

Island Profile: Mitiaro

Economic Development Strategy

Background

Mitiaro is traditionally known as Nukuroa and is located in the Southern Group of the Cook Islands. Atiu, Mauke and Mitiaro are clustered in a triangle approximately 45 kilometres apart for which they became known as Nga-pu-toru, the three roots.

Mitiaro is a raised atoll with a ring of fossilised coral and a centre of fertile land. Distinctive characteristics of the island are its two fresh water lakes, several caves and freshwater sink holes.

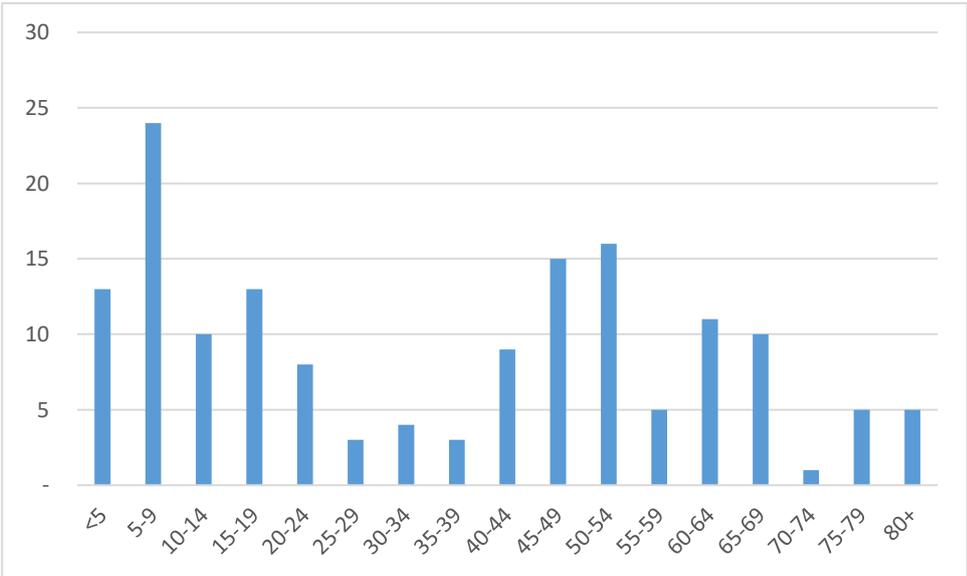
Mitiaro has four villages, located on the western side of the island: Atai-Taurangi, Auta, Mangarei and Takaue. As per 2016 census the population on the island was inhabited by 155 people which is 50 per cent less compared to the 1996 census (319). In 2016 there were 52 dwelling units on the island.

Currently Mitiaro is working on the implementation of Te Raukura A Nukuroa 2020 which is the fourth development plan of its kind focused on outlining the current priorities for the island.

Demographics

Figure 1 presents the demographic profile of Mitiaro. Based on the census data the most populated age group was 5 to 9 years of age. Thirty-nine per cent of the island residents were under the age of 19. Residents in their 20s and 30s comprised 11 per cent of the island population while those in their 40s and 50s made up 29 per cent. Mitiaro residents over 60 accounted for 21 per cent of the total population.

Figure 1: Age profile – Mitiaro



Education

Education services in Mitiaro consisted of a single school with four classrooms. The school staff included the principal, two teachers plus two teacher aids. The school had 39 students from Early Childhood Education to Form 5 or to NZCE Level 1.

In 2019 three students from Mitiaro were enrolled in the USP Cook Islands Campus.

Labour statistics

At the time of the census the total labour force in Mitiaro was reported to consist of 62 people aged 15 years and over. Sixty per cent of the labour force was employed by the public sector. The remaining 40 per cent were employed in agriculture and fishing (9), education (6), health and social work (1), wholesale and retail (3).

All of the private sector workers were self-employed. Around two thirds of people reported being employed full time while the remaining 1/3 were employed part time only. Average income on the island was around \$12,500. Women reported an average income of \$7,500 per annum.

Industry

Mitiaro is mostly comprised of coral limestone and swamps. Fertile land makes up only about 5 per cent of the land area, which limits the island's agricultural potential.

Women's handicrafts, such as maire are being exported to Hawaii.

Information Technology

At the time of 2016 census, 59 per cent of Mitiaro's population aged 10 years and older were using cellular phones and 45 per cent had landlines. Internet was accessed by 31 per cent of the residents. Five per cent reported having no access to any of the above forms of information technology.

Budget

In 2019/20 budget the Net Operating Appropriation for the Mitiaro Island administration totalled \$782,859 of which personnel and operating expenditure allocation was \$678,693 and \$73,824 respectively.

MFEM Outer Islands Small Capital Fund for Mitiaro in 2019/20 was \$8,000 enabling the island to purchase small capital such as ICT equipment and machinery parts.

Welfare Payments for Mitiaro in 2019/20 totalled \$340,700.

The Government allocated \$250,000 to rehabilitating Mitiaro's water supply and storage. The funding has been provided to improve and replace the existing water infrastructure as well as plan for a long-term efficient water supply system.

Also Mitiaro is provided support by a number of agencies through the national and Pa Enea initiatives such as the Government IT Network.

For further information contact:

Natalie Cooke, Director
Economic Planning Division
Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
PO Box 120, Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Telephone: +682 29511 ext. 8314

Email: natalie.cooke@cookislands.gov.ck

Website: <http://www.mfem.gov.ck/economic-planning/economic-development-strategy>