



Norfolk Island education services

Transition issues and information #3

November 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

These Frequently Asked Questions will be continuously updated as more information becomes available, so make sure you check back regularly to find the most up-to-date answers.

Where are you up to with transitioning essential services for Norfolk Island?

The Australian Government is committed to providing stability to the Norfolk Island community through a long-term partnership that delivers state services, to a standard comparable to similar communities on the mainland.

On 26 October 2021, it was announced the Australian and Queensland governments had signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to support the provision of Queensland services to Norfolk Island when current arrangements with the New South Wales Government cease on 31 December 2021.

Under the IGA, Queensland will operate the Norfolk Island Central School (NICS).

The Australian and Queensland governments are working together to finalise the associated Education Service Delivery Schedule. Discussions are already well under way between the Australian, Queensland, and New South Wales (NSW) governments to support transitional arrangements for operation of NICS.

Officials from the Queensland Department of Education visited Norfolk Island in late October and early November to support scoping and planning. Further visits will occur in coming weeks as transition planning continues.

All governments are committed to working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements for NICS.

The Australian Government will continue to update the Norfolk Island community, including the school community, as transitional arrangements for NICS progress.

What is happening with the Norfolk Island Central School curriculum?

Student outcomes and certainty for students are key priorities for all governments. The Australian Government's contract with the NSW Education Standards Association to license the NSW curriculum for 2022 to 2023 is close to being finalised. Current Year 10 and 11 students have been advised that they will be able to complete the NSW Higher School Certificate in 2022 and 2023. The licensing arrangement will ensure the senior school cohort are not disadvantaged while transition arrangements to Queensland operating the Norfolk Island Central School from January 2022 are implemented.

When will lower secondary students be able to select their subjects and what will be offered?

All students should proceed with subject selection for 2022, based on current offerings and subjects.

What size classes will be offered at NICS in 2022?

Once enrolment numbers for NICS are known, class sizes will be established. No eligible student will be denied attendance at NICS due to class size requirements.

What information is currently available to parents about 2022?

NICS has been advised they should operate under normal processes and subject selection for 2022 can now proceed.

An intention to enrol form is now available to support the usual planning process at NICS.

No eligible student will be denied attendance at NICS due to class size requirements.

The Australian Government has confirmed funding arrangements will be in place over the transition period. Funding to NICS will remain stable and responsive to the ongoing needs of the school.

Further information will be provided to the NICS community as it is available.

Who is responsible for the effective transition of education services?

The Australian Government is wholly responsible for the provision of essential services to Norfolk Island including education services.

All governments are committed to working collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to new arrangements for NICS.

When are we going to know how the transition will work?

Transition planning is already well underway. Now the IGA is signed with the Queensland Government, we anticipate being able to provide more information on transition arrangements progressively over the coming weeks.

Have you confirmed future staffing arrangements for Norfolk Island Central School?

Discussions are progressing in relation to employment arrangements at NICS in 2022. These include development of a process for existing staff to express an interest in continued employment at NICS.

A weekly Teachers' Consultative Committee was established in September 2021 to advance discussions on employment arrangements. Its membership includes representatives from NICS, NSW Teachers Federation, Queensland Teachers Union, NSW Department of Education, Queensland Department of Education, the Norfolk Island Administrator and the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

Queensland Department of Education officials visited the island in October to meet with NICS teaching staff, prior to the IGA being signed.

Building on the general information already received from the NSW Department of Education, a HR specialist met with individual teachers to understand their specific circumstances and provide initial information on employment related matters to ensure any future offer of employment captures unique circumstances for each individual teacher.

Further visits by Queensland Department of Education officers, including HR representatives will take place in the coming weeks.

All parties are committed to exploring options for teachers who wish to remain at NICS, to ensure they are no worse off as a result of the transition.

The NSW Department of Education (NSW DoE) is providing weekly updates to the NICS teaching workforce.

NSW DoE has now provided all NSW teachers working at NICS with individual written advice on their entitlements should they choose to return to work in NSW or remain working at NICS in 2022. NSW DoE has also established virtual sessions so that each staff member can talk to an HR expert about their own individual circumstances.

NSW DoE employed NICS staff will continue to have access to information and support through:

- EDConnect, the department's contact centre for Human Resources, Finance, Procurement and Student Management and Wellbeing: call 1300 323 232
- 24-hour access to the Employee Assistance Program (Converge International) for health and wellbeing support: email customerservice@convergeintl.com.au or call 1800 060 650
- other wellbeing resources through the department's Being Well program.

What about the clerical and support staff?

At this time there are no proposed changes to the current contractual dates of individual staff with the Australian Government.

All arrangements with Effective People will continue until 30 June 2022.

The Australian Government is currently working through options for ancillary staff employment arrangements post- June 2022.

There is no intention to put existing ancillary staff through recruitment processes to continue in their current roles from 1 January 2022 until 30 June 2022.

Ancillary staff are encouraged to accept the monthly check-in sessions with Effective People and to access the Employee Assistance Program provided through AccessEAP on 1800 818 728.

Can an additional role be created at the school to ensure a smooth transition?

The Australian Government will provide additional resources during the 2022 school year to support the transition to a new provider.

Sally Thompson, former Acting Principal at NICS is working remotely during Term 4 as Deputy Principal supporting the NICS senior leadership team in both operational tasks and the transition process.

Will there be any changes to funding throughout the transition period?

Existing funding arrangements for NICS will remain in place over the transition period. Funding will remain stable and responsive to the ongoing needs of the school. Purchasing can proceed as per the usual processes.

Will Norf'k language and culture studies continue after transition?

The Australian Government will ensure that arrangements for schooling in 2022 recognise the importance of Norf'k language and culture studies and provide for continued delivery of these studies at NICS.