



Nauru Bulletin

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Speaker Godfrey Thoma further explains why parliament cannot yet dissolve

The Nauru Parliament sat this morning (30 April) but only briefly as ten members did not attend and the House therefore failed to have a quorum.

This is the second consecutive parliament meeting that newly appointed Speaker, Hon Godfrey Thoma, has had to adjourn for not having the numbers.

Shortly after opening prayers this morning, Speaker Thoma delivered a statement in Nauruan which further explained an earlier statement delivered at last week's (Friday, 26th April) sitting of the reasons why dissolution of parliament cannot yet come into effect.

Mr Thoma said that in recent days his office had been receiving enquiries from the public about his stance in parliament and what the current situation was in the House.

He explained that when he was elected last week (Thursday, 25 April) as speaker, he followed normal procedure by recessing the House to the following day.

He further explained that his role as speaker is to ensure things move forward, including, when it becomes possible, dissolution and calling of a general election.

However, the speaker further clarified that in order for dissolution to go ahead, the president's advice to dissolve the House must first be referred to members and members must be given the opportunity to debate it, which has not happened.

Mr Thoma also suggested that those members who are insisting that dissolution should have taken effect on 25th April should consider resolving the matter in court.

At its sitting last week (Friday, 26th

April), parliament commenced shortly after 2.00pm but sat only briefly as nine members did not attend and therefore the House did not have a quorum.

The speaker read a letter from the nine stating the reason for their absence was their understanding that the life of the 20th parliament had expired the night before (midnight of Thursday, 25th April).



Speaker of Parliament Hon Godfrey Thoma, MP

The nine members cited the president's advice, read out in parliament on Thursday, 18th April, to dissolve parliament. However, since the advice has not been properly referred to the House nor have members had the opportunity to debate it, the dissolution cannot yet come into effect.

The speaker then made a statement expressing his disappointment over the absences.

In his statement the speaker said that the nine absent members were well aware that the Supreme Court has held "that the 7 day time period leading up to dissolution begins to run from the time that the debate begins. As there has so far been no opportunity for debate, it is

clear that parliament could not have been lawfully dissolved yesterday [Thursday, 25th April]."

"In any case, Article 41(4) requires the Speaker to take action, at a specific point in time, to dissolve the House. Parliament does not dissolve automatically except when it reaches its full three year term or when, following the successful motion of no confidence, parliament fails to elect a new President within 7 days."

The Constitution is the supreme law of Nauru adopted in 1968 by the people through the Constitutional Convention. It creates the three branches of government: the executive (Cabinet), the legislature (Parliament) and the judiciary (the Supreme Court) and each of those three branches is bound to act in accordance with the Constitution.

Article 54 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court exclusive jurisdiction to 'determine any question arising under or involving the interpretation or effect of [the] Constitution.' The Court was exercising this jurisdiction when it decided the two recent cases concerning the correct interpretation of Article 41.

Parliament will sit again on Thursday 2 May at 10am. This is the next opportunity for debate of the President's advice for dissolution to begin.

The election of Godfrey Thoma as speaker comes after the resignation this month (Thursday, 18 April) of former Speaker Ludwig Scotty.

Mr Thoma is the second-longest serving member after Ludwig Scotty.

He was first elected into parliament in 1995 as member for Aiwo and served as minister for transport and RONPHOS during the 12th, 13th and 14th parliaments.

Health and Education collaborate for better student care at the Able-Disable centre

Minister for Health Honourable Shadlog Bernicke attended a special assembly at the Able Disable Centre (ADC) this morning (Friday, 26 April) in recognition of the successful collaboration between Health and Education.

The assembly was hosted by the ADC and began with an opening prayer and singing of the national anthem.

Special Education Adviser Ms Angela Spalding then welcomed Mr Bernicke and other distinguished guests.

Minister Bernicke addressed the attendees on the importance of the collaboration between the two departments.

Certificates were awarded to the students followed by a tour of the facility highlighting the various improvements made to the Centre.

On a previous occasion, the ADC expressed the need for medical support in which the Minister encouraged and a team of medical practitioners were called in this week (24 April) to carry out general health and dental checks for the students.

The medical team is made up of pediatrician Dr Peter Asuo, dentist Dr Sililo Tomiki and physiotherapist Romulo Qereqertabua.

“As some of you will be aware many of our lovely students have complex health needs and Special Education is somewhere where the philosophy of holistic care is vital,” Ms Spalding said.

“The team have promised to come back to see our students once a month which will have a major impact on our students health and well-being.”

The ADC and its new medical support team are focusing on involving the community as well as hopes of enlisting a public health nurse on their team.

The health visitations will be a monthly event•



Top: Health Minister Bernicke with student at the Centre.

Bottom: Pediatrician Dr Peter Asuo with a student and her mother in one of the first aid rooms

Photo: Angela Spalding



Nauru students returned home as student protests escalate at PNG university

The five Nauruan students studying at the University of Goroka in Papua New Guinea returned home this week (25 April) amidst concerns for their safety as student protests escalates at the university campus.

Last week students of the University in the province of Goroka boycotted their classes and protested against the University's administration and its reluctance to address issues regarding student welfare.

The five Nauruan students that were taking a specialized secondary teacher degree course at the university were moved to the residence of a university lecturer and his family when the protests escalated.

Requests were made by the concerned parents for the Education department to arrange the return of the students as tension mounted.

Education Minister Aloysius Amanwo stated that while he would like the students to finish their studies, their safety and welfare was of greater importance.

Gwein Jose, Kylene Kepae, Jennifer Dekarube, Juvina Akua, and Rosena Detenamo had successfully completed the Introductory Program at the Nauru Teacher's Institution (NTI) in 2011 and were in their second year of a four year course at Goroka.

Their scholarships are funded by the Australian government's development aid program – AusAID.

The Education Department is now sourcing alternate institutions as they will not be returning to PNG.

The students were greeted upon arrival at the airport by Minister Amwano and Member of Parliament Milton Dube•



Education Minister Amwano and Aiwu MP Dube greet students returning from PNG's University of Goroka amidst protests at the university

Nauru tsunami support plan nears completion

The National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) office is progressing to the final stages of the National Tsunami Support Plan (TSP).

The NDRM office is currently awaiting submissions for the Plan from relevant stakeholders, which were due for submission last week (Friday, 26th April).

Work on the TSP continued after a National Disaster workshop held in November 2012. The workshop was facilitated by the Pacific Islands Geosciences Commission (SOPAC) in conjunction with the NDRM office.

The TSP outlines the rules and responsibilities of Government agencies and stakeholders, in the event of a tsunami.

A communications flow chart was also drafted in the plan, outlining the proper channels of communication for the dissemination of tsunami advice. This chain of communication begins with the Commissioner of Police Richard Britten who is the National Coordinator for disaster response and the first point of contact for tsunami reports and updates.

Furthermore, a PacWave 13 Tabletop exercise workshop is expected to be conducted next month (May). This is a classroom exercise designed to evaluate tsunami threats and prepare response plans for the country.

Tsunami messages and warnings from the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre are closely monitored by the National Disaster Coordinator Richard Britten and deputy coordinator Roy Harris•

Nauru takes the lead in holding national consultations for SIDS conference on sustainable development

As the chair for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Nauru has taken the lead to be the first member state of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) to undertake its national-level preparations in the lead up to the SIDS conference on sustainable development.

The national multi-stakeholder consultation, held this month (16-18 April) was facilitated by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT) and supported by the Nauru Permanent Mission to the United Nations sustainable development focal point in collaboration with the Department of Finance through the Planning Aid Division (PAD).

The purpose of the consultation is to assess the progress on the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) including a review of the gaps in implementation, address new and emerging challenges and a vision for future implementation with the aim of providing useful inputs to the upcoming SIDS meetings and the United Nations processes for sustainable development.

President Sprent Dabwido officially opened the three-day event with Secretary for DFAT Michael Aroi offering welcome remarks and a brief introduction of the program.

Sustainable Development Adviser to the Nauru Mission Mrs Margo Deiye led the consultations with the PAD's Director of Social & Economic Planning, Mr John Limen.

Ms Jillian Campbell from the UN-ESCAP Regional Office Fiji also attended the national consultations in a supportive role to the national process.

"Nauru needs to be seen as driving the SIDS preparatory process as the Chair of AOSIS to set the level of ambition for other SIDS to follow with aim to achieving a concise, forward looking and action-oriented outcome document for the Third SIDS conference," Mrs Deiye said.

The objective of the SIDS preparatory process is to identify inputs for the conference outcome that is largely drawn from member countries national priorities within the three SIDS regions. The three SIDS regions encompass the Pacific, Caribbean and Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea.

"The outcome of the consultations is Nauru's National Assessment Report that will serve as the national input for Nauru for the 2014 SIDS Conference. The findings of the consultations exemplified that Nauru remains a 'special case' in achieving sustainable development due to its small size, extreme isolation, narrow resource base, isolation from markets, diseconomies of scale and capacity limitations which pose major challenge.

"Moreover, the constrained resource base, dependency on imports for food and energy security and high level of aid received has resulted in extreme vulnerability to external forces such as global food and energy prices, financial and economic crises.

"It was identified that Nauru is highly vulnerable to climate change, sea level rise, ocean acidification and natural disasters and these will further exacerbate the problems of water availability and environmental impact of the mining," Mrs Deiye said.

The national consultation will feed into the regional meetings. For Nauru the regional meeting will take place in Fiji in July 2013, which will be followed by the interregional meeting of the three SIDS regions in September that will be held at the Ministerial-level in Barbados.

Finally the launching of the intergovernmental preparatory committee (PrepCom) also known as the "negotiations" with the UN member States or partners (non-SIDS members) at the United Nations in January 2014 in New York.

The intergovernmental preparatory process will lead to the final Third SIDS International Conference in Apia, Samoa to be held in August or September of 2014•



Sustainable Development Adviser Margo Deiye leads national consultations for SIDS conference

Maree Bacigalupo reappointed secretary of health

The Health Ministry has re-appointed former secretary of health Maree Bacigalupo to the position through the bilateral agreement between the Governments of Nauru and Australia under the auspices of the Pacific Technical Assistance Mechanism (PACTAM).

Ms Bacigalupo commenced her two year appointment last month (3rd April) with intentions of improving and accomplishing health priorities.

Ms Bacigalupo is no stranger to the Health Department, as she was appointed the same position in 2005 for two years.



Secretary for Health Maree Bacigalupo re-joins Nauru health

"I am pleased with the progress the health department has made the last time I was here," Ms Bacigalupo said.

Some areas of notable improvement include the expansion of health positions taken up by local and expatriate staff, and the completion of scholarships granted to Nauruan students studying in Kiribati and Fiji.

Additionally, Ms Bacigalupo notes the introduction of new health legislation and completion of building works around hospital premises as major accomplishments.

"More improvements can be made and the work needs to continue to meet those changes," Ms Bacigalupo said.

She envisions a Health department that builds on local staff capacity and less dependent on expatriate personnel.

Prior to coming to Nauru Ms Bacigalupo worked in rural South Australia as a health manager and has also done some work for the Secretariat of the Pacific Community•

Masau Detudamo wraps up duties at the Fiji Embassy

The Nauru High Commission's First Secretary Mr Masau Detudamo will be joining his colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade in Nauru next month after the arrival of his replacement Ms Kim Aroi.

Mr Detudamo had been with the Department for several years before his appointment in December 2011 as First Secretary.

He represented the High Commission in various areas such as education, job recruitment and liaising with overseas Government agencies.

Mr Detudamo was also involved in addressing the needs of Nauruans living and studying in Fiji notably the response and assistance provided to students following the fire damage at Levuka Public School in 2012, where six Nauruan students attended.

Mr Detudamo worked closely with the school and identified an immediate and urgent need for mattresses, bed sheets and pillows which were donated by the Nauru High Commission. Last year he officially opened the Ba Provincial Freebird Institute on behalf of the High Commission which donated towards refurbishing the science laboratory.

Mr Detudamo also worked closely with the Fiji Ambassador in finalizing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the reduction in school and immigration fees.

Additionally, Mr Detudamo assisted in the facilitation of the Fiji Volunteer Scheme (FVS), which resulted in the recruitment of seven volunteer Fijian teachers. The High Commission is also in the process of recruiting an accountant for the Nauru Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority (NFMRA) under the MOA.

Mr Detudamo's most recent work included working closely with the Korean Embassy in regards to the donation of Government vehicles which arrived in March.

He says he is looking forward to his new job placement upon his return to Nauru.

Mr Peter Jacob will replace Ms Aroi who served as Private Secretary to the President for a number of years•



Masau Detudamo will be re-posted to Nauru next month (May). His replacement Kim Aroi takes up the post of first secretary at the Fiji Embassy this week

The Nauru Bulletin is a fortnightly publication of the Government of the Republic of Nauru.

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