



# Norfolk Island Governance Committee

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## Communique

Meeting – 20 November 2024

The Norfolk Island Governance Committee (NIGC) met on Norfolk Island and virtually on Wednesday, 20 November 2024.

Attendees at the meeting included the two democratically elected community representatives Chris Magri and Chelsea Evans, the Administrator of Norfolk Island George Plant, Australian Government representative Kim Forbes and, by videoconference, Queensland Government representative Rachel Welch.

The Community Representatives provided frank feedback on community concerns regarding the Australian Government's decision on the new governance model.

Ms Evans tabled Alma Davidson's letter of resignation, and the NIGC formally acknowledged Ms Davidson's significant contributions to the work of the committee, as well as her strength and dedication to the community.

- The NIGC agreed that the two Community Representatives will lead the process regarding the vacancy and noted that all key decisions will be deferred until the Committee has a full quorum.
- The NIGC Committee Chair, Mr Plant, emphasised the Government's decision is for an overarching model of local governance, as distinct from local government, and that detailed design now needs to occur.
- The NIGC discussed a wide range of issues that will need detailed consideration in finalising the design of the legislation to establish the new Norfolk Island Assembly. These included elements of the financial model to ensure equity in how residents contribute to the delivery of local services and the requirement for legal advice to better understand how the proposed Ordinance will operate.
- Key considerations the NIGC will continue working on include ensuring the ongoing process is as transparent as possible, understanding what elements of the establishing legislation need to be prescriptive and how the new Assembly needs to be properly empowered to deliver its functions. The Committee acknowledged this work will likely continue after the new Assembly is elected.
- Ms Forbes provided the Committee with information about the next steps to progress the new Preamble. She noted the community draft has been provided to Minister McBain for her consideration. The draft Preamble will need to undergo legal review and internal consultation across other relevant areas of government, and there may be some changes to the proposed wording following this. Ms Forbes advised there will be public consultation on the draft wording before it progresses to Parliament, with opportunity for the community to provide comment

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before the draft is settled. Ms Forbes confirmed the Preamble will be established through amendment to the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*. Mr Magri acknowledged the community's long-standing desire to see the Preamble reinstated.

- Officers from the Territories Legislation Section of the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts provided a presentation on the process to draft the Ordinance that will implement the new governance model. The Territories Legislation Section outlined the direct role the NIGC will have in the development of the drafting instructions for the new Ordinance and the opportunities for the community to provide input into this process.
- The NIGC discussed developing the proposed financial model for the new governing body. Mr Phil Reid, General Manager of the Norfolk Island Regional Council, attended the meeting to provide information about NIRC finances, including key revenue streams and expenditure, risk and forward planning. The NIGC will work closely with NIRC and the incoming Administrators on developing the financial model and on transitional planning as the new body is designed and implemented.
- The NIGC acknowledged the ongoing need to provide the community with information on the design of the governance model, including regular updates to the Frequently Asked Questions.

Communiqués 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](mailto:NorfolkIslandGovernance@infrastructure.gov.au) or the community representatives directly on [NIGCcommunityreps@gmail.com](mailto:NIGCcommunityreps@gmail.com).