



# **The Feasibility of a Nauruan Limestone Industry and Its Linkage with Rehabilitation**

by

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## ABSTRACT

### (Proprietary Information Redacted)

This report evaluates the feasibility of establishing an industry on Nauru based on the processing of limestone, selling the products on the international dimension stone market, and linking this limestone industry to the rehabilitation and sustainable development of Nauru. Part I explores the geology of the limestone pinnacles and their relation to the origin of Nauru Island. The pinnacles project vertically about 11 m from elongated ridges of limestone parallel to the shoreline and connected to a solid limestone cap that extends below sea level. The geological evidence supports the hypothesis that the limestone was formed by wave action in a shallow tropical sea. Evidence is presented that phosphate was deposited between the pinnacles by upwelling of marine organisms during repeated climate cycles, and did not originate from avian guano.

Part II demonstrates that the limestone pinnacles can be readily quarried using conventional quarrying equipment and methods. Evidence is presented that the most efficient and cost-effective quarrying method is drill-and-split. Calculation of the volume of the pinnacles and sub-surface limestone cap indicates that Nauruan limestone is, for practical purposes, unlimited in supply. Quantitative calculation of the volume of troughs between pinnacles, which contain secondary phosphate, indicates that the reserves of secondary phosphate are [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Preparation of limestone samples for laboratory and market evaluation is detailed. Part II concludes with the demonstration that Nauruan limestone can be split using conventional hydraulic guillotine equipment to produce blocks and bricks of limestone, a model for Phase 1 of Nauru's limestone industry.

Part III evaluates samples cut from pinnacles, boulders, and deep cores. The results show that the pinnacles are pure, high-density dolomitic limestone with high compressive strength and physical/chemical properties that make it uniquely ideal for the dimension stone market. Nauruan pinnacle and deep stone meets the commercial definition and most scientific criteria for marble. Preliminary market analysis shows that Nauruan stone will have relatively high value on the international dimension stone market, supported by a “green” market narrative that will help differentiate Nauruan limestone products. The final chapter of Part III concludes with the steps by which the limestone industry can be initiated while minimizing developmental risk to Nauru, in two years and on a budget estimated at US\$1 million.

Part IV links the proposed limestone industry with the rehabilitation and sustainable development of Nauru. This linkage can be achieved by integrating the limestone industry with the secondary phosphate industry and rehabilitation, in a mutually-reinforcing interactive industry that can restore Nauru's tropical ecosystems and yield a fully sustainable Nauruan economy within a few generations. Industrial processes and managerial structures for such an integrated industry are described and evaluated.

## OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
SUMMARY.....	3I
INTRODUCTION.....	54
<b>PART I: BACKGROUND: THE GEO-MORPHOLOGY OF NAURU'S PINNACLE FIELDS AND THE ORIGIN OF NAURU.....</b>	<b>59</b>
Introduction to Part I.....	61
Chapter 1: Organization of Nauru's Pinnacle Fields.....	63
Chapter 2: The Geo-morphology of Individual Pinnacles and Troughs.....	85
Chapter 3: Comparison of Present Data with Previous Findings.....	103
Chapter 4: The Geological Origin of Nauru, Its Limestone, and Phosphate.....	131
<b>PART II: QUARRYING AND PROCESSING OF NAURUAN LIMESTONE.....</b>	<b>153</b>
Introduction to Part II.....	155
Chapter 5: Quarrying and Collection of Nauruan Limestone Samples.....	157
Chapter 6: Quarrying Methods, Costs, and Reserves of Limestone and Secondary Phosphate.....	189
Chapter 7: Production of Nauruan Limestone Test Samples.....	217
Chapter 8: Splitting Trials on Nauruan Limestone.....	251
<b>PART III: EVALUATION OF NAURUAN LIMESTONE.....</b>	<b>281</b>
Introduction to Part III.....	283
Chapter 9: The Petrography and Mineralogy of Nauruan Limestone.....	285
Chapter 10: Laboratory Testing of Nauruan Limestone.....	307
Chapter 11: Preliminary Market Analysis of Nauruan Limestone and Future Directions.....	361
<b>PART IV: LINKING THE LIMESTONE INDUSTRY WITH REHABILITATION.....</b>	<b>395</b>
Introduction to Part IV.....	397
Chapter 12: Rehabilitation Principles and Options.....	399
Chapter 13: Land Use Options and Limestone Construction Methods for Rehabilitation.....	437
Chapter 14: The Physical, Biological, and Cultural Restoration of Nauru.....	473
Chapter 15: The Integrated Industrial Model: Linking Phosphate, Limestone, and Rehabilitation.....	515
Chapter 16: The Nauru Model Rehabilitation Project.....	543
<b>INDEX.....</b>	<b>571</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>599</b>
Appendix 1: 1993 Laboratory Test Report of Dynamic Consultants, Inc.....	601
Appendix 2: 2009 Petrographic Evaluation of Phosphate Rocks.....	603
Appendix 3: 2009 Petrographic Evaluation of Dolomitic Limestone.....	605
Appendix 4: 2009 Laboratory Reports of the Tile Council of North America....	607
Appendix 5: Expert Market Testimonials on Nauruan Limestone.....	609