

Developing and enhancing the quality of leaders in Fiji

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRMAN



William Parkinson

It's been another busy start to the year with the launch of the 2019 Leadership Fiji program AND we celebrated the achievements of LF 2017 as they were inducted as Fellows of Leadership Fiji.

The task of selecting participants to the program becomes increasingly difficult. This year we received 70 strong applications with candidates coming from 40 different organizations. The selection panel is given the challenge of selecting a participant group that is both diverse and balanced, taking into account gender, communal background, profession, location plus the different skill sets and interests. It is tough and there are always a number of highly qualified candidates who don't get in because of these challenges. This year I am particularly pleased to report a big increase in public sector participants.

As I mentioned we also celebrated Leadership Fiji's 2017s induction as fellows at the 2019 Launch Ceremony in early March. Read on for the details I will say LF2017 was the biggest year group (33) that we have ever had. This made coordination of fellowship projects, when they are on their own, especially difficult. However, their achievements speak for themselves.

It has also been an active start to the year for the Leadership Fiji Alumni. In recent years we have been approached by various schools to assist with providing leadership training for school prefects. Last year, inspired by Veronika Naiwaqa LF2015 we decided to put together a proper program for school prefects. We then approached the Ministry of Education and with their support launched our first school prefect training program on Leadership and Communication. More on this later but I am very proud of this initiative as it is a key part of our goal of taking the "leadership message" out to the wider community. Congratulations to all the LF Alumni who have volunteered their time to pay it forward for our future leaders.

I was also pleased that our Leadership Fiji Community Fund Committee was able to launch the year with the handover of a tractor and plough to Montfort Boys Town. Many thanks to the New Zealand High Commission and a number of private donors who raised just under \$40,000 for this project. The Fund is a new initiative established by Leadership Fiji for the Leadership Fiji Alumni to give back to communities. Read more about their objectives etc. in this newsletter.

Finally, we are so thrilled to have our own home!! We moved in late last year and thanks to the support of the Alumni and many friends and supporters it is now fully furnished. Our "home" features office space for our executive team and a small meeting cum resource centre and reading room. We are currently working on our library and would welcome donations of any leadership books or reading material.

2019 is going to be a very exciting year for Leadership Fiji with lots more news to come. I know it is a bit of a cliché but all I can say isWATCH THIS SPACE!!



Our Leadership Fiji Home

In December we received the keys to our LF Home at 6 Denison Road, Suva. We're super excited as after 17 years of our establishment, we now have a "Home". This puts us in good stead to scale up Leadership Fiji and pursue our dream to establish a Leadership Institute.

Some of our Alumni, Sponsors and friends pitched in to help fit out our "Home" over December and January. We were so proud

to have had our Leadership Fiji 2019 applicant interviews at our Home too.

We take this time to acknowledge the generosity of ANZ, BSP Life, W&G, Class of LF2014, Nowen Low LF2012, Taniela Rararua LF2018 and his children, Hanisi Taito LF2018, Arif Khan LF2017, Anna Cowley LF2004, Ritesh Singh LF2002, Cathy Wong LF2008, Fareesha Shah LF2017 and Mechanical Services.

We are now building our library resource base and welcome any donations of books and material on leadership.

We also invite our Alumni to visit our Home for a cuppa when you're around our neck of the woods.



Leadership Fiji 2019



There was no rest for the Leadership Fiji Secretariat, as we sieved through these applications over December.

Those qualifying for the next stage of the process, the interviews, had the selection panel in awe, as they writhed through to get the final applicants selected. It was no easy task!

On 1st March we launched the 2019 Leadership Fiji program and inducted LF2017 Fellows at the FNU Tiri Restaurant in Nasese. Guests and sponsors were introduced to the 30 participants for this year's program.



The place was abuzz with a room full of Sponsors and a good number of Alumni who represented their organisations or took the time to join the occasion and to meet up with their fellows.

Our Chief Guest for the occasion was Filimoni Vosarogo, Solicitor and an Alumni of LF2002. Filimoni captured everyone's attention with his inspiring speech. He challenged us and said "Whilst our presence has been felt in the marketplace, our potential as a breeding ground of national leadership is inevitable... If your individual worth is much, imagine what many years of graduates of LF can produce if we harness our strengths, draw from the reservoir of our spirit and contribute toward building a future not only for ourselves for those who would come after us to continue living in our island home, with a promise of tranquility, peace, understanding and acceptance of each other despite our differences." In ending, Filimoni shared "...it is humility that is the birthing place of your leadership power, humility makes a leader worthy of following as we prepare in years to come, to build a nation with courage and purpose, with faith in the promise of tomorrow, in the course of developing our island nation to be more peaceful, more prosperous and more just!"



We also had a good number of the Leadership Fiji inaugural class fellows amongst the guests who shared the responsibility of handing out LF2017's Fellows Certificates and Pins with their fellow and our Chief Guest, Filimoni.

Congratulations, LF2017 Fellows



We saw the induction of the largest number of Fellows for LF2017, where 30 made it through their fellowship. During their fellowship year in 2018, LF2017 major project was to build a home at Koroipita, built a play centre for Ratu Ilaisa Memorial school in Sigatoka, and donated a cooler to the Fatima Girls Hostel in Nabua. In addition, LF2017 has sponsored a participant from Koroipita into the LF2019 program. Apart from the group projects, some individuals within LF2017 who were inspired by the community outreach programs they were exposed to during their year in LF, undertook their own acts of charity.

Well done LF2017 and congratulations!



LF2017 Gifts Play Centre

The pre-school children of Ratu Ilaisa Memorial School outside of Sigatoka were excited to see their play centre which was funded and built by LF2017.

LF2017's lone Police Woman from Sigatoka, Avikali Bari, led this project with the management of Ratu Ilaisa Memorial School. The project was formally handed over to the management of Ratu Ilaisa Memorial School on the weekend before school started this year, amongst much fanfare and feasting which was hosted by the communities of the school.



Alumni Paying It Forward

Eighteen passionate Leadership Fiji Alumni from year groups ranging from 2003 to 2018 went through two sessions of Training of Trainers (TOT) training in December to equip them with knowledge and the confidence to deliver communications and leadership training for high school prefects this year. The TOT sessions were facilitated by our fellow Alumni, Veronika Naiwaqa LF2015, a Toastmaster and passionate about youth development and Sharyne Fong LF2005, our Executive Director.



We've had a number of interests from schools to run our communications and leadership training for their school prefects. Our group of volunteer Alumni trainers who are passionate in "paying it forward" for our future leaders have already covered 4 schools and trained over 130 student leaders. More schools to follow later this school term and into the second term.

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Nancy Pays It Forward

Our Leadership Fiji Alumni, Nancy Tikoisuva Loalua LF2009 and also our Board Director conducted a session with Homes of Hope on Domestic Violence and Child Protection Laws. This is her passion and

is all part of her "giving back" to our communities. Nancy's interest in advocating for Child Protection started when she was at the DPP's Office and hearing cases on child abuse. She took it upon herself to make a difference and advocate, to create awareness on the laws.

Thank you Nancy for "paying it forward".



We'll Miss You, Greig

After many, many, really enjoyable years with Leadership Fiji and running our Mid-Year Retreat's, Greig is changing course and has accepted a full-time role as Pastor of his local Christian church in Tasman, NZ. He started in his position on 14 January 2019.

Greig wrote to notify us in December of his changing course and said "Please know that I have loved EVERYTHING about working with the participants each year, and all of you - the team there in Fiji.

Please know too that I have always felt fully supported, have been treated very well and have really appreciated the honour of the work opportunities you have given me. I have been so grateful and humbled by the high calibre of leaders rising up through your programs.

There is a small measure of grief concerning our distance and that I won't get to give this farewell personally (ie. accompanied with a big hug!) I should follow this calling now however and I have had to encourage myself that I am doing the right thing, especially when reflecting upon what I regularly try to inspire in others through my work . . . that they should follow their passions and step up to challenges and go make the world a better place. This continues to be a guiding principle for me, and this new role is another form of service.

Because we remain friends, I know I will feel welcome to pop in when in Fiji, and that goes both ways. See you sometime . . . whenever you get over here to the sunny islands of New Zealand!"

Thank you Greig for all you have done for Leadership Fiji and especially for the many participants who you've inspired. We wish you well in your endeavours and please know that our homes are always open to welcome you when you choose next to visit our shores.

Sponsors Support Leadership Fiji



We had Tradewinds Marine Group present their sponsorship funds to our Board Chair, William Parkinson in December, and Credit Corporation and ANZ handed over their sponsorships to our Executive Director, Sharyne Fong in January.

We also welcome Transam Fiji who recently came onboard as a Silver Sponsor for Leadership Fiji.

No doubt, the commitment from our sponsors, both current and potential, becomes more pertinent to the success of Leadership Fiji, not only because you will provide much needed resources to ensure our development and sustainability, but also because you support an organization that ensures those committed to Fiji's development, have access to continuously advancing Leadership resources for the benefit of our communities at large.

Leadership Fiji will be launching into a new era, as we intend to develop the organisation further, by taking stock of the past 17 years' achievements, successes, and lessons, and using these to include some structural changes as well as efforts for more collaboration with prominent individuals, programs and institutions, both locally and abroad, to further strengthen Leadership Fiji. Our dream is to establish a Leadership Institute offering values-based leadership courses and programs for Fiji, and the Pacific.

Thank you all for your continued support and generosity.



LF Community Fund

Leadership Fiji established a LF Community Fund Committee, led by Alumni members as a means to inspire our wider Alumni to contribute and continue their service to Fiji's communities.

The inaugural Committee are: Rajesh Patel LF2002 and Chair, Thelma Savua LF2003, Anare Manulevu LF2005, Ritesh Ratiram LF2017 and Talei Tuitoga LF2018. The Committee is still at formation stage, however have undertaken their first initiative to raise funds for a tractor and plough for Monfort Boys Town.

The initiative was inspired and led by our Leadership Fiji Board Chair, William Parkinson, and saw the hand over of the tractor on 14 March at the Car City showroom in Nabua by H.E The New Zealand High Commissioner, Mr Jonathan Curr.

“This is a dream come true for the Boys Town” said Monfort Boys Town Principal, Brother Jim Madavana. “We desperately need a tractor and plough so we can develop our farm and meet the growing needs of our community”.

When talking to last year's Leadership Fiji participants at their site visit of the Montfort Boys Town, Brother Jim highlighted the challenges of developing their farm, and the main one was the need for a tractor and ploughing equipment. That planted the seed for this initiative and saw this as an excellent FIRST activity for the Fund.

The LF Community Fund raised just under \$40,000.00 thanks to donations from a number of individual donors and organisations. We would especially like to thank the New Zealand High Commission who donated \$9,800.00 to the project.

Special thanks also go to Car City, the Fiji Times and Fiji Sixes, Young and Associates, Tara & Hari Punja Foundation and other private donors who contributed the balance of the funds.



LF2019 Opening Retreat

LF2019 participants got straight into their leadership journey with an early 5:30am departure on Saturday 2nd March for the Yatule Resort & Spa at Natadola, which was going to be their weekend home and the venue for the Opening Retreat.

As expected the weekend was engaging as it was intense. The Retreat was filled with fun activities and lots of laughter giving time for bonding and reflection, including the required early sunrise wellness activity on the beach! Oh...and importantly we took breaks to watch Fiji's games at the Las Vegas Rugby 7s which was streamed live to our conference room by the staff of Yatule.

Our Board Chair, William and Executive Director, Sharyne led the Retreat and discussed the expectations of Leadership Fiji from the outset. Participants were exposed to a range of critical leadership thoughts, to analyse their own personalities, their leadership styles, and importantly understanding that it is OK to be different. They were also given insight into the Adaptive Leadership model and its relevance in today's changing environment.





A highlight for each Opening Retreat is the group defining their shared Vision for Fiji. This segment of the Retreat is always exciting and interesting as each group had to creatively craft their Vision until finally settling on one shared Vision for the future. This shared Vision will be used as a basis for LF2019's session reflections and community projects over the next two years.

At the end of the Retreat on Sunday, everyone departed much excited and with mixed emotions, as this was just the beginning of a 9-month long journey together as a group.

LF2018 Hosts Lunch & Learn Fundraisers



LF2018 hosted two Lunch and Learn sessions this quarter to raise funds for their fellowship project, to build a library for the Dama District School in Bua, Vanua Levu. Inspired from their trip to the North and visit to the Dama District School last year to donate stationery and books, the group vowed to give back and help the school with their library.

The first Lunch & Learn was by Ram Bajekal, Managing Director of the Flour Mills of Fiji group on the topic "Step Up Leadership" and stories of leadership within the Indian military in handling the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks.

The second Lunch & Learn was a panel discussion on "Advocating Against Child Sexual Exploitation and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children" where the panelists included a representative from Save the Children Fund, Office of the DPP and our very own LF Board Member and Alumni, Nancy Loaloa LF2009 who is a self-proclaimed Child Protection Advocate, Lawyer and USP Lecturer.



Follow us on our social network and keep a look out for upcoming Lunch & Learn sessions.

Save the Date: Tuesday 18th June & Wednesday 19th June



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For more information about Leadership Fiji visit our website leadershipfiji.org.

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