

REPUBLIC OF NAURU
NAURU (RPC) CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2017

SECOND READING SPEECH

Honourable David Adeang MP

14th September 2017

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Omo yekwo,

Mr Speaker and Honourable Members, today marks an important shift in our relationship with Australia in respect of the Regional Processing Centre, which was negotiated and has been part of us since 2012.

In the last sitting of Parliament, I introduced the Nauru (RPC) Corporation Act 2017. I promised then that the Bill was going to reform the RPC. I can now report to this House that the Act which you passed has resulted in the Board of the Corporation, officials of the Departments of Multicultural Affairs and Justice having very meaningful meetings with the stakeholders from Australia. In order to facilitate the work of the hardworking team, I am again standing before you seeking your support for the benefit of all our people including the asylum seekers and refugees for the Bill which I am about to introduce .

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to introduce to the House today the *Nauru (RPC) Corporation (Amendment) Bill 2017*.

The Secretary for Multicultural Affairs is required to execute a contract for and on behalf of the Republic under section 16 of the Asylum Seekers (Regional Processing Centre) Act 2012. The proposed amendment to section 24(1)(b) of the Act is to allow the Secretary to endorse all contracts. The endorsement is an acknowledgement of the Republic's commitment under the Memorandum of Understanding. Moreover, the endorsement certifies compliance with the Act.

Secondly, the proposed sub clause (1)(c) allows Australia to appoint a representative, nominee or agent *to* execute an authorised contract. The signing of the contract is at the request of the Commonwealth which they are obliged under their domestic laws. The Republic affirms its commitment under the Memorandum of Understanding and acknowledges Australia's commitment to finance the RPC and Settlements. This provision applies to contracts that can only be signed by Australia. However, all these contracts will be subjected to the scrutiny under the Act provided for under section 7. That is to say that our Cabinet will have a final say on this. Furthermore, Australia is required to endorse contracts which do not fall under clause (1)(c) so that it fulfils its own legal commitment.

The Bill will now empower the Secretary for Multicultural Affairs to issue a certificate that a contract is authorised and is in full compliance with the Act. The certificate will be admissible in any court of law.

Despite the proposed amendment, the intent of the existing Act does not change and holds firm.

Mr Speaker, the explanatory memorandum details the provisions of the Bill.

I commend the Bill to the House.