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PRESS RELEASE

Academic meets Queen Elizabeth

Suva, Fiji Islands. Senior academic of the Fiji National University Mr. Joji Marau had his dream turn into a reality this week after he met with Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, at her home town in Windsor Castle in Britain.

Mr Marau who is the Head of School of Mechanical Engineering – Higher Education, at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) was invited to be part of the Queen’s 90th birthday celebrations.

The man from Ogea Island in the Lau groups was no ordinary guest at the celebrations as his prestigious handiwork the authentic traditional ‘*Drua*’ (double hull) *Adi Eta*, is one of the centerpieces during the birthday celebrations.

Speaking after the ceremony and meeting Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Marau said it had been a great honour for him to display the master piece that was carved by him and three others.

“I will never forget this day for the whole of my life when I and five other members of the Fiji Delegation was part of the tea party with the Royal Family in the Castle...what an opportunity,” said Mr. Marau.

FNU Chancellor Mr. Ikbal Jannif said the milestone has strengthened the University’s position on the global stage.

Mr. Jannif said they were proud to see that a project under the leadership of a senior University academic received royal blessings and would be seen by millions around the globe through the media and social media networks.

“The Fiji National University has certainly a very proud history with Colleges established 130 years ago. The display of the ‘*Drua*’ on the global stage at the Queen’s birthday celebrations is certainly phenomenal news not only for us as a growing academic institution, but as a proud nation and people of the South Sea Islands,” said Mr. Jannif.

“We at FNU are confident this exposure will strengthen our position on the global map and open doors for new and closer collaboration with similar institutions and organisations in terms of research projects, academic exchanges and curriculum development and so on.

“FNU will also continue to support its staff in development as we continue on a journey of creating a strong knowledge based society that would advance Fiji and other developing Pacific Island nations,” said Mr. Jannif.

Built in 2014, the Drua - *Adi Eta* as it’s known – is the only authentic traditional double hull canoe to have been built after the Ratu Finau, which is now kept and displayed at the Fiji National Museum.

Adi Eta, the double hull canoe stands at 8 meters in length and 2.15meters in width and is made from Damanu tree from the interior of Viti Levu in Nakorosule, Naitasiri.

After the birthday celebration, *Adi Eta* will then be transported down to Norwich where it will be showcased in an exhibition later in August before it moves to its new home the National Maritime Museum, where it will be maintained and kept.

For further information, please contact the Communications Office on 339 4000 extension 2890/2886 or Senior Public Relations Officer, Ranbeer Singh on Email: SPRO@fnu.ac.fj or Phone: 9895267

About the Fiji National University: The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).