



Nauru Bulletin

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Parliament passes budget, \$38.9k surplus

Economy expected to contract owing to global economic downturn and RPC future

Finance Minister Martin Hunt tabled the Appropriation Bill 2020-21 recognising \$210.5 million in revenues and expenditures of \$210.4 million, with a surplus balance of \$38,900.00.

The budget was tabled at the 5 June sitting of parliament after an absence of five months due to the interruption caused by the coronavirus global pandemic.

Development partners are expected to contribute a further \$7.7 million in new funding to support achievement of national sustainable development strategy outcomes.

Minister Hunt told the House the budget has been framed against a highly uncertain short and medium term outlook, impacted by the coronavirus and the future of the Regional Processing Centre (RPC).

“The economy is expected to contract over the next year by 1.7 per cent of GDP, in light of the global economic downturn and expected wind down of the RPC towards an enduring capability,” Minister Hunt said.

Government revenue is expected to decline as expenditure restraint is required to ensure that government can function within its means.



Finance minister Martin Hunt presented the 2020-21 budget advising it is framed against a highly uncertain short and medium term outlook

“Nauru is in a period of economic transition, and we must seek to diversify the economy and sources of economic growth.”

In this regard, the government commits to a range of actions including to improve the resilience of the economy through responsible economic management; address the productivity of social and economic infrastructure, including through investing in education and health services; mitigate risks to food and supply security alleviate cost of living pressures for households; maintain government services at sustainable levels;

whilst also managing an orderly response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The budget retains the three fiscal responsibility ratios by delivering a budget surplus, keep a proportion of current expenditure at 28 per cent, and maintain a cash buffer of two months adjusted government expenditure.

Contributions for the Intergenerational Trust Fund is set at 10.1 per cent of adjusted revenue, that is \$23.3 million. Of this, \$6.7 million has been prepaid in 2019-20 and \$16.6 million will be paid in the new financial year 2020-21. The balance of the trust fund now exceeds \$120 million.

Funding made available from balances from the Bank of Nauru liquidation will be used to resolve long outstanding debt liabilities of \$5.8 million for Ronwan capital distribution. This payout will bring total remaining Ronwan capital for redistribution down to \$29.2 million, or 25 per cent.

Another \$1 million is provided for Bank of Nauru bank book deposit holders.

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ADB grants \$5M for public money management

The Government of Nauru will receive a US\$5 million policy-based grant to support public investment management and fiscal sustainability, approved by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in a statement on 5 June.

The grant will help improve the management of public expenditure and national infrastructure, as well as the governance of state-owned enterprises (SOEs).

“The Government of Nauru is implementing a comprehensive reform program, improving public investment management which will help Nauru sustain a responsible fiscal position and strengthen public service delivery,” Regional Director of ADB’s Pacific Liaison and Coordination Office Lotte Schou-Zibell said. The Improving Public Investment Management Program will

improve budget control, reporting, and transparency; create frameworks to prioritise infrastructure spending and for SOE governance for efficiency and to contribute to public welfare; factors that also protect ADBs recent and ongoing investments in Nauru like the seaport and solar farm, to be owned and managed by SOEs on completion.

ADB also reports that \$323,000 in budget support is cofinanced by the New Zealand government.

The program supports ADB’s Strategy 2030 operational priority focused on strengthening governance and institutional capacity, particularly in small island developing states. It effectively mainstreams gender issues through policy actions that encourage the participation of women in the economy •

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“In 2020-21, the Government will undertake a review of tax policy, with a view to diversify sources of revenue and ensure long term sustainability and efficiency of revenue streams. This is expected to lead to a new goods and excise tax regime to replace the current import duties as Pacer Plus is implemented,” Minister Hunt said.

In the interim, a few changes are expected from 1 July, including an increase on import duty for cigarettes and alcohol by 20 per cent which will go towards funding government expenditure priorities.

In an effort to ease cost of living for households, also from 1 July, there will be an increase of \$50 for fortnightly payments for the aged and disabled, totalling \$5.5 million for 2020-21 for this group.

Residential electricity rates will also decrease with the pre-pay lifeline tariff of 25 cents reduced to 22 cents per kilowatt hour for 200 kilowatt hours. This is a reduction of 12 per cent, or from \$50 to \$44 on the monthly lifeline tariff. The usage beyond the lifeline tariff will also decrease from 50 cents to 47 cents.

The residential post-pay tariff will be reduced from 50 cents to 48 cents per kilowatt hour. All other tariffs remain the same.

The Nauru community housing scheme is provided \$5.6 million and \$2 million for the Department of Infrastructure for new housing construction and a Smart Village pilot.

A back to school funding of \$700,000 is provided for payment of \$50 per child per term to ensure parents can outfit their children for school each term; while \$500,000 is provided to repair classrooms and improve school facilities.

Seven new school buses have been purchased; while \$300,000 is provided for school supplies such as books and learning materials; \$2.2 million for nutritious school lunches through the school lunch program, and \$2.2 million for scholarships including 17 additional places a year to students in years eight, nine, and 12.

“This investment in scholarships will bring to 35 the total number of students sponsored each year to study in Australia or Fiji – 30 by the Government of Nauru and five by Australia,” Minister Hunt said.

Investment in teachers is also a priority in this budget. From 29 June, inclusive of the five per cent superannuation, the gross pay of a teacher with a certificate, diploma and degree will increase by 10 per cent, 12 per cent, and 21 per cent respectively.

The minister adds that public service salaries generally will increase in 2020-21, the first since 2018, “and is long overdue.”

The Nauru Bureau of Statistics estimates that the basic wage required to meet essential cost of living expenses in Nauru is \$351 a fortnight. In this regard, from 29 June, the government will increase the minimum amount paid in the public service to at least meet the basic wage.

This equates to an increase of 10 per cent for the lowest public service pay band of \$339.96 a fortnight to \$373.97, inclusive of the five per cent superannuation.

Wage increases for the different bands are: Band 2 and 4, at 8 per cent; Band 5 and 6, at 6 per cent; Band 7 to 17, at 8 per cent.

“The different percentage changes relates to the removal of pay discrepancies between the salary bands. There will be no increase in salaries for those on special pay, or those in the Department of Multicultural Affairs,” Minister Hunt said.



The community housing scheme is provided \$5.6m

Additionally, the allowances for front line workers will be increased and nurses with certificates, diploma or degree will also receive a pay rise ranging from 26 per cent and 28 per cent, including the five per cent superannuation.

The budget also includes measures to support the community with \$3.1 million for Clean and Green projects; \$200,000 to capture the Nauruan language, address petrol sniffing, support early childhood community workshops, implement domestic violence legislation, undertake disability awareness sessions, etiquette learning for children and a national *Aroeni Day* to celebrate Nauruan cultural diversity.

“The coronavirus pandemic has created significant uncertainty for Nauru, both in terms of the economic impact as well as the health and human impact of a potential outbreak.

“The government’s capture and contain strategy has so far ensured that Nauru remains COVID-19 free,” Minister Hunt said.

The dedicated COVID Taskforce which coordinates and manages the government’s response to the pandemic, is allocated \$6 million for health preparedness, including medical and equipment supplies; quarantine arrangements; building works for the hospital; repatriation flights and air freight subsidies; and running costs for the Taskforce.

In addition to the work of the Taskforce, government has allocated additional \$2.5 million to increase salaries and allowances for existing and new medical staff, including the return of Cuban doctors. This increase will bring the total staff salary for health to \$7.2 million.

“This investment should improve the scope and range of medical issues able to be resolved in Nauru and reduce the need for overseas medical referrals,” the finance minister said.

Primary health care services will also be strengthened with \$300,000 to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) and reversal of NCD complications.

The Nauru Health Professional Training Institute will also be revamped to commence island delivery of nursing and public health training in partnership with universities in Fiji and Australia.

To mitigate risks to food supply and delivery in times of COVID-19, the government is ensuring there is at least one air freight service a week and regular sea freight services are available at reasonable cost.

Nauru Airlines will receive cash flow support of \$9.2 million for regular freight services and upgrade of an aircraft to a freighter; while \$2.1 million is for the charter of sea freight services; and \$1.2 million to keep port charges at pre-COVID-19 levels.

Key economic infrastructure projects such as the port project will also receive an allocation of \$15.7 million and \$2.6 million to continue the tank farm refurbishment.

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Reflecting the uncertainty of the arrangements with the Regional Processing Centre (RPC) after December and the full impact of COVID-19 yet to be seen, \$8.9 million has been provided in the fiscal cash buffer to cover any urgent and unforeseen events that might arise in the year ahead.

“The 2020-21 budget has been framed to support Nauru improve its resilience through responsible economic management, easing cost of living pressures, especially for the most disadvantaged, and investing in service delivery and productivity enhancing infrastructure,” Minister Hunt said, adding that the budget builds on the strong performance in 2019-20 that is forecast to leave a \$15.5 million surplus balance.

“This surplus will be used to build up cash reserves at the bank and support Nauru to manage the uncertainties in the year ahead.”

The budget was debated on and passed by the House, 5 June •

Development fund projections

Minister for Finance Martin Hunt reported to parliament, 4 June, that Nauru’s external donors will continue to support the nation’s development agenda in the new financial year, with \$7.7 million as new funding.

The minister presented the Development Fund Projections for 2020-21 stating that the budgeted projections set out a number of important projects that the government has been working on to ensure the country has modern, supportive services and infrastructure for the well-being of Nauruans.

“The development budget also reflects the success this government has achieved in strengthening relationships with our development partners,” Minister Hunt said.

In the new financial year, the government expects the fund to receive an indicative total income of \$7.7 million as new funds to either support new development projects or continue existing ones.

“This complements the estimated \$84.3 million that Nauru will receive as aid in-kind.”

As the global COVID-19 pandemic impacts the economies of the world, including Nauru and its development partners, it also disrupts global supply chains and travel restrictions for foreign workers in Nauru projects. In turn, this impacts construction timelines and project completions.

One such project is the port project which the government has had to enter into a six month suspension agreement with the construction company China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), to mitigate delay costs.

Development partners have contributed over \$6.8 million in cash for medical supplies and economic stabilisation, led by \$4.1 million from Australia, \$1.65 million from Taiwan, and approximately \$500,000 each from New Zealand and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

“Australia continues to strongly support Nauru with an estimated total amount of around \$23 million for financial year 2020-21, based on ongoing projects and past bilateral arrangements,” Minister Hunt said.

He added that the new year “marks a new beginning of a new planning cycle for our partnership with Australia, and will see the development of a new Aid Partnership Agreement and Aid Investment Plan.”

The ADB is expecting to provide an overall assistance of \$35.5 million for 2020-21 including \$8 million for general budget



Australia continues to strongly support Nauru with an estimated total amount of \$23m for FY2020-21.

Pictured (L-R) Australian high commissioner Angela Tierney and President Lionel Aingimea

[file photo]

support reflecting the achievements and performance of the public sector reforms over the last two years. It will continue to implement Nauru’s infrastructure programs such as the port project and the solar development project, and support reform activities.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) will provide \$18 million for recurrent commitments in addition to its annual contribution for the Intergenerational Trust Fund.

The Government of Japan maintains its support of \$280,000 as aid in-kind assistance for the Japanese Grassroots Grant Project and \$2.8 million through the Economic & Social Development program, primarily to fund essential hospital equipment and upgrades in response to COVID-19 measures.

New Zealand is expecting to provide \$2.8 million mainly focused on the education sector plus a further \$900,000 towards the Intergenerational Trust Fund.

The European Union continues to support Nauru through the 11th European Union Development Fund (EDF) with project for Nauru Utilities to upgrade the power distribution system and strengthening the national authority office.

Approximately \$1.3 million is expected from United Nations agencies to support ongoing development in health, energy and statistics.

Minister Hunt concluded his presentation by emphasising that the “projections provide a snapshot of our development journey and this government will continue to manage the challenges ahead. We have survived because of our determination and support for each other.” •

USP council's work undermined: Nauru president

The ongoing saga at the University of the South Pacific (USP) could soon be resolved, thanks in part to the decisive action of council member, incoming chancellor and President of Nauru, Lionel Aingimea, at a council meeting set for Friday, 19 June.

President Aingimea is due to begin his 12 month term as the USP's chancellor on 1 July, and as a current council member, alumnus and 'co-owner' of the university, delivered strongly worded letters to council members calling for, among other things, an extraordinary council meeting to resolve the matter of the suspension of Vice-Chancellor Professor Pal Ahluwalia, and plans to move the university forward.

On Thursday, 11 June, the President updated *Nauru Bulletin* on developments and his rationale.

"I'm coming at it basically as an independent because I'm the incoming chancellor. Therefore, I've looked at all the scenarios and the issues and the facts that surrounded this issue that is now basically a quagmire for the USP," President Aingimea said.

The USP is more than just a university. It is one of only two universities of its kind, jointly owned by the governments of its 12 member countries, each with their own campus. It represents an expression of regional pride in educational and research excellence, and especially for Nauru, a founding member, opening the same year as Nauru gained her independence in 1968.

"We have to keep in mind that the USP is really a jewel in the Pacific. It is one of the fine jewels of the Pacific - something that was put together by the former leaders of the region, and Nauru, being one of the founding members, has always been, I suppose, vocal in things that deal with USP," President Aingimea said.

In his correspondence, the President referred to the new investigation being opened by the USP Executive Committee against the VC as "preposterous", saying it "reeks of bad faith", when 26 previous allegations against him remained open and unresolved. In addition, the President warned against the executive's misuse of the current global pandemic as a smokescreen to act beyond their powers.

Regardless, an Executive Committee meeting did go ahead on Monday, 8 June, resulting in the suspension of the VC and sparking a follow up letter from President Aingimea the following day.

"I responded because there was an Executive Council meeting that was put together that did not follow the procedure of the USP statutes. It went outside its powers to hold a meeting to decide the fate of the USP VC.

"The USP VC was installed in that position by the USP Council," the President said, and in his letter accused the Executive Committee, saying they "hijacked Council processes and failed to accord duty of care and natural justice to a council-appointed vice chancellor."

During his short tenure to date, VC Ahluwalia, installed in November 2018, instigated investigations into alleged improper administrative or financial practices happening at USP, the report of which remains confidential.

"We must allow the institution... to govern itself by what it teaches. So, if we say we're all for good governance, then let good governance have its say. If we're all about correct ethics, then let that have its way. If we say we've got a law school and we're teaching law to students to come out and follow the law,



Nauru President Lionel Aingimea and incoming USP chancellor says the investigation against the university's vice-chancellor is preposterous and reeks of bad faith

then let us follow the statutes and the USP regulations because if we don't, that jeopardises the USP's future," President Aingimea said.

The President's stance has attracted the overwhelming support of fellow Council members.

"The only problem is, for the council to convene, [a request] has to be written to the Chair of the Council," President Aingimea explains.

"The Chair of the Council (Winston Thompson) is the person who sat on the Executive Council on Monday [8 June], so you can see that there's issues already of ethics - a conflict of interest."

Throughout the week, USP staff and students were also calling for a resolution to the situation. Based at Laucala campus in Fiji, Nauruan student, Aqua Harris, who is a member of the USP Student Association (USPSA) senate and disciplinary committees, joined a reported 500-strong crowd to throw their support behind VC Ahluwalia.

"I stand in solidarity alongside my fellow students as we come together as 'one-people, one-ocean and one-voice' to protest for the sake of promoting good governance, accountability and transparency. And we want those principles to be practiced for the betterment of our institution," Mr Harris said.

A post-graduate student based at Nauru campus, who spoke to *Nauru Bulletin* anonymously, expressed concerns shared across the campus, about the possible damage to the "good name and reputation of the USP as the premier tertiary academic institute of the region and not just the Laucala Campus in Fiji. Other students are concerned that the USP is becoming centralised in Fiji and decisions are being made without the representation from all of the USP campuses in the Pacific."

"It must be remembered, Hammer DeRoburt and the Government of Nauru were instrumental in establishing the USP as the regional tertiary institute during the time of Nauru's independence."

The USP Nauru campus director Alamanda Lauti affirmed her support for President Aingimea, saying, "I support the comments made by His Excellency as our minister for education."

"Everyone's looking up to the Council now - everyone: the current chancellor, the RMI president, and, of course, when I step in, everybody will be looking towards us for decisions to be made and the right direction to 're-plant', I suppose, USP," the President concluded.

The special Council meeting will be held via video conference on Friday, 19 June •

Trash is treasure: waste management comes to Nauru

World Environment Day 2020 in Nauru was celebrated with the official opening of the waste segregation building at the dump site, 12 June.

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, Madam Ingrid Aingimea, Speaker of Parliament Marcus Stephen, cabinet ministers and deputy ministers attended to support the work of colleagues, Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment (DCIE) Minister Rennier Gadabu and Minister for Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation (NRC) Reagan Aliklik in the establishment of a Nauru first – a waste segregation station with a one district and one school pilot program.

Minister Gadabu welcomed attendees, saying that, while the project, co-financed by the Government of Japan through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Programme (GGP), NRC and UNDP through the Ridge to Reef (R2R) project, will prolong the life of the dump, create an income stream through exporting of recycling materials, and clean up Nauru's ocean, reef and land environments, “we can still do more to support them in their work.”

“A pilot project to segregate waste will be launched at Meneñ school including the district of Buada.”

“Today marks the beginning of a country-wide program and our commitment to improving the proper management of our own waste.”

DCIE Secretary Berilyn Jeremiah delivered the statement of Japan Ambassador to Nauru Omura Masahiro, as COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented his in-person appearance.

“This building is part of the Japanese project for the promotion of waste segregation in Nauru that also includes the provision of a glass crusher, can baler, trailer and a thousand woven polypropylene bags and... is worth US\$53,589.

“I commend the Commerce, Industry and Environment Department and the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation for your tireless commitment towards the preservation and protection of the environment in ensuring the people of Nauru are safe.



NRC Minister Aliklik and CIE Minister Gadabu celebrate the establishment of Nauru's first waste segregation station

“I acknowledge the challenges these departments faced in trying to kick-start this initiative of improving waste management in the country, particularly due to the small land area, and therefore congratulate you on this accomplishment.”

Next, Minister Aliklik outlined Nauru's waste management challenges of population growth and land scarcity, then delivering a ray of hope; “The introduction of ideas to combat uncontrolled waste disposal is never too late.”

NRC manages the dumpsite and for the minister, the onus will be not only on NRC, but on the entire Nauru population and also commercial enterprises and small businesses to “start practicing good and responsible habits of disposing waste” and find innovative ways to turn trash into treasure.

The cutting of the ribbon followed, with a demonstration of the Japan-funded glass, plastic and can crushing and baling machines before morning tea and a regrouping at the Meneñ Infants School to launch the waste segregation pilot with the future custodians of this nation – our children •

CHEC contribute to Nauru's PPE stocks

Health Minister Isabella Dageago, with Deputy Health Minister Pyon Deiye and Deputy Minister for the Nauru Port Authority Russ Kun received a donation of personal protective equipment (PPE) from China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd (CHEC), the contractor for the port project, 3 June.

CHEC Project Manager Mr Tan Bo Zhen told ministers the donation includes 35,000 masks, 96 infrared thermometers and 1,000 pairs of disposable gloves.

He praised Nauru on being COVID-19-free, calling the results of the Nauru government's capture and contain policy, “a very remarkable feat,” and thanked the government and the people of Nauru for accepting CHEC onto the island for the major port project.

Minister Dagaego co-signed for receipt of the items with Mr Tan, in the presence of the CHEC team, ministers and the Secretary for Health Chanda Garabwan and Acting Director for Public Health Stacey Cain.



Nauru port contractor China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) donate personal protective equipment for frontline workers supporting Nauru's efforts to protect against COVID-19

The PPE donation was delivered to public health in Denig for distribution to frontline workers in the continued campaign to keep Nauru coronavirus-free •

300-strong force gather for monthly muster

Police Commissioner Iven Notte presided over a whole staff Nauru Police Force monthly Commissioner of Police muster, 12 June.

COP Notte heads one of the largest organisations on Nauru, with the combination of his executive committee, uniformed officers, the community liaison officer and police reserve network and administrative and ancillary staff plus Australian Federal Police (AFP) contingent numbering around 300 persons in total.

The muster, held in the forecourt of the police barracks, is one means by which information can be disseminated across the workforce at the one time, with each member of the executive team given the opportunity to deliver their talking points on the spot, with the consistent theme that individuals are members of “a disciplined body” - a recurring phrase reminding staff of their responsibilities and repeated to develop and encourage an improved and unified mindset.

Commissioner of Police has a mandate and obligations to deliver the new-look NPF, including the implementation of required fitness level (RFL) training and bringing back the traditional discipline practice such as marching, parades, and drills.

Commissioner Notte holds a Double-Major Bachelor degree in Management and Public Administration, and Pacific Policing from the USP, and has been a serving officer of NPF for 27 years.



Police, reserves, community liaison officers gather for the monthly commissioner of police muster

With his team and the support of the Government of Nauru, COP is set to take NPF into an era where their motto ‘to protect and serve’ is a lived expression of the work that NPF officers and staff do, to the highest of standards, for the people of Nauru on a daily basis •

NSS students tell president ‘I don’t smoke’

Nauru Secondary School students marched in a rally on government house to present a signed request to President Lionel Aingimea and Health Minister Isabella Dageago to make Nauru smoke-free, 1 June.

The student request is timed to coincide with the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) No Tobacco Day, 31 May.

This year’s theme is #TobaccoExposed, highlighting the manipulative tactics tobacco companies use to attract the next generation of smokers, whether through, for example, product placement in movies, TV shows and online content or attractive flavours of tobacco products.

Year 11 and 12 students prepared for the rally, creating a government request, a Nauruan song and a personal pledge.

The rally moved from the school campus to the government building forecourt, where the president, health minister, Deputy Minister for Education Richard-Hyde Menke and other ministers and deputy ministers, health and education secretaries were waiting.

President Aingimea and Minister Dageago joined the students for the presenting of the request.

Students delivered their pledge, co-signed by NSS Principal Mona-Lisa Bagadouwe, vowing to not smoke, to stay away from second-hand smoke, to encourage people to quit smoking and to support them as they do.

NSS head boy then presented a student-signed “I don’t smoke” request to Minister Dageago, while the head girl presented another to the President.



NSS year 11 and 12 students pose for photo with health minister Isabella Dageago following their ‘I don’t smoke’ campaign at the government office

The request to the Minister of Health, ministers and the Government of Nauru is to “stop the use and smoking of tobacco in Nauru”, to “save our lives, save our economy, save our environment.”

Minister Dageago congratulated the students on their efforts, saying she fully supports their campaign and assured students that her colleagues would support her.

The minister reminded everyone that the government buildings and surrounds are smoke-free areas and, “we all have the right to fresh air.”

DM Menke added that he, too, supported the campaign, thanking the rally coordinators and promising to support the health minister.

Students completed the rally with a few renditions of their chant and song before refreshments were served •

New look police force: RFL testing

The Nauru Police Force (NPF) fitness level training committee has presented the first draft of the official training policy and training manual to Police Commissioner Iven Notte for approval, 10 June.

All 300 staff members of NPF, including the community liaison officer (CLO) workforce, are expected to undergo the training regimen and perform the RFL test, the first one of which will now be staged in late July.

The training manual includes a message from COP, plus a detailed description of the program; its rationale, citing relevant legislation; objectives; general information on health, wellbeing, diet and progress tracking; plus the program itself, with RFLs at each age band from 18 to 60 years.

“It is my duty as the Commissioner of Police to enforce health, safety and fitness for my officers, who respond to and care for people in the community and my priority and mandate that I, along with my executive team, spearhead this reform for a healthier, safer and fitter police force in 2020.

“This is an initiative that will help reduce the risk of injury and illness to police and one that will help prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and prolong officers’ life spans to be with family and loved ones longer,” Commissioner Notte writes.

Prolonging life is close to the hearts of all Nauruans, as Pacific Community (SPC) 2018 statistics reveal average life expectancy in Nauru is 64.5 years for females and 57 years for males.

The authors of much of the program are qualified police fitness trainers Alice Fritz and Dinamo Appin, who describe the RFL training as an ‘attain-maintain-assess’ cycle, that, after three repeated tests three months apart, will determine if a particular officer is ‘fit for work’.

The program is divided into a compulsory component, with added options for female and male officers.

To pass RFL1 at the end of July, every officer must complete a timed 2.4km walk/run, push-ups and sit-ups and for women, perform a timed plank. This means that, for example, female officers aged 25 to 29 years walk/run 2.4km in 15 minutes, do 15 push-ups, 25 sit-ups and plank for 120 seconds.

For male officers in the same age bracket, the run must be completed in 11minutes, 45 seconds, and 30 push-ups, 25 sit-ups and 15 tricep dips must be performed.

Cars for our doctors

Nauru’s doctors now have transport, with the handover of four vehicles from the Government of Nauru in the government forecourt at Yaren on 11 June.

Health Minister Isabella Dageago, along with Minister Rennie Gadabu and Deputy Minister Pyon Deiye stood with Nauru’s doctors and health administrative staff to receive the keys from Secretary for Public Administration and Operations Michelangelo Dimipilas.

Minister Dageago thanked the government for the gesture, which represents a show of appreciation and recognition for the work of Nauru’s doctors, enabling them to extend their reach of care into the community, and more efficiently carry out their work.

Health Secretary Chanda Garabwan also thanked the doctors for their ongoing work and personal and professional sacrifice,



Police fitness trainers Dinamo Appin and Alice Fritz say the training is an ‘attain-maintain-assess’ cycle to determine whether an officer is ‘fit for work’

Given that just five per cent of officers health tested this year were deemed to be at a normal body weight, officers are warned that lack of preparation in the lead-up to RFL testing combined with the prevalence of NCDs in the population can be fatal.

In Fiji, where RFL training has been ongoing for over 10 years, the Fiji Sun reported an officer fatality during the 2.4km run in 2019, and in 2005 the Pacific Islands Report stated that two Fiji police officers aged 38 and 39 years, in two separate incidents, reportedly died of heart failure during RFL testing.

While on-island public health NCD specialist Don Kadir sits on the committee as a health advisor, and will organise first-aid training for overseers on the day, with an ambulance and health staff on-site, the responsibility is on employees to ensure they put in the preparation time, developing their physical and mental fitness and resilience, in the lead-up to testing.

“As an individual, if you fail to prepare properly, you will fail the RFL test.

“The public health team has conducted the screening at NPF and done awareness and education sessions for its officers.

“All officers are aware of their individual health status and what changes they need to make as individuals in order to pass the RFL test. Not adhering to health advice may result in serious health consequences for the individual. The NPF as an organisation has developed strategies to motivate and accommodate individuals to pass the test.

“My advice to the officers is to adhere to health advice and make the most of the opportunities that NPF has provided to its officers to better their health status.” •



Health Minister Isabella Dageago (centre) receive keys to four vehicles for doctor’s use

and her appreciation to the government and the minister for the assignment of the vehicles to health to further improve services to patients •

COVID-19 port regulations

Under the National Disaster Risk Management Act 2016, Cabinet made port regulations to give effect to the 16 March declaration of the national emergency for coronavirus.

These Regulations apply to a vessel and its crew in Nauru waters and aircraft crew at the airport.

Gazetted on 20 May, the objectives of the Regulations are to avoid necessary interference with cargo loading and unloading; prevent the spread of coronavirus; control the embarkation and disembarkation of people at a sea port; provide a process for loading and off-loading cargo at ports; permit screening and examination of crew before travellers or cargo is off-loaded; and ensure contact tracing measures are carried out where necessary.

Obligations of the master of vessel includes informing travellers and crew of the signs and symptoms of coronavirus or other symptoms as advised by the secretary for health; do twice daily temperature checks on travellers and crew; isolate a potentially infectious person on board to avoid the spread of the virus; ensure common areas and rooms on the vessel are disinfected before arrival into Nauru waters; and all rooms and areas that might be accessed by the harbourmaster, immigration officer, customs officer and maritime security officer must be disinfected every day before the officials are required to go on board.

Documents to be submitted before arrival in Nauru waters – to prevent the spread of COVID-19, all vessels shall submit documents (forms, crew list, last two ports of call and traveller names) to the Nauru Port and Maritime Authority 12 hours prior to arriving in Nauru waters. The documents are to be provided whether or not there is anyone sick on board.

Failing to comply with the requirements will prevent anyone on board to disembark or cargo to be off-loaded and will be required to complete 14 days on the vessel from the last departing port.

Duty of captain of an aircraft to notify authorities at the airport if a traveller or crew is suspected of suffering from or showing symptoms of coronavirus, before anyone disembarks, and anyone suspected of the disease must be reported to border authorities.

In the event of a suspected case, the captain shall provide a list of other travellers seated within two meters of the seat of that potentially infectious traveller; and a crew suspected of the virus must remain in an isolated seat to avoid the spread of the virus.

Embarkation or disembarkation of persons at port is permitted if the person is a Nauruan citizen or a resident of Nauru; permit a departing foreign national to board; for an emergency medical evacuation; or other reasons authorised by the minister for national emergency services. Any crew disembarking is required to undergo thermal screening and other health measures as directed by the secretary.

Precautionary measures must be observed by crew in Nauru waters when conducting operations at a seaport, including daily temperature checks, refrain from working if feeling unwell and to seek immediate medical assistance, wear personal protective equipment where necessary, frequent hand washing and sanitising, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid handshakes, reduce vessel to shore activities such as non-essential maintenance or activities, strengthen gangway or ladder control.

All unnecessary physical interactions between crew, harbour master and other officials must be maintained and refrain from prolonged interactions in close proximity, and no unnecessary boarding visits.

All essential crew to remain in the same work area and as practicable as possible, briefings and completion of paperwork to be conducted through electronic means.

The use of appropriate PPE is required if there is an imminent risk of contact with a potentially infectious person.

Loading and offloading in and out of port for travellers and cargo is permitted and the minister may make rules governing this.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for crew – any crew at a port shall use PPE when relevant authorities board the vessel or aircraft for necessary clearances. All used PPE must be disposed of appropriately and must not be shared, reused or preserved. The handling of used PPE is consistent across all COVID-19 regulations.

Contact tracing system at seaport will be conducted if the vessel's master has cause to believe that a crew is presenting signs and symptoms or suffering from coronavirus. The master shall immediately inform the harbourmaster.

The harbourmaster shall keep a register of all crew on a vessel as well as an updated list of persons, ports and such other places for the purpose of contact tracing for COVID-19. The record will be kept under confidentiality requirements of a medical patient except for any lawful purposes including those under these Regulations.

If a Nauru citizen or resident of Nauru is found to have been in contact with a crew member or a potentially infectious person, they will be directed to reside at a designated residence or other place ensuring social distancing from others.

Isolation of crew on board aircraft or vessel from an area of the aircraft or vessel is required when officials board to conduct statutory functions, health screening, or to carry out an investigation including arrests.

The captain or master shall comply with instructions of the official including allowing unrestricted access to such person on board the aircraft or vessel. Minimum contact must be maintained.

Officials must carry and present their identification to the captain or master when required.

Offences are committed when the Regulations are contravened or fail to be complied with, as well as the obstruction of an authorised officer in carrying out official duties and functions under the Regulations and when a person refuses to accept service of a COVID-19 Fixed Penalty Notice.

The fixed penalty is \$10,000, payable within 24 hours of being charged or before leaving the Republic. Failure to pay this fixed penalty attracts a second fine not exceeding \$10,000 or a term of imprisonment of six months or both.

Jurisdiction of court – the District Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine any cause or matter under these Regulations.

The Supreme Court has jurisdiction over any aircraft or vessel including any proceedings for the purposes of admiralty suits.

The minister for emergency services may give directions, rules or orders to give effect to these Regulations •

COVID-19 immigration, visa regs

Cabinet made the Immigration (Coronavirus Visa) Regulations 2020 under the Immigration Act to supplement the travel restrictions imposed by coronavirus. The Regulations were gazetted on 20 May.

The Regulations apply to non-Nauruans already in Nauru and have not been able to depart due to travel restrictions imposed as a consequence of coronavirus.

This visa class does not apply to anyone who is lawfully in Nauru under any other class of visa; however they must ensure that their visa remains current.

For anyone who has been unable to depart from Nauru as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions, an application can be made for a COVID-19 visa to lawfully remain in Nauru.

The visa is valid for six months unless extended by the secretary for justice and border control, and the visa holder is expected not to behave in a manner prejudicial to the peace and good order of Nauru.

A holder of this visa may engage in employment other than employment at the Regional Processing Centre and settlements or by any approved commercial service provider under the Nauru RPC Act 2017.

Employment details must be provided to the secretary for justice including a confirmation letter from the employer for this class visa.

A non-Nauruan who has been in Nauru unlawfully for more than a year and has no or never held a visa to enter and remain in Nauru, may apply for this class of visa to rectify their status of remaining in Nauru.

The visa fee is \$150 plus the processing fee of \$50 •

Date changes for international events

COP26 - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), agreed on 28 May to change the date of COP26 to now take place in Glasgow on 1–12 November 2021.

Expo 2020 is a World Expo to be hosted by Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, originally scheduled for 20 October 2020 - 10 April 2021. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it has been postponed to run from 1 October 2021–31 March 2022.

COVID-19 maritime security regs

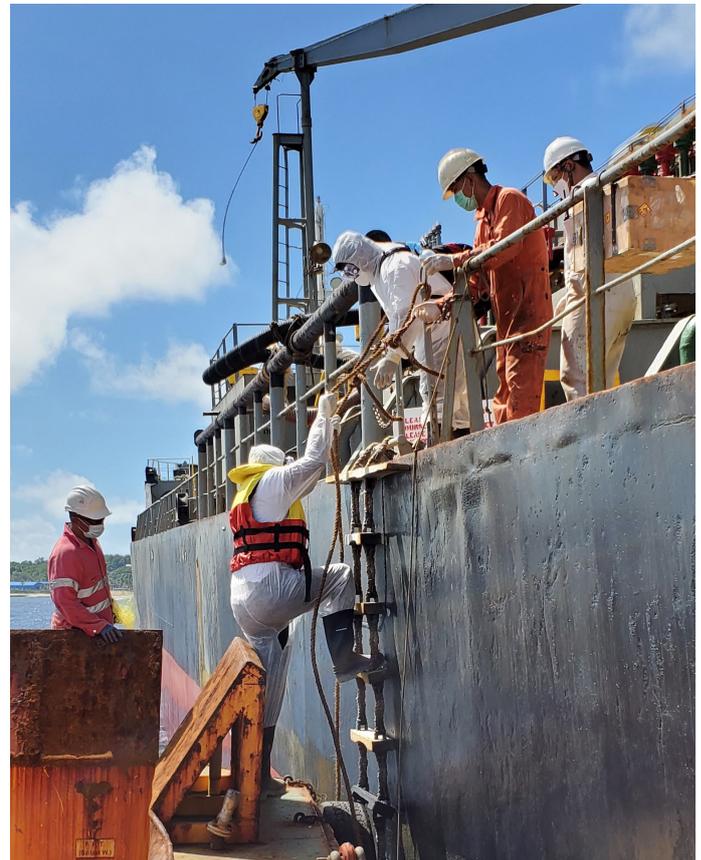
Cabinet made regulations under the Maritime Security Act 2019 to strengthen rules and movements surrounding maritime during this unprecedented time of coronavirus.

The Maritime Security (Prohibition) Regulations 2020 made under Section 36(2)(c) of the Act came into effect on 1 May 2020, highlighting the approach and boarding of a ship without lawful authority.

The Regulations states that a person without the prior authorisation from customs, immigration, quarantine and the consent of the harbour master cannot approach or board any ship in Nauru waters; nor can they take or cause another person to take any material on to a ship in Nauru waters; or remove or cause another person to do so.

No-one shall (aid or abet) give advice or encourage anyone else to do the same.

Anyone that contravenes these Regulations commits an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to six months prison or both •



Doctor dressed in full protective gear boards cargo vessel to take samples from crew for COVID-19 testing before unloading cargo containers can commence

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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