



Norfolk Island Governance Committee

Communique

Meeting – 6 February 2024

The Norfolk Island Governance Committee (NIGC) met on-island on Tuesday, 6 February 2024, at the Old Military Barracks in Kingston. This was the third on-island meeting since the NIGC commenced in October 2023.

NIGC members include the three democratically elected community representatives Chris Magri, Alma Davidson and Chelsea Evans, the Administrator of Norfolk Island George Plant, Australian Government representative Sarah Vandenbroek and Queensland Government representative Rachel Welch.

The NIGC agreed to Recommendation 1 from the November 2023 report of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories: *Restoring Democracy: Report of the inquiry into local governance on Norfolk Island*, and updated the Terms of Reference to reflect its role in developing a preamble for the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*.

Recommendation 1

“The Committee recommends that the Norfolk Island Governance Committee incorporate into its terms of reference consideration of the development of a preamble for the establishing legislation that:

- Recognises the culture, traditions, heritage and history of Norfolk Island;
- Defines the nature of the relationship between Norfolk Island and Australia; and
- Sets out the shared aspirations for the future direction of the relationship.”

The Territories Legislation Section from the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) provided a presentation to committee members on the Australian Government’s process for creating and enacting legislation.

The NIGC focussed further discussion on establishing the foundational elements for the new governance model on Norfolk Island. This included discussion of:

- Laws and legal frameworks to establish and empower the new governance body
- The key areas of responsibility for the new governance body

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- The new governance body's relationship with the Australian Government and how it will work in collaboration with the Australian Government to deliver sustainable outcomes for the Norfolk Island community
 - Principles underpinning the delivery of services to the Norfolk Island community, such as providing the new governance body with access to expert advice and capacity-building support, and empowering it to determine how services may be delivered to best meet the community's needs.

The NIGC have had, in addition to formal meetings on Island, four virtual meetings, with another planned for 20 February 2024.

Following the NIGC meeting on Tuesday, all NIGC members attended a community consultation meeting at the Rawson Hall Supper Room on Wednesday, 7 February. NIGC members responded to a wide range of questions from the community about their work to develop a new model of governance for Norfolk Island.

The NIGC confirmed they are currently considering the foundational elements of a new governance model for the island, and are seeking initial input from the community about what they would like to see in the model until 1 March. The NIGC confirmed community consultation will continue throughout the development process and the Norfolk Island community will be asked to provide feedback on the framework of the new governance model once it is developed.

The NIGC noted the December 2024 date for elections recommended by the Joint Standing Committee is a very short timeframe to establish a new governing body. The NIGC is seeking to meet this timeframe, but will consider transitional arrangements if establishing a new governance body will take longer. The NIGC undertook to provide further information to the community about its planned timelines.

Communiques and other public information about the NIGC will be distributed through Norfolk Island media and online at <https://www.norfolkislandgovernance.com/> or on DITRDCA's website at <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/territories/norfolk-island/norfolk-island-governance-administration/norfolk-island-governance-committee>.

Contact NorfolkIslandGovernance@infrastructure.gov.au or the community representatives directly on NIGCcommunityreps@gmail.com