

Fact Sheet:

Overview of the Cook Islands



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Useful information about the Cook Islands.

Location

At the centre of the South Pacific, south of Hawaii, northeast of New Zealand, and west of Tahiti. Comprised of 15 islands spread over 2 million square/km of the South Pacific.

Capital: Avarua, on the island of Rarotonga.



Population

Approx. 13,000.

Time

-10 hours GMT. Same time zone as Hawaii.

Access

Regular flights from New Zealand, Australia and Los Angeles, USA.

Language

English is the business language, and Cook Islands Maori is the indigenous language.

Status

Sovereign state, in free association with New Zealand since 4th August 1965.

Government

Westminster styled parliamentary democracy.

Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II, represented in the Cook Islands by the Queen's Representative who is appointed by the Queen.

Head of Government: Prime Minister, has the confidence of a majority in Parliament.

Parliament: consists of 24 members elected by popular vote for five-year terms.

Legal System

Constitution is supreme. Incorporates English common law, certain British and New Zealand statutes and customary laws.

The High Court of the Cook Islands hears civil and criminal matters. The Court of Appeal is highest court in the Cook Islands. The Privy Council is the ultimate appellate court.

Currency

The Cook Islands dollar is on a fixed exchange rate to the New Zealand dollar (CI\$1.00=NZ\$1.00).

Industries

Tourism, fishing, and the financial services industries are the largest revenue earning sectors. There is also a growing pearl industry, and an untapped trove of seabed minerals which contains an estimated twenty-five percent of the world's supply of cobalt.

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