

FIJI

IMPACT STORIES

APTCC 
AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC
TECHNICAL COLLEGE
CREATING SKILLS FOR LIFE

Australian
Aid 



CONTACT DETAILS

Regional Head Office
Ganilau House
Corner of Edward and Scott Street
Suva
PO Box 14319, Suva, Fiji
Phone: +679 330 0967
Email: enquiries@aptc.edu.au

About the Australia-Pacific Technical College

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is a development initiative funded by the Australian Government and managed by TAFE Queensland (RTO 0275)

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Message from the **Australian High Commissioner to Fiji**

Recognising the high demand for a skilled and capable workforce in the Pacific, the Australian Government is very pleased to be supporting the Australia-Pacific Technical College and technical education across the region.

Education is one of the main priorities of Australia's aid program because education opens up opportunities and develops more capable, stable and productive societies.

Through the Australia-Pacific Technical College, the Australian Government is providing greater access for Pacific Islanders to attain internationally-recognised trade and service qualifications. We are contributing to Pacific countries' ambitions to develop their workforces and improve employment opportunities for their people domestically, regionally and internationally.

One of Australia-Pacific Technical College's strengths is its ability to partner with government ministries, educational institutions, the private sector and NGOs to deliver training that is in demand and will result in a better employment outcome for the graduate. I would like to acknowledge, Fiji National University,

Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, National Training and Productivity Centre, The University of the South Pacific, Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education, Fiji Higher Education Commission, and Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, for their partnership with the Australia-Pacific Technical College in the effort to upskill Fijians and provide high quality training.

I thank the graduates who shared their stories and wish them well in their future endeavours. I am pleased that the Australian Government's support of Australia-Pacific Technical College has played some part in helping to make their achievements possible.

I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Australia-Pacific Technical College staff who pass on their knowledge and skills with great professionalism and passion.

I hope you enjoy reading these testimonials about the lasting difference that learning makes in individual lives.

John Feakes
Australian High Commissioner to Fiji



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

At the Australia-Pacific Technical College, success extends beyond the number of men and women who gain internationally recognised qualifications.

In a region where relationships matter, the Australia-Pacific Technical College has embraced a partnering approach, working with governments, Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions and the private sector to ensure that the Australia-Pacific Technical College training meets labour market demands and produces job-ready graduates.

Thriving communities and societies have one thing in common – a skilled, qualified and capable workforce. Technical and vocational skills are in high demand across the region; in trades, hospitality, tourism, health and community industry sectors. Without these formal qualifications, Pacific Island workers can find themselves stalled on the career ladder. But success is also measured by the lasting impact of the difference that learning can make in the lives of individuals, their families and communities.

This collection of graduate profiles from Fiji highlight the impact of learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College on individuals

and communities, and the contribution to strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training across the Pacific.

There are many more stories of success that could have been told, that could have been highlighted in this publication. The process of selecting the stories to be told was not an easy one. I wish to extend my gratitude to all those who so willingly shared their stories and who gave their time to allow the writers to conduct interviews and research.

I wish to thank the Australian Government for their support. I also thank the Pacific Island Governments and people who have worked with the Australia-Pacific Technical College to realise the results you will read about in the following pages.

On behalf of all at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I hope you enjoy reading these stories. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively to enhance opportunities for the citizens of the Pacific Island Countries that we serve.

Denise O'Brien
Australia-Pacific Technical College



THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EFFECT OF TRAINING	4
WHERE A QUALIFICATION CAN LEAD YOU	14
SEEING THE ABILITY, NOT THE DISABILITY	20
OPENING DOORS FOR ENTREPRENEURS	26
BIG MACHINES, BIG DREAMS	30



FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

PALAU

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

SOLOMON ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA

GOAL

Contribute to a more prosperous Pacific driven by a skilled, competitive and productive workforce

12000
Total Graduates

41%
FEMALE
GRADUATES

59%
MALE
GRADUATES

14
Pacific
Island
Countries

5
Campus
Locations

MARSHALL
ISLANDS

NAURU

KIRIBATI

TUVALU

SAMOA

COOK
ISLANDS

VANUATU

FIJI

TONGA

NIUE



“

It is really important for all technical trainers to go through this training because it helps a lot especially for currency, because technology is rapidly changing and is more advanced and trainers need to be at that level ”

Mr Serevi Nauvi

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL EFFECT OF TRAINING

When trainers in technical sectors have access to quality capability development and upskilling, it has a transformative effect – it both propels careers and raises the standards of technical and vocational education and training across the Pacific.

In 2017, the Australia-Pacific Technical College introduced the innovative Master Trainer program, offering trainers a technical qualification in their specialised trade and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

The program brought together trainers in the areas of cookery, automotive and carpentry from across the Pacific to develop specialised skills, learn from one another and uncover new trends in their respective trades.

The participants of the program came from Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Fiji to train at the Australia-Pacific Technical College in Suva.

They gained skills in a variety of training methods, such as group-based learning through innovative methods and developing a learner-centred approach.

The Master Trainer participants have since formed an online network to actively share knowledge, opportunities, experiences and challenges after their studies.



Improving capacity of national trainers to international standards



“ I liked everything about the Master Trainer program. One of my biggest achievements is being able to graduate with two Australian standard qualifications ”

Ms Sandhya

Mr Serevi Nauvi, who is an Assistant Trainer in Automotive Engineering at the Technical College of Fiji in Rakiraki, decided to participate in the Master Trainer program to gain better skills and increase his understanding of how to address individual student needs.

Since completing the Master Trainer program, Mr Nauvi has changed his training delivery style and has started to provide more one-on-one mentoring and training in small groups to gauge how his students' work and learn. This includes developing their language, literacy and numeracy skills.

“It is really important for all technical trainers to go through this training because it helps a lot especially for currency, because technology is rapidly changing and is more advanced and trainers need to be at that level,” he said.

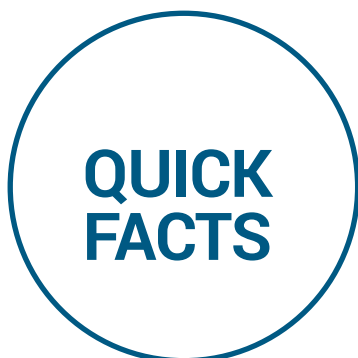
Another shining example of how the program is propelling careers is Ms Sandhya, one of three female trainers who participated in the program.

Having begun her training career in cookery in 2010, she joined the Technical College of Fiji in 2015 and rose to the role of Head of School in Hospitality, overseeing the department's administration and training delivery.

Ms Sandhya said she has grown as a trainer after undertaking Certificate III in Commercial Cookery and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment through the Master Trainer program.

“I liked everything about the Master Trainer program. One of my biggest achievements is being able to graduate with two Australian standard qualifications,” she said.

Since returning to the Technical College of Fiji, Ms Sandhya has implemented successful initiatives like organising World Chefs Day celebrations at the campus. In this event, Ms Sandhya invited executive chefs to conduct cooking demonstrations, and encouraged students to compete with each other for medals and industry recognition.



A photograph of Mr Ronil Nadan, a man with short dark hair, wearing a blue jacket over a light blue shirt and tie. He is wearing black gloves and is working on a complex piece of machinery, a refrigeration system trainer. The machine is white and has various pipes, valves, and gauges. The brand name 'Hampden' is visible on the top right of the machine, along with 'MODEL H-RST-2 REFRIGERATION SYSTEM TRAINER'. Mr Nadan is looking towards the camera with a slight smile.

“ We are fortunate that the Australia-Pacific Technical College brought these programs to Fiji, giving us the opportunity to study at home ”

Mr Ronil Nadan

PARTNERSHIP HELPS DRIVE TRAINING DELIVERY

The Australia-Pacific Technical College works closely with many technical and vocational education and training institutions in the Pacific to improve and sustain systems of training delivery that will continue to foster quality training opportunities for Pacific Islanders.

In Fiji, one such example is the collaboration between the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Fiji National University, which has been built on the foundation of cooperation to deliver training programs that align to industry demand.

In 2016, the two institutions embarked on a partnership that would benefit not only the students of the Australia-Pacific Technical College but also built the capacity of trainers at the Fiji National University.

“The Australia-Pacific Technical College delivers Australian qualifications in some areas that the Fiji National University also trains in. So the opportunity for collaboration fits with the Australia-Pacific Technical College’s goals and the Fiji National University’s desire for support in these areas of training,” said Australia-Pacific Technical College Country Manager in Fiji, Mr Jonathan Todd.

The partnership enables the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver programs at the Fiji National University campuses in Narere, Nabua and Samabula.

These programs include painting and decorating, fashion, electrical airconditioning and refrigeration, leadership and management, and training and assessment.

In addition to developing training facilities for these programs to ensure they meet the Australian training package and health and safety requirements, the Australia-Pacific Technical College also provided the opportunity for over 30 trainers like Mr Ronil Nadan and Ms Rashri Lata from the Fiji National University to attain an Australian qualification.

“We are fortunate that the Australia-Pacific Technical College brought these programs to Fiji, giving us the opportunity to study at home,” said Mr Nadan, who is the Assistant Instructor in Airconditioning and Refrigeration with the Fiji National University.

In 2017, Mr Nadan graduated with Certificate III in Airconditioning and Refrigeration from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

He is currently enrolled in the Australia-Pacific Technical College's Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program, which is providing him the tools to lead and manage others and further his career in a senior role.

"I put together what I have learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Fiji National University to give students the best training that they can get," he said.

Fiji National University's Fashion Trainer, Ms Rashri Lata is a graduate of the Australia-Pacific Technical College's Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology and Certificate IV in Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising programs.

Ms Lata said she gained a lot of knowledge from her Australia-Pacific Technical College training and is eager to learn about advancements in the fashion trade.

"Every day we come across new designs and techniques of doing things. I have learned so much about time management, design and production. There are so many things I am implementing as a result of what I have learned at the Australia-Pacific Technical College," she said.

Ms Lata has been applying what she has learned in her training. This includes using different types of materials, developing patterns and designs, testing machines, staying organised, preparing costings, conducting quality checks, to distribution and sales.

Under the partnership, Fiji National University trainers have also studied Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, which is highly regarded as a benchmark qualification for the vocational education and training sector.

"Apart from this professional development assisting in maintaining currency, acquisition of the Australian qualification allows for potential co-delivery models moving forward," said Mr Todd.



“Every day we come across new designs and techniques of doing things. I have learned so much about time management, design and production. There are so many things I am implementing as a result of what I have learned at the Australia-Pacific Technical College”

Ms Rashri Lata



Driving change through leadership

RAISING CAPACITY OF LEADERS

Fiji's technical and vocational education and training sector has been growing significantly, with its focus on practical, industry-specific skills in high demand in Fiji's workforce.

To help strengthen this sector, the Australia-Pacific Technical College partnered with the Fiji Higher Education Commission to implement joint initiatives and activities for the development of staff working in technical and vocational education and training institutions.

The first initiative was the provision of Certificate IV in Leadership and Management to 20 managers and team leaders from the Fiji Ministry of Education and national training institutes.

Fiji Higher Education Commission Director, Ms Linda Aumua, said that the collaboration was timely, as the two organisations have worked alongside each other in the past.

"This training was vital to the Ministry of Education to ensure that our leaders in the technical and vocational education and training sector were upskilling and being provided greater insight to strategic planning, financial capability and leadership skills."

During the training, participants learned specific skills and knowledge that they can use in their respective leadership and supervisory roles.

These skills include, communicating effectively as a leader, creating operational strategies, developing work priorities and promoting innovation in a team environment.

Ms Aumua praised the Australia-Pacific Technical College for its contribution towards the growth of Fijians by providing qualifications of international standard.

She hopes that the Fiji Higher Education Commission and the Australia-Pacific Technical College will continue working closely together to benefit the technical and vocational education and training sector.

“For both students and teachers, industry and stakeholders, we could provide greater quality in the development and delivery of qualifications and teacher capability.”

For two of the program’s graduates, Ms Releshni Karan and Mr David Wedlock, the training provided the ideal environment to develop their skills as leaders.

As the Director Corporate Services of the Ministry of Education, Ms Karan said she had operational challenges in the workplace, which she can now easily resolve after undertaking the training.

Ms Karan’s training gave her new ideas and strategies to implement in not just her workplace, but also in schools across Fiji.

“I am formulating a new design of a costed operational plan for the Ministry that will include a risk management plan (as learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College program) and I am in the process of formulating a risk management policy that will be implemented in the Ministry and all schools in Fiji.”

Ms Karan added that as a female leader, she is working hard to bring about positive change in the workplace and empower women.

“I encourage women in my office to take up the Certificate IV in Leadership and Management program as it prepares you to deal with challenges in the workplace.”

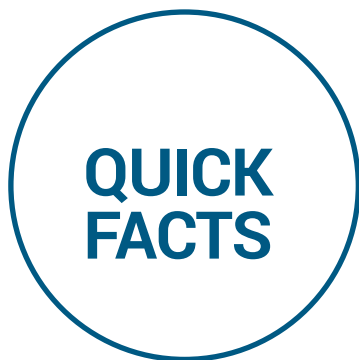
Ms Karan also applauded the Australia-Pacific Technical College for providing her with the learning environment that catered to her working life, while enabling her to grow into the role of a young female director.

“Studying Certificate IV in Leadership and Management at the Australia-Pacific Technical College was the best decision I made,” she said.

For the Director of the Technical College of Fiji, Mr Wedlock, effective leadership and communication skills, emotional intelligence and conflict management are just some of the skills that he learned while studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

“I am now a better leader and can provide guidance and boost the morale of my team. I have been able to build trust, create team confidence and build a good work environment.”

He feels that Fijians working in leadership roles need to continue upskilling in order to nurture better leaders and leading organisations to meeting their key performance indicators and goals.





Graduates like Ms Rohini Kumar are helping develop the aged care industry through quality training

DELIVERING RELEVANT SKILLS

Ensuring a steady supply of skilled workers for the aged care sector in Fiji has been the goal of the collaboration between the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Then India Sanmarga Ikyā Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education.

The partnership enabled the Australia-Pacific Technical College to deliver its Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community) program to the Then India Sanmarga Ikyā Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education students, as well as, mentor two of its trainers in vocational education and teaching strategies.

Australia-Pacific Technical College Country Manager in Fiji, Mr Jonathan Todd said the partnership with the Then India Sanmarga Ikyā Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education has supported industry demand and helped raise the standard of care provided to older generations in Fiji.

“We have strengthened efforts in addressing the need for qualified Fijian nationals in this area and contributed to improved training standards in the country,” he said.

Director of the Then India Sanmarga Ikyā Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education, Sister Eleni Kata believes that the elderly deserve to have trained professionals to care for them.

“The graduates of the Certificate III in Individual Support program will benefit the country with their newfound skills and knowledge. The Australia-Pacific Technical College has provided valuable support in this regard and the Then India Sanmarga Ikyā Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education would welcome the opportunity to continue collaborating with them,” she said.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College's Individual Support Trainer, Ms Sandy O'Brien, said the graduates of the program would be able to use their skills in two ways.

She explained that some graduates may choose to use their skills and seek further training as it is a pathway into nursing.

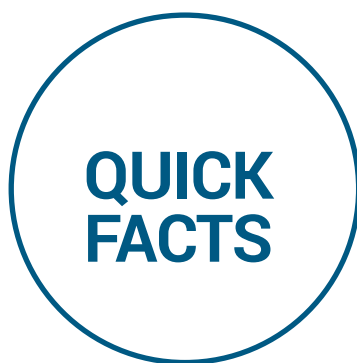
Secondly, since many graduates are employed within the health sector or work with the elderly in the communities, the skills they have learned from the program will help them with their day-to-day work. Ms O'Brien said this will benefit the clients because the graduates have learned new methods of how to care for them.

Ms Rohini Kumar, who is a graduate of the Certificate III in Individual Support program, also assisted in the delivery of the program.

She said being mentored by an Australia-Pacific Technical College trainer was very advantageous.

Ms Kumar spent 10 years working as a nurse before joining the Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education as a Clinical Tutor in 2015.

"Being mentored by the Australia-Pacific College trainer was very useful, as it allowed me to mark assessments of students, which was new for me, prepare lesson plans, and present lectures in front of students."



BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY



“The skills and knowledge that I have gained through the Australia-Pacific Technical College are a boost for me. As one of the trainers who will be teaching this program, it will help me train my students more effectively”

Ms Unaisi Drauna

Ms Unaisi Drauna, who has 21 years of nursing experience under her belt, is one of the first group of students to benefit as a result of the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Then India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam College of Nursing and Health Care Education partnership.

At first, Ms Drauna said she questioned the need for her to take up the program as she was already a registered nurse with many years of experience.

“I quickly realised that this is a specialised program focused specifically on Aged Care, for the elderly, and how we manage them, nurse them and look after them.”

She added; “the skills and knowledge that I have gained through the Australia-Pacific Technical College are a boost for me. As one of the trainers who will be teaching this program, it will help me train my students more effectively.”

For another pioneer graduate of the program, Ms Bernadette Smith, elderly care is not new to her. As a teenager, she had started helping her mother care for her elderly grandmother.

“As an active member of the womens club, I saw that the elderly were in need of special care, but I did not realise that there was a formal sector for caring for older people,” she said.

When Ms Smith heard about the Australia-Pacific Technical College’s Certificate III in Individual Support program, it immediately caught her interest as a way to get skilled and qualified to work in the community.

“I learned hands-on skills, such as using the slide sheets for moving patients or clients from one position to another, using standing and hoist machine, communication skills and the legal and ethical aspects of caring for the elderly in the aged care industry,” she said.

“I was not aware of a lot of things, due to the way that we live in our communities and perceive things. But now that I have seen a lot of ideas and new ways of looking after the elderly through the program, I believe that many more people need to be educated in elderly care.”



“ My learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College allowed me to upgrade my salon and I started generating more profits from it ”

Ms Moiren Kiran



WHERE A QUALIFICATION CAN LEAD YOU

Gaining an internationally recognised qualification provides a platform for graduates to leap in many new directions.

For sisters, Ms Moireen Kiran and Ms Gayatri Kiran, this meant transitioning from job takers to job creators with the skills they both acquired through the Certificate III in Hairdressing program from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Ms Moireen Kiran began her career in customer care at a supermarket, but beauty and fashion had long been her true passion. "Growing up, I used to style my sister's hair, as well as my friends, and it later occurred to me that I could earn a living from this."

In 2010, she opened MAKS Hair and Beauty Salon in Labasa on the island of Vanua Levu. Her sister later decided to join the business.

"We realised that the business could be prosperous with us working together," said Ms Gayatri Kiran.

It was three years later that Ms Moireen Kiran found out about the Australia-Pacific Technical College and decided to apply.

"My learning at the Australia-Pacific Technical College allowed me to upgrade my salon and I started generating more profits from it," she said.



Following in her sister's footsteps, Ms Gayatri Kiran also went on to successfully complete Certificate III in Hairdressing at the Australia-Pacific Technical College in 2014.

"When we completed the Australia-Pacific Technical College program, we started implementing our ideas together, and it started us off in a big way," added Ms Gayatri Kiran.

As a budding entrepreneur, Ms Moireen Kiran was recognised for her hard work as she was awarded the Best Entrepreneur Award for Women in Labasa in 2017 by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

In her spare time, Ms Moireen Kiran runs workshops with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to help empower women in hairdressing and beauty therapy through skills-share.

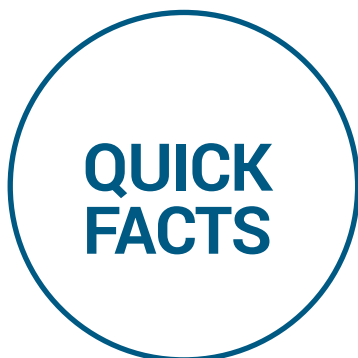
"I use my knowledge gained from the Australia-Pacific Technical College to go with the Ministry to villages in the interior areas of Fiji and pass on basic skills to women so that they can start their own businesses."

Ms Moireen Kiran tries to encourage women across Fiji to run their own business. "It gives women the ability to not be dependent on anybody."

The sisters plan to open another salon in Labasa to create more opportunities for hairdressers and beauticians to be trained by Ms Moireen Kiran and earn an income.

"It is a viable business because development is taking place in Labasa. With better access to internet and improved education, people here are becoming aware of health and beauty programs. This will bring people back to the salons," said Ms Moireen Kiran.

Running a business is not without its challenges, with one of the most prominent being standing out from competitors but both sisters remain confident. "The advantage we have is our qualification and so we are confident in whatever task we do."





Fostering entrepreneurial skills in trade

PAINTING A PROMISING FUTURE

A fascination with the world of colours and an opportunity to pave the way for a professional body of painters has five Australia-Pacific Technical College painting and decorating graduates operating their very own business.

Painting and decorating is a specialised area of trade that has evolved over the years, leaving consumers with endless options of paints and paint applications on a vast array of materials.

This is an area in which the five directors of Likeminded Pacific Painters, Ms Tikosaya Vereledua, Mr Joji Lolomai, Ms Pamela Komai, Ms Vika Tokona and Mr Sosiceni Tamanirukurukukuiovalau are more than happy to assist customers.

The importance of applying the correct paint on an interior or exterior surface could prolong the lifespan of the painted surface guaranteeing value for money.

“A lot of people are unaware about this. Whenever we go to our clients, we explain about the paint, and one thing that we need our clients to know, is what kind of paint they are using,” said Company Director, Ms Tikosaya Vereledua.

All five directors are graduates of the Australia-Pacific Technical College’s Certificate III in Painting and Decorating program.

Mr Mavuku Tokona, their trainer, recognised their talent and continues to mentor them. He has also been influential in the Australia-Pacific Technical College alumni forming a professional body of painters in the Pacific region.

The group share ideas and experiences that help inform other painters in the group about innovations in painting and decorating.

“Painting is more than just holding a brush and applying paint. It is more than that. What we teach students at the Australia-Pacific Technical College is that 99 per cent of painting is surface preparation. Just to apply paint on the wall is only 1 per cent,” he said.

Mr Tokona has been the Painting and Decorating Trainer at the Australia-Pacific Technical College since 2015, and is the only international member of Likeminded Painters Australia.

Mr Tokona, with the support of Likeminded Painters Australia, identified and selected students based on their experience, who could establish and operate the business. This was how Likeminded Pacific Painters was established.

“Our objective is to go out into the market as a painting company to show what we have learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College and also to demonstrate that painting, in itself, is a trade,” said Ms Vereledua.

Colour has been at the centre of her world from a very young age and has helped her painting and decorating career to flourish.

“One thing I learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College is that they treat everyone the same. They do not judge you by your gender or by your qualification. This is a male dominated field and I am thankful to the Australia-Pacific Technical College for training and empowering us as Fijian women, to go out there and exercise what we learn,” said Ms Vereledua.



“ Our objective is to go out into the market as a painting company to show what we have learned from the Australia-Pacific Technical College and also to demonstrate that painting, in itself, is a trade ”

Ms Tikosaya Vereledua

LEADING THE WAY ONE PAINT STROKE AT A TIME

Three of the Directors for Likeminded Pacific Painters are women who are the voice for many women that are empowered to take up careers in trade.

Ms Vika Tokona, Director, also shared her experience on how the Australia-Pacific Technical College has helped elevate her painting skills.

"After I finished from the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I knew how to apply wallpaper, do drag roll and decorative painting. There is a lot about painting that Fiji has not seen yet," said Ms Tokona.

Fellow Director, Ms Pamela Komai said her training has taught her to be particular about the standard of applying paint.

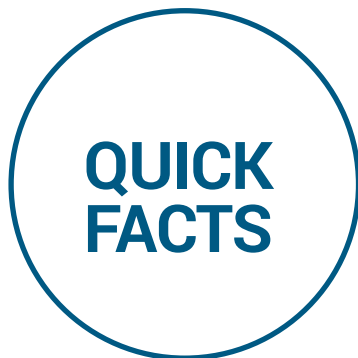
"I am the only female working with men at the current jobsite. I will know if something has gone wrong and the painting is not done well. For example, if the surface preparation and undercoat is not done properly," said Ms Komai.

Overall, all three women are excited about how the painting industry is developing in Fiji and the potential of having more women painters join the industry.



“After I finished from the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I knew how to apply wallpaper, do drag roll and decorative painting. There is a lot about painting that Fiji has not seen yet”

Ms Vika Tokona





“

I am very thankful to the Australian Government and to the Australia-Pacific Technical College for including the provision of my sign language interpreters, and especially for not leaving students with deafness or other disabilities behind ”

Ms Etika (Eve) Naqio

Handwritten notes on a piece of paper, including the number 000-008 and some illegible text.

SEEING THE ABILITY, NOT THE DISABILITY

The Australia-Pacific Technical College is committed to broadening access to quality training and opportunities for work and further study that is inclusive.

Through the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program, the Australia-Pacific Technical College is providing a pathway for students with disabilities to develop their skills, and capitalise on their unique abilities.

The program provides skills that are necessary to enter the workforce or move to further training opportunities. These skills include administration and basic digital literacy, communication, and key employability attributes like teamwork, initiative and confidence.

The Australia-Pacific Technical College Country Manager in Fiji, Mr Jonathan Todd said the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program was developed in consultation with the Include Disabilities, Employ this Ability program and the National Council for Disabled People.

“We focused on work placement for students to offer as many organisations as possible the opportunity to see firsthand the skills and knowledge of our students in their workplace,” he added.



Creating a learning
environment that supports
students with disabilities



Promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities

PATHWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

At the end of their work placement, some students of the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program were offered full-time employment. One of them was Ms Maria Isikeli.

After graduating from the Australia-Pacific Technical College, she continued to work at the McDonald's restaurant in Suva, where she had undertaken her work placement while studying.

"It is really exciting since I work in the lobby and sometimes I help out in the kitchen, working alongside people who have the ability to hear. It is sometimes a challenge but I have learned about my role in the workplace, and I understand my responsibilities."

Ms Isikeli discovered the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program through the Fiji Association of the Deaf and said she feels better equipped to persevere through what was once viewed as "limitations" in the workplace.

She described her study experience at the Australia-Pacific Technical College as "enjoyable yet sometimes challenging" because of her hearing impairment, but she appreciated the training support that was provided.

As part of her training, Ms Isikeli learned how to conduct presentations through visual aid (PowerPoint), preparing a resume, and the importance of clear communication, all of which, she said has been very helpful to her.

"I am very proud of my Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways qualification, and I know this certificate will take me a long way, so I thank the Australia-Pacific Technical College for supporting me through this program."

"My advice to other people with disabilities is that we can do a lot of things – so apply to the Australia-Pacific Technical College, study and use your skills," she said.

EDUCATION BRINGS HOPE



“The Australia-Pacific Technical College opened this door for me to study. If I had not attended the program, it would have been very hard for me to apply to The University of the South Pacific”

Mr Aisake Tamanilo

Mr Aisake Tamanilo is a professional athlete who represented Fiji in the South Pacific Games. He sustained a hip injury in 2007 and underwent surgery that required him to use crutches for walking assistance until he could access another round of treatment.

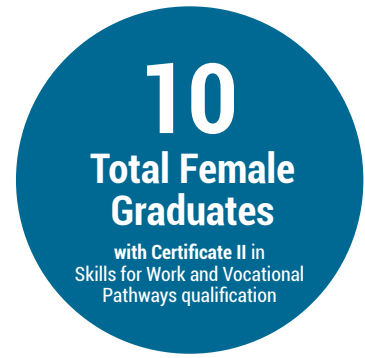
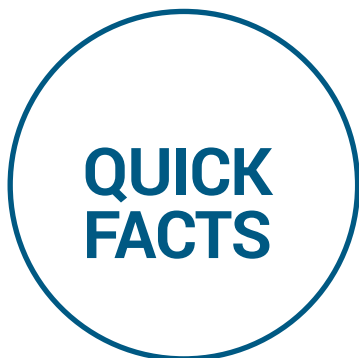
Seeing education as a pathway for work that would lead to being able to afford another treatment, Mr Tamanilo decided to enrol in Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

This semester, Mr Tamanilo has enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management at The University of the South Pacific.

“The Australia-Pacific Technical College opened this door for me to study. If I had not attended the program, it would have been very hard for me to apply to The University of the South Pacific.”

His immediate goal is to graduate from The University of the South Pacific and find employment in order to afford his surgery.

Mr Tamanilo shares that there should be no limitations for someone with a disability. “What I say from experience, is that the things that a disabled person can do, an able-bodied person may not be able to do. But anything that an able-bodied person can do, a disabled person can also do if they do not lose hope.”



DEFYING BARRIERS



“It was just so different, people were very friendly, we were welcomed, we felt at home. It is always nice to be treated like everyone else, and everything was accessible”

Ms Mere Roden

Another graduate of the Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways program was Ms Mere Roden. In 2006, she acquired a physical impairment that restricted her to a wheelchair.

Progressing her career has been key to overcoming her challenges. “My greatest achievement is climbing up the ranks at the Spinal Injury Association of Fiji. I came in as a volunteer, then I went into the employment program, and then I moved up to become the Head of Operations.”

She describes her experience studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College as “unforgettable.”

“It was just so different, people were very friendly, we were welcomed, we felt at home. It is always nice to be treated like everyone else, and everything was accessible.”

For Ms Roden, one of the greatest takeaways from the program was learning new ways to organise work.

“For my role, this is something that helps me put things in order, and organise my records. In terms of meeting deadlines, I also learned that it was very important to have a timeframe for projects and programs,” she explained.

Ms Roden is also flourishing outside her work as she also has an active sporting life, participating internationally in the 2018 Table Tennis Para-World Championship.

Her advice to others is to not look at their disability as a barrier. “I think that we are all unique individuals born with a purpose, and it is up to you yourself to look for that purpose.”

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE



“ Hopefully, I can make a change in the mindset of people, and bring about more understanding towards the marginalised and disadvantaged within our community, and take inclusiveness to a whole new level ”

Ms Etika (Eve) Naqio

Ms Etika (Eve) Naqio has never let her hearing impairment affect her dedication to creating opportunities for disabled youth in Fiji.

Having worked as a Youth Officer with the Fiji Disabled Peoples Association, Eve is a leading voice when it comes to inspiring people with disabilities to achieve their dreams of work, study and more.

“Hopefully, I can make a change in the mindset of people, and bring about more understanding towards the marginalised and disadvantaged within our community, and take inclusiveness to a whole new level.”

Her passion to empower young people with disabilities who have diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, was boosted with a Certificate IV in Youth Work qualification from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

The skills and knowledge gained through the Australia-Pacific Technical College have been relevant for Eve, and her work monitoring various advocacy engagements on behalf of the Fiji Association of the Deaf.

“I am a member of various sub-committees under the Fiji Association of the Deaf banner, with responsibilities in completing strategic plans, organising and facilitating youth workshops and sporting activities.”

Learning has not stopped for Eve. Having an Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification has propelled her to pursue a Diploma in Law and Prosecution at The University of the South Pacific.

She explained that this would help her to continue her advocacy work into the future, with one priority being to advocate for proper wages within the disabled community and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Eve said the environment at the Australia-Pacific Technical College is “inclusive, having zero tolerance for discrimination and disrespect of any student.”

“I am thankful to the Australian Government and the Australia-Pacific Technical College for including the provision of my sign language interpreters, and especially for not leaving students with deafness or other disabilities behind,” she added.



“ I see many women entrepreneurs out there and many who are yearning to become businesswomen. If they are trained with the skills that I have been provided through the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I am sure they will make a difference and become good entrepreneurs ”

Ms Maria Moi



OPENING DOORS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

A joint initiative between the Australia-Pacific Technical College and the Australian Business Volunteers has helped develop the capacity and confidence of Fijian women through the innovative Certificate IV in New Small Business program.

The training enabled 18 women from different entrepreneurial backgrounds to come together to acquire skills and innovative ideas to take their businesses to greater heights.

Together, they learned how to plan and manage small business finances, promote their businesses in an innovative way to customers and manage employees.

The Australian Business Volunteers provided highly experienced Australian business mentors who worked alongside these women to provide one-on-one coaching on how to develop and run a successful small business.

Australian Business Volunteers Chief Executive Officer, Ms Liz Mackinlay said, they believed the program and the women who participated in it could benefit from the expertise of their business mentors.

“These women are putting into practice the skills and knowledge they have learned, they have confidence in their plans, and they are growing their businesses. I really believe this has been a life-changing program for many of the women and their families,” she said.



Providing opportunities for women to excel in business

REACHING FOR NEW HEIGHTS



“ I am aiming to excel and push my business to become the biggest in the Pacific region and because of my Australia-Pacific Technical College training, I am working my way towards that goal ”

Ms Maria Moi

As a grandmother, mother, wife and business director of Ben's Trading Limited, Maria Moi is an inspiration to Fijian women everywhere.

Realising the potential of agricultural farming in Fiji, she began running the family business alongside her husband in 2006.

They started working with local farmers to process root crops including taro and cassava, for exporting. Their hard work paid off, with the business being awarded the Indigenous Exporter of the Year in 2007. They currently employ over 200 Fijians.

Ms Moi was delighted when she came across the Certificate IV in New Small Business program, which she said, was tailored to the needs of her business and gave her fresh ideas.

“The business has really grown over the years, but there were areas that we needed to improve, which we were not aware of. Because of the time management and employee management skills learned from the training, I was able to tap into those areas and put in place several processes that have improved efficiency and overall productivity of my business,” she said.

She added that previously, the business was preparing one container of frozen cassava and taro in a week, but after implementing her skills from the training, she managed to speed up the preparation to within three days.

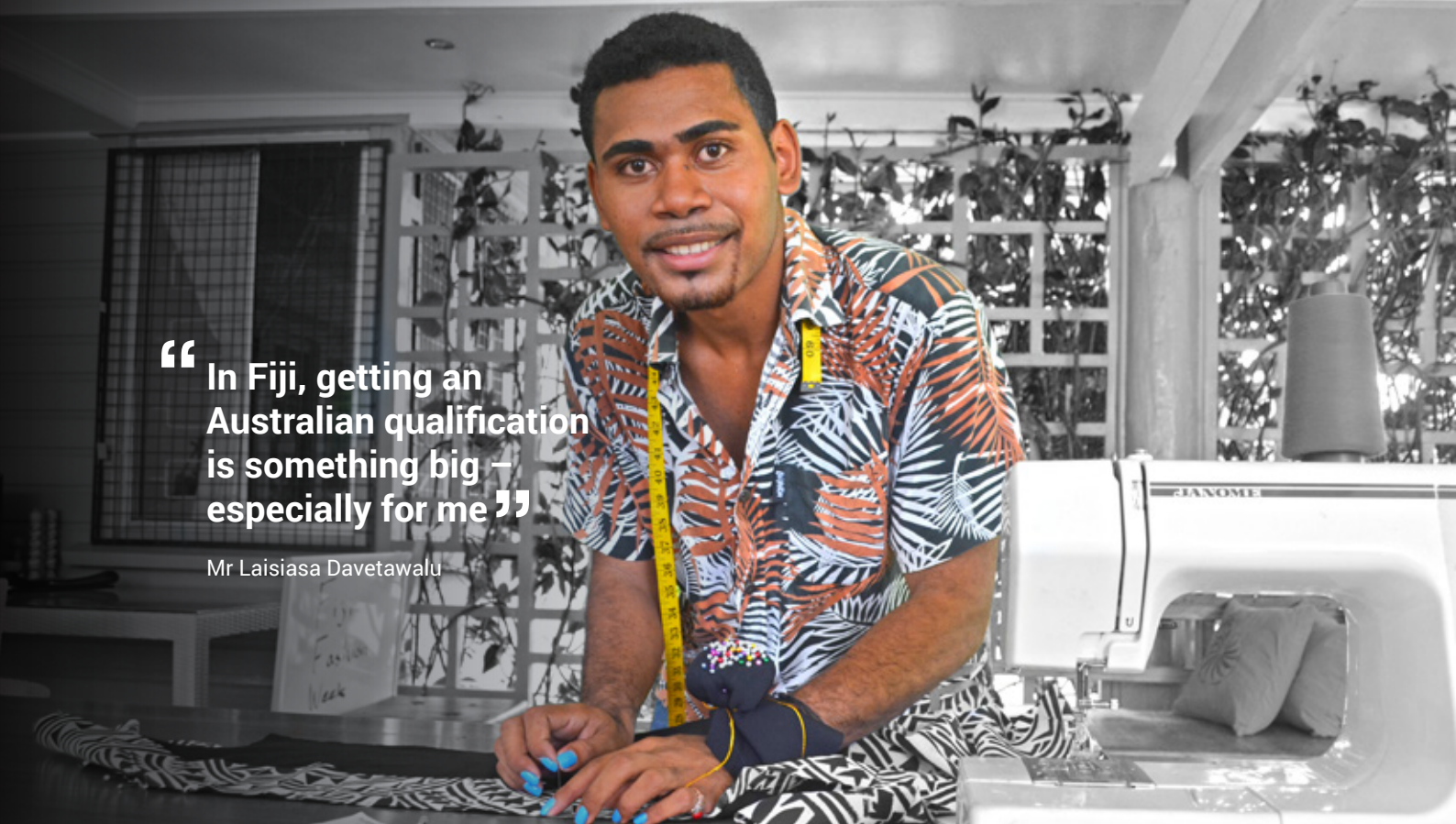
Not only that, Ms Moi has improved her book-keeping with help from the Australian business mentors.

Ms Moi employs women of all ages from diverse backgrounds and rural communities, including women with special needs.

“It is not just about productivity but the passion. If they don't get employment from anywhere else, then I need to create an industry to give them a fair chance in life.”

“I see many women entrepreneurs out there and many who are yearning to become businesswomen. If they are trained with the skills that I have been provided through the Australia-Pacific Technical College, I am sure they will make a difference and become good entrepreneurs.”

“I am aiming to excel and push my business to become the biggest in the Pacific region and because of my Australia-Pacific Technical College training, I am working my way towards that goal,” she added.



“ In Fiji, getting an Australian qualification is something big – especially for me ”

Mr Laisiasa Davetawalu

TAKING THE FASHION WORLD BY STORM

For every Australia-Pacific Technical College graduate, a world of opportunity opens not only for local employment, but global experience.

After successfully completing both a Certificate III in Applied Fashion Technology and Design and Certificate IV in Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising, Mr Laisiasa Davetawalu has the opportunity to further hone his skills in Australia through an internship with Kookai Australia.

Mr Davetawalu gained an interest in fashion from an early age and made his debut at the Fiji Fashion Week sulu-jaba competition in 2014. He has since scooped numerous awards including best storyboard and best designer at the annual Fiji Fashion Week student designer show.

After graduating from high school and dabbling in the industry, Mr Davetawalu enrolled at the Australia-Pacific Technical College as he viewed it as “one of the best opportunities.”

“In Fiji, getting an Australian qualification is something big – especially for me.”

The Certificate III in Applied Fashion Design and Technology program is delivered in conjunction with the Fiji National University in a simulated garment production workshop, equipping students with hands on skills to start their own business, gain a promotion with their existing employer, or seek new employment at a higher level.

The Certificate IV in Applied Fashion Design and Merchandising offers a vastly different skillset as it focuses on a business owner’s perspective.

“The students learn more advanced machining, patternmaking, quality processes and design. They also learn about quoting, marketing, presentation of goods, communicating with employees and stakeholders, how to improve and run a proficient production line and how to be more professional in their day-to-day business dealings,” said the Australia-Pacific Technical College’s Fashion Trainer, Ms Karlene Dangerfield.



“ I was always interested in working on big earthmoving and mining machines, so it is like a dream come true for me ”

Mr Roneel Prasad

BIG MACHINES, BIG DREAMS

Growing up working on cars with his father, it is no surprise that Mr Roneel Prasad is quickly making a name for himself in the mechanical industry.

His hard work behind the scenes in ensuring that machines run smoothly, has taken him abroad where he now works as a heavy diesel mechanic for Ross Reid Ltd in New Zealand.

“I was always interested in working on big earthmoving and mining machines, so it is like a dream come true for me.”

Mr Prasad said a big part in moving his career forward was the training he received from the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

After completing his tertiary education in automotive engineering, Mr Prasad worked at Metromix Concrete. He always had the desire to study further and this is why he took up the Certificate III in Engineering – Mechanical Trade (specialising in Diesel Fitting) at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

He learned skills such as how to use power tools, perform fault diagnosis, installation and removal of bearings, tune diesel engines and maintain engine-cooling systems. The facilities, tools and diagnostic machines used during training were of an international standard.

Mr Prasad believes his training truly prepared him for the realities of working in another country and the expectations of him as a mechanic.



Graduates like Mr Roneel Prasad
are applying their trade skills
internationally

“In Fiji, we do not have big machines like motor scrapers, big D10 dozers and dump trucks that I work on at Ross Reid Ltd. The hydraulics and electrical knowledge I gained from the Australia-Pacific Technical College helped prepare me for this type of work.”

“With my training, I feel more confident in diagnosing and fixing the problems in the machines.”

For Mr Prasad, getting the opportunity to work with Ross Reid Ltd in New Zealand is his biggest achievement and he works hard every day to keep himself motivated when on the job. His aim is to learn as much as possible so that one day he can open his business.

Just like Mr Prasad, the prospect of securing overseas employment to further his career and to have a better future is what motivated Mr Tale Waqa to pursue studies at the Australia-Pacific Technical College.

Mr Waqa worked as a carpenter for almost 12 years before he took up the Certificate III in Carpentry program.

This is where he was able to enhance his carpentry knowledge and skills, including techniques to tackle work at construction sites, safety components and methods of construction.

After graduating from the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Mr Waqa returned to his work at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital. However, this was not for long as he decided to apply for a trade job with the Canterbury Trade Pilot Initiative in New Zealand.

His application was successful, making him one of the first Fijians to work under this project. He is now working as a carpenter for Rebuild New Zealand in Christchurch.

“I knew my Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification was my passport to overseas. I signed a three-year contract to work in Christchurch. I earn around four to five times more than what I used to get in Fiji. It is like a dream come true,” he said.

“Working overseas is helping me to use the skills and techniques I acquired from the Australia-Pacific Technical College. I am able to use my knowledge and share with other tradespeople and also learn from them and gain more experience,” he added.



“ I knew my Australia-Pacific Technical College qualification was my passport to overseas ”

Mr Tale Waqa



“ My Australia-Pacific Technical College training helped me understand what was expected of me and it has given me a unique opportunity to become this new person ”

Mr Samuela Bainivalu

WHEN PASSION BECOMES A CAREER

Hospitality is a growing industry ripe for Australia-Pacific Technical College graduates to build skills, flourish and uncover exciting career paths both locally and abroad.

Certificate III in Hospitality graduate Mr Samuela Bainivalu is a great example of someone who seized his opportunity to create an international résumé.

An interest in food and travel has been at the core of his career path. After completing secondary school, Mr Bainivalu joined a local catering school to pursue his interests.

He went on to gain experience in the hospitality sector, including working as a combat chef in the military, and in hotels across England.

Having had the opportunity to improve his hospitality and service skills at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, Mr Bainivalu went to work at Cable Beach Resort and Spa in Australia for six months through the seasonal workers’ program.

“With the skills I gained at the Australia-Pacific Technical College and my previous experience, I adapted very quickly to my role. My first training was at the bar and one of the things my manager wanted was for me to understand the menu. This was not difficult for me as it was something I had learned as part of my training.”

After completing his six-month contract with Cable Beach Resort and Spa last year, Mr Bainivalu returned to Fiji and is now working at the Holiday Inn in Suva as a Food and Beverage Attendant.

His experience in Australia has helped broaden his understanding of expectations in the growing hospitality industry, and in ensuring a high-level of customer service delivery.

“My Australia-Pacific Technical College training helped me understand what was expected of me and it has given me a unique opportunity to become this new person,” he concluded.

BAKING HER WAY TO SUCCESS



“ If you have a qualification that is internationally recognised from an institution like the Australia-Pacific Technical College, you know you can secure a job anywhere ”

Ms Razia Naaz

If you enjoy preparing baked treats and specialty pastries from the careful kneading and elaborate showpieces, to the variety of different decorations then a career in the baking and patisserie industry could be the thing for you.

This was certainly true for award-winning pastry chef, Ms Razia Naaz. Today, she is an aspiring professional who is pursuing her dreams in New Zealand. She hopes to open her first-ever dessert and pastry outlet soon.

Ms Naaz was recognised for her talent while she was working at the Sofitel Fiji Resort and Spa, winning five gold medals, including Pastry Chef of the Year award at the 2013 Moffat National Salon Culinaire competition in Fiji.

Following her victories at home, Ms Naaz moved to New Zealand in 2015, working at establishments such as KOHU Road Ice Cream, Compass Group and most recently, Thorndon Bakery.

Ms Naaz said she was able to take her skills to another level by studying at the Australia-Pacific Technical College. “The training was of a high standard. We used proper resources and were taught the correct techniques.”

Her training also helped her prepare for life abroad, giving her the tools to overcome any challenges she would face.

“If you have a qualification that is internationally recognised from an institution like the Australia-Pacific Technical College, you know you can secure a job anywhere you go. I always knew that I will find employment in New Zealand because of my qualification,” she added.

Ms Naaz believes that graduates from the Australia-Pacific Technical College are highly employable because of the calibre of training, which was the reason she was convinced to join the College in 2013 to do a Certificate III in Patisserie.

“The Australia-Pacific Technical College has a reputation of changing people who study there. From the way, students dress themselves, to the way they work in the kitchen, you can tell that they have been trained professionally.”

“If you get the opportunity to study at the Australia-Pacific Technical College, it is a big step towards growing your career and you should make the most of it.”

Fiji Campus

PO Box 14319

Corner of Scott and Edward Street

Suva

Fiji

enquiries@aptc.edu.au

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