



L-R: Dr Lohi Matainaho (VC), Mere's husband Siosaia Vaihola, Mere Vaihola (new DVC Admin) and Dr David Tasker (head of school of humanities, education and theology).

## New deputy VC arrives at PAU

Port Moresby, PNG | Kym Piez

Pacific Adventist University (PAU) welcomed its newly appointed deputy vice-chancellor (administration), Mere Vaihola on July 3. Mrs Vaihola, originally from Tonga and a former student of PAU, brings with her extensive experience and strong connections to other Pacific Island countries.

Vice-chancellor Professor Teatulohi Matainaho expressed the significance of having a representative from the Pacific in this role: "We want to maintain the connection with Pacific Islanders, as it has been since the establishment of PAU."

Having previously served as education director for the Trans Pacific Union Mission (TPUM) for eight years in Fiji and Tonga, Mrs Vaihola brings 24 years of dedicated service in the Adventist education administration system within the Pacific. Her warm reception by the students and staff upon her arrival reflects their excitement for the opportunity she has been given. Mrs Vaihola expressed her enthusiasm

and stated her desire to see more Pacific Islanders become part of the university community.

In this new role, Mrs Vaihola will oversee various key areas, including policy and legal services, human resource management, the PAU clinic, communications management, ICT operations and support services, which encompass physical plant operations, development and campus security. She will work alongside the existing management team, which includes the vice-chancellor, provost and deputy vice-chancellor (academic), bursar and the director of student services.

Acknowledging the challenges posed by the pandemic, Dr Matainaho highlighted that the number of students from other Pacific countries had decreased to 66, posing a significant challenge. However, he emphasised that PAU is actively collaborating with Pacific countries to address this issue, and the appointment of Mrs Vaihola is a step in the right direction.



Delegates attended from across the South Pacific Division (Credit: Alexandra Manners).

## Business professionals set their focus on "mission possible"

Port Stephens, NSW | Tracey Bridcutt

Business professionals employed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division (SPD) recently convened for a series of insightful presentations, seminars and workshops, to connect and learn from each other.

The 2023 Business Professionals Convention was held June 5-8 at Port Stephens in northern NSW. With the theme "Mission Possible", the convention brought together 200 delegates from across the SPD, including Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, and representatives from church organisations and institutions such as ADRA, Adventist Media, Adventist schools and retirement villages.

Financial leaders from the General Conference (GC)—treasurer Paul Douglas, under-treasurer Ray Wahlen and associate treasurer Tim Aka—provided a global perspective on church finances. Other international guests included Robyn Kajjura, executive director of the GC Auditing

Service, and James Winegardener, CEO of Adventist Risk Management.

The convention served as a platform for delegates to gain a deeper understanding of the mission and scope of the Adventist Church and their role as accountants, managers, treasurers, CFOs and other business professionals. By exploring innovative strategies and emphasising collaboration, the convention aimed to guide the Church towards growth and change, enabling it to better fulfil its mission and serve the community.

Julie Gotaha, treasurer at the Central Papua Conference in Papua New Guinea, appreciated the missional aspect.

"The convention was mission focused and different from previous ones I have attended," she said. "I learned that there should be a refocus on the mission to the frontline. There is no other greater frontline than the local church. Mission is possible because God is powerful and God is present."