

SOLOMON ISLANDS NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

REPORT

Follow-Up Meeting with Malaita Provincial Government on the Establishment of the Fourth (4th) Campus – Aligegeo, Auki



2 May 2025

(1) Introduction

This report presents the outcomes of a follow-up meeting held between the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) and the Malaita Provincial Government (MPG) on the transfer of land at Aligegeo for the establishment of SINU's fourth (4th) campus the School of Agriculture. The meeting reaffirmed both parties' commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2024 during the Second Appointed Day celebrations of Malaita Province and outlined a strategic roadmap for implementation. The meeting was held at MPG provincial head quarter In Auki, Malaita Province whereby SINU and MPG meet and discuss the way forward on the land to be allocated to SINU by MPG at Aligegeo.

(2) Background

In 2024, SINU, MPG, and the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) signed an MOU committing to the establishment of a new SINU campus in Aligegeo, Auki to be the fourth (4th) Campus for the University. This development aims to decentralize access to higher education and expand opportunities in agriculture and rural development. However, despite the MOU, the formal transfer of land has not yet occurred, prompting a high-level SINU delegation visit to Auki on 2nd May 2025 to advance discussions and implementation plans.

(3) Delegation and Attendance

SINU Delegation:

1. Dr William Parairato – Pro Vice-Chancellor Corporate (PVCC)
2. Mr Darius Ramo – Director, Planning and Development (DIPD)
3. Mr Moffat Selo – Director, Property, Facilities and Projects (DPFP)
4. Mr Edward Biku – Secretary to Council and Legal Advisor (CS)
5. Mr Terere Aaron – Executive Officer, PVC Corporate (EO)
6. Ms Renee Bisili – Senior Marketing and Public Relations Officer

7. Ms Rosemary Kolosu – Planning and Development Officer

8. Mr Wilson Saeni – Public Relations Officer

9. Ms Priscilla Ragu – Marketing and Public Relations Officer

MPG Representatives:

1. Deputy Provincial Secretary

2. Minister for Education, MPG

3. Minister for Planning, MPG

4. Minister for Lands, MPG

5. Representative, Malaita Lands Office

Note: The Premier and Provincial Secretary were in Honiara and thus unable to attend.

(4) Objectives

To follow up with the Malaita Provincial Government (MPG) on the implementation of the MOU sign during the MPG second appointed day in Auki in 2024 on the guise to establish the SINU fourth (4th) Campus and the transfer of Alegegeo Provincial land to the Solomon Islands National University.

(5) Summary of Discussions

1. The MPG's begin by acknowledging the University delegation and commit on their unwavering support for the establishment of the campus at Aligegeo, Malaita Province. This support was reaffirmed as essential for advancing education within the region. The discussions emphasized that the establishment of the campus will not only improve access to higher education but will also contribute significantly to the regional development of Malaita. The central location of Aligegeo, as a hub for all four regions of Malaita, was noted to provide a strategic advantage, offering more accessible education for students without the burden of high travel costs to Honiara.

2. A key focus of the discussion was the transfer of the land title under the 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MPG reiterated its commitment to fulfill its obligations under the MOU, specifically the transfer of the title from the name of the Premier to Solomon Islands National University (SINU). However, it was acknowledged that this process would require administrative procedures in accordance with the Land and Titles Act. The committee also discussed MPG's responsibility to identify alternative locations for the secondary school currently occupying the site, ensuring that students' education would not be disrupted during the transition.

3. The location of Aligegeo was highlighted as a significant advantage for the establishment of the SINU campus. As the area is centrally located in Malaita, it is poised to serve students from all four regions of the province. This would drastically reduce the travel costs for Malaita students who otherwise must travel to Honiara for tertiary education, making higher education more accessible and affordable. The discussion also touched on how this will promote regional equity in educational opportunities, aligning with national priorities for inclusive education.

4. The committee discussed the broader impact of the Aligegeo campus on local development. The initiative was recognized as a catalyst for economic growth, particularly in the agricultural sector. Aligegeo is strategically placed to become a leading hub for agricultural education and research, which will not only benefit the province but also the broader national economy. As such, there was a strong call for SINU to seek donor support and begin the development activities without further delay to capitalize on this potential. The committee also noted that agricultural education could create a skilled workforce, supporting the growth of the agricultural sector in the region.

5. A critical point of discussion was the establishment of a Steering Committee, as outlined in the MOU, to oversee the implementation of the campus project. This committee will play an integral role in managing land transfer, infrastructure development, and stakeholder consultations to ensure a smooth transition. The Steering Committee will be tasked with ensuring that all activities are aligned with the agreed-upon objectives and that the necessary administrative and legal processes are followed. A Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the committee has already been discussed, and the TOR is currently under review by SINU. Once approved by the Vice Chancellor's Office, it will be shared with MPG for final approval.

6. Another significant aspect of the discussion was the management of the transition process, particularly with respect to land transfer and infrastructure planning. It was resolved that the Steering Committee will play a pivotal role in this regard, ensuring that the transition is fair and transparent for all parties involved. The committee also emphasized the importance of regular stakeholder consultations throughout the

process to ensure that all concerned groups, including the local communities, faculty, and students, are adequately informed and involved in the planning and implementation stages.

7. The academic focus of the Aligegeo campus was also thoroughly discussed. Initially, the campus will concentrate on agricultural education, aligning with the region's strengths and the national priority for agricultural development. However, there are plans to gradually expand the range of programs offered, including University Preparatory College (UPC) programs, SINU TAFE programs, and higher education and research programs. This diverse range of academic offerings will help ensure that the Aligegeo campus meets the needs of a wide range of students and prepares them for various professional fields.

8. The committee also took time to discuss SINU's broader expansion plans, which include potential land acquisitions in the Western and Isabel provinces. These plans reflect SINU's long-term vision of extending its educational reach and ensuring that students across the country have access to quality higher education. The discussions also noted that this broader expansion will contribute to the decentralization of education in Solomon Islands, which will further support regional development.

9. A significant challenge raised during the discussions was the accommodation of secondary school students (Forms 1-5). It was noted that the integration of UPC programs into the curriculum for Form 6 and 7 students would require addressing current gaps in the existing education structure, especially since these students are currently undertaking USP's preliminary and foundation courses. The committee agreed that MPG, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), should explore viable options for relocating the secondary school and integrating UPC into the existing Form 6 and 7 curriculum. This collaborative effort will be critical in ensuring that the educational needs of all students are met and that the transition does not disrupt their learning.



1.0.SINU and MPG Team at Aligegeo Land

(6) Way Forward

The following action points were agreed upon:

1. MPG to formally administer title transfer of the Aligegeo land to SINU through the appropriate process stipulated in the land and title Act.
2. Finalize and endorse the TOR, with the first meeting scheduled post-endorsement.
3. Collaborate with Aligegeo School on relocation and transition arrangements.
4. Official announcement of the land transfer to be made during Malaita's 2025 Second Appointed Day celebrations in August.
5. SINU to prepare preliminary infrastructure plans and engage with donor partners.

(7) Conclusion

The Auki meeting marked a critical milestone in the establishment of SINU's fourth (4th) campus. The strong political will demonstrated by MPG, combined with SINU's commitment and coordination, sets a clear and optimistic path forward. Both Parties acknowledged the need to expedite the land transfer process and implement the commitments of the 2024 MOU.

This collaborative effort reflects a shared vision for educational advancement and sustainable development, not just for Malaita but for the Solomon Islands as a whole.