

# State of the Media: Nauru



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*This study was led and designed by ABC International Development (ABCID), informed by our Pacific partners. The University of Adelaide's (UoA) Stretton Institute were implementation partners across the 12 countries studied. Fieldwork and data analysis was conducted by Pacific researchers. We would like to thank all the expert advisers and study participants for their time and generous contributions.*

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*Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or the University of Adelaide.*

*Photos in this report are from ABCID programs, ABC staff, and ABC archives, unless otherwise specified.  
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# ACRONYMS

<b>3G</b>	third generation of wireless services
<b>4G</b>	fourth generation of wireless services
<b>5G</b>	fifth generation of wireless services
<b>ABC</b>	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
<b>AI</b>	artificial intelligence
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BCC</b>	Broadcasting Corporation of China
<b>CMG</b>	China Media Group
<b>CNN</b>	Cable News Network
<b>FM</b>	frequency modulation
<b>GIO</b>	Government Information Office
<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually and gender diverse people
<b>LTE</b>	long-term evolution
<b>NFCC</b>	Nauru Fibre Cable Corporation
<b>NMB</b>	Nauru Media Bureau
<b>MoJo</b>	mobile journalism
<b>NSDS</b>	National Sustainable Development Strategy
<b>NTV</b>	Nauru Television
<b>RONLAW</b>	Republic of Nauru Law (Nauru's Online Legal Database)
<b>UN</b>	United Nations



*News studio in Nauru Media Bureau.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in the Republic of Nauru. It outlines the dominance of state-owned media platforms run by the Nauru Media Bureau (NMB), which publishes a newspaper and produces radio and television broadcasts. The following themes were identified in the research.

## No private media

All journalists in Nauru are employees of the NMB. They are classified as public servants and take an oath of allegiance to the government. Consequently, media independence is limited, and content is rarely critical of the government or public figures. Media freedom is further curtailed by the challenge foreign media face to enter and work in Nauru as visa applications are expensive and not always successful.

## Foreign content popular

Audiences have local access to a variety of foreign media services, including Australian television and radio (such as ABC Australia and Radio Australia), Fiji One, and Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC). NMB and China Media Group (CMG) announced the launch of CMG's media bureau in Nauru in January 2024.

## Facebook a popular platform but blanket bans suppressed media freedom

The media sector experiences challenges regarding capacity, resources, and infrastructure, including internet connectivity. Audiences and media have moved to social media as an alternative platform. Facebook is popular, but a complete ban of the platform from 2015 to 2019 and censoring of public comments more recently have limited its utility as a platform for free media and civic discourse.

## New infrastructure expected to improve slow internet connectivity

Currently, Nauru does not have reliable telecommunications infrastructure. However, the East Micronesia Cable System is due to connect to Nauru in 2025, and Starlink, an internet service that provides high-speed internet via low orbit satellites even to remote areas, has recently entered into an agreement with government-owned Cenpac to provide a community gateway service, which will use last-mile infrastructure, such as fibre cables, fixed wireless, and mobile wireless to connect remote locations to Starlink satellite internet.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

*Nauru is located in the Micronesian subregion of the Pacific Islands, 4,000 kilometres north-east of Sydney. It has a total land area of 21 sq km across one island and an estimated population of 12,871 at the time of writing.<sup>1</sup> It is a parliamentary republic, and the national government manages all levels of government – local and national. The parliament chooses the president and vice president from among its members.*

The media in Nauru operates within the Department of Media, Radio and Television, which falls under the Ministry of Nauru Media. Therefore, the media is directly under governmental control, with journalists taking an oath of allegiance as civil servants. However, Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) outlines that media should be independent by 2030. The Government Information Office (GIO) issues press releases and produces the Nauru Bulletin, a fortnightly newsletter distributed electronically and accessible via the GIO website. The Nauru Media Bureau (NMB) houses the television and radio stations. It also produces the fortnightly newspaper, Mwinen Ko or Let's Talk About It.

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<sup>1</sup> [Worldometer - Nauru population](#), accessed August 27, 2024.





*Miss Nauru before an interview in the Nauru Media studio. (Facebook: Miss Nauru Eita Dabug 2024)*

This report provides a detailed, up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in Nauru. It is part of the State of the Media project, which comprises 12 country reports and one regional report. These reports serve as an accessible resource for media, civil society, and government organisations in support of development goals in the region. In addition to Nauru, the countries studied are: Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

*The study's methodology was guided by core research questions identified by ABC International Development (ABCID). It was designed to foreground the expertise of Pacific researchers and media professionals. Data collection, analysis, and report drafting were conducted by Pacific researchers.*

The research team began with a desk-based review of primary and secondary literature. Four stakeholder interviews were then conducted, with media practitioners. This was followed by a detailed online survey with 15 audience members on media consumption patterns, to contextualise the interview findings. At each step, feedback and advice were sought from the country expert advisor, Dominic Appi, who also crosschecked the accuracy of findings and co-authored this report. The research was approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee and steps were taken to mitigate risks to all research participants, including maintaining their anonymity.

A more detailed discussion of the project methodology is contained in the regional report.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [ABC International Development - Research.](#)





*Journalists at work in the Nauru TV production room.*





## 3. MEDIA ORGANISATION FOOTPRINT

*The NMB runs the state radio and television channels, distributes a fortnightly community newsletter, and has an online presence on Facebook. Media workers are public servants who observe the Public Service Act 2016 as government officers. They take an oath of allegiance to render true and faithful service as an officer of the public service, and to not use official information unlawfully for personal or others' gain.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Thirty-four public servants who missed their scheduled oath-taking in the last few weeks had the opportunity to do so \(Facebook\), August 30, 2021.](#)

In 2020, 23 media staff and 17 information and communications technology (ICT) staff swore their Oaths of Affirmation and Secrecy in an official ceremony conducted by the Office of the Chief Secretary.<sup>4</sup> One media practitioner respondent commented that: “I believe all media staff have taken their oath of allegiance, with those missing out initially called in to take their oath” (Nauru 04). NMB only communicates official information from the government and covers community events.

Table 1. Media platforms

Platform	Organisation	Ownership/ Funding	Language	Website/Social media	Sector
Newsletter	Mwinen Ko (NMB)	State	Nauruan/English	N/A	Government
	Nauru Bulletin (GIO)	State	English	<a href="#">The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Nauru Bulletin, Newsletter (Index page)</a>	Government
Radio	Radio Nauru 105.1 FM, 88.8 FM (NMB)	State	Nauruan/English	<a href="#">Radio Nauru - live stream</a>	Government
Television	Nauru TV (NMB)	State	English	Facebook (Nauru Media News – NTV)	Government
Online	The Government of the Republic of Nauru (GIO)	State	English	<a href="#">The Government of the Republic of Nauru - website</a> Facebook	Government
	Nauru Parliament	State	English	Facebook	Government

The NMB’s community newspaper, Mwinen Ko<sup>5</sup> (which roughly translates as Let’s Talk About It), was established in 2009 as a monthly publication. In November 2023, Mwinen Ko transitioned to digital only and is now published fortnightly. It is distributed digitally to Nauruans and interested readers locally and overseas.

NMB’s vision is “to be fair and to provide independent television, radio and newspaper information and services to the general community as well as the Government of Nauru”.<sup>6</sup> Through the Mwinen Ko newsletter, Radio Nauru and Nauru Television, NMB covers and relays news and information from the government and community, including on civic activities like community sports.

<sup>4</sup> [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Staff of Nauru Media Bureau and ICT swore their Oaths of Affirmation and Secrecy in an official ceremony conducted by the Office of the Chief Secretary \(Facebook\)](#), November 21, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> [Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union - Nauru Media](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union, “Nauru Media.”

## Radio and television

In 1991, Nauru Television was established and brought under the NMB alongside Radio Nauru. Digital television and radio broadcasts are transmitted across the entire island in English and Nauruan. Nauru Television is provided free-to-air so local viewers can access local and overseas TV news and content.

To improve the quality of its news broadcasting channels and connectivity, NMB carried out a survey in 2023 seeking public feedback as part of its plans to add more channels to Nauru TV. There are currently two channels broadcasting for Nauru TV, with plans to increase to six channels.<sup>7</sup>

Radio Nauru transmits via 105.1 FM and 88.8 FM. This is because the radio dial in most vehicles only goes up to 90 FM, therefore the former 88.8 frequency was reinstated. A new ABC Radio Australia frequency was launched on 90 FM in May 2024, adding a variety of music, podcasts, and other programs of public interest.

ABC Australia, Fiji One, CNN (Cable News Network), and the BBC (from the British Broadcasting Corporation) are among the TV channels relayed to viewers in Nauru. News and information from Australia are popular, as the main overseas news content that most respondents read, watch, or listen to. One respondent commented that: “ABC TV, PacificAus TV, and Pasifika TV can be viewed on NTV while Digicel TV has Fiji One, CNN, and the BBC” (Nauru 04). In addition, NMB and China Media Group (CMG) announced the launch of CMG’s media bureau in Nauru in January 2024.

## Online

Other government bodies also engage directly with the population of Nauru. In May 2008 the Government Information Office (GIO) was established within the Office of the President. The GIO “prepares and distributes media releases for the Nauru government and publishes a fortnightly newsletter called the Nauru Bulletin which contains news and information on government ministries” and departments.<sup>8</sup> The Nauru Bulletin is circulated via email to subscribers both in Nauru and overseas. Past issues are accessible online via the main government website. The GIO also coordinates “interviews between the President, Ministers and other official government spokespersons for local and international media, and receives and responds to enquiries and requests for information”.<sup>9</sup>

Facebook was banned in Nauru in May 2015 under the government of Baron Waqa, with the stated intention of stopping “criminals and sexual perverts”.<sup>10</sup> However, the government reversed the ban in 2018, with then President Waqa urging “the public to be sensible and mindful of language and content being used on social media”.<sup>11</sup> The lifting of the ban has resulted in the platform gaining in popularity, such that even the government and the NMB use it for communications.

7 Post by Nauru Media News – NTV (@naurumedianewsntv), Facebook, May 10, 2024 (deleted).

8 [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Government Information Office](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

9 Republic of Nauru, “Government Information Office.”

10 [Radio New Zealand - Nauru Lifts Facebook Ban](#), January 31, 2018.

11 [Nauru Bulletin - Parliament Sitting 4 October \(PDF\)](#), October 24, 2018.



A recent development in the online space was the creation of the Nauru Parliament’s Facebook page in May 2024, providing news and information direct from parliament. The page is an initiative managed by the Nauru Accountable and Inclusive Governance Project.<sup>12</sup>

Other ministries and state entities also have their own communications staff or public relations officers who provide regular updates on Facebook about news and events. These include the Ministry of Health, Nauru Police Force, the Department of Education, and the Nauru Maritime and Port Authority.

The table below shows the number of followers as of June 2024 of some popular Facebook accounts that post news updates from Nauru. NMB is yet to develop a website and relies on Facebook for distributing its news content (though has not used the platform since 2022).

Table 2. Facebook followers of key media platforms, as of June 2024

Organisation	Followers
Nauru Media News – NTV (NMB)	13,000
The Government of the Republic of Nauru	10,000
Nauru Parliament	714

### Target audience

Media in Nauru do not focus on specific audience niches. All media targets the general population, as in other small island nations in the Pacific.

Media engage with their audiences and collect feedback in informal ways. According to the country expert adviser, the general public sometimes provide their feedback directly to media personnel – even in the supermarket or streets. However, the most commonly used feedback channels are the media’s social media platforms, such as Facebook.

At the time of writing, the results of an NMB audience survey were yet to be released. NMB launched the survey in May 2023 to seek people’s views on areas for improvement, such as the quality of channels or network connectivity.<sup>13</sup>

12 [Nauru Parliament - Launch today at Parliament House of the Nauru Community Engagement Strategy and Facebook page \(Facebook post\)](#), May 10, 2024; [Parliament of Victoria - International Relations: Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

13 [Post by Nauru Media News – NTV \(@naurumedianewsntv\)](#), Facebook, May 20, 2023 (deleted).



## 4. MEDIA CONTENT COVERAGE

*Locally produced content consists of community news and updates from the government, and coverage of other civic events like sports, graduations, and happenings in communities.*

### **Gender equality, disability and social inclusion**

The stakeholder interviews with media practitioners aimed to capture top-level themes including gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) representation in media content coverage in Nauru. The findings below should not be viewed as exhaustive due to a small sample size. Rather, these insights provide an indication of potential trends in media practitioner perceptions of GEDSI issues.



*Covering celebrations for Nauru's 50th anniversary of Independence. (Facebook: Nauru Media News )*

In recent years, Nauru has prioritised gender equality, disability and social inclusion at the global and national levels by signing international conventions, enacting local laws that protect the rights of women and girls and people with disabilities, and decriminalising same-sex activity.<sup>14</sup> Concerns remain that Nauruan law does not adequately protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>15</sup>

In the media sector, disability and gender equality are prominent issues, with journalists having some training on gender equality, according to media practitioner respondents. One respondent mentioned that the media usually report on the training and events held by the Department of People Living with Disabilities:

We also cover that as well for public news. What's happening at the school, we also cover it for public news. I've received the training, not on LGBT, but on disability. It is also important to cover this story because their stories need to be told. (Nauru 02)

All media practitioner respondents stated that it is still sensitive to single out LGBTIQ+ issues in the media due to strong religious intolerance in the country. One respondent commented that: "It's not talked about much, especially in the media. I think it's because of the culture." (Nauru 03).

## Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is not used widely in the newsroom and media practitioner respondents appear cautious about using it. However, it is used in some cases for editing and is being trialled in radio podcasting. As one respondent stated:

AI is more used in the radio in terms of podcast, I think they're still there working on it to get that podcast AI thing. But in editing tools, our editors use a little bit of AI. (Nauru 01)

<sup>14</sup> [UN Women - Gender Equality Brief for Nauru.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor - Nauru Human Rights Report, 2020.](#)



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## 5. MEDIA BUSINESS RESILIENCE

*The media industry is almost entirely government funded, although the NMB generates a small amount of revenue through running adverts on its radio and television platforms. The \$1.4 million Nauru Media building, which opened in October 2020, was fully funded by the government.<sup>16</sup> Donor countries Australia, Japan, and China also assisted the NMB with equipment, particularly for transitioning its TV and radio production studio from analog to digital.*

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<sup>16</sup> [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - The new \\$1.4M Nauru Media building was officially opened today \(Facebook Post\)](#), October 27, 2020.



*Nauru Media prepares for a Presidential address to the nation. (Facebook: Nauru Media News)*

Respondents highlighted that NMB cannot sustain itself financially through its advertising revenue and subscription fees alone due to the small size of its media market. To increase its revenue generation, NMB is diversifying its services to include production of videos for commercial clients, sale of TV antennas, and hire of its equipment.

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## 6. MEDIA POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT

*The media landscape in Nauru lacks diversity and is vulnerable to government influence as all media infrastructure is owned by the state.<sup>17</sup> The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), while not a media-specific policy, outlines aspirations for media to be independent by 2030, however, it does so with little detail as part of a broader set of infrastructure development goals.<sup>18</sup>*

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<sup>17</sup> [United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor - 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nauru.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Republic of Nauru - Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2019 – 2030 \(PDF\).](#)





*The Nauru Media Bureau team at the ceremony to launch ABC Radio Australia services in Nauru.*

The NMB is the only Nauruan media organisation in the country. There is no self-regulatory organisation for the media in Nauru.

The following table highlights some of the key policies and legislation that regulate media output and telecommunications. These are discussed further throughout this section.

*Table 3. Legislative frameworks*

Platform	Legislation
Radio	Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018
Television	Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018
Newspaper	Crimes Act 2016 – criminal defamation Administration of Justice Act 2018
Telecommunications	Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018 Cenpac Corporation Act 2018
Online/Social media	Cybercrime Act 2015 Administration of Justice Act 2018

## Freedom of expression

Although freedom of expression and the media is protected in the constitution,<sup>19</sup> there is evidence that this is not always respected. For instance, while in office from 2013 until 2019, then President Baron Waqa was “accused of suppressing freedom of speech by banning Facebook, restricting the media and prosecuting citizens who spoke against his government”.<sup>20</sup> According to online survey respondents, people are not free to express themselves. One respondent stated that this is also true of the NMB: “Nauru Media Department does not have full access to inform people on political side of information, only share government achievements” (Nauru 190).

<sup>19</sup> Republic of Nauru Const. art. 12, s. 1–2.

<sup>20</sup> Marian Faa, *ABC News - Baron Waqa's Tenure as Nauru's President Has Been Called a 'Very Dark Chapter'. He'll Now Lead the Pacific Islands Forum*, March 2, 2023.

Nauru switched diplomatic relations to the People's Republic of China in January 2024, and severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan. When news of the diplomatic switch filtered onto the Nauru government's Facebook page, users posted messages criticising the change. The government responded to the criticism by posting a statement: "This page invites educated, informed and constructive criticism. It does not condone abuse and profanity." Reuters also reported that the government had restricted comments on its Facebook page, with a further warning that online abuse could result in criminal sanctions.<sup>21</sup>

Currently, there is a heavy visa application fee (\$8,000) for international media personnel intending to visit Nauru for media-related work, and a letter is required from employers stating the reason for the trip.<sup>22</sup> The fee is non-refundable if the application is unsuccessful. This is likely to dissuade foreign journalists from visiting Nauru to report on issues of international interest.

Foreign journalists have been refused visas to report in Nauru,<sup>23</sup> including the ABC.<sup>24</sup> The Government of Nauru obstructed foreign reporting on refugees and asylum seekers in Nauru stating it would hinder their "assimilation and progress" and cause riots and unrest that local police would struggle to maintain.<sup>25</sup> Refusing entry to journalists who it claimed wanted to incite violence and portray Nauru only in a negative light was widely seen as an effort of the Government of Nauru to prevent independent reporting about the Australian immigration detention facility located in Nauru.<sup>26</sup> Foreign reporting on the detention centre – notably through "The Nauru Files" published by The Guardian Australia – proved critical in uncovering human rights abuses.<sup>27</sup>

Nauru displayed some ambition to improve its support for "independent and commercially viable media", and potentially media freedom, through its 2019 national development strategy (NSDS), which recognises independent media and freedom of information as two of the "governance institutions [that are the] key building blocks for progressing the NSDS."<sup>28</sup>

21 Ryan Woo, *Reuters - China State Media Races to Plant Presence in Nauru After Switch From Taiwan*, January 17, 2024.

22 *The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Fact Sheet for Visiting Media Personnel*, accessed August 27, 2024.

23 Stefan Ambruster, *SBS News - Comment: No Nauru election visa for SBS journalist despite presidential handshake*, July 9, 2016.

24 Melissa Clarke, *ABC News - Nauru bans ABC from attending Pacific Islands Forum (audio)*, July 3, 2018.

25 *The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Nauru is not Australia – Government (Media Release)*, accessed 13 January, 2025.

26 Amanda Meade, *The Guardian - Only 'Respectful and Objective' Media Outlets Are Welcome, Says Nauru*, June 22, 2016; Paul Farrell and Ben Doherty, *The Guardian - Nauru Lets Local Journalists Into Centre But Keeps \$8,000 Fee for Foreigners*, October 8, 2015.

27 *Australian Department of Home Affairs - Review into Recent allegations relating to conditions and circumstances at the Regional Processing Centre (PDF)*, October, 2014; *Amnesty International Australia - The Guardian's Damning 'Nauru Files' on Refugee Abuse*, August 9, 2016.

28 *Republic of Nauru - Nauru's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2019 – 2030 (PDF)*.

## Accessing official information

The Nauru Constitution does not refer to freedom of information.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Article 12 of the constitution, which protects freedom of expression, permits laws that regulate information obtained by public officers, thus enabling laws that prevent access to government information.<sup>30</sup>

The Official Information Act 1976 prohibits “the unauthorised communication of certain official information and the use of official information for private gain.”<sup>31</sup>

While Nauru does not have a law on the right to information, a recommendation was made as part of a constitutional review for Nauru in 2006 to enact a law establishing mechanisms for access to information. The Nauru government is not obliged to implement recommendations from the review and the recommendation to establish mechanisms for access to information has never been enacted.<sup>32</sup>

The Government Information Office (GIO) is the focal point for distributing media releases regarding news and information on government ministries and agencies. It also arranges interviews between government officials and “local and international media and receives and responds to enquiries and requests for information from non-government entities, the general public, media and international stakeholders as required”.<sup>33</sup>

## Telecommunications

With the repeal of the Telecommunication Act 2002 and Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs Act 2017, the Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018 is the current law that regulates radio and television broadcasting services, radio communications, telephone, internet service providers, and hosting service providers. All regulatory issues of the telecommunication sector are governed by this act. Essentially, the act separates the roles and functions of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the Nauru Communications Authority.

The Nauru Communications Authority is the regulatory authority dealing with the granting, renewal, suspension, and revocation of all communications licences, including radio licensing and allocation of frequencies in the spectrum. It also regulates “interconnection between communications networks of different service providers”, consults with “service providers, subscribers, members of the public and other stakeholders to monitor retail rates and charges for the provision of communication services” and determines “competition matters in the communication industry”.<sup>34</sup> The ICT department provides telecommunication infrastructure specifically to government departments and offices, schools, and health clinics, in alignment with Nauru’s NSDS.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> [Republic of Nauru Constitution](#).

<sup>30</sup> [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative - Nauru Constitutional Review: Addendum to the CHRI Submission \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>31</sup> [Laws of the Republic of Nauru - Official Information Act 1976 \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>32</sup> [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative \(CHRI\) - Nauru Constitutional Review: Addendum to the CHRI Submission \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>33</sup> [Government of the Republic of Nauru - Government Information Office \(homepage\)](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> [Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative \(CHRI\) - Nauru Constitutional Review: Addendum to the CHRI Submission \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>35</sup> [Government of the Republic of Nauru - Department of ICT](#).

This differs from Cenpac, which was created to “establish, operate, manage and invest in communication services” more generally for the people of Nauru, in addition to operating as a wholesaler of internet services.<sup>36</sup>

The Nauru Fibre Cable Corporation Act 2017 regulates the supply of international internet services provided to the country by the Nauru Fibre Cable Corporation (NFCC), via the East Micronesia Cable.

## Broadcast media

Under sections 93 and 94 of the Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018, the cabinet may make regulations to restrict or prohibit broadcasting and advertising content that is deemed unsuitable for public consumption, including content supplied by service providers. Content that is deemed indecent, obscene, violent, blasphemous, treasonous or seditious is prohibited.<sup>37</sup>

Hosting service providers are required to comply with a take-down notice if they host prohibited content. An internet service provider may also be directed to make family-friendly filtering available to subscribers to restrict access to unlawful content on the internet. It is also an offence to supply prohibited content, with a penalty of \$10,000 or two years’ imprisonment. Both internet service providers and hosting service providers also have a duty to report child pornography accessed by service users on the internet to the Nauru Police Force.<sup>38</sup>

## Print and online

There is no specific legislation regulating print media, but there are laws relating to publication and defamation. For instance:

- Section 250 (1) of the Crimes Act 2016 provides for criminal defamation with a penalty of three years’ imprisonment where defamatory matter is published about another person.
- Section 243A of the Crimes (Amendment) Act 2020 provides for a seditious offence when seditious words are printed, published, or posted in the print media, digitally, or electronically.
- Section 7 of the Administration of Justice Act 2018 makes it an offence and contempt of court if a person publishes a prediction of the outcome of court proceedings in any form of media.

According to Freedom House, these provisions deter journalists from publishing pieces critical of the government and the judiciary.<sup>39</sup> Amnesty International has also raised concerns that the three-year imprisonment penalty for criminal defamation is an inappropriate “response to defamation, and amounts to an unlawful restriction on the right to freedom of expression under international law”.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> [Republic of Nauru - Cenpac Corporation Act 2018 \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>37</sup> [Laws of the Republic of Nauru - Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018 \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>38</sup> *Communications and Broadcasting Act 2018*, s. 97.

<sup>39</sup> [Freedom House - Freedom in the World 2024: Nauru](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

<sup>40</sup> [Amnesty International Australia - Nauru: New Criminal Law Is Welcome Improvement on Human Rights](#), June 16, 2016.



## Cybersecurity

The Cybercrime Act was enacted in 2015 to prevent, investigate, and suppress computer-related offences. A Cybercrime Unit within the Nauru Police Force implements the act. The unit has the power to investigate and obtain evidence of offences for prosecution.<sup>41</sup> In addition to this, a cyber security awareness team was set up in 2019 to provide cyber safety awareness to all government departments.<sup>42</sup>

Nauru does not have standalone legislation relating to cyberbullying. However, sections 21, 22, and 23 of the act indirectly protect against this:

- Section 21 makes it an offence to send or publish information or material through electronic communication that may be classified as “politically subversive, defamatory or seditious” and which may threaten national security.<sup>43</sup> In 2022, international media reported that the Nauru police took action against speech that offended politicians and, in other cases, recommended citizens for prosecution.<sup>44</sup>
- Section 22 provides for punishment of “any electronic communication with the intent to coerce, intimidate, harass, or cause emotional distress to a person, using an electronic system to support severe, repeated, and hostile behaviour”.<sup>45</sup>
- Section 23 also makes it an offence to use language that is “threatening, abusive, or insulting” through electronic communication, intended to stir up racial or religious hatred and threaten public security.<sup>46</sup>

These offences are punishable to a maximum of seven years’ imprisonment.<sup>47</sup>

## Drones

Under section 13 of the Drones Act 2018, the use of drones to take photographs of, film, or record any social, sporting, or official event without a permit, a person without their consent, or in an area declared by the Minister for Finance to be protected, is prohibited. The penalty is \$50,000 or 12 months’ imprisonment.

<sup>41</sup> [Laws of the Republic of Nauru - Cybercrime Act 2015 \(PDF\)](#).

<sup>42</sup> [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Department of ICT: Cyber Security Awareness Team \(Homepage\)](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Cybercrime Act 2015, s. 21.

<sup>44</sup> Cam Wilson, [Crikey - Leaked Emails Show Nauru Police Using Facebook, Cybercrime Laws to Stop Online Attacks on MPs](#), May 6, 2022.

<sup>45</sup> Cybercrime Act 2015, s. 22.

<sup>46</sup> Cybercrime Act 2015, s. 23.

<sup>47</sup> Cybercrime Act 2015, s. 21–23.

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## 7. MEDIA INFRASTRUCTURE

### Telecommunications

*Internet connectivity is a challenge in Nauru, despite reports that there were about 10,600 users as of early 2024.<sup>48</sup> This puts internet penetration in Nauru at about 83 per cent. Internet connectivity is primarily facilitated by satellite. Nauru “relies entirely on medium earth orbit satellite (O3b) links for international connectivity”.<sup>49</sup>*

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<sup>48</sup> Simon Kemp, [Simon Kemp for Data Reportal - Digital 2024 Nauru](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

<sup>49</sup> [Asian Development Bank, Improving Connectivity for Micronesia Project - Sector Assessment \(Summary\): Information and Communication Technology.](#)



*Editor working in Nauru Media Bureau radio room 2. (MKO@NauruMedia)*

Digicel, an international mobile operator, has been the primary internet and mobile service provider since the Nauru Telecommunication Corporation terminated its services in 2009; through an agreement with the government, Digicel Nauru was established with the government owning 20 per cent of the organisation, with a view to providing telecommunications services to Nauru until 2024.<sup>50</sup>

The Cenpac Corporation (Cenpac) “is a government-controlled internet service provider that provides services to the government and state-owned enterprises”.<sup>51</sup> It leases internet bandwidth from Digicel and distributes this to government bodies.

A 3G network was introduced in August 2014 and LTE (4G) was launched in late 2016. As a result, Nauru has nearly universal mobile coverage: 75 per cent of the population is connected via 4G LTE, with the remainder on 3G.<sup>52</sup>

Overall, despite some progress, the internet connectivity on the island “is very limited and unstable due to the vulnerability of the network infrastructure to bad weather and limited network coverage, with several blind spots”.<sup>53</sup>

There’s not 100 per cent coverage in Nauru. There are some areas that do not access internet and you must buy it. They must pay for the Digicel hookup and not everybody can afford that... So, they can’t really watch the national news and the same with radio, unless you have a radio or you’re in the car but it’s not 100 per cent. (Nauru 02)

Despite issues with internet connectivity, such as increased cost in poorly connected

<sup>50</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Sector Assessment: ICT*, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Sector Assessment: ICT*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Sector Assessment: ICT*, 2.

<sup>53</sup> [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster - Country Profiles: Nauru](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

areas, most Nauru residents can access news and information cheaply through social media such as Facebook. The geographical coverage of news via internet radio, television and social media will improve once the East Micronesia Cable (funded jointly by Australia, Japan, and the United States) reaches Nauru in 2025.<sup>54</sup> Japan is providing ¥1.5 billion to fund Nauru's connection, which is expected to be operational in January 2026.<sup>55</sup> Internet connectivity is also set to improve following a collaboration between Cenpac and Neotel. The collaboration has involved the construction of new 4G and 5G towers in blackspot areas with the service launching as Nauru Telikom Corporation in 2024.<sup>56</sup> The NFCC was established as a state-owned enterprise in 2017 to equip the country with reliable access to telecommunication and internet services specifically via fibre-optic cables. This is being made possible primarily through the East Micronesia Cable System.

Furthermore, the state-owned Cenpac Corporation now owns the Starlink Community Gateway service in Nauru – the first such service to be rolled out in the Pacific Islands region – following the signing of an agreement between Cenpac and Starlink in August 2024.<sup>57</sup> The Community Gateway Service uses last-mile infrastructure, such as fibre cables, fixed wireless, and mobile wireless to connect remote locations to Starlink's satellite internet.<sup>58</sup> The service was turned on in December 2024.<sup>59</sup>

## Broadcast transmission

Progress has been made to equip and upgrade the NMB. A new building opened in October 2020, equipped with advanced TV and radio studios and office spaces, funded by the Nauru government.<sup>60</sup> By November 2022, NMB had transitioned television to a digital system from analog, and added an additional channel. There are also two radio channels available on TV. Nauru Television can “provide multiple channels on the new digital platform and broadcast visual and audio in the best quality”.<sup>61</sup> NMB's digital transition was made possible through direct funding assistance from the Australian Government, which committed \$200,000 to boost media as well as census taking by the Nauru Bureau of Statistics.<sup>62</sup>

54 [East Micronesia Cable System - The Project \(website\)](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

55 [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Minister for Information Communication and Technology Pyon Deiye and Charge'd Affairs of the Embassy of Japan Kenichiro Tanaka officially signed the exchange of notes for the East Micronesia Cable project \(Facebook Post\)](#), June 2, 2023.

56 Dominic Appi, “Cenpac's new tower to enhance internet connectivity and launch a 4G LTE and 5G+ Telecommunication Service,” Mwinen Ko, 132 Edition.

57 [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - Nauru Inaugurates First Pacific Starlink Community Gateway \(Media Release\)](#), December 17, 2024.

58 [Starlink - Starlink Community Gateways](#).

59 Andrew Curran, [Space and Defense - Nauru Switches on Starlink Community Gateway Internet Service](#), December 20, 2024.

60 [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - The new \\$1.4M Nauru Media building was officially opened today, 27Oct equipped with advanced TV and radio studios and office spaces, fully funded by the Government of Nauru \(Facebook Post\)](#), October 27, 2020.

61 [Nauru Department of Finance - National Sustainable Development Strategy \(NSDS\) Annual Report FY 22–23 \(PDF\)](#).

62 [The Government of the Republic of Nauru - The Australian Government commits \\$200,000 to boost media and census undertakings, at the signing of Direct Funding Arrangements \(Facebook Post\)](#), June 14, 2021.





Nauru Media Technician Bronson works with ABC's International Transmission Specialist Pooyan Khorasani.  
(Facebook: Australian High Commission Nauru)

# 08

## 8. MEDIA CONSUMPTION

*The audience survey, stakeholder interviews and literature review aimed to capture top-level themes around audience consumption patterns in Nauru. The findings below should not be viewed as exhaustive, due to the limited sample size. Rather, these insights provide an overview of potential trends in how audiences in Nauru are engaging with the media.*

### **Radio and online media the most accessible formats, with widest coverage**

Radio has 100 per cent coverage on the island and internet penetration is almost 83 per cent, according to DataReportal.<sup>63</sup> Television is also a preferred platform among online survey respondents to access information. In the print media space, the community newsletter Mwinen Ko produced by the NMB and the Nauru Bulletin produced by the GIO are not popular platforms among surveyed audience members.

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<sup>63</sup> [Simon Kemp, "Digital 2024: Nauru," DataReportal, accessed August 27, 2024.](#)





*Team Nauru Media at the 10th Micro Games in the Marshall Islands. (Facebook: Nauru Media News)*

Online survey respondents identified social media, especially Facebook, as the main platform from which they can access news and information cheaply. Meta's advertising resources indicate that Facebook had 8,400 users in Nauru in early 2024; Instagram, 1,650; LinkedIn, 3,700; and X (formerly Twitter), 385.<sup>64</sup> Traditional media such as radio and television are also a popular source for news and public service information.

### Foreign syndicated content popular

Perhaps due to the small size of Nauru's media sector, foreign syndicated content – particularly from Australia – is popular and frequently consumed by online survey respondents. Additionally, media practitioner respondents recognise that political decisions made in countries like Australia may impact life in Nauru. According to one media practitioner respondent:

Things they do will directly or indirectly affect Nauru in some ways. The ripples will be felt here. That's why I always pay attention to what's happening in Australia, especially with the politics, because if the government is pressured by the people politically about their policies in the Pacific, then I know that will affect me. That's why Australian news is important to me. (Nauru 02)

### Nauru media updates and entertains the public

Based on the data collected from media practitioner and audience member respondents, it is evident that the media in Nauru provides a public and community service, despite a lack of capacity for independent journalism. Employees in the NMB consider their role to be essential for dissemination of information rather than critical analysis of information. According to one respondent:

The role of media is to inform the public, educate the people, as well as entertain them, on what's happening in Nauru. That is my role and that is what I'm passionate about. I want the people of Nauru to know what's happening in the government and in the community, to keep them updated. (Nauru 03)

<sup>64</sup> [Simon Kemp for Data Reportal - Digital 2024 Nauru](#), accessed August 27, 2024.

# 09

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following recommendations on strengthening the Nauru media sector are informed by data collected from media practitioners, surveyed audience members and a desk review of existing literature.*

### **Set up an association to represent media interests and train media**

Nauru has a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), which states that the media should be independent and commercially viable by 2030. However, some media practitioner respondents expressed doubt that this can be achieved. Some important steps could be taken, such as setting up a media association to encourage self-regulation in media and the development of digital strategy and digital skills for media organisations and practitioners.

### **More rigorous reporting practices as media work towards independence from government**

Online survey respondents said that, as part of strengthening the media, outlets need to build audience members' trust. Fact checking and developing strong editorial policies would contribute to this. This will also help prepare Nauru's media for the implementation of the NSDS.





*Nauru Media's radio studio (MKO@NauruMedia).*

## CONCLUSION

The findings in this report highlight the ongoing dominance of state-owned media platforms in Nauru, all run by the Nauru Media Bureau (NMB). With no private media currently operating, media freedom in the country is limited. The report also illustrated the rising popularity of foreign media and social media platforms for Nauruan audiences, with improved telecommunications infrastructure set to accelerate shifts to online content. The report also outlines the significant work to be done to meet the ambition of an independent media as identified in the government's strategy for sustainable development.