

Distinguished Professor Dharmendra Sharma, AM recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours 2019



Professor Dharmendra Sharma.

Fiji-born academic and a member of the newly appointed Fiji National University (FNU) Council, Professor Dharmendra Sharma, AM has been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2019.

Professor Sharma, who is originally from Ba, has served the Chair of the Academic Board since 2014 at the University of Canberra, where he was also the Dean of Engineering and Information Sciences from 2007 to 2012 and Head of School of Information Sciences and Engineering prior.

"I feel honoured by the recognition and dedicate it to my people of Fijian diaspora. The journey will continue as I draw energy and enthusiasm from this validation and recognition of my contributions," Professor Sharma said.

"My humble journey starting in Fiji has taught me much. I am indebted to all my people for their support, understanding and to make sacrifices to get the best for their children and their generations to come. I have been a beneficiary. University of the South Pacific (USP) had been instrumental in shaping my journey and of many. I am ever so thankful. Out of challenges, we draw opportunities that provide the oxygen to keep moving."

Professor Sharma was in Fiji two weeks ago to attend the inaugural meeting of the newly appointed FNU Council.

The soft-spoken Professor said he was elated to be appointed to the Council as it presented him an opportunity to give back to his country of birth.

"I'm very excited to be able to make a contribution through my experience and the interest that I have," said Professor Sharma.

"Coming back to Fiji where I was actually born and brought up has been a big pull for me you know. Each time I come to Fiji I always feel special, and look for ways to contribute back. The opportunity at FNU is a great vehicle for me to do that."

Professor Sharma is not new to the education system in Fiji, having worked at USP for over twenty years and served on the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) board several years ago.

The distinguished academic said with the right support and guidance which was being received from the government, FNU has full potential of becoming an internationally recognised institution and an institution of distinctiveness in the ecosystem of quality and relevance in the modern higher education sector.

"The system has to produce skills for job/leadership-creation and those that are transferable across sectors."

"There's enormous hunger for higher education and its education that drives developments, drives economies, aspires to bettering quality of life, and it opens doors for opportunities."

"I'm attracted to all that especially for Fiji strengthening institution like FNU and to take it to places and help build it at a level that becomes a highly reputable institution globally. This will be a good legacy that we can build towards and leave behind to empower our people," Professor Sharma said.