



Lilli-unna King gave new Administrators, Scott Mason and Gary Mottau a tour of the Norfolk Wave's key recycling processes.

## ADMINISTRATORS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

Norfolk Island Regional Council Administrators, Scott Mason (Lead) and Gary Mottau (Financial), had a jam-packed itinerary on the island recently, while attending their first Council meeting in an official capacity.

Both were keen to meet as many people as possible during their January visit, while also learning about Council facilities and services, and meeting staff, and a full calendar kept them very busy.

With transparency and sharing of information with the community among their top priorities, Scott and Gary participated in a well-attended public access session prior to the January Council meeting.

Later in the week they met with Administrator George Plant and members of the NIGC, and in separate meetings with representatives of the Business Council of Norfolk Island and the Norfolk Island

Chamber of Commerce, taking time out on the weekend to ensure all meetings could take place.

On Wednesday morning, the two learned more about wastewater issues during a visit to Headstone, which was followed by a tour of the Norfolk Wave, where Daniel Brogden and Mandy King gave them an overview of the services and products offered at the centre. Lilli King then led them through the various processes and activities inside the recycling centre.

Following the Council meeting, Scott and Gary were interviewed by Spider at the radio station about their roles and plans for the transition period, and also provided an overview of the meeting outcomes. During the radio interview, Scott confirmed that NIRC would return to live-streaming Council meetings, and airing them on the radio, while also regularly speaking on radio about current issues and activities.

*continued on page 2*

### IN THIS EDITION

- *Electricity Pricing Sparks Discussion*
- *Radio Broadcasting Licence Transfer Approved*
- *The Great Eel Rescue - a Community Story*



# TRANSFER OF COMMUNITY BROADCASTING LICENCE APPROVED

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has approved the transfer of ownership of the Norfolk Island community radio broadcasting licence from Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) to Norfolk Island Radio (NIR).

Under current regulations, ownership of a radio broadcasting licence by a government organisation, including councils, is not permitted. To ensure the continuation of this important communication service for the island, NIRC has been working behind the scenes for close to two years to meet the requirements of the transfer.

ACMA approved the transfer to NIR, a public company limited by guarantee, managed by a board of directors representing community interests, in December 2024. Brent Adams and John Kenny were appointed to the board in November 2024.

Brent Adams has strong family connections with Norfolk, spending his school years and early working life (including working at the community radio station) on the island. His recent experience is in corporate communication, broadcasting and digital leadership.

John Kenny is a Norfolk resident and brings legal expertise in commercial and company law, and experience in directorships and board positions ranging from innovation to music to policy. John has an established involvement with Radio Norfolk through his voluntary work for the station. Brent and John join Philip Reid, Acting GM of NIRC, who represents Council and supports NIR's operational activities.

On receiving advice that the radio licence had been transferred to NIR, one of the next important tasks was the submission to the ACMA of a licence renewal application in mid-December 2024, in light of the licence expiry date of June 2025. The ACMA is currently assessing the application for licence renewal for a period of five years.

# ADMINISTRATORS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

*continued from page 1*

The two men also met with the Council's senior leadership team and many staff, and made themselves available for questions at staff events.

Members of the community, whether individual, community group or business, who would like to arrange either an in-person appointment in February or an online meeting in the meantime, can do so by calling Council on 0100 local call or by emailing [council.administrator@nirc.gov.nf](mailto:council.administrator@nirc.gov.nf)



*NIRC's Manager of Planning & Environment, Tara Patel, showing Scott Mason and Gary Mottau around at Headstone*



*Daniel Brogden and Mandy King from the Norfolk Wave explaining to the new administrators how some of their recycled products are made.*

# ELECTRICITY ISSUES SPARK DISCUSSION

**A recommendation to amend electricity supply charges at the January Norfolk Island Regional Council meeting sparked discussion among the incoming administrators and resulted in an increased daily charge, albeit lower than the proposal from management.**

The Council report recommended the daily supply charge change from \$0.90 per day to \$1.48 per day, and the introduction of a temporary Electricity Network Transition charge of \$0.37 per day until 30 June 2025, to cover electricity supply costs not covered in the budget.

Council is constantly working toward a cost neutral position where individual business units are financially self-sustaining, however revenue from electricity supply sits just under 50% of anticipated income, with expenses higher than revenue.

Public sentiment and the flow-on effect of cross-subsidising this shortfall from other Council services prompted a deeper dive into the full cost of electricity provision and billing late last year. A follow-up report will be presented at the February Council meeting, which will be useful in informing future pricing and upcoming budget and operational planning for the 2025-2026 financial year.

Gary Mottau, Financial Administrator for NIRC, acknowledged that the Acting GM's report on this complex issue provided greater transparency and clarity on the situation. The 49 public submissions received on the topic confirm the public perception that electricity supply and billing on Norfolk Island is a complex topic.

Mr Mottau said "We need to gather as much information as possible as part of planning for the upcoming review of the operational plan and budget planning. Surplus is the ideal position, however NIRC's challenge is to first manage the deficit and to implement prudent financial management in budget planning".

The final motion by Lead Administrator, Scott Mason, addressed community concerns about availability of information about the electricity scheme, cost of living pressures and service delivery issues, while delivering a lower fee of \$1.20 per day instead of \$1.48 per day.

The Electricity Network Transition Charge was not adopted. However, there is recognition that the future budget will need to consider a change in charge and tariff structure.

"Electricity customers need to be able to easily understand the tariff structure and billing, and the best ways to manage their energy consumption. Through these 49 public submissions and conversations I have had with some community members, it has become clear that this is not the case currently," Mr Mason said.

"This motion is one step toward improving not only the information available to the public, but also to contractual arrangements with Incite that should lead to improvements in areas such as tariff management, meter reading, and consumer equity."

The amended charge will become effective from 1 February 2025.





# DESAL PLANT UPDATE

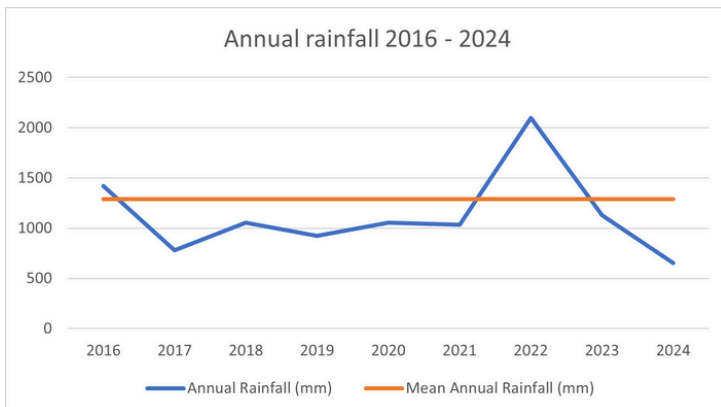
With little rain on the horizon, Norfolk Island Regional Council is closely monitoring water resources and planning for a possible rise in Drought Response Level. 2024 was notable for being the driest on record, with 653mm recorded as at 31 December, compared to 1129mm the previous year.

NIRC's Interim Drought Response Plan is key to operational aspects of drought and water management. With the drought response level currently sitting at HIGH, Council is working closely with water carters, supplying water produced through the desalination plant and from existing storage around the island.

The desal plant is producing 20,000 litres per day (140,000 litres per week), sufficient to meet the demands of the community under current conditions, which this week was around 112,000 litres.

To help offset operational costs of running the plant, desalinated water is being supplied at a rate of \$8 per kilolitre. This follows discussions with water carters to determine a rate in the short term, however better understanding of actual operating costs of the desal plant are being investigated with a view to feed this information into future budget and operational planning activities to enable costs to be recovered.

Council has developed a series of FAQs that explain the desalination process and product, and these will be available on NIRC's website from early February.



Water carters Peter and Gary Horrocks at NIRC's desalination plant

## BULK FUEL TENDER AWARDED

A tender for the supply of diesel and unleaded petrol to Norfolk Island Regional Council has been awarded to Toll Remote Logistics Pty Ltd for a period of three years with an option for a three-year extension, and a potential contract cost of \$8M over the term of the tender.

The accepted tender price is at parity with the price that Council and the island currently pays for wholesale fuel, while there is an allowance for fluctuation in price due to influences such as freight costs or weather delays.

In moving the motion to accept the tender, Lead Administrator, Scott Mason noted that the option for a three-year extension was solely at Council's discretion, and encouraged exploration of other potential tenderers when the contract came up for extension in 2028.



## EOI - ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Road Safety Committee (RSC) is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) from members of the Norfolk Island community to assist the committee to carry out its functions.

The Traffic Act 2010 (NI) (the Act) provides for the establishment of a Road Safety Committee, two members of which will be community members.

The committee is now seeking applicants with suitable knowledge, qualifications and experience to fill one (1) community member vacancy.

The Act provides that the Committee shall meet regularly and shall, amongst other things, have the power to inquire into and make recommendations to the Acting General Manager in relation to changes to the Act or the Regulations which would make the Act more effective in regulating road traffic for the purpose of improving road safety for persons in Norfolk Island.

### Application process

An EOI application should include:

- A written application of no more than two pages addressing why you would like to serve on the Road Safety Committee, how you think your skills, attributes and/or experience align to the above criteria;
- A current copy of your curriculum vitae (CV) or a brief overview of your experience and qualifications (one to two pages);
- Names and contact details of two referees.

To submit an EOI for this role, please email your application to [customercare@nirc.gov.nf](mailto:customercare@nirc.gov.nf) by no later than close of business on Monday, 16 December 2024.

For any further information regarding this EOI, please contact Katie Walden, Registrar of Motor Vehicles, Norfolk Island Regional Council on +6723 22001.

## NEW ADVISORY COMMITTEES FORMED

Expressions of interest will shortly be issued for members of two new advisory committees, being established to provide a conduit between the community and Norfolk Island Regional Council, and ultimately to benefit the Norfolk Island Assembly.

While the previous advisory committees have come to an end, the new committees are expected to play an active role in Council's future policy and direction. Residents, particularly those with specialist knowledge or interest, will shortly be invited to submit EOIs for the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee, and the Tourism and Economic Development Advisory Committee.

The EOI will be issued in coming weeks and details will be shared on NIRC's Tenders and EOIs webpage, Facebook and through local media.

## FOCUS ON WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

A Commonwealth Government Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Audit on Norfolk Island Regional Council has resulted in multiple non-conformance issues, and development of a NIRC Corrective Action Plan to address the findings.

NIRC welcomed the opportunity to address the gaps identified across the organisation, and acknowledged that knowledge, understanding and compliance were among the key issues to be addressed by following the Corrective Action Plan.

A Workplace Health and Safety Committee and a set of new processes will be developed, while staff training will be a key activity to raise understanding of WHS and its relevance to daily work and home life. Mental health and wellbeing will also be included in the strategy to improve NIRC's WHS standards in every area across Council, with frontline staff – our Customer Care team, in particular – receiving training, support and advice relevant to their roles.

# NIRC SUPPORTS DRAFT WASTEWATER STRATEGY

NIRC's Draft Wastewater Management Strategy will be placed on exhibition for 56 days, following support for the plan at the January 2025 meeting,

Community and stakeholder feedback will be sought through public exhibition of the plan and a range of engagement activities.

The draft strategy details current operations of the wastewater network, otherwise referred to as the Water Assurance Zone, and provides a framework for future extensions, with an overarching theme of protecting the health of both the community and the environment. There is also a proposal for formalising an improved standard to onsite wastewater management systems.

Past studies that have input into the draft Wastewater Management Strategy include the Water Quality Assessment by CSIRO, which identified the greatest risks to coral reefs at Emily and Slaughter Bays. Their study confirmed that surface water and groundwater discharge are both pathways into lagoon, creating a major risk to the marine park.

Nitrogen and phosphorus have both been identified as the main contaminants, and the most likely sources of these elements are cattle and wastewater systems on the island.

An assessment of critical areas of wastewater management operations was carried out, looking at the wastewater systems used, performance issues and operational risks, asset management, cost and compliance issues, and community expectation.

The strategy document is comprised of a background report and an action plan, that together aim to address contamination of waters of the Norfolk Island marine park, the health of people and environment, and improvements to the health of our surrounding waters.

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If adopted after the public exhibition period, the strategy will have cost implications for Council, the Commonwealth, and landholders for infrastructure upgrades.

NIRC's intention is to give the community and stakeholders an opportunity to provide feedback on the strategy through the public exhibition process, while also sharing information on Council's online platforms, through printed information and the chance for landholders who may be affected by implementation of the plan, to arrange ad hoc, face-to-face consultations.

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST Mack tipper truck & dog trailer EOI 02/2025



Expressions of Interest are invited by Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) for the purchase of surplus vehicles as mentioned above. Interested parties can inspect the tender items by contacting Scott Hackney at the Bicentennial Complex.

Applications must be submitted on the form, which is now available on our website under the Tenders & EOI page: <https://www.nirc.gov.au/homepage/32/tenders-and-eoi>.

Further information can be found in Gazette No. 04, which can be viewed on the NIRC web site at <https://www.nirc.gov.au/government-gazettes>

The completed form can be sent by email as an attachment to [tenders@nirc.gov.nf](mailto:tenders@nirc.gov.nf) or placed in an envelope appropriately marked and placed in the Tender Box located at Customer Care.

Applications close at 4pm on Friday 14 February 2025.



# THE GREAT EEL RESCUE!

The Norfolk Island Community are known for their caring nature and don't hesitate to roll up their sleeves and get muddy when the need arises. This need was evident last December when native wildlife was in dire need of our help.

The Short-Finned Eel (*Anguilla australis*) is an eel native to Norfolk Island, Lord Howe Island, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and other Pacific Islands. Eels have a fascinating life cycle, in that they are one of few species that migrate from fresh water to the ocean to breed.

The exact spawning grounds of eels remain a mystery, but it is believed that these eels spawn somewhere near Kanaky New Caledonia, and the adults die after spawning. The environmental trigger for a mass migration to the spawning grounds is also relatively unknown but it's thought to revolve around seasons, the moon, tides, and rainfall. We also have a native, possibly endemic long-finned Eel, but these are rarely seen.

Short-finned Eels can grow to just over 1m in length and will spend most of their lives in freshwater creeks or rivers. After 14-24 years (depending on their sex) the eels migrate back to the ocean to breed.

Their young - glass eels - slowly make their way back to coastal waters. Here they transition into 'elvers' and navigate their way inland into freshwater systems. Elvers are capable of swimming up waterfalls and even crossing small areas of dry ground to reach their home creek.

We are lucky to have eels in most of the creeks on Norfolk. These resilient creatures are managing to survive despite our waterways being impacted by the removal of or lack of native vegetation, from cattle access, run-off, erosion, failing septic tanks or trenches and lack of water.

These drought-stricken times are severely impacting the habitat available for the eels, forcing them to retreat to small pools and places of refuge.

Before Mission Pool dried up completely a few weeks ago, masses of eels had gathered there as a final source of water. The days were hot, the water foul and rapidly heating up, and the eels were dying by the hour. A group of salan got together to net, rescue, and relocate as many as possible before the heat of the day killed them all off. It was a mammoth effort, involving netters, bucket carries, spotters and lots of mud!

About 60 eels were relocated to a more permanent water source over the course of three days before Mission Pool dried up completely. There were a number that weren't saved in time, but we hope that those that survived will be happy in their new catchment area.

Eels are critical for the health of our waterways and freshwater systems. In turn, it is so important that we protect and provide habitat for them. Unprecedented drought conditions like we're experiencing right now are very difficult to protect against, but by caring for our creeks, we can boost the resilience and drought tolerance of these ecosystems.

*Council commends this group of people for the community spirit shown in saving these animals and thanks Lilli King for providing these words about the rescue.*



*Community members relocating and releasing rescued eels*

# NORFOLK NATIVES - NORFOLK ISLAND PINE

*The Norfolk Island Pine has a connection with the island that is steeped in history and culture, and creates an instant reminder of our island for anyone who has lived here or visited us.*

*Araucaria heterophylla*

**Common Names:** Pine, Norfolk Pine, Norfolk Island Pine

**Family:** Araucariaceae

**Status:** Endemic

**Distribution:** Island-wide

## Description

The Norfolk Pine can grow to heights of up to 70m. Trunk and bark can differ slightly from tree to tree but are usually a dark brown/deep red colour. Needles are long, dark green and waxy with small scales that spiral from base to tip. Young/juvenile trees have branches that are usually symmetrical and point in an upwards V. As they mature (circa. 35+ years), their branching system grows more complex and asymmetrical. Older trees have branches that droop downwards.

Seeds grow in almost spherical cones that are made up of seeds and held in place by overlapping papery wings. Male cones containing pollen are obscure, (4-6cm long) and narrow, looking like a small bulbous tip on the end of the needles. Female cones are much more obvious. Immature female cones can fall to the ground on occasion, otherwise seeds mature and disperse from high in the branches. Seedlings emerge with 2 pairs of V-shaped leaves, followed by the first true needles.

## Growing conditions

Can tolerate a wide range of growing conditions. Can be found growing naturally on exposed and eroded cliffs, as well as throughout valleys, paddocks and gardens. When planting pines, it is best to choose areas with moderate sun and wind protection, or provide protection with pallets and/or shade cloth until trees establish.

## Propagation

Collect seed between May-July. The pine has what is known as 'mast years' or 'mast seeding' every 3-5 years. Mast years produce much larger amounts of seed than the in between years. Seeds can be readily propagated at home.

## Look-alikes

A few specimens of Bunya Pine (*Araucaria budwillii*) are present on Norfolk. Though belonging to the same genus, the Bunya Pine, native to Australia, has sharp needles and sparser foliage. Cones are also much larger. In other parts of the world, Norfolk Pines are often mistaken for New Caledonia or Cooks Pine (*Araucaria columnaris*). To the untrained eye they may be difficult to tell apart, however Norfolk Pines tend to have a more triangular-tapered shape.





# TOURISM NEWS

## NEW E-BIKES AT VIC

The VIC has added five new e-bikes to its rental fleet, following a tender process which was won by local business Rabbit's Bikes and Brew.

If your visitors fancy a ride around the island, our E-bikes are \$30 for a 24 hour hire period, which includes helmet rental.

## CALL FOR LOCAL ARTWORK

Council is seeking expressions of interest from local artists to display their work in Awus Art Gallery, located in the Visitor Information Centre, to expand on our current collection and offer local artists and artisans an opportunity to showcase and sell their work.

We welcome a variety of mediums but are particularly interested in original works that reflect or are inspired by the local culture, landscapes and community.

Artworks will be displayed prominently and made available for sale, providing artists with both exposure and potential income.

To express your interest and for more information, please email [tania.anderson@nirc.gov.nf](mailto:tania.anderson@nirc.gov.nf) or phone 22147.

## VIC Trading Hours

Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri: 9am – 4.30pm.

Wed: 9am – 4pm

Sat: 9am – 12.30pm

Sun: 9am – 11.30am



# 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

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 1-9 February   | International Clay Target Championships |
| 8-15 February  | Vets Golf Tournament                    |
| 12 February    | Government House Open Charity Day       |
| 14-23 February | South Pacific Pairs Lawn Bowls          |
| 2-9 March      | History Lovers Tour                     |

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/](http://norfolkisland.com.au/)

## COUNCIL MEETING

### DATE

The next Council Meeting is scheduled to be held on 26 February 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:customercare@nirc.gov.nf)

**WEBSITE:** [www.nirc.gov.nf/](http://www.nirc.gov.nf/)

### OPENING HOURS

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