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## Press Release

### FNU students provide community dental services to Naqarawai villagers

**Suva, Fiji.** Villagers of Naqarawai in the interior of Namosi province are thankful to a team of forty-five students from the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) for recently undertaking a dental outreach program in their village.

A total of 113 people were screened by the FNU team during the weeklong tour last month. Naqarawai is located about 146 km out of Suva and has an approximate population of 290.

The *Turaga ni Yavusa*, Ratu Ilaisa Kuruibua, said the dental assistance provided to them was greatly appreciated.

"We really appreciate this gesture by the FNU team as the dental services were brought right to our door-steps. Given the distance from towns and cities, we are hardly able to visit the dental facility for regular check-ups. In fact, thanks to this outreach program, many residents here received dental attention for the first time," said Ratu Kuruibua.

Dr Suniel Nath, a Lecturer in the Department of Oral Health said the main idea behind the community outreach initiative was to provide dental care and share best dental practices with those who had difficulty in accessing these services.

"This village setting was chosen for reasons such as geographical isolation, hence it justifies the provision of basic dental service to those who are disadvantaged due to their physical location," Dr Nath.

Dr Nath said the initiative also assisted in developing and strengthening the practical components of students' ability to plan, organize, and carry out an oral health survey.

He added the experience gained by students was invaluable and life changing. He said that the village setting provided students an opportunity to experience and learn firsthand the challenges that people sometimes have to overcome to access health services.

Following the outreach program Dr Nath said they have noted that there is a high prevalence of untreated dental caries and missing teeth among the villagers.

The treatment included 92 restorations, 82 extractions and five people had fluoride application.

The result was presented to the community by the students who further advised them on the most appropriate oral health preventive programs.

According to Dr Nath the people of Naqarawai were able to save just over one thousand dollars on treatment as the services provided was free of charge.

**For more information contact: Shireen Lata | Public Relations and Communications Officer | P: 339 4000 | Ext: 2886 | Email: [prco-sl@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:prco-sl@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).