



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

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NIUE ASSEMBLY PROGRESSES CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: FIRST READING SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

Alofi, Niue – 05 April 2024 - The Niue Assembly has made notable progress in its constitutional reform process by successfully concluding the first reading of the Constitution Proposed Amendment Bills on the 27th March 2024.

Convening for its first session on the 20th March 2024, the Assembly commenced discussions on proposed constitutional amendments. A key agenda item during this session was the presentation of the Report of the Constitution Review Committee (CRC) to the 18th Legislative Assembly. The report made four recommendations for amendment and outlined various aspects pertaining to the constitutional amendments. This included the work of previous CRCs, other Pacific Islands and public engagement.



Key findings as highlighted by the Deputy Chairperson of the CRC Committee, MAM Kahealani Hekau includes the reasoning behind constitutional amendments, Niue's societal challenges in relation to population dynamics, procedural challenges associated with such amendments, and comparative observation from constitutional revisions in other Pacific Island nations. The report emphasized the importance of adopting a gradual approach to address proposed amendments efficiently.

After gathering feedback from the public on four proposed changes to the constitution, the CRC obtained valuable insights. Significant findings highlighted strong backing of calling the head of government Prime Minister instead of the Premier, with about sixty-nine percent in favour. Similarly, about fifty-one percent expressed the idea to expand Cabinet from four to six Ministers. However, opinions were split on whether the Niue Assembly's term should be extended from three to four years, with fifty-one percent disagreeing. Additionally, the public had reservations about the issue with the Audit change of name as they wanted more information.

In light of these results, the Honourable Premier, Dalton Tagelagi, introduced four Constitution Amendment Bills to the Niue Assembly on the 27th March 2024 for consideration. The Assembly concluded its proceedings by approving the first readings of the four amendment bills and a motion was approved for the bills to be referred to the CRC Committee by the house in order to revise the text and bring back to the Niue Assembly for its second reading at the end of April 2024.

Thereafter, if the bills pass their second reading, there will be a mandated stand down period of 13 weeks, to allow people the opportunity to consider the changes. If the third reading is passed, a

referendum will be held for people to vote on the proposed amendment to our constitution, the change of leadership title requires 2/3rds majority of the voting population and the others simple majority. This is expected to take place in August 2024.

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