



Nauru Bulletin

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Parliament passes Ronwan distribution bill 2013

The Nauru Parliament convened its last sitting for the year on 19 December with a number of statements presented including the bill that would determine the fate of the closely watched RONWAN principal fund.

In his Second reading Speech, the Minister for the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust (NPRT) Hon Shadlog Bernicke said the “bill represents a continuation of the Baron Waqa Government to not only listen to the voices of the constituents of Nauru – but to deliver the reforms and improvements they have sought for a long period of time.”

The Ronwan fund is one of four funds held with the NPRT with dividends paid annually to beneficiaries.

The Ronwan Distribution Act 2013 will now enable a full payout of the funds effectively giving Nauruans control of their own wealth.

“The introduction of the Ronwan Distribution Bill represents the conclusion to the independent management of the landowners’ royalty trust fund and facilitates the return of beneficiary income and capital into the hands of the landowners,” Minister Bernicke said.

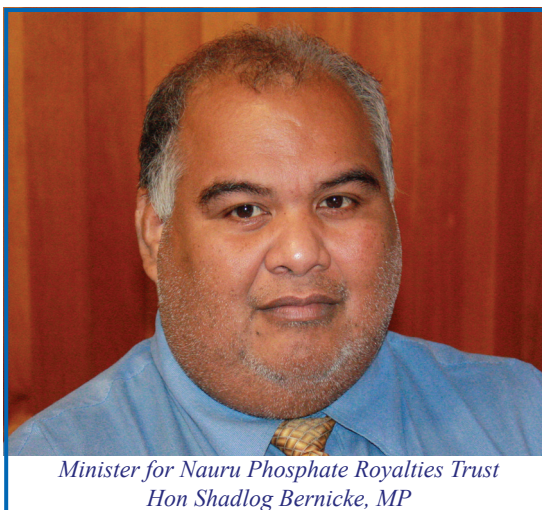
The Bill also coincides with the Government’s recent announcement of the introduction of the Bendigo Bank on Nauru.

“This government is committed to maximising beneficiary entitlements and has elected to account and record all entitlements payable by Government to the Trust. These debts will be paid to beneficiaries.

“Government will ensure all amounts payable to the Trust will be quantified and independently audited and will ensure all beneficiary entitlements are repaid overtime when Government

revenues allow for repayment to occur.

“Beneficiaries will be informed of their entitlements via the issuing of an independent statement outlining their entitlement balance on a yearly basis,” the minister said.



*Minister for Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust
Hon Shadlog Bernicke, MP*

Minister Bernicke highlighted the key elements of the Bill and how it will impact beneficiaries:

- As of 1 January 2014 the cash rate payable to the owners of phosphate bearing land will increase from \$14 to \$20.50;
- No further royalties will be paid to the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust (NPRT) after 31 December 2013;
- The distribution of Ronwan income for the period of 1 July 2007 to 31 December 2013 will be paid by 31 January 2014;
- The distribution of the residual capital retained within the Ronwan fund will be paid by 28 February 2014;
- The NPRT will be dissolved by 1 July 2014.

The Act provides that after 31 December 2013 “payments to NPRT in respect of Funds 1, 2, 3 and 4 shall permanently stop.

It also provides that Fund 1, the Long Term Investment Fund, shall have its assets transferred to the Government by the NPRT.

Fund 2, the Nauruan Landowners Royalties trust Fund, “shall be vested in the landowners directly in proportion to the landowners respective interest in Fund 2. Such debt shall be non-recourse and unsecured and shall not bear interest.”

Fund 3, the Nauru Housing Fund, shall have any assets transferred to the Government by the NPRT.

Fund 4, the Nauru Rehabilitation Fund, shall have any assets transferred to the Government also by the NPRT.

The remaining funds such as the Nauru Royalty Fund and the Nauru Development Fund will also have any assets transferred by the NPRT

to the Government.

The Nauru Landowners Cash Royalties Fund will have its assets transferred to RONPHOS.

All these Funds are expected to be wound up on 30 June 2014.

The Act also provides protection of members and others for “any and all acts, things done, omissions, failures, negligence, recklessness or abandonment save to the extent of any fraud, after the date of commencement of this Act.”•

[The Ronwan Distribution Act 2013 may be accessed online at <http://ronlaw.gov.nr> in the ‘Act as passed’ database.

Ministerial statements will be circulated via the GIO email distribution as they come to hand]

Australia foreign minister Bishop in Nauru as part of annual pacific visit

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop led a bipartisan delegation of parliamentarians to Nauru this month (18 December) as part of an annual visit to the Pacific.

Ms Bishop said Nauru was of particular interest because of the long standing friendship, historical links and shared interests between Nauru and Australia.

The delegation arrived on board a Royal Australian Air Force flight from the Solomon Islands before flying on to Vanuatu later in the afternoon (18 Dec).

The delegation was met at the airport by Nauru's Secretary for Foreign Affairs & Trade, the Australian High Commissioner Bruce Cowled and members of the Australian High Commission.

The protocol welcome at the government office shortly after arrival included the playing of national anthems of Australia and Nauru and an inspection of the all-female police honour guard.



Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop greeted on arrival last week (18 Dec) by Nauru DFAT staff

Afterwards, a closed door meeting with President Baron Waqa, Ministers and members of government caucus was held in the Cabinet room with discussions centring on a range of engagement activities between Nauru and Australia such as Nauru's economic activity, the aid budget, Australia's support for fisheries management, an infrastructure and investment fund, the opportunity to open up banking services, health outcomes and the Regional Processing Centre (RPC).

Following the cabinet meeting, Ms Bishop and her delegation visited RPC 1 where they attended another meeting with service providers of the centre.

This meeting was essentially an opportunity for the service providers to update the minister on work being done at the centres and the working relationship between them and the Nauru Government.

Ms Bishop said her delegation received a broad understanding of the diverse range of services that are being provided at the RPC.

Lunch was later hosted by His Excellency President Baron Waqa at the Menen hotel.

President Waqa and Ms Bishop both gave speeches highlighting the ongoing mutual support and respect both countries have enjoyed, before exchanging gifts.

Australia provides approximately 60 per cent of overseas development assistance to Nauru and the minister expressed her delight in seeing the outcome of investment in education and health sectors.

Ms Bishop and her delegation were later escorted to the Nauru Secondary School that was recently refurbished under Australian aid and the TVET centre, prior to their departure shortly after 3.00pm Nauru time.

Ms Bishop was accompanied on this trip by adviser Gabby Young, Parliamentary Secretary Senator Brett Mason, deputy Leader of the Australian Opposition and Shadow minister for Foreign Affairs Tanya Plibersek, Deputy Chief of Staff to Ms Plibersek Daniel Doran, Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Matt Thistlethwaite, Ambassador for Women and Girls Natasha Stott Despoja, First Assistant Secretary Pacific Division Department of Foreign Affairs Kathy Klugman and media representative Antony Walker.

This was Ms Bishop's first visit to Nauru since becoming an Australian government minister.

President Waqa hosts Christmas banquet



President Baron Waqa (front left) leads cabinet, caucus and parliament staff in a Christmas carol

His Excellency President Baron Waqa and Madam Louisa Waqa hosted their first President's Christmas banquet last week (20 December) outside the Government office complex.

The evening began with an opening prayer led by Reverend Roger Mwareow.

With a change in the usual arrangements, guests were served their barbecue dinner and entertainment in the form of carol singing

was provided by the various departments, including a number by President Waqa and government members.

Special guests included senior citizens, cabinet ministers, Speaker of Parliament Ludwig Scotty, members of parliament and members of the diplomatic corps.

RPC interviews ongoing



RSDO Registrar and review Tribunal member Stella Duburiya says interviews are in three stages before recommendation for asylum is granted

The Nauru Refugee Status Determination Office (RSDO) has to date conducted transfer interviews of approximately 600 applications, of which around 200 are progressing to the second stage of interviews, with more applications currently under review.

RSDO Registrar and Review Tribunal member, Ms Stella Duburiya explains that interviews are done in three stages before transferees can be granted a recommendation for asylum.

Firstly, new arrivals would sit the transfer interview followed by a second interview to be conducted by the Claims Assessment Providers (CAPs) team to clarify those claims.

Following the CAPs interview, a final interview is conducted and a recommendation made by the RSD officer. Those recommendations are then reviewed by the Secretary of Justice who then notifies the asylum seeker immediately of the outcome.

According to Ms Duburiya, interviews are progressing well with about 200 claims completing the first stage of the interview process and awaiting CAPs interviews due to take place in February.

The RSD Office is outfitted with trained local officers with more expected to undergo training to meet the growing number of asylum seekers arriving on Nauru and lodging their claims for asylum•

Correctional services commend graduates in educational programs

The Nauru Correctional Services celebrated the graduation of nine inmates from an education program that they believe will “clear out the old ways, and make way for the new.”

Minister for Education Mrs Charmaine Scotty attended the graduation ceremony this month (12 Dec) and congratulated the inmates who had successfully completed a capacity building program that is designed to assist in their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

The Department of Youth Affairs created the Work and Life Development Training Program which covered courses such as Basic English, Music, and Nauruan history.

The program began earlier in the year (4 March) and finished this month (2 Dec)•



Corrections inmates with their certificates attained under the Work and Life Development Training program

Our Airline's third aircraft VH-PNI named - Itsirir



Our Airline sponsored a public competition to name its third aircraft VH-PNI. The winning entry “itsirir” was announced on Christmas day with an equal first entry by 15 year old Misha Kaleah Canon and 10 year old Aie Menke. Misha and Aie are both from Aiwo District. They attend Nauru Secondary School and Nauru Primary School respectively.

The *itsirir* or Nauru reed warbler is brown and white in colour and is said to be endemic to Nauru. It is one of two bird species that are at risk of dying out, according to the Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment.

The runners-up were eight year old Sina Rigamoto of Yaren District, seven year old Honey Duburiya of Buada District, and 13 year old Millanica Batsiua of Yaren District.

Our Airline takes this opportunity to thank all those who took part in this competition, and would like to wish all a safe and blessed Christmas celebrations for 2013 and a prosperous New Year for 2014•

*Seasons greetings and blessings for
a happy and prosperous
New Year*

*Thank you for your support and
contributions throughout 2013*

*from the
Government Information Office*



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