Norfolk Island Transition Assembly

Charter

Purpose

The Norfolk Island Transition Assembly (Transition Assembly) provides the community with a direct role in shaping a future governance model for Norfolk Island. Through five democratically elected representatives, the Transition Assembly will develop recommendations over a two-year period to inform the design and future establishment of the democratically elected Norfolk Island Assembly, established under primary legislation. The Charter sets out the role, priorities and guiding principles of the Transition Assembly.

The role

The Norfolk Island Transition Assembly is a non-statutory advisory body that will:

- develop recommendations on a future statutory governance framework for Norfolk Island, including the establishment of the Norfolk Island Assembly
- provide recommendations to inform primary legislative changes, including amendments to the *Norfolk Island Act 1979* and reinstatement of a preamble, and
- support a smooth transition to the future democratic governance model.

The Transition Assembly will comprise five elected members and will operate for an initial period of two years. Its role is advisory and focused on developing recommendations to the Australian Government.

The Transition Assembly does not exercise legislative, executive or regulatory powers.

The priorities

The Transition Assembly will propose a new bespoke local governance model and develop recommendations for new primary legislation that:

- build on the important work undertaken by the Norfolk Island Governance Committee
- support financially sustainable democratic governance on Norfolk Island
- provide a practical administrative model for local government-type services with modifications to reflect the distinct needs and context of Norfolk Island
- consider the existing administrative and service-delivery arrangements
- reflect community aspirations, including the clear preference for a primary legislative pathway
- are based on the Queensland local government model, with modifications to reflect the distinct needs and context of Norfolk Island, and
- maintain continuity of essential services during the transition and in the future governance model.

The principles

Any part of this Charter may be amended at the absolute discretion of the Minister with responsibility for Territories.

In developing its recommendations, the Transition Assembly will be guided by five principles:

- **Sustainability**: That governance arrangements are financially and administratively sustainable.
- **Consistency**: That recommendations build on the work of the Norfolk Island Governance Committee, are consistent with a Commonwealth legal framework, and are based on the Queensland local government model with modifications to reflect the distinct needs and context of Norfolk Island.
- **Practicality**: That recommendations are clear, outcome-focused, and feasible to implement.
- **Representation**: That the entire Norfolk Island community and its diversity of views is captured.
- **Continuity**: That existing legislative, governance and service delivery arrangements for Norfolk Island will continue unimpeded.

How the Transition Assembly will work

The Transition Assembly will:

- develop a workplan for its initial two years approved by the Minister for Territories
- work collaboratively with the community and key stakeholders
- provide regular opportunities for the Norfolk Island community to contribute to its work
- focus on practical outcomes that support sustainable governance and effective service delivery
- provide quarterly progress reports to the Minister through the Administrator of Norfolk Island
- deliver a Final Report containing recommendations for the future governance model, and
- propose a workplan for the second phase.

Matters outside the role

The Transition Assembly will not:

- exercise legislative powers or amend Commonwealth legislation
- administer government programs
- direct Commonwealth or State agencies
- revisit decisions already made by the Australian Government regarding governance reform
- recommend arrangements inconsistent with Australia's Constitutional framework.

The Transition Assembly's role is outcome focused and will inform the development of, not draft, legislation.

Membership eligibility

The Transition Assembly will have five members. To nominate, a person must:

- be at least 18 years of age
- be enrolled to vote on Norfolk Island in accordance with applicable election rules
- be Australian citizens, and
- have been ordinarily resident on Norfolk Island for at least 12 months before nomination.

Operational timeline for the Norfolk Island Transition Assembly

Phase	Indicative timing	Activity	
Phase 1 – Establish Transition Assembly and deliver recommendations			
1. Transition Assembly begins	Month 0	**Norfolk Island Transition Assembly begins** The first stage is the election of a five-member Transition Assembly to develop recommendations over two years on the future statutory governance framework.	
2. Initial workplan confirmed	Months 1-3	**Transition Assembly submits workplan for Minister's approval** The workplan sets out quarterly focus areas for the first two years.	
3. Initial workplan progressed	Months 4-24	**Transition Assembly progresses work** Work progresses and the Transition Assembly develops recommendations. Quarterly reports to the Minister include draft recommendations for consideration. Draft recommendations are refined through Ministerial feedback.	
4. Final report delivered	By end Year 2	**Transition Assembly produces Final Report** Full suite of recommendations is provided in a Final Report to the Minister for Territories for approval.	
Phase 2 – Support the implementation of new Norfolk Island statutory body			
5. Second-phase workplan confirmed and progressed	After Year 2	**Minister considers Final Report** Final recommendations are considered and agreed by Minister for Territories.	**Transition Assembly develops a second-phase workplan** Focuses on how to support the transition to a statutory body, including new supporting administrative body
		Commonwealth drafts legislation Final recommendations inform primary legislation for the Norfolk Island Assembly and reinstatement of a preamble. Consultation on draft legislation occurs through Australian Government legislative drafting processes, with community engagement opportunities communicated as the process progresses.	**Transition Assembly builds capacity** Development and implementation of: • Training program • Capacity building to meet expectations for future statutory Assembly member qualifications and skills • Collaboration with Norfolk Island Regional Council
		Commonwealth introduces legislation to Parliament Final legislation approved by Minister and Prime Minister and introduced to Parliament. Legislation debated and considered by Parliament.	**Transition Assembly supports shift to permanent Norfolk Island Assembly**
6. Commencement	Commencement date set by legislation	**Legislation passed and enacted**	**Norfolk Island Assembly commences**