



REPUBLIC OF NAURU
Government Information Office

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nauruans vote against proposed Constitutional Amendments

The sixty-eight year old Constitution of Nauru will remain unchanged as Nauruans voted against the proposed amendments to their supreme law yesterday (27 Feb).

2939 votes out of 4389 formal votes were cast by Nauruans opposing the 34 proposed changes to their supreme law.

Seventy-eight percent of the voters on the electoral roll turned out to vote in the referendum.

Two-thirds of votes cast at a referendum were required to approve the Bill. Instead, two thirds of the voting public voted "No".

The polling booths were open from 1.00pm till 6.00pm and several expatriate personnel working in Nauru joined with the presiding officer and polling clerks to witness the conduct at the polls and the count in the tally room.

As in a general election, polling booths were stationed in all 14 districts around the island in which eligible voters cast their votes.

But unlike the usual voting structure of a general election, this time voters only needed to fill in one box with either a 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question "*do you approve of the proposed law entitled Constitution of Nauru (Referendum Amendments) Bill 2009?*"

The Supreme law of Nauru was written before Independence in 1968 and it was six years ago when the process of constitutional reform began. The Scotty government established a parliamentary standing committee on constitutional review (the 'CRC') after it identified a number of flaws in the Constitution.

The proposed changes to the Constitution were designed to improve the transparency and accountability of public institutions, make the Constitution more relevant to the Nauruan people and to today's society, make it easier to understand and improve the consistency of the Constitution.

The *Constitution of Nauru (Referendum Amendments) Bill 2009* sought to achieve four main aims which were to strengthen human rights, change the way the President is elected, clarify the roles of the President and Cabinet and to provide stronger mechanisms for ensuring stability and continuity of the Government.

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