



**Tuesday 31 July, 2018**

### Press Release

#### **Fiji National University partners with United Blind Persons of Fiji for 1<sup>st</sup> Awards Nite**

**Suva, Fiji Islands.** The Fiji National University (FNU) is the first organisation to confirm its sponsorship for the inaugural Disability Gala Awards Nite 2018 which is being organised by the United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP).

Chairperson of the Gala Awards Ceremony, Rajnel Prasad said they were grateful to FNU for showing its generous support towards the event which will be held at the Grand Pacific Hotel in October.

The Fiji National University will sponsor the Student of the Year category, which is one of seven awards that will be up for grabs on the evening.

“As Fiji’s national university, we are proud to have them as our first official sponsor. This is certainly a great boost to our event,” said Prasad.

FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey said they were pleased to be associated with organisations like UBP, as it is important to ensure that tertiary education is inclusive.

Professor Healey said with government placing so much emphasis on education, it was only fitting that as the national university, FNU work with such organisations to ensure that everyone has access to quality tertiary education.

He said recognising students for succeeding against the odds by organisations such as UBP will create greater awareness, empowerment and inspire others to excel, achieve their tertiary goals and become independent and productive citizens of our nation.

“Too often we are immersed in our own worlds. We have to become more responsible and as Fiji’s national university I believe that it is important that we take the lead in such initiatives,” said Professor Healey.

“We have to ensure that we provide access to quality education to all our people and at the same time recognise those that have persevered and are able to achieve their goals despite facing difficulties. These are the real champions and they become role models for others.”

“I do hope that we will be able to inspire others to come on board and support this great initiative by the United Blind Persons of Fiji,” added VC Healey.

The purpose of organising this award is to celebrate and promote inclusive education and the achievement of outstanding student who have shown remarkable endurance and fortitude to excel in their respective fields of study and research.

Nominees for the Student of the Year will be considered under the following criteria:

- Has to be a student attending any of the three Universities in Fiji and living with a disability;
- Needs to have completed 80% of his or her course and is on his/her final year of studies/attachment.
- Has been consistent and is self-motivated to succeed.
- Is actively involved in other extra-curricular activities apart from academic work;
- Has shown remarkable endurance and fortitude to succeed against all odds;
- Has participated at University activities and functions; and
- Has joined and has been actively involved in any university student committee.

The six categories for the 1st Disability Gala Awards Nite 2018 are:

1. Youth Group of the year
2. Entrepreneur of the year
3. Senior Manager of the year
4. Sports Person of the year
5. Best Entertainment Group of the year
6. Premium Awards (Life Time achievement awards)

Nomination forms for the Awards can be collected from United Blind Persons office NCDP complex Brown Street Suva or all Disable affiliates in Fiji.

On the Thursday 2nd August, FNU will sign-on as a sponsor for the 2018 Disability Gala Awards Nite and we would like to invite you to cover this in your news segment. The media conference will be held at FNU Nasinu Campus from 11am at the main boardroom.

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**About the United Blind Persons of Fiji:** The United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP) was established in 1992 by a group of blind individuals to lobby and advocate on behalf of blind and vision impaired persons. This was due to an obvious need for the raising of awareness to the general public on issues affecting people with vision impairment. UBP is made up of vision impaired and sighted persons and is an affiliate of Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation. UBP has a membership of about 200 people who actively participate in the program and activities of the Association. The office of UBP is situated at the National Council for Persons with Disabilities NCPD Complex, 3 Brown Street Suva.

**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 eight 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).