



Nauru Bulletin

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Nauru government welcomes chief justice resignation - announces new law reforms

The Government of Nauru has welcomed the resignation of chief justice Geoffrey Eames and has announced a series of reforms that will create a more effective and transparent judiciary.

Justice Minister David Adeang said the resignation will allow the Government to fast-track the reforms that were backed by the former chief justice, which includes the appointment of more Supreme Court justices, a maximum contract period for judges and magistrates, and a separate registrar of the court.

Mr Adeang explained the Government was already in the process of appointing new justices and will now look for a new chief justice.

He said that despite continual comments

within the Australian and New Zealand media about Nauru neglecting the rule of law, the country was in fact supporting and advancing the rule of law with the new reforms.

“In the past Nauru has operated with only one chief justice and one resident magistrate, who was also the registrar of the court. There was no limit on the time a member of the judiciary could serve.

“As you can imagine in a small country like Nauru personal friendships form and this can potentially – and I am talking generally and not aiming this at any specific person – compromise the integrity of the court.”

The minister said it was ironic that the reforms created to enhance accountability were being incorrectly

portrayed as doing the opposite.

“We have unfortunately been subject to a campaign of misinformation and very unfair criticism from sections of the media and some lawyers who know nothing about Nauru, but we choose to ignore this because the decisions we are making are about improving the legal process.

“For example, two year contracts for the judiciary with a possible extension for a further two years will prevent much of the cronyism and corruption we have seen for too long.”

A new magistrate and registrar of the Supreme Court have already been appointed.

Steering committee updated on Bendigo bank's progress

The Bendigo Bank Steering committee was briefed on Friday (14 March) regarding the current status and set up of a branch of the Bank of Bendigo and Adelaide.

The teleconference between the committee and representatives of Bendigo Bank in Australia was held at the Chief Secretary's conference room.

The committee was notified that Bendigo Bank initially had issues with the extension of the bank's license to issue bank cards overseas which caused slight delays in the distribution of the cards. The cards were anticipated to have arrived in February three weeks after the initial bank seminars.

The committee was also told that Bendigo bank representatives are expected to return to Nauru on 31st March for one week to distribute bank cards, give advice on banking services and offer another opportunity for members of the public to open accounts with the bank. The bank will also be accepting deposits from account holders during the week of 31st March.



Members of the Bendigo bank steering committee in a teleconference with the bank's representatives in Australia

Cabealawa and Leung heads Nauru judiciary

The newly appointed resident magistrate Ropate Cabealawa and registrar Graham Leung are looking forward to the challenge ahead and in continuing the judicial work of the courts as well as share their knowledge and experience in law with their local staff.

Resident Magistrate Cabealawa is on a three year contract with Nauru with the initial six month appointment as resident magistrate. After which he has the option of reapplying or take up the role of senior state counsel with the office of Solicitor-General.



Ropate Cabealawa has signed a three contract but takes up the initial post of resident magistrate for six months

Mr Cabealawa who is passionate about law and the work he does says he sees his role in Nauru as an extension of his role with the Government of Fiji where he also served as resident magistrate.

“I will continue the work already started [in Nauru] and also provide training for my court staff on procedures and processes and hopefully to improve what we have here in the magistrate’s court,” the resident magistrate said.

“I have quite a backlog of cases to deal with so I’m working my way in to those cases. I’m working very closely with the court staff and also the public legal adviser - the director of public prosecutions, on how best we can set some timetables.”

Mr Cabealawa holds a Bachelor of Law from the University of Waikato, New Zealand and a Master of Law from the University of Pune, India.

Immediately before taking up the position in Nauru, Mr Cabealawa was the resident magistrate for the Fiji Government since 2009 and worked as a research assistant with the Fiji Law Reform Commission as well as being a government lawyer with Fiji’s Office of the Solicitor General.

Mr Cabealawa has held numerous other high profile positions in the region including admission into the High Courts of New Zealand and Fiji and the Supreme Court of Tasmania.

The role of registrar and resident magistrate were previously performed by one person however Registrar Graham Leung hopes that the separation of the two positions will attract a benefit.

“By separating the two positions allows the magistrate to concentrate solely on adjudication and dealing with court

matters... and my role as registrar will deal with more of the administrative matters,” Mr Leung said.

Having travelled extensively in the world and the Pacific Mr Leung is reminded of the historical ties that Nauru and Fiji have and says he is excited about his time in Nauru.

Mr Leung says the historical ties and relationship between Nauru and Fiji makes his appointment all the more important.

“So for me as a Fijian coming here at this critical juncture in your [Nauru’s] development and in your history, is a huge privilege and I feel enormously privileged to be here and in the short time that I will be here to make a constructive, solid and a useful contribution to your country.

“I’m a firm believer in regionalism, I’m a firm believer in the Pacific family, I’m a firm believer in the partnerships that we have and should be developed.”

Mr Leung also believes that as a much larger and more developed Pacific country Fiji should play a role in sharing some of its skills, knowledge and capacity with its regional neighbours.

“It’s my dream that in the relatively short space of time, given the proper training a lot of these positions will be filled by Nauruans.”



Graham Leung joins the Nauru court team as registrar for a six month appointment

Former president of the Fiji Law Society, Graham Leung will take up the appointment for six months.

Prior to taking up the appointment Mr Leung was the senior trainer at the Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team/Secretariat of the Pacific Community (RRRT/SPC) based in Fiji.

He has over 30 years of international experience in his field of work and also served as the former principal and deputy director of the public prosecutions office in Fiji and vice-president of LAWASIA;

He also served as the managing director/owner of Fiji law firm Howards & Associates, as well as former chairman of the Fiji Electoral Commission, chairman of the Fiji New Zealand Education Trust and former director of the International Commission of the Jurist (ICJ).

Mr Leung holds a Bachelor of Law from the University of Adelaide, Australia and a Master of Law from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), USA•

Nauru government opens office space establishing presence at RPC

The Department of Justice and Border Control officially opened the offices for two of its three operations managers at the Regional Processing Centre (RPC) this week (10 March).

Justice Minister Hon David Adeang cut the ribbon to officially open the office spaces while Secretary for Justice Lionel Aingimea said opening remarks and explained the importance of having a presence for the Nauru Government at each of the three camps.

Three government employed operation managers will be stationed at each camp to oversee the work being done at each camp as well as to provide a direct link between the Government of Nauru and the various service providers at the RPC.



The Nauru Government understands the importance of the work being done at the RPC and sees that by having a presence in each camp will ensure a continuous flow of information between the RPC, the processing and government.

While the first office was already established at camp one, the newer offices will serve the same purpose.

The three operation managers are Berilyn Jeremiah at camp one, Brene Karl at camp two and Bervena Adeang at camp three•

Minister for Justice Hon David Adeang and Operations Manager Brene Karl cut the ribbon to officially open the government managed offices at the RPC camps

Women's day 2014 - Innovating education for young women and young men

This is the eighth year that Nauru is celebrating International Women's Day with the local theme *Innovating education for young women and men*.

The event was celebrated over two days (8 and 10 March) with a range of activities and guest speakers hosted by the Women's Affairs department at the Centennial hall.

On Saturday (8 Mar) the day commenced with a prayer by Wanda Hiram and concluded in the evening with the lighting of candles to commemorate the suffering of women worldwide.

Minister for Home Affairs Mrs Charmaine Scotty was present for the occasion.

Having fallen on the weekend, a public holiday was declared the following Monday (10 March) and a church service honouring international women's day was held at the Orro Congregational Church.

Refreshments and entertainment followed across the road at the Centennial hall.

Among the guest speakers was Dr Angelique Makutu. Dr Makutu is the first Nauruan female doctor and the first Nauru doctor graduate in almost 20 years.

International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities•

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