



The Campus This Week

ISSUE 136 | Friday May 2, 2025

Hombunaka urges graduates to make national impact

OUR VISION

Advancing Knowledge for Sustainable Development

OUR MISSION

To develop into a sustainable University through delivery of innovative research, quality teaching and learning, developing staff and students as alumni agents for positive change.

OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

CHANCELLOR

Chief Dr. John Momis

PRO-CHANCELLOR

Mr. Martin Maden

VICE-CHANCELLOR

Professor Aisak G. Pue

ACTING PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

Mr. Peter Navus

PRO VICE CHANCELLOR (PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT)

Dr. Livingstone W. Tavul

REGISTRAR

Mrs. Jennifer G. Popat

ACTING BURSAR

Mr. Hillic Weanzinga

GRADUATES of PNG UNRE have been encouraged to make a difference in their workplaces and remain positive as they help drive the country forward over the next 50 years.

This call was made by Potaisa Hombunaka, Project Manager with Coffee Industry Corporation (PACD) when he delivered the keynote address during the University's 28th Graduation Ceremony last Friday (April 25).

Acknowledging the current economic challenges facing Papua New Guinea, Mr Hombunaka reminded the graduates that they had been trained to work the land to help the 90% of the population who have yet to fully benefit from the country's wealth.

He encouraged the students that with the qualifications they had attained from UNRE, the future of Papua New Guinea is now in their hands for the next 50 years.

He urged them not to join the negative workforce but to focus instead on



▲ Mr Potaisa Hombunaka.

helping the majority of the population who continue to struggle daily - walking kilometres to bring their produce to market and facing difficulties accessing quality health services.

"That's the reality today, when you are given the opportunity, go and make a difference. This country belongs to all of us and not for the minority group," said Mr Hombunaka.

He also urged graduates to maintain a positive attitude, noting that in the current limited job market, employers are increasingly looking for individuals with strong character and commitment to industry standards.

"There are not many jobs

around, positive attitude is vital," Mr Hombunaka stressed.

This year's graduation marked another milestone for the university, with 14 pioneer students graduating from the School of Climate Change and Environment. Of these, nine received Bachelor of Science in Environment and Climate Change, while five earned Bachelor of Science in Renewable Energy and Environment Engineering.

Apart from these 14 other graduates included:

- 8 with Masters in Management
- 14 with Postgraduate Diploma in Management
- 14 with Bachelor in Sustainable International Tourism
- 164 with Bachelor in Sustainable Tropical Agriculture
- 40 with Bachelor in Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Resources
- 17 with Bachelor in Sustainable Tropical Forestry
- 18 with Bachelor in Sustainable Livestock Production



Boniface Daramam makes history for Komdia village

BONIFACE DARAMAM, 28, from Komdia - a remote village in the Lassul Baining LLG - has made history by becoming the first person from his village to graduate with a university degree.

His recent graduation with a Bachelor in Sustainable Tropical Forestry was not just a personal milestone, but a proud achievement for his entire family and community.

Determined and resilient, Boniface's journey to academic success was far from easy.

He began his education at Komdia Elementary School before moving to Raunsepna to live with relatives and complete his primary education. From a young age, Boniface was focused on his goal. He studied hard and consciously avoided bad influences, staying clear of negative peer pressure and harmful habits.

"I completed Grade 8 in 2015 and was selected to continue to Grade 9 at Utmei Secondary School," he shared.

Boniface went on to complete Grades 9 to 12 at Utmei Secondary School, but his academic results in a few subjects were not strong enough



▲ Boniface Daramam.

to gain entry into a tertiary institution.

He did not let this setback stop him. Instead, he enrolled at the the University's Centre for Self-Education for a semester where he upgraded his grades.

His perseverance paid off. The following year, Boniface was accepted to study at PNG UNRE.

After four years of hard work and dedication, last Friday he proudly

walked across the stage to receive his degree from Acting Dean of the School of Natural Resources, Dr Nason Pue.

Boniface's graduation was a momentous occasion for Komdia village.

His family and clan members turned up in large numbers to witness his big day, joined by students from Komdia Elementary School who came to celebrate their local hero.

He paid heartfelt tribute to his parents, who supported his education through their hard work as subsistence farmers and also acknowledged the National Government's Higher Education Loan Program, which made a significant difference in helping students like him access higher education.

In his message to young people, Boniface encouraged them to put education first.

"Avoid bad company, stay focused, and work hard to achieve your dreams."

Boniface's story is a reminder that it truly takes a village to raise a child - and in his case, it was a village that celebrated him. Komdia stood behind him every step of the way, and on his graduation day, they stood with him in pride.

From Yangoru to the sea: Mikai follows his dream to graduation

WHETHER raised in a bustling town or a quiet village, determination often makes the difference.

For 26-year-old Mikai Homihau from Yangoru Saussia District, East Sepik Province, a childhood spent in the village sparked a deep passion for the marine world and a desire to learn more about this underwater world.

Last Friday he fulfilled his dream, when he graduated at the University's 28th Graduation Ceremony.

Mikai reflected that as a child, he had always loved the beauty of the marine environment - especially the different fish species, coral reefs, and everything associated with them.

He said he was fascinated by the value and population of fish stocks in different countries and how people

benefited both directly and indirectly from these resources to sustain their livelihoods.

This led to his desire to understand more about marine resources and their contribution as a living environment to human life.

His began his quest to learn more at Holik Elementary School in 2007, followed by Yangoru AOG Primary and Yangoru Secondary, where he completed Grade 12 in 2019. Though he wasn't selected for tertiary studies immediately, the setback only strengthened his resolve.

In 2020, Mikai moved to East New Britain to pursue matriculation studies to boost his chances of entering PNG UNRE.

His dedication paid off. In 2021, he was accepted into his "dream institution" for



▲ Mikai Homihau.

the Bachelor of Sustainable Fisheries and Marine Resources program.

The first year presented its own challenges. As a Non School Leaver, Mikai registered as a Self Sponser student, however,

his commitment paid off and from his second year until his final year, he received support through the Government's Tertiary Education Study Assistance Scheme.

Reflecting on his journey, Mikai said, "Dropping out after Grade 12 and moving provinces to chase my dream wasn't easy. Matriculation and non-school leaver applications were

costly, but my hardworking parents stood by me - and I made it."

Story adapted from a report originally published by Post-Courier Online. Photo courtesy of Kemkoda Visuals.