



APTC offers bright future for many

IN less than one year the Australia Pacific Technical College has significantly expanded the horizon for those young men and women interested in a vocational career.

In that time it has established campuses in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu, working with local industry partners and existing educational institutions.

It has enrolled 1,045 students, and graduated 176 with Certificates III and IV in Tourism and Hospitality, Automotive, Construction and Electrics and Manufacturing, Training and Assessment, as well as Health and Community Services.

APTC is an AusAID initiative first introduced into the Pacific Island Forum Nations in October 2006 with monies close to \$150 million provided to fund the project through to 2011.

Its goal is to graduate 3,000 students by that year and with 176 already attaining Certificate III & IV levels, it is



Salimone Ratuvo receives his Certificate from Patrick Wong, Chairman Tourism Fiji, (2nd from right) while APTC GM Antoine Barnaart (left) and CEO Box Hill Institute, John Maddock (right) look on. (see story on page 4).

on target to achieve its aspirations.

APTC is a training centre for excellence. The training is internationally recognised and to Australian standards.

Course delivery is by highly qualified

Australian registered instructors who are managed by Box Hill Institute and Sunshine Coast Institute TAFE.

To ensure that training courses are relevant to local industries, an APTC Advisory Group has been

organised with members drawn from the education sector, regional organisations and governments in the region.

Students from the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are all eligible to apply to study at APTC.

A \$10 million scholarship programme is in place to ensure that those with limited means of support and from contributing countries have an equal opportunity to apply for the skilled training provided by APTC.

The message has been clear: because of APTC, its graduate students will be able to help fill the shortage of skilled labour and contribute to the economic and social development of the Pacific region, offering a bright future for them all.

Welcome

“With the continuing growth of APTC, we believe that it is important that all those involved with the College be kept informed of developments. The introduction of this newsletter is a major step towards this end”

ON the inside pages one will see stories and photographs about a number of graduation ceremonies held in the countries where the students come from.

It is a reflection of the importance that APTC not only places on student training, but on understanding the rainbow of cultures that make up the South Pacific.

time away from their home countries. They are often placed in unique situations, with limited experience, that have tested their abilities to adjust. And yet many have proven again and again that they comfortably fit into the programme.

Their instructors are “amazed” and “delighted” (their own words) at the enthusiasm and commitment to learning that the students across the board have shown, or as one instructor noted, “they are a joy to teach.”

The success of APTC can be attributed to planning, to trainers, selection of courses and the students. The industry and business leaders have contributed so much to its success, and has the outstanding support of the various island governments.

But perhaps the real hero of this success story is the Pacific way. It is a willingness to work together in a spirit of friendship that has set this organisation apart.

There is a way to go before we can all say a job well done. But the journey that has begun has filled us all with the confidence of knowing that we are certainly on the right path.

Calendar of events:

- 03-05 March, GM to Australia, Big Skills conference
- 10 March, Launch of APTC facilities at Port Moresby Tech, PNG
- 10 March, Graduation, PNG Campus
- 16 March, Samoa Graduation
- 19 March, Tonga Graduation
- 23 March, Mid-term Review
- 23 March, Graduation, Vanuatu Campus
- 30 March, Advisory Board Meeting, Nadi, Fiji

Twenty-four graduates in Solomons

SOLOMON Island students graduated in Honiara, October 2008, in an inaugural graduation ceremony held at the Honiara Hotel. The 24 graduates included students who had studied at the APTC School of Tourism & Hospitality (STH) campuses in Vanuatu and Samoa.

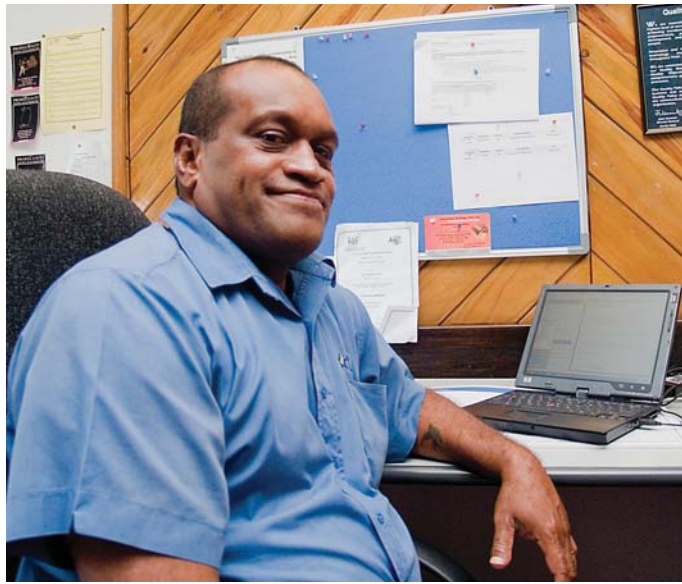
The Special Guests included the Honourable Mr Seth Gukuna, Solomon Islands Minister for Culture and Tourism, and His Excellency Mr Peter Hooton, Australian High Commissioner to the Solomon Islands.

After congratulating the students, Mr Gukuna emphasised that "should the Solomons achieve their target of doubling visitation by 2010, the country will need more Solomon Islanders undertaking APTC programmes."

In his address to the graduates, previous APTC Country Manager, for Vanuatu, Mr Peter Snelson urged the students to build on the skills and knowledge they had gained, to contribute to the development of their country.

Graduate Francis Lilo, now Operations Manager at King Solomon Hotel, thanked APTC, and particularly the trainers, administrators and the support staff for the privilege and the opportunity to study with APTC.

Fiji's TPAF head endorses APTC



TPAF's Director General Mr Jone Usamate

MR Jone Usamate, Director General of the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF) says that the training partnership between APTC and TPAF has many benefits.

Had doubts

"When APTC was first announced, I had my doubts about the addition of another tertiary institution into Fiji and the South Pacific," said Mr Usamate. "I was concerned that APTC would train people who would then migrate to fill shortfalls in the Australian labour market."

"However," continued Mr Usamate, "Since the inception of APTC, I have completely revised my opinion, and I welcome the benefits of the training partnership with our sister institution."

Benefit for trainers

Mr Usamate said that not only did APTC (through AusAID funding) assist with financing facilities such as the new training kitchen at the shared

Namaka campus in Nadi, but also, he could see the benefits for TPAF trainers.

"TPAF instructors are gaining a greater understanding of competency-based training, thanks to APTC. Some of our trainers are being 'attached' to an APTC trainer for up to a year," continued Mr Usamate.

"TPAF trainers have understood competency-based training in theory, but their practical understanding is so much stronger now. The collegial support that TPAF trainers receive from their APTC counterparts continues to be valuable for TPAF staff development, and strengthens their training delivery."

Benefits for students

Mr Usamate sees the benefits of APTC for students as four-fold; the acknowledgement of prior experience, the acquisition of new skills, the potential for further education, and the broadening of life-experience.

"Students seeking enrollment in

an APTC course take competency-based tests prior to admission," Mr Usamate explained. "This means that students undertake study of new material, taking those units required to complete a certificate. They don't have to cover areas where they have already mastered the necessary skills. Students' knowledge and skills are upgraded, but just as importantly, their abilities are acknowledged and validated."

Higher qualifications

Mr Usamate said that the APTC certificate courses provide a pathway to higher qualifications, the highest of which is a diploma.

"Perhaps in the future we should look at extending vocational education to a Bachelor's degree status," he said, "This would be in line with the growing awareness within the community of the value of occupations other than 'white collar', or at the end of an university education. People respect those who have practical expertise, who can get the job done."

Mr Usamate also remarked on the benefits for students of the cross-linkages between APTC and TPAF courses. "This contributes to the portability of education, opening up more possibilities and options for students," he said.

Total educational package

"APTC is hosting all of the Pacific Island Forum countries. Students have the opportunity to travel to other regional countries, which is of particular value to students from smaller island countries. The cross-cultural mix helps all students to expand their awareness and understand why others think differently from them. APTC is providing a total educational package," concluded Mr Usamate.

Gender issues addressed in the workplace



PNG's first woman automotive graduate, Doris Meliwane

"APTC is committed to addressing gender issues in the workplace," said Ms Colleen Peacock Taylor, APTC Monitoring, Evaluation Gender Officer.

"Since the inception of the College, we have encouraged women to apply for training in areas that traditionally have been seen as male occupations," explained Ms Peacock Taylor. Already, South Pacific women have been pioneers in male dominated areas by attending courses at the School of Automotive, Construction, Electrical and Manufacturing.

During 2008, Cindy Liatlatmal from Vanuatu enrolled in Certificate III in Air Conditioning at the

Samoa campus, Doris Meliwane of Papua New Guinea enrolled at the PNG campus in Automotive Technology, Cassandra Crocker of Fiji enrolled in Certificate III in Painting and Decorating, and Eniami Botitu and Eva Meke from Fiji enrolled in the Certificate III in Plumbing at the APTC campus in Samoa.

"Increasing the number of women in vocational and technical fields will result in a more diverse and effective labour market. It will, however, require a long-term effort that needs ongoing support from families, communities, schools and employers," said Ms Peacock Taylor.

Agreement benefits APTC students

APTC students will benefit from a 'Letter of Agreement' that will better prepare them for courses of study offered at APTC campuses.

APTC's G.M Antoine Banaart (left) and Kiribati Secretary Minister of Labour, Taakei Taoaba shown here following the signing of the agreement.

The agreement, signed by APTC and Kiribati Institute of Technology, focuses on competency-

based curriculum reform, enhanced literacy and numeracy teaching, TVET teacher development as well as middle-level leadership and management development, augmented through collaborative activities conducted as a result of the signed agreement between the two organizations.

APTC GM Mr Antoine Banaart (left) and Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Taakei Taoaba (right) sign the Letter of Agreement



Tonga Royalty honours graduates.



Official Party at the APTC STH Tonga graduation. L-R: Andrew Warwick, Acting Chief Justice of Tonga, Sr Koleti Kitau, APTC Tonga Coordinator, HRH Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita, Karl Evans, APTC STH Samoa Country Manager, Anthony Bailey, APTC STH Head of School, Ms Mele Taumoepeau, APTC Advisory Board Member for Tonga and Dr Bruce Hunt, Australian High Commissioner to Tonga.

TONGA celebrated its first APTC graduation ceremony, of special significance to the nine students who were honored by special guest Her Royal Highness, Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita, who was also the keynote speaker.

The students were all graduates of the School of Tourism and Hospitality, with Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) and Certificate III in Tourism (Operations).

In her address to the graduates,

Her Royal Highness spoke about the contribution made by APTC to the people of the South Pacific, and the contribution made to the Tongan economy by the tourism and hospitality industry.

The occasion was doubly special for the graduates, as it coincided with the Princess' birthday. Graduates and the assembled guests joined together in singing "Happy birthday, dear Princess," and wishing her many happy returns of the day.

Nauru's success

APTC, whose continued effort is to provide international training to Australian standards, has reached into every corner of the South Pacific, the latest with the graduation of three students from Nauru.

The students, who attended the School of Hospitality & Tourism in Vanuatu, were welcomed back to Nauru and honoured with a special ceremony held at the Australian Consular Officer's residence.

APTC policy is to hold graduation ceremonies for its students in the island country that they come from no matter the APTC School that they attend in the region.

Diploma level now at SHCS

APTC is now offering Diploma level courses at its School of Health & Community Services (SHCS) at its Fiji campus.

The Diploma in Children's Services and the Diploma in Community Services are being offered in response to the huge demand for qualifications at this level.

The Diploma level courses recognise the prior experience and qualifications of the enrolled students.

The SHCS continues to offer Certificate III in Children's Services at the APTC Vanuatu and Fiji campuses.

First graduation for Kiribati

THE importance of APTC to the people of the the South Pacific was underscored with the graduation of two Kiribati students who are now qualified for employment in the hospitality sector of the region's economy.

Ms Aretati Tewera, Hospitality (Commercial Cooking) and Teitinana Ribanti, Hospitality (Operations) were the first from Kiribati to graduate, presented with their Certificate III by the Guest of Honour Her Excellency, the Australian High Commissioner, Ms. Anne Quinane.

The significance of the event was further demonstrated by the attendance and support by senior Kiribati Government officials, including Teekoa letaake, Secretary, Ministry of Education Youth & Sports and APTC Advisory Board member, Taakei Taoaba, Secretary, Ministry of Labour, and Taam Biribo, Secretary to Cabinet Representing Teitinana and receiving his Certificate on his behalf,



Aretati Tewera with her Certificate III in Hospitality

was his wife, Mrs Ribanti. Teitinana was off-island, already putting his new skills and knowledge to good use in his new employment position.

ACEM graduate a first for Samoa

OLIVA Lapalapa of Samoa recently graduated from APTC's School of Automotive, Construction & Electrical and Manufacturing, (ACEM) with Certificate III in Fitting and Machining.

Of equal significance, were the 14 graduates from APTC's School of Tourism and Hospitality. Eight completed Certificate III in Tourism (Operations), and six were awarded Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery).

All fifteen graduates were looking forward to returning to their places of employment, and putting into practice their newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Among the Guests of Honour attending the ceremony were: the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Hon. Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, who was the keynote speaker; the Minister of Education,



ACEM graduate Oliva Lapalapa

Sports and Culture, Hon. To'omata A. To'omata, and His Excellency, the Australian High Commissioner to Samoa, Mr Matt Anderson.

Three thousand graduates targeted in first four years

THE Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC) initiative was announced at the October 2006 Pacific Islands Forum with the stated goal that '3000 Pacific Islands students will graduate from the College with Australian qualifications in the first four years'.

"This target is well on the way to being met," said Antoine Barnaart GM.

"In less than a year 176 students have graduated with internationally recognised Australian qualifications. This puts us well on target for 2011."

Those graduates attended vocational education and training courses at APTC's four campuses in

Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Fiji.

APTC students have graduated from APTC's School of Hospitality and Tourism, and the School of Automotive, Construction & Electrical and Manufacturing in their home countries of Vanuatu, Nauru, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea.

"We are looking forward to the first graduation ceremonies for students completing courses in the new School of Health Community Services, which has recently joined the APTC campuses in Vanuatu and Fiji, said Mr Barnaart.

Graduation in Fiji for seventeen



Some of the seventeen graduates proudly display their Certificates following the graduation ceremony.

SEVENTEEN students graduated from the APTC School of Tourism & Hospitality (STH) located in Nadi.

APTC offers students from around the region a range of courses including Tourism and Hospitality, Automotive, Construction & Electrical and Manufacturing, and Health and Community Services.

Those that graduate are awarded certificates, qualifying them to pursue their chosen field, trained to an internationally recognised standard of excellence, according to Mr. Antoine Barnaart, General Manager of APTC's.

Mr. Barnaart said that APTC holds its graduation ceremonies in the island countries where the students are from so that they can share that well deserved moment with their families, friends, colleagues and employers.

"In addition to Fiji, we have had graduation ceremonies in Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, PNG, Solomon

Islands, Nauru and Kiribati."

Of the 17 students who graduated from the School of Tourism & Hospitality, one received a Certificate III in Operations, seven received Certificate III in Commercial Cookery and nine received Certificate IV in Supervision.

In presenting the certificates to the graduating students at the School of Tourism & Hospitality graduation ceremony, Mr. Barnaart said, "Your (the students) hard work and success in study as well as the support you have received from those around you shows that you are well qualified for the hospitality and tourism industry."

Joining Mr. Barnaart at the graduation ceremony was the CEO of Box Hill Institute, Mr. John Maddock, and the Chairman of Tourism Fiji Mr. Patrick Wong.

Box Hill is one of the premier educational institutions in Australia and is a partner in the APTC project.

Training at four campuses

SOME may be confused when APTC mentions its four campuses located in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Vanuatu, collectively forming its college.

Campus invokes an image of sprawling grounds, clustered buildings, with students and faculty wandering from class to class, all centred on one site.

Instead, APTC is aligned with existing private and government training and business facilities in each of the four countries it has campuses.

The campuses are defined by their training programmes:

- **Fiji** : School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH) School of Automotive, Construction & Electrical, and Manufacturing (ACEM) School of Health & Community Services (SHCS)
- **Samoa**: School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH) School of Automotive, Construction & Electrical, and Manufacturing (ACEM)
- **Papua New Guinea**: School of Automotive, Construction & Electrical, and Manufacturing (ACEM)
- **Vanuatu** : School of Tourism and Hospitality (STH) School of Health & Community Services (SHCS)

APTC and its schools do not duplicate existing programmes in the island countries where campuses are located, but offer courses that complement and add value to those programmes, as well as to existing qualifications.

New PNG facility opens to graduation

APTC's new AUS\$5 million training facility will be opened later this month in Port Moresby.

Seven ACEM and twenty-seven STH students from PNG will receive their Certificates at a ceremony held at the facility.

These graduates will join the nine PNG students who have already graduated in their home country.

Like Fiji, Vanuatu, and Samoa, PNG hosts one of the four campuses of the College.

**WRITE
TO US**

We will produce the publication on a regular basis to help keep you informed of developments. We are asking for your support. If you would please forward to virgo@connect.com.fj news and/or photographs that you believe would be useful for the newsletter, we would very much appreciate your efforts. **For further information visit www.aptc.edu.au or contact antoine.barnaart@aptc.edu.au**