

Outreach with Impact

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Dedicated to her learning journey, Ishanvi is one of the three deaf students in her class and dreams of becoming a sign language teacher. Photo: Navinesh Kumar

“Different, Not Less”

Ishanvi's Dream Shines Bright at Nasavusavu Special School

BY NAVINESH KUMAR

Nine-year-old Ishanvi Prasad greeted the Fiji National University (FNU) Outreach Team with a warm smile and a determined spirit during their recent visit to Nasavusavu Special School in Savusavu – a place where dreams are nurtured and challenges are met with courage.

Born with a hearing impairment, Ishanvi's story is one of hope, resilience, and a mother's unwavering love. Her mother, Abhikashni Devi Ram, shared that when Ishanvi was just two years old, they realised she had special needs. Since then, Abhikashni has accompanied her daughter

to school every day, supporting her learning journey and advocating for inclusive education.

“She picks up what her teachers teach her very quickly,” Abhikashni said proudly. “She loves school and wants to become a sign language teacher one day.”

Ishanvi is one of the three deaf students in a class of 35 children with special needs, but that has not held her back. In fact, her enthusiasm has inspired the entire class to learn sign language, a milestone that Acting Head of School, Inise Tawaketini, considers a significant achievement.

Tawaketini, who has been teaching at Nasavusavu Special School since 2018, leads a small team of dedicated educators,

though none are formally trained in special education.

“One of the major challenges we face is that our teachers are trained in general special education but are not specialised,” she explained. “Every child here has unique needs — some struggle with behaviour, others with speech, mobility, or cognition. So we adapt. We incorporate movement activities between classes to manage behaviour and teach literacy and numeracy at a slower, more patient pace.”

The students range from 7 to 24 years old, with tailored pathways for each child. Those aged 9 to 15 are placed in transition classes where their potential to move into mainstream schools is assessed. Others who

continue to face academic challenges are guided toward vocational training, offering them practical, skills-based learning to build future independence.

“Every child has potential,” Tawaketini affirmed. “And every child deserves to be seen for who they are, not what they lack. Ishanvi is a perfect example of that. She's bright, she's curious, and she's passionate about learning. Her needs may be different, but she is not less.” She also offered a heartfelt message to the wider community, urging parents and caregivers to overcome stigma around disability.

Continues on Page 2



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Students and teachers of Nasavusavu Special School join the FNU Outreach Team for a group photo during their visit to Savusavu. Photo: Navinesh Kumar

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“There is still a reluctance in our communities, some parents don’t want to send their special needs children to

a special school because of fear or shame. But this school is like any other. Our students laugh, learn, play, and dream here too. They deserve that chance.” The FNU Outreach Team’s visit forms part of the University’s wider

commitment to inclusive education and community engagement. By meeting young learners like Ishanvi and educators like Tawaketini, the team witnessed firsthand the vital role that special schools play in empowering every Fijian

child, regardless of ability, to reach their full potential. As the FNU team departed, Ishanvi signed her goodbyes with a sparkle in her eyes — a young girl already inspiring change, one gesture at a time.

Finding Her Voice



Ameeta Esther Narayan at the FNU Showcase Booth.

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

At just 16 years old, Year 11 Suva Sangam College student, Ameeta Esther Narayan, is already taking bold steps toward discovering her future and she’s starting with her passion. “I came to the FNU booth because I’m still undecided about my career path, and I wanted to explore my options,” Ameeta shared. “University offers so many choices, and that can feel overwhelming. But after today, I feel more certain.” Although currently a science student, Ameeta is drawn to the power of words. Her dream is to pursue a path in writing. “My passion is writing. I love English, and it’s what I do best. After speaking to the FNU team, I feel confident that this is

what I want to do,” she said. “I’ll study literature at FNU.” Ameeta hopes to become the first writer in her family. She’s already planning her first book, one based on her own life experiences and challenges. “I want to inspire people who feel like they’ve been left behind, who have not been encouraged or motivated in life.” Her experience at the FNU booth left her feeling empowered. “Five stars out of five,” she smiled. “It was the best consultation I’ve had. I felt heard, not pressured.” As she looks ahead to Year 12, university life, and one day becoming a published author, Ameeta is embracing her voice and encouraging others to do the same.

Atinesh Rekindles His Legal Dream



Atinesh Kumar at the FNU Showcase Booth.

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

Vanua Levu native Atinesh Kumar is no stranger to responsibility and hard work. A few years ago, Atinesh had to place his dream of becoming a lawyer on hold due to personal responsibilities. “I had to support my parents as the only son, so I put my studies on hold to find employment,” he shared emotionally. “It wasn’t easy to step away from something I was passionate about, but family always comes first.” Now proudly serving as the first police officer in his family, Atinesh has taken the bold step of returning to academia with a new goal: to become the first lawyer in his family. Atinesh says his current role is a valuable foundation for the legal path ahead.

“Working in law enforcement has deepened my understanding of the justice system. It’s a bonus to my dream of becoming a lawyer,” he explained. He recently visited the Fiji National University (FNU) booth during the Fiji Showcase and was thrilled at how accessible the enrolment process was. “I was honestly surprised at how easy and welcoming the process was,” he said. “The staff took the time to guide me through the options and helped me understand exactly how to continue from where I left off. I’m really excited to start again and this time, I’m finishing what I started.”

Enrolments for Semester 2, 2025 are now open and interested individuals are encouraged to apply through the FNU website: www.fnu.ac.fj/apply or visit their nearest campus for more information.

From the Interior to Inspiration

BY NAVINESH KUMAR

Travelling from the remote highlands of Cakaudrove, students and teachers from Saqani High School journeyed for hours to attend the Northern Division Careers Expo hosted at Savusavu Secondary School.

Their determination to be part of the event captured the spirit of resilience and ambition that the expo aimed to inspire—and their visit to the Fiji National University (FNU) booth left a lasting impression.

Among the group was Nepote Godravanavanua, the Head Boy of Saqani High School, whose quiet confidence and strong sense of purpose stood out.

As he listened intently to the FNU’s outreach officers explain the range of engineering programmes available at the university, it became clear that Nepote had already charted a course for his future.

“I want to become an engineer, and I believe FNU is the place that can help me get there,” he said with conviction.

Nepote’s interest in engineering stems from his upbringing in a rural setting, where access to modern infrastructure is limited.

He dreams of returning one day to help develop better roads, sustainable water systems, and reliable power solutions for his community.

His visit to the FNU booth gave him new insight into the academic pathway he’ll need to follow to turn that dream into reality.



Saqani High School Head Boy, Nepote Godravanavanua, visits the FNU booth during the Northern Division Careers Expo in Savusavu. He hopes to join FNU after high school to pursue a career in engineering.



FNU’s Manager Public Relations & Communications, Navinesh Kumar, speaks with secondary school students during the Northern Division Careers Expo, providing insights into the university’s programmes and encouraging students to plan ahead for their future with FNU.

Despite the long distance, the group from Saqani arrived eager to learn, ask questions, and gather information that would guide their next steps.

For many of them, the event was the first time they had engaged directly with university staff and explored post-secondary education options in person.

The FNU’s Outreach Team, which is

supporting the Ministry of Education’s nationwide careers initiative, is committed to reaching students in even the most remote parts of Fiji.

“When we see students travel from such distances just to have a conversation about their future, it reinforces why this work matters,” said the FNU’s Manager Outreach, Ella Bennion.

“FNU is not just about offering

qualifications; it’s about creating hope and opening doors.”

As Nepote and his classmates returned to Saqani with new knowledge and big dreams, they carried more than just FNU prospectus, they carried the belief that with hard work and the right support, their goals are within reach.

FNU Outreach Sparks Nursing Interest

BY NAVINESH KUMAR

In the quiet village of Nacekoro, just outside Savusavu, dreams were rekindled, and futures began to take shape during a recent visit by the Fiji National University (FNU) Outreach Team.

Among the many who attended the session was Adelaide Markeisha Claire Koroi, a Year 13 student of Savusavu Secondary School, who described the evening as a life-changing experience.

“As a young woman from Nacekoro, I’m truly grateful for the FNU team’s visit this evening,” Adelaide said. “The session was not only informative but also inspiring. I now see a clear pathway to pursue a career in nursing, something I’ve always dreamed of but didn’t know how to begin.”

Adelaide’s words echoed the sentiments of many young people in the community who face limited access to career information due to their remote location. For her, the FNU’s outreach brought more than brochures and programme guides - it brought hope, clarity, and a renewed sense of purpose.

“Vinaka FNU for guiding us through the application process and helping us see that no dream is too big, no matter where we come from. Tonight’s engagement has given



Young people from Nacekoro and surrounding communities gather for a group photo after an engaging and informative outreach session with the FNU team, aimed at empowering them with knowledge on study and career pathways.

me hope and direction.”

The outreach initiative is part of FNU’s wider commitment to making tertiary education more accessible to students in rural and remote areas. While FNU is actively participating in the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Careers Expo nationwide, the Outreach Team is further maximising its presence by engaging directly with communities like Nacekoro.

During the session, FNU’s Senior Outreach

Specialist, Vijayta Sharma, explained programme offerings, entry requirements, and the application process. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions, and many left with a clear understanding of how to pursue further studies in areas such as nursing, education, engineering, agriculture, and TVET pathways.

Adelaide’s story is just one of many that emerged from Nacekoro, a reminder of the lasting impact that access to information

and direct engagement can have.

“It’s stories like Adelaide’s that drive us,” FNU’s Manager Outreach, Ella Bennion. “We want every student, regardless of geography, to believe that their future can begin with FNU.”

As Adelaide prepares for her final year of secondary school, she does so with a renewed sense of confidence and direction—one step closer to becoming the nurse she’s always dreamed of being.

FNU Shines at Tailevu Expo



Naqia SDA Primary School students participate in the Careers Expo held at Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS), in Tailevu on Friday, 13 June 2025. **Photo Credit:** Romeka Kumari



Tailevu North College students participate in the Careers Expo held at Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS), in Tailevu on Friday, 13 June 2025. **Photo Credit:** Romeka Kumari

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Twenty-Two schools, including 14 primary and eight high schools, benefited from the academic assistance provided by the Fiji National University (FNU) during the Careers Expo at Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS), in Tailevu.

The event, held on Friday, 13 June, aimed to support students and teachers.

RKS Assistant Principal, Masi Saqanavere, thanked FNU for bringing the education opportunities to their doorstep for schools around the greater Tailevu areas.

“The Expo was very important because it included both primary and secondary students. Primary students are about

to enter high school, so this is a good opportunity for them to consider their future careers,” he said.

He also shared how the event was a beacon of hope for high school students.

“It helps them understand what they need to succeed in their chosen careers before university. They can get advice from FNU staff on how to further their education.”

Saqanavere added that the Expo made it easier for teachers to get information on advancing their education.

“Since we are far from the universities, teachers usually must take leave and travel to gather information,” he said.

Naqia SDA Primary School, near the

border of Ra and Tailevu provinces, took a step toward the future as Year 7 and 8 students attended the Careers Expo.

Teacher Kaminieli Koro, an alumnus of FNU, stressed the importance of such events.

“It is crucial for young students to explore their options early. These expos help them understand the different careers available and guide their subject choices for secondary and tertiary education.”

He said that exposing students to many career paths helps them broaden their horizons and gain confidence in making future decisions.

“Such initiatives are key in preparing

students for life beyond school,” he added.

Paula Joan Dean, a Year 13 student and Head Girl at Tailevu North College, was also at the Expo. She thanked FNU for offering academic services.

“It’s good to have FNU here to help us choose a pathway for our future,” Dean said.

“It’s a great opportunity to learn about different careers and what we can achieve after school.”

The Careers Expo provided valuable guidance and inspired students to think about their dreams and plans.

FNU Brings Career Guidance to Lami

BY NAVINESH KUMAR



Smiles all around as FNU helps students at Lami High School envision a brighter future. **Photo Credit:** Navinesh Kumar



Students engage with FNU Outreach Team to learn about the wide range of programmes available at FNU. **Photo Credit:** Navinesh Kumar

The Fiji National University’s (FNU) Outreach Team made a strong impact during the Lami Day celebrations at Lami High School on Friday, 13 June.

The team had set up an engaging university outreach kiosk to promote the University’s diverse range of academic and technical programmes, including admission and career pathways to students, parents, and the wider community.

The event provided an ideal platform for the Outreach Team to connect directly with prospective students and families in the Lami area, offering them personalised career guidance and vital information about study pathways available across FNU’s five colleges and two centres.

Manager Outreach, Ella Bennion, said the team’s presence at Lami Day was part of FNU’s broader commitment to making higher education more accessible and visible to communities outside the traditional urban centres.

“We are proud to be part of Lami Day, and it was heartening to see so many students and parents eager to learn more about what FNU has to offer,” she said.

“Events like this help define university life, while also showing how FNU supports a wide range of learners, from secondary school leavers to adult learners seeking upskilling opportunities.”

Many students from Lami High School visited the FNU booth during the day, exploring their interests in programmes such as Law, Information Technology, Education, Business, Nursing, and TVET pathways.

One such student was Fatali Nataqa, Head Girl of Lami High School, who expressed her excitement about applying for FNU’s Bachelor of Law programme.

“After speaking with the Outreach Team, I feel more confident about the choices I need to make after high school,” she shared.

The team also connected with parents like Mere Rokosevu Seru, a housewife who was inspired to consider enrolling in short courses at NTPC. “I’m interested in taking an Occupational Health & Safety course. I didn’t realise FNU offered these kinds of training for people like me. It’s never too late to learn something new,” she said.

Teachers at Lami High School also welcomed FNU’s presence and praised the outreach efforts. Edwin Ajay Karan, Head of Languages, highlighted how valuable it was for both students and teachers to receive direct information from tertiary institutions.

“FNU offers more choices for everyone, not just academically inclined students, but also those interested in practical skills training. The students left the booth more informed and motivated,” he said.

The initiative is part of FNU’s ongoing outreach and community engagement efforts, aimed at broadening access to education and helping students make informed decisions about their academic and career futures.

Throughout the year, the university will actively participate in community-driven events nationwide, ensuring that every Fijian has the opportunity to pursue higher education and vocational training.

Students Connect with FNU at West Careers Expo



Students from Ahmadiyya Muslim Primary School receiving academic counselling at the FNU booth. Photo Credit: Silika Damu

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

Students from various secondary schools in Lautoka had the opportunity to engage with staff from the Fiji National University during the Ministry of Education’s West Careers Exposition 2025, held at Natabua High School in Lautoka earlier this month.

The Lautoka-based school was the first of the many locations in the Western Division where the

expo took place.

Ministry of Education Acting Senior Curriculum Specialist for Careers, Lasarusa Rakula, highlighted the significance of the expo, noting that the initiative offered students a rare opportunity to access a wealth of information in one place.

“With over 1000 students attending, it was a big plus for us. This is an opportune time for students to identify their areas of

interest, ask the right questions, and begin mapping out their future careers,” he said.

“The FNU being present here is a big plus to the students.”

The FNU’s Division of Marketing and Communication – Department of Outreach led the FNU team.

Natabua High School academic, Laniana Ratabacaca mentioned that witnessing students visit the FNU booth and receive academic

counselling on the spot was enlightening.

“Visiting the FNU booth has been informative and instrumental in helping students explore the diverse educational and career pathways.

“The Expo allows students to engage with the exhibitors, ask questions and explore different career paths that may shape their future,” Ratabacaca added.

Saint Thomas High School Year

10 student, Leone Tatawaqa said he was fortunate to speak with the academics present as they guided him to take the correct subjects.

“The West Careers Expo 2025 at Natabua High School was very helpful for me as a student. Visiting the FNU booth, it has allowed me to know what subjects I can take next year when I pursue Law,” he said.

Shaping Career Paths in Ra



Team Leader Outreach Vijayta Sharma with students during the Expo held at Nakauvadra High School in Rakiraki. Photo Credit: Wati Talebula



Maria Tinai during the Expo at Nakauvadra High School in Rakiraki. Photo Credit: Wati Talebula

BY WATI TALEBULA

Students from across Ra, Tavua, and Ba converged for the Ministry of Education’s highly anticipated Career Expo on June 6, and the Fiji National University (FNU) team was right at the heart of it.

The Expo brought together 39 primary schools and 22 high schools from Rakiraki, Tavua, and Ba. The event aimed to provide students with insights into various career paths and study opportunities, and the FNU booth quickly became a focal point of the day’s activities.

For Maria Tinai, a Year 12 student from Saint Frances College in Ra, the event was more than just informative but was life changing.

“I was uncertain about which career path to pursue after high school, but Civil Engineering has always been a field I have aspired to enter since

childhood,” she shared.

“Today, I had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the Civil Engineering programme, and I received answers to all my queries. As a result, I have decided to pursue my studies at FNU after my Year 13. Thank you, FNU team, for your guidance and support.”

Unaisi Caginiwai, a teacher at Nakauvadra High School, praised the event’s impact: “The service provided by the FNU staff was excellent and it was informative. The students were happy to ask questions.”

From engineering and health sciences to hospitality and agriculture, the conversations were as diverse as the students themselves.

FNU looks forward to continuing this journey with Fiji’s future leaders — one question, one answer, and one dream at a time.

PCMS Graduates Thankful

A First for Rewa



Proud Nukui Villagers from Rewa who graduated from the Fiji National University's Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies with guests on Friday 20 June, 2025. **Photo Credit:** Penioni Kolinisau



BY WATI TALEBULA

For the first time, the Class 6 Master and Engineering Full License Certificate of Competency has been introduced in Rewa, with 19 students graduated on Friday after successfully completing a one-month training programme.

The programme was launched in Nukui Village, Rewa, and comprised a comprehensive training schedule: three days of basic sea survival training, three weeks of nautical knowledge, and one week of engineering knowledge.

This initiative was delivered through the Fiji National University's (FNU) Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) and sponsored by the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme.

Sevuloni Valenitabua expressed his gratitude for being among the 19 graduates.

"I am extremely happy to be one of those who graduated. This is the first certificate that bears my name. I would like to sincerely thank the sponsors—without their support, we would not have been able to participate in this programme," he said.

"We are truly grateful. I also wish to thank FNU for making it more accessible by coming to the village.

The lecturers made the learning process easier for us to

understand. Many of us needed this certificate, but due to financial constraints, we were previously unable to pursue it."

Head of the Nautical Department at the Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS), Captain Vilivo Valenitabua, said Nukui Village was fortunate to be able to access funding support from the University of the South Pacific (USP).

"The role of FNU's PCMS is to serve as the training institution. For this programme, we assigned two lecturers who delivered a comprehensive training schedule to the participants," Captain Valenitabua said.

"The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) facilitated the issuance of the Class 6 Certificate of Competency (COC), which the participants received today. Nukui Village was in contact with USP, which had the necessary funds to support the programme. Once initial discussions began, USP informed us that they required sufficient participant numbers as well as approval from MSAF before proceeding."

He added that Nukui Village was able to meet the required number of participants, which was then submitted to MSAF to allow the course to go ahead.

"This programme needs to be rolled out across Fiji, but the main challenge is securing funding. Nukui Village was fortunate to be able to access support through USP, which

made this training possible," Captain Valenitabua said.

USP Officer-in-Charge for the Centre for Sustainable Futures, Dr Isoa Korovulavula, said the PEUMP Programme was implemented by several partners, including the Pacific Community (SPC), the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and USP.

"One of the activities under the USP-PEUMP objective is the development of 'Lifelong Learning Pathways' for marine and fisheries stakeholders, which includes continuing professional development opportunities. This also involves providing financial support through scholarships for individuals from low-income households to address the challenges of poverty," Dr Korovulavula said.

Dr Korovulavula added that the graduates from Nukui Village will now meet the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) requirements for all boat owners.

"They will also be permitted to operate their boats outside the reef areas, enhancing opportunities for both livelihoods and employment. Furthermore, their Master/Engineer Class 6 Certification will enable them to access Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) being installed by the Ministry of Fisheries outside the reef areas," he said.



INSIDE FNU



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Laisenia Julian Singh with his aunt, Mitchell Singh after the graduation ceremony. **Photo Credit:** Penioni Kolinisau

Singh Finds His Calling at Sea

BY WATI TALEBULA

For Laisenia Julian Singh, the journey toward a career at sea began with a simple question from his uncle: “Do you want to give it a shot and become a seafarer?” Fresh out of high school, Singh had briefly tried his hand at electrical work. But it was that conversation with his uncle who is a seasoned seafarer that sparked a new path forward. Now, Singh holds his first official maritime certificate, having completed the Deckhand Fishing Programme at the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies, sponsored by WWF-Fiji. “This is my first certificate, and I believe this is my calling,” Singh said.

“A few people in my family are seafarers, so it feels like something I’m meant to do.” The middle child of seven siblings, Singh said his parents are proud of his achievement and supported his decision from the start. “They gave their full approval, and that means a lot to me.” Singh admits the course was eye-opening. “It taught me what life is really like for a seafarer, not just the struggles, but also how rewarding it can be,” he said. He also expressed gratitude for the programme’s sponsorship, which covered many of the costs that can become barriers for young people.

“The sponsorship really helped remove some of the burdens of education—like the fees, bus fare, and even lunch money. It’s a really good initiative.” Singh has advice for other young people who may be considering a similar path: “Everyone should give it a shot. I’ve learned a lot, met interesting people, and grown as a person. Don’t be scared to try something new.” With his certificate in hand and his family’s legacy behind him, Singh is now ready to make waves in the maritime world charting his own course toward a promising future at sea.

Deckhand Earns First Maritime Training Certificate



Lino Naitoko Sauturaga with his wife Salasaini Tavaga Sauturaga and two children, Daniel Enock Sauturaga (standing) and Lepani Isreal Sauturaga. **Photo Credit:** Penioni Kolinisau

BY WATI TALEBULA

Lino Naitoko Sauturaga has worked on fishing vessels for several years, despite not having undertaken any formal studies or qualifications in the field. However, this changed on 18 June 2025, when he graduated from the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) with a certificate in the Deckhand Fishing Programme. The programme is sponsored by WWF-Fiji. A father of two, Sauturaga has travelled across various Pacific countries while working on different fishing vessels. “I did not expect to get the scholarship when I applied, and I’m glad I did after my cousin whom I worked with told me about it. Just two weeks after applying, I received an email confirming

that I had been accepted,” he said. “This is the first time my name is on a certificate, and the feeling is just overwhelming. I’m especially happy to have my family here with me today.” Sauturaga said the programme has been a valuable learning experience. “It has taught me a lot not only about our responsibilities as deckhands but also about endangered species and the importance of protecting them,” he explained. He added that this achievement marks only the beginning of his educational journey. “This is just the start. I plan to return and further upgrade my qualifications. I can’t stay a deckhand forever because there will come a time when I want to move up the ladder,” he said. “The more certificates I earn from PCMS, the more I can earn in the industry.”

Navigating Her Own Future



Proud father Ifereimi Rinakama with daughter Ro Ivamere Rinakama after the graduation ceremony at Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies. **Photo Credit:** Penioni Kolinisau

BY WATI TALEBULA

Ro Ivamere Rinakama has taken a significant step that may not only redefine her future but also reshape her life’s plans. She is one of four women among 18 graduates from the Fiji National University’s Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies, who successfully completed the Deckhand Fishing Programme, sponsored by WWF-Fiji. After completing Year 13, Ro Ivamere found herself at a familiar crossroads. While many of her peers chose to pursue further studies immediately, she decided to take a break and remain at home. “I decided to stay at home,” she recalls. “One of my sisters-in-law told me about this programme. She encouraged me to try it and said I might like it.” That encouragement became a turning point. “I’m glad I listened to her,” Ro Ivamere reflects. “Because this is now a career path I want to pursue.” Like many courageous journeys, hers began quietly.

“When I applied, I didn’t tell my parents,” She admits. “I only told them once I received the acceptance email.” It was a decision that speaks volumes about her independence and determination. Her efforts culminated in a proud moment, witnessed by her father. “I’m glad that my dad is here,” she says. Ro Ivamere’s journey is more than just personal achievement but a statement. In a field traditionally dominated by men, particularly in the maritime sector, her success challenges longstanding stereotypes and helps pave the way for more women to follow. Her recent accomplishment is a milestone: “This is my first certificate under my name,” she says proudly. And it is just the beginning. With plans to complete her sea time and later pursue higher qualifications, Ro Ivamere is setting her sights on greater horizons. She is a young woman confidently steering her own course one certificate, and one courageous decision, at a time.

Health & Hustle

Fong For Fiji

WATI TALEBULA

Abraham Fong, a fifth-year Dentistry student at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, will represent Fiji in the Mini South Pacific Games from June 29 to July 9.

Fong is a member of the national Va'a (outrigger canoeing) team and will be competing in Palau alongside other elite paddlers from the Pacific region.

This will not be Fong's first appearance on the international stage. He was also part of the Fijian Va'a squad that competed in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.

Despite the demands of an academic schedule, he has remained committed to his sport.

"I only study and go to practice," Fong shared.

"I had to remove certain distractions from my life so I could stay focused. If I'm not studying, I'm training, and I've never regretted that decision."

What began as a casual hobby has now become a central part of his daily routine.

"Paddling started off as something fun, introduced to me by a friend. I'm grateful he did, because now it's a huge part of my life," he said.

Balancing the intense demands of a Dentistry degree with high-performance sport is no small feat.

Fong credits careful time management and a strong support system for his ability to juggle both.

"It's all about prioritising the things that matter," he explained.

"I'm thankful that my lecturers are understanding of my commitments. Fortunately, I've completed my exams and will be on semester break when I leave for Palau."

His daily schedule is a testament to his discipline.

"I train early in the morning before classes, and then again in the afternoon after lectures," he said.

Fong also expressed deep gratitude to those who have supported his journey.

"My family, friends, and lecturers have all been incredibly supportive. Having the right people around you make a big difference, and for that, I am truly grateful."






Fong remains focused and determined both in the classroom and on the water.

On behalf of FNU, we extend our best wishes to him and the rest of Team Fiji as they proudly represent Fiji in the Mini South Pacific Games in Palau.



Abraham Fong during one of his classes at Pasifika Campus. **Photo Credit:** Vetaia Dakua



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