



MEDIA RELEASE

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MANAGING CATTLE GRAZING ON NORFOLK ISLAND TO ENHANCE WATER QUALITY

A project funded through the Australian Government's Our Marine Parks Grants program is underway, reviewing livestock grazing practices on public land across Norfolk Island, with the goal of enhancing water quality.

The project aims to reduce livestock-related impacts on waterways, wetlands, and erosion-prone areas, while maintaining the carrying capacity of public land and improving livestock health and productivity.

The Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC), the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA), and the Norfolk Island National Park, are collaborating through a joint project working group to identify priority areas for protection from cattle grazing impacts along with less sensitive public areas that could potentially be grazed. There is also representation from the Norfolk Island Cattle Association (NICA) on the project working group.

Through improved grazing management practices, the project aims to improve water quality in waterways that flow into the Norfolk Marine Park, including Watermill and Town Creek.

These creeks run through the KAVHA catchment and directly into the Emily and Slaughter Bay Lagoon reef system at the Emily Bay outlet, with poor water quality in these two creeks recognised as a major threat to the health of Emily and Slaughter Bay reef.

Water quality in Norfolk Island's creeks and wetlands is poor, with high nutrient levels from various sources, including poorly managed human wastewater from outdated household septic systems and unrestricted cattle grazing around waterways and wetlands in some areas.

Additionally, increased sediment loads from erosion and pugging (or soil disturbance) caused by cattle grazing around waterways contribute to the poor water quality.

Agronomists will be visiting Norfolk Island this month to assess areas of public land that are currently grazed, as well as less sensitive areas that are not grazed but could be.

Working with project partners, they will explore approaches to improving weed control, pasture quality, soil chemistry, and grazing management to potentially increase carrying capacity and overall productivity, helping inform the development of a Norfolk Island Public

Land Grazing Management Strategy. This plan will explore sustainable ways to increase productivity and manage grazing in areas away from watercourses, wetlands, and steep areas where cattle grazing does not impact water quality.

The agronomists will also recommend additional actions that cattle owners can take to improve the health and productivity of roadside cattle. Pasture management and the control of noxious weeds on grazed public land will be considered as part of this effort.

It is expected that significant improvements in the management of livestock grazing on public land across Norfolk Island will result from the Norfolk Island Grazing Management Project.

Additionally, the project seeks to enhance water quality in waterways flowing into the Norfolk Marine Park, including Watermill and Town Creek, which both pass through the KAVHA World Heritage Site and into the Emily and Slaughter Bay Lagoonal reef system at the Emily Bay outlet.

The Our Marine Parks Grant Program, managed by Parks Australia, is investing in the long-term health of Australia's Marine Parks – with Council's cattle grazing project helping to reduce the negative impacts of livestock on waterways, wetlands, and erosion-prone areas, while supporting livestock health and productivity.

For more information about this project please contact Manager of Planning and Environment, Tara Patel via Customer Care on 22001 or local freecall 0100.

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