

1.01 EVENT BRIEF – Kingston and Arthur’s Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) tour

Date and Time:	12 November 2018, 3.00 pm
Location:	Meet at Pier Store Museum
Meeting with:	Tour of Kingston and Arthur’s Vale Historic Area (KAVHA) and meeting with the local representatives of the Advisory Committee
Attendees:	Eric Hutchinson, Administrator Duncan Evans, KAVHA Advisory Committee member Dids Evans, KAVHA Advisory Committee member Museum Curator

Outcomes Sought:

- The visit will provide an opportunity for the Minister to understand KAVHA’s economic potential, future investment needs to meet Australia’s international obligations and how the community values and uses the site.

Key Issues:

KAVHA’s potential

- KAVHA is a World Heritage site showcasing Polynesian, convict and Pitcairn Islander history. It is one of eleven sites that make up the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property, and is recognised as being among the best surviving examples of large-scale convict transportation and the colonial expansion of European powers.
- KAVHA is a significant drawcard for tourists. It attracts visitors from the mainland and internationally. A 2017 Economic Feasibility Study conducted by the Centre for International Economics (CIE report) shows that more than 78 per cent of people visiting Norfolk Island went to KAVHA and 38 per cent of tourists reported that KAVHA was their main reason for visiting.
- KAVHA is a traditional focal point for many Norfolk Island community activities. It is a working site, as home to one of the island’s two major piers for receiving freight and passengers. Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC), the Golf Club, Lions Club, sports fields, cemetery and the popular swimming beach at Emily Bay are located within KAVHA.
- KAVHA has significant potential to generate revenue and contribute to the Norfolk Island economy while providing improved recognition of the site’s cultural and traditional significance to the Norfolk Island community.

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Community Engagement

- The KAVHA Advisory Committee provides expert and community input to the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (the Department) to guide management of KAVHA. The Advisory Committee comprises two community members (Mr Duncan Evans and Mr David Evans), two independent heritage experts (Mr Kevin Sumption, Director and CEO of the Australian National Maritime Museum, and Ms Kristal Buckley, Senior Lecturer in Cultural Heritage Management at Deakin University). The Committee is chaired by the Administrator of Norfolk Island.
- Following a call for expressions of interest, the KAVHA Advisory Committee expert and community members were appointed in November 2015 for an initial two-year term by the then Administrator of Norfolk Island, the Hon Gary Hardgrave.
- Expert and community members were subsequently re-appointed by the General Manager, Norfolk Island Branch, for a further two years to 30 November 2019.
- Mr Eric Hutchison will Chair the Advisory Committee for the term of his appointment as Administrator of Norfolk Island, which expires 31 March 2019.
- The Department and the KAVHA Advisory Committee have recognised the need for a more concerted effort to keep the community informed of activities at KAVHA and facilitate greater community involvement in the site. A regular radio update, more regular updates in The Norfolk Islander newspaper and Norfolk Online, and greater engagement with the Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) and its advisory committees are part of this effort. In addition, establishment of a formal Community Advisory Group is underway, with terms of reference in development.

Constraints on KAVHA

- The current KAVHA governance arrangements are inadequate and do not provide the Australian Government with the ability to meet its world heritage obligations to protect, conserve, present and transmit the values of KAVHA.
- Key governance constraints include a lack of visibility and control over activities on site, an inability to generate, retain and reinvest revenue and an inability to employ specialist staff.
- The CIE report found that the current level of funding for KAVHA's site maintenance and conservation was insufficient. Interpretation of the site was also considered below the standard of other Australian Convict Sites and less than required to meet the Australian Government's obligations for 'presenting' the World Heritage values.
- The CIE report noted KAVHA's potential to contribute to Norfolk Island's economic development, and identified governance reform as the single biggest impediment.
- The Department is seeking to identify a suitable governance model for KAVHA and planning to bring this forward as part of the 2019-20 Budget submission.

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- AECOM has been engaged to develop a Strategic Asset Management Plan for the Australian Government's assets on Norfolk Island, with KAVHA identified as the first priority site for review.
- AECOM is expected to provide a report on KAVHA's asset management requirements before the end of 2018. This will support development of a site maintenance and conservation program which includes identified priorities and scoped projects. Funding for this program of works is to be considered by the Australian Government in the context of the 2019 Budget.

Safety

- The KAVHA site has a number of inherent safety hazards which require management to mitigate risks to the public, including visitors, workers and residents. The hazards and risks are consistent with the nature, age and condition of the buildings and other infrastructure on the site.
- GML Heritage recently completed a safety hazards scoping study of the KAVHA site which identified possible solutions to improve public accessibility and safety while preserving KAVHA's unique character.
- Additional funding secured in the 2018 Budget will improve the conservation and presentation of the site and contribute to addressing visitor safety.
- Thirteen very high risk hazards were identified that may have very serious consequences. These hazards primarily relate to potential structural failure of buildings, retaining walls and bridges; fire safety, including inadequate fire egress from multi-storey buildings and other infrastructure failure.
- A further 55 hazards were rated as high risk. Other hazards include slip, trip and fall hazards, health hazards, hazards from extreme weather events and hazards arising from the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles.
- The range of risks will be addressed through a combination of the site maintenance program, access changes, major capital works projects and further technical investigations.
- AECOM have recommended engineering solutions for the five highest priority structural issues at the site. This advice is being peer reviewed by heritage experts to ensure that the solutions are compatible with the heritage nature of the site.
- Addressing the identified hazards is well beyond the capacity of the current financial resources available for KAVHA. The Safety Hazards Scoping Study and AECOM Strategic Asset Management Plan will be important in underpinning future budget submissions.

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- Some proposed mitigation strategies that will impact the way the community accesses and uses the site such as controlled parking, pedestrian and vehicle movement, water quality and vegetation management are closely linked to the KAVHA Cultural Landscape Management Plan (CLMP). Community consultation on key safety mitigation strategies is proposed to occur in tandem with the public review of the CLMP.

Cultural Landscape Management Plan (CLMP)

- In 2017-18 GML Heritage and Context has also developed a CLMP for KAVHA. This plan will provide a valuable tool to guide future management of KAVHA to conserve its significant heritage values, improve the experiences for visitors, and ensure it remains an integral part of the local community.
- The plan considers a range of practical issues including strategies to guide the management of priority issues such as vehicle and pedestrian access, livestock, vegetation, site drainage and water quality.
- Public review of the draft CLMP will occur in late 2018 and early 2019 to confirm priorities for improving site access and presentation. The projects to be implemented from this plan are likely to include improving vehicle and pedestrian access, managing livestock within the site, resolving water quality issues and managing vegetation to protect historical vistas.

Site Interpretation

- The Australian Government has responded to the feedback frequently provided by visitors that site information needs to be improved. A comprehensive site interpretation plan is currently being written to develop stories of each of the site's settlement periods and identify engaging and innovative ways to present information while preserving the site's unique character.

Background:

- The Department has overall responsibility for the management of KAVHA, guided by the statutory KAVHA Heritage Management Plan (2016). A specialised heritage position is located on island, supported by staff based in Canberra. The Commonwealth Heritage Manager position is vacant following the departure at short notice of the previous incumbent in July 2018. Recruitment to fill the position is well progressed.
- Many Australians are unaware of KAVHA's significance to Australia's convict history. This presents both a challenge and opportunity for expanding Norfolk Island's tourism appeal. The Australian Government is committed to promoting KAVHA as a place of outstanding heritage value and one of 11 sites making up the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. As an active member of the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee, the Australian Government will continue to encourage all 11 Australian Convict Sites to work together to promote visitation to every site and increase opportunities for Australians to experience the full story of our convict past.

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- There is no specific legislation which provides for Commonwealth control over the day-to-day management of the site, such as events approvals, public access, fees and charges. Development and use of the site is subject to the *Environment, Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)* and Norfolk Island planning laws, administered by NIRC, with limited Commonwealth oversight.
 - These complex planning arrangements hinder development and use of the site. For example, development approval to erect new entry signage to the site is currently the subject of an Administrative Appeals Tribunal review.
- NIRC provides services at the site under an agreement with the Australian Government, including building and grounds maintenance and the management of Australian Government owned museum collections.

Sensitivities:

- Local Advisory Committee members have expressed some frustration at the slow pace of governance reform and the lack of on-ground resources to deliver priority conservation, maintenance and interpretation projects. The 2018 Budget has provided additional funding to improve maintenance standards, however this funding has not been provided on an ongoing basis.

Attachments: Nil

