When Sakaraia learned about the two-week Community-Based Non-Formal Education programme offered by the Fiji National University's (FNU) National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC), he knew it was an opportunity he couldn't pass up. He received the news through a phone call from Nasautoka, and without

hesitation, he applied for leave from his school to attend the Front Office Fundamentals course. On the first Monday of the course, he embarked on a long journey, leaving Naitasiri in the early hours of the morning to ensure he arrived in Nasautoka on time to attend the class.

"I didn't want to miss this opportunity, because for years I've been doing admin work without a certificate," Sakaraia said. "This course has given me the confidence and knowledge I needed, and with this certificate, I know it will take me to a better place."

Sakaraia credits his headteacher for supporting his decision to attend the programme. He is now looking forward to returning to his school with newfound pride and a certificate in hand.

"I feel so proud and blessed," Sakaraia said. "This is more than just a certificate; it's a step toward securing a brighter future."

Congratulations, Sakaraia!

Sakaraia Baleibuca after receiving his certificate at Nasautoka Village.
Photo: Selita Bolanavanua.



Couple Builds Brighter Future through FNU's Free Education Programme

By **SELITA BOLANAVANUA**

Lavenia Vicokosi and her husband, Solomoni Kadavu Uluinavucu, were not ones to shy away from opportunities that could help them improve their lives. When they heard about the two-week Community-Based Non-Formal Education Programme organised by the Fiji National University's (FNU) National Training and Productive Centre (NTPC), they knew immediately that it was something they couldn't afford to miss.

The programme was held in Nasautoka, in Ra, just a stone's throw from their doorstep. With its free offerings and promises of practical skills to help local communities, it was an opportunity they felt lucky to have so close to home. Lavenia and Solomoni have two young children and were always on the lookout for ways to earn more and provide a better future for them.

"I wouldn't want to miss this free education opportunity for anything," Lavenia said. "The fact that it's here, at our doorstep, and it's free, it's a chance I don't think many get. We wanted to make the most of it."

Turning Passion to Business

Over the course of the two weeks, the couple was exposed to a wealth of knowledge, each in their own respective fields. Lavenia immersed herself in the art of screen printing, gaining hands-on experience in artwork and design. She had always loved art and had an innate creativity, but the course gave her the practical skills and knowledge she needed to turn her passion into a viable business.

"I've learned so much," Lavenia added. "Before, I didn't know where to start. Now I have

the confidence to open my own screen-printing business. I want to design shirts, bags, and other items, and sell them to help support my family."

Solomoni, too, found the course transformative. As someone who had always been interested in agriculture, he knew that managing soil properly was key to sustainable farming. His course in Sustainable Land Use Management offered him insights into how to make the best use of the land while preserving its health for future generations.

Solomoni was eager to implement what he had learned on their land, knowing it would not only boost their own harvests but could also be a potential source of income. "The programme has been eye-opener for me," Solomoni said. "I've learned how to better manage our soil, which will not only help us grow food for our family but also make our land more productive. I hope to use these skills to start a small farming business that can support us."

Thank You NTPC/FNU

The couple thanked NTPC and FNU for the opportunity to learn. They were especially thankful for the local community-based approach that made the programme accessible to people like them who may not have had the means to travel far for training.

"We are so thankful to FNU and NTPC for bringing this programme to our community," Lavenia said. "It's given us the tools to move forward and create a better future for our children. This is a great way for people like us to learn and grow."

The FNU's commitment to accessible education is fostering a culture of continuous learning. Through these programmes, couples are building brighter futures, one skill at a time.



Lavenia Vicokosi and her husband Solomoni Kadavu Uluinavucu with their son after receiving their certificates at Nasautoka.
Photo: Selita Bolanavanua.

Graduation

CEREMONY



APRIL 2025

Tuesday 15 - Thursday 17
Vodafone Arena, Suva



Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba during the 2024 December Graduation.

Photo: Penioni Kolinisau.

Vice-Chancellor's Message for Graduating Students

Dear Graduating Students,

As we approach the culmination of your academic journey at the Fiji National University (FNU), it is with immense pride and joy that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each one of you on reaching this significant milestone. Graduation is not merely a ceremony; it is a celebration of your hard work, perseverance, and dedication over the years. You have navigated challenges, embraced opportunities, and emerged with knowledge and skills that will serve you well in your future endeavours.

This journey has not only equipped you with academic qualifications but has also fostered personal growth and development. Each of you have contributed to the diverse tapestry of our university community, enriching the lives of your peers and lecturers alike. As you prepare to step into the next phase of your lives, remember that you carry with you not just your educational achievements, but also the values and experiences gained during your time at FNU.

As you embark on new adventures, I encourage you to remain curious and open-minded. The world is filled with possibilities, and I have every confidence that you will pursue your passions with the same enthusiasm you have demonstrated during your studies. Whether you continue your education, enter the workforce, or explore new paths, I urge you to make a positive impact in whatever you

choose to do.

We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments on graduation day, which will be held on the 15 - 17 of April 2025 at the Vodafone Arena in Suva—a fitting tribute to your hard work and determination. Your university family is immensely proud of you, and we are excited to witness the bright futures that await each and everyone of you.

Congratulations once again and see you on graduation day!

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba
Vice-Chancellor
Fiji National University



From Page 1

Nayasi is a Lecturer in Education at FNU’s College of Humanities, Education, and Law (CHEL), under the Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education (ECE), where she has been teaching since 2017.

Her expertise lies in Language Study (iTaukei), and she also teaches Educational Research, Curriculum Studies, and Ethics.

Humble beginnings is where it all started for the former Xavier College student.

“Growing up, we didn’t always have what we wanted but we sure had everything we needed. My father made sure we remained grounded and that we knew our roots and visited family often. He didn’t always have much money, but he made sure we were taken care of and that our Vanua and Church obligations were looked after,” Nayasi said.

The Journey

Prior to commencing her PhD journey in 2021, Nayasi sat her husband down to discuss her biggest next step in life.

It wasn’t an easy one for her.

“I, of course had a very candid conversation with my husband as he was going to be footing most of our expenses in the next three years. He knew it was something I wanted to do, and I was provided with a great opportunity to pursue it. He gave his full support and I am quite grateful to him for that,” she said.

“While doing my Masters, I started looking for Scholarship opportunities and was fortunate to be awarded a full time HDR (Higher Degree by Research) Scholarship from FNU the following year.

“The most fun I had in my three years of study was during my data collection and analysis phase where I spent seven months in

my koro ni vasu and the nearby school to conduct my data collection – it remains my proudest moment(s) as I had the opportunity to study my own people, their ways of knowing and teaching, document them and present them in academia.”

She remains eternally grateful to the Vanua o Naivu’u and Naraviravi, specifically the Yavusa Lai’oa and Koroma’ua for the opportunity.

“Although it wasn’t always easy to be an insider-outsider researcher, it didn’t deter my will to complete my thesis and give back to my people. I got through my mid-candidature, completion seminar and Viva successfully,” she said.

Nayasi shared the two elements that motivated her to complete her PhD Degree was - the many stereotypical thinking about iTaukei learners and an education area to specialise in to better serve her people.

Nayasi added FNU’s CHEL allowed access for her to contextual knowledge and expertise (in the form of iTaukei scholars – Professors and Associate Professors) that she wouldn’t have found elsewhere. FNU was the best option for her.

Thesis Background

Her thesis was based on ‘Vanua pedagogies—the indigenous knowledge systems and teaching practices of the iTaukei people—can be integrated into the Fijian primary school curriculum to enhance the academic performance of iTaukei students.’

Nayasi’s advise to women is ‘as women and young girls, your voices and experiences are valuable, and education strengthens your ability to contribute meaningfully to your family, community, and society.’

Her Principal Supervisor, Dr Victor Alasa and Dr Taraivini Raiula said Kasanita’s PhD journey exemplified exceptional commitment, hard work, willingness to learn and an outstanding scholarly disposition.

“Her groundbreaking research offers transformative contributions to pedagogical strategies for her community and indigenous peoples globally.

“Her work challenges conventional educational approaches, urging a rethinking of procedures to better serve all learners. We are super proud of her! Congratulations, Kasa!,” they highlighted.

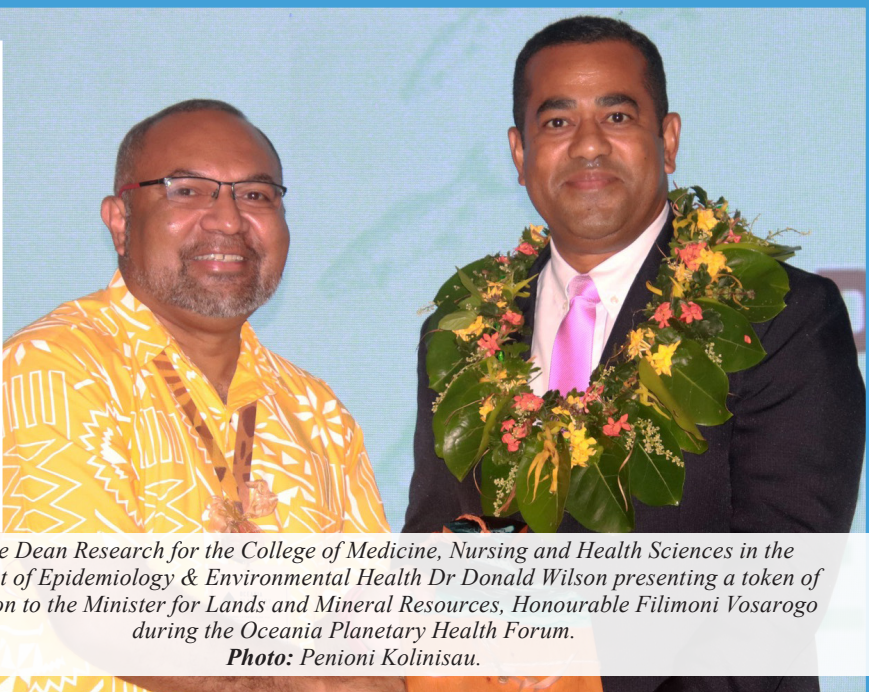
She also looks forward to graduating next month as the real work of giving back to her people will begin.

The CHEL graduation ceremony will take place on Tuesday, 15 April from 9.00am at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.



Kasanita Nayasi
Photo: Nicolette Chambers.

The Oceania Planetary Health Forum Aims to Foster A Healthier Planet



Associate Dean Research for the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences in the Department of Epidemiology & Environmental Health Dr Donald Wilson presenting a token of appreciation to the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Honourable Filimoni Vosarogo during the Oceania Planetary Health Forum.
Photo: Penioni Kolinisau.

By WATI TALEBULA

The Oceania Planetary Health Forum (OPHF) had convened a meeting with experts, for three-days of insightful discussions and collaborative action to promote a healthier planet and population.

The forum is being jointly hosted by the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR), the University of Sydney, Monash University, and Wildlife Conservation Society.

Minister for Lands and Mineral

Resources, Honourable Filimoni Vosarogo, has called on participants to unite in building a healthier, more resilient Pacific.

The theme of the OPHF is: “Embracing Vanua as a Planetary Health Principle.”

“Together, let us not only create policies but also pathways toward a flourishing future for our people, our land, and our planet.

“For us in Fiji and across the Pacific, the concept of Vanua—which embodies the sacred relationship between people, place, and identity—is not just a concept or philosophy, but a way of life,” Honourable Vosarogo said.

“Pacific Island nations are the guardians of vast ocean territories, stewards of unique ecosystems, and leaders in advocating for climate action. Our voice is crucial in shaping the various elements that constitute the global planetary health discourse.

“Our efforts must be rooted in both scientific rigor and cultural wisdom. For far too long, indigenous knowledge has been undervalued in mainstream policy frameworks.

“However, our ancestors navigated the vast Pacific, cultivated sustainable food systems, and nurtured biodiversity long before the modern conservation era.

“It is time we recognise that traditional ecological knowledge is not only relevant, but also essential to contemporary planetary health solutions.”

Former President of the Republic of Kiribati, Anote Tong, emphasised the commitments of the Pacific and Oceania to planetary health, and how regional strategies could benefit from a more coordinated

planetary health approach.

FNU’s Strategic Plan 2021-2026 promotes Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience and Sustainability.

FNU recognises the adverse impacts of climate change experienced locally and globally.

In support of Fiji’s contribution to the Paris Agreement, FNU, as a dual-sector university with a stronghold in TVET and Higher Education, is committed to playing a key role in contributing to the global target.

500 Women Breaking Barriers



Students from Adi Cakobau School and Marist Brothers High School engage in opening a car's engine under the guidance of an instructor at the Fiji National University's (FNU) Derrick Campus in Samabula on Friday, 15 March.
Photo: Vetaia Dakua.



High School Students participating at the TVET First programme at the Fiji National University's (FNU) Derrick Campus in Samabula.
Photo: Vetaia Dakua.

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

More than 500 young women from four all-girls school came together to participate in the Fiji National University's (FNU) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) First Programme. This is a groundbreaking initiative designed to equip students with hands-on technical and vocational education across 26 specialised workshops at FNU's Derrick campus.

Traditionally, technical and vocational education programmes were dominated by

men, with industries like automotive, electrical and construction works, considered off-limits for women. However, through TVET First Programme, young women in Fiji are challenging gender norms.

Through the College of Engineering and Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (CETVET), the TVET First Programme, was launched at the FNU's Derrick campus on Friday, 7 March.

Every Friday, students from the five schools, Saint Joseph Secondary School, Ballantine Memorial Secondary School, DAV Girls College, Adi Cakobau School,

and Marist Brothers High School explore opportunities in engineering and other vocational areas.

"We want to challenge the traditional view that TVET is secondary option," said Salabogi Mavoa, Dean for CETVET. Mavoa further stated that this vibrant mix reflects a significant shift in perceptions, as female students aspire to careers that were once considered out of reach. "The impact of this initiative is evident, as over 600 students including the boy's school, have shown an enthusiastic interest in vocational education, and the numbers are steadily rising."

"I spoke to some of the girls, and they relayed their excitement about what they are learning. They are filled with hope and ambition. "We saw female schools stepping up to participate, and this is fantastic," Mavoa said.

The programme will continue until 25 April, ensuring that each participant gains skills that will help them enter the workforce.

FNU's TVET First Programme, is not just about technical skills – it's about inspiring confidence, fostering resilience, and opening doors for young women in Fiji.

Kelera's Engineering Dream Takes Off with TVET First

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

Kelera Bureicia is making strides participating in the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Technical, Vocational, and Training's (CETVET) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) First Programme.

She is a Year 11 student at Adi Cakobau School, one of the many young females taking part in the 25 weeks TVET First programme at Derrick campus in Samabula.

"It's my first ever time to participate in such a programme and its an eye opener for me," Bureicia said with a sparkle in her eye.

"This programme has allowed me to better understand my ambition of becoming a mechanical engineer."

Studying subjects such as Technical Drawing, Geography, Computer, Mathematics, and English, Bureicia is determined to pursue her dream of becoming a mechanical engineer.

"I know I'm on the right path, and I can't wait to learn more about the fascinating world

of engineering," she said.

As the youngest of five siblings, Bureicia is eager to break barriers and set a new precedent in her family.

"I want to be the first female in my family to become an engineer," an ambitious Bureicia said.

"This opportunity has given me the chance to learn the basics of mechanical engineering and to build skills that will take me far."

Her enthusiasm is visible as she reflects on her journey so far.

"Every lesson brings me closer to my dream. I believe that with hard work and determination, anything is possible."

Bureicia's journey highlights the importance of supporting girls in Technical and Vocational Education, proving that determination knows no bounds.

She is a beacon of inspiration, paving the way for future generations to follow in her footsteps.

With the support of FNU, young women like Kelera, are proving that talent and determination knows no gender.



Kelera Bureicia eager to gain hands on experience at the TVET First programme at the Fiji National University's (FNU) Derrick Campus in Samabula.
Photo: Romeka Kumari.

"I know I'm on the right path, and I can't wait to learn more about the fascinating world of engineering."



Successful industry research collaboration between the School of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at the College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET) researchers and Telecom Fiji Limited (TFL).
Photo: Silika Damu.

The FNU Project with TFL Hailed A Success

By WATI TALEBULA

Telecom Fiji Limited (TFL) is eager to collaborate on more projects with the Fiji National University (FNU) in the near future.

This follows the successful completion of an industry research project by a team of researchers from the School of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at the College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), in collaboration with TFL.

The project focused on designing and building an innovative remote fuel level monitoring system. The objective of the project was to provide TFL with real-time insights into fuel storage and consumption patterns in tanks located at remote sites that operate generators.

TFL’s Chief Technical Officer, Mesake Tuinabua, described it as a remarkable achievement to reach this significant milestone in the project.

The system was specifically designed to detect fuel leakage or theft, helping the

company reduce downtime and better understand business risks and opportunities. It also enables the pursuit of tank capacity optimisation strategies through consistent and reliable data.

“As we initially discussed with the FNU project team, most of Telecom’s remote stations operate off the power grid and rely on generators running 24/7. Therefore, Telecom is seeking a fuel monitoring system solution that ensures power continuity, prevents fuel theft and fraud, optimises fuel logistics, and reduces maintenance costs,” Tuinabua said.

“We have been collaborating with FNU on this project for almost two years, from the initial discussions through every phase of its development. To ensure its success, we have also assigned a dedicated Telepower Engineer to work closely with the FNU project team.”

First Major Project

Tuinabua said that this is one of the first major projects in which TFL and FNU have collaborated.

“Telecom Fiji is committed to partnering with major universities such as FNU in the field of technology research and development, fostering innovation and advancement,” he added.

The College of Engineering and TVET Acting Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Satyanand Singh, emphasised the importance of monitoring fuel levels and consumption of generators at remote locations for the efficient operation of TFL’s cell towers and base stations.

“Traditional on-site monitoring methods are time-consuming and resource-intensive, making a reliable remote monitoring solution highly desirable.

“This collaborative research project has designed, developed, and formulated a roll-out plan to implement an IoT-enabled fuel monitoring system for TFL, providing real-time insights into fuel usage, storage, and supply chain management,” Singh said.

“The project involved a comprehensive investigation and analysis of suitable transducers, transmitters, receivers, and micro-

processors to design an efficient monitoring system. Advanced platforms such as the Internet of Things (IoT) have been integrated to enhance fuel level tracking, optimise generator performance, and improve overall resource management.

“By leveraging IoT technologies, the system provides TFL with real-time fuel level data, automated alerts, and remote access to consumption trends, enabling predictive analytics and proactive decision-making.”

The Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Professor Paul Ade Iji, emphasised the significance of the industry collaborative research project and congratulated the CETVET team for successfully achieving the project objectives.

The CETVET research team included Dr Satyanand Singh, Dr Ronesh Sharma, Dr Shiu Kumar, Prof Tibor Pasinszki, Dr Kajal Kothari, Dr Bhanu Pratap Soni, Shivneel Chand, Nauneet Menon, Nischal Chandra, Shamal Chand, Pranid Reddy, Vinay Maharaj, and Ravendra Chand from TFL, who served as key industry partner for the project.

FNU's New Agreement Expands Opportunities for International Students

By NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing between the Fiji National University (FNU) and Australian Vocational Management, trading as Study Pacific, will enable international students to study at FNU’s Nadi Campus in Bonunaqwele.

FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, highlighted during her address at the official signing that regionalism and globalism, through educational tourism, could promote world peace.

“International student tourism, I believe, is the way forward,” she said.

“Back in 1985, as a university student, we believed in the value of regionalism. Students who travel the world tend to

perform better academically, as textbooks provide knowledge, but real-world travel offers the best education,” Professor Nabobo-Baba explained.

“At FNU, by welcoming international students, we are expressing our intellectual aspirations—to bring students from across the globe to Fiji and to various campuses around the country. This, we believe, is the way forward.”

She also noted the potential benefits of fostering connections with Asia.

“I am confident that Fijian and Pacific students will gain countless opportunities as they interact with their international peers across all our campuses, particularly at the FNU Bonunaqwele Nadi Campus,” she added.

“Our students will benefit immensely

from engaging with international counterparts. For FNU and Fiji, we aim to continue positioning ourselves as a leading destination for international education in the Pacific.”

Professor Nabobo-Baba also pointed out that educational tourism is an emerging trend with significant potential, adding that Study Pacific is a key partner and an ideal platform for showcasing what FNU has to offer.

“With Study Pacific and under this comprehensive and robust MOA, everything will be covered—from personalised student counselling and visa processing to accommodation arrangements. In short, Study Pacific will ensure that students receive seamless support throughout their educational journey at

FNU,” she said.

“This partnership isn’t just about student recruitment; it’s about creating a mutually beneficial collaboration.

“It will elevate FNU’s global visibility, attract talented students, and foster cross-cultural exchanges that will enrich the academic and social fabric of our university.”

Study Pacific’s Chairman, Renjith Joseph, emphasised that Fiji has the potential to become a gateway to the world.

“When international students come to the country, the benefits extend beyond financial gains. The entire community will prosper, as students will seek accommodation, food, and transport—this will spur substantial growth within local communities,” he said.



From left: Australian Vocational Management, trading as Study Pacific Director of Operations, Shanmukha Bhuravarjhdla, Study Pacific Chairman, Renjith Joseph, Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba and FNU’s Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching, Professor Jimaima Lako following the signing of the MOA between FNU and Study Pacific at FNU’s Nadi campus in Bonunaqwele.
Photo: Nicolette Chambers

SPORTS

FNU Student from Vanuatu Excels in Both Sports and Studies

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

Balancing academic and sports is no easy feat, but for Sonia Lava, second-year student at the Fiji National University (FNU) originally from Ambae Province in Vanuatu, it has become a way of life. Sonia Lava, now 21, has been playing for the national team since she was 18, is a talented defender for the Vanuatu National Women’s Basketball team, is striking the right balance between her passion for sport and her education.

Pursuing a degree in Bachelor of Science in Forestry at the Koronivia campus, FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), Lava has managed to excel both in the classroom and on the field.

“I love basketball, and at the same time, I have a dream to pursue in life which is to become a forestry officer,” Lava said. She believes that sports are crucial for students. “I feel that to have a positive mindset, sports are equally important for us students,” she said.

“I believe that sports and education can go hand in hand.”

Despite the challenges of juggling with coursework and intense training sessions, the determined student remains committed to achieving success in both areas.

“I live by the faith that students who engage in physical activity often develop a better mindset and learn valuable life skills.”

“In sports, like in life, you must play with heart and purpose.”

This determination drives her to manage her time effectively, ensuring she excels in both areas.

“Training is essential for me,” she said aiming for a spot on the national team at the 2025 Pacific Mini Games, which will be held in Palau from June 29 to July 9.

Having grown up in Vanuatu, Lava developed a passion for basketball at a young age and was inspired to pursue higher education in Fiji to gain better opportunities.

Since arriving at FNU, she has made a name for herself as a dedicated sportswoman and disciplined student.

“Although, I am far from my home, I continue to train with my regional peers on campus.”

Lava serves as an inspiring example of how pursuing an education while dedicating time to sport can lead to personal growth and achievement.

“Every training session makes me stronger, both as an athlete and a student,” she added.

“Whatever setback I encounter on the court is a lesson that prepares me for challenges ahead.”

As she balances her duties, she remains focused on her goals for both the court and her career.

Lava’s journey serves as an inspiration to fellow students, proving that with hard work and determination, it is possible to succeed both academically and athletically.

*Photo Caption: Sonia Lava during a training session with the Vanuatu National Women’s Basketball team.
Photo: Vanuatu Basketball Federation.*



FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



FNU Gym Opening Hours

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

Multi-Purpose Court Operating Hours

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

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

INSIDE FNU is a monthly newspaper which aims to promote the University’s activities to the wider community. This newsletter is produced by the Public Relations and Communications team at the Division of Marketing and Communications.

Publisher: Fiji National University
Editor: Manager Public Relations and Communications, 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