



# Nauru Bulletin

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## Port review mission assess project issues

The review mission for the Nauru Sustainable and Climate Resilient Connectivity Port met to take stock of progress, discuss issues and explore options for the successful completion of the port, 17-21 February.

The project steering committee also met on 20 February to consider these options and decide on ways forward.

The joint mission comprised President Lionel Aingimea and the Cabinet, representatives from Australia and Japan, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Port Authority of Nauru as the implementing agency, construction supervision consultants Cardno, works contractor China Harbour Engineering Company, Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation, Nauru Utilities Corporation, ministries of Finance, Commerce Industry and Environment, and Fisheries, the Australia Bureau of Meteorology, and CSIRO (Australia).

The ADB team was led by Regional Director Pacific, Ms Lotte Schou-Zibell.

The new sustainable and climate resilient port will bring significant changes to the



*The 3D model of the Nauru Sustainable and Climate Resilient Connectivity Port ADB presented at the Cabinet meeting, 20 February*

island with the ability to berth ships that will bring in cargo supplies and fuel, safely and at a faster turnaround time for ships.

Currently ships arriving at Nauru are connected to a buoy system which President Lionel Aingimea says is an expensive exercise “that is basically translated all the way down to the grassroots level”.

President Aingimea says the port is a “lifeline for Nauru”.

“[It is] Absolutely necessary. Shipping,

because we are such an isolated country, shipping in and out of Nauru is crucial, so the port coming in is a lifeline.”

In the short term President Aingimea said the new port will bring about changes to a faster shipping service. Efficient off-loading of cargo results in faster turnaround time for ships to leave Nauru and to get things on island.

For the long-term, “it’s a game changer”.

“Having a port that is weather resilient, having a port that allows us to basically bring in not just cargo ships but fuel ships quickly and fishing vessels quickly, we can basically start turning around the economy of Nauru, and basically putting it on a footing that it’s never been on before. It’ll be an economy that has, well, industries that are being made possible because of the new port,” the President said.

One of the big changes will be the impact to people’s lives as a result of cheaper food products coming on island.

In a presentation to Cabinet, the ADB produced a 3D model of the proposed new port while explaining the overall features, budget and timeline of the project.

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## Nauru Airlines celebrates 50 years of flying

Nauru’s national carrier – the airline of the central Pacific is celebrating 50 years of operations and is offering discounted fares for locals.

The leisure fares were announced in parliament on 28 January by the airline’s Deputy Minister Asterio Appi to enable more Nauruans to enjoy holidays abroad.

Nauru’s airline was established on 17 September 1969 as Air Nauru and started operations on 14 February 1970. It went through a series of rebranding including Our Airline in October 2006.

Today it flies as Nauru Airlines and operates five Boeing 737-300 aircrafts.

Also in celebration of the airline’s jubilee year, was an anniversary dinner, a cross-fit competition, a training program for Nauruan pilots and engineers and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on the morning of Saturday 15 February by DM Appi who acknowledged the airline’s past and present achievements, struggles and challenges likening it to the resilience of Nauru as a nation and its people in enduring decimation through disease and war.

“We (the Nauruan people) are survivors. We can enjoy the good times and we can suffer hard times, and push through to the next day,” DM Appi said.

“It is for this reason we are gathering this weekend to celebrate, remember and be thankful for what was started all those years

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## Port review mission assess project issues

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President Aingimea says the challenges and difficulties Nauru faces with the current port are big given that adverse weather conditions delays unloading supplies including food, medical supplies and building materials. Nauru imports close to 95 per cent of these supplies.

The project, however, has not been without delays.

Circumstances forcing the completion date to be extended from November 2020 to early 2021 meant the works contractor China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), has had to implement a recovery program to catch up on lost time using extended working hours and additional equipment.

As the executive agency, the Ministry of Finance said at the recommendation of the supervision consultants, Cardno, an extra 51 days has been added to the original completion date to account for other unanticipated matters.

The Ministry also states that the slow progress put the project at approximately 20 per cent completion, making the recovery program vital.

All stakeholders continue to monitor progress and evaluate project risks. Such as the impact of the coronavirus COVID-19, increased demand for aggregate and upcoming dredging works.

The Ministry of Finance stated that the Project Steering Committee approved six variations to the project, all either within the original scope of the project or to address technical issues. Two variations for additional works were deferred pending more information, including the exploration of options for the timely supply of materials and an assessment of the financial risks to Nauru Government.

The aide-memoire from the review mission has yet to be finalised. The next mission—the mid-term review—is tentatively scheduled for June 2020.

President Aingimea says the relationship between ADB and Nauru is a strong one, and the partnership it has with all other partners is critical to the success of the project.

“The discussions are frank because they have to be, and therefore frank discussions are built on trust... and mutual respect towards each other,” President Aingimea said offering sincere thanks on behalf of the Nauruan people.

“For us [Nauru], strong partnership, good partnership, that works both ways that see a project that makes a difference in the lives of people; that actually is crucial.”

Additionally, local workers at the Nauru Port have also commenced training in all aspects of operating the new port including in maritime safety, finance and administration. The training will go to the end of the year •

## Nauru Airlines celebrates 50 years of flying

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ago with that inaugural flight our founding father took, President Hammer DeRoburt,” DM Appi said, recounting the days when travel was on ships instead of flight to the ease of booking a flight today.

“What an extraordinary day it must have been when that first Air Nauru flight took off.”

DM Appi highlighted that while the plaque serves as a reminder of the airlines’ past and the accomplishments, “no plaque can do real justice to the achievement behind what many, many, people have done over 50 years and the years of air services to Nauru.”

“The airline’s history is full of joy and heartbreak,” DM Appi said recalling the airline’s ‘hey days’ in the 70s and 80s followed by the struggles of the 90s.

DM Appi expressed admiration of the decision to corporatise the airline and to have it placed under the Australian regulatory system, enabling the airline today to reach levels of international standards of safety, performance and operations.

While there were the glory days, the airline encountered a collapse, left without an aircraft in December 2005 but was rebuilt with the assistance of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 2006.

“I am very pleased to say that Taiwan remains a strong partner continuing to help Nauru ensure the airline can continue to develop and maintain sustainable air services for Nauru and our neighbours in the central pacific,” DM Appi said.

Australia also recognises the essential services of an airline for the people of Nauru.

Recent years saw the growth of the airline with the economic benefits gained from the arrangements with Australia and the Regional Processing Centre.



*Nauru Airlines 50th anniversary commemoration plaque unveiled at Nauru International Airport, 14 February*

“A small, geographically isolated island nation like Nauru must be connected to the rest of the world and Australia has been supporting the sustainability of Nauru Airline’s services for Nauru,” DM Appi said.

However, as the RPC winds down, the airline will again address new challenges in the changes to the economy.

DM Appi said the airline’s history is full of lessons.

“It is a history that shows the achievements our small nation can deliver when we do things right.”

Later at the dinner celebration, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea briefly echoed those words of resilience and achievement and great history of Nauru’s airline, but focused his statement on celebrating the “people who have all contributed to delivering us this achievement of 50 years of air services for Nauru,” and thanked and congratulated the board, management and staff of the airline on the historic milestone.

“I also want to thank the different partners and stakeholders who have played various roles in the life of our national airline, from our close friends in Taiwan, to Australia, and our neighbours across the Pacific.”

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## Nauru Airlines celebrates 50 years of flying

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His Excellency acknowledged the presence of Maureen Dougherty, President of Boeing for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, as well as the Secretary General of the Association of South Pacific Airlines (ASPA), George Faktaufon.

“Nauru has been fortunate to have such great people serving us across the years,” President Aingimea said.

As the country celebrates the past 50 years, the Aingimea government looks to the future and what can be expected from the national airline.

“We do place great expectations on the board and management to continue to build on the legacy they have inherited,” President Aingimea said.

The government has begun work on an aircraft renewal program that will see two new generation Boeing 737-700 planes this year, as well as promote Nauruan leadership in the airline and begin two programs that will provide a training pathway for Nauruans to become pilots and aircraft maintenance engineers.

President Aingimea reiterated the new air services agreement signed with Taiwan that will open up new opportunities for Nauru Airlines to expand its route to the Northern Pacific, particularly with Palau.

“These are but a few examples of new and exciting work my Government is progressing with Nauru Airlines.

“As we celebrate the past and our history of perseverance; as we celebrate our great people and all who have been a part of the airline; we also look forward to a positive future for our national airline,” the President said.

From humble beginnings, Nauru’s airline commenced operations with its first flight from Nauru to Brisbane, via Honiara and Noumea, with a leased Dassault Falcon 20, under the Australian registration VH-BIZ.

Nauru also had aircrafts registered under Nauru’s own registry – C2. Its first Fokker F28 aircraft was acquired in 1972, named Nauru Chief which carried the first Nauruan aircraft registration, C2-RN1.

The airline has had many aircrafts since then, registered VH, under the Australian system, such as VH-INU, the first Boeing 737-300 to operate under the Our Airline brand.

During President Aingimea’s Independence Day speech, His Excellency announced expected changes to the colours of the national carrier as well as images of the frigate bird to replace the blue waves to reflect the symbol of the bird to Nauru. Names of frigate birds will also be used to name individual planes.

As the airline was rebranded several times, airline staff also donned many changes in uniform reflecting the vibrancy and adaptability of the airline and the Nauruan people.

For more information about Nauru Airlines, visit [www.nauruair.com](http://www.nauruair.com) •

## Official firetruck handover

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea attended the official handover of fire trucks from Japan at the fire station in Yaren, 18 February.



*President Aingimea and Japan’s Counsellor Tsuguyoshi with Health Minister Dageago and the NES team at the fire station, 18 February*

Fiji-based Japan Embassy Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission Hada Tsuguyoshi and Co-ordinator of grant assistance for the Grass-roots Human Security Project (GGP) Junko Yasuda were in Nauru for a week-long series of handovers and grant signings through the project.

Nauru Emergency Services (NES) Secretary Roy Harris opened the ceremony, welcoming the Japan delegation and thanking them for the extra vehicles, which means Nauru is now in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) regulations.

“These extra additions have now increased our response capacity in dealing with emergencies and fires, whether it’s a

difficult, structural fire, emergency fuel spills, rescue operations or aviation emergencies.”

The grant is valued at AU\$352,292, and includes the two vehicles, shipping and insurance costs, spare parts and rescue and safety equipment, plus training through the Society for Promotion of Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD).

Mr Tsuguyoshi then spoke, providing some background to the rationale behind the GGP grant.

“Your current fire trucks have difficulty accessing inland areas because of their size. There is also a need to go back and forth to the airport to refill the water for the fire trucks.

“The [additional] fire trucks will improve your response times and will greatly support the rescue and fire services.”

President Aingimea then received the vehicle keys from Mr Tsuguyoshi, handing them over to Fire Chief Celso Dageago.

Reverend Roger Mwareow blessed the vehicles, a 4,000L fire truck with accompanying 7,000L back-up water tanker, and NES Fire Officer and Station Mechanic Stution Temaki guided the President and the Nauru and Japanese delegations over the features and operations of the fire truck.

Next, NES fire staff showcased their drills and routines, enacting an emergency call-out scenario, and donning gear in a mere 30 seconds; a feat they practice daily.

Mr Tsuguyoshi and Ms Yasuda attended the RoN hospital the following day for a grant agreement signing for a refurbished and stocked ambulance.

The value of GGP projects to date in Nauru exceeds US\$1.8 million.

SPJD, a non-profit organization, was established in 1947 with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. One of its major activities is to donate recycled emergency vehicles from local governments in Japan to developing countries •

## New ambulance, Japan grassroots

Health Secretary Chanda Garabwan co-signed an MOU with the Government of Japan for a fully refurbished and stocked ambulance for the RoN hospital on 19 February, bringing the ambulance fleet to three.

At the signing ceremony, opened and conducted by Vania Scotty as MoC, Secretary for Health and Fiji-based Embassy of Japan deputy chief of mission Hada Tsuguyoshi signed the MOU for a Toyota Hiace van-style ambulance, including spare parts and consumables and an equipment training package valued at AU\$137,063.

Health Secretary Garabwan expressed her deep gratitude to the Government of Japan for the provision of the ambulance.

Mr Tsyguyoshi replied, providing some background to the current ambulance situation at RoN hospital, and how this grant, through the Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP), will make a positive difference to Nauruans.

“The condition of one of the ambulances, which is a remodeled four-wheel drive, has deteriorated over time, with mileage in excess of 300,000 kilometres.

“The ongoing repair and maintenance costs including replacement of the vehicle parts have become a huge financial burden to the hospital, affecting hospital operations and service to the community.

“The new ambulance will be equipped with specialised equipment to provide for emergency response... with room for medical staff to conduct emergency operations and procedures.”



*Secretary for Health Chanda Garabwan and Japan Embassy Counsellor Hada Tsuguyoshi at the signing of contracts for the new ambulance*

Technical training is also part of the package, provided in a workshop conducted by the Society for Japanese Diplomacy (SPJD), the same organisation that conducted operational and mechanical training to firefighters in January.

“The signing today (19 Feb) is another milestone that signifies our shared values and commitment to the improvement of healthcare to the people of Nauru,” Mr Tsuguyoshi concluded.

The ceremony closed with a final prayer before refreshments were served •

## Aroi's plans as high commissioner

The last edition of *Nauru Bulletin* reported the presentation of credentials by Nauru's former DFAT Secretary Michael Aroi to Fiji's President Major General (Ret'd) Jioji Konrote, becoming Resident High Commissioner of the Republic of Nauru to Fiji on 6 February.

At the ceremony, HC Aroi stated his intentions in the role, highlighting the special relationship between the two nations of Nauru and Fiji.

“As High Commissioner of Nauru it would be my constant endeavour to work for further strengthening and expanding the friendly relations between our Governments and peoples.

“We also look forward to cooperating closely in regional and multilateral fora on issues of common concern.

“We share the common commitment to work for the inclusive social and economic development of our peoples.

“Nauru is committed to working with Fiji in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism.”

HCAroi is eager to keep Nauruans informed over his tenure of his progress in the role and how the work of the High Commission in Fiji benefits Nauru.

His itinerary since becoming High Commissioner includes hosting the Nauru Independence celebrations for Nauruans

residing in Fiji, attending the badging ceremony of Nauru government student Ginette Teabuge as the Head Girl of Ballantyne Methodist School, facilitating President Aingimea's official visit to Fiji to attend the Forum Trade Ministers meeting in Suva, attending a range of PIF meetings and even securing legal representation for a court case involving a Nauruan national.

HC Aroi lists his short-term priorities as: “facilitate construction of new Nauru High Commission building; secure school placings for Nauru students; increase trade and trade opportunities between Fiji and Nauru and; further strengthen the relationship between the Government and the people of Fiji and Nauru.”

When asked what Nauru can learn from the way Fiji does business, the HC said “Size does not matter.

“You just have to be innovative, identify your niche and work hard to achieve what you have set out to achieve.”

In the immediate to short term, HC Aroi and his team will be monitoring the threat posed by COVID-19, preparing a response plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Nauruans in Fiji.

*Nauru Bulletin* will continue in partnership with HC Aroi and his office to report on the work of the Nauru High Commission in Fiji •

## Customs modernisation comes to Nauru

Customs staff spent two days ‘on retreat’ for a modernisation and strategic planning workshop, led by Customs Deputy Secretary Jennifer Clarke, 10-11 February.

Finance Secretary Novena Itsimaera presented opening remarks before recently-appointed Ms Clarke set the context with the team of around 10 on why it is no longer “business as usual” for customs administration.



*Nauru's customs team talk customs modernisation at the retreat, 10-11 February*

She told her team that they had to work differently, seeing themselves as facilitators of trade, if they wished to remain relevant.

“There has been a marked shift in how people trade. Technology is driving how we are forced to operate,” Ms Clarke told the group, adding that, in the fast-paced, increasing-volume global trade environment, customs cannot afford to be the bottleneck in the system, slowing down the process.

Challenges for Nauru customs include having to work with limited resources in the face of increasing trade where staffing levels remain static, suggesting that operations need a diligent and oft-monitored ‘informed’ and ‘enforced’ trader compliance balance, directing resources to traders who pose the greatest risks. These activities must be overseen by customs professionals who have an intimate knowledge of the global, regional and local customs landscape and the law, in the form of Nauru’s Customs Act 2014.

“As customs administrators, if we are moving towards modernisation and reform, every individual in the customs department has to know the Customs Act and regulations,” Ms Clarke said.

## Japan donates wheelchair bus; ADC

After more than two years without a bus, the Able Disabled Centre (ADC) will soon take delivery of a replacement bus with wheelchair accessibility, valued at AU\$87,300, thanks to the Government of Japan and the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

Deputy Minister for Education Richard-Hyde Menke and Education Secretary Darrina Kun attended the ADC on Thursday, 20 February to sign an MOU with Japan Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Hada Tsuguyoshi.

Secretary Kun gave the welcome address, followed by a statement from Mr Tsuguyoshi.

“This project will provide a new wheelchair accessible bus that will ensure the safe transport of students with disabilities to and from school,” Mr Tsuguyoshi said, revealing that, according to education department staff, once the current bus went out of

The payment of correct duties and taxes is dependent on customs staff having the knowledge to determine goods classifications rather than relying on the customs broker or even the trader for advice.

Customs reform is also dependent on legislation keeping pace with modernisation initiatives, such as, for example, the acceptance of electronic signatures.

Another challenge for customs is interagency working relations, with one workshop participant commenting on how different interpretations of work ethic, team work and communication between the air and the sea port operations causes continual disruptions to smooth customs operations.

“Agencies tend to work in silos and there is a lack of understanding that we’re all working toward the common goal of economic development,” Ms Clark said.

With world trade volumes increasing at around eight per cent per annum, and multi-lateral agreements like Pacer Plus impacting customs administration, the role of customs is ever-evolving.

Customs functions are not only related to collecting import taxes and the protection of society through detection of drugs, firearms, environmental hazards and terrorism, but also the protection of economic interests, including intellectual property rights, trade facilitation and economic development and collection and distribution of trade data, guided by the SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade as adopted by the World Customs Organisation (WCO).

Nauru is a member of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO), but does not have WCO membership at this time.

Nauru celebrates World Customs Day in April this year, when multiple agencies, both government departments, state-owned and private enterprises, will come together under the one roof to showcase their work, under the theme *Customs Fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet*, “focusing on the contribution of customs towards a sustainable future where social, economic, health and environmental needs are at the heart of its actions”, according to WCO Secretary General Dr Kunio Mikuriya •

For more information, visit:

Nauru Trade Portal <https://nauru.tradeportal.org/>

Oceania Customs Organisation <https://www.ocosec.org/>

World Customs Organisation <http://www.wcoomd.org/>

Nauru Customs Act 2014 <https://nauru.tradeportal.org/media/Customs%20Act%202014.pdf>

service in December 2017, attendance at the school “plunged unavoidably”.

“I hope that with the new school bus, which is equipped with wheelchair lift, students with disabilities will be able to have access to an education that will empower them and prepare them for their future.”

DM Menke said in his address that the Government of Japan provides much ongoing support to Nauru’s education department, including funding student trips to Japan, donations of water tanks and covering costs of attending overseas conferences.

“The bus will contribute towards the department’s goal of improving the quality and widening the scope and reach of education.”

After the official signing, ADC students presented a Nauruan chant and song, before morning tea was served.

According to Mr Tsuguyoshi, this is the 19th GGP in Nauru since 2006 when the program began here •

## Nauru celebrates world radio day

Radio Nauru FM105.1 celebrated UNESCO's World Radio Day 13 February, in line with the international theme *We Are Diversity, We Are Radio*.

For World Radio Day 2020, UNESCO calls on radio stations to uphold diversity, both in their newsrooms and on the airwaves.

Objectives for the day include raising greater awareness among the public and the media of the importance of radio; encouraging decision makers to establish and provide access to information through radio and; enhancing networking and international cooperation among broadcasters.



*Serafina Jeremiah has worked with Radio Nauru for three decades, and wants to see diversity in broadcasting with more Nauruan language*

Listeners in Nauru were invited to phone in and SMS their congratulatory messages as well as suggestions to make Radio Nauru better.

Radio hosts Samvic Namaduk and Serafina Jeremiah received over 40 messages from listeners requesting more children's content, Nauruan culture, local news and events reporting, with many calls asking if hospital patients can call in or text song requests.

Ms Jeremiah, a 30 year veteran announcer on Radio Nauru recalls when the station aired local news, as well as a 30 minute children's education show daily.

"We are thinking about bringing back the children's programs," she said.

According to UN Secretary General António Guterres, radio brings communities together, promotes peace and inclusiveness, and was, in fact, ahead of its time as it "pioneered interaction with audiences and user-generated content decades before they became mainstream".

"We have that program, *Samvic and Friends* every day.

"Anyone who wants to come in to have a chat with Samvic on whatever they want to talk about – it's an open house.

"We need to bring back everything that was good before. We know that people are listening to the radio," Ms Jeremiah said, acknowledging that the latest hourly Digicel radio promotion has dramatically increased Radio Nauru's listener base.

"We had the FM105 song competition promoting local talent. We want to do it this year," Sera said.

Ms Jeremiah's personal passion is to increase content programming focused on Nauruan language.

She has extended an invitation to staff at the Language Bureau, Home Affairs, to speak on the radio for two 10 minute segments per week.

The date of World Radio Day coincides with the day United Nations Radio was established in 1946, but it was not until 2013 that the UN General Assembly formally endorsed UNESCO's proclamation of the day.

According to UNESCO, radio is "a platform for democratic discourse" and remains the world's "most widely consumed medium" that is both low-cost and accessible to remote communities and the most vulnerable of the world's people, breaking educational barriers and playing a crucial role in emergency communication and disaster relief.

You can call or SMS Radio Nauru on 557 3491 and tune in at FM105.1 or online at [radionauru.nr:8000/live](http://radionauru.nr:8000/live) •

Read more about World Radio Day at <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldradioday>

### Reduce your risk of COVID-19 (coronavirus) infection:

1. Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub for at least 20 seconds
2. Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
3. Thoroughly cook meat and eggs
4. No unprotected contact with live wild or farm animals

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**Republic of Nauru**

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