

STATE OF THE MEDIA NIUE

RESEARCH BRIEF

ABC
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

**THE UNIVERSITY
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AT A GLANCE



1. Social media and online content primary sources of information



2. Diaspora communities a significant part of Niuean media audience



3. Critical need for resilient media infrastructure and sustainable media business models



4. Media association established to promote media freedom and strengthen industry

5. Distinct challenges and opportunities as a mini media ecosystem

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report provides an up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in Niue. 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.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a multi-method approach. The research team began with a desk-based review of literature. Additionally, seven stakeholder interviews with media practitioners were conducted, followed by a targeted online survey to contextualise the interview findings. Feedback and advice were sought from the Niue expert adviser, Esther Pahivi, 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 research participants, including maintaining their anonymity.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Social media and online content primary sources of information

Social media and online content are the primary sources of news and information among audience members sampled. Almost all media organisations, government departments, and civil society organisations in Niue have social media accounts to connect with their audiences, notably on Facebook. Factors contributing to the rise of online and social media content are the expansion of the Manatua cable system in 2021 and the high internet penetration rate in the country. High internet cost remains a challenge. There is also limited capacity among regulatory bodies and media organisations to address emerging issues of online safety and digital misinformation and disinformation.

2. Diaspora communities a significant part of Niuean media audience

While approximately 1,500 people live in Niue, about 23 times that number of Niueans live abroad. The growing Niuean diaspora is a critical part of the media audience. Factors contributing to this trend include the rise of social media and the unprecedented uptake of livestreaming services by Niueans abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, which extended content reach significantly. Media in Niue increasingly play a role in sustaining the diaspora's connection to their homeland and preserving generational knowledge of culture and language.

3. Critical need for resilient media infrastructure and sustainable media business models

As a small island developing state, Niue is exposed to climate change impacts and disaster risks, and contends with limited resources and a decreasing population. While international support has been available, there is strong interest among media in Niue to have greater capacity to cope and rebuild when confronted with natural hazards and to address an acute shortage of staff.

4. Media association established to promote media freedom and strengthen industry

The Niue Media Association was established in 2023. The establishment of the association that promotes free and independent media is significant in a country that has no constitutional provisions or legislation guaranteeing freedom of expression and the media. Moreover, the association's launch signals promising opportunities to strengthen the industry by addressing gaps in journalism training and education, and by enhancing relationships between media and the community.

5. Distinct challenges and opportunities as a mini media ecosystem

Media in Niue face distinct challenges and opportunities, given the very small size of the media landscape. In addition to limited staffing, resources, and infrastructure, the closely connected nature of Niuean society poses several challenges. These include investigative journalism being perceived as intrusive and divisive, and the limited newsworthiness of content, given that information tends to reach the community before it is reported by media. However, the tight-knit nature of Niuean community also allows information to be verified promptly, which contributes to mitigating misinformation risks.

The State of the Media: Niue study is delivered as part of the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS), an ABC International Development (ABCID) managed program funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Data was collected and initial findings distributed in 2024, but the reports are published in 2025.

Disclaimer: 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.