

23 March 2023

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories:  
Inquiry into local governance on Norfolk Island

Part 1: Submission by the Norfolk Island Council of Elders and the Norfolk Island People for Democracy

The Chair,

In 2015 the Australian Parliament abolished Norfolk Island's Parliament and imposed new governance arrangements on Norfolk Island without first understanding the cost, impact, complexity, suitability or economic viability of the new arrangements.

**Today, Norfolk Island's current governmental arrangements are undemocratic, complex and operationally inefficient. They are not supported locally. They are not economically viable and continue to have deleterious economic, cultural and social impacts on Norfolk Island and its people.**

Since 2021 our majority represented community organisations have engaged directly with our community and, more recently, with representatives of the Australian Government to develop the attached Plan titled, *'Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth of Australia: A better future, together'*.

The following submission demonstrates how this Plan provides a pathway to:

- address the matters identified within the Inquiry Terms of Reference,
- establish appropriate, economically viable and genuinely democratic governance arrangements for Norfolk Island, and
- establish a legally-protected foundation upon which the People of Norfolk Island can build a secure and democratic future.

We trust your committee will listen and respect the wishes of the Norfolk Island people and will support the recommendations of this submission in its final report to Parliament.

*The Norfolk Island Council of Elders, the Norfolk Island People for Democracy, and all of our supporters*

## Background

In 2015 the Australian Parliament abolished Norfolk Island's Parliament and imposed new governance arrangements on Norfolk Island without first understanding the cost, impact, complexity, suitability or economic viability of the new arrangements.

Today, the Norfolk Island people do not have a territory government or any territory rights.

The Norfolk Island people are administered by unelected Commonwealth officers through a complex patchwork of Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland and Norfolk Island laws and service delivery arrangements.

New laws and regulations are routinely applied to Norfolk Island without any democratic involvement of the Norfolk Island people and with little, if any, consideration given to the impacts on the economy or the community.

State-type functions and laws are administered through service delivery agreements that are negotiated without any democratic involvement of the Norfolk Island people.

Government services do not properly engage local knowledge or experience and are instead delivered by persons who are unfamiliar with Norfolk Island's unique challenges; in most cases resulting in cost-inefficient and sub-optimal service delivery outcomes and negative economic and social impacts.

The Norfolk Island people no longer have a single local governing body that can efficiently and effectively administer the Island's affairs or represent their concerns. Rather, responsibility to administer Norfolk Island affairs is distributed amongst numerous Canberra-based Commonwealth departments, the Queensland Government, the Island's Australian Administrator, the local government Administrator, and contracted non-government organisations.

To the extent that there is any coordination between each of the Island's administering bodies, or between those bodies and the community, that coordination is ineffective and deficient.

Norfolk Island votes federally in the A.C.T. seat of Bean, an electorate 1900km from Norfolk Island, with little, if any, shared community interests.

The current arrangements are so complex that no-one, either on Norfolk Island or in Canberra, can authoritatively and exhaustively identify the laws applying in and to Norfolk Island.

The newly established Regional Council cannot access state grants or support programs and with only 1,100 ratepayers is unable to sustainably fund its most basic statutory service delivery obligations.

The Regional Council was placed into financial administration in 2020 and is now administered by a single unelected (fly-in fly-out) Commonwealth appointed Administrator.

Today, Norfolk Island's current governmental arrangements are undemocratic, complex and operationally inefficient. They are not supported locally. They are not economically viable and continue to have deleterious economic, cultural and social impacts on Norfolk Island and its people.

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### The Joint Standing Committee: Inquiry into local governance on Norfolk Island

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#### ***1. alternative approaches to property-based taxation revenue collection ('land rates') that are appropriate and equitable for the Norfolk Island community:***

Property-based taxes are inappropriate and inequitable in the Norfolk Island context.

We submit that an alternative approach to property-based taxation would be best identified through the development of a comprehensive, well-designed long-term plan for the future of Norfolk Island.

The plan must, amongst other things, provide for the most appropriate, affordable and equitable form/s of revenue collection for the Norfolk Island community, and take account of:

- advice from the Norfolk Island community,
- advice from the Australian Taxation Office and the Commonwealth Grants Commission,
- independent econometric analysis,
- the need to develop a more appropriate form of Government for Norfolk Island, and the level of funding required to ensure that Norfolk Island's new governance arrangements are financially sustainable,
- the level of Federal and state-type contributions available to the community through Norfolk Island's participation in the Australian taxation system,
- cost-of-living impacts,
- Norfolk Island's population density,
- Norfolk Island's geographic remoteness,

- Norfolk Island's legal and constitutional status,
- social, economic and cultural impacts (including Pitcairn descendants' affinity to their land)
- the level of services provided to Norfolk Island, and
- the revenue raising capacity of our community.

Part 2 of this submission, '*Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth of Australia: A better future, together*', details how and by whom such a plan should be developed.

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**2. *whether the categorisation of the Norfolk Island Regional Council as a 'Rural Council', for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)(NI) results in an appropriate quantum of funding given the geographic remoteness and population density of Norfolk Island:***

See background above.

Although a local government arrangement may serve communities in Australia well, in the Norfolk Island context a local government model (whether it is categorised as a Regional Council or not) constitutes an uneconomical and inefficient way to administer local government responsibilities on a small geographically remote island with only 2,300 residents.

We submit that the Regional Council and the current governance model that support the Regional Council must be abolished and replaced with an operationally efficient, economically sustainable and genuinely democratic governance model for Norfolk Island.

A new governance model would be best developed through a comprehensive, well-designed long-term plan for the future of Norfolk Island.

See Part 2 of this submission.

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**3. *The impact of limiting access to state-partner grants on the financial sustainability of the Norfolk Island Regional Council.***

The impacts of limiting access to state-partner grants and support programs are self-evident in the level of Commonwealth subsidies required to ensure the Regional Council remains solvent, the role the Norfolk Island

Regional Council plays in the enormous and growing cost to administer Norfolk Island, and the parlous and deficient state of Norfolk Island's current local government service-delivery capacity.

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**4. *the relationship between property-based taxation and the delivery of commensurate local government services:***

Property-based taxation represents a small percentage of the Regional Council's overall revenues.

Significant increases in property-based taxation will not make the Regional Council financially sustainable and will not enable the Regional Council to sustainably deliver a commensurate level of local government services.

See response to one (1) above.

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**5. *the resilience and sustainability of current and alternative revenue approaches, noting the impact of COVID-19 on Norfolk Island's economy:***

**Alternative revenue approaches**

From 1856 to 2015, largely unsupported by the British or Australian Government's, the Norfolk Islander approach to revenue raising was to live within our means. As a general policy, this meant low government taxation and regulation and a community-supported willingness to subsidise the cost of providing government services through volunteerism.

This was a deliberate and very successful approach; not because Norfolk Islanders are averse to paying tax, but as an appropriate means of suppressing the cost of administering the Island, minimising the cost-of-living, and ensuring Norfolk Islanders can afford to continue living on their Island home.

The same is true for land rates. The aversion is not paying tax - it is to ensure the Norfolk Islanders are not forced off their family land.

Going forward, our community would much rather be supported and encouraged to achieve greater local autonomy and self-sufficiency than see money being wasted on the inefficient administration of their Island.

The current Australian Government approach to revenue raising, which is based on an approach that only works well in urban Australia:

- disregards the extraordinarily high cost of airfares, freight, electricity, food and other consumables on Norfolk Island,
- is forcing people to sell their family land,
- is changing our traditionally proud, engaged and self-reliant society to one of government expectation and entitlement,
- is inefficient and wasteful, and
- is placing unsustainable financial hardships on many in our community.

There are practical ways to enhance the financial and revenue-raising capacity of Norfolk Islanders through lower electricity, better shipping and infrastructure, and there are more cost-efficient approaches to raising revenues and administering a small geographically isolated island community with only 2,300 residents.

The current approach to administering and revenue-raising on Norfolk Island is unsustainable. An alternative revenue approach should be developed through a comprehensive, well-designed long-term plan for the future of Norfolk Island.

See response to (1) above.

### **Impact of COVID-19 on Norfolk Island's economy**

The benefits of Norfolk Island maintaining their relationship with Australia were clearly demonstrated during the recent airport upgrade and the COVID-19 pandemic (when Australian Government support for Norfolk Island was instrumental in mitigating what would have otherwise been an economic catastrophe for our community).

In the past, the extent of Australian Government support provided to Norfolk Island has varied from very little between 1914 to 2015, to arguably more support than is required to efficiently administer Norfolk Island today.

A clearer understanding of how and why Australia chooses to support Norfolk Island was first established in the 1975 Nimmo Royal Commission; which examined whether Australia should either abandon Norfolk Island

completely or continue to accept the responsibility for maintaining it as a viable community. Ultimately, Australia chose the latter.

Australia's decision to maintain Norfolk Island as a viable community was primarily based on the importance of Norfolk Island to Australia's national interests; including Norfolk Island's strategic location and its importance to Australia's defense and sphere of influence in the Pacific, Norfolk Island's 438,000 km<sup>2</sup> Exclusive Economic Zone, and the importance of Norfolk Island to Australia's early heritage.

The fact is the relationship between Norfolk Island and Australia benefits both places, and we have a shared obligation to respect each other's interests and ensure Norfolk Island is administered democratically, cost-effectively and efficiently.

This is not the case today. It is the primary reason for developing Part 2 of this submission.

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***6. the current governance model that supports the Norfolk Island Regional Council under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)(NI);***

See background above.

The current governance model that supports the Norfolk Island Regional Council under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)(NI) was imposed without first understanding the cost, impact, complexity, suitability or economic viability of imposing such an arrangement on Norfolk Island.

We submit that the Regional Council and the current governance model that support the Regional Council must be abolished and replaced with an operationally efficient, economically sustainable and genuinely democratic governance model for Norfolk Island.

A new governance model would be best developed through a comprehensive, well-designed long-term plan for the future of Norfolk Island.

See Part 2 of this submission.

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*7. alternative approaches to local government and local representation utilised across Australia;*

The Norfolk Island people must play a direct and leading role in determining the best possible governance model for Norfolk Island going forward.

We must not be restrained or limited to local government and local representation models utilised across Australia, and nor should the JSC make this decision for us.

This submission and the attached Plan establish the need to look beyond governance models utilised across Australia to find an alternative approach to Norfolk Island's future governance.

This includes the need to look at the numerous island territories around the world that share a similarly unique constitutional relationship with a larger country, in particular, island territories that have successfully faced and conquered the challenge of establishing an economically sustainable, legally-protected, secure and democratic future for their community, e.g., the Falkland Islands through their relationship with Great Britain and the Cook Islands through their relationship with New Zealand.

We submit that achieving the best possible governance model for Norfolk Island will require the establishment of an inclusive and effective partnership between the Norfolk Island people and the Australian Government, committed to:

- planning, designing and progressively implementing new democratic and economically viable governance arrangements for Norfolk Island that respect Norfolk Island's interests and Australia's interests, and empower the Norfolk Island people to determine their own future, and
- establishing a legally-protected foundation upon which the People of Norfolk Island can build a secure and democratic future.

See Part 2 of this submission.

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*8. whether alternative approaches sustainably achieve the key outcomes of local government;*

*9. whether alternative approaches equitably increase local representation and decision-making;*

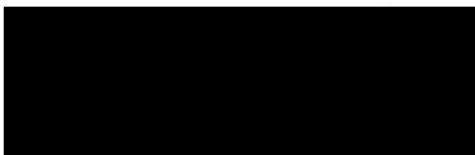


**10. whether alternative approaches would appropriately support the additional functions the Norfolk Island Regional Council provide on behalf of the Commonwealth.**

The need to identify alternative approaches to the matters described in questions (8,9 and 10) further highlight the deficient nature of Norfolk Island's current governmental arrangements.

We submit that the Committee:

- recognise that the Federal Government's experience and expertise is in managing federal responsibilities. It is not in the remote-control administration and micro-management of a culturally distinct, geographically remote island community with 2,300 residents,
- resist supporting a continuation of the poor-planning and design that led to the establishment and subsequent failure of the Island's current governmental arrangements,
- listen and respect the wishes of the Norfolk Island people and support and encourage them to achieve greater local autonomy and self-sufficiency,
- recommend the abolition of the Regional Council and the current governance model that supports the Regional Council, and
- recommend the establishment of an operationally efficient, economically sustainable and genuinely democratic governance model for Norfolk Island (see Part 2 of this submission).



**David Buffett**

**President  
Norfolk Island Council of Elders**

**E:** 



**Christopher Magri**

**President  
Norfolk Island People for Democracy**

**e:** 





**NORFOLK ISLAND**  
*Council of Elders*  
INASMUCH

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories:

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23 March 2023

NORFOLK ISLAND PEOPLE  
for DEMOCRACY



YOUR FUTURE – YOUR CHOICE

# Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth of Australia: A better future, together





**NORFOLK ISLAND**  
*Council of Elders*  
INASMUCH

Norfolk Island is a distinct and separate Non-Self-Governing External Territory administered under the authority of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Norfolk Island's unique constitutional and political relationship with the Commonwealth of Australia presents challenges that will only be truly overcome when the Australian Parliament accepts its obligation to ensure the foundational tenets of democracy and good governance are legally-protected on Norfolk Island just as they are in Australia.

This Plan establishes an inclusive and mutually respectful process to design, implement and sustain a mutually beneficial democratic governance partnership between the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government, and represents an historic opportunity for Norfolk Island to reset and transform its relationship with the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Our vision, which is reflected in and delivered through this Plan, is for a future in which the right of the Norfolk Island community to freely determine their political, economic, social and cultural development is recognised and respected.**

*The Norfolk Island Council of Elders, the Norfolk Island People for Democracy, and all of our supporters.*

NORFOLK ISLAND PEOPLE  
for DEMOCRACY



YOUR FUTURE – YOUR CHOICE

# Overview of the Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to create an inclusive and effective partnership between the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government, committed to:

- establishing a more unified, cooperative and mutually trustful relationship between the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government,
- developing democratic governance arrangements for Norfolk Island that respect Norfolk Island's interests and Australia's interests, and empower the Norfolk Island community to determine their own future, and
- establishing a legally-protected foundation upon which the Norfolk Island community can build a secure and democratic future.

This presentation provides an overview of the planning context and the key initiatives required to implement the Plan and associated timelines.

Overview of the Plan

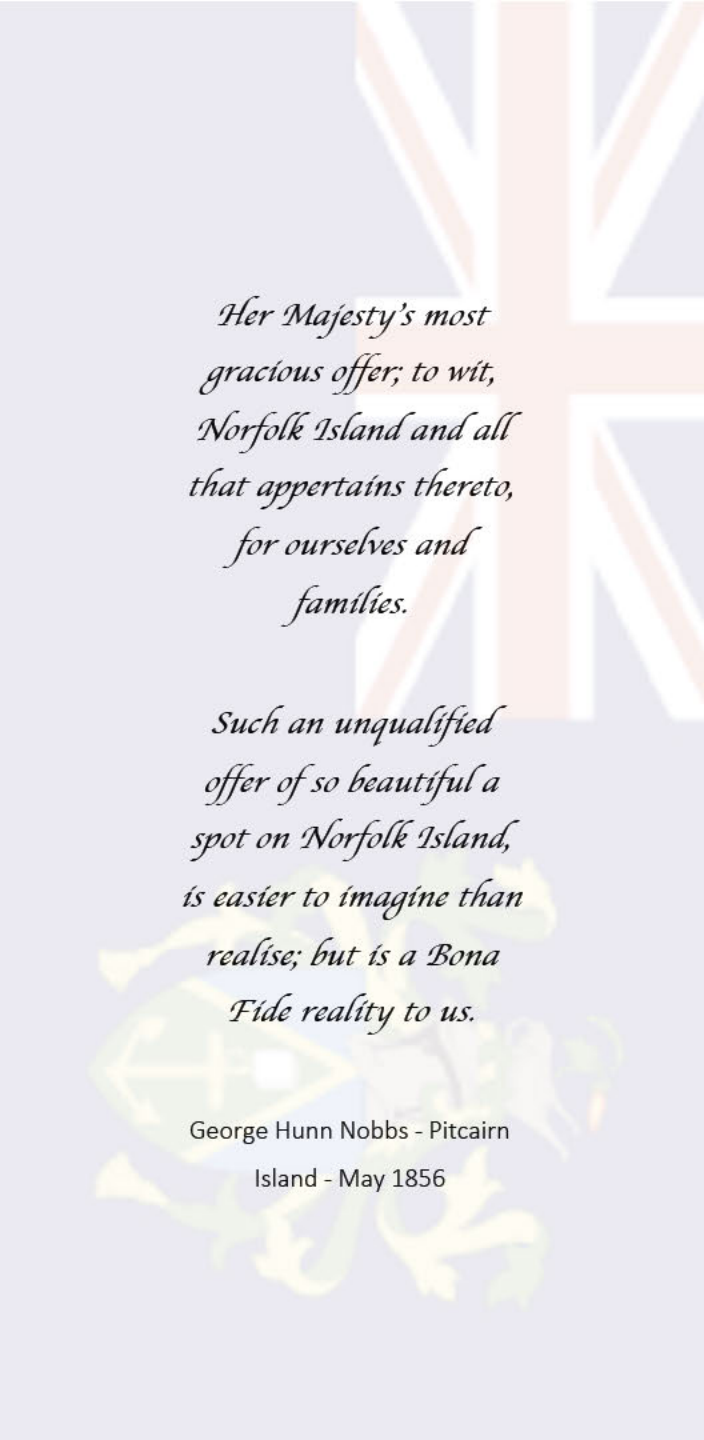
Slides 3 - 5

The Governance Committee

Slides 6 - 10

Moving to the Future

Slides 11 - 15



*Her Majesty's most  
gracious offer; to wit,  
Norfolk Island and all  
that appertains thereto,  
for ourselves and  
families.*

*Such an unqualified  
offer of so beautiful a  
spot on Norfolk Island,  
is easier to imagine than  
realise; but is a Bona  
Fide reality to us.*

George Hunn Nobbs - Pitcairn  
Island - May 1856

**The Plan recognises and acknowledges:**

- ▶ The Royal Order in Council of 24 June 1856 which established Norfolk Island as a 'distinct and separate settlement'.
- ▶ The uncertainty, mistrust and division in respect of Norfolk Island's governance that began during our Island's colonial-era relationship with Great Britain and has continued to define our Island's current relationship with Australia to today, and the significant distress this causes for our community.
- ▶ The desire of the Pitcairn descendants to protect and preserve their distinct identity, language, customs, culture and traditions.
- ▶ The concerns and aspirations of the Norfolk Island community; which now includes the Pitcairn descendants and the many other people who have chosen to make Norfolk Island their home since 1856, and
- ▶ The efforts of generations of Norfolk Islanders who have fought for formal recognition of their legal, political and cultural rights.
- ▶ The need to ensure the Norfolk Island community take a leading role in designing the most appropriate and respectful way to govern Norfolk Island going forward, and
- ▶ The need to provide an opportunity for Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth of Australia to formally reset their relationship and take a more enlightened approach toward the future good-governance of Norfolk Island, together.



The lessons of Norfolk Island's history that have informed the development of this Plan include:

- ▶ A long history of decisions made in respect of Norfolk Island governance without the proper involvement of the Norfolk Island community.
- ▶ The Australian Parliament's decision to abolish Norfolk Island's Parliament and impose new undemocratic, complex and operationally inefficient governance arrangements on Norfolk Island in 2015, against the expressed wishes of the Norfolk Island community.
- ▶ An undemocratic governance arrangement developed and administered solely by the Australian Government will not be supported by the Norfolk Island community.
- ▶ For a new governance arrangement to succeed it will need to align with Norfolk Island's unique circumstances and the needs and aspirations of our community, acknowledge the positive elements of Norfolk Island's relationship with Australia, be developed by both the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government - together - and both places must be committed to it's success, and
- ▶ Norfolk Islands interests and Australia's interests are not mutually exclusive. There is a way of developing a framework, a co-operative partnership agreement, that can protect Norfolk Island's and Australia's interests, celebrate Norfolk Island's unique, distinct and separate identity, and preserve everything that is best about our Island at the same time.

## The Governance Committee

*'The continuing challenge is to devise and maintain open processes of dialogue and consultation between Norfolk Island and Australia.'*

*If the process of implementation included a two-way mechanism for ongoing consultation, aimed at achieving acceptance and endorsement, as well as any mutually acceptable modifications, both Norfolk Island and Australia would be the winners.'*

*'An uneasy relationship: Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth of Australia'*

Professor Maev O'Collins - 2004





## The Governance Committee

One of the key component's of the Plan is the establishment of a permanent and highly influential Norfolk Island and Australian Government governance steering committee (the Governance Committee) comprising a team of dedicated leaders committed to designing new democratic governance arrangements for Norfolk Island, and responsible for:

- ▶ overseeing the implementation of and ensuring the future success of Norfolk Island's new democratically elected governing body,
- ▶ facilitating effective inter-governmental communications and cooperation,
- ▶ re-building and maintaining trust and good relations between the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government,
- ▶ ensuring both Norfolk Island and Australia have an equal and shared obligation in preventing small easily solvable problems from growing into significant difficulties and divisions, and
- ▶ ensuring Norfolk Island's new democratic governance arrangements are able to adapt to changing circumstances and conditions.





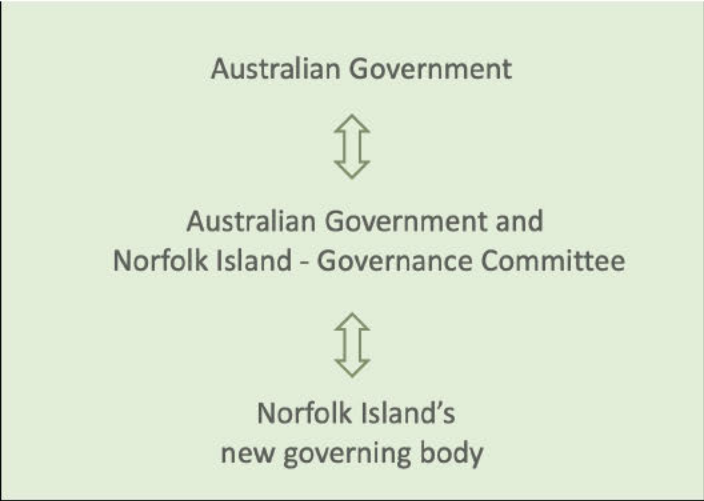
## The Governance Committee: Guiding Principles

The remit of the Governance Committee will ensure that all of its decisions and recommendations are made in accordance with a set of 14 **Guiding Principles**. The Guiding Principles determine the Committee's operational framework and ensure the Committee has established expectations. This includes, for example, ensuring:

- ▶ *Norfolk Island's governance arrangements are clear, fair and effective and align with Norfolk Island's unique circumstances and the needs and aspirations of its community.*
- ▶ *Norfolk Island retains and administers its public lands, reserves and assets.*
- ▶ *Norfolk Island has a limited form of territorial self-government and gradually progresses toward more complete arrangements in accordance with its progressive stages of advancement.*
- ▶ *Democracy and other core fundamentals of good governance on Norfolk Island are protected in a way that respects the needs, interests and obligations of both Australia and Norfolk Island, builds trust and promotes good relations between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Non-Self-Governing External Territory of Norfolk Island.*



These examples are provided to highlight the highly influential nature of the proposed Governance Committee, and to emphasise how important Norfolk Island's representation on the Committee will be to the future of our Island.



## Representation on the Governance Committee

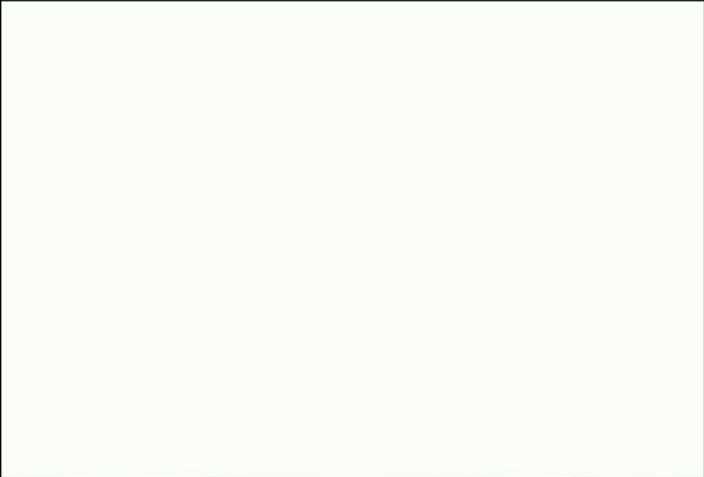
The Governance Committee will comprise a total of six persons. This includes:

- ▶ Three Norfolk Island representatives. Two elected representatives and one representative chosen by and from the Norfolk Island Council of Elders (to ensure respect for the culture and traditions of the Pitcairn descendants).
- ▶ Two Australian Government representatives. One representative of the Federal Minister and one representative of the Federal Government Department with responsibility for Norfolk Island, and
- ▶ One representative of the Queensland Government (to ensure any services provided by the Queensland Government are delivered in a manner that aligns with Norfolk Island's unique circumstances and the needs and aspirations of the Norfolk Island community).

## Election

As an interim measure, until Norfolk Island has its own democratically elected governing body, Norfolk Island's two elected representatives on the Governance Committee will be determined through a non-compulsory election.

- ▶ All persons will be eligible to vote provided that on the day of election they have attained the age of 18 years and can provide proof of both identity and residence on Norfolk Island.
- ▶ The two (2) candidates with highest number of votes will be Norfolk Island's elected representatives on the Governance Committee. (Note. Once a new democratically elected governing body is established for Norfolk Island, that body will select the two elected Norfolk Island representatives on the Governance Committee from within its membership).





## The commencement of the Governance Committee

Once the Governance Committee is appointed, Norfolk Island's future governance arrangements and its relationship with Australia will be guided by the elected Norfolk Island community representatives on the Committee, by the Australian Government representatives on the Committee, and by the Committee's jointly agreed Guiding Principles.

The Governance Committee will be required to meet a minimum of four times per year.

The Governance Committee will be provided with a comprehensive schedule of all laws currently applying to Norfolk Island, up-to-date data on the Norfolk Island economy, a precise recitation of Norfolk Island's legal and political history, and any other information it requires to begin the process of carefully planning and designing Norfolk Island's future governance arrangements.

The Governance Committee is not bound to retain any part of the Island's current governance arrangements.

Rather, the Committee's remit ensures it has the freedom and flexibility to examine and utilise governance models from both within Australia and elsewhere in the world to assist in forming a well-designed long term plan and ensuring that Norfolk Island has the best possible governance arrangements.



## Moving to the Future



## Moving to the Future

Another of the key components of this Plan is a clear strategy outlining how to best manage the intervening period - between today and when a new governance arrangement is established. A strategy that focuses on re-building trust and assisting our community to repair some of the detrimental impacts of recent years which, if left unaddressed, will continue to cause division and erode trust and confidence in our future.

This component of the Plan will be progressed concurrent with the establishment of the Governance Committee and will focus on addressing the immediate needs of our community. This includes:

- finding an urgent solution to the rapid and largely uncontrolled growth in our population which is causing difficulties in a range of areas for both the Norfolk Island community and the Australian Government.
- re-establishing the co-represented Norfolk Island and Australian Government KAVHA Management Board. This action will convert the current role of the Norfolk Island community from being advisors to the decision-makers to once again being actual decision-makers in preserving the continuing usages, occupation and connections of the Norfolk Island community and in determining the future of the Kingston World Heritage Area, and
- providing meaningful recognition of the Pitcairn descendants and their special relationship with Norfolk Island. This includes re-establishing the Preamble and having Pitcairn descendant representation on the Governance Committee.

*We had two speeches from the Prime Minister. In the first he said that we were passing the Constitution for Norfolk Island, and the islanders could have what laws they wished.*

*In his second speech he contradicted this, fortunately for himself, and pointed out that the Bill now under consideration does not give the islanders power to do anything.*

*We have undoubtedly agreed to provisions which, to a large extent, establish a dictatorship over them.*

Hansard – Parliament of Australia - 1913

### **Moving to the Future**

The Governance Committee, a new genuinely democratic governance arrangement for Norfolk Island, and a well-designed long-term Plan for Norfolk Island will address the immediate needs of our community.

**The final issue, that must be addressed, is one that goes to the heart of our Island’s uneasy relationship with Australia, namely, the continuing failure of the Australian Parliament to establish a solid legally-protected foundation upon which the Norfolk Island community can build a secure and democratic future.**

The reason this issue is so important is the Norfolk Island community can never have genuine trust and confidence in their future while living under the constant threat that a handful of Australian Parliamentarians can so easily orchestrate the abolition of their democracy and the imposition of a locally unsupported and undemocratic governance arrangement on Norfolk Island again.

And, unless the Australian Parliament is prepared to work with the Norfolk Island community to confront and resolve this difficulty now - uncertainty, mistrust and division will remain - and history will eventually be repeated.

Resolving this difficulty will require an Australian Parliament that recognises the Norfolk Island community do not enjoy the same constitutional or political protections as people living in Australia, and is willing to act to ensure the foundational tenets of democracy and good governance are legally-protected on Norfolk Island just as they are in Australia.

## Moving to the Future: A Constitution for Norfolk Island

This Plan provides a pathway for the Australian Parliament to establish a legally-protected, secure and democratic future for our community and, in doing so, end Norfolk Island's uneasy relationship with Australia.

It ensures, respects and acknowledges all of Australia's interests and obligations in respect of Norfolk Island, and the Governance Committee provides the necessary means and opportunity for our community and the Australian Government to communicate, co-operate, build and sustain the trust and confidence in each other to take the next crucial steps together.

One of those next steps is identifying the best possible governance arrangements for Norfolk Island. This will require that the Governance Committee look at the numerous island territories around the world that share a similarly unique constitutional relationship with a larger country, in particular, island territories that have successfully faced and conquered the challenge of establishing a legally-protected, secure and democratic future for their community's, e.g. the Falkland Islands through their relationship with Great Britain and the Cook Islands through their relationship with New Zealand.

A review of those island territories will identify how those community's have successfully enshrined and protected the fundamental tenets of their good governance and democracies through the development of **a jointly-agreed territory constitution** recognised by their respective administering governments.

Without any doubt, if the Australian Parliament were to engage in the same process with the Norfolk Island community, an uneasy relationship will be replaced with a mutually beneficial governance partnership and both Norfolk Island and Australia will enjoy a better future, together.