



# Nauru Bulletin

**Issue 1 - 2025/284**

# Parliament meeting December 2024

As Minister for Finance, His Excellency President David Adeang tabled the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.2) 2024-25, with updated expenditure estimates for a third ex-gratia payment for this financial year, business travel, overseas medical referrals, Trust Fund contribution, Micronesian Games field and stadium preparations, salary increments, operational costs for departments and state-owned enterprise, airline loan repayments, and dwellings associated with the port relocation project.

With the passing of the Bill, the approved 2024-25 budget will reallocate expenditure savings of \$15 million and appropriate new expenditure of the same, leaving a small surplus budget balance of \$200,000 for the year. //



## Parliament December 2024

### Meeting with ICJ update

Minister Lionel Aingimea provided an update to parliament regarding his meetings in Europe at The Hague and with his Austrian counterpart.



*Foreign minister Aingimea presenting Nauru's concerns to the ICJ*

At The Hague the Minister presented Nauru's oral submission before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 9 December as part of the advisory proceedings concerning climate change.

In his address, Minister Aingimea emphasised the existential threat that climate change poses to small island developing states, highlighting the urgent need for global accountability and ambitious actions to protect vulnerable nations.

Nauru's submission underscored the critical importance of international cooperation in addressing challenges induced by climate change and urged the ICJ to offer authoritative guidance on the legal obligations of states under international law to combat this issue.

The Minister's participation reaffirmed Nauru's steadfast commitment to advocating for justice and sustainable solutions on the global stage.

Later on 10 December, Minister Aingimea met with Austria's Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Alexander Schallenberg, in Vienna.

The ministers discussed avenues to enhance diplomatic relations and explore potential areas of cooperation, and exchanged perspectives on pressing global issues, including climate change, sustainable development, and multilateral collaboration, highlighting the significance of partnership in tackling shared challenges and promoting international peace and stability.

Minister Aingimea highlighted Austria's pledged to support Nauru's Higher Ground Initiative, further solidifying the cooperative ties between the two nations. //

### Department of People Living with Disabilities

Minister Charmaine Scotty presented a brief report on the Department of People Living with Disabilities, firstly expressing deep condolences for the passing of Secretary Riddell Akua, saying his commitment in advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities will be remembered.

The Department has thrived with financial support from the government and international donors, enabling projects that enhance accessibility, improve living conditions, and promote inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

One notable initiative, funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, is the Access to Public Buildings for People Living with Disabilities project, which began in late September. It includes the installation of three ramps and accessible signage in government buildings, designed for individuals with visual impairment.

The department is currently working on providing assistive devices for individuals with mobility impairments and are actively seeking funding from external organisations to facilitate the purchases.

Minister Scotty says the initiative aims to support those living with mobility challenges, helping to reduce their vulnerability both at home and in social environments. It aligns with the department's key performance indicator: 'Vulnerable Nauruans are comprehensively supported'.

The proposal submitted by the department has received approval from the People's Republic of China and the Latter-Day Saints Church, resulting in the acquisition of 34 assistive devices from China and 171 from the church. Minister Scotty thanked the donors for their generous contributions which will assist vulnerable Nauruans in the community.

Additionally, home modifications for individuals with disabilities are underway for the financial year 2024-2025, with 14 projects completed and nine in progress. The department estimates around 30 homes will be modified during this fiscal year.

These accomplishments are celebrated, recognising the positive impact they will have on the lives of people with disabilities.

According to the department's database, there are a total of 329 individuals with disabilities, comprising 190 males and 139 females.

Minister Scotty emphasised the importance of what the department stands for, therefore proposing for community support in "advocating for people with disabilities to ensure that their rights continue to be recognised and protected, whereby removing any barrier that hinders their inclusion and acceptance into society". //

### Fisheries

Minister for Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) Reagan Aliklik reported that in December, 44 purse seine vessels operated in Nauru's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with seven being Nauru-flagged vessels.



*Climate change impacts on fisheries remain a critical concern*

The Minister says the state-owned entity continues to maintain efforts to enhance maritime monitoring and compliance with the participation in workshops, training and technical compliance meetings focused on regional security and sustainability.

The most recent was the French Coast Guard workshop held in Tahiti, 3-5 December, focused on rescue operations, monitoring patrol vessels, and ship rider patrolling plans.

The NFMRA is committed to upskilling its fisheries observers with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification course, tuna tagging, and a refresher course on the observer's workbook scheduled this month.

Nauru's first and only female fisheries observer, Viti Louisa Teimitsi, successfully completed sea safety training certification in Brisbane. The certification covered vital safety aspects such as survival techniques, firefighting, and security awareness.

CEO Erana Aliklik also participated in The Hague hearings on climate change obligations and supported the Forum Fisheries Agency's (FFA) request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

The FFA's written statement was submitted in March 2024, with oral presentations scheduled in December 2024.

Climate change impacts on fisheries remain a critical concern as highlighted during the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission meeting in Suva, in November.

Nauru's delegation, led by CEO Aliklik, actively supported measures addressing climate changes vulnerabilities and the management of key tuna stocks.

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### Fisheries

...from pg 2

NFMRA's engagement with the Commission meeting included advocacy for improved crew labour standards, marine pollution, control shark conservation measures, and electronic monitoring systems.

Ongoing work on harvesting strategies for certain fish groups remains vital to sustaining Nauru's fisheries revenues and resources.

For 2025, the Minister says fisheries revenue is estimated to be US\$28 million for both domestic and joint venture arrangements from the total Party Allowable Effort (PAE) at 3,451. Nauru is left with 203 fishing days with a few more vessels yet to negotiate fishing days and establish new arrangements. //

### Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation

The state-owned entity, Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation (NRC) is clearing its debt to landowners for rock royalties which commenced on 17 December, 2024.



*NUC staff assisting customers during royalty payments*

Minister for NRC Reagan Aliklik told the December sitting of parliament that while the SOE is always upfront with its royalty payments, it always encounters setbacks with landowners banking details, thus called on landowners to submit the relevant details to ensure correct and swift disbursement of their funds.

On the other hand, the company's progress with the port project is slowly phasing out shifting focus to the sports stadium project for the 2026 Micronesian Games.

The entity is also pushing to complete the firebreak project at the tank farm, and calls on the public to follow the instructions of site controller for safety reasons. The dumpsite project is a project of the ADB-funded Nauru Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development Project (NSRUDP). //

### Women's and Social Development Affairs

Minister Charmaine Scotty delivered a statement on behalf of the Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs, reflecting on the significant achievements of the department in 2024.

Their key accomplishments for 2024 include, capacity building programs, in which the department organised workshops and training sessions to enhance skills in Nauru, while also facilitating staff participation in training opportunities in Fiji and China, thus equipping individuals for economic and social success.

Another is violence prevention initiatives, where focused campaigns were implemented to raise awareness about domestic violence and offer support to domestic violence survivors.

The department also established networks and referral systems in collaboration with faith-based organisations and community leaders; as well as policy advocacy, where the department progressed in promoting gender equality policies and legislative reforms, and actively engaging stakeholders to ensure that legal frameworks meet the needs of all citizens.

Minister Scotty announced that WASDA has finalised several policies for Cabinet endorsement, including the Gender Responsive and Inclusive Responses to Climate Change, Disaster and Pandemic Policy, the Nauru National Women's Policy, Nauru National Gender Mainstreaming Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and the Zero to Three Child Development Centre Operational Policy.

Community engagement efforts have strengthened dialogue and collaboration, promoting awareness of gender issues and fostering respect and equality, particularly by involving men and boys.

Over the past year, Nauru actively participated in regional and international meetings, including hosting the Micronesian Minister for Women's Conference and attending the 15th Triennial Minister for Women's Conference and the Pacific Island Forum Women's Leaders Meeting.

Nauru also completed consultations on the Beijing Platform for Action and endorsed its National State Report for its 30th Anniversary.

The Minister underscored that while celebrating these achievements, it is essential to acknowledge the ongoing challenges in the pursuit of gender equality, which requires continuous effort and collaboration.

"I reiterate the call for all our citizens living in Nauru to make time and effort to know the laws that is passed every year as it will affect us in some way, shape or form," Minister Scotty said concluding her statement. //

### **Nauru Police Force**

As the last sitting of parliament ahead of the Christmas festive period, Minister for Nauru Police, Lionel Aingimea said “this time of year presents a unique opportunity to reflect on the core values of peace, love and community that define our society”.

Minister Aingimea encouraged community members to engage with local law enforcement, participate in community safety initiatives, and report any suspicious activities to help uphold peace and order.

“Through collaboration and mutual respect, we can establish a strong foundation of trust that benefits both the police force and the citizens they serve.”

Throughout the festive period, the NPF conducted regular patrols, assisted with community events, while promoting safe driving practices.

Police presence serves as a deterrent to potential disturbances and a reassuring sense of security for families and friends gathering to celebrate. //



*Police officers prepare schedules for festive period patrol*

### **COP29**

Minister for Climate Change and National Resilience Asterio Appi updated parliament on the events of the 30th Conference of Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November, where the Nauru delegation also hosted and launched the side event on the Nauru Citizenship Program and the higher ground initiative.

While this was a success and COP29 made some advancements in climate finance discussions, Minister Appi said the outcomes are viewed as insufficient and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) representatives expressed dissatisfaction with the negotiations, highlighting that their demands for specific funding of \$39 billion annually for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), were not met.

“The final agreement did not adequately address the urgent financial needs for adaptation and resilience building efforts in these regions,” Mr Appi said.

He suggests the next steps also involve a concerted effort to ensure that climate finance commitments translate into meaningful action while fostering an inclusive environment for all nations involved in the global climate dialogue.

Minister Appi also had a bilateral meeting with India’s Minister of State for Environment Mr Kirti Singh, focusing on South-South cooperation in addressing climate change.



*Minister Appi presents Nauru citizenship program during COP29*

He also had a fruitful exchange with Secretary General of the Commonwealth Patricia Scotland on advancing key partnerships and addressing shared climate challenges, emphasising the importance of collective action mitigating the impacts of climate change.

During the margins of the conference, the minister attended Ms Clance Harris’ graduation from the AOSIS Fellowship where she worked alongside Nauru’s New York office and gaining valuable training on climate-related issues that affect AOSIS countries.

Another Nauruan, Mr Garrik Akken, also achieved the Climate Youth Negotiating Program Advanced Training certificate which he was selected for the second time to attend.

Minister Appi thanked external donors and the government of Azerbaijan for funding Nauru’s nine-member delegation to COP29. //



### ***Nauru Utilities Corporation***

Power generation by the Nauru Utilities Corporation (NUC) is producing capacity exceeding consumer demand with solar energy contributing 10 per cent. This is still expected to increase with the launch of the new six-megawatt solar project in April, up surging renewable energy to 50 per cent, and improving operational efficiency.



*Power production exceeding consumer demand*

The NUC's financial position stilled from past months indicating a negative 5.1 per cent compared from the approved budget, with expenditure exceeding expenses by 7.8 per cent.

Minister Reagan Aliklik attributes this to efforts in achieving power stability by conducting much needed repairs due to the aging equipment, while delay in commissioning the solar plant will also have an impact on the SOE's financial outlook.

Water production is high with the reverse osmosis (RO) units producing 1.7 million litres per day and is expected to boost production further to 2.5 million litres daily once the new RO unit is commissioned in early 2025.

Sanitation services are upgrading its infrastructure, while the waste water processing capacity has increased to 278,000 litres.

Discussions are ongoing with the State of Israel to commission the sewage treatment plant while NUC looks to acquire a new sludge truck.

The urban development project for a new sewage treatment plant and water reticulation network is also advancing, with implementation expected to begin this new year. //

### ***Nauru Intergenerational Trust Fund***

On 9 November 2024, His Excellency President David Adeang chaired the committee meeting of the Nauru Intergenerational Trust Fund (ITF), in Canberra for the year ended 30 June 2024.



*President Adeang chairs Trust Fund committee meeting in Canberra*

The President presented to parliament, 23 December, the Fund report from that meeting and since, that at the end of June 2023 the fund's unqualified audited report was valued at over \$320 million. Since then the fund grew by \$36 million in the value of investments and income as of the 1 December 2024, and with an additional Nauru contribution payment by Australia via the Nauru-Australia Treaty arrangement, the fund is today valued at over \$400 million.

During the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, cash contributions for the year exceeded \$29 million.

President Adeang says the Fund remains on its planned path to exceed the \$800 million-plus value by 2033.

The 2024 annual report [Intergenerational trust fund - Department of Finance - Nauru](#)



### ***Justice and Border Control***

Minister Lionel Aingimea commended his staff at the Department of Justice and Border Control for their comprehensive support to the government, while simultaneously providing services to the general public.

The department comprises 17 sections which operate a multifaceted approach ensuring their functions are effectively layered and seamlessly executed.

"Creativity, innovation, and passion for excellence have set a high standard in our department," Minister Aingimea said.

"The strides we have made together are a testament to your exceptional skills and relentless pursuit of perfection. It is the collective efforts that have made the Department of Justice and Border Control not just a successful but a great place to work," the minister concluded conveying well wishes for the festive period. //



*JBC staff assisting a customer at the business registration desk*

### ***Civil Aviation***

Minister for Transport Reagan Aliklik updated the Parliament on his recent visit to Muscat, Oman and to the State of Qatar on 9 to 16 December

Both occasions play an important role in Nauru's upgrade of civil aviation standards and strengthening bilateral relations.

Minister Aliklik's first statement regarding his visit to Muscat highlighted the need for Nauru's upgrade of its civil aviation sector.

The minister attended the meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) security week held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, organised by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Sultanate of Oman in collaboration with the ICAO.

Topics centred on threats to aviation's cyber-security and infrastructure, regulation and integrations of unmanned aerial systems or drones into airspace.

"As a small nation, Nauru faces unique challenges in the aviation sector. However, through platforms like this meeting, we can ensure that our voice is heard, our concerns addressed and our needs met," Minister Aliklik said.

His second ministerial statement informed his visit to the State of Qatar, 16 December, and the signing of the landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) aimed at strengthening the shared commitment to enhancing the



*Minister signs security and development MOU with Qatar*

safety, security and the development of air transport services between Nauru and Qatar.

The MOU was signed by the Minister for Transport Hon Reagan Aliklik and co-signed by the Acting President of Qatar Civil Aviation Authority, Mohammed Faleh Al Hajri.

Minister Aliklik said the MOU establishes a "partnership which has the potential to open new doors for Nauru in the fields of civil aviation, enabling access to advanced technologies, capacity-building programs and enhancing operational frameworks".

He also added that an air services agreement between Nauru and the State of Qatar would likely be signed in the future after further negotiations and a thorough consultation process. More than 600 civil aviation officials and experts attended the meeting. //



### **Department of Nauru Public Health**

Minister Charmaine Scotty updated parliament on the Ministry of Health's initiatives, highlighting the establishment of the new Nauru Public Health (NPH) Department saying the initiative reflects the government's commitment to addressing public health issues, especially non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and enhancing the primary healthcare system.

The NPH Department aims to improve healthcare workforce capabilities, upgrade facilities, and strengthen public health emergency preparedness by revising legislation, training personnel in pandemic preparedness, and strengthening surveillance systems.

Furthermore, the Nauru Government banned the import, manufacture, sale, and use of vapes and e-cigarettes, though challenges like illegal sales persist. The ministry is focused on improving law enforcement and customs to combat these issues.

Minister Scotty also highlighted that funding from Australia will support the establishment of two Primary Care Wellness Centres, promoting accessibility and preventative health.

The Minister acknowledged ongoing challenges in Public Health, including infrastructure issues in the NPH Department and the district wellness centres, which require upgrades to meet rising service demands.

There is also a staff shortage, with 178 positions (134 local) operating at 79 per cent capacity. A recent recruitment initiative added 15 nurses on long-term contracts. //

### **Department of Health and Medical Services**

Minister Scotty highlighted advancements in the Department of Health and Medical Services, notably in the Tamanu electronic medical records system.

From July to November 2024, RON Hospital's outpatient department served 7,116 patients (356 weekly), with the specialist OPD clinics treating 3,280 patients (164 weekly). However, about 20 per cent missed appointments, prompting follow-up initiatives.

The emergency room attended to 5,523 patients (276 weekly), with 1,128 admissions and an average stay of 10 days, along with 70 births.

The lab conducted over 590 tests weekly, and radiology completed around 122 examinations.

To improve local services, collaborations with visiting medical specialists are being strengthened, including partnerships with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Pacific Eye Institute Fiji.

## **Sports**

Minister for Sports Jesse Jeremiah updated parliament on Nauru's recent participation in sporting events during 2024 and athletes' world-ranking achievements.



*Aroeni claims AFL Womens Pacific Cup*

The minister commended the great achievements of the Nauruan athletes who participated in the Oceania Sports Education Program (OSEP) and anti-doping awareness.

"OSEP aims to build capacity for local team managers, improve sports management and governance and create training pathways for various roles," Minister Jeremiah said.

World Powerlifting Nauru (WPN) came second after China by one point in the world powerlifting bench press championship at the Sydney Fitness Expo, 11-13 October. Of the eleven competing nations, Nauru athletes brought home 12 gold medals, eight silver, and six bronze.

In October Nauru hosted two regional powerlifting and bench press championships supported by the International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) and the Department of Sports, with nine participating Oceania teams.

Nauru closed the event with 66 gold medals, 16 silver, and one bronze, and topped with the outstanding performance by My-Only Stephen who is now a world record holder in the women sub-junior category, while Irving Harris is named in the Powerlifting Regional Federation's Hall of Fame.

Also in October, three Nauruans took part in the IPF Master's World Powerlifting championship in South Africa and won four gold, two silver, and two bronze medals.

In cycling, 11 Nauruan cyclists took part in their first international event at the Brisbane Gold Coast cycle for cancer event.

Team Nauru performed well in the 2024 Australian Rules Football competitions. The Nauru Stars men's under 17 won the AFL Pacific Cup, while the women's Aroeni team won the AFL Women Pacific Cup open category for 2024. Subsequently, 11 Nauruan football players both male and female were selected to join the AFL Pacific Team.

Nauru's overall performance for 2024 resulted in 98 medals; two AFL Pacific Cup titles; 15 Oceania powerlifting records; and two world records. //

Recently, the eye team assessed 221 patients and performed 98 surgeries, followed by a visit from the Eye Care Team from China, which reviewed 100 patients.

The Health Department has scheduled at least four visits from RACS in 2025, including a cardiologist for evaluations.

The PRC is also exploring scholarship opportunities for training healthcare professionals, and a Traditional Chinese Medicine team is expected to visit soon.

Increased patient screenings have revealed a significant need for super-specialist care in Nauru, highlighting the importance of Overseas Medical Referrals (OMR). Since July 2024, 56 patients have been referred abroad, with 66 currently receiving treatment in Fiji, India, Thailand, and Brisbane.

The Health Department has implemented digital solutions in radiology and laboratory services, allowing real-time access to patient information through the PACS system for electronic image and report sharing.

Minister Scotty noted that staffing is a major challenge for RON Hospital, with 124 of 288 positions still vacant, including 78 in nursing and midwifery. While most medical specialist roles are filled, securing long-term specialists in obstetrics/gynecology and anesthesia is crucial.

To combat this issue, a nurse recruitment initiative in collaboration with Fiji's Chief Secretary's Department has begun, with offer letters sent to successful candidates.

Additionally, the Health Department's Training and Development Division, in partnership with Fiji National University, has trained and graduated 17 students as Certified Nurses.



During a recent trip to Cuba, Minister Scotty secured an agreement to send a long-term medical brigade to Nauru, including eight healthcare professionals. Plans for a second brigade in 2025 are also underway to address staffing shortage.

Minister Scotty expressed her appreciation to the departments of Health and Medical Services and the Nauru Public Health for their dedication to serving the country.

She acknowledged the challenges ahead but expressed confidence in the health personnel's commitment to improving services for the Nauruan people. //

## UNFPA director visit

Minister for Health Charmaine Scotty updated parliament on the recent visit of United Nations Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UNFPA Dr Natalia Kanem, who described Nauru as "small but mighty."

During her visit, Dr Kanem toured the maternity ward antenatal clinic at RON Hospital and the Naoero Public Health Centre, where she observed the procedure of inserting a birth control implant.

Minister Scotty says Nauru is making significant strides in improving family planning services and women's healthcare and announced the partnership with Family Planning Australia which focuses on developing essential health guidelines and providing training.

The partnership has a particular emphasis on meeting the health needs of women and promote critical services such as pap smears and reproductive health care, among others. //

## Nauru-Australia Treaty

His Excellency President David Adeang presented the positive outcome of the signing of the Nauru-Australia Treaty in Canberra, 9 December, with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Both the governments of Nauru and Australia decided to elevate their nations' relationship through the establishment of a treaty. It is a testament to their deep relations through people-to-people links in sports and cultural affinity.

The Treaty essentially will assist and secure Nauru's long-term economic resilience and security.

President Adeang says the Treaty secures direct budget support of \$100 million over five years to support Nauru's economic resilience.

"Furthermore, with the forthcoming departure of Bendigo Bank, Australia has agreed to continue its support to Nauru for access to banking services with the commencement of Commonwealth Bank of Australia providing this service including its physical presence."

These elements are key to Nauru's economic development.

Additionally, in recognising the importance of security both domestically and within the region, Nauru and Australia committed to mutually agree to any engagement in Nauru's security such as decisions on defence, maritime, policing, cyber security, banking and telecommunications sector.

They also agree to consult on any engagement in other critical infrastructure such as ports, aviation and energy infrastructure.

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## Parliament December 2024

### Nauru-Australia Treaty

...from pg 8

President Adeang explains the joint agreement will not hinder Nauru's good relations with its other development partners.

"I want to reassure the House and the people of Nauru that the Treaty will not undermine our relations with our foreign development partners, old and new, but will further strengthen our collaboration and cooperation in progressing Nauru's development.

"Under this Treaty, Nauru continues to enjoy and maintain its sovereignty on its decision-making processes through the Joint Committee working group."

Australia and Nauru have the flexibility to terminate the agreement at any time in the event a dispute is not resolved.

Such disputes can only be determined within the parameters of the Treaty.

The joint committee had its first meeting on 20 December to discuss the implementation process and follow-up on funding arrangements of the budget support under the Treaty.

The meeting was led by the chief secretary along with officials from the departments of foreign affairs and trade, justice and border control, finance, and the Office of the President.

"The Treaty is the cornerstone of our close relations with Australia built over decades," President Adeang said.

"Both sides have worked hard to bring this Treaty into fruition," the President said concluding with commending those involved "in bringing this Treaty over the line". //

## Parliament December 2024: Amendment Bills



The bill to amend the Nauru Lands Committee Act 1956, is now cited as the Nauru Lands Committee (Amendment) Act 2024.

Its first proposed amendment is to increase the number of members of the Lands Committee from the minimum five to nine, and the maximum from nine to 14 members.

It now also introduces a quorum of eight members for a meeting to proceed. It is therefore required that nine members should be appointed, and anything less than that will not constitute a committee in law.

The bill also clarifies the appointment and removal of members, which can only be done by the Cabinet. The power of the Cabinet has not been changed in this bill but it makes provision for the grounds for removal.

There have been instances where land owners have alleged bias on the part of committee members.

The bill provides that members declare their conflict of interest if they are going to benefit from any decision of the committee. However, in a small country, we are in one way or another, related to each other.

The bill makes it very clear that a decision is not to be lightly changed only on the grounds of conflict of interest. It is important that any person challenging this needs to establish that the decision is one which cannot be sustained in law or facts.

The position of secretary to the committee is also established as an administrative position appointed under the Public Service Act 2016, and is the custodian of all records.

The bill proposes that the Cabinet has the power to change the rules of the committee, if and when required by, or in consultation with the Nauru Lands Committee. //



The bill to amend the Illicit Drugs Control Act 2004, is now cited as the Illicit Drugs Control (Amendment) Act 2024. It introduces the penalty for life imprisonment for certain offences, including a mandatory requirement that the offender serve a minimum term of 10 years as a custodial sentence before anyone is considered for parole or probation.

The offences are:

- Unlawful import of illicit drugs in to Nauru;
- Unlawful export of illicit drugs from Nauru;
- Unlawful transit of illicit drugs through Nauru;
- Unlawful acquisition, sale, supply, manufacture, cultivation, use or administration of illicit drugs; and
- Unlawful import of controlled chemical or equipment which may be used for the unlawful acquisition, sale, supply, manufacture, cultivation, use of administration of illicit drugs.

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The gravity of the offences clearly states in the penalty that at least a minimum term of 10 years must be served as a custodial sentence, before anyone is considered for parole or probation.

The bill removes the penalty of a fine from some offences under the Act and this is intended to ensure that the courts do not give offenders a slap on the wrist by sentencing them to pay a fine or from suspending their sentence.

The main objective is deterrence and this is likely to be achieved when offenders are sentenced to a term of imprisonment instead of them having to pay a monetary sum or having a suspended sentence.

The only offence that carries the penalty of a fine of \$50,000, is the offence under Section 13 of the Act, which deals with international travellers. These travellers should pay their fine if they commit an offence under that provision and should thereafter immediately leave Nauru.

Where an offence is for owners whether natural persons or bodies corporate, the penalty for an individual is imprisonment for 10 years, or in the case of a body corporate a fine not exceeding \$100,000.

The proceeds of a crime are dealt with under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2004, subclause (2) ensures that no person is to benefit from any unlawful conduct. Drugs involved substantial sum of money, and so where investigating officials have been able to confiscate any money, which forms part of the proceeds of crime, must be forfeited to the Republic. //



## Jeremiah is new ambassador to China



*Jeremiah presenting her credentials to President Xi*

A year after re-establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, Nauru appoints the first ambassador to head its foreign mission in Beijing.

Seasoned diplomat Chitra Jeremiah was appointed by the government to head the mission as Nauru's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the People's Republic of China. She presented her credentials to China's President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, 12 December 2024.

Ambassador Jeremiah previously served Nauru in several diplomatic postings but prior to this appointment she was Nauru's Ambassador to the United Nations Office and other international organisations in Geneva, and to Switzerland. Her other assignments include head of Nauru's missions in Brisbane, Australia and Taiwan, as well as secretary for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. //

## Foreign ministers discuss partnership

Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade Lionel Aingimea MP and Australia's Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus KC MP, met for a bilateral meeting at Parliament House in Canberra, 29 November, to discuss and finalise new arrangements to deepen the close security partnership between Australia and Nauru.

They were joined by senior representatives from the Attorney-General's department and the Department of Foreign Affairs. //





## Austria, Nauru discuss climate and development

A bilateral meeting between Nauru and Austria marks significant step in fostering diplomatic relations between the two nations.



*Foreign Minister Aingimea in bilateral meeting with Austrian counterpart*

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lionel Aingimea and Austria's Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Alexander Schallenberg met in Vienna, 10 December and discussed pressing global issues and opportunities for deeper collaboration.

The ministers focused on topics of mutual interest, including the escalating threats posed by climate change, the importance of capacity-building initiatives, and the complexities of global migration. They acknowledged the disproportionate impact of climate change on small island developing states like Nauru and emphasised the urgent need for collaborative international action.

Minister Schallenberg commended Nauru's advocacy on climate resilience and assured Austria's support for Nauru's Higher Ground Initiative which aims to protect the population of the people of Nauru from the dangers of rising sea levels.

Minister Aingimea expressed appreciation for Austria's willingness to engage with small nations, highlighting the importance of building capacity and fostering partnerships to address shared challenges.

They also discussed and exchanged views on addressing the root causes of forced migration and ensuring humane and sustainable policies on the matter.

This bilateral engagement reflects the growing recognition of the interconnectedness of global challenges and the need for diverse nations to work together to address them effectively.

Minister Aingimea was accompanied by Deputy Minister Russ Kun and Chargé d'Affairs of Nauru's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and other International Organisations in Geneva, Joanie Hartman. //

## MoU formalises Micronesia Ocean ownership



*Cargo vessel Skyline transferred ownership to Nauru as the Micronesia Ocean*

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hon Lionel Aingimea with Chinese ambassador to Nauru Lyu Jin, signed the MOU formalising the acquisition and transfer of ownership of the container vessel, Micronesia Ocean, 31 December.

The Micronesia Ocean formerly known as Skyline has a gross tonnage of 5,317tons with two built-in cranes for easy handling of cargoes.

Minister Aingimea says the vessel will now allow goods to be brought directly from Australia to Nauru, avoiding extended wait times calling on other ports. The ship is currently doing other charters in the Pacific for countries requiring the assistance.

He expressed Nauru's appreciation for the continued efforts by China in assisting Nauru in its development.

Ambassador for the People's Republic of China to Nauru Lyu Jin said his country wants to help Nauru secure the supply of goods to improve people's living standards, to lower the cost, and believes the ship will play a great role in the future. //



## Nauru urges top UN court to address global climate crisis

Nauru called for legal clarity on states' obligations under international law to address the global climate crisis at the International Court of Justice, 10 December.

Minister for Foreign Affairs & Trade Lionel Aingimea and legal counsel Eirik Bjorge presented Nauru's case emphasising the existential threats that climate change poses to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), particularly in relation to their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the fundamental human right to self-determination.

Nauru's submission to the ICJ focuses on principles of general international law, asserting that states have binding obligations to prevent environmental harm, ensure the rights of other states are respected, and uphold the international legal order.

The legal points specifically highlighted in the presentation were obligations to prevent transboundary harm; due diligence standards; protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity; right to self-determination; and the legal obligations of states beyond treaties.

Nauru argued that obligations under general international law are not superseded by treaty frameworks like the Paris Agreement, but instead these treaties complement existing obligations.

Nauru called on the ICJ to confirm that states cannot evade their responsibilities under general international law by relying solely on treaty mechanisms.

Minister Aingimea reiterated Nauru's call for justice and accountability, emphasising international law principles such as state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the duty to prevent harm.

Nauru urged the ICJ to use the moment to set a legal precedent that safeguards vulnerable states, and as emphasised in its submission, "The ICJ has the opportunity to reaffirm that the rule of law protects the weak against the excesses of the powerful. Its guidance is critical for a just and sustainable future".



*Minister Aingimea and legal counsel Bjorge present Nauru's case on climate threats to SIDS*

The ICJ proceedings ran from 2 to 13 December 2024 and are the largest in the Court's history, with oral submissions from a record 98 states and 12 intergovernmental organisations.

The proceedings stem from the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77-276, adopted on 29 March 2023. It requests the ICJ to address what the obligations are of states under international law to ensure the protection of the climate system for present and future generations; and what the legal consequences are for states where their actions or omissions have caused significant harm to the climate system.

UN Resolution 77-276 was championed by Vanuatu and supported by other SIDS underscores the disproportionate burden of climate change on vulnerable nations.

Across 2024, the ICJ received 91 submissions, the highest number ever in advisory proceedings, and will inform the Court's forthcoming opinion expected this year, and anticipated to shape international climate governance. //





## Tribute to Dr Vathsala Mani



On behalf of the Government and people of Nauru, His Excellency President David Adeang, expressed heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Dr Vathsala Mani, whose passing on 26 December 2024, left a profound void in the hearts of many.

Born on 26 September 1941, Dr Mani was a distinguished professional who served Nauru with dedication as a senior project officer with the Department of Island Development and Industry, and her contributions integral to Nauru's development during a critical period of growth and transformation.

Dr Mani is the wife of the late Dr V.S Mani who served as Nauru's chief secretary in 1990. During his tenure, DR V.S Mani's leadership and vision were instrumental in guiding Nauru's administrative framework.

Together, the Mani family exemplified a spirit of service and dedication that greatly benefited the Republic of Nauru. The passing of Dr Vathsala Mani is a great moment of loss for all who knew her.

Dr Mani was an economist, lecturer in economics, a research officer and research associate, an avid reader, an intellectual and a believer in family values.

The Government and people of Nauru stand in solidarity with the family in celebrating the life of a remarkable individual who gave so much to our nation. May her soul rest in eternal peace. //



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