



Shaping the Future: Knowledge, Technology and Nation Building.”

Professor Transform Aqorau
Vice Chancellor
Graduation Speech
April 30, 2026

Chancellor of Solomon Islands National University Dr. Sir Nathan Kumamusa Kere;

Pro-Vice Chancellor and Chair of SINU Council, Dr. Morgan Wairiu;

The Honourable, John Stil Tariqetu, Minister for Health of the Republic of Vanuatu;

Our Distinguished Guest of Honour, Mr James Dolarii, Chief Executive Officer of the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce;

Distinguished Members of the SINU Council;

Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic Dr. Eric Katovai;

Pro-Vice Chancellor Corporate Dr. William;

Members of the SINU Senate;

Respected Deans of the Faculties of the University

Permanent Secretaries and Government Representatives

Members of Diplomatic Corp

Acting Director of the University of the South Pacific KGVI Campus, Mr. Clayton Kum and Staff of USP present

Distinguished Directors and Members of the ITL Education and Scholarship Board of Vanuatu, KALTABANG Christian, Chief Executive Officer, and members of your Delegation

Esteemed Members of the Vanuatu Ministry of Health, Dr. Dr. Santus Wari—Acting Director General, Ministry of Health and members of your Delegation

Representatives of partners institutions, Churches, civil society and the private sector,

Heads of Schools, and Members of our of Academic and Ancillary Staff;

Students here present;

Proud parents, guardians, families, friends;

and, above all, our graduands—good morning and welcome.

It is my great honour, on behalf of Solomon Islands National University, to welcome you to this April 2026 Graduation Ceremony. Today we gather under the theme “Shaping the Future: Knowledge, Technology and Nation Building.” That theme is not simply a slogan for a day. It is a statement of purpose. It reminds us that a university does not exist only to confer awards; it exists to prepare minds, form character, strengthen communities, and help a nation imagine and build a better future.

Today, SINU celebrates a remarkable cohort. We are graduating 1,005 graduands, drawn from a wide range of disciplines and learning pathways across our faculties and schools including 41 international students from Vanuatu. This class reflects the breadth of our university: nursing, medicine and health sciences; education and humanities; business and technology; agriculture, forestry and fisheries; science and technology; technical and vocational education and training; and distance and flexible learning. It is also a cohort that speaks powerfully to widening opportunity and achievement. Of today’s graduands, 632 are female, representing 63 per cent of the graduating class, while 373 are male, representing 37 per cent. This strong female representation is an encouraging sign for Solomon Islands and for our region, because when women and men are both given the opportunity to learn, lead, and serve, the whole nation is strengthened. The largest groups of graduands come from the Faculty of Nursing, Medicine and Health Sciences, with 385 graduands, and the Faculty of Education and Humanities, with 336 graduands—an important reminder of SINU’s contribution to the country’s health, education, and public-service workforce

Among today’s graduates, we pay special tribute to our 33 high achievers—students who have graduated at the top of their programmes with a GPA of 4.0 and above. Their excellence deserves our admiration, not only because of the results they achieved, but because of what those results represent: discipline, perseverance, consistency, and a refusal to settle for less than their best. To our high achievers, we congratulate you warmly. To every graduand here today, we also say this clearly: your journey matters, your achievement matters, and your presence on this stage matters.

Every graduation ceremony tells public stories, but behind every name called today there are private stories too. There are stories of early mornings and late nights; of fees paid through sacrifice; of family responsibilities carried alongside study; of homesickness, uncertainty, disappointment, and persistence. There are stories of people who encouraged you when you were tired, corrected you when you drifted, and stood by you when the road was long.

“In our islands, the wantok spirit reminds us that no one succeeds alone—every achievement is carried by many hands.”

So today, to the parents, guardians, spouses, children, siblings, sponsors, mentors, lecturers, librarians, administrators, technicians, cleaners, drivers, and all who carried our graduates in visible and invisible ways, I ask the university community to join me in saying: thank you. This is your celebration too.

Today is also an occasion to reflect on the purpose of SINU itself. Our university was established to provide quality and affordable education and training for Solomon Islanders and for others who choose to study with us. Official SINU documents describe the university as a leading national institution with a responsibility to help build the country's human capital, create relevant knowledge, and contribute solutions for the Solomon Islands. That mission matters profoundly. In a young nation with great promise, a national university must do more than transmit information. It must nurture capability, courage, integrity, service, and imagination. It must help develop the future thought leaders of the country.

That is why today's theme is so fitting. Knowledge matters because informed societies are stronger, wiser, and freer. Technology matters because the future will increasingly reward those who can adapt, innovate, communicate, and solve problems in changing environments. Nation-building matters because education is never only personal; it is also civic. Your qualification can improve your own life, but its highest purpose is found in what it enables you to do for others—for your family, your community, your province, your church, your workplace, and your country. The direction of government planning in Solomon Islands, as well as SINU's own strategic outlook, places human-capital development, workforce readiness, innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth at the heart of national progress. You, our graduates, now stand at the meeting point between that vision and its practical fulfilment.

We gather, too, at a time of global uncertainty and economic volatility. Events beyond our shores continue to disrupt energy supplies, unsettle markets, and place pressure on the cost of living. For island economies such as ours, these effects are often felt indirectly but acutely—through higher fuel and freight costs, rising food prices, tighter household budgets, and growing anxiety in homes and communities. We acknowledge this reality today with sobriety and compassion, not to overshadow this moment, but to recognise the world our graduates are entering. Yet it is precisely because the world is uncertain that your education matters even more. In times such as these, nations need wise nurses, ethical business leaders, dedicated teachers, resilient farmers and fishers, capable technicians, creative entrepreneurs, thoughtful public servants, and citizens whose minds are steady and whose hearts remain open.

So let me speak directly to the graduands.

First, I encourage you to carry with you a strong sense of responsibility. The qualification you receive today is not just something you have earned for yourself—it carries an expectation. It reflects the investment of your families, your communities, and this country. What you do with it matters. Use what you have learned with honesty and good judgement, and in ways that open doors not only for yourselves, but for others as well.

Second, I urge you to guard your integrity. SINU's own graduate attributes speak of professional leadership, initiative, work ethic, and personal integrity. In every profession, your knowledge may open doors, but your integrity will determine whether people continue to trust you once you walk through them. In a world crowded with noise, shortcuts, and convenience, let your word be dependable, your conduct be honourable, and your service be marked by humility.

Third, I urge you to practise leadership. Leadership is not only about title or position. It is about service, judgement, steadiness, and the courage to do what is right when it is not easy. SINU's strategic documents speak often of leadership, innovation, communication, and entrepreneurship. These are not abstract ideas. They are daily practices. Leadership may mean returning to your community and raising standards where standards have slipped. It may mean starting a business that creates employment. It may mean improving patient care, teaching with excellence, designing better systems, protecting resources, or modelling decency in public life. Whatever form it takes, let your leadership lift others.

Fourth, I urge you to commit yourselves to lifelong learning. Today is a milestone, but it is not the end of your education. Technology will continue to change. Labour markets will change. Knowledge itself will

continue to expand. The most valuable graduates in any generation are those who remain teachable—those who keep reading, keep listening, keep questioning, keep learning, and keep growing. Continue to sharpen your mind and enlarge your understanding. Be curious. Be adaptable. Be willing to learn from people who are younger than you, older than you, and different from you.

As you leave this ceremony, remember also that the Solomon Islands and the wider Pacific face real challenges: climate risks, economic volatility, unemployment, service-delivery gaps, and the pressures of rapid change. But ours is also a region of extraordinary strengths: resilient communities, rich cultures, abundant land and ocean resources, deep faith, and enduring traditions of cooperation and problem-solving. Do not underestimate what this country can become, and do not underestimate what your generation can contribute to that becoming. Your task is not only to inherit the future. Your task is to shape it.

Allow me, before I close, to express sincere appreciation to all who have made this ceremony and the wider work of the university possible: the Solomon Islands Government; the University Council and University leadership; academic and professional staff; the graduation committee; our sponsors and development partners; community and church leaders; families and friends; and our partners in industry and the private sector. Official preparations for this ceremony quite rightly recognised the importance of partnership, including the private sector's role in nation-building. The success of this graduation is another reminder that universities flourish best when the whole community stands behind them.

To the graduating class of April 2026: congratulations. You have earned this day. Wear your achievement with gratitude, but also with purpose. Let your knowledge serve people. Let your skills build communities. Let your character strengthen institutions. Let your leadership bring hope. And let your lives, in all the places you will go from here, bear witness to the truth that education remains one of the surest ways to shape the future of our nation.

I wish to close by quoting one of my beloved Mum's favourite Bible verses, from **Numbers 6:24–26**: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”

May God bless Solomon Islands and the Solomon Islands National University.

Congratulations, and thank you.