

= Nauru =

Nauru (/ n??u?ru? / nah @-@ OO @-@ roo or / ?n??ru? / NAHR @-@ oo) , officially the Republic of Nauru (Nauruan : Repubrikin Naoero) and formerly known as Pleasant Island , is an island country in Micronesia in the Central Pacific . Its nearest neighbour is Banaba Island in Kiribati , 300 kilometres (186 mi) to the east . It further lies northwest of Tuvalu , north of the Solomon islands , east @-@ northeast of PNG , southeast of the FSM and south of the Marshalls . With 9 @,@ 488 residents in a 21 @-@ square @-@ kilometre (8 @.@ 1 sq mi) area , Nauru is the smallest state in the South Pacific and third smallest state by area in the world , behind only Vatican City and Monaco .

Settled by native peoples from Micronesia and Polynesia , Nauru was annexed and claimed as a colony by the German Empire in the late 19th century . After World War I , Nauru became a League of Nations mandate administered by Australia , New Zealand and the United Kingdom . During World War II , Nauru was occupied by Japanese troops , who were bypassed by the Allied advance across the Pacific . After the war ended , the country entered into UN trusteeship . Nauru gained its independence in 1968 .

Nauru is a phosphate rock island with rich deposits near the surface , which allowed easy strip mining operations . It has some remaining phosphate resources which , as of 2011 , are not economically viable for extraction . Nauru boasted the highest per @-@ capita income enjoyed by any sovereign state in the world during the late 1960s and early 1970s . When the phosphate reserves were exhausted , and the island 's environment had been seriously harmed by mining , the trust that had been established to manage the island 's wealth diminished in value . To earn income , Nauru briefly became a tax haven and illegal money laundering centre . From 2001 to 2008 , and again from 2012 , it accepted aid from the Australian Government in exchange for hosting the Nauru detention centre . As a result of heavy dependence on Australia , many sources have identified Nauru as a client state of Australia .

The president of Nauru is Baron Waqa , who heads a 19 @-@ member unicameral parliament . The country is a member of the United Nations , the Commonwealth of Nations , the Asian Development Bank and the Pacific Islands Forum . Nauru also participates in the Commonwealth and Olympic Games . Recently Nauru became a member country of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) .The Republic of Nauru became the 189th member of the International Monetary Fund in April 2016 .

= = History = =

Nauru was first inhabited by Micronesians and Polynesians at least 3 @,@ 000 years ago . There were traditionally 12 clans or tribes on Nauru , which are represented in the 12 @-@ pointed star on the country 's flag . Traditionally , Nauruans traced their descent matrilineally . Inhabitants practised aquaculture : they caught juvenile ibija fish , acclimatised them to fresh water , and raised them in the Buada Lagoon , providing a reliable source of food . The other locally grown components of their diet included coconuts and pandanus fruit . The name " Nauru " may derive from the Nauruan word Anáoero , which means " I go to the beach " .

The British sea captain John Fearn , a whale hunter , became the first Westerner to visit Nauru in 1798 , calling it " Pleasant Island " . From around 1830 , Nauruans had contact with Europeans from whaling ships and traders who replenished their supplies (particularly fresh water) at Nauru .

Around this time , deserters from European ships began to live on the island . The islanders traded food for alcoholic palm wine and firearms . The firearms were used during the 10 @-@ year Nauruan Tribal War that began in 1878 .

Nauru was annexed by Germany in 1888 and incorporated into Germany 's Marshall Islands Protectorate for administrative purposes . The arrival of the Germans ended the civil war , and kings were established as rulers of the island . The most widely known of these was King Auweyida . Christian missionaries from the Gilbert Islands arrived in 1888 . The German settlers called the island Nawodo or Onawero . The Germans ruled Nauru for almost three decades . Robert Rasch , a

German trader who married a Nauruan woman , was the first administrator , appointed in 1890 .

Phosphate was discovered on Nauru in 1900 by the prospector Albert Fuller Ellis . The Pacific Phosphate Company began to exploit the reserves in 1906 by agreement with Germany , exporting its first shipment in 1907 . In 1914 , following the outbreak of World War I , Nauru was captured by Australian troops . In 1919 it was agreed by the Allied and Associated Powers that His Britannic Majesty should be the administering authority under a League of Nations mandate . The Nauru Island Agreement made in 1919 between the governments of the United Kingdom , Australia and New Zealand provided for the administration of the island and for working of the phosphate deposits by an inter @-@ governmental British Phosphate Commission (BPC) . The terms of the League of Nations Mandate were drawn up in 1920 .

The island experienced an influenza epidemic in 1920 , with a mortality rate of 18 per cent among native Nauruans .

In 1923 , the League of Nations gave Australia a trustee mandate over Nauru , with the United Kingdom and New Zealand as co @-@ trustees . On 6 and 7 December 1940 , the German auxiliary cruisers Komet and Orion sank five supply ships in the vicinity of Nauru . Komet then shelled Nauru 's phosphate mining areas , oil storage depots , and the shiploading cantilever .

Japanese troops occupied Nauru on 25 August 1942 . The Japanese built an airfield which was bombed for the first time on 25 March 1943 , preventing food supplies from being flown to Nauru . The Japanese deported 1 @,@ 200 Nauruans to work as labourers in the Chuuk islands . Nauru , which had been bypassed and left to " wither on the vine " by American forces , was finally liberated on 13 September 1945 , when commander Hisayaki Soeda surrendered the island to the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Navy .

This surrender was accepted by Brigadier J. R. Stevenson , who represented Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee , the commander of the First Australian Army , on board the warship HMAS Diamantina . Arrangements were made to repatriate from Chuuk the 737 Nauruans who survived Japanese captivity there . They were returned to Nauru by the BPC ship Trianza in January 1946 .

In 1947 , a trusteeship was established by the United Nations , with Australia , New Zealand , and the United Kingdom as trustees . In 1947 , a United Nations trusteeship agreement between the three countries was approved by the United Nations . Under those arrangements , the UK , Australia and New Zealand were a joint administering authority . The Nauru Island Agreement provided for the first Administrator to be appointed by Australia for 5 years , leaving subsequent appointments to be decided by the three governments . However , in practice , administrative power was exercised by Australia alone .

Nauru became self @-@ governing in January 1966 , and following a two @-@ year constitutional convention it became independent in 1968 under founding president Hammer DeRoburt . In 1967 , the people of Nauru purchased the assets of the British Phosphate Commissioners , and in June 1970 control passed to the locally owned Nauru Phosphate Corporation . Income from the mines gave Nauruans one of the highest standards of living in the Pacific . In 1989 , Nauru took legal action against Australia in the International Court of Justice over Australia 's administration of the island , in particular Australia 's failure to remedy the environmental damage caused by phosphate mining . Certain Phosphate Lands : Nauru v. Australia led to an out @-@ of @-@ court settlement to rehabilitate the mined @-@ out areas of Nauru .

= = Geography = =

Nauru is a 21 square kilometres (8 sq mi) oval @-@ shaped island in the southwestern Pacific Ocean , located 42 kilometres (26 mi) south of the Equator . The island is surrounded by a coral reef , which is exposed at low tide and dotted with pinnacles . The presence of the reef has prevented the establishment of a seaport , although channels in the reef allow small boats access to the island . A fertile coastal strip 150 to 300 metres (490 to 980 ft) wide lies inland from the beach .

Coral cliffs surround Nauru 's central plateau . The highest point of the plateau , called the Command Ridge , is 71 metres (233 ft) above sea level .

The only fertile areas on Nauru are on the narrow coastal belt , where coconut palms flourish . The

land surrounding Buada Lagoon supports bananas , pineapples , vegetables , pandanus trees and indigenous hardwoods such as the tomano tree .

Nauru was one of three great phosphate rock islands in the Pacific Ocean , along with Banaba (Ocean Island) in Kiribati and Makatea in French Polynesia . The phosphate reserves on Nauru are now almost entirely depleted . Phosphate mining in the central plateau has left a barren terrain of jagged limestone pinnacles up to 15 metres (49 ft) high . Mining has stripped and devastated about 80 percent of Nauru 's land area , and has also affected the surrounding Exclusive Economic Zone ; 40 percent of marine life is estimated to have been killed by silt and phosphate runoff .

There are limited natural fresh water resources on Nauru . Rooftop storage tanks collect rainwater . The islanders are mostly dependent on three desalination plants housed at Nauru 's Utilities Agency .

== Climate ==

Nauru 's climate is hot and very humid year @-@ round because of its proximity to the equator and the ocean . Nauru is hit by monsoon rains between November and February , but does not typically experience cyclones . Annual rainfall is highly variable and is influenced by the El Niño @-@ Southern Oscillation , with several significant recorded droughts . The temperature on Nauru ranges between 26 and 35 ° C (79 and 95 ° F) during the day and between 22 and 34 ° C (72 and 93 ° F) at night .

== Ecology ==

Fauna is sparse on the island due to a combination of a lack of vegetation and the consequences of phosphates mining . Many indigenous birds have disappeared or become rare owing to destruction of their habitat . There are about 60 recorded vascular plant species native to the island , none of which are endemic . Coconut farming , mining , and introduced species have caused serious disturbance to the native vegetation .

There are no native land mammals , but there are native insects , land crabs , and birds , including the endemic Nauru reed warbler . The Polynesian rat , cats , dogs , pigs , and chickens have been introduced to Nauru from ships . The diversity of the reef marine life makes fishing a popular activity for tourists on the island , as well as SCUBA diving and snorkelling .

== Politics ==

Nauru is a republic with a parliamentary system of government . The president is both head of state and head of government . A 19 @-@ member unicameral parliament is elected every three years . The parliament elects the president from its members , and the president appoints a cabinet of five to six members .

Nauru does not have any formal structure for political parties , and candidates typically stand for office as independents ; fifteen of the 19 members of the current Parliament are independents . Four parties that have been active in Nauruan politics are the Nauru Party , the Democratic Party , Nauru First , and the Centre Party . However , alliances within the government are often formed on the basis of extended family ties rather than party affiliation .

From 1992 to 1999 , Nauru had a local government system known as the Nauru Island Council (NIC) . This nine @-@ member council was designed to provide municipal services . The NIC was dissolved in 1999 and all assets and liabilities became vested in the national government . Land tenure on Nauru is unusual : all Nauruans have certain rights to all land on the island , which is owned by individuals and family groups . Government and corporate entities do not own any land , and they must enter into a lease arrangement with landowners to use land . Non @-@ Nauruans cannot own land on the island .

Nauru had 17 changes of administration between 1989 and 2003 . Bernard Dowiyogo died in office in March 2003 and Ludwig Scotty was elected as the president , later being re @-@ elected to serve

a full term in October 2004 . Following a vote of no confidence on 19 December 2007 , Scotty was replaced by Marcus Stephen . Stephen resigned in November 2011 , and Freddie Pitcher became President . Sprent Dabwido then filed a motion of no confidence in Pitcher , resulting in him becoming president . Following parliamentary elections in 2013 , Baron Waqa was elected president .

Its Supreme Court , headed by the Chief Justice , is paramount on constitutional issues . Other cases can be appealed to the two @-@ judge Appellate Court . Parliament cannot overturn court decisions , but Appellate Court rulings can be appealed to the High Court of Australia . In practice this rarely happens . Lower courts consist of the District Court and the Family Court , both of which are headed by a Resident Magistrate , who also is the Registrar of the Supreme Court . There are two other quasi @-@ courts : the Public Service Appeal Board and the Police Appeal Board , both of which are presided over by the Chief Justice .

= = = Foreign relations = = =

Following independence in 1968 , Nauru joined the Commonwealth of Nations as a Special Member ; it became a full member in 2000 . The country was admitted to the Asian Development Bank in 1991 and to the United Nations in 1999 . Nauru is a member of the Pacific Islands Forum , the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme , the South Pacific Commission , and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission . The American Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Program operates a climate @-@ monitoring facility on the island .

Nauru has no armed forces , though there is a small police force under civilian control . Australia is responsible for Nauru 's defence under an informal agreement between the two countries . The September 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between Australia and Nauru provides the latter with financial aid and technical assistance , including a Secretary of Finance to prepare the budget , and advisers on health and education . This aid is in return for Nauru 's housing of asylum seekers while their applications for entry into Australia are processed . Nauru uses the Australian dollar as its official currency .

Nauru has used its position as a member of the United Nations to gain financial support from both Taiwan (ROC) and China (PRC) by changing its recognition from one to the other under the One @-@ China policy . On 21 July 2002 , Nauru signed an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC , accepting \$ 130 million from the PRC for this action . In response , the ROC severed diplomatic relations with Nauru two days later . Nauru later re @-@ established links with the ROC on 14 May 2005 , and diplomatic ties with the PRC were officially severed on 31 May 2005 . However , the PRC continues to maintain a representative office on Nauru .

In 2008 , Nauru recognised Kosovo as an independent country , and in 2009 Nauru became the fourth country , after Russia , Nicaragua , and Venezuela , to recognise Abkhazia , a breakaway region of Georgia . Russia was reported to be giving Nauru \$ 50 million in humanitarian aid as a result of this recognition . On 15 July 2008 , the Nauruan government announced a port refurbishment programme , financed with US \$ 9 million of development aid received from Russia . The Nauru government claims this aid is not related to its recognising Abkhazia and South Ossetia .

A significant portion of Nauru 's income has been in the form of aid from Australia . In 2001 , the MV Tampa , a Norwegian ship that had rescued 438 refugees from a stranded 20 @-@ metre @-@ long boat , was seeking to dock in Australia . In what became known as the Tampa affair , the ship was refused entry and boarded by Australian troops . The refugees were eventually loaded onto Royal Australian Navy vessel HMAS Manoora and taken to Nauru to be held in detention facilities which later became part of the Howard government 's Pacific Solution . Nauru operated two detention centres known as State House and Topside for these refugees in exchange for Australian aid . By November 2005 , only two refugees , Mohammed Sagar and Muhammad Faisal , remained on Nauru from those first sent there in 2001 , with Sagar finally resettling in early 2007 . The Australian government sent further groups of asylum @-@ seekers to Nauru in late 2006 and early 2007 . The refugee centre was closed in 2008 , but , following the Australian government 's re @-@ adoption of the Pacific Solution in August 2012 , it has re @-@ opened it .

== Administrative divisions ==

Nauru is divided into fourteen administrative districts which are grouped into eight electoral constituencies and are further divided into various villages . The most populous district is Denigomodu with a total of 1 @, @ 804 residents , out of which 1 @, @ 497 reside in NPC settlement called Location . The following table shows population size by district as per 2011 census .

== Economy ==

The Nauruan economy peaked in the early 1980s , as it was dependent almost entirely on the phosphate deposits that originate from the droppings of sea birds . There are few other resources , and most necessities are imported . Small @-@ scale mining is still conducted by RONPhos , formerly known as the Nauru Phosphate Corporation . The government places a percentage of RONPhos 's earnings into the Nauru Phosphate Royalties Trust . The Trust manages long @-@ term investments , which were intended to support the citizens once the phosphate reserves were exhausted .

Because of mismanagement , the Trust 's fixed and current assets were reduced considerably and may never fully recover . The failed investments included financing Leonardo the Musical in 1993 . The Mercure Hotel in Sydney and Nauru House in Melbourne were sold in 2004 to finance debts and Air Nauru 's only Boeing 737 was repossessed in December 2005 . Normal air service resumed after the aircraft was replaced with a Boeing 737 ? 300 airliner in June 2006 . In 2005 , the corporation sold its property asset in Melbourne , the vacant Savoy Tavern site , for \$ 7 @. @ 5 million .

The value of the Trust is estimated to have shrunk from A \$ 1 @. @ 3 billion in 1991 to \$ 138 million in 2002 . Nauru currently lacks money to perform many of the basic functions of government ; for example , the National Bank of Nauru is insolvent . The CIA World Factbook estimated a GDP per capita of \$ 5 @, @ 000 in 2005 . The Asian Development Bank 2007 economic report on Nauru estimated GDP per capita at \$ 2 @, @ 400 to \$ 2 @, @ 715 . The United Nations (2013) estimates the GDP per capita to 15 @, @ 211 and ranks it 51 on its GDP per capita country list .

There are no personal taxes in Nauru . The unemployment rate is estimated to be 90 percent , and of those who have jobs , the government employs 95 percent . The Asian Development Bank notes that although the administration has a strong public mandate to implement economic reforms , in the absence of an alternative to phosphate mining , the medium @-@ term outlook is for continued dependence on external assistance . Tourism is not a major contributor to the economy .

In the 1990s , Nauru became a tax haven and offered passports to foreign nationals for a fee . The inter @-@ governmental Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) identified Nauru as one of 15 " non @-@ cooperative " countries in its fight against money laundering . During the 1990s , it was possible to establish a licensed bank in Nauru for only \$ 25 @, @ 000 with no other requirements . Under pressure from FATF , Nauru introduced anti @-@ avoidance legislation in 2003 , after which foreign hot money left the country . In October 2005 , after satisfactory results from the legislation and its enforcement , FATF lifted the non @-@ cooperative designation .

From 2001 to 2007 , the Nauru detention centre provided a significant source of income for the country . The Nauruan authorities reacted with concern to its closure by Australia . In February 2008 , the Foreign Affairs minister , Dr Kieren Keke , stated that the closure would result in 100 Nauruans losing their jobs , and would affect 10 percent of the island 's population directly or indirectly : " We have got a huge number of families that are suddenly going to be without any income . We are looking at ways we can try and provide some welfare assistance but our capacity to do that is very limited . Literally we have got a major unemployment crisis in front of us . " The detention centre was re @-@ opened in August 2012 .

== Population ==

=== Demographics ===

Nauru had 9 @, @ 378 residents as of July 2011 . The population was previously larger , but in 2006 1 @, @ 500 people left the island during a repatriation of immigrant workers from Kiribati and Tuvalu . The repatriation was motivated by wide @-@ scale reductions @-@ in @-@ force in the phosphate mining industry .

=== Ethnic groups ===

58 % of people in Nauru are ethnically Nauruan , 26 % are other Pacific Islander , 8 % are European , and 8 % are Chinese . Nauruans descended from Polynesian and Micronesian seafarers . Two of the 12 original tribal groups became extinct in the 20th century .

=== Languages ===

The official language of Nauru is Nauruan , a distinct Pacific island language , which is spoken by 96 percent of ethnic Nauruans at home .

English is widely spoken and is the language of government and commerce , as Nauruan is not common outside of the country .

=== Religion ===

The main religion practised on the island is Christianity (two @-@ thirds Protestant , one @-@ third Roman Catholic) . The Constitution provides for freedom of religion . The government has restricted the religious practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter @-@ day Saints and the Jehovah 's Witnesses , most of whom are foreign workers employed by the government @-@ owned Nauru Phosphate Corporation . The Catholics are pastorally served by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tarawa and Nauru , with see at Tarawa on Kiribati .

The original native people believed in a female deity , Eijebong , and a spirit land , an island called Buitani .

There is also a sizeable Bahá 'í population (10 %) ? the largest proportion of any country in the world ? and Buddhist (9 %) and Muslim (2 @. @ 2 %) populations .

=== Culture ===

Angam Day , held on 26 October , celebrates the recovery of the Nauruan population after the two World Wars and the 1920 influenza epidemic . The displacement of the indigenous culture by colonial and contemporary Western influences is significant . Few of the old customs have been preserved , but some forms of traditional music , arts and crafts , and fishing are still practised .

=== Media ===

There are no daily news publications on Nauru , although there is one fortnightly publication , Mwinen Ko . There is a state @-@ owned television station , Nauru Television (NTV) , which broadcasts programmes from New Zealand and Australia , and a state @-@ owned non @-@ commercial radio station , Radio Nauru , which carries programmes from Radio Australia and the BBC .

=== Sport ===

Australian rules football is the most popular sport in Nauru ? it and weightlifting are considered the

country 's national sports . There is a football league with eight teams . Other sports popular in Nauru include volleyball , netball , fishing and tennis . Nauru participates in the Commonwealth Games and the Summer Olympic Games .

Rugby sevens popularity has increased over the last two years , so much they have a national team (Nauru national rugby union team (sevens)) .

Nauru competed in the 2015 Oceania Sevens Championship in New Zealand .

= = Public Services = =

= = = Education = = =

Literacy on Nauru is 96 percent . Education is compulsory for children from six to sixteen years old , and two more non @-@ compulsory years are offered (years 11 and 12) . There is a campus of the University of the South Pacific on Nauru . Before this campus was built in 1987 , students would study either by distance or abroad . Since 2011 , the University of New England , Australia has established a presence on the island with around 30 Nauruan teachers studying for an associate degree in education . These students will continue onto the degree to complete their studies . This project is led by Associate Professor Pep Serow and funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade .

= = = Health = = =

Life expectancy on Nauru in 2009 was 60 @.@ 6 years for males and 68 @.@ 0 years for females

By measure of mean body mass index (BMI) Nauruans are the most overweight people in the world ; 97 percent of men and 93 percent of women are overweight or obese . In 2012 the obesity rate was 71 @.@ 7 % .

Nauru has the world 's highest level of type 2 diabetes , with more than 40 percent of the population affected . Other significant dietary @-@ related problems on Nauru include kidney disease and heart disease .