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**MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release

A first of its kind arts and culture entertainment hub has been launched by VOU Dance (Fiji) Limited on Denarau in Nadi. Aptly named *Fun Hub*, the facility will feature traditional Fijian concepts and stories told in modern and innovative dance and song. The Fun Hub will also showcase quality contemporary entertainment to tourists visiting Fiji under a Big Top arena that can seat up to 450 guests.

The Fun Hub is the brainchild of Sachiko and Edward Soro, the founding couple of VOU, who have run an internationally acclaimed music and dance school since 2011.

“The core founding philosophy of VOU Dance Company was to create fulfilling and sustainable career paths for Fijian artists. As the company developed, we wanted to find new ways of supporting our artists into long-term careers so that they could devote themselves full time to creating excellence in Fijian performing arts,” Sachiko said.

The development of the Fun Hub has been done in partnership with the Market Development Facility (MDF), a multi-country Australian Government aid program that partners with the private sector to achieve lasting growth and create sustainable jobs for poor women and men.

MDF has provided ongoing business guidance and strategic investments with VOU over the last two years to help the company to stay on track to achieve its goal to setup Fiji’s first contemporary performance theatre.

Once completed, the hub is anticipated to generate employment for 90 people, including two 30-member dance troupes and 30 backstage and operations staff.

The Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Anna Dorney was present at the launch of the Fun Hub and has applauded VOU’s efforts to continue to encourage young people to seek livelihoods through the arts.

Ms. Dorney said the Australian Government is proud to have partnered with innovative and aspiring entrepreneurs such as VOU Dance (Fiji) Limited to contribute to Fiji’s sustainable economic growth.

MDF Fiji Deputy Country Director Malcolm Bossley, echoed Ms. Dorney’s sentiments adding MDF is proud to partner with VOU to launch Fiji’s first arts and culture performance hub.

“The establishment of the new Fun Hub provides Fiji with a new must-see experience in Nadi that will generate increased tourist spending in the country which is a key focus of MDF”.

-ENDS-

**Notes to Editors**

**VOU**

VOU, meaning “new” in the Fijian language, is the premier independent dance company in Fiji. VOU Dance (Fiji) Ltd was formed in 2007 and over the last decade has established itself as the most internationally toured and successful dance company in the country.

**Market Development Facility (MDF)**

Market Development Facility (MDF) is an Australian multi-country initiative operational in five countries in Asia Pacific: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. MDF uses a market systems (MSD) approach to achieve long-term, lasting growth, alleviate poverty and create sustainable jobs for poor women and men.

MDF is funded by the Australian Government and is implemented by Palladium, in partnership with Swisscontact.

In Fiji, MDF focuses on developing a growing, diversified and inclusive tourism industry, while also improving the competitiveness of Fiji’s high value agriculture and urban industries. MDF-supported activities are targeted to increase incomes for 40,000 people.

Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) is central to MDF’s work on the ground, and all interventions are dedicated to ensuring that its activities benefit women and girls.

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