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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Back in classroom after eleven years**

**Suva, Fiji Islands.**

Age is no barrier for Edward Sarufi as he strives to attain higher qualification.

The 46 year old is a water engineer by profession and had been in the workforce for the past 23 years before making the difficult decision to return to the classroom.

Originally from the Solomon Islands, Mr Sarufi started studies at the Fiji National University (FNU) in 2004 before returning to his homeland in 2006.

Eleven years later in 2017, Mr Sarufi returned to the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) to complete his Diploma in Civil Engineering.

“As a working person, it is hard to leave work and return to school but I had to because I needed to upgrade myself in order to progress up the ladder at work. I need to complete my Diploma programme before I can go on to do my degree; hopefully here at FNU,” said Mr Sarufi.

Mr Sarufi previously worked with Solomon Islands Ministry of Health & Medical Services in the Department of Environment Health and the Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (RWASH) Program that directly deals with rural communities to ensure clean water supply and proper sanitation.

“My area of work is very specific and 40% of what I study here is relevant to my work. The training is very specific and with the practical classes, it gives us a feel on the reality of work and how to handle different situations when it arises.”

“I am excited about this year and I am pleased more students from the Solomon are coming across to study at FNU because we adjust easily to the life here and there are a lot of similarities so it almost feels like we are home away from home.”

Mr Sarufi encourages people of all ages to never give up on educating themselves and to go forth for higher qualification.

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**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).