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Press Release

\$15M project for Fiji National University's Fiji Maritime Academy

Suva, Fiji Islands. The Fiji National University (FNU) today signed a contract with Sambhu Lal Construction Ltd to build a three-storey teaching facility at the Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

The project, which will cost around 15 million dollars, will encompass labs on ground floor including Marine High Voltage Room, Safety and Survival equipment labs, computer labs, fisheries lab and an open foyer.

The upper two levels will have lecture rooms with seating capacity of up to 45 students. The project also includes construction of a car park area.

The contract was signed by FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey and Director Sambhu Lal Construction Ltd, Shiu Dayal Sharma at the Fiji Maritime Academy office at Laucala Bay.

The project is government funded.

Speaking at this afternoon's signing ceremony, Professor Healey said since Fiji is a maritime nation, there's a need to have high-quality learning facilities to provide quality training for cadets, engineers, navigators and sea captains so they could prosper in the growing shipping industry.

VC Healey said with the signing of this contract, the University is taking another step towards fulfilling its vision of providing quality education to the people of Fiji.

"Today is a great day for us at the Fiji National University and we are proud to commence yet another multi-million dollar project. This is certainly good news for students intending to enrol at FMA as they will be able to train in modern facilities," Professor Healey.

"FMA is in major expansion phase. This year we launched two new Level 5 Diploma programmes; Diploma in Nautical Science and Diploma in Marine Engineering."

"These are innovative new programmes accredited by the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) which lead to a 240-credit university diploma, at the same time completing the requirements for the Class 5, 4 and 3 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) professional qualifications."

"The new Diplomas are designed to be extremely flexible. After Semester 1, a student will have completed the IMO Class 5 course and can go to sea and get the necessary experience to qualify for a Class 5 Certificate of Competence with MSAF. He or she can then return for Semester 2 and complete the IMO Class 4 course, go to sea and so on."

Students can either complete the new Diplomas in two years, followed by a six-month internship or spread their studies over up to five years and complete the sea time needed for MSAF Certificates of Competence up to Class 3.

The new Diplomas have attracted and recruited almost 250 future seafarers so far. The University has also launched a new Certificate IV in Shipbuilding.

“Currently there are many Fijian Captains who only hold a Class 3 Certificate of Competence (CoC), rather than the Class CoC required to be a ship’s master. These captains currently have limited tickets, which restrict them to the size of ship they can captain,” said Professor Healey.

“We believe there may be up to 300 Fijian ships captains who are seeking to upgrade to a Class 2 or Class 1 Certificate to Competency.”

FNU is also working on launching a new Bachelor’s programme, which will build on the Diploma programmes and give graduates a Diploma in Nautical Science, which will also meet the taught requirements for Class 2 and Class 1. Thereafter graduates will be able to go back to sea and complete the sea time necessary to obtain their Certificate of Competency as a ships master.

In addition to the completing the academic requirements for a university qualification, whether a Diploma or a Bachelor’s, meeting the IMO requirements for Classes 5 through 1 requires students to also undertake a wide range of additional short courses in things like fire safety, fire fighting, first aid and so forth.

Professor Healey said providing this education requires a range of specialist facilities, hence the steady expansion in the physical infrastructure at FMA.

Director Sambhu Lal Construction Ltd, Shiu Dayal Sharma said it is an honour to be given the opportunity by the Fiji’s national university to construct this teaching facility

“We are delighted to be part of this project and we look forward to working closely with FNU,” said Sharma.

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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).