



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

NORFOLK ISLAND reform update

Message from the Administrator

The transition year to a stronger and more economically sustainable Norfolk Island has begun. We are developing a plan to build resilience and community well-being using professional advice and ongoing community interaction.

The interim Advisory Council will be critical to understanding community ambitions and concerns as we plan this future. Executive Director Peter Gesling is also settling into his new role on Norfolk Island. Mr Gesling will be using his many decades of experience to build a new public service structure to transition staff from the Administration of Norfolk Island to the Norfolk Island Regional Council.

In his recent visit here, Assistant Minister Jamie Briggs made it clear the role for the Australian Government to manage and deliver local services on Norfolk Island will diminish. There will be less intervention by the end of this transition year than there has been over the past few years when the fading financial position of Norfolk Island demanded direct Commonwealth involvement. The election of the new Regional Council next year will provide local governance for the Norfolk Island community, while providing new services, new benefits and maintaining important cultural traditions.

In the meantime I invite you to provide your views on the long term vision which should guide planning for the future. What sort of Norfolk Island do we want twenty years from now? We need to be bold. We need to have a vision which challenges us. Please send in your views to the Advisory Council or directly to me.

The Hon Gary Hardgrave

Assistant Minister's Visit

The Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, Jamie Briggs, visited Norfolk Island on 30 June to meet with local business owners and community leaders to discuss the reforms and to meet the Advisory Council ahead of its first meeting.

The Assistant Minister also met with the Chair of the Council of Elders, Albert Buffett to clear up concerns about cultural practices being impacted by the reforms.

During the Assistant Minister's visit, he announced a footpath project to be delivered and paid for as part of the Australian Government's infrastructure plan for Norfolk Island. The new footpath will be wide enough to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to share the pathway and add greater accessibility and safety to pedestrians with prams, electric scooters and the elderly.

The Australian Government has set aside \$13.5 million over the next four years for infrastructure upgrades in addition to the \$13 million committed to the Cascade Pier.

Supporting growth and economic prosperity for Norfolk Island



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Since announcing the reforms, the Australian Government has commissioned a number of studies into community and economic issues: options for improved mobile technology; a roads infrastructure plan; health services plan; and an economic development strategy.

The Assistant Minister visited the upgrade site at Cascade Pier. The Pier represents an important link for goods and services from the mainland and other destinations, and holds cultural and economic significance for Norfolk Island.

Assistant Minister Jamie Briggs also visited the Australian Government Information Centre where over 400 people have visited since it opened on 9 June.



Left to right: Peter Gesling, Lorraine Macari, the Hon Gary Hardgrave, Assistant Minister Jamie Briggs and Melissa Ward at the Information Centre.

The Centre's work to provide information and assistance to the community to support a smooth transition to the mainland arrangements plays an important role in the reforms and is making a difference to the community.

The Assistant Minister restated the Australian Government's commitment to stability for the community and economic and growth prosperity for Norfolk Island.

He also outlined the importance of businesses and the community engaging with the Advisory Council,

Administrator and Executive Director on the model of the Regional Council, concerns regarding the reforms and actions for economic growth.

2015-16 Financial Year

1 July 2015 was the start of the new financial year which runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. The financial year is used to report your annual income to the Australian Taxation Office.

While the Norfolk Island reforms do not start until 1 July 2016, it is a good idea to keep track of your income and expenses now.

Keeping track can help you to better estimate your income for 2016-17 and any tax you might need to pay, including the Medicare levy surcharge. This will also help you if you choose to test your eligibility for Australian Government payments and services.

Note - Norfolk Island residents will not pay any tax on income earned on Norfolk Island this financial year.

Reduced fuel and power prices has positive impact on savings

You should have noticed the price of petrol has been lower over the last week. Lower supply prices for fuel have led to savings, which are being passed onto the retailers. On 1 July 2015, the wholesale price of unleaded petrol fell by \$0.18 to \$1.85 per litre and by \$0.23 to \$1.84 per litre for diesel.

Due to the lower diesel costs, electricity tariffs will also be lower at \$0.62 per kWh. These lower prices will provide savings for individuals and businesses.

These prices will remain in place until October 2015 when the next fuel shipment is due to arrive. Prices may change after the next shipment as a result of external factors, such as the exchange rate for the Australian dollar and the crude oil price.





Your feedback is important to me.

If you have a question about changes that commence from 1 July 2016, you can confidentially contact my Office.

You are also encouraged to contact my Office if you have any topics you would like to see in future editions of this newsletter.

✉ Office.administrator@infrastructure.gov.au

Free immunisation programme continues

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community.

The Rotary Club of Norfolk Island has provided funding support for the immunisation programme in recent years. Rotary Club's dedication and hard work has provided Norfolk Island children with access to protection against many of the world's most infectious diseases.

The hospital is continuing the free immunisation programme for all children who are normally residents on the Island.

Since 1 July 2015, the hospital is now fully funding immunisations for children aged between 12 months and 15 years, while the Administration of Norfolk Island will continue to fully fund immunisations for children up to twelve months.

Immunisation protects more than just one child's health. When levels of immunisation in a community are sufficiently high, the risk of specific diseases can fall so low that even those who are too young or too sick to be given a vaccine will not be exposed to it. This communal or 'herd immunity' can save lives.

Parents are encouraged to check their children's immunisation record and make appointments at

the Hospital to stay up to date. Immunisation is one of the best ways to protect yourself, your children and safeguard the health of future generations.

Further information about immunisation can be found at www.immunise.health.gov.au

Did you know – Tax File Numbers

It's a good idea to get a tax file number (also known as a TFN) before the Australian tax system comes into effect on 1 July 2016.

You don't have to have a TFN, but without one you pay more tax. You also won't be able to apply for government benefits, lodge your tax return electronically or get an Australian business number.

What is a tax file number?

Your TFN is your personal reference number in the tax and super systems. TFNs are issued by the Australian Taxation Office, and used to identify your tax records. It's important to keep your TFN secure.

Everyone has a different TFN. Your TFN is yours for life, even if you haven't used it for many years, change jobs, go overseas or change your name.

If you are running a business you may need a separate TFN as well as other registrations. We will provide more information on how to apply for a business TFN over the coming months.

How do I apply for a Tax file number?

You can apply for a TFN by visiting the Office of the Administrator and completing a form. You should bring one original primary proof of identity document, such as a birth certificate, passport or Australian citizenship certificate, and two secondary documents, such as a drivers licence, marriage certificate, or bank statement.

If you're not sure if you have a TFN, or have lost it, you can submit the application form to find out your TFN.



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Introducing Peter Gesling, Executive Director of Norfolk Island

Earlier this month, Peter Gesling started as the Executive Director of Norfolk Island.

Peter has widespread experience in local government with over 30 years' experience in NSW local governments. He is well positioned to strengthen local service delivery and to manage the public service restructure to ensure a smooth transition to the Regional Council.



Peter Gesling

Peter's immediate goals are to prepare a model which identifies functions to be part of a future Norfolk Island Regional Council. Together with the Norfolk Island Administrator and Advisory Council, Peter will also develop a project plan to deploy all services to respective providers (federal, state, local and non-government organisation sectors).

Peter's strengths include the ability to listen and work with stakeholders to create connected communities. He has had an extraordinary career, serving a range of communities in rural and regional NSW. This has included public and private sector experience with projects in the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Sudan.

Peter's first impression is he is working with resilient people with a proud heritage and strong traditions and culture.

He is also taken with the picturesque Island, particularly the stunning landscapes and seascapes.

Peter's partner Susan has also come to the Island and both are encouraging their children and grandchildren to experience this beautiful place.

Peter Gesling has strong interests in heritage, oral and family history, sport and coaching and mentoring. He is currently the Chair of the Newcastle Airport Board.

Over the next twelve months Peter will work closely with the Chief Executive Officer of the Administration, Jon Gibbons, the Norfolk Island public service and the community to transition the Administration of Norfolk Island to a Regional Council.



You may have heard ...

"There is already a footpath from the school to Channer's Corner, so why is the Australian Government building another footpath?"

Although there is a footpath between the school and Channer's Corner, a new footpath from Channer's Corner to the shopping village is being constructed to improve safety and accessibility for pedestrians with prams, electric scooters and the elderly.

Importantly, this shared footpath will also create a safe walkway for pedestrians, particularly school children, walking to and from Burnt Pine.

To date, community funding and volunteer efforts in developing the existing footpath have made an important contribution to pedestrian safety.

