During January 2010 I spent 2 weeks in Suva, Fiji for the third year of the Fiji Village Project (FVP). 22 students from Australian and New Zealand medical schools joined 54 students from the Fiji School of Medicine to promote health in the village of Veivatuloa.

The project had four aims for the village:

1. Improving water quality through assisting the villagers to establish a clean water supply, establish a committee of villagers responsible for water quality and education for the villagers about hygienic water practices
2. Health screening of all the villagers for hypertension, diabetes and other medical problems with referrals to the medical centre
3. Visiting the school to promote health awareness and sanitation
4. Education and health awareness for women, men and young adults in the village on topics relevant to each group

The time I spent in Fiji was incredible, and I had an unbelievable amount of fun with the other medical students and with the villagers. The village was extremely welcoming, and hosted a welcoming and a goodbye party for us where we met the village elders, participated in a traditional kava ceremony and danced with everyone, both old and young.

We stayed at the college of the Fiji School of Medicine and experienced life as a Fiji medical student. This involved playing a lot of volleyball, going out at night to the local bar in Suva, trips to the beach and a nearby waterfall, going shopping at the market, drinking ‘grog’ (kava), learning how to open a coconut and never being on time for anything. I made many amazing friends in Fiji and I hope to return next year for FVP 2011.