

Minister for Education Rosy Akbar tours Fiji National University



Education Minister Rosy Akbar visits FNU capital project sites with FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council Dr Rajesh Chandra and VC Professor Nigel Healey and receives construction updates from contractors.

The Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts, Honourable Rosy Akbar met with the Fiji National University's (FNU) Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey and the Senior Management Group (SMG) today for a briefing on operations and projects being undertaken at the University.

This was the Minister's first briefing by the FNU management team since her appointment to the Education portfolio. Also present at the high-level meeting was the FNU Chancellor and Council Chair Dr Rajesh Chandra and representatives from the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey made a presentation that reviewed recent developments at the University as well as major construction projects that are currently underway.

During the meeting, Honourable Akbar emphasised the need to ensure all capital projects funded by the Government be on-track so they are opened as scheduled and placed special emphasis on the completion of the Labasa Campus in a timely manner. Professor Healey assured her that all risk factors had been taken into consideration and contingency plans put in place and the Labasa Campus is top priority.

Some of the major projects being funded by the Government include the construction of the new Labasa Campus, the three-storey

building at the Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA), the four-storey Student Administrative and College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism building, the Multi-Purpose Gymnasium at Nasinu Campus and the state-of-the-art Animal Hospital at Koronivia Campus.

"It is encouraging to note that student numbers are going up. You are also aware of the study where you live policy and the Labasa Campus sort of cements this policy," said Minister Akbar.

"We want students to stay and study in the North so obviously students from this year would be planning that these are the courses that will be offered from Semester 1, 2020 by the University and ofcourse they are going to enrol into that so that kind of visionary angle needs to be looked at."

VC Professor Healey assured the Minister that the University was working closely with the relevant stakeholders to ensure the multi-million dollar Labasa Campus will open for classes from next year.

"Clearly for us, Labasa is the most important project," said Prof Healey.

"This Campus will not only attract students from Vanua Levu but students from across some of the surrounding islands like Taveuni and so we are looking at building residential accommodation there in time."

The Education Minister was accompanied by the FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, Dr Rajesh Chandra, VC Professor Healey and Director Capital Projects and Infrastructure, Mr Niranjwan Chettiar on a tour to the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) Koronivia Campus to view construction progress on the \$30 million Veterinary training hospital.

Honourable Akbar also visited the Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) to inspect construction works on the three-storey teaching facility which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The Minister was pleased to note that was project was proceeding as scheduled. This facility will be used by students who will enrol for the new Bachelor of Nautical Science programme next year.

The Minister is expected to make similar visits to other FNU Campuses later in the year.



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