

Recently appointed FNU Council convenes first meeting



Members of the newly-appointed Fiji National University Council with Minister For Education, Heritage and Arts Rosy Akbar (middle) and FNU senior management group.

Members of the newly appointed Fiji National University (FNU) Council were challenged by the Minister of Education, Heritage and Arts Minister Rosy Akbar to elevate the University to a new level of pedigree and prestige.

Whilst officially opening the first FNU Council meeting at FNU Nadi Campus on Friday, May 31, Honorable Akbar highlighted the important role the Council plays in the growth of the national university and to support Government's vision in the creation of a knowledge-oriented society.

"This is an extremely competent and distinguished Council which we are confident will lift the level of governance and the performance of Fiji National University," Honorable Akbar said.

"You all bring with yourself a well-rounded array of local, regional and global insights and accomplishments from across the fields of academia, business and the sciences including engineering and medicine."

"The Bainimarama Government has consistently lifted the vision of Fiji, to be a smart society, peaceful, progressive and inclusive, and one committed not only to the sustainable development of Fiji, but to Fiji playing its full role globally to fight the challenge of climate change and resulting intensification of natural disasters that threaten the very existence of our globe."

The Education Minister stated that despite having a regional university, the Fijian Government saw the need to establish its own national university.

"The government wants the University to produce relevant graduates, graduates who can critically think, have an entrepreneurial mind and be responsible members of society. The future of the country is dependent on the national university to produce well balanced individuals."

"Within our vision, our national university has a major role to play. That is why we have been increasing our support to FNU steadily and even dramatically."

"Of its \$164m revenue in 2018, \$60m (37%) was Fiji Government operating grant and \$74m (45%) was student tuition fee and hostel income. Given that tuition and hostel income is almost exclusively from TELS, this \$74m is almost all publicly-funded in the first instance."

Honorable Akbar added that the Fijian Government was confident in the future of FNU as the nation's national university.

FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, Dr Rajesh Chandra reiterated that the Council will ensure that University was aligned to the needs of the industry and other stakeholders.

"As we approach the 10th anniversary of FNU next year, and as the Government pursues its agenda for tertiary education with very high expectation, FNU stands ready for a significant lift in its performance and in

its plans and activities going forward that is very much in line with the Fijian Government's vision to create a knowledge oriented society and economy," Dr Chandra said.

"For that, it is making historically unparalleled investments in education, as well as in tertiary education."

Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey added that the University will continue in its mission to provide quality education that is accessible to all Fijians.

"This is training which is relevant to the needs of the economy and is open to all, regardless of age and location," Professor Healey said.

"For the first ten years, we have been rebuilding the foundations by bringing together the Colleges and restructuring the academic programmes."

"The issues raised by the (Education) Minister are very well taken and we are now at a point where in the next ten years, we are ready to move on to a new level."

The 16 Council members present underwent an induction session in the morning before the first Council meeting was opened by Education Minister, Honorable Akbar.

Presentations were made on the nature, importance and implications of good university governance, together with an in depth orientation of the FNU ACT.

The FNU Council meeting ended on Saturday, June 1.



Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts Rosy Akbar officiates at the FNU Council Meeting in Nadi.