



FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# FNU

# NIKUA

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## Inspiring Hearts

## Empowering Minds



SCAN FOR ECOPY

**FNU EMPOWERS** FUTURE LEADERS

**TIMOR LESTE STUDENT** GRADUATES DESPITE CHALLENGES







Seated (L-R): DFAT Counsellor Sophie Temby, FNU Vice - Chancellor Professor Unaisi Nabobo- Baba, APTC Executive Regional Operations Director Carmel Nee with members of FNU's Senior Leadership Team.

## Celebrating Achievements and Building the Future with FNU

*Bula vinaka to you all!*

I am delighted to welcome you to another edition of FNUNIKUA, a monthly newsletter that celebrates the achievements and progress of our vibrant Fiji National University (FNU) family. This month's theme, "Inspiring Hearts, Empowering Minds," ignites both passion and knowledge. It speaks to igniting enthusiasm and motivation while equipping you with the skills and understanding to achieve your goals. It is about nurturing a love of learning that empowers you to make a difference. The theme perfectly encapsulates the stories and highlights we share within these pages.

### Celebrating Achievements

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the graduates of our National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Sustainable Livelihood Project (SLP) Training programme! We celebrate your achievements following the graduations in Vunivutu, Labasa, and Nauru. A total of 928 individuals (712 Nauruans, 216 Fijians) graduated from NTPC's valuable programmes, equipping them with skills in baking, plumbing, carpentry, and more. These newfound skills will empower graduates to pursue exciting careers, further their studies, strengthen their livelihoods, and contribute positively to their communities. We, your FNU family are proud to have played a role in your success story.

On a related note, the NTPC recently celebrated another milestone, the launch of the 25th Anniversary of Fiji Business Excellence Awards (FBEA). This prestigious event recognised excellence, innovation, and resilience in Fiji's business community. Businesses and organisations across the country were recognised for their outstanding achievements, highlighting those who truly go above and beyond in serving our community. Congratulations to all winners and nominees.

### Strengthening Collaborations

After holding the single biggest graduation in Nauru last month, we welcomed esteemed government officials from the Republic of Nauru for a productive meeting aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing educational opportunities between the two nations. This aligns with our Strategic Plan 2024-2026 Priority Area 5: Education for Employability and Internationalisation and we are excited about what the future holds for both FNU and the Republic of Nauru.

On the international front, I recently led a team to Nevada, in the United States of America for fruitful discussions with the College of Southern Nevada and Nevada National Guard. We explored potential collaborations in areas like emergency response, learning from their esteemed EMT/Paramedic Programme and Department of Criminal Justice and Emergency Service. This knowledge exchange paves the way for exciting future partnerships.

### Honouring the Past, Building the Future

This month, we reflect on the significant contributions that shaped Fiji's vibrant present. We recently commemorated *Girmityas* Remembrance Day, paying homage to the enduring legacy of the *Girmityas*. Their sacrifices laid the groundwork for Fiji's rich cultural tapestry and national progress. Later this month, we will also commemorate the life and the achievements of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna. Often referred to as the "national father of modern Fiji" Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna was a high chief, statesman, and scholar who played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's development.

By acknowledging both these historical moments, we bridge the past and the present. The contributions of the *Girmityas* and the leadership of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna continue to resonate in Fiji's social fabric and national identity.

### Showcasing FNU

Our Outreach Team continues to connect with young minds by interacting with students and communities at some of the notable secondary schools and also hosted visitations from a few maritime secondary schools. Sharing academic information empowers students to make informed career choices, and we remain committed to such outreach initiatives in the future.

### GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan 2024- 2026

Furthermore, I am proud to announce the launch of FNU's Gender Equality, Diversity, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Strategy and Action Plan. This initiative fosters a more inclusive environment, empowering individuals to thrive in a diverse and equitable society. By championing GEDSI principles, we not only enrich our university but also contribute to the holistic development of our nation.

### Looking ahead!

Dear students, as Semester 1 examinations approach, I would like to wish you all the very best in your studies and exams. I acknowledge your hard work and dedication throughout the semester. Remember to utilise all available resources, manage your time effectively, and approach your exams with confidence.

I am also pleased to announce that applications for Semester 2 are now open! Whether you are a continuing student or a prospective student seeking a new academic journey, I encourage you to explore the exciting programmes FNU has to offer.

Visit our website [www.fnu.ac.fj](http://www.fnu.ac.fj) or any of our campuses for detailed information on available programmes, application procedures, and important deadlines.

The future is ours to shape! Through collaboration and a commitment to diversity and inclusion, FNU is building a brighter tomorrow. Explore the possibilities and be empowered!



**Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Fiji National University



# Timor-Leste Student Graduates Despite Challenges

Despite living many kilometres away from her family, Timor-Leste native, Luciana Celeste Amaral accomplished her goal and graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing (Emergency Nursing) at the Fiji National University's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) April graduation ceremony.

She could not contain her tears, being the lone graduate in the programme.

The 48-year-old mother of three travelled to Fiji in 2023 to pursue her studies. A year later, her hard work and commitment to her education finally pay off.

She is a nurse with 22 years experience, working at the Guido Valadares National Hospital in Timor-Leste, and giving back to her country is one of her top priorities.

Amaral joined the FNU after hearing from a friend, also from Timor-Leste, about the programmes under the CMNHS.

"I gathered information from my friend who was also a student at the CMNHS about the programmes

offered, and I was interested to apply and study as well," she said.

"I applied and got my Offer Letter, interestingly this was my first time to come to Fiji!

"Whatever I have learnt throughout my educational journey at the FNU, the next step is implementation for me when I return and see which areas I need to improve on."

She revealed that the main challenge for her was being away from her family in a foreign country, but she immediately felt welcomed and at home in Fiji.

"Being in a new country without family was a major challenge. I was missing my family, but I felt welcomed in Fiji. Learning from Fijians and friends from other countries filled the void and gave me strength to focus on my studies," she said.

"My aim is to continue my education later. I am grateful to the FNU for giving me an opportunity to study."

Amaral departed the country a few weeks following her graduation.



FNU College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences graduate, Luciana Celeste Amaral.



Bachelor of Sports Education and Exercise Science student, Saiasi Bose.

## 'Sports, Creating Endless Opportunities': Bose

"Sports is becoming an industry and is creating a lot of opportunities as well for many students."

This was the statement made by the Fiji National University Bachelor of Sports Education and Exercise Science (BSEES) student, Saiasi Bose.

Bose is also the current Fiji Rugby Regional Development Officer 5.

Being in the sports arena for many years, the 38-year-old shared his story on how sports could change a person's life.

The Yasawa native said he was grateful to his father for introducing him to sports.

"My father was a teacher, and this is where I was introduced to sports and developed an interest in rugby and athletics," said Bose.

"He then joined the FNU in 2009 to pursue his studies.

Bose's career began with the Fiji Sports Commission as Assistant Sports Development Officer West in 2013. In 2015, he was promoted to Sports

Development Officer North, and later joined the Fiji Rugby Union in his current role.

"My responsibility includes looking after training and education, where we conduct courses like coaching, strength and condition, First Aid, admin courses, and also look after secondary and primary schools solely focusing on rugby," he said.

"Nowadays, sports is becoming a big industry with many career pathways and opportunities. For instance, athletes are receiving major benefits like scholarships and professional contracts. This is exactly what we want for students, to be part of that journey and achieve similar success."

The BSEES programme, now in its second year with FNU's College of Humanities and Education, is known to cater to the demands of the industry in the provision of qualified sports scientists to develop sports in Fiji and the region.

Presently, the BSEES programme is the only sports science Degree programme offered locally and regionally.

"I believe the FNU has set a great platform to study and to allow its students and graduates to go back and teach others in terms of sports development, wellness and physical activity."

## FNU Empowers Future Leaders

The Fiji National University (FNU) is shaping the future by empowering senior secondary school students with insightful career guidance sessions. This recent initiative targeted students from Saint Joseph Secondary School, Suva Grammar School, and Ballantine Memorial School.

FNU's outreach team aimed to broaden students' educational horizons and equip them with knowledge of the diverse career paths offered by the university. The interactive sessions exposed students to a range of academic options, from certificate, diploma, and higher education programmes.

Saint Joseph Secondary School's Assistant Principal, Asena Waqanicakau, emphasised the importance of early guidance for secondary school students.

"While careers expo often targets senior secondary school students, we involve our Year 9 students with the aim that they are able to identify future career paths and align them with subject choices when they reach Year 11," said Waqanicakau.

At the Suva Grammar School Careers Fair, Elik Baleinakama, visited FNU's booth to enquire about



Cicia High School students at the CMNHS Pasifika Campus

FNU's aviation programmes.

"We were fortunate to have FNU here advising us of our future endeavours after high school and to turn our dreams into reality," said the Suva Grammar School student.

Representatives from FNU's five colleges and the National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) and the Pacific Centre for Marine Studies (PCMS) presented comprehensive programme details and overview of FNU's comprehensive services, providing a well-rounded understanding of the university's offerings.

The spotlight on Technical, Vocational and

Education Training (TVET) programmes highlighted second-chance opportunities for students who may not have excelled in traditional academics.

Ballantine Memorial School Vice-Principal, Mrs Emi Veilawa, applauded FNU's approach of bringing career pathways directly to students.

"Having college representatives present was incredibly valuable. Students were able to relate and ask questions comfortably, gaining a clearer understanding of career paths

linked to their chosen subjects," she explained.

Meanwhile, eleven Year 13 students from Cicia High School in Lau, delved into exploring FNU's central campuses and programmes. This visit was particularly impactful for these students given their limited access to the internet on their island, according to School head girl, Kesaia Temo.

"We were able to hear directly from campus representatives the different programmes and pathways available for us once we complete high school. A few of us have already identified what career path we will take up at FNU," said Temo.



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David Antonio practises his cooking skills at FNU's Nasese campus.

# Recipe for Success

David Baravinitabua Lawa Antonio was always intrigued by food and flavours. This fascination motivated him to pursue a Diploma in Culinary Arts (Level 5) at the Fiji National University's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies.

"I have always been interested in cooking and was looking for a pathway to gain more knowledge and insights about cooking," said Antonio.

"Last year, I got the opportunity to visit the FNU Open Day, it immediately felt like home due to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The best part was that FNU offered a range of courses in cooking, so it was the best choice that I could make to attain success in the culinary world."

The first year Nasese Campus student revealed that his university experience at FNU was eye-opening.

"I discovered Moodle during the first few weeks, and it was challenging at first but with the help of friends and lecturers, I

adapted quickly."

"The lecturers are well educated and have vast knowledge and experience in the industry which is very beneficial for students. They are friendly and are always ready to assist when we have any questions, especially during our practical."

The Dama, Vanua Levu native stated that the excellent academic support, friendly environment and discovering new recipes and skills were the best parts of his Semester 1 journey at FNU.

Antonio says his parents are his biggest inspiration in life as they have constantly encouraged him to continue pursuing his passion of becoming a professional chef despite challenges.

"I would like to encourage young Fijians to work hard in school and join FNU because FNU is where your dreams become a reality!"

## Mocevakaca paves way for women in Fiji's dairy industry

Wati Tomasi Mocevakaca, a rising researcher with a passion for animal science, recently earned a Master of Science in Agriculture, specialising in livestock production.

She graduated from the Fiji National University's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) in the April Graduation ceremony.

Mocevakaca's research tackled the underdevelopment of Fiji's dairy industry, aiming to establish vital baseline data and pave the way for future growth and inclusivity within the sector.

Hailing from Lau with maternal links to Rewa, Mocevakaca completed her Bachelor's degree in Veterinary Science in 2022.

Recognising the significant gap in knowledge and skilled professionals within Fiji's dairy sector, especially for women, she pursued her Master's programme with the support of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

"The lack of knowledge and women in leadership roles are significant hurdles for Fiji's dairy industry.

"My research directly addresses these challenges by establishing baseline data, paving the way for a more

inclusive and prosperous future for women and the entire sector."

Mocevakaca expressed her deepest gratitude for the invaluable support provided by ACIAR.

"Their generous funding programme went beyond simple financial aid.

"ACIAR provided the resources and mentorship needed for in-depth research, especially crucial for women pursuing leadership roles in agriculture. Their commitment to empowering researchers like me is truly inspiring."

Furthermore, Mocevakaca expresses deep appreciation for her supervisor, Dr Royford Magiri, who has mentored her for the past five years.

"Dr Magiri instilled in me a passion to bridge the gender gap and make a positive impact on the dairy industry."

"My parents' unconditional support has been the foundation upon which I have built my success. I am incredibly proud to be the first person in my family to earn a Master's degree, especially in a field where women are often underrepresented."

As a role model for aspiring female agriculturalists,



Wati Tomasi Mocevakaca.

Mocevakaca offers a powerful message of encouragement.

"Agriculture extends beyond textbooks; it is about forging a path for ourselves and contributing to a more sustainable future. This field offers women the opportunity to nurture the environment, champion innovation, and build a stronger food security system for all of Fiji."

Mocevakaca currently works for the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways.



Joji Tavura with his SLP Certificate at Vunivutu village in Labasa.

## Tavura sets example at the age of 72

"We found the programme very beneficial because it would help us get jobs in the community, and we are now able to do so many things," Tavura stated.

"Now we can repair the boats ourselves, therefore the maintenance becomes less of a burden. These valuable skills will last a lifetime, and we can share them with the next generation.

"I was able to get a certificate at the age of 72, and if I can do it, then others can do it for themselves and for their families. There is no age requirement when it comes to education, and we should welcome every opportunity to learn new things in life."

Tavura briefly worked as a helping hand at the Police Mobile Force in Narere, Nasinu, before returning to his village, where he is currently involved in fishing and farming.

"I am glad that the Fiji National University thought of our people and brought the courses to our village," he said.

The graduates were challenged by Commissioner Northern and Chief Guest Uraia Rainima to make a

difference in their communities and help develop the country.

"Use the learning to good use, and you should be proud of yourself. Having these new skills and knowledge is just like having a new pair of legs with many strengths, which can empower you to walk on a new path that no one in the village has ever walked on," Rainima said.

"Use the superpower that you have been given today to rise to a new level. These certificates represent your journey and serve as a reminder of your newfound expertise."

Under the government-funded Sustainable Livelihood Project (SLP), participants successfully completed training in a variety of skills, including Wooden House Construction, Household and Sanitary Plumbing, Domestic Electrical, Solar Installation, Small Engine Repair, Cabinet Making and Joinery, Garment, Construction, Screen Printing, Floriculture, Business Etiquette, and Fibreglass Boat Repair.



# FNU upskills Nauru's workforce through targeted training



*Nauru Graduates of NTPC's Sustainable Livelihood Project at the Nauru Graduation Ceremony last month.*

A partnership between The Fiji National University (FNU) and the Government of Nauru's Department of Multicultural Affairs has empowered over 700 Nauruans. The collaboration saw the graduation of these individuals from practical courses ranging from the fundamentals of baking and patisserie to household and sanitary plumbing, small engine repair, carpentry, refrigeration and air conditioning, and front office management for the hotel and resort industry.

Specialising in areas like community education, construction, tourism, and automotive repair, fashion, and travel, FNU's National Training and Productivity Centre delivered these programmes in Nauru aimed at benefiting people in diverse sectors.

At the graduation ceremony in Nauru late last month, FNU's Chancellor and Chair of Council, Mr Semesa Karavaki, praised both the participants and the Nauru

government for their dedication. He emphasised the programmes success as a result of a strong partnership built on mutual respect and a shared vision for the future.

"These achievements are a testament to the unwavering commitment of both Fiji National University and the Government of Nauru to empower individuals with industry-relevant skills and knowledge," said Mr Karavaki.

"Through the MOU signed between our institutions, we have forged a partnership built on mutual respect, collaboration, and a shared vision for the future."

Nauru's Department of Multicultural Affairs representative, Junior Olsson, emphasised their commitment to continuing this collaboration and providing more skills development programmes for the Nauru community.

"Organising the graduation was a challenge, but our

team worked hard to ensure its success. We are committed to continuing this journey and developing more skills for the Nauru community," Olsson said.

Suli, a fashion design graduate, expressed her delight and appreciation for FNU's initiative.

"We learned so much! Before, most of us didn't even know how to use a sewing machine. Thanks to FNU, we can now fulfill our dreams of working in fashion design. We are saving money by making our own clothes and look forward to future training opportunities," stated Suli.

Saro Pali a graduate of the caregiving course commended the programme and the possibilities it presents for the people of Nauru.

"This programme has been amazing. I am grateful for the opportunity and the support from FNU and our government. All that is left now is to establish a caregiving center here on the island," concludes Pali.

## FNU Hosts High-Level Delegation from the Republic of Nauru



*(L-R) FNU Chancellor, Mr Semesa Karavaki, Nauru Minister for Education, Honourable Asterio Appi and FNU Vice - Chancellor Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.*

After holding the single biggest graduation in the history of Nauru earlier this year, the Fiji National University (FNU) welcomed esteemed government officials from the Republic of Nauru for a productive meeting aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing educational opportunities between the two nations.

The meeting was attended by key representatives from both FNU and the Republic of Nauru, including the Chancellor, Mr Semesa Karavaki, Vice Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, the Honourable Asterio Appi - Minister for Education for the Republic of Nauru, Secretary of the Department of Multicultural Affairs, Daniel Eoe, Secretary of Justice and Border Control, Jay Udit, Secretary for Education, Darina Kun and other officials from various government ministries of Nauru.

Professor Nabobo-Baba expressed her enthusiasm about the collaboration and highlighted the importance of fostering educational partnerships in the Pacific region.

"This meeting signifies a significant step towards fostering mutual growth and development between Fiji and Nauru. Education serves as a cornerstone for progress, and our discussions today pave the way for impactful initiatives that will benefit both our nations," said Professor Nabobo-Baba.

The agenda covered a range of critical topics including Future Training Proposals, On-Campus Training and Accommodation, Nurses and Teachers Training and Capacity Building, Existing Students in Nauru and Fiji.

Both parties also discussed potential variations to

the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), aiming to adapt and expand collaborative efforts in line with evolving priorities and opportunities.

The Vice Chancellor reaffirmed FNU's commitment to nurturing a robust partnership with Nauru, emphasizing the university's role in fostering academic excellence and socio-economic development in the Pacific region.

As the meeting concluded, Professor Nabobo-Baba expressed her gratitude to the delegation from Nauru for their engagement and looked forward to the fruitful implementation of the discussed initiatives.

The delegation was later hosted to a dinner which was also attended by the Fijian Minister for Education, Honourable Aseri Radrodoro.





# Natutusau Aims to Give Back to Nadarivatu

Timoci Natutusau struggled to hold back his tears when he recalled his humble upbringing in the highlands of Nadarivatu.

Natutusau was part of the 1592 graduates that graduated in the Fiji National University's April Graduation.

"I am the first to graduate in my family!" proudly declared Timoci.

"My father is a subsistence farmer while my mother looks after our family, this moment is for them. Today, our lives have been changed forever."

His parents left Nadarivatu in the wee hours of the morning to make it in time for their son's big day.

The Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resources, Industrial Relations and Management graduate is grateful to the villagers of Buyabuya

who supported him financially during his academic journey as this was his biggest obstacle.

"The saying 'it takes a village to raise a child' is true in my case! My family and friends back in my village supported me financially during my studies and I am so thankful to every one of them."

"I am dedicating this achievement to my people back in Buyabuya and I hope to give back to them as soon as I secure a job," said Natutusau.

Natutusau's message to young Fijians residing in Fiji's rural and remote villages was truly inspiring.

"Nothing is impossible if your heart is truly willing. If you are determined to do something and you set your heart and mind on it, you can do it!"



Timoci Natutusau moments before his graduation in April.



Nividita Chand (left) and Ashmit Kumar in China.

Two doctoral students and staff from the Fiji National University's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) successfully represented the university at an international trade fair in China.

Ashmit Kumar and Nividita Varun Chand were part of the 2024 Zhongguancun International Technology Trade Fair that was held in Beijing, China, from 26-29 April.

The fair provided a valuable platform for the two scholars to exchange ideas with leading international experts in agriculture and technology.

## FNU Researchers Shine at the China Tech Fair

For the second time in attendance at the fair, Kumar, a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) scholar in crop genetics, explored the potential of advanced technology and artificial intelligence learning in agriculture during discussions with industry leaders.

The 30-year-old from Ba, who is also an Assistant Lecturer under the Department of Crop Science at CAFF, said it was an honour for him to represent Fiji and FNU on an international platform.

"The discussions with experts at the fair were eye-opening," Kumar said.

"The potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to transform agriculture through data-driven decision-making and sustainable practices is truly exciting, and I believe it has immense potential for Fiji's agricultural sector.

"We believe that by sharing knowledge and collaborating with international partners, we can make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable food security in Fiji."

Chand, an Assistant Lecturer at CAFF specialising in Agribusiness and Extension Education, leveraged the fair to build her network and gather valuable insights.

With her current PhD thesis focusing on IT and digital agriculture, Chand presented her research on empowering Fijian farmers through technology adoption at the "Agricultural Zhongguancun: Technical Achievements Matchmaking and Exchange Seminar."

"Presenting on gender inclusivity in agricultural development was a valuable opportunity to connect with specialists and highlight the crucial role women play in Fiji's food security," she shared.

"Witnessing cutting-edge technologies like AI-powered crop yield prediction and drone-based pest control was truly inspiring.

"These advancements have the potential to revolutionise agriculture in Fiji and around the world."

Strong support systems are essential for achieving success. Atunaisa Talesiga Seruitamana's journey to becoming a qualified Ship Masters is a testament to the power of a supportive network.

Seruitamana credits his success to two strong females in his life, his mother, Laisa Nanumi Vula and his wife, Seruwaia Seruitamana and with the blessing of his father, Solomoni Seruitamana, who helped him to graduate with the Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 5) from the Fiji National University's Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies.

"I started the programme in 2012, and I managed to graduate. At times, it was hard to find work in the shipping industry. I have worked on local tourism boats. I am now working at Swire Shipping, and this career is very rewarding as it allows me to experience new places and cultures and meet people," he said.

"The simulator at the PCMS is very beneficial as it has helped me a lot to understand and put my theory into practice.

"My family has been my pillar of strength. My father, a sailor himself, always encouraged me to persevere. He instilled in me the importance of faith, reminding me to pray and leave the rest to God to create the path for you."

His wife, Seruwaia Seruitamana, said she was proud of her husband's achievement.

"Supporting ones' success is important, and I think we have been supporting him all the way and that is what women can do as strong support systems," Seruwaia said.

Mum, Laisa Nanumi Vula, said, "It is always a proud moment for any parent to see their child graduate, and today, I am filled with immense pride to see Atunaisa walk the stage to receive his Diploma."

## Seruitamana Set to Sail



Atunaisa Talesiga Seruitamana with his family on his graduation day.



# 18-Year-Old Naicker Makes Waves at FNU Graduation

18-year-old Navindra Krishn Naicker, a recent graduate of Fiji National University's National Training and Productivity Centre's (NTPC) Diploma in Information Technology (Advanced Networking) programme, distinguished himself at this year's April Graduation ceremony.

Naicker, who hails from Tavua, received the prestigious NTPC Excellence Award in Diploma in Information Technology (Advanced Networking), a testament to his exceptional academic achievement and promising future in the IT field.

"I did not know that I was going to win an award, and it was a truly exciting moment for me!" he exclaimed.

The ceremony itself held great

significance for him, with his entire family present to share in his accomplishment.

"Following Year 12, I opted for the IT programme at NTPC instead of Year 13.

His decision to forgo Year 13, has already proven fruitful, as he has secured a desired position at Vatukoula Gold Mines.

"Initially, I began as an attaché, but they have offered me a permanent position.

"My professors were true role models who provided invaluable guidance throughout my academic journey.

"FNU offers an excellent platform for young students to develop their skills and knowledge. The TAFE programmes, in particular, provide a comprehensive range of high-quality courses."



Navindra Krishn Naicker at the FNU Graduation in April.



Staff of the College of Humanities and Education participating in the Girit Remembrance Day

## FNU Family Celebrates Girit Remembrance Day

The Fiji National University family at Natabua Campus celebrated Girit Remembrance Day earlier this month, honouring the lives and remembering the sacrifices made by all Giritiyas in Fiji.

The Acting Dean for the FNU's College of Humanities and Education, Professor Mesake Dakuidreketi, who officiated at the celebration at the renowned NaWerelevu Lecture Theatre, shared that the FNU was grateful to the Coalition Government for designating the day so that all Fijians could pay tribute to the sacrifices of the indentured labourers.

The celebration began with students taking part in games like tinpani, kaddu godha, sugarcane peeling, sari and dhoti tying.

The activities also captured the display and demonstrations of Girit gadgets, commemorating 145 years since the first arrival of Indian indentured labourers to Fiji.

In his opening address, Professor Dakuidreketi highlighted that the day was also a special one for him and his family remembering his maternal grandfather, who was a Fijian of Indian descent.

"This day holds profound importance as it allows us to reflect on the enduring impact of indentured labour on countless individuals and their descendants," he said.

"Today, the families of the Giritiyas continue to contribute to Fiji's economy, and they remain as hardworking, today."

He said that despite facing numerous challenges, the Giritiyas made significant contributions to Fiji's social, cultural, and economic development and played key roles in various industries, including agriculture, business, education, and politics.

"The journey of Girit descendants in building a new Fiji is a testament to their resilience, determination, and commitment to creating a better future for themselves and future generations; through their efforts, they are shaping a more diverse, inclusive, and prosperous nation that celebrates its multicultural heritage and embraces the contributions of all its citizens," he added.

Professor Dakuidreketi reminded all staff and students to continue to honour the memory of all Giritiyas and continue to respect their work and their families.



## Selwyn Builds His Future with CETVET Graduation

Following in the footsteps of his uncle, Bruno Reymond, who graduated from the former Fiji Institute of Technology now the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), Selwyn Myles Reymond (pictured left), decided to pursue a Certificate 3 in Carpentry and Joinery at CETVET.

"I first heard about FNU when I was in Year 9 in high school," said Reymond.

"I aim to become a joiner after graduation and CETVET was the best place to pursue studies in this particular field."

"FNU offers both theory and practical education and training which is beneficial to me as a student as it allows me to have hands-on experience," stated Reymond.

The Part German-Part Rotuman lad said that the highlights of his first semester at Derrick Campus were the practical classes, extracurricular activities, and inclusivity of the student life at the Derrick Hostel.

Reymond says he considers his lecturer as his idol and inspiration in life.

"My lecturer, Mr Saimoni Sovalawa is my biggest inspiration. He is always ready to help his students and makes even the most complicated concepts so simple for us!"

Reymond has said that the facilitators and lecturers were excellent and that anyone who hopes to attend a university needs to choose FNU.



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SCAN TO REGISTER

# MY FNU

# Talanoa

## with our Alumni



*Mikaele Vunisa presenting for Blue Horizon Property Group at the Bau Tikina meeting on Viva Island*

## Vunisa Makes His Mark in Land Development

success to parents who constantly inspired him.

“They instilled in me the importance of faith, prioritising education, hard work, and perseverance,” Vunisa said.

### Education

Vunisa began his academic journey at Navala Catholic School from Years 1- 8, and then onto St Vincent College for Years 9 – 13. In 2018, Vunisa enrolled at the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET) to pursue the Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (with Honours) programme. He graduated from the programme in 2022.

Vunisa found the programme’s focus on planning particularly interesting, highlighting its applicability across various fields and professions.

### Career

Following his graduation in 2022, Vunisa wasted no time in joining the Blue Horizon Property Group. The very essence of the job, meticulously crafting plans for the development of land resonated well with Vunisa. His role at the Blue Horizon Property Group allows him to directly assist landowners seeking to develop their property.

“In my line of work, the interesting thing is that it deals with land development and mostly assisting landowners who are interested in developing their own land. It blends well with the programme that I took as it involves planning phases, development approvals, construction and managing projects.”

Challenges are inevitable on any path, and Vunisa readily acknowledges the hurdles he has encountered.

“Resource limitations, the art of time management, managing workplace complexities, the pressures of career progression, and the ever-present strain of financial constraints are some challenges that I face.”

Yet, Vunisa’s spirit remains steadfast. His greatest motivators are the constant pursuit of knowledge, the thrill of creative solutions, and the satisfaction of collaborating effectively within a team.

Beyond the confines of his professional life, Vunisa finds solace in a list of hobbies. Singing and playing the guitar are his outlets for creative expression. He turns to swimming for physical rejuvenation and to movies for entertainment. During his time off, he loves to participate in training and extra curricular activities particularly, rugby.

About his time at FNU, Vunisa reminisced with fondness. The opportunity to delve into new learning territories, embrace new challenges, and broaden his knowledge base, were according to him, ‘invaluable experiences’.

“The services provided by the university, workshops available, and the wisdom imparted by lecturers all fused to shape me into who I am today,” he added.

### Words of Wisdom

To current students of FNU, he shared the following, “Build Bridges, do not destroy them! When at FNU try and build as many networks as possible with friends from other Campuses/Colleges or friends from other courses in the same College. Friendships forged across campuses and disciplines during one’s time at FNU transform into invaluable connections later in life. Once you all graduate and move to your different professions, that network will remain and can foster future collaborations. So, build as many bridges as possible.”

Looking towards the future, Vunisa’s vision for the next five years is one of steady growth and professional refinement. He aspires to master the intricacies of his role, garner the respect of his team and superiors, and most importantly, gain immense satisfaction from his work.

For those contemplating a similar path, Vunisa’s message is clear and concise. Faith comes first, he emphasises.

“God first! Following that, setting goals and targets and work towards them. Hard work, attentiveness to lecturers’ guidance, and wise time management are the cornerstones of success. Lastly, honour your parents and never give up.”

Mikaele Vunisa is a young professional making his mark in the field of land development.

His journey has taken him from the rural serenity of Navala village in Ba to the urban bustle of Suva.

### Background

Raised by hardworking and devoted parents alongside two sisters, Vunisa grew up in the picturesque village of Navala in the highlands of Ba province. Seeing the tireless toils of his father, a farmer, and his mother, a homemaker, he was determined to improve his family’s circumstances.

Vunisa’s inspiration to delve into the realm of land development stems from a desire to build his own path. With no family members venturing into this profession before him, he aspired to be a pioneer and leave his own mark on the industry. He credits his

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FNUNIKUA welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the newsletter. Please send your suggestions, comments or articles for consideration to [mprc@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj)

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