



## **NATIONAL ADDRESS**

**His Excellency President Lionel Rouwen Aingimea, MP  
on the global health issue, the Coronavirus pandemic  
Saturday, 15 March 2020**

Good evening Nauruans and all people on Nauru.

Recently, the World Health Organisation declared the Coronavirus to be pandemic. What this means is that the Coronavirus is now a global health issue.

Your Government has taken every step possible to ensure the protection of its people against Coronavirus.

We are setting up a quarantine area at public health. You will see lots of work happening there. We have toured certain areas at topside to see if there are places there feasible for quarantine purposes.

We have put in body scanners at the airport and we thank Taiwan and Malaysia for its support in this. We also thank Australia for assisting us in our preparation to meet the threat of Coronavirus.

Plans have been stood up to ensure that Government agencies are sufficiently equipped and staffed to deal with any potential case of Coronavirus. Leading these efforts is the Department of Health, which has put into effect all measures necessary for our safety.

Coronavirus is an illness that attacks the respiratory system and has flu-like symptoms including coughing and fever. It is transmissible from person to person and can be severe for vulnerable individuals including the elderly and individuals with pre-existing or underlying chronic illnesses such as severe asthma, uncontrolled diabetes, acute hypertension and heart disease. Individuals with such conditions should take precautions and ensure that they continue their routine medication.

Let us not panic as we face this global health crisis. We must prepare ourselves and do what is necessary to weather the onset and impact of this pandemic. Let me assure you there is no confirmed Coronavirus case on Nauru as we speak and it is your Governments objective

to ensure a healthy Nauru that is free of Coronavirus. Let me stress that we do not have coronavirus on island. We are doing all that is necessary to ensure we remain free and if it does come onto our shores we are ready to meet it and contain it.

Your Government assures you that food and medical supplies are sufficient and that there is no disruption to air and sea freight. Additional support and resources have been given to the Government agencies tasked with combating COVID-19, and the public is asked to remain vigilant and proactive in efforts to protect yourself and your families from contracting this disease. This can be done through simple hygiene practices such as hand washing with soap, using hand sanitisers and keeping your home environment clean. The public should seek further information or report suspected symptoms to the RON Hospital. Preparation across the community is crucial to managing the spread and impact of Coronavirus.

Government has issued a two-week travel restriction for all Government and SOE officials. We are not closing our borders, nor are we stopping flights but flights will change in the coming week and we ask that you contact Nauru Airlines from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March onwards. I would like to ask those who are travelling overseas to please be mindful of the places they are visiting and if possible not go at all.

Our students overseas are safe. We are in close contact with the governments of the countries of where our students are.

We continue to monitor the global situation and are working with the World Health Organisation in ensuring that steps taken are effective. Travel into Nauru has been monitored by the Department of Health and border security agencies with the installation and operation of a thermal image scanner. Significant increases have been made in the number of clinical and health staff allocated to the RON Hospital with a 24 hours, 7 days a week roster established to deal with Coronavirus issues.

I know that this pandemic has caused concern and fear amongst our people. It is still early days and the path through this pandemic will see many phases. However, let me reassure you, your Government stands ready to protect its people. We will continue to monitor the situation and respond accordingly. We will share important information and updates through various media platforms and community engagement.

We must work together as a nation to face this problem and ask all people on Nauru to help and assist.

Most importantly, let us not forget that God Almighty remains our Saviour and Protector. It is through our prayers, faith and trust in God that we as a nation will overcome this pandemic. God Bless you, and God Bless the Republic of Nauru. ENDS///