

MEDIA RELEASE

May 9, 2024

DRAFT 2024-25 OPERATIONAL PLAN AND BUDGET FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION AND FEEDBACK

You are invited to provide feedback on Council's Draft 2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget.

The Draft Operational Plan 2024-25 is now presented for public consultation, with written submissions accepted until **4.00pm on Friday 14 June 2024**. The community is encouraged to read the plan and Budget and provide a written response submission to Council by email or mail.

Draft 2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget

I am pleased to present the Draft 2024-25 Operational Plan for NIRC for the consideration of the community. This is my fifth Operational Plan as General Manager, and the last one under Administration. During this time, we have taken the Council from a parlous financial state to one that is financially sustainable for the future governance model for the community. Under Administration we have achieved the following:

- A financially sound organisation achieving the unrestricted cash targets identified from the External Audit work of Grassroots.
- A complete governance and risk framework of policy, procedure, reporting transparency, and operational systems ready for a new governance model.
- A state-of-the-art government building to operate in Burnt Pine to allow future employees a safe and clean work environment.
- A pathway to renewable energy with the installation of over 800 solar panels and nearly 4 megawatts of battery storage.
- A green fleet of vehicles to promote the use of renewable energy compared to fossil fuels.
- A new airport runway to allow the lifeline of tourism and community movement to and from Norfolk.
- A new Telecom Satellite solution that allows locals to connect easily to the outside world.
- A new lighterage solution that meets current marine safety operations.
- A new waste management solution that has reduced landfill by up to 75% and stopped disposal into the marine park.

As the decision has been made to replace the Council model with a new bespoke governance arrangement from December 2024, the 2024-25 Operational Plan has been prepared on the basis that as an interim solution for the local community, the Council model will continue until such time as a final decision has been made by the Minister, and the Department of Infrastructure can implement the changes required. This Operational Plan represent primarily business as usual for the organisation, with little to no new initiatives to deliver during the 12-month period.

As such the following changes are built into the draft plan as follows:

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- A rate revenue increase of 6.25% which is based on a 5% increase in employee costs and 1.25% RPI increase to meet cost changes for the past 12 months.
 - Fees & Charges have been increased where possible (those that aren't regulated or fixed) by 10%.
 - Increase in operational costs of 10%.
 - A vacancy rate of 7% is set within the budget to manage the decrease in cash flow from nearly one third of ratepayers electing to no longer pay their rates. This will see a decrease in the number of employees longer term at Council.
 - A surplus operating budget of \$500K is presented.

This is a “no-frills” operational plan as compared to the previous 4 years, and one that has consolidated the great work that has transpired under Administration. I invite the community to consider the Draft as presented.

Andrew Roach
GENERAL MANAGER

DRAFT DOCUMENTS AND SUBMISSIONS

The draft 2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget can be accessed on Council's website at the following link:

<https://www.nirc.gov.au/documents-public-exhibition>

A hard copy is available for inspection at Council's Customer Care and the Library.

Written submissions must be received by 4.00 pm on Friday 14 June 2024 by either of the following methods:

Email: customercare@nirc.gov.nf
Subject Heading: Draft 2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget

By mail: Draft 2024-25 Operational Plan and Budget
General Manager
PO Box 95
NORFOLK ISLAND 2899

Public Access will be available with the Administrator on **Wednesday 26 June 2024** (3.00pm to 7.00pm), and **Thursday 27 June 2024** (8.30am to 10.00am) if required, for up to 10 minutes available per person. If you would like to book a session, please contact Council by emailing customercare@nirc.gov.nf. The Council Administrator can also be contacted at any other time to discuss concerns, issues or general information through the same contact details.

more information contact comms@nirc.gov