



# Nauru Bulletin

Issue 11-2022/245

3 November 2022

## October Parliament

### ***Bail Act amended to include drug-related offences in list of unbailable offences***

A sitting of Parliament was called on Saturday 8 October to address the urgent matter of additional funding for the ministry of health.

Maiden statements from new ministers were presented promising fresh new approaches to revitalise and improve on existing practices.

Education Minister, Richard-Hyde Menke presented his first ministerial statement stating that over the next three years the ministry seeks to renew its commitment to education in Nauru.

“It (ministry) seeks to mobilise ambitions and solutions to deliver on existing and emerging commitments that are unique to our current and future circumstances.

“The ministry’s way forward will continue to focus on providing quality learning outcomes for all students.

“Although our gains over the last years have been impacted by the disruptions of our recent school closure we commit to effective learning recovery to ensure that learners



*Urgent health budget calls for Saturday sitting*

catch-up on lost learning.”

School reopened to full operation within the fortnight following the parliament sitting after a period of closure due to COVID-19 being detected in the community in June.

Minister Menke says emphasis will be placed on the key areas of literacy and numeracy, focus on early years, learning pathways in the secondary years and ensuring that service

delivery is evidence-based and efficient.

“Measures for sustaining the crucial role of teachers during this global crisis of teacher shortage will continue to be guided by policies and management systems that ensure a professional, trained and motivated teaching cohort,” Minister Menke said.

Minister for Health Timothy Ika presented his first ministerial statement acknowledging that the volume of work required in the health sector is “substantial but not impossible.”

In the weeks following his appointment, Minister Ika held one-on-one meetings with staff and commenced weekly meetings with senior staff and aims to also meet with patients.

“This is crucial so that I may have firsthand experience of the hospital environment, the quality of services and patient care we are giving, and to get a better understanding of the challenges that the staff face in delivering the best care for patients.”

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## 2022 scholarship winners

On 1 November, the Secretary for Education announced that Cabinet has approved the results of the 2022 Year 8 Secondary Scholarship examinations.

Twenty Year 8 students have been awarded a fully funded Government of Nauru scholarship to study at a high school of their choosing in Queensland, Australia. Students select a school from 11 school options provided to them by the department. They will take up their studies in 2023 at Year 9 (form 3) level.

Currently there are 52 Nauruan students studying in Queensland funded by the government since 2018.

Students are billeted with local families in Queensland for the duration of their secondary education.

The Government congratulates the students and wishes them well in their future secondary studies •

The successful awardees of the scholarship are:

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Adari Jeremiah         | 11. Brianka Waidabu       |
| 2. Lasa Khaushal Menke    | 12. Tyson Agir            |
| 3. Luvya Hiram            | 13. Sioto Susannah Akubor |
| 4. Lucia Reweru           | 14. Bibiana Dageago       |
| 5. Joyful Sosefo          | 15. Khalia Moses          |
| 6. Vaelei Finaunga Vaelei | 16. Marlina Tannang       |
| 7. John Herman            | 17. Amor Harmony Gaubidi  |
| 8. Staricel Engar         | 18. Hailey Benjamin       |
| 9. Frangipani Batsiua     | 19. Kristie Debao         |
| 10. Marius Michael        | 20. Lavi-I-Care Ledua     |

...from pg 1

Minister Ika outlined the more urgent challenges in the ministry including the shortage of staff particularly with doctors and nurses. He says the shortage accounts for around 30 per cent with 122 vacancies from 391 positions.

Noting that staff shortage is a worldwide problem given the COVID pandemic, Minister Ika says the strategies to alleviate the shortage include reengaging staff, recruiting new staff, and revising some operational procedures.

The state of the hospital grounds and buildings is the second urgent issue. The Minister says a revision of the cleaning, maintenance and security structure will focus on streamlining the services to ensure a clean, functional and safe environment.

The patient overseas medical referral program (OMR) currently has 33 patients and 32 family escorts in the five OMR countries.

The OMR budget for this 2022 financial year has been revised from \$5 million to \$10.1 million and the OMR identified by the previous government for 60 patients will be honoured, the minister confirms.

While the OMR is an important program, the minister says it is unsustainable and in some instances, avoidable.

In this regard, alternative modalities of providing healthcare and treatment for Nauruans are being explored, including reengaging visiting medical specialists now that COVID travel restrictions have reduced, with the long term goal of undertaking a strong campaign to improve the preventative measures for healthy lives.

The fourth issue of import, Minister Ika says is the public themselves who access health services as a last resort, which has proven too late for the best possible health outcomes. He urges the public to access the health services earlier rather than later.

In stepping up health-conscious behaviour in the public Minister Ika is working with development partners to increase the accessibility to services through the community wellness centres through strengthened health promotions as well as reinforce the relationship with departments such as education, finance, and sports “who have a critical role in influencing the social determinants of health.”

The fifth challenge is human resources and COVID duties in particular the absence of pay and allowances for services rendered for COVID operations.

Minister Ika highlighted the nature of the job carries high risk and delay in pay has detrimental effects on staff morale and family life.

He therefore will work towards ensuring staff allowances are processed and paid in a timely manner, and on advice by the COVID-19 Taskforce, suspend payment of allowances when safe to do so.

Also presenting his maiden statement was Deputy Minister for Sports Jesse Jeremiah assuring members that despite the change of government and ministerial reshuffle, the Kun Government is committed to hosting Nauru’s first major international event, the Micronesian Games in 2026.

“The Micronesian Games will be my priority project. I am sure that all other departments and their plans will also be boosted in terms of funding to assist them with their own goals relating to the 2026 Micro games,” the deputy minister said adding the games will increase valuable tourism “which can boost local economies, directly or indirectly.”



*Absence of pay and staff allowances for services during COVID operations has detrimental effects on staff morale and family life says health minister*

Mr Jeremiah adds that the department will make changes to its annual operational plan for the current financial year and the budget adjusted to support national sporting federations and athletes prepare for the games.

“This financial support for the national federations and its athletes, will not only prepare them for the Micro games but also for other bigger federation events and of course games such as the Mini and Pacific Games, World Championships, the Commonwealth and Olympic Games.”

#### **BILLS**

President Russ Kun tabled the Bail (Amendment) Bill (No.2) 2022 seeking to add drug-related offences to the list of offences under the Bail Act underscoring that “drug related offences are just as serious” as other offences listed in the Act.

The Bill’s explanatory note states that it seeks to amend Section 4A(a) of the Bail Act to ensure that accused persons who are charged with an offence under the Illicit Drugs Control Act 2004 are not granted bail.

This means the accused will be remanded in custody until they are required to attend court for trial.

The amendment is intended to prevent the possibility of re-offending by an accused person while on bail.

Section 4A of the Bail Act 2018 provides that bail must not be granted for the offences of murder, treason, sedition, sexual offence, terrorism related offences.

It also states that bail is not to be granted to a person convicted of these offences in appealing such conviction. Bail is also not granted for a person who breached a bail undertaking and condition or if the person is arrested under the Extradition Act 1973.

“Nauru being a small country needs to do all it can to prevent and deter serious offences including drug related offences.

“By providing in the law that mandatory remand is applied to persons charged with drug related offences, it sends out a strong message. The message is that the law looks harshly upon those who commit such offences.

“Such message may contribute to deterring others from committing these offences. This amendment protects the community,” President Kun said •



## Angam bwiō, 90 years

President Russ Kun delivered his first national address at the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of Angam at the War Memorial in Aiwo, 26 October.

President Kun recalls the words of Nauru's founding father, the late Sir Hammer DeRoburt describing Angam as a day that "will always be Nauru's day of deliverance."

"This is a significant achievement and a very proud moment in our history."

President Kun paid homage to those who perished during the Second World War, in exile on Truk and those who remained on Nauru and suffered the daily invasion of enemy fire.

"To this day, they still lay in unknown and unmarked graves in Truk and we collectively grieve for them.

"We also come together on this jubilant day of Angam to pay tribute to all those who came before us, most especially those who survived and are still here with us now.

"We are forever indebted to them as they are the reason for our existence."

Nauru's population has increased almost ten-fold since the first Angam in 1932 when the population was at 1,500.

President Kun recognised new threats such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, "but despite these many and complex challenges, I am confident that we will continue to overcome any obstacles or hardships that may come our way in the future."

"I would like to urge us all to continue to work together and remain resolute in our Christian beliefs and the pursuit of God's Will First. In doing so, we will prevail."

President Kun then laid a wreath at the centre of the memorial followed by Australian High Commissioner Dr Helen Cheney, and Minister for Education Richard-Hyde Menke.

Young at heart WWII survivor David Peter Gadaraoa gave an account of wartime stories shared by his parents who remained on Nauru during the Japanese invasion.



*President Kun lays a wreath in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of Angam*

Mr Gadaraoa, one of only 34 wartime survivors today, was born in 1944, too young to know the devastation that surrounded him but was educated about the life and suffering of the Nauruan people who remained on Nauru.

The war ended in 1945 and Nauruans were returned home from exile on Truk in January 1946.

Iruwa DeRoburt, granddaughter of the late Hammer DeRoburt spoke of the strength of Nauruans who being of one heart, triumphed in times of sickness and war and overcame the turmoil and destruction of their homeland and of the Nauruan people.

She said her grandfather returned home from exile on 31 January 1945 and recalled his determination and that of his colleagues to restore Nauru and its people.

She urged that Nauruans not forget the efforts and struggles of Nauru's forefathers for the life or death of Nauruans was in their hands.

A commemorative stamp and First Day cover for the 100th anniversary of Hammer DeRoburt was released by Nauru Philately and presented to Ms DeRoburt.

Various church choirs led the hymns and opening and closing prayers rendered by Pastor Gaye Hiram and Reverend Roger Mwareow, respectively.

## Australian foreign minister announces \$20m education funding

Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Penny Wong makes first visit to Nauru to discuss shared priorities and introduced initiatives to improve bilateral relations, 14 October.

Discussions with President Russ Kun and Cabinet ministers include climate change, pandemic recovery, reform measures for the University of the South Pacific (USP), and strengthening partnerships at the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Shortly after flying in from the Marshall Islands, Ms Wong and her delegation had a closed meeting with President Russ Kun, Cabinet ministers and the Australian High Commission.

Following the meeting the delegation met with students of Nauru Secondary School where Ms Wong announced education funding of at least \$20 million over five years focusing on "long term change".

Ms Wong says Australia is committed to another decade and beyond of support and partnership in education in Nauru with the \$20m being the first phase of the support which will commence in November.

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*Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong meets Nauru secondary students during her brief trip to Nauru*

*Cont pg 4...*

## Australia announces \$20m education funding

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“We think (it) is a good commencement time and we’ll continue our partnership to support inclusive and education pathways and to help the young people of Nauru prepare for the future,” Minister Wong said.

She encouraged students to look at education as having the power to transform lives.

“Apart from your family and your faith, it is that (education) which makes you most resilient in this world and most able to make your own decisions about what you want to do.”

Education Minister Richard-Hyde Menke welcomed Minister Wong to Nauru and to NSS “to see first-hand the school which Nauru looks for its future leaders.”

“With the enabling support of Australia to our education systems not only do the students of Nauru Secondary School exit their schooling with the senior school certificate as do their peers in Australia but enhance the opportunities for our students with their post-secondary choices.

“It’s only through a mutual process the next phase of Australia’s support will strengthen key areas of our education system such as early years and pathways for the secondary years.”

A short stroll to the nearby Australia-funded Sports Complex, Ms Wong launched the AFL Talent Academy which aims to support promising young athletes from Nauru, Papua New Guinea and Fiji in AFL training programs as well as offer coaching and umpire mentoring programs.

The program also offers young players opportunities to train with the Gold Coast Suns and Brisbane Lions academies in Australia.

“It’s about working with AFL clubs with Nauru, Fiji, PNG to support talented Pacific boys and girls athletes in the future,” Minister Wong said to students and attendees at the Nauru Sports Complex.

Sports Minister Richard-Hyde Menke said the launch opens up the opportunity for young Nauruans the chance to show their talents.

“Nauru shares a very special relationship with Australia in their love for the game of AFL, noting Nauru’s interest in AFL dating

## Daniel receives policing excellence award

Superintendent (SP) Czarist Daniel of the Nauru Police Force (NPF) wins “Excellence in Law Enforcement in the Asia Pacific Region” award, in Sydney, Australia, 19 October.

The award is given out on an annual basis by the Australian Council of Women and Policing (ACWAP). Established in 1997, the ACWAP is a women’s organisation that aims to promote and recognise the participation and opportunities of women in policing within the Asia-Pacific region.

SP Daniel thanked God, her family and friends for their support as she fulfils her duties as an officer.

“I would like to thank the almighty God for everything and guidance over me in life and throughout my journey in executing my duties as a servant to the people.”

SP Daniel is the second NPF officer to receive the award after Sergeant Sareima Aremwa in 2017.

NPF Deputy Commissioner Kalinda Blake said that this goes to

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back to the 1930s” when Nauruan students were introduced to the sport while attending school in Victoria, Australia.

Minister Menke says AFL is Nauru’s national sport and the initiative will be a boost to avid footballers and highlighted Nauruan participation in junior AFL games through the Nauru Chiefs and Nauru Stars teams.

Shortly afterwards Minister Wong, Nauru’s Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Asterio Appi and Australian High Commissioner Dr Helen Cheney laid wreaths at the World War II Memorial in Aiwo in remembrance of the victims of World War II.

Ms Wong listened to stories shared by two war survivors, David Peter Gadaraoa and Violet Mackay and described her time at the memorial as a very “sombre” moment.

Just prior to departing Nauru, Minister Wong formally launched the Australia-North Pacific connector route which commenced on Sunday 16 October, connecting Australia and Nauru with Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia.

President and Minister for Nauru Airlines, Russ Kun thanks Australia for its ongoing support underscoring the challenges associated with travelling and recently exacerbated by the pandemic.

“Nauru welcomes the Australia-North Pacific Connector as a conduit to achieving sustainable transportation, inter-island connectivity and opportunities for economic prosperity,” President Kun said.

“Subsequently, opportunities to utilise and improve air services in the North Pacific region must remain diverse to accommodate passenger movement and also facilitating the movement of goods and services.

“I must also acknowledge the Government of Australia’s support towards this initiative which exemplifies its dedication and commitment to strengthening regular and scheduled connectivity across the Pacific region,” President Kun said, and reiterated Nauru’s commitment to further strengthen the partnership and progress joint efforts as both countries continue to address shared challenges for the mutual benefit their peoples •



*Daniel is second NPF officer to receive the award after Sergeant Sareima Aremwa*

show that skills are being recognised.

“NPF and Nauru as a whole is recognised for the great works they are doing and in particular, lots of female officers’ achievements being recognised,” Deputy Blake said •



## Wilson security donates ambulance

Australian service provider Wilson Security handed over an ambulance to the National Emergency Services (NES) at the fire station, 5 October.

The handover began with an opening prayer and dedication of the new ambulance by Pastor Owen Joram followed by remarks by Fire Chief Celso Dageago, the Acting Secretary for NES Barassi Botelanga, and Deputy Minister for NES Hon Jesse Jeremiah. An inspection of the new vehicle followed.

Deputy Minister Jeremiah thanked Wilson Security for their support and donation and for providing training to 12 young NES officers whom he says “at the end of this course will become qualified paramedics.”

He also thanks the department of Multicultural Affairs for coordinating with NES to ensure the safe arrival of the ambulance.

Wilson Security has made a number of donations to the NES department however this is the first vehicle the company has donated with a second ambulance expected in the near future.

Mr Botelanga says the NES vision statement is a “safer more resilient Nauru” and their aim is for all national emergency



*National Emergency Services receives first ambulance from Wilson Security*

services to work under one umbrella to reach those emergency calls as quickly as possible.

He clarifies however it does not mean that NES will take over the work of the hospital’s ambulance services but rather will focus on road accidents, fire emergencies, emergency calls and help out the hospital ambulance service if needed •

## Media training for health promotion team

The Nauru Media Bureau facilitated a two-day training workshop for Naoero Public Health focusing on planning, script writing and health promotional videos, 7 October.

Funded by the World Health Organisation, its representative Saula Volavola introduced the program which is a continuation of the staff development and capacity building training that had been conducted in 2020.

The training, conducted in two parts focussed on theory and practical.

The Nauru Government Information Office was invited to co-present the first day’s theory-based lesson, expounding on media etiquette, news story development, and the Do’s and Dont’s of report writing and interviews.

Senior staff of the Nauru Media Bureau presented the sessions on story board writing and the broader aspects of packing news as well as the practical hands-on training in using media editing tools for the production of effective promotional material.

The workshop helps prepare the public health team for the upcoming Nauru Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Campaign 2022. Participants are expected to produce and



*Health promotion staff learn creative media skills to produce effective promotional health material*

disseminate seven videos with key messages about general health, smoking, COVID and NCDs.

Upon completion of the media training, the public health staff will be able to creatively reach out to the target audience and communities, promoting health through videos, radio spots and social media posts •

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**Republic of Nauru**

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