



## Press Release

### **FIJI Water, Neptune Pacific, FNU and Key Stakeholders Strengthen Dialogue with Cal Poly**

**SUVA (17 June, 2026)** – The California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) Training Ship – *Golden Bear* visit to Fiji last week marked an important milestone in the growing partnership between Cal Poly, FIJI Water, Neptune Pacific, Fiji National University (FNU), Ministry of National Planning, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) and the US Embassy.

The vessel's visit provided an opportunity for these key partners to come together for a joint mini summit which explored future collaboration in maritime training, workforce development and industry-aligned career pathways.

The summit built on the relationship established during the FIJI Water and Neptune Pacific Career Centre Summit in California last year, where delegates from FIJI Water, Neptune Pacific and FNU visited Cal Poly to discuss opportunities for international engagement and skills development.

Discussions at last week's mini summit included strengthening maritime training in Fiji, including potential train-the-trainer support, cadet pathways, international exposure opportunities, and ways to better align local training with international standards.

"We acknowledge the contribution of all key stakeholders to support this important dialogue. Partnerships between education, industry, government and international institutions are critical to ensuring Fiji's training programs continue to respond to the needs of our people, our industries and our national development priorities," said FNU Vice Chancellor, Unaisi Nabobo-baba.

The outcomes of the summit will help guide future discussions between the Career Centre, Cal Poly, FNU, government and industry partners, with priority areas identified for further exploration.

"It was via our stakeholder partnerships and discussions that we identified the gap between the skills being developed and the skills needed in practice, particularly within the manufacturing and maritime sectors. That is why last year, an MOA was signed between FIJI Water, Fiji National University and Neptune Pacific to establish a \$14 million dollar Career Centre. The Centre was created as a solution which strengthens industry-aligned

skills training and workforce development in Fiji.” said Director Career Centre, Carol Watkins.

“This year, the focus is foundation-building. We have already begun delivering training across key areas, including manufacturing fundamentals, maritime safety and forklift operations with a goal of training over 300 employees by the end of the year. In 2027, the Career Centre transitions into an institutionalised national model delivered through FNU. And in 2028, the aim is internationally recognised certification,” she added.

Cal Poly Professor Dawn Neill said this mini summit reflected a shared commitment to strengthening maritime education and supporting industry-relevant training.

“This collaboration is about stewardship, partnership and building long-term capability. We look forward to continuing discussions on how we can work together to innovate programmes, review training pathways, connect learning to employment opportunities, build capacity and support practical, phased industry engagement,” Professor Neill said.

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### **About FIJI Water**

FIJI® Water is a natural artesian water bottled at the source in Viti Levu (Fiji Islands). With its iconic square bottle, soft mouthfeel, and with more than double the electrolytes compared to the other two top premium bottled water brands, FIJI Water is the No. 1 premium imported bottled water in the United States. FIJI Water has a perfectly balanced 7.7pH. FIJI Water is available in a variety of sizes, including 330mL, 500mL, 700mL, 700mL Sports Cap, 1L, and 1.5L.

As part of its longstanding commitment to sustainability, nearly 70% of FIJI Water’s global bottle volume is in 100% recycled plastic (rPET) including its best-selling 500mL and 330mL bottles. Since 2007, the FIJI Water Foundation has been committed to supporting environmental conservation and strengthening local communities, investing more than FJD \$47 million in community development, access to safe water, education, health & wellness, and environmental sustainability.

To discover Earth’s Finest Water®, please visit [www.fijiwater.com](http://www.fijiwater.com), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Instagram](#).

### **About Neptune Pacific**

Neptune Pacific, owned by The Wonderful Company, is the leading shipping and logistics company in the South Pacific. Neptune Pacific offers liner shipping and end-to-end supply

chain logistics services between 21 countries and 37 ports across the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Asia, and the Pacific region, including Fiji (Suva and Lautoka), Samoa (Apia), American Samoa (Pago Pago), Tonga (Nuku'alofa and Vava'u), Tahiti French Polynesia (Papeete), Cook Islands (Rarotonga and Aitutaki), Norfolk Island, Kiribati (Tarawa and Kiribati Christmas Island), Tuvalu (Funafuti), Wallis and Futuna, Solomon Islands (Honiara), New Caledonia (Noumea), Vanuatu (Port Vila and Santo), and the Marshall Islands (Majuro, Kosrae, Pohnpei). Currently, Neptune Pacific's fully owned fleet includes 11 vessels supported by onshore logistics assets and a dedicated agency staff. Fiji is more than a shipping hub for the Neptune Pacific Group – it serves as a shared services centre, home to over 460 Fijian team members.

Headquartered in Singapore, the company's operations include ship management and chartering, shipping agencies, cruise agencies, stevedoring (port operations), warehousing, container consolidations, fumigation and customs clearance, trucking and container depot operations, airfreight, and fuel brokerage. For more information, visit [npdlship.com](http://npdlship.com) or follow us on LinkedIn.

### **About FNU**

The Fiji National University (FNU) celebrated its 24th Anniversary in 2024 as a contemporary Fijian educational and training institute dedicated to achieving academic, training and research excellence. Although it was formally established in 2010, FNU has a long and colourful history of relevant education dating back to the origins of its component Colleges through institutions that were established according to national needs and aspirations as these developed. FNU was established through the merger of seven government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji and commenced operations from 15 February 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 26,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last 14 years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Technical Vocation Education and Training (CETVET), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS), Fiji Maritime Academy and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).

### **About Cal Poly**

Cal Poly is a nationally ranked public university located in San Luis Obispo, California, and known for its Learn by Doing philosophy. Each year more than 23,000 top-tier students come to San Luis Obispo to put knowledge into action, taking their learning outside the classroom as they prepare for careers in engineering, agriculture, science, business,

humanities and the built environment. Cal Poly's hands-on philosophy, small class sizes and close student-faculty mentorships result in graduates ready from day one to impact their communities, California and the world. For more information, visit [www.calpoly.edu](http://www.calpoly.edu).