



Nauru Bulletin

Issue 4-2022/238

14 April 2022

Nauru vaccinates 90 percent of kids, contains cases

Nauru's COVID-19 vaccine coverage has reached 90 and 75 per cent for the target groups and is once again COVID-safe and free after three cases were cleared on Monday, 11 April.

The target groups are children aged 12 to 17 years and the adults requiring booster shots.

President Lionel Aingimea made the announcement that evening following negative final PCR test results of the three confirmed cases that were isolated at the RON Hospital negative pressure COVID ward and all residents at the hotel quarantine facilities.

All these individuals travelled from Brisbane to Nauru on 31 March and two from the cohort were detected in quarantine with traces of the COVID virus.

While they were quickly moved into isolation at the COVID ward the rest of the passengers tested negative.

Nonetheless, their time in quarantine was extended from five to 10 days according to guidelines to ensure any potential spread of the virus was contained in quarantine.

Upon release back into the community everyone satisfied the minimum required 10 days since infection and all remained well and free of symptoms.

Daily COVID testing and regular health checks confirmed that no more passengers turned into a positive case and all remained



Kids vaccination reaches 90 per cent and adult booster shots 75 per cent coverage

negative until the day of their release from quarantine.

Following news of the initial positive test results of the two passengers, people streamed into the Public Health centre and at mobile health stations to take a rapid antigen test while others got their COVID vaccinations.

President Aingimea thanked the community for the support by getting their COVID tests taken when called for.

The COVID management guidelines followed by the Nauru Taskforce and Health department, as provided by the World Health Organisation, require that if a person is infected with COVID but remains well and asymptomatic, that they remain isolated for 10 days.

After this period of isolation, they are no longer considered a risk to the community and can be released from isolation.

Due to the particular circumstances of the common exposure at Brisbane Airport on 31 March and evidence that multiple passengers had exposure, all passengers were classified as 'close contacts' and so were required to remain in quarantine for the same period.

Nauru remains COVID-safe and there is no community transmission.

The Taskforce and Health Department continue to test the front line workers at the quarantine sites such as security and cleaners to ensure there is no community spillage of the virus.

All airport, quarantine and health front line workers, along with all persons screened at the hospital and in the community, have returned negative results.

The government is confident that the containment procedures are tight and working well, ensuring no leakage out of quarantine.

No other special community measures are required for Nauru at this stage, other than the temporary measures at the hospital.

Public Health urges that we maintain health protocols by hand washing with soap and water and use sanitiser, cough and sneeze into bent elbow or tissue.

Call the COVID Hotline 191, for enquiries •

GOVERNMENT OF NAURU

Protect yourself and those around you:

- Get vaccinated as soon as it's your turn and follow local guidance on vaccination.
- Practise social distancing of at least 1.5 metres from others, even if they don't appear to be sick. Avoid crowds and close contact.
- Clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand rub (sanitiser) or wash with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of used tissues immediately and clean hands regularly.
- If you're worried about COVID or flu-like symptoms, testing is available at the RON Hospital.
- You will be required to wear a mask when visiting the hospital. One will be provided for you on arrival.



Airline prioritise safety

Safety is behind Nauru Airlines' purchase of its newest plane which brought back the national colours and the iconic 12-pointed star making many Nauruans proud.

The Next Generation Boeing 737-700 aircraft's inaugural passenger flight landed in Nauru on 31 March, crewed by an all-Nauruan team led by Captains Vodrick Detsiogo, Kristian Keke and Dylan Rimmer.

In the parking position on the tarmac, the pilots displayed Nauru flags through the flight deck windows, before captains Detsiogo and Keke presented the aircraft by waving the flag from the top of the aircraft stairs.

Captain Detsiogo, who is also the Nauru Airlines vice chairman, said it has been 17 years since the iconic 12-pointed star was featured on the national airline's livery.

President Lionel Aingimea thanked the Republic of China (Taiwan) for its immense support in co-funding the aircraft and acknowledged the airline and especially the flight crew for the dedication and hard work to achieve this milestone.

Three scenic flights carrying school students, senior citizens and other passengers to nearby Banaba Island were scheduled for Friday 1 April. The first two flights were commissioned by the government and the third was chartered by the Blues community.

Deputy Minister for Nauru Air Corporation Asterio Appi says the airline recognised the importance of replacing the aging fleet and bringing back the Nauru colours was by popular demand.

"Regardless of COVID, we have put in place an aircraft replacement program and part of that reason, one of the core fundamentals behind that is basically the safety.

"We have an aging fleet of the 300 series. Parts are getting scarce to source; they're [parts are] no longer on the shelves. Engineers are getting harder to find because our planes are older.

"They're [engineers] doing the service that we need them to do but it's becoming a safety issue for us," Mr Appi said.

The airline has seen some rebranding from the original Air Nauru, to Our Airlines and now Nauru Airlines including a change in livery, only to return to the original flag colours and the star by popular demand.

"They [Nauruans] wanted that sense of pride and ownership and this is what we've delivered.

"We've also intertwined the friendship waves of Our Airline or Nauru Airlines for that matter. That symbolises our responsibility and our role in connecting the central pacific to the outside world basically.

"Nauru Airlines' core business and core service and destination will always be Nauru for a start.

"Any new destination will have to be profitable to subsidise and help carry the Nauru Airlines' Nauru sector."



A second Boeing 737-700 series aircraft is in the pipeline for Nauru Airlines

Converting the 300 series planes in to freighters is part of the strategy to diversify the airline's business with Nauru being the core service.

The airline attracted additional services in Australia with national carrier Qantas, thus aiding to subsidise the Nauru service.

Deputy Minister Appi says since the start of the COVID pandemic, the demand for air freight has tripled.

A weekly freighter service delivers fresh produce, medicine and other critical supplies to the island, mostly from Australia.

This has proven beneficial for the people of Nauru as evident in the early days of the pandemic when shipping services to Nauru was disrupted resulting in empty shelves.

The government subsidised a few air freight services at the time to enable businesses to fill shop shelves.

Mr Appi says the plane carries 13 tonnes and has been averaging 10 tonnes minimum per flight.

The airline's pilot and engineering program is ongoing with one cadet in his final few months of training to become a first officer with Nauru Airlines.

Mr Appi says, the program which was introduced in 2020, "provides a very clear pathway for people with no flying experience at all to be pilots of ours in the future," similarly with the engineering program.

"So basically our plane, our pilots. Our plane, our engineers.

"This is part of the drive behind investing in our own human resource to look after our own fleet. "

Part of the rebrand is to include Bible scriptures in the aircraft to provide passengers comfort and safety in travel.

The Nauru Airlines fleet currently consists of one 700 series and two 300 series passenger aircrafts; and two freighters which were converted and returned to service in February and September 2021.

The aircraft replacement program approved by the Cabinet includes the replacement of one more of the ageing 300 passenger aircraft. Work on this will proceed this year •



Follow us on
Facebook

republicofnauru

AusComm signs \$15,000 sports grant

The Australian High Commission delivers \$15,000 grant funding to kick off a ‘say no to bullies’ school holiday sports program, through the Pacific Sports Partnership grant.

The funding, signed on Monday 11 April, between Secretary for Sports Dagan Kaierua and Deputy Australian High Commissioner Andrew Hodges is to support the operational aspects of the upcoming Easter school holiday sports program.

A more permanent structure was planned with an Australian-based company contracted to install the equipment, but COVID hindered travel and delivery of equipment.

Mr Kaierua said in light of the delay and funding timeline, acquiring portable equipment would get the program going.

“So the options was to get something portable, just to get things rolling... we focus on our main National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) in terms of fighting NCDs and reducing the NCDs and keeping a healthy lifestyle, especially for kids,” Mr Kaierua said.



Secretary for Sports Dagan Kaierua and Australian Deputy High Commissioner Andrew Hodges sign \$15K sports funding for school holidays

Mr Hodges congratulates the department for the initiative saying it is “so important to keep kids busy and engaged over the [school] break” and is especially pleased to know that students will also learn other social awareness issues from partnering departments.

The program will incorporate health, the women’s affairs department and the police who will deliver and promote awareness programs •

Undersea cable agreement signed

Nauru signs the East Micronesia undersea cable Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will see the expansion of Nauru’s information connectivity to the rest of the world at a much faster and cheaper rate.

On behalf of the Nauru Government, Secretary for ICT Geoffrey Harris signed the MOU between the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the U.S, Japan, Australia, and Nauru, on 1 April.

Mr Harris says connectivity will increase many times over and the advantages are many including economically and socially but warns there are also cyber security issues.

Currently, Nauru relies on satellite connectivity and due to the nature of the technology the connection will fade during rain, Mr Harris cautions.

“With the submarine cable that [rain interference] won’t be an issue anymore; plus the fibre [cable] can carry terabytes of data per second.

“The population can grow but it will still have that reliable fast bandwidth, regardless.

“With [Nauru’s] small population it will be like almost instantaneous internet (connection),” Mr Harris said adding that the economic advantages will be high, low cost and “will be so much more reliable and so much more faster and efficient.”

Witnessing the signing, Deputy Australian High Commissioner Andrew Hodges says while the undersea cable will open up a whole range of opportunities for Nauru including for business, e-commerce, and e-government, Australia is “also mindful of the threats of cyber security.”

“Nauru’s had its issues in the past with cyber security issues. We know that they’re a growing issue across the region and so it’s great that we’re [Australia] also able to talk helping Nauru build its cyber security structures over the next few years as well,” Mr Hodges said.



Secretary for ICT Geoff Harris signs East Micronesia undersea cable to improve Nauru’s information connectivity

The substantial assistance package, provided by Australia, the U.S and Japan, may continue to increase as the invasion of Ukraine persists and the rising cost of fuel which is required to operate the vessel to lay the cable.

The Nauru Fibre Cable Company (NFCC), formed by the Nauru government, will run and manage the connection.

Mr Harris warns that cyber security is always a threat and while the department and other watchdogs are mitigating cyber threats, users need to be careful and aware of these threats and refrain from answering unsolicited emails or messages and not give away usernames and passwords.

The ICT department monitors cyber security for the government network partnering with a regional cyber agency. The Nauru Police Force has its own cyber security division and is responsible in laying charges against offenders.

The majority of the submarine cable will lie on the seabed until it has to come up to land to be connected.

Mr Harris says the long process requires mapping the sea bed to determine the route of where the cable will run.

The East Micronesia cable will connect Pohnpei and Kosrae in the Federated States of Micronesia, to Guam, and branching out north from Kosrae, to Nauru and Kiribati •

Locals treated to scenic tour

Approximately 200 passengers embarked on a scenic tour on board Nauru Airlines' newest aircraft, VH-INU, flying over the island of Banaba, or Ocean Island, 289 km east of Nauru, 5 April.

The airline operated two government endorsed scenic flights as part of celebrating the arrival of the airline's Boeing 737-700 aircraft.

The first flight took off around at 10am on the hour-long tour, circling over Banaba before returning safely back to Nauru. The second flight was scheduled for 12.30pm.

Passengers on board the first flight included the Taiwan Ambassador Dean Wang, senior citizens, and students from various schools with some of them experiencing their first trip on a plane.

Ambassador Wang said he had a very enjoyable time with the crew and passengers and is hopeful that he could fly home to Taiwan directly on the new aircraft.

One happy teacher was only too delighted to be one of the first passengers on board to accompany her students, commenting "it's good to have the star back," in reference to the 12-pointed star which is featured on the National flag of Nauru symbolising the 12 tribes of Nauru.

Following the detection of two COVID-positive cases in quarantine a day earlier, from individuals who travelled on an incoming flight, authorities say there was no exposure between



Taiwan Ambassador Dean Wang and students on the first scenic flight to Banaba Island on board VH-INU

the two flights or from the crew on Thursday and Friday.

The plane was thoroughly sanitised after passengers cleared the plane on Thursday night.

While the same pilots operated the flights on Thursday 31 March flight and the scenic flights the following day, they safely remained and secured themselves in the cockpit for the duration of the scenic flights, and there was a change in cabin crew.

A third flight was chartered by the Blues community.

Nauru Airlines says that people will regularly see VH-INU visit the airport, continuing the airline's service and support to Nauru •

Runway resurface financing signed

President Lionel Aingimea and Deputy Australian High Commissioner Andrew Hodges signed the \$30 million Arrangements Document to upgrade Nauru's international airport, 31 March.

The grant is being provided through the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP). The upgrade will be delivered by AIFFP in partnership with the Department of Transport.

President Aingimea thanked the government and people of Australia for the friendship and assistance in repaving the runway and the main ring road.

In these times of COVID, the frequency of passenger flights may have decreased however air freight services are consistent and in demand to supplement the delivery of essential products and to fill shop shelves.

Mr Hodges says the upgrade will extend the service life and safety of the airport runway another 25 to 30 years, keeping the world connected to Nauru.

The signing was done on the same day of the arrival of Nauru Airlines' newest plane, the new generation Boeing 737-700.

The upgrade includes resurfacing of the runway and upgrade some critical air traffic control equipment; as well as climate-resilient upgrades to sections of the ring road.



President Lionel Aingimea and Deputy Australian High Commissioner Andrew Hodges sign runway upgrade grant provided through AIFFP

The upgrade is a critical and major infrastructure priority for Nauru given the heavy reliance on air transport to import goods such as fresh food, medicine and other critical supplies.

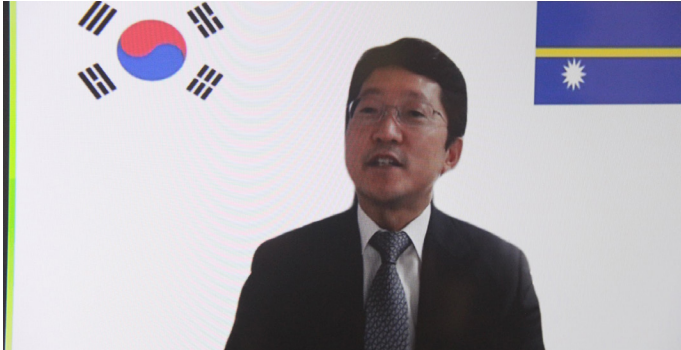
Being small and isolated makes it very important to ensure the airport continues to operate safely and meet international standards.

The steering committee is made up of several government departments and state-owned entities including the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Finance, Infrastructure, the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation (NRC), and AIFFP •

President receives Korean ambassador

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea received the Korea non-resident Ambassador to Nauru at the virtual presentation of credentials, 25 March.

Young-kyu Park is the new Ambassador Extraordinary Plenipotentiary of South Korea to Nauru, succeeding Mr Shinhee Cho.



Ambassador of Korea to Nauru, Young-kyu Park, presented his letter of credence on 25 March

“The Republic of Nauru and the Republic of Korea share a longstanding relation based on common interests,” President Aingimea said.

“I especially wish to take this opportunity to express the government’s appreciation for the COVID-19 assistance rendered by your country to Nauru through UNICEF for medical items.”

The Ambassador said that he was honoured to have been appointed to the position.

“It is my great honour to serve as Ambassador of Korea... and I will do my best to strengthen bilateral relations between our two countries,” Ambassador Park said.

Ambassador Park joined Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1994, and appointed to various positions in Korea’s overseas missions including as first secretary, counsellor, and director.

He also served as consul-general of the Korean Embassy in the Republic of Iraq and minister at the Korean Embassy in the United Arab Emirates.

Nauru established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea on 20 August 1979 •

Aus-Nru sign health, education funding

The governments of Australia and Nauru sign Direct Funding Agreements (DFA) for education and health, 21 March.

Then Acting High Commissioner Andrew Hodges, Secretary for Education Darrina Kun and Secretary for Health Chanda Garabwan signed two DFAs on behalf of their departments.



Secretary for Education Darrina Kun and Australian High Commissioner Andrew Hodges sign direct funding agreement

Managed by the finance department, the DFAs aim to support Nauru in terms of health and education amongst other priorities in departments such as the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) and Women’s and Social Development Affairs (WASDA).

Mr Hodges says he is pleased that Australia is able to assist Nauru to address some key issues through a long-term strategy.

The \$3.8 million DFA with education is focused on key priorities such as the Australian Certificate of Education (ACE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), junior scholarships, school equipment and teacher salaries.

In addition, the \$2 million DFA signed with health also covers airfreight to bring in supplies to the island in times of COVID-19-related emergencies when sea freight is unavailable and other costs associated with COVID.

Secretary for Finance Novena Itsimaera said the departments are very appreciative of the continued support from Australia and they look forward to implementing the DFAs successfully in the near future.

DFAs are enabled through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Australia and Nauru on the Development Cooperation Program in 2017 •



Switzerland donates postie bikes

The Nauru Postal Services Corporation held a handover ceremony of three new electric bikes donated as aid in kind by Switzerland Post and Manufacturer Kyburz Switzerland AG, 5 March.

Nauru Post Office Chairman, Alvin Harris officially handed over the three electric bikes to the Director of Operations Lisa Tebouwa.

Kyburz is an international leader in high-quality mobility and transport solutions the three electric bikes that are powered by electricity.

The electric bikes are eco-friendly and efficient. They have all the features of a regular motorcycle with the addition of an electrical drive system.

The bikes can travel up to 45km/h and are fitted with protected carry units for light packages, helping the Nauru Postal Service increase its capacity to serve Nauru by delivering inbound mail to its customers.



Switzerland-gifted electric bikes can travel up to 45 kmh

Nauru Post conveys its sincere thanks and gratitude to the Switzerland Government, Ambassador Yasmine Chatila Zwahlen, Switzerland Post and Kyburz Switzerland AG for their generous donation •



The Nauru Bulletin is a fortnightly publication of the Government of the Republic of Nauru.

It is produced by the Government Information Office (GIO).

The GIO was established in May 2008 and is a section of the Office of the President.



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