



# Norfolk Island education services

## Transition issues and information

September 2021

### Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently Asked Questions will be continuously updated as more information becomes available, so make sure to check back regularly to find the most up-to-date answers.

#### **Where are you up to with transitioning essential services for Norfolk Island?**

The Australian Government is committed to providing stability to the Norfolk Island community through a long-term partnership that delivers state-level services, to a standard comparable to similar communities on the mainland.

On 20 June 2021, the Australian and Queensland governments signed a Heads of Agreement, outlining an intention to develop an enduring partnership to support the provision of specific state-level services to Norfolk Island.

The Queensland Government is in the process of making a formal decision on whether to deliver services to Norfolk Island.

Should the Queensland Government agree to partner with the Australian Government, it is proposed that essential health support and school education services currently delivered by the New South Wales (NSW) Government will transition to the Queensland.

Initial discussions have already commenced between the Australian, Queensland, and NSW Governments regarding the potential transitional arrangements for the Norfolk Island Central School (NICS).

All governments are committed to working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements for NICS.

As the formal arrangements are being developed and agreed, we are focusing on supporting your ongoing engagement and input into the transition process.

#### **What is happening with the Norfolk Island Central School curriculum?**

Initial discussions have already commenced between the Australian, Queensland, and NSW governments regarding the potential transitional arrangements for NICS next year.

All governments are committed to working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements for NICS.

Student outcomes and certainty for students and school staff are key priorities for all governments.

The Australian Government is currently seeking to enter into a contract with the NSW Education Standards Association (NESA) to license the NSW curriculum for 2022 to 2023. Current Year 10 and 11 students have now been advised that they will be able to complete the NSW Higher School Certificate in 2022 and 2023. We expect to be in a position to provide more information on primary and secondary curricula for 2022 soon.

### **Have you confirmed future staffing arrangements for Norfolk Island Central School?**

Discussions are progressing in relation to employment arrangements at NICS in 2022. These include development of a process for existing staff to express an interest in continued employment at NICS.

The Commonwealth recognises the need to provide certainty to school staff about future employment arrangements at the school.

The Australian Government is committed to exploring options for teachers who wish to remain at NICS through the transition process to ensure they are not disadvantaged. To support this, we have established a Teachers' Consultative Committee to advance discussion on employment arrangements. This group is now meeting weekly in school term. Its membership includes representatives from NICS, NSW Teachers Federation, Queensland Teachers Union, NSW Department of Education, Queensland Department of Education, the Norfolk Island Administrator and the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

The NSW Department of Education (DoE) is providing weekly updates to the NICS teaching workforce.

DoE has now provided all NSW teachers working at NICS with individual written advice on their entitlements should they choose to return to work in NSW or remain working at NICS in 2022. NSW DoE has also established virtual sessions so that each staff member can talk to an HR expert about their own individual circumstances.

NSW DoE employed NICS staff will continue to have access to information and support through:

- EDConnect, the department's contact centre for Human Resources, Finance, Procurement and Student Management and Wellbeing: call 1300 323 232
- 24-hour access to the Employee Assistance Program (Converge International) for health and wellbeing support: email customerservice@convergeintl.com.au or call 1800 060 650
- other wellbeing resources through the department's Being Well program.

Ancillary staff are encouraged to accept the monthly check-in sessions with Effective People and to access the Employee Assistance Program provided through AccessEAP on 1800 818 728. At this time there are no proposed changes to the current contractual dates of individual staff with the Australian Government.

### **When are we going to know how the transition will work?**

The Australian Government will continue to update the Norfolk Island community, including the school community, as discussions around the potential transitional arrangements for NICS progress.

### **Why isn't anyone from government level communicating clearly and consulting with us about the transition?**

Initial discussions have already commenced between the Australian, Queensland, and NSW Governments regarding the potential transitional arrangements for NICS.

All governments are committed to providing information and answers to the questions received as soon as possible.

Where there is an opportunity for input, engagement from the school and broader community will be encouraged.

### **Who provides the "vision" for the school, in terms of landscape plan, building plans?**

The Australian Government will work in close collaboration with the new state partner and the community to ensure delivery of a high-quality educational facility on Norfolk Island.

### **When will we find out more information on the Queensland education system?**

Once formal partnership and transition arrangements have been agreed, further detailed information relating to the Norfolk Island arrangements will be provided to NICS staff, parents and students.

More general information on the Queensland education system can be found at:

<https://education.qld.gov.au/>

<https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum> (state schooling and state schools)

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/> (curriculum and certification).

### **What is going to happen with child protection arrangements at NICS?**

Child protection arrangements will be considered in a transition to a new education provider.

### **Will Norfolk language and culture studies continue after transition?**

The Australian Government will ensure that arrangements for schooling in 2022 recognise the importance of Norfolk language and culture studies and provide for continued delivery of these studies at NICS.