



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Communications**

# 2019 Norfolk Island Health Service Plan

## Stakeholder consultation feedback report

May 2020

## Purpose of the feedback report

The Australian Government recognises the importance of having safe and quality health services on Norfolk Island that are delivered at levels commensurate to those provided in remote mainland communities. The existing health facility on Norfolk Island had been identified as being overdue for replacement and inadequate to deal with the needs of Norfolk Island's ageing population.

In 2018, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the department) engaged KPMG to review the 2015 Norfolk Island Health Service Plan to determine the types of health and aged care services that may be required, and can be safely and sustainably delivered, as part of the process to develop a capital works business case for the planning and design of a new Multipurpose Health Service Facility (MPS).

In December 2018 and February 2019, community consultation sessions were held on Norfolk Island to gather qualitative data from the community on their views and recent experiences regarding health services. Qualitative data from the consultation sessions, quantitative data on Norfolk Island death rates, self-reported health status, and use of health services, as well as research on the genetic impacts for population health, informed the 2019 Draft Norfolk Island Health Service Plan (the 2019 Plan) outlining future service and infrastructure requirements.

On 28 November 2019, the 2019 Draft Plan was released for public consultation, with consultation concluding on 31 March 2020. Consultation sessions were held on Norfolk Island from 2 to 5 March 2020 to:

- brief stakeholders on the 2019 Draft Plan;
- demonstrate that stakeholder themes from previous rounds of consultation have been appropriately reflected in the 2019 Draft Plan; and
- answer any questions related to the 2019 Draft Plan.

Consultation was undertaken in the form of phone consultations with some stakeholders ahead of the visit to Norfolk Island, as well as targeted individual and group face-to-face meetings and community drop-in sessions on Norfolk Island.

This report summarises feedback received on the 2019 Draft Plan from the eight written submissions received and 53 participants directly engaged in the consultation process. This feedback report has been developed in alignment with the Norfolk Island Community Engagement Framework which was agreed upon by the department and the Norfolk Island community in 2019.

This feedback has been used to finalise the 2019 Norfolk Island Health Service Plan (the final 2019 Plan).

The Administrator and the department appreciate the time and effort of individuals, organisations and the community in preparing submissions and attending consultation meetings.

## Summary of key messages from the consultations and written submissions

During 2 to 5 March 2020, 10 meetings, representing 34 individuals and/or organisations were held, as well as themed community topic group sessions that were attended by 19 people. The participants represent 3.77 per cent of the Norfolk Island adult population.

A summary of the themes expressed by stakeholders during consultation follows.

### The Norfolk Island context

Stakeholders agreed that Norfolk Island has a unique culture, heritage and isolated geography, but is not necessarily rural and remote. Stakeholders suggested that the new MPS facility should be called hospital and that renaming the MPS would make it easier to attract clinicians to work on Norfolk Island.

### Ageing in place

Stakeholders commented that ability to age in place and palliate on Norfolk Island would allow for cultural and heritage connections to be retained. The ability to palliate and die on Norfolk Island has been difficult for community members due to the lack of continuity of care in the primary healthcare setting and a lack of appropriate pharmaceuticals on Norfolk Island. The expense of returning people to Norfolk Island after they die on the mainland was noted. Other stakeholders noted the pharmacist has access to appropriate pharmaceuticals for palliative care. Stakeholders commented that appropriate health services and supports would be required to enable ageing and palliating on Norfolk Island.

### Travelling for planned care

Stakeholders noted there is a significant cost, dislocation and stress associated with travel or planned and emergency care to the mainland. Stakeholders noted the Norfolk Island Patient Travel Accommodation and Assistance Scheme (NIPTAAS) was difficult to understand when seeking a reimbursement. Stakeholders would like to see a better networked service that was integrated with mainland service providers for when travel to the mainland was required. The inability to access mainland education while receiving health treatment on the mainland was also raised by stakeholders.

### Operating in a networked context

Stakeholders commented there was a need for the community's needs to be safely met and that this would be achieved through the integration of health, community, aged care and emergency services. Stakeholders appreciated that the 2019 Draft Plan acknowledged that health services need to be networked to sustainably deliver safe and quality health services on Norfolk Island.

Stakeholders commented on the recent challenges face by a wide range of hospital and health services in responding to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and the isolation of Norfolk Island. Stakeholders considered that a designated quarantine area within the new MPS, that is formally networked to a higher level service provider to access specialist support and advice, is required.

### Continuity of care

Stakeholders commented there was a need for greater continuity of care to support the delivery of quality, patient-centred care and to encourage community members, particularly the elderly, to engage with the health services on Norfolk Island.

## Opportunity for training generalist clinicians

Stakeholders appreciated the 2019 Draft Plan included a reference to the requirement for a partnership with a mainland health service provider. They noted that the delivery of health services in a new facility will support:

- opportunities for healthcare providers in mainland Australia to train as generalists in responding to the healthcare needs to remote and isolated populations
- training and supervising local clinicians and clinical support services on Norfolk Island
- a pipeline of suitably skilled and experienced clinicians to meet the need on Norfolk Island
- positioning Norfolk Island as an important part of the training rotation for clinicians seeking to work in rural, remote and isolated settings
- telehealth support from an Australian mainland provider.

Many stakeholders noted the importance of having a pipeline of appropriately skilled general practitioners as well as nurses, allied health and community health service providers.

## Clinical and corporate governance

Stakeholders appreciated the inclusion of the governance process proposed in the 2019 Draft Plan to periodically review the community's health needs and health service requirement. Stakeholders also agreed with the need to provide community input into the terms of reference and identify the subset of health services that a periodic review would focus on.

A number of stakeholders also pointed out the clinical governance for future health services delivered on Norfolk Island should consider the linkages with not only a tertiary provider on the mainland, but also the formal networked arrangements with other support services, for example ambulance, allied health and community service providers.

## Birthing services

A number of stakeholders stressed the cultural importance of having children born on Norfolk Island, particularly by women, or those whose partners are of Pitcairn descent. Stakeholders commented on the ability for women who have been identified as being in a low risk birthing category, to give birth on Norfolk Island. Stakeholders also commented on the need to develop the capacity to offer birthing services, including caesareans on the Island.

## Surgical services

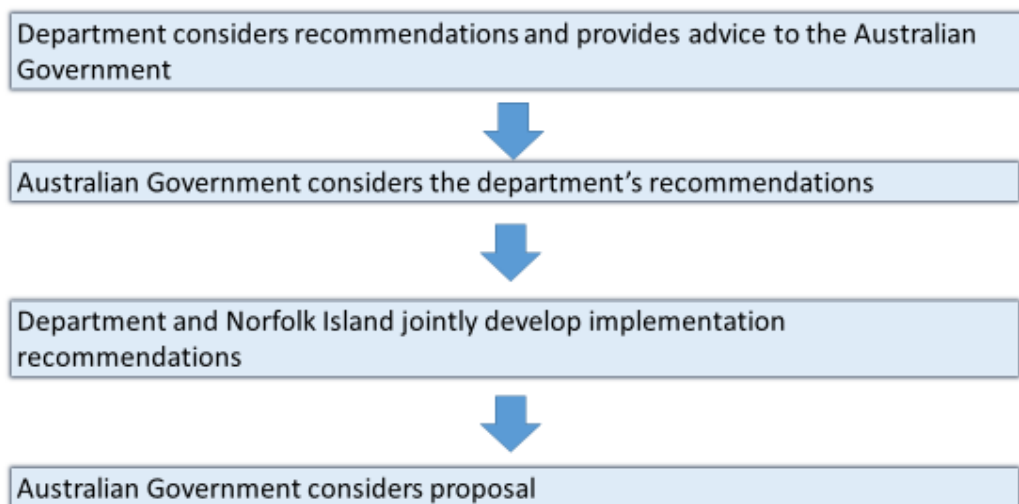
Some stakeholders commented that a Level 2 surgical service would be inadequate due to Norfolk Island's remoteness and potential delays to flights. Stakeholders acknowledged that a Level 2 surgical service would enable some emergency surgical services to be performed on Norfolk Island as well as treating elderly people who would prefer to receive their treatment on Norfolk Island.

## Next steps

The final 2019 Plan recommends establishing a clinical advisory panel, consisting of medical experts and members of the Norfolk Island community, who will make future recommendations to the department on the delivery of health services. The final 2019 Plan also recommends exploring the options to develop a family centred model for on and off Norfolk Island maternity services.

The department is considering the recommendations and will engage with the Norfolk Island community using the community engagement framework.

Further updates will be provided via the *Norfolk Islander*, Norfolk Online News and the department's website.



## Stakeholders consulted on Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island Administrator
The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Service (NIHRACS)
Allied Health Services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Norfolk Inc</li> <li>• Anglicare</li> <li>• Breast Screening Service</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Mental Health Awareness Group</li> <li>• Hettae Ucklan</li> <li>• Hospital Auxiliary Group</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Assisting Those in Need (NATIN)</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Community and Consultative Committee</li> <li>• Health &amp; Wellbeing Advisory Sub-Committee</li> <li>• Life without Barriers</li> <li>• ASPECT</li> <li>• People Plus</li> </ul>
First responders and emergency management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St John's Ambulance Norfolk Island</li> <li>• Emergency Management Norfolk Island (EMNI)</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Volunteer Rescue Squad</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Police Force</li> <li>• Norfolk Island Fire Service</li> <li>• Red Cross Norfolk Island</li> </ul>
Community service organisations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lions Club</li> <li>• Rotary</li> <li>• Probus</li> <li>• Quota</li> <li>• Mens Shed</li> <li>• Club L</li> <li>• Women's Advocacy Group on Norfolk Island (WAGNI)</li> </ul>
Norfolk Island Chamber of Commerce
Councillors of the Norfolk Island Regional Council
Norfolk Island Council of Elders
Norfolk Island Child Services (NI Connect)
General Manager and Senior Management of the Norfolk Island Regional Council
Topic group discussions with community members on Norfolk Island
Education sector stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norfolk Island Central School teaching cohort</li> <li>• Banyan Park Early Learning Centre Committee</li> </ul>
Written submissions: Eight received