

REPUBLIC OF NAURU
PUBLIC SERVICE BILL 2016
SECOND READING SPEECH
Honorable Baron Divavesi Waqa MP
28 January 2016

Mr. Speaker Sir,

I have the pleasure of introducing to the House today a Bill for the *Public Service Act 2016*.

The public service plays an important role in state-building, and services offered makes the state visible to its citizens, often forming the primary tangible link between the government and their people. The reform of the law governing the public service has taken into account the challenges faced and the changing dynamics of the public service and the need to ensure a well-organized system of service delivery. It will further strengthen our resolve to implement a robust law that is built on the foundation of operational effectiveness and efficiency. The Bill offers a more meaningful and constructive mechanism for accountability of all employee's including an explicit disciplinary machinery.

Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members, let me briefly highlight the changes that this Bill proposes.

The first of these is the inclusion of Public Service Values and a Public Service Code of Conduct. Public servants carry a heavy load and these values and code of conduct are not intended to create burdensome rules that would be difficult to follow. The values and code of conduct enshrined in the Bill are intended to build confidence between the government, the public servants and ultimately the people of Nauru.

In the words of our Chief Justice, "*There are reasonable limitations as being essential for public order because without them confidence in the public service would not only be undermined but it would become dysfunctional, partisan and subject to gridlock, unable to properly serve the people of Nauru and hostage to whim, caprice and the agendas of various interests rather than the public good*".

Also significant in this Bill are the changes made to leave provisions including provisions on maternity leave, official leave and the inclusion of paternity leave. The changes here brings Nauru on par with other jurisdictions in the region and ensure the protection of our workers and their families.

An additional, and I trust interesting change is that regarding the retirement of public servants.

Mr. Speaker, we will no longer force our public servants to retire when they reach the age of 60. This Bill creates provisions for public servants to continue to serve beyond that age and this has been done because we strongly believe that many of our public servants who have reached that age still have much more to give to the Government and to the people of Nauru.

This is but a snippet of the changes that this Bill will make for the public service and to assist the Members and your good self Mr. Speaker, I have included an explanatory memorandum that explains the Bill in more detail.

Mr. Speaker, being a public servant is not about the power, the perks or the prestige. It is about the ability to make a real difference to all those that one serves, especially those who have no voice of their own.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.