



Nauru Bulletin

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23 December 2021

President hosts Christmas banquet

Frontline workers saluted for selfless work on COVID

President Lionel Aingimea “salutes” airline crew, individuals and groups for their selfless acts in keeping Nauru safe from COVID.

The comments were made at the President’s Christmas luncheon held today at the Meneñ Hotel.

“First and foremost I would like to express the deep gratitude of this nation to members of Nauru Airlines.

“There are crew members, pilots, who will not be spending Christmas, who will not be spending New Year with their families because they made the sacrifice to come and fly in cargo and to fly in passengers from Australia and Fiji so that we can be together as one, as families and as friends to celebrate Christmas together.

“To Nauru Airlines crew I salute you and you have the heartfelt thanks of the nation.



President Aingimea chats with senior citizens over Christmas lunch

“I would also like to offer my thanks and gratitude on behalf of our country to the members of the [COVID-19] Taskforce. They’ve done a stellar job in keeping us safe... and have done well in actually telling

our frontline people what to do. To them you have the undying thanks and gratitude of this nation.”

President Aingimea extended the appreciation to other frontline workers in quarantine, health, customs, Nauru Police, port and “to the various entities who are involved in keeping the frontline of Nauru safe.”

“It is on your shoulders, all of you, that Nauru hinges its safety [and] protection, and to you we thank you all.

“But in all of this, I cannot forget that God has given us his providence, has given us the blessing in keeping our shores safe.”

Guests to the annual banquet include the senior citizens, affectionately referred to as ‘young at hearts’ •

Police begin special Christmas roster

The number of road accidents this month has broken last year’s record with multiple accidents recorded before Christmas.

Despite heightened police presence on the road conducting driver and safety checks drivers are still being reckless and evading police checks.

The Nauru Police Force started its special Christmas roster, Monday 6 December yet six road accidents happened from that week.

The roster comprises three eight-hour shifts with 22 per shift. Close to 250 police officers and Police Protective Service (PPS) officers are rostered on to ensure full teams on each shift.

Police Commissioner Iven Notte stresses the importance of maintaining police presence to ensure public safety.

Except for superintendent heads of sections and office staff at police headquarters, all other officers are rostered on.

PPS officers are also sworn officers under reserves in the NPF Act.

Maintaining road safety is key at this time of year as traffic and

partying paired with alcohol tend to escalate.

Commissioner Notte says last year’s special roster was a success in terms of zero fatalities or serious traffic injuries, the first after many years.

“The island [in Christmas 2020] was almost in full lockdown with police presence everywhere. Compared to the past five years or so, last year we had more manpower, increased [presence] and high visibility, and we did road blocks and checks.”

Commissioner Notte says the outpouring of community support was “enormous” and it “speaks for itself”.

While reckless and drunk driving are main concerns this time of year, so is under-aged driving. Commissioner Notte urge parents look after their children and not allow them to get behind the wheel.

“You must know where your children are at all times.”

Under-aged driving is illegal but mostly it puts them and other motorists’ lives at risk.

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Parliament December

Speaker of Parliament Marcus Stephen led opening prayers for the start of the last parliament sitting of the year, 16 December.

Following prayers His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea addressed the House on the recent spike in road accidents and the survey poll on the eligibility to hold a seat in parliament.

President Aingimea stressed his concern about road safety emphasising that adults are being responsible in regards to driving, alcohol and valid driving licences. However, the Nauru Police will be tightening its handle on under aged drivers and under aged drinking.

The President warns that vehicles involved in under aged driving and drinking will be impounded and the necessary arrests made.

This year recorded 14 road accidents but in the first two weeks of December alone accounted for six road accidents, some involving under aged drivers.

The figures are disappointing considering last Christmas had zero accidents or serious road incidents.

President Aingimea appeals to drunks intending to drive as well as owners of vehicles involved in these arrests to heed the warning for a safe and enjoyable festive season.

The President says the result of the recent survey asking Nauruans to vote yes or no to the question, should the membership of parliament be reserved for Nauruan citizens born before 31 January 1968, was a resounding yes majority mandating the government.

During question time Minister for Finance Martin Hunt announced the welcome news of the pre-Christmas ex-gratia payment for eligible public servants. The bonus payout is awarded in three tiers with the lower pay scale up to \$500 a fortnight in salary will receive an \$800 bonus. Others earning \$500 to \$800 a fortnight will receive a \$600 bonus and those earning \$800 and above will receive \$500 bonus.

The payment is made in this week's pay period ending 22 December.

Ministerial Statements

Nauru Police

President Aingimea's statement on the Nauru Police Force (NPF) highlights the special roster has reduced and transferred the manpower office hours to frontline operations, often including extended working hours and duties and no days off.

For 2021 a total of 943 reports were made to the police, of those 14 are road accidents with alcohol being the main contributor. At the time of publication, six accidents have occurred in December alone.

Eigigu Holdings Corporation

Minister for EHC Martin Hunt says the company has adopted an improved version of its human resources policy manual and adopted the employment terms and conditions to reflect improved changes in how Eigigu does business, and manage employees and human resources issues.

The company has also adopted new remuneration codes and a new salary structure to match the national minimum wage and a review to allow for employees to progress up the levels depending on performance.

In response to the impacts of COVID-19 on its expatriate workers Eigigu established a pandemic contract to assist with those needs, and all subsidiaries have drafted their own operational manuals

Police begin special Christmas roster

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Maintaining road safety is key at this time of year as traffic and partying paired with alcohol tend to escalate

Children on bicycles are also urged not to cycle on main roads due to the increased number of cars and motorbikes.

The NPF continues to seek the support of the community, church leaders and the people of Nauru to keep Nauru safe.

Mr Notte says the special roster will continue on to early January and reassessed whether it needs to continue until Independence Day.

"Let's have a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year and avoid accidents," COP Notte said.

The Commissioner says attitudes towards police in past generations have been respectful compared to the "new generation".

"There are changes in our youth, their mindset and advancements in terms of technology," the commissioner says but concurs he sees improvements every year in the relationship and community response with the police.

He adds that miscommunications and misunderstandings do happen but usually resolved and the police thanked for their work.

In the event of accidents, the first line of reporting are the police, who will attend the scene then coordinate with the hospital and fire emergency services as needed.

The commissioner says as first responders the police have first aid skills but always work alongside the ambulance attendants because of their added skills to attend to accident victims •

Safety First!

- * Drive safely this Christmas
- * Be considerate with other motorists
- * Wear your helmet
- * Have your drivers' licence ready for police inspection
- * Have a designated driver if you plan to consume alcohol
- * Don't drive if you're underaged
- * Be responsible and let's all have an enjoyable festive Christmas

God bless Nauru!

Parliament December

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specifically tailored to their functional requirements.

Renovations and restructuring are underway across the Eigigu subsidiaries including construction of a new beauty and hair salon, VIP room and gym at the Meneñ Hotel and installation of security surveillance at the Civic Centre complex.

The supermarket is expected to open a new branch in Yaren as well as launch its first online shopping website.

Minister Hunt says Eigigu's financial performance recorded a profit of \$3.7 million after tax for the financial year ending 30 June.

"This was consistent with the profit made by the [Eigigu] Group of \$3.68 million after tax last year ending 30 June 2020."

Women and Social Development Affairs

Minister for Women and Social Development Affairs (WASDA), Isabella Dageago outlined the department's progress since the November sitting including Nauru's nomination as vice-chair for the Regional Working Group on Domestic Violence/Family Protection Legislation in the Pacific region.

In that capacity, Nauru made the opening statement at the launch of the working group outcomes document and places Nauru at the forefront of implementation on this regional legislation.

Further, the outcomes from the September national consultations for the 10 core policies and the CEDAW and CRC state reports will be completed in the first quarter of 2022.

The White Ribbon campaign 16 Days of Activism in early November culminated in a walk for life event led by President Aingimea and White Ribbon champion Justice Minister Maverick Eoe.

Summit for Democracy

President Aingimea reported on his participation at the Summit for Democracy held virtually from 9 to 10 December.

The significance of the summit is to galvanise commitments and initiatives across the three principle themes on strengthening democracy and defending against authoritarianism, fight corruption, and promote respect for human rights.

The President says the summit was also a platform to engage, listen and speak honestly about the challenges facing democracy globally and within participating countries; and provided the opportunity to share Nauru's initiatives on strengthening democracy.

In His Excellency's address at the summit, it was stressed that "as governments, as leaders, visualise strategies to fight corruption" and "informed participants that Nauru, as a state party of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, demonstrates its commitment by not only refining its anti-corruption laws, but by also implementing them."

The President further stressed that "as servants of our countries, envisage how to promote the respect for human rights by succeeding in the quest to regulate, civilise and create mechanisms for order around us which protect harmony, guarantee safe possession, and allow society to develop."

At the summit, President Aingimea also shared Nauru's progress as reported at the 37th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in legitimising the human rights treaties that Nauru is party to, "especially in promoting, protecting, and fulfilling the rights of vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities and detained persons."



Ronphos has exported 11 phosphate shipments, 301k MT since January

In respect to environmental impacts and their direct bearings to the livelihood and survival of the people of small nations like Nauru, the President urged developed countries to ensure the Paris Agreement on climate change be strengthened to ensure that the bigger and economically powerful countries mitigate the losses suffered by countries like Nauru, in particular land and marine resources.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) was also invited to participate in the summit, "confirming our recognition of the island as a democratic and sovereign state."

Intergenerational Trust Fund

Finance Minister Martin Hunt says the NTF continues to perform well over the past quarter and the fund's annual report as well as the audited annual financial statements for FY 2020-21 approved at the last NTF quarterly committee meeting on 30 November.

As donor contributions were not scheduled prior to the December sitting, the Government did contribute \$8.29 million, or 50 per cent of the annual amount on 30 September leaving a total fund valuation on 31 October at over \$230 million.

Considering the consumer price index (CPI) and the objective of a 4.5 per cent return the September 2021 target for investments was \$200 million resulting in a market value of \$30 million or 11 per cent above target.

Investment returns for the quarter were 1.9 per cent and 22 per cent for the year to September 2021.

The Minister says investment returns since inception (April 2016) have been 10 per cent per annum, and with inflation averaging only two per cent per annum real returns have been eight per cent.

"We continue to work closely with our investment advisors to ensure we are reviewing our current investment strategy and achieving the future income earnings required."

The NTF annual report can be accessed at <https://naurufinance.info/intergenerational-trust-fund/>

Internal Affairs

Of the 15 students enrolled in the Youth Division's life skills program in October eight completed the program and have since moved into the field and furthering their studies as teachers training with the education department in the various schools.

Successful outcomes were also reported from the Sir Hammer DeRoburt day, bingo operations for Aroeni day, home visits for senior citizens on Angam day, and a clean and green banner competition.

The Minister says the department is aware of the ongoing concern of

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Parliament December

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butane gas sniffing among the youth, reiterating the department will continue to demonstrate the harmful effects of gas sniffing.

“The division requests families to allow and encourage their children to participate in the awareness process in the hopes that it will help create and instil the major impacts and consequences the sniffing of gas imposes to their young body and brain.”

RONPhos

State-owned phosphate company RONPhos paid landowners their royalties for the June quarter in November and the September quarter forecast to be paid before the end of the year.

Minister Reagan Aliklik says phosphate exports since January including the December shipment totals 11 vessels with a total cargo of 301,824 metric tonnes (MT).

In the last month RONPhos and the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation together extracted 20,000 MT of phosphate from Meneñ land portion 230, taking the total extraction of 57,000 MT to date.

A total 60 per cent from block one of Meneñ 230 has been mined and backfilling underway; while 70 per cent of pinnacle rocks has been cleared in block 2 and ready to be mined.

UN Conference on Trade & Development

President Aingimea reported on his participation at the 15th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, themed ‘From inequality and vulnerability to prosperity for all’.

President Aingimea said the conference presented an opportunity to align the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the global health crises of COVID which has “affected trade as a tool and an engine for sustainable prosperity.”

The President delivered a statement sharing Nauru’s perspective based on its small size, remoteness and narrow production base, challenges exacerbated with the onset of the pandemic.

To ensure sustainable financing is available for recovering better, especially for developing countries, President Aingimea called and urged financial institutions to “avail better financing for development and commit to reforming the international financial system and global sustainable debt system to consider the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).”

“Only then can we recover sustainably from the impacts of the pandemic.”

The President also called for the establishment of partnerships to assist and support efforts in trade technologies to increase efficiency, inclusiveness and potentially close the existing economic gaps amongst developed and developing states.

The global community is further urged to work together and collectively to strengthen institutions, improve connectivity, generate trade, and develop cross-border solutions to shared problems to promote prosperity through economic development.

Nauru Utilities

Minister for Nauru Utilities Corporation, Wawani Dowiyogo presented the company’s 2021 Statement of Corporate Intent which covers business operations for the current budget year and two subsequent years.

The implementation of NUC’s six megawatt solar development project include the submission by its contractor, a 85 per cent civil and electrical designs for review and approval and the handover of



Acute care unit designed to manage critically ill patients

the development site to the contractor was concluded in October.

A new generator to support thermal generation for the solar plant is being procured at a cost of \$340,000 including freight to Nauru. The engine and the installation costs of \$15,000 will be borne by NUC.

Recruitment of local staff for the project is underway and construction of campsite facilities on site to house construction personnel has been approved.

Forty-five personnel from China arrived on 6 December and after satisfying quarantine requirements, were scheduled to commence work at the solar site on 17 December.

The solar farm is scheduled to be complete this month and commissioned and operational by January 2022.

In September the 1.1 megawatt containerised Cummins diesel generator failed as a result of a high temperature protection malfunction leading to extreme overheating of the main engine.

A replacement engine was subsequently ordered to maintain reliable power supply for the island.

Up to November NUC has provided 16 million kilowatt hours of electricity to meet customer demand which remained steady with 3.2 million kilowatt hours per month for the period.

With generator availability reaching 88 per cent and maintenance compliance achieving 96 per cent, Minister Dowiyogo says both are within acceptable performance targets.

Energy losses, technical and non-technical, reduced over the period from 11 per cent to eight per cent reflecting operational efficiencies and savings for NUC.

The cost of diesel increased from 99 cents a litre in July to \$1.03 in November, and the total diesel fuel costs for the period to November amounted to \$4.6 million.

The number of electricity customers continues to increase averaging 38 new customers a month; with 3,941 customers currently connected to the grid.

Minister Dowiyogo says power outage durations were 480 customer minutes, “well below the set target of less than 1,500” with customer interruption frequency rate at 7.51, also well below the target of 25 interruptions per customer.

In renewable energy, the 2.7 megawatt solar installations equate to 13 per cent of total available generation capacity.

The Minister says with the completion of the six megawatt solar project, the projected generation from renewable energy will reach

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and likely exceed Nauru's renewable energy target of 50 per cent of total energy exported to the grid. This will further offset the use of diesel fuel and the associated costs.

Demand for water continues due to the extended drought period; water production over the period to November increased by 40 per cent on average or 136 million litres of water.

A total of 128 million litres was delivered to households and businesses which is an average increase of 21 per cent per month.

Rainfall decreased from 66mm in July to 3mm recorded in November.

The 12 water delivery trucks deliver approximately 110 deliveries per day.

Health

The recently commissioned fit-for-purpose acute care unit at the RON hospital is designed to meet the challenges and management of COVID-19 positive critical cases. While Nauru is still COVID-free, the system is set up to manage an event.

The set up includes a specific ventilation system to optimise ventilation imperative for the care of COVID patients and minimise the risk of COVID-19 exposure on health staff.

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago says the public health centre's launching of the three new vaccines pneumococcal, rotavirus and human papillomavirus vaccines to the national immunisation schedule will protect infants, children and girls.

A third medical charter flight to Taiwan at the end of November transported 31 patients with 14 family escorts and two health escorts, while the return flight brought back 45 patients and escorts.

COVID-19 has made it difficult to send multiple patients for treatment in Australia and other countries, but an arrangement with Taiwan's Taichung Veterans General Hospital has made it possible for a lot of families the chance for treatment and recovery.

The Minister adds that a recent repatriation flight from Fiji brought home 30 patients who had been in Fiji since April and unable to return due to COVID-19 and border restrictions in Fiji.

Nauru Rehabilitation Corp.

Minister for Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation, Reagan Aliklik says 51 per cent of land clearing work and 44 per cent backfilling work at the higher ground initiative land portion 230 in Meneñ District is completed.

This paves the way for the development of Nauru's first model of a smart village.

"We should expect the plan to establish and update the Nauru Land Use Plan and also the basis of the new master plan for the future development of our country," Minister Aliklik said.

The Minister says a wide range of ideas and concepts are being considered by the steering committee and urban planners with a central guiding principle that capitalises on resilience and durability, "a plan flexible enough to cater for the needs of our children and their children's children."

A design workshop is expected to commence in February to March 2022. The purpose is to garner ideas and encourage discussion between stakeholders to determine what the final draft and design of the plan should look like.



Capturing COVID cases at the border is expected as neighbours Australia, Fiji relax border restrictions

COVID-19 Taskforce

Health Minister Dageago updated the House of the global situation regarding COVID-19 with the World Health Organisation (WHO) reporting a five per cent and 10 per cent decrease globally in new cases and deaths respectively, reportedly owing to the high number of vaccines being administered.

The Minister urged individuals who have not yet taken their COVID vaccine shots, to do so "to safe guard our loved ones."

Minister Dageago said Nauru has had three near-miss cases at sea.

"These cases never made it to land thus not being recorded as a Nauru case."

She warns that as other countries start to relax some border restrictions, Nauru should expect and not be surprised if more COVID cases are caught at the border, and provided that everyone, including children are vaccinated "then we should no longer fear cases being picked up at the border."

The government's capture and contain strategy is working well and the Taskforce, health and relevant stakeholders continue to review and revise the processes and protocols to meet global changes.

Minister Dageago says as countries relax border restrictions, including Fiji on 1 December and Queensland opening up to other Australian states, cases are expected to rise in the coming months

Accordingly Nauru will need to adjust its protocols and a recent meeting of the Taskforce and health agreed to added measures to mitigate the risk to Nauru and introduce additional pre-travel testing and arrival tests in quarantine.

The Government of India has doubled its donation of a 12-tier pop-up mortuary system, while Australia's recent donation of \$1.4 million went towards the fit-out of the acute care unit, training, diagnostics and infection prevention. Taiwan also donated \$570,000 towards the fit-out of the acute unit and other COVID-related activities.

The Taskforce and UNICEF are finalising the delivery date for the 5,850 doses of the Pfizer vaccine donated by Australia. Nauru Public Health staff has undergone training by UNICEF and WHO in the administering and handling of the Pfizer vaccine.

Education

Deputy Minister for Education, Richard-Hyde Menke congratulates the 41 Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) high school graduates, "an exponential increase... from the modest three" when the program first commenced in 2013.

Mr Menke also acknowledges the ten Year 12 students who graduated from secondary schooling in Australia on government sponsored

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scholarship. The students have finally returned home after two years due to COVID-19 restricting travel.

However, the impacts of the pandemic and school closures were less accommodating for the 14 government sponsored students in Fiji who, for the majority of their school days were spent in billeted homes and studies done remotely.

The Deputy Minister says to compensate for the loss in school days this year Fiji schools will be completing their 2021 final exams in early 2022.

Meanwhile, the triennial Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) for years four and six students was held on 16 and 17 November and the results expected in the first quarter of 2022.

DM Menke concluded his statement by congratulating the 2021 Dux of Nauru Secondary School student, Eulitisi Tomiki. Miss Tomiki who hails from Tonga attained the highest achievement to date on QCE results.

“This is an admirable feat,” DM Menke said while also acknowledging the support of all stakeholders.

Nauru Post

DM Menke presented the final statement on Naoero Postal Services and its development plan of taking over management of Angela’s Service Station in Uaboe from 6 December •

Snap health activities another success

With school holidays just starting Nauru Public Health resumed its SNAP program which aims to raise awareness about smoking – why it is harmful; nutrition – to consume nutritious food; alcohol – why it is bad; and physical activity – how or why is it good for your health.



SNAP was introduced at this year’s September school holidays

The three-day program for 7-17 year olds was launched 14 December at the Sports Complex in Yaren District.

The program includes fun games and activities, cooking and first aid demonstrations, cross fit mini games and road safety awareness.

Health staff also shared information about trachoma, dental hygiene and nutrition.

The SNAP program was introduced at this year’s September school holidays to keep school-aged children occupied and minimise the likelihood of getting into trouble elsewhere.

After the activities the attendees were served healthy refreshments and received free T-shirts for participating.

The SNAP program concluded 14 December •

President receives credentials of UN resident coordinator

President Lionel Aingimea received Jaap van Hierden of The Netherlands as Resident Coordinator of the UN Multi-Country office for the Northern Pacific and to Nauru through a virtual presentation of credentials, 8 December.

Mr van Hierden holds residence in the Federated States of Micronesia and has responsibility for program matters in Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru and Palau.



UN Resident Coordinator to Nauru Jaap van Hierden is based in FSM and oversees programs in Kiribati, RMI, Nauru and Palau

President Aingimea expresses confidence that under the leadership and experience of Mr van Hierden the work between Nauru and the UN will be further strengthened.

“My government looks forward to working closely with you and your good office to address prevalent and emerging challenges, including COVID-19, climate change, food security, high transportation costs and global security issues to successfully navigate our region and our individual countries towards a path of resilience and sustainability for future generations,” President Aingimea said.

Mr van Hierden has devoted nearly 30 years of his career to public service, bringing experience in sustainable development, humanitarian affairs, information systems management and peace-building to the position.

He worked with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), holding leadership positions at the country, regional and global level, including Country Director and Representative for Cambodia, then for the Philippines, as well as Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. He also served as Associate Project Management Officer with the UN Development Program (UNDP) in Bangkok and as a Field Implementation Officer for the UN Capital Development Fund in Sierra Leone.

Following his UN assignments, Mr van Hierden most recently served in Afghanistan as Country Director of Cordaid, an international non-governmental organisation. He also worked with the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands as a civil expert.

Mr van Hierden holds a master’s degree in agricultural economics with specialisations in development economics, marketing and business administration from Wageningen University in the Netherlands •

COVID remains off-shore: health minister

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago says Nauru’s ‘Capture & Contain’ strategy continues to keep Nauru free of COVID-19.

Nauru’s arrival testing procedures for crew on shipping vessels has identified one member of crew on the landing craft, Kiwai Chief, with a positive COVID test result, 14 December.

The Minister says Nauru’s maritime border protocols require several measures for arriving ships, including minimum quarantine periods at sea and testing all persons on board before they are allowed to undertake contact operations on Nauru. Regardless and where possible, ships operate a no-contact procedure in Nauru.

The landing craft Kiwai Chief arrived in Nauru waters on the 10 December having spent 10 days at sea and continued to drift off Nauru to complete 14 days at sea as per Nauru’s maritime border protocols.

This positive COVID result was identified late on Tuesday 14 December and the crew member was well and had no symptoms.

“This vessel has been in quarantine at sea for the last 14 days and there has been no unprotected contact with anyone on Nauru.

“With the ship’s logs and arrival declarations supplied to the Taskforce and Health Department, it appears likely that this is a historical case with the original source of infection probably originating a few weeks ago when the vessel was in Lae, Papua New Guinea as they set sail to Brisbane Australia where the Kiwai Chief picked up heavy machinery destined for Nauru.”

The lab results show the crew member has very low levels of virus, suggesting that his infection likely started some time ago and that he was likely no longer contagious.

“The crew member is also fully vaccinated which may also explain why the test result was so weak and further reinforces that it is unlikely that the crew member is still contagious.”

The Nauru COVID Taskforce discussed the findings and despite the very low risk from this case, and with an abundance of caution, the Taskforce has advised the Kiwai Chief to drift and quarantine at sea for a further period. The crew will be reassessed and tested before any contact procedures will be able to be undertaken in port.

In accordance with World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines, a person who tests positive to COVID, is cleared and safe to leave isolation and carry on normal activities if they have been well and have had no COVID symptoms for 10 days.

In the meantime the Taskforce will reassess the current situation and if safe and practical, a strict no-contact unloading procedure may be considered, ensuring there is no risk of COVID entering Nauru.

“This is a case we have identified at the border before entry to Nauru. This case remains on a vessel, and has not been in Nauru.

“As other countries have started relaxing some border restrictions we need to expect and not be surprised if we begin to catch more cases on our border. However, if we either continue to contain these cases at the border, or ensure we have everyone protected by vaccination, including our children, then we should no longer fear cases being picked up at the border. In fact, we should feel safe and confident that the capture and contain strategy is working,” Minister Dageago said •

Health develops 5-year health strategy

The Department of Health and Medical Services is developing a new Nauru Health Strategy for 2021-2025 which will help guide the department achieve its goals on a long-term basis.

The development process beginning in August includes four one-day participatory workshops involving government departments and key stakeholders such as the Department of Justice and Border Control, the Department of Education, the Department of People Living with Disability, The National Emergency Services and the Nauru Police Force.



The health strat-plan is a structured framework to assist with the department’s long-term plans moving forward

The main strategic log frame is drafted and includes chapters on situation analysis, human resources, governance, costing, monitoring and evaluation framework, and gender and social inclusion is now completed. The strategy is a structured framework which will assist with the department’s long-term plans moving forward.

According to the Deputy Secretary for Department of Health, Andrew O’Connell the strategy will provide guidance for the department through identification of priority areas to be planned for in annual operational plans.

The latest feedback received from the United Nations, Pacific Community and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, are generally positive, reporting that the strategy is comprehensive. All of the feedback is now incorporated into the final draft.

The final draft has been submitted to Minister for Health and Medical Services, Isabella Dageago, for her endorsement and submission to cabinet for final approval by January next year •



PUBLIC HOLIDAY – CHRISTMAS DAY

As Christmas day falls on the weekend, Monday 27th December and Tuesday 28th December, 2021 from 9am to 5pm are declared public holidays to be observed by the officers and employees of the Public Service and its instrumentalities in celebration of Christmas Day and the day following Christmas.

Happy Holidays!



Improving east Micronesia telecommunications connectivity

Australia, Japan, and the United States are committed to working in partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, and Nauru to improve internet connectivity to these three Pacific nations by providing funding to build a new undersea cable.



Nauru and partner countries agree to improve internet connectivity, more than an infrastructure development

A joint statement announcing the partnership was released on 11 December by Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Marise Payne, President of the Federated States of Micronesia His Excellency David W. Panuelo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan Yoshimasa Hayashi, President of the Republic of Kiribati His Excellency Taneti Maamau, President of the Republic of Nauru His Excellency Lionel Aingimea, and Secretary of State, United States of America Antony J. Blinken.

The statement says the proposed undersea cable will provide faster, higher quality, and more reliable and secure communications to approximately 100,000 people across three countries. This will support increased economic growth, drive development opportunities, and help to improve living standards as the region recovers from the severe impacts of COVID-19.

The new cable will connect Kosrae (FSM), Nauru, and Tarawa (Kiribati) with the existing HANTRU-1 cable at Pohnpei (FSM), providing internet connectivity through a submarine cable for the first time.

Improved connectivity and access to digital technologies can provide significant economic and social benefits and are key enablers of sustainable development. They also help increase the availability of digital government services, particularly in education and health, and provide businesses and households with improved access to services, information and trade, and employment opportunities.

This six-country collaboration highlights the commitment to work together on critical telecommunications infrastructure and contribute to reliable and secure internet for the region.

The six countries will continue to coordinate closely with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to ensure this project complements investments by these institutions to enhance digital connectivity in FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru.

This is more than an infrastructure investment. It represents an enduring partnership to deliver practical and meaningful solutions at a time of unprecedented economic and strategic challenges in our region. This project builds on the strong foundations of trilateral collaboration between Australia, Japan, and the United States in the Indo-Pacific, including support for Palau's undersea cable.

It is a further demonstration of the shared commitment to quality, transparent, fiscally sustainable, catalytic infrastructure partnerships with, and between, Pacific nations. These partnerships meet genuine needs, respect sovereignty, and complement the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership and the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative. Trilateral partners will continue to work together to promote an open, inclusive and resilient region •



94 graduate from NSS, Tomiki tops QCE rankings

Ninety four Year 12 students graduate with a Nauru Secondary school leavers' certificate, 41 of them attaining the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), and the Dux awarded to Eulitisi Tomiki, 10 December.

The 2021 Dux awardee, Eulitisi Tomiki attained the highest achievement to date on the QCE results. Miss Tomiki who hails from Tonga also took out the science and all-rounder awards.

"This is an admirable feat," Deputy Minister for Education, Richard-Hyde Menke later describing Miss Tomiki's achievements during parliament sitting on 16 December.

The number of QCE graduates is testament to the progress of the school's implementation of the program and reflects the importance placed on education.

The 41 QCE graduates is a commendable effort and a huge leap from the modest three graduates in 2013 when the program was implemented.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Centennial Hall.

The QCE is Queensland's senior secondary schooling qualification. It's internationally recognised and provides evidence of senior schooling achievements, opening opportunities for recipients to further their studies in the University of the South Pacific (USP) or to pursue a career in the work force.

Several awards were given across year levels 9, 10, 11 and 12. For this year, the dux award went to Eulitisi Tomiki for being the highest achieving student in year 12.

To graduate with a QCE, students are required to take up subjects in years 11 and 12, recognised by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Students must achieve the set amount of learning, at the set standard, in a set pattern, while meeting literacy and numeracy requirements.

Deputy Minister for Education, Richard-Hyde Menke, said that despite the challenges that they faced, the students were ultimately successful in achieving their goals.

"The increase in numbers of graduates has seen a healthy rise considering the relative challenges that are faced with being a sole school offering an offshore program."

The recipients of the special awards for the Nauru Secondary School (NSS) graduation ceremony are as follows:

Dux Award: Eulitisi Tomiki

Top Science: Eulitisi Tomiki

Top Arts: Lijan Uera

All Rounder: Eulitisi Tomiki

Leadership Award: Tissarina Harris

Citizenship Award: Rosileen Thoma

Citizenship Award: Jesaja Temaki



Eulitisi Tomiki accepting her Dux award from Deputy Minister Menke, she attains the highest QCE score to date



Community Service Award: Jesaja Temaki

Sportsmanship Award: Nancy Abouke

Sportsmanship Award: Cy Daoc

Taiwan Embassy Award: Marsha Eoe

Taiwan Embassy Award: Nsdsia Adeang

Taiwan Embassy Award: Joselyn Rose Jones

Taiwan Embassy Award: Grace Seymour

Police Commissioner Award: Class 9.1 •

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