

Nauru

Status: Nauru is an island republic in the Pacific Ocean, 42 kilometres south of the Equator. It is eligible for Australian Government ODA.

Population: The population was estimated at 12,7004 people and around 1,647 households¹. Nauru is a small coral island has a total land area of 21 square kilometres. The languages spoken include Nauruan and English.

Accessibility: Good. Nauru Airlines flies to Nauru International Airport from: Brisbane (Australia), Tarawa (Kiribati), Kosrae (Micronesia), Majuro (Marshall Islands), Nadi (Fiji) and Pohnpei (Micronesia).

Statistics around Waste (including plastic waste data)

	Coastal population	Waste generation rate [kg/person/day]	% Plastic in waste stream	% Inadequately managed waste	Waste generation [kg/day]	Plastic waste generation [kg/day]	Inadequately managed plastic waste [kg/day]	Plastic waste littered [kg/day]	Mismanaged plastic waste [kg/person/day]	Mismanaged plastic waste in 2010 [tonnes]	Mismanaged plastic waste in 2025 [tonnes]	
Nauru	15,289	1.2	12	67	18,347	2,192	1,473	44	0.099	554	1,043	

Source Jambek 2016

According to the PacWastePlus Waste Audit, the estimated generation of household waste per household per day is 0.9 kg (within a range of 0.1 kg – 3.7 kg per household per day). Single-use items (19%)² and hygiene products (14%)³ were the largest components of the waste stream, closely followed by paper and cardboard (13%) plastics (13%)⁴ and organics (garden and food organics) (12%).

Household interviews reported an average of 8 plastic water bottles per person per household per week with a range of 0 to 50 bottles per person, per week. Using the average from the household interview data collected, across Nauru this equates to 100,698 per week for the whole population. Over one year this is estimated to be around 5,236,280 plastic bottles disposed of per year. This is likely to be at the upper end of the number of water bottles produced per week

Solid waste management disposal operations and waste collection are carried out by the waste facility site operations, *Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation (NRC)* or private businesses (household collections). A free waste collection service is offered to all households across Nauru with collection weekly. To access this service households are required to purchase a bin (240-litre wheelie bin) from NRC for AUD 108. Households who do not use the waste collection service can take their waste directly to the waste facility. Alternative waste disposal methods used include open backyard dumpsites (more frequently used in the past), disposal on unused land or burning. Separation requirements were proposed in 2021 waste facility services. Plastic Bottles – All Plastic bottles should be packed in garbage bags.

Compactors for aluminium cans and plastic bottles. There are currently no compactors available for use with aluminium cans or plastic bottles. Glass, plastic, and aluminium cans were recorded as the most dominant categories of potentially recoverable materials. Cardboard boxes were also identified but were less significant. There is currently no recyclables collection service in place, but there are plans in place to design and commence a system. There are no official recycling companies in Nauru. There are small community non-profit groups of recyclers, who operate during events and special occasions. Previously

¹ SPC Statistics for Development Division (2021) <https://sdd.spc.int/nr>

² Dominated by plastic bags. And included the following items: supermarket plastic bags, plastic takeaway plates, plastic, takeaway containers, straws, plastic beverage containers.

³ Dominated by nappies and sanitary products.

⁴ Dominated by drinks containers of varying sizes and food containers. Plastic drinks containers – small (0.6 litres) and larger (1.5 litres) water bottles (PET), 0.6 litre Coca Cola bottles (PET). Plastic containers – food (condiments), butter (PP), salt, non-food – body wash, washing liquid, laundry liquid (PET and HDPE).

there has been recycling of copper radiators and aluminium cans by one individual who purchased these cans from the public at \$0.40 per kg, however, this is no longer occurring. Key points to note: Plastics are present with a high proportion of single-use items suitable for recycling if markets can be secured. Metals and glass are present at a relatively high proportion of the total household waste stream (both easily recycled where markets are accessible). A significant proportion of the items identified have the potential to be involved in a deposit or levy scheme e.g., drinks containers, other single-use items.

Legal/Policy framework to address single use plastics In October 2020, the *Environmental Management and Climate Change Act 2020* came into force. *Environmental Management and Climate Change (Ban on Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags) Regulations 2021*. Section 4 Prohibition of single use plastic shopping bags (1) No person shall import, manufacture, sell or distribute single use plastic shopping bags. For the purposes of the Act and these Regulations, a person may only import, manufacture, sell or distribute: (a) bio-degradable plastic bags; (b) degradable plastic bags; and (c) reusable bags.

Single Use Plastic policy: Nauru's *waste management strategy (2017-2026)* acknowledges the widespread lack of awareness regarding littering and waste generation, the absence of legislation, inadequate staff capacity and no sustainable financing mechanisms. The strategy identifies the goal of having solid waste management laws in force by 2020, including the introduction of a container deposit scheme and plastic bag control measures.

According to the University of Melbourne (UoM) *PacWastePlus Waste Legislative Review 2020* citing Nauru Bulletin of 31 Dec 2018 a single-use plastics strategy being planned.

	Single Use Plastic Policy	Dedicated Single Use Plastic Orders, Acts and Regulations							Economic Instruments to internalise costs					Recycling	National Campaigns targeting SUP	R&D Alternatives
		Plastic bags	Polystyrene plates	Straws	Styrofoam food Containers	Cups plates cutlery	PET	Plastic Ice blocks pouches nappies	Container Deposit Scheme	Levy Plastic Bags	Duty SUP	ARDC	Single Use Diapers			
Nauru																

Economic Instruments: None in place.

Institutional capacity: Waste Management Officer in Department of Commerce, Industry and Environment, Environment division is responsible for planning and coordinating development of the National Waste Management Policy Framework

Enforcement and compliance: Nauru's *Waste Management strategy (2017-2026)* acknowledges the widespread lack of awareness regarding littering and waste generation.

Community Governance and organisation: Nauru, Palau is a founding members of the new Group of Friends (a UN coalition) established to tackle plastic pollution. One of the key objectives of the Group of Friends is "to support implementing the relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, in particular SDG 14 and 12" (Norway UN, 2020).

Public Awareness- communities/villagers: Human pollution by way of disposing rubbish on the beaches is a very serious problem that needs to be addressed, holistically involving all stakeholders such as the government. NGOs and the people. It is common to find disposable diapers, plastics, corrugated iron, cans, shoes, pieces of clothing inter alia, on the intertidal reef flat and the reef slope.

'Nauru Plastic Free', is an NGO active in initiatives to reduce pollution through school seminars and rubbish collection drives, and to provide wheelie bins to participating schools.

Public Awareness schools and involvement of youth Public Awareness local consumers: Nauru Dept of Multi-culture, Dept of CIE and Eigigu Solution Corp initiated "Return, earn and learn program" 2019 for Nauru cultural and educational awareness. Objective is to reuse plastic bottles to create ornaments and furniture etc. 10cents per plastic bottle collected when plastic bottles presented to the collection points.⁵

Tourism/ plastics nexus: Nauru is not a tourism hotspot. The Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) has concluded a 3-day plastics repurposing workshop in Nauru (2021) in joint partnership between SPTO and Nauru Tourism Corporation.

Research and Development into Single Use Plastic alternatives: No data available

Development Partner Initiatives UN Environment implemented a project between 2019 and 2022 which included conducting marine litter surveys and developing a national marine litter plan⁶.

PacWastePlus is looking to address Policy and Regulation (ARF, Levy in Nauru. Research into alternatives to the use of disposable diapers

Summary Overview

- Small population makes it a potential place where visible results can be seen if implemented well (like Niue). Small population in one location could make for effective media campaign and roll out of products like steel straws.
- Have a law regulating use of single use plastic bags and potential to include more SUPs.
- As water resources very limited (most imported) PET will always be in the picture so opportunity for work on recycling PET out of country and finding a market
- Ripe for development of a Single Use Policy and regulations covering bans/phase out of more single use plastics (other than plastic bags).

⁵ Please contact Grace Garabwan on 5564749 for more information.

⁶ <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/chemicals-waste/what-we-do/special-programme/special-programme-projects-database-33>