

Background Brief

3.06 Budget 2018-19 - Norfolk Island – Additional funding – Update on Progress

Current Commonwealth funding for Norfolk Island is insufficient

- The original Norfolk Island reforms, with the removal of self-government in 2016, were based on poor quality service and expenditure data provided by the previous Norfolk Island Government. The data is now known to have manifestly under-represented the resources required to deliver base-level services at an acceptable standard. As a consequence, service delivery and funding deficiencies were embedded into the reforms at the outset.
- Services (such as child protection) and the enforcement of safeguards (such as work health and safety) are decades behind those on the mainland. The removal of self-government revealed a high demand for essential services (including childcare assistance, aged care and vocational education), and unforeseen deficiencies in the social, economic and built infrastructure.
- While some limited stop-gaps have been put in place, additional resourcing is required to raise and establish new services and safeguards (such as child protection) to ensure reforms continue to progress and remain effective.

Funding received through the Budget 2018-19 Submission

- The Hon Dr John McVeigh MP, the then Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government, sought Government agreement to a package of additional funding.
- The then Minister announced in May 2018 that the Australian Government had agreed to invest an additional \$38.7 million over four years to continue to improve services and infrastructure to Norfolk Island. This was comprised of:
 - Additional funding of \$8.3 million over four years to support the delivery of essential community services, including repairs and maintenance to the local road network and managing environmental waste and sanitation.
 - An additional \$776 000 over two years to increase visitor numbers to Norfolk Island and income generated from tourism activities, to complement the Norfolk Island Regional Council's Tourism Strategic Plan 2013–2023 to rebuild tourism back to desired levels, and provide sustainable growth for the future.
 - Additional funding of \$1.8 million over two years for maintenance of the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) site, to enhance the visitor experience and increase economic opportunities for the Norfolk Island community.

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- The Australian Government's investment of \$3.6 million in quality services and infrastructure was for future service delivery planning and critical infrastructure upgrades and maintenance at the Norfolk Island Central School, the Norfolk Island health facility and the police station. This funding has been used to support the development of a first pass business case for redevelopment of the Norfolk Island health facility (Event Brief 1.06).
- Over \$6.3 million in funding will be allocated over four years to increase access to specialist medical services and increase professional development opportunities for staff at the Norfolk Island health facility. This will continue to strengthen the island's healthcare and community services.
- An additional investment of \$17.9 million to continue the Government's important work on enhancing services for children and families on Norfolk Island and to improve education services. This recognises that providing support for children is an investment in Norfolk Island's future.
- The additional investment of \$17.9 million over the next four years has been used to provide reliable internet access to students at the school, increase vocational education and training opportunities and improve child and family wellbeing services on Island. This includes:
 - New funding to ensure reliable internet access for Norfolk Island Central School students and staff to help improve educational resources, to enable students to access the resources they need for their education and help teachers deliver their curriculum.
 - Financial assistance to local residents to go towards vocational education and training costs for eligible courses will be open for application on 2 January 2018.
 - A strengthened child and family wellbeing service on Island. Additional support has been provided to the Child and Family Wellbeing Team on island to ensure the delivery of improved services for children and families.
 - Funding for the accreditation of childcare services, once a child care regulator is in place on Norfolk Island.

Progress of budget initiatives

- The progress on each of these measures is summarised in separate background briefs.

Sensitivities: Nil

Attachments: Nil

