



# Nauru Bulletin

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## Parliament passes 2015-16 budget

The national budget for 2015-16 was tabled and passed at this month's parliament sitting on Wednesday 17 June with a budget surplus estimated at \$140,000.

The government expects to collect \$115.2-M in revenue over the year while expenditure is expected to be \$115.1-M.

Is it expected that development partners will provide a further \$27.6-M in assistance to Nauru during the year.

Finance Minister Hon David Adeang said the government remains committed to its strategy established last year that is to "maintain limited fiscal expansion, direct significant savings to the future and undertake key infrastructure investment that has lasting economic and social impact and future proofs Nauru against economic shock."

"This budget continues this strategy but with the theme of 'Rebuilding Nauru'.

"It does this by both providing funds for significant public and social infrastructure investment and through setting aside trust funds in these prosperous times for the future," Minister Adeang said.

The government has committed a further \$10.4-M for the Nauru Trust Fund, in addition to the already available \$10-M set aside in previous budget allocations.

"The major source of revenue for the Government now comes from the operation of the Regional Processing Centre in Nauru."

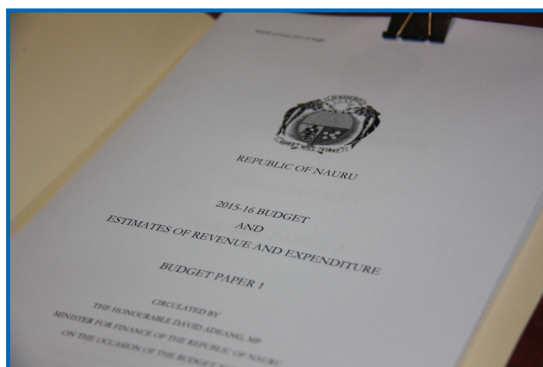
The governments of Nauru and Australia recently concluded a five year plan that guarantees annual revenues of \$31.5-M from visa fees for asylum seekers and resettled refugees in Nauru and other associated costs from hosting the RPC.

Fisheries comes in as the second largest

contributor to government revenues with an expected \$26-M from the licensing of vessels and auctioning of fishing days in Nauru waters.

Customs is expected to contribute \$17.4-M from customs and excise duties while the Nauru Revenue Office is to return \$10.4-M from income tax.

Contributors to the annual expenditure will come from the increased demand for the Community Housing Scheme at \$5.5-M while ports will absorb \$2-M.



A further \$2.6-M is set aside to repay phosphate royalties dating back to 2011 as well as \$2.5-M to repay Bank of Nauru depositors.

Minister Adeang said the repayment towards phosphate royalties "will be in addition to the existing Ronphos royalty debt repayment to landowners of \$2.6-million."

The health budget is allocated \$1.5-M in light of the changes to the Australian aid policies whereby this has been removed from the aid allocation this financial year.

"Health will continue to engage locum doctors or specialists to come to Nauru. We (Nauru government) anticipate this will ease the referral costs."

New items in the budget include the introduction of a \$200 fortnightly wage for labour work carried out by prison inmates.

"This \$200 payment per fortnight will be paid directly to the families of inmates whilst they are in prison, in assist them whilst their main bread winner is incarcerated," Minister Adeang said.

The government's financial support for death claims has been abolished. In the past the government has been providing \$2000 to support families prepare for funerals.

Death claims were introduced during the financial crisis when the government sought to assist families. The government now sees that times are more fruitful and the population much better off.

A school age allowance scheme is also introduced with \$1.5-M allocated to address school truancy and performance.

Parents will be required to open bank accounts for each child whereby \$5 a day will be deposited into that account.

Similarly the government wants to recognise skills within the public service and the associated program of position restructuring, therefore \$2-M is allocated for reclassifications.

Two and a half million dollars is allocated to improve the existing clean and green program.

The recent takeover of fuel supply and operations to FSM company Vital Fuel has alleviated up to \$20-M of the government's costs. However, government will continue to subsidise the fuel for power generation Finance .

Minister Adeang concluded his budget speech stating that the budget maintains fiscal responsibility and save for future investments.

"It is truly a budget to 'Rebuild Nauru'."•

## Protests outside parliament disrupt proceedings

The sitting of the Nauru Parliament last week (Tuesday 16 June) was recessed an hour into proceedings due to the assembling of a protest outside parliament chambers causing disruption to the proceedings.

The protest was led by suspended opposition MPs Mathew Batsiua, Sprent Dabwido and Squire Jeremiah.

They made several demands including the resignation of President Baron Waqa and finance minister David Adeang as well as calls to speak with the speaker of parliament and the third member of Meneng, Mr Tawaki Kam to address their concerns.

As a result Opposition MP Mathew Batsiua was arrested and charged with Disturbing the legislature. He was remanded in police custody until his court hearing on Thursday 18 June. He was granted bail. The penalty for Disturbing the Legislature carries a maximum penalty of up to three years imprisonment.

More arrested are expected as police interview witnesses and go through photos and video footage taken during the protest.

The Nauru Police Force and other protective personnel stationed on the front entrance of parliament clashed with protesters who tried to force their way into the building. Several police officers have been reported to have suffered injuries as a result.

The protest continued into a second day on Wednesday 17 June as parliament reconvened with continued demands on the president, finance minister, speaker of parliament and Mr Kam.

Despite the protests parliamentary proceedings continued uninterrupted with the Nauru Police Force in riot gear stationed outside at the main entry points of the parliament building.

The Supplementary Appropriation Bill #9 2014-15 was passed along with the National Budget 2015-16.

## MPs charged over protest

The protests outside the Nauru Parliament last week (16-17 June) resulted in the arrest and detention of three opposition MPs for their involvement in the protest.

Member for the Constituency of Boe Mathew Batsiua and Members for Menen Sprent Dabwido and Squire Jeremiah were arrested and detained on separate occasions before appearing before Resident Magistrate Emma Garo in the Nauru District Court.

The first arrest was for Boe MP Mathew Batsiua who appeared before Resident Magistrate Emma Garo at the Nauru District Court on a charge of Disturbing the Legislature following the public protest outside parliament house last week (Tuesday 16 June).

Mr Batsiua was arrested on the first day of the protests (16 June), was remanded in custody until his court appearance on Thursday 18 June.

The protest continued for a second day to Wednesday 17 June.

In her ruling, Her Worship stated that the defendant Mr Batsiua “conducted himself in a disorderly and violent manner, tending to interrupt the proceedings of the said Parliament.”

The prosecution initially made an application that Mr Batsiua should be remanded in custody on the grounds that it is in the public’s interest and safety, citing that Mr Batsiua was one of the ringleaders of the protest. The prosecution also noted that the Nauru Police have yet to collect witness statements from the public and police officers.

However, Resident Magistrate Garo granted Mr Batsiua’s application for bail.

“The prosecution has not submitted that any fears would not be allayed by bail being granted with strict conditions. The Prosecution has not discharged the onus to persuade me to refuse bail,” Resident Magistrate Emma Garo said.

Some of the conditions of Mr Batsiua’s bail include surrendering his passport over to the court, to keep the peace and be of good behavior whilst on bail and not to communicate with any of the people present at Parliament on the day of the protest by any means whatsoever.

Additionally, on Friday 19 June the other MPs Mr Dabwido and Mr Jeremiah were arrested and charged with counts of being in a security restricted area, unlawful assembly, riot and disturbing the legislature.

The two men appeared in the Nauru District Court on Saturday 20 June, where they submitted an application for bail.



*Police block protestors outside parliament house during the two days of protest (16 and 17 June)*

*Continued pg 3...*

## Nauru Airlines makes inaugural flight into FSM

Nauru's national air carrier flew to the Kosrae and Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) for the inaugural flight at the weekend, 11 June.

The weekly flights to the north will connect Nauru, Tarawa, Majuro, Kosrae and Pohnpei to the south in Fiji and Brisbane.

It also serves as an alternative travel option for travellers in the north to fly to other destinations such as Guam and the US.

As the plane landed in Pohnpei and made its way along the runway, received a water salute from the Pohnpei fire service as it pulled in to park.

His Excellency President Baron Waqa, Madam Louisa Waqa and the official delegation were greeted and welcomed with the traditional sakau drinking ceremony.

The official event for the inaugural flight was hosted by Nauru Airlines at the Mangrove Bay hotel the following evening, Saturday 12 June.

In his welcome address Nauru Airline's Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Bowmaker said the airline has seen great support for the development of Nauru Airlines and the foundation laid for progress, thanks to the support of President Waqa, Minister David Adeang and the government Cabinet.

Mr Bowmaker said the airline was fortunate to have three very supportive presidents of Nauru, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and the FSM.

The CEO thanked RMI President Christopher Loeak for his vision of extending flights from Nauru to the Marshall Islands as well as thanks to the members of the task force set up by President Loeak.

Mr Bowmaker acknowledges the vision of the President of FSM Peter Christian for looking beyond the Marshall Islands and into the FSM.

The CEO said the purpose of the flight are numerous including "plugging the gap of the north and south, bring in visitors, develop market and trade and reconnect families" as well as "spread the word into other countries like Australia of how great these pacific countries and destinations are."

President Waqa was personally encouraged with the partnership between Majuro and the FSM and the development of air services in the region.



*FSM President Peter Christian presents the air carrier permit for Nauru Airlines to President Baron Waqa at the flight inauguration reception hosted by Nauru Airlines in Pohnpei*

"It has been 15 years since Air Nauru last serviced Pohnpei with regular flights. The absence of an operator linking south, central and north Pacific has hampered the development of business, trade and family links because of the high cost and long travel times between our countries.

"These flights will offer our people even more choice of travel opportunities between our Nations and bring more overseas visitors into our countries as well.

"I understand as well that studies are proceeding whereby Nauru Airlines is reviewing the possibility of services that will reach further into the other FSM states, and perhaps, beyond," President Waqa said.

A spokesman gave remarks on behalf of President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) thanking the leaders of Pohnpei for allowing the three countries (Nauru, FSM, RMI) "to imprint our footprint on their precious and sacred soil," and agreed with the airline's CEO that "it took a long time to come to fruition."

FSM President Peter Christian then presented the air carrier permit for Nauru Airlines to President Waqa before sharing a bit of history that his first encounter with Air Nauru was with the Fokker 28 planes.

Mr Christian likened the new destinations as a "little path between neighbours in villages joining them is what Nauru Airlines is doing, joining the neighbours of Nauru, RMI and FSM," as well as "provide the opportunity for FSM to go via Majuro to other destinations from there.

"We've taken a baby step but nonetheless a step," Mr Christian said.

## Magistrate denies bail for MPs

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The case reconvened on Tuesday 23 June, where the presiding Resident Magistrate Emma Garo read the judgment for the charges refusing bail on the "strength of the prosecution case against the two defendants; the two defendants are the ringleaders of the unlawful protest on 16 June 2015; public interest and safety issues; and resource issues with the Nauru Police Force."

Ms Garo distinguished the case from Mr Batsiua's case.

"I am not satisfied that there will not be another protest

and that if repeated it will be peaceful. Even if peaceful, if repeated, it will be lawful. Their conduct in organising another protest just a day after the first protest turned violent, shows on the face of it, a willingness to disregard the process for obtaining permits to conduct a lawful protests.

"I am therefore satisfied that the Prosecution has discharged the onus to satisfy me that there is a reasonable suspicion that the two defendants have committed offences and also that bail should be refused in the public interest. Bail is refused. Defendants remanded to 2nd July 2015," the Resident Magistrate said.

Both men have been remanded in custody until 2nd July 2015 and may appeal to the Supreme Court within 14 days.



## Parliament passes Supplementary Appropriation #9, 2014-15

Prior to tabling the budget for the new financial year Minister for Finance Hon David Adeang presented the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.9) 2014-15 for a transfer of \$550,000 of unspent department funds to cover additional expenditure.

Mr Adeang explained “at the time of the budget the Government predicted a modest budget surplus of \$409,558,” and the “Supplementary Bill maintains a zero net effect to that surplus.”

The funds will be sought from unspent funds of the Finance Other Payment provision and transferred to Presidency to cater for the Special Projects Nauru Community Housing Scheme for the rest of the 2014-15 financial year.

The amount of \$550,000 caters for a top up of \$50,000 for each of the 11 members of parliament.

“The funding from this top up has been made available from reducing the balance held with the Bank of Nauru Liquidation budget,” Minister Adeang said.

“This Government still remains stringent and vigilant in the spending of its budget.”•

## Taiwan medical team donate hearing aids, patient beds to come

The Taiwan Mobile Medical Mission met with the Minister for Health Hon Valdon Dowiyogo at the Ministry of health office last week (Thur 18 June) to donate ten sets of hearing aids.

Taiwan ambassador Joseph Chow also confirmed that his government will donate 40 hospital beds in response to a request that the minister had made on his last trip to Taiwan.

The Minister said that the beds are not only for the hospital patients but people needing special beds but living at home will also benefit from the donation.

The Nauru Government will cover the cost of freight for shipping the hospital beddings from Taiwan to Nauru.

The team paid a courtesy call on His Excellency President Barron Waqa before they departed Nauru on the following week (Wednesday 24 June).



President Waqa offered his thanks for the assistance the Taiwan Medical team has offered Nauru.

The medical team arrived on Nauru on 16 June•

## Staff take part in yoga day

A symbolic yoga program was held last week (19 June) Acknowledging the first International Day of Yoga.

The event was held at the parliament building two days ahead of the designated date of Sunday 21 June to allow greater attendance.

Mr Sanjeev Sharma was the yoga instructor and he led approximately 30 participants through a 20 minute pre-selected yoga exercise routine.

The participants included President Baron Waqa, Health Minister Valdon Dowiyogo, Education Minister Charmaine Scotty, Speaker of Parliament Ludwig Scotty, employees of the public service as well as members of the public.

Light refreshments of fresh fruit, vegetables and water were served following the yoga session.

Yoga exercise encourages healthy living•

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

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