



REPUBLIC OF NAURU
Government Information Office

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE
by
His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea

Friday, 8 May 2020

As we head into the weekend President Lionel Aingimea is pleased to inform the Nauruan public yet again that Nauru is coronavirus free, and thanks the Nauruan public for their continued support in abiding by the measures and rules that are put in place to ensure we remain safe from coronavirus.

Past incidents of security breaches at the Budapest have not reoccurred with the current group in quarantine at the Meneñ Hotel, who have another week in managed quarantine.

Globally, the aviation sector is collapsing and is also having a major impact on Nauru Airlines with measures taking on coronavirus. Border restrictions and closures, and halting of international travel are affecting the airline.

While a Nauru Airlines freighter is still operating to ensure Nauru is amply supplied, four passenger planes have been parked due to the reduced flight activity.

As Minister for Nauru Airlines, President Lionel Aingimea says “this affects our airline dramatically, in a financial sense,” adding that in 2021 the airline is looking at 80% less operations which means revenue for the airline will be down by millions.

The President noted other major international airlines are also feeling the effects of the downturn caused by COVID-19 to the point of going into receivership or filing for bankruptcy.

“By the grace of God, Nauru Airlines hasn’t gone there [bankruptcy or receivership]. But saying that, it has impacted our airline.”

As the aviation sector struggles, its staff are also affected. The Nauru Government is providing Nauru Airlines \$2.5 million in funding to directly support its staff as they face drastic changes and financial challenges during coronavirus.

One of the primary public health measures to stop the spread of the virus is to stop people moving and making contact with other people. This means stopping travel which Nauru Airlines has also had to do.

Staff restructuring across the board will affect 40 per cent (approx. 50) staff at its Brisbane office, making them redundant, and staff advised the need for the company to commence stand down arrangements.

As Nauru Airlines is a foreign company in Australia, its staff are not eligible to participate in the Australian government's JobKeeper scheme.

After much deliberation, the Nauru Government decided to subsidise stand down by paying its Brisbane staff a redundancy package to June. The Nauru-based staff will not be affected in terms of salary. They still get full pay.

Plans are to utilise and re-deploy airline staff to other departments or state-owned enterprises (SOE) but continue to be employees of and paid by the airline.

President Lionel Aingimea said "we need to take measures and assist our staff," noting the \$2.5M will help staff cushion the effects of redundancy.

The President adds that the continued support from donors especially in the time of coronavirus is well noted and appreciated by the Nauru Government and the people of Nauru.

As previously reported about donor support, today was the formal handing over of PPE and medical equipment from close friends Taiwan as well as their direct budget support. Australia today formally signed the financial assistance it pledged in April, and Israel handed over the medical equipment and PPE it also pledged in April. The President also thanks IHMS for the indirect help and countless assistance they've offered Nauru during this time of coronavirus.

President Aingimea wishes everyone a safe weekend. "Let's keep working together, let's keep praying together for our country... and for this fight we have against coronavirus."

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