



SINU: PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Vice Chancellor's Strategic Leadership Overview

Reporting period: 16 March to 18 July 2026

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Prepared for the University Council, Senate, staff, students and stakeholders of Solomon Islands National University

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Executive Summary

This report provides a strategic account of the direction taken by Solomon Islands National University from 16 March to 18 July 2026. It is intentionally more than a record of meetings, correspondence or isolated decisions. It draws together the principal issues addressed through the Vice Chancellor's correspondence, internal directions, policy papers, speeches, committee engagements and external partnerships, and considers them as parts of a single institutional transformation agenda.

The central argument of this report is that the University's work during the reporting period has been coherent and purposeful. Matters that may appear unrelated when viewed as individual emails - accreditation documents, internal audit investigations, student dialogue, Government grant claims, ERP implementation, staff appointments, programme reviews, campus maintenance, solar energy proposals, commercial ventures, research partnerships and international engagements - are in fact connected. Together, they represent an effort to strengthen the foundations of the University while positioning SINU to serve Solomon Islands more effectively.

The period has been marked by several important advances. The Strategic Plan 2026–2030 was launched and the supporting Academic and Corporate Plans were refined. The University intensified its whole-of-institution effort towards SITESA registration and accreditation, using the Bachelor of Public Administration as an important pathway for learning and quality assurance. Programme review activity increased, including in Fisheries Studies and Business and Tourism, while teaching and learning capability continued to be strengthened through staff development and academic leadership arrangements.

Governance and institutional integrity remained central. Council, Senate, the Senior Management Committee, the Corporate Services Committee and the University Tender Board continued to address policy, compliance and implementation issues. Internal Audit was supported to progress annual planning, risk assessment and investigations concerning matters such as business and commercial services, student rationing, nursing admissions, security procurement, housing rentals, imprests and late enrolment. Legal and governance work also included land matters, employment questions, procurement processes, contract reviews, policy consolidation and accountability arrangements.

The student and staff agenda was equally prominent. Student dialogue was used to bring concerns directly to University leaders, and the emerging Student Wellness function began to organise activities despite staffing constraints. Students accessed opportunities in Melbourne, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. At the same time, the University confronted difficult human-resource questions involving acting appointments, recruitment delays, staff appraisals, study leave, payroll processing, staff housing, salary alignment, conditions for operational employees, training and the need to consolidate and modernise HR policies.

Financial and administrative reform has focused on strengthening reporting, recovering Government funding, modernising systems and improving operational discipline. The University pursued outstanding Government grants, including the recorded figure of approximately SBD 231.56 million, and began preparing quarterly claims in response to Government direction. The TechnologyOne ERP project moved into its design phase, with DFAT support and sustained involvement required from Finance, ICT, HR and Student Administration. These initiatives are intended to address longstanding weaknesses in reporting, payroll, procurement, record-keeping and management information.

Infrastructure and property issues remain substantial. The reporting period included attention to the Faculty of Nursing, Medicine and Health Sciences refurbishment, the University Preparatory College project, Poitete rehabilitation, Ranadi facilities, staff housing, security, signage, vehicle management, ICT equipment, library resources and the maintenance backlog. The University has also begun to consider a more strategic approach to its land, assets, campuses and housing, recognising that recurring maintenance problems cannot be solved through ad hoc expenditure alone.

Financial sustainability and commercialisation emerged as a major strategic theme. Work was advanced on strengthening Business, Investment and Commercial Services, rebranding Lokol Fusion, establishing SINU Ltd, improving events management, promoting accommodation and laundry services, developing official merchandise, and considering commercial and partnership arrangements for SINU Village and

other assets. The proposed solarisation partnership with OKA Technology was framed as a long-term power purchase arrangement requiring due diligence, governance approval and a robust legal framework.

Research and national policy engagement expanded significantly. SINU initiated analysis of the Government's Free Education Policy; developed and discussed work on climate finance, fisheries management, food systems, indigenous knowledge, forestry reform, urban governance, renewable energy and the GREAT policy agenda; supported postgraduate supervision and publication; and explored the development of research centres, special issues, conferences and policy dialogues. These activities position SINU not only as a teaching institution, but as a national source of evidence, analysis and public leadership.

International and domestic partnerships also grew. The University maintained or advanced engagements with RMIT, the University of Newcastle, the University of Melbourne, ANCORS at the University of Wollongong, University of the Sunshine Coast, universities in China and Japan, DFAT, UNDP, KOICA, WorldFish, WWF, Tina Hydro, Honiara City Council, Pacific regional organisations and others. The strategic value of these relationships lies in their capacity to support academic quality, staff development, student mobility, research, infrastructure and institutional credibility.

The report is candid that much remains incomplete. The University continues to face funding constraints, Government arrears, infrastructure deterioration, recruitment delays, limited specialist capacity, policy fragmentation, weak information systems and uneven implementation. The significance of the reporting period therefore lies less in claiming that the transformation has been completed than in demonstrating that the right questions are being asked, the necessary foundations are being laid, and a coherent direction has been established.

1. Purpose, Scope and Strategic Context

I am pleased to provide this overview of developments at Solomon Islands National University since commencing my current term as Vice Chancellor on 16 March 2026. Although the period covered is not yet a full six months, I considered it important to keep Council, Senate, staff, students and stakeholders informed of the University's direction, the progress made, the matters requiring attention, and the choices that now lie before us.

This is not intended to be a catalogue of every meeting attended or every email issued. The volume of correspondence during the period reflects the breadth of issues confronting the University, but volume alone is not evidence of progress. The purpose of this report is therefore to interpret that activity strategically: to identify the underlying institutional questions, assess the significance of the actions taken, acknowledge weaknesses and constraints, and set out a disciplined agenda for the next phase.

The report follows a simple leadership framework: what we planned; what we have achieved; what has challenged us; what opportunities we now see; and what we must do next. It treats governance, accreditation, students, staff, finance, infrastructure, research, partnerships and commercialisation not as separate silos, but as interdependent elements of institutional capability.

SINU enters this period with important strengths. It has a national mandate, a committed workforce, a growing network of partners, a Strategic Plan, expanding postgraduate and research ambitions, and a student body whose aspirations reflect the hopes of the country. It also carries accumulated institutional weaknesses: ageing facilities, policy and systems gaps, inadequate funding, Government arrears, uneven compliance, recruitment and capacity constraints, and expectations that often exceed available resources.

Institutional transformation in such circumstances cannot be achieved through a single initiative. It requires simultaneous attention to governance, people, systems, resources, quality, culture and external trust. Some progress will be immediately visible; much of it will consist of less visible work such as updating policies, clarifying authority, improving reporting, completing due diligence, strengthening contracts, building partnerships and creating implementation discipline. These foundations are essential if the University is to move from short-term problem solving to sustained institutional development.

2. Strategic Commitments at the Beginning of 2026

At the opening of the 2026 academic year, I set out a broad programme for strengthening SINU as a well-governed, academically credible, financially sustainable and genuinely national university. That programme can be summarised in the following commitments:

- Consolidate good governance, institutional integrity, accountability and ethical leadership.
- Complete registration and accreditation requirements and move progressively towards self-accrediting status.
- Improve the quality, relevance and practical orientation of teaching and academic programmes.
- Expand access through provincial reach, Distance and Flexible Learning and more inclusive pathways.
- Improve infrastructure, ICT, libraries, laboratories, accommodation and the broader learning environment.
- Strengthen TVET and practical skills for employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- Build research capacity and increase SINU's contribution to national policy and development.
- Promote innovation, enterprise and the creation of jobs and solutions by graduates.
- Improve financial sustainability through better systems, commercial activity, partnerships and strategic use of assets.
- Develop smart partnerships with Government, industry, development partners and international universities.
- Improve student welfare, participation, leadership and success.
- Invest in staff capability, professional culture, recognition and continuous learning.
- Promote climate resilience, renewable energy and environmentally responsible campuses.
- Strengthen SINU's role in nation-building, grounded in truth, humility, service and the principle that to lead is to serve.

These commitments were never presented as tasks that could be completed within six or twelve months. They are multi-year institutional priorities. The test for the present reporting period is therefore whether SINU has begun to establish the structures, decisions, relationships and momentum required to achieve them.

3. Progress Against the Strategic Agenda

The issues addressed during the reporting period can be organised under thirteen strategic themes. This approach allows the individual matters reflected in correspondence to be understood as connected parts of a broader leadership agenda.

3.1 Governance, Leadership and Institutional Integrity

Governance has remained the organising foundation of the reform agenda. The launch of the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 provided the University with an agreed statement of direction, while work on the cascaded Academic and Corporate Plans sought to translate broad ambitions into operational responsibilities. The correspondence on strategic-plan implementation, cascaded plans and a proposed Vice Chancellor's Office monitoring and evaluation framework reflects an effort to move the University from planning by aspiration to planning by measurable responsibility.

Council, Senate and management processes were also a recurring focus. Matters considered included the routing of motions through the appropriate secretariats, committee meeting arrangements, second-quarter reporting, annual-report contributions, Council appointment and performance policies, fit-and-proper declarations for SITESA, University Tender Board minutes and composition, delegation and authorisation arrangements, and the need for stronger institutional records. These are not merely procedural details. They determine whether decisions are lawful, traceable, implemented and capable of withstanding audit and public scrutiny.

The work of Internal Audit has been actively supported. The Annual Audit Plan and Risk Assessment were progressed, and terms of reference or work plans were developed for investigations into Business, Investment and Commercial Services, student rationing, West Gate security services, nursing admissions, housing rentals, TAFE imprests and petty cash, and late student enrolment. The purpose is not punitive investigation for its own sake. It is to identify control weaknesses, establish facts, protect the University and ensure that management responses lead to systemic improvement.

Legal and compliance issues also demanded sustained attention. These included the successful land and court matters involving University interests, subsequent implementation and handover questions, employment and contract advice, commercial agreements, memoranda of understanding, procurement matters, research agreements and proposed renewable-energy arrangements. The strategic lesson is that legal review must occur before commitments are made, not after difficulties arise. As SINU expands its partnerships and commercial activity, contract management and due diligence must become core institutional capabilities.

Human-resource governance was a particularly demanding area. Leadership transitions, acting arrangements, vacancies and recruitment delays required interim measures to maintain continuity. Correspondence addressed proposed acting HR leadership, the Council Secretariat, the appointment of an Acting Chief Planning Officer, the urgent advertisement of key vacancies, authorisation to sign official documents and payroll timesheets, and the establishment or revival of a taskforce to support appraisals, recruitment and contracts. These interventions were necessary to keep essential functions operating, but they also reveal the need for succession planning, clearer delegations and more resilient systems that are not dependent on individual officers.

There has also been a consistent emphasis on institutional culture. Staff have been encouraged to respect one another, allow professional disagreement without personalising it, uphold appropriate standards of conduct and presentation, and place service to students and the University above sectional interests. Governance is ultimately behavioural as well as procedural. Policies matter, but their effectiveness depends on whether people act with integrity when no one is watching and whether leaders model the standards they expect from others.

Strategic assessment

The University has strengthened its governance architecture and has shown a greater willingness to confront non-compliance. The principal weakness is not the absence of policies, but fragmentation, uneven awareness and inconsistent implementation. The next stage must consolidate policies adopted since 2023, update the HR policy framework, improve access to approved instruments, track management responses to audits, and ensure that decisions of Council, Senate and management committees are assigned, monitored and closed.

3.2 Strategic Planning, Performance and Accountability

The Strategic Plan 2026–2030 is now the central reference point for institutional development. Its value, however, will depend on the quality of implementation. The review of the Academic and Corporate Plans, the proposed monitoring and evaluation framework, and requests for regular faculty and directorate reports show that attention is shifting towards execution.

The 2025 Annual Report has been another important accountability task. Faculties, directorates, Student Administration, Internal Audit, the University Secretariat, the Solomon Islands Maritime College and Properties were asked to complete or correct contributions. Delays in annual reporting are more than an administrative inconvenience: they weaken institutional memory, impede oversight, reduce confidence among Government and partners, and make it difficult to assess trends. The sustained follow-up reflects a determination to restore reporting discipline.

Quarterly reporting through the Corporate Services Committee has similarly been emphasised. ICT, Finance, HR, Properties, BICS, Security, Planning and other corporate functions have been required to report on progress, constraints and next steps. This creates a basis for collective problem solving and reduces the risk that issues remain hidden within departments until they become crises.

The challenge is to avoid a proliferation of plans and reports that are disconnected from resource allocation and management action. Performance information must be concise, reliable and linked to decisions. The ERP project, updated committee reporting and the monitoring framework should ultimately provide a single line of sight from the Strategic Plan to annual plans, budgets, responsibilities, milestones and outcomes.

3.3 Academic Quality, Accreditation and Programme Relevance

Academic quality and accreditation have been among the most important priorities of the reporting period. The whole-of-University commitment to SITESA registration and accreditation, the completion of fit-and-proper declarations, the submission of Bachelor of Public Administration documentation, and the continued work on postgraduate accreditation demonstrate that the University is approaching quality assurance as an institutional responsibility rather than the task of a single office.

The accreditation process matters because it tests whether governance, academic policies, staffing, assessment, curriculum, student support, records and quality assurance operate as an integrated system. The paperwork is demanding, but the greater value lies in the institutional learning it produces. Stakeholder engagement in programme review has also brought employers, ministries, communities and professional interests closer to the design of qualifications.

Programme relevance has been addressed through faculty and departmental engagements. The Fisheries Studies stakeholder consultation examined the knowledge and practical competencies required of future fisheries managers, including coastal and offshore management, community engagement, stock assessment, regulation, technology and at-sea experience. Discussions with the Faculty of Business and Tourism addressed absenteeism, professional recognition, accounting standards, curriculum review, industry links, short courses and staffing. Similar attention has been directed to Nursing, Health and Medical Sciences, Education and Humanities, Science and Technology, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the University Preparatory College and the Solomon Islands Maritime College.

The appointment and support of Associate Deans for Teaching and Learning, the contribution of the Learning and Teaching Excellence Centre, and staff participation in teaching-development programmes are intended to embed improvement within faculties. The University has also begun to confront the implications of artificial intelligence and digital technology for teaching, assessment and academic integrity. The appropriate response is neither denial nor unrestricted use, but guided adoption based on critical thinking, ethical practice and clear academic standards.

International academic partnerships have supported quality and relevance. RMIT engagement has opened pathways in construction and project management; the University of Melbourne student exchange has expanded student experience; ANCORS collaboration supports fisheries and maritime-policy education; and discussions with universities in Newcastle, China, Japan, France and the wider Pacific create opportunities for joint programmes, staff exchange, research and benchmarking.

Strategic assessment

SINU is closer to a coherent quality-assurance culture, but accreditation must not become a deadline-driven compliance exercise. The next step is to ensure that every programme has current approval, clear graduate attributes, appropriate staffing, credible assessment, industry and community input, and evidence of student outcomes. The University should also develop a rolling programme-review calendar and a disciplined process for closing review recommendations.

3.4 Students, Access and the Student Experience

Students are the central purpose of the University. During the reporting period, direct dialogue with students was used to surface concerns and create accountability. Deans participated so that academic and faculty-specific matters could be addressed directly. The dialogue also reinforced that students have responsibilities: to attend, study, respect University processes and use opportunities responsibly.

The emerging Department of Student Wellness represents an important institutional shift from reactive welfare to coordinated student support. Although recruitment and resourcing remain incomplete, activities

have already begun. Correspondence also addressed student representation, the Student Council, the Sports Policy, cultural-night concerns, social events, safety and security, counselling, campus life and the importance of student voices in faculty and University decision-making.

Student mobility has been a visible area of progress. Seven students participated in the University of Melbourne winter exchange, with extensive coordination of examinations, travel, insurance, finance and debriefing. Other students accessed opportunities through a SPREP hackathon in Vanuatu, activities in New Caledonia and joint field-practice programmes. These experiences matter because they broaden confidence, networks and expectations, and demonstrate that SINU students can participate in regional and international academic environments.

Access beyond Honiara remains a strategic objective. Work on Distance and Flexible Learning, including the Western Province report, the proposed delivery of a Diploma in Primary Teaching through DFL, the CDFL Strategic Plan and provincial engagement, reflects the need to serve students who cannot relocate to Honiara. The longer-term ambition for a Malaita campus and possible centres in other provinces remains important, but must be approached through careful demand analysis, programme planning, land arrangements, infrastructure costing and sustainable staffing.

Student experience is also shaped by facilities and administration. Delays in procurement, inadequate internet, classrooms, accommodation, recreation, security and maintenance directly affect learning. The strategic response must therefore connect student welfare to finance, ICT, Properties, academic planning and campus services rather than treating it as a separate activity.

Strategic assessment

The University has improved listening and opened more external opportunities, but it still needs a clear student-success framework covering orientation, attendance, advising, academic support, wellbeing, complaints, careers, leadership and graduate outcomes. Student representation should be confirmed across faculty structures, and the Student Wellness function should be fully staffed and linked to measurable indicators of retention and success.

3.5 Staff Capability, Human Resources and Institutional Culture

The University's ambitions cannot be achieved without capable, motivated and fairly treated staff. Human-resource matters have therefore occupied a large part of the Vice Chancellor's correspondence. These have included leadership transitions, acting appointments, recruitment delays, staff contracts, appraisals, study leave, salary and condition anomalies, staff development, staff housing and concerns about the consistency of HR policy and practice.

Interim leadership arrangements were necessary following changes within HR and other functions. The proposed Acting Director HR arrangements, the temporary support of the Council Secretariat, the Acting Chief Planning Officer appointment, the follow-up on Director Properties, University Librarian and UPC Director recruitment, and the taskforce proposal were designed to preserve continuity. They should be understood as temporary stabilisation measures, not substitutes for completing substantive recruitment and strengthening institutional capability.

The security recruitment grievance highlighted the importance of procedural fairness. An independent review was considered, and directions were issued to reassess or rerun the process. The strategic significance extends beyond one recruitment exercise: staff trust depends on transparent criteria, independent assessment, accurate records and a credible avenue for review.

Performance management has also received attention through appraisals, probation questions and supervisor comments. Study-leave cases exposed the need for clearer rules on applications before departure, salary support, bonding, completion requirements and continuity of service. The proposed transfer of payroll processing to Finance, while preserving HR's approval role, reflects an effort to strengthen segregation of duties and reduce operational risk.

A particularly important issue concerns cleaners, grounds staff, drivers, security personnel and trades employees. Concerns have been raised about salary alignment, inconsistent contracts, senior employees earning less than newer staff, housing allowances and limited training opportunities. The response should

not be confined to correcting pay anomalies. It should include role evaluation, contract standardisation, career pathways and practical life-skills training such as budgeting, financial management, small-engine repair, entrepreneurship, occupational safety and retirement preparation.

Staff housing remains a difficult problem. Existing University houses require substantial maintenance, while the current model does not consistently recover the cost of upkeep. The University therefore needs to distinguish between immediate health-and-safety repairs and a longer-term housing strategy involving eligibility, rents, maintenance responsibilities, possible partnerships and a self-financing staff housing estate.

Institutional culture has been addressed through messages on respect, communication, professionalism, health, bereavement, recognition and service. These matters are sometimes dismissed as peripheral, but they influence morale and trust. Staff need to see that performance is expected, misconduct is addressed, contribution is recognised and personal dignity is respected.

Strategic assessment

The principal HR challenge is fragmentation. Policy, records, recruitment, contracts, payroll, performance and development are not yet operating as a reliable end-to-end system. A consolidated HR reform programme is required, aligned with the ERP, and supported by an updated policy manual, workforce plan, position establishment, salary review, recruitment timetable, training plan and succession arrangements.

3.6 Finance, Administration and Digital Transformation

Financial sustainability depends first on reliable financial management. Monthly and quarterly reporting has improved in parts but remains affected by backlogs, manual processes and incomplete integration. Finance and Procurement have continued to keep the institution operating, often under pressure, but the present system limits timely decision-making and creates frustration for faculties and suppliers.

The TechnologyOne ERP project is therefore one of the most important institutional reforms now underway. Correspondence has addressed project documents, DFAT support, the design phase, Finance modules, ICT infrastructure, project management and the need for active participation by Finance, HR, Student Administration, Planning and executive leadership. ERP is not simply a software installation. It requires process redesign, data cleansing, clear ownership, staff training, change management and disciplined governance over a multi-year period.

Government funding remains a major pressure. The University compiled outstanding grant claims recorded at approximately SBD 231.56 million and engaged the Minister for Finance and relevant officials. Following Government direction, quarterly payment vouchers for the 2026 variance were prepared through the required channels. The work is technically detailed, but strategically it concerns the State's obligation to fund its national university predictably and the University's obligation to support every claim with accurate records.

Budget, procurement and payment processes have also been reviewed through committee reporting, budget policies, purchase orders, customs payments, audit contracts and urgent student travel support. The recurring pattern is that delays often arise not from a single department but from gaps between initiation, approval, procurement, finance, delivery and acquittal. Digital workflow and clearer service standards are needed across the whole chain.

The transfer of payroll processing to Finance, subject to appropriate HR control, is one example of redesigning responsibilities to strengthen internal control. Other administrative priorities include records management, annual reporting, contract registers, asset information, project accounts and clearer treatment of externally funded research revenue through discrete accounts within SINU.

Strategic assessment

The ERP creates an opportunity to move from fragmented administration to integrated institutional management. The main risks are treating it as an ICT project, underestimating data and change requirements, and failing to release capable staff to participate. A strong steering structure, dedicated project management, clear milestones and regular Council reporting are essential.

3.7 Infrastructure, Properties and Campus Services

The condition, use and development of University infrastructure have been persistent concerns.

Correspondence has addressed the Faculty of Nursing, Medicine and Health Sciences refurbishment, the University Preparatory College project, Poitete Campus rehabilitation, Ranadi classrooms and convenience facilities, library equipment, ICT hardware, security locks, signage, post-entry quarantine facilities and numerous maintenance requirements.

The FNMHS refurbishment illustrates the complexity of capital projects. Delivery delays, including electrical switchboard issues, have affected completion. The lesson is that project reporting must cover design, procurement, dependencies, budget, risk and revised completion dates. Council committees need concise exception reporting so that obstacles are identified before they become prolonged delays.

The University Preparatory College project is similarly important because it will influence access, transition and future enrolment. While design work has progressed, internal systems such as ICT, power, furniture and fittings must be resolved early. Buildings should not be treated as complete when the learning systems required to use them are absent.

Properties discussions have also covered Aruligo and Aligegeo land, the master physical plan, staff housing, campus security, the maintenance backlog, Tata buses, idle vehicles, fuel and repair costs, insurance, registration and replacement planning. These issues point to the need for an asset-management approach based on lifecycle cost, utilisation and service need rather than ad hoc repair or acquisition.

Campus appearance and environmental responsibility have been promoted through the Green Campus message, Wednesday clean-up activities and a proposed Cleanest Campus or Department Award. These initiatives have symbolic and practical value: they encourage shared responsibility for the environment and reinforce that standards of care are part of the educational culture.

Safety and security remain essential. The comprehensive residential safety and security framework, land-encroachment concerns, break-ins, security recruitment and the West Gate review show that campus security involves people, contracts, infrastructure, lighting, access, incident response and community relationships. A fragmented response will not be sufficient.

Strategic assessment

SINU requires a costed infrastructure and asset plan that distinguishes urgent compliance and safety works from strategic capital development. It should include condition assessments, project prioritisation, preventive maintenance, vehicle and fleet strategy, energy performance, space utilisation, student accommodation, staff housing and land-development options.

3.8 Commercialisation and Financial Sustainability

The University has begun to move commercialisation from a collection of small activities towards a more deliberate institutional strategy. Discussions with Business, Investment and Commercial Services addressed governance, staffing, risk, revenue targets, events management, accommodation, Lokol Fusion, the bookstore, merchandise, printing, IT services, the SINU Lodge and the establishment of SINU Ltd.

This work is necessary because Government subvention alone will not finance the University's ambitions. However, commercialisation must not be pursued through weak controls or informal arrangements. The BICS internal-audit work and management responses underline the need for clear business cases, delegated authority, cash and inventory controls, pricing, contracts, reporting and separation between commercial risk and core academic funds.

Several practical initiatives have been advanced. These include promotion of laundry services for guest apartments, establishment of an official gifts and merchandise inventory, a dedicated events-management team, rebranding Lokol Fusion, improved use of SINU Village and consideration of the National Trade Fair. In the Trade Fair discussions, potential discounts were linked to measurable trade-offs such as facility improvements, services, visibility or long-term value, rather than being treated as uncosted concessions.

The concept of SINU Ltd offers a possible vehicle for commercial activity, but its purpose, ownership, governance, tax position, reporting, relationship with SINU and risk limits must be carefully designed. A

company is not a substitute for fixing weak business processes inside the University. It should be established only where it provides a clear legal and commercial advantage.

Property and partnership models also form part of financial sustainability. Staff housing, student accommodation, commercial space and energy projects may be suitable for public-private partnerships if they transfer appropriate risk, protect University land, provide value for money and are supported by transparent procurement and Council approval.

Strategic assessment

The University has identified a credible portfolio of revenue opportunities. The next step is to prioritise them, prepare business cases and establish a commercial governance framework. The strongest early opportunities are likely to be those closely related to existing assets and capability: accommodation, events, short courses, consultancy, merchandise, food services, printing, facilities hire and professional services.

3.9 Research, Innovation and National Policy Leadership

The reporting period has seen a significant expansion of research and policy engagement. A recurring theme is that SINU should not wait for national policy to be completed before offering expertise. The initiative on the Government's Free Education Policy demonstrates this approach. Staff from education, finance, planning, TVET, research, business and other areas were invited to examine what 'free' means, which costs are covered, how the policy will be funded, and what its implications are for access, quality, institutions, households and the national budget.

The value of this initiative lies in moving beyond slogans to evidence. Free education may mean the removal of tuition fees, full Government financing, targeted support or a cost-sharing arrangement. Each model has different consequences. SINU's role is to clarify those consequences and provide Government and the public with practical options, not simply endorse or oppose the policy.

Other national-policy work has included the GREAT Coalition Statement of Policies, forestry-sector reform, Bina Harbour, renewable energy and electricity costs, food systems, climate finance, infrastructure asset management, land and peace, urbanisation, fisheries allocation and management, ocean governance, maritime security and the concept of an Ocean of Peace. These activities demonstrate the breadth of expertise that can be mobilised across SINU and its networks.

Research development has also included postgraduate supervision, review of a PhD proposal on fisheries governance, external supervision support, thesis feedback, publication in high-quality journals, special issues on the Pacific Blue Economy and small-state economic diplomacy, research on female death registration, fisheries capacity building, canoe and cultural-heritage research, indigenous knowledge, traditional pharmacopoeia and the proposed Pacific Doctoral School.

Institutional research governance remains important. Correspondence has addressed ethics, governance of research in Solomon Islands, commercialisation, external funding, project accounts, adjunct appointments, intellectual contribution and the return of research findings to communities. As research grows, SINU must protect participants, recognise indigenous knowledge, manage funds transparently and ensure that partnerships build local capability rather than merely extract data.

The Innovation Hub and proposed centres in climate resilience, indigenous knowledge, food systems and related areas create opportunities to connect research, teaching, enterprise and public policy. Conferences and dialogues such as POPCCC, the Climate Finance Symposium, PIPSA 2027, the Island Food Council and fisheries workshops can position SINU as a convening institution for national and regional problem solving.

Strategic assessment

Research activity is growing, but it needs stronger institutional coordination. Priorities include a research strategy, thematic clusters, grant support, ethics and contract systems, project financial management, publication incentives, postgraduate supervision standards and a deliberate process for translating research into policy, community benefit and teaching.

3.10 Partnerships and International Engagement

Partnerships have been pursued as instruments for institutional development rather than ceremonial relationships. Engagement with the University of Newcastle has identified multiple possible streams, including academic collaboration, staff exchange and institutional support. RMIT discussions have focused on construction management, project management, staff exchange and practical tools. The University of Melbourne exchange has directly benefited students, while ANCORS collaboration supports fisheries and maritime-policy education and research.

Relationships with universities and institutions in China and Japan have included the Smart Agriculture Joint Laboratory, Yangzhou University training, the China Universities Joint Implementation Committee, Ocean University of China field practice, University of Tokyo arrangements, Kyoto University and other capacity-building opportunities. These engagements require careful coordination so that MoUs lead to work plans, responsibilities, resources and measurable outcomes.

Development-partner engagement has included DFAT support for ERP, hardware and security-studies initiatives; UNDP agreements relating to the SAFE project and the Innovation Hub; KOICA renovation arrangements; Climate Investment or Conservation International agreements; Erasmus opportunities; and dialogue with the World Bank. Each arrangement must be aligned with SINU priorities and supported by appropriate financial, legal and reporting systems.

Domestic partnerships are equally important. Work has progressed with Honiara City Council, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Tina Hydro, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Solomon Power and energy stakeholders, the business community, churches, professional bodies and provincial authorities. The proposed Pacific Food Revolution and Island Food Council partnership reflects the potential to connect research, food systems, health, culture and public engagement.

Regional networks have expanded SINU's visibility. Participation in PAS, PIURN, PIPSA, the Pacific Peace and Security Dialogue, fisheries ministerial processes, WorldFish, WWF and other networks supports research, leadership and regional influence. Hosting PIPSA 2027 and contributing to major regional conferences will require early planning, funding and internal coordination.

Strategic assessment

SINU now has a substantial partnership portfolio. The risk is that agreements multiply faster than implementation capacity. A central partnership register and review process should record objectives, obligations, responsible units, expiry dates, funding, outputs and strategic value. Low-activity MoUs should be closed or renewed only with a credible work plan.

3.11 TVET, Workforce Development and Employability

TVET is central to SINU's national mandate. The proposed governance and organisational structure for TAFE, collaboration with rural training centres, practical programme delivery and attention to trades and technical occupations reflect the reality that national development requires a broad range of skills, not only academic degrees.

The University has also considered professional and short-course opportunities in fisheries, security studies, project management, construction, digital skills, agriculture, ocean governance and other fields. These can support workforce development while creating revenue, provided that quality assurance, costing and credentialing are clear.

Employability must become an explicit measure of programme success. Employer input, internships, field practice, professional accreditation, entrepreneurship and graduate tracking should be built into programme design. The objective is not simply to graduate students, but to ensure that they can perform competently, create livelihoods and contribute to their communities.

3.12 Climate Resilience, Energy and Environmental Sustainability

Energy cost and security have become major strategic concerns. Correspondence on electricity costs, the national 5 MW solar and battery project, University-wide solar planning and the proposed OKA

Technology arrangement reflects a recognition that dependence on diesel-generated electricity creates financial and operational vulnerability.

The proposed OKA model is essentially a solar power purchase agreement: the provider would finance, install, own, maintain, repair and replace the solar assets, while SINU would purchase the electricity produced. This approach could reduce capital pressure, but it creates long-term obligations and technical, legal and financial risks. It therefore requires energy-demand data, site assessment, tariff modelling, performance standards, grid and Solomon Power arrangements, insurance, land and roof rights, termination provisions, handback, dispute resolution and approval through management, the Physical Resources Committee, the Finance and Investment Committee and Council.

Environmental sustainability extends beyond energy. The Green Campus initiative, clean-up activities, climate finance work, research partnerships, food systems, biodiversity and environmental monitoring with Tina Hydro, and the proposed climate-resilience agenda position SINU to model responsible practice and contribute to national adaptation.

The University should also use its campuses as living laboratories. Solar performance, water use, waste, biodiversity, sustainable buildings and food systems can be integrated into teaching and research, allowing infrastructure investment to produce academic as well as operational value.

Strategic assessment

Solarisation is a high-potential opportunity, but it should proceed through competitive, evidence-based due diligence. A broader sustainability plan should set targets for energy, emissions, water, waste, campus environment and climate resilience, linked to capital planning and research.

3.13 Nation-Building and Public Leadership

SINU's responsibilities extend beyond its campuses. As the national university, it must contribute to the country's public life through education, research, convening and principled leadership. This has been reflected in Independence messages, public commentary, policy papers, national dialogues and engagement with Government, media, industry and communities.

The recurring values have been truth, service, responsibility, accountability and national unity. The message that 'To Lead is to Serve' has practical implications for the University: leaders must be accountable; staff must place students and the institution before personal interests; graduates must carry a responsibility to their communities; and research must address real national needs.

The University's engagement with fisheries, forestry, free education, climate, energy, urbanisation, peace and security, food systems and governance illustrates how academic expertise can contribute to policy. It also creates a responsibility to be careful, evidence-based and non-partisan. SINU should be a place where difficult questions can be examined honestly and where competing views can be discussed respectfully.

Cultural and historical work - including canoe research, indigenous knowledge, traditional music, the National Panpipe Festival and heritage partnerships - is also part of nation-building. A modern university should not force a choice between global knowledge and Solomon Islands identity. Its role is to preserve, critically examine and renew both.

4. Cross-Cutting Challenges

4.1 Funding uncertainty and Government arrears

The most immediate structural challenge is financial uncertainty. Government subvention remains essential, but substantial arrears and irregular cash flow constrain procurement, maintenance, staffing and programme delivery. Recovery efforts must continue, but SINU must also improve the quality and timeliness of claims, reporting and engagement with MEHRD, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.

4.2 Institutional capacity and dependence on a small number of staff

Many reforms depend on a limited number of experienced officers who already carry heavy workloads. Vacancies, acting arrangements and specialist gaps slow implementation and increase organisational risk. Capacity development must therefore be linked to workforce planning, succession, mentoring and targeted external support.

4.3 Fragmented and outdated systems

Manual and disconnected systems affect finance, payroll, procurement, HR, student records, reporting and asset management. The ERP will address part of this problem, but only if processes and data are improved at the same time. Digitising a weak process will not make it sound.

4.4 Infrastructure deterioration and maintenance backlog

The University's campuses require more investment than available funds can currently support. Reactive maintenance consumes resources without resolving underlying asset problems. Prioritisation based on safety, academic need, lifecycle cost and strategic value is essential.

4.5 Policy fragmentation and uneven compliance

Policies adopted over several years are not always consolidated, accessible or understood. In some cases, practice has continued under older documents. This contributes to inconsistent decisions and grievances. A controlled policy register, regular review and staff communication are needed.

4.6 Recruitment, HR and industrial-relations pressures

Leadership vacancies, delays in recruitment, salary anomalies, contract quality, staff housing and performance issues place pressure on morale and service delivery. Reform must be procedurally fair and financially realistic, while addressing long-standing inconsistencies.

4.7 Implementation discipline

SINU has no shortage of ideas, plans or partnerships. The greater challenge is implementation: assigning ownership, sequencing tasks, budgeting, reporting and closing actions. Management must resist the temptation to begin more initiatives than the University can sustain.

4.8 Balancing urgent operations with long-term transformation

Senior leaders are frequently drawn into operational problems that should be resolved through routine systems. This reduces time for strategic leadership. Strengthening delegations, service standards, management capability and escalation protocols will be necessary if the executive is to focus on institutional transformation.

5. Strategic Opportunities

Accreditation as a platform for quality

The SITESA process can be used to establish a permanent quality culture, improve programme relevance and increase confidence in SINU qualifications.

ERP-enabled institutional management

TechnologyOne can integrate finance, HR and student administration, improve reporting and support evidence-based decisions.

Renewable energy and lower operating costs

A well-designed solar programme could reduce exposure to electricity costs while creating teaching and research opportunities.

Commercial and professional services

Short courses, consultancy, events, accommodation, food services, merchandise, printing and property use can diversify revenue.

National policy leadership

Free education, fisheries, climate, food systems, forestry, urban governance and energy provide opportunities for SINU to become the country's trusted policy resource.

Provincial and flexible access

DFL and carefully planned provincial centres can extend the national reach of the University without replicating a full Honiara campus model in every location.

International partnerships

Current partnerships can support staff development, mobility, joint programmes, research and infrastructure when tied to clear work plans.

Research centres and postgraduate growth

Thematic centres and stronger postgraduate systems can create a distinctive national and regional research profile.

Workforce and TVET leadership

SINU can respond directly to skills shortages through credible vocational, professional and micro-credential programmes.

Fiftieth Independence and national renewal

The approach to Solomon Islands' fiftieth anniversary creates an opportunity for research, publications, public dialogues, cultural work and national reflection led by SINU.

6. Priorities for the Next Six Months

1. Complete key SITESA requirements and establish the post-registration quality programme

Complete outstanding registration actions; maintain whole-of-University engagement; confirm a rolling programme-review schedule; track academic-policy implementation; and strengthen evidence on graduate outcomes.

2. Translate the Strategic Plan into a disciplined performance system

Finalise and endorse the Academic and Corporate Plans; approve the monitoring and evaluation framework; assign executive ownership; and provide regular progress reports to Council.

3. Stabilise Human Resources and complete priority recruitment

Resolve substantive leadership appointments; consolidate HR policies; complete recruitment in key functions; implement fair appraisal and study-leave processes; and begin salary and contract rationalisation.

4. Strengthen financial management and recover Government funding

Continue quarterly claims and arrears engagement; improve monthly reporting; strengthen procurement workflow; maintain discrete project accounts; and ensure that budgets align with strategic priorities.

5. Protect and deliver the ERP programme

Confirm governance, project management and staff participation; map and redesign processes; clean data; manage change; and report risks and progress regularly.

6. Prioritise infrastructure, maintenance and asset management

Complete condition and risk assessments; progress FNMHS and UPC projects; adopt a fleet strategy; address urgent safety works; and develop a costed medium-term capital plan.

7. Improve student success and campus life

Fully establish Student Wellness; confirm student representation; strengthen advising and careers; respond to student-dialogue commitments; and improve communication on services and responsibilities.

8. Advance a focused commercialisation programme

Approve a commercial governance framework; develop business cases for priority activities; progress SINU Ltd only after due diligence; improve BICS controls; and create realistic revenue targets.

9. Progress solar due diligence and the sustainability agenda

Collect energy data; undertake technical and legal due diligence; compare delivery options; follow the proper committee pathway; and develop a broader campus sustainability plan.

10. Build a coordinated research and policy platform

Complete the Free Education analysis; support research clusters; improve ethics and grant systems; advance policy dialogues; and link research outputs to Government, communities and teaching.

11. Convert partnerships into measurable outcomes

Create a partnership register; assign responsible units; close inactive agreements; and focus executive attention on partnerships with clear benefits for students, staff, research or infrastructure.

12. Strengthen communication and institutional culture

Provide regular staff updates; recognise achievement; address misconduct fairly; promote respectful professional disagreement; and reinforce the shared responsibility to serve students and the nation.

7. Closing Reflection

The period from 16 March to 18 July 2026 has not completed the transformation of Solomon Islands National University. It has, however, clarified the direction of travel and brought many of the University's most important issues into a common strategic frame.

We have established and launched the Strategic Plan, intensified the accreditation effort, strengthened programme review, engaged students and staff, progressed ERP implementation, pursued Government funding, confronted governance and HR weaknesses, advanced infrastructure and commercial discussions, expanded research and policy engagement, and deepened a wide range of partnerships. Each of these areas remains unfinished, but the foundations are more visible and the institutional conversation is more honest.

The next phase must be characterised by disciplined implementation. We must complete what we have started, make choices about priorities, allocate responsibility clearly, measure progress and be willing to stop activities that do not advance the University's mission. We must also continue to communicate openly about constraints. Trust is not built by pretending that difficulties do not exist; it is built by acknowledging them, acting fairly and showing steady progress.

I remain deeply appreciative of the Chancellor and Council, Senate, the Pro Vice Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Heads of School, managers, academic and professional staff, our unions and staff associations, students, partners and friends of the University. The progress described in this report is collective. Where there are shortcomings, they must be addressed collectively as well.

SINU's opportunity is larger than the improvement of one institution. A stronger national university can help create a more capable public service, a more productive economy, healthier communities, stronger national debate and a generation of graduates who lead through service. That is the purpose that must continue to guide us.

Appendix A: Issues Reflected in Vice Chancellor Correspondence

The following thematic register identifies the principal matters reflected in Vice Chancellor correspondence during the reporting period. It is included to show the breadth of engagement underpinning the strategic analysis in this report. It is not a complete email-by-email chronology.

Governance, Council, Senate and compliance

- Strategic Plan 2026–2030 launch, cascaded Academic and Corporate Plans and monitoring framework
- Council governance, performance evaluation and member-accountability policy
- Council appointment policy and fit-and-proper declarations
- Senate motions and academic policies
- Senior Management Committee and Corporate Services Committee reporting
- University Tender Board minutes, composition and procurement oversight
- Delegations, document-signing and payroll authorisations
- Policy consolidation and updating of HR policies
- Annual reports and institutional reporting
- Internal Audit annual plan, risk assessment and investigation terms of reference
- Land and court matters, implementation of orders and legal handovers
- Contract, MoU, LOA and due-diligence reviews

Academic quality, teaching and accreditation

- Whole-of-University SITESA registration and accreditation effort
- Bachelor of Public Administration accreditation documentation
- Postgraduate Diploma and programme accreditation
- Programme reviews in Fisheries, Business and Tourism and other faculties
- Associate Deans Teaching and Learning
- Learning and Teaching Excellence and UTS-supported staff development
- Artificial intelligence and digital literacy
- University Preparatory College appointment and project
- Fisheries manager competencies and stakeholder consultation
- Professional accreditation and employer engagement

Students and access

- Vice Chancellor–student dialogue and meetings with SINUSA
- Student Wellness Department and student-support activities
- Student representation in faculty and University governance
- Sports Policy, cultural representation and social events
- Melbourne winter exchange for seven students
- SPREP hackathon and New Caledonia opportunities
- Distance and Flexible Learning and Western Province report
- Proposed Diploma in Primary Teaching through DFL
- Student travel, insurance, examinations and financial support
- Campus safety, accommodation, recreation and welfare

Staff and Human Resources

- Interim HR leadership and Council Secretariat arrangements
- Acting Chief Planning Officer and other acting appointments
- Recruitment of Director Properties, University Librarian and UPC Director

- Security recruitment grievance and independent review
- Performance appraisals and probation policy questions
- Study leave, salary support, bonding and retrospective cases
- Payroll processing transfer to Finance
- Salary, contract and housing-allowance issues for operational employees
- Training for cleaners, drivers, gardeners, security and trades staff
- Staff housing, maintenance and future housing-estate models
- Staff associations, communication, morale, professional conduct and wellbeing

Finance, systems and administration

- Outstanding SIG grants of approximately SBD 231.56 million
- Quarterly payment vouchers and engagement with Finance and Treasury
- Monthly and quarterly financial reporting
- TechnologyOne ERP design and DFAT support
- ICT and hardware requirements
- Procurement, customs and purchase-order delays
- Project accounts and treatment of research revenue
- Budget policies, audit contracts and financial controls
- Records, annual reports and management information

Infrastructure, properties and services

- FNMHS refurbishment and switchboard delays
- University Preparatory College design and internal systems
- Poitete Campus rehabilitation
- Ranadi classrooms, marine engineering facilities and signage
- Staff housing and University-owned residences
- Aruligo, Aligegeo, Tulagi and other land matters
- Master physical planning
- Vehicle fleet, Tata buses, idle vehicles, fuel, repairs and replacement
- Security locks, access, lighting, break-ins and residential safety
- Library equipment, UPS, desktop computers and mesh support
- Green Campus, clean-up activities and Cleanest Campus Award

Commercialisation and enterprise

- BICS governance, staffing, internal audit and revenue strategy
- Lokol Fusion rebranding
- Establishment of SINU Ltd
- Bookstore, merchandise, printery and IT services
- SINU Lodge and guest accommodation
- Laundry service for guest apartments
- Dedicated events-management team
- SINU Village and National Trade Fair partnership terms
- Official gifts and merchandise inventory
- Consultancy, professional training and property income

Research, policy and innovation

- Free Education Policy concept note and SINU-led analysis
- GREAT Coalition policy statement and SINU's contribution

- Climate Finance Symposium and climate-resilience agenda
- Fisheries policy, management, capacity and regional developments
- Bina Harbour, forestry reform and national development proposals
- Food systems, Island Food Council and Pacific Food Revolution
- Indigenous knowledge, traditional music and National Panpipe Festival
- Canoe, tomoko and cultural-heritage research
- Female death-registration research
- Postgraduate supervision and PhD proposal development
- Marine Policy and other special issues and publications
- Research commercialisation, ethics, governance and project funding
- Innovation Hub, entrepreneurship and startup support

Partnerships and external engagement

- RMIT, University of Newcastle and University of Melbourne
- ANCORS and University of Wollongong
- University of Sunshine Coast and Pacific university networks
- China Universities JIC, Yangzhou University and Smart Agriculture Joint Lab
- Ocean University of China field practice
- University of Tokyo, Kyoto University and other Japan partnerships
- DFAT, UNDP, KOICA, World Bank and Erasmus initiatives
- Tina Hydro research, biodiversity and scholarship partnership
- Honiara City Council implementation plan
- Ministry of Health and Medical Services MoU
- WorldFish, WWF, SPREP, PAS, PIURN and PIPSA
- Pacific Peace and Security Dialogue and regional leadership
- PIPSA 2027 hosting and POPCCC planning

Climate, energy and sustainability

- University-wide solar PPP planning
- OKA Technology solar power purchase arrangement
- National 5 MW solar and battery project
- Electricity-cost reduction and energy-security advocacy
- Green Campus and environmental standards
- Climate finance, adaptation and disaster resilience
- Environmental monitoring and biodiversity research

Nation-building and public leadership

- Independence anniversary messages and University participation
- Public commentary on peace, security, governance and regional affairs
- Government policy launches and public dialogues at SINU
- Education, youth and leadership messages
- Women's leadership and WELSI participation
- National investment, landowner and development dialogues
- Truth, service, accountability and "To Lead is to Serve" as institutional values