



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Communications

Norfolk Island state services

Partnership with Queensland to deliver state services

October 2021

BACKGROUND

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring stable service delivery, strong regulatory frameworks and comparable rights and protections for the Norfolk Island community through long-term arrangements for provision of state-level services.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

The Australian Government and the Queensland Government have signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to support the provision of state services to Norfolk Island when the current arrangements with the New South Wales (NSW) Government cease on 31 December 2021.

Under the IGA, the Queensland Government will provide support and oversight of Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Services (NIHRACS) and operate the Norfolk Island Central School (NICS).

WHY DOES NORFOLK ISLAND NEED A STATE TO PROVIDE SERVICES?

State or territory government involvement is necessary to provide the legal and regulatory frameworks that support and underpin the delivery of essential services.

WHY ARE SERVICES CHANGING FROM NSW TO QUEENSLAND?

The current arrangements with NSW cease on 31 December 2021. The Australian Government is committed to establishing ongoing arrangements to provide Norfolk Island with comparable services as communities on mainland Australia, and Queensland has agreed to a partnership that will deliver benefits to the Norfolk Island community.

HOW WAS QUEENSLAND CHOSEN AS THE NEW STATE PARTNER?

The Australian Government recognises the Queensland Government has an extensive track record of delivering high-quality service to its community.

Queensland brings relevant capability and expertise to Norfolk Island service delivery. It has experience and demonstrated capability in delivering high-quality state services to remote and island communities

PLANNING FOR TRANSITION TO A NEW STATE SERVICES PARTNER

The continuity of essential services during transition is a key priority. The Australian Government is working closely with the Queensland and NSW governments on a smooth transition of services. Transition planning is already well progressed.

WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR THE COMMUNITY?

This agreement will provide stability for the community through a long-term partnership that will provide access to state service delivery arrangements.

The Government will continue to focus on delivery of the range of services, legislative and regulatory frameworks that apply on Norfolk Island. The Norfolk Island Act currently allows for the laws of NSW to apply, with most NSW law being suspended with the exception of those relating specifically to education and health. Amendments to the Act, introduced in 2020, allow for the laws of other states, such as Queensland, to apply.

The community will, over time, have greater access to services and extended protections through a comprehensive legislative regime.

WHAT ABOUT THE NORFOLK ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL?

The Norfolk Island Regional Council has an important ongoing role in the governance and administration of Norfolk Island.

The establishment of the new partnership between the Australian and Queensland governments is unrelated to the current temporary suspension and interim administration of the Council, and the Public Inquiry proceedings.

NEXT STEPS

Now the IGA is signed, the Australian, Queensland and NSW governments will continue to carefully plan the transition of services to minimise disruption to the Norfolk Island community. Finalisation of detailed Service Delivery Schedules for health and education is ongoing.