

Norfolk Island | Issue no. 13 | May 2022

Administrator's update



In every community, there are those who serve and, in contrast, those who would wish to be important. Those who put others and the interests of their community first – and those who pursue a personal agenda for self-aggrandisement or notoriety.

It is not the critic who counts (in the words of Theodore Roosevelt) – there are so many critics on so many challenges, so many complaints, but less constructive solutions proposed. How easy it is to criticise others, particularly in the faceless world of social media.

To the people who show up in this community – I say, thank you!

This day, I think particularly of the men who will work the ship this week using the newly purchased barges – this has been a massive and required change and it is the skill and capacity of these men, the leadership many have shown and the commitment they have to their own community that will carry the day. You deserve the respect and thanks of a grateful community. All this despite the commentary and criticisms of “experts” at arm’s length in the parallel universe that is social media.

To those who are prepared to see the good in others and recognise how fortunate we are compared to many others around the world, living in a special and beautiful part of a wonderful country. Those who are able to enjoy what we have now, to appreciate how fortunate we really are, being willing to contribute with a positive approach to fashioning a better community here in the future.

You know who you are and, again, thank you.

Studying the health of Norfolk Island's Reef

Scientists from the University of New South Wales, the University of Newcastle and Macquarie University visited Norfolk Island during April to continue the study of the health of the Emily and Slaughter Bay coral reefs, which are part of the Norfolk Marine Park. The reef health study is using coral bleaching, coral health and disease, and key species and algal cover as indicators of the health of the coral ecosystem. This is the third year of ongoing study of these systems.

The research team collected data to assess the health and abundance of corals, looked for juvenile corals following this year's spawning events, and documented the diversity of marine organisms within Emily, Slaughter and Cemetery bays. The team also redeployed loggers throughout the bays to track the water temperature and water flow. The settlement tiles that were placed in the bays by Parks Australia in December to record the recruitment of juvenile corals following the spawning events in summer were collected and juvenile corals were recorded.

Jane Williamson from Macquarie University studied the sea urchin and sea cucumber populations in Emily, Slaughter and Cemetery bays. Sea urchins are important herbivores in marine ecosystems as they help to maintain the balance between coral and algae. Sea cucumbers also play a crucial role in coral reefs by filtering algae covered sand to remove organic matter. Sea urchins and sea cucumbers can be especially important on reefs where other herbivores, such as fish, have been depleted or when a reef is under stress from pollution and coral bleaching.

Early results of the research suggest a further decline in coral cover and an increase in red algae cover in Emily and Slaughter bay, and a decline in populations of in sea urchins and sea cucumbers in Emily, Slaughter and Cemetery bays. Early results of fish surveys suggest a small increase of some species of fish within the lagoons.

About 60 people attended a community information session on 21 April at Emily Bay where the research team presented some of the early results of the research. More information will be provided following results of water quality testing and other data analysis, and there will be opportunities for the community to get involved with ongoing monitoring and possibly other activities to help improve the health of our reefs. The team looks forward to continuing to share information and strategies to protect and maintain these significant Bays.





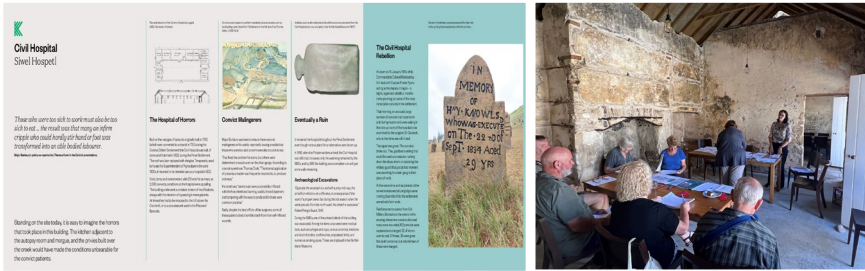
The Kingston team are on the home straight to deliver a new generation of interpretation across the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area.

Interpretation Project Coordinator Maree Evans and content writer Susan Prior have developed new interpretive signs after many months of reviewing existing content, identifying untold stories, researching and writing new materials, and obtaining accompanying images. Chelsea Evans also provided a valuable contribution to the project in 2021.

Consultation is currently under way with key stakeholders including the Council of Elders, Norfolk Island Historical Society, Norfolk Island Museum Trust and museum staff to check the historical accuracy of the information provided. The Kingston team is grateful to everyone that has assisted with this important project.

The new signage and a number of interpretive waypoints have been funded under the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund. This includes the Settlement Guard House as a welcome and orientation waypoint in the Pier Precinct, where work has accelerated in recent months to prepare the building for visitor interpretation.

The team is excited to present new stories along with cultural traditions, Norfolk language and contemporary use of the site.



Update on Kingston Pier and Slaughter Bay Sea Wall

The Department continues to progress the Kingston Pier Channel Construction works.

The environmental and development approval applications are being finalised for the Pier project, with public exhibitions of materials for both approvals set to take place in May.

An approach to market for the Slaughter Bay Sea Wall and Kingston Pier Rock Revetment works is also being progressed, with opportunities for local on-island contractors to bid for the works.

To protect the Norfolk Island community, sections of the Slaughter Bay sea wall were closed to the public, following the collapse of two sections in mid-October.

Temporary works were undertaken to repair and mitigate against further damage to the sea wall, while the longer term remediation works are progressed.

Current consultations

Biofouling Solutions is on Island until 6 May to engage with the community on the Marine Pest Survey.

The Norfolk Island Flora & Fauna Society hosted a presentation by the Biofouling Solutions team, at the A&H Hall on Monday, 2 May.

Conrad Gargett visited Norfolk Island again from 26-28 April 2022 to consult with the community on opportunities and options for the Site Master Plan for Kingston. A community presentation and consultation session took place on Wednesday, 27 April 2022 along with a range of stakeholder meetings.

Norfolk Island state services transition update

Commonwealth officials recently visited the island to check in on the progress of state services transition and continue planning for next steps, following the commencement of initial Queensland services in January.

The visit was supported by Callida Consulting, which is mapping and cataloguing state services on Norfolk Island to help inform future planning.

The team and Callida, along with myself, had productive discussions with a range of stakeholders including the Norfolk Island Regional Council, Banyan Park, business representatives, the Mental Health Tribunal and Magistrate. These discussions are supporting the planning and progression of next steps, including for other services.

We also reached the end of the first term – and are now into the second – at Norfolk Island Central School under the Queensland education system. Queensland Department of Education staff will routinely visit the school each term, with a focus on learning and teaching, staff matters, IT and infrastructure.

Other Queensland officials will also visit the Island, as part of the ongoing service delivery support and development.

