

## Niue

**Status:** Niue is a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand. Niue is one of the largest upraised coral atolls in the world. Its landmass is 261 square kilometres.

**Population:** The population of the island was last assessed in the 2017 census to be 1,719. Languages are Niue and English. At last census counts, 30,867 ethnic Niueans were resident in New Zealand (2018) and 4,958 in Australia (2016).

**Accessibility:** Flights to Niue are only available through New Zealand (Air NZ, once a week).

### 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]	
Niue	1,799	2.1	12	0	3,778	451	1	9	0.006	4	5	

Source Jambek 2016

There is currently no specific waste management legislation in place in Niue. Waste management is covered under the *Environment Act 2015* which sets out a number of waste related activities that require development consent including landfills, recycling or collection stations, drainage or disposal systems, wastewater and sanitation schemes, and human waste disposal systems.

Waste management in Niue benefits from a small population and a strong tourism industry. Sustainable financing remains the key concern, with waste management largely reliant on economic support from New Zealand and, to a lesser degree, Australia<sup>1</sup>.

*Niue Waste Recycling Facility* is a recycling facility for glass and PET bottles, extending to other wastes. This facility was due to be operational by the end of 2019. Most recently the Government of Niue tendered for the development of the Resource Recycling Centre in late 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Wheelie bins are the preferred method to contain waste before collection. In the 1990's the Department of Health supplied 240 litre wheelie bins to some households. Between 2019 – 2020, all households in Niue were provided new wheelie bins through funded projects: Two villages, a total of 100 householders, were supplied with 140 litre (L) bins by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Ridge to Reef project. The remaining 12 villages (550 households) were provided with 120L bins through the Australian Aid funded Waste Management Project. Although bags and other easily accessible containers can be used, there have been issues with animals scavenging through the waste causing a nuisance. Waste is manually loaded into a single compactor truck that services both residential and small commercial customers.

Household collections of hazardous waste by the Department of Environment occur across all 14 villages on the island and include: E-waste and white goods which is collected monthly; and • Household special waste including e-waste, white goods, batteries, asbestos, stockpiled plastic bottles – which are collected six-monthly. The Department of Environment provides 450 red recycling crates (20 litre) for recycling glass, metals (aluminium and steel cans) and plastics.<sup>3</sup>

There is a recycling program for aluminium cans operated by the Catholic Church Mission located in Alofi North. A deposit of 8.33¢ is collected by the government on each imported can, 5¢ is refunded when the can is returned to the Catholic Church depot, and the operator is paid a handling fee of 2.5¢ per

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/4070Country%20Report\\_Niue.pdf](http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/4070Country%20Report_Niue.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://pacwasteplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Niue-Audit-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pacwasteplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Niue-Audit-Report.pdf>

can and is allowed to keep the proceeds from the sale of the cans in New Zealand. Despite the recycling program, it is still common to find aluminium cans in the waste stream and dumpsite. A new can crusher with a capacity of 500 cans per bale was installed sometime in 2008. Recently, there was also an interruption to the recycling program due to a break down in communication between the operator and the Environment Department. As a result, residents were turned away when returning their cans.

In the last year, a Niue-based small business – *Vili Franchise* - has expressed interest in recycling other types of wastes such as plastics, and glass, and the business owners have approached the Environment Department to discuss options and opportunities. Draft Recycling Regulations under the Environment Act 2003 were proposed to Cabinet to apply a system of deposits and refunds to PET pellets and PET beverage and cooking oil containers, lead-acid batteries and white goods.

## Legal Policy Framework:

	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	Recycling Of plastics	
RMI															

Waste management is guided by the *Environment Act 2015*<sup>4</sup>. This act does not prescribe specific regulations on managing different waste streams, however grants Cabinet the ability to prescribe levies on waste products.

In 2018 Niue Tourism wrote on their Social Media: "We're proud to announce that Niue is banning single use plastic bags on the island!" Over the following 12 months single use plastic bags were gradually phased out and replaced with reusable bags. The announcement coincided with International Plastic Bag Free Day on July 3.that year.<sup>5</sup>

On 1 March 2020 the country legislated to ban single-use plastics via the *Customs Import Prohibition (Plastic Shopping Bags) Order 2020*. The ban on single use plastic bags will be phased in, with all existing stocks to be used by 1 June.

There is further scope to expand the legal measures to deal with plastic wastes *in situ*, and to use various revenue models to fund facilities to assist in their re-use, recycling and/or final disposal, as well as examining measures to limit the importation of these items into the country. In turn, plastic wastes could be treated as a form of pollution where it enters waterways to allow regulation of the more pervasive impacts of plastic waste<sup>6</sup>.

*National Integrated Waste Management Strategy 2015-2020* did not specifically address single use plastic waste as an issue.

In June 2022 designated all of its 317,000 square kilometre territorial waters as a maritime conservation area *Nukutuluea Multiple-Use Marine Park*.<sup>7</sup> Only sustainable local fishing will be permitted within the island's exclusive economic zone and NOW says the project "reflects Niue's ancestral tradition of taking only what is needed from the ocean to sustain life and ensure continued abundance for future generations". The decision reflects Niue's ancestral tradition of taking only what is needed from the ocean to sustain life

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gov.nu/wb/pages/legislation/niue-acts.php>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.niueisland.com/sustainability-niue-to-ban-single-use-plastic-bags>

<sup>6</sup> UoM, *Assessment of Waste Legislation in the 15 PacWastePlus Participating Countries*

<sup>7</sup> The designation of an area of sea roughly the size of Norway as a marine park follows a decision by the nearby Cook Islands to set up a marine protected area in their territorial waters in 2017 [safeguarding 1.9 million square kilometres of the Pacific Ocean](#).

and ensure continued abundance for future generations. It also underpins the centrality of sustainable and responsible tourism that has been a significant part of Niue's sustainable development agenda and economy over the last decade. And ultimately, it helps to respond to the reality of unprecedented global pressure on our ocean from climate change, pollution and extractive industry.

**Governance and organisation:** Under the Environment Act 2015, the Department of Environment is responsible for designing and implementing programmes for waste management and pollution control, in collaboration with other departments.

#### **Public Awareness in the Community:**

Niue's *Nukutuluea Multiple-Use Marine Park* established public-private partnership called Niue Ocean Wide (NOW), led by local non-profit organisation *Tofia Niue*. All of Niue's marine species will be protected by Global Fishing Watch, which uses satellite imagery and machine learning to identify and monitor vessels in the Niue marine park. The World Economic Forum's New Nature Economy Report II: The Future of Nature and Business said that marine conservation areas, in which fishing is restricted and sustainably managed, could be conducive to a healthy and productive ocean.<sup>8</sup>

A recycling programme for aluminium cans is operated by the Catholic Church Mission (CCM) located in Alofi North. The government pays \$0.12 per can to the CCM who buy the cans from the community at \$0.10 per can. It takes up to 6 months to fill one container for export to New Zealand. Despite this programme being in place, aluminium cans remain common within the waste collections across the island.<sup>9</sup>

Plastic waste that is segregated at the Makato landfill is palletised and wrapped in plastic wrap before being moved to shipping containers. Plastic bottles are stored in large lift bags and transported to the Huihui site for storage, while the recycling facility is being developed. The department is looking at a machine similar to the Shruder developed by the Plastic Collective to manage plastic bottles in Niue. Segregated plastic bottles are not exported, due to no current agreement in place with New Zealand.<sup>10</sup>

A recycling centre for the island is currently under development at the south end of the airport runway. Negotiations with the successful contractor, for the commencement of construction will be confirmed mid-2021, with a predicted open date for Q4 2021. Once the facility is operational it will replace the Huihui site for storage and processing and support Makato and Vaiea landfills by removing the recoverable materials. The site will accept and process glass and PET plastics with provision for expansion to include other recyclable items. In addition to the recycling facility, there are also plans for a sewage treatment plant that will address the current dumping of septic system sludge at the edge of the runway. This component will be part of the Ridge to Reef Project<sup>11</sup>

**Public Awareness- tourism:** The tourism industry has remained steady between 2016 – 2019 with an average of 11,100 tourists per annum, 75% were non native to Niue. Revenue from tourism amounted to 15 million NZD in 2018/2019 which accounted for 41% of contributions to GDP in 2018 (\$11,700,000).

Niue Tourism provide substitute bags reusable organic bags for every family on Niue (four household).<sup>12</sup>

**Research and Development into Single Use Plastic alternatives** Not much information found during desktop review Niue PocketGuide.com donated reusable metal straws to every bar, cafe, restaurant and resort on the island to celebrate the launch of Niue's largest online travel guide.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Development Partner Initiatives**

New Zealand is the largest bilateral donor to Niue. Other donors include Australia, China, France and various multilateral organisations. Australia funded *Waste Management Plan* in 2000.

Australia and NZ co-funded a recycling facility in Niue reported to begin operations in 2019. This facility sorts and processes glass and PET bottles for export .

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/06/pacific-island-protecting-100-marine-waters/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://pacwasteplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Niue-Audit-Report.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.plasticcollective.co/resource-recovery/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://pacwasteplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Niue-Audit-Report.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://southpacificislands.travel/niue-is-the-latest-pacific-country-to-ban-single-use-plastic-bags/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://niuepocketguide.com/how-we-eliminated-plastic-straws-from-niue/>

GEF funded a waste audit in Niue.

### **Summary Overview**

- Niue has a small population, with good community awareness around management of single use plastics.
- Scope for single use plastics laws and bylaws
- A NAP is also needed as Niue does not have a single use plastic policy as yet
- Need to consider overall feasibility of removing PET bottles due to limited water supply on island and contamination issues.
- Scope to address marine litter survey through a coastal monitoring program supporting the *Nukutuluea Multiple-Use Marine Park* initiative.