



REPUBLIC OF NAURU
Government Information Office

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE
by
His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea

Wednesday, 2 September 2020

In this week's coronavirus update, Nauru continues its 'capture & contain' strategy by placing in quarantine all new arrivals to the island and testing for coronavirus.

There are currently 47 new arrivals at the Anibare village quarantine residence, and are due to be tested this week, 3 September; while another eight at the Budapest Hotel were tested last week, all returned negative results and sent home.

Regionally, New Zealand is still battling its second wave of the virus, but the numbers of new cases daily steadily range between two to 14 in the month of August. Fiji has had another death, bringing the total deaths to two. Both cases are reportedly repatriation passengers. Palau is reported to be looking at opening up tourism with Taiwan next month. Taiwan is known to have exceptional control and management of the coronavirus situation. Discussions are also underway in Palau for the possibility of hosting Micronesian leaders for their Independence Day celebrations.

Meanwhile, Nauru's travel advisory will be updated to remove French Polynesia from the safe list of countries for Nauru's purposes, citing the fast increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country.

The Nauru Police Force is seeking 64 recruits to take over security services at the quarantine sites (two sites at Meneñ Hotel, and each at the Budapest Hotel and Anibare village). The 33 applications received for the first group were sworn in as police officers last week and are now undergoing training in law and regulations, health and emergency services for the purposes of COVID-19.

Another 46 applications for the second group are being considered. The unit will be called 'Police Protective Services'.

Nauru Airlines maintains its weekly and fortnightly flights for passenger and freight with some additional charters.

Nauru Port Authority (NPA) is expecting fuel, phosphate and cargo shipments in the next two to three weeks, while the whereabouts of a Korean fuel ship is currently unknown to NPA.

Ports have put on hold the travel plans for 50 workers for the port development project until further notice and the arrival of its deputy project manager from Malaysia is also postponed due to flight changes by the various airlines from his originating country.

The new oxygen compressor has arrived and will be installed in the coming weeks while a second oxygen plant is expected to arrive this month. Over 40 refilled oxygen cylinders of varying sizes have also arrived while the same numbers of empty cylinders were returned to Brisbane last week for refilling.

Pharmaceutical stocks are healthy however some items nearing or reached their expiry dates will be disposed of to obtain a true picture of stock levels. In the meantime, all essential medical stock will be flown in via Nauru Airlines to maintain supplies.

An important feature of the successful operation of an emergency situation is an effective communications setup. Nauru Police and Nauru Emergency Services have received the repeater for national communications essential for COVID response and management of emergency services. Final adjustments and fine-tuning of the system is underway.

In finance, the Nauru Government is in the process of applying for an additional COVID-19 support grant of approximately AU\$1 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The funding will be earmarked to purchase essential supplies, fund recruitment, quarantine costs, and requirements for disease prevention, to name a few.

There has been positive feedback in regards to Nauru's management of the threat of coronavirus. Observations made by incoming passengers directly reference the "impressive" and "excellent system" and management by staff from the time of boarding the plane at Brisbane airport to disembarking at Nauru and time spent in quarantine.

The enforced changing of face masks before disembarking the aircraft in Nauru is praised as a first for any airline.

President Lionel Aingimea once again thanks the airline, health and police for their tireless efforts in ensuring Nauru's safety.

The president also revisited the concern by some members of the public in regards to Nauru's five and a half days quarantine compared to 14 days as imposed in other countries.

The president explains that Nauru's testing machine specifically tests for the virus of COVID-19, while in other jurisdictions testing may not be specific or mandatory due to their large populations and numbers of arriving travellers therefore restricting testing for everyone, hence their reliance on the 14 day quarantine.

President Aingimea says Nauru is guided by doctors and expert advice and is blessed that we have the capability to test everyone [every arrival by air or sea] all the time.

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