

APPENDICES

Appendix One

Written Response by the Fiji National University

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS

1. Appointment of Council Members:

- i. Inform the Committee on the term of appointment of the respective members of the Council.

As set out in the Fiji National University Act 2009 and the Fiji National University (Amendment) Act 2018:

- 'The term of an appointed member of Council shall be 3 years'
- 'The term of elected members under subsection (1)(a) and (1)(b) shall be 3 years and for the elected members under subsection (1)(c) and (1)(d) shall be 1 year, from the first scheduled meeting after the date of election'
- 'The term of co-opted members of the Council shall be 3 years from the first scheduled meeting after the date of appointment'

- ii. Highlight if there are age limits to the appointment of Council members.

Neither the Fiji National University Act 2009 nor the Fiji National University (Amendment) Act 2018 specifies an age limit for the appointment of Council members.

2. The Committee notes few members holding multi-membership of other boards, how does this affect their deliverables in all of these boards, particularly to FNU?

The Fiji National University Act 2009 requires that:

'A member has the function of ensuring the Council performs its functions and exercises its powers appropriately, effectively and efficiently.

In performing the function, a member is obliged to each of the following –

- (a) act honestly and in the best interests of the University;
- (b) exercise reasonable skill, care and diligence;
- (c) disclose to the Council any conflict that may arise between the member's personal interests and the interests of the University;
- (d) not make improper use of his or her position as a member, or of information acquired because of his or her position as a member, to gain, directly or indirectly, an advantage for the member or another person.

All members of the Council and of any board of committee appointed by the Council shall fully declare to the Council any financial or other interest with which they may at any time directly or indirectly be connected and shall, unless the Council so decides, refrain from voting at meetings of the Council or of such board or committee on any matter related thereto provided that such interest, if so declared, shall not disqualify such member for the purpose of constituting a quorum.'

3. Provide the current status of vocational training programmes offered in rural areas. In regards to the closure of technical colleges, how is the University reviewing its set up to be able to accommodate the current demand in place with the operational campuses?

Vocational training continues to be offered by FNU through the National Training and Productivity Centre's Community-Based Non-Formal Education team. The team provides courses to learners in rural communities and peri-urban and urban areas. The vocational courses offered are inclusive and people of all ages, including those living with disabilities, are free to participate. A wide range of Certificate III and IV programmes continue to be delivered by FNU, and the University is proud to be the leading provider of TVET in Fiji.

When taking the decision to close the TCF colleges, FNU ensured that students who wished to transfer to Certificate III or IV programmes at nearby FNU campuses were supported in doing so. FNU will continue to invest in its campuses in the Central, Western and Northern Divisions, enhancing and refining the range of education and training opportunities offered to students in line with labour-market demand.

4. Elaborate on FNU's strategic plan and how it is aligned to the National Development Plan.

Following extensive consultation with staff, students and stakeholders, including 26 separate 'town hall' meetings conducted by the Vice-Chancellor at FNU campuses across Fiji, the FNU Council formally approved the University's new 5-year Strategic Plan, *Opportunity and Ambition*, at the end of April 2021.

The Strategic Plan, which set out the goals and aspirations for FNU to 2026, is strongly aligned with Fiji's National Development Plan – which is referenced throughout the document – and with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Three of the four pillars of the Strategic Plan map explicitly onto NDP goals, in the areas of education for employability, research with real-world impact, and student experience. The fourth pillar, financial sustainability, is essential in the wake of COVID-19 and its impact on the economy, and reflects the necessity for FNU to diversify its income streams and provide excellent value for money in the investment of public funds.

5. Page 26 of Annual Report ('The incorporation of the Technical College of Fiji into the University provides an opportunity to receive TVET strategy, with the possible development of a new College of Vocational Education and Training planned') - Provide an explanation regarding those students coming from rural areas, whether they are accommodated in the main campus and if there is sufficient accommodation available to them.

FNU has 1,920 hostel beds. Priority is given to all first year students, including those from rural and maritime areas. Any unallocated hostel accommodation is then offered to second and final year students. Before classes commence, any remaining unallocated hostel rooms are made available to any enrolled student on first come first serve basis. In some of FNU's hostels, priority is given to medical students who have to undertake clinical attachments in hospitals which may end after dark.

6. Provide a progress update on the construction and operation of the new College of Agriculture in Koronivia.

FNU continues to upgrade the facilities at Koronivia for the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Plans for a Veterinary Training Hospital are not being pursued, in response to the economic impact of COVID-19 and a set of independent benchmarking studies by the International Institute for Animal Health (OIE) which demonstrated that pursuing the project would provide insufficient return on investment for public funds.

7. Page 33 of the Annual Report mentioned that the National Apprenticeship Department scheme had a total of 284 apprentices in training at various trade and technical levels in 2019. A total of 188 tests were recorded under the National Trade Testing Scheme for 2019. Are there any plans for this programme to continue, if yes, then identify the areas of target?

Yes, all apprenticeship programmes and Trade Testing will continue and there are plans for further developments in the future.

Apprenticeship training has been positively received by industry, and more employers are interested in participating. FNU is actively targeting small businesses and manufacturing companies.

The Trade Testing Team is working with Ministry of Youth and Sports and vocational schools, and is developing a range of further skills assessments. These will be supported by short courses and refresher programmes for those in work requiring certification. Programmes are offered in all 3 major divisions: Central, West and North. Public programmes are advertised. FNU is currently working to facilitate Plumber Licensing training and certification for the Water Authority of Fiji.

8. Inform us on the kind of assistance provided by the University to those students who went for placements and attachments and those who set up SME businesses. How is FNU working with other organisations and agencies to ensure continuous up skilling for students in their respective careers?

FNU's industrial attachment (IA) programmes are designed to prepare 'work-ready' graduates for success in professional careers. The concept behind the IA program is that hands on experience is the best way of learning.

The University provides the following assistance to the students undertaking their IA programmes:

- Identifies, makes arrangements with, and attaches students to suitable organisations to undertake IAs;
- Makes arrangements with employers to reimburse students' out-of-pocket costs;
- Provides academic assistance to ensure programme outcomes are met:
 - Industry-specific hard skills and behavioural soft skills and aptitudes
 - Putting classroom learning into practice
- Provides specific guidance on how to engage with the profession and succeed in a real-life work environment, how to appreciate and understand the practical application of their academic programme, and how to work with professional mentors to begin to build networks within their professions.

Students are required to write a project, discussing how they have achieved the specific learning outcomes outlined above. The projects are graded as part of their assessment. The IA program provides an opportunity for partnership between industry and the university, designed to offer students the opportunity to gain valuable experience in a professional workplace environment.

FNU works closely with employers through the Industry Advisory Committees which ensure that curricula, assessments and learning outcomes are kept up-to-date and aligned with industry needs.

The Office of Registrar, through its Placement unit offers University students career advice and helps to find employment. The FNU Placement Portal enables employers to upload vacancies and students to upload their CVs.

Some of the major initiatives by the Office of Registrar to upskill students in their career paths include:

- CV writing workshops (both face-to-face and online)
- Interview training
- On-campus recruitment drives by employers
- Employer chat sessions
- Careers Fair

9. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the various programmes at the University with regards to the student intake in each respective programme? Furthermore, inform us if there has been an increase in student enrollment in agriculture and veterinary science programmes.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a differential impact on different programmes. As the table below shows, enrolments in the College of Business, Tourism & Hospitality Studies (CBHTS) and the College of Humanities & Education (CHE) increased from 2019 to 2020. The College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS) and the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) experienced slight declines in overall student numbers. A more pronounced decline was experienced by the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF).

Student Headcount by College

College	Headcount as at 31st December, 2019	Headcount as at 31st December, 2020	% Change
CAFF	1,223	907	-26%
CBHTS	5,437	5,846	8%
CEST	5,941	5,542	-7%
CHE	3,220	3,240	1%
CMNHS	2,835	2,725	-4%

10. We note that the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research received \$1.4 million for a five- year implementation project to strengthen policies to tackle diabetes and hypertension. Provide an update on the achievements and outcomes of the project and any challenges associated with its implementation.

Please see the attached report.

11. Provide an update on the student enrollment numbers in the following new programmes at the university:
- Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Health (Disaster Management),
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research, and
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Non-Communicable Diseases.

Programme	Enrolment 2021	2020 Enrolment		2019 Enrolment	
	Semester 1	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2
Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Health (Disaster Management)	2	5	4	First offer in semester 2	9
Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research	9	7	7	-	1
Postgraduate Diploma in Non-Communicable Diseases	14	15	15	2	8

12. Provide an update on the completion of the following capital projects:

- **Maritime Academy 3-Storey Building**

The project is currently 79% complete. Works on site have been extremely slow since the start of 2021 due to issues between the main contractor and the sub-contractors. Mindful of the need to complete the building expeditiously for the benefit of FNU students, and to achieve value for money in the expenditure of public funds, FNU has, in accordance with the contract, removed the balance of works from the main contractor and will, through the project superintendent, engage sub-contractors directly to complete the remaining works. The estimated time for these works to be completed is 16 weeks. It is expected that these works will commence as soon as COVID-19 restrictions permit.

- **Sports Complex at Nasinu Campus**

The construction of the Sports Complex was completed in December 2020 and the Gym and multi-purpose rooms have been operational since the start of Semester 1. Installation of the high-performance flooring for the court was delayed due to travel restrictions. In order to complete the building and up-skill the local workforce, FNU has negotiated with the specialist contractors based in Australia to train via video-conferencing a local company, Fortech Construction Ltd, to complete the flooring works. They are expected to be completed by July 2020 depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

- **New campus in Labasa**

FNU has two over-arching objectives in Labasa: to provide enhanced learning and teaching facilities for students in the Northern Division as soon as possible, and to achieve the best value for money in the investment of public funds. Given the major economic impact of COVID-19, FNU has put further expenditure on the proposed new campus on hold. The University is exploring other opportunities to deliver its objectives more swiftly and at significantly less cost to the public purse.

13. Provide an update on the disability centre:

- Number of persons living with disabilities using the facilities and the capacity development obstacles and challenges.

At present there are 25 students living with a disability registered at the FNU Disability Centre.

Support provided:

- At the beginning of the academic term, the Office of Registrar conducts a special orientation session for students living with a disability to inform them about the different services and support provided by the University.
- Students registered at FNU's Disability Centre are able to participate in capacity building workshops organized by the Fiji Disabled Peoples Federation (FDPF).
- Special workshops on CV writing and mock interview training are also organized by the Office of Registrar for students living with a disability to prepare them in their career pathways.
- Data gifting by Office of Registrar to help students with their studies online.
- Mentoring and support provided to students to help them succeed in their studies.

Challenges:

- **Resource:** As the number of students living with a disability looks set to increase, the University will invest appropriate resources to provide support.
- **Intersectionality:** Most students living with a disability come from economically disadvantaged and/or remote areas and often require additional support to succeed in their studies.

14. Provide an update on the new Engineering Research & Development Centre and whether it is operational.

The building is completed and operational. It provides significantly enhanced facilities for research and teaching for the College of Engineering, Science and Technology.

15. What adjustment and relief measures has the University sought to implement to cushion the impacts of COVID-19 and tropical cyclones on its operations and to ensure that course and programme delivery is not affected?

To help students and their families suffering economic hardship as a result of COVID-19 and tropical cyclones, FNU has introduced a Payment Plan, which enables students to pay their tuition fees in instalments over the course of their programme. The University has also introduced bursaries which pay the tuition fees of full-time first-year undergraduates from low-income households. The FNU Students' Association has introduced its own bursaries and cyclone relief efforts, to support students and their families in the worst-affected areas of the country.

Please refer to the answer to question 16 below for the University's operational response to COVID-19. The same investment in digital capacity and capability has enabled FNU to move learning and teaching online at individual campuses, when required in response to adverse weather events.

16. Inform us on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic and what operational areas the University will strengthen and prioritise to be better prepared for future crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic required FNU, in common with many institutions worldwide, to review its operational delivery and preparedness, in particular in its core areas of learning and teaching. Before the pandemic struck, the University had invested in two specialist centres to support digital delivery and enhancements in pedagogy: the Centre for Learning & Teaching Enhancement (CLTE, which works with academic staff to support online and blended delivery and drive enhancements in learning and teaching) and the Centre for Flexible and E-Learning (CFEL, which supports the Moodle platform, and provides specialist training to students and staff to optimize learning and teaching in online and blended modes). The infrastructure and educational programmes put in place by both Centres pre-pandemic meant that FNU was well placed to switch to fully online delivery of learning, teaching and assessment, in 2020 and again in 2021, in line with official guidance. The range of support sessions and materials offered by CLTE and CFEL has been steadily expanded and enhanced throughout 2020 and 2021, and FNU will continue to invest in these Centres going forward. They will ensure that FNU is well prepared for any future suspension of face-to-face teaching and/or closure of one or more campuses in response to health emergencies or natural disasters.

Alongside these targeted investments and interventions in learning and teaching, FNU has thoroughly revised and updated its Incident Management, Disaster Management and Business Continuity Plans, and will keep them under constant review to ensure the University is well placed to respond effectively in any future crisis.

17. Update the committee on FNU's future plans and initiatives and so as to avoid a recurrence of issues such as, the closure of technical colleges.

Led by the FNU Council, the University has taken a range of steps to enhance governance, risk management and compliance capabilities, in order to facilitate strategic planning, and to anticipate and mitigate short-, medium- and long-term risks to the University's activities. Guided by the

extensive international leadership experience of the Vice-Chancellor, FNU has adopted a Risk Management Framework and associated High-Level Risk Register; the latter is updated biannually and shared systematically with the Audit & Risk Committee of the FNU Council, and with full Council. FNU has established a Department of Risk and Compliance within the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, to implement and monitor all aspects of institutional risk and compliance, and to embed the Risk Management Framework, in accordance with international best practice. The FNU Council is undertaking a review of corporate governance, to include an effectiveness self-review and skills audit.

18. How does the University ensure high staff retention as per its HR Policy?

The University has various initiatives in place to ensure staff retention goals are met. There is a dynamic, strategic workforce plan in place for the whole university which sets targets for recruitment, retention and succession planning. Through the annual performance planning exercise, staff development needs are identified and customised pathways are activated for the staff to pursue and complete their developmental needs. Staff are incentivised to upgrade qualifications with promotion routes available for career progression with the provision of mentoring during their career journey. Salaries are also reviewed regularly to ensure that FNU remains competitive in the tertiary education space.

19. Page 61 of Annual Report (Counseling Services) – Further enlighten the Committee on whether professional counselors are based in each FNU campus.

FNU currently employs 2 professional counsellors, based in the Central and Western Divisions. Before the current travel restrictions, counsellors regularly travelled to all FNU campuses to provide services and raise awareness. All counselling services can be accessed online, and this is particularly important during the current restrictions. FNU counselling services are currently conducted via phone, Zoom, Viber and messenger calls. Students can easily access counselling services by sending a text or Viber message to the Counsellors who respond by scheduling a counselling session with the student.

Students have been informed about the availability of counselling services via FNU-PR and the University's social media platforms. FNU further utilizes all free counselling services available through public hospitals and other service providers such as Empower Pacific, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and Life Line.

20. Page 68 of Annual Report (SDG 4 - Quality Education) - Under the NTPC National Apprenticeship Scheme, are there future plans in place for the scheme to also cover those who are interested in venturing into other courses apart from apprenticeship?

The current apprenticeship offer focuses on trade-related areas. FNU is working with employers to expand the scheme to include areas such as commercial agriculture, civil engineering, and management.

21. Issues on Technical Colleges managed by FNU:

- i. Update the Committee as to how the decision was made for the closure of technical colleges and highlight the reasons behind it.

Most of the TCF campuses needed major refurbishment and, in some cases, carried health and safety risks. The initial plan was therefore to mainstream TCF's Certificate II programmes by moving them to nearby FNU campuses where possible. This would create economies of scale and a better

student experience. Five TCF campuses were to remain open because there were no nearby FNU campuses.

For the academic year 2021, however, TSLB revised upwards, from 15 to 17, the minimum age limit for eligibility for the 1000 funded places. Students aged 17 and above already qualify to take Certificate III and IV courses at FNU. This resulted in a collapse in demand for Certificate II TCF programmes: only 166 students applied in 2021 in comparison to 1,504 in 2020. Due to non-viability and changing patterns of student demand, the decision was taken to close the technical colleges. The 166 students who had applied to TCF for Certificate II programmes were offered enrolment onto FNU's Certificate III and IV programmes.

- ii. Has FNU considered the impacts of closing down technical colleges to students in rural areas? What plans are in place to provide technical and vocational education to these students?

As the country's largest TVET provider and a proud dual-sector university, FNU is committed to providing programmes for the benefit of all Fijians. Any student who is 17 or older can enrol on FNU's TVET programmes. Those below this age who wish to pursue Certificate II programmes can study at the secondary vocational schools throughout the country which are equipped to meet the needs of these students.

- iii. How many staff employed in these technical colleges have been retained at FNU and how many have been made redundant?

Sixty-two staff were made redundant (59 teachers and 3 administrative staff). Five ex-TCF staff were given contracts to work at colleges and divisions at FNU at the start of 2021. All ex-TCF staff can apply for positions at FNU as when these are advertised. FNU is also open to the possibility of recruiting the ex-TCF teachers as temporary staff as when the need arises and where there is a skills shortage.

- iv. On issues relating to outstanding payments that FNU owed to some of the technical colleges - Highlight what was the initial arrangement in regard to the outstanding payments and whether this has been upheld.

There are no outstanding payments.

- v. Is FNU yet to clear any payment and if so, update us on the current arrangement and by when these payments are expected to be completed?

There are no outstanding payments.

- vi. Is there any plan to reopen these technical colleges in the future?

There are no plans to reopen the technical colleges in the future.

22. Inform us on the reasons for the non-release of \$20.7m government grant and what impacts it has had on staff and students.

FNU cannot comment on the reasons for the non-release of \$20.7 government grant. The University took the following prudent measures to ensure continued financial sustainability:

- a freeze of vacant positions

- a re-scheduling of certain capital expenditure projects.

Tight control of costs and successful recruitment minimized the impact of the budget reduction on staff and students, and ensured that University operations continued to a high standard.

23. Page 72 of Annual Report – Elaborate more as to why the net assets decreased by \$6.1m.

Net assets decreased due to a \$20.7m provision in respect of the reduction in the operating grant, which resulted in a net deficit on \$6.1m in 2019.

24. Page 73 of Annual Report – Provide a breakdown of the consultancy income and dividend income generated in 2019.

The breakdown of consultancy income is as follows:

Description	Amount
Consultancy fees received for EU PacTVET Project	28,875
Staff Consultancies & Sitting Allowances	20,898
	49,773

The University receives dividend income from the shares invested in Fijian Holdings Unit Trust and Unit trust of Fiji. The breakdown of dividend income is as follows:

Financial Institution	Amount
Fijian Holdings Unit Trust	25,227
Unit trust of Fiji	417,917
	443,144

25. We note that there was an increase in personnel cost in 2019 due to an increase in staff allowances and benefits and staff medical insurance. Provide details of these two expenses.

In 2019, the University outsourced its Staff Medical Insurance, to provide out-patient, in-patient and overseas evacuation benefits. Provision of comprehensive medical insurance is critical to the successful recruitment and retention of staff.

The increase in staff allowances and benefits was largely due to professional training and development costs incurred by the University, in particular training, workshops and seminars to support the implementation of the new University Information Management System (UIMS).

The breakdown of other personnel costs is as follows:

Other personnel costs	Amount
Professional Training & Development	1,755,184
Staff Medical Insurance	683,614
Staff Recruitment Cost	335,114
Protective Clothing - OHS	135,669
Staff Welfare & Uniforms	185,245
Gratuities	51,102
	3,145,928

26. Provide information on the total cost of construction of each of the technical college under the University as well as the rental arrears that need to be cleared to the landowners by the University.

The University did not incur any cost for construction of any technical college under the University.

Please find the below details for all the pending rental payments for 2019 which were paid by FNU after taking over TCF on 1st January 2020.

2019 TCF Rental Arrears	Not Paid as at 31.12.2019	Status
TCF Penang-Rakiraki Campus	July to September 2019	Paid in 2021
TCF Nukulua-Ba Campus	October to December 2019	Paid in 2021
TCF Nadi Campus	September to December 2019	Paid in 2020
TCF Nadroga Campus	July to December 2019	Paid in 2020
TCF Navua Campus	October to December 2019	Paid in 2020
TCF Navoalevu Campus	October to December 2019	Paid in 2020

All other campus payments were made by the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts.

27. Page 77 of Annual Report (Non-Current Assets) – Provide an update on the finalization of boundaries and allocation of land leases to certain properties as the Committee notes that this was not finalized while the report was submitted. The Committee also notes in the past report there was an outstanding issue on transfer of titles, provide an update whether this have been rectified.

The table below provides an update on the property transfers:

Property Name	Current Update
Legalega	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FNU has the Agreement for lease of this property from ILTB for 99 years from 2005. There are 33 Conditions from Department of Town & Country Planning which have to be fulfilled before a proper ITLB lease is made under FNU's name. FNU has engaged surveyors and is working with the relevant authorities.
Nasinu Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FNU has the Approval Notice of this property for 99 years from 2018. A lease is being processed but requires the completion of the CBHTS building before the lease can be made under FNU's name.
Koronivia Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lease is being processed by ILTB. Ministry of Agriculture has surrendered the three portions within the FNU boundary.

Property Name	Current Update
Natabua (Beside Lautoka Corrections Centre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FNU has the Approval Notice of this property for 99 years from 2014. • There are requirements from Fiji Roads Authority that are being fulfilled by the University before a lease is made under FNU's name.
MacGregor hostel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lease is being processed by ILTB. Ministry of Agriculture The area occupied by FNU has been surrendered to FNU by the Ministry of Health. • FNU's application will be being processed after the requirements of the Fiji Roads Authority is met. This is being facilitated by our surveyors.

UPDATE REPORT ON GACD SUP-PACIFIC PROJECT (GACD/NHMRC FUNDED)

18th May 2021

Background

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) account for about 80% of all deaths and 50% of all premature mortality (under the age of 70) in the Pacific Islands ⁽¹⁾. Modelling studies have demonstrated that fiscal interventions can reduce cardiovascular risk and diabetes incidence and are largely cost effective²⁻⁴. Interventions that promote reformulation of processed food to reduce salt and sugar content have also been shown to reduce cardiovascular disease risk ⁵⁻⁶. There is a plethora of policies implemented in Fiji and Samoa, backed by ministerial and multi-sector bilateral support, to implement healthy interventions in the Pacific. However, significant barriers to effective implementation and monitoring are preventing effective scale up of impact. The Fiji National University was amongst the collaborative group that obtained funds from GACD/NHMRC for this project.

The Collaboration

The College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) through the Pacific Research Centre for the Prevention of Obesity and Non-Communicable Diseases (C-POND), a WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and Management at the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR) in collaboration with The George Institute (TGI) for Global Health Australia, The Menzies Centre for Health Policy, University of Sydney (Menzies), and The Global Obesity Centre (GLOBE) at Deakin University undertook the **'Scaling Up Food Policy Interventions to reduce Non-Communicable Diseases in the Pacific Islands'** (SUP-Pacific) project, which is a 5-year implementation science research project for Fiji and Samoa. It is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Government of Australia grant (#APP 1169322) under the GACD Scale Up Hypertension Grant cluster. This project is led by TGI and is supported by the Ministry of Health Fiji, Ministry of Health Samoa, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), The Pacific Community (SPC), and the World Bank.

Research Methods

The overall aim of this SUP-Pacific project is to test the feasibility and effectiveness, of policy interventions to reduce salt and sugar consumption in Fiji and Samoa, as well as factors that support sustained implementation of the interventions. This project use a pragmatic Type 3 implementation effectiveness hybrid trial through an iterative adaptive process to strengthen and monitor food policy interventions, including (1) a policy landscape analysis to map existing policy content, stakeholders and politics; (2) repeated cross sectional surveys to measure dietary intake, food sources and diet-related biomarkers, and implementation of school food policies; (3) Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange (STICKE) to engage stakeholders to identify, implement and monitor actions to strengthen food policy interventions; (4) evaluation of impact, process and cost-effectiveness of interventions

Project Update

1. Policy Landscape Analysis

The Policy Landscape Analysis (PLA) is designed to help us understand the potential policy gaps and opportunities, as well as contextual and politico-economic considerations that might inhibit or foster policy change. Approval for this work in Fiji has been granted by the College Human Health Research Ethics Committee (CHHREC) of CMNHS. Data collection have been completed and are currently analysed. These included the desk-based study; document analysis that informed a matrix with detailed information on relevant policy contents, stakeholders and their interests and influence, industry data especially for SSBs industry; and key informant interviews with selected policy makers from Government, NGOs and Food industries in Fiji. The results will be used to inform Systems Thinking in Community Knowledge Exchange (STICKE) to help policymakers and other stakeholders strengthen implementation of food policies. This component is led by Ms. Sarah Mounsey, a PhD candidate from the University of Sydney, supervised by Associate Professor Anne-Marie Thow from the University of Sydney.

Progress/ Achievement: This component has been completed; only the STICKE component of this aspect of analysis is currently underway

2. Nutrition Survey

- a) **24-hour dietary recall:** This component is designed to provide an in-depth robust assessment of what adults are eating, including the contributions of different foods to salt and sugar in the diet. Preparations for the household survey is underway to estimate the daily salt and sugar intake, identify key sources of dietary salt and sugar and information on participants' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors around salt and sugar intake. The ethical approval was granted by CHHREC followed by an amendment to include the collection of spot and 24-hour urine samples. Four (4) Research Assistants are ready to sign their contracts as Data Collectors to visit and collect population data from individual households in the two Enumeration Areas in Deuba and Nakasi once the restrictions of movement from the COVID community transmission is lifted. This new development was made because of the change in policy from the Fiji Bureau of Statistics. Data collection will start once the household sampling is confirmed which is now delayed by the COVID situation in Fiji. The nutrition study is led by Dr. Claire Johnson of TGI with support from the remaining CIs and the Fiji team.

Progress/ Achievement: Household survey to commence once community entry is allowed. Input of data will be via the Fiji Nutrition Survey HH Survey mobile app for the 5 communities in 2 zones.

- b) **FoodSwitch survey:** A store survey was conducted in November 2020 by a team of Research Assistants who were recruited and collected data on all packaged foods in selected supermarkets around Fiji using a smart phone app. FoodSwitch is a phone application originally developed in Australia and since launched in 7 other countries including the United Kingdom, China and India. The FoodSwitch App functions by drawing on a comprehensive database of the nutritional composition of processed foods on the market. The App was used to collect data, which are then uploaded into the database. The categorization of the data from the FoodSwitch App are currently being categorized and will be used to establish a baseline on the salt and sugar levels and prices of processed foods in the market.

Progress/ Achievement: More than 6000 food items were collected via the FoodSwitch App of which, a majority were new items. Categorization is underway using the protocol

developed by TGI. The protocol has been tested and implemented in Fiji (2018), China, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

3. Systems Thinking

The systems thinking or knowledge exchange component is designed to help us understand diets and the drivers of poor diet, map existing interventions, and then discuss barriers and opportunities to strengthening policy implementation.

Building on the previous work done in Fiji⁸ and informed by baseline outcome data and the policy landscape analysis, we will invite key government, industry and civil society leaders to participate in a structured, facilitated process⁸ to build consensus on population level actions to reduce sugar and salt. We hope to recruit 15-20 participants in each country, through known contacts of the existing project team, in a series of deliberative consensus building forums. The preparations for ethics submission is underway and we hope to start this component in August 2021. This component is led by Professor Collin Bell and Steve Allender from Deakin University and Associate Professor Gade Waqa from C-POND.

Progress/ Achievement: The Ethics discussion has convened; the write up for submission and approval is underway.

[Note: The above are current key deliverables and there are other deliverables for years 4 and 5]

Budget

The project acquired AUD 948,957.20 which is equivalent to FJD 1.4m of which AUD 290,957 is allocated for the Fiji Activities specifically through C-POND, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and Management at the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR), the research arm of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

The funding includes salaries for those that work to deliver the project objectives and fund research activities that are key deliverables of the project including publications.

Published articles and reports

1. Santos JA, McKenzie B, Trieu K, et al. Contribution of fat, sugar and salt to diets in the Pacific Islands: a systematic review. *Public Health Nutr.* 2019;22(10):1858-1871. doi:10.1017/S1368980018003609
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Appendix Two

Supplementary Responses

FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**RESPONSE TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS ON THE FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY 2019 ANNUAL REPORT RAISED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

1. Explain why the University has not provided a substantive response to the Standing Committee's review report of the 2018 Annual Report, in accordance with [Section 121 \(6\) \(b\) of the Standing Orders of Parliament](#).

The email correspondence between the Standing Committee and the then Vice-Chancellor of FNU, Professor Nigel Healey, is attached. The Office of the Vice-Chancellor confirms that FNU responded to all requests from the Standing Committee in connection with the review of the 2018 Annual Report.

2. Provide a list of FNU's internationally accredited or recognized programmes.

Programme	Accrediting Body
Bachelor of Commerce	CPA Australia
MPA (CPA)	CPA Australia
Diploma in Nautical Science	International Maritime Organisation
Diploma in Marine Engineering	International Maritime Organisation
Certificate IV in Nautical Science	International Maritime Organisation
Certificate IV in Marine Engineering	International Maritime Organisation
CISCO Certified Network Associate	CISCO
Certificate in IT	C-DAC India
Certificate Courses in Business Computing, Advanced Web technologies, Java Programming, Android Programming, Linux Administration, Network Security, Cyber Security, Software Testing, IT Project Management	C-DAC India and National Qualifications Register India
Bachelor of Medical Imaging Science	New Zealand Medical Radiology Technologist Board
Postgraduate Diploma in Dermatology	Australia Council of Dermatology
Masters in Emergency Medicine, Pathology, Public Health, Applied Epidemiology, Health Services Management, Anaesthesia, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Paediatrics, Surgery	Respective Australasian Colleges

3. How has FNU realigned its Strategic Plan to adapt to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic?

FNU's new 5-year Strategic Plan 2021–2026 notes in its introductory remarks that:

'The economic and social impact of COVID-19 presents significant challenges to Fiji, the Pacific and the world, now and in the coming years. But challenge also brings opportunity. As a dynamic, modern university, looking to the future, FNU is determined to seize the opportunities for innovation and fresh thinking; and, in turn, to create opportunities for our students, communities, nation and region.'

One of the pillars of the new Strategic Plan is Financial Sustainability, which notes that 'FNU's long-term success depends on financial sustainability, and on reducing the University's dependence on government funding. The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant economic challenges for countries around the world, including Fiji. To emerge stronger and more resilient,

and to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the post-COVID world, organisations as well as national economies need to diversify and build resilience’.

Among the specific measures responding to the COVID-19 pandemic are:

- Streamline and renew our course and subject portfolio, developing new programmes aligned to Industry 4.0, based on national and regional skills needs, and robust evidence of employer, labour-market and student demand;
- Develop additional in-service training, short courses, executive and professional education, microcredentials and online programmes to support up-skilling, re-skilling and enhanced productivity, as part of a lifelong approach to education and training;
- Enhance access for students across Fiji and the region to high-quality TVET and HE, building on our network of physical campuses and an improved digital education offer, including out-of-hours availability of e-services;
- Promote and enhance health and wellbeing, counselling services and psycho-social support across all FNU locations;
- Develop and enhance our sources of external revenue (i.e. revenue other than government grant or tuition fees), enhancing our income from online programmes, educational and training contracts, research, consultancy and philanthropy Rationalise and maximise the income-generating potential of our existing asset base (including dormant assets);
- Review and revise the FNU masterplan to create a financially sustainable, green and climate-resilient estates strategy.

4. Is the student accommodation provided at the University sufficient to cater for students demands?

FNU believes that its current student accommodation in aggregate is sufficient to cater for student demand. We keep demand for university hostel accommodation under constant review, and will carefully consider the business case for bringing additional accommodation on stream should there be a rise in demand in the future.

5. Provide a breakdown of students of each the University’s colleges who were under the National Toppers Scheme and Tertiary Education Loan Scheme for the period under review.

College	Sponsor	Number of NTS and TELS sponsored students as at 31st Dec 2019
College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry	National Toppers Scheme (NTS)	40
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (Existing)	626
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme 2019	145
College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies	National Toppers Scheme (NTS)	53
	TELS – In-service	1
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (Existing)	1349
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme 2019	1015
	National Toppers Scheme (NTS)	183

College of Engineering, Science & Technology	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme	7
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (Existing)	970
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme 2019	715
College of Humanities & Education	National Toppers Scheme (NTS)	50
	TELS – In-service	1
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (Existing)	1092
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme 2019	567
College of Medicine Nursing & Health Sciences	TSLB - National Toppers Scheme	65
	Tertiary Scholarships & Loans Board – Fiji (TSLB)	798
	TSLB - Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs	2
	TSLB - National Toppers Scheme	593
	TSLB - PSC - Loans	1
	TSLB - PSC - TELS	2
	TSLB –In Service Training	1
Total - 8276 students	National Toppers Scheme (NTS)	391
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (Existing)	4044
	Tertiary Education Loan Scheme 2019	2442
	TELS – In-service	2
	Tertiary Scholarships & Loans Board – Fiji (TSLB)	798
	TSLB - Ministry of I-Taukei Affairs	2
	TSLB - National Toppers Scheme	593
	TSLB - PSC - Loans	1
	TSLB - PSC - TELS	2
	TSLB –In Service Training	1

6. Capital Projects of the University:

- a. Inform us of the tender process for hiring of the contractors for the construction of the Maritime Academy 3-Storey Building.

The tenders were called based on the Construction Implementation Unit (CIU) of the Ministry of Economy methodology, which is a Quality-Cost model. The tenders were open to the public. The tender evaluation committee (TEC) was chaired by the Head of CIU, including

the members of FNU and the consultant team. Finally, the recommendations were presented to the University Tender Board.

- b. Is there a timeline for the completion of the new campus in Labasa?

Given the major economic impact of COVID-19, FNU has put further expenditure on the proposed new campus on hold. It is not possible to provide a definitive timeline given the uncertainty over the future trajectory of the pandemic and the associated economic and budgetary impact.

- c. Was the Construction and Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Economy engaged in the period of completion of the above two projects including the Sports Complex at Nasinu Campus? What monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were put in place to ensure the timely completion of these projects?

CIU is a crucial stakeholder in the projects provided with Capital Grant; CIU has been strongly represented since their inception on the above two projects as well as the other government grant projects.

The projects are monitored through independent Project Management Consultants, which entails frequent inspections, and fortnightly site meetings. The FNU Team also carries out its own site inspections. The project consultants and contractor are required to report back to a Project Steering Committee to evaluate the progress and address any items of concern. The project managers are required to provide a monthly report. Action items are tracked through Requests for Information, Project Managers' Instructions, project Risk Registers and work programmes.

7. Are there any specific mental health courses or workshops provided by the University?

The Fiji National University provides Counselling Services to all students and staff, free of charge. Currently, three full-time professional counsellors are employed under the Office of the Registrar to provide counselling services at all FNU Campuses and Hostels.

The counsellors provide a safe, confidential, comfortable and enabling environment to discuss any issues affecting the client and explore options to resolve these issues. Students and staff can be self-initiated clients or referred by their lecturers or supervisors. While face to face counselling was conducted during regular working hours, appointments are also given after hours and during weekends for working students and busy staff members.

All students are informed about Counselling Services during orientation at various FNU campuses and Hostel orientations. The counsellors also visited the various FNU Campuses weekly. The overall awareness effort has resulted in more students and staff seeking counselling services primarily through self-initiation. Communication with the counsellors further improved through the use of emails, official mobile phones and even online communication apps such as Skype and Zoom.

Counselling is considered an essential support service in FNU for its students and staff. With the challenges of 21st century and evolving student life, professional roles and family dynamics, there is a need to have an opportunity to talk about and explore the problems and difficulties that people encounter in everyday life. By openly discussing issues, people can explore possible

solutions rather than acting irrationally causing loss of life and property. FNU Counselling Services operates with a simple slogan "Let's Talk".

FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) provides the following courses for Pacific health workers, in collaboration with partners in Australia (St. Vincent Mental Health and RANZCP):

- Pacific Mental Health Online Course
- Online Pacific Health Exchange training in Child and Adolescent MH (2020 and 2021)
- Veilomani Training in GBV (PacSRHRC, UNFPA, CMNHS, Counseling Unit, St. Vincent)

In addition to the Psychiatry course in the MBBS programme, CMNHS also offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health.

8. University's response to Q21 (iii) – The Committee notes that 62 of the staff were made redundant due to the closure of technical colleges. Inform us on the specialty areas of these staff and the technical colleges that they were teaching in prior to their redundancies. Highlight the recruitment process for the 5 ex-TCF staff who were given contract to work at colleges and divisions at FNU at the beginning of 2021.

Information on the 62 staff made redundant

Lecturer	Cookery	Tailevu North Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Painting and decoration	Nabua Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	carpentry	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Electrical	Ratu Epeli Ravoka Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Nabua Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	plumbing & Sheetmetal	Nukuloa Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Welding and Fabrication	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	carpentry	Tagitagi Technical Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Communication	Ratu Epeli Ravoka Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Nadroga Navosa Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Auto Motive	Anjuman Hidayat-UI Islam Campus	TEACHING
Clerical Officer		Headquarters Campus	NON-TEACHING
Lecturer	Agriculture	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Clerical Officer		Headquarters Campus	NON-TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	carpentry	Nadroga Navosa Campus	TEACHING

Lecturer	Auto Electrical	Lautoka Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Teacher Technical	Headquarters Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Carpentry	Nukuloa Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Nabua Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Agricuture	Nabua Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Communication	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Communication	Technical TISI SSK Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Computer/Math	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Agricuture	Tailevu North Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Cookery And Baking/Pat	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Auto Electrical	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Cookery	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Auto Motive	Labasa	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Communication	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Secondary	Communication	C P Singh Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Macuata I Cake Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Cookery	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	carpentry	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Tailevu North Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Pannel Beating	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Clerical Officer		Tagitagi Technical Campus	NON-TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Baking and Patisseries	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Cookery	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Cookery	Anjuman Hidayat-UI IslamCampus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Agricuture	Anjuman Hidayat-UI IslamCampus	TEACHING

Assistant Lecturer	Agriculture	Anjuman Hidayat-UI Islam Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Electrical	Lautoka Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	carpentry	Lautoka Sanatan Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Baking and Patisseries	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Cookery	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Cookery	Suva HTT Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	carpentry	Tagitagi Technical Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Cookery	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Auto Motive	Tailevu North Campus	TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Cookery	Anjuman Hidayat-UI Islam Campus	TEACHING
Teacher Secondary	Communication	Nadroga Navosa Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	carpentry	Technical TISI SSK Campus	TEACHING
Lecturer	Cookery	Tagitagi Technical Campus	TEACHING
Head of Campus	Head of Campus_Nadroga Navosa	Anjuman Hidayat-UI Islam Campus	NON-TEACHING
Head of Campus	Head of Campus_Nadroga Navosa	C P Singh Campus	NON-TEACHING
Head of Campus Nadroga	Head of Campus_Nadroga Navosa	Dr Saukhat Ali Sahib Campus	NON-TEACHING
Head of Campus	Head of Campus_Nadroga Navosa	Tagitagi Technical Campus	NON-TEACHING
Acting Head of Campus	Head of Campus_Nadroga Navosa	Vanua Levu Arya Campus	NON-TEACHING
Teacher Technical	Computer/Math	Nukuloa Campus	TEACHING
Head of Department	Head of Department	Lautoka Sanatan Campus	NON-TEACHING
Head of Department	Head of Department	Nabua Sanatan Campus	NON-TEACHING
Assistant Lecturer	Joinery Cabinete Making	Tagitagi Technical Campus	TEACHING

- Administration staff were recruited based on their knowledge and experience of tertiary education administration.
- Teaching staff were recruited based on the available positions at the respective FNU Colleges and NTPC.

9. Apart from the student fees and investments with Fijian Holdings Unit Trust and Unit Trust of Fiji, what are the other income streams of the University?

- Government Grant - this includes government grants received as per the grant agreement.
- Project Income - (Donor Funded) includes funds from various donors for research and other learning & teaching activities.
- Hostel Income - fees received from students staying in the FNU hostel, including accommodation and meal charges.
- Levy Administration Income - 1% fees received for collecting levy and disbursing this to ACCF and Medical Scheme.
- Other Income - includes miscellaneous student fees like enrolment, late payment of fees penalties, other student-related reissues of certification fees, verification fees, sale of school products (Student practicals), interest on term deposits, and canteen sales.