

## FNU encourages professional development for TVET teachers



*(3rd from Left) Scholarship recipients Ratu Siwate Dakuna Dharmendra Kumar and Joeli Pulu with PS Education Alison Burchell and FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey.*

Three Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teachers have been granted scholarships by the Fiji National University (FNU) to pursue Higher Education Certificate Teaching in TVET.

The teachers selected had applied for the scholarship that was announced by FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey earlier this month.

Dharmendra Kumar, Joeli Pulu and Ratu Siwate Dakuna received the scholarship during Australia Pacific Training Coalition's (APTC) inaugural graduation ceremony for the National Certificate in Teaching TEVT (Level 4) at the Holiday Inn in Suva yesterday.

Professor Healey said FNU was excited to encourage further professional development for TVET teachers in the country.

"We are very pleased to offer scholarships to future champions of TVET teaching here in Fiji," said VC Healey.

"We feel very passionate about the TVET sector and we estimate that 60 percent of all the future jobs will be at the TVET stream rather than at Higher Education level."

Professor Healey said FNU cooperated closely with the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) during the design process of the TVET Teaching Certificate IV programme which is a "national qualification".

This programme can be delivered by any registered tertiary education provider, to ensure students seamlessly move onto FNU's Certificate V TVET Teaching after which they can pursue Year 2 of the Bachelor in Education (TVET) and the Master in Education (TVET).

"We are a long-term partner of APTC and we were delighted when they stepped forward to deliver the pilot programme," said VC Healey.

"We believe that in strengthening and professionalising the teaching of TVET subjects, to ensure that Fiji gets the highly skilled workforce, it needs to underpin its continued economic development. Together, FHEC, APTC and FNU are making a concerted effort to upgrade the teaching skills and competences of the nation's TVET teachers."

The successful trio will undertake Higher Education Certificate Teaching in TVET, a 120-credit Level 5 programme offered by FNU's College of Humanities and Education (CHE).

The Higher Education Certificate in TVET is a stand-alone qualification but successful completion allows direct entry into Year 2 of FNU's Bachelor of Education (TVET) for teachers wanting to progress further in their professional studies.

Scholarship recipient Dharmendra Kumar was caught by surprise when his name was announced by the VC Healey.

Kumar said while he submitted his application but did not expect to be successful given the strong competition from other applicants.

The scholarship awardee is a FNU alumni, having attained a Diploma in Architecture from the College of Engineering, Science and Technology a few years ago.

"I wanted to do something different from the normal industry work and the best option to explore teaching in the TVET sector," Kumar said.

"For the past three years I have been an instructor at Technical College of Fiji (TCF) teaching Carpentry and AutoCAD programmes. I also facilitate AutoCAD workshops for the industry partners as part of their professional development programmes," he added.

Kumar said the formal teaching qualification will equip him with necessary expertise which will enable him to impart knowledge more effectively to the trainees.

"The things I have learnt during the course of this programme has really given me a clearer image of how the TVET sector works and what the expectations are in the near future."

Another recipient, Joeli Pulu said he was thrilled to receive the scholarship and looked forward to studying at FNU.

Pulu, who is a Carpentry instructor at TCF, said it was imperative to have teaching skills in order to effectively impart knowledge to the trainees.

"From industry experience, we already have the skills and knowledge required for this job. However, if we are not able to teach these correctly then we are failing as instructors," said Pulu.

"We need to be able to communicate our ideas to the trainees and this is where the teaching qualification becomes an essential component of our day-to-day work."

"I am glad that I took up the level 4 qualification and now FNU has given me the opportunity to continue my learning experience and further enhance my teaching capabilities," Pulu added.

The three teachers will undertake the one year programme commencing Semester One, 2019. For more pictures kindly visit the Fiji National University facebook page.