



FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey, Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji Anna Dorney and APTC Chief Executive Officer Soli Middleby (middle) with staff from FNU and APTC after the signing of the partnership framework.

FNU and APTC ink partnership to raise TVET profile in Fiji

A new partnership agreement has been signed between the Fiji National University (FNU) and Australian Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) aimed at strengthening the quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) in Fiji.

The agreement was signed by the FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey and APTC Chief Executive Officer Soli Middleby in the presence of Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Anna Dorney today.

Deputy High Commissioner Dorney said the partnership was a boost towards the Australian government's support towards technical education in Fiji and across the Pacific.

"We are delighted to contribute to Pacific countries ambition to develop their workforces and improving employment opportunities for their people," she said.

According to Dorney, the partnership demonstrated a strong mutual commitment to provide high-quality technical training and building a skilled, demanding and productive workforce in Fiji, which will be beneficial to all.

"Students benefit by receiving quality training that will make them workforce ready. Employers benefit because they rely on training institutions to provide essential skills and knowledge to both new and existing employees and government benefits as technical and vocational skills contribute to the country."

"The partnership framework will guide both the institutions to initiate goals more efficiently and productively and of course among this is a goal of contributing to a high quality technical and vocational education and training sector."

FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey said the University will work with APTC to seek Australian recognition for new FNU qualifications.

"While APTC and FNU programmes will initially be taught alongside each other in shared workshops and laboratories, the aim is that FNU programme will gradually be aligned with APTC programmes, so that in the final stage, there will be one set of FNU TVET qualifications being delivered at APTC standards."

"Achieving this endpoint will require significant 'technology transfer' from APTC to FNU by helping us to upgrade the skills and competencies of our TVET staff so they can teach programmes to Australian standards," said Professor Healey.

"We believe that the national interest of Fiji is best served by having a highly skilled workforce which underpins a rapidly growing economy and that, if some graduates choose to take advantage of internationally recognised qualifications by working overseas, this is just part of living in a globalized world."

"The alternative is to have a poorly skilled workforce, which is trapped by their lack of decent qualifications in a stagnating economy, and this is not an option."

As part of the partnership framework, APTC will also relocate its physical training equipment from other facilities to FNU's Derrick Campus in Samabula, which will enable FNU to upgrade its resources to train students.

The partnership is timely given that from 1 August, the Technical College of Fiji (TCF) will be merged with FNU.

"By joining with APTC, FNU will be responsible for the most of the TVET sector in Fiji and will be in a position to work closely with the Fiji Higher Education Commission and major employers to ensure that we meet the nation's training needs and continue to support Fiji's economic growth and development."

APTC Chief Executive Officer Soli Middleby said the new partnership adds another layer of cement to APTC's relationship with FNU.

"I have no doubt that the process that we have gone through and the discussions we have had has enabled both parties to articulate some more ambition and action towards our common vision which is for strengthening the quality and relevance of TVET in Fiji," said Middleby.



FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey and APTC Chief Executive Officer Soli Middleby signing the new partnership framework between FNU and APTC