



MEDIA RELEASE

NORFOLK ISLAND FOOD SECURITY

Norfolk Island has seen land under cultivation significantly decrease over the last decades. This has put a strain on the remaining food producers, and increased reliance on importation. Recent months have really brought home that the Island can face food scarcity. The development of a Food Security Strategy by NIRC will provide a framework to direct policy and investment into Norfolk Island's food and agricultural sector, to improve access to a greater range of local food products for the community. The goal is to create a well-functioning community food system, where food production, processing, distribution and waste disposal are all integrated to enhance the health of the people, land stewardship and environmental, economic and social outcomes.

NIRC's approach has been to encourage community leadership. A group of like-minded people has met regularly to discuss how the goal could be achieved. It has shown strong interest from the people of Norfolk Island in sustainable food and regenerative farming. Encouraging backyard gardens, farming under-utilised land to supply fresh produce, trialling different regenerative farming techniques and crops that enhance soil biology, agrobiodiversity and ecological processes, sharing the wealth of knowledge present on the Island, forming a Norfolk Island Food and Farming Alliance – these are some of the objectives stated by the group. Possibly establishing a multi-stakeholder food Co-op as a business structure for food growers and the community to collectively strengthen the local food system, if this is an avenue the community wants to pursue.

To inform this process, a land capability assessment for agriculture is underway. Assessing the land suitability (amongst other variables) is a pre-requisite to inform and guide agricultural expansion and sustainable production. Mr Jason Lynch, senior agronomist at Pinion Advisory will be on Island this coming week to undertake this assessment and meet with the community.

A public meeting is planned for Friday 10 June, at 5:30 PM at the Rawson Hall (Supper Room) for anyone interested to hear and contribute to the above.

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