

**1.05 EVENT BRIEF – Meeting with NI–Connect**

<b>Date and Time:</b>	Tuesday 13 November 2018, 12.00 pm – 12.30 pm
<b>Location:</b>	NI Connect
<b>Attendees:</b>	Eric Hutchinson, Administrator

**Key Points:**

- NI-Connect was opened by the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP, the then Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government, on 26 July 2018.
- NI-Connect is an integrated community centre that brings the spectrum of child and family wellbeing service delivery from early intervention and primary prevention, targeted services for those with more complex needs, specialist counselling services, health and general wellbeing. Staff are skilled professionals who work together to deliver services in response to community needs.
- Examples of services available at NI-Connect include:
  - a safe and child-friendly handover point for separated parents;
  - drop-in positive parenting information across life stages, from newborns, toddlers, children and teens;
  - computer literacy and accessibility support;
  - forums and education sessions for professionals and community groups;
  - counselling, child and young people wellbeing and welfare assistance;
  - access to a range of quality toys and child rearing equipment for loan;
  - arrangements for safe accommodation for victims of family and domestic violence; and
  - health and wellbeing promotion regarding healthy lifestyles.
- The Norfolk Island Child and Family Wellbeing Unit (CFW Unit) is located within NI-Connect and has been established to deliver practical services to improve the safety and support of children and families on Norfolk Island. The CFW Unit provides integrated and specialist services for referred children and families in collaboration with other agencies on the Island.
- On 30 July 2018, Key Assets commenced service provision, which included the appointment of a statutory child welfare officer (CWO) who has been delegated to act on your behalf in regards to the delivery of child protection services on Norfolk Island, including removal of children for their protection if required.

## **DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CITIES**

- The CFW Unit staff are employed by Norfolk Island Health and Residential Aged Care Service (NIHRACS). The CFW Unit consists of a manager to lead service delivery, a child welfare caseworker, a specialist child and youth counsellor, a part time health promotions coordinator and an administration officer.
- The Department funds the CFW Unit staff with the exception of the child and youth counsellor, which is funded by the Central & Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN). Funding for this position was secured from the Commonwealth Department of Health.
- NI-Connect and the CFW Unit have partnered with the Letl Salan Toy Library to improve family access to an extensive range of toys and equipment available for loan. Letl Salan Toy Library supports families through enabling quality time spent playing with children.
- NI-Connect supports the delivery of visiting family services to create a one-stop shop for people seeking assistance. Further opportunities for co-location of services continue to be built.
- NI-Connect provide counselling and support to youth experiencing mental health issues as a result of a lack of tertiary study opportunities available on Norfolk Island following completion of their schooling. Young people have self-referred to NI-Connect and NIHRACS, in addition to other services as a result of these stressors.

### **Background:**

- NI-Connect advertises events in the weekly Norfolk Islander Newspaper. NI-Connect has access to a permanent column in the newspaper through NIHRACS.
- Anglicare playgroup has been held at NI-Connect four times since the opening of the centre, however the group has recently relocated to a more suitable venue for playgroups.
- The NI-Connect hot desk facility is utilised by NSW and Commonwealth services and agencies. A recent visit by Centrelink staff proved to be very successful, and it was noted that a steady stream of community members dropped in to the CFW Unit to book appointments.
- The Department secured the specialist services of a Non-Government Organisation, Key Assets, to lead and direct the delivery of child protection and wellbeing services on Norfolk Island, effective from 30 July 2018. Key Assets assist with supervision and direction to the CFW Unit, in addition to delivering training, reporting, implementation of policies & procedures and building community partnerships.
- The Chief Executive Officer of Key Assets holds the role of CWO for Norfolk Island. The CWO is responsible for the provision of services directed at supporting families in relation to the care and protection of children and young people, in addition to having other powers and functions under the Norfolk Island Child Welfare Act 2009.
- The CFW Unit and Key Assets are expected to provide mandatory reporter training to agencies and services on Norfolk Island before the end of 2018 and again in early 2019.

### **Sensitivities: Nil**

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**Attachments:** Nil

