



REPUBLIC OF NAURU  
Government Information Office

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
Thursday, 2 July, 2020

**President Aingimea commence chancellorship, wants a strong USP**

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea is the third president of Nauru to hold the position of chancellor at the region's premier institution, the University of the South Pacific.

The chancellor is the titular head of the University in which President Aingimea is the 28<sup>th</sup> head of state or government to hold the title.

President Aingimea says the chancellorship means "it brings what Nauru can contribute to USP" and a chance for Nauru to "put our stamp in how we think USP should be governed."

"It is my intention that as chancellor it is not just a figure head, that as chancellor I will get really involved in improving and pushing USP that will make USP proud. That will make people want to go to USP.

"The USP needs to have strong staff, strong students and supported by a strong council.

"The vision I see is one where staff can work in an environment without fear and without intimidation, where they can deliver what is needed either in business houses or what is needed in industries.

"I want us (USP) to be at the level of excellence that is on par with the best universities in the world and I believe we are one of the premier universities in the world," President Aingimea said, adding however, that the governance of the university needs to improve.

"If the governance element of USP doesn't improve then it gives way to corruption, it gives way to nepotism, and it gives way to an environment where people are too frightened to speak and you'll have basically low morale and a code of ethics that is thrown out the door."

While the term of chancellor commences 1 July, President Aingimea will be officially installed at the USP's main campus in Laucala, Suva, Fiji. With strict border closures and travel restrictions imposed as a result of COVID-19 measures, the date for the ceremony is yet to be confirmed.

H.E Aingimea is serving his first term as Nauru's 15<sup>th</sup> president. He represents the constituency of Meneñ. Prior to becoming president, he served as secretary for justice and border control under the Ministry for Justice and Border Control.

Former presidents of Nauru that have held the title are the late Hammer DeRoburt from 1974 to 1976 and Marcus Stephen from 2009 to 2010.

The main role of the position is to confer degrees at the graduation ceremony and chancellors are appointed by the USP Council from heads of states or heads of governments in alphabetical rotation amongst the 12 member countries of the USP.

The term for chancellor was for three years until the change in the University Charter and Statutes altered the term to one year appointments.

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