Administrator Newsletter

NORFOLK ISLAND | ISSUE NO. 39 | NOV 2026

WELCOME MESSAGE



On 19 November, Minister McBain released the date and details of the upcoming election process for the Transition Assembly. I would encourage everyone with an interest in Norfolk Island's future governance to actively engage in the process. It's said that you get out what you put in – and the Norfolk Island community currently has the significant opportunity to inform and shape its own legislated governance arrangements.

October and November marked the start of a busy event season involving young and old community members (although perhaps "wise" is the preferred nomenclature).

A highlight was the gathering of the island's Nonagenarians for morning tea. Despite a few nonagenarians being unable to attend, there was still more than 1000 cumulative years of wisdom sitting around the table. It was lovely to listen to recollections from a lifetime of adventure, travel and diverse careers, shared over a lovely morning tea provided by the QUOTA ladies. I look forward to welcoming them again next year.

The NICS Sports and Citizenship Awards and Year 12 graduation provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements and positive contributions of young people across the island.

Members of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) visited the island for the public hearing on the Norfolk Island Multi-Purpose Service Facility (MPS) Stage 1 Residential Aged Care Replacement Project.

The hearing represented an important milestone in the Committee's consideration of the proposal.

I had the pleasure of joining the Norfolk Island National Parks (NINP) team, Flora and Fauna Society members, along with some hardy locals out on a blustery evening at the end of October for a Morepork Owl survey session.

While we didn't see any owls (it was dark, wet and windy) we certainly heard some territorial and tête-à-tête calls of some of the owls. It was encouraging to hear them so active and to know the efforts in place to support the small population.

For those who have not yet visited the *Drawing Nature's Bounty* exhibition at the Royal Engineers Office, I'd encourage you to pop in for a look.

We are fortunate to have visiting Artist in Residence Vivienne Dadour, supported by CDANI, sharing her talents with the community down in New Military Barracks.

It was also great to see the return of University of New England archaeologist Professor Martin Gibbs and his team, who are focused on surveys and excavations within KAVHA as part of the project Australia's *First Colony: Connected isolation on Norfolk Island 1788–1814*.

During the Science at Sunset session hosted by the NINP, we heard how the project, funded by the Australian Research Council, will be using remote sensing and archaeological survey across the KAVHA property to refine the location of First Settlement sites.

As part of their community outreach, they are hosting workshops on Polynesian flint-making and welcoming everyone to come douwn a touwn and have a look at their outdoor activities.

And finally, I completed my first Around Island Relay with my trusty team members Liz Parry and Cooper Pike.

I'd encourage everyone to give it a go - clearly, you are never too young or old to enjoy the Relay. I can vouch that sunrise is the best time to be up and about and with the bonus of some fabulous views along the route, a few steep hills and a great feeling of accomplishment at the end, it was well worth the sweaty end.

A huge shout out to those that did the entire 25km (you are all truly awesome) and for Athletics Norfolk Island for their organisation and all the cheer squads along the way.

As we head into the busy social period that seems to appear with the warmer weather, it is certainly nice to see everyone enjoying the outdoors. Just remember to take your rubbish home and don't drink and drive.

Fiona

NICS School academic and sports prizegiving ceremony



On 14 October, I attended Norfolk Island Central School's Sports and Citizenship prizegiving ceremony, presenting trophies and awards in recognition of students' achievements in the classroom and on the sporting field throughout the year.

The strong participation across all age groups and all fields of endeavour is commendable. The awards were a clear acknowledgement of the effort and commitment demonstrated by students.

What stood out most was the enthusiasm and involvement of students from Prep to Year 12, not only in sport and school activities but also in the positive contribution they make to the school community each day. The breadth of participation on display was a credit to both the students and the staff who support them.

Congratulations again to all those students who received awards and also to the entire school community who contribute to a supportive environment that helps all students thrive.

The Year 12 graduation assembly on 21 October was a wonderful way to acknowledge the students' hard work in reaching this important milestone and I wish them every success in their upcoming examinations and future endeavours. It was particularly moving to hear younger students reflect on the positive impact the graduating class had on their wellbeing, school life and broader school community.

I also want to acknowledge the parents, families and teachers whose encouragement, guidance and support help students thrive and reach their potential.

I wish the graduating students every success in their upcoming examinations and future endeavours.

Celebrating Norfolk Island's Nonagenarians: A lifetime of Stories

On 21 October, I had the pleasure of welcoming Norfolk Island's nonagenarians to Government House for a morning tea, beautifully catered by Quota. The gathering provided a valued opportunity to celebrate their lives and recognise their enduring contributions to our community.

Listening to recollections spanning many decades was a reminder of the remarkable breadth of experience within our community. Their early years were lived in a world before the internet and mobile phones, when letters and face-to-face conversations played a far greater role in keeping people connected.

Their stories offer a valuable perspective on the changes that have shaped both Norfolk Island and the wider world.

Celebrating our nonagenarians is an important acknowledgement of their place in the life of the island and an opportunity to preserve and share their stories with future generations.

I thank everyone who attended and extend my appreciation to Quota for their thoughtful hospitality and contribution to this special occasion.





Art Meets Heritage

I had the pleasure of attending the opening of *Drawing Nature's Bounty*, an exhibition by acclaimed local artist and nature-lover Sorrel Wilby at the Royal Engineers Office (REO).

Bringing together her artworks and historical artefacts from the Norfolk Island Museum collections, the exhibition offers a fresh perspective on the connections between our island's natural beauty and its rich heritage.

The exhibition is also a timely reminder of the remarkable natural environment that surrounds us and the many ways artists help us see familiar places through a difference lens.

I congratulate Sorrel and the museums team on this creative collaboration. For those who have not yet visited the exhibition, I encourage you to pop in and take a look.



Halloween at Government House: Screams and Treats



Government House welcomed some 350 adults and children for our popular Halloween event, with all ages coming down to Kingston to discover whether they would be in for a fright or a treat!

Plenty of screams echoed from the dark cellar and corridor as children made their way through the house before collecting their treats from the Lady of the House. A few even returned for a second trip through the house.

I thoroughly enjoyed welcoming everyone for an evening of spooky fun, and thanks to all those parents who put in lots of effort into creating such imaginative costumes.

I don't go down to the cellar that often and any regular spirits would have certainly found it more occupied than usual.

Welcoming the Public Works Committee to Norfolk Island

I was pleased to welcome members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works during their recent visit to Norfolk Island for a public hearing into the Norfolk Island Multi-Purpose Service Facility (MPS) Stage 1 Residential Aged Care Replacement Project. The hearing was an important step in the Committee's consideration of the proposal and provided an opportunity for the community to observe the parliamentary process.

The visit also included a reception at Government House, where I had the pleasure of sharing the beauty and heritage of this remarkable building with our visitors.





Making a milestone and looking ahead

The Norfolk Island Governance Committee held its final meeting on 15 October, followed by the release of its final communiqué, bringing this stage of its work to a close.

The Committee has undertaken an enormous amount of work over the past three years, considering a wide range of issues and helping inform discussions about Norfolk Island's future governance arrangements. I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to this work.

I particularly thank community representatives Chris Magri, Chelsea Evans and Alma Davidson, and proxy Anita French, for their commitment, time and hard work.

I also acknowledge George Plant, who chaired the Committee from its inception until May 2026. His leadership helped guide the Committee through an important period of discussion and consultation.

I recently marked the conclusion of this stage with a dinner at the Homestead with local Committee members, providing an opportunity to reflect on the work undertaken, recognise the contribution of those involved and look ahead to the next chapter.

While the Committee's work has concluded, community involvement remains as important as ever. I encourage everyone to bring their enthusiasm, ideas and involvement to the next stage of Norfolk Island's governance journey.

Working Together for KAVHA's Future

I was pleased to welcome members of the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) Advisory Committee to the island for our final meeting of 2026.

The two-day meeting included a review of the Committee's Terms of Reference and membership arrangements as well as how we ensure balanced community representation on the Committee and have local knowledge and expertise reflected in the Committee's deliberations and decisions, to best support this remarkable heritage precinct.

The KAVHA Advisory Committee (KAC) plays an important advisory role, bringing heritage management expertise and an understanding of community concerns and expectations to discussions about the precinct's future.

I thank members for their contributions throughout the year and their commitment to this special part of Norfolk Island.

I look forward to working with KAC members in 2027 to showcase the KAVHA precinct and, together with the community, suggest strategies for its effective management and stronger community partnerships. Our shared appreciation of this unique place provides a strong foundation for the work ahead.

Honouring Service and Sacrifice

On 11 November, I was honoured to join the community at the Norfolk Island Cenotaph for the Remembrance Day service. Together, we paid tribute to those who have served and remembered those who died or suffered in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

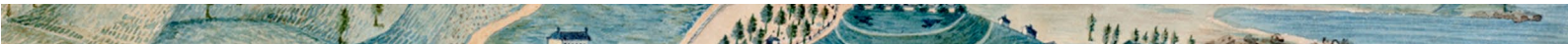
Remembrance Day marks the anniversary of the Armistice that ended fighting on the Western Front at 11 am on 11 November 1918. More than a century later, it remains an important opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices of those who served and the lasting impact of war on families and communities.

Thank you to everyone who organised the service and to all who attended. By preserving the stories behind the names on our memorials and sharing them with future generations, we help ensure that service and sacrifice are never forgotten.

Lest we forget.







Hills, Cheers and Team Spirit

I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in my first Around the Island Relay, joining teammates Liz Parry and Cooper Pike for a morning of fresh air, spectacular views and a few steep bits that certainly made us earn those views!

The early start was well rewarded with a stunning sunrise and the wonderful community spirit that was evident around the course. It was also a reminder that you are never too young or too old to take part, with runners and walkers of all ages enjoying the challenge in their own way.

One of the highlights was seeing so many people out and about early on a Sunday morning, whether competing, volunteering or supporting participants from the roadside. Events like the Relay are a great example of community spirit in action and showcase the enthusiastic volunteers who help make them possible.

My thanks to Athletics Norfolk Island for organising such an enjoyable event, to everyone who cheered us along the way, and especially to Liz and Cooper for being willing participants (I am not sure I would have enjoyed all 25km) and bringing in the team spirit.

With fabulous views, a few steep hills and a great sense of accomplishment at the finish, it was well worth the effort.

Congratulations to all who took part, particularly those who completed the entire 25km. It was a wonderful reminder that getting involved is every bit as important as getting across the line.



Celebrating Our Island's Trees



Tree days around the world offer a lovely excuse to celebrate our leafy neighbours and on Norfolk Island, we certainly have some impressive guests of honour!

Our iconic Norfolk Island pine can reach up to 70m tall. That is quite a local landmark, even without a signpost.

Of course, the pines should not take all the limelight. Our white oaks put on their own show, with pink and mauve flowers that fade to white as they age. Beyond looking splendid, trees provide wildlife habitat, help protect our soils and offer welcome shade, a hardworking community contribution, all without leaving their spot!

Did you know that the endemic White Oaks in front of Government House are estimated to be close to 200 years old? With 21 November marking International Day of the Tree, I'd like to say Happy Birthday to those two large White Oaks.

Ongoing care of our Norfolk Island pines is important too: in KAVHA, regular checks by an arborist help identify and address potential issues early, before they become safety risks to the community.

I encourage everyone to take a moment to appreciate the trees around us, enjoy a walk in the national park or consider a suitable native tree for the garden. Looking after the trees we have, and making room for the next generation, will help keep Norfolk Island green and beautiful. Now that is something worth rooting for!

Giving Thanks, Island Style



It was a pleasure to join the community in All Saints Church for my first Thanksgiving service as Administrator.

I warmly embraced the opportunity to take part in this cherished island tradition and reflect on the generosity, friendship and sense of belonging that gives the day such meaning.

With links to visiting American whalers in the late nineteenth century, Thanksgiving is a distinctive part of Norfolk Island's heritage. Church services, displays of local produce and meals shared with family and friends bring people together to give thanks.

It is a wonderful reminder of the value of pausing to appreciate both the bounty of the island and the people who make it special.

My thanks to everyone who welcomed me so warmly. I look forward to joining the community again next year and continuing to share in this much-loved Norfolk Island occasion.



Monitoring Norfolk Island's Rare Morepork Owls

On a blustery midweek night on 29 October, I had the pleasure of joining Norfolk Island National Park staff, members of the Flora and Fauna Society and community volunteers for an evening of morepork owl monitoring.

Citizen-supported surveys like this can play an important part in monitoring and protecting wildlife, helping track their numbers and monitoring population trends. This information supports conservation work at a time when the small population faces challenges from reduced genetic diversity and limited breeding success.

According to Norfolk Island National Park, only about 25 moreporks remain, making them among the rarest owls in the world. Moving between designated sights in the National Park, the team I joined played recorded morepork calls (male then female), then fervently listened for, and recorded, responses from owls then estimated their distance and direction).

The morepork's history is a remarkable conservation story. In 1986, only one female was known to remain on Norfolk Island. Breeding with a closely related morepork introduced from New Zealand prevented the complete loss of these owls from the island. Their continued presence highlights both the value of sustained conservation efforts and the fragility of this small population.

I extend my appreciation to the National Park team and the volunteers who contribute their time and knowledge to this important survey. Their commitment demonstrates the valuable role our community plays in safeguarding Norfolk Island's natural heritage for future generations.

