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The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

# **Same country: different world**

**The future of Norfolk Island**

**Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories**

October 2014  
Canberra

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## Chair's foreword

The Committee's terms of reference were to focus on the prospects for economic development in the wake of a marked decline in tourist visitors, a serious budget deficit, and ongoing financial management concerns. There is an ever increasing reliance on the Commonwealth Government for financial and other assistance, just to keep basic services going for Norfolk Islanders. A consistent theme throughout the inquiry, from witnesses and experts, was that economic development is simply not possible without the establishment of new governance arrangements.

*The Norfolk Island Act 1979 (Cth)* established self-government. Over the years, a number of reviews and reports have assessed the effectiveness of self-government and questioned whether it has best served the interests of Norfolk Island residents. Some 35 years on, it is clear that this model has failed and on many levels.

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories has a long standing history and interest in the welfare of Norfolk Island and Norfolk Islanders, as Australian residents. Norfolk Islanders should have the same rights and responsibilities as all Australian residents. The priority therefore must be what is in the best interests of the people, and not a defence at all costs of governance arrangements that have not been able to provide a social or economic existence that equates to the rest of the nation.

Bringing Norfolk Island into the Australian system will require legislative reform, a period of transition and resolve. Seizing the new opportunities and concomitant prospects for growth and prosperity will be dependent on the will of the Commonwealth Government to proceed with bold reforms. It will also depend on

the fortitude and willingness of the Norfolk Island community to work with the Commonwealth to ensure their future sustainability. Vested interests must now be put aside for action that is in the best interests of every man, woman and child resident on Norfolk Island.

**Mr Luke Simpkins MP**  
**Chair**





## **Membership of the Committee**

**Chair** Mr Luke Simpkins MP

**Deputy Chair** Senator Carol Brown

**Members** Senator Chris Back

Mrs Natasha Griggs MP

Senator the Hon Kate Lundy

The Hon Bruce Scott MP

The Hon Warren Snowdon MP

Senator Gavin Marshall (from 7/7/14)

Ms Gai Brodtmann MP

Senator Sarah Hanson-Young

Senator Stephen Parry (to 7/7/14)

Senator Zed Seselja

Mr Ross Vasta MP

## **Committee secretariat**

<b>Secretary</b>	Dr Alison Clegg
<b>Inquiry Secretary</b>	Ms Sara Edson
<b>Administrative Officers</b>	Mrs Fiona McCann
	Ms Kathy Blunden



## **Terms of reference**

The Norfolk Island Roadmap has as one of its aspirational goals under Economic Development:

- Positive action to encourage diversification and broaden the Island's economic base.

The Committee will inquire into and report on:

- redressing barriers to tourism, with particular regard to air services, facilities for cruise ships, roads and other infrastructure;
- complements to tourism, such as agriculture, other industry or small-medium enterprises; and
- proposals and opportunities for niche industries.





## Abbreviations

ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ASCOT	Australian Standing Committee on Tourism
ATDW	Australian Tourism Data Warehouse
CITA	Christmas Island Tourism Association
Cth	Commonwealth
DIRD	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
GBE	Government Business Enterprise
IOTs	Indian Ocean Territories
JSCNCET	Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
KAVHA	Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area
MLA	Member of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly
NIA	Norfolk Island Administration
NICESC	Norfolk Island Convention, Entertainment and Sports Centre
NIG	Norfolk Island Government
NSW	New South Wales
OH & S	Occupational health and safety
RTOs	Regional Tourism Organisations

STOs	State Tourism Organisations
TA	Tourism Australia
TAG	Tourism Action Group
TMM	Tourism Ministers' Meeting
TTF	Tourism Transport Forum
WA	Western Australia



# Recommendations

## 3 Governance: a new model

### Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that, as soon as practicable, the Commonwealth Government repeal the *Norfolk Island Act 1979* (Cth) and establish an interim administration, to assist the transition to a local government type body, determined in line with the community's needs and aspirations. This will require the development of a new legislative framework.

### Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that formal mechanisms for community consultation be established which allow for regular and ongoing communication between any transitional administration and the community about the reform process and new governance arrangements.

## 4 Infrastructure: investment required

### Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government assume responsibility for the Cascade and Kingston Pier upgrades and that the Commonwealth Government expedite the works in line with Australian standards and occupational health and safety requirements, as soon as practicable.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government purchase multi-purpose barges for use on Norfolk Island in conjunction with upgrades made to Cascade and Kingston Piers. Barge use must be integrated into the design and functionality of the upgrades.

#### **Recommendation 5**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government ensure that, as part of the new governance arrangements, the public road infrastructure on Norfolk Island is assessed against current Australia-wide design, building and engineering standards and, where needed, work is undertaken to remedy deficiencies.

### **5 Framework for new economic opportunities**

#### **Recommendation 6**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government appoint officers in the transitional administration to strengthen Norfolk Island's economic and human resource capacity. Officers from Commonwealth agencies like Tourism Australia and Austrade should be tasked to provide advice and support to define the tourist market, develop the tourist product and promote and market tourist and other products and services, including new ones.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government provide a dedicated officer to assist Norfolk Island cottage industry owners and operators to brand their products, set up a cooperative shopfront, and look at ways to market and export their products.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government take charge of the psyllid eradication effort on Norfolk Island, and that responsibility for quarantine control matters be transferred to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.



