

## Australian High Commission Media Release

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Australia Awards graduate: “If I can do it, so can you”

For Australia Awards alumnus Mulipola Laki Lafaele, pursuing his Bachelor’s Degree in Australia was a dream come true.

In December 2017, he realised this dream when he completed a Bachelor in Digital Media from the Central Queensland University (CQU). He is set to graduate in March 2018.

The 48-year-old had worked at the National University of Samoa (NUS) for more than 10 years but felt he needed to back up his experience with a formal qualification.

Mulipola recently returned to work at NUS as the Audio Visual Editor in the Multimedia Unit after three years of study in Australia. The chief from Manono village said his Bachelor’s Degree will take his career to the next level.

“I was in this role before I took up this scholarship and I have returned with skills and knowledge that can lift the standard of my work.

These skills can be applied in a variety of fields associated with design, technology and media,” said Mulipola.

He said the course structure allowed him to focus on his strengths and pursue other areas of study including illustration and visualisation, interaction and web design, digital design and communication, mobile application development, digital video and sound, advanced 3D animation and marketing fundamentals.

In his current role, Mulipola is responsible for a variety of tasks, such as helping students with computing studies or with video and sound compilations for their course work.

He also resolves technical issues that lecturers have with the equipment used to deliver their course materials.

“My work is very wide ranging – some days I am out in the field filming case studies for student projects, the next I am here in my office here in my office doing designing and editing work.”

He has taken a keen interest in producing advertising material for the university.

“I really enjoy graphic design and visual effect so I like to design ads for the media and get the word out about studying here at NUS.

I think what we generate about the university in the media is very important so we have to ensure we get the right images and information and compile in a way that can appeal to our target audiences.”

He chose to study Digital Media not only because it aligns well with his current role, it also is his passion.

“The uniqueness and the demand in this area will also open up better opportunities for me. Technology is the gateway to the future and I believe keeping up with all the advancements in technology will help me move forward in my career.”

Mulipola said going to Australia to complete his degree was the best experience of his life and thanked his lecturers and peers for his success.

“International students are always well informed of their rights as students and the support services available to us were of a very high standard.

The help I received from the [CQU] staff was amazing. I can testify that if it wasn't for this help, I wouldn't be here right now.”

Mulipola was actively engaged in the CQU student community. He was the founder and President of the first CQU Samoan Students Association.

But the best thing about his study was the quality of the courses he undertook.

“I was always learning something new and felt we were always ahead of the game in the field we were studying.”

Mulipola heard about Australia Awards from a colleague who had previously graduated under the program.

“I would encourage other Samoans, especially those who have experience but are not yet qualified in their field, to apply for an Australia Award.

If I can do it, so can you.”

He says his employer – NUS – was supportive of his application and even allowed him to take leave with pay for part of his study.

Mulipola is from Vaiusu, Palauli Savaii, Satoalepai, Avao and Manono.

He was educated at Falevalu Primary School, Itu o Tane No 1 High School in Savaii and Vaipouli College. He has returned to Samoa to serve his bond under the scholarship. Mulipola studied in Australia for three years and lived there with his wife and three of his five children.

Australia Awards offer the next generation of global leaders the opportunity to undertake studies in specialised fields that align with human development priorities in the applicant's country of origin.