

Administrator Newsletter

NORFOLK ISLAND | ISSUE NO. 38 | OCT 2026

WELCOME MESSAGE



Since my last newsletter, there has been much focus on the announcement of the staged governance model made by Minister for Territories Kristy McBain on 3 August 2026. Ahead of the release of more details on the election, and Transition Assembly arrangements, I have been engaging with as many corners of the community as I can to encourage community members to consider nominating as a candidate during this important period. Like many in the community, I look forward to further discussions following the release of more details from the Minister once Parliament resumes.

This week's visit by Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher provided an opportunity to raise the impact of the proposed policy changes to Working Holiday Maker visa categories. The potential impact on small, medium and large business across the island who are dependent on these programs for sourcing labour, particularly the very important hospitality and catering sectors, is making this a very hot topic. I continue to raise the potential impact of the proposed policy change with the Department and Minister McBain, and it was actively discussed during Senator Gallagher's visit. It is important to reinforce the potential challenges the policy presents for a small labour market in a remote location, and the economic impact.

As Senator Gallagher also has portfolio responsibilities for Finance, Women and Government Services and the Public Service, it was a timely visit to discuss the announcement of the Transition Assembly and meet with many women leaders around the island involved in business and those focused on youth and culture.

Victory in the Pacific Day (15 August) commemorations at the RSL were a sombre reminder of the sacrifices of those that served. While much of the focus is often on those that died, it is important to remember those that returned (but were potentially never the same) as well the contributions of current and former serving members (15 Aug). It does not take too much to be reminded the impact of loss of young able men on a small population.

The inaugural Colour Run was a delight to see on a sunny (but windy) Sunday morning, as was the recent Spring Fair at St Barnabas. To see the most impressive and probably the world's biggest "slip-n-slide" brought back memories of the homemade one my sister crafted. It was not too dissimilar, but was only about three meters long, it didn't have a slope and it involved a sprinkler and detergent and a very muddy grassy patch at the end of it. Simple fun is often the best. It was great to see many of the same children enjoying the colourful slip-n-slide on the slopes of Government House as part of the recent holiday program. No doubt I will see all of them again at the big house at the end of the month for Halloween.

It was a pleasure to join the mix of wise women at the Club L evening and reflect on leadership in unusual places, and what I have learnt along the way in a rather winding career path. I chose to reflect on lessons that I encourage young leaders to consider as they take their own pathway into the future. This was a message I relayed to the 2026 Year 12 graduates, who joined me for dinner at Government house on 14 September. They truly are a delightful group of articulate and engaged young men and women, who show great potential and I was delighted to be able to host them – their parents can be proud, and I am sure they agree they are an absolute delight (... that was a school captain in-joke, with credit going to Rawson).

There have been quite a few citizenship ceremonies, and it was a pleasure to hear the stories of how those who have chosen to become new citizens came to Norfolk Island, and the continuing contribution they make to the community. It is also interesting to hear what the inspiration is for taking such a significant step, particularly those who have resided in Australia for many decades. Diversity and inclusion is always a key theme at this event, reflecting the reality that one in three people living in Australia who were born overseas themselves. In this globalised world, you don't have to travel far (even here on Norfolk Island) to find someone making a positive contribution to the community that has come from a far-flung corner of the globe.

I was happy to support the Administrators Cup for its ninth year and also have preliminary discussions on the plans for celebrating the 100-year centenary of the Golf Club's operation in 2027.

Yours respectfully until the next newsletter.

Fiona McKergow



A warm welcome for Senator Katy Gallagher

It was a pleasure to welcome Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women, Government Services, Finance, the Public Service and Government Business in the Senate, to Norfolk Island recently and to join her during her visit.

Her program created valuable opportunities to hear directly from our community, learn more about the priorities that matter to Norfolk Islanders and strengthen the connection between the island and the Australian Government.

Conversations ranged from Norfolk Island governance and local economic challenges to an inspiring focus on championing women in leadership. I was particularly pleased to see the Senator engage so warmly with local organisations and community members, whose knowledge, experiences and aspirations are central to shaping the island's future.

I sincerely thank Senator Gallagher for taking the time to listen, connect and share in the life of our community.



Commemorating Victory in the Pacific and Vietnam Veterans' Day 2026

It was a great honour to join the Norfolk Island RSL Sub-Branch in commemorating Victory in the Pacific and Vietnam Veterans' Day, and to lay a wreath on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The service provided a valued opportunity to meet Norfolk Island's Vietnam veterans, as well as visiting veterans and the partners and widows of those who served. The moving ceremony, made especially memorable by the stirring sound of the bagpipes, offered a poignant reminder of the courage, sacrifice and service of generations past.

I sincerely thank the RSL Sub-Branch for ensuring these significant chapters in our history continue to be remembered with such dignity and respect.



Hei Making

In September, Annie and I joined the Council of Elders' Foremothers Committee for a hands-on lesson in the traditional art of Hei-making, using rauti and flax leaves.

Although the skilled makers made it look effortless, my first attempt showed that a little more practice may be needed. It was a joyful and rewarding experience, and I warmly thank the Council of Elders for sharing this beautiful tradition and creating opportunities for the community to keep it flourishing.





Kingston rock revetment project

At the beginning of September, I officially marked the commencement of the Kingston Rock Revetment project by leaving my natural habitat and venturing “into the field” to turn the first sod down in Kingston, signalling the start of this important coastal protection initiative.

This project represents a significant investment in safeguarding Norfolk Island’s coastal assets and preserving the historic Kingston foreshore for future generations.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and collaboration of all those involved in bringing the project to this important milestone and I am sure many in the community look forward to seeing the project progress in the months ahead and to the long-term benefits it will deliver for the Norfolk Island community.



Welcoming our newest Australian citizens

Since my last newsletter, it has been a privilege to welcome four new Australian citizens to our Norfolk Island community. Each citizenship ceremony was a joyful celebration of belonging and commitment, made even more meaningful by the presence of family and friends who supported our newest citizens throughout their journeys.

I warmly congratulate each of our new citizens on this significant milestone and thank them for choosing to make Norfolk Island their home. We are delighted to welcome them as part of our community.



Club L address

I enjoyed another Club L evening with a diverse range of women from all walks of life, including a few extra visitors, where I spoke on being “An accidental diplomat: Leadership in unexpected places...” and some of the lessons I have learnt along the way. We all bring something to the table, so it is always great to listen to people and hear where they have been, what they have done, and their takes on life and experienced that make up the rich tapestry of the community on Norfolk Island. I cannot also forget to thank the Hilli’s team, particularly Justine and Josa, for their lovely meal and great hospitality on a very busy night.

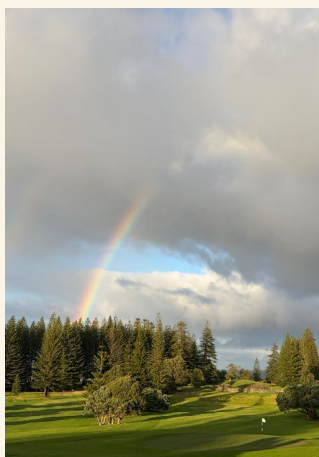




A Colourful Celebration of Community Spirit

A beautiful rainbow over Kingston seemed the perfect welcome to Athletics Norfolk Island's inaugural Kingston Running Festival, held in KAVHA on Sunday, 13 September. I was delighted to join the community for the Colour Run and Walk and to see people of all ages sharing in the fun, cheering one another on and making the most of our spectacular surroundings.

The smiles, laughter and wonderful sense of togetherness made the occasion especially memorable. My heartfelt thanks go to Athletics Norfolk Island and the many generous volunteers whose hard work brought the day to life. Congratulations to everyone who participated – you filled Kingston with colour, energy and community spirit.



Australian Government
Office of the Administrator
Norfolk Island

Year 12 formal dinner

Last month, Government House had the pleasure of hosting a formal dinner in honour of Norfolk Island's Year 12 graduates. It was an evening filled with pride and excitement, together with a touch of sadness as these remarkable young people prepare to close one chapter and begin the next. Throughout the evening, the graduates impressed with their thoughtful conversation and the respect, determination, curiosity and kindness they showed. I wish each of them every success in their upcoming examinations. Like the wider community, I will watch with great pride as they forge their own paths and embrace the opportunities ahead



Administrators Cup

Sunday, 27 September delivered a spectacular day of golf and I was delighted to present the Administrators Cup to Luke Willersdorf and Ian Edward. My warm congratulations go to the winners and to everyone who took part and contributed to such an enjoyable day on the course.

Inspired by the occasion, I have booked a few lessons with Umi next month—so you may see me more regularly out on the fairways attempting to hit the ball more like a golfer, not a hockey player.

Golf has a proud and enduring place in Norfolk Island's sporting history.

The game was first played on the Kingston Links course in 1913, with the modern club's official records beginning after golf was re-established on the island in 1927.

I am delighted to play a small part in continuing this proud tradition, which brings our golfing community together.

