



Shallow domestic well survey being undertaken in Nauru. ©SOPAC

Domestic wells in Nauru

Nauru relies upon rainwater harvesting and desalination for its potable water needs. According to current estimates, between 600 to 700 households also rely on shallow domestic wells for much of their non-potable needs including bathing, washing, and toilet flushing. The mostly brackish groundwater is an important resource for communities and reduces the need for costly desalinated water.

During March and early April the first comprehensive survey of domestic wells in Nauru was conducted. The Government of Nauru, in conjunction with the Pacific Island Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC), carried out the survey of household wells and collected information to find out how many people use well water, the quality of water in each well, usage, and potential areas of groundwater contamination.

Sanitary surveys were conducted to assess the risk of contamination to individual wells. The results will be used to promote safe use and development of the water resource and were made available to communities through district based workshops.

SOPAC conducted the survey and community workshops with the assistance from the Nauru Department of Health, two Nauruan field assistants and Louis Bouchet, a junior professional. Louis is completing his Masters in Integrated Water Resource Management at the International Water Centre in Brisbane and was based in Nauru for 9 weeks.

The survey information will be entered into a spatial database (GIS) to allow analysis of the shallow groundwater, including use distribution, water quality and areas of current contamination. This information will complement information from rainwater harvesting surveys collected by SOPAC over the last 2 years. Together the surveys will provide a complete understanding of the water needs, demands and current reliance of Nauru on available water sources.

The survey and district workshops are expected to be completed by the end of April. Reporting and initial groundwater maps identifying at risk areas, will be available later in June.



Children with HYCOS monitoring equipment.
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