

Key Issues Brief

2.03 Preamble to the Norfolk Island Act 1979

Key Issues

- In May 2018, the Norfolk Island Mayor, Councillor Robin Adams, publicly stated she will undertake a consultation process with the community and the Australian Government to reinstate the preamble (**Attachment A**) into the Norfolk Island Act 1979 (Cth) (the NI Act) as a means of protecting and enhancing the unique culture, heritage, traditions and environment of the Norfolk Island people.
- The preamble was repealed from the NI Act by the Australian Government in 2015 as it was considered to be a necessary step for cultural inclusion, and disengagement of the Pitcairn stronghold and cultural exclusion that had previously occurred.
- Any revised preamble must be succinct, historically accurate, and inclusive to reflect the multicultural nature of the community of Norfolk Island today.
- When the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP, former Minister for Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, met with the Council of Elders, the preamble was raised. He requested that the Council of Elders support the Mayor in working with the Administrator to develop a proposed preamble for broad consultation. The Administrator has advised that the Mayor has held discussions with the Council of Elders.
- You may wish to:
 - seek an update on the Mayor’s meeting with the Council of Elders; and
 - advise that the Australian Government is committed to protecting Norfolk Island’s culture and heritage, for example:
 - Norfolk is an official language of Norfolk Island and the curriculum at Norfolk Island Central School includes classes in the Norfolk language and culture; and
 - Norfolk Island’s public holidays have been maintained.

Background

- The NI Act previously contained a preamble that included a statement about the special relationship of Pitcairn Island descendants with Norfolk Island and their desire to preserve their traditions and culture.
- The Advisory Council established to represent the Norfolk Island community before the commencement of NIRC consulted the Norfolk Island community on a proposed new preamble. However, community feedback was divided.
- In February 2016, the Advisory Council recommended to the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, the then Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects, that the matter of a preamble should be further considered by NIRC.

Sensitivities

- This issue may be raised by NIRC or members of the community during your visit.

Attachments:

A Preamble

