Proposed Conservation Area

NAURU

Anabare Bay - Ijuw - Anabar Conservation Area

hereinafter called

EAST COAST ESCARPMENT

CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

or

the ‘ ECECA ‘ PROJECT

A PROPOSAL BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NAURU

1. Background to the proposal

The proposal to have the East Coast Escarpment designated as one of Nauru's five conservation areas to date stemmed from the government's desire to promote sustainable use of the country's terrestrial and marine biodiversity as a foundation for sustainable development. The other Conservation areas as shown in Map 1 have been recommended as an addition to the East Coast Escarpment Conservation Area. This desire of government is well supported by the local communities who have shown almost universal support for the need to promote sustainable development and conservation of Nauru's biological diversity. This was further well documented in the Nauru Australia Cooperation Rehabilitation and Development Feasibility Study (Overview Report 1994).The East Coast Escarpment has also been identified in the Nauru National Environment Management Strategy (in press) as perhaps having the highest priority for the sustainable use and conservation of the nation's biological resources.

With a land area of only 22 km2 and a population of about seven thousand Nauruans, the Republic of Nauru is one of the smallest independent nations in the world. At the time of first European contact in the 19th century, when sailing vessels stopped for provisions, Nauruans had lived sustainable, self-sufficient lifestyles on their island for some three thousand years. Subsequent to European contact, the distinct culture and traditions of Nauru have been subjected to a succession of colonial regimes and serious exploitation and degradation. The expansion of coconut monoculture during the colonial period, widespread destruction and displacement of people during World War II, and almost a century of open-cast phosphate mining have made the island one of the most environmentally degraded and dependent (on imports) areas on earth. In short, the environmental situation in Nauru is critical, partly due to its own short sightedness and inability to address these problems over the past 25 years since the localisation of the phosphate industry. If nothing is done to protect the biological diversity of this island now, it will be unfit for habitation in future.

For these reasons, the government of Nauru hereby proposes that the East Coast Escarpment is to be designated first as a conservation area pilot project. Subsequent to its successfulness, it will then be a lesson learnt for other proposed conservation areas identified in the Rehabilitation Development Feasibility Study.

The East Coast Escarpment Conservation Area hereinafter known as the " ECECA" Pilot Project will be a joint venture cooperation between the Department of Island Development and Industry (IDI), the Nauru Island Council and local communities of Anibare, Ijuw and Anabar Districts. Other stakeholders such as landowners, Fisheries Department, Works and Community Services, etc. will also be invited to participate in the project.

2. Proposed Conservation Area.

The proposed conservation area will extend from the boundary of the Anibare District (where the Menen hotel is located) including the whole of the Ijuw District to about mid-point of the Anabar District on the western side of the island. The area includes the dense vegetation beyond the escarpment which to date have remained un-mined and extends to about 100 meters beyond the flat coral reef. The total area of the proposed conservation area (CA) is about 98 hectare which is jointly owned by land owners and families in the districts of Anibare, Ijuw and Anabar.

The East Coast Escarpment is considered to be of highest priority for conservation due to its unique ecological importance and high visual quality of its ecosystems. The area also has the best remaining coastal and escarpment vegetation, the only extensive mangrove ecosystem in Nauru, a number of wetland areas, and the greatest concentration of rare and endangered vascular plant species, including two species not known from elsewhere on the island. Furthermore, the area is a primary habitat for the noddy bird which has an extremely important value in the culture and traditions of the people of Nauru.

The East Coast Escarpment area has comparatively few residents, and some of these have already taken part in a number of meetings with officers from the IDI such as "Conservation of Fish Stocks and Marine Resources Workshop" (August 1995) Coral “Reef Workshop” (1997), National Task Force meetings, after which time they indicated their consent to declaring fish habitat reserves over parts of the reef flat in the Anibare Bay to Ijuw area. Being situated very close to the Menen Hotel, Anibare Bay as a conservation area offers great potential for recreational and eco-tourism development in Nauru. Moreover in the past, there used to be an area allocated for a ‘ Scout Camp’ at Anibare where training of Nauruan youths to know more about their flora and fauna and experience ‘bush life’, as well basic scout training was undertaken. The ECECA pilot project is therefore seen as a prime candidate site for developing an appropriate Conservation Area model for Nauru.

3. Physical Features of the Area

3.1. Topography.

Nauru is an isolated, uplifted coral-limestone island located in the Central Pacific, 59 kilometres South of the equator at 0*32'S and 166*56'E. The island is 2200 hectares in area, and is surrounded by a fringing coral reef between 120 and 300 metres wide. The reef drops away sharply on the seaward edge, at an angle of about 40 degrees, to a depth of the order of 4000 metres.

There is a coastal plain or "bottomside" encircling the island, ranging from 150 to 300 metres in width. This zone comprises a sandy beach and foredune behind which are either relatively flat grounds or a more or less developed swale. This swale sometimes results in a brackish swamp or shallow ponds where the relative level intersects the ground water lens, particularly in Ijuw and Anabar Districts. Interior to the coastal plain is a transition zone dominated by coral-limestone pinnacles that sometimes

results in a cliff up to 30 metres or more in hight, other times a slope of 1 in 10 to 1 in 20 with isolated pinnacles in scattered groups. This zone is known as the escarpment.

The third zone comprises the interior, raised portion of the island, also known as the "topside". This zone extends over approximately 1600 hectares and is the site of the mining for phosphate deposits. Relative levels vary generally between 20 and 45 metres above sea level (asl), with occasional pinnacle outcrops of 50 - 70 metres asl, and depressions such as Buada Lagoon to 5 metres asl.

The proposed ECECA include the coastal plain and escarpment zones in the Anibare, Ijuw and part of Anabar Districts.

3.2. Climate

Nauru is located in the dry belt of the equatorial oceanic zone, with diurnal temperatures ranging from 26 deg. C to 35 deg. C, and nocturnal temperatures between 22 deg. C and 28 deg.C.

Annual rainfall is extremely variable, averaging 2126 mm per year (data from 46 years between 1916 and 1977) with a range of 280 mm to 4590 mm. Monthly rainfall data available for the period 1977 to 1993 indicate a range of 0 mm to 746 mm, with 62 out of 204 months in total having less than 100 mm of rain. Rain tends to be more frequent during the months of December to April.

3.3. Soils

The Nauruan soils are coarse textured sands, sandy loams and loams with varying amounts of gravel, stones and boulders. They have a weakly developed structure, and moisture retention is generally low. The soils are very well drained, and heavy rains are rapidly removed away from the surface. The pH varies from 6.0 to 8.0, with most in the higher range. Organic content of the undisturbed soils is 1 - 11% on the topside, 0.1 - 1.9% on the bottomside.

From the plant nutrition point of view, Morrison (in Hassall, 1994) reports that Nitrogen is sufficient in all but intensive agriculture, although Potassium is generally low (and depressed by high levels of Calcium). Expected trace elements deficiencies include Manganese, Copper, Cobalt and Molybdenum. Iron, Copper, Zinc and Manganese are not likely to be available to plants due to high pH values. Calcium is present in the soil at high concentrations of 80 - 120 mg/kg, and needs to be monitored in plant products for human consumption.

3.4. Hydrology

Ground water exists in the form of a layer of 4 to 5 metres thick on average, particularly in two areas; one in the north central and one in the south central parts of the island. Beneath this layer, the water is increasingly brackish down to salt water at 80 metres below sea level.

Ground water on the bottomside is tapped by several hundred wells, about one-third of which exceed the W.H.O. recommended limit of 1500 mg/l Total Dissolved Solids.

Ground water under the topside area has been mathematically modelled, with the result that a sustainable bore field can comprise 4 bores at 1 km centres producing 1 l/second and 4 bores at 1 km centres producing 2 l/second. Alternatively, bores could be spaced closer together but produce less water flow.

Collection and storage of rainwater is a top priority for Nauru. Long term potential threats to the quality of ground water resource include Cadmium, rubbish dump leachate and sewage.

3.5. Flora (Extracted from Hassall, 1994)

Nauru is a small, raised atoll in the middle of a large ocean. Typically, the lack of size and habitat diversity of atolls and other small islands, together with their physical isolation from larger land masses, ensures that their flora are few in numbers and comprise mainly widespread, pioneer species. Nauru is not an exception to this.

A Nauruan flora inventory has been completed by Hassall and Thaman and it was reported that sixty-one (61) indigenous species had been identified. Of these there are 28 species regarded as being rare and in danger of becoming extinct on the island. (NACRDFS, 1994) This description indicates that these species are at serious risk of disappearing from the wild within 10 to 20 years if present landuse and other casual factors continue to operate. This category includes some species with populations so small that they may not survive, even if they are immediately protected. Urgent action needs to be taken to protect and nurture through a program of controlled propagation, of all of Nauru's rare and endangered species. (See Appendix 1a)

The total cover of the indigenous vegetation has been reported to be reduced down to 17% of the total area in Nauru. The forests dominated by Tomano (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) on topside area have been reduced by mining to 30% of their inferred area. Based on these observations, the Rehabilitation Development and Feasibility Study undertaken in 1994 had recommended that the natural vegetation types be incorporated into a system of forest reserves within the conservation areas. In particular the *Calophyllum inophyllum* was recommended as the dominant tree species and if other introduced species are contemplated then they should demonstrate a capability to grow in environments similar to Nauru.

Thaman et al.. have compared the flora of Nauru with those of 11 Pacific island groups. Of the 142 widespread coastal species surveyed, 55 species grow on Nauru. These species are all members of the pan-tropical or palaeotropical flora, comprising easily dispersed species. These plants generally have the ability to grow on environments characterised by loose shifting sands, wave action, soil-less limestone and volcanic terraces and rock outcrops, high salinity, strong sunlight, seaspray and associated physical drought, and periodic inundation (Fosberg, 1960). They are supremely well-adapted to life on islands like Nauru.

Moreover the vegetation of Nauru has been comprehensively mapped by Hassall and Thaman (Overview report,1994), where it showed seven classes of vegetation as Disturbed areas, Freshwater and Littoral vegetation, Very tall closed forest, Tall open forest, Mid-high closed forest and Tall shrubland. The disturbed areas area are

dominant with mining the most prominance disturbance, followed by clearing for urban development.The mined areas showed varying degrees of vegetation regeneration while th urban areas are a mosaic of gardens, ornamental trees and coconuts.

There remain pockets of the original vegetation on the island. Small pockets of mangrove exist around the Ijuw lagoons. Remnants of tomano (*Calophyllum inophyllum*) forest exist around the Bauda lagoon and other unmined areas of topside. High pinnacle outcrops protect a complex of natural vegetation dominated by *Ficus prolixa* and *terminala catappa.* The most intact natural vegetation is found along the eastern escarpment of topside. This is represented with all the major indigenous species - *Calophyllum, Ficus, Terminalia* and *Hibiscus tilaceus.*

The Twentieth Century history of Nauru has been one of continuous disruption to the natural environment by clearing for coconut production, wartime activities, sustained phosphate mining, and increasing pressure of urbanisation. Three indigenous species of vascular plants collected earlier in the century are thought to be extinct today. Other uncollected species may have also become extinct during this period of upheaval. It is indeed reasonable to suspect that some further, widespread Pacific island species may once have been present on Nauru, particularly when they are found common on other, similar islands.

The majority of plant species on Nauru are introduced, numbering possibly 450 in total. Of these, approximately 80 species are weeds of roadsides and derelict or disturbed lands. Thaman et al. have suggested that some of these weeds can participate in the early phases of regeneration after mining, and some species were certainly present in significant numbers in un-mined forest.

Having regard to the low number of indigenous species compared with introduced species, and the proven aggressive weedy nature of at least some of the latter, underlines the importance of protection and nurturing the native plants to ensure their future on Nauru.

3.6. Terrestrial Fauna

To the best of our knowledge, no specific surveys of the terrestrial fauna of Nauru have been undertaken. Anecdotal observations are however available particularly in relation to the presence of bird species on the island.

Black noddies and white-capped noddies (*Anous stolidus* and *A. minutus*), white terns (*Sterna albifrons*) and frigate birds (*Fregata minor* or *ariel*) at least figure largely in the traditional Nauruan environment. Other bird species observed include the indigenous reed warbler (Nauruan canary) and the introduced house sparrow.

There are no known indigenous mammals on Nauru, although introduced rats, cats, dogs, fowls and pigs are commonly observed.

3.7. Marine Fauna

Little information is available on the marine fauna of Nauru and a survey of the fringing reef is anticipated should this proposal be approved. A list of rare and endangered reef species of Nauru has been compiled by the IDI (see Appendix 1.b.). The Fisheries and Marine Resources Authority which conducted a workshop for the "Conservation of Fish Stocks and Marine Environment" in Nauru, had recommended the need for better fisheries management due to overfishing and the public's concern over reduced fish catches and sizes of catch. Various suggestions for the management of fish stocks include catch limitation; limitation of fishing licences and fishing time; limiting the size of mesh nets; imposing a minimum size on fish caught; and the establishment of sanctuaries around popular fishing grounds (Deiye, 1995). The proposed ECECA pilot project will enable some of these suggestions to be implemented. A list of marine species considered to be rare and endangered is at Appendix 2.

3.8. Physical Processes and Constraints to Conservation of the Area

Although phosphate mining has brought great economic benefits to both Nauru as a nation and to Nauruan landowners, it has been at great environmental cost. This cost will continue to be borne by the people of Nauru for many generations. The National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) for Nauru has identified a number of constraints and challenges to the conservation of the country's environment and natural resources. Amongst these are severe degradation due to phosphate mining and soil erosion; inadequate education, public awareness and training; loss of traditional knowledge; loss of biodiversity due to over-exploitation and habitat degradation; and breakdown of traditional marine tenure systems.

The above factors will continue to frustrate efforts to protect biodiversity in Nauru and to establish the proposed ECECA pilot project. There is however a genuine desire on the part of the Nauru government and the communities of Anibare, Ijuw and Anabar to protect one of the last remaining examples of the island's ecosystems through the establishment of a conservation area at the Anibare - Ijuw-Anaber area. This effort could lead to greater interest in the protection of other areas on the island before they are lost forever.

4. Social and Cultural Environment

4.1 Community structure and services

4.1.2 Population / Target Group

Anibare, Ijuw and Anabar districts are the least populated areas on Nauru. According to the 1992 Census report, an estimate of 691 individuals or 7% of the total population were found to be living around the fringe or the coastal area of the proposed CA. This figure however is most likely to be presently at 10% due to increased population and high density rate of 533 km^2. Like the rest of the country, indigenous population is growing rapidly at 4.3% and it is expected that the present number will double in the next 20 years. A census in 1992 estimated the total population at 9919 of which 6,831 were Nauruan.

Therefore at least 10% of landowners and families will be affected by the proposed ECECA pilot project as all of them are expected to play an important role in the planning, establishment and management of the project through their participation in the Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) to be set up for the project.

A large number of the population in the proposed ECECA pilot project find employment in the government sector, Nauru Island Council or the Nauru Phosphate Corporation (NPC) which are major employers in the country. People are generally well educated but change in diet and lifestyles have resulted in an increase in the number of heart-related diseases and weight problems.

As already stated, the communities in the three districts of Anibare, Ijuw and Anabar have indicated their support for the proposed ECECA pilot project for they see this as a way of controlling fishing by people from other communities in their waters. The government agencies such as IDI and the Nauru Island Council, and NGOs such as the Nauru Environment Association, the Nauru Fishermen Association, the Scouting Movement, the Women's Groups and Church organisations are expected to be actively supporting this proposal. Other interested groups will also be invited to participate if they so wish.

The exact role of women in the project is yet to be determined but this will be done once the project is underway. Women in Nauru, like in all other Pacific island countries are the users of land and marine resources. Their participation in projects of this nature will therefore be critical to their success. Women's role in providing advice, educating their children, and in the dissemination of information will be vital to the overall development and management of the CA.

4.2.3 Social services and Infrastructure

Health and education services are provided by the government and are adequate for the young population of Nauru. Most of the water is provided to the population from a desalination plant at minimal cost. Every family in Nauru has a water tank and water quality is generally better than in many other Pacific island countries. The island is well serviced by good roads, and electricity supply and communication facilities are available throughout the country.

4.2.5 Land Tenure

To the Nauruan, the issue of land has always been a matter of spiritual responsibility as it is a material possession. It is a basis of a person’s identity as a Nauruan as it differentiates him/her from other residents on Nauru. Land is owned individually and though nowadays siblings inherit equal rights, it had been in the past that the oldest daughter inherited the majority of the land, but bound to take care of her nuclear as well as her extended family. The rights to land cover the coconut bearing land and pandanus land while today some of these land titles including phosphate bearing lands are shared by the landowner and the government through lease arrangements.

4.2.6 Nauru Districts

In addition to the family land parcels, Nauru had traditionally been divided into 12 tribal units. However over the last 95 years, these tribal units have since been divided into 14 political districts where the district is used as means by which every Nauruan has a political voice to raise pertinent issues through their district Councillor or their member of Parliament. The elect member of the Nauru Island Council in each distirct is directly responsible to his/her locality and plays an important role in conservation activities.

5. Conservation Area values and other economic activities

The well-known status of Nauru's degraded and impoverished environment makes the CA-designation of the ECECA pilot project of even greater significance at both the national and regional levels. The choice of this area provides the greatest chance of protecting a complete representative sample Nauru's intact ecosystem. It is also an excellent example of the development of biodiversity conservation, not only in areas with very rich and unique biodiversity status (for example, areas with a high degree of endemism), but also in areas which may not have comparatively rich biodiversity, but where that biodiversity, and the biodiversity-use traditions (ethnobiological knowledge) and cultures that depend on them, are under serious threat.

The need for conservation areas on small islands like Nauru is just as great as on continental islands with inherently more complex biota. This is because these islands support only relatively small populations of many species, and these are therefore more susceptible to chance extinctions or extirpations. This assertion applies also to the Micronesian archipelagos. There is also a good possibility that the widespread tropical island species with disjunct distributions may have genetically differentiated to some extent in the different parts of their ranges. It is therefore of importance in the regional context, to obtain samples of protected populations from each island group, to preserve genetic biodiversity. The existence of a CA programme in each country of the region will of itself strengthen the process by interchange of ideas and experiences between countries. This will not be possible if small impoverished islands like Nauru do not have a CA system.

The tangible benefits of establishing the ECECA pilot project are clear to both the government and the people of Nauru. The conservation of its biodiversity and the development of models for its sustainable use will provide the basis for limited cash and very considerable subsistence income to future generations of Nauruans. In addition, the ECECA will be used as a model for the other identified CA’s on parts of the island and will assist in preserving the cultural and ecological life-support system for the people living on the island.

The benefits will be integral to and complement the rehabilitation process after the impending cessation of the high phosphate income in the past. Only through the protection of Nauru's biodiversity will it be possible to protect the health of both our island home and our people, and to assist in sustainable developments such as agro forestry, limited local commercial fishing and eco-tourism. This area is also seen as an important resource and field site for environmental education and research in Nauru.

The CA inland boundary extends to the edge of the mined areas but it is not expected that mining operations will resume in the proposed area due mainly to its difficult terrain (escarpment). At the bottomside, clearing for settlement are visible in some parts and there is a possibility that portions of the mangrove and wetland areas may be lost to this use. There is at present very little agricultural activity in the area but spear fishing, net fishing and reef gleaning are common within the Anibare Bay area. It is proposed that these activities will be strictly regulated when the CA is formally established.

6. Rationale and CA Objectives

As previously stated, the rationale for this proposal is to promote the sustainable use of Nauru's terrestrial and marine biodiversity as the foundation for sustainable development by the present and future generations of Nauruans. The main objectives of the project are:

a) to support efforts by government, local communities and other interested parties in the establishment and management of the biological resources of the East Coast Escarpment Conservation Area;

b) to protect terrestrial and marine species that are threatened or endangered in Nauru;

c) to improve the awareness of the local people about the importance and means of conserving biological diversity;

d) to promote and support ecologically sustainable economic activities by local people;

e) to improve the capacity and cooperation between different sectors of society and agencies of government in the conservation of the biological resources of the country;

f) to contribute to regional and international action in the conservation of biodiversity worldwide;

g) to retain green belts for visual and aesthetic reasons and to preserve noddy bird habitat and other sites that have historical, cultural and environmental significance.

h) to investigate and provide better understanding of plants and animals and the overall ecology.

7. Project Design

To achieve the above objectives, the following components will be inherent in the project design.

a) Project Management.

Conservation area management will be at a local level in the context of a National Cconservation Policy. This will involve the appointment of a Conservation Area Support Officer (CASO) within the lead agency (IDI); the establishment of a Project Coordinating Committee (comprising all interested parties and stakeholders) which will have overall responsibility for the project; support for meetings with local communities, and the development of regular work plans and monitoring procedures for the project. The success of the project needs public understanding, interest and support and thus a need for an early start on a program of information and education. Already there are interest groups such as the Greenery Association, Nauru Environment Association, Nauru Fishermen Association and Coral Reef Action Body (CRAB) who were formed to promote conservation of Nauru's natural environment.

b) CA Establishment.

Under this component, resource surveys will be undertaken to determine the status of biodiversity in the CA.. Management plans will be prepared and implemented and rules and regulations will be developed and enforced as and when necessary. Full participation by local communities in the CA establishment and management will be encouraged.

c) Sustainable Development.

An important aspect of the project will be the identification and support for sustainable income generating activities by local communities. Feasibility studies into agro forestry, alley-cropping, limited commercial fisheries and eco-tourism will be conducted. Other options will also be considered.

d) Education and Training.

In-country training of conservation officers and local people will be a continuing aspect of the project as will the production of educational materials to help promote the CA in particular and biodiversity conservation in general not only to the communities concerned with the project but also to the rest of the communities in Nauru.

e) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Appropriate procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the project objectives and outputs will be developed and revised as the need arises. This task will involve project personnel and staff.

A draft work plan and budget for the first phase (1999 - 2000) of the project is attached as Appendix 2.a. and 2.b. respectively. A long term work plan and budget will be developed once this concept proposal is approved.

8. Management structure

The project will be under the direction of the Secretary of the Department of Island Development and Industry or designate. The Secretary or designate will serve as chairperson of the Conservation Area Committee (CAC) which will comprise of representatives from appropriate government agencies, the local communities involved in the project, NGOs, and other institutions. The functions of the CAC may include the following:

a) advise the CASO on technical and management issues relating to the project;

b) review and approve periodic reports of the CASO on the implementation of the project work plans;

c) approve quarterly and annual work plans and budgets for the project;

d) assist the CASO where necessary in the implementation of project activities;

e) assist in the promotion of the CA and of biodiversity conservation in other communities of Nauru; and

f) help identify and secure other resources in support of the project.

The CAC will meet at least once every 6 months at a place and venue to be advised by the CASO. The CASO may attend meetings of the CAC and may act as its secretary.

9. Constraints, risks and outstanding issues for resolution

The logical framework presented below itemises the major issues which could prevent the project from achieving its objectives and work plans together with an indication of how these may be overcome.

Logical Framework

Objectives	**Achievement indicators**	**How quantified or assessed**	**Assumptions / constraints**
Project management	CASO appointed CAC established	TORs for CASO and CAC approved. CAC meetings held	A commitment by landowners to attend meetings of the CAC and be part of the decision-making process.
CA establishment	CA formally recognised. Management plan in place.	Full recognition by government and communities of CA. Implementation of management plan in progress.	Failure of certain sectors of community to support the project. Integrated planning by resource owners.
Sustainable development	Reports on needs of the community. Improved subsistence income of local communities.	Records by local community and business sector. Monitoring data measured against benchmark levels.	Integrated sustainable development plan supported by government and local community.
Education and training	A number of project personnel trained in conservation practices. A number of educational materials produced and disseminated.	A training programme in place for local officials. In-country training / workshop reports produced and distributed.	Availability of personnel to carry out training.
Monitoring & evaluation	Monitoring data shows progress in project implementation.	Records by project personnel and local communities.	Monitoring and evaluation procedures approved by local communities and supported by government policies.

10. Rating the Anibare Bay CA Against Selection Biodiversity Criteria

Biodiversity Criteria	**ECECA Features**

a) Area must contain nationally or regionally significant examples of one or more ecosystems of global conservation concern, such as tropical rainforest, mangroves, wetlands, lagoons and coral reefs, and must be large enough to maintain their viability.	**YES** - East Coast Escarpment comprises examples of pan-tropical forests, mangroves (the only one on the island), wetlands, limestone formations (pinnacles, escarpment) lagoons and coral reef flats. Based on the size of the island, the area proposed as CA is considered large enough to maintain the viability of its ecosystems.
b) The project must be achievable and exhibit a high degree of commitment by landowners, residents, resource users and other potential partners.	**YES** - Almost all the landowners in the three Districts have indicated their support for the project. The government is fully committed and other NGOs have also supported the proposal.
c) The area must be sufficiently large and complex to encompass a wide range of the interactions among people and the natural resources prevailing in the country.	**YES**- Although the area is the least populated on the island, the interaction of people here and the natural resources are representative of the rest of Nauru. There is a potential to include the rest of the Anabar district in the CA in future.
d) Area should contain high levels of biological diversity and ecological complexity, represented by a number of major environments, diversity of ecosystems, and large number of genera and species of plants and animals.	**FAIR -** As an isolated island, Nauru does not have a high level of biological diversity, however the propossed area has a combination of forest, mangroves, wetlands, lagoons and coral reef that make up a very complex environment. This area is one of the two richest areas on Nauru in terms of the number of genera and species of plants and animals.
e) The area may be important for the survival of endemic species, or of species that are rare or threatened nationally, regionally or internationally.	**YES** - Most if not all of the 27 species of plants considered to be endangered on Nauru are found in this area. Two endangered plant species are found in this area alone and nowhere else on Nauru. The Nauruan warbler, the only endemic bird species on Nauru, is also found in this area. Many of the rare or endangered reef species are also found within the proposed site.
f) The area may be threatened by destruction, degradation or conversion.	**YES -** Although there are no plans at the moment to mine in this area, the threat of mining remains. Mangrove and wetland areas face the threat of being used as rubbish dumps and / or conversion to settlement areas.

11 Summary

By this document, the government of the Republic of Nauru formally proposes that the area defined as "East Coast Escarpment" (see map) be designated as a Conservation Area and to be considered for financial support. Nauru is a unique

island ecosystem, its biodiversity has provided the foundation for the health and culture of its people for countless generations. The serious environmental degradation and neglect of its biodiversity traditions over the past 90 years has seriously compromised the potential for the sustainable habitation of our island home.

Moreover, the lack of local capacity in the area of environmental management restricts our ability to promote conservation, sustainable use and rehabilitation of our island ecosystems and biodiversity. Although the recent Deed of Settlement with the government of Australia and the 1994 Nauru-Australia Cooperation Rehabilitation and Feasibility Study have produced a Plan of Action for the rehabilitation of Nauru's mined-out lands, the plan does not go far enough in the areas that are stressed ie. to protect and manage our remaining biodiversity, particularly our marine biodiversity.

We believe the designation of the East Coast Escarpment as a Conservation Area will complement our own rehabilitation efforts, and provide the support needed to manage Nauru's extremely endangered biodiversity, as a foundation for a new era of sustainable development.