



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Norfolk Island fire control

Exposure Draft – Norfolk Island Continued Laws Amendment (Fire Control) Ordinance 2022

August 2022

Have your say on updated fire control laws

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (the Department) is strengthening the *Fire Control Act (2000) (NI)* to improve community and environmental safety.

A draft of the Norfolk Island Continued Laws Amendment (Fire Control) Ordinance 2022 (the draft Ordinance) is now open for public comment.

Under the changes in the draft Ordinance, the existing fire permit system will be extended to give fire control officers more visibility of planned fires, helping them to plan for appropriate action.

The current permit system applies only during periods of acute fire danger declared by the Administrator, including days on which a total fire ban has been declared. Permits are not needed in any other circumstances, regardless of the local environmental conditions or type of fire activity being conducted.

As part of the proposed updates, the Chief Fire Control Officer will be able to declare total fire bans and fire danger periods, during which permits will be required to light most fires. Additionally, permits will be required year-round for fires to clear land, burn firebreaks, and burn large quantities of green waste.

The updates to the *Fire Control Act (2000) (NI)*, were commenced at the request of the Chief Fire Control Officer in 2020, after a dry summer period and ongoing reduced water availability on the island. Following the release of a consultation paper in 2020, the Norfolk Island community shared their views on this issue during two face-to-face community consultation sessions hosted by the Administrator of Norfolk Island, Mr Eric Hutchinson, in March 2021.

Attendees broadly agreed further controls on burning should be introduced, and that regulation and education would be beneficial for the health of the community, visitors and the island environment.

The proposed ordinance will also update language, modernise penalty provisions, increase deterrents and extend the term of the Chief Fire Control Officer, to reduce administrative process.

How can you have your say?

It is important that local input and knowledge continue to inform legislation changes on Norfolk Island. The Department invites your comments on the exposure draft by Sunday, 4 September 2022. You can send comments in writing by:

Email: NI_Legislation@infrastructure.gov.au

Hard copy: Leave your written comments at the Administrator's office, Norfolk Island, and they will be sent to the department.

The Department intends to publish all comments on this exposure draft, unless the comment is confidential or contains other information that is not suitable to publish. We will publish your name and any organisation you represent, but we will not publish any personal contact details such as your private email address or your residential address.

If you would like part or all of your comment, including your name, to remain confidential, please indicate this clearly in your correspondence. Automatically generated statements in an email are not sufficient. Confidential comments will be kept securely and will only be disclosed to third parties where authorised or required by law.

Privacy notice

The Department will use the personal information it collects in this consultation only for the purpose of the development of this Ordinance, including where we may wish to communicate with you about your comment or about the draft legislation more generally.

Even if a comment is not marked confidential, we may not publish sensitive information or personal information, including information which may be used to identify a person other than the author of the submission or a group of people. This is in accordance with our obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

The Department's privacy policy contains information about how to access and/or seek correction of personal information we hold and how complaints may be made. The Privacy Officer can be contacted by email at privacy@infrastructure.gov.au or on +61 2 6274 6495.