



Nauru Bulletin

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Commemorating independence, return from Truk

Several hundred gathered at the forecourt of the government offices for the flag raising ceremony to celebrate the 54th anniversary of Independence Day and the 76th anniversary of the peoples' return from exile in Truk.

January 31 is a day marked with history mixed with emotions of extreme hardship and abundant joy for Nauruans.

In 1946, a reported 762 Nauruans out of 1,202 were returned home from two years of exile; then 22 years later in 1968, Nauru raised her first flag symbolising her independence and freedom from colonial rule.

This year, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea delivered his third Independence Day national address as Head of State.

"I am honoured to address the nation on this auspicious occasion of Nauru's 54th Anniversary of Independence and 76th Anniversary of Nauruan survivors' return from Chuuk. A day of mixed emotions - melancholic and jubilant.

"Today therefore is a day for all Nauruans - young and old - to reflect and reminisce."

The President quotes former president Sir Hammer DeRoburt, who in December 1967, in his then role as Nauru's head chief, addressed the United Nations' General Assembly advocating for Nauru's independence, "underscoring the sacrifices and the survival of the Nauruan race that was



President Aingimea observes a moment of silence after laying a wreath in memory of the those who perished during the invasion of Nauru and exile to Truk

nearly wiped out from the ravages of disease and war."

President Aingimea acknowledges and pays tribute to "our family and friends impacted by World War II, those whom are still with us and those departed before us."

"We salute their strength, tenacity, and perseverance by honouring their memory as we celebrate our day of Independence.

"As we venture into the new year, we must continue to be guided by the principles and ideologies of our forefathers who fought hard for Nauru's sovereignty and independence, who were "willing to suffer some inconveniences in order to retain and preserve our national and racial identity and entity."

"There is no doubt that the hardships

experienced by our ancestors and sacrifices of past generations have been instrumental in molding modern Nauru and we its people, with resilience and resolution. "

"Today we embark on our fifty-fourth year of Independence in circumstances overwrought with challenges.

"Our island nation, although isolated and secluded, is part of the global economy and therefore vulnerable to global impacts. Our values and principles susceptible to influences of modern society, alien to our customs and traditions. By working together, we can address these challenges to minimise any detrimental impacts and ensure that our convictions and our way of life as we know it, not be compromised nor conceded."

World War II survivors David Peter Gadaraoa and May Cook, accompanied by Acting Sergeant Ika Aliklik and Acting Senior Constable Dominic Kepae, carried the flag to be hoisted by Probationary Constable Jeshurun Harris.

President Aingimea laid the single wreath at the foot of the cenotaph before the float parade that was led by the Nauru Police Force •

To read the full address delivered by President Aingimea, go to <https://www.nauru.gov.nr/government-information-office/media-release/54th-independence-day-national-address-by-he-president-aingimea.aspx>

Parliament Jan-Feb 2022

- *Supplementary Appropriation Bill #3, 2021-22 recognises additional government revenue of \$34.7m;*
- *Telecommunications Service Tax (Amendment) Bill 2022 to reduce the telecoms service tax from 15 per cent to 10 per cent;*
- *Constitutional Amendment Bill 2022 seeks to make additions to Article 31 - disqualification for the membership of parliament.*

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The sitting of parliament for 2022 was conducted across two days and culminated in the tabling of the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2022 seeking to make additions to Article 31, the disqualification for the membership of parliament.

Additionally, Finance Minister Martin Hunt tabled the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2021-22 recognises additional government revenue of \$34.7 million, and the same in expenditure, with a small surplus balance of \$20,000.

The Telecommunications Service Tax (Amendment) Bill 2022 sees to reduce the telecoms service tax from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, thus ensuring telecommunications provider, Digicel Nauru Corporation, to be “fully tax compliant similar to any other taxable entity in the Republic,” the finance minister explained.

Article 31 of the Constitution of Nauru provides for disqualifications for membership of parliament on several grounds including bankruptcy, mental state, conviction of an offence, non-resident, or holds an office of profit in the service of Nauru or its entities.

In prefacing the bill, President Lionel Aingimea explained that the government is addressing people’s concerns largely due from a number of Nauruan citizenships given to foreign nationals.

“Citizenship is a process which can be controlled but not absolutely stopped. Our Citizenship Act allows for citizenships to be granted on a number of different grounds, not only that Nauru needs some of these naturalised citizens for our social and economic development.”

The President explains the focus of the Bill relates to Article 71 of the Constitution of Nauru which allows for Nauruan “descendants who have derived their heritage to those who became citizens on 30 January 1968 to be eligible to contest for parliamentary seats.”

The public opinion poll conducted on 13 November 2021 asked the voting public to vote yes or no to the question – *Should the membership of parliament including the office of the president and ministers be reserved for Nauruans and their descendants who became Nauruan citizens in 1968 when the Constitution came into force?* A resounding 71.2 per cent voted yes, against the 28.8 per cent no votes.

President Aingimea highlighted naturalised citizens.

“The filing of citizenship through the naturalisation process is not a right but a privilege. Not only this government but all other governments have conferred citizenship to a number of people.

“As leaders of this nation we acknowledge all Nauruans and your contributions to our nation building.

“Apart from the rights to contest an election, all other rights we are the same, by every Nauruan will be enjoyed by you and everybody else.

“We are part of the Nauruan community and we feel that everyone here is one of us.

“In the proposed amendment we have taken the views of all the voters.”

The proposed bill amends Article 31 with four additional criteria for disqualifications for membership of parliament:

- Article 31(f): disqualifies any person who is not a Nauruan citizen by virtue of Article 71.



Excessive car importation could have detrimental effect for Nauru. Stats estimate 5,000 cars to a population of 12,000

- Article 31(g): disqualifies a Nauruan who is not a direct descendant of any one of those persons who became citizens by virtue of Article 71.

- Article 31(h): disqualifies a Nauruan who acquired citizenship through a naturalisation process pursuant to any laws made by the parliament.

- Article 31(i): disqualifies a Nauruan citizen who is a descendant of a naturalised citizen. This include when a naturalised citizen marries a naturalised citizen; a non-Nauruan or a Nauruan citizen who has no direct link to his or her heritage to those who acquire citizenship under Article 71.

On the other hand, citizens who are qualified to be elected as members of parliament are:

- Any person who became a citizen under Article 71;
- Are the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and so forth of that citizen;
- Any Nauruan citizen who through their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents and so forth as long as it goes through the generation chart, is able to link his or her heritage to those person who became citizens under Article 71 is qualified to be elected as a member of parliament.

Debate on the bill is deferred for 90 days as required under Article 84 (2) of the Constitution to be complied with. This is standard procedure when making amendments to certain aspects of the Constitution to allow members time to read the amendments and make informed decisions for debate.

Ministerial statements

Transport

Minister Martin Hunt presented the transport department’s progress report with particular concern in the number of vehicles being imported in to the country and warns this could have “detrimental effects just like any other imported product if brought in excessively.”

The minister says statistics show that 5,000 vehicles are on island equating to an estimated one car for every two people.

“This issue will pose problems in several areas such as road safety, environmental protection, and traffic congestion during emergencies.”

The minister further demonstrates that if the non-driving population is removed from the equation this averages to approximately one vehicle per person.

“Considering we have only one main road around the island, the given figures are alarming.”

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The minister says certain regulations will be reviewed to prevent the importation of old vehicles including the year of manufacture and transition to importing reliable vehicles equipped with safety designs and features of current standards.

“Moreover, these changes going forward will also benefit the environment.”

Land transport is also working on additional bus services for the community.

Though not a new concept, the reintroduction of the service with proper attention and strategic planning has the potential to provide an efficient and sustainable public transport service.

People Living with Disability

Minister Isabella Dageago rose to thank the multiple donors who contributed towards the event commemorating World Disability day organised by the Department of People Living with Disability.

The minister said the gesture shows the acknowledgement of people living with a disability are very much part of the community and reinforces their slogan, ‘nothing about them without them’.

There are two more events in the coming months for the department which commemorates down syndrome and autism.

RONPHOS

Minister for Ronphos, Reagan Aliklik says a phosphate vessel departed on Friday 21 January for India with a load of 27,850 metric tonnes of phosphate.

A total of six phosphate vessels exported a total of 164,200 metric tonnes of phosphate during the 2021-2022 financial year.

Meanwhile, royalties for the December 2021 quarter are expected to be paid in February.

Women’s and Social Development Affairs (WASDA)

Minister Dageago reiterates the ongoing work of the department in regards to women and children protection and policy as well as its partnerships with regional organisations in such areas.

The minister says an emerging trend in the delivery of work around domestic violence is the number of overlapping issues having a domino effect and resulting in violence.

“This has greatly impacted the work delivery of the department and we are now working smarter to ensure that we have continuous dialogue with the police, the judiciary, the health department and the community so that no-one is left behind,” Minister Dageago said.

Mental health issue is one of the major focuses of the department this year and conversations have begun for an all-inclusive approach to address the issue.

Sports

While sports is a regular feature of Nauru’s independence day celebrations, sports minister Maverick Eoe highlighted the arrival of the Queen’s Baton Relay on Friday 4 February for the island wide relay on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 February.

The Baton was received on arrival by President of the Nauru Commonwealth Games Association and Speaker of Parliament



Participants representing the department of people living with disability in the Independence Day march parade

Marcus Stephen and chef de mission for Team Nauru Leona Waidabu.

Baton bearers for the two-day relay included President Lionel Aingimea, government ministers and officials, students, frontline staff, past Commonwealth Games and other athletes and members of the community.

The minister thanked the various entities that offered assistance and helped in the clean-up campaigns including the department of emergency services, Canstruct, the Fiji community, and sporting federations.

Justice & Border Control

Minister Eoe highlighted a handful of the many sections of the justice department notably the intellectual property section which has received approximately 110 applications for the registration of trademarks and numerous more on the registration of patents.

The business registration and licencing section is the revenue earner bringing in \$500,000 per annum, although there have been slight reductions owing to business activities being impacted by COVID-19.

Earlier in the year the quarantine section destroyed a shipping container load of housing material infested with termites. This was the first consignment to be destroyed by the section.

“If this had not been discovered at the port and destroyed, these termites would have caused a lot of damage to building constructed with the wood,” Minister Eoe said.

Nauru has a huge problem with white ants or termites leaving homes and wooden building structures needing constant repairs or complete demolition to rid the problem and prevent it from spreading to nearby wooden structures.

The correctional service currently hosts 47 inmates who are actively involved in the rehabilitation programs offered by the centre such as self-sustaining skills like vegetable and poultry farming.

The rehabilitation program also includes community work in cleaning cemeteries, while special leave requests to attend family funerals are granted subject to, and in accordance with, the Correctional Services Act.

NRC

Minister for Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation Reagan Aliklik says the state owned entity has cleared 6.21 hectares (63%) of rock on land portion 230 with 3.6 hectares (37%) remaining. The average weekly clearance is 0.22 hectares (23,680 square feet). The land clearing is estimated to be completed by mid-May.

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Additionally, other NRC activities in the community continues with land clearing for new housing construction; fire and pollution control measures for the dumpsite being identified; and ongoing dialogue between stakeholders for designs, studies and reports in compliance with the Environmental Management and Climate Change Act 2020.

NRC is also waiting on an update from contractor Metrocology for the design and site plan for the higher ground initiative project.

Internal Affairs

A number of upcoming events notably a youth life skills program is soon to accept applications offering basic English, mathematics, computing and trades skills in woodwork, welding and art.

The Internal Affairs' six month program will also teach the basics of traditional and cultural weaving and net mending.

Meanwhile, the team showcasing Nauru at Dubai Expo 2020 are allocated 27 March for the main exhibition day.

Due to the high number of COVID cases in Dubai, Expo staff are required to undergo a PCR test every 48 hours.

The minister says members of the Nauru delegation affected by the virus have since recovered and taking extra precautions.

The department also sponsored Independence Day prizes for district clean-ups, banner and logo competitions with winning cash awards of \$5,000, \$3,000 and \$2,000.

Health

Minister Dageago announced the Nauru Health Strategic Plan 2021-25 is complete and to be launched soon.

The minister says the strategy will steer the department's plans and activities towards a healthy and resilient nation that values and supports individual rights through quality, inclusive health care, in direct support to achieve the national sustainable development goal of 'a healthy and productive population'.

The recent rise in the number of influenza-like symptoms in patients presenting to the hospital prompted a screening station set up at the hospital.

A total of 60 tests were taken revealing the type of influenza as seasonal flu. Random COVID testing at the screening station returned negative results.

The hospital has several important activities in the pipeline this year including urgent recruitment to boost human resources; a capital investment plan; and capital works including the construction of housing for a new waste management unit which is already on island; and plans to increase the capacity of maternity services.

Applications for the registration and annual licence of health practitioners is being reviewed and anticipated to be finalised in the first quarter this year.

At the time of the sitting overseas medical referral patients and their escorts number 81 in Taiwan, 16 in Brisbane, four in Fiji and three in Bangkok. Three patients have since returned from Taiwan.

Minister Dageago concluded her remarks with a message of



Nauru pavilion at Dubai Expo

condolence to the family of the late Mrs Lupe Deireragea who passed away in Taiwan while on medical treatment.

COVID Taskforce

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago updated members of the COVID situation in the region with Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Samoa, and Palau recording new cases in recent times, and over 700 cumulative deaths in Fiji, at the time of the sitting.

The minister says over three million doses of the COVID vaccine have been administered in 20 Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs) up to 20 January. Just fewer than two million are first doses while 1.5 million are fully vaccinated and an additional 175 thousand administered in ten PICTs.

On 3 February an Australian government-funded consignment of 5,850 doses of the Pfizer vaccine arrived via a chartered flight arranged by UNICEF in conjunction with the Government of Australia. This supply has been rolled out prioritising the young population of 12 to 17 year olds.

The Australian government and the New Zealand department of foreign affairs and trade have also agreed to fund a further 5,000 doses which will enable a booster campaign and first doses across the adult population.

Minister Dageago conveyed special thanks to the Australian High Commissioner Dr Helen Cheney, her team, the Australian government, Taiwan government, Digicel, Nauru Airlines, Canstruct and frontline workers for the ongoing support and sacrifice rendered during these unprecedented times.

Fisheries

Minister for Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority, Wawani Dowiyogo cautioned that the increased level of fishing activities increases the level of incidents and accidents at sea, if without the implementation of proper safety and awareness.

In response the state-owned entity is planning a series of safety awareness workshops. It recently met with the National Spearfishing and Freediving Federation, Nauru police, and the justice department, to discuss possible legislative measures to protect divers while at sea.

The NFMRA will also make available dive buoys and markers to various dive groups during the workshops to improve visibility of divers in the water.

The minister urges the public to exercise personal safety and precautions at all times.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary year since the NFMRA was established and anniversary celebrations began with fishing

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competitions over the Independence Day weekend.

Education

The most urgent and of concern for the education department is the teacher shortage currently facing the schools which has forced students in years three to five to home school as the department awaits the arrival of its teachers stranded abroad as a result of COVID measures.

Deputy Minister for Education and Training, Richard-Hyde Menke says after much deliberation the department is left with few options and concluded to delay the start of the 2022 academic year by two weeks. This will not shorten the 10 week duration of term one but will shortened the first term break.

“This is a small consolation for the adverse consequences to students’ learning that we have avoided in not forging ahead with the teacher deficit.

“Our heavy reliance on teachers from abroad will be a constant thorn in our side for this year and radical and short-term measures may need to be swiftly implemented to safeguard our students from further learning disadvantages,” Deputy Minister Menke said.

While the department has received a number of interested applicants for teaching positions, it recognises that recruitment is subject to the stringent COVID requirements for entering Nauru and the protection of Nauru’s borders takes precedence.

As a number of high school students complete their education in Australia and Fiji, other scholarship awardees are still on-island awaiting full vaccination. The department will be guided by the evolving COVID situation in regards to the way forward for these students.

Nauru Post

Deputy Minister Menke then presented the annual report for Naoero Postal Services Corporation and acknowledging the support that has been provided in reaching an audited operating profit for the year of \$517,784.

Government dividend of \$200,000 was also paid and \$103,557 set aside for business tax. Overall retained earnings for the year was recorded at \$214,227; resulting in funds amounting to \$970,888 as at 30 June 2021.

Multicultural Affairs

Deputy Minister Asterio Appi informed the House of the extension of regional processing in Nauru, agreed to by both the governments of Nauru and Australia, for a further six months ending in June.

The agreement includes appropriate funding models to address the costs of key operational requirements for the management of regional processing on Nauru.

Both governments are committed in the process of ensuring that the enduring capability process comes into effect from 1 July 2022.

Implementation of the enduring capability process will also see some PRC related sites and assets gifted to the Republic by Australia’s Department of Home Affairs. Gifted assets however, remain the property of Australia until the gifting and documentation completed and signed.



Education ramp up measures to support parents and students as teacher shortage forces years 3 to 5 to be home schooled

The proposed gifting date of 28 February was brought forward to 25 January when several assets including a CT scanner, residential modules and an industrial diesel generator, were urgently needed by departments.

DM Appi advised that department’s seeking use of the assets should liaise with the Chief Secretary’s department.

The number of refugee transferees on island is 112.

NPRT

DM Appi says the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust and the rollout of the 2021 RONWAN payout ensured that over 90 per cent of the approved funds were disbursed to beneficiaries before Christmas.

This RONWAN payout doubled at 10 per cent substantially increasing the redistribution of funds and simultaneously helped pay down NPRT’s debt at a faster rate and supporting the consolidation work.

The minimum RONWAN capital payout raised to \$500 allowed more beneficiaries to receive their remaining capital balances.

The total funding commitment from treasury amounted to \$12 million this financial year alone.

“This is the largest commitment that a government has ever put forward, to directly support a RONWAN capital repayment, in any one financial year,” DM Appi said.

Consolidating the NPRT’s remaining overseas investments is a long process and the government continues to work closely with the Trust on this and to liquidate the remaining assets.

DM Appi says the Aingimea government is committed to clearing the remaining RONWAN capital debt balance which it has now paid out just over 50 per cent, reducing the debt from \$35 million to \$17.4 million.

Nauru Airlines

DM Appi then presented the airline’s report and its steady progress in an “extremely challenging period since the impact of COVID on travel from March 2020.”

During this time the airline has reshuffled flight schedules and replaced aircrafts to suit the current need in the rise of freighter services over declining passenger travel.

However, over the last six months passenger flights were increased to weekly flights between Nauru and Brisbane except for the temporary halt from 7 January to 3 February owing to the rapidly escalating number of COVID-19 cases in Queensland.

It is anticipated that in the first half of this year it will become

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easier for fully vaccinated Nauruans to travel to Australia and other countries in the region as travel restrictions ease.

From 22 January Queensland's international border restrictions eased with the clear message that travellers will need to be fully vaccinated to be able to travel.

The airline continues to analyse what may be a viable schedule to recommence Fiji flights.

While securing charter work remains a challenge it remains part of the airline's core business and key strategy to provide revenue that supports all Nauru Airlines operations.

Efforts are being made to secure longer fixed term contracts for charter work with various entities in Australia, New Zealand and South-East Asia.

A pillar of the airline's strategy plan is to build new business beyond the core operations. Discussions are ongoing with the Tongan government's airline, Lulutai, to provide services between Australia, Tonga and New Zealand once travel restrictions are eased.

Positive discussions have also been held with Solomon Airlines for cooperative work, while communications with the Marshall Islands continues, as well as possible new services connecting Palau and Honolulu.

The airline's hangar and engineering services in Brisbane are being looked at with a number of customers and partners entering into discussions.

The new generation Boeing 737-700 aircraft, registered as VH-INU, will be able to undertake operations from sometime in February.

The current airline fleet consists of one Boeing 737-700 and four Boeing 737-300 aircraft.

The aircraft replacement program includes one more of the aging -300 passenger planes with another new generation aircraft, which is expected to proceed early this year.

President Lionel Aingimea presented a report on the special roster stood up by the Nauru Police Force over the Christmas festive period to curb unruly use of public roads.

Despite a few accidents resulting from driver negligence, this was the second special operations roster that has resulted in zero fatalities during the festive season.

UNPOL

Ending the statements on a high note is the first deployment of a team from the Nauru Police Force as members on the United Nations Police program.

Six officers are selected to be part of this very first team. They departed on 10 February for initial pre-deployment training in Ankara, Turkey by the Turkish National Police Academy.

The officers are Superintendent Imran Scotty, Sgt Wilhelm Appi, Sgt Drusky Dabadauw, Sgt Shannon Kanimea, Sgt Priscilla Dake, and Snr Constable Jacaranda Akibwib.



The current airline fleet consists of one Boeing 737-700 and four Boeing 737-300 aircraft

BILLS

Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2021-22

Finance Minister Martin Hunt tabled the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2021-22 recognising additional government revenue of \$34.7 million, and the same in expenditure, with a small surplus balance of \$20,000.

This takes the expected total revenue for 2021-22 to \$328.1 million and \$328.9 million appropriated for expenditure; leaving a surplus balance for the year of \$300,000.

The bill reflects and takes into account the six month extension of the Regional Processing Centre agreement with Australia from 31 December 2021 to 30 June 2022; an outcome of the mid-year review of budget estimates; and government decisions taken since the last supplementary budget was brought down.

The budget recognises revenue changes which includes \$12.3m in additional tax revenue from the RPC; \$2.6m in additional revenue that is expected to be collected from import duties; \$10m from management and services fees as results of the RPC extension; and \$9.9m in reimbursement revenue and visa fees reflecting the RPC extension.

Under expenditure, \$9.1m is provided to Nauru Community Housing to address sanitation and overcrowding issue and improve Nauru's housing stock; while \$400,000 is provided to the finance department to cover urgent refurbishment and extension of the treasury office; \$125,000 for additional consultancy fees; and \$8,000 for staff training and additional internet costs for the rest of the year.

Under other finance payments totalling \$13.8m are allocations of \$3.5m to settle Bank of Nauru outstanding debts with account holders; \$3.5m in contributions to the Intergenerational Trust Fund; \$3.9m fiscal cash buffer; \$2.5m in fees for tug boats for phosphate and fuel operations; and \$500,000 for freight.

The Nauru RPC Corporation is allocated \$285m for staff upskilling; while climate change and resilience is budgeted \$440,000 to cover consultancy fees, and plant and equipment purchases.

The Department of Multicultural Affairs is provided \$6.5m to cover three months' worth of expense measures following the confirmation of the RPC extension with Australia.

The COVID-19 Taskforce is allocated \$400,000 for operational costs relating to the newly established Stay Safe Accommodation in Brisbane, and \$180,000 to cover the cost of an additional return Fiji charter in February for Nauruans and expatriate workers.

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The minister notes that “due to the limited capacity of the quarantine facility in Nauru and to properly manage the risk of a potential outbreak, one charter flight would not be ideal.”

Health is allocated \$2.2m for overseas medical referrals, bringing the total allocation for the year to \$11.2m.

Nauru’s New York and Canberra missions are provided \$53,000 and \$77,000 respectively for new rent, salary, and additional travel and allowance entitlements.

Internal Affairs is provided \$80,000 for travel costs and allowances incurred for representatives attending the culture and youth Expo in Dubai.

For transport, \$145,000 for overtime pay and utilities incurred due to technical issues with the implementation and roll out of the department’s new solar system; and telecom receives \$50,000 for consultancy fees.

An allocation of \$730,000 for whole of government to cover department salary provisions such as appointments to vacant positions, the three-day additional pay in September 2021 to modify the pay cycle, and special Christmas ex-gratia payment.

Telecommunications Service Tax (Amendment) Bill 2022

The amendment sees to reduce the telecoms service tax from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, thus ensuring telecommunications provider, Digicel Nauru Corporation, to be “fully tax compliant similar to any other taxable entity in the Republic”, explained finance minister Martin Hunt.

Negotiations commencing in late 2017 reached an agreement in December 2018 that effective 1 July 2021, Digicel Nauru would be brought into the mainstream taxation system.

The outcome ensures Nauru remains compliant with international taxation requirements and as such conforms to OECD standards, which Nauru is a member.

Digicel Nauru will pay all taxes on amounts paid to non-residents, and tax on annual trading profits.

It is estimated that under the revised settlement deed, an approximate additional \$1.5 million will be collected in the 2021-22 financial year, on the assumption that the current level of Digicel operations is maintained.

Minister Hunt says this provides the “basis for renewal negotiations in respect of any new agreement from 1 July 2024 which will assist in ensuring a better outcome for citizens of the Republic.”

The amendment serves to amend the Act in accordance with the Settlement Deed signed on 18 December 2018, and has no impact on the Communication and Broadcasting Act 2018.

Minister Hunt underscored there are lessons to be learnt from the original Digicel agreement with Nauru caught in economically challenging times in 2009 when no taxation system was in place and committing to long term agreements.

The current 15 year licence agreement is due for renewal in 2024.

“I must stress that it is critical for negotiations to commence early to ensure the ongoing agreement with the new owner, Telstra, is mutually beneficial to both parties [Nauru and Telstra],” Minister Hunt said •

New plane sports Nauru star

A proud moment as His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea unveiled the latest in the Nauru Airlines’ fleet, B737-700 VH-INU, in the brand’s iconic livery featuring the 12-pointed star representing Nauru’s 12 tribes, on 26 February.



New generation B737-700 in new livery featuring Nauru’s star

“The new design of our first new generation aircraft reveals an innovating, fresh, and minimalistic look is reflective of our nation’s flag,” the President said.

“The ‘waves of friendship’ design, which has been a feature of the airline’s design since 2006, has been refreshed with navy-blue waves along the fuselage symbolising the Pacific Ocean and the role Nauru Airlines has connecting small island states to Australasia.

“This new livery represents months of work by Nauru Airline’s dedicated teams in Brisbane and Nauru and I would like to thank all of you for your perseverance throughout the last two years of certainty.

“This VH-INU Boeing 737-700 is the first aircraft of its kind to be introduced to Nauru Airlines’ and expands the operational capabilities of Nauru Airlines’ service, opening up opportunities to increase its network of destinations. As the airline transitions into the next generation of commercial aviation this aircraft allows us flexibility amid new demands for passenger, charter, and freight.

“I would like to extend my gratitude on behalf of the Republic to Flying Colours for the phenomenal application of this new brand to the aircraft. We look forward to seeing the entire fleet sporting the white star of Nauru,” President Aingimea said.

This year is the airlines’ 52nd year of service.

The unveiling ceremony was held at Australia’s Townsville Domestic Airport, and the blessing delivered by Pastor Craig Hannay.

At the dinner reception the same evening, Deputy Minister for Nauru Airlines, Asterio Appi expressed his personal pride in the return of the national colours and the iconic star on the plane noting the amount of work gone into making it happen.

“Nothing says Nauru more than our national colours and to see it on our newest addition to the fleet says the star is back.”

DM Appi says this work started shortly after the 2019 general elections during a state visit to Taiwan with an initial request by President Aingimea to Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen, and subsequent meetings to support an upgrade of the Nauru Airlines’ fleet.

“The dinner tonight is the result of over two years of hard work,” DM Appi said referring to the work of the government, the airlines’ management and staff, and the Government of Taiwan.

“We believe the upgrade of the fleet ensures that Nauru Airlines can continue its path to its sustainability and is an example of our strategy that has been in play for the last two and a half years.” •

High commission officially opens

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea officially opened the Nauru's high commission in Canberra, Australia with the raising of the Nauru flag marking a significant milestone in the diplomatic relations of Nauru and Australia, 2 March.

“Our physical presence here will enable regular and on-going policy dialogue on a wide range of issues from climate change, health security, labour mobility and many others,” President Aingimea said.

The office was established in 2020 and Camilla Solomon appointed in 2021 as the first high commissioner. Due to COVID-19 the formal opening was delayed.

The government made a key foreign policy decision in 2020 seeking to establish a high commission in Canberra - a decision that goes back to January 1968 when Nauru attained independence and the diplomatic relations between Australia and Nauru established soon after.

This decision goes back to January 1968 when Nauru attained independence and the diplomatic relations between Australia and Nauru was established soon after.

While Nauru was unable to appoint a Nauruan as high commissioner at the time in Canberra, an Australian citizen was appointed instead.

“Nauru’s first President the late Head Chief Hammer DeRoburt, believed strongly that appointing a High Commissioner would give the position weight of authority and influence, and starting in 1972, had several discussions with the Australian Representative Richard Gate, regarding this issue.

“Today, more than 50 years after our two countries first exchanged representatives, we are delighted to announce that we have fulfilled a historic milestone.

“It may seem a long time, however we are not looking back but only focus on our shared future underpinned by our democratic values and our shared interests on a raft of issues, including climate change, cyber security, maritime people smuggling, rules-based international order to mention a few.”

President Aingimea acknowledged the leadership role Australia plays in advancing peace and security in the region today and underscored that Nauru remaining one of the very few COVID-free countries in the world is made possible through Australia’s commitment and support in key sectors of social, economic, infrastructure and health security.



President Aingimea and High Commissioner Solomon unveil plaque for the new Nauru high commission in Canberra, in the Australian Capital Territory

“We live in times of heightened conflict and complex challenges, and as we gather today at this flag raising ceremony, we reaffirm our commitment to our shared democratic ideals which underpin our enduring partnership.”

Australia remains Nauru’s biggest development partner and while Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison often portrays a family relationship between the Pacific and Australia, President Aingimea says it’s more than that.

“You have played and continued to play an important part in our development journey contributing to Nauru’s development progress.”

The opening was attended by Australia’s Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Senator the Hon Zed Seselja and members of the Australian Federal Police.

Following the opening, President Aingimea paid a courtesy visit on the Australian Governor-General David Hurley AC DSC (retd).

Later that evening was the unveiling of the high commission plaque. Being mindful of COVID the ceremony was a closed event reserved for high commission staff and a few members of the presidential delegation •



#republicofnauru

First UNPOL pre-deployment training

The first ever team of Nauru police officers taking part in the United Nations Police (UNPOL) pre-deployment training departed 10 February, via Brisbane and on to Ankara, Turkey.

The six officers lead by Superintendent Imran Scotty will undergo four weeks pre-deployment training, before obtaining the go-ahead for full deployment of one year in South Sudan and Cyprus.

The team includes Sgt Wilhelm Appi, Sgt Drusky Dabadauw, Sgt Shannon Kanimea, Sgt Priscilla Dake, and Snr Constable Jacaranda Akibwib.



(L-R) Sgt Wilhelm Appi, Sgt Drusky Dabadauw, Supt Imran Scotty, Sgt Shannon Kanimea, Sgt Priscilla Dake, and Snr Constable Jacaranda Akibwib.

The training will be hosted by the Turkish National Police Academy.

Supt Scotty said as police officers it is a proud moment and to take on such a mission, the first for Nauru, is a challenge that they look forward to doing, to learn and experience other forms of policing.

The UN's selection process calls for gender equality thus 50 per cent female officers are required.

While the expression of interest selection process invited the senior and middle management ranks, Snr Constable Akibwib was an exception with her experience in peace keeping work with the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

Supt Scotty who was also part of RAMSI says they shared their RAMSI experiences with their fellow officers ahead of today's deployment and are all very positive about the task ahead.

As a mother of four, Sgt Kanimea says her family supported her decision right from the start and looks forward to the experience, contribute to and learn from.

She joined the NPF ten years ago and says as a police officer she is happy for the opportunity to contribute to international policing working alongside her colleagues on a mission that would further expand their experience in spaces outside Nauru.

Nauru is sending one of the smallest teams to UNPOL. The officers will return to Nauru at the completion of the training where they await the selection for deployment.

Should the officers be selected for the one year mission, they will be deployed to South Sudan and Cyprus and engaged in unarmed mission in the community •

Australia-Nauru cooperation on critical transport infrastructure

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne and His Excellency President Lionel Rouwen Aingimea met in Sydney to discuss further steps to deepen the close and enduring bilateral partnership between the two countries, and their shared commitment to strong and unified regional institutions, 28 February.

Both leaders committed to working together to upgrade Nauru's international airport, to strengthen Nauru's connectivity, safety and security.

Minister Payne announced Australia would provide a \$40 million grant finance package, including \$30 million through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP). This investment is a practical demonstration of Australia's commitment to supporting critical infrastructure in our region, in response to the priorities of Australia's Pacific partners.

Australia's funding will support the re-surfacing of Nauru's runway and the provision of vital air traffic equipment to enable critical air transport services for decades to come. The funding will also enable climate-resilient upgrades to sections of the Nauru ring road. The project will employ Nauruan workers and use local materials where possible, to help stimulate Nauru's economy.

This commitment builds on the joint announcement on 12 December 2021 of the partnership between Nauru, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Australia, Japan and the United States to build the East Micronesia Cable, which will provide Nauru with internet connectivity through a submarine cable for the first time.

President Aingimea and Minister Payne discussed Australia's support for Nauru's COVID-19 response. They shared concerns about enduring and emerging international security threats, including deep concerns about Russia's unprovoked and unacceptable aggression towards Ukraine. They reaffirmed both countries' support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Minister Payne also extended congratulations to President Aingimea in advance of the formal opening of the new Nauru High Commission in Canberra •



New UK high commissioner

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea received the United Kingdom’s non-resident high commissioner to Nauru at the virtual presentation of credentials, 11 January.

Thomas Edward Coward is the new High Commissioner of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Nauru and the Solomon Islands.



Thomas Edward Coward presenting his credentials as the new High Commissioner of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Nauru and the Solomon Islands

“Nauru and the United Kingdom share a relationship spanning over many decades, a historical and enduring relationship,” President Aingimea said.

“Our respective governments’ mutual respect of the rule of law and shared responsibility to uphold and respect universal values of peace, freedom, democracy and human rights has compounded that relationship further.”

High Commissioner Coward took up his appointment in December 2021, succeeding Dr Brian Jones.

“Your Excellency, I’m honoured to present to you my letter of commission from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth and I’m proud to be appointed as the new High Commissioner to the Republic of Nauru,” the high commissioner said.

“We value our longstanding friendship and our deep partnership between the United Kingdom and Nauru including through our shared membership of the Commonwealth, our shared values and on global issues where we act together including on climate change.”

Prior to his new appointment he worked as team leader for the Inclusive Growth and Livelihoods Team at the British Embassy Yangon in Myanmar and as a country economist for the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

He also worked in the Solomon Islands as a senior research analyst for the Central Bank of Solomon Islands from 2008 to 2010 under the Overseas Development Institute Fellowship Scheme.

The high commissioner is the UK government’s representative in a Commonwealth nation. They are responsible for the direction and work of the High Commission and its Deputy High Commissions and/or Consulates, including political work, trade and investment, press and cultural relations, and visa and consular services •

Khan formally opens legal year

Acting Chief Justice Mohammed Shafullah Khan officially opened the 2022 legal year in a ceremony held at the main court house this morning, highlighting plans on expediting cases and the way forward for cases to be heard by judges who are stranded abroad due to COVID restrictions.



Acting Chief Justice Khan highlights plans of expediting cases amid COVID-19 and stranded judges

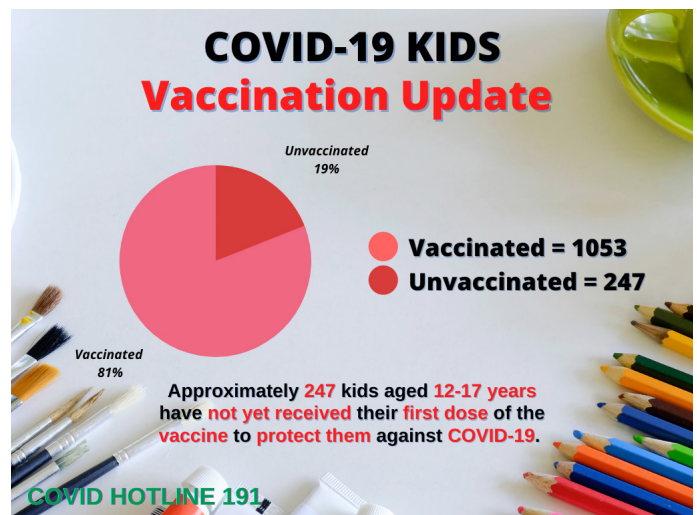
His Honour Khan noted there are 20 pending refugee appeals that needed to be settled and recommended clearer directions for consent to build and subdivide land ownership to avoid disputes. The appointment of a second fulltime resident magistrate has been made and the acting CJ hopes “the people will be better served.”

Acting Secretary for Justice Stella Duburiya noted the budget and jurisdiction matters of the District Court, and encouraged continuing legal education for legal practitioners.

Ms Duburiya commended that lay magistrates sat during the festive season in the absence of the resident magistrate saying “this is important for our capacity building,” and notes that “lay magistrates form an important part of the judicial system.”

President of the Nauru Law Society Barina Duburiya underscored that while there are 40 legal representatives and members of the NLS there is still a low representation in private practice.

Ms Duburiya supported legal aid funding, office space and office equipment for private practitioners otherwise they “will continue to be under represented,” and welcomed alternatives to dispute resolution and law reforms especially with regards to land, property and civil procedure laws •



Australia day highlights indigenous people

Australian High Commissioner Dr Helen Cheney hosted an Australia Day barbeque and highlighted the importance of the indigenous people of Australia, 26 January.

“The marking of 26th January is an important date in Australia’s history and it has changed overtime starting as an anniversary of settlement and evolving into the celebration of Australia that reflects the nation’s diverse people.”



Language and culture highlighted as important aspects of indigenous community

The high commissioner further said that the day is important as it shows how vital languages are to indigenous peoples, as well as giving recognition to the urgent need to preserve, revitalise and promote indigenous languages.

His Excellency, President Lionel Aingimea echoed the importance of indigenous languages, saying that they give people a better understanding of culture and society.

“Language is an important part of any culture, without language we would not understand love, we would not understand community, we would not understand the things that makes us a people,” President Aingimea said.

Thereafter the national anthems of Nauru and Australia were sung and the event concluded with lunch.

The United Nations declared that from 2022 to 2032 will be the decade of indigenous languages, to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the need to preserve them •

HODs complete leadership training

Four public servants receive certificates after completing a 6-month HR leadership development program equipping them with skills to build capacity for their HR staff thus enhance their work and boost service delivery, 26 January.

Participants Nadia Ika from the ICT department, Kaelyn Dekarube, secretary for Nauru Media, Giedo Garabwan from health and Clarissa Scotty, manager for recruitment division in the HR department, took part in the pilot program commencing June 2021.

Facilitators Andrew McMilan and Jeremy Leslie conducted the three-hour once-monthly interactive sessions via Zoom from New Zealand.

This is the second time the training is run in the Pacific islands by the NZ Public Service Fale.

Mr McMilan shared a NZ proverb describing the sharing of baskets of knowledge together and being “nourished” by them sprouting a great relationship between the NZ fale and the Nauru

Government gifts womens fellowship as it begins centenary celebrations

On behalf of the Government of Nauru, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea gifted \$10,000 to the Nauru Congregational Combined Women’s Fellowship (NCCWF) for its 100th year anniversary, 15 January.

“Without God we would not have reached 100 years this year. So we give honour, thanks and praise to God,” President of the NCCWF, Marissa Cook said.



Founders acknowledged for the vision and contribution to the womens fellowship movement

She further thanked President Aingimea for the government’s generous gift and also acknowledged the rest of her fellow sisters for their contributions to the NCCWF over the years.

“It would be remiss of me not to mention the hard work of our foremothers and want to extend our tribute to them. And also want to recognise and acknowledge my fellow sisters of NCCWF.”

President Aingimea congratulated the NCCWF for reaching their milestone and wished them well for the future.

The event continued with special guests sharing the history of the church and the event concluded with lunch.

The NCCWF was founded by Rosie Detudamo, wife of Timothy Detudamo, on 17 May 1922, coinciding with Nauru’s Constitution Day •



Despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 leadership training for department and section heads went ahead

public service.

HR consultant Meleoni Uera said despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 training went ahead and “continue to build up our capacity and build our leaders” and hopes to see more Nauruans in the public service receive similar leadership building “that will help us to continue to deliver better services for our people.”

Acting Chief Secretary Peta Gadabu presented the certificates •

Jaala Jeremiah is first Pacific islander selected for inaugural UN HOPE fellowship

Nauru's Jaala Jeremiah is the only Pacific Islander to be selected for the inaugural President of the General Assembly Fellowship for HOPE (Harnessing Opportunities for Promoting Empowerment of Youth).

Director of Water Resource Management with the Department of Climate Change, Jaala is one of eight young diplomats/civil servants from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin American and the Caribbean selected for the Fellowship.

A graduate from Taiwan's Tamkang University with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Science, Diplomacy and International Relations, Jaala sees the Fellowship as pertinent to enriching national skills.

"To understand and navigate the extensive UN system and in order to enhance my skills in diplomacy, negotiations and climate change, this Fellowship is, needless to say, invaluable for myself and my country as this opportunity will allow me to grasp the system at its core," Ms Jeremiah said.

The flagship initiative of the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA), developed in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), was successfully launched on 10 January 2022 and will run to the end of the UN's 76th session in September 2022.

The Fellows are attached on a rotation basis for an intensive, multifaceted program through OPGA's six substantive working teams - Peace & Security; Human Rights; Humanitarian; Sustainable Development; Reform, Legal & Budget; and Communications; work closely with their Permanent Missions on various responsibilities, and receive weekly UNITAR training workshops on UN processes and relevant topics.

As envisioned by President of the 76th General Assembly Mr Abdulla Shahid, this Fellowship program aims to promote youth engagement in multilateralism and support the next generation of diplomats, particularly from underrepresented countries (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS) at the United Nations, while also ensuring geographical representation and gender balance.

"These are the future diplomats who will lead the international community in finding solutions to the challenges of the 21st Century."

An independent three-member panel selected the eight based on agreed-upon criteria, balancing gender and regional representation; with preference given to young diplomats, 18-



Jaala is the first Nauruan and only Pacific Islander to be accepted into the inaugural President of the General Assembly Fellowship for HOPE designed to promote and empower the youth

35 years, and civil servants from underrepresented countries, particularly from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.

The Fellowship will allow Fellows to garner a deeper understanding of issues relevant to the world today, from climate change to COVID-19, from peace and security, to human rights and gender equality.

Other recipients are Mr. Javier D. M. Spencer of Antigua and Barbuda; Ms. Jigme Wangmo of Bhutan; Ms. Diedra Sealey of Grenada; Mr. Mohamed Fofana of Guinea; Mr. Mahathilath Phongsavath of Lao People's Democratic Republic; Ms. Kamukama Stella of Uganda; and Ms. Margaret Tatenda Chikawa of Zimbabwe.

All costs associated with relocation, housing and work will be covered by the Member State funded Fellowship Program •

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Republic of Nauru

Office contact:
Government Information Office
Government Offices
Yaren District, Republic of Nauru

Em: gio.nauru@gmail.com
Tel: +674 557-3009/3133 ext. 307
www.naurugov.nr