

MEDIA RELEASE

August 29, 2024

NIRC PROGRESSES TRANSFER OF NORFOLK RADIO COMMUNITY BROADCASTING LICENCE

Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) will continue to consult with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to ensure the continuation of the community radio service on Norfolk Island while meeting legislative broadcasting requirements.

Radio Norfolk is a vital communications service for residents of the island, one that provides entertainment and information, including important community and emergency news. The station currently operates under a community broadcasting licence allocated to Council by the amendments made by Territories Legislation Amendment Act 2020 (Cth).

NIRC holds the licence for and owns the community radio station, however under current ACMA regulations, ownership of a broadcasting licence or radio station by a local government organisation is not permitted. Council's licence was extended to 16 June 2025 to enable Council to put the necessary transition and transfer arrangements in place to ensure Radio Norfolk can continue to lawfully operate.

In November 2023, NIRC issued an expression of interest calling for local community organisations interested in taking over the licence and broadcasting activities. Despite a wide-ranging advertising campaign both on and off the island, no applications were received, and Council officers have taken the next steps in the process to find a solution.

Following extensive consultation with AMCA over the past twelve months, Council is now pursuing the transfer of the community broadcasting licence from NIRC to Norfolk Island Radio (NIR), a public company limited by guarantee (CLG) to be managed by a board of directors representing the community's interests. An expression of interest calling for applicants for the director roles can now be viewed on Council's website under Tenders and EOIs, detailing the role, applicant criteria and the process for applying.

The appointment of suitable members of the local Norfolk Island community to NIR's Board of Directors is key to the transition and transfer arrangements. The presence of local community members on the Board of NIR is seen as critical to fully representing the local community's interests.

Council and NIR are currently working with ACMA to implement these arrangements. Subject to obtaining approval from ACMA, the transfer of the community broadcasting licence from Council to NIR and subsequent appointment of directors is hoped to occur in the coming months, to enable NIR to submit a licence renewal application to the ACMA by the deadline of 16 December 2024.

ENDS