

Island Profile: Penrhyn

Economic Development Strategy

Background

Penrhyn is the most remote atoll in the Cook Islands located only 9 degrees south of the equator. It is comprised of a ring of coral stretching 77 kilometres around a 233 square kilometre lagoon. There are a total of 53 islets which contribute to Penrhyn’s sense of vastness.

Penrhyn has two main villages. The government building as well as the shipping and air services are located in Omoka, which is considered the central village. Tetautua village has a smaller population and is located about 10.5 kilometres across the lagoon.

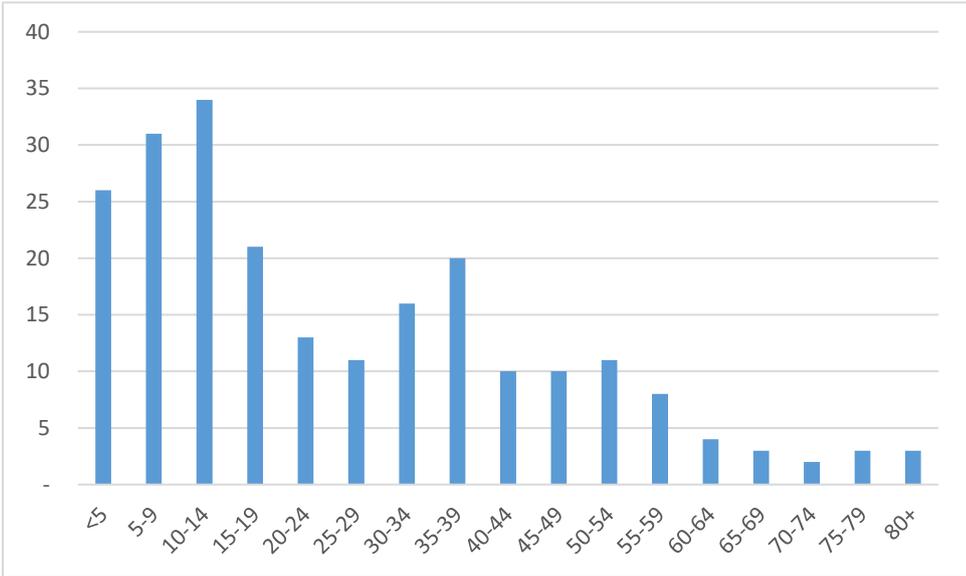
The population in Penrhyn was recorded at 226 residents as per 2016 census. In the 20 years following 1996 census 380 people left the island. A total of 47 dwelling units were reported on Penrhyn in 2016 with the majority built with a minimum of 4 rooms.

The island is currently working towards achieving the goals outlined in the Tongareva Henua Parani 2016-2020. The island plan was designed to guide the efforts, share the resources wisely and help the people improve their livelihood.

Demographics

Figure 1 represents demographic composition of Penrhyn as per 2016 census. As it can be seen children and youth made up 50 per cent of the island population. Forty-four per cent were residents between 20 and 59 years of age with the majority of people in their thirties. Residents over the age of 60 accounted for only 7 per cent of the island’s population.

Figure 1: Age profile – Penrhyn



Education

Omoka and Te Tautua were the only two schools in the Northern Cook Islands that went up to Year 10 and Year 8 respectively catering to a total of 62 students. The schools did not go up to Year 11 due to the lack of qualified teachers.

In 2019 one student from Penrhyn was enrolled in the USP Cook Islands Campus.

Labour statistics

In 2016 the active labour force aged 15 and over was comprised of 60 people with 85 per cent employed by the public sector. Half of the total labour force (33) were working for the public administration. Education employed 10 people, while health and social services had a total of 5 employees.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing had a total of 4 employees, mining and manufacturing industries employed 2 people.

Fifteen per cent of the labour force were engaged in elementary occupations. Managers and professionals accounted for 37 per cent of the labour force and 10 per cent were skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers.

Private enterprise, ad-hoc and religious organisations hired two employees each.

Average income at the time of the survey was reported at around \$12,500. When broken down by gender women had a lower average income of around \$5,000 per annum.

Industry

Penrhyn is primarily dependent on the income generated through employment in the public sector, as well as welfare payments. The island has a potential in developing the fishing industry although it requires further planning. Organic farming is another industry with a potential to generate extra income for the island.

Information Technology

As per 2016 census, out of the total population aged 10 and over 46 per cent had cellular phones and 44 per cent had landlines. Forty per cent of the residents had access to the internet and 12 per cent reported not using any of the outlined forms of information technology.

Budget

In 2019/20 Penrhyn Islands Administration was allocated a total funding of \$828,154 of which \$599,964 was for personnel expenditure and \$163,309 for operating expenditure.

Penrhyn Small Capital Fund summed to a total of \$12,000 to enable the island to purchase small capital such as ICT equipment and machinery parts.

Welfare payments for Penrhyn summed to a total of \$210,402.

In 2019/20 the Government appropriated funding for a number of Capital Projects in Penrhyn.

Funding of \$4,200,000 was appropriated to the island for the construction of two cyclone shelters, one in Omoka and one in Tetautua. The Government is focused on improving Pa

Enua's safety measures against natural disasters as well as the ongoing development of the Outer Islands.

Another major project in Penrhyn is the construction of a new Tetautua hospital. The project was appropriated \$500,000 and will ensure easy access to immediate and direct health care.

Pa Enea Infrastructure Improvement Programme was appropriated \$150,000 for the design and subsequent construction of the Penrhyn and Nassau harbours during the 2019/20 financial year. This will provide robust and durable harbour structures that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

In addition, Penrhyn 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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