



The University of Fiji

(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)

The University of Fiji's Centre for Women in Leadership Hosts First Public Lecture – *Watch Women Win*

The University of Fiji's Centre for Women in Leadership had its first public event on Wednesday 21 September 2022 at the University's Samabula Campus. The UniFiji Centre for Women in Leadership aims to provide training and mentorship to women for national leadership.

The keynote speaker at the event was the Group Chief Executive Officer of ANZ Bank New Zealand, Ms Antonia Watson who presented a powerful lecture on the topic "*Watch Women Win*". She elucidated on winning as a female leader, her professional journey especially the lessons learnt along the way, and what it meant for all women.

Watch Women Win was a piece of research that was released in New Zealand by ANZ late last year.

"We launched the *Watch Women Win* report because we were concerned that there was a lack of confidence, a fear of failure and judgment holding back a lot of young women in sports," said Ms Watson.

"It always seems harder to achieve your dreams if you're a girl, woman, or minority. While the barriers seem the same, so too are the solutions - encouragement, having visible role models, supporting others, and celebrating the steps of success and those already achieving," said Ms Watson.

Ms Watson adds building a strong network, supporting and knowing each other is crucial for women to progress in their life.

"Having been a woman leader in the business community for many decades now, I've come to the conclusion that women can only break the glass ceiling of leadership and success if we have male counter parts who see us and treat us as equals," said Ms Watson.

Ms Watson ended the lecture by talking about values that are critical for leading and that values are learned over time and are at the core of who you are as a person. "I want to work with smart, inspiring and good-hearted people because I've found that they generally make for high performing employees who make better decisions for our shareholders, customers, staff and our other stakeholders. I reckon life is too short to work with people you don't like," concluded Ms Watson.

Fiji Women Lawyers Association Vice-President Ms Mele Rakai provided commentary and observations from a Fijian perspective going back in history on the journey and rise of female leadership in Fiji in politics, the judiciary, the legal fraternity and representation of women in corporate boards across Fiji using statistics from the FWRM research released in September 2020.

While there has been some improvement there's still more to be done in Fiji to achieve gender equality, said Ms Rakai.

Moving the vote of thanks, The University of Fiji Student Association Acting President Ms Maca Ratabua reiterated that behind a successful woman is a progressive man who could be her father or her partner to always support her.

The event was held pursuant to the Gender Responsiveness and Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching KPIs in the University of Fiji's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.



Ms Antonia Watson (Left) with The University of Fiji Team and Guests at the Samabula Campus



L-R Professor Shaista Shameem, Ms Antonia Watson, Ms Mele Rakai



L-R Mr Tom Ricketts, Mrs Jane Ricketts, Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem, Ms Mele Rakai, Mr Hemendra Nagin, Ms Sharyne Fong

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