

# Inspiring Success

## CAFF Triumph

PhD Holder Returns

By SELITA BOLANAVANUA

The College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) is celebrating the return of Dr Nividita Varun Chand, who has successfully completed her PhD in Information Technology and Digital Agriculture at the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GSCAAS).

Her return marks a historic milestone for the College and a new chapter in advancing agricultural education and innovation in Fiji.

Raised in the quiet farming community of Mulomulo, Nadi, Dr Chand is now the first in her family to reach this academic milestone. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from FNU, a Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching from the University of the South Pacific, and a Master's in Agricultural Economics and Management from GSCAAS.

"I pursued further studies because I wanted to expand my knowledge in agriculture, and to inspire others, especially young women in rural areas, that it is possible. Becoming the first PhD holder in my family is something I'm very proud of," Dr Chand said.

Her journey, which began at Mulomulo Kindergarten, Primary, and Secondary School, is a story of perseverance, passion, and purpose. With her extensive academic background and newly acquired expertise, Dr Chand is now set to contribute



significantly to teaching, research, and digital innovation at FNU, strengthening the College's mission to advance agriculture in Fiji.

College Dean Dr Kaliova Ravuiwasa was proud to welcome Dr Chand back.

"Dr Chand's achievement is a landmark moment for CAFF and for Fiji's agricultural sector. Her knowledge and experience will directly benefit our students, our research initiatives, and ultimately agricultural development in Fiji and the region."

Continues on Page 2

Dr Nividita Varun Chand after graduation with a PhD in Information Technology and Digital Agriculture from the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (GSCAAS).

### WHAT'S INSIDE

<b>Page 2</b> • CAFF Triumph - PhD Holder Returns	<b>Page 5</b> • Vikash's Recipe for Change • Disability Students Drive Climate Solutions	<b>Page 7</b> • More than 250 Patients Receive Free Dental Treatment • Koroka: FNU's Rising Rugby Star
<b>Page 3</b> • Beyond the Mountains • Chasing Dreams at 49	<b>Page 6</b> • A Celebration of Unity, Skills, and Dreams in Ra • Crafting a Future for Mereleki	<b>Page 8</b> • Koroka: FNU's Rising Rugby Star
<b>Page 4</b> • Kanimawi Eager to Preserve Indigenous Language • FNU at the Nadi District Schools		



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



# Dreams Beyond Limits

## Breaking Barriers, Shaping Futures



Merewai Hoyt with her student Apenisa from Thomas Baker Secondary. **Photo:** Vetaia Natoga.

## Beyond the Mountains

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

In the quiet strength of Fiji’s highlands, far from the noise of city streets, lives a young man whose dreams reach far beyond the towering peaks that surround him.

Apenisa Tukana Saurara is 22 years old and a Year 13 student at Thomas Baker Secondary School in Navosa. The highlands of Navosa gave him a story of second chances, of resilience, and of a future shaped not by circumstance, but by choice.

Originally from Vatoa in Lau and raised in Vanua Levu, Apenisa’s life took a different turn when he followed a woman married into the nearby Nanoko Village. He came to the highlands to farm but found something much more powerful, purpose.

“I was just going from place to place, uncertain of what my future held,” he shared softly. “When I came to Nanoko, it was for farming. But I realised I wanted more for myself. I wanted to rise above poverty and do something that would make my family proud. Education was the only path I saw that could take me there.”

So, Apenisa returned to the classroom, older than many of his classmates, but determined to walk a new path.

Now a pure science student, Apenisa dreams of becoming a nurse. But it doesn’t stop there. His aspirations stretch beyond medicine, into policy, leadership, and national change.

“I want to be a nurse because I want to help my people,” he said.

“One day, I also want to sit in Parliament to bring development to our rural communities, so that our children won’t have to leave their families just to find opportunity.”

His voice trembles with emotion as he reflects on the struggles faced by his peers.

“The roads are bad. All you see around us are mountains. If we want a better life, we must be willing to go beyond the mountains. We must fight for a future where our children don’t have to suffer as we did.”

That’s why the visit from the Fiji National University (FNU) team meant so much to him.

“We don’t have the resources here to make informed decisions about our future,” he said. “FNU made that long, difficult trip to get to us and because of that, we now know there are pathways we can take. They reminded us that we matter, too.”

With gratitude, Apenisa explained how the FNU team opened his eyes to what’s possible.

“For the first time, my dreams have direction, and I am sure my classmates feel the same.

“People think leadership only comes from the cities, but future leaders live in the highlands, too,” he said. “We are ready. We are determined. We are not giving up.”

Apenisa’s story is just one of many uncovered in the highlands. Stories of struggle, strength, and stunning resilience. Stories of young people who, like the mountains around them, refuse to be moved by hardship, and who are trusting in education and in themselves to craft a better tomorrow at FNU.



Tarusila Soakula Nagata.  
**Photo:** Aaron Fatiaki.

## Chasing Dreams at 49

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

At forty-nine, Tarusila Soakula Nagata turned a new chapter in life by earning Fiji National University’s Certificate in Film and Television (Level 4).

The proud Yaqeta, Yasawa native, with maternal ties to Dratabu, Nadi, returned to tertiary education after 25 years and she has no intention of looking back.

“This was our retirement plan. When my husband, Tomasi, a police officer retires, I want to open a production business that offers live-streaming, videography and photography services,” she explained.

Her vision was sparked years ago while living in her husband’s village of Nailaga. “I noticed how quickly technology was changing and how digital connectivity was becoming part of everyday life. I thought, people in the village especially the elderly and differently abled should be able to attend important functions from afar, through live streaming. That’s when the idea was born.”

With courage and determination, the mother of two enrolled at FNU.

“I vividly remember my first day in class. My hands were shaking as I touched the camera. Being an ‘old schoolgirl’, all this modern equipment was new to me. But I am deeply grateful to my lecturers and classmates, who encouraged me and helped me understand what once seemed impossible.”

Her leap of faith soon paid off. Nagata was recently selected to intern on the crew of Love Island — an experience she describes as

unforgettable.

“When I told my husband, we had no idea what Love Island was about. We watched a few clips on YouTube, and after a while he looked at me and said, ‘Are you sure you’re up for this?’ I told him I was, and that it would be a great learning experience.” Indeed, it proved to be transformative.

“The long shifts were exhausting at times, but the knowledge I gained was priceless. Each day I went to bed tired, but satisfied and grateful. Working on a large-scale production gave me first-hand insight into the demands and rewards of the industry.”

As the second youngest of fourteen siblings, Nagata’s decision surprised her family. “When I told my sons, my siblings and extended family that I was studying film and television, they were shocked but very supportive. I am the first in my family to enter this field.”

Her journey now carries a bigger dream. She hopes to establish her own production company, Grace Productions.

“God’s grace has led me this far. He gave me purpose, even at 49. After raising my two wonderful sons and living most of my life in service to family, God showed me that it is never too late. My business will be dedicated to Him.”

Nagata wants her story to inspire other women, especially those who feel age or stereotypes hold them back.

“Don’t use age as a shield. Don’t let fear stop you from exploring opportunities. FNU has something for everyone. If I can do it, so can you.”



# Kanimawi Eager to Preserve Indigenous Language

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

Timaima Kanimawi is a young girl with a big dream — to become an iTaukei language teacher and help preserve her indigenous culture.

The Year 13 student at Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Memorial School (RSMS) has found her passion and is determined to make a difference.

During her school’s 60th Anniversary celebration earlier this month at Sukuna Park, Kanimawi met the Fiji National University’s (FNU) outreach team.

“I’m very thankful that I was able to meet the FNU team,” she said.

“They gave me valuable advice and helped me choose the right academic pathway.”

After talking to the FNU team, she realised her dream — to become an iTaukei language teacher.

“I am determined to become an iTaukei language teacher and pursue this dream at FNU,” she stated.

“For me, it’s all about preserving the indigenous language.”

“iTaukei language is my mother tongue. In

class, we learn a lot about the language and I am eager to learn more at FNU.”

She hopes to inspire more students to take up iTaukei studies.

“Not many students are eager to learn iTaukei. They find it hard and don’t want to take up iTaukei studies in high school,” she added.

“But I want to change that. I hope to learn more through FNU’s course on iTaukei studies and educate the young ones one day.”

Despite being the oldest of four siblings and coming from a farming family, Kanimawi is proud of her goals.

“It’s not just my dream, it’s my family’s dream as well,” she said.

“At first I was hesitant to take up iTaukei studies in school.”

“My father encouraged me that iTaukei language is our mother tongue and it holds a lot of indigenous culture and tradition which is fading away.”

“It’s not late and I want to make my parents proud.”

Her dream is clear: to teach the iTaukei language and help keep her culture alive for future generations.



Timaima Kanimawi at the Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Memorial School’s (RSMS) 60th Anniversary celebration at Sukuna Park. **Photo:** Romeka Kumari.



FNU academics attending to a customer at the Nadi Education District Schools Careers Expo.. **Photo:** Nicolette Chambers.

## FNU at the Nadi District Schools Expo



FNU’s Division of Marketing and Communication Manager Outreach, Ella Bennion serving students at the Nadi Education District Schools Careers Expo. **Photo:** Nicolette Chambers.

By **NICOLETTE CHAMBERS**

The Fiji National University (FNU) was given the opportunity to participate at the Nadi Education District Schools Careers Expo organised by the Ministry of Education.

The Careers Expo which was held at the end of July was hosted by Fulton Adventist University College in Sabeto.

The Careers Expo saw many primary schools and secondary schools in the Nadi area attend and visit the FNU booth

as well as other booths that were set up by representatives from other educational institutes as well as Government and Non-Government Organisations.

Students from Fulton Adventist University College also visited the FNU booth and were enlightened on the different pathways available at the FNU.

In his opening address, the Vice-Chancellor of Fulton Adventist University College, Pastor Professor Ronald Stone encouraged the students and participants to embrace the Careers Expo with open hearts.

At the Careers Expo was 13-year-old Jeevika Shankar, a Year 8 student at Namaka Public School, who already knows her purpose in life which is to help others.

Driven by compassion and determination, Shankar has set her sights on pursuing the Certificate in Clinical Laboratory Technology (Level 5) at FNU’s College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) when she completes her secondary level education.

“It was always in my mind to choose a programme that allows me to help people,

and this one is the best fit for me,” she said.

Head Boy of Votualevu College, Shivesh Sharma, said he was grateful that several engineering programmes at FNU’s College of Engineering, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETVET) were internationally accredited as he looked to pursue his tertiary studies at the FNU next year.

The FNU is also grateful to have served more than 2000 secondary and primary school students that participated at the Careers Expo.



# Vikash's **RECIPE** for **CHANGE**

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

When Prathna Vikash began her academic journey at the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (CETVET) in 2019, she never imagined the road ahead would stretch across oceans or that it would be so powerfully shaped by pandemic giving her resilience, courage, and an unshakable purpose.

Today, she lives in Brisbane, Australia, pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management. But that isn't the only dream she's chasing. Still deeply connected to the place where her passion for food safety was born, Prathna continues her postgraduate studies in Food Science and Technology at FNU, the very institution that moulded her into who she is today.

This is not the first time she's taken on the challenge of studying more than one programme at a time.

"While pursuing my Bachelor of Science in Food Technology at CETVET, I was also taking short courses at FNU's National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC)," she recalled. "There was a point when I was juggling seven units at once!"

It wasn't just about passing exams. For Prathna, it was about proving to herself that she was capable of more and helping others along the way.

Her vibrant energy and commitment to student life saw her elected into the FNU Students Association, where she ensured that she could support and inspire others.

"My time at FNU really brought out the best in me," she said, smiling.

"It gave me the confidence, inspiration to



*Prathna Vikash with her qualifications.  
Photo: Christal Kapoor.*

care about others and the courage to take up challenges head on."

She was among the brave cohort who studied during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that tested her spirit but ultimately made her stronger.

"COVID taught me discipline, time management, and resilience," she reflected.

"It made me appreciate the flexibility of blended learning, which is now helping me pursue my postgraduate studies while living abroad and despite the distance, FNU continues to feel like home."

"The lecturers and staff at FNU have always been so supportive and understanding," she shared.

"They treat students with such compassion and it's that human touch that sets FNU apart."

But Prathna's story doesn't end with her personal success. She is deeply passionate about the role food technology can play in changing lives in Fiji.

"Food technology isn't just about becoming a chef or a home economics teacher," she said.

"It's about protecting lives and ensuring food safety from processing to manufacturing and helping reduce the rising number of non-communicable diseases in our country."

Vikash aims to pursue a Master's in Food Technology and gain the knowledge and expertise to create healthier futures for Fijians.

"I want to make a difference not just in the food industry, but in the lives of everyday people. And it all started at FNU!"

## Disability Students Drive Climate Solutions

By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

The Fiji National University's (FNU) students with disabilities are making a strong case for their vital role in fighting climate change.

Their lived experiences and academic insights are helping to shape community-led solutions for climate adaptation.

This was highlighted during a recent two-day Climate Research Workshop held at the Fiji Vocational Technical Training Centre for Persons with Disabilities in Suva.

Selina Sandy Seau, who has hearing impairment, is a first-year student studying for a Diploma in Sports Science.

Seau explained why the workshop was important stating "It was a chance for FNU students with disabilities to examine how we can create authentic research partnerships."

"We want to address power imbalances and include disability perspectives in climate work."



*FNU's disability centre students at the two-day Climate Research Workshop held at the Fiji Vocational Technical Training Centre for Persons with Disabilities in Suva. Photo: Luke Salababa.*

Seau emphasised that climate change does not discriminate.

"It affects everyone, people of all backgrounds and abilities," she said.

"We experience its effects through our senses and in our daily lives. It's a major issue that involves us all."

She added that including people with disabilities in climate discussions is essential.

"Our voices matter because we see and feel the impacts differently," she explained.

The workshop focused on gender equality, social inclusion, and disability. Its goal was to foster inclusive partnerships in climate research.

Mohammed Zain Zuber, a second-year student studying for a Certificate in Information Technology, also shared his views.

Zuber has low vision, and his participation in the workshop highlighted the importance of representation.

"People with disabilities have valuable insights. We can contribute to better climate strategies. Including diverse voices leads to more effective solutions," he said.

"We need to be part of the conversation. Climate change affects us all, and our participation ensures that solutions are fair and inclusive."

"We bring unique experiences that can help develop stronger, more effective responses," he added.





Some of the graduates after receiving their certificates. **Photo:** Elenoa Cagi.

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

## A Celebration of Unity, Skills, and Dreams in Ra

It was a day of smiles, laughter, and proud tears in Ra as 235 individuals celebrated a milestone that will stay with them for life — their graduation from the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Sustainable Livelihood Programme. For two weeks, 122 men and 113 women, some travelling from as far as Vatukaceveva, came together in Vunitogoloa Village and Nanuku Settlement Community Hall to learn practical skills that could open new doors for their families and communities. The training was provided at no cost under FNU’s National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Community-Based Non-Formal Education Programme.

The courses ranged from hands-on trades to entrepreneurial skills, including:

- Small Engine Repair
- Baking and Patisserie

- Floristry
- Screen Printing
- Fibreglass Boat Repair
- Land Use Management
- Domestic Electrical Installation
- Block Laying
- Household and Sanitary Plumbing
- Business Management
- Front Office Operations
- Garment Construction
- Joinery and Cabinet Making

Among the graduates was the youngest participant, just 15 years old, who proudly completed the Small Engine Repair course and the eldest, a 76-year-old gentleman whose determination saw him graduate with a Certificate in Land Use Management.

The graduation was not just about certificates, it was about the power of unity. Pro-Vice-Chancellor TVET Pasifika and NTPC, Dr Isimeli Tagicakiverata, praised how the project brought together people from the two major ethnic groups in the area. “What makes today even more special is the unity that has brought us here. This project was coordinated by the Rakiraki Indo-Fijian Community and Vunitogoloa Village, proving that when communities work together, barriers are broken and success is inevitable,” he said. “Your collaboration has turned this idea into a reality that will leave a lasting legacy, especially for our young Fijians who are witnessing the power of unity in a multicultural society like Fiji.” Dr Tagicakiverata reaffirmed FNU’s mission

to ensure that education reaches every corner of the country: “At the Fiji National University, we firmly believe that education should not be confined within walls or campuses. It must reach every village, settlement and community that dreams of a better tomorrow. Whether in the heart of Suva or here in the vibrant communities of Ra, our vision is the same: to ensure that every Fijian, no matter where they are, has access to skills that can change lives.” As the graduates left with their certificates in hand, the atmosphere was filled with a renewed sense of purpose, proof that when people learn together, they grow together, and when communities unite, they thrive together.

**For more information about FNU’s free Community-Based Non-Formal Education and Training programmes, visit:** <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/ntpc/productivity-consultancy/community-based-non-formal-education-and-training/>

## Crafting a Future for Mereleki

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

Twenty-three-year-old Sainimere Buliasewa stood out in a room filled mostly with women over the age of 40. Seated at a sewing machine, she was carefully hunched over her work, turning a small piece of fabric into a dress for her five-month-old daughter, Mereleki Ofa Cavakilagi. A resident of nearby Draunivi Village, Buliasewa joined the Sustainable Livelihood Programme held at Vunitogoloa Village and Nanuku Community Settlement Hall, alongside her husband, Kilimo Cavakilagi.

“We heard about the programmes one evening during the village announcements by our Turaga-ni-Koro,” she shared. “I was unsure at first since my daughter is still very young, but after discussing it with my husband, we decided to give it a try for our daughter’s future.” Buliasewa graduated with a Certificate in Garment Construction, while her husband earned a Certificate in Household and Sanitary Plumbing. This is not her first Fiji National University (FNU) achievement. Earlier this year, she completed a Diploma in Front Office Operations. However, she missed the April graduation ceremony as Mereleki was only a few weeks old. “This is an added achievement, and a very important one too, as it will allow me to start a small tailoring business from home so that I can raise my daughter. I can always return to



Sainimere Buliasewa with her daughter, Mereleki Ofa Cavakilagi. **Photo:** Elenoa Cagi.

further studies once she is older, but for now, I want to provide for her using my skills.” Her husband also plans to open his own plumbing business, serving nearby villages and settlements. Buliasewa, originally from Naibitia, Wainibuka, expressed heartfelt gratitude to her trainer for her patience and kindness, especially as she attended every class with baby Mereleki in tow for two weeks. “I cannot thank my trainer enough for the kindness she showed me and my daughter. I’m also deeply grateful to my classmates, who helped care for Mereleki during lessons so I could focus on learning to sew. This would not have been possible without the strong group of mothers and grandmothers who stood by me.” Buliasewa hopes more young mothers will take up studies at FNU, saying that passion and skills, when paired with FNU’s education, are the perfect recipe for success.

## Navutu’s New Beginning

By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

When mother-of-four Akeneta Navutu heard that the Fiji National University (FNU) was coming to Rakiraki to offer free short courses, she immediately knew this was a God-given opportunity for a new beginning that she simply could not pass up. Having worked as an administration officer at Nanuku Sangam School, Navutu saw this as the perfect chance to upskill without having to leave her children, especially her one-and-a-half-year-old behind.

“My husband encouraged me to go ahead and take this step because he saw how much I wanted to study a course that would help me become even better at my job,” said an emotional Navutu after her graduation. “I knew it was going to be tough. Being a mother, working full-time, and taking time out to study for a fortnight, but my husband was my biggest motivator and supporter. He went the extra mile with the chores and the children, ensuring I had enough time to devote to my studies.” Navutu graduated with a Certificate in Basic Computing and Business Skills and now plans to continue her studies at FNU by joining the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies. Her goal is to complete a Certificate in Office Assistance (Level 3) followed by a Certificate in Office Administration (Level 4),



Akeneta Navutu receives her certificate from NTPC’s Director Productivity and Innovation, Bob Mitchell. **Photo:** Elenoa Cagi.

paving her way towards a degree in the near future. “I just want to thank FNU and my trainer for broadening my knowledge and motivating me to study further, especially as a working student. FNU’s programmes are flexible, and the trainers are patient, kind, and understanding,” said the Narewa Village native. She hopes her journey will inspire her children and other mothers to never give up on education. “Nothing is impossible for us as women! We just need to be strong and believe in God and ourselves. FNU has provided such a wonderful opportunity and that too without us having to spend a single dollar. I encourage women to upgrade their talents and skills through FNU’s TVET programmes and find ways to support their children or achieve financial security, especially now when times are hard.”



# More than 250 Patients Receive Free Dental Treatment



Fourth-year students from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) at Nakavu Village in Namosi. **Photo:** Luke Salababa



CMNHS students conducting dental clinics at Nakavu Village in Namosi. **Photo:** Luke Salababa



Children of Nakavu Village in Namosi. **Photo:** Luke Salababa



By **ROMEKA KUMARI**

More than 250 Fijians living in Nakavu village, Namosi, received free dental treatment during a three-day outreach programme held at the Village.

The event was organised by Fiji National University (FNU), with 24 fourth-year students and six staff members from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) providing the treatment.

Head of Department of Dental Public Health, Paediatrics and Preventive Dentistry at CMNHS, Dr Vidhant Nambiar said this outreach programme runs every year as part of the students' learning and teaching experience.

“The students conducting the treatment are currently enrolled in Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS4), Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH3), and Certificate in Dental Assisting (CDA) programmes,” Dr Nambiar explained.

“This outreach gives students practical experience in public health work, and it also provides free dental services to community members.”

The team arrived in Nakavu village on Monday, 18 August, and offered a range of dental treatments. These included extractions, fillings, cleaning, and preventive care.

“We provide dental care to underserved communities. During this outreach, students and staff stay with the villagers

and experience their daily activities in a rural environment. This helps them develop important skills needed as graduates,” he emphasised.

“We have screened and treated over 250 patients. Some of the highlights include identifying potentially malignant oral lesions and offering health education about risk factors found in the environment through screening.”

The group of 24 students included participants from Fiji, Australia, Tonga, the Federated States of Micronesia, Tokelau, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna, and Kiribati.

One of the students, Zaid Najeib, is a fourth-year student studying for a Bachelor of Dental Surgery at CMNHS.

The 25-year-old, originally from the

Middle East and living in Australia for the past 16 years, chose to study dental surgery in Fiji in 2022.

“I really enjoy the dental course at FNU,” Najeib said.

“Studying here is more affordable, and I get more practical experience.”

“We are exposed to real-world situations, which helps us apply what we learn directly in our work, even before graduation.”

This year marks his final year of study.

Reflecting on his time living in the village, Najeib said, “It’s the first time I have ever stayed in a village.”

“The people here are so caring and warm. They make me feel at home. The environment is friendly, and I have connected easily with the locals.”

## Koroka: FNU’s Rising Rugby Star

From Page 8

This year, he stepped up to trial for the main Suva side, a decision that paid off in the best possible way.

“I went into the selection trials not expecting to be chosen, but I was extremely grateful to be selected,” he said with a smile. “This opportunity will shape my future in rugby.”

Now, in addition to the Skipper Cup, Koroka will also proudly represent FNU in the inter-tertiary games.

Balancing his academic commitments with his sporting career is no easy task, but Koroka credits FNU’s blended learning mode—a mix of online and in-

person classes, for helping him find that balance.

“While I was at RKS, I learned the importance of time management and independence,” he explained. “Those lessons are serving me well now as a young adult. I even picked up conversational *vosa vakaviti*, which has been such a great help!”

Off the field, Koroka’s academic journey is giving him the solid foundation he needs for his future career goals as well as life after rugby.

“My programme is teaching me the fundamentals of the subject while keeping pace with modern IT developments,” he said. “One day, I hope to

become an Information Systems Manager.”

But his sporting dreams are equally ambitious, Koroka aspires to play for either the Brumbies or the Fiji Drua.

Sport runs deep in his family. His mother, Gamini Koroka, has represented PNG in both netball and basketball and remains his biggest inspiration.

“She’s my top role model in sports,” he shared. “She keeps me disciplined when it comes to diet, training, and school.”

When he’s not in the lecture hall or on the rugby field, Koroka turns to nature, finding peace and focus in its quiet beauty.

“It is a reminder that in life, as in rugby, balance is key.”



George Koroka with his mother Gamini Koroka.



## Koroka: FNU's Rising Rugby STAR



By **CHRISTAL KAPOOR**

For Papua New Guinea native George Koroka, the rugby field is more than just a game, it's a place where discipline, passion, and purpose collide.

At just 21 years old, he is carving his path as both a dedicated athlete and an aspiring IT professional, proving that dreams can be pursued side by side with determination and grit.

### Bachelor of Science - Computer

Currently pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information Systems at FNU's College of Engineering, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), Koroka is also making waves on the rugby pitch. He plays for the Eastern Saints Rugby Club and the Suva Rugby Union in the prestigious Skipper Cup competition, no small feat for someone balancing the demands of full-time study.

"My rugby journey began when I was very young in PNG," the Mount Hagen, Western Highlands Province native recalled.

"I wasn't very serious about it at first, but after moving to Fiji and joining Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS), I felt a deep drive to play."

That spark quickly grew into a fire. After high school, Koroka played both league and 15's rugby with his friends before joining the Suva under-20 team.

**Continues on Page 7**

*George Koroka powers through the defence during the FMF Suva Club Rugby 2025 match.  
Photo: Suva Rugby Union.*



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](mailto: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, Navinash Kumar.  
Design & Layout: Selita Bolanavanua & 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](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj)**

Follow us on [f](#) [@](#) [X](#) [@](#) [v](#) [in](#) [d](#)