

FNU, APTC, FHEC and CIC sign MoU to review and develop national qualifications for construction industry

The Fiji National University (FNU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with key stakeholders to collaborate and review, develop and deliver Fiji National Qualifications for the country's construction sector.

The MoU was signed today between FNU and the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC).



FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey (first left), APTC Deputy Chief Executive Officer Lori Banks Dutta, FHEC Interim Director Dr Nikhat Shameem and CIC Chief Executive Officer Vijay Naidu signing the MoU.

FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey said the Memorandum of Cooperation represents a "first" in Fiji, as it is the first time that FHEC and the two main providers of TVET qualifications for the industry have come together to build an integrated set of National Qualifications which will meet the industry's needs, fit into the Fiji Qualifications Framework and is designed to articulate with the higher level diplomas and degrees offered by FNU.

"TVET is part of the DNA at FNU, this is our root and we are committed to the vitality of this sector," Professor Healey said.

"With the boom in the construction industry in Fiji, we are very keen to see how we can extend our partnership with APTC, FHEC and CIC to design new, internationally benchmarked National Qualifications which can be delivered by a wider range of education and training providers."

Professor Healey said CIC was an important industry stakeholder, given that FNU trains the country's labor force such as civil engineers, the electrical engineers, the quantity surveyors, the carpenters, plumbers and electricians, amongst others.

"I think the significance of this event today is that for the first time, we are connecting up all the players."

"Rather than FNU being the kind of hub and being bilaterally connected, we're bringing all four of these key players here in Fiji together to develop a set of national qualifications that can be delivered by a wide variety of

training providers that articulate into the higher level TVET and degree level qualifications offered by FNU."

"This is the first time we've had that scale of integration in Fiji and it should be a role model for other sectors."

APTC Deputy Chief Executive Officer Lori Banks Dutta added that the MOU would ensure that the training delivery for construction-related trades in Fiji addressed the real-life needs and standards of the nation's construction industry now and in the future.

"Like any other country, Fiji needs and deserves the highest quality and most relevant skills and standards to support the productivity and sustainability of the industries, and the construction industry is a vital sector in this regard," Dutta said.

FHEC Interim Director Dr Nikhat Shameem said the agreement was also aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular Goal Four.

"SDG Goal Four talks about equitable access to education and lifelong learning," Dr Shameem said.

"I believe this MOU will bring to realisation these goals. We are not doing this for ourselves or our organisations, but we are actually doing it for the youths of this country."

CIC Chief Executive Officer Vijay Naidu highlighted that as an industry that contributed vastly to Fiji's economy, the sector was constantly in need of skilled workers.

"Part of the dream is that training providers not only offer the technical skills, but also change the mindsets and motivate students to have a good work ethic and be proud of what they are doing," Naidu said.

"We hope this collaboration will lead to more workers."

"As an employer, once we have a national qualification I will know exactly what the person has done, what their skills and experiences are and I will feel more confident in employing them."



FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey (second from left) delivers a short address before the MoU signing.