



Nauru Bulletin

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President Aingimea delivers second Independence day national address

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea delivered his second national address as Head of State and recalled the achievements of the recent past; future plans and pays tribute to 53 years of independence and 75 years of the people's return from exile on Truk.

"Fifty-three years of independence which has been built on hard work, shadowed by hardships, buoyed by resilience but most of all blessed and protected by God Almighty.

"Seventy-five years ago saw a return of some of the Nauruans who were exiled to Chuuk. We remember all those affected by World War II. We salute their strength, by their sacrifice, moved for their love of country, learn from their support for each other and most of all aspire to emulate their undying faith in God," the President said.

President Aingimea covered a broad range of issues and projects across the government departments and their collective efforts to strengthen the public service and services to the community.

As numbers of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths continue to rise globally, President Aingimea appeals to the Nauruan



President Aingimea pays homage to Nauru and her fight for independence and the return of her people from exile

public to adopt special care and be vigilant and comply with rules and regulations in place to keep Nauru safe from coronavirus.

President Aingimea said the figures for COVID-19 has surpassed the loss of lives of WWII highlighting that was a six year event, while the COVID pandemic has only just reached a year.

The President thanks the coronavirus warriors – the frontline workers - for their tireless work and the many countries that continue to stand with Nauru in its fight to keep Nauru COVID-free.

Of particular mention are Australia and the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their quick responses at the start of the pandemic helping kick start Nauru's efforts.

"Many a times I have used the word family to describe the relationship we have with Australia and Taiwan and from how they continue to stand with us is a testament to the correctness of that description," President Aingimea said.

While Nauru has received numerous support, it has also offered assistance to the Pacific region by way of delivery of much needed personal protective equipment (PPE) using Nauru Airlines.

Looking to Nauru's economic environment, the President says the past year has turned out better than expected. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised Nauru's forecast to a growth of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) from a contraction of 1.7 per cent of GDP at the time the budget was prepared last year.

"Nauru is one of the only handful of countries globally that has experienced positive economic growth in the face of the coronavirus pandemic."

Cont pg 2...

Double celebration for 31 January

Nauruans celebrate 31 January for two reasons and those with close ties with this country understand its fight for independence, the wartime struggles and its peoples' eventual return from exile from Truk.

This year marks the 53rd anniversary of Independence for the Republic of Nauru and the 75th anniversary of the people's return from Truk in what is now Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Hammer DeRoburt, as one of the founding fathers of independent Nauru became the first president, and along with the rest of Nauru proudly watched the national flag being hoisted for the first time on 31 January 1968.

Independence marks the start of the road to reclaiming control

of Nauru, the welfare of its people and its most prized resource – phosphate.

Foreign administration of Nauru meant total control of the phosphate mining, royalties and reserves.

The political advancement of Nauru did not begin until 15 December 1951 when the first election for the Nauru Local Government Council was held and Timothy Detudamo was elected Head Chief.

In December 1965 a Bill to establish Nauru's Legislative Council was introduced in the House of Representatives in Canberra, Australia, and the Australian government held its first full debate on Nauruan affairs.

Cont pg 3...

President delivers second Independence day national address

...from pg 1

The President credits this strong financial performance in part, to the continued improvements in public financial management, underlining that the whole-of-government transaction, recording and reporting facilitated preparation and the audit of historic financial statements for 2016-17 and 2017-18; while the Nauru tax system and the customs service also contribute to the national budget.

The fisheries industry remains the second major revenue source for Nauru while in other sectors Nauru has achieved development milestones in diesel power generation, the Nauru Trust Fund, the learning village and the developments of the port and aviation runway.

At the end of June 2020, the Nauru Intergenerational Trust Fund (NTF) sat at over \$142 million and at the end of January was \$177 million.

Continued annual support contributions from fund stakeholders Australia, Taiwan, New Zealand and the setup contributions from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), will see an expected balance exceeding \$190 million at the end of the 2021 financial year and well on the way to the \$400 million goal by 2033.

President Aingimea said other progressive financial developments include the implementation of a debt action plan to proactively address legacy debt arrears and improve Nauru's economic resilience; as well as reform the effectiveness and efficiency of state-owned enterprises and alleviate cost of living pressures for Nauruans.

Nauru continues to reiterate its call for the need for a strong and collective multilateral response and a United Nations fit for purpose to address challenges like the climate crisis, food security, energy, oceans and sustainable financing for development, and see solutions for all.

In spaces like the Climate Ambition Leaders' Summit and the Kainaki III high level roundtable, President Aingimea says Nauru makes known the importance of and commitments to achieving its climate target goals.

Work with partner countries continues to strengthen such as with the United States under the Investment Incentive program to explore economic opportunities; and bilateral exchanges with Japan for the provision of heavy machinery and tourism expansion under the newly signed agreement with Japan International Relations Organisation.

The President says as the aviation industry is hit hard by COVID restrictions, Nauru Airlines has been able to continue to provide a freight service throughout Australia and the Pacific region with the delivery of humanitarian cargo with the World Food Program's Humanitarian Air Services.

A second Nauru Airlines aircraft has just completed its conversion to a freighter plane thus putting the airline in a stronger position to service the increasing demand for freight services across Australia and the Pacific.

As the presidents of the five Micronesian countries – Nauru, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and Palau agree to establish a Micronesian transport bubble, Nauru is expected to host the Micronesian President's Summit this year and will build on the Desperate Imagination agenda and summit theme, 'Sustainable transportation and trade through the Micronesian region', where leaders will build on measures to enhance air and shipping routes within the Micronesian region.

President Aingimea says the government recognises the pivotal role Australia plays in Nauru's development roadmap and thus the opening



The national flag is hoisted to full mast at the 53rd Independence Day flag raising ceremony, 1 February

of the new high commission in Canberra; with plans also underway to establish a high commission in India once border restrictions ease.

The President highlighted the importance of the public service as demonstrated through a review of salaries and positions resulting in salary increases effective June 2020. Special salaries, a COVID-19 ex-gratia bonus, and Christmas bonuses were also provided in June and December 2020.

Additionally, a graduate internship program will be introduced to capture graduating Nauruan students in a strategic move to contribute to bridging the gap in the local workforce and strengthen public service capacity.

A new neighbourhood watch program is expected to be rolled out this year following the successfully run special police roster over the Christmas period that resulted in zero traffic related fatalities or serious injury.

As improvements in school attendance is noted the President underscored the backdrop of teacher shortage and called for more Nauruans to take up teaching "so that we can minimise the recruitment of teachers from overseas," which is proving difficult due to COVID travel restrictions.

President Aingimea also took the opportunity to welcome the United States back to the Paris Agreement, "where they could support stronger climate and financial commitments around the globe."

Meanwhile, the Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs is setting up a juvenile processing centre to address issues of juvenile delinquency, gender sensitisation and other social ills such as gas sniffing, drugs and alcohol.

The Nauru Shipping Line is building its freight service to Nauru following the acquisition of the 364-container capacity ship, the Micronesian Pride, which made its first voyage to Nauru on 14 January.

The President says Nauru Utilities Corporation has become financially sustainable, raising sufficient revenue to cover its operation costs and contributing to the national target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2022, following the construction of the six megawatt solar farm at top side.

This development in energy will result in approximately 47 per cent of energy generated from renewable sources and thus reduce the reliance on diesel fuel generation.

The President is pleased to announce that Ronphos has cleared the outstanding debt of five phosphate ships and is settling outstanding royalties and land leases.

The Government's provision of \$5.8 million for the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust (NPRT) enabled a five per cent payment to all beneficiaries in December 2020.

Negotiations are ongoing with the government and NPRT on future payouts with a focus of completing the full redistribution of RONWAN capital in the immediate future.

In closing the President calls the public to adopt special care and to comply with rules and regulations in the prevention of coronavirus •

Double celebration for 31 January

...from pg 1

The beginnings of self-government were achieved in January 1966 with the establishment of a Legislative Council in the first election held for the Council.

What is probably less known is that on 31 January 1966, 20 years after the return from exile on Truk, the Council was officially opened in the Court House at Nauru by the Australian Minister for Territories Mr C. E. Barnes, and on the same day, Head Chief Hammer DeRoburt was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

The journey to independence was long and challenging and eventually on 19 December 1967 the formality of the General Assembly was carried, and Nauru's independence on 31 January 1968 was assured.

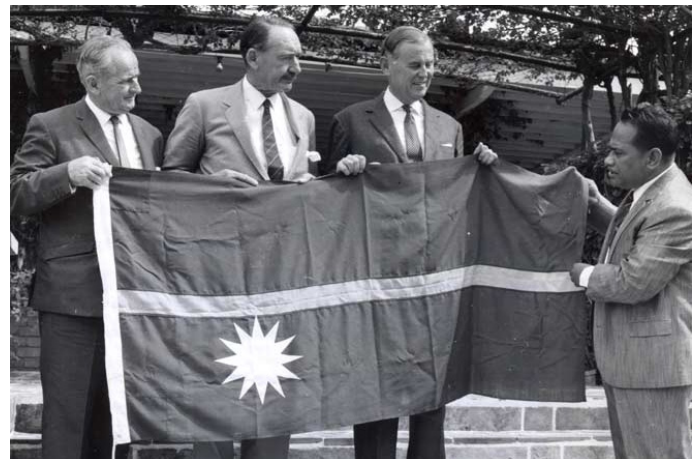
The date for independence was not chosen randomly. Twenty two years prior, in 1946, was the return of fewer than 800 Nauruans from exile on Truk by Japanese forces after the end of the Second World War.

Those that remained on Nauru suffered starvation and bombings by the Americans for two years before the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945. Liberation came on 13 September 1945, ending the war.

The Japanese forces occupied Nauru from 1943 to 1945. In June 1943 two groups of Nauruans totalling 1200 were deported to Truk, including Head Chief Timothy Detudamo and Hammer DeRoburt who was later to become head chief and the first president.

By the time they returned, Nauru was a mass of military litter; battered and needed almost total rebuilding.

Nauru suffered greatly as a result of the Second World War. The people perished and the land and vital infrastructure destroyed by bombings and air raids. Remnants of such destruction remain.



The late President Hammer DeRoburt receives the first Nauru flag on the eve of Nauru's first Independence Day

One example is the ground water supply in parts of Aiwo district where oil tanks stood, and bombed, continue to bring up oily water, unusable for basic cleaning and washing.

A handful of Nauruan babies were born during wartime, and with very little to no memory of their parents hardships of the time.

Surviving was key, but homecoming was the yearning.

Stories passed down tell of the evacuation from Truk and the spirit of every Nauruan and foreigner that was deported, to return home and leave no-one behind.

Some Nauruan children and babies who were 'adopted' by Trukese families were reclaimed before the return journey home but hundreds more remain on Truk as their final resting place.

Jubilation and mixed waves of emotion rippled across the island as the survivors disembark from the British Phosphate Commission ship Trienza, and embraced by their waiting relatives on shore. Cries of happiness and grief, resonated, for loved ones reunited, and loved ones lost •

Parliament sitting 28 January

The Nauru Parliament sitting of 28 January passed the Supplementary Appropriation Bill #2 for 2020-21 of \$54.6 million for expenditure leaving a surplus balance on \$6,000 taking the total financial year's budget to \$317.8 million and \$65,000 as surplus.

Minister for Finance Martin Hunt tabled the supplementary budget outlining that the bill reflects updated revenue and expenditure estimates taking into account the six month extension of the Regional Processing Centre (RPC) agreement with Australia to 30 June 2021.

Minister Hunt stated the bill also takes into account "the outcome of the mid-year review of budget estimates that reflects better than expected economic conditions in the year to date, and government decisions taken since the last supplementary appropriation."

Under revenue, \$31.1 million was collected from tax due to the six month extension of the RPC and better than expected economic conditions in Nauru in the year to date; while \$10.1 million is generated from RPC services fees and \$8.9 million for visa fees, RPC related operational and reimbursable cost receipts and miscellaneous revenue reflecting the six months

RPC extension.

Customs and excise duty collected \$2.4 million which is less than the expected revenue from diesel sales as a result of the government's decision to exempt Ronphos and Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation from paying duty.

Additional non-tax revenue of \$749,000 is also recognised following the mid-year review of budget estimates; while \$270,000 is collected from fisheries.

Revenue collection is matched with expenditure items with \$7.1 million provided to the department of multicultural affairs to meet expenses related to the extension of the RPC agreement.

The community housing scheme is provided \$6.7 million to address overcrowding and sanitation issues, and \$4 million for the Bank of Nauru liquidation to enable further payment to bank book holders that were creditors to the bank.

Provision for new police recruits and new vehicles and trailers are allocated \$1.1 million and another million to support Nauru Shipping Line to cover costs of hiring a larger cargo ship to mitigate risks to Nauru's food security.

The presidency department is provided \$775,000 with \$675,000 allocated to support the commemoration of the 75th anniversary

Cont pg 4...

Parliament sitting 28 January

...from pg 3

of the return from Chuuk and the 53rd independence day celebrations, and the remaining \$100,000 for State House repairs and maintenance.

The Fiji High Commission is allocated \$500,000 for renovations while \$322,000 is provided to meet final payments for the new \$1.6 million media building.

The customs modernisation project is allocated \$300,000 and NRPCC received \$285,000 to fund 100 participants to complete a certificate IV in leadership and management.

A reallocation of \$254,000 from the Department of Internal Affairs reflects the government's decision to transfer the child protection unit and gender mainstreaming unit to the Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs.

The Department of CIE is allocated \$150,000 for dredging of 30 underground water storage facilities for households, while a further \$150,000 is provided to the Department of Sports to move its operations into the National Sports Complex.

Costs to cover aircraft charter and business travel related to the Micronesian Presidents special meeting in Palau last year was provided \$147,000.

TVET is provided \$140,000 to purchase course supplies in hospitality, welding, automotive and carpentry.

Nauru Emergency Services is allocated \$130,000 for truck and building maintenance; \$89,000 for justice to establish a new dog management unit; \$64,000 for lands and survey to meet additional staff and car hire costs; \$32,000 for ICT to support its recruitment of additional expatriate staff; and \$20,000 for CIE for land clearing in Meneñ for a new market garden that will include breadfruit trees and root crops.

Minister Hunt says the windfall revenue recognised in the Bill present an opportunity to improve future economic resilience and to increase national saving for the benefit of future generations.

The Bill allocates \$15.7 million to the Nauru Trust Fund which comprises \$10.4M as a 20 per cent bonus contribution this year from windfall revenue; and \$5.3M as prepayment for next year's trust fund contributions; and \$15.9M to the fiscal cash buffer for urgent and unforeseen expenditure for the year.

The passing of the Bill will take the 2020-21 approved budget to \$317.8M in revenue with matching expenditure with a surplus balance of \$65,000.

The President's opening parliament statement was a call for continued understanding and cooperation of the community to maintain peaceful unity on the roads and in the community in general.

President Aingimea highlighted this past Christmas period was the first time in a long time that there were no fatalities or serious traffic injuries and commended the outstanding work of the Nauru Police Force in maintaining their presence on the roads.

The outpouring of public support, verbally and with the provision of food and drink to the officers on duty reflects a job well done and a grateful community.

Just as equal is the plea for motorists to show common courtesy at events such as funeral processions and to give way to funeral motorcades.

President Aingimea then delivered the first ministerial statement



Round-the-clock police presence pays off with zero deaths last Christmas

File photo

on the Nauru Police Force outlining the success of the special roster over the Christmas and New Year period from 11 December 2020 to 10 January 2021.

The roster almost doubled staffing per shift to beef up frontline operations with 22 officers across five teams; equating to 110 law enforcement personnel working round the clock. All upper ranked and executive team members were placed on frontline duties.

Continued police presence on the roads resulted in zero deaths and no serious or major road accidents.

The leading incidents however, were 75 charges of public nuisance; 59 DUI; 30 causing a disturbance and 19 assaults; as well as 127 arrests and 618 traffic infringement notices issued.

Finance Minister Martin Hunt then presented the 2020 annual report for the Intergenerational Trust Fund (NTF), which at the end of June 2020 was more than \$142 million and with additional contributions increased the market value of investments and income as of the date of tabling (28 January) was \$177 million.

"With continued donor contributions from our funds stakeholders, the fund is expected to exceed \$190 million at the end of the 2021 financial year," Minister Hunt said adding that it is "well on the way to our goal of \$400 million by 2033.

The highlights of the fund from 1 July to 30 June 2020 include cash contributions greater than \$30 million. The Government's contribution of \$23.9 million including a \$6.7 million prepayment for 2020-21 contribution; \$2.9 million from Australia, including \$1.5 million prepayment for 2020-21 contributions; \$3 million from Taiwan; and \$900,000 from New Zealand.

The investment income for the same period is \$7 million, while \$142 million are total investments at market value; total net assets at \$138.5 million and the fund's performance riding at 1.6 per cent.

A contribution of \$1.4 million was also made to the private equity investment during August 2020.

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago highlighted the three days of activities of the Department of People Living with Disability commemorating International Day of Disability from 3 December, as well as acknowledged a \$10,000 donation from Nauru Ocean Resources Inc., (NORI) which the Minister says will go towards assistive devices for the mobility impaired.

The activities included awards presented for merits achieved in 2019 and 2020. Six Digicel inspirational awards went to Sisco Cain, Karwoski Akua, Zandaya Hiram, Faithful Thoma, Opal Debaio and Anella Philliips.

Cont pg 5...

Special Olympics Nauru awards were also granted to Zinzael Agir, Jennita Daao, Babrishka Dageago, Sicsa Cain and Stanford Tsiode for their medal-winning participation at two disability sports events in Dubai and Fiji.

Four ‘disability persons champions’ – Vaiuli Amoe, Bosco Cain, Maska ubert and Freedom Appin were awarded certificates recognising their valuable work and contribution to the disability community; and an official vehicle given to the principal officer of the PLD.

Minister for Infrastructure Development Rennier Gadabu presented his department’s progress since November including the smart housing design competition which received five submissions but failed to incorporate all components of the five criteria project.

The criterion includes energy efficiency, space, waste management, water security, and financial costing.

The department has consequently taken steps to embark on a second option in bringing together a team of engineers and experts to come up with a design incorporating the criteria.

The road painting project did commence but has since been put on hold pending some changes in implementation.

In November, 40 metres of road repairs were completed bringing the total to 120 metres since the beginning of the financial year while the NPC hill road repair is expected to commence soon with two local companies contracted to do the work.

Additionally, areas around the island are being identified for the installation of road traffic signs.

Minister for Justice Maverick Eoe tabled the subsidiary legislation for law made in the latter half of 2020, stating that section 17 of the Interpretation Act requires the tabling of such legislation – 29 orders and regulations - before Parliament.

Minister for the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation Reagan Aliklik presented the completed land preparation work at topside for the construction of the six megawatt solar installation, thus giving Nauruans greater access to clean, renewable energy.

The Minister says to have greater efficiency of equipment, he has mandated the NRC and Ronphos to develop a plan for boosting productivity and thus identified three areas of potential collaboration, which include:

- Secondary mining of Tile 2 -- an area of 1km² which Ronphos will conduct mining on followed by rock hauling and land rehabilitation by NRC.
- Clearing land access to portion 230 in Meneñ District, pending landowner agreements; and
- To complete a test plot for joint mining and rehabilitation method.

Minister Aliklik says the efforts and innovations of the two entities working together puts Nauru in a better position to implement the higher ground initiative (HGI).

The HGI looks at relocating infrastructure and residents from the coastal area in light of increased concern over climate change and sea level rise; and to redevelop topside under the HGI to potentially address many of the social and economic challenges facing Nauru including the lack of good jobs and adequate housing.



The higher ground initiative plan will see the development of topside that could potentially address many social and economic challenges including jobs and housing

The Minister’s vision is “Two SOE working together under one ministry and serving one country to transform Topside.”

Minister Aliklik stated the HGI is taking the lead to develop a master land use plan for topside; its steering committee will coordinate a whole of government effort to ensure that the land use plan meets the needs of current and future generations.

“HGI is a multi-generational undertaking and will deliver benefit over the course of many election cycles,” Minister Aliklik said highlighting that this administration should be the one to build a national consensus and break ground in this important initiative.

“We can take the first and most important step towards Nauruans rebuilding their nation.”

Minister Dageago presented her update on the rebranded Department of Internal Affairs, firstly with its Youth Affairs division and its life skills program offered to students and “producing excellent results.” Students demonstrated their skills and exhibited their craft work at the International Women’s Day with some expanding their reach by tapping into employment opportunities.

The Minister highlighted the department’s celebration of National Youth Day on 25 September 2020 and acknowledged the community’s support of the program.

The language division also prepared for International Mother Language day on 22 February which aims to promote the indigenous language and collect information about Nauru’s 12 tribes.

Meanwhile the family and community division is focusing its goals on reaching out to the community on the dangers of gas sniffing which Minister Dageago says is “on the constant rise amongst the juveniles.”

Minister Dageago continued on to highlight the theme of the 2021 Miss Nauru pageant, ‘Women in leadership’, that is to achieve an equal future in a COVID-19 world; while also commending the work of the reigning Miss Nauru Chanique Deiye and Miss Aroeni Teen Gorgeous Ribauw.

The Department of Climate Change and National Resilience (CCNR) procured 50 fresh water tanks of 10,200 litre capacity to address the ill effects of La Nina and drought conditions on the island.

Minister Rennier Gadabu told parliament the tanks arrived in January and have been distributed to various households to support water access and storage constraints.

Parliament sitting 28 January

...from pg 5

The department is also proposing to construct 30 underground water wells to relieve the pressure of using limited fresh water supplies in flushing toilets, laundry and watering dusty driveways and yards.

“Providing 30 underground wells to households across Nauru will lead to increased water security and there will be a lesser demand for potable fresh water produced from reverse osmosis,” Minister Gadabu said.

The US\$3.3 million Global Environment Fund (GEF) financed Supporting Mainstreamed Achievement of Roadmap Targets on Energy in Nauru (SMARTEN) project has commenced under the supervision of the CCNR energy division.

“The project will enable increased applications of renewable energy, it will also strengthen the Energy Policy and Regulatory Framework, improve awareness and capacity building to meet our climate change mitigation commitments,” Minister Gadabu said.

The department’s next project is the Nauru Energy Efficiency on Demand Side (NEEDS) initiative, funded by New Zealand’s ministry of foreign affairs. NEEDS focuses on the achievement of the 30 per cent energy efficiency target as set out in Nauru’s energy roadmap.

A \$1.39 million grant funding, over three years, was signed in December 2020 for the first phase.

The project’s activities will include the introduction of performance standards and energy labelling of appliances, outreach programs and creation of energy management plans for commercial establishments and the creation of an energy efficiency fund that will increase access to higher efficiency appliances without an increase in price.

In the meantime, the climate division is finalising the revised nationally determined contribution (NDC) for submission to the UNFCCC.

“The NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement that embodies the efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change,” Minister Gadabu explains.

“Our updated NDC enumerates specific targets and action in seven areas identified in our National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS): Productive land; health and productive people; water, food and energy security; healthy environment and good governance.”

Minister Gadabu highlighted that while a vaccine is being developed for COVID-19, there is no vaccine for against climate change, underscoring the ever-importance of building a safe, resilient and sustainable future for Nauru by responding to the impacts of climate change.

Sports Minister Maverick Eoe shared the highlights of the recent Independence Day sporting events that included a range of sporting events including traditional games with medals, trophies and cash prizes amounted to \$30,000 was sponsored by the sports department.

The Minister said, the department’s primary goal, guided by the NSDS, is sports for all to reduce the rise of non-communicable diseases in Nauru.

“The department of sports continues to build and grow interest from the communities and schools to take part, to stay active, fit



The sports department promotes the National Sustainable Development Goal - sports for all to reduce the rise of non-communicable diseases in Nauru

and healthy as we consistently battle the rise of NCDs.”

Furthermore, Minister Eoe represented the ministry on its first appearance at the Conference of Parties (COP7) in Paris. This inaugural attendance looks at the compliance levels of member countries under the UNESCO anti-doping requirements.

Failure to comply, countries will be listed as non-compliant and places them at high risk of disciplinary actions, and possibly prevent its athletes from participating in international events such as the Commonwealth Games, the Olympics and the Pacific Games.

Nauru currently is deemed ‘not transparent’ as it is yet to fulfil criteria required of five other stakeholders which are, the justice department, police, health, education, women’s affairs, and the Nauru Olympic Committee.

Minister Eoe also congratulated weightlifter Nancy Abouke for her three bronze medals achieved in the 71kg category at the IWF online World Youth Cup 2020.

Minister for Ronphos Reagan Aliklik highlighted 10 targets for the corporation for 2021, firstly being the announcement of five phosphate shipments expected to June equating to over 200,000 metric tonnes of phosphate exported this financial year.

Other targets include timely pay out of land rents and royalties, an expansion of shared working synergies with NRC to reduce costs and duplication of services, repair main dry bins and install a new furnace, replace all conveyor belts, contribute towards the higher ground initiatives, achieve efficiencies in secondary mining and provide additional staff training and capacity building.

Minister for the Department of Women’s and Social Development Affairs, Isabella Dagego acknowledges that 2021 will be a year of work and challenges but the department’s vision of ‘walking the talk’, places the understanding of rights for all, front and centre, a responsibility for all, irrespective of gender roles.

This year the department will be addressing priority work on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) while a paper on juvenile delinquency has led to collaborative work with the justice department in the setting up of a legal framework for a juvenile justice system.

As with other government departments, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department has also developed a pandemic policy which the Minister says is envisaged will lead to the drafting of a proper policy to create and protect response mechanisms for all future pandemics.

Cont pg 7...

Minister Gadabu then presented the Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment's (CIE) bilateral discussions with Israel's MASHAV under Israel's Pacific Food Security Alliance on Nauru's challenges and needs in the food and agriculture sector.

The department is also working with Israel for the provision of 20 biogas cooking devices for small home farmers; with the Minister underscoring that the devices fit the concept of Nauru's smart housing projects.

Thus, the departments of CIE and infrastructure development will explore options to combine the two projects.

A month-long virtual regional training program also commenced late January which aims to share the principles and methods of agriculture extension, specifically for vegetable production, and with local conditions in mind.

Minister Gadabu further reported that the Micronesian subregional private sector climate finance virtual workshop co-hosted by the government through the commerce division and with the Pacific Islands Forum, was attended by 70 participants from government and the private sector from across the five Micronesian states – Nauru, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and Palau.

Aligning with the Forum economic ministers meeting, it recognises the importance of engaging the private sector in climate change and disaster risk finance where participants learn about regional and global climate finance opportunities, lessons learnt, and available support.

In December, teams from environment, health and NRC surveyed 80 households and 20 businesses on their weekly waste collection.

Minister Gadabu says the national waste audit aims to identify national priorities in the waste sector, provide baseline information that will play a critical role in the planning for better waste management. Along with regulations and impact assessments, such efforts will support the recently enacted environment and climate bill.

“With a declining ecosystem, it is critical that we work together at all levels from across the government right down to the individual Nauruan to improve the management and protection of our environment for our future generations.”

In this new year, the Ministry of Health is revamping its public relations strategy to improve and widen its reach to the public by addressing their concerns, issues and complaints.

The ministry is reengaging its presence on Facebook and appearing on weekly radio segments – ‘Health Check with Samvic and Friends’ - for health information, updates, including on COVID matters, and promotions.

Health Minister Isabella Dageago says a health enquiries line is now operational at phone number 5572901 and complemented by an enquiries desk at the general outpatients department.

In addressing public concern regarding patient services, an open door policy at the RON hospital and the public health centre has commenced, without the need to make an appointment. However, is dependent of the availability of the concerned staff.

Staff shortage remains critical and the ministry is now working with the University of Fiji for the delivery of a diploma in



A three-year nursing program is expected to boost local nurse numbers. Here, a local nurse demonstrates suturing to students at a health expo for secondary students

nursing program to boost local nurse numbers.

The three-year program is anticipated to commence this March with 20 participants.

The Minister says there will be two year intervals between program delivery until the local nursing needs are met.

The Nauru Health Professional Training Institute is currently working with the University of Fiji to accredit the diploma program to meet regional standards.

In overseas medical referrals (OMR), 21 patients with 13 escorts and an organ donor, are currently overseas either undergoing medical treatment or awaiting repatriation.

In the meantime, three other patients are awaiting confirmation of travel arrangements and 14 patients are waiting on hospital acceptances in various health institutions.

“The OMR processes have been adapted to suit the challenges of today in relation to the (COVID-19) pandemic. However, my OMR team is working closely with our health liaison officers in the various missions to expedite our OMR processes,” Minister Dageago said.

Minister Dageago then presented an update on the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic by first noting that since the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the pandemic, in March 2020, global confirmed cases have exceeded 100 million, and over two million have died from it.

As the virus moves in on our region, Nauru remains COVID-free and many of Nauru's closest neighbours have only had cases found in quarantine with no cases in the community.

The Nauru Government took decisive and effective response measures since January 2020 then additional measures once the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic with travel restrictions, and the ‘capture and contain’ strategy implemented.

“With God's grace and guidance, Nauru remains COVID-free,” Minister Dageago said.

“The national response is working. This government's actions are keeping the virus out of our community,” the Minister added underscoring that it is not a simple task, but work is ongoing with long and heavy hours by the COVID taskforce, health and central agencies involved.

National response measures continue to be reviewed and updated with the latest research and expert advice, WHO guidelines and using best practice experience from around the world.

Cont pg 8...

Parliament sitting 28 January

...from pg 7

Border measures and the 'capture and contain' strategy will need to be maintained at least through 2021 and "likely well into next year."

As part of these measures, the Taskforce is considering undertaking periodic community screening and testing for coronavirus.

"I want to be clear and stress the point that we do not have any COVID-19 and there are no signs that we have any cases."

"The planned community screening is to continue to prove this and to build everyone's confidence that we do not have any cases."

Nauru has signed up to the COVAX Facility, which now includes 191 countries and participants. Through this global mechanism, Nauru will purchase the first batch of vaccines enough to cover 20 per cent of the population.

COVID vaccination requires two doses per person. Additional doses will be available by COVAX after the first round of 20 per cent has been administered.

Taiwan has provided \$564,900 in vaccine funding; Australia has confirmed that it will provide \$1.3 million over the next three years with \$213,000 to be provided this year; and discussions have taken place with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for support through the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX).

The Minister anticipates that Nauru will begin receiving the first deliveries of the vaccine in the first half of this year.

The details of the distribution of the vaccine in Nauru will be announced in due course however, priority will be given to those at greatest risk, thus targeting front line workers at the border, quarantine, health and key decision makers, as well as the most vulnerable to the infection such as the elderly and those with specific medical conditions.

Minister Dagego warns that while the vaccine will provide protection for individuals from coronavirus, they may still be able to carry the virus and spread it to others who have not been immunised.

"This will likely continue until around 70 per cent of the world's population has been immunised and it is estimated that this may take another two years or more to achieve," the Health Minister said.

In the meantime the government continues to discuss the possibility of COVID-safe travel zones or travel bubbles with neighbouring countries.

Deputy Minister for Education Richard Menke told the Parliament that the proposed number of enrolled student of 3908 and 121 teachers averages out to 31 students per teacher.

However, with teaching qualifications concentrated at the early years, the upper primary and secondary class' student-teacher ratio sits at an average of 50-1.

The deputy minister notes COVID travel restrictions has prevented the department from recruiting from abroad.

An effort to re-engage 104 former local teachers started with an information session which approximately 40 attended. The majority offered their assistance to the department in some way and six agreed to return to full-time teaching. They will assist in



Staff shortage is resulting in an average of 50-1 student-teacher ratio

two intervention programs targeting students with critically low results and on borderline pass marks.

Despite the high student-teacher ratio, assessment results indicate the average pass marks from mid-year compared to the end of year results have increased overall by nine per cent, across years one to ten, compared to four per cent improvement in the same period last year.

Year One increased the most with 29 per cent and Year 4's up by 15 per cent.

The department is also streamlining student learning for those requiring the most support in each year level.

"This strategy aims to minimise the disparities in the learning that both students and teachers have encountered in the past," Deputy Minister Menke said.

The overall school attendance for 2020 sat at 49 per cent, an increase of nine per cent from 2019, with Nauru Secondary School recording a significant increase in attendance of 16 per cent. However, despite this improvement, NSS still has the lowest attendance rates of all Nauru schools.

The number of graduates of the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) is a key performance indicator of the department.

The year 2020 had the most QCE graduates with 30, an improvement from 26 graduates in 2017, of which almost 50 per cent were asylum seeker students. In 2020, 28 students of the 30 are Nauruans.

Due to COVID-19 and border control measures in place, some senior secondary students meant to travel back to Fiji for this academic year have remained on island.

Five of those students opted to return in January on the special flight to Fiji while the rest remained and with the government's support and commitment, will take up QCE courses at NSS in the meantime.

The deputy minister also reported that a customised bus donated by the Government of Japan for the Able Disabled Centre is expected to arrive prior to the start of second term.

Forward planning, the department is placing priority on reviewing the targets of its current strategic plan; address the early school years; and strengthen community partnerships.

Deputy Minister for the Regional Processing Centre (RPC) Asterio Appi updated the House that negotiations are ongoing for the future funding arrangements and logistical arrangements

Cont pg 9...

associated with placing RPC related sites into a contingent state, including RPC assets and structures.

The department has engaged the services of a structural engineer and a quantitative surveyor to undertake the review of the RPC sites. The outcomes report will be submitted to the government for further deliberations on the repurposing and future of each site.

Deputy Minister Richard Menke presented the final ministerial statement on Nauru Post highlighting the shift in premises of its Frigate Service operations to its new warehouse in Denig District and in its endeavour to provide alternative product selection for the Nauru community has begun importing from Taiwan and Malaysia.

The state-owned entity (SOE) is also assisting the Nauru Correctional Services in selling the eggs produced at the centre's poultry farm that was set up with the assistance of the Taiwan Technical Mission and now run by the inmates.

The eggs are part of the daily meal plans for the inmates and prison staff however the sale ensures the farm is sustainable with profits going back into purchasing livestock feed and cleaning equipment and products.

Nauru Post staff have been attending online training provided by the Asia Pacific Postal Union (APPU) and in January it launched the online Nauru Postal Delivery system with support of the Republic of China (Taiwan) at a value of \$49,100.

This enables Nauru Post to manage its HR management, sales and purchase, inventory, accounts, and parcel tracking. The new website, naurupost.nr provides customers the convenience to order products online.

Bills

Justice Minister Maverick Eoe tabled the Parliamentary Services Bill 2020, relating to the core services provided to the parliament and its sovereignty; effectively transferring all financial, administrative and other functions of the parliament from the executive branch.

This transition conforms to the doctrine of separation of powers of the three branches of government.

"This Bill is not about the constitutional powers of the parliament. It is for a specified purpose of separating the administrative responsibilities and duties of the parliament supporting the constitutional duties of the parliament which are currently controlled by the executive," the Minister said.

The Minister further explained that for each arm of government – executive, legislature and judiciary – to perform its functions there is a need for each of the branches to have their own administrative and financial control.

Typically, the executive branch has the financial power through



Taiwan eggs produced at the Correctional Centre farm are sold at Nauru Post and profits recycled to purchase livestock feed and cleaning items for the Centre's farm

the treasury as well as recruitment through the chief secretary.

The Bill therefore seeks to separate the function of the chief secretary to the office of Parliamentary Services and the parliament budget to be prepared by the Speaker and the clerk of parliament with the assistance of the House Committee.

"The [Parliamentary Services] Office is not above the law. It is subject to the Constitution and its financial responsibilities will have to be compliant with the laws of the Republic," Minister Eoe said.

In that regard, Part 8 of the Bill provides for the financial provisions and the manner in which the funds of the office are to be appropriated and defrayed. The office will also be able to acquire property.

A fund will be established in compliance with Article 58 of the Constitution and its operations will be managed under the Public Finance (Control and Management) Act, while the requirements of the Treasury Fund Protection Act will be maintained.

"Ultimately, Parliament is answerable to the people for all public funds and this Bill ensures that, the Office of Parliamentary Services will adhere to those principles and a custodian of the public funds appropriated to it."

Similarly the appointment, discipline and termination of parliament staff will be transferred from the chief secretary to the Office of Parliamentary Services.

Minister Eoe explains the transition will not attract loss of staff accrued privileges, benefits or entitlements, and the levels of salary kept as consistent as possible.

A position of parliamentary legal counsel is also established thus giving an opportunity for all members of parliament to have access to independent legal advice from the counsel.

However, the justice department will continue to provide legal services to the parliament only in matters which do not conflict with the role and functions of the executive and legislature.

All Acts of Parliament can be accessed at http://ronlaw.gov.nr/nauru_lpms/ •



republicofnauru

Independence day opening church service

The opening church service commemorating Nauru's 53rd Independence Day anniversary and the 75th anniversary of returnees from Truk was held at the Orro Congregational Church led by Reverend Roger Mwareow, 31 January.

The service commenced following the trooping of the colour by the Nauru Police Force and the singing of the national anthem.

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea read the first scripture from Psalm 105: 7-8 and later John 6: 38-39 by the acting Chief Secretary Sasikumar Paravanoor; with Rev Mwareow later delivering his sermon centred on 'What is God's will?'

The Orro Combined Church Choir sang a rendition of 'This Is the day' followed by the Fijian community-led choir singing a Pasifika medley of 'Rock of Ages'.

President Aingimea and Madam Aingimea attended the service along with Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice and the diplomatic corps.



Nauru Combined Congregational Church choir leads the hymn singing

The flag raising ceremony was held the following day, Monday 1 February at the government office complex, and His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea delivered his second national address as the Head of State.

The opening service was followed by a week-long program of sporting activities and community events •

Micronesia united in Forum withdrawal

The five Presidents of Micronesia will honour the Mekreos Communiqué and withdraw from the Pacific Islands Forum. They have initiated the process to denounce the 2000 Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum, thus withdraw from the Forum.

The move comes after failed negotiations, lobbying and abiding by the Pacific Way and the long standing gentleman's agreement on sub-regional rotation for the position of secretary general for the PIFS.

The Micronesian leaders have faithfully respected the gentleman's agreement, notably the election of the current SG where Micronesia withdrew its own candidate to make way for the appointment of Melanesia's candidate, Dame Meg Taylor.

This time was Micronesia's turn.

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea has been instrumental and fervent in Micronesia's turn at heading the region's premier political and economic policy organisation, and with events leading to the breakdown in negotiations, believes the Forum has lost its original intent to be a regional body and what the Forum was originally set up to do.

Events and decisions unfolded over the next year including the Forum Chair's proposals to postpone the SG appointment to a face to face meeting in 2021; extend the nomination deadline for the SG position; and extend the current SG or appoint the deputy to be acting – to the disagreement of Micronesia.

In February 2019, at the 18th Micronesian Presidents' Summit in Palau, the Micronesian leaders nominated their candidate, Ambassador of the Republic of the Marshall Islands to the USA, Gerald Zackios and trusted the gentleman's agreement to be honoured by Forum members. It was not unanimous.

A secret ballot among the PIF Leaders declared Henry Puna of the Cook Islands the next SG by one vote in the early hours of 4 February.

On 9 February 2020, the five Micronesian presidents issued a joint communiqué stating their position:

1. The President of the Federated States of Micronesia, the President of the Republic of Kiribati, the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the President of the Republic of Nauru and the President of the Republic of Palau convened a virtual meeting on



Micronesia's nomination for Pacific Islands Forum secretary general lost

8th February, 2021.

2. The Micronesian Presidents expressed unity and solidarity and restated that their position remains in accordance with the Micronesian Presidents' Summit (MPS) Special Leaders Meeting Mekreos Communiqué, 2020. There is no value in participating in an organization that does not respect established agreements, including the

gentlemen's agreement on sub-regional rotation.

3. The Micronesian Presidents collectively expressed great disappointment with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General appointment process.

Withdrawal from the Pacific Islands Forum

4. The Micronesian Presidents jointly agreed that all five nations will initiate the formal process of withdrawing from the Pacific Islands Forum, as set out in Article XII of the Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Each nation will undertake this process with respect to its own internal legal and procedural requirements and final decision rests with respective governments.

5. The Micronesian Presidents look forward to strengthening the work of subregional organisations including the Micronesian Presidents' Summit.

The legal process to withdraw from the Forum will take effect one year from the time of depositing the denunciation letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Fiji who is the Depository Chair.

The Mekreos Communiqué endorsed at the special meeting of the Micronesian Presidents in Palau in October 2020 underscores the Gentleman's Agreement and intentions to withdraw from the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) should the agreement not be honoured and Micronesia denied its turn to nominate the secretary general of the regional institution.

The PIF was formed in 1971 and has only been led once by a Micronesian secretary general in its 50 year history. The original members were Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Tonga and Samoa •

COVID-19, one year on

March 16 marks one year since the Nauru Government declared a State of Disaster and put in place legislation and processes to keep coronavirus out and the people of Nauru safe from it.

In March 2020 the Nauru Government slowly commenced closing its borders to its Pacific destinations, initially leaving only fortnightly passenger flights and a weekly freighter service to/from Brisbane were permitted.

In that time 1465 international passengers have travelled to Nauru from Fiji and Brisbane, including the nine repatriation flights; 1034 of those have stayed at the government-managed quarantine facilities while the remaining travellers were accommodated at Australian government-managed facilities on-island.

Nauru is now only a handful of countries in the world to be COVID-free.

The National Coronavirus Taskforce, mandated to manage the quarantine facilities and advise government and the community, has its work cut out.

Now with the expected roll-out of the COVID vaccines in the coming weeks, a scheduled vaccination program is being planned.

In the very early days of the quarantine arrangements, five cases of quarantine breaches were recorded from April to August 2020, by people from inside and outside the quarantine facilities.

Fortunately authorities have learnt from those errors and managed to close the gaps and maintain a smoother quarantine operation.

In the past year, 11 community drills were conducted across the island with scenarios ranging from security breaches, community contact tracing, fire at a quarantine facility, symptomatic passenger and plane engine catching fire, and symptomatic persons at various workplaces.

Nauru Emergency Services (NES) is working on suggested plans and way forward for more drills.

The drills have been beneficial in improving the national system, stakeholders and community awareness and understanding as well as to look at other possible COVID-related incidents to best prepare the country.

Nauru now has three lab testing machines for PCR tests. In the last fortnight 150 rapid antigen tests were administered on frontline workers and some community members as part of random community testing. Community testing continues this week.

In addition to the regular lab tests for international travellers to Nauru, this community testing using the rapid antigen tests further demonstrates Nauru's COVID-free status.

The Government expects to receive 7200 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in two batches in April.

The launching of the vaccination program will be advised by the COVID Taskforce and is aimed at immunising 250 people a day (1000 a week). This would cover about 80 per cent of the adult population in a couple months.



The National COVID-19 Taskforce meet weekly to stay abreast of global events and medical advice surrounding COVID

The National Disaster Risk Management Act (NDRM) requires the establishment and active participation of the Community Disaster Management Committee (CDMC) which will be the body by which the Taskforce can channel information to and from communities.

In the past year these committees were formed and they play an important part in passing on information from the Taskforce to their respective communities as well as relay concerns and suggestions from the community to the Taskforce.

Representatives of the community committees consist of traditional or community leaders, women's leaders, men's leaders, church leaders, and youth leaders.

As Nauru remains COVID-free, 11 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have recorded coronavirus cases.

Those 11 PICTs are the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, PNG, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

The PICTs have reported approximately 29,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 300 deaths.

As of 16 March, nine countries of PICTs have commenced administering COVID-19 vaccines. A total of 321,790 vaccines have been distributed, and of those 121,924 of the first dose and 71,815 of the second dose have been administered. Those who have received the second dose are considered fully vaccinated.

Meanwhile, Fiji commenced its COVID vaccination on 10 March and Nauru is expecting to receive its first batch of COVID vaccines in the coming weeks.

192 countries world-wide have recorded coronavirus cases •



The Taskforce has commenced community awareness about the COVID-19 vaccine to allay fears, misinformation and to answer questions. Pictured - meeting with airport frontline workers

Taiwan antigen rapid test kits

The Taiwan Embassy has donated 6000 antigen rapid test kits to the RON Hospital, further boosting capacity for Nauru health in its COVID-19 prevention and testing scheme.

The presentation on 22 January, comes in three-fold – the donation of the test kits; financial donation of \$564,900 for COVID vaccine support to cover 23 per cent of the population of Nauru; and the signing of the Memorandum of Association to continue and strengthen medical referrals between Nauru and Taiwan's Taichung Veteran's General Hospital.



Taiwan's solid support for Nauru since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared continues with donations of PPE, rapid test kits and financial for procurement of the vaccine (L-R) Health Minister

Taiwan Ambassador Dean Wang presented the kits to Health Minister Isabella Dageago stating "as a family" Taiwan does its best to help Nauru, its people and the government to remain COVID-free.

Minister Dageago is very thankful for the support saying "you (Taiwan) have been part of that prevention program, that's why we're still free from the virus."

Deputy Secretary for Health and Director of Medical Services Dr Ola explains these antigen rapid test kits detects the virus itself to see if the virus is in your body. Unlike the earlier versions of rapid test kits, Dr Ola says "the test kits now have been refined and made better" and "have been certified by the European Union."

The antigen rapid tests will work alongside the lab tests currently being used and while both tests detect the antigen, the difference is the lab test has a stronger layer of detection.

Dr Ola explains the rapid tests can be used on passengers before boarding a flight as a quick detection; as soon as passengers arrive; and also administer it to all health workers and front liner workers in Nauru, as well as to sample the population.

Dr Ola says by sampling the population will further show that Nauru is truly coronavirus-free •

CJ Fatiaki sworn in

Justice Taniela Vafoou Fatiaki was sworn in as Nauru's chief justice and president of the Court of Appeal in a ceremony at the Office of the President, 29 January.

On arrival, His Honour and Mrs Fatiaki received a traditional welcome chant followed by an inspection of the Nauru Police Force guard of honour commanded by Inspector Sakiusa Tikotani.



His Honour Daniel Fatiaki looks forward to making a difference as Chief Justice of Nauru's Supreme Court

Later in the Office of the President, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea announced the appointment of CJ Fatiaki, witnessed by cabinet ministers, Justice Mohammed Shafiullah Khan, Registrar Ronald Prakash and members of the judiciary.

President Aingimea recalls CJ Fatiaki's vast background in law and the exceptional decisions made over the course of his career as a judge and chief justice across the two jurisdictions of Fiji and Vanuatu.

"It is that experience of knowing two Pacific countries [Fiji and Vanuatu] and with his firmness and toughness that is on the bench basically brought him to become our chief justice," President Aingimea said.

His Honour says he is humbled to be offered the position of CJ and looks forward to making a difference. Having been a civil servant all his life he says, "whenever there's a call to service I answer it, no matter where it is. So it's a particularly humbling experience for me to be able to accept the appointment and come to this country for a second time."

CJ Fatiaki's first visit to Nauru in October 2019 was appointment on a special commission as a judge of the Supreme Court of Nauru for the retrial of the parliament riot case well known as the Nauru 19, which His Honour subsequently brought to a close just before Christmas 2019.

He looks forward to "making more differences" during his tenure.

His Honour Fatiaki hails from Rotuma in Fiji and worked as a prosecutor at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for 10 years before going into private practice for two years until the Fiji military coup of 1987.

In 1988 he was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Fiji and later elevated to chief justice in 2002 until his retirement from the office in 2006 following that year's military coup; and in September 2009 was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Vanuatu for 10 years.

His Honour Fatiaki assumes the role of CJ after Chief Justice Filimone Jitoko and will serve his tenure until he reaches the retirement age •

Australia Day 2021

Australian High Commissioner Angela Tierney hosted an Australia Day barbeque at her residence, 26 January, welcoming guests in her impressive spoken Nauruan, and reflected on the year that was.

“What a year it has been for us all; for the world.

“If nothing else, the last year has reinforced the critical importance and value of our partnerships as we come together to address local, regional and global challenges and that there is no stronger friendship than that between Australia and Nauru.

“In fact it was at this event last year that His Excellency the President actually coined a term to sum up the relationship which he described as ‘familyship’, and I truly think that says it all.”

President Lionel Aingimea spoke of the “strength of the friendship that is between Nauru and Australia” and applauded High Commissioner Tierney’s “untiring effort” and her “outstanding work,” with special note that the High Commissioner is the first high commissioner to bring to Nauru female AFL players, which has further boosted female participation in AFL in Nauru.

“You have brought in so many other positive and different things in regards to what you have done here in Nauru and for that we sincerely thank you,” President Aingimea said.

The President reflected on the two countries friendship as being historic and based on shared customs and beliefs, “but also it is the things that Australia does when the chips are down.”

“Australia’s historic impact on Nauru has been long and has been fruitful. From the very beginning Australia was one of the few countries that fought for Nauru’s independence. From the very beginning, ever since we’ve needed help Australia has been there. One of the very oldest laws that we have... agreements we have with Australia is that Nauru can buy property in Australia and sell it and not get taxed by Australia.”

The President also highlighted the special arrangement that Nauruans can “find refuge and sanctuary” at an Australian high commission or embassy in a foreign country where Nauru does not have one.

“It is things that like that that strengthens relationships.

“And needless to say what Australia has done to the Pacific especially to Nauru in regards to COVID-19 speaks volumes, not just of the relationship but of the care that they give to Nauru.”

“So to Australia our most heartfelt thanks and appreciation for always being there with us,” President Aingimea said.

At the onset of COVID-19 Australia acted quickly and provided rapid and practical support to the Pacific including \$4.5 million in immediate and additional funding to Nauru to assist with health response and economic recovery and are not distracted from its other priorities and commitment to addressing climate change and disaster resilience in the Pacific.

Throughout the year, Australia has participated and partnered with the government in various areas including meetings of



High Commissioner Angela Tierney says 2020 reinforced the importance and value of the partnership between Nauru and Australia



Pacific women leaders sharing perspectives on the impact of COVID-19 on women and vulnerable groups.

Australia and Nauru also partnering on a project to upgrade airport and transport infrastructure while their support in sports continues for AFL and rugby and upgrades of community tennis, basketball and volleyball courts; and promoted their various civil society partners.

Other support has been to the Nauru Post, Nauru Parliament, museum, and Nauru television with PacificAus TV and strengthened support to the development of the private sector.

“We look forward to another year of close cooperation, collaboration and mutual support among the Australia and Nauru family, particularly as Nauru opens its new high commission in Canberra – a truly historic moment in our relationship,” High Commissioner Tierney said •

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Legal year opening

Chief Justice His Honour Daniel Fatiaki officially opened the 2021 legal year at the Nauru Supreme Court with a clear vision for the courts to take responsibility and commit to its duty, 5 February.

“This opening is an opportunity for the Court to recall its responsibility and restate its commitment to its primary mission which is to bring justice to the people of this nation by upholding the rule of law in the exercise of the State’s judicial power and authority,” His Honour Fatiaki said.



His Honour Fatiaki's first role as CJ was officially opening 2021 legal year

“It is also a time to look back on the Court’s achievements, recognise our shortcomings and identify where improvements might be made.

“It is also an occasion to consolidate and look forward to the new year ahead and to formulate plans for the future advancement and development of the Courts, its facilities and human resources,” the CJ said.

The work of the Nauru Courts is likely to be impacted with the reduced number of judges from three to two since the departure of CJ Filimone Jitoko and Justice Rapi Va’ai.

CJ Fatiaki says the reduction of judges may require the Supreme Court to conduct parallel sittings that will in turn have a ripple effect on the court’s support staff, the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, public legal defender’s office and members of the legal profession.

“I trust that we will all work together cooperatively in order to address the backlog that exist in the Supreme Court.”

The Chief Justice congratulated the Nauru government for its efforts to keeping Nauru COVID-free thus enable the District Court, Family Court and Supreme Court to continue to sit normally throughout 2020 without COVID restrictions as many other jurisdictions have had to endure.

The CJ makes particular note of the District Court’s implementation and disposal of 857 traffic cases with substantial fines and costs imposed; and if fully collected a substantial contribution of \$172,025 by the District Court would go towards government revenue.

On the other hand, no civil claims were filed in the District Court in 2019 and 2020, but 32 criminal cases in the District Court were disposed of, while 18 cases in the Family Court were dealt with and 17 domestic violence matters disposed of in 2020.

CJ Fatiaki adds that given the work load, the present court

structure is top heavy suggesting there should be more magistrates than judges.

In 2020, criminal cases in the Supreme Court were reduced by 50 per cent of the outstanding backlog of cases; while stringent case management measures is needed to close the 87 civil cases; and 22 pending refugee appeals needed further clarification before they can be heard and disposed of.

The CJ also notes the 46 appeals before the Court of Appeals have not been able to be heard for various reasons including COVID-19 travel restrictions.

CJ Fatiaki is pleased to report that funding will be provided by the Pacific Judicial Strengthening Initiative (PJSI) for eight staff members to undertake a certificate of justice course offered through the USP’s extension services.

The court will also be undertaking major reworking of the rules that apply to the issuing of civil claims which the CJ says that presently the court relies on the English civil procedure rules better known as “the white book”, which the CJ says needs to be simplified and streamlined.

“These rules are complicated and written in a style and manner which is difficult to comprehend and apply. Quite simply, it is not user-friendly or relevant for this jurisdiction. It needs to be simplified and streamlined.”

The Ministry of Justice will also be spearheading a new consolidation of all legislation for Nauru, undertaken by global provider of legal, regulatory and business information and analytics, LexisNexis.

Minister for Justice Maverick Eoe welcomed CJ Fatiaki back to Nauru, this time as the chief justice.

“We inherit you as the chief justice of the country with your insurmountable experience, wisdom and judgement.

“The people of Nauru have a high expectation of the judiciary and no doubt under your leadership, the judiciary will only be further enhanced,” Minister Eoe said underscoring the reputation of the judiciary as an important element of Nauru’s democracy and rule of law.

The Minister says in the absence of private media on Nauru, the government still furnishes news and information to the public through the government’s Facebook page, the Government Information Office and the Nauru Media Bureau’s radio, television and monthly print publication; as well as court judgements reported on the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PacLII) website.

Minister Eoe further added the importance of judgements being formally reported in Nauru law reports which the justice department is ready to assist in expediting as well as the need for public education for better delivery of legal services.

President of the Nauru Law Society (NLS) Vinci Clodumar acknowledged the “esteem and vast experience” CJ Fatiaki will bring to the office of the chief justice and the judiciary as a whole and noted comments the CJ made at his swearing-in that he “will make change” during his tenure.

“We look forward to going on this new journey under your stewardship.”

Mr Clodumar brought to attention two matters of concern to the NLS, the first being the land tenure system stressing that

Cont pg 15...

Legal year opening

...from pg 14

“something has to be done or the system will collapse due to the distrust and delusion people now have of the existing system as a whole.”

“Land appeals are not abating but continue to grow and if one looks at the cases, most contain similar substances that have been decided by this Court,” Mr Clodumar said suggesting that Nauru land law reforms in particular are complex.

“The current system is outdated and lacks the necessary legislative and administrative framework to deal with such issues.”

Mr Clodumar points out land ownership in “fractions of a million” and the revolving effect of the Nauru Lands Committee decisions “that disregard Court decisions and today land conflicts are impacting the cultural, social and familial fabric of Nauru.”

“It is important that these reforms are prioritised and done so with outmost regard for the best practice possible in the Nauruan context.”

President commends NPF

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea delivered an impassioned speech to the Nauru Police Force commending them for the exceptional work that resulted in a “death-free” Christmas period.

President Aingimea addressed the NPF on 14 January expressing “feelings of pride, joy, and exaltation.”

“You can’t imagine how deeply grateful your government is towards the Nauru Police Force.

“It is an honour, almost a unique honour for a police force to be given a new vision, new management, new attitude and come away and execute it and return and say to the minister, within a year of been given that mandate, we have completed that mandate and we have done our best to uphold it.”

President Aingimea who is also the Minister for Police acknowledged that the NPF not only succeeded because of a wide range of initiatives and vision but more so because they trusted the changes, their own experiences and a government that trusts their abilities to keep the public safe.

“For the first time in a long time, we had a free-from-death, from drunkenness and from drunk driving at Yuletide season.

“It was the safety of the public, their property and ourselves that

Child protect toll free lines 248, 249

The Department of Women’s and Social Development Affairs (WASDA) has partnered with Digicel to make available a toll free line specifically for the Women’s Affairs Department and the Child Protection Division.

The department says the toll free line will assist the community greatly in calling for assistance no matter the situation.

“In ensuring that it delivers its core work which is centred on women and girls, children and gender the department is constantly reaching out to like-minded organisations to partner with and combat the issue of Gender Based Violence and Violence in all its forms against children and women and girls,” a WASDA statement said.

The department is grateful and appreciative of Digicel’s support

Mr Clodumar’s second matter of concern is the quality and standard some graduates of the pleaders training course run by the justice department, stressing more attention be given to practical training and professional development with the expectation that graduates and practitioners are of a professional calibre straight out of school.

“Quality control is crucial at all stages [of the pleaders’ course] and we would like to see more support not only from the Court but also the department of justice in ensuring these objectives and outcomes are achieved.”

Mr Clodumar adds that reducing the pass mark of the pleaders’ course to 50 per cent and running the course over 12 months is reflected in the standard of knowledge of the graduates when it comes to practice law.

“This goes to the heart of the system providing competent and effective legal services to the community.”

The opening was attended by the Speaker of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, the Australian High Commissioner, Taiwan Ambassador, members of the legal fraternity and court staff •



President Aingimea commends NPF for the exceptional policing work over the Christmas period that resulted in zero deaths

was high and centre in the things you did this Christmas and this New Year season and people saw it and people felt it and people responded to it.

“People felt safe.”

For many years during the Christmas period, Nauru’s road incidents record numerous alcohol-related deaths and accidents. The success of the 2020-21 festive period is indeed an achievement admirable of the actions and dedication of the NPF.

The NPF operated its special roster from 11 December to 8 January with continual presence on the public roads, conducting traffic checks for drunk driving, drivers’ licence and general good behaviour and conduct for public safety •

in the fight to end violence against women, girls and children.

The toll free line available 24/7 are as follows:

* 248 - Women’s Affairs Department

* 249 - Child Protection Division

The police toll free line is also available on 110.

The public is advised that when there is no answer on the toll free numbers, the call will automatically divert to a designated mobile phone at the Women’s Affairs Department and the Child Protection Division and your call will be answered.

The department affirms its commitment to the vulnerable in the community - women and girls, children, disabled and the elderly that “we stand committed to ensuring your voices are allowed in spaces which affect your lives and that you are heard in those spaces.” •

Oppenheimer presents credentials as Israel honorary consul

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea received the Honorary Consul of the State of Israel to Nauru, Sean Oppenheimer for the presentation of credentials in the Office of the President, 23 February.

President Aingimea congratulated Mr Oppenheimer for the distinct honour of being the only Nauruan to be appointed as honorary consul. This is the second occasion that Mr Oppenheimer is presenting his credentials; the first was in February 2012.

Mr Oppenheimer was also elected at the 2016 general elections and served as a Member of Parliament for his constituency of Ewa/Anetan in the 22nd Parliament.

"I am confident that you will not only be an asset to Israel but also to Nauru to further strengthen the close relationships that we have in regards to the cooperation that already happily exists between our two countries and people," President Aingimea said.

Based in Nauru, Mr Oppenheimer was able to present his credentials in person, and in doing so emphasised that while Israel and Nauru are worlds apart yet "share a set of unshakable values that unite us."



Honorary Consul of the State of Israel to Nauru Sean Oppenheimer presented his credentials to President Lionel Aingimea

"Most importantly Israel and Nauru vigorously and unambiguously defend every nation's right to exist. In this regard let me thank Nauru for being a staunch and close ally of Israel at the United Nations and other international fora," Mr Oppenheimer said.

Israel and Nauru have cooperative measures in health, agriculture, water and food security to which Mr Oppenheimer says he looks forward to working with the government, its agencies, businesses and community leaders to create investment opportunities and expand the visibility of Israel in Nauru •

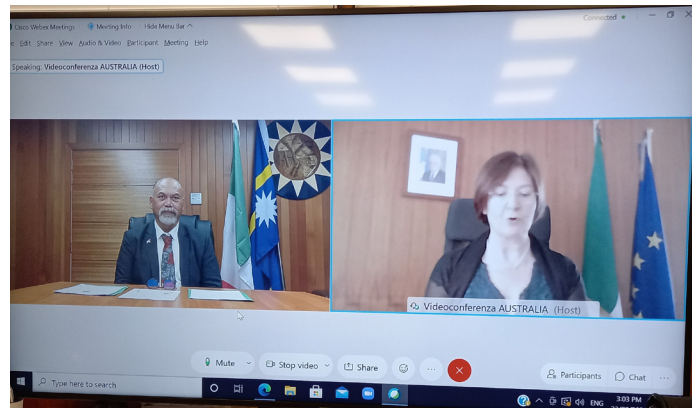
Italy's ambassador Tardioli presents credentials

The Ambassador-designate of Italy to Nauru Francesca Tardioli virtually presented her Letter of Credence to His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, 23 February.

Ambassador Tardioli joined the Italian National Diplomatic Service in March 1991 and promoted through the ranks to her current position as Ambassador of Italy to Australia.

President Aingimea congratulated the Ambassador and noted Italy's support to the region and welcomed Italy's commitment to fight climate change particularly the marine dimension, pointing out that Nauru's daily livelihoods evolves around and directly affected by the ocean; and further noted Italy's initiative proposing to allocate a seat for the PSIDS on the UN Security Council.

President Aingimea also extended condolences for the loss of Italian lives to coronavirus and the tragic death of Italy's



Italy's Ambassador to Nauru Francesca Tardioli expresses her country's commitment to fight climate change, particularly marine, in light of Nauru's livelihood evolving around the ocean

Ambassador to Congo Luca Attanasio, Italian military officer Vittorio Iacovacci and their driver who were killed a day earlier on Monday 23 February, in an attack on a UN humanitarian convoy, in which they were travelling, near the eastern Congolese city of Goma •

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 29:

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.

Learn more: www.unicef.org.au

Nauru, USA agree on importance of securing clean network

President Lionel Aingimea and the United States Under Secretary of State Keith Krach agreed on the importance of securing telecommunications infrastructure and ensuring safe technology supply chains based on internationally accepted digital trust standards.

In a joint statement, 12 January, President Aingimea and Mr Krach express their commitment to protecting peoples' personal data, companies' intellectual property, and each country's national security by excluding high-risk 5G equipment suppliers.

"It is critical that the data traveling across 5G infrastructure is safe. The Clean Network provides a trusted foundation for countries and companies to ensure the security of their most sensitive information. The Republic of Nauru is proud to be a member of the Clean Network," President Aingimea said.

Nauru joins more than 50 Clean Countries, 180 Clean Telcos and many of the global high-tech Clean Companies on the Clean Network.

"The Republic of Nauru's participation in the Clean Network paves the way for expanded U.S private sector investment and strengthens the joint security of like-minded partners in the region and around the world," Mr Krach said.

President Aingimea and Under Secretary Krach further emphasised the critical importance of ensuring a Nauru-U.S. partnership based on transparency, reciprocity, respect for sovereignty and the rule of law. These principles underpin the relationship between the two countries and will serve as a trusted guide in the vital area of 5G security •

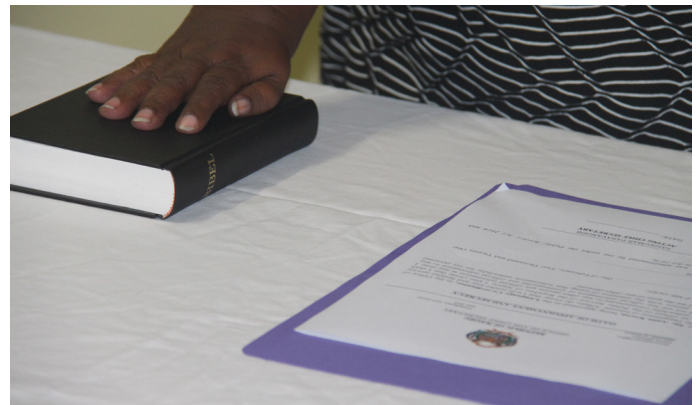
Five departments take the public service oath

The oath-taking by public servants continues with five departments swearing their Oaths of Appointment and Secrecy in official ceremonies on the 15 January and 26 February.

Ten staff members from the Department of Infrastructure Development took the oath on 15 January while 67 staff from the combined departments of Land Management, Women's and Social Development Affairs, Internal Affairs, and People with Disability took their oath on 26 February.

Public servants across the 26 government departments take part in the ceremony whereby they swear to render true and faithful service as an officer of the public service; never unlawfully communicate official information and; not use official information unlawfully for personal or others' gain.

The oath ceremonies are presided over by acting Chief Secretary Sasi Kumar and witnessed by Secretary for Corporate Services Peta Gadabu and a legal representative from the department of justice •



Anna Rose Ribauw awarded third NORI scholarship

The third Nauruan to be awarded a Nauru Ocean Resources Inc., (NORI) scholarship has commenced full-time undergraduate studies for a Bachelor of Science majoring in biology and chemistry at the University of the South Pacific.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade Asterio Appi presented the scholarship certificate to 19 year old Anna Rose Ribauw on 20 January.



Anna Rose Ribauw proudly accepts her NORI scholarship certificate from Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Asterio Appi

The presentation was overseen and facilitated by NORI Country Manager Peter Jacob and the scholarship document endorsed by then acting Secretary for DFAT Camilla Solomon.

Mr Jacob says Ms Ribauw is an ideal recipient given her impressive high school record and performance across her 5 years at St John's College in Levuka, Fiji where she was a top student.

She graduated from Year 13 last year and her ambition is to become a doctor. However, with the NORI scholarship opportunity at hand, she decided to start off with biology and chemistry which would take her further towards a specialised medical career pathway.

NORI is a subsidiary of DeepGreen Metals of Canada, and works in partnership with the Government of Nauru to explore and eventually mine for polymetallic nodules in the Clarion Clipperton Zone - international waters between Hawaii and Mexico.

The scholarship program is part of NORI's ongoing commitment to promote capacity building and social development in Nauru and will be offering scholarships each year. This is the third NORI scholarship offered since 2012 •



Nauru Ocean Resources Inc
Community Grant Assistance Programme

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS




Project Announcement

Nauru Ocean Resources Inc (NORI) is pleased to announce the roll-out of its 2021 community grant initiatives programme. The programme shall provide funding support for two (2) small and two (2) medium scale community development projects in the following areas:

- Youth & Healthy Living
- Agriculture & Food Security
- Water Supply & Storage
- Climate Health & the Environment
- Education
- Women Empowerment

All proposals will be considered and they must clearly specify the targeted community, the number of beneficiaries or how many people will benefit, with detailed cost of the project, and anything else to support the project. Proposals submitted that exceed the budget ceiling will not be considered.

For more information, contact the NORI Country Manager.

Project Type

Small Projects - \$1,000 - \$5,000
Medium Projects - \$5,000 - \$10,000

How to Apply

Application forms are available from the NORI Office, Egigau Hardware Store Building, Denig District or you may request an e-copy from the email address below.

Closing Date

19th April 2021

Contact Details

Peter Jacob
NORI Country Manager
Mobile: +677 3008
Email: peter.jacob@deepgreen.com

Japan, Nauru join forces to boost tourism

Nauru-awareness is moving to new heights in the Japanese market as interest skyrockets in Japan through social media promotions.

Nauru Tourism is partnering with Japan International Relations Organisation (JIRO) to promote Nauru and has attracted over 165,000 Twitter followers mostly in Japan.

Japan International Relations Organisation (JIRO) Deputy Director Tatsuya Haga who co-partners the tourism promotion of Nauru in Japan says in February, JIRO's Twitter account for Nauru attracted over 165,000 followers in four months, exceeding Finland, France, Germany, and USA.

A virtual meeting was held and facilitated by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade on 26 February with the Nauru Tourism Office and JIRO to follow up on the progress work of the tourism MoU which came in to effect in October 2020.



JIRO deputy director Haga connected virtually from Japan to advance plans for Nauru tourism

DFAT Director for Trade Masau Detudamo facilitated the meeting said he is pleased to see that Japan's proposed plans are aligned with the three-year MOU with each year allocating a project and planning.

Nauru Tourism Chair Bernard Grundler presented his offices' plans and initiatives and hopes JIRO and Nauru Tourism can work together to match their plans over the initial three years.

Mr Haga says his office has immersed itself in public relations through the free service of Twitter as well as engaged in traditional mediums such as television and newspaper marketing.

The three-year plan includes focus on Twitter in 2021; tours and survey in 2022 and investment and development in 2023.

Mr Haga says when things return to normal from COVID-19, his office will plan small travel package tours for Japanese tourists to Nauru in 2022.

The construction of a tourism railway at Topside is also in the planning for 2023. This proposal will be carried out by JIRO in consultation with Japanese railway companies.

A sister relationship request by the Governor of Tottori Prefecture in Japan is also on the table. The prefecture has the smallest population in Japan with 570,000 people.

The three parties exchanged questions for future collaboration and a way forward. They will present further updates as plans firm up •

Nauru pays tribute to PNG's Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare

His Excellency President Lionel Rouwen Aingimea extended heartfelt sympathies and deepest condolences from the people and Government of Nauru to the people of Papua New Guinea on the passing of the first prime minister of PNG, Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

In a letter addressed to the PNG Prime Minister the Honourable James Marape, President Aingimea says, "It is with profound sadness that I have learned of the passing of Papua New Guinea's 'Father of the Nation' and first Prime Minister, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare GCL, GCMG, CH CF, SSI, KSG, PC.

"Sir Michael was truly a man of the region, one of whom to be admired and respected. His passing is a great loss not only for his immediate family and friends but also a great loss to his people and the Pacific region."

Sir Michael passed away at 12am on Friday 25 February 2021 at the age of 84. His family issued a statement announcing his passing.

"Sir Michael was only diagnosed with a late stage of pancreatic cancer in early February and was admitted to hospital on Friday 19 February 2021. Sadly, pancreatic cancer is one of the most aggressive cancers that are rarely detected early. We as a family had only two weeks to look for possible treatments for our father," the statement said.

Known as the father of the nation, he led PNG to independence from Australia in 1975 and was one of the country's longest-serving politicians, with a career that spanned 49 years. He served as prime minister for four terms (17 years) until 2011.

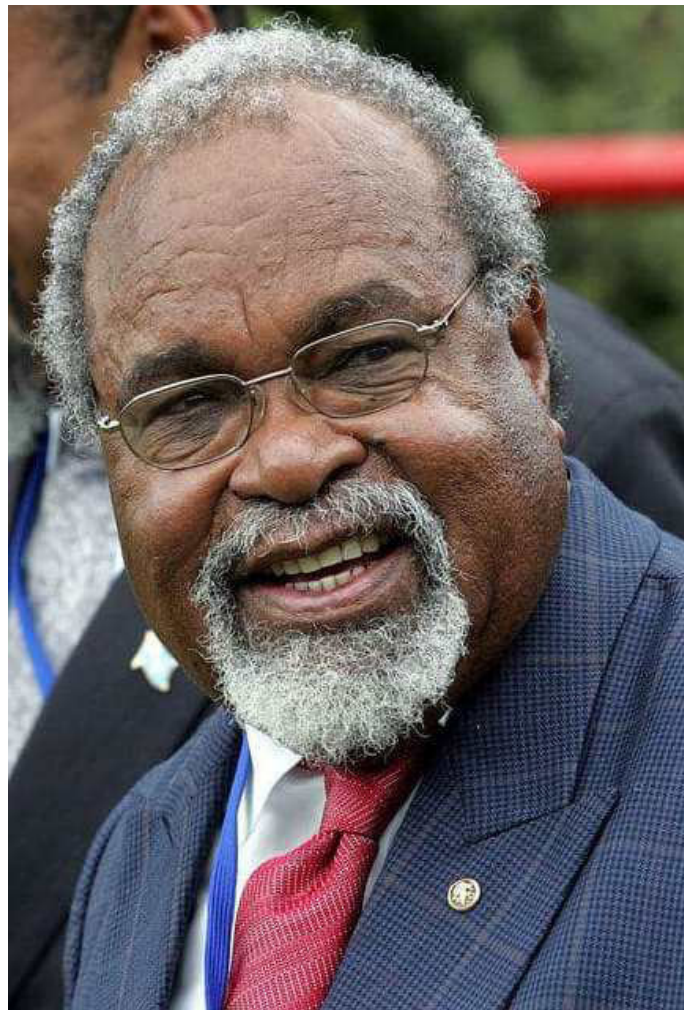
Michael Thomas Somare was born on 9 April, 1936 in Rabaul, a coastal town in what was then the Australian mandated territory of New Guinea, and raised in the East Sepik Province, a region he went on to represent in parliament.

In 1972, Sir Michael was elected as Chief Minister of the territory and three years later PNG gained its independence, and at the age of just 39 Michael Somare became PNG's first prime minister.

The Grand Chief, as Sir Michael was known, was the longest serving parliamentarian in the Pacific region.

Sir Michael Somare was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1990.

He is survived by his wife Lady Veronica Somare and their five children •



PNG's first Prime Minister, Sir Michael Somare was laid to rest at his home in Wewak.

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

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Republic of Nauru

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