

SOUTH PACIFIC NURSES FORUM 2026: Country Report

Organisation: NIUE HEALTH DEPARTMENT – NURSING DIVISION	Report by: ROSE JACKSON-SIOHANE
Provide a brief overview of the changes, challenges and opportunities within nursing and midwifery since the 2024 SPNF report: Fakalofa lahi atu. It is my pleasure to present the Country Report for Niue on behalf of the Nursing Division, Niue Department of Health. Niue is a small self-governing island nation in free association with New Zealand, located in the heart of Polynesia. Our resident population is approximately 1,700 people, making us one of the world's smallest independent nations. Despite our small population, we are committed to providing safe, equitable, and quality health care through our single hospital, Niue Fook Hospital, and community-based health services. One of Niue's unique characteristics is its large overseas population. Today, around 35,000 people of Niuean ethnicity live in New Zealand, meaning that over 90% of people who identify as Niuean live outside of Niue, with the vast majority residing in New Zealand. This close relationship brings many benefits, including education, workforce development, and health partnerships, but it also presents ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining our health workforce. Today, I will provide an overview of the progress, challenges, and opportunities for nursing and midwifery in Niue since the 2024 South Pacific Nurses Forum, highlighting our achievements while acknowledging the realities of delivering healthcare in a small island setting. The Niue Department of Health has continued to strengthen its nursing workforce despite ongoing resource and workforce challenges. Nursing services remain the backbone of healthcare delivery across acute, community, aged care, public health and emergency services. New graduate nurses have successfully transitioned into practice through structured orientation and mentoring. Challenges remain with workforce shortages, recruitment, retention and the absence of a resident midwife. (since 2018) Opportunities continue through regional partnerships, online education, leadership development and collaboration with Pacific nursing organisations. As a new attendee to the SPNF, I look forward to learning from regional colleagues and strengthening partnerships. Maternal and Child Health remains an important priority for the Niue Department of Health. Although Niue continues to experience low birth numbers each year, maintaining safe, high-quality maternity services remains essential. Despite the absence of a resident midwife,	

maternity services at Niue Foou Hospital continue to provide safe intrapartum care through the collaborative efforts of the medical, nursing, and supported by visiting obstetric and Gynaecology specialists and referral pathways to New Zealand for women with high-risk pregnancies or those requiring specialist obstetric care. This collaborative approach helps ensure mothers and babies receive safe and appropriate care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

Niue remains heavily reliant on external surgical and specialist obstetric services for caesarean births.

Summary Table

Year	Total Births	NVD	Caesarean	Male	Female
2024	7	4	3	3	4
2025	12	8	4	8	4
2026 (Jan–Jun)	6	4	2	5	1

The increase in births from 7 in 2024 to 12 in 2025 represents a 71% increase in local deliveries. While annual birth numbers fluctuate due to the small population, the continued provision of safe maternity services is a significant achievement given the ongoing workforce challenges.

Maternal and Child Health services include antenatal and postnatal care, childhood immunisation, (we follow the NZ immunisation schedule)growth and developmental monitoring, health promotion, breastfeeding support and routine child health assessments.

Niue has consistently maintained a very high routine childhood vaccination coverage, with most vaccines reaching levels close to or above 95% target recommended for community protection. The latest available WHO estimates indicate that Niue continues to have one of the highest routine childhood immunisation coverage rates in the pacific.

The achievement was widely recognised internationally and won an award in France in July 2024 receiving a Gold Medal to acknowledge the hard work of vaccinating 99% of infant's standard vaccinations. Niue will continue to keep achieving these goals and most importantly protect all our children and also its entire population

The Department continues to strengthen these services through evidence-based practice, regional partnerships and workforce development.

In 2026, Niue also strengthened women's health services with the introduction of its first organised National Cervical Screening Programme using HPV testing (ages 25-69) improving access to early detection and prevention of cervical cancer for eligible women.

The Department remains committed to improving maternal, newborn and child health outcomes through preventive care, early intervention, community engagement and ongoing professional development for nurses involved in maternal and child health services. The Niue Foou Hospital continues to provide maternal and child health programmes as part of its core health services, with tertiary care supported through referral to New Zealand when required.

What are the significant issues that impact on nurses and midwives in your country today?

- Workforce shortages and difficulty recruiting experienced nurses.
- Retention challenges due to migration overseas.
- Limited specialist education opportunities.
- Continued absence of a resident midwife.
- increasing workload from an ageing population and chronic diseases.
- Limited relief staff and succession planning
- Develop Nursing Care Standards and a clear professional development pathway linked to competency and career progression.
- Regularly review nursing roles and position descriptions to strengthen accountability and workforce development.
- Continue regional workforce partnerships while building Niue's local nursing workforce to meet future service demands.

What recruitment and retention strategies do you have for nurses and midwives in your country?

- Recruitment of locally trained graduate nurses.
- Structured orientation, mentoring and supervision.
- Salary progression following successful probation.
- Continuing professional development and postgraduate study support.
- Leadership development and staff recognition
- Flexible workforce planning.
- Review nursing roles and position descriptions to meet current service needs and professional standards.
- Continue regional partnerships to support the nursing workforce while building local nursing capacity.

What initiatives do you have in your country to uphold the professional, social and economic position of nurses and midwives?

Support for continuing education, conference attendance, leadership development, competency and appraisal processes, advocacy for fair remuneration, and promotion of staff wellbeing and teamwork.

Outline your preparedness in the event of a disaster:

The department maintains Emergency response plans, collaboration with emergency agencies, public health surveillance, provides emergency preparedness training, maintenance of essential medical supplies, supports Infection Prevention and Control and continues to strengthen preparedness through lessons learned from the COVID-19 response Under the Public Health Team.

What are your goals for your NNA?

Strengthen the nursing voice, increase member engagement, promote education and leadership, support recruitment and retention, and advocate for improved professional recognition and working conditions.

What are your aspirations and suggestions for the SPNF?

Continue regional collaboration, expand leadership and specialist training opportunities, strengthen mentorship networks, advocate for workforce sustainability, and support research and disaster preparedness across Pacific nations.

The Niue Department of Health acknowledges the dedication of all Nurses(and midwives who have served before) who continue to serve their communities with professionalism, compassion and resilience. We remain committed to strengthening our workforce through education, leadership, collaboration, and continuous quality improvement.

Fakaue lahi mahaki Kia Monuina

Niue Foou Nurses