

DECEMBER 2024



2024 - YEAR IN REVIEW

With just days left before we welcome in 2025, it's timely to look back across that past year to recognise some of the positive outcomes that have been achieved for our island community.

With challenges come innovations, and NIRC has had plenty of opportunity to find new ways of doing things that suit our local conditions.

We thanked Andrew Roach for his service to the island at the end of his tenure, with Philip Reid stepping up into the Acting General Manager role, and shortly afterwards a change in administration saw us farewell Mike Colreavy and welcome Scott Mason and Gary Mottau as the dual administrators to take us through the transition from regional council to Norfolk Island Assembly.

Their focus will be handing over a financially sustainable organisation to enable the best possible start to a new way of island governance,

reinstating a model that includes local representation in decision making for the community. Among highlights from the last twelve months are the following projects and activities:

Toon Trust Grants

Five applications for environmental projects under the Round 7 of the Ivens F (Toon) Buffett Environmental Trust were awarded in 2024.

The projects had a combined value of \$47,812 and included a broad range of activities across the island, all aimed at improving environmental outcomes for waterways, regeneration of nesting sites for wedge tailed shearwaters, weed control and revegetation, creation of leaky weirs and works to improve water quality, among others.

The calibre of applications clearly indicated the environmental ethos that exists within the community, a positive for Norfolk Island.

IN THIS EDITION

- *Water-wise campaign targets new residents*
- *Current tenders and EOIs*
- *Motoring reminders incl. ute tray back riding*

Launching of the Satellite Backhaul

In a partnership with Telstra and the satellite backhaul program, both Norfolk Island Central School and NIHRACS now have improved connectivity as part of a trial system which will be further investigated to find similar improvements for banking and other common services and needs. With speeds that are four times faster, students are able to access online study services, with increased bandwidth available for individual use both inside and outside of school hours for the community.

Final Design for Skatepark

The community had strong input into the design process for a skatepark for Norfolk Island, after architect and skateboarder Angus Thomas from CONVIC gathered feedback and ideas from three separate consultation events. More than sixty people participated in the two in-person workshops and one online survey. The final design will be used in the process of seeking funding for the construction of the community facility.

Wrapping up the EAF Program

The External Audit Findings (EAF) report, adopted in 2021, detailed over one hundred findings to be progressed by NIRC in the short to medium term. These EAF's covered items across Council's infrastructure program, including uncommon and financially risky arrangements for service provision by a local government body, such as airport management, delivery of electricity, telecommunications and community radio. In May 2024, Council adopted their final update and close out report on the completion of tasks, and referred the final twenty-one EAF's to the new governing body, once up and running.

Blasting of Youngs Quarry

In the later part of this year, blasting was carried out at Young's Quarry, recovering an estimated 13,500 tonnes of rock that will provide a valuable source of material for road works and other projects around the island. A tender for the removal and crushing of the rock has just been opened.

Ferny Lane Upgrade

A three-stage upgrade program for the reconstruction of Ferny Lane was recently completed, in conjunction with local contractors. Funding for Stage 1 (between Douglas Drive and the old Peters Highway) was provided through the Commonwealth Government Roads 2 Recovery (R2R) program, while works undertaken at the Ferny Lane - Country Lane - New Farm Road intersection were funded under Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP).

Transfer of the Community Radio Licence

To ensure continuation of the community radio station while also meeting legislative requirements, Council went through the rigorous process of applying for the transfer of the community broadcasting licence to a community-based organisation. The application was approved this month, and will be good news for Norfolk Island Radio and its newly appointed board, who oversee the management of the radio station.

Finalisation of Tourism Strategy

Following an in-depth community consultation process involving a series of five sessions of face-to-face interviews, two community workshops and detailed online surveys, the Tourism Strategy for 2024-2027 was presented to Council for endorsement in November. The strategy offers a clear pathway to sustained growth over the next three years.

TENDER - REMOVAL AND CRUSHING OF ROCK

Norfolk Island Regional Council is inviting Tender Responses from suitably qualified organisations to perform the removal and crushing of rock from Young's Quarry, Norfolk Island, in accordance with the Invitation to Tender documentation.

Tender responses are to be submitted by 4:00pm on 24 January 2025. Documentation may be downloaded from the [Tenders and EOIs page](#) of NIRC's website.

FRESH APPROACH TO TRANSITION PHASE

Newly appointed administrators for Norfolk Island Regional Council, Scott Mason and Gary Mottau, attended the December Council meeting as observers before diving into their roles.

Both administrators aim to keep the Minister and the Department informed about emerging and ongoing issues and community attitudes.

As Lead Administrator, local government veteran Scott Mason is taking a community-based approach to his role.

“My approach to building trust with the community is based on honest and meaningful communication from the start, developing relationships within the community to achieve the best outcomes for Norfolk Island.

“Gary and I have already met with some of the island’s local leaders and organisations, and we intend to continue to make further community connections, whether in person or through digital meetings,” he said.

“I believe my role is to strengthen the relationship between NIRC and the Norfolk Island community, and to prepare NIRC for transition out of administration.”

Gary Mottau, an experienced financial professional whose previous involvement with NIRC as an independent member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee provided him with key insights into the operational and financial workings of the organisation, understands the challenge ahead.



Incoming administrators Gary Mottau (left) and Scott Mason with Acting GM Philip Reid

“I’m excited and challenged by the opportunity the Minister has given me to work with the local community, Scott Mason, Phil Reid and his team to prepare NIRC for transition out of administration,” he said.

During their visit to Norfolk Island in early December, both Scott and Gary gained insights into the island’s natural beauty, history and culture. They also met with members of the community and intend to talk to as many organisations, businesses and individuals as possible over coming months.

MEET WITH THE ADMINISTRATORS

The community is invited to contact administrators, Scott Mason (Lead Administrator) and Gary Mottau (Financial Administrator) to arrange either an in-person meeting during their monthly visits, beginning in January 2025, coordinated around Council meeting dates, or online meetings via Teams by emailing council.administrator@nirc.gov.nf.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

We'd like to shout out to our incredible teams of volunteers who contributed so much time and energy in 2024 to important environmental issues, sat on advisory committees, regularly cleaned up the beach at Anson Bay, helped on community tree planting days and citizen science projects across the island. You are AMAZING and we place great value on your contributions - THANK YOU!

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CHARGES ON NORFOLK ISLAND

A Public Notice proposing amendments to fees and charges for the Electricity Daily Supply Charge and an Electricity Network Transition Charge closed on 12 December 2024.

Council only considers raising fees and charges for services in situations where it is financially necessary to do so. An important goal for NIRC is handing over a financially healthy budget to the Norfolk Island Assembly, and one way of achieving this is ensuring that our various business units are able to support their own operational costs.

Electricity is one area of service provision that NIRC treats as a business unit that must work towards a cost neutral operation, meaning it does not draw funds away from other Council services that are usually funded by general rates, fees and charges, or through government funding for specific projects.

Historically, the supply of electricity has run at a loss due to the significant cost of diesel, along with increasing operational costs. In the 2022/2023 financial year, diesel costs sat at \$3.5M, reducing to \$2.1 the following year.

This reduction resulted from increased solar installation. Forecasts suggest that the current financial year diesel costs will be around \$2.3M, which can be attributed to increases in fuel pricing.

Ongoing expenses such as depreciation costs, currently \$800K, and which cover electricity assets including cables, transformers and generators, materials, payroll and contractor costs are forecast to rise by around 3% in the coming year.

Managed billing services, initially a capital project expense, now fall under the operational budget, and these costs are to be met from ongoing revenue generated through the supply of electricity across the island, which means an adjustment of fees to ensure other council services are not impacted.

The Public Notice for proposed fee changes remained on Public Exhibition until 12 December and submissions received by this date will be considered by incoming Administrators, Scott Mason and Gary Mottau, before any action on the new charges is taken.

FESTIVE SEASON CLOSURES

For a [full listing of closures](#) over the Christmas - New Year period, click on the above link or head to Council News at the bottom of our homepage.

Wishing everybody a safe and happy Christmas.



EOI - INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF NIRC'S AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (ARIC)

Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) is seeking Expressions of interest (EOI) for the role of Independent Member (12-month remunerated term) for Council's Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

Through this EOI process, NIRC is looking to appoint a suitable candidate with the appropriate skills and experience for the recently available role on Council's ARIC being one (1) Independent Member.

The committee provides independent advice to the Council that is informed by the Council's internal audit and risk management activities and information and advice provided by staff, relevant external bodies and subject matter experts.

The objective of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee is to enhance the corporate governance of the Council through the provision of independent oversight, review and advice.

The Committee will assist the Council by providing independent assurance and assistance on the organisation's governance, audit, risk management, control and compliance frameworks.

We are looking for people with suitable knowledge, skills and experience to serve on ARIC for a term to 30 November 2025, following a member vacancy.

Anyone interested in applying should first read the information provided in the Information Packet and Terms of Reference.

Expression of Interest Information can be viewed [HERE](#).

Terms of Reference can be viewed [HERE](#).

Expression of Interest Queries

For any further information regarding this EOI, please contact Acting General Manager Phil Reid, Norfolk Island Regional Council on philip.reid@nirc.gov.nf or ARIC Chair Katie Sexton at katie.sexton@nirc.gov.nf.

Expressions of Interest close Wednesday, 15 January 2025.

EOI - ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER

No Expressions of Interest have been received for a member to fill a recent vacancy on the Road Safety Committee. The EOI closed 16 December 2024.

The EOI will be held over until the new year, with an extended closing date. More information will follow in late January 2025.

MOTORING REMINDERS

RIDING ON THE BACK OF UTES

During the holiday season, families and friends get together for fun and celebration. Make sure your family Christmas is a safe one for everybody whether you're out in or on the water or making memories around the island.

Riding in the back of utes is allowed on Norfolk Island, provided the following points are followed:

- Drivers must have a full Norfolk Island Driver's licence to carry passengers on a ute tray.
- Drivers must pass a short, written test indicating that they understand the rules that apply to transporting passengers on the back of a ute and have their driver's licence endorsed.
- Drivers must have ZERO blood alcohol when transporting passengers on a ute tray.
- Transport in a ute tray is limited to the hours of 6am to 8pm.
- A two-hour extension for these hours from 8 pm to 10pm has been approved in conjunction with NI Police for the purpose of families viewing Christmas lights around the island. The extension applies from 20 to 26 December 2024.
- Passengers must be at least 8 years of age to travel in a ute tray.
- The sides of the tray are closed and extend at least 150 millimetres above the floor of the tray.

The written test is available for completion at Customer Care and is free of charge.

On successful completion, the Registrar will provide an endorsement on your Norfolk Island driver's licence.

For any further enquiries about any of these motoring topics, please contact the staff at Customer Care on free call 0100, or email customercare@nirc.gov.nf



VEHICLE REGO AND LICENCES

Don't forget that Customer Care and the Registry office will be closed from 4pm Tuesday, 24 December 2024, re-opening Thursday, 02 January 2025.

Holders of Norfolk Island driver's licences or owners of motor vehicles are encouraged to check their expiry dates and renew their licence or vehicle registration before the holiday period, if required.

Motorists are reminded that vehicles no longer in use and/or have expired registrations should have their number plates removed and returned to Customer Care.

Number plates of unregistered vehicles remain the property of Council and retaining them attracts a fee equivalent to the registration amount.

Returned plates may be held for safe keeping by Customer Care for the customer if required, otherwise they will be made available for re-issue.

CAT TRAPPING - THE FACTS

Norfolk Islanders have made cats part of their households for generations, much-loved family members who often receive as much care and pampering as any child. Care and control of our furry friends is highly encouraged, particularly in light of the fragile native fauna that also calls Norfolk Island home.

By their very nature, cats are curious and playful, and guided by strong instincts. They are excellent hunters, stealthy and quiet, often killing not to eat, but purely through instinct. Whether feral or domestic, these feline qualities pose an enormous threat to nesting native seabirds, particularly at this time of year.

We've recently noticed an increase in the number of roaming cats, and "missing cat" posts on our social media feeds, with friends and family members concerned about pet disappearances. Following some of these posts of friends and family, we often see "dem-tull's" creeping into the dialogue and NIRC would like to address these, and hopefully ease the minds of our residents.

"NIRC is targeting, trapping and killing our cats"

Council has a long-standing Feral Cat Control program that was implemented to address an increase in feral and roaming cats having a direct impact on nesting bird numbers. The cat traps used by NIRC are basic bait and cage setups to ensure minimal ecological impact. They are installed in strategic locations such as reserves where evidence of bird kill has occurred, and locations where roaming cats have been seen.

The cages are checked frequently to ensure any domestic cats are returned to their owners and all successful cat trappings are logged and mapped. As part of the Feral Cat Control program, staff are directed to look for any signs of the cat being domestic, this can be temperament, collars or appearance. If there is ANY uncertainty, the cat is taken to the vet for identification. Only if we are completely confident the cat is feral is the animal euthanised.

Some of our staff have been approached by community members and accused of killing the cats that they capture. This is untrue and unfair. Staff who work in this area are also community members who sympathise with those whose pets have gone missing. If your cat is missing, our team is there to help wherever they can. If a cat is found in a Council trap, we take steps to ensure its return to its owner.

Advice

While we're happy to return domesticated cats, we want to minimise the need to. To reduce harm to native birds, cats should remain indoors whenever possible.

A few creative cat owners on the island have engineered enclosures that allow their cats to access the best of both worlds, and spend some time outside without causing a danger to native fauna.

We also are aware how elusive cats can be, so if your cat is an expert escape artist, a collar and microchip are your best protections.

In the end, all we want to ensure is the protection of Norfolk Island's unique and sensitive native fauna. The community's assistance in this is essential, as we're a small team with a passion for preservation and a large area to protect.

If you have any concerns, queries, or require assistance please feel free to reach out by contacting Douglas Donaldson, our Team Leader – Biodiversity, by emailing him at douglas.donaldson@nirc.gov.nf.



GENERAL COUNCIL NEWS

TOTAL FIRE BAN

The Chief Fire Control Officer has declared a total fire ban effective Monday 16 December 2024.

This action is only taken when the Chief Fire Control Officer is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so to protect life, property or the environment from fire, having regard to:

- the existence or likelihood of severe weather conditions conducive to the outbreak or spread of fire in the area; or
- the likelihood that a fire in the area could get out of control; or
- the number, nature or location of existing fires in the area; or
- insufficient resources being available to extinguish or prevent the outbreak or spread of fire in the area.

Please adhere to the fire ban while it is in place to ensure the safety of all on the island.

BULKY STEEL & CAR CRUSHER OUT OF ACTION

Due to a mechanical issue with the car crusher, we are unable to accept any bulky steel items or cars for crushing until parts have arrived and the equipment is functional again.

We apologise for any inconvenience this might cause.

Council Meeting Dates for 2025

Council meeting dates for 2025 are shown below, and details about meetings can be found on our website.

- 29 January
- 26 February
- 26 March
- 16 April
- 04 June
- 25 June
- 30 July
- 27 August
- 24 September
- 29 October
- 26 November
- 10 December

Meetings are held at Bicentennial Complex 39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine, Norfolk Island.

All meetings can also be viewed online with the live link provided on Council's Facebook page prior to the commencement of the meeting, and a recording is made available with the release of meeting minutes.

The meetings page can be found at: <https://www.nirc.gov.au/council-meetings>.



**TOTAL
FIRE BAN**

A total fire ban is in place for Norfolk Island from 16 December 2024 until further notice.

NORFOLK ISLAND
Regional Council



WATER-WISE CAMPAIGN TARGETS NEW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

NIRC has embarked on a campaign to highlight the importance of water conservation on the island, focusing on newer residents and visitors.

While long-term residents practice water saving habits as a matter of course, not everyone understands how precious our water supplies are.

A series of tips for being water-wise around the home has been developed for use on Council's social media and newsletter, along with flyers that are being distributed to accommodation providers, to be used as posters or in information packs for visitors (pictured).

As we enter the summer months and the potential for drier weather, the time is right for keeping people up to date with local practices for water-saving.

DOG REGO REMINDER

Don't forget that dog registrations will expire on 1 January 2025.

It is the responsibility of the owner / keeper to ensure that any dog over the age of 6 months is registered and wearing a current registration tag issued by the Registrar of Dogs. The keeping of an unregistered dog is an offence.

Owners of dogs are encouraged to ensure that their dog is registered and attach the identification tag to their dog's collar within 14 days after issue.

Application forms for registration of dogs are available online at Councils website under customer care forms or from the Customer Care office in the Bicentennial Complex, Taylors Rd during normal business hours.

Our Water is Precious
6 SIMPLE HABITS
TO HELP CONSERVE NORFOLK ISLAND'S WATER SUPPLY

Norfolk Island's water is a limited resource and we ask that you respect the community and fellow visitors by being water-wise during your stay with us. There are plenty of ways you can reduce water usage and help protect our water supply.

- 1 DRY WASH DIRTY CARS**
Using a dry wash spray and a microfibre cloth, park the car in a shady spot and spray the vehicle according to the directions. Use the cloth to wipe away the product and buff the surface for a clean and shiny NO WATER result!
- 2 KUDOS IN THE KITCHEN**
Scrape dishes instead of rinsing before packing dishwashers, and only run the dishwasher when it's completely full. Rinse fruit and veggies in a bowl or sink rather than under running water. Use the most water-efficient dishwasher cycle (eco cycle).
- 3 BATHROOM BANTER**
Always use the half-flush button wherever possible. Turn off the tap while shaving or brushing your teeth. Report or change leaky taps or shower heads. Choose water efficient taps, fittings and toilets.
- 4 REUSE RAINWATER**
Collect rainwater by placing containers outside your house, and use this water to water plants in the garden. You can also reuse household water by installing a grey water system and using that water on your garden.
- 5 SHOWER SHENANIGANS**
Take shorter showers. Take a quick shower over a bath. Limit showers to one per day for each person. Turn the water off while shampooing your hair or brushing your teeth. Use a shower timer and challenge the Family to beating the best time set!
- 6 GORGEOUS GARDENS**
Use mulch (it's free, from the Waste Management Centre) on garden beds to reduce moisture loss. Water veggie gardens deeply, and less often. Water in the early morning or evening. Use collected shower or grey water on gardens.

NORFOLK ISLAND
Regional Council

Our Water is Precious
6 SIMPLE HABITS
TO HELP CONSERVE NORFOLK ISLAND'S WATER SUPPLY

NORFOLK ISLAND
Regional Council

- Is your household WATER WISE? DRY WASH YOUR CAR**
 - You'll need dry wash spray and a microfibre cloth
 - Park the car in a shaded spot
 - Spray the dry wash product on and follow directions to wipe off and buff the surface
 - Alternatively, use grey water to hand wash your car with a mitt or sponge
 - Wipe dry with a microfibre towel
- Is your household WATER WISE? IN THE SHOWER**
 - Limit each person to one shower a day
 - Turn the water off while you soap up or shampoo
 - Turn the tap off while brushing your teeth
 - Collect shower water (or install a grey water system) for use in the garden
 - Make sure leaking taps are fixed quickly
- Is your household WATER WISE? OUTDOORS**
 - Fix leaky gutters and connect downpipes to water storage for maximum roof catchment
 - When rain is forecast, set up additional containers around the property to collect water
 - Install a grey water system from your washing machine or shower for in the garden
 - Make sure leaking taps or hoses are fixed
 - Dry wash cars or use grey water and sponges
- Is your household WATER WISE? IN THE KITCHEN**
 - Scrape, don't rinse, dishes before packing the dishwasher
 - Only use the dishwasher when it's completely full
 - Choose a more water-efficient dishwasher or use the eco cycle
 - Install water-efficient tapware
 - Rinse vegetables in a bowl or sink rather than under running water
- Is your household WATER WISE? IN THE BATHROOM**
 - Take shorter showers
 - A quick shower is more efficient than a bath
 - Turn water off while shaving or brushing teeth
 - Install a dual-flush toilet
 - Fix leaky taps straight away
 - Install low-flow showerheads and water-efficient taps
 - Collect shower water for use in the garden
- Is your household WATER WISE? IN THE GARDEN**
 - Mulch your garden to reduce moisture loss
 - Water your garden in the early morning or evening to reduce evaporation
 - Water vegetable gardens deeply, but less often, to encourage strong, deep roots
 - Collect shower water (or install a grey water system) for use in the garden

NIRC SNIPPETS

LATEST NEWS IS ONLINE

Did you know you can find our most recent media releases on our website? You can find them under News on our homepage or you can click [HERE](#) to view them all.

UP TO DATE INFO ON ISLAND RECYCLING

Want to see how recycling is going on the island? The Norfolk Wave Community Dashboard lets you see the latest data in real time - you can view it [HERE](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 20 December | Christmas Pageant and Street Parade |
| 5 January | Heiwa - Community Day, Emily Bay |
| 15 January | Government House Charity Open Day |
| 1-9 February | International Clay Target Championships |
| 8-15 February | Golf Tournament - Vets |

Click [HERE](#) for details of all upcoming events, or to find everything you need to know about visiting our beautiful island, head over to our tourism website at norfolkisland.com.au/

COUNCIL MEETING

DATE

The next Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 29 January 2025 at Bicentennial Complex 39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine, Norfolk Island.

Meetings can also be viewed online with the live link provided on Council's Facebook page prior to the commencement of the meeting.

www.nirc.gov.au/council-meetings

PUBLIC ACCESS

MEETING

Requests for Public Access are open to members of the public until 3pm on the Tuesday prior to Council Meeting day, with public access meetings to be held at 10am on the day of the Council meeting. See below information to arrange a Public Access meeting with one of the Administrators.

The Council Administrators Mr Scott Mason and Mr Gary Mottau, can be contacted to discuss concerns by emailing: council.administrator@nirc.gov.nf .

CONTACT NIRC

ADDRESS:

Bicentennial Complex
39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine
NORFOLK ISLAND 2899

PHONE:

Free local call 0100
International callers +6723 22001

EMAIL:

customercare@nirc.gov.nf

WEBSITE: www.nirc.gov.nf/

OPENING HOURS

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm (closed on public holidays)