



# Nauru Bulletin

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31 December 2018

## Final parliament for 2018

The Parliament of Nauru met on 18 December for the final sitting of 2018 with question time covering a range of issues from Ronwan to deep-sea mining and community health.

The sitting ended in the early hours of the following morning, with a number of ministerial statements and bills tabled and passed by parliament.

After the opening prayer by the Speaker, His Excellency President Baron Waqa addressed the parliament about the 50th anniversary year and called for peace during the festive season especially in regards to noise and consideration for the neighbourhood.

President Waqa also warned thieves to take heed of their disruptive and criminal activities during the busy festive season, and cautioned parents who may be encouraging such behaviour, but ended on a high note with a message of



Christmas, good tidings and a time of giving.

Speaker of Parliament Cyril Buraman advised the House of improvements being made to the building including video recording equipment and a new electronic voting system which is anticipated to be completed in the new year.

With no petitions, notices of motion or questions on notice, the first off-the-rank

in questions without notice time was posed by member for Ubenide Russ Kun on an end of year bonus for government employees.

As minister for the public service, President Waqa confirmed that instead of a bonus, Nauruan public servants will receive a salary advance for the next two pay cycles (PPE 30 Dec and PPE 13 Jan) to be paid on Friday 21 December.

Deductions of 20 per cent to recover the advance over five pay cycles will commence in the pay period ending 27 January 2019.

His Excellency also confirmed that Ronwan beneficiaries aged 40 years and below will also be receiving a payout.

Over the years, the Waqa government set up a payment schedule and made budget allocations to gradually pay off Ronwan entitlements, starting with the oldest group of Nauruans. This payout is now due for aged 40 and below. Any

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## Cenpac 'soft' launches PacCell/PacFi network on Nauru

Cenpac staff and technicians met with President Baron Waqa and cabinet ministers on Monday 17 December for the 'soft' launch of Nauru's new mobile phone and data service provider, PacCell.

President Waqa is also minister for state-owned enterprise Cenpac Corporation and, following the launch, received a new ZTE brand phone complete with PacCell Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) card from Cenpac chair Sharain Hiram to make the first call.

Cenpac has engaged in a joint venture with China-based communications company Acclinks to make PacCell services available to the people on Nauru through their outlets at Civic Centre at Aiwo and Yaren.

"This will now provide the much needed fair competition where communication is concerned on the island and hopefully this will draw down the costs for both voice and data which would benefit greatly our people," President Waqa said.



*President Waqa makes the first call using the PacCell service, with Cenpac chair Sharain Hiram*

The 'soft' launch simply means that at this stage, communications are only available between PacCell SIMs.

"Very soon, you'll be able to use both services (PacCell and/or Digicel and between) at your own convenience, at your own choice," the President said.

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remaining balances for other age groups will be looked at by the government in due time.

A question was raised on the possibility of RONphos assisting landowners rehabilitate their mined-out lands to enable them to build houses on the land.

Minister for RONphos and Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation (NRC) Aaron Cook clarified that where there is opportunity for secondary mining RONphos will look at the land again before NRC commences rehabilitation.

Minister for Ports Tawaki Kam explained the increase in tariff and increase of US\$50 per container is in line with the port redevelopment project which the minister advised is expected to commence in January 2019 and may take two years to completion.

The minister for Justice David Adeang was asked about possible resolutions to household overcrowding and dwellings that were initially lent to families which the original landowners now want returned to them.

Mr Adeang explained that this was a common practice (during the early years of independence), whereby chiefs borrowed land for a particular purpose and they would build the house, on the understanding the land would revert to the original landowner. Similarly, a young family would borrow land to get them set up as a family, and also with the understanding the land would revert to the heirs of the land. This was done during the time of district counsels under the Nauru Local Government Council (NLGC).

With the abolishment of the NLGC and counsels, the responsibility now shifts to the Cabinet who does not wish to put itself in the dilemma of deciding the fate of the dwelling and land as well as the unsavoury outcome of displacing families. And so Cabinet agrees to keep the status-quo and let whoever has been residing in the house to remain there.

A concern was raised about the deep seabed mining company, Nautilus, which is currently mining in Papua New Guinea but emerging international news report of its downward performance.

The concern is particularly in relation to Nauru's investment in deep seabed mining.

President Waqa confirmed that PNG does its own mining within its waters, whereas Nauru sponsors the company to do deep seabed exploration in international waters around Hawaii, and the mining is expected to commence in 2019.

Police-issue guns have made their way into the public which is causing much concern and unrest in the community.

Minister for Police, President Baron Waqa confirmed the police armoury was broken in to and investigation into the theft is ongoing. The president is yet to be advised whether the artilleries are in working condition.

Some queries on infrastructure development were raised on repairing footpaths, road markings and a general infrastructure plan.

### Ministerial statements

Parliament recessed for lunch to be followed by the presentation of ministerial statements, the first by President Waqa on a summary of reports of events on recent official trips beginning with the Asia Pacific Summit in Kathmandu, Nepal.

President Waqa delivered a statement on His Excellency's

understanding and interpretation of the theme, focusing on trade and politics and how these notions have come to dictate and shape the landscape of development at the regional and international level.

Minister for Sport Hon Tawaki Kam presented his statement updating the progress of work being done to the indoor sports complex and the outfitting for the upcoming weightlifting and powerlifting championships to be held in January 2019.

The sports department will also be hosting the first function for sports awards and elite scholarship awards in January 2019 as part of the Independence Day celebrations.

The AFL Nauru competition which started on 17 November, and at the time of parliament sitting, attracted 480 player registrations.

In education, Minister Charmaine Scotty updated the House on the graduation of ten students from Queensland and Fiji secondary schools, as well as three community centre teachers receiving their certificates in early childhood, and nine pre-service teachers studying at the University of New England.

"The department is committed to the recruitment of teachers, however we are still in shortage of teachers. We need more Nauruans to take up the teaching profession as teaching is the backbone of our country's development," Minister Scotty said.

President Waqa then presented a statement on Nauru's attendance at the Asia Pacific Economic Forum in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Waqa noted that apart from the PNG, the Forum Island countries including Nauru were not members of APEC but were nonetheless invited by the host country PNG for the opportunity to dialogue with the member countries.

"Leaders did sit in a round table with the presidents and prime ministers of APEC and we articulated our regional position on issues like trade, development assistance and the challenges the Pacific faces associated with climate change," Mr Waqa said.

In ports, Minister Kam reported a trip to Taiwan to meet with key officials in marine and port, and deep sea tuna purse seiners, and an update on the work of the Central Pacific Shipping Commission (CPSC).

The CPSC has provided a small reduction in Australian origin base freight of AU\$700 to the shipper while Neptune Shipping has revised its shipping to Brisbane, Suva, Honiara and Nauru commencing January 2019.

Contractors for the redevelopment of the Aiwo harbour, China Harbour Engineering Company will be mobilising equipment and personnel to Nauru in January 2019.

Cardno Emerging Markets (Australia) have been appointed as the civil works supervision consultants and will work closely with the Port Authority of Nauru and its CEO to ensure the contractor delivers a quality port and minimises project related risks and delays.

President Waqa delivered a brief report on the fifth Oceans Conference in Bali, Indonesia, under the theme *Our Ocean, Our Legacy*, which aimed to generate commitments and take actions to maintain the sustainability of the oceans.

Being the first speaker at the conference, President Baron Waqa used the opportunity to express Nauru's position on the world stage by articulating the development aspirations of Small Island Developing States (SIDS); addressing unsustainable and destructive fishing practices; and preparing for the growing consequences of greenhouse gas emissions.

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Minister Adeang then presented his statement on the government's annual audit report for fiscal year 2015-16, highlighting this being the third consecutive year that the accounts are submitted to the Parliament after a gap of 15 years.

Mr Adeang said the audit report highlights some crucial observations particularly with regard to non-compliance of the adopted accounting policies, scope limitations on a few issues and accuracy figures provided.

Recommendations were made for the government including to implement a strategy to strengthen the weaknesses.

Minister Adeang then moved to refer the accounts and audit report to the Public Accounts Committee.

President Waqa then presented a statement on the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland, summarising that COP24 delivered the minimum of what was needed to implement the Paris Agreement.

"Despite the odds, we need to keep moving forward in this process."

"The Paris Agreement was a great diplomatic accomplishment but the transformational change that is required cannot and will not start with a decision at the UNFCCC. That can only be driven by dramatically changing the politics around climate change in capitals around the world," President Waqa said.

Minister Scotty attended the same conference, COP24, to which she presented a statement on three separate ministerial level meetings.

At the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) ministerial meeting, delegates were appraised on the state of negotiations in the context of AOSIS priorities, while at the third high level ministerial dialogue on climate finance, Minister Scotty focused her intervention based on Nauru's national experience to access international climate finance.

"I emphasised that climate finance is the lynchpin of the Paris Agreement and that for nations like Nauru, lack of ambition and the political will to address climate change are not the problem, but rather, lack of resources is the problem," Minister Scotty said.

At the ministerial Talanoa Dialogue, Minister Scotty reiterated three key points of improving access for SIDS to international sources of finance; scaling up climate finance for adaptation and resilience measures; and replenishment of the Green Climate Fund.

President Waqa then updated the House on developments of Cenpac Corporation and its partnership with new telecom provider Acclinks that have launched their mobile and data services in PacCell, on 17 December.

Hailing it a positive venture for the Nauruan people given the competition it will bring, President Waqa said that calls between the two service providers is still being negotiated.

Minister Adeang then tabled the Nauru Trust Fund audited annual accounts for the year ending 2018.

"The Fund at the 30 June 2018 had total investments of AU\$ 84.4 million at market value. While the value of the fund exceeded AU\$ 100 million in August with a prepayment of the GON 2018-19, this has slightly come off with the recent equity market volatility."

Annual contributions are made by Nauru and partners Australia, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and now New Zealand in 2018.

"In FY 2017-18 the Fund achieved a return after fees over 9.8 per cent financial year to date. This amounted to investment income for the year of \$5.3 million. The Fund managers Mercer International are professionally managing the assets and investment to the highest international standards.

"The Fund continues its membership in the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Fund. This continues Nauru access to many benefits including peer inputs, service provider access and requires the Fund operate to a very high standard as per the Santiago Principles of Sovereign Wealth Funds," Minister Adeang said.

The full background and operational details of the Fund can be found on [www.naurugov.nr](http://www.naurugov.nr) under the department of finance section.

The statement on the audit department over the past eight months was then presented by President Waqa on the achievements of the department to promote good governance by strengthening auditing standards, staff capacity development and quality assurance.

In health and medical services Minister Scotty reported that the common emergency room presentations have been diabetes and heart-related conditions as well as motor vehicle accidents.

The department is also in the process of refurbishing the old acute block into a one-stop wellness centre for pediatrics and the dialysis unit including purchasing new dialysis machines.

The new telemedicine facility installed by Digicel will enable the hospital to communicate and consult with international specialists on patient condition and diagnosis.

In public health, school screening continues which resulted in the identification of four patients with rheumatic heart conditions.

Nursing is working toward strengthening local nurses while recruitment of nurses in general remains a focus given the occupancy rate as at November 2018 sits at 74 per cent.

Finance minister David Adeang then table the updated report of inter sub-head transfers as approved by cabinet for the period 1 July to 17 December 2018, with the total amount of \$13,872,350.00 being moved around within departments.

President Waqa then presented his final statement on the National Meteorological Services development program and the visit of four consultants from Fiji to assist in the division as well as to install equipment that is donated by the government of Finland.

"This is indeed an historical moment for our nation to have a first-ever established and permanent National Meteorological Services, since its establishment in 2015," President Waqa said.

Nauru is now recognised under the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and membership is being sought with a fee of AU\$12,000 per annum.

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### **CORRECTION**

Edition 14 (182) *Nauru Bulletin* page 3

Title should read: "CIE inception GCF"

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### Presentation of Bills

At the conclusion of the presentation of ministerial statements was the first of a dozen bills and amendments to bills presented.

The first bill to be presented was the Public Service (Amendment) No. 2 Bill 2018 by President Waqa.

The amendment repeals and replaces section 84 of the Public Service Act 2016 allowing public servants who intend to submit a nomination as a candidate in a by-election or in a general election held due to an early dissolution of parliament to resign from public office within five days from the date the writ of elections is published under section 56 of the Electoral Act 2016.

“The current Act only provides for a resignation of three months prior to a submission of a nomination as a candidate in the general elections,” President Waqa said.

The Constitutional (Amendment) Bill No 2. 2018 was then introduced by President Waqa but referred to the Constitutional Review Committee for deliberation. To enable the amendment to proceed, it would first need to go through the referendum process.

Minister Adeang then presented the Trusts (Amendment) Bill 2018 to further comply with the Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) membership requirements.

Phase two of the OECD Peer Review focusses on the implementation and enforcement of Nauru’s legislative framework that identifies gaps in Nauru’s legislation, therefore prompting amendments to achieve compliance with the OECD membership requirements.

A number of amendments were made but of note is the separation of the definitions for beneficiary and beneficial owner.

The clarification states that ‘beneficiary’ is in relation to a registerable trust and means a natural or legal person who is entitled to the benefit of the trust; and ‘beneficial owner’ is in relation to a registerable trust and means a natural person: (a) who has ultimate control, directly or indirectly, over the trust; (b) who ultimately owns, directly or indirectly, the trust; or (c) on whose behalf a trust is created.

There was also an amendment clarifying the definition of registerable trust as well as the provision for the registrar to remove a trust proven to be dormant and which has failed to file annual returns for three consecutive years of the annual returns filed.

Minister Adeang continued to present the Partnership Bill 2018 which repeals and replaces the Partnership Act 1976.

“The aim of the Bill is to supplement the other legislation being tabled today which increases Nauru’s transparency for the OECD and correspondingly increases the revenue base for the country.

“A new requirement for registration is that a firm or persons seeking to register a partnership must comply with the requirement of the Business Licences Act 2017, Beneficial Ownership Act 2017 and Business Names Registration Act 2018,” Minister Adeang said.

Continuing on as minister for finance, Mr Adeang then presented the Beneficial Ownership (Amendment) Bill 2018 which aims to enhance the existing Beneficial Ownership Act 2017 and other relevant laws for the purposes of the OECD membership requirements.

The amendments proposed are a result of the OECD Phase 2 review of November 2018.

“It is a matter of priority for Nauru to implement recommendations by the OECD so as not to adversely affect the overall rating of Nauru in the Phase 2 Peer Review. In addition, Nauru as a member of the Global Forum intends to establish itself as a compliant nation. Nauru has come a long way from the last review and the proposed amendment is a testament of our commitment to the Global Forum,” Minister Adeang said.

Another legislation for compliance with the OECD is the Business Licences (Amendment) Bill 2018 which Minister Adeang underscored no person is to do business without a business licence.

“The amendments to the Business Licences Act 2017 are consequential amendments. This statute is central to the Business Names Registrations Act, Partnership Act, Corporations Act, Trusts Act and Beneficial Ownership Act.

“This Bill will supplement the current Act by providing clear regulatory and supervisory provisions. This will enhance the existing responsibilities and functions of the administrative and implementing institution including the Registrar of Business Licences.”

Mr Adeang continued to present the Corporations (Amendment) Bill 2018 that will ensure the laws of the Republic are robust and effective, and will further support Nauru’s membership with the OECD.

The Corporations Act was enacted in 1972 allowing foreign companies to register their business without a presence in Nauru, but recommendations by the OECD are now clarified in the Bill to ensure Nauru’s compliance.

“As a matter of the current government policy, which has been implemented by the Registrar of Corporations, all foreign corporations are now required to have a physical presence in Nauru.

“Essentially, these institutions and bodies are the historical remnants of a system that is no longer appropriate or applicable to modern-day Nauru. Over 90 per cent of the clauses in the Bill are to remove references to these institutions and bodies from the Act,” Minister Adeang said.

The Business Names Registration Bill 2018 was then introduced to the House by Mr Adeang replacing the Business Names Act 1976.

“Any business in order to operate or carry on a business must have a business name.

“The Bill is a law essentially for the registration of business names as defined by the Bill to include any name or style under which any business is carried out on, whether by an individual, partnership, corporations and trust.

“The Bill is also compliant with the OECD Global Forum requirements for particulars of beneficial owners of a legal entity to be kept by the Registrar. It introduces a better record keeping and archiving of business information.”

Minister Adeang then presented the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) No.2 Bill 2018 to align with the Crimes Act and the penalties it provides.

“The intention of the proposed Bill (Criminal Procedure (Amendment) No.2) is to increase the jurisdictional limits of the Republic’s District Court. It will complement the provisions of the Crimes Act 2016 and other legislation which contains criminal offences provisions which are in the purview of the District Court,” Minister Adeang explained.

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President Waqa then tabled the Liquor Control (Amendment) No.2 Bill 2018, which proposes to address the liquor licencing board's role in determining liquor licence applications and to enhance existing provisions in the current Act by ensuring that the hours and days that alcohol may be sold in closed containers are entrenched in the licences issued.

"It is proposed specifically for the off-licence holders which are retail or wholesale licence holders, that alcohol may only be sold during the hours specified in the licence from Monday to Saturday. On Sundays and public holidays, no alcohol shall be sold.

"The proposed Bill also requires an import licence for liquor for the purpose of sale or wholesale or retail sale or supply," Mr Waqa said.

President Waqa went on to present the Nauru Superannuation Bill 2018 which proposes the implementation of the Nauru Super scheme.

"This Bill protects the integrity of the superannuation scheme by providing checks and balances in the collection of employer and employee contributions and management of the fund," President Waqa said.

The Nauru Government has increased public service salaries by ten per cent at the commencement of the mandatory contributions by employer and employees on 1 July 2018, so as not to affect the take-home pay.

The tabling of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill (No.3) 2018-19 by Finance minister David Adeang was the final of the Bills presentations.

Mr Adeang was pleased to advise the House that the newly established Eigigu Solutions Corporation (ESC), "will be in a position to remit a modest \$300,000 to government in the form of a dividend during this financial year."

"Additionally, government is in the process of negotiating a further \$2.4 million with the Australian government for unpaid visa fees and this is expected to come through in this financial year as well," Mr Adeang said.

The minister added that the additional revenue along with identified savings under the Fiscal Cash Buffer has provided the opportunity for government to fund an additional \$4.99 million of expenditure in this supplementary.

The Minister further outlined the details of the supplementary which includes capital funding for replacement of aging government fleets, refurbishment of the office of the president and ministers as well as renovations to the Fiji embassy in Suva.

Other costs are for additional procurement of staff in the Brisbane consulate, travel allowance for the Taiwan embassy, establishment budget for the Pacific Labour Mobility program and funds for the Christmas and Independence Day celebrations, as well as an allocation to make partial debt repayment for Ronwan.

As a sporting nation the government acknowledges the passion for sports and the recent successes in the sport of powerlifting and therefore allocated funds to host an international weightlifting and powerlifting challenge in early 2019.

The bill also accommodates for the visit of the president of Taiwan in March 2019.

"With the passing of this bill, the surplus is expected to be maintained at \$222,000 for the year," Minister Adeang said.

Questions followed and parliament concluded with the adjournment debate, which ended at 1:00am Wednesday 19 December

**You may obtain copies of Acts, Amendments and Bills at [www.naurugov.nr](http://www.naurugov.nr) and find the RONLAW link.**

## Nauru team travel to Kenya for Blue Economy conference

An eclectic team of seven Nauruan delegates travelled to Nairobi, Kenya for the inaugural Sustainable Blue Economy conference 26 to 28 November.

Each reported their results in a cabinet room presentation on Monday 17 December.



*President Waqa (centre) with Cabinet ministers (L) and five of the seven-delegate team Sustainable Blue Economy conference presenters*

The hand-picked team comprised Nauru Port's (PAN) Kemp Detenamo, Nauru emergency services secretary (NES) Roy Harris, cabinet secretariat's Ojay Stephen, Planning and aid division's Justin Togoran, civil society representatives Cindrea Denuga and Max Dowedia; youth and environment respectively. The delegation was led by Chief Secretary Bernard Grundler.

The conference, the first-ever global event of its kind according to organisers, was hosted by the Kenyan government and co-hosted by the governments of Canada and Japan, and brought together a large number of participants.

"Nearly 5,000 delegations and 18,000 participants," Mr Harris said.

The 'Blue Economy', one that seeks to fully utilise the resources and potential of the world's rivers, lakes, seas and oceans, is seen as the global way forward to help meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 14 - Life under water.

As President Baron Waqa pointed out during the group's presentation to cabinet, Nauru is also committed to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), signed in April 2016 and

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## Nauru team travel to Kenya for Blue Economy conference

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registered under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) treaty, in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

The ocean is the world's largest carbon sink; Nauru's NDCs include shifting from diesel to photovoltaic energy sources as its contribution to ocean acidification mitigation.

Looking to the blue economy for future sustainable livelihoods will not only ease pressure on land-based economic activities, but has the potential to reconfigure traditional global wealth distribution, giving developing nations opportunities to attract private investment to create a more inclusive, gender-balanced, environmentally-sustainable and equitable future for coming generations.

Conference sessions included 'smart' shipping, job creation, tourism, energy alternatives, food security and health, waste management and maritime regulatory enforcement.

In his presentation, Roy Harris suggested that tertiary studies in marine science and biology are important career directions for Nauruans to consider.

Not only does this conference continue the momentum from the 2015 Paris Agreement and subsequent oceans conference events, as well as this year's Pacific Islands Forum, it also supports the upcoming 2020 Our Ocean conference to be hosted by Palau and held in Malta.

### *Nauru's Blue Economy conference achievements*

Nauru is now committed to the Oceans Plastic Charter, and will develop a strategy to reduce single-use plastics in Nauru.

Already, Nauru's education department has reduced or eliminated single-use plastic from school catering. In addition, the next shipment to Nauru will contain plastic shredding machines to be placed in each district producing an income for communities, courtesy of a polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastics buy-back scheme introduced by Honorary Ambassador of Thailand to Nauru, John Yu.

Each member of the delegation has committed to being a representative for the 'war on plastic' on Nauru.

"This group here, they will be the champions at their homes. We will make an example of ourselves.

"We are recommending that the government endorse our group, Nauru Blue Economy Group (NBEG) to work with Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance (CCOA), Oceans Plastic Charter (OPC) and Commonwealth Marine Economies Program (CMEP) – they are very keen to start working and partnering with Nauru," Mr Grundler said.

President Waqa committed to the OPC during the G7 meeting held in Canada in September, and Mr Grundler signed the charter during the Blue Economy conference.

Mr Grundler is also calling on Nauru's state-owned enterprises, such as Nauru Airlines, to lead by example and implement sustainable environmental strategies to reduce their use of plastics.

Within the government, the Chief Secretary said his office and the departments of health, education and commerce, industry

and environment (CIE) need to, "work together to implement awareness on plastics and environment litter."

While Nauru has not yet banned single-use plastics, such as take-away containers, plastic shopping bags, straws and micro-beads, some retailers are imposing levies designed to change purchasing behaviours.

***Calling on all Nauruans to change the tide and say 'keo, tubwa' to plastic bags today***

According to *Zero Waste Europe*,

- on average, plastic bags are used for 25 minutes
- it takes between 100 to 500 years for a plastic bag to disintegrate (depending on the type of plastic)
- 1 million plastic bags are in use around the world every minute
- the average European uses about 500 plastic bags per year
- Europeans overwhelmingly support a ban on single-use plastic bags
- 80 per cent of marine litter is plastic
- 3.4 million tonnes of plastic carrier bags are produced in the European Union each year (equivalent to the weight of more than two million cars)

In 2019, Nauru will observe a range of international environmental awareness days designed to inform and educate industry, retailers and the general public on reducing plastic waste and making alternative purchasing decisions.

In the meantime, the Chief Secretary's department intends to enact policies on the use of plastics in the workplace, and will next meet early in the new year to begin the drafting process•

Visit *Zero Waste Europe* at <https://zerowasteurope.eu/> to learn more.

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**The Government Information Office wishes to thank you for helping us educate and inform all Nauruans through your contributions to *Nauru Bulletin*.**

**We look forward to continuing our partnership with you in 2019 to bring news and information on the government of the Republic of Nauru to the people.**

**Tubwa kor,  
GIO**

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## Digicel's new telemeds for on-island health consultations

True to his word, Digicel Chair Denis O'Brien promised during his last visit to Nauru in late November to bring telemedicine to the RoN hospital (RoNH) within a month.

On 28 December the official handover of the service to President Baron Waqa and the RoNH was performed by Digicel Nauru CEO Deepak Khanna at the hospital's conference room.



*President Waqa thanks Digicel Nauru CEO Deepak Khanna, as the new hospital telemeds system is demonstrated, 28 December*

The telemeds teleconference bridge opening was attended by President Waqa and Madam Louisa Waqa, Health Minister Hon Charmaine Scotty along with the members of her executive health team. Digicel's team included CEO Deepak Khanna with technicians on-site as well as back at the Digicel offices in Aiwo who performed a demonstration of the equipment for the President.

As featured in Issue 13 (181) of the *Nauru Bulletin* in late November, telemedicine enables doctors anywhere in the world access medical specialists via video-link in real-time for case consultation.

Now, doctors and patients on Nauru have full and complete access to this technology, with Digicel providing not only the hardware, but also the dedicated high-speed bandwidth of 5Mbps that can connect, using the Zoom web-conferencing app, up to 50 users, including mobile users.

Secretary for Health Rayong Itsimaera opened the ceremony, after which Reverend Roger Mwareow delivered the opening prayer. Mr Itsimaera then handed over to Digicel CEO Mr Khanna to explain the system.

Mr Khanna first thanked President Waqa for his vision in identifying connectivity as a significant material concern for increasing positive health outcomes on Nauru.

"What we are presenting to you is the best. Today, the best of hospitals in Australia, within United States (US) are using this system.

"This is a teleconferencing set-up where we are able to connect to any hospital anywhere across the world. All they need to do is share that particular link.

"With the high-definition camera, X-ray reports can be shown," Mr Khanna said.

According to Director of Public Health, Dr James Auto, radiographers burn patient imaging to compact disc (CD) for diagnosis in Fiji; a costly and time-consuming practice now a thing of the past.

Director of Nursing Moralene Capelle added that the system can now be used for the nurse's Regional Alliance monthly teleconferences, previously conducted by telephone, while another application was suggested for use in the recruitment of health staff.

Mr Khanna described the teleconferencing service as stage one, with stage two extending the service to the operating theatre.

President Waqa then 'cut the ribbon' on the system, taking the opportunity to convey his thanks and gratitude, highlighting the further educational application.

"We can see that Digicel is doing a lot of community work and a lot of cooperation work with the government, and this is one of them, and with the chairman visiting Nauru last November, this is very fast.

"This will promote the work of doctors and nurses on Nauru – not just consultation, but training as well.

"This has come at the right time – before year's end.

"We are approaching the end of 2018, the golden year for Nauru, our independence, and this is a great gift that your company has given us," President Waqa said.

The President went on to detail Digicel's other contribution to Nauru to ensure that FM105.1 Radio Nauru returned to the airwaves.

"When Radio Nauru was down, Denis O'Brien 'DHL'd' the system all the way from Ireland just the day after he left Nauru and so that's the level of cooperation and seriousness between Nauru and Digicel," President Waqa said.

Minister Scotty also thanked and extended Christmas blessings to Digicel on behalf of the Ministry of Health, before representatives enjoyed brunch courtesy of Digicel Nauru.

Nauru's telemeds service will also add to RoNH's ability to share its specialised knowledge with other health service suppliers in the region and globally. Dr Auto reported that just recently, during the peak of the dengue fever outbreak, Australian medical services consulted with Nauru hospital staff to share patient information on two cases of dengue in patients who travelled to Queensland•

## Australian high commission awards for Nauru's scholars

His Excellency President Baron Waqa presented 19 Australia award scholarships to recipients for the 2019 academic year. The event took place at the residence of the Australian high commissioner, Angela Tierney on 19 December.

The students will take up their studies either in Fiji or Australia in a broad range of fields that are identified as priority areas for Nauru.

"They will be studying a wide range of disciplines including health, law, commerce, management and government, amongst other things," Ms Tierney said.

Of the 19 scholarships, two special Hammer DeRoburt scholarships, named in honour of Nauru's first president and in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Nauru's Independence, were conferred on Unique Harris and Marquita Detabene.

The event was opened with a prayer, followed by the Australian high commissioner's speech and congratulatory words for the scholarship recipients.

His Excellency then delivered his remarks thanking and acknowledging Australia's generosity.

"We are grateful for the continuous support of Australia in various fields," the President said.

Speaking in the vernacular, the President encouraged the recipients to be diligent in their studies reminding them that they are ambassadors of Nauru and their families.

The President supported by Ms Tierney then presented a framed certificate to each recipient, before the cutting of the cake, a group photo session and lunch.



*Australia award scholars with President Waqa and Australian high commissioner Angela Tierney (right of the President), 19 December*

## President's Christmas state banquet

President Baron Waqa hosted the annual Christmas state banquet held at the Government offices forecourt on Friday evening 21 December.

The President opened the event where he reflected on 2018 as the golden year – the 50th anniversary of independence for the

Republic of Nauru and the success and sense of pride Nauruans have felt this year as they have celebrated and hosted guests from across the region and the world.

Drawing the audience's attention to the nativity scene in the forecourt, the President reminded attendees that, ever since his government came to power, the nativity scene has featured each Christmas as a symbol of humility representative of the focus of his government's work and effort, and of the motto of the Republic; *God's Will First*.

"We are proud to acknowledge Him, for without Him, nothing is possible," President Waqa said.

This year, 21 choral groups from across the public service, state-owned enterprises and corporations performed their Christmas carol offerings throughout the night.

Each group received a contribution from the President and Madam Waqa for their departmental Christmas celebrations, and 30 lucky ticket prizes were drawn during the event.

Guests were rewarded with a fireworks display at midnight, with the President wishing all present and their families a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

*President Waqa opens the annual Christmas state banquet 21 December in a year of celebration for Nauru on her 50th anniversary of independence*





## President's Christmas address to the nation

On the eve of Christmas, His Excellency President Baron Waqa delivered the end of year Christmas message of love and generosity, quoting the Bible's John 3:16.

*"For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son,"* was the beginning of the president's message to the nation, underscoring that Nauruans are proud to embrace being Christians, especially at this time of celebrating the birth of Christ.

President Waqa encouraged brotherly love emphasising that Christmas is a time of happiness, a time for giving and a time for renewing.

Christmas 2018 is particularly special for Nauruans as they continue to celebrate the nation's 50th anniversary of independence.

The president encouraged fellow citizens to embrace the true meaning of Christmas and to continue celebrating and giving, quoting the Bible's message that it is better to give than to receive.

His Excellency said the government will continue to work with the people of Nauru highlighting the achievements of the past year and thanked everyone who had assisted in 2018.

President Waqa encouraged a positive start to the New Year for the children of Nauru as they take the country through another



*President Baron Waqa addresses the nation in a televised message on Christmas Eve, 24 December*

50 years in peace and joy and in keeping with the motto of "God's Will First".

On behalf of the government, President Waqa said 2019 will be a better year as it works together with the people to build and improve Nauru for the lives of its' children.

In conclusion, the president conveyed best wishes and a very Merry Christmas for all Nauruans on island and abroad•

## Chief Secretary's Christmas message to public servants

We are in the midst of another festive season with 2019 around the corner.

This year our government and public servants have continued in their pursuit of the common benefit of all people living on Nauru.

As public servants, you must pursue this public interest with a caring attitude.

You possess specialized qualities and merits, among which are, impartiality, experience accumulated over many years, technical knowledge and talent, creativeness, frankness, flexibility, and ability to follow the lead provided by the government of the day.

Your virtuous labour in 2018 is not only appreciated by your government and the public but seen and commended by God.

God is omniscient and cared as you made best use of your experience and resources at your disposal to serve others.

Since you are storing your treasures in Heaven by your selfless deeds, God says this to you: *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."* (Matthew 25:40). God's praise is eternal like He is eternal.

I wish our leaders and all public servants a safe and blessed festive season•

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## It's the law:

Don't drink and drive.

Wear a helmet.

Drive safely; speed limit 50 km/h.

Keep Nauru safe.



## SIP turns 10: introducing GIO intern Dinah Fritz

Dinah Fritz is one of 51 students accepted to participate in the six-week student internship program (SIP) under the Chief Secretary's department.



*GIO intern  
Dinah Fritz  
working on the  
Nauru Bulletin*

The SIP is in its tenth year and has been beneficial to students in years 12 and 13 in gaining experience in the workplace and exposing young people to a variety of career options.

The program takes place during end of year school holidays and is open to Nauruan students studying locally and abroad.

Dinah just completed year 12 in New Zealand, and her interest in journalism led her to apply for the internship position with the Government Information Office (GIO), making her the third student to work there.

She commenced on 17 December and completes her internship just prior to the commencement of the 2019 academic year and her final year of high school.

Acting Secretary for Corporate Services Ms Clarissa Scotty, who is instrumental in coordinating the program this year explained the selection process.

"They (students) are selected based on their report cards and attendance," Ms Scotty said.

The SIP applicant cap was 70 this year; 51 students applied and all were accepted.

Students are allowed three choices of placement across a variety of public sector workplaces.

"They are given three preferences, in case the first or second one didn't come through. So most of them have been placed in their first preference, others have wanted to change after their first day so they wanted to move to another section." Ms Scotty explained.

The program has placed interns in government departments, state-owned enterprises and public corporations: ICT, CIE, GIO, DFAT, Media, Port Authority, Civil Aviation, Nauru Airlines and Justice are each participating in the SIP.

According to Ms Scotty, the departments are selected by the students, and are matched up with the departments' requests for interns.

Before the interns are assigned their respective working places, the heads of the department are first notified to prepare for the students' arrival.

Each student receives a handbook that contains the code of conduct, rules and regulations as well as a journal where the students are expected to keep a record of their work experience each day.

This journal will be collected at the end of the six-week course and will assist in further improvements of the program.

Government-related news and information is prepared and distributed electronically via the *Nauru Bulletin* on a fortnightly basis.

Requests for interviews by the foreign media with the president and ministers are also coordinated through the GIO.

The SIP is an ideal program for students during the school holidays as it offers opportunities for training and work experience and helps them decide on their career paths.

The SIP is paid work and is funded under the Department of Chief Secretary.

### *Child Protection is everyone's responsibility*

- Treat children right.
- Ensure that children in your home and community get an education.
- Empower children to be the best they can be; it's everyone's responsibility.

**Know how else you can help a child by calling 557 3856**

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**Republic of Nauru**

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