

STATE OF THE MEDIA NAURU

RESEARCH BRIEF

ABC
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme



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AT A GLANCE



1. No private media



2. Foreign content popular



3. Facebook a popular platform but blanket bans suppressed media freedom



4. New infrastructure expected to improve slow internet connectivity

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

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

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a multi-method approach. 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.

KEY FINDINGS

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

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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.