



The University of Fiji

(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

Media Statement 21st October 2022

THE UNIVERSITY OF FIJI HOLDS A MULTI-CULTURAL CELEBRATION FOR DIWALI AND ALL OTHER IMPORTANT AND SPECIAL DAYS IN OCTOBER.

The University of Fiji decided to hold a joint celebration on Friday 21st October for all important and special days in October and November to illustrate the diversity of the University Community in all its splendour.

Organized by a combined staff and student committee representing all the special days in October, the celebrations involved students and staff at both Saweni and Samabula Campuses of the University. The special days celebrated were Fiji Day, Diwali, Prophet Mohammed's birthday, Teachers Day, Pinktober and, looking ahead, Movember.

The day's events included multi-cultural performances, speeches, prayers and friendly competitions for best-dressed persons and best-decorated office for Diwali. The University Community was entertained throughout the celebrations by its recently-formed Age of Aquarius Band which was named to signify the dawning of the Age of Aquarius which is the international age for freedoms, equal representation, artistic expression and peace.

The University of Fiji's Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, congratulated the Organizing Committee for its innovative thinking and said that the multi-cultural event marking all special days in October and November 2022 was a unique way to show that the University was celebrating its renaissance after the long period of Covid-19 restrictions.

"At a time when conflict, stigma, discrimination, pandemics, as well as unhealthy and uncouth personal opinions about others expressed publicly by people who should know better are all rife, not only internationally but in the Pacific and Fiji too, the University's multi-cultural celebrations

represented a blueprint for action for the public good. It was an example to others that harmony and unity are much more sustainable for our people and our place, and also for the entire planet”, Professor Shameem said.

She said that the staff and students of the University had a duty to ensure that they caused no harm to people and the environment by hard words or dishonourable actions. The multi-cultural celebrations were an excellent way for the University to exhibit the principle of goodwill with, and for, all the communities in Fiji. If only influencers, persons in authority and power, and those with an economic stake in Fiji, could follow the example of the University of Fiji, everyone would benefit, she said.

Professor Shameem said Diwali especially signified happiness and love. Celebrating Diwali and the other festivals and important dates in October and November provided a signal to the University to ensure it acted for the common good in all that it did. That is the undertaking given in the University’s Strategic Plan 2022-2026 as encompassing its resilience as well as its renaissance, Professor Shameem said.