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Message from Pro Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation – Professor Paul Iji

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It is with great pleasure that I share this update on the continued growth and impact of research and innovation across our University.

Research and innovation remain central to our institutional mission and our commitment to national, regional, and global development. Over the past year, we have witnessed encouraging progress in strengthening our research culture, expanding collaborative partnerships, and aligning our scholarly work with real-world challenges faced by our communities, industries, and governments. Our academic and professional staff have demonstrated commendable dedication through increased research outputs, successful grant applications, and active participation in national and international conferences, seminars, and policy dialogues. These achievements not only enhance the University’s academic standing but also reinforce our role as a driver of evidence-based decision-making and sustainable development in the Pacific region.

A key highlight has been the growing emphasis on interdisciplinary and applied research. Initiatives addressing climate resilience, food security, public health, digital transformation, and inclusive economic growth exemplify how our research is translating into tangible social and economic impact. Platforms such as the Global South Seminar Series have further strengthened dialogue between academia, industry, policymakers, and communities, fostering solutions that are locally grounded yet globally relevant.

Innovation continues to be a strategic priority. Through strengthened industry engagement, entrepreneurship support, research extension, and the development of innovation-focused programs, we are creating pathways for research commercialization and knowledge transfer. These efforts ensure that our research outcomes move beyond publication to practical application, contributing meaningfully to national development agendas. The year 2025 was particularly spectacular by way of number of conferences that FNU hosted or co-hosted. Among others, we held the first research symposium, and through nearly 10 conferences, we shared our findings with local, regional and international audiences.

Looking ahead into 2026, the Research & Innovation Office will continue to focus on:

- Enhancing research capacity building and mentorship, particularly for early-career researchers
- Expanding external funding opportunities and international collaborations
- Strengthening ethical, governance, and quality assurance frameworks
- Promoting impact-driven research aligned with regional and global priorities

I would like to sincerely acknowledge and thank our researchers, research assistants, postgraduate students, partners, and support teams for their unwavering commitment and contributions. Your collective efforts are the foundation of our research success.

I encourage all staff and students to remain engaged, innovative, and collaborative as we continue to advance a vibrant research ecosystem that delivers knowledge with purpose and impact.

Together, we will continue to shape solutions for today’s challenges and tomorrow’s opportunities.

Prof Paul A. Iji – Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation), Fiji National University

Author of Writing and Publishing Your Research (hard and Kindle editions) and A Guide for Young Africans Growing up Overseas (CreateSpace/Amazon).

1.0 Community Information

1.1 In Memoriam



The Research Office regrets to announce the passing of Dr. Apaitia Macanawai, Director of Research and Innovation, who passed away on 10 November 2025.

Dr. Macanawai joined the Research Office on 10 February 2025 and served with dedication, professionalism, and a strong commitment to advancing research and innovation. During his tenure, he made valuable contributions to the strategic development of research initiatives and was highly respected for his leadership, integrity, and collaborative approach.

Dr. Macanawai's dedication to research excellence and service made a lasting contribution to the Research Office and the wider FNU community. He will be remembered for his guidance, insight, and collegial spirit.

The Research Office extends its deepest condolences to Dr. Macanawai's family, friends, and colleagues during this time of loss. He will be greatly missed, and his contributions and legacy will be remembered with respect and gratitude.

1.2 Pacific Action on Climate Transitions (PACT): An Overview

The Pacific Action for Climate Transitions (PACT) Research Centre is a joint initiative between Monash University and FNU established to strengthen Pacific-led climate research, policy, and implementation. PACT works to build institutional capacity, mobilise climate and environmental finance, and support the design and delivery of high-impact projects aligned with national and regional priorities. In Fiji and across the Pacific, PACT focuses on climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration, energy transition, and innovative financing mechanisms, positioning FNU as a trusted technical advisory and implementing partner for multilateral climate funds such as the GCF, GEF, and Adaptation Fund. Through research, capacity building, partnership development, and project implementation support, PACT aims to translate global climate finance opportunities into locally grounded, Pacific-driven solutions.

1.2.1 Mr. Martin Timperley, Project Manager (PACT), attached to the Research Office



Mr. Martin Timperley is a climate resilience and sustainable development expert from Byron Bay, NSW, Australia. He is the Project Manager of PACT at Monash Business School, where he oversees the design and delivery of climate resilience and mitigation initiatives across the Pacific, with a focus on building local expertise and improving access to climate finance.

Currently based at the Research Office under an Adjunct appointment, Mr. Timperley has nearly a decade of experience in climate change and sustainability, including previous roles as a Senior Sustainability Consultant with William Sale Partnership Ltd in Australia and Research Assistant at The University of Queensland. He holds a Master's degree in Environmental Management from The University of Queensland.

1.2.2 New Administrative Officer - PACT



Ms. Chioma Kelechi Victor-Prynce joins the Research Office as the new Administrator for PACT. She is an administrative professional with over seven years of diverse experience in high-level program support, and office management. Ms. Victor-Prynce is recognized for her ability to manage complex schedules, coordinate large-scale events, and leverage technology to enhance institutional efficiency. She holds a Master of Public Administration from Benue State University and a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in English Language from the University of Uyo.

FNU is pleased to welcome Ms. Victor-Prynce to the Research Office, and looks forward to her valuable contributions.

1.3 Visitors

The Research Office meets with a diverse range of visitors every week, from within Fiji, other parts of the South Pacific and from beyond. During the reporting period of this Newsletter, we welcomed Dr. Linda Wess and Professor Steven J.R. Underhill of the University of Sunshine Coast, Australia. Prof Underhill is an Adjunct Professor with FNU, who for many years has worked with researchers at CAFF. He supported FNU in the delivery of the ACIAR scholarships from 2020 to 2025. Most of the work with the students online and on the ground was done by his staff member, Dr Wess, who is retiring from research activities. We wish Linda all the best in her next direction.

We also welcomed Dr. Veronica Doerr, the CEO of Sustineo, a consultancy firm appointed by the ACIAR to develop the next round of graduate scholarships at FNU and USP. Dr. Doerr and her team then spent some weeks meeting with partners from FNU, USP and ACIAR to develop the plans for the awards that will commence in 2026.

Two other key visitors to the Research Office were Dr. Mary Johnson and Clinton Muller from RMIT University, Melbourne. Dr. Johnson is the Project Leader of ACIAR-funded Landcare project, which is a collaboration between FNU, RMIT, Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, and Philippine Council for Agriculture and the Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD).

2.0 Conferences and Seminars

2.1 Global South Seminar Series

Five seminars/webinars were given in the Global South Seminar Series. Dr. Jioji Tabudravu of the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), UK presented on the topic “Exploring the World of Natural Product Biodiscovery”. Other speakers and their topics were:

- Associate Professor Eugene Ezebilu, National Research Institute, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea - Challenges and Determinants of Coffee Production in Papua New Guinea: Lessons for the Pacific region.
- Dr. Sam Goundar, RMIT University, Australia - AI, Editors & Ethics – Mastering the Art & Science of New Era Research Publications.
- Professor Nick Paul, UniSC Seaweed Research Group, School of Science, Technology & Engineering, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia – Seaweed Biotechnology for Climate Impact: from Cows to Coastal Communities. .
- Dr. Janin Bredehoeft, CEO of Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) and Ms. Tamzen Armer, Director of Programs at SAGE – Beyond Empowerment: How to Make Systems Change Happen.

2.2 FNU Research Office Holds its First Research Symposium Highlighting Fiji’s National Priorities



Participants at the 1st FNU Research Symposium

FNU successfully hosted its inaugural Research Symposium at the Nasinu Campus, focusing on national challenges affecting key sectors of the Fijian economy. Held under the theme “Inter-Disciplinary Approaches to National Challenges,” the symposium featured research addressing agriculture, health and medical care, climate change, education, and construction.

The Chief Guest and Director of the Higher Education Commission of Fiji, Dr. Eci Naisele, commended FNU for establishing a platform that promotes knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation within higher education. He highlighted the presentation of 22 research papers as a testament to the University’s commitment to academic excellence, capacity building, and impactful research. Dr Naisele also emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary research in overcoming lingering colonial influences in education and advancing solutions aligned with national priorities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba described the symposium as a significant milestone for the young university and expressed confidence in its continued growth. She noted that research findings, particularly in climate change, would inform FNU’s review of its learning and teaching frameworks to strengthen climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The symposium brought together academics, researchers, students, staff, and industry representatives, fostering dialogue and collaboration across multiple sectors.

2.3 Loss and Damage Symposium, Savusavu, Fiji



Regional Symposium on Loss and Damage Outcomes (Savusavu, Fiji | 16–18 September 2025)

The Pacific Symposium on Climate Loss and Damage, jointly hosted by FNU, Monash University, and the Pacific Community (SPC), in partnership with the Government of Denmark, convened more than 120 delegates from across the Pacific and beyond. Participants included academics, policymakers, development partners, and community leaders.

The symposium featured research presentations, panel discussions, a poster session, and a field visit to Vunisavisavi Village, a community affected by climate-induced relocation. Discussions examined both economic impacts such as infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods, and non-economic impacts, including health, displacement, and cultural heritage. Key cross-cutting themes included water security, customary land tenure, climate finance, and socio-ecological resilience. A central outcome of the symposium was the recognition that integrating Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge (ITK) with academic research is critical to strengthening the Pacific’s response to climate change.

The symposium was officially opened by Fiji’s Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Honourable Mosese Bilitavu, and was widely regarded as a success. It was also attended by senior national leaders, including the Chair and CEO of the Fiji Higher Education Commission, Mr. Steve Chand; its Director, Dr Eci Naisele; the Permanent Secretary for Education, Mr. Navin Raj; and the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change, Dr. Sivendra Michael.

2.4 53rd Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) Conference

PACT funded the participation of two FNU representatives from the Legal Office at the 53rd Oceania Comparative and International Education Society (OCIES) Conference, held at the University of Canterbury from 23 to 26 November 2025. This support enabled their attendance, scholarly presentation, and active engagement with regional and international academics on key issues relating to education, climate justice, and resilience. The participants delivered a well-received paper titled “Law, Education, and Climate Resilience in Fiji: Bridging Policy and Practice,” which has since been formally accepted for publication in the *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*. The conference offered valuable opportunities for professional networking and knowledge exchange, particularly in the areas of climate justice, ITK systems, artificial intelligence, research ethics, and policy frameworks. These experiences have strengthened the participants’ capacity to support research compliance, policy development, and academic scholarship at Fiji National University. Overall, PACT’s sponsorship made a significant contribution to their professional development, institutional representation, and the advancement of climate resilience research at FNU.



3.0 PIVOT-RP - An Advanced Resource for Identifying and Securing Research Funding

The University has introduced Pivot-RP, a leading research development platform used by top universities worldwide to identify and access research funding opportunities. Fiji National University has now subscribed to Pivot-RP to support our researchers by providing timely and relevant calls for research grants aligned to their areas of expertise.

Pivot-RP functions most effectively when linked to individual researcher profiles. As these profiles are not currently available on the FNU website, staff are kindly requested to submit their research profiles to the Research Office or subscribe on the Clarivate website (see recent FNUPR for details). These will be shared with the vendor, Clarivate, for integration into the database. This will enable Pivot-RP to more accurately match our researchers with suitable funding opportunities.

4.0 Research Grants & Publication Incentives

4.1 Internal research grants awarded to colleges in 2025

Our funds for internal grants were quite limited in 2025. However, we supported this stream of funding with the PACT grants. In 2025, we awarded \$102,792 from the direct internal grants, and \$120,000 from PACT for small grants (see Table below). The PACT large project, worth close to \$500k will include all colleges.

Year	Grant	Internal/ External	Colleges					Number of Projects	Total
			CBHTS	CAFF	CMNHS	CHEL	CETVET		
2025	Seed fund	Internal	NIL	57792.00	45000.00	NIL	NIL	7	\$102,792.00
		External	NIL	15,000	45,000	NIL	60,000	8	\$120,000.00
	Industry Collaboration		NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL		
	International Fellowship		NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL		
	Research Preparatory Funding Scheme		NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL		

4.2 Publication Incentives for FNU Staff and Students

We continued to support our researchers who publish in high-impact journals or publish books and book chapters. We are revising the policy to make it fairer and more sustainable. Below is what we have paid out in the past 3 years. The figures do not reflect a decline in the number of publications but changes in formula that is applied to the payment of the incentives (see section 5).

2023-2025 Incentive Payment				
No.	Month	2025	2024	2023
1	January	\$9,034.50	\$13,540.84	\$715.00
2	February	\$8,097.90	\$14,778.81	\$20,037.00
3	March	\$16,271.40	\$12,279.11	\$19,970.00
4	April	\$7,309.14	\$4,725.00	\$34,114.66
5	May	\$6,497.49	\$19,913.74	\$30,512.50
6	June	\$3,960.00	\$10,669.66	\$15,973.00
7	July	\$12,430.97	\$7,548.33	\$13,440.00
8	August	\$13,131.67	\$3,207.50	\$7,881.59
9	September	\$22,480.00	\$7,862.50	\$1,878.33
10	October	\$6,688.21	\$4,287.50	\$4,325.00
11	November	\$28,322.95	\$15,912.77	\$6,177.50
12	December		\$32,287.19	\$8,700.00
Total		\$134,224.23	\$147,012.95	\$163,724.58

5.0 Publication Metrics

Our researchers, including graduate students, continue to churn out high-impact publications through various channels. In 2025, FNU published 12 book chapters, 139 journal papers and 5 conference papers. It excludes 19 Reviews, 5 Notes and 2 Errata.

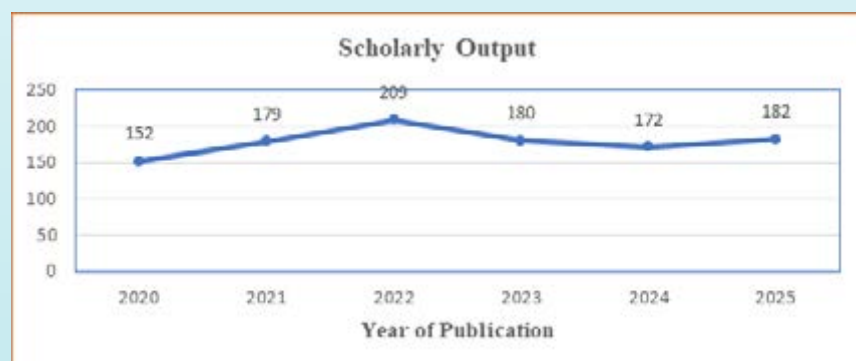
Publication	Number
Book chapter	12
Journal paper	139
Conference paper	5
Total	156

Source: Scopus (updated as at 31 December 2025)

(a) Scholarly Output

FNU publications in Scopus only	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Overall
Scholarly Output	152	179	209	180	172	182	1,074

Source: Scopus (updated as at 31 December 2025)

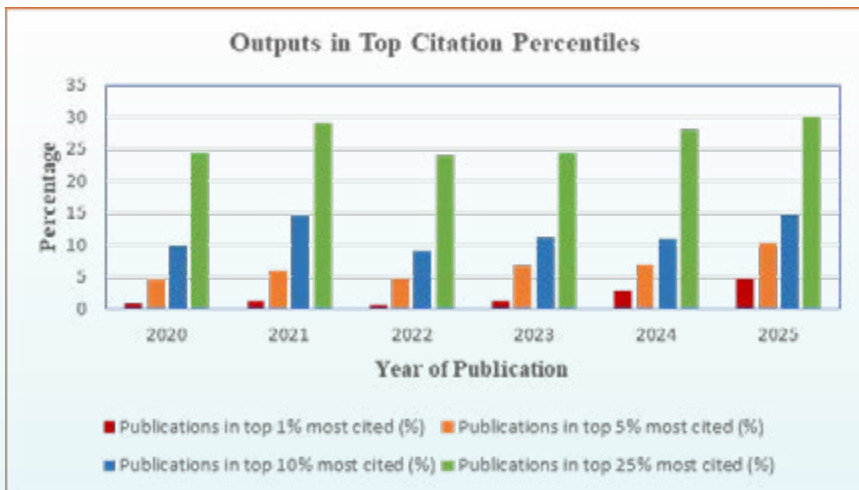


(b) Outputs in Top Citation Percentiles

Share of publications at Fiji National University that are among the most cited publications worldwide

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Overall
Publications in top 1% most cited	1	2	1	2	5	9	20
Publications in top 1% most cited (%)	0.7	1.1	0.5	1.1	2.9	4.9	1.9
Publications in top 5% most cited	7	11	10	12	12	19	71
Publications in top 5% most cited (%)	4.6	6.1	4.8	6.7	7	10.4	6.6
Publications in top 10% most cited	15	26	19	20	19	27	126
Publications in top 10% most cited (%)	9.9	14.5	9.1	11.1	11	14.8	11.7
Publications in top 25% most cited	37	52	50	44	48	55	286
Publications in top 25% most cited (%)	24.3	29.1	23.9	24.4	27.9	30.2	26.6

Source: Scopus (updated as at 31 December 2025)



286 (26.6%)
number of publications in the top 25%
most cited publications worldwide

Source: Scopus (updated as at 31 December 2025)

(c) Publications at Fiji National University from 2020 - 2025

Share of publications at Fiji National University that are among the most cited publications worldwide

CiteScore quartile	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Overall
Q1 (top 25%)	69	73	82	81	88	103	496
Q2 (top 26% - 50%)	34	39	52	28	30	47	230
Q3 (top 51% - 75%)	23	32	25	23	17	15	135
Q4 (top 76% - 100%)	10	12	14	12	12	4	64
Total	136	156	173	144	147	169	925

Source: Scopus (updated as at 31 December 2025)

6.0 Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) PASS-CR Scholarship Students

6.1 Scholarship Awards

a) The ACIAR scholarship recipients from 2021-2026

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. of Applications received	16	11	27	18	26	Nil
No. of Awardees	5	6	6	6	8	Nil

b) The FNU Graduate scholarship recipients from 2020 - 2026

Year	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
No. of Applications received	6	24	32	24	28	Nil
No. of Awardees	1	9	6	6	6	Nil

6.2 PASS Design Workshop: Shaping the Next Phase of PASS Scholarships

The ACIAR Pacific Agriculture Scholarships and Support (PASS) Design Workshop was held from 1 to 4 September 2025 to finalise the contents of the next contract. The first contract at FNU ended in December 2025. The new agreement will offer more than scholarships but include fellowships, and more support for the supervisors.



6.3 Advanced-Level R Statistical Software Workshop

Building on the success of the earlier beginner-level session, FNU and the University of the South Pacific (USP) successfully conducted an Advanced-Level R Statistical Software Workshop from Tuesday, 4th November to Friday, 7th November 2025.

This workshop was funded by the ACIAR to support the research development of PASS scholars. Jointly organized by the ACIAR Graduate Officers – FNU and USP, the workshop aimed to further strengthen scholars' research and data analysis capabilities through advanced applications of R, complementing the capacity-building initiatives under the PASS program. Participants explored complex data handling, visualization techniques, and statistical modelling to enhance their analytical proficiency.

Facilitated by Dr. Tamara Osborne Naikatini, the training was a hands-on workshop featuring a range of practical exercises and applied learning activities. The workshop involved scholars attending in person and others joining via Zoom, all actively engaging in exercises and practical learning, reflecting strong participation and continued enthusiasm for research capacity building.

The workshop reinforced the strong partnership between FNU and USP in driving research development and empowering PASS and other scholars with advanced analytical skills.



7.0 Upcoming Events and Conferences

- Research Office and PACT workshop – 1-2 April 2026 (TBC)
- Research Excellence and Innovation Award 2026 – 7 May 2026 (TBC)
- Research Symposium 2026 – October 2026 (TBC)

8.0 Staff of the Research Office

For any research support and questions, please contact the Office of the PVC Research & Innovation:

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