

Alumni Newsletter

VOLUME 4, EDITION 2: DECEMBER 2015

APTC Alumni Receives National Young Fijian of the Year Award



Abhinesh receiving the National Young Fijian of the Year Award from the Minister for Youth and Sport Laisenia Tuitubou

"The road to success comes with it's own challenges however, challenges should not stop one from moving forward." These are the sentiments of Abhinesh Kumar who graduated from APTC with Certificate III in Wall and Floor Tiling and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

APTC provided Abhinesh with the opportunity to further his skills and obtain an Australian qualification. Abhinesh is now a successful businessman and founder and co-owner of Quality Tile Setters. He now employs a number of APTC graduates.

Abhinesh says he struggled a lot throughout his childhood days. He used to sell vegetables on the roadside and in the market. He came from a poor family and says he was "not good at studies."

During these challenging times, Abhinesh found something that brought happiness and instilled courage in him, it was sports. He realised that his true strength was in sports. Since then Abhinesh has been very active in sports. He has participated in the Pacific Games and various international championships, established various sporting clubs such as Jet Masada 7s rugby team, Jet Star Netball club, and Jet Runners club. Ten percent of his business profit goes towards the clubs for their expenses.

Recently Abhinesh received two awards, the National Young Fijian of the Year Award for his contribution to sport in Fiji from the Minister for Youth and Sport Laisenia Tuitubou, and the 2015 Westpac Prime Minister's Exporter of the Year Awards - Winner of the Youth Entrepreneur Award.

Abhinesh also strongly believes in community service. Abhinesh, with his friends have organised over 64 races through the Jet Runners Club and provided approximately 100 community services including free painting and tiling in schools and hospitals, and cleaning of Nadi River and Nadi Hospital.

Passion to Serve

Passion to serve people and make a difference in their lives, has been a motto for Mohenesh Singh, who graduated with a Certificate III in Children's Services and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from APTC.

In October this year, Mohenesh's passion and work was recognised when he was awarded the title of Member of the Order of Fiji and received a medal from His Excellency, the President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau.

The Order of Fiji is the highest honour of the Fijian honours system. The award was given to Mohenesh in recognition of his service to the country in promoting child rights, early childhood education and the teaching profession. He is the youngest person to receive this prestigious award.

Mohenesh furthered his studies after graduating from APTC, by undertaking courses at the Fiji National University (FNU). These included Advance Counselling Tools for People Support and Enhancement and Higher Education Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

His commitment to his duties were also recognised by National Substance Abuse Advisory Council last year.

APTC is once again very proud of the achievements of their Alumni.



Mohenesh receiving medal from the President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau

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Meet the Country Managers

Recently APTC country managers have changed. We would like to introduce you to our new country managers.

Patricia Vella, Samoa Country Manager



Pat joined APTC with a strong record of leadership and management in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) having an extensive career in TAFE NSW where she held the position of Faculty Manager, Engineering and Transport. Her industry background is predominantly in Community Services and Health. She started out as a Social Worker and worked with youth crisis services, paediatric health and developing programs and policy for working families with the NSW Trade Unions. She has also managed a diverse range of vocational education delivery in large and small metropolitan TAFE colleges in Sydney, Australia.

Message to Alumni:

"I am very excited to be working with our APTC Alumni in Samoa this year. The new executives have some innovative ideas and projects to promote APTC throughout Samoa and to try to engage more Alumni in our ongoing activities. I encourage all Samoa alumni to be active members of the Chapter."

Nick Crosling, Vanuatu Country Manager



Nick has worked in international development for Australian aid programs for the last ten years often as an adviser for TVET programs including skill development projects in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea where he was the workforce development and TVET adviser to the Institute of Public Administration and the Internal Revenue Commission.

His public sector career has included a number of roles in vocational education and training, including three years as the Executive Officer for Government Skills Australia.

Last year, he completed the six Vanuatu Provincial Skills Plans for the TVET Program.

Message to Alumni:

"I encourage all APTC graduates to become active members of the APTC Alumni, and join in with the benefits of being an alumni member. This includes industry networking, professional development activities and opportunities to mentor, support and provide leadership to others seeking skill development as they join all of us who celebrate lifelong learning."

Jonathan Todd, Fiji Country Manager



Jonathan joined APTC with a wealth of experience in the TVET sector where he has worked in various roles since 1999. Commencing as a trainer, Jonathan has held management and leadership roles since 2004. His focus has been on educational leadership, change management, staff development, program planning, financial management, quality compliance, and student support and guidance. Jonathan has lectured in the VET and tertiary sectors in information technology, multimedia development and design, and delivered numerous in-house training and capability building programs for staff.

Message to Alumni:

"It is with absolute pleasure I say "Bula" to all of our alumni. As APTC graduates you are unique; unique in having completed an Australian qualification in a Pacific country, but also in having experienced a program of study that should open doors for you and your career. Whether you choose to stay in your country of birth, or travel internationally, your APTC qualification will be recognised as an industry applicable qualification. I have attended an Alumni meeting already in the time I have been Country Manager in Fiji, and I look forward to catching up with as many graduates as possible into the future."

Pamela Morgan, Solomon Islands Country Manager



Pamela came to APTC with an extensive experience in the VET sector in Australia as an Institute Director, Manager, Advisor and Trainer. Recently she completed a 2 year assignment in Kiribati with the TVET Sector Strengthening Program as the Senior Management Advisor. Pam has a great interest in Language Literacy and Numeracy and building the capacity of TVET practitioners through ongoing professional learning.

Message to Alumni:

"APTC Alumni Solomon Islands Chapter is a fantastic professional network to be involved with, as it schedules interactive activities throughout the year for its members. APTC graduates in Solomon Islands are strongly encouraged to participate in these activities, share their experiences and stay connected to the College and fellow alumni."

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'No Pain No Gain'



Nau at the Pacific Game in PNG

"To be an athlete, you must be ready and willing to accept any challenges that come your way," says APTC graduate of Certificate III in Hospitality, Seini Adivuti (also known as Nau Dakuiliga).

It is Nau's "never give up" attitude that has resulted in her successful triathlon career. She first tried triathlon in 2007 when she was invited by a friend to participate. With no prior training, Nau competed in her first triathlon and won the first place becoming the National Champion. Through this great achievement, Nau was automatically selected in the Fiji Triathlon Squad. Since then, she has participated in various national and international triathlon competitions.

"Being an athlete is not easy. People have high expectations of you, especially during game time. You will always have people who will criticise you, complain of your performance, discriminate and ridicule you. Most times, I would have to remind myself, why I love doing triathlons and competing in sports," says Nau.

Nau recently represented Fiji at the Pacific Games in PNG this year, participating in triathlon in the sprint distance category (Swim 750m /Bike 20km /Run 5km). This is the second time she has represented her country in the Pacific Games.

"Representing Fiji is always an honour," says Nau. "For me, representing my country does not come easily every year, as qualification times keep getting faster. In order for me to represent Fiji, I need to beat the qualifying time three times, one each for Swim/Bike/Run," she adds.

Nau is passionate about triathlon. She plans to work her way towards becoming the President of Fiji Triathlon Association. Career-wise she would like to venture in the world of business and become an entrepreneur.

Currently Nau is working at Mana Island Resort and Spa as their inaugural Life Guard. On her 6th day at the job, she was promoted to Supervisor of the newly renovated swimming pool.

Nau's advice to young people is, "to take of whatever challenges come their way. You never know what door of opportunity will open for you."

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

Alumnus Nominated for Employee of the Quarter Award



Judy with her Nomination Certificate

Judy Ambah is employed in the Housekeeping department at the Cable Beach Club Resort & Spa (Vanuatu) and has done an exceptional job from the moment she arrived says Nicole Taylor, Human Resources Manager of the Resort. "For someone to be nominated after such a short time at the Resort is a great achievement," she said. Judy graduated from APTC with a Certificate III and IV in Hospitality.

Judy has been nominated by her department manager for the Employee of the Quarter award which is a resort-wide acknowledgement of the top performing staff. This is a fabulous achievement given that the Resort has 300 staff. The criteria for the award are focused on customer service and job performance.

Judy's manager commented that, "since Judy joined our team a few months ago we have been absolutely blown away by her positive attitude and the way she goes about making guests feel special. She is able to anticipate their needs, whether working in Housekeeping or Food and Beverage, to really make a positive impact on their stay."

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Alumni Assist with Climate Change Project in the Marshall Islands



Linton fixing broken water catchment

APTC graduate, Linton Baso has been hired to assist in one of the European Union (EU) projects being implemented by the USP Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD) in the Marshall Islands. Linton graduated from APTC with a Certificate III in Carpentry.

The project initiatives are to assist the community to adapt to climate change through capacity building, community engagement and applied research. Jenrok Village in Majuro was identified as one area most susceptible to Climate Change. The community project in Jenrok Village is called the 'First Flush Water System'.

Linton's involvement in the project was mainly with the installation and maintenance training of the water systems. His skills and

knowledge in carpentry were highly sought after. He was mostly involved in repairing and fixing gutters and broken water catchment and in distributing project supplies to each household that were identified to receive the assistance.

Linton says that, "he has learnt and acquired new skills in community development and has a better understanding of what the project is and how it works." Through working with the youth and fellow peers Linton realised that teamwork and leadership build a stronger community and he is proud to have experienced this. "I now feel confident to share my skills and knowledge with the community and especially the youth," said Linton.

Linton has also worked at a training program called Waan Aelōñ in Majel (WAAM), Canoes of the Marshall Islands, where he helped to develop the skills of traditional woodworking and carpentry. After graduating from APTC, Linton returned to WAAM to assist in teaching carpentry, specialising in canoe building. Linton is currently attending training in TAICHUNG, Taiwan, to further enhance and develop the skills acquired from his APTC training. Upon completion of his training Linton will become the next full time trainer at the WAAM, teaching young girls and boys the skills of canoe building and other carpentry skills.

APTC Alumni Becomes Entrepreneur and Restaurant Owner



Tuilevuka in his restaurant

Becoming an entrepreneur has always been a dream for Tuilevuka Teamoto, a graduate of APTC with Certificate III in Commercial Cookery. His dream came true when he opened his own restaurant, located at the centre of Betio town in Kiribati. Prior to this Tuilevuka worked at the Utirerei Motel as a Chef.

Opening a restaurant is a great achievement for Tuilevuka and also a benefit to the community as it provides jobs for cleaners, security and kitchen staff.

His passion for cooking and dream to own a business led Tuilevuka to attend APTC to enhance his skills in commercial cooking and take a step forward in realising his dream. Tuilevuka says APTC improved his skills and broadened his knowledge about cooking. Through APTC training he learnt how to work effectively with others, provide first aid, hygiene and especially environmentally sustainable work practice.

Tuilevuka is now a confident chef and can provide catering for large events and functions. This year in July, he catered the President's Function during Independence week, which included the Buffet State House Dinner (President Hall) for 500 guests. He also catered a cocktail party for the Bairiki Rotary Club beauty contest for 300 guests. Furthermore, he provided catering for 200 guests at this year's APTC graduation in Kiribati, where he also graduated. Tuilevuka is proud to have achieved success in large scale catering and is looking forward to developing his business further.

His advice to fellow graduates who wish to own a business is, "if there is a will, there is a way. Practice what you have learnt."

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Alumni Provide Valuable Insight into the Industry Needs



Gareth McGrath (third from left), the Specialist Vocational Training Advisor, with APTC graduates from the Youth Work program during the industry consultation meeting

Gareth McGrath, a Specialist Vocational Training Advisor (SVTA) of the Australia-Pacific Technical College's (APTC) Community Services and Health program, met with APTC graduates in Samoa for industry consultation in October this year.

"Industry consultations with relevant stakeholders such as APTC students and graduates allow us to contextualise our programs to meet the needs of the sector," says Gareth.

The consultation meeting in October was held with graduates from the Certificate IV in Youth Work program who are working within the youth sector in Samoa. During this meeting the areas/themes of the Youth Work and Disability programs were discussed and the graduates provided valuable feedback.

Gareth said, "the meeting allowed APTC to identify what industry wants us to cover, as well as identify those issues that are most important in the Pacific region in relation to Youth Work".

Gareth added that "the graduates of our programs are, in many cases, the most sustainable, authentic and reliable resource we have available to us. They are the ones who can provide us with retrospective feedback concerning the courses that they took part in, as well as providing us with valuable industry links and networks for the future".

In his role as the SVTA, Gareth intends to meet with alumni of APTC in each of the campus countries to conduct similar consultations. APTC alumni are encouraged to participate in such consultation processes.

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Fiji Alumni Chapter Assists Children and Senior Citizens



The APTC Fiji Alumni Chapter organised a donation drive to collect clothes, soft toys, and educational materials for Children's homes and blankets for Senior Citizens' homes. These projects were led by the Chapter Chair, Harry Smith, in Suva and, Chapter Deputy Chair, Moureen Khan, in the West.

Alumni members generously contributed towards this great cause. Clothes, soft toys, and educational materials received were donated to St. Minas Children's Home in Nadi and St. Christopher's Home in Nakasi. Blankets were donated to the Golden Age Home in Lautoka.

Moureen says, "the donation drive was a success as what we had collected and donated was a major need for the children. Blanket donation to the Golden Age Home was also very timely as we are going through the cold season."

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Solomon Islands Chapter Networking and Scholarship Information Session



Alumni members at the event

The Solomon Islands Chapter held its first activity since the new Leadership Committee of the Chapter was elected in August this year. On the 5 of November 2015, seventy four graduates attended the activity, which was divided into two sessions, networking and scholarship information. It was perceived that networking would open up opportunities for students to interact and provide information, particularly in terms of job opportunities.

After the introduction of the networking session by the Chairman, Cherry Galokepoto, two graduates were asked to share their experiences of before and after APTC - one graduate focused on rural and the other on urban area experiences. Caroline Malkmus, who hails from one of the remote part of the country, Santa Cruz Island, shared her

experience of undertaking the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECE) course. Caroline remarked that, "the APTC course allowed me to focus on child health and safety within the kindergarten setting. Health covers both hygiene and healthy eating practices of children attending Kindergarten." Caroline applied for ECE training at APTC when looking for opportunities to enhance her skills after taking over a pre-school that was operated by her mother, a retired ECE teacher.

John Tahiaawa, a Painting and Decorating graduate shared his APTC eye opening experience. He stated, that he went from, "eating dust to an air-conditioned office." He recalls one of the trainer's instruction while painting is to, "always stand tall and proud."

Additionally, several graduates were able to share their post APTC experiences. Most of them now hold key positions in their workplaces as instructors and supervisors or operate their own businesses.

The second session involved representatives from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand High Commission Office providing information on opportunities available to APTC Alumni should they want to advance their training overseas.

In general, the graduates found the sessions very rewarding and are looking forward to the next chapter activity, which is planned for early December. To find out more contact the Chapter at Solomon.Alumni@aptc.edu.au.



Nester (interpreter) signing for the deaf graduates

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Kiribati Alumni Chapter Clean-up Tarawa



Kiribati Chapter members participating in the clean-up campaign

The Kiribati Alumni Chapter of the APTC organised a clean-up campaign on the 1 April 2015 in Tarawa, as one of their community service activities. Tarawa is one of the most visited places by tourists in the island.

"This activity is in line with the Kiribati Government initiative - encouraging the general public to keep Tarawa clean. APTC Alumni received credit from the general public and government. We want to be a role model in caring for the environment and promoting cleanliness for good health," said the Chapter Chair, Rokobati Tearo who graduated from APTC with Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

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Warren Gama, Vanuatu



"APTC is one of the best things that has happened to me in my life and the qualification I obtained from APTC really helped me realise the hidden skills and knowledge I possess" says Warren Gama from Vanuatu who graduated from APTC with Certificate III in Tourism in 2010, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in 2012 and a Diploma of Management in 2014.

Warren has achieved many successes since graduating from APTC. He managed a tour company from 2011 till early 2015. He was awarded the 2014 Vanuatu Tourism Award for best tour guide in the country. Warren has also been Secretary of the Vanuatu Tour Operators Association from 2012-2014. Currently Warren works as the TVET for Tourism Coordinator for the Vanuatu Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector Strengthening Program funded by the Australian Government.

In the future, Warren plans to set up a private consultancy business of his own to promote tourism across the islands of Vanuatu. His aim is to help people in the rural areas to, "understand and utilise their skills, knowledge and resources for tourism and to sustain their lives in terms of economic, social and healthy growth."

He has been an avid advocate of APTC and has encouraged his staff to continue to upskill. He particularly promotes the Certificate III in Tourism as a valuable qualification delivered by APTC.

Warren's advice to current students and Alumni is;

"Just like climbing up the mountain is always a challenge so is life, especially climbing up the corporate ladder. To overcome the challenges is entirely up to you. You must aim high, dream big dreams, and always believe in yourself. Be patient and wait for your dreams to come through. I like the saying 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger'. It really helps me in my personal and professional development to look to a level higher on the corporate ladder."

ALUMNI PROFILE



Thank you for your support of APTC in 2015

Wishing you a joyous and safe festive season.

Best wishes, Denise O'Brien (CEO), Management and staff of APTC

