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Press Release

FNU partners with Drone Services Fiji

Suva, Fiji Islands. Fiji National University (FNU) will soon commence with conducting Aviation Regulator approved license training on Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) in Fiji and the Pacific Region.

Licensing, certification and related courses will be developed and delivered in-line with Civil Authority of Fiji (CAAF), Civil Aviation Safety Authority of Australia (CASA) and Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA – NZ) standards.

This has been made possible with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between FNU and Drone Services (Fiji) Pte Ltd.

Through this partnership, FNU will conduct the trainings with Drone Services Fiji which will then award successful candidates with Regulator approved Licenses or Certificates at the completion of each course.

FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey said this new partnership will also allow FNU Civil Engineering students to learn how to use drones to survey land and ensure that Fiji's construction industry is better prepared to take advantage of the new technology.

Professor Healey said over time the University, in collaboration with Drone Services Fiji, will redesign the syllabus to build in the drone applications.

"Lightweight drones, using rechargeable electric batteries, powerful cameras, GPS and satellite constellation technology, are increasingly being used to perform a wide range of tasks more cheaply and efficiently," said VC Healey.

"Drone can be used, for example, to accurately survey land in three dimensions. They can be used to track the movement of cattle in inaccessible areas, inspect the structures of cell towers and tall buildings and maintain security in industrial areas."

"Increasingly, drones are flying autonomously, using prescheduled flight routes," Professor Healey added.

Drone Services Fiji - Managing Director, Mr. Richard Russell commented that the company was privileged to partner with Fiji National University to introduce CAAF recognized licensing and certification training for drone users in Fiji.

"Commercial drone operators have required to travel overseas or fly in an instructor to obtain drone pilot training and certification recognized by the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji and aviation insurance providers."

"With the support of our business partners RPAS Training & Solutions (Australia), FlyUAV (New Zealand) and the FNU – School of Aviation we are now able to deliver CAAF approved training courses in Suva and Nadi. The courses include a ground school to introduce students to aviation law, metrology, risk assessments, etc. and practical drone flight competency assessments."

The scope of cooperation under this partnership includes:

- Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) licensing and certification training mandated by the Civil Aviation Authorities of Fiji, Australia, New Zealand, ICAO and UAV industry organizations.
- RPAS training for Humanitarian, Search and Rescue, Cinematography & Photography, Asset & Infrastructure Inspection, Mapping & Surveying, Education, Research and Development applications and uses.
- Training courses in processing of remote sensor data acquired on drones.

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**For more information contact: Kalpana Kaajal | Public Relations and Communications Officer | P: 339 4000
| Ext: 2886 | Email: prco-kk@fnu.ac.fj**

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).