



FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

"Your Guardian in Higher Education"

ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 2016 - JULY 2017



Acronyms

AARNet	Australian Academic and Research Network
ABP	Annual Business Plan
ACSE	Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy
APL	AARNet Proprietary Limited
APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
APQR	Asia Pacific Quality Register
APTC	Australia Pacific Technical College
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CAUQ	Committee for the Accreditation of University Qualifications
CBA	Competency-Based Assessment
CBT	Competency-Based Training
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CS	Corporate Services
EER	External Evaluation and Review
EO	Executive Office
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EU PacTVET	European Union Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training
FAESP	Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific
FCCI	Fiji Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FCEF	Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System
FHEC	Fiji Higher Education Commission
FHEIP	Fiji Higher Education Improvement Programme
FINTEL	Fiji International Telecommunications Limited
FNU	Fiji National University
FQC	Fiji Qualifications Council
QF	Fiji Qualifications Framework
F&R	Finance & Research
GGP	Guidelines of Good Practices
HEAB	Higher Education Advisory Board
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HES	Higher Education Strategy
HR	Human Resources

IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
ISAC	Industry Standards Advisory Committee
IT	Information Technology
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
MBT	Montfort Boys' Town
MEPIR	Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MITT	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
MEHA	Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts
NEC	National Employment Centre
NQ	National Qualification
NQD	National Qualification Development
NSHRP	National Strategic Human Resource Plan
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Pacific ACP	Pacific Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
PIFACC	Pacific Islands Framework Action on Climate Change
PQR	Pacific Qualifications Register
PS	Professional Services
PSC	Public Service Commission
QA	Quality Assurance
QS	Quality Standards
RPL	Record of Prior Learning
RQ	Regional Qualification
SE	Sustainable Energy
SPC	The Pacific Community
SPF	Strategic Performance Framework
TAF	Telecommunications Authority of Fiji
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TES	Tertiary Education Strategy
TCF	Technical College of Fiji
TOPEX	Top Executives Conference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UniFiji	University of Fiji
USP	University of the South Pacific
VTC	Vivekananda Technical Centre
WINTEC	Waikato Institute of Technology
TWWoA	Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

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Executive Summary

This Annual Report covers the progress of the financial year August 2016 – July 2017 of the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

The report provides progress on the FHEC's activities in the priority areas and financial performance towards supporting these activities. The progress on achievements in this reporting period are split into two; (1) reporting on the original annual business plan; and (2) reporting on new priorities under the FHEC Strategy.

The priority areas from August to December 2016 were:

1. Delivering on the Government's strategic priorities for Higher Education (HE);
2. Providing a platform for excellence; and
3. Building our capacity.

The priority areas from January to July 2017 were:

1. Improving access and equity;
2. Developing linkages to employment; and
3. Strengthening the higher education system.

Progress towards Outcomes and Achievements

The FHEC has made progress towards achieving activities outlined in the Annual Business Plan (ABP) from August to December of 2016 and under the priority areas under the FHEC Strategy from January to July 2017.

This report focuses on evidence gathered over the reporting period, and the results are due to the persistent and combined efforts of all FHEC work since its inception.

Section 3 of this report reviews progress and achievements against indicators included in the ABP and the Higher Education Strategy (HES). The following are major highlights for this reporting period:

- 18 National Qualifications (NQs) developed;
- Relationship established with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat;
- Five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) awarded recognition status;
- Four HEIs newly registered;
- Three HEIs re-registered;

- Four programmes accredited on the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF);
- The FQF successfully reviewed;
- Information Technology (IT) Strategy developed;
- Human Resources (HR) review completed;
- Strategic Performance Framework (SPF) developed;
- Five Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signed; and
- Government grants of FJD 79.6 million allocated to HEIs.

Financial Performance

Section 4 of this report provides details of funds received and expenditure for this reporting period.

- The total funds available to the FHEC in this reporting year were FJD 2,251,373. Total expenditure for the period amounts to FJD 2,236,733.

Our Year in Numbers



18 National Qualifications developed



5 Recognised Higher Education Institutions



4 Newly Registered Higher Education Institutions



5 Memoranda of Understanding signed



3 Re-registered Higher Education Institutions



79.6 Million FJD

Government Grant Allocated to Higher Education Institutions



Vision

Building together an educated and globally competitive Fiji.



Mission

To quality assure the delivery of higher education that meets the needs of our stakeholders.



Values

In fulfilling its mission, the Commission is committed to acting in ways that are consistent with the values it places on:

- i. Commitment to excellence in higher education and training;
- ii. Commitment to exceptional services when aiding all our stakeholders;
- iii. Integrity and transparency;
- iv. Innovation and responsiveness for continued relevance;
- v. Lifelong learning for learners; and
- vi. Commitment to our people and their contribution.

Message from the Chairperson



Dr Milika Sobey

The Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) is in its seventh year of existence, and it is with immense pleasure that I present the Annual Report for the period August 2016 – July 2017.

The year saw some progressive changes for the Commission. Firstly, there was a change in leadership at the Secretariat level whereby a new Director was appointed. Mrs Linda Aumua replaced the inaugural Director, Mrs Salote Rabuka. Mrs Aumua brings with her a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience, and I welcome her on board the FHEC Secretariat. I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mrs Rabuka for her contributions towards the FHEC during her tenure and her leadership during the problematic inception stage of the organisation.

A significant activity undertaken during this period was the development of the Higher Education Strategy (HES). The HES is anticipated to be the compass to provide direction on the development of the HE sector (post-secondary) in Fiji.

Another significant activity undertaken during the period in the review was the rolling out of the FJD 7 million Fiji Higher Education Improvement Programme (FHEIP), funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Under the FHEIP, a range of actions have been identified that are designed to deliver on the Government's aspirations for the country's HE system, and further develop the central role that the FHEC plays in the regulating, funding and monitoring of the system. The programme will be delivered

by 30 June 2021. Six outputs have been defined that reflect the FHEC's immediate priorities. The six outputs are focused on: (1) strengthening the FQF; (2) supporting the FHEC to implement the HE monitoring framework to strengthen provider quality and sector performance; (3) enabling the rollout of new pedagogical approaches to HEIs to improve the performance of HE teachers, assessors and managers; (4) and (5) enhancing FHEC performance with the implementation of a strategic information technology plan and organisational development plan, respectively; and (6) MOUs in place between the FHEC and New Zealand agencies and institutions to enable support of the production of outputs that meet the needs of HE in Fiji.

Furthermore, the FHEC reviewed its vision and mission statements to reflect better the work undertaken. The Commission felt that the original vision and mission statements were very abstract and too ambi-

tious. As such, the new statements clearly define the objectives of the FHEC and the roles of the respective teams.

The FHEC has come a long way since its establishment and continues to pave a clearer path to improve the quality of HE in Fiji. The Commission is thankful to its stakeholders for their continued support and guidance.

I take this time to thank the Minister for Education, Honourable Dr Mahendra Reddy, for his invaluable support to the FHEC and the Permanent Secretary, Mr Iowane Tiko, for his timely guidance to the FHEC when required. I also thank the Commissioners for their time and effort in ensuring that the organisational governance was executed without disruptions. Last, but not least, I wish to thank the Director and the staff members for their commitment to ensuring that objectives were achieved during the financial year.

Overview by the Director



Ms Linda Aumua

It is indeed a great honour for me to take up the position of Director, Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC). I am privileged to take the organisation to greater heights after taking the reign from inaugural Director, Mrs Salote Rabuka under whose leadership had progressed the FHEC Secretariat to its current standing. While the role comes with its share of challenges, I am confident that I shall be able to make a significant difference during my term of appointment.

The report for the financial year August 2016 – July 2017 is the initial report compiled following the Government's adjustment of its fiscal year. The FHEC has attuned well to the change in the Government's directive and continued its operations without any major discord.

Well into its seventh year of existence, the FHEC has realised that it would need some alignments, reviews and improvements in terms of governance and strategic development. The FHEC is fortunate to have the FHEIP which will not only address critical matters of the HE sector but will also review the FHEC's internal processes and systems.

The financial year saw the initiation of many activities and projects under the FHEIP. The FHEC realised that professional and expert guidance is vital in rolling out of the FHEIP activities; hence, it engaged local and overseas experts during this period. During the engagement, the Secretariat Staff were also urged to understudy these consultants as part of their professional capacity development. The work carried out under the FHEIP has engrossed the staff and allowed them to recognise the importance of their work in elevating the HE sector of our nation.

In progressing the FHEIP activities, new partnerships were formed to secure the support and provision of relevant parties, at both national and international level. For the FHEC Secretariat, the year has been a challenging one; where the mandated roles were to be carried out simultaneously with

the activities of the FHEIP. I congratulate the staff members for their commitment and tireless effort, especially in taking ownership of the assigned responsibilities.

We look forward to a more productive and progressive 2017-2018.

1. Background

The Education Act of Fiji (1978) did not cover HEIs; which led to the Government establishing the Higher Education Advisory Board (HEAB) to make significant recommendations to the Minister for Education on aspects about HE which would assist in determining a suitable legislative framework for the sector.

The HEAB comprised a Chairperson and six members from various professional and educational backgrounds, who were responsible for preparing and finalising the Higher Education Act 2008. This encompassed the establishment of the FHEC. The Higher Education Act 2008 was gazetted on 14th October 2008; charged with quality-assuring, regulating and facilitating the governance and the business of HE in Fiji. The FHEC began its operations effective 1st January 2010 following the commencement of the Higher Education Act 2008.

The FHEC is a statutory body that reports directly to the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA); and is responsible for regulating the establishment, recognition, registration, operation and standard of HEIs. These responsibilities are contained under the FHEC's 11 mandated functions.

The Government of Fiji has recognised the importance of HE, highlighting the need to provide Quality Education for all students in Fiji as a key strategy. The Government has implemented a wide range of changes to higher and post-secondary education over the past decade including the establishment of a central agency for regulation, quality assurance and funding the FHEC and efforts to improve the quality and availability of vocational education and training across the country. HE is an area of comparative strength for Fiji among Pacific Island Countries. The key reasons for this strength include its role as a regional educational hub with an integrated national quality assurance system, strong community support for higher education, and a diverse provider sector.

1.1 Commission Members

For the period August 2016 – July 2017, the Commission consisted of the following members:

Dr Milika Sobey (Chairperson),
Mr Savenaca Madanavosa, Dr John Fatiaki,
Mr Arun Narsey, Mrs Emi Rabukawaqa,
Mr Pratarp Singh, and Mr Vimlesh Chand.



Commission members (Standing L – R: Savenaca Madanavosa, Arun Narsey, Vimlesh Chand, Dr John Fatiaki, Pratarp Singh, Sitting L – R: Emi Rabukawaqa, Minister for Education, Arts and Heritage, Dr Mahendra Reddy, Dr Milika Sobey)

1.2 Our People

Appointment of a New Director

In December 2016, the FHEC bid farewell to its first and longest-serving Director, Mrs Salote Rabuka. Ms Rabuka retired after 43 years of extensive service in civil service and six years at the FHEC. In January 2017, the FHEC officially welcomed its new Director, Mrs Linda Aumua. Mrs Aumua, who has maternal links to Fiji, is passionate about HE and has about 30 years of work experience in the education sector. She has previously worked in the New Zealand education sector.



(L – R); Salote Rabuka, Dr Milika Sobey (Chairperson), Linda Aumua.

1.3 Our Team

I. Executive Office (EO)



The FHEC's Executive team provides strategic and operational leadership, which ensures the proper administration and management of the overall functions and affairs of the FHEC by the governing legislation and policies. The EO oversees strategic planning and conferences, finance, human resources, registry, and communications.

II. Quality Assurance (QA)



The Quality Assurance (QA) team is primarily responsible for QA matters at the FHEC as an agency (internal) and HEIs (external) in Fiji. The QA team is responsible for the recognition and the registration of HEIs and monitoring of HEIs and compliance at all levels. The QA process is an evidence-based approach that ensures goals are achieved and that policies and practices are reviewed promptly as part of overall continuous improvement and quality enhancement. The FHEC is a member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and its internal practices are benchmarked to the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Guidelines of Good Practices (GGP) and APQN criteria.

III. Professional Services (PS)



The Professional Services (PS) team is primarily responsible for the accreditation of HEI programmes, the development and implementation of NQs, conducting audits

and Competency-Based Training (CBT), Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) and moderation of national standards and qualifications, and the recognition of foreign qualifications.

IV. Finance and Research (F&R)



The Finance and Research (F&R) team was set up for establishing and administering the Funding Model (FM)

for the financing of HEIs in the HE sector. Underlying this broad function, was the need to establish a team to be the hub and facilitator of all HE data collection and analysis, including any other research deemed important to Fiji's HE sector.

V. Corporate Services (CS)



The Corporate Services (CS) team ensures that the Secretariat of the FHEC is adequately resourced, allowing operations to flow smoothly. The CS team facilitates the administrative operations that

support other sections with their budget planning while the Information Technology (IT) unit within the CS assists with the management of data and the FHEC's IT processes.

1.4 FHEC Committees

I. Recognition Committee

The FHEC Recognition Committee is established by Section 8 of the Higher Education Promulgation 2008. Applications for recognition¹ are assessed and

scrutinised by this Committee. The Committee then later makes recommendations to the Commission for final approval. In July 2016, new members were elected to the FHEC Recognition Committee to replace members who had completed their terms. The four members were appointed for a term of two years. The newly elected members are:

1. Mr Vikram Deo (Chairperson);
2. Mr Apiame Cegumalua;
3. Ms Makelesi Driu; and
4. Mr Ned Taito.

II. Registration Committee

The FHEC Registration² Committee is established in accordance with section 8 of the Higher Education Act 2008. Applications from HEIs for registration are assessed and scrutinised by this committee. The Committee then later makes recommendations to the Commission for final approval. Four new members were elected to the Committee, as the former members had completed their terms. The four members have been appointed for a term of two years. The newly elected members are:

1. Ms Releshni Karan (Chairperson);
2. Mr Jimione Raiwalui;
3. Dr Neel Nitesh; and
4. Mrs Evisake Kedrayate.

The members are eligible for reappointment but may not serve for more than three consecutive terms.

III. Review Committee

The FHEC Review Committee was established according to Section 9 of the Higher Education Act 2008. The primary role of the committee is to review HEIs for quality assurance.

¹Recognition - a one-off process with 13 criteria and is the first step towards acquiring registration.

²Registration - status of a HEI accorded by the FHEC that meets the prescribed criteria and means the HEI is 'fit for purpose'.

IV. Industry Standards Advisory Committees (ISACs)

The engagement of industry stakeholders and appropriate HEIs to form the Industry Standards Advisory Committees (ISACs) help to support the FHEC in the development of National Qualifications. The ISACs ensure that the qualifications developed and delivered by education providers meet the needs of industries. Doing so will ensure that Fijians acquire knowledge and skills which can be applied in the respective work fields.

V. Committee for the Accreditation of University Qualifications (CAUQ)

The Committee for the Accreditation of University Qualifications (CAUQ) is a forum facilitated and supported in its establishment and operations by the FHEC. It comprises of the Vice-Chancellors of the University of the South Pacific (USP), the Fiji National University (FNU) and the University of Fiji (UniFiji) and an independent Chairman, Dr John Harré of New Zealand. The Universities are established by individual statutes, which to varying degree, empowers them to approve their qualifications. However, this authority accorded to Universities was deemed inconsistent with the statutory responsibilities of the FHEC with respect to approving qualifications. For this reason, the Vice-Chancellors negotiated a procedure with the FHEC following which the CAUQ was established,

and it was tasked with the responsibility for the approval and accreditation³ of new programmes at Level 7 and above.

Noted below are the members of the CAUQ:

1. Dr John Harré – Independent Chairperson;
2. Prof. Chandra Dulare – Acting Vice-Chancellor (UniFiji);
3. Prof. Ian Rouse – Acting Vice-Chancellor (FNU); and
4. Prof. Rajesh Chandra – Vice-Chancellor (USP).

VI. Fiji Qualifications Council (FQC)

The FQC was established to administer and maintain the functions relating to the FQF⁴, such that the FQF stands as a beacon and reference for socio-economic planning. The FQC is guided by the Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2010 and the Higher Education (Qualifications) (Amendment) 2013. The Council is also responsible for accrediting qualifications at Levels 1 – 6 on the FQF and reviews such qualifications every five years to ensure currency and adherence to acceptable and relevant standards of teaching, learning and assessment. The CAUQ complements the FQC in accrediting qualifications at Levels 7 – 10 on the FQF. For the period 2016 August – 2017 July, the FQC did not meet; this is because there was no quorum. Majority of the member's terms had come to an end for this period.

³Accreditation of a qualification means the recognition that the standard of the programme of study and the way of delivering it, are appropriate to the award.

⁴The FQF provides a system for describing and classifying quality assured qualifications. It provides for different learning pathways and promotes learner mobility, by clarifying how qualifications relate to each other within the national system. Fiji Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (2011). National Strategic Human Resource Plan 2011 – 2015, Suva: Government of Fiji.

2. Our Strategic Context

2.1 Higher Education Strategy (HES) 2017 – 2021

The development of the HES, previously called the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), for the higher education sector started in 2015. The FHEC reports on the outcomes, measures and activities identified in the HES. These are linked to the MEHA. The HES provides strategic direction for the FHEC for the period 2017 – 2021.

Fiji uses the term Higher Education (HE) holistically to cover all post-school learning opportunities. This means all programmes of study offered by all HEIs operating in Fiji. The term, Higher Education Institution (HEI), is an inclusive one and incorporates all post-secondary providers, ranging from TVET centres; colleges and institutes; and universities. The higher education sector underpins national development through skills development and learning and is fundamental in stimulating more employment opportunities and advancing the socio-economic development across all sectors. As a strategic framework for the HE Sector, the HES sets the path towards the establishment of a coherent, vibrant system that is well-placed to provide a platform for pan-sector, inclusive development of Fiji. This strategy will assist the

FHEC and HEIs in setting future directions for HE in support of Fiji's sustainable development programme.

The HE system operates at ten levels of study as defined by the FQF. Quality of provision is dependent on the capacity of the sector to deliver on national expectations at each of these levels. To this end, the sector must be strengthened to ensure that all prospective learners can identify and undertake quality HE programmes which provide the range of knowledge, skills and competencies required for access to good employment opportunities or to engage in rewarding self-employment.

Employers in the Fijian market must have confidence in the ability of the sector to produce appropriately qualified and skilled personnel for all levels of work in both the private and public sectors. Ultimately, the whole sector will be assessed on its ability to contribute to the development of an inclusive society that fosters diversity and social justice, a commitment to lifelong learning and the kind of knowledge-based society critical to nation-building.

Linkages to urban, rural, remote communities and vulnerable groups will need to be forged to ensure the relevance of programme offerings and outcomes that meet diverse local needs and aspirations.

A Vision for Inclusive, Quality Higher Education in Fiji

The core question for the development process of the HES was, Higher Education for what and whom in Fiji? The HES prioritises quality HE that is relevant for sustainable future development in Fiji.

The HES comprises three key priorities, and two interwoven strategic themes for collective focused attention by all stakeholders over the next four years. Each places the learner at the heart of the system.

These priorities are designed to guarantee that all learners can access relevant, quality HE opportunities which will lead to worthwhile employment, improved quality of life, and contribute to national development.

Priority 1: Improving Access and Equity



The goal of HE in Fiji is to enable all Fijians to realise their potential in contributing to a just, peaceful and sustainable nation. Improving access to quality HE will contribute to both the economy and society. Equity will be progressed by special provision for disadvantaged groups and communities, particularly in those areas of study and locations where the disparity is identified. These groups may include youth; early school leavers; the unemployed and under-employed; people living with disabilities and rural communities. Accessibility to HE is restricted by any number of factors, such as lack of information about relevant programmes of study available, financial constraints, not meeting entry requirements, disadvantage posed by distance from HEIs or discriminatory policies against age or

disability. HEIs and other stakeholders will disseminate information regarding relevant programmes of study, bridging programmes, career pathways from these programmes of study, scholarships and loan schemes, and distance modes of learning available to them. HEIs will guarantee quality teaching and learning experiences and relevant and timely learning support to enable retention and successful completion of studies. They will ensure inclusive policies for equitable participation and make available data on how well they have supported the recruitment, retention of disadvantaged groups.

Priority 2: Developing Linkages to Employment



The National Strategic Human Resource Plan (NSHRP) 2011– 2015⁵ states that 20,000 school and HE leavers compete for around half that number of formal sector jobs. In specialised areas, there are skills shortages; this suggests a mismatch of employability skills overlaying a limited carrying capacity by the Fiji labour market. Strengthened collaboration between HE providers and employers will enable more programmes to be offered that provide authentic practical learning opportunities that enhance work-readiness and the acquisition of soft skills deemed critical to secure gainful employment and create self-employment in Fiji.

National employer surveys will be accessible to HEIs and learners to create a better understanding of work-readiness requirements. Up-to-date employment data, including supply and demand for various industries and professions, shortages and saturation points, will be made available.

This will assist potential learners make better-informed choices about higher education study options.

Specific attention is also needed to bridge the gender gap in equity in employment. HEI-industry networks will be used to promote gender equity.

Priority 3: Strengthening the Higher Education System



Continuous improvement in the sector will require targeted resourcing to develop infrastructure, support sustainable growth and to build staff capability both in teaching and learning and in educational leadership.

Other areas of focus under this priority will be to promote and continue the strengthening of the FQF with the new Fiji National Research Council to support research in the HE sectors.

The availability of regular, reliable information on the performance of the HE sector is essential for sustained improvement. Data on enrolment, retention and completion rates will be required of HEI providers, broken down by appropriate demographics; this needs to be supplemented by data on employment outcomes.

Two Interwoven Strategic Theme

Successful efforts towards these three primary priorities of the HES rely on two in-

terwoven strategic themes for action. These are (1) establishing strategic partnerships both locally and internationally, and (2) the development of a culture of learning mindset about HE in Fiji.

Establishing Strategic Partnerships

HEIs will be expected to establish and engage meaningfully with other stakeholders and with the FHEC in order to ensure that they align with NQ requirements, deliver programmes that meet professional standards and provide learners with transferable employability skills. It is important too that HEIs engage with their wider communities, families and learners to create awareness about current pathways and opportunities in HE and to engage in consultation about HE needs and aspirations.

Developing a Culture of Learning

Developing a culture of learning has two dimensions for the system. The first is for organisations to become learning organisations themselves deliberately. Globally, tertiary education is rapidly changing. All organisations involved in HE must be continually prepared to review how they add value to the system and be on a deliberate path of continuous improvement. The second is the need for organisations within the system, and particularly HEIs, to foster a culture of learner-centeredness. It is only by placing learners at the heart of the system, that this strategy will be achieved.

⁵Fiji Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics (2011). National Strategic Human Resource Plan 2011 – 2015, Suva: Government of Fiji.



Fiji Higher Education Commission Performance Framework 2017 – 2021

Vision

Building together an educated and globally competitive Fiji

Mission

To quality assure the delivery of higher education that meets the needs of our stakeholders

Values

Commitment to **Excellence** in higher education and training | Commitment to **Exceptional Services** when aiding all our stakeholders | **Integrity** and **Transparency** | **Innovation** and **Responsiveness** for continued relevance | **Lifelong Learning** for learners | Commitment to **Our People** and their contribution

KEY

FHEC Desired Results
The impact that FHEC is seeking to achieve

Measures
How will FHEC know it has achieved its desired result at the end of 2021

Priority Activities
How will FHEC know it has achieved its desired result at the end of 2021

Government & Minister's Priorities for the Higher Education Sector
Our operating environment

IMPROVING ACCESS AND EQUITY

Seamless pathways through higher education
Increased number of students transitioning through the Higher Education system

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) improve recruitment towards equity groups
Increased number of group enrolments

- Develop access and equity data collection and analysis mechanisms
- Facilitate pathways to successful study
- Conduct advocacy and awareness to actively assist learners to make informed decisions
- Enhance Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)/ Recognition of Current Competence (RCC) opportunities
- Provide opportunities to HEIs to engage and improve E-learning and Mobile Learning opportunities
- Establish equity group data collection mechanism (FEMIS)

DEVELOPING LINKAGES TO EMPLOYMENT IN FIJI

National/ Provider Qualifications (NQs) are developed with industry
Increased number of National Qualifications being delivered | Increased number of learners enrolled in National Qualifications

- Promote the uptake of National Qualifications
- Foster collaboration with HEIs and supporting industry on Provider Qualifications
- Establish data collection mechanism for employment and workforce information and industry attitudes about graduates
- Register and Record National and Provider Qualifications

Graduates meet industry needs
Increased proportion of surveyed employers that report satisfaction with recent graduates

- Foster collaboration between FHEC and relevant stakeholders

Programmes include entrepreneurship elements
Increased number of NQs that include entrepreneurship elements

- Develop entrepreneurial skills

HEIs actively engage with industry to promote employment of female graduates

- Promote gender equity in employment

STRENGTHENING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

All Higher Education Institutions have robust internal quality assurance systems
HEIs report healthy surpluses, cash flow and asset base at the end of each financial year | Increased number of HEIs delivering qualifications that are registered on the FQF

- Develop and implement a HEI Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- Integrate HEI data into FEMIS
- Target Funding to support high quality relevant provision
- Strengthen FHECs internal systems
- Support HEIs to build robust IQA systems
- Review the Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET)/Technology Employment Skills Training (TEST) sector

Improved HEI performance (sustainable, financially stable, better reputation, better decision making and increased research activity)
Improved risk rating for HEIs inside the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

HEIs are responsive to the Higher Education Strategy (HES)
HES priorities are reflected in HEI documents

- Provide opportunities for Leadership training

Better qualified teachers/ assessors/ moderators
Increased number of HEIs using the Teacher Competency Framework | Number of teachers/ assessors/ moderators who have undertaken professional development

- Develop a Teacher Competency Framework, teacher qualifications and; training modules for teachers, assessors, and moderators

Better student outcomes (including retention and completion)
Increased retention and completion rates | Increased teacher satisfaction reported by students

- Develop a Teacher Competency Framework, teacher qualifications and; training modules for teachers, assessors, and moderators

The Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF) is aligned with other qualification frameworks
Formal agreement between Fiji and international agencies

- Progress efforts towards alignment of FQF with other qualifications frameworks
- Develop partnerships with other international agencies

3. Review of Progress

We assess our performance against both operational and HE sector measures. While we have direct influence over our operational measures, we do not have much influence over sector measures as there are a number of factors beyond our control.

We are committed to being a learning organisation and continue to identify opportunities for improvement. We acknowledge that we have still a long way to go, and with our people and partnerships, we look forward to a higher education sector that is globally competitive.

There was a crossover of strategies during this period, and as such, not all activities under the original Annual Business Plan (ABP) were covered. This means that for the period August – December 2016, this report covers activities under the original ABP and for the period January – July 2017, this report covers activities under the new HES.

This section reviews evidence on the achievement of outcomes.

August – December 2016

Priority 1: Deliver On The Government's Strategic Priorities For Higher Education

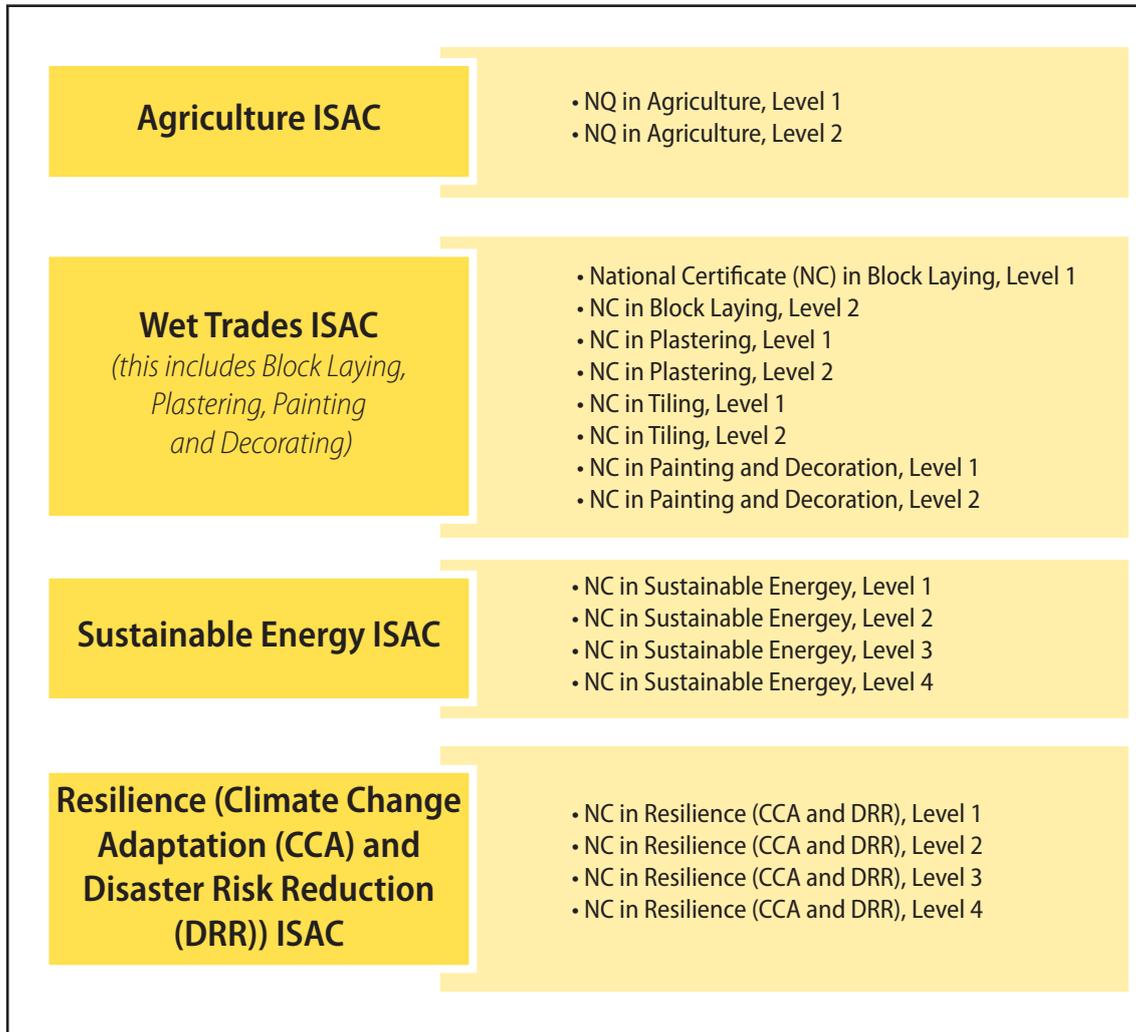
Outcome: Strengthening Partnerships To Ensure Relevant Higher Education

National Qualifications

From August 2016 to July 2017, 18 NQs were developed by four ISACs: Agriculture, Wet Trades, Sustainable Energy and Resilience. Figure 1 on the next page shows the

National Qualifications (NQs) approved under each of the Industry Standards Advisory Committees (ISACs) from August 2016 to July 2017.

Figure 1: National Qualifications approved under each ISAC



Accredited Programmes

From August 2016 to July 2017, a total of four programmes were accredited and registered on the FQF.

Table 1: Programmes accredited and registered on the FQF

No.	Qualification	Higher Education Institution	FQF Level
1	Certificate in Fisheries Enforcement and Compliance	The University of the South Pacific	4
2	Certificate in Library/Information Studies	The University of the South Pacific	4
3	Certificate in Commercial Cookery	The University of the South Pacific	4
4	Diploma of Human Resources Management	The University of the South Pacific	5

Review of Institutions

From August 2016 to July 2017, the Review Committee conducted reviews of seven HEIs.

Figure 2: The FHEC Review Committee conducted reviews for seven institutions from August 2016 to July 2017



August – December 2016

Priority 2.1 Providing a Platform for Excellence

Outcome: Strengthening Partnerships To Ensure Relevant Higher Education

Fiji Qualifications Framework

Review the FQF

A review of the FQF was undertaken in May 2017. After extensive internal and external consultations, a final report with 34 key recommendations was tabled and approved by the Commission; a total of 20 recommendations have been implemented. The implemented recommendations were in relation to the following:

1. FHEC policy review;
2. Review strategic direction planning;
3. Engagement with employers and community;
4. ISAC study domains in level descriptors for sector competency maps;
5. Revision of ISAC structure;
6. FQC role expanded within the current legal framework;
7. National competency standards;
8. Review of the National Apprenticeship scheme;
9. Commission meets with TELS board for unnecessary delays;
10. Schools to take the national qualifications;
11. FHEC as custodian of FQF;
12. Legacy qualifications phase out and

- replaced by national competency standards;
13. New assessment and moderation systems;
14. International engagement plan;
15. FQC reactivated;
16. Request NQs from ASEAN;
17. Accreditation process to apply at all levels;
18. Ongoing data gathering;
19. Strengthen research arm of the Commission; and
20. CAUQ be discontinued.

The FQF review was highlighted as a major activity under the Fiji Higher Education Improvement Programme (FHEIP), funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The FQF, which was launched on 24 February 2012, was found to be irrelevant to the current development for the higher education sector. The 20 recommendations were implemented at different stages of progress, all in working towards efficiency and improving systems and performance.

The recommendations are grounded in improving the key quality assurance processes of the FQF namely recognition, registration, mandated review and programme accreditation. All the other built-in systems with the FQF support these quality work which is monitored regularly.

Populating the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF)

Populating the FQF is vital to enhance its effectiveness. This activity was one of the major recommendations received by the FHEC after receiving the final review report in early 2017. The FQF was reviewed after five years of existence.

The review report highlighted the need to expand the number of relevant qualifications and standards on the FQF. While urging institutions, especially the universities, to have their qualifications registered on the FQF, the FHEC will be looking at ways to achieve this through the fast-tracking and populating of the FQF.

Upon populating the FQF, the FHEC is working towards promoting the mutual recognition of Fiji's qualifications through Asia and the Pacific, particularly Malaysia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to broaden employment opportunities for Fijians and to facilitate opportunities for business development. Following the review, it was found that the FQF was sound in its conception and based on good international practice. It was recommended that its potential contribution to business, industry and community, planning and development should be more widely promoted.

In reviewing the FQF, considerations were focused on the efficiency of the procedures and systems underpinning the FQF, its effectiveness in delivering for key stakeholders and on its connection to national priorities and how it can contribute to expediting the progress.

New methods for accreditation of programmes onto FQF

New methods of improving the accreditation and recording processes were proposed in the FQF review report. Plans for improving the quality and speed of the accreditation of programmes onto FQF were consolidated and documented. Similar programmes of study can be grouped by level or programme area and put through a rigorous assessment process for accreditation. These new methods were trialled during a workshop. The initial accreditation process carried a total of 47 criteria which, after consultations, has been reduced to 15 quality criteria for the three universities. This process allows the three universities to record their programmes on the FQF. Meanwhile, other HEIs (non-universities) must fulfil the 47 quality criteria in order for their programmes to be accredited on the FQF.

Develop National Qualifications

One of the key recommendations from the FQF report was for the FHEC to develop more NQs by sector. Two techniques were refined for adoption, which includes: partially outsourcing of development of NQs; and establishing a sector reference group. Sector ISACs were established for tourism, retail, agriculture and security. Following approval, the working ISAC developed the unit standards, which are the building blocks to the NQs. The adoption of the notion of 'no need to reinvent the wheel' was adopted. This process allowed the sector ISAC to decide on the skills needed for the sector before the working ISAC deliberated on the detailed competencies required for the relevant NQs at the required level. The process of completing an NQ takes less than three months compared to the initial 18 months development time.

European Union Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EU PacTVET)

The EU PacTVET project on Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation is the third component within the broader Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (ACSE) programme. The project builds on the recognition that energy security and climate change are major issues that are currently hindering the social, environmental and economic development of the Pacific Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (Pacific ACP).

The significance of capacity building on sustainable energy and climate change to the sustainable development of the ACP is evident by the endorsement by the Forum Leaders on the Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific (FAESP) and the Pacific Islands Framework Action on Climate Change (PIFACC). Both frameworks have themes on capacity building, training and awareness with outcomes of:

- Increased awareness and understanding of sustainable energy and climate change issues among communities and other stakeholders;
- Strengthened capacity to monitor and assess the impacts of sustainable energy and climate change; and
- Strengthened capacity to identify, design and implement effective, sustainable energy and climate change measures.

The general objective of the project is to enhance sustainable livelihood in the Pacific ACP. Sustainable livelihoods are a high priority for Pacific ACP communities and governments. The purpose of the project is to enhance and create the Pacific ACP's regional and national capacity and techni-

cal expertise to respond to Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Sustainable Energy (SE) challenges.

The FHEC was contracted by EU PacTVET to assist in the development of Regional Qualifications (RQs) in the areas of resilience and SE. In addition to RQ development, the FHEC was also involved in the following additional activities:

- Training of assessors in Resilience (CCA & DRR) and Sustainable Energy (SE) NQs and advocate HEIs in Fiji.
 - A total of 30 regional assessors were trained and certified in Suva and Nadi.
- Create career pathways and develop a strategy for recognition of prior learning for the uptake of Resilience (CCA & DRR) and SE NQs.
 - A policy on the Regional Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was developed and completed.
- Publication of manuals for the Resilience (CCA & DRR) and SE NQs, levels 1 – 4.
 - A total of eight RQs (Levels 1 – 4) were developed and published.
- A regional ISAC formed for both Regional Qualification (RQs) Resilience (CCA & DRR) and SE.
- One advocacy conducted which focused on existing Resilience and SE projects in Viti Levu.

Higher Education Sector

Supporting the governance and performance of the higher education sector places a greater emphasis on the outcomes obtained by HEIs in decision-making; this is in relation to:

- Administering the HEI registration and recognition processes which includes streamlining and improving processes with reduced timelines; and

- Removing the external registration committee and replacing this with an internal registration committee headed by the team leaders.

Undertake Institutional Review for the the renewal of HEI Registration

Four members in the Review Committee were appointed and were tasked to develop a review criteria template in line with the 2009 Higher Education Regulations. They were tasked to review the first seven HEIs that are due for review after the lapse of their registration. As per the requirements in the Higher Education Act 2008, non-universities are registered for five years while the universities are registered for seven years before they are reviewed for re-registration.

Monitoring Framework Consultation

As part of the MFAT-funded project, the FHEC will devise a comprehensive monitoring framework in consultation with the HEI sector. This framework will encompass a range of indicators including those defined as part of the FHEC's strategy HES, and the requirements of QA processes. Developing this monitoring framework will support the FHEC and the sector to move toward managing for outcomes and reduce the current demand for highly transactional and input-focused monitoring.

The required work in the development of a draft monitoring framework in consultation with HEIs outlined an aggressive internal monitoring system with selected quality criteria and self-evaluation tools that are externally monitored regularly by an external quality system team to ensure compliance and standards are not compromised.

This work is similar to the work undertaken by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited in 2015 when reviewing the Monitoring Framework of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) which focused on rationalising and resource sharing. This work also entails looking at developing proper assessment outcomes for our External Quality Assurance (EQA) processes of re-accreditation and re-registration. Currently, the assessment criteria are based on inputs, which is relevant for those going through the process for the first time. However, when it comes for re-assessment, this should be done based on outputs and outcomes (how well the programme/HEI has performed since being initially assessed).

Additionally, the FHEC will provide relevant support to institutions to develop and improve the provision of quality education and training. The elements of the External Evaluation Review and Compliance – will be reviewed and recommendations made to strengthen registered HEIs.

The framework will set the standards by which the HEIs must adhere to. These are applied in the registration and review processes and following current review policy and timings. The first round of consultations has already taken place about the work on the development of the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Framework for HEIs. The consultation was done to gather the views and opinions of the HEIs in Fiji. Simultaneously, this was done to create awareness of the initiative.

Activities undertaken include implementing the recommendations specific to this output from the review done by the Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) Council, a sub-committee under the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), of which FHEC is a full member. One of the recommenda-

tions was to rationalise and show a clear demarcation between all our EQA processes. As such, the FHEC is embarking on merging all M&E processes into an over-arching, all-inclusive higher education monitoring framework. This framework will encompass the work currently being done, at different levels, by EQA, Compliance, Finance and Research and Professional Services. This work is critical for the Commission in conducting quality checks of HEIs under a specific set of criteria. This process will supplement and affirm the institutions Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process whereby the FHEC, through the monitoring framework, will engage with an HEI's QA team to uphold quality measures and comply with all necessary standards. This framework is also aligned with the Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions booklet prescribed by the FHEC for all HEIs.

Provide advice to the Minister for Education on funding allocations to HEIs

The Cabinet Memorandum on funding for HEIs was developed, completed and submitted to the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA). The templates for funding and programme costing were developed and approved by the Commission and sent to the registered HEIs. The master sheet has also been prepared for the funding model template. Of the 28 HEIs, only nine are currently funded by the government. All registered HEIs may apply for government funding, and these applications will be assessed based on a set of criteria prescribed by the FHEC.

Provide advice to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economy for the release of grants

The FHEC's request for funding, accompanied by relevant data and statistics and a Cabinet submission, was approved by the government and has allowed for the disbursement of grants to the nine eligible HEIs. The funding request for 2017-2018 has already started; this process is done annually through a Cabinet Memorandum which requires the endorsement of the Minister for MEHA and subsequent approval of Cabinet.

External Evaluation Review & Strengthening of External Quality Assurance

The FHEC undertook the review of two processes; the External Evaluation Review (EER); and Strengthening of EQA of HEIs. The EER model has been adapted from a New Zealand model after a number of industry visits between 2015-2016. A policy on EER was developed with the training of EER evaluators, who were recruited from industry and institutions. The new EER model was piloted at Fulton College, Vivekananda Technical Centre (VTC), ServicePro International Tourism Institute, Spa Academy and the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CATD).

The EER objectives are set out specifically on the intent of the policy which is the statement of confidence in the performance of the HEI in terms of its Self-Evaluation & External Evaluation and Review. As outlined in the policy, it will relate to both recognised and registered HEIs. The policy is explicitly detailed in terms of the components like High Trust High Accountability, Quality as a Dynamic Concept and Focus

on outcomes. All considerations provide an in-depth perspective that institutions need to think about.

The EER policy applies to all recognised and registered HEIs in Fiji, with the exception that those institutions which have been subject to review by an external international authority may be exempted from review by the FHEC, provided the criteria used are consistent with the provisions of this policy.

Due to critical components of EER like High Trust, High Accountability, Quality as a Dynamic Concept and Focus on outcomes, the EER evaluators are trained to provide this confidence to the HEIs when dealing with their internal evaluation of the EER, prior to the EER proper. The EER policy has the statement of confidence in the performance of the HEI in terms of its Self-Evaluation & External Evaluation and Review. Both recognised and registered institutions will relate to the EER policy.

The EER was stalled for ten months awaiting the decision of the Commission between the EER and the Mandated Review. The EER was re-activated for three months in 2016-2017, and in doing so the FHEC's QA team continued with the training of its members with selected HEIs in Fiji including Fulton College, Pivot Point International, College of Evangelism and Theology and the University of Fiji; this was important to consolidate what has been learnt in earlier training in the IQA aspect of the EER. An institution is required by the EER process to first self-evaluate its performance based on its own QA policy before it is externally reviewed by external reviewers who are trained and appointed by the FHEC. It was then accepted that the EER will run alongside the mandated review to promote continuous improvement particularly in the period between two reviews. As such,

an institution may undergo more than one EER while awaiting its next review.

Link with other government agencies

The FHEC has developed and strengthened links with a number of government and professional/licensing agencies, including: MEHA, Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MITT), Ministry for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations (MEPIR), National Employment Centre (NEC), Public Service Commission (PSC), Office of the Attorney-General, Ministry of Defence and National Security, and Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF).

These networking relations with government ministries and statutory bodies are critical in terms of high-level ministerial support, sector/strategic planning, legislative advice, advocacy and accessing data/statistics.

Apart from gaining support in terms of ISAC membership for National Qualifications Development (NQD), the links with government agencies have been strengthened through the following:

1. Ministry of Defence and National Security – the FHEC is represented on the National Security Council and Board;
2. Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial relations (MEPIR) – the FHEC was actively involved in the national employment relations policy consultations and with the National Employment Centre for the provision of data on student dropout, employment, underemployment and unemployment;

3. Ministry of Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics – on-going relations on the status of national workforce development with backup statistics on the labour movement and school dropouts;
4. Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) – the FHEC is represented in all seven executive councils.

The result of these relationships with key

stakeholders is evident during the FHEC-organised activities for the development of NQs – Sector and working ISACs, industry engagement and consultations, development of workforce development strategy, developing situational analysis reports, advocacy and marketing, government roadshows, regional and international meetings, radio and TV talkback shows, 2011 Tokyo Convention and stakeholders consultations.

Priority 3.1 Building Our Capacity

Outcome: Investing in the Capabilities of Our Staff and Making Sure That Our Systems Are Fit for Purpose

Review of Human Resources (HR)

In January 2017, the FHEC engaged the services of KPMG to review its HR systems and processes. A staff survey was used to gauge staff feedback. Additionally, group work (focus sessions), reflections and individual interviews were other tools used to gauge staff feedback.

Focus Sessions (four in total) were conducted to capture the experience and ideas of every employee. A high point of these sessions was the positive feedback received on the FHEC's new directorship and change in leadership style. A key area for improvement is strengthening the HR function, including the performance management system which has not served the employees or the FHEC to its best.

The staff survey outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the FHEC HR systems in

terms of services to its employee, relevancy compared to the similar workplace, policy engagement and applications. A major activity outlined under the recommendations made was to review the existing and develop new policies and procedures, respectively, for the FHEC. In this reporting period, the FHEC developed 3 policies including HR Manual, Bonding Policy and Training Policy.

Capacity Building

In March 2017, six FHEC staff members visited New Zealand under the FHEIP project. The purpose of the visit was to meet with possible partners for the six outputs of the FHEIP. The team visited the following agencies:

- NZQA – the FHEC team met with the NZQA to learn and share best

practice models in the development and implementation of qualification frameworks and QA processes, gain insight and understand the New Zealand education system and how the NZQA fits within the system and contributes towards the higher education sector. The discussions also included how best the NZQA could provide expertise to assist the FHEC to evolve the FQF and strengthen its QA systems and processes – these also included the rollout of NQs, accelerating the accreditation process for Level 7 – 10 programmes, IT systems and the FHEC’s current needs.

- Coolbear Ltd. – the discussion centred around strategy and policy development.
- Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTEC) – the FHEC team met with the institution to explore WINTEC’s capabilities to assist the FHEC to develop a competency framework for teaching staff in the delivery of TVET. Additionally, the discussion focused on data collection from an end-user perspective and how the WINTEC collected data across varying platforms that was required by higher education regulators in New Zealand.
- Ako Aotearoa – similar to the meeting with WINTEC, the FHEC team discussed possible collaboration with the institution for the development of a competency framework for teaching staff in the delivery of TVET.
- Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) – the visit to this institution focused on exploring TEC systems and processes, especially the TEC monitoring framework which measured institutional performance. The discussion also focused on data collection mechanisms that could be used to improve the FHEC’s current systems.

- Pacific Island Education – the meeting explored possibilities of collaboration to identify strategies and approaches that ensure teaching and learning caters appropriately to the needs of the iTaukei and understand what opportunities exist to adapt pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for the needs of indigenous communities in the Fijian context.
- Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TWWoA) – the visit to TWWoA was similar to that of Pacific Island Education. Additionally, the discussion focused on how the institution developed and delivered programmes to the Māori people.

Records Management

In late 2016, the FHEC started with the data entry and cataloguing of its physical files. This work carried into 2017 where the focus was on digitising files.

January - July 2017

Priority 1 Improving Access & Equity

Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS)

Building on from discussions initiated in 2016, the FHEC continued collaborative work with the MEHA on the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) and the integration of HE data. As the national student education database, FEMIS can track rates at which learners progress through education. This integration project, in collaboration with HEIs, would enable the FHEC to have a complete overview of the education sector and to be better equipped to provide the government with education research and policy advice. Development of this work started in early 2017.

National Assessors certified as Competency-Based Assessors

In early 2017, 35 nationally registered assessors were awarded certification in Certificate in Workplace Attachments (Level 4) and later trained and certified as Competency-Based assessors for NQs in their respective areas of expertise. Ms Linda Aumua acknowledged the assessors in rising to the challenge and their determination in taking up the commitment. “Your involvement as assessors will enhance the lives of the learners, empower them and that experience will enrich you,” stated Ms Aumua.

The FHEC Director also thanked the European Union Pacific Technical and Vocational Education and Training (EU PacTVET) team for funding the project

that enabled the training to take place. The NQs that these assessors have been trained to assess are developed with the advice of experts from the various industries and measured against international standards.

Institutions delivering NQs include the Technical College of Fiji (TCF), Montfort Boys’ Town (MBT) and the Vivekananda Technical Centre (VTC). It is anticipated that the TCF, VTC and the MBT will deliver more NQs in the new future.



FHEC Director Linda Aumua and registered assessors

The Rollout of New Pedagogical Approaches to Higher Education Institutions

The FHEC commenced work to develop a framework that describes the competencies that teaching staff must have, including the relevant skills and knowledge required for the delivery of vocational education and training. This competency framework includes teaching and learning relating to vuli-tara (hands-on), and traditional/indigenous skills, culture (tovo vakavanua kei

na cakacaka ni liga) and knowledge

The FHEC has worked with the HEI sector and community leaders to design a competency framework that will help to guide the planning of professional development activities. Additionally, this work is also important to build on work already supported, such as the initiative through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to develop regional standards for teachers and principals. Developing a competency framework will assist HEIs with strategic HR planning, enhance confidence among employers and the community in the higher education system in Fiji, and help to ensure that the system is more responsive to the needs of stakeholders.

As part of this output, the FHEC has also worked with indigenous (Māori) organisations in New Zealand namely the TW-WoA and Ako Aotearoa with experience of working successfully with Māori learners to identify strategies and approaches that ensure teaching and learning caters appropriately to the needs of iTaukei Fijians and specific minority communities in Fiji.

In addition to the development of the competency framework, the FHEC has also designed and developed a Certificate IV in Teaching of TVET, which is aligned to the competency framework. This programme is specifically for the practising TVET teachers in schools to support staff practice, including improving the quality and consistency of teaching and assessment, use of more up-to-date learning modules, with the focus on outcomes for learners. The certificate programme has four key teaching/learning modules, namely TVET Teaching in Fijian Contexts, 'Coco framework': The Relationships of Learning and Teaching, The Professional Practice of TVET Teaching and Assessing Learner Outcomes.

A modest and targeted professional development programme to support the HEI sector, realise the benefits of the implementation of the new staff competency framework, align with FHEC's current work to increase and strengthen the network of workplace assessors and contribute to the strengthening of the governance and management of HEIs. The FHEC is working with partners in the sector to design and implement a programme of professional development for teachers that provides access to expertise and opportunities for peer networking and support. FHEC will also support HEIs to make the transition to managing for outcomes.

The new pedagogical approach (competency framework and Certificate in Teaching of TVET) is expected to improve the quality of teaching and learning by enhancing the competency of teachers, assessors and moderators. The FHEC has completed phase one of the projects with the consulting partners to support the FHEC to design and implement a teacher competency framework that includes new, culturally appropriate pedagogical approaches that better suit iTaukei and other learners. This work consists of a professional development programme and new National Certificate and Professional Diploma level qualifications on the FQF. The final report was submitted for the 'Coco' Competency Framework for teaching staff.

Collaboration with AARNet

The FHEC is mandated to develop or cause to be developed an academic broadband facility for use by HEIs. The Australian Academic and Research Network (AARNet) is the only high-quality academic broadband facility in Fiji, and it is used by the University of the South Pacific (USP). The FHEC's involvement with this project aimed to

promote the expansion of AARNet to other HEIs through collaboration.

AARNet Pty Ltd (APL), which operates AARNet, was formed by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and provides unique information communications technology capabilities to enable Australian education and research institutions to collaborate as well as their international peer communities. From 2010 to 2011, discussions had commenced, and correspondence had been exchanged between the USP, Ministry of Communication and the Telecommunications Authority of Fiji (TAF) about the opportunity to expand the facility to other HEIs. Several factors had contributed to the discussions stalling; one of the main challenges being the high financial investment required to connect to AARNet.

In May 2017, the Finance and Research section began the compilation of AARNet related documents from the USP, the FNU and previous discussions at meetings of the Commission to determine the best approach to progress this project. Later in June, the FHEC facilitated a meeting of representatives from the USP, the FNU, the UniFiji and the Fiji International Telecommunications Limited (FINTEL) to propose a way forward for all parties. The FNU was able negotiate access to AARNet, and through the Government Operating Grant allocation, was able to secure funding to support this activity. It is envisioned that once successfully implemented, AARNet will expand the technological and research information access for other HEIs across Fiji.

Priority 2

Developing Linkages To Employment

Approval of National Qualifications in the Wet Trades skill areas

The demand to develop wet trade NQs came from the construction industry after several industry consultations and meetings with several stakeholders. The wet trades are specialised competency skills courses that are derived from a full carpentry qualification and are generally lacking in the building and construction industry.

They are components of the building and carpentry trades courses which are available at certificate Level 4 on the national qualification. These wet trades were developed by the ISAC comprising of industry representatives and institutions representatives from the building construction

industry. These NQs have been endorsed by the FQC, registered on the FQF as a Level 2 Certificate and are delivered by the TCF.

The four NQs approved in the Wet Trade are:

- National Certificate in Tiling;
- National Certificate in Block laying;
- National Certificate in Painting Decoration; and
- National Certificate in Plastering.

Approval of a Regional Qualification (RQ)

A Pacific RQ in Sustainable Energy (SE) and Resilience (Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)) has been endorsed. This endorse-

ment took place when 15 countries from the South Pacific met in Nadi, Fiji from 16-19 May 2016 for the EU PacTVET Conference.

This work is part of the EU PacTVET Project, which is jointly implemented by the Pacific Community (SPC) and the USP.

The FHEC is the national agency taking the lead role in facilitating the development of these two RQs. Discussions on the RQs included the development of Competency-Based Training and Assessment which is inclusive of learning and support resources to meet the training needs for addressing CCA and SE at the national and regional level, and the appropriate methods of delivery these as well as assessing these mechanisms.

By having regionally accredited programmes in Resilience (CCA and DRR) and SE, the standards of training will be raised for CCA and DRR, while subsequently increasing the potential employment opportunities of those who wish to

study abroad or migrate within the region.

The two RQs will be registered on the Pacific Qualifications Register (PQR) and Pacific countries when adopting the regional programmes, are expected to contextualise these to provide more relevant and suitable content. The RQs are packed at Certificate Levels 1-4.



FHEC Staff facilitating the regional qualification programme.

From Left; Epeli Lesuma, Leba Halofaki, Viliame Rabici (consultant) and Akuila Savu

Leadership Training in the TVET Sector

Twenty participants have been awarded scholarships to study the Australian Certificate in Leadership and Training (Level 4) at the Australia Pacific Technical College. This opportunity was finalised after the APTC, and the FHEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to undertake this project jointly.

The programme will allow the participants to gain specific skills and expertise as they transition into leadership and supervisory

roles. The FHEC Director, Mrs Linda Aumua, stated that this partnership has been long overdue. The two parties have come together in support of development of the TVET sector in Fiji.

APTC Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Ms Denise O'Brien, expressed that it was a great pleasure to sign its first MOU with the FHEC, especially in developing the TVET sector. Ms O'Brien stressed that TVET is a needed, growing and vibrant sector that allows for the provision of skills for economic prosperity throughout Fiji.



Back row: from left to right; APTC Fiji Country Manager, Mr Jonathan Todd and FHEC FHEIP Programme Manager, Troy Irwin

Front row: from left to right; Ms Marian Wilkinson; APTC CEO, Ms Denise O'Brien; Director FHEC, Linda Aumua; and Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, Eci Naisele.

Priority 3

Strengthening the Higher Education System

FHEC Signed MoU With New Zealand Institutions

The FHEC signed an MOU for Cooperation with two established New Zealand institutions: Ako Aotearoa and the Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi (TWWoA). The parties entered into an MOU with the view of exploring opportunities to establish and promote collaborative activities that would enhance their mutual education goals.

The Ako Aotearoa's New Zealand National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence is an organisation that assists educators and organisations to enable the best possible outcomes for all learners. Ako Aotearoa would assist in providing access to technical assistance on the development of a competency framework for teaching staff, leadership and governance, and a programme of professional development.

The TWWoA's contribution is through the defining of opportunities that exist to adapt pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for the needs of the different cultural communities and also look at other related appropriate policy interventions. Both institutions recognise and respect the diverse

strengths and contributions that they each brought and looked forward to exploring, developing and evaluating proposals and initiatives to the benefit of each institution and the communities they serve.

The agreement is part of the FHEIP where the FHEC aims to coordinate the rolling out of new pedagogical approaches to HE: improving the quality of teaching and learning by enhancing the competency of teachers, assessors and moderators.



Back row; from left to right; Surava Elaisa (MFAT Development Programme Coordinator), Ms Evie O'Brien (Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi), Troy Irwin (FHEC FHEIP Programme Manager), Rachel Wetere (Project Lead|CEO (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi), Mr Glenn MacKay (Ako Aotearoa).

Front row; from left to right; Professor Wiremu Doherty (CEO-Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi), FHEC Director Linda Aumua, Mr Stanley Frielick (Director, Ako Aotearoa).

MOU to Address Skills Gap in Fiji

The FHEC and the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF) have signed an MOU to address the issue of the skills gap in industries. While the FCEF will identify the needs of industries about skills demand, the FHEC will work to develop the related NQs.

“Two minds coming together is important so that there is no misalignment in the development of qualifications, especially in meeting the training needs of the nation”, explained FHEC Director, Mrs Linda Aumua. FCEF President, Mr Himen Chandra, said that the MOU was the result of the discussions held during the Top Executives (TOPEX) Conference 2017 early in March on the topic of closing the skills gap in Fiji. Mr Chandra was glad that they have established the beginning of a committed relationship where stakeholders are also expected to contribute effectively to the betterment of the nation.



Sitting (L-R): Director FHEC Ms Linda Aumua, President FCEF Mr Himen Chandra

Higher Education Institution Collaboration

The first HEI Collaboration was held on February 2017 and hosted by the Fiji College of Evangelism and Theology in Lautoka. Institutions have identified the need to share good practices. The FHEC is supporting the concept to promote the building of harmonious relationship amongst institutions and the sharing of good practices for quality assurance purposes.

The collaboration is also a platform for the HEIs to create one voice in raising issues about HE in Fiji. It is expected that there will be at least three times annually. Dr Sereana Kubuabola of the USP facilitated the first HEI collaboration.

Recognised and Registered Higher Education Institutions

In 2016-2017, the FHEC granted full registration to four HEIs, three HEIs were re-registered, and five HEIs were recognised.

Table 3: Recognised and Registered Institutions for the period 2016 -2017.

Recognition
South Pacific Aviation Training Institute
Technical College of Fiji
Northern Christian Training Centre
Marist Training Centre – Tutu
Unitech Global Pty (Fiji) Ltd
Re-registration
Fiji National University
Chevalier Training Institute
Advance Aviation Training (Fiji) Ltd.

IT Services and Consultations T/A APTECH FIJI
Re-registration
Pacific Regional Seminary
Pacific Eye Institute
Montfort Boys' Town

The total number of fully registered HEIs as at July 2017 was 32, nine were provisionally registered, and 26 HEIs obtained recognition.

Funding of Higher Education Institutions

HEIs play a pivotal role in national development; empowering learners through education and training, to contribute towards the building of the economy by applying knowledge and skills gained in the classroom, to opportunities in the informal or formal sector. Through its Funding Model, the FHEC can advise the government on funding allocations for eligible HEIs, in recognition of the critical role these HEIs play. The FHEC administers government grants and supports HEIs in delivering quality HE programmes that meet the needs of the economy.

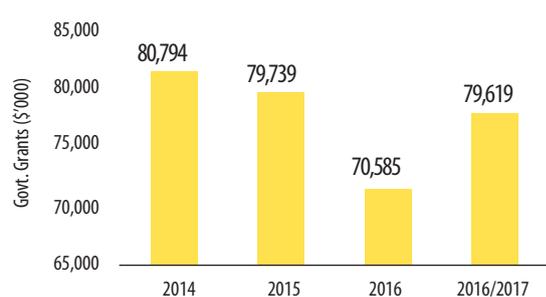
Table 4: Funding Allocations to HEIs for August 2016 – July 2017

Higher Education Institution	2016/2017 Funding (\$'000)
Vivekananda Technical Centre	143
Montfort Boys' Town (Suva)	287

Montfort Technical Institute (Savusavu)	388
Corpus Christi Teachers' College	140
Sangam Institute of Technology	250
University of Fiji	2,335
University of the South Pacific	30,217
Fiji National University	45,073
Fulton College	50
Centre for Appropriate Technology and Development	736
Total \$	79,619

In 2016-2017, a total of FJD 79.6 million was allocated to ten (10) HEIs for operational funding.

Figure 3: Government Funding for HEIs from 2014 – 2016/2017



(Source: Republic of Fiji Budget Estimates 2014 – 2016/2017)
Figure 3 shows the level of funding provided by the Government to HEIs since 2014.

The government grant supports HEIs in the areas of operations, institutional, teaching and learning, and research. With the grant provided in 2016-2017, HEIs were able to invest in either enhancing the quality of programmes through the delivery of NQs or in the recruitment or retention of suitably qualified teaching staff. Other investments by HEIs included enhancement of students learning experience through the upgrading of library services or the refurbishing of computers for the computer labs. The FHEC will continue to work with HEIs towards building a robust HE system that will be globally competitive.

Fiji Higher Education Improvement Programme (FHEIP)

The funding agreement between the FHEC and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) was signed in 2016. Implementation of activities did not commence until early 2017. The programme focuses on six key areas, including:

- Strengthening the Fiji Qualifications Framework – external review of the FQF to ensure that it is fit for purpose, conduct an internal review of options to reduce the proliferation of qualifications at all levels and identify ways to streamline their development.
- Implement a higher education monitoring framework – devise a comprehensive monitoring framework in consultation with the HEI sector. This framework will encompass a range of indicators including those defined as part of the Higher Education Strategy (HES), the FHEC's financial and other performance monitoring regime, and the requirements of quality assurance processes.
- FHEC rollout new pedagogical approaches

to higher education institutions – develop a framework that describes the competencies that teaching staff must have including the relevant skills and knowledge required for the delivery of vocational education and training.

- FHEC implement Strategic IT Plan – work with a New Zealand-based partner with experience in strategic information technology project development to prepare a strategic information technology plan. The FHEC has a range of flexible online information technology modules that support the organisation's staff to deliver its functions.
- FHEC implement Organisational Development Plan – develop and implement an organisational development plan which includes a review of the current structure, policies and procedures; workforce planning; and learning and development needs.
- MOUs in place between FHEC and New Zealand Agencies and institutions- A priority for the FHEC is to build on relationships with key New Zealand agencies and institutions that have expressed an interest in supporting the development of the higher education sector in Fiji. These institutional linkages will assist with the long-term sustainability of relationships and interventions.

Review of IT and Development of IT Strategy

In early 2017, the FHEC undertook the review of its IT strategy. The results of the review provide a high-level information systems strategy for the FHEC to ensure its operating model and information systems are user-friendly – both now and into the future.

The intent is to put in place information systems that make quality improvement and assurance activities:

- As effective as possible, given the resources available.
- Easy to access and understand.
- Easier and less costly to engage/comply with.

4. Financial Statements

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Suva, Fiji

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Fax: (679) 330 3812
E-mail: info@auditorgeneral.gov.fj
Website: <http://www.oag.gov.fj>



File Ref: 1359

20 March 2019

The Chairperson
Fiji Higher Education Commission
Red Cross Building
22 Gorrie Street
SUVA

Dear Madam

FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

Audited financial statements for Fiji Higher Education Commission for the year ended 31 July 2017 has been completed.

Particulars of errors and omission arising from the audit have been forwarded to the management for necessary actions.

Yours sincerely

Ajay Nand
AUDITOR-GENERAL

Encl.

cc: Director – Fiji Higher Education Commission



**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
COMMISSIONERS' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

In accordance with a resolution of the commissioners, the Commission herewith submit the statement of financial position of the Commission as at 31 July 2017, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date and report as follows:

Commissioners

The names of commissioners in office at the date of this report are :

Dr. Milika Sobey - Chairperson
Pratarp Singh
Vimlesh Chand
Arun Narsey (co-opted member)
Dr. Sandhya Coll
Dr. Joseph Veramu

Principal Activities

The principal activities during the year remained unchanged and are in accordance with the mandated functions of the Commission as per Higher Education Act 2008.

Results

The net profit for the year was \$14,640 (2016 : loss \$298,076).

Bad and Doubtful Debts

Prior to the completion of the Commission's financial statements, the commissioners took reasonable steps to ascertain that action had been taken in relation to writing off of bad debts. In the opinion of commissioners, no further provision for doubtful debts is required.

As at the date of this report, the commissioners are not aware of any circumstances, which would render the amount written off for bad debts inadequate to any substantial extent.

Non Current Assets

Prior to the completion of the Commission's financial statements, the commissioners took reasonable steps to ascertain whether any non current assets were unlikely to be realised in the ordinary course of its operation compared to their values as shown in the accounting records of the Commission. Where necessary these assets have been written down or adequate provision has been made to bring the values of such assets to an amount that they might be expected to realise.

As at the date of this report, the commissioners are not aware of any circumstances, which would render the values attributed to non current assets in the Commission's financial statements misleading.

Unusual Transactions

Apart from these matters and other matters specifically referred to in the financial statements, in the opinion of the commissioners, the results of the operations of the Commission during the financial year were not substantially affected by any item, transaction or event of a material unusual nature, nor has there arisen between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the commissioners, to affect substantially the results of the operations of the Commission in the current financial year, other than those reflected in the financial statements.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
COMMISSIONERS' REPORT (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

Events Subsequent To Balance Date

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Commission, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Commission in future financial years.

Other Circumstances

As at the date of this report:

- (i) no charge on the assets of the Commission has been given since the end of the financial year to secure the liabilities of any other person;
- (ii) no contingent liabilities have arisen since the end of the financial year for which the Commission could become liable; and
- (iii) no contingent liabilities or other liabilities of the Commission has become or is likely to become enforceable within the year of twelve months after the end of the financial year which, in the opinion of the commissioners, will or may substantially affect the ability of the Commission to meet its obligations as and when they fall due.

As at the date of this report, the commissioners are not aware of any circumstances that have arisen, not otherwise dealt with in this report or the Commission's financial statements, which would make adherence to the existing method of valuation of assets or liabilities of the Commission misleading or inappropriate.

Commissioners' Benefits

Since the end of the previous financial year, no commissioner has received or become entitled to receive a benefit (other than those included in the aggregate amount of emoluments received or due and receivable by the commissioners shown in the financial statements or received as the fixed salary of a full-time employee of the Commission or of a related entity) by reason of a contract made by the Commission or by a related entity with a commissioner or with a firm of which he or she is a member, or with an entity in which he or she has a substantial financial interest.

For and on behalf of the Commission and in accordance with a resolution of the commissioners.

Dated this *05* day of *March* 2019.


.....
Chairperson


.....
Commissioner

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS'
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

In accordance with a resolution of the Commission, we state that in the opinion of the commissioners :

- (i) the accompanying statement of comprehensive income of the Commission is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the results of the activities of the Commission for the year ended 31 July 2017;
- (ii) the accompanying statement of changes in equity of the Commission is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the changes in equity of the Commission for the year ended 31 July 2017;
- (iii) the accompanying statement of financial position of the Commission is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Commission as at 31 July 2017;
- (iv) the accompanying statement of cash flows of the Commission is drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the cash flows of the Commission for the year ended 31 July 2017;
- (v) the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities;
- (vi) at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Commission will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due ; and
- (vii) all related party transactions have been adequately recorded in the books of the Commission.

For and on behalf of the Commission and in accordance with a resolution of the commissioners.

Dated this 05 day of March 2019.


.....
Chairperson


.....
Commissioner

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of Fiji Higher Education Commission, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 July 2017, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Commission as at 31 July 2017 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-Sized Entities (IFRS for SMEs).

Basis of Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Commission in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Fiji and I have fulfilled other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter

As stated in note 21 of the Notes to the Financial Statements, the Commission collected revenue from registration fees, annual fees and renewal of registration fees totaling \$39,770 which was deposited in the Consolidated Fund Account during the year. This amount is yet to be reconciled with the records of Ministry of Education.

The Commission did not carry out a detailed survey of the registered institutes for the year ended 31 July 2017. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to determine if all institutes operating in Fiji in 2017 were registered and paid their registration fees.

Responsibilities of the Management and Directors for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with IFRS for SMEs and for such internal control as the management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management intend to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so. The Directors are responsible for overseeing the Commission's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a

guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISA will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISA, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Commission's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's and directors' use of going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Commission's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures, are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Commission to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the management and directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

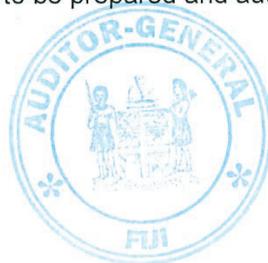
Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

In my opinion, the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Act 2008 in all material respects, and:

- a) I have been given all information, explanations and assistance necessary for the conduct of the audit; and
- b) The Fiji Higher Education Commission has kept financial records sufficient to enable the financial statements to be prepared and audited.



Ajay Nand
AUDITOR-GENERAL



Suva, Fiji
20 March 2019

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

	Notes	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
REVENUE			
Government grant	3 (i)	1,472,604	841,424
MFAT grant	3 (j)	100,000	-
Release of deferred income	13	620,572	42,229
Conference collection		8,786	147,198
Other income - Reimbursements from Technical College of Fiji		46,381	-
Other refunds		3,030	20,122
Total operating revenue		2,251,373	1,050,973
EXPENSES			
Depreciation and amortisation expense	10 & 11	(67,680)	(37,302)
Salaries and employee costs	5.1	(1,381,925)	(696,143)
Operating expenses	5.2	(787,128)	(615,604)
Total operating expenses		(2,236,733)	(1,349,049)
Operating profit for the year		14,640	(298,076)
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive profit/(loss) for the year		14,640	(298,076)

The statement of comprehensive income is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

	Notes	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
ACCUMULATED FUND			
Balance at the beginning of the year		317,636	615,712
Profit/(Loss) for the year		14,640	(298,076)
Accumulated Fund at end of the year		332,276	317,636

The statement of changes in equity is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 JULY 2017**

	Notes	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	9	1,839,802	2,306,490
Other debtors, deposits and prepayments	6	89,631	37,118
Total current assets		<u>1,929,433</u>	<u>2,343,608</u>
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	10	258,757	233,946
Intangible assets	11	182,439	166,610
Total non current assets		<u>441,196</u>	<u>400,556</u>
TOTAL ASSETS		<u>2,370,629</u>	<u>2,744,164</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade payables and accruals	7	122,658	82,826
Provisional tax		14,193	6,012
Provision for annual leave	14	32,328	26,799
Deferred income	12	1,869,174	2,310,891
Total current liabilities		<u>2,038,353</u>	<u>2,426,528</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES		<u>2,038,353</u>	<u>2,426,528</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>332,276</u>	<u>317,636</u>
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		<u>332,276</u>	<u>317,636</u>

Signed on behalf of the Commission


.....
Chairperson


.....
Commissioner

The statement of financial position are to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

	Notes	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
Cash flow from Operating Activities			
Receipt of grants		1,584,420	2,999,911
Payments to suppliers and employees		(2,121,643)	(1,273,170)
Net cash (used in) / provided by Operating Activities		<u>(537,223)</u>	<u>1,726,741</u>
Cash flow from Investing Activities			
Acquisition of plant and equipment		70,535	(89,661)
Net cash (used in) Investing Activities		<u>70,535</u>	<u>(89,661)</u>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(466,688)	1,637,080
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		2,306,490	669,410
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	9	<u><u>1,839,802</u></u>	<u><u>2,306,490</u></u>

The statement of cash flows are to be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Reporting entity

Fiji Higher Education Commission is a government statutory body incorporated under the Higher Education Act 2008. The address of its registered office and principal place of operation is at 22 Gorrie Street, Suva.

2. BASIS OF PREPARATION

2.1 Basis of preparation of the financial statements

The financial statements of the Commission have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are presented in Fijian dollars and all values are rounded to the nearest dollar.

2.2 Statement of compliance

The financial statements of the Commission have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities ("IFRS for SME's").

3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The preparation of the Commission's financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of revenue, expenses, assets and liabilities and the disclosure of contingent liabilities at the reporting date. However, uncertainty about these assumptions and estimates could result in outcomes that could require a material adjustment to the carrying amount of the asset or liability affected in the future.

a) Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment is stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Such costs includes the cost of replacing part of the plant and equipment when that cost is incurred, if the recognition criteria is met. Likewise, when a major inspection is performed, its cost is recognized in the carrying amount of the plant and equipment as a replacement if the recognition criteria are satisfied. All other repair and maintenance costs are recognized in income statement as incurred.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis over the useful life of the asset as follows:

Office equipment	12% - 25%
Furniture and fittings	12% - 25%
Computer equipment	20% - 30%
Softwares	12% - 40%

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal. Any gain or loss arising on derecognition of the asset (calculated as the difference between the net disposal proceeds and the carrying amount of the asset) is included in statement of comprehensive income in the year the asset is derecognised.

The asset's residual values, useful lives and methods of depreciation are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each financial year.

Software costs which does not form an integral part of the hardware is recognised as intangible assets in the year of acquisition.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

3 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

b) Receivables

Trade receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. Trade receivables are initially recognised at original invoice (inclusive of VAT where applicable).

c) Cash and cash equivalents

For the purpose of statements of cash flows, cash equivalents include cash at bank.

d) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Commission has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event, it is probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation and reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at reporting date taking into account the risk and uncertainties surrounding the obligations. Where a provision is measured using the cash flows estimated to settle the present obligations, its carrying amount is the present value of those cash flows.

When some or all of the economic benefits required to settle a provision are expected to be recovered from a third party, the receivables is recognised as an asset if it is virtually certain that recovery will be received and the amount of the receivables can be measured reliably.

e) Employee entitlements

Provisions are made for wages and salaries, annual leave estimated to be payable to employees at balance date on the basis of statutory and contractual requirements.

f) Taxes

Value Added Tax

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised gross of the amount of Value Added Tax (VAT) except:

- where the VAT incurred on a purchase of assets or services is not recoverable from the taxation authority, in which case the VAT is recognised as part of the acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense item as applicable; and
- receivables and payables are stated with the amount of VAT included.

The net amount of VAT recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included as part of receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Further to above, this policy was effective from September 2016 as Fiji Revenue and Customs Service (FRCS) has waived VAT from 2010 to July 2016.

g) Income Tax

The Commission is not subject to income tax.

h) Trade and other payables

Liabilities for trade creditors and other amounts are carried at cost (inclusive of VAT where applicable) which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in the future for goods and services received whether or not billed to the entity. Amounts payable that have been denominated in foreign currencies have been translated to local currency using the rates of exchange ruling at the end of the financial year.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

i) Government grant

Government grants received from Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts are recognised in the statements of the comprehensive income and where there is reasonable assurance that they will be received and that the Commission will comply with the conditions attached to them.

Government grants related to assets including non-monetary grants at fair value, shall be presented in the statement of financial position either by setting up the grant as deferred income or deducting the grant in arriving at the carrying amount of the asset and in the case of the entity it is treated as deferred income.

j) MFAT Project

The Commission has signed a five year \$7,328,947 agreement with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) of New Zealand on 27th June 2016 improve Higher Education Sector and Commission's internal capabilities.

In the MFAT project funding, a variation was made to allocate \$220,000 as diminishing assistance towards management remuneration for three years. This variation was approved and signed off by MFAT Development Manager and FHEC Board Chairperson on 26/11/16 and \$100,000 was released to FHEC in 2016/2017.

k) Segment information

A business segment is a group of assets and operations engaged in providing products or services that are subject to risks and returns that are different from those of other business segments. A geographical segment is engaged in providing products and services within a particular economic environment that are subject to risks and returns that are different from those of segments operating in other economic environment.

(i) Industry segment

The Commission operates predominantly in the education sector.

(ii) Geographical segment

The Commission operates predominantly in Fiji and is therefore one geographical area for reporting purposes.

CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND JUDGEMENTS

a) Depreciation

In relation to acquired property, plant and equipment, the commissioners and the management apply judgement to determine the depreciation period based on the expected useful lives of the respective assets. Where estimated useful lives or recoverable values have diminished due to technological change and market conditions, depreciation is accelerated. The commissioners assessment of useful lives or recoverable amount involves making a judgement, at the particular point in time, about inherent uncertain future outcomes of events and conditions. Accordingly, subsequent events may result in outcomes that are significantly different from assessment.

b) Amortisation/impairment of intangible assets

In relation to acquired intangible assets, the commissioners and management apply judgement to determine the amortisation period based on the expected useful live of the respective assets. Where estimated useful lives or recoverable values have diminished due to technological change or market conditions, amortization is accelerated or allowance for impairment is provided. The Commissioners' assessment of useful lives or recoverable amount involves making a judgement, at a particular point in time, about inherent uncertain future outcomes of events or conditions. Accordingly subsequent events may result in outcomes that are significantly different from assessment.

The commissioners reasonably believe that no indicators for impairment exist as at balance date and therefore no impairment or provision was made during the year.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

5. OPERATING EXPENSES	Notes	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
5.1 EMPLOYEE BENEFIT EXPENSE			
Wages and salaries		1,255,916	636,212
Superannuation contributions		126,009	59,931
		<u>1,381,925</u>	<u>696,143</u>
5.2 OPERATING EXPENSE			
Allowances	8	54,791	72,825
Travel and subsistence		137,763	186,302
Training Facilities and materials		11,788	6,715
Bank charges		2,321	1,509
Utility bills		117,882	26,054
Vehicle expense		9,260	9,875
Publication/subscription		79,451	59,687
Conference workshop seminars		43,257	200,707
Other expenses		39,348	35,207
Audit fees		3,945	2,500
Consultancy fees	15	287,322	14,223
		<u>787,128</u>	<u>615,604</u>
6. OTHER DEBTORS, DEPOSITS AND PREPAYMENTS			
Prepayments and other receivables		76,620	34,664
VAT Refund		7,404	-
Bond receivable		5,607	2,454
		<u>89,631</u>	<u>37,118</u>
7. TRADE PAYABLES AND ACCRUALS			
Trade creditors		21,111	1,750
Accruals and other liabilities		101,547	81,076
		<u>122,658</u>	<u>82,826</u>
8. ALLOWANCES			
Higher education commission		13,289	14,578
Fiji Qualification Council		-	1,050
Registration committee		900	1,591
Recognition committee		2,475	1,350
Assessors fees		38,128	49,881
Standard setting committee		-	4,375
		<u>54,791</u>	<u>72,825</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash at bank accounts all maintained with ANZ Bank.		
Government grant - a/c # 11447457	240,595	261,974
FNU grant - a/c # 10780690	81,349	89,613
INQAAHE - a/c # 12463126	4,126	45,461
APQN - a/c # 12463115	37,169	4,522
MFAT Account	1,376,162	1,903,920
EUPACTVET	99,101	-
Petty Cash	1,300	1,000
	1,839,802	2,306,490

The purpose of the bank accounts are as follows:

- (i) Government grant account captures all inflows and outflows of cash related to operation of the Commission.
- (ii) FNU grant account captures all inflows and outflows of cash related to National Qualification Implementation Project.
- (iii) MFAT project account captures all inflows and outflows of cash related to the MFAT project.
- (iv) EUPACTVET captures all inflows and outflows of cash related to National Qualifications Development project.
- (v) Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE) accounts captures all inflows and outflows of cash related to hosting of conference.

0. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

	Office Equipment (\$)	Computer Equipment (\$)	Furniture & Fittings (\$)	Total (\$)
Cost				
Cost at beginning - at cost	52,844	202,004	115,414	370,262
Additions	2,743	33,825	48,367	84,935
Disposal	-	-	-	-
Closing balance	55,587	235,829	163,781	455,197
Accumulated depreciation				
Acc. Dep. at beginning	14,871	99,596	21,849	136,316
Depreciation for the year	6,538	38,190	15,396	60,124
Closing balance	21,409	137,786	37,245	196,440
Carrying amount				
Carrying Amount at beginning	37,973	102,408	93,565	233,946
Carrying amount at year end	34,178	98,043	126,536	258,757

FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

11. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

	Software (\$)	Database (\$)	Total (\$)
Cost			
Cost at beginning - at cost	62,969	116,827	179,796
Additions	-	23,385	23,385
Closing balance	62,969	140,212	203,181
Accumulated depreciation			
Acc. Dep. at beginning	13,186	-	13,186
Depreciation for the year	7,556	-	7,556
Closing balance	20,742	-	20,742
Carrying amount			
Carrying amount at beginning	49,783	116,827	166,610
Carrying amount at year end	42,227	140,212	182,439

12. DEFERRED INCOME

Government Grant			
Opening Balance		406,971	354,612
Additions		82,524	89,661
Release to income statement		(66,839)	(37,302)
		422,656	406,971
MFAT Grant			
Opening Balance		1,903,920	-
Additions		-	1,908,847
Release to income statement		(496,994)	(4,927)
		1,406,926	1,903,920
EUPACTVET			
Opening Balance		-	-
Additions		96,330	-
Release to income statement		(56,738)	-
		39,592	-
		1,869,174	2,310,891

MFAT grant relates to unutilised grant provided for the Fiji Higher Education Improvement Programme 2016 - 2021.

FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

13. RELEASE OF DEFERRED INCOME

Property, Plant and Equipment Depreciation charge for the year - Government Grant	60,124	33,096
Intangible Assets Depreciation charge for the year - Government Grant	7,556	4,206
Amortization of charge - MFAT	496,598	4,927
Amortization of charge - EUPACTVET	56,293	-
Release of deferred revenue to income statement	<u>620,672</u>	<u>42,229</u>

14. PROVISION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE

Opening balance	26,799	50,468
adjustment to opening balance	4,152	(618)
Additions	91,777	15,532
	<u>122,728</u>	<u>65,382</u>
Leave taken	(90,400)	(38,583)
Closing balance at year end	<u>32,328</u>	<u>26,799</u>

15. CONSULTANCY FEES

Overseas consultants	241,297	-
Local consultants	46,025	14,223
	<u>287,322</u>	<u>14,223</u>

16. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

- a) Capital expenditure commitments at balance date amounted to \$56,981 (2016: \$82,471)
- b) Contingent liabilities at balance date amounted to Nil. (2016 : Nil)
- c) Operating lease commitments at balance date amounted to \$130,403 (2016: Nil)

17. PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

The Commission's principal activities is to carry out regulatory and facilitative role in the higher education sector, as specified under section (7) of the Higher Education Act 2008.

18. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely, in the opinion of the commissioners, to affect significantly the operations of the Commission in the subsequent financial year.

In addition to above, the Commission has further received \$1,297,465 and \$2,053,194 on 14/05/18 and 15/10/18 respectively totalling to \$3,350,659 as grant from MFAT.

**FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017**

19. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Where necessary, amounts relating to prior years have been reclassified to facilitate comparison and achieve consistency in disclosure with current year amounts.

20. COMMISSION DETAILS

Registered Office

The registered office of the Commission is located at:
22 Gorrie Street
Red Cross Building
Suva
Fiji Islands

Number of employees

As at balance date, the Commission employed a total of 37 employees.

21. COMMISSION TRANSACTIONS ADMINISTERED FOR THE FIJI GOVERNMENT

The Commission is responsible for collection of following revenue which are deposited directly by the Commission into the Government Consolidated fund:

	2017 (12 months) (\$)	2016 (7 months) (\$)
Fees	<u>39,770</u>	<u>26,025</u>

The above fees represents application for registration fees, annual fees and renewal of registration fees.

22. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURE

Management

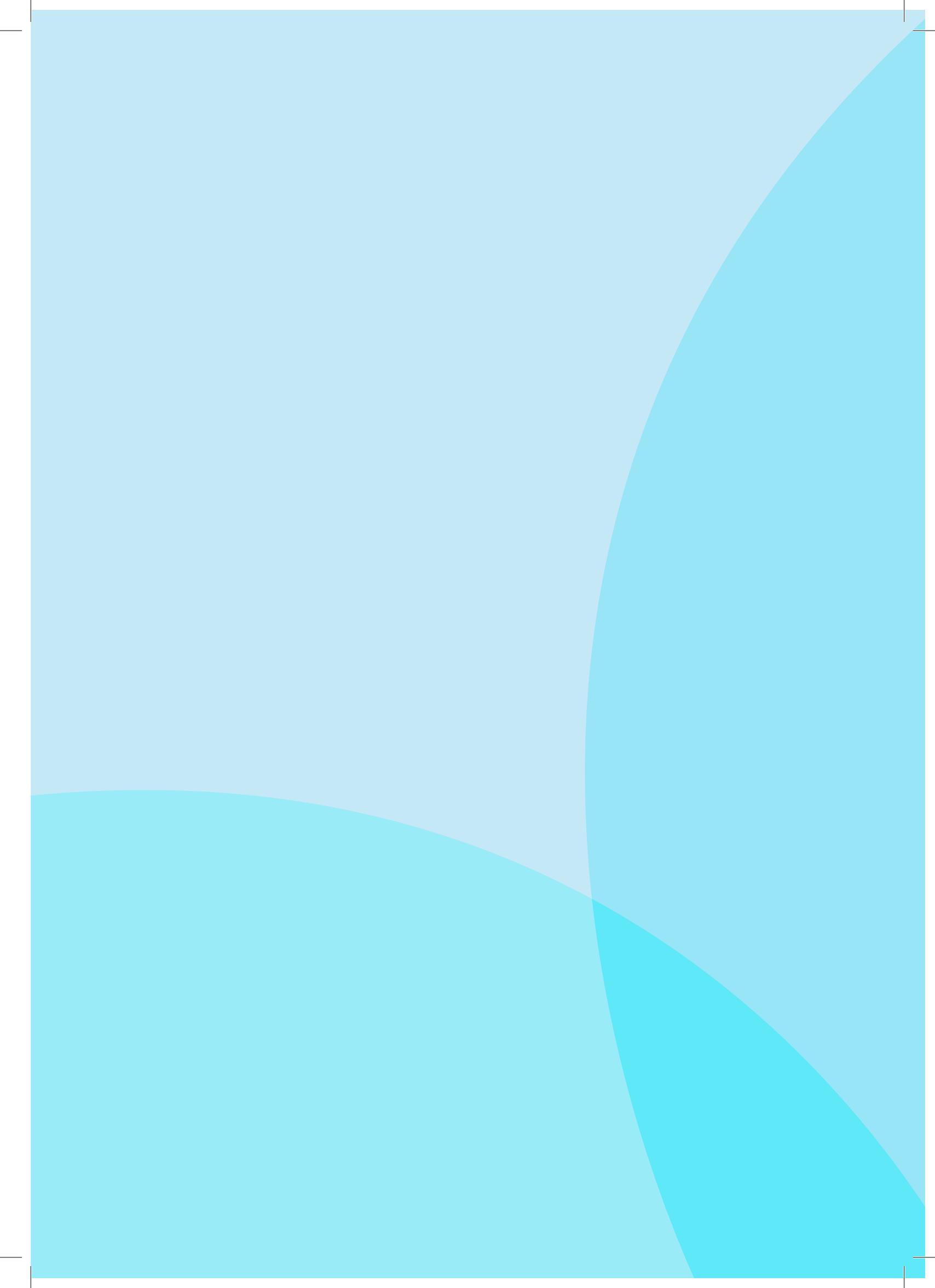
The names of the management in office at any time during the year are:

Mrs. Linda Anuma	Director
Mrs. Salote Rabuka	Acting Director
Mr. Robert Misau	Team Leader Funding and research & Corporate Services
Mr. Eci Naisele	Team Leader Quality assurance
Mr. Akuila Savu	Team Leader Quality assurance
Mrs. Amelia Siga	Team Leader Professional services
Ms. Charmaine Kwan	Team Leader Executive Office
Mr. Troy Irwin	MFAT Programme Manager

The above key management personnel who have the authority and responsible for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Commission directly or indirectly during the year.

During the year, remuneration of the key management personnel was as follow:

Salaries and superannuation	<u>511,875</u>	<u>217,680</u>
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FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Level 1 | Fiji Red Cross Building | 22 Gorrie Street | Suva

P.O Box 2583 Government Buildings | Suva

Phone: (+679) 3100031

Mobile: (+679) 8358165

Website: www.fhec.org.fj

Email: fhec@fhec.org.fj