

**THE LAWYERS EXCHANGE AND
DEVELOPMENT (L.E.A.D)
PROGRAMME**

POST REPORT BY SHEKINAH LAW

LEAD 2022:

In September 2022, the LEAD Program facilitated an agreement for the exchange between the Managing Director of Corney & Lind Lawyers (CL), Mr. Alistair Macpherson ("Alistair") and the Principal of Shekinah Law (SL), Ms. Laurel Vaurasi ("Laurel"). Given the demanding schedules, the exchange commenced with Alistair being in Fiji on the 30th of September 2022 and Laurel's time scheduled for February 2023. The deferment presented Alistair the experience and exposure of working in another legal jurisdiction, but a wonderful opportunity for the leaders of the respective firms to work together, exchange ideas and sharpen leadership skills.

Experience and Exposure to another jurisdiction

Having Alistair at Shekinah Law for two weeks proved most advantageous. His wealth of experience in the Australian legal system saw the imparting of knowledge in business structure, billings, work systems, tools, costing structure as well as strategy for human resource and providing extra human resource while on exchange.

Alistair qualified for admission as a Fijian legal practitioner. On Wednesday, 05 October, 2022 he was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of Fiji before the Chief Justice, Mr. Kamal Kumar in Chambers. This was followed by afternoon tea with the Chief Justice, who also attended the same Queensland university as Alistair.



Photos from the Admission Ceremony for Alistair

A successful exchange is not only when the firms benefit but the jurisdiction that the exchange occurs. KILN provided the platform for Alistair to present at a Continuing Legal Education (CLE) session sharing thought provoking nuggets of successfully running and managing a Law Firm and challenging Fiji practitioners to consider afresh their roles as Christian lawyers and Christian leaders of their firms and businesses to be ethical, competent and professional in their work. Wonderful reviews were received with the common thread of thankfulness for the reminder that a lawyer's Christian values was no different from the legal

ethics required from lawyers. It was humbling to hear a teary testimonial from a senior lawyer who was moved by Alistair's presentation.

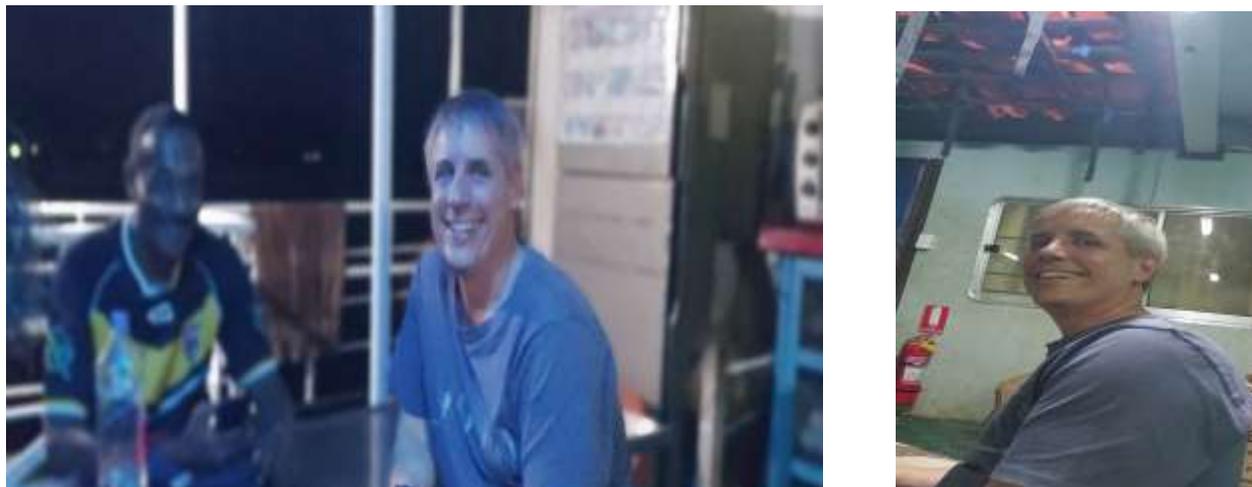
In addition to external presentations, Alistair spent time on file reviews on some of our complex litigation matters, with follow up strategy and input on legal advices and trial preparation.



Alistair also presented on the trends in school law and employment discrimination in Queensland and Australia to a church governance group.

Cross Cultural Learning

On 6 October, 2022, Alistair went with our lawyer Seruwaia Nayacalevu and her family to Buliya, Ono, Kadavu. It was the first time that they were taking their daughter Asena with them, so there was bound to be a number of traditional Fijian ceremonies that would need to take place. It was an opportunity for Alistair to experience the simplicity yet beauty of Fijian village life for 4 days, and also witness the traditional ceremonies, as well protocols that are carried out in the village settings that are rarely observed in the urban areas.



Boat Ride to Buliya

One of the customary protocols that was done is called "Boka". This is when gifts are presented to the Chief and elders of the village that the group will be in the village for a period of time. It is synonymous to the granting of a visa before entering a country, but this time it is for a person to enter, live, sleep and play in the village. Alistair was granted an Open visa by the Chief and Elders of Buliya village. He is now joined to Buliya Village for life. Village life is community and Alistair experienced people sending food daily to the household he was in to assist them with the accommodation of their visitors.



After the completion of all cultural protocols was a visit to a primary school called Natusara Primary School. To get to the school, we had to travel in a punt in the choppy oceans, as the weather had drastically changed that particular weekend.



The school is a boarding school for students between the ages of 6 years to 14 years of age. Alistair visited the classrooms, the library, the dormitory for the girls and the boys, as well the place where their daily meals are prepared and cooked. The visit was an eye-opening experience and one that tugged at the heart strings, especially since a lot of the work that Alistair does in Australia focuses around the area of school law.

Unfortunately, though, there were no sighting of the manta rays that are normally sun tanning on the pathway to Natusara Primary School, as the stormy weather forecast for the

weekend drove them back into the deeper ocean. Nevertheless, the serene and pristine ocean did not disappoint providing some memorable snorkelling experience for Alistair. There was also a moment during the “swimming with manta rays experience”, that Alistair had to dig deep to find his inner “Maui” to jump back into the Boat, but the ocean currents proved a bit too choppy which turned the experience into a “beached merman” experience.

Alistair also attended the Sunday church service, and the Fiji day celebration in Buliya that commemorated the soli (collection of money) for a women's project in Buliya. There was a lot of singing and dancing, which included 5 bowls of kava, before returning to Suva.



Alistair also showed us that behind the façade of a lawyer's suit, he had some other versatile skills like changing a flat tyre. The gruelling runs up the hills of Suva and the circuit trainings after work on a regular basis surely paid off with the balancing efforts it took to ensure that the flat tyre was successfully changed. Towards the end of Alistair's time, we discovered that despite his somewhat reserved personality, Alistair has a wicked sense of humor, that synchronised well with the 'Fijian' humour. You have to be in Fiji to understand and enjoy it.



The Shekinah Law Team farewelled Alistair at the end of his two weeks and looking forward to future opportunities to work together. We have no doubt that Alistair left our shores relaxed and ready to tackle the responsibilities in Australia with new found perspective. Thank you KILN for this great exchange program.