

## CMNHS Regional Students start a Pacific Connect Network

The Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) regional students have started a 'Pacific Connect' Network for knowledge sharing and mentoring.

Regional students attending the College were hosted to a networking event by the Associate Dean Regional (ADR) Office to highlight the support services available to assist in their transition from home to University life. The Counsellor, Development-Cooperation Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Gordon Burns, while welcoming students at the Pasifika Campus said: "you have a key role to play in making the shared vision of the region, that everyone should be able to access universal health coverage, a reality."



Counsellor Development-Cooperation DFAT-Gordon Burns and Dean CMNHS-Dr William May with students from Tuvalu

"While there are many challenges, there are also opportunities to make sure that everyone has access to the health care they need and your governments have selected you to be here, shows your ability and potential to succeed in your study programmes."

"This is the only College to have an Associate Dean Regional Office and we are proud to support that through our Australian Aid resources," he said. According to Burns, it was important for students to make friends and network with the diverse group of colleagues at the College.

"The ADR Office is intended to help the College strengthen the links with health ministries in the region to catalyse on the work that has already started in your countries on workforce planning and making sure that the workforce is there to sustain the level of health services that are needed."

"Please draw on the Office resources and it is a wonderful initiative to form the Pacific Connect Network and support available to everyone," Burns said.

Dean CMNHS, Dr William May, acknowledged the assistance the College had received from the DFAT program.

"I would also like to thank all the embassies in Fiji who have been there to support students in times of need, and who have been actively involved in monitoring performance of their students."

"CMNHS is committed to deliver to the needs of Pacific Island Countries (PICs), and work is underway to carry out visits to PICs so that we are able to design academic programs that align with current and emerging capacity needs in the region."

"In the Pacific, we are often encountered with the same nature and type of health issues so we should make use of every opportunity we have to discuss, plan and set out to implement context specific interventions in our different countries," Dr May added.

According to the senior academic, yesterday's forum could signal the start of networking and blending exercise which would be beneficial in the long term for all regional students.

"Pacific Connect could be viewed as a catalyst on how we share knowledge, deal with risks, address health issues and where needed improve on how we allocate resources within the region," Dr May highlighted.

The Dean stressed that it was also vital for them to ensure that regional students were properly inducted into the College especially first year students – and to be introduced to city life, University schedule, and most importantly safety measures while they were in Suva.



Vanuatu students perform their cultural dance.