

KEY FACTS

Official name: Republic of Nauru

Head of State: President Baron Divavesi Waqa (from 8 Jun 2013)

Head of government: President Baron Divavesi Waqa (from 8 Jun 2013)

Ruling party: There is no formal party system; parliament is traditionally dominated by independents that form factions.

Area: 21 square km

Population: 9,454 (July 2013)*

Capital: Owing to its small size and absence of urban development, Nauru has no capital. Yaren is the main town.

Official language: Nauruan

Currency: Australian dollar (A\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rate: A\$1.10 per US\$ (Jul 2013)

GDP per capita: US\$5,632 (2009)

GDP real growth: 4.90% (2012)

GDP: US\$55.00 million (2009)

Inflation: -0.50% (2012)*

Foreign debt: US\$63.00 million (2010)

* estimated figure

Nauru

Although an independent republic, Nauru, with a population of around 10,000, is largely dependent on Australia for its existence. A review of Australia's official development assistance (ODA) published in 2012 acknowledged the limited growth prospects for very small Pacific countries, such as Nauru. A planned increase in ODA, to offset the lack of private sector activity, is likely to be delivered through programme based approaches. This will require improvements to the country's public financial management strategies in order to efficiently absorb and manage higher ODA levels and translate this into economic growth.

Nevertheless, growth in FY2011 (ending 30 June 2011) was a respectable 4.0 per cent, largely because phosphate exports increased by more than 20 per cent. . Recently improved phosphate-loading facilities are expected to further increase phosphate exports to 450,000 tons in FY2012 from 350,000 tons in FY2011, taking economic growth to 4.8 per cent in FY2012 and 4.2 per cent in FY2013.

The *Asian Development Bank Economic Outlook 2012* reports that Nauru has been experiencing deflation for the last few years and in FY2011 the consumer price index declined by 3.5 per cent, in part because of appreciation of the Australian dollar (which Nauru uses as its official currency). Government revenue in FY2012 is expected to be A\$31.6 million (US\$) and expenditure A\$32.5 million, yielding a small deficit of A\$0.9 million. Cash reserves brought forward from FY2011 will, however, result in a small surplus.

COUNTRY PROFILE

Historical profile

1798 Sighted by the British and named Pleasant Island.

1887 Nauru became a German protectorate.

1888 Became part of the (German) Marshall Islands.

1900 Phosphate was discovered.

1906 Mining began under an agreement signed by the Australian Pacific Phosphate Company and the German government.

1914 Nauru was captured by Australian forces.

1919 After Germany's defeat, the island was placed under the joint administration of the UK, Australia and New Zealand. The three countries formed the British Phosphate Commission in order to share phosphate-mining revenues.

1942 Nauru was invaded by the Japanese.

1945 At the end of the Second World War, Nauru was made a UN Trust Territory under Australian Administration.

1968 The adoption of the Nauru constitution established it as the world's smallest republic with a parliamentary system of government. Hammer DeRoburt was Nauru's first head of state.

1970 Nauru took control of its phosphate industry. Nauru's per capita income became one of the world's highest.

1976 Parliament unseated DeRoburt after objections to his autocratic style.

1978 DeRoburt was re-elected.

1989 Bernard Dowiyogo was elected president, defeating DeRoburt by 10 votes.

1995 Lagumot Harris defeated Dowiyogo.

1996 Harris resigned and Dowiyogo returned to power. Dowiyogo was ousted in parliament and Kennan Adeang became president; he in turn was replaced by Reuben Kun.

1997 Kinza Clodumar won the presidential election, backed by Bernard Dowiyogo.

1998 Dowiyogo replaced Clodumar as president.

1999 Dowiyogo was defeated in parliament and René Harris, a former president of the Nauru Phosphate Corporation, was elected president.

2000 René Harris resigned and Dowiyogo was re-elected president.

2001 Nauru agreed to Australia's proposal to house its asylum-seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants in Nauru for a fee. Parliament ousted Dowiyogo and re-elected former president, Lagumot Harris. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) (established by the G-7 Summit of 1989) on money laundering blacklisted Nauru for not implementing appropriate

legislation to curb money laundering, especially by the Russian mafia.

2002 Over 400 asylum-seekers bound for Australia were rescued from a sinking ship in the Indian Ocean and 293 were sent to Nauru which housed around 1,000 in detention.

2003 Bernard Dowiyogo ousted René Harris and became president. When Dowiyogo died of a heart attack Derog Gioura was appointed acting president. The US threatened to impose sanctions if Nauru did not halt the sale of passports and close down its banking sector, both allegedly used by the terrorist group al Qaeda. Ludwig Scotty won presidential elections. Scotty lost a no-confidence vote and was replaced by René Harris.

2004 Nauru defaulted on loan payments to Australia and had its assets seized when foreign debts were over US\$165 million. Although René Harris organised a restructured loan he lost a vote of no confidence in parliament and Scotty was re-appointed president. Australia installed officials in Nauru to handle state finances. Scotty declared a state of emergency and dissolved parliament after it failed to pass a reform budget. In parliamentary elections supporters of Scotty won.

2005 Ties were severed with China and links re-established with Taiwan. Nauru was removed from the FATF blacklist of countries lacking restrictions on international money laundering; the US also lifted its 2003 sanctions.

2007 In parliamentary elections, supporters of Ludwig Scotty won 14 seats out of 18. Scotty was re-elected president beating Marcus Stephen. President Scotty lost a vote of no confidence in parliament and Marcus Stephen was appointed in his place.

2008 The Australian offshore processing centre for asylum seekers was closed when the remaining 21 Sri Lankans, who had been granted refugee status, were flown to Australia. This brought to an end the controversial 'Pacific Solution' that Australia had instituted in 2002. The centre is said to have contributed around 20 per cent of Nauru's GDP, and employed about 100 people. President Stephen called a snap election after declaring a state of emergency, following political stalemate since he took office. President Stephen won most support with 12 members (out of 18) of his grouping elected; the remainder were either opposition or independent members. Former president, René Harris died.

2009 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a list of countries that had not implemented international tax information exchange standards, of which Nauru was

one, despite signing a co-operation agreement in 2003.

2010 In a constitutional referendum, 66.96 per cent of voters rejected changes that included a directly elected president and a distribution of power and a strengthening human rights legislation. The President dissolved parliament and scheduled elections, one year earlier than planned, as a series of no-confidence motions in parliament had undermined his position and had stalled the budget. The elections had no clear majority for or opposed to President Marcus Stephen. In another round the result was nine pro-Stephen, eight opposed and one independent. A state of emergency was imposed and government business carried on under presidential decree. The Supreme Court rejected the oppositions' challenge to the president's imposition of a state of emergency and a deal was forged whereby Ludwig Scotty became Speaker of the House and, following an indirect presidential ballot, Marcus Stephen was re-elected president, beating Milton Dube by 11 votes to six.

2011 Nauru signed the UN Refugee Convention in June, which precludes refugees being forcibly returned to their country of origin. On 10 November, President Marcus Stephen resigned and Fredrick Pitcher was elected by parliament (nine votes to eight for Milton Dube) as president. However, on 15 November parliament changed its decision and Pitcher was deposed (by nine votes to eight) and replaced by Sprent Dabwido.

2012 On 14 August the Nauru Detention Centre was reopened on behalf of the Australian government and the first irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) (asylum seekers and unauthorised migrants). When fully operational the centre will house up to 1,500 people, including families. However, the camp is a makeshift tent city and by 2 November, 170 (out of 400) IMAs were on hunger strike in protest about the conditions and their prospects.

2013 On 18 March the elections scheduled for 6 April were cancelled by the Supreme Court. President Sprent Dabwido withdrew his notice, submitted to the speaker of Parliament on the 1 March, advising that parliament be dissolved, on 15 April. Elections were rescheduled for 22 June. However, the President declared a state of emergency and brought the date forward to 8 June. Supporters of Baron Waqa won 14 seats and those of Roland Kun 5 seats. Baron Waqa was elected President.

Political structure

Constitution

Republic

Voting is compulsory for all over the age of 20.

Independence date

31 January (anniversary of independence from Australia in 1968).

The executive

The president is head of state and head of government. The president, elected by parliament, governs for a three-year term, with the assistance of a cabinet of four or five ministers appointed from within parliament.

National legislature

Legislative power is vested in an 18-member unicameral parliament, elected for a three-year term in multi-seat constituencies.

Last elections

8 June 2013 (parliamentary)

Results: Parliamentary: 14 'non-partisan' supporters of President Baron Waqa and five 'non-partisan' supporters of the Roland Kun were elected.

Next elections

2016 (parliamentary and presidential).

Political parties

Informal alliances and personal links rather than formal, strong party discipline.

Ruling party

There is no formal party system; parliament is traditionally dominated by independents that form factions.

Political situation

Government business became fraught in 2010 as parliament ground to a halt following the political stand-off between President Marcus Stephen and the opposition. President Stephen survived a series of no-confidence motions in parliament, while the opposition held up the budget, until in April when Stephen called a snap election to break the deadlock. However, the electorate did not look favourably on either camp and returned the same members of parliament; this happened twice. The Speaker was sacked by the president and in June and President Stephen declared a state of emergency. The opposition retaliated by challenging the legitimacy of the caretaker government in the Supreme Court in October 2010. However, the Supreme Court threw out the motion saying the president had every right to call a state of emergency, under the circumstances.

Parliament now has to find some consensus and bipartisan support for constitutional changes that will stop such deadlock in the future.

Population

9,454 (July 2013)*

Last census: April 1992: 9,919

Population density: 475 inhabitants per square km (2010). Urban population 100 per cent (2010 Unicef).

Annual growth rate: 0.6 per cent, 1990–2010 (Unicef).

Ethnic make-up

Nauruan (58 per cent), other Pacific islanders (26 per cent), Chinese (8 per cent), European (8 per cent). The indigenous population is of Micronesian descent.

Religions

Protestant (66 per cent), Roman Catholic (33 per cent).

Education

Schooling is provided free and is compulsory for aged 4–16. 10 per cent of schoolchildren are expected to complete secondary education. The government has backed the 'one laptop per child' programme (OLPC). Scholarships are available for higher education overseas.

Health

The population's general health is not good; Nauru has a high rate of type two diabetes, with one-third of adults suffering from the disease due to the consumption of large amounts of processed food. In May 2004, a report ranked Nauruans as the most obese people in the world. A new diabetes centre has been set up as a focal point to provide multi-faceted treatment and education.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released statistics in January 2011 that ranked Nauru's population with the world's highest level of obesity, with 97 per cent of men and 93 per cent of women overweight or obese. Associated chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer are responsible for around 75 per cent of all deaths. A diet of processed foods, which are high in sugar and fat, have replaced the traditional diet of fish, coconuts and root vegetables and is held responsible for the condition of most people. Cultural values, which equate size with prosperity, also contribute to the condition.

Life expectancy: 61 years, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Fertility rate/Maternal mortality rate: 3.8 births per woman, 2004 (WHO 2006)

Birth rate/Death rate: 26 births per 1,000 population; seven deaths per 1,000 population (2003).

Child (under 5 years) mortality rate (per 1,000): 37 per 1,000 live births (WHO 2012)

Main cities

Owing to its small size and absence of urban development, Nauru has no capital. Yaren is the main town (estimated population 4,859 in 2012).

Languages spoken

Nauruan and English, which is widely spoken and used for most government and commercial purposes.

Official language/s

Nauruan

Media

Press

The government-owned, weekly *Nauru Bulletin*, publishes in Nauruan and English. Other newspapers include the fortnightly *Central Star News* published on Saturdays and *Nauru Chronicle*.

Broadcasting

The Nauru Broadcasting Service operates public radio and TV.

Radio: Radio Nauru operated two services on AM and FM, in English and Nauruan, with imported material from Radio Australia and the BBC.

Television: Nauru Television (NTV) moved its operation to New Zealand in 1991 and broadcasts via satellite and on video-tapes.

Other news agencies: ABC Pacific Beat: www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat
Pacific Magazine: www.pacificmagazine.net

Economy

The economy, which once relied almost solely on phosphate mining to give the islanders in the 1960s the highest per capita income in the world, has virtually collapsed so that in 2009 the island was dependent on fishing rights and international grants and development funding and aid (particularly from Australia) to survive. The resumption of limited phosphate mining and its export by the Australian company Incitec Pivot, which invested A\$6 million (US\$7.9 million) in a government backed revitalisation of the industry, has shown small profits but can only provide limited respite. Reserves are expected to last until 2011. At the same time the government made commitments to refurbish the associated infrastructure. With the help of the Pacific Island Forum the government is undertaking a strategic development programme to create a new sustainable economic framework for the future.

GDP growth plunged into recession in 2007 with negative growth of -27.3 per, before rallying to 1 per cent in 2008. It remained static for the next two years at 0 per cent, until 2011 when the economy registered estimated GDP growth of 4 per cent. Inflation typically runs at around 3–4 per cent and the government often has difficulty in balancing the budget with poor agricultural productivity and little prospect for industrial expansion. In 2009 inflation spiked at 21.2 per cent following the collapse in international trade due to the global economic crisis and the high

prices of imports of food and fuel. In 2010–11 as domestic and government spending reacted to sharp rises in costs, an average -2 per cent deflation rate was recorded.

Around 90 per cent of the workforce is unemployed and of the remaining 10 per cent the government employs 95 per cent of these.

External trade

Nauru is a member of the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (Sparteca) along with 12 other regional nations, which allows products duty free access by Pacific Island Forum members to Australian and New Zealand markets (subject to the country of origin restrictions).

Imports

Imports include food, fuel, consumer goods, building materials, vehicles and machinery.

Main sources: Russia (79.4 per cent of total in 2010), Australia (13.6 per cent), South Korea (0.1 per cent).

Exports

Phosphates, besides financial services, are the sole export.

Main destinations: India (37.9 per cent of total in 2010), Australia (12 per cent), South Korea (9.2 per cent).

Arable land is confined to a strip 150–300 metres between the beach and the cliff, surrounding a vast crater caused by the phosphate mine.

Artisanal vessels (canoes and aluminium dinghies) supply fish for local consumption. Most food is imported.

There are long-term plans to rehabilitate former mining land into agricultural land with funds from the Australian government.

The total fish catch is typically 400 tonnes per annum.

In April 2010 the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) (eight island states including Nauru) collectively agreed to close to *purse seine* fishing in 4.55 million square kilometres of high seas in their area, from 1 January 2011, to vessels licensed to fish in their waters. The area involved stretches from Palau and Papua New Guinea in the west to Kiribati in the east, from the Marshall Islands in the north to Tuvalu in the south; it holds an estimated 25 per cent of the world's tuna supply.

On 12 April 2011, a summit of the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) concluded its strategy for a policy of sustainable fishing in the Pacific. The PNA treaty, which was established in 1989 and expires in 2012, is seen as in need of an overhaul. As a collective region (FSM, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu)

control around 25–30 per cent of world stocks of tuna. Only 5 per cent of sales revenue is returned to the PNA and ministers called for specific changes, including an increased share of profits, PNA crews on-board *purse seine* vessels (minimum 10 per cent), conservation and management measures including a limit to fish trapping (fish aggregating devices (FADs)), net mesh rules and the establishment of an observer agency and fisheries information management system.

Industry and manufacturing

Phosphate processing is the only industry.

Tourism

Nauru offers the quintessential white sandy beaches fringed by palms that make up the image of a tropical paradise, and is particularly suited to those visitors who want to get away from a frenetic lifestyle. The island has little in the way of tourist development with only two hotels and two lodges and activities limited to sea sports (fishing, diving and swimming). Trips to Nauru involve a flight from Brisbane (Australia), which are limited to two flights a week.

The Nauru Tourism Department has a new, interactive website (www.discovernauru.com) that offers advice, a range of accommodation and all activities available.

Environment

Rehabilitation of the island is necessary after decades of phosphate mining. Nauru was one of the first countries to sign the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Rising sea levels related to global warming mean that in the future habitable low-lying land areas will be at risk from tidal surges and flooding.

Mining

Nauru's phosphate reserves, the legacy of millennia of fossilised bird excreta, represented the highest-grade phosphate ore in the world. It is estimated that reserves will be exhausted by around 2008. There are plans to reach deeper sources via boring coral, in a more involved secondary mining process.

There are no known hydrocarbon reserves. Consumption of oil was 1,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 2008, all of which was imported.

Energy

Total installed generating capacity was 10MW in 2007, producing 3 million kilowatt hours. The Nauru Utilities Authority (NUA) is responsible for electricity generation. It is participating in the Pacific Islands review of renewable energies, specifically wind power, sponsored by the European Union.

Banking and insurance

There are no reliable commercial banking services in Nauru. Setting up a viable domestic banking system will be a major task to be addressed in the government's economic reform programme.

Central bank

The Bank of Nauru is insolvent and operates on a very limited basis.

Offshore facilities

Nauru is in the process of closing down its offshore banking sector, and thereby closing off access of criminal money laundering. The 2004/05 budget set aside funds for the establishment of a financial investigations unit to support the implementation process. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a list on 2 April 2009 of countries that had not implemented international tax information exchange standards, of which Nauru was one, despite signing a co-operation agreement in 2003.

Time

GMT plus 12 hours

Geography

Nauru is a small island in the central Pacific Ocean, lying about 40km (25 miles) south of the Equator and about 4,000km (2,500 miles) north-east of Sydney, Australia. Banaba (Ocean Island), in Kiribati, is about 300km (185 miles) to the east. It is oval-shaped and was one of the Pacific's largest phosphate-rock islands (the phosphate has since been depleted), ringed by a wide coral reef that gives no natural harbour or anchorage. Sandy beaches fringe a fertile belt between the shore and a coral cliff that rises to a central plateau up to 60 metres above sea level. There are no rivers or large lakes and the populations' main source of fresh water is either the often brackish water of the 300 acre Buada lagoon, or rainwater; there is an underground lake in the south-east in the Moqua Cave.

Hemisphere

Southern

Climate

Tropical, tempered by sea breezes, but humid (80 per cent) with variable rainfall. Temperatures range from 24–34 degrees Celsius in the shade. Monsoon season from November–February; average annual rainfall is 2,060mm. Between May–October is the best time to visit.

Entry requirements

Passports

Required by all.

Visa

Required by all, except nationals of New Zealand for visits up to three months and South Korea for 14 days. Tourist visas, for up to 30 days, may be obtained on arrival

by nationals of US, Canada, UK and Caribbean Commonwealth countries with proof of sufficient funds, accommodation and return/onward passage.

Business and visitors' visas from all other countries must be obtained in advance directly from the Department of Foreign Affairs in Nauru (details in Ministry Addresses).

Currency advice/regulations

The import of local and foreign currencies is unlimited but must be declared on arrival. Export of local currency is limited to the equivalent of A\$2,500; amounts greater than this must be authorised by the Bank of Nauru. The export of foreign currency is unlimited.

Travellers cheques are readily accepted.

Customs

Personal property is duty-free.

Traditional artifacts of Nauru require an export licence.

Prohibited imports

Firearms, ammunition, pornography and illegal drugs.

Health (for visitors)

Mandatory precautions

Cholera vaccination certificate if arriving from or via an infected area within five days. Yellow fever vaccination certificate if arriving from an infected area.

Advisable precautions

Vaccination for diphtheria, tuberculosis, hepatitis A and B, polio, tetanus, typhoid. There is a rabies risk. Main water is chlorinated but may cause mild stomach upset. Local water may be contaminated. There are no medical specialists, and serious cases are sent to Australia so medical insurance, including emergency evacuation, is necessary.

Hotels

There are two hotels on the island the Menen and the Od-N-Aiwo.

Credit cards

All major credit and charge cards are accepted. ATMs are not available.

Public holidays (national)

Fixed dates

1 Jan (New Year's Day), 31 Jan (Independence Day), 17 May (Constitution Day), 25 Sep (Youth Day), 26 Oct (Angam Day), 25–26 Dec (Christmas).

Variable dates

Good Friday, Easter Monday and Tuesday.

Working hours

Banking

Mon–Thu: 0900–1600; Fri: 0900–1630.

Business

Mon–Fri: 0800–1200, 1330–1630.

Government

Mon–Fri: 0900–1700.

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Shops

Mon–Fri 0800–1800. Some food shops are open for longer hours and at the weekend.

Telecommunications

There is an automatic island and international radio communications system in operation.

Electricity supply

110/240V AC, 50Hz

Weights and measures

Metric system

Social customs/useful tips

In business an informal attitude prevails, shirts and smart trousers or skirts are acceptable and only on very special occasions is more formal wear advisable. It is customary to shake hands on meeting and taking leave.

Gratuities are not customary. The minimum drinking age is 21 years.

Getting there

Air

National airline: Our Airline (formerly Air Nauru), with limited services to Brisbane (Australia), Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

International airport/s: Nauru Island International (INU), there are few facilities; buses run to Yaren after each arriving plane and there is a courtesy bus provided by the Menen Hotel.

Airport tax: Departures tax: A\$25.

Surface

Water: The main sealinks are with Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Without a natural harbour most commercial vessels moor offshore, in what are reputedly some of the world's deepest permanent anchorages, and passengers and cargo have to be ferried ashore.

Getting about

National transport

Road: A main road (19.3km) circles the island, and all residential areas are linked by surfaced roads. A regular local bus service operates around the island. Buada

and the former phosphate areas are linked by an inland road.

Car hire

Car hire can be arranged locally. Traffic drives on the left. A national driving licence should suffice.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

The addresses listed below are a selection only. While World of Information makes every endeavour to check these addresses, we cannot guarantee that changes have not been made, especially to telephone numbers and area codes. We would welcome any corrections.

Telephone area codes

The international direct dialling (IDD) code for Nauru is +674 followed by subscriber's number.

Useful telephone numbers

Police: 110

Fire: 119

Ambulance: 118 or 117

Banking

Central bank

Bank of Nauru, PO Box 289, Civic Centre, Aiwo District (tel: 444-3238/3267; fax: 444-3203; e-mail: bon@cenpac.net.nr).

Travel information

Air Nauru, Government Building, Yaren District (tel: 444-3141, 444-3418; fax: 444-3170).

Nauru International Airport, PO Box 40, Nauru Air Corporation (tel: 444-3754/3141; fax: 444-3282-3705).

Pacific Island Travel, Herengracht 495, 1017 BT Amsterdam, The Netherlands (tel: (+31) 020-626-1325; fax (+31) 020-623-0008; internet: www.pacificislandtravel.com).

National tourist organisation offices

National Tourist Office, c/o Special Project Officer (Culture and Tourism), Department of Island Development and Industry, Government Offices, Aiwo District (tel: 444-3191; fax: 444-3791).

Ministries

Address for all Government Offices: Government Offices, Yaren District.

Chief Secretary, Secretary to Cabinet, Public Service Commissioner and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages (tel: 444-3133; fax: 444-3110).

Department of Foreign Affairs (tel: 444-3133; fax: 444-3105).

Secretary for Education (tel: 444-3130; fax: 444-3718).

Secretary for External Affairs (tel: 444-3191, 444-3701; fax: 444-3105).

Secretary for Finance (tel: 444-3285, 444-3287; fax: 444-3125).

Secretary for Health (tel: 444-3702; fax: 444-3106).

Secretary for Island Development and Industry (tel: 444-3281; fax: 444-3705) (economic development and privatisation and foreign investment).

Secretary for Justice (tel: 444-3747, 444-3160; fax: 444-3108).

Secretary for Works and Community Services (tel: 444-3703; fax: 444-3718).

Other useful addresses

Directorate of Telecommunications, Private Bag, Yaren (tel: 444-3132; fax: 444-3111).

Nauru Finance Corporation, PO Box 306, Yaren (tel: 3390; fax: 3345) (responsible for promoting economic diversification, including offshore banking).

Nauru Permanent Mission to the UN, 800 Second Ave, Suite 400D, New York, NY-10017 (tel: (+1-212) 937-0074; internet: www.un.int/nauru).

Other news agencies: ABC Pacific Beat: www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat

Pacific Magazine: www.pacificmagazine.net

Internet sites

Nauru International Airport: www.airnauru.com.au

Nauru website: www.nauruwire.org