



Norfolk Island | Issue no. 10 | 8 October 2021

### 90 per cent vaccination rate for Norfolk Island

A big thank you to Norfolk Island residents who have rolled up their sleeves to get their COVID-19 vaccination.

Thanks to your commitment to keeping yourselves, your families and community safe, we have achieved a vaccination rate of 90 per cent for Pfizer across Norfolk Island.

Following last week's round of second doses, we have 1702 people now fully vaccinated across Norfolk. With vaccinations open to 12-15 year olds, it was great to see as many eligible community members as possible come forward to get vaccinated, as it remains our best defence against getting seriously sick with COVID-19.

I would like to once again thank the hardworking staff at the Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Services (NIHRACS) for their tireless efforts in helping protect our community from COVID-19, along with all those who have been working hard over the past months to ensure the successful roll-out of the vaccine program on Norfolk Island.

While border restrictions remain in place for Norfolk Island for jurisdictions of concern, it is vital that we remain vigilant to the potential threat COVID-19 poses to the most vulnerable in our community and continue to follow health directions.

EMT are currently considering the best ways to keep our community safe during the evolving situation on the mainland, as vaccination rates rise.



### Latest on the COVID business relief support program

The ongoing response to the Australian Government's financial assistance payments for Norfolk Island business impacted by the evolving COVID-19 outbreak and travel restrictions remains strong.

It is pleasing to see 55 local businesses already having received government funding through the Norfolk Island Regional Council to assist them through these challenging times where visitor numbers from the mainland are reduced by the ongoing COVID situation.

The relief available includes one-off payments as well as fortnightly payment support.

Applications for the support payments will remain open until border and travel restrictions ease, to align with EMNI emergency declaration dates.

Any Norfolk Island businesses that wish to apply for the financial assistance payments need to have experienced a decline in turnover of 30 per cent or more due to the Public Health Order over a **minimum two-week period between 26 June and 20 August 2021**. They also need to meet the other eligibility criteria, with full eligibility guidelines and the application form available at: [www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/council/grants-program](http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/council/grants-program)

### A message from Eric Hutchinson

I take this opportunity to personally acknowledge the wonderful contribution that Crystal and David Fell and their family have made to this community. They will be missed by many people including myself, as both friends and confidants. I know many others in this community will feel similarly. My memories of David include the stage we shared in a NATS production and various commemoration services. Of Crystal, her wonderful smile that can light up any room and her dedication to her business and work at Banyan Park. Both for their faith in the love of God and how they live this in their daily lives, their general decency and good humour.

The Norfolk Island Show is on again this year after a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID.



I've attended many small rural shows across Tasmania and other parts of the mainland and the local show here compares with any I have attended. My thanks and acknowledgment for all those people who contribute in this community to make it such a special event. Having been a regular competitor in the bread baking section during my time on the island, I will again be striving to bring home a first place certificate this year. I'd never be someone to question the impartiality of the bread section judges, but running a distant 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2019 in the wholemeal bread section to a loaf baked in a bread making machine, was a bitter pill to swallow and still cuts me to the quick...



# Newsletter

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## Working together to improve Norfolk's water quality

With recent research commissioned by Parks Australia providing valuable information on the declining health of Emily and Slaughter bays, the Water Quality Working Group is focused on developing and supporting a range of initiatives to address water quality issues and avoid future deterioration of local reef health.

The coral health studies conducted by the Sydney Institute of Marine Science (SIMS) in 2020 and 2021 have confirmed the coral reef in Emily Bay and Slaughter Bay lagoon is in poor and declining health, with increased coral disease and algae growth.

Through the Water Quality Working Group, officers from the Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC), Parks Australia, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC) and my Office are meeting regularly to collaboratively coordinate actions for water quality improvement, most of which are focused in the Kingston catchment.

Poor water quality entering Norfolk Marine Park at Emily Bay after heavy rainfall events has a well-recorded history.

Over the past year, a number of important works have been undertaken. These include the construction of four leaky weirs to reduce the volume of polluted water entering Emily Bay during large rainfall events and increased frequency of sillage collection from septic tanks in Kingston to reduce the potential for pollution.

Repairs and maintenance works have also been undertaken to address immediate faults across septic tanks in Kingston. Alarms have been installed in collaboration with local contractors to provide forewarning of potential hazards.

We are planning construction of additional water control structures in Kingston by the end of the year to slow and reduce the volume of water entering Emily Bay during large flood events. In collaboration with the Norfolk Island Cattle Association, NIRC and DITRDC have installed fences along key tributaries for the Kingston catchment. Native vegetation has also been planted along the banks. These actions will reduce erosion and sediments entering Emily Bay. The washing of aggregate at Watermill Dam standpipe has also ended.

The CSIRO, which continues its important work on Norfolk Island's water security, has also been engaged by the Department to implement a comprehensive water quality monitoring program and undertake targeted studies that will inform future catchment management.

Water quality management is something that all catchment management partners are taking seriously. However, we also need support from the Norfolk Island community. We are working to develop resources to provide information on how you can help reduce pollution of groundwater, with better management of private septic systems a key consideration. NIRC are also proposing amendments to the DCP for new developments, to better regulate onsite systems. NIRC will work with the community on these amendments.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as we take important steps to improve the health of Norfolk Island's lagoons.



Office of the Administrator

New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

## NIHRACS advisory council

To strengthen the existing governance arrangements for the Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Service (NIHRACS), the Australian Government is continuing to progress the establishment of an Advisory Council to oversee the management and operation of the health service.

Following the earlier calls for expression of interest for two independent representatives on the Council, the membership selection process is ongoing and under active consideration by the Advisory Council chair. An announcement will be made once membership is finalised.

## Norfolk Island state services transition update

The transition planning for state services is progressing well, with officials from the Queensland, NSW and Australian Governments continuing to meet regularly to discuss health and education service delivery.

The teachers consultative committee is now meeting on a weekly basis. Work is currently under way to provide clarification on employment arrangements for Norfolk Island Central School (NICS) staff, including issues such as leave portability, allowances, role descriptions, superannuation and workforce planning and recruitment.

Queensland officials provided further details about employment arrangements for teachers in Queensland and shared a list of key Queensland policies related to schooling.

The Australian Government has further confirmed funding arrangements will remain in place over the transition period, including funding to NICS, ensuring it will remain stable and responsive to the ongoing needs of the school.

Over the past weeks, myself and Oliver Holm from the department have also been meeting regularly with NIHRACS leadership. The NIHRACS transition manager is assisting in information gathering to support the transition of health services.

We will continue to keep you updated on the progress of transition through regular communications.

For the latest information on the transition visit,

[www.regional.gov.au/territories/norfolk\\_island/state-services-transition/index.aspx](http://www.regional.gov.au/territories/norfolk_island/state-services-transition/index.aspx)