

# Island Profile: Pukapuka

## Economic Development Strategy

### Background

Pukapuka is the most isolated island located northwest of Rarotonga. It comprises three islets (motus) situated around a triangular lagoon. The 8 kilometre submerged reef to the west of the island makes it difficult for boats to anchor.

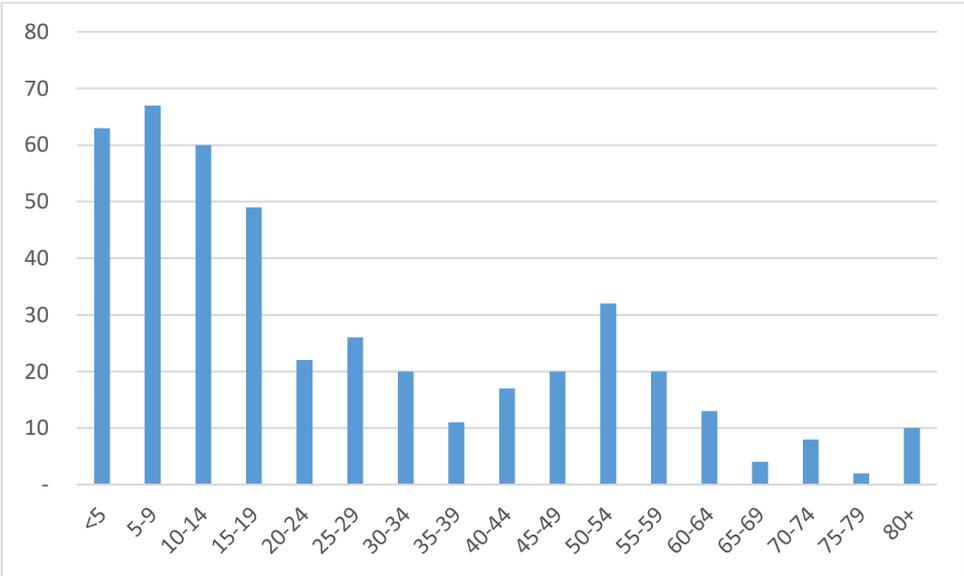
The three villages on the atoll are Yato, Ngake and Loto. The island had a population of 444 as reported in the 2016 census, a decline from 779 people in 1996. There are 95 dwelling units, 83 of which were built with 4 or more rooms.

Both Pukapuka and Nassau are currently working towards the implementation of the Community Sustainable Development Plan 2016-2020. The plan was designed to promote social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of the islands and their residents.

### Demographics

Figure 1 represents Pukapuka’s population at the time of the 2016 census. The island’s population was mostly comprised of children and youth, 54 per cent of the population was under 19. Eight per cent of the population was over 60.

**Figure 1: Age profile – Pukapuka**



### Education

The Niu School in Pukapuka had 156 students and 13 teachers. Classes were offered up to Form 5. The school took an initiative in teaching children some of the essential life skills such as cooking, traditional house building and vaka making. This programme allowed for the integration between the students’ homes and school life.

In 2019, 3 students from Pukapuka were enrolled in the USP Cook Islands Campus.

## **Labour statistics**

In 2016 forty per cent of the population aged 15 and over indicated wages and salaries as their main source of income. The island's labour force was mostly comprised of elementary occupation workers (115). Out of the 95 per cent of the labour force employed by the public sector 85 per cent were working in public administration. Four people were engaged in agriculture or fishing industries while 129 people reported fishing as their unpaid work.

Census indicated that out of the 244 residents aged 15 and over 63 per cent were receiving salary of less than \$10,000 while 31 per cent were receiving an income of less than \$5,000 per annum. The later were mostly young people engaged in road beautification work. Thirteen per cent reported having no income.

## **Industry**

Pukapuka relies on subsistence living supplemented by public sector income. The only income generating businesses on the island in 2017 were the five islands shops.

## **Information Technology**

At the time of the 2016 census 38 per cent of population (10 years and older) had cellular phones, 11 per cent had access to the internet and 27 per cent had land lines. Only 17 per cent reported not having access to any of the outlined forms of information technology.

## **Budget**

In 2019/20 Pukapuka and Nassau islands administration was appropriated a total of \$1,188,409 of which \$906,017 was allocated to personnel and \$142,706 to operating expenditure.

Outer Island Small Capital Fund in Pukapuka and Nassau totalled \$12,000. The funds are to enable the islands to purchase small capital such as ICT equipment and machinery parts.

Welfare payments in Pukapuka and Nassau totalled \$588,700.

In 2019/20 budget \$350,000 was appropriated to Nassau to enable the purchase and replacement of the Nassau ferry. Due to the age of the current ferry the transportation between the islands of Nassau and Pukapuka became unsafe.

An additional \$150,000 was appropriated for the construction of the Nassau and Penrhyn harbours to promote safety and resilience to the impacts of the climate change. In 2019/20 the works include the design and subsequent construction of the harbours.

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

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