

## FNU works on accreditation for short courses



*Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching Professor James Pounder (fifth from right) with EQAP representatives and staff members during the workshop.*

Fiji National University (FNU) is working with the Pacific Community's Educational Quality Assessment Project (EQAP) to get accreditation for its short courses at the national and regional level. According to Pro Vice Chancellor Learning and Teaching (PVC L&T) Professor James Pounder, FNU has over 100 micro-qualifications that are likely to meet the requirements of accreditation with EQAP.

"The local regulator for higher education in Fiji – the Fiji Higher Education Commission currently has systems and processes for the recording of Fiji universities' traditional academic and professional programmes only and has no facility for accrediting micro qualifications," said Professor Pounder.

"However, the Educational Quality Assessment Project (EQAP), part of the Pacific Community and a recognised accrediting body in the South Pacific, is now providing the opportunity to Higher Education Institution's in Fiji and the region to receive accreditation of micro qualification."

A two-and-a-half-day capacity building workshop was organised with representatives from the EQAP team and FNU's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), College of Humanities and Education (CHE), College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) and College of Medicine,

Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) and the National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) last week.

Around thirty-one participants attended the inaugural workshop.

"The workshop focused on providing the participant with the knowledge and skills required to develop short courses in line with the accreditation standards of EQAP and prepare application for accreditation in accordance with the standards," Professor Pounder said.

PVC L&T added the FNU Quality Office is currently preparing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with EQAP to have a systemised and subsidised process for attaining accreditation.

"Through the MoU, there will be greater technical support and collaboration with the EQAP," commented the senior academic.

Professor Pounder said that short courses offered at FNU have been a major source of qualification for industry employment such as tradesmen in Fiji but generally not recognised. FNU's initiative in the micro-qualification area should be viewed as enabling such short courses that lead to a certificate of attainment to be recognised both nationally and regionally in the future.