



# Nauru Bulletin

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## Pandemic will not end soon: president

**Agencies and stakeholders continue to build COVID response mechanisms**

Nauru is fortunate to be among 13 countries that still have not reported confirmed cases of coronavirus. Pacific neighbours Kiribati, Marshall Islands, FSM, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are among the 13.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), global figures of new cases continue to rise between 70,000 and 90,000 daily.

President Lionel Aingimea says this means the numbers for COVID-19 continue to grow, and warns that every person that has not been infected is still susceptible to being infected.

“We cannot put down our guard, we must always be ready.”

The Nauru Government ceased its island flights in early March and substantially reduced the thrice weekly Brisbane flights to once a fortnight. While its borders are not completely closed, the reduced flights minimise the flow of travel and works in with the government’s two weeks managed quarantine time for all new arrivals.

Sixteen people are currently in quarantine at the Meneñ Hotel, including a fisheries observer who arrived by fishing vessel, and 18 at the Canstruct Anibare village.

President Aingimea addresses the local media for regular situational updates on coronavirus reminding the public of the dangers in being complacent and watering-down of the security rules put in place.

Nauru is a close-knit community and crowded extended family living arrangements makes Nauru particularly vulnerable if an infection were present in the community.

According to the 2019 mini census, Nauru has a population of 11,550 and 1713 houses.

Guided by expert advice, President Aingimea says to achieve global immunity would require a large portion of the global population to be infected so they develop



*Canstruct provides free meals to quarantine residents and fumigates the whole airport and baggage after every arrival at no cost to the Nauru Government*

natural immunity or the obvious one to develop a vaccine and vaccinate most of the global community.

But the President says what is clear is that we will be dealing with coronavirus for a long time to come and the risk will be with us for the next one or two years.

“This pandemic will not end soon. It’s still increasing in numbers and we have to remain alert.”

Under the amended National Disaster Risk Management (Management and Minimisation of the Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID19)) Regulations 2020, the maximum penalty for failing to comply with the rules and regulations is a fine no more than \$10,000 or jail term of no more than six months, or both.

On 9 April the former Correctional Centre at Yaren District was declared to be the Remand Centre for the purposes of COVID-19. It is limited to the accommodation of accused persons who may be subject to screening or observation purposes for COVID-19 and remanded by an order of the Court or required to be detained by Nauru Police Force pending investigation.

Under Section 86 of the NDRM Act 2016 for COVID-19, the Cabinet made the

COVID-19 Community Transmission and Public Health Safety Regulations 2020 for the objective of preventing the spread of coronavirus; supplement and give effect to the national emergency declaration, declared on 16 March; and encourage voluntary action by all citizens and residents of Nauru to comply with all instructions, requirements and directions by the relevant authorities.

Lab staff at the Republic of Nauru Hospital is trialling the machine to test for coronavirus, while the Ministry of Health is scheduled to conduct clinical drills for nurses and doctors to identify gaps in their system. Nauru Police is also working on their own drills with a focus to assist the hospital including patient movement.

Minister for Health Isabella Dageago also led a health team in a community meeting at the Parliament house aimed at updating the community on the incidents and penalties imposed as a result of security breaches at the quarantine residences.

Four community group representatives attended this particular meeting, but the ministry continues to reach out to the community to provide health advice and guidance.

The President thanks the continued support of Australia, Taiwan and Israel in funding the various supplies and equipment required for COVID-19 response.

Service provider Canstruct has also been instrumental in its support of the government’s efforts by providing three meals a day for everyone in quarantine and also fumigates the whole airport and baggage after each flight - at no charge to the government, while airport staff conduct cleaning of the airport after each flight.

Government urges the public to heed COVID rules and regulations that are put in place to protect Nauru •

## Nauru signs global supply chain agreement

As Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea affirmed the Republic of Nauru's commitment to ensuring supply chain connectivity amidst the COVID-19 situation to keep global supply and trade links open.

A joint ministerial statement by Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Lao People's Democratic Republic, The Republic of The Union of Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Singapore and Uruguay presented a collective response to the COVID-19 global pandemic with a commitment to maintaining open and connected supply chains, as well as to collaborating to identify and address trade disruptions with ramifications on the flow of necessities.

Countries recognise it is in their mutual interest to ensure that trade lines remain open, including via air and sea freight, to facilitate the flow of goods including essential supplies.

In addition, the group affirmed the importance of refraining from the imposition of export controls or tariffs and non-tariff barriers and of removing any existing trade restrictive measures on essential goods, especially medical supplies, at this time.

"We are committed to working with all like-minded countries to ensure that trade continues to flow unimpeded, and that critical infrastructure such as our air and seaports remain open to support the viability and integrity of supply chains globally," the joint statement read.

On Monday, 4 May, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Trade Negotiation Division's Sam Rea announced that the United Arab Emirates has also signed UAE Minister of Economy, Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri on to the joint ministerial statement.

## Proactive teachers, disease prevention

School students on Nauru returned to school for term two with the world dramatically changed.

While Nauru remains free from COVID-19, lesson one for Yaren Primary School Year 2 teacher Lucia Tsitsi is about hand hygiene and education on the nature and spread of coronavirus across the world.

Ms Tsitsi is a graduate of the University of New England teacher education program on Nauru, and says her teacher training has prepared her to be responsive to local, regional and global events and bring them into the learning and teaching space for her students.



*Year 2 teacher Lucia Tsitsi starts term 2 with hand hygiene and education of the nature and spread of coronavirus across the world*

Hand hygiene posters, poems and even craft activities are used to assist children to gain vital protective knowledge which gives them a sense of control in their own lives.

"UNE has provided updates online; news, information, safety regulations and important precaution messages. I am fortunate that UNE has helped me become aware of everything happening around the world, such as the COVID-19 impact."

Ms Tsitsi revealed that some parents may be keeping their children away from school this term due to the threat of COVID-19.

"Some students have been absent for two to three weeks. We know your fears but COVID-19 has not reached our shores.

"I encourage parents that their child will be given warning awareness of the virus, to be safe.

"They will be taught also to keep themselves and others safe. The school will inform parents and guardians if COVID-19 is at a serious stage," Ms Tsitsi said.

According to the US Government's Centre for Disease Control (CDC), it is vital that children are educated about COVID-19 to alleviate feelings of fear and anxiety.

According to the CDC, parents and trusted adults should discuss with children what COVID-19 is, how to avoid it and what happens if the disease is contracted by themselves or someone they know.

In delivering the information, the CDC advises parents and carers to remain calm and reassuring, make yourself available to listen and to talk, avoid language that might blame others and stigmatise certain groups in society, either by ethnicity or otherwise, pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online, provide information that is honest and accurate and teach children habit-forming everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

In Nauru, Education Secretary Darrina Kun said the Department of Education and Training (DoET) Director of Schools Emmaline Caleb is the focal point for our DoET Local COVID19 Team which is comprised of health representatives in each school.

"As a stage one response, education and promotion of relevant information to school, students and staff is ensuring that the message gets across to everyone and that it is being implemented," Ms Kun said.

"All large gatherings, and other events such as 'open days' are postponed to a later date. Some schools are foregoing whole school assemblies in favour of conveying schools message to individual classes.

"In Infant Schools, schools are to ensure that a daily message with demonstrations is in place. In Primary Schools to Year 10, COVID-19 awareness [and] education takes up slotted learning times for 'Health'."

"Year 11 and 12 use home [or] form room time for COVID-19 related activities and awareness.

"Sick children are encouraged to stay home until they are better. Posters and cleaning supplies were provided for all schools in Term 1.

"The next phase of this was to include reps [representatives] from the Curriculum Committee to work on our DoET staged response. This would be students staying home and work being provided and monitored via other means," Secretary Kun said.

Nauru's schools are open for education, with those students attending enjoying continuity of curriculum along with vital, accurate information and protective strategies in this time of pandemic.

## Nauru's Geneva post in the time of COVID

Continuing to advocate for Nauru in international fora presents a range of new challenges in the time of coronavirus.

The Government Information Office (GIO) spoke to Permanent Representative of Nauru to the United Nations Office at Geneva Chitra Jeremiah about how business is now done.

“All meetings are conducted virtually, with the World Health Assembly being the first major ministerial meeting to be held online in May 2020.

“This will attest to how future major meetings ahead of us will be conducted. At the moment, all other meetings have been postponed to dates beyond June 2020.”

First Secretary Joanie Hartman is also in Geneva with the Nauru posting for a three-year term, and says while the staff of six is connecting remotely online and via SMS, the physical isolation is a challenge as she must work from home and her family are not with her.

“During the lockdown, our team has been communicating with each other via email or through our WhatsApp group chats.

“Our Ambassador or our Administrative Assistant Patrick Tippenhauer will drop us text messages from time to time asking how everyone is doing.

“This way, we are able to update each other of our current situation. Useful tips in how to keep safe during these extraordinary circumstances were provided by Ambassador,” Ms Hartman said.

The Ambassador shared COVID-19 statistics for the Canton of Geneva, with a population of half a million. Switzerland is landlocked by Germany, France, Italy and Austria, where cases of COVID-19 have devastated populations there.

In 21 days between 31 March and 20 April, confirmed COVID-19 cases in Geneva almost doubled, from 2,375 to 4,654, with deaths increasing by over 430 per cent in the same period, from 42 to 181. The good news is that both hospital and intensive care cases have decreased.

The Swiss lockdown meant adapting to new ways of working and schooling happened overnight.

“Schools have been closed since 16 March 2020 and home schooling conducted since closure.



*Ambassador Chitra Jeremiah (centre) says the situation coronavirus has created will attest to how future meetings are held. The team together before COVID-19 restrictions.*

“It’s a new way of life for everyone, even children who are getting restless with being kept indoors and at their computer for the better part of the day,” Ambassador Jeremiah said.

However, Switzerland’s Federal Council issued a statement on 16 April on its intention to begin the gradual three-phase easing of their COVID-19 measures.

“On 27 April, hospitals will resume all medical procedures, including non-urgent procedures, and outpatient medical practices, hairdressing salons, massage practices and cosmetic studios will be allowed to reopen,” the statement said.

Phases two and three will see elementary schools and shops open, 11 May and on 8 June, high schools and tertiary learning institutions and other public facilities such as museums and libraries open, with effects observed from phase to phase, monitoring for significant increases in COVID-19 cases.

Funeral restrictions will also be lifted.

The public may be required to wear face masks, and consistent tracing of infection chains will continue as the Council attempts to juggle public health, the health of the economy and basic human rights.

The first big virtual meeting Nauru will participate in will be the 73rd World Health Assembly held online 17 to 21 May.

The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the organisation, appoint the director-general, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget.

The World Health Assembly is held annually in Geneva, Switzerland •

## New electoral commissioner and deputies sworn-in

President Lionel Aingimea witnessed the swearing-in of new Naoero Electoral Commissioner Sylvanna Deireragea, and Deputy Commissioners Corinne Joram and Cronisa Baguga in a ceremony in the cabinet room, 5 May.

The ceremony was presided over by Justice Rapi Vaai, with Court Registrar Ronald Prakash and Judge Associate Mammoham Singh Mehra alongside.

Each placing her right hand on the Bible, the three new office bearers swore to “serve...and do right to all manner of people according to law without fear or favour, affection or ill will”.

President Aingimea congratulated and wished the new team well•

*Sylvanna Deireragea sworn in by Justice Rapi Vaai as the new electoral commissioner*



## Tourism corporation office opens

The Nauru Tourism Corporation (NTC) opened its new office premises at the Meneñ Hotel and will start promoting Nauru to the world with the vision of opening up a niche market, Saturday 2 May.

President Lionel Aingimea said this with the view of stimulating visitor numbers before proceeding to cut the ribbon and lead the first group of guests to inspect the tourism office premises on the first floor overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

His Excellency said while Nauru cannot compete with regional neighbours Fiji, Samoa or Indonesia who have well-established tourism industries, Nauru can capture its own niche of people.

“We can capture the adventurer that wants to come here and wants to see some place that is off the beaten track, and therefore experience not just the magic that is Nauru, but encounter the people of Nauru and see things they’ll never see anywhere else in the world,” President Aingimea said.

Spending a day snorkelling, hiking the pinnacles or exploring the phosphate and other fossilised items are some things the President suggested could be the niche Nauru can tap into to attract its tourists.

President Aingimea further underscored the “tourist industry needs a strong, vibrant backbone” as he introduced the six-member tourism board headed by Executive Chair Bernard Grundler.

Mr Grundler said this is an opportune time to develop and build on the office and the tourism strategic plan and be ready for the world when COVID-19 restrictions are eased, adding that with a committed administration the tourism agenda can be pushed forward.

As a member of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) the opportunities are far-reaching and Mr Grundler says Nauru can partner with SPTO and the bigger tourism players to develop Nauru tourism.

“We should not limit ourselves to events [COVID restrictions] around us, if we can do something that will result in some of our

## World tuna day: Nauru says ‘fish wisely’

Nauru celebrated the annual United Nations World Tuna Day 2020 with fishing competitions and school-based activities for the week 30 April to 7 May under the theme ‘Tuna for us all’.

World Tuna Day falls on 2 May each year for the past three years, having been voted in by the UN General Assembly under Resolution 71/124 in December 2016. The day promotes conservation management to ensure that systems are in place to prevent tuna stocks from crashing.

In Nauru, Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) Coastal Fisheries Manager Aiue Harris says the message to Nauruans on World Tuna Day is simple: “Fish wisely, do not take small, young fish, give them a chance to grow until they are big enough to reproduce and maintain a good supply of fish for us now and in the future.”

Demand for tuna around the world is high for processing as canned tuna and for sushi and sashimi. According to the UN, “approximately seven million tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species are harvested yearly.”



*President Aingimea cuts the ribbon to the new Tourism Office at the Meneñ Hotel*

dreams coming to fruition, then we do it and believe in ourselves to do it,” Mr Grundler said.

Meneñ Hotel general manager and a board director for Nauru Tourism Juliana Pitcher said having the office placed at the hotel premises is ideal for guests and tourists and wearing both hats enables unified planning for the benefit of both NTC and the hotel.

“On the financial side I would know how many tourists are coming into the country and any complaints [from tourists], we can feed back to the hotel to improve and make their stay more comfortable and more enjoyable and to keep them coming,” Ms Pitcher said.

Meantime, as event organisers around the world are postponing or cancelling events and international travel hindered as a result of coronavirus, there is a possibility the regional Miss Pacific Islands pageant will also be affected. But Ms Pitcher says the restrictions will not deny Miss Nauru Chanique Deiye the opportunity to promote Nauru to the region and the world.

“We will put her title to use and help tourism.

“We are ready, we really want this [tourism] to get going and get this done,” Ms Pitcher said •

Twelve tonnes of that is caught in Nauruan waters by local fishermen.

“According to our artisanal tuna landing data that we use to record our tuna catch, it averages to about one tonne of tuna caught a month by local fisherman,” Mr Harris said.

Nauru, however, is fulfilling UN sustainable development goal 14, life under water, with the stated aim to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources...”

“Tuna stocks are being managed well, there’s strong evidence that they have all being fished at a sustainable level. Yellowfin, Skipjack and Bigeye are currently on a sustainable level of fishing,” Mr Harris confirmed.

There is, of course, much more work to be done to ensure Nauru’s sustainable fishing practices provide ongoing, generational food security.

“We are improving our milkfish farming using best practices to increase the production of milkfish, working with local milkfish farmers on a weekly basis.

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## World tuna day: Nauru says 'fish wisely'

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“We’re developing giant clam farming to restock the reef with giant clams.

“We’re looking to get the Coastal and Aquaculture Bill and accompanying regulations endorsed and with this approved, a lot of our work can be done which involves scientific research, community work etc.,” Mr Harris said.

The NFMRA points to the economic contribution fisheries can make to the nation in the near future, with fishing techniques, joint ventures and alliances, as well as opportunities brought about by the completion of the Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Connectivity Project (formerly Port Development Project).

“There’ll soon be a new port so there’s a possibility to have a port state and that opens up doors in terms of the tuna industry.

“Transshipment is likely to increase at the new port which will bring extra money for Nauru.

“There’s a chance of small scale cannery using some of the tuna that are being transhipped in our port. Nauru is looking at becoming a competent authority which is required for us to be able to access the EU market,” Mr Harris explained.



*NFMRA Aiue Harris tallying results of the fishing competition on World Tuna Day*

Throughout the week, schools on Nauru are invited to take part in poetry and art competitions as well as a beach clean-up and planting of indigenous plants along the coastline, as students learn more about World Tuna Day and its impact on food security and nutrition, economic development, employment, government revenue, livelihoods, culture and recreation for the people of Nauru, and across the world •

## Nauru supports postponing international events due to COVID19

Numerous international events have been postponed due to coronavirus and Nauru has done the same with international sporting championships, and regional meetings, in a bid to protect borders and save lives.

The annual climate forum, Conference of Parties (COP26), where world leaders gather to deliberate positive change and mobilise action to reduce carbon emissions and save the planet from the devastating effects of climate change, has been postpone until 2021, as agreed to by the UNFCCC COP Bureau.

Five years ago in Paris, world leaders committed to an historic agreement to tackle climate change, expressing commitment to keep global mean temperature rises well below 2C, the overall goal for COP26 flow from this commitment.

While recognising the capacity constraints many countries face, all parties to the UNFCCC are encouraged to make their best endeavours in coming forward with more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies as soon as is possible.

The COP forum also seeks to demonstrate that, whilst climate change presents a challenge, it also represents an opportunity to modernise the global economy and protect people and environments from harm.

COP supports post-COVID19 economic recovery plans that are designed to deliver sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth, as well as seek to accelerate the movement of public and private capital from high to low-carbon and resilient investments, improve climate-related disclosures and ensure firms and investors can manage climate risk, and scale up support and access to finance for developing countries.

Honorary-Consul for Nauru to the United Kingdom, Martin Weston is conveying the Nauru Government’s vote at these discussions.



*Nauru's Honorary-Consul to the UK Martin Weston is conveying Nauru's vote in respect to postponement of international meetings*

*(File photo)*

“The postponement of numerous international events in 2020 is not at all surprising given the global coronavirus crisis,” Mr Weston said.

“These obviously now include the Olympics in Japan, football tournaments in Europe and elsewhere, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda and the United Nations’ COP26 in Glasgow.

“This expo has involved massive development costs by UAE and 190 participating countries many building their own pavilions,” Mr Weston said.

Nauru, as a member of the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE) in Paris, voted in favour of a postponement.

*Cont pg 6...*

## Nauru supports postponing events due to COVID19

The host country, the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) proposed changing the dates for the Expo to 1 October 2020 until 31 March 2021, and based on the final quorum of 117, two-thirds majority of BIE members voted in favour of approving the resolution on the change of date of Expo 2020.

The name of the expo, 'Expo 2020 Dubai' will be maintained.

Secretary-General of the BIE, Dimitri Kerkenztes stated, "World Expos are collective endeavours that express the shared international goals of progress for all humankind."

"I am confident that when the time is right, Expo 2020 Dubai will constitute the best platform to build, with renewed optimism

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and hope, a better and brighter future for all," Mr Kerkenztes said.

"Twenty five million visits were expected and an equivalent of over US\$33 billion contribution made to the gross value of UAE's economy. Although the Dubai Government is attempting to be positive by pointing to "the silver lining" of postponement providing "an opportunity of re-uniting mankind after the end of the crisis", as suggested by the Japanese Chief Medical Officer in relation to the Olympics, there must remain doubts that one year's postponement of these events will be sufficient," Mr Weston said.

A decision on the postponement date of CHOGM is yet to be revealed •

## 2020 International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

### 5 May, International Day of the Midwife

### 12 May, International Nurses Day



As the world grapples with the catastrophic effects of this new coronavirus, we acknowledge and thank our frontline workers for their tireless effort to protect us from this pandemic.

We celebrate 5 May as the International Day of the Midwife and 12 May as International Nurses Day.

*Nurses and midwives play a vital role in providing health services. These are the people who devote their lives to caring for mothers and children; giving lifesaving immunisations and health advice; looking after older people and generally meeting everyday essential health needs. They are often, the first and only point of care in their communities. The world needs 9 million more nurses and midwives if it is to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.*

*[Source: who.int]*

The World Health Assembly designated 2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, in honour of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.

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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