

## SINU recruits new PVCA and PVCC

The Chair and Pro Chancellor of the SINU Council, Dr. Morgan Wairiu, is pleased to announce the appointment of two highly respected academics and administrators to key leadership roles at the Solomon Islands National University (SINU). Following a Council meeting held on Monday, 14th October 2024, Dr. Eric Katovai has been appointed as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), and Dr. William Parairato as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate).

Meanwhile, Dr. William Parairato has been appointed as Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate), replacing Shadrach Fanega, who previously served in this role. Dr. Wairiu acknowledged Mr. Fanega’s valuable service, saying, “Shadrach Fanega has been a dedicated member of the SINU Council and a strong leader in his role as Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate). His contributions to the growth and development of SINU are greatly appreciated, and we wish him continued success



**From left to right: New PVCA Dr. Eric Katovai and new PVCC Dr. William Parairato.**

Dr. Morgan Wairiu emphasised the significance of these appointments for the future direction of SINU, stating: “The appointments of Dr. Katovai and Dr. Parairato reflect the University’s commitment to achieving international recognition through academic and corporate reforms. Their leadership will be instrumental in helping SINU meet its goals for academic excellence and institutional growth.”

Dr. Eric Katovai, who has been acting in the position of Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic) since June last year, now takes up the role substantively. Dr. Morgan Wairiu expressed his confidence in Dr. Katovai’s ability to lead the University’s academic division, praising his contributions to research, academic development, and his role in advancing the Faculty of Science and Technology.

in his future endeavours.”

Dr. Eric Katovai is an accomplished academic and researcher specialising in tropical ecology, with a focus on the anthropogenic environmental challenges facing the Pacific Islands, particularly in Melanesia. Over nearly two decades, Dr. Katovai has advanced through

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the ranks of academia, from a tutor to an Associate Professor, reflecting his dedication, expertise, and leadership in both research and education.

Dr. Katovai earned his Ph.D. in Tropical Ecology from James Cook University, Australia, and a Master of Science in Conservation Biology from the University of Queensland. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Physics, as well as a Bachelor of Education from Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea. This interdisciplinary academic background provides a strong foundation for his multifaceted approach to research and teaching.

Currently, Dr. Katovai serves as the Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology at SINU. In this leadership role, he has been instrumental in advancing research excellence and promoting academic development. Additionally, he holds adjunct senior positions at both the University of the South Pacific and Pacific Adventist University, where he actively mentors and supervises postgraduate students and early-career staff, demonstrating his commitment to nurturing emerging scholars and scientists.

Dr. Katovai has a robust track record in postgraduate supervision across several leading institutions, both locally, regionally, and internationally. He has guided students at various levels, including Bachelor's Honours, Master's, and Ph.D. candidates, at universities such as Pacific Adventist University, the University of the South Pacific, and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand.

Many of his students have successfully graduated, while others are currently pursuing advanced research degrees under his guidance. His extensive involvement highlights his dedication to developing the next generation of scientists and his significant contributions to the field of tropical ecology and environmental management in the Pacific region.

Dr. Katovai's research focuses on the ecology and restoration of logged tropical forests, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem recovery in the Solomon Islands and the broader Melanesian region. His leadership in key projects, such as the Ensuring Resilient Ecosystems and Protected Areas (EREPA) initiative, the Livelihoods in Forest Ecosystem Recovery (LIFER) program, and the Establishing Forest Observatory Plots across Melanesia (MELANOB) project, underscores his dedication to sustainable development and ecosystem management.

In addition to his academic and research roles, Dr. Katovai serves as an active reviewer for several prestigious scientific journals, including *Biotropica*, *Conservation Biology*, *Forest Ecology and Management*, *Journal of Sustainable Forestry*, *Land Use Policy*, and *Restoration Ecology*, as well as other journals within the MDPI Open Access network. His contributions help ensure the quality and advancement of research in his field, demonstrating his commitment to maintaining high standards in tropical ecology and conservation.

A prolific researcher, Dr. Katovai has published extensively in scientific journals on topics ranging from forest regeneration to the impacts of land use on biodiversity and ecosystem restoration. He is also deeply involved in community environmental stewardship, providing technical advice and educational talks, particularly in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Dr. Katovai's influence extends beyond academia and research; he is a Member of the International Science Council (ISC) Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Liaison Committee, where he advocates for integrating the unique challenges faced by small island nations—such as climate change and biodiversity loss—into global research agendas and policy frameworks.

He is also a Member of the Pacific Academy of Sciences Establishment Committee, responsible for the strategic development of the Academy, which aims to unite the Pacific region's leading scientists to foster collaboration, promote research excellence, and address regional and global challenges through science-driven initiatives. The Pacific Academy of

Sciences will be launched on 23rd October 2024 in Samoa alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Dr. Katovai also holds several key roles in academic and advisory capacities at the University of the South Pacific and Fulton University College. At USP, he serves as the Program Advisory Committee Pacific Islands Representative for the Geography, Environmental Science, and Earth Science Division in SAGEONS.

Additionally, he was recently recommended by the Solomon Islands government as a co-opted member of the USP Council, representing the academic community of the Solomon Islands.

At Fulton University College, he is a Council Member and the Chairman of the Recruitment Committee, a sub-committee of the council.

Dr. William Parairato brings over 25 years of experience in the fields of public administration, corporate governance, and education to his new role as Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate).

He holds a Ph.D. in Management and Public Administration from the University of the South Pacific (USP), which he earned in March 2020 with distinction. His academic qualifications also include a Master of Management from Massey University, New Zealand, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Management and Public Administration from USP.

Dr. Parairato's extensive career began as a Lecturer in Business Studies at Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE) in 1996. Since then, he has taken on numerous senior leadership roles in both public and private sectors, including serving as the Manager of Administration at the Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI) and the General Manager (Ag) for the West Are'Are Constituency Shipping Community Company.

He has consistently provided strategic direction and overseen the implementation of institutional reforms across various sectors, helping to ensure efficiency and operational sustainability.

As the Managing Director of Frontier Consulting Services from 2017 to 2019, Dr. Parairato managed consultancy projects in business and public administration, providing expertise in corporate governance and management across the Solomon Islands and the wider Pacific region. His extensive involvement in teaching, consulting, and administration, particularly in the areas of finance and personnel management, underlines his commitment to advancing the development of institutions and governance systems in the Solomon Islands.

Dr. Parairato has a deep passion for teaching and mentoring, reflected in his academic roles at USP and his earlier positions at SICHE, where he contributed to the education of young Solomon Islanders in the fields of business, economics, and management. His leadership is further demonstrated by his ability to design and implement training programmes that focus on capacity building, human resource development, and corporate governance.

In his new role as Pro Vice Chancellor (Corporate), Dr. Parairato will oversee the corporate portfolio of SINU, guiding the institution's financial and operational strategies as it continues to expand and grow in the Pacific region.

The appointments of Dr. Eric Katovai and Dr. William Parairato signal a new chapter in the leadership of SINU as the University seeks to strengthen its academic and corporate frameworks. Both individuals bring exceptional expertise and experience, and their leadership will undoubtedly play a critical role in SINU's ongoing efforts to achieve international recognition and drive reforms that will benefit the entire academic community.



## United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Donates Laptops and Projector to SINU's Faculty of Nursing, Medicine and Health Sciences

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU) Faculty of Nursing, Medicine, and Health Sciences (FNMHS) in October this year received a generous donation of two laptops and one projector from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Solomon Islands Country Office.

The equipment was presented by the UNFPA Country Head, Mrs. Alicia Hilly-Kenilorea. In her remarks, she expressed her honour in representing UNFPA and presenting the donation of laptops to the Faculty of Nursing, Medicine, and Health Sciences to support the strengthening of midwifery education.

She acknowledged the vital role midwives play in saving lives by ensuring safe and healthy pregnancies and deliveries. Mrs. Hilly-Kenilorea highlighted that, "the UNFPA Pacific Sub-regional Office has been supporting SINU since 2018, initially under the DFAT-funded Transformative Agenda Phase One, and continuing under the current Phase Two."

She noted that UNFPA has partnered with SINU and, with technical

support from the Burnet Institute, conducted a gap analysis of the midwifery curriculum. Based on this analysis, the curriculum has been updated to align with international standards and is ready for implementation. She expressed confidence that, with the support of the Solomon Islands Government, "SINU would begin offering midwifery education using the updated curriculum starting early next year."

UNFPA Country Head Mrs. Hilly-Kenilorea also mentioned that they supported preceptor training in preparation for the rollout next year. To enhance the quality of teaching and learning, she noted that UNFPA had previously donated anatomical models and other resources. Today's handover of laptops is seen as a valuable resource for students and faculty, providing access to essential information, training materials, and communication tools.

She expressed hope that this donation would contribute to the overall development of the school and improve SINU's capacity to offer quality midwifery education, ultimately saving the lives of mothers and their babies in the Solomon Islands.

In his remarks, the Dean of faculty, Dr. Humpress Harrington, expressed gratitude, stating, "Without women, we wouldn't be here. We are deeply thankful to UNFPA for their continued support."

Midwives play a crucial role in ensuring safe pregnancies and deliveries, and this donation will greatly assist our staff and students in advancing midwifery education and improving maternal healthcare in the Solomon Islands."

The brief handover ceremony was witnessed by staff from FNMHS and UNFPA representatives.



Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Medicine and Health Sciences Dr Humpress Harrington and Country Head of UNFPA Mrs Alicia Hilly-Kenilorea at the handover ceremony



SINU FNMHS Staff with representatives from UNFPA pose with the newly donated ICT equipment



## SINU Appoints Professor Padma Lal and Dr. Pete Connolly to Key Adjunct Positions

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is pleased to announce the appointments of Professor Padma Lal as Adjunct Professor and Dr Pete Connolly as Adjunct Senior Fellow, both under the Office of Research and Postgraduate Studies.

These appointments reflect SINU's commitment to enhancing its academic and research capacity, contributing to national development and global engagement through strategic partnerships and advanced



### Professor Padma Lal

research.

Professor Padma Lal, an ecological economist, brings extensive experience in environmental and resource economics, climate change adaptation, and policy development.

With decades of academic and professional contributions across the Pacific, Australia, and internationally, Professor Lal will significantly bolster SINU's research efforts in environmental sustainability and climate change.

She will also help build capacity for government officials, communities, and university staff. Her leadership will be instrumental in identifying high-priority projects, developing interdisciplinary, outcome-focused research initiatives, and supporting capacity-building workshops, especially in grant proposal writing and project management for SINU staff.

Dr Pete Connolly, an expert in strategic analysis and security studies, brings extensive experience in international engagement, national security, and defence strategy, particularly in the Pacific region.

His expertise will shape SINU's emerging programmes in security studies, a key area of collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Dr Connolly will support the Faculty of Education and Humanities, led by Rev Dr Ben Wate, in developing programmes that address security challenges in the Pacific. His contributions will further strengthen SINU's capacity to engage with global stakeholders and develop impactful research and teaching initiatives.

SINU Vice Chancellor, Professor Transform Aqorau, expressed enthusiasm for the appointments, stating, "We are privileged to have someone of Professor Lal's calibre join SINU.

Her understanding of environmental economics and climate change, along with her dedication to capacity building in the Pacific, will be a tremendous asset to our institution."

Regarding Dr Connolly's appointment, Professor Aqorau remarked, "Dr Connolly's background in strategic analysis and leadership in security studies are invaluable to SINU.

His involvement in our security studies programme, in collaboration with DFAT, will equip our students to address complex security issues in the Pacific."

Both Professor Lal and Dr Connolly will play crucial roles in advancing SINU's mission to be a leading institution for research and higher education in the Pacific.

Their appointments mark a significant step forward in building the University's academic and research capacity to address national and regional priorities through collaborative, interdisciplinary initiatives.



### Dr Pete Connolly



# Staff Profile

**Name:** Terere Aaron

**Province:** Western Province

**Age:** 30 years

**Work station:** Kukum Campus

**Department:** Pro Vice Chancellor Corporate Office

**Job title:** Executive Officer to Pro-Vice Chancellor Corporate

**Qualification:** Bachelor of Commerce in Human Resource Management and Public Administration (USP Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji)

**How long have you been working here?** 1 year 6 months

**Tell us about your job:** As the Executive Officer to the Pro-Vice Chancellor Corporate, my role involves providing high-level executive support, coordinating activities, and ensuring that the office operates smoothly and efficiently. I assist in managing schedules, drafting correspondence, preparing reports, and facilitating communication within the PVCC Office and across SINU.

My responsibilities also include organizing meetings, managing records, and contributing to the implementation of corporate strategies.

**What do you like about SINU and your job?** I enjoy the dynamic environment at SINU, where I have the opportunity to work with a dedicated team focused on enhancing education and organizational development. My role allows me to engage with various stakeholders and contribute to meaningful projects that support the university's goals. Additionally, I value the opportunities for professional growth, the collaborative culture, and the sense of purpose in being part of an institution shaping the future of students and the community



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Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is the Prime and ONLY National University of Solomon Islands.

Founded in 2013, SINU is striving to be one of the Best Education and Research Institute in the Region.

Our VISION: "A quality National University, raising Standards of education and applied research in the

Pacific Region."

Our Mission: "Championing the pursuit of knowledge, skills, academic inquiry and applied research to transform lives through higher education and training, inclusive of diverse communities, while providing relevant solutions for the Solomon Islands.