



Nauru Bulletin

Issue 11-2020/215

26 June 2020

Parliament 4-5 June

Parliament's first sitting since COVID-19 declared a global pandemic

The Speaker of Parliament convened the first sitting of the Nauru Parliament since the declaration of the global outbreak of coronavirus earlier this year, with several statements and bills tabled as well as the new budget, 4 and 5 June.

Speaker Marcus Stephen opened the sitting with a prayer before a message from the president in which His Excellency Lionel Aingimea thanked Nauruans for their patience during the prolonged absence of a parliament sitting due to coronavirus, and several members of parliament being abroad at the time domestic and international flights were interrupted delaying their return home.

Nonetheless the delay provided the opportunity for comprehensive reporting by government to the House on the developments around coronavirus including the successful on-island testing for the virus. Some progress was halted in mid-March by the pandemic as the government mobilised to set up emergency rulings, quarantine facilities and suspend international flights.

President Lionel Aingimea presented the first ministerial statement reporting on his trip to Switzerland where he attended several meetings; first on the opening of Nauru's permanent mission in Geneva in January then later from 24 February to 1 March, to the Universal Postal Union (UPU) where the president once again sought the UPU Council's agreement to exempt or waive Nauru's membership fee arrears; and explained Nauru's intention to submit a proposal at the 2020 congress on reserving two seats for the Pacific Islands.

The President also met with the President of the Swiss Confederation, Her Excellency Simonetta Sommaruga who sought information about refugees on Nauru and noted her strong support of human rights for refugees.



Nauru flag outside Nauru's Parliament House, Yaren District

Ms Sommaruga invited Nauru to identify sectors where Switzerland can assist, and President Aingimea, in turn, invited Swiss officials to form a multi-sectoral team to visit Nauru to experience and understand the situation, developments and challenges in Nauru.

The President then met with the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) President Thomas Bach who sought Nauru's support in initiatives involving refugees in sports.

Nauru Intergenerational Trust Fund

Minister for Finance Martin Hunt presented the Nauru Intergenerational Trust Fund (NTF) brief against the back drop of COVID-19 explaining that all sovereign wealth funds or superannuation funds in the world would have experienced a decline during these times, however, Nauru is fortunate to be in a contribution phase with no pressure for payments that would force sale of assets or losses.

The fund's total value at the end of May is \$136.3 million. Total contribution by stakeholders are: Nauru 68.03 per cent, Taiwan 14.84 per cent, Australia 12.24 per cent, New Zealand 2.52 per cent and the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) establishment grant worth 2.38 per cent.

Additional contributions before 30 June will bring the value of the fund at end of June to around \$140 million.

"Besides the normal investment risks, the recent outbreak of the coronavirus may continue to have a negative effect on the world economy and therefore result in a decline or certainly increased volatility of the Fund value and or lowering of investment returns."

Nonetheless, the minister says the committee and investment managers of the NTF continue to monitor the situation as it develops "but no major corrective action is deemed necessary at the moment."

Home Affairs

Minister Isabella Dageago presented her statement on Home Affairs starting with Youth Affairs and their collaboration with community youth groups to re-elect the new 2020 national youth council. The council's executive members will work closely with the department in addressing youth related issues and develop activities to promote healthy living, progress the life-skills program and work closely with stakeholders to create multiple life experience programs such as agriculture, fishing, Nauruan culture, and basic human rights.

Also under Home Affairs is the child protection unit and in May it was processing the CRC recommendations for school visits to strengthen child protection referral pathways with the education department.

The unit is thankful to the Nauru Government for approving budget allocation for a zero to three years development training with mothers, parents, and caregivers.

"The objective of this training is to ensure that the child's mother and caregivers are informed on their child's development in their home before they reach their school age at four," Minister Dageago said.

Cont pg 2...

The Women's Affairs unit continues to work on implementing the CEDAW recommendations as well as programs targeted for schools, communities and stakeholders; while also meeting with Nauru Police over an MOU aimed at allowing greater working collaboration with the ministry and NPF for the better protection of the community.

The Family and Community unit is progressing programs targeted specifically towards parents and the concern of the use of methane gas by children.

The Language and Culture division is working on the Nauru dictionary and programs around capturing the Nauru language and culture to ensure that memories are captured and recorded for the future of Nauru.

The Gender Mainstreaming unit is working towards assessing the work done by the protection division as well as moving towards the creation of a gender policy with the assistance of Pacific Women based in Fiji.

Minister Dageago also introduced the newest addition to the department, the Nauru Disabilities Persons Office, and said "all these divisions under the ministry of Home Affairs are all interlinked and form the basis of the social development sector for Nauru."

Health

Minister Dageago then presented the health ministry's organisational structure which has been remodelled to create a more robust workforce to ensure an improved and upgraded level of care. This includes reorganisation of services and preparedness of site facilities in the wake of coronavirus, should it be introduced into the Nauru community.

While there have been minimal disruptions, the minister said challenges and constraints posed by COVID-19 are mostly in the timely procurement of essential health supplies, recruitment of health professionals, and deferment of organised health events.

In early May the ministry celebrated International Day of the Midwife and Nurse.

"The ministry endeavours to invest in our nursing workforce through capacity building initiatives to ensure nursing care standards and practices are achieved and maintained," Minister Dageago said.

The Minister also headed the Nauru delegation in a virtual meeting of the World Health Assembly (WHA) on 18 and 19 May, and delivered the statement on behalf of the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) focusing on the status of COVID-19 and how the majority of the PICs remain free from the virus.

The eye clinic is also carrying out a mass drug administration for trachoma to clear the infection and decrease the prevalence for this transmissible eye disease. The minister urges the public to get tested and treated for the disease.

The minister also reported that overseas medical referral (OMR) has reopened with the Australian government granting special exemption for patients requiring critical care.

Health – COVID response

Minister Dageago then presented the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a general overview of the global situation that the rising numbers of cases and deaths is indication that the pandemic has not begun to slow down nor has it reached its peak.

"The pandemic will continue to devastate world populations and



Eye clinic nurse Sue Chen Apadinuwe (R) educating children on the importance of facial hygiene on trachoma prevention

(file photo)

the virus will continue to threaten Nauru for a long time to come," Minister Dageago said.

The minister highlighted some positive news in the region noting Australia, New Zealand and Fiji "amongst our neighbours who have successfully brought their situations under control through lockdown responses, however experts still warn that the fight against the pandemic is far from over.

Nauru was one of the first countries to implement strict quarantine measures and the government's 'capture and contain' strategy is keeping Nauru safe from the possible introduction and spread of COVID-19.

The efforts include recruiting additional nurses, health staff training, improvement and changes to hospital infrastructure and facilities including works on the oxygen plant and purchase of a second plant, a high level ward for ICU care, acquisition of a medical waste management system, on-island testing for COVID-19 and over a million dollars of new medical equipment, lab test kits and medical supplies and an additional \$700,000 worth of personal protective equipment for health and all front-line workers.

As Nauruans remain abroad, unable to return home due to closed borders in other countries, Minister Dageago said the government has "actively arranged repatriation flights and our government has funded and found ways to get our people home or to support them if they were genuinely at risk."

The minister thanked all who have been involved in the "immense team effort" in keeping Nauru safe and assured the people that the "Aingimea government will not rest easy until we know all on Nauru are safe from this pandemic disease and its impact."

"Whilst Nauru has been fortunate and has been spared direct impact to date, we remain at risk and so the fight must continue," Minister Dageago said.

Infrastructure

Minister Rennier Gadabu presented an update on the ministry of Infrastructure Development firstly on the virtual launch of the Nauru Integrated Infrastructure Strategic Plan (NIISP) and the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2019-2030.

The Minister explains that the NIISP aligns well with the NSDS as the blueprint of Nauru's development path, while the NIISP outlines the government's infrastructure investment and management priorities for the next 10 years, and provide the basis to present high priority infrastructure projects to development partners and the private sector for financing.

Plans for a Smart Village are expected to commence in the new financial year 2020-21 at Topside with government funding of \$1 million. The concept is a retreat from rising sea levels as well as a solution to Nauru's current housing development issues. The village

Cont pg 3...

Parliament 4-5 June

...from pg 2

will incorporate mixed-use planning that integrates residential and commercial.

The department's achievements over the past couple of months include engaging the service of over 40 local contractors for various projects including tree lopping, asbestos removal, road works, soak pit and maintenance of storm water drains.

Plans for the 2020-21 year include the next phase of the ongoing housing development project.

Sports

In sports, Minister Maverick Eoe congratulated Evergreen for winning this year's Constitution Day athletics – for nine consecutive years.

On the international scene, the coronavirus pandemic has severed plans for Nauru to host the Oceania powerlifting and weightlifting championships, an event the minister says would have assisted in economic growth, revenue from tourists and visitors of the events and opportunity to create friendships with the extended Oceania family.

The minister said both events have been postponed with the likelihood of being cancelled at a later date depending on the COVID-19 situation.

Eight of a total 18 powerlifting gyms have been completed while seven are near completion and legal action may be sought to push the construction companies of the remaining gyms that have not started construction.

In the meantime, the eight community sporting sites have either completed or are at near completion in the renovation and build stages.

Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation

The NRC is undertaking several projects for land rehabilitation and producing aggregates. Minister Reagan Aliklik reported to parliament the state owned entity's aggregate production and revenue since 2018. Between December 2018 to April 2020, NRC produced over 65K metric tonnes of aggregate and boulders, mostly for the port project, valued at over \$1.4 million. Between May and November, NRC is expected to produce 114,392 metric tonnes of aggregate valued at \$2.7 million.

Arrival of new crushing and excavator equipment will bring up to speed some of the works that have lagged due to the interruption of delivery services and imports caused by coronavirus.

Another big NRC project is levelling six hectares of phosphate land to make way for the installation of six megawatts of solar panels funded by the Asian Development Bank. The project is worth \$4.7 million to NRC.

Minister Aliklik highlights that waste management is an important component of land rehabilitation and compost creation and a lot of work is expected in the coming years to improve waste management.

The higher ground project is another NRC concept associated with climate change and the impacts of sea level rise. Minister Aliklik warned that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change project a 0.5 metre sea level increase by 2050.

"Half a metre may not sound much but if you consider that extreme weather events are expected to worsen in the times ahead, the impacts to the coastline and people's homes from rough seas, will be devastating," Minister Aliklik said, adding that homes can be destroyed by king tides and salt water intrusion contaminate land



Infrastructure department engage over 40 contractors for various projects including soak pit and road maintenance of storm water drains, tree lopping, asbestos removal, and road works.

Pictured soak pit in Anabar.

making it difficult for trees and crops to grow.

NRC is also engaged with external entities to explore opportunities for investment and business development in ventures such as mineral extraction in the limestone rock and value adding.

DeepGreen

President Lionel Aingimea informed the House on his attendance at the NORI-DeepGreen Strategic Partner's event in San Diego on 4 February.

At the event, the president conveyed that while Nauru has a new administration, it remains committed to the partnership and views it as mutually beneficial to both parties.

The president took part in two bilateral meetings, with the Chairman and CEO of NORI/DeepGreen Gerard Barron and Secretary General of the International Seabed Authority Michael Lodge, and discussed operational updates and support to Nauru to advance work on the mining code as a sponsoring state.

Commerce, Industry and Environment

Minister Gadabu then presented a progress report on the Department of CIE and the draft of the Nauru Climate Change Policy which is under review and expected to be finalised and approved by end of July.

The minister adds that the policy will provide an overarching framework for existing policies to guide action on climate change mitigation, adaptation and advocacy in Nauru.

Fifty fresh water tanks are expected to arrive this month after delays due to COVID-19.

Various developments are in progress including the initiation of a prefeasibility study on ocean energy and the implementation of an energy act and creating an enabling environment for private sector investment on energy, the AusAID water tank installation project, and the development of Nauru's draft Foreign Investment Bill that will help improve the climate for foreign investment in Nauru and provide greater certainty to foreign investors. The commerce division has also met with the Republic of China (Taiwan) embassy officials on restarting the micro finance loan project.

Other projects keeping the department busy are the installation of rubbish stands in the community, and the development of an application to provide best practice on the proper disposal of asbestos.

The minister reports that as the Ridge to Reef (R2R) project comes to an end, it has achieved several projects including canoe building for each of the five pilot districts, provision of a barge and FADs for

Cont pg 4...

Parliament 4-5 June

...from pg 3

Nauru Fisheries, installation of water tanks for clam culture, support in drafting the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, and raising salt and drought tolerant plants to be distributed to the community.

The department also led a three month training program with youth on establishing their own kitchen gardens and hosted a *Kiao ko ongam* at home competition for grades one to six.

Fisheries

Minister for Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) Wawani Dowiyogo was pleased to inform the House of the value of its tuna resources with fisheries revenue surpassing \$70 million in the current budget.

“While this is worthy of celebration by the NFMRA, it should be noted that dire times are ahead and the demand for fisheries access is on the decline across the Pacific,” Minister Dowiyogo said.

The minister also reported that Nauru now has 16 flagged vessels which have contributed to maintaining revenue streams “despite the worst fishing landscape in our short history of being a flag state.”

Other updates of the entity is the recent board meeting finalising the NFMRA Employment Conditions, which until now NFMRA employees were dependent on the Public Service Act on administrative related matters.

The purchase and supply of outboard motors, trailers and safety bags to local fishermen is slowly coming to fruition following a brief interruption due to COVID-19 interrupting travel, shipping movements, and production. As a result only one shipping container load of trailers has arrived with another expected on the next shipment. This Outboard Motor and Trailer project is to assist and enable fishers to fish and ensure food security for the general public.

The minister highlighted the success of the fish market in Anibare which has been operating since March by NFMRA employees, and in recent weeks local fishermen have also started selling their product at the venue.

“We would like to see more of this to ensure ample supply for the local consumers,” Minister Dowiyogo said.

NFMRA staff joined the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) surveillance aircraft on 10 April in conducting aerial surveillance in Nauru’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Seven vessels were spotted in Nauru’s EEZ but no illegal fishing activity was found.

The minister acknowledged FFA’s assistance in providing regular aerial surveillance in Nauru water and also “thank the Australian government for donating the aircraft to the FFA and for its continued support to regional monitoring control and surveillance efforts.”

There have been several fishing tournaments throughout the year to which the minister congratulated the winners on their successful outcomes.

Nauru Port

Deputy Minister for Nauru Port Russ Kun informed the House that the planned completion of the port has now shifted from April 2021 to November 2021 owing to the global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision comes after the Nauru Government and port contractor China Harbour Engineering (CHEC) entered into a mutual agreement to suspend construction for six months, commencing June 2020.

During the six months, CHEC is able to do non-supervised work and make preparations for normal work to restart when the travel bans



The construction of the Nauru Port is suspended for six months due to COVID-19 interruptions

and other restrictions caused by the pandemic have been lifted.

The costed impact of the six month suspension is estimated at \$3.5 million.

“We are presently discussing support by the Asian Development Bank for this fund to be covered under the ADB COVID-19 Emergency Fund,” DM Kun said.

The eventual arrival of the cargo ship Capitaine Quiros voyage 86 after a four month absence resulted in much damage to cargo owners’ perishable goods.

Total damages incurred as a result of the long delay are being documented by the Nauru Maritime and Port Authority and will be made available to PAN and also sent to the Central Pacific Shipping Commission (CPSC).

The deputy minister also noted the general disregard of the cargo service operator – Neptune Pacific Line (NPL) to its commitment under the CPSC to provide regular and affordable shipping services which he says “has threatened and endangered the food security and the provision of essential supplies for the welfare of the people of Nauru.”

He also warned that a 20 ft container coming from Brisbane will increase to \$10,500 in the next voyage, a systematic increment every year with no future prospect of relaxed or reduced freight rates for Nauru.

In this regard the government has reached the juncture to start up a state owned shipping service for general cargo.

The Nauru Shipping Line is proposed to link with general cargo feeder services from Australia and Fiji, connect to general cargo services from South East Asia to Fiji, operate general cargo services to Nauru twice a month, and carry 20 ft containers from Brisbane and Fiji for estimates of \$8,000 and \$4,500 per container respectively.

Labour Mobility program

Deputy Minister for Public Service, Asterio Appi updated the House on the Labour Mobility program that Nauru participates in with Australia and New Zealand. The programs are comprised of the Pacific Labour Scheme, Seasonal Workers Program, and the Recognised Seasonal Employers.

The program offers Nauru and other Pacific countries over 10,000 employment opportunities annually in Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Appi says Nauru is the only labour sending country in the Pacific that has taken initiative to incorporate a ‘family support component’ into the system, which provides updates, in-country support and the inclusion of a subsistence and dependents support to family members.

Cont pg 5...

Parliament 4-5 June

...from pg 4

Since January a total of 28 Nauruan workers were deployed to Australia and New Zealand in the hospitality sector, machinery work and agribusiness sector.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic 10 hospitality workers were affected, five of whom have been re-deployed to the meat industry while the other five are waiting for new placements; and four others have returned as a result of disciplinary outcomes.

All Nauruans affected by COVID-19 are being assisted through subsistence support provided by the Pacific Labour Facility in conjunction with the Nauru Government.

A Policy Framework and the final report developed by LMU consultant Meleoni Uera have been submitted for review and approval; while LMU Director Rebecca Amwano is responsible to plan and further develop the unit's recruitment process, workers protection measures and invest in other initiatives. DM Appi acknowledged the governments of Australia and New Zealand for their continuous support and assistance to Nauru in this regard.

Ronphos

Minister for Ronphos Reagan Aliklik reported that there have been no phosphate exports since the last shipment in February 2020 of 25,000 metric tonnes.

"The decline in the global prices for phosphate continues to persist and the short to immediate term forecasts shows that this global price trend will continue for some time," Minister Aliklik said, adding that all storage sheds are full to capacity with 62,309 metric tonnes of phosphate raised from February to May, ready for export.

Ronphos still has outstanding export debts to clear for Samsung C&T, and Genesis India for 25,000 mt and 10,000 mt respectively.

Education

Deputy Minister for Education Richard-Hyde Menke presented his ministerial statement on the progress of the education department and that schools are largely operating as normal. However, although Nauru is free of COVID-19, the department decided to suspend school activities and events that would entail large gatherings of people in the spirit of prevention.

"The Curriculum unit progresses to prepare delivery of learning through other modes and means for our students should the need to work from home becomes a necessity. Discussions with relevant service providers have begun to ensure the support and necessary services are in place," DM Menke said.

There are 48 and 23 government-sponsored students in Fiji and Australia respectively and as COVID-19 forced the closure of schools in Fiji, the students have been under the care of the Nauru high commission office. Fiji's Ministry of Education has provided online learning for schools and the Nauru education department has provided for the purchase of 47 laptops for the Nauru-sponsored students in Fiji, including 10 printers. One of the 48 students in Fiji opted to return on the repatriation flights.

The department has also strengthened mechanisms to maintain timely communication between Nauru government-sponsored students in Queensland, their schools and parents. As a result Queensland students needing extra support are receiving the extra tuition support from their respective schools.

DM Menke also reported that the unfortunate situation with COVID-19 has affected the commencement of 2020 studies for some RONTSS/QCE students. Only two of the eight students were able to travel to Australia before travel restrictions were put in place.



The number of Year 8 scholarship placements has increased by 10 and will see 20 places for study opportunities in Fiji and Brisbane

In other scholarship news, the number of Year eight scholarship placements has increased by 10; this year will see 20 placements for study opportunities in Fiji and Brisbane.

The government recognises the importance of a strong school system and as such increased Nauruan teacher salaries and qualifications and teacher's efforts to improve their own education will also be recognised in the budget.

Additional training for teachers and education staff across various platforms and institutions are being advanced to improve the quality of teachers and education, while also significant works to improve school structures and provision of new school buses are goals of the government.

Cenpac

Deputy Minister for Cenpac, Pyon Deiye reported on the operations of internet service provider Cenpac, a wholly government-owned commercial entity and that for the first time in many years, is now successfully operating on its own link, with its own equipment and owns 100 per cent of all revenue earned; and projected to earn \$5.1 million in the new financial year from its .nr domain sales and provision of internet bandwidth sales.

Mr Deiye explained the unfortunate past circumstances that "diluted or misconstrued" the functions of the corporation and past questionable foreign partnerships which drove the corporation to the brink of bankruptcy have been revoked, and the new board appointed last September is tasked with reviving and restoring the vision and functions of Cenpac to once again provide revenue for government.

Cenpac has since engaged international service providers, Av-Comm Pty Ltd and Speedcast of Sydney, Australia, to provide C band satellite internet service bandwidth.

Since January, Cenpac commenced providing internet bandwidth for several state-owned enterprises (SOE), and from 1 July, Cenpac will take over as internet provider for the Regional Processing Centre (RPC) via optic fibre cable and point to point backups.

Nauru Airlines impacted by COVID-19

In this the 50th anniversary year of Nauru Airlines, Deputy Minister Asterio Appi reported to parliament the upturn in savings of around \$5 million as a result of changes made to the airline since the new government took office, with almost \$700,000 profit for February alone.

"This was the first profit the airline had posted for nearly four years and the future for the airline was looking bright," Mr Appi said.

The airline was also looking forward to several programs like aircraft

Parliament 4-5 June

...from pg 5

upgrades, training and scholarship programs, leisure fares and development of new routes.

However, the outbreak of coronavirus and the impact of it on the global aviation industry has dashed further prospects of financial advances with the government forced to assist the airline out of this crisis.

“The impacts have already been immense, and they continue,” Mr Appi said.

Since the declaration of the global pandemic by WHO, the Marshall Islands decided to closed its borders to foreigners, hence forcing Nauru Airlines to cease operating flights to Majuro in the Marshall Islands and Tarawa, and later Fiji by mid-March.

“Beyond the immediate operations, based on the best available information, projections for the year ahead show a massive reduction of 4,132 flying hours for the airline, including an 84 per cent reduction in passenger aircraft flights.

“Whilst the airline has been losing millions in lost revenue since March this year, the reduced operations translate to a reduction of \$25 million in the airline’s projected revenue for the coming financial year,” Mr Appi said.

As a response and to keep the airline operating even at minimal levels, it needs government support and this came in the form of \$3 million to assist maintaining operations from March to June, and identified \$23 million in cost cutting measures and 84 per cent reduction in operations. Regrettably this meant staff redundancies for its Brisbane based staff and reduced hours of work.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts an impact of over \$314 billion or almost 80 per cent of flights worldwide down across the global aviation industry.

These estimates are based on severe travel restrictions lasting three months, with aviation experts warning the situation is deteriorating and airlines are currently operating in survival mode.

Looking to the future, Mr Appi said the airline needs support to ensure Nauru and its people have access to essential air services and a key element of the airline’s future business plan is to look at innovative partnerships.

UNITAR

Deputy Minister for Education, Richard-Hyde Menke reported on his recent meeting attended with President Aingimea, at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in February .

Mr Menke said the meeting with the Under Secretary General of the UN and director of UNITAR Nikhil Seth was a success in that Mr Seth agreed to send a multi-sectoral team from the institute to undertake a needs assessment on capacity gaps and training requirements in the environment, health, economy, education sectors including in satellite imagery, among other pertinent issues.

Mr Seth also offered Nauru scholarships in the field of public sector and training at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research in Geneva, analysing satellite data and imagery to produce and deliver information for emergency response, and to assess the impact of disasters and plan for sustainable development in the face of climate change.



The impact of COVID-19 on the aviation industry has dashed further prospects of financial advances with the Nauru government forced to assist the airline out of the crisis

RPC update

As deputy minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Appi then presented an update on the Regional Processing Centres first thanking and acknowledging the Australian government’s efforts to provide a means of addressing the global coronavirus pandemic in regards to the management of the RPCs.

One such step taken as a result of the current pandemic is the departure of non-essential staff from Nauru who are Australian citizens, and both governments are working to ensure the level of service to the RPCs are maintained “insofar as practicable” through the engagement of locally based employees and local service providers.

“The Republic remains committed to ensuring that the services to the transferee population on the island is not affected despite Nauru managing a bigger national disaster,” Mr Appi said.

It is anticipated that when the impact of the virus is contained, the level of staffing will return to normal.

Given the current COVID-19 threat, both the Nauru and Australia governments agreed to a temporary closure of the settlement clinic and consolidate health resources at RPC1 for the transferee population in the event of dealing with COVID-19 related illness; as well as negotiations on the future of the RPC.

On that note, the Nauru government is also finalising operations matters such as outstanding land leases and the effective management of COVID-19 related arrangements.

Both governments will then work on and agree to the Enduring Capability Framework for RPC Operations on Nauru.

Revision of CLO program

Mr Appi then presented the revised plans for the Community Liaison Officer (CLO) program under the Department of Multicultural Affairs which entails the advertisement for CLO recruitment. This requires even those currently working as CLOs to reapply.

The program was identified as needing an overall revision to maximise its operational capabilities and output.

“With the current pandemic it has been made obvious that the CLO program has been a great support to NPF, and the Taskforce. The CLO program has provided the extra numbers for NPF being at the frontlines during the Taskforce drills plus potential riots, and also provide important sources of information,” Mr Appi said.

Cont pg 7...

Parliament 4-5 June

...from pg 6

Status of RPC land lease

Deputy Minister Appi then presented the report of the status of the RPC land leases which is being negotiated by the Department of Multicultural Affairs, which involves inclusive consultations with landowners to ensure they fully understand the terms and conditions of the leases before they agree and consent to the lease.

A lease document only becomes legal after the president has consented to and signed the lease in compliance with the Lands Act 1976.

“The purpose of this is that His Excellency the President as protector and custodian of all lands in Nauru must ensure that landowners are protected from fraud and undue influences by the lessee,” DM Appi said.

Nauru Post audit

Deputy Minister for Nauru Post, Richard-Hyde Menke tabled the corporation’s audited annual financials for the first 15 months for the period 18 March 2018 to 30 June 2019, and reported the successful return of substantial profit of \$263,490 for this period; as well as the dividend payment to government of \$50,000 and \$52,698 corporate tax.

DM Menke thanks the former president and the chairman of Nauru Post for their contribution.

Nauru Post

The deputy minister then presented the activities of Nauru Post and new and current developments including work to implement the Customs and Declaration System to allow the transmission of customs information electronically to any destination, as well as Nauru Post being selected by Bendigo Bank as one of the businesses to pilot the project introducing EFTPOS in Nauru.

This year also saw the reshuffle of the board and Alvin Harris appointed chairman in April and Marcia Paye as the Australian resident director of Nauru Post Pty Ltd., in May.

DM Menke said the impacts of COVID-19 has “allowed us to recognise the importance of the services of Nauru Post,” given the movement of letters and parcels from abroad becomes a challenge with border closures and limited flights.

Dept of Chief Sec restructure

President Aingimea reported that the Department of Chief Secretary is undertaking the establishment and restructure of salary scales and positions in the public service to reflect the cost of living.

A review conducted recently by audit and assurance consultants PriceWaterhouseCoopers was not approved by Cabinet given the recommendation was to pay certain salaries lower than the current basic wage for Nauru.

A review by the acting chief secretary and the secretary for corporate services has been undertaken to ascertain a salary that is above the basic wage of \$351 a fortnight, and to provide subsequent percentage increases. The new public service salary scale will be effective from 29 June.

Furthermore, a COVID-19 ex-gratia payment ranging from \$500 to \$800 was paid out at pay period ending 12 June. This payment was paid to Nauruan employees of the Public Service, members of parliament, pensioners, CLO’s, police reserves, teacher trainees, and employees of SOE’s.

The President also announced that Public Service day is postponed to September.



Nauru Post is one of the first businesses to be selected by Bendigo Bank to pilot the project introducing EFTPOS in Nauru

UNO meetings, Geneva

DM Asterio Appi updated the House on meetings with United Nations Organisations in Geneva earlier this year, specifically with the UN office of Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) which has acknowledged Nauru’s continuous efforts in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction 2015-2030.

On that note, the UNDRR agreed to offer Nauru technical assistance with drafting of its progressive report on the framework; and DM Appi emphasised the importance and effectiveness of practical solutions at the grass roots level in reducing the risks of damages caused by natural disasters in Nauru.

DM Appi also noted the upcoming meeting on the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be hosted by Australia on 29 June.

The second of three meetings attended by DM Appi on this trip was the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) of which Nauru became the 193rd member on 11 May.

At that meeting, WIPO stressed the importance of establishing a national patent system and urged Nauru to effect at the earliest opportunity and agreed to provide assistance in capacity building and technical training.

At the third meeting with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), DM Appi said it is an organisation Nauru needs to “fully exploit in regards to their expertise and provision of technical assistance in policy development and foreign direct investment (FDI) assessments.”

In this regard, UNCTAD has committed to working with the Nauru government with targeted training and capacity building programs which DM Appi says is anticipated that the assistance “will benefit Nauru in meeting its priority to diversify its economy and attract foreign investors.”

At the conclusion of ministerial statements, member for Yaren, Charmaine Scotty delivered a tribute to former Member of Parliament for Yaren, Anthony Audoa who passed away on 3 June in Melbourne, Australia due to illness.

“He has represented his beloved district of Yaren through many terms, serving as both government cabinet minister and opposition and his representation has been invaluable and treasured by his family, community and district of Yaren. Rest in peace, Yaren warrior,” Ms Scotty said.

Mr Audoa served as a Member of Parliament for Yaren from the seventh parliament from May 1984, and except for the 10th and 11th parliaments, Mr Audoa’s final term as MP was the 14th parliament, from 2000 to 2003 •

Bills

On the second day of the sitting of Parliament, 5 June, seven amendment Bills and one introduction to an Act were tabled, the first of which was presented by His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea as Minister for National Disaster Risk Management.

National Disaster Risk Management (Amendment) Bill 2020

President Aingimea tabled the NDRM (Amendment) Bill 2020 noting that Nauru is one of 18 countries to be coronavirus-free, hence the amendment is a result of the review of the progress, current situation and experience Nauru is facing with coronavirus.

“Experience has taught us that preventing and mitigating the effects of emergencies whether natural or otherwise is far better than responding or reacting to them. We must recognise that good disaster risk management helps to keep us safe and to achieve development goals,” President Aingimea said.

The definition of disaster is amended as the nature and scope of a disaster is unpredictable and in order for government to manage a disaster, the cause of a disaster therefore has to be as wide as possible in the event of something unexpectedly occurring.

The minister for emergency services is also now given the discretion to appoint a national controller other than the secretary for national emergency services. This ensures that a disaster of a specialised nature and any emergency plans are implemented accordingly.

More offences have also been included such as uttering, publishing or posting messages on social or mass media and to cause fear or mislead the public as well as distorting official information. Police are given powers to act without a warrant, as disasters may not permit time to request a warrant.

Public Service (Amendment) Bill 2020

President Aingimea then presented the Public Service (Amendment) Bill 2020 which aims to strike a balance between protecting the rights of the public service employees, and improving efficiency through performance-based management, promote transparency, clarify and streamline roles, functions and entitlements.

The changes proposed in the Bill include the streamlining of a permanent position to be held on contract. This has already begun with the heads of department positions. The minister may, on approval by Cabinet determine any permanent position to be held by a public service employee on a fixed term contract.

In the case of temporary employees who are appointed for six months, the Bill ensures that the relevant secretary makes a decision whether a temporary employee stays on as a permanent staff; continue as a temporary employee for another six months; or terminated.

Only one extension of six months is allowed to avoid the problem of multiple extensions as it gives uncertainty for the employee's livelihood and career path. It is also intended to bring stability to the public service and having permanent employees.

The Bill also addresses the issue of taking leave on a pro rata basis, to instead take planned recreation leave which would ensure productivity, decrease unexplained absences and sick leave.



The Ports and Navigation (Amendment) Bill proposes to rectify the operational restrictions of the Nauru Maritime and Port Authority

A carefully planned leave avoids accumulation of recreation leave and allows employees to actually take leave rather than seek encashment to avoid losing the same as only 60 days of recreation leave is allowed to be accrued.

An amendment also clarifies disciplining secretaries or heads of department who will now be disciplined for misconduct by the chief secretary, who will in turn submit a report of findings and recommendation to the Cabinet for a decision.

Another amendment relates to the notice requirement for termination of an employee for misconduct, which is inconsistent with the purpose of termination. This is due to whether compensation is to be paid which is ordinarily available to any staff made redundant or terminated without any cause or notice.

The role of the Public Service Appeals Board is also streamlined with the secretary to the board now appointed and appeals will now have to be lodged with the secretary instead of the chief secretary which is deemed inappropriate as it is the chief secretary's decision which is being challenged by way of an appeal. This is intended to expedite the appeals process.

Ports and Navigation (Amendment) Bill 2020

President Aingimea then presented the Ports and Navigation (Amendment) Bill 2020 which proposes to rectify the operational restrictions of the Nauru Maritime and Port Authority which has the legislative authority to undertake commercial work. The amendment is to allow the Authority to carry out business to provide services to a local vessel or public-private partnerships.

Employment and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020

Finance Minister Martin Hunt introduced the Employment and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill 2020 which removes the word 'non-resident' in four sections of the Act.

The technical changes remove any doubt, ambiguity or unintended consequences in the interpretation and application of the Act; and an amendment under section 12 ensures uniformity in the application of the employment and services tax law, and equitable treatment for Nauruan resident individuals.

Interpretation (Amendment) Bill 2020

Minister for Justice and Border Control Maverick Eoe presented the Interpretation (Amendment) Bill 2020 which provides that the calculation of time to be done under a written law is extremely important for meeting legal requirements. The Bill clarifies the interpretation on the calculation of time so that there is uniformity in all legislation, and that often used terms and phrases operate in a way that is consistent across the board.

Cont pg 9...

Bills

...from pg 8

Crimes (Amendment) Bill 2020

Minister Eoe then presented the Crimes (Amendment) Bill 2020 to ensure Nauru's laws are effective, current and provide appropriate punishments. A hallmark of the amendment is about offences against the Republic itself, the first offence of which is disturbing parliament.

For this purpose two offences are further enhanced and that is first, no one should interfere with a member of parliament from entering parliament; and secondly the parliament is not to be disturbed in any way from sitting or carrying out its functions. The penalty for these offences is now increased to 10 years imprisonment.

An additional offence of sedition committed as a result of technological advancement is reviewed and the penalty increased to 10 years imprisonment.

Criminalising attempted murder is introduced in light of the changing nature of crime which results in severe injuries or life threatening attacks on innocent people. The penalty for this offence is similar to that of murder which is life imprisonment.

Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2020

Minister Eoe went on to present the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill 2020 that now legislates the discovery process and obliges the director of public prosecutions to provide disclosures to the accused persons so that they are able to prepare their defence.

The Bill also allows for a speedy trial of criminal proceedings and the prosecution is responsible for ensuring that an accused person is tried within a reasonable time.

Where the prosecution delays a trial, a court now has the discretion to either discharge or acquit an accused person. This recognises the fundamental rights of an accused person.

A third amendment allows hearsay evidence to be tendered in certain circumstances where the witness cannot be physically available in court. With the development of technology, it is anticipated that the court may be able to rely on witnesses testifying from outside the jurisdiction using video link.

Minister Eoe explained that Nauru does not have a legislative foundation for maintaining records of persons convicted of criminal offences, and while the Police tries to keep some form of record, it is not official and in some instances, may not be wholly accurate.

The Bill therefore introduces a system of record keeping of all criminal conviction or any other offences by the Court itself.

Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill 2020

Minister for Nauru Fisheries, Wawani Dowiyogo introduced his maiden bill, the Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill 2020 to regulate the use of coastal fisheries resources that are subject to over-exploitation.

One major issue that is raised from time to time is overfishing. Surveys, observations and experiences by local fishers also note changes in size and scarcity of coastal fish.

"These local observations and experiences noted the facts that the sizes of fish that are commonly caught are getting smaller and fishers are going out further and spending longer hours fishing to supply daily food and to sell," Minister Dowiyogo said.



Surveys, observations and experiences by local fishers report changes in size and scarcity of coastal fish

"After a review of the existing fisheries legislation, it was noted that ownership and user rights needed to be considered carefully in developing the new legal framework that will support the management of coastal fisheries resources."

The Bill also introduces size limits to prevent undersized fishing including prohibiting the selling of cast nets and drift nets with small mesh sizes to prevent the catching of undersized fish, as well as prohibit fishing for clams until it is certain they reach healthy numbers.

The principles considered in developing the Bill include: all coastal fisheries areas from the high water mark out to sea belong to the government; there is currently no traditional ownership of coastal and marine waters; the fisheries are an all open access fishery to Nauruans; the minister for fisheries through the Cabinet has the power to designate special fishing areas and fisheries management areas; and an approach which involves more participation and involvement of the communities in both the management decision making process as well as in the monitoring and enforcement of management measures for coastal fisheries should be used.

Minister Dowiyogo reiterated that the Nauruan public is permitted to fish anywhere but government, from time to time, may designate fisheries management areas or special fishing areas •

It's the law:

Wear a helmet

Wear a seatbelt

Renew and produce your valid driver's licence

Do not carry young children on motorbikes

Keep our roads safe!

Smokes and alcohol up 20% from 1 July

From 1 July, Nauruans will pay 20 per cent more for tobacco and alcohol products after Cabinet approved a proposal to increase import taxes on 4 June.

The price hike will raise revenue to allow the government to pursue a variety of 2020-21 policy goals, but also, to work the economic levers to encourage more positive changes in consumer behaviours and choice-making as high tobacco and alcohol consumption is causing health care costs to rise and productivity to fall.

From 1 July, the average packet-a-day smoker will pay \$547.50 a month, or \$6,570 a year, just to maintain their addiction.

The most recent WHO Nauru Stepwise Non-communicable Diseases Prevalence and Risk Factor Survey (Nauru-STEPS), 2015-2016, reveals that almost half of all Nauruans smoke, in equal numbers of males to females. Upwards of 54 per cent and 27 per cent of those surveyed revealed having been exposed to second-hand smoke - highly injurious to health - in the home and the workplace respectively.

The survey also revealed that over a quarter of the Nauruan population are current drinkers (27.7 per cent), with those under 45 years 62.8 per cent more likely to be current drinkers than those over 45.

Nauru Police Force reports that excessive alcohol consumption is a factor in a large majority of call-outs to which they attend, with half of these domestic violence incidents.

In the 12 months between July 2017 and June 2018, alcohol was a factor in the majority of the 66 motor vehicle accidents that occurred.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), non-communicable diseases (NCDs), also known as 'lifestyle' diseases, are "the single largest cause of premature mortality in the Pacific Islands" causing cardiovascular (heart and blood



The 1 July 20% import duty increase in the price of tobacco and alcohol products is a good time to reconsider your lifestyle choices and decide to quit

vessels) diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases. The four major risk factors result from personal lifestyle choices: tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and the harmful use of alcohol.

Public messaging in Nauru through the Government Information Office (GIO) and Nauru Media is designed to inform and educate the range of stakeholders impacted by the tax increase, which not only includes tobacco and alcohol product importers, customs brokers, and retailers, but also the general public as consumers.

For businesses, the uniformed increase is designed to reduce administrative complexity, and thus overheads, and for the consumer, the tax hike serves as a good opportunity to consider lifestyle choices and quit smoking and the misuse and abuse of alcohol.

Naoero Public Health has quit smoking and alcohol counselling programs to assist individuals to gain more knowledge and improve their health and wellbeing, securing a brighter future for themselves and their families.

For assistance and advice, call Public Health NCD Coordinator Don Kadir on 557 3073 •

The cost of smoking

Item	Cost Per Packet	Annual Cost of Smoking	Base Annual Wage *	Amount Left For Living Expenses
Pkt cigarettes (20s)	\$18 per day	\$6,570/year	\$9,724/year	\$3,154/year or just \$60.65/week

Smoking: it's not worth it!

**Base annual wage (Band 1, Basic 1, per annum pay point 1) based on Public Service Salary Scale effective 29 June 2020.*

HC Aroi signs \$1.3M Japan grant

Nauru's High Commissioner in Fiji Michael Aroi formalised the Government of Japan's medical equipment assistance for Nauru with Japan Ambassador Omura Masahiro at a signing and exchange of notes ceremony in Suva, Fiji on 23 June.

The grant, through the Economic Social Development Program (ESDP) is valued at AU\$1.3 million, and will enable the procurement of equipment to support the efficient delivery of health and medical services in Nauru.

In a press release by the Japan Embassy, the details of the program acknowledge that, "although Nauru has yet to have a positive case of COVID-19, the ongoing global pandemic has brought about the need to strengthen health systems in order to increase the country's preparedness."

Ambassador Aroi thanked Ambassador Masahiro, delivering messages of appreciation from Nauru's President Lionel Aingimea and Minister for Health Isabella Dageago.

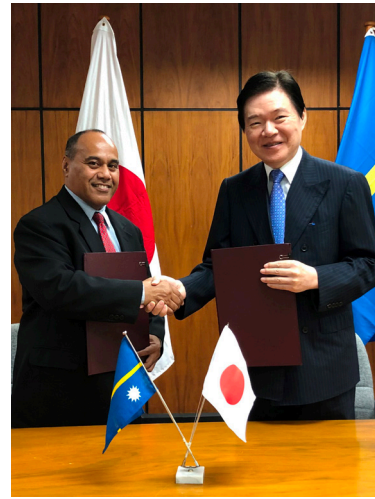
"President Lionel Aingimea sends his words of appreciation for this grant that has been offered by Japan to the people of Nauru, especially during these unprecedented times because of COVID-19.

"The Ministry of Health welcomes the generous donation that will greatly assist Nauru in its efforts to keeping Nauru free from COVID-19.

"Although we are one of very few countries who are COVID-19 free, we are still vulnerable to the impacts to the development of this pandemic.

"Every life matters in Nauru and with the support given by the Government of Japan, Nauru's Ministry of Health is able to advance positively to offer the much needed health care to the people of Nauru," Mr Aroi said.

Ambassador Masahiro said it gave him, "great happiness to say that this assistance will meaningfully contribute to the capacity building of Nauru's medical service delivery and its wider health sector.



Nauru's Ambassador to Fiji Michael Aroi and Japan Ambassador Omura Masahiro celebrate the AU\$1.3M ESDP medical equipment grant aid, 23 June

"I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the sound leadership of the Nauru Government in effectively guiding the nation through the difficulties brought about by COVID-19."

Describing Nauru as, "one of the closest partners of Japan in the Pacific", the Ambassador added that Japan's short, medium and long term goals to assist Nauru's health sector is evidenced in both the AU\$2.5million medical equipment grant in 2018, and the recent US\$3 million UNICEF funding to support Pacific island countries to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The grant aid is aligned with Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2005-2025 relating to the provision of quality and effective service delivery in the health sector through the upgrading of health facilities as well as the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM8) Leaders' Declaration to achieve resilient and sustainable development in major sectors of the economy including health, with special consideration channelled towards enhancing cooperation to elevate the quality of medical services and the welfare of the people in the Pacific and to accelerate progress towards a universal health coverage through access to better diagnostic, better screening, essential medicines and medical equipment and human resources development •

Taiwan generosity continues, more PPE

Health Minister Isabella Dageago and Deputy Minister Pyon Deiye accepted another donation of medical equipment and supplies from Taiwan at a ceremony held at the Taiwan Embassy at the Civic Centre in Aiwo, 23 June.

Taiwan Ambassador Dean Wang presented two PCR COVID-19 testing machines and testing kits, two bluetooth temperature measurement stations plus 250 forehead thermometers, 500 PPE gowns for medical personnel and 2,000 patient gowns, 40,000 disposable masks and 1,000 N-95 masks and medicines.

"We're (Taiwan) doing all we can to contribute to global public health.

"We are so happy that Nauru is COVID-19-free and we are working with your government to keep Nauru COVID-free," Ambassador Wang said.

In reply, Minister Dageago thanked Taiwan on behalf of President Lionel Aingimea and the government of Nauru for the donation, saying it, "shows our strong friendship and we receive it with appreciation."



Health Minister Isabella Dageago with DM Pyon Deiye and key health representatives accept Taiwan's latest COVID-19 medical donation from Ambassador Dean Wang and Deputy Counsellor Joseph Hsu, 23 June

This is the third donation of medical supplies and equipment from the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The previous donation on 8 May was valued at AU\$220,000 with AU\$1.65 million in budgetary support to purchase medical supplies.

Acting Director Public Health Stacey Cain, Health Secretary Chanda Garabwan and Taiwan Embassy Deputy Counsellor Joseph Hsu were also on hand for the ceremony •

Close protection detail for HE

Nauru's President Lionel Aingimea has provided Nauru Police Force (NPF) with motorcycles and a vehicle as part of the new-look NPF, 16 June.

Part of the new look includes new roles for police as close personal protection (CPP) officers.

"The Nauru Police Force is honoured to receive the three Yamaha motorcycles from His Excellency.

"The resources are of great benefit to the CPP to enable the team to attend to their duties effectively and efficiently working alongside His Excellency the President," Police Commissioner Iven Notte said.

A CPP officer, sometimes known as an executive protection agent, personal protection specialist or bodyguard, is required to provide security for VIPs, including heads of state.

"CPP is about maintaining the integrity and security of the president."

COP explained that, "the CPP team conducts escort duties for the president, and will now be able to respond effectively and efficiently to their duties," with their own dedicated transport resources, rather than taking from existing and in-use police resources.

CPP officers are often trained in law enforcement; NPF officers on CPP duty will now undergo dedicated training to fulfill the functions of the role.



President Aingimea with Commissioner of Police Iven Notte and CPP officers in receipt of 3 new CPP-dedicated motorcycles, 16 June

In Australia, minimum training requirements to become a licenced CPP officer include walking drills and escort formations, route and advance planning, operational practice and assignment preparation: communications, contingency planning and threat and risk assessment.

While the Nauru context may not require the full range of CPP skills, as COVID-19 restrictions lift and international travel resumes, Nauru's president will again need officers highly qualified in CPP in his security detail.

Another motorcycle and one vehicle are expected to arrive soon to complete the CCP transport complement •

HE addresses Berlin climate conference

President Lionel Aingimea submitted his video message to the 2020 Berlin Climate and Security Conference (BCSC) as part of the high-level political segment on day two of the online conference, 24 June.

This year's BCSC, in just its second year, brought together leading figures from governments, international organisations, the scientific community, the private sector and civil society from around the globe.

Back in 2018, in an effort to further strengthen the United Nations' engagement on the issue, Nauru, through the work of Nauru's UN Ambassador Marlene Moses, and Germany aligned to establish the Group of Friends on Climate and Security within the United Nations.

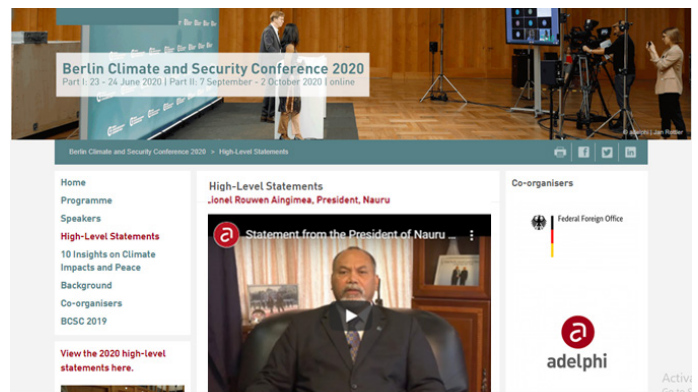
Climate change is now regarded as a "risk multiplier" in fragile and conflict-prone situations and Part I of the conference is designed to investigate the state of the art of climate and security and hold a high-level political segment, in which President Aingimea made his address.

"I would like to begin by thanking His Excellency foreign minister Heiko Maas for his exemplary leadership on the very important issue of climate change and security.

"The most basic responsibility of any government is to protect the safety and security of its citizens. Failure risks social unrest and political unrest."

The President outlined the impediments to governments being able to protect their citizens as a result of climate change: the undermining of food and water systems, increasing competition over diminishing natural resources, disrupting of global supply chains and the displacing of communities.

He continued Nauru's call for a new office of the special representative of the secretary-general on climate and security and outlined the Pacific small island developing states' six proposed



In a video presentation, President Aingimea outlines in his high-level statement the 6 functions of the proposed office of the Special Representative of the SG on Climate and Security, 24 June

functions of the new office: integrated country and regional risk assessments; preventative diplomacy in situations where climate instability is provoking conflict such as migration or competition over diminishing natural resources; facilitation of cross-border and regional cooperation around shared vulnerabilities such as food or water security; monitoring of tipping points at the climate and security nexus such as the collapse of eco-systems critical to human settlements; targeted support and push conflict situations where vulnerabilities to climate change could escalate tensions and finally; thematic work on essential human systems vulnerable to climate change such as food production and distribution, freshwater access, internal and cross-border migration, land use and tenure, disaster response and displacement, industrial production and distribution and international finance.

Part II of the 2020 Berlin Climate and Security Conference, to be held in September 2020, will reflect on how more comprehensive risk assessments could support forward-looking and preventative foreign and security policy.

Watch President Aingimea's address at <https://berlin-climate-security-conference.de/high-level-statements> •

Appi opens deep-sea mining webinar

Nauru's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Asterio Appi opened the latest Nauru Ocean Resources Inc (NORI) webinar with a keynote address, 12 June.

The webinar is a continuation of the series *Where should metals for the green transition come from?*, based on the research work of white paper lead authors on the subject, Daina Paulikas and Dr Steven Katona and funded by NORI parent company DeepGreen Metals Inc.

The April 2020 paper compares the environmental, social and economic impacts of supplying base metals from land ores and seafloor polymetallic nodules, and the webinar series is designed to open the global conversation on how the world can best proceed to obtain the metals required for an environmentally sustainable energy future.

DM Appi began by setting the context for Nauru and the Pacific, starting with the 1982 Law of the Sea convention.

"I will start on the importance of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the constitution of the ocean within which all activities in the ocean and seas must be carried out.

"Under this regime, Nauru became a party to the 1994 Agreement and the 1995 Fish Stocks Agreement.

"The Law of the Sea regime was a game-changer for Nauru and the rest of the world, especially for those who enjoyed their claim over large exclusive economic zones (EEZ) including those marine resources found within.

"Over the years it has brought prosperity to my country like others in the Pacific in particular through the tuna fisheries."

The seemingly nascent industry actually has its origins back in the 1860s when, according to International Seabed Authority (ISA) literature, polymetallic nodules were discovered in the Kara Sea, in the Arctic Ocean off Siberia. The challenge of actually retrieving them, at depths of more than four kilometres was ongoing, with eventual success in the 1970s for the purposes of scientific analysis.

The ISA, established in 1982, is the body mandated under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea established to organise, regulate and control all mineral-related activities in the international seabed area for the benefit of mankind as a whole. In doing so, the ISA is responsible for the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects that may arise from deep-seabed related activities.

"The [UNCLOS] regime was also designed to support and encourage developing states to participate in the future seabed minerals industry in The Area.*

"We recognise the important role of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) as the regulator to put in place strict guidelines and protection measures before any extraction takes place."

Nauru's uptake of the opportunity to gain deep-sea mining exploratory rights was the first of its kind for a developing state, recounts DM Appi.

"In 2010, Nauru requested the ISA to seek an advisory opinion from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) which has been helpful to shape the discourse on international law underlining that all States regardless of status - developing or developed, we have the same obligations regarding environmental protection.

"As a result of the clarity rendered through ITLOS Opinion of 2011, that set the highest standards of due diligence and obligation to



Nauru was the first developing nation to sponsor a deep sea mining exploration contract but DM Asterio Appi says via video link no extraction of polymetallic nodules will occur until further extensive environmental studies are completed

apply the precautionary principle and best environmental practices.

"Nauru developed its Nauru International Seabed Minerals Act of 2015. In April 2011, we issued the certificate of sponsorship, and in July of the same year, the ISA exploration contract was signed.

"It was the first ever ISA contract sponsored by a developing State. In June 2017, NORI Sponsorship Agreement was signed," Mr Appi said.

Polymetallic nodule extraction has still not occurred, and the DeepGreen webinar series is designed to open the conversation on how the world decides to move forward with minerals exploration as the regulators and scientists continue to legislate and research.

"We are still at the exploration phase of seabed mining in The Area. No extraction has occurred.

"There are many factors at play here – the ISA membership is still in deep negotiations on the draft exploitation regulations. And, ISA has engaged the world's best deep-sea experts to contribute to the development of the regulations that contractors must follow.

"Moreover, no extraction will occur until further extensive environmental studies are completed.

"We are heartened that the Authority, the membership and contractors are all carrying out their responsibilities effectively," DM Appi said.

The Deputy Minister finished with thanks for the additional opportunities afforded Nauruans.

"I wanted to take this opportunity to thank NORI for their engagement with the University of the South Pacific (USP) and am pleased that as a result of their collaboration they have a new scholarship program for Pacific Island students wishing to pursue a Master's program at USP.

"NORI will also be offering a great training opportunity for those interested in learning more about the deep sea environment – this will provide young professionals or recent graduates with the opportunity to participate in three or four of NORI's upcoming environmental campaigns over the next two years and work alongside leading scientists. We thank them for this opportunity provided to our Pacific youth."

* *'The Area': seabed beyond a coastal state's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf claims is known under the Law of the Sea Convention as The Area. The Convention states that The Area is considered "the common heritage of all mankind" and is beyond any national jurisdiction.*

Read the DeepGreen white paper at <https://deep.green/white-paper/>
Learn more about the ISA: <https://www.isa.org.jm/> •

Trachoma intervention reaches 8024 Nauruans

Public health is working hard to defeat the eye disease trachoma in Nauru, having already checked and administered drugs for disease prevention to 8,024 Nauruans, or 70 per cent of the population, as at 26 June.

Trachoma is a disease of the eye caused by infection with the bacterium *chlamydia trachomatis*.

It is a public health issue in Nauru and around the world, with 44 countries and 142 million people living in trachoma endemic areas and at risk of trachoma blindness, based on March 2019 data from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Left untreated, repeated trachoma infections can result in permanent blindness, and data collected in Nauru over the past year has found the presence of trachoma follicles in children aged one to nine years is 23 per cent.

Infection spreads through personal contact (via hands, clothes or bedding) and by flies that have been in contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person.

With repeated episodes of infection over many years, the eyelashes may be drawn in so that they rub on the surface of the eye, with pain and discomfort and permanent damage to the cornea.

Nauru's public health staff is using the WHO standard elimination strategy summarised by the acronym SAFE: surgery for advanced disease; antibiotics to clear *chlamydia trachomatis* infection; facial cleanliness and; environmental improvement to reduce transmission.

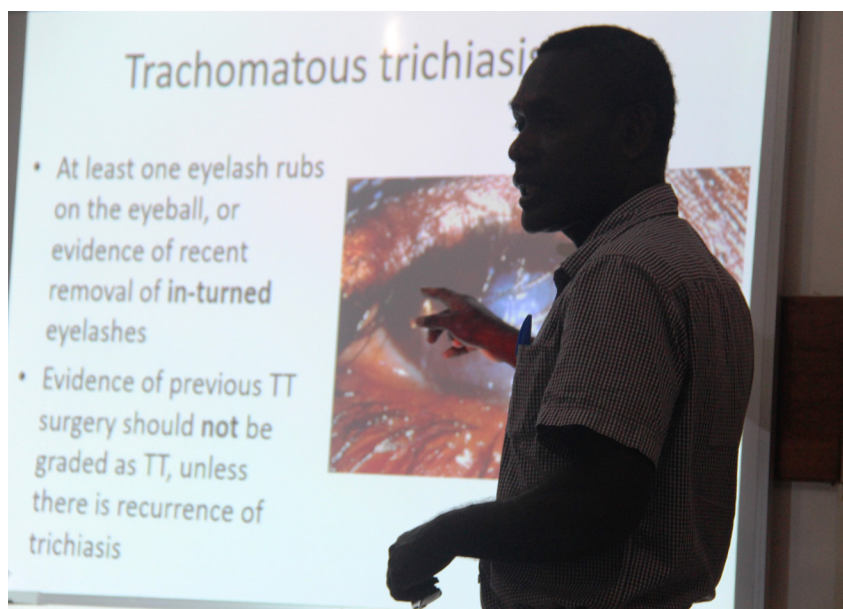
Health staff operate a mobile trachoma intervention strategy, which includes mass drug administration, in the evenings and on weekends, visiting districts and workplaces and positioned in shopping areas where there is a lot of passing foot traffic.

Individuals are given a painless eyelid examination and provided with an antibiotic treatment of azithromycin suspension liquid and tablets, and their patient details recorded.

Next step for public health to reach 100 per cent national coverage includes examination and treatment of staff at RPC1, the government offices and the Nauru Police Force.

The World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA51.11 in 1998, targeting the global elimination of trachoma as a public health problem, and by 2018 global-level antibiotic coverage was 50 per cent.

Call Naoero Public Health on 557 3933 for more information and to ensure you and your family are included in Nauru's strategy to eliminate trachoma •



Naoero Public Health staff underwent trachoma grader training in June 2019 to learn how to examine and identify trachoma infections in preparation for the 2020 intervention strategy

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