

Island Profile: Mauke

Economic Development Strategy

Background

Mauke is the easternmost outer island of the Cook Islands. It is a central volcanic plateau surrounded by a ring of jagged, razor-sharp fossilised coral which extends to 1 kilometre inland. The volcanic origin of the island makes it suitable for agriculture. The island is also known for its underground fresh water caves.

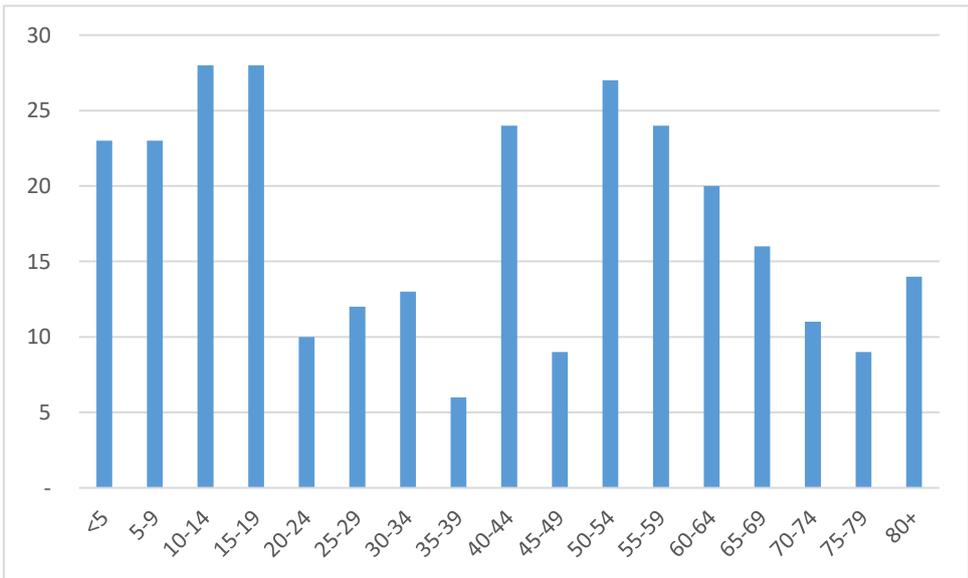
In the twenty-year period between 1996 and 2016, Mauke’s population decreased by 52 per cent. As per 2016 census the population on the island was 297 people residing in 97 dwelling units.

Mauke is currently working towards the Mauke Community Sustainable Development Plan 2020 which outlines the key priorities over the next four years. The plan was developed with an objective to identify the island’s limitations and capitalise on the strengths to assist the people of Mauke.

Demographics

At the time of the 2016 census nearly one third of the island’s population was under 19 years of age. Residents ages 20 to 59 made up 42 per cent of the island’s population. Most of the people were in their 40s and 50s. Twenty-four per cent of the population were 60 and over.

Figure 1: Age profile - Mauke



Education

In 2016 there was one school in Mauke which went up to Form 5, after which students were required to continue their studies in Rarotonga. At the time of the assessment the school had an enrolment of 56 students.

In 2019 two students from Mauke were enrolled in the USP Cook Islands Campus.

Labour statistics

The active labour force in Mauke was made up of 90 people aged 15 years and over. Sixty-one per cent were employed by the public sector, 21 per cent worked for the private enterprise and 8 per cent were self-employed.

Public administration employed 31 per cent of the Mauke labour force. The wholesale and retail sectors employed 18 per cent of the labour force. Agriculture and fishing industry employed 8 per cent of the labour force while electricity, water and waste sectors employed 9 per cent.

Average income in Mauke in 2016 was estimated at around \$10,000.

Industry

Mauke primarily relies on the government to provide employment and welfare payment with remittances coming from family members working overseas on short or long term basis.

The island's rich soil is well suited for agriculture, although farming on Mauke is primarily done for subsistence and local consumption.

The main export of the island is maire, a leafy plant harvested by local women and processed by hand into garlands to make leis.

The tourism market in Mauke is very modest, comprised of 2 small budget accommodations of 11 beds with generally low occupancy rates.

Information Technology

According to the 2016 census 55 per cent of the population aged 10 and over had cellular phones and 60 per cent had landlines. Thirty per cent of the residents had access to the internet. Eight per cent reported not having access to any of the above forms of information technology.

Budget

In 2019/20 Mauke island administration received a total appropriation of \$1,246,091 of which \$730,255 was for personnel expenditure and \$212,655 for operating expenditure.

Outer Island Small Capital Fund for Mauke in 2019/20 was \$10,000 assigned for small capital purchases such as ICT equipment and machinery parts.

Welfare payments for Mauke summed up to \$486,400.

Presently Mauke is not undergoing any island specific projects although the island is provided support by a number of agencies through the National and Pa Enea initiatives such as the government IT Network.

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