Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Norfolk Island Transition Assembly – FAQs

1. What will the election process be for the Transition Assembly?

New

The election for the Transition Assembly will be carried out by an independent professional election services provider engaged by the Australian Government.

Because this election process is for the Transition Assembly rather than a local government body, the provider will prepare an electoral roll specific to this election. Voting will not be compulsory, but we strongly encourage all eligible persons to enrol and participate. This election represents the opportunity to be part of a democratic process that will inform the future of Norfolk Island's governance model.

The practical details about when, where and how to nominate and vote are included in the election rules and other election material which will be published by the election provider shortly.

To **nominate** to be a Transition Assembly member a person must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be enrolled to vote in accordance with applicable election rules
- be an Australian citizen (including dual citizens)
- have been ordinarily resident on Norfolk Island for at least 12 months before nomination
- be nominated by a person who is enrolled to vote.

The eligibility requirements to nominate as a candidate have been informed by the Norfolk Island Governance Committee (NIGC) – including the requirement to be an Australian citizen and the residency period.

To **vote** in the Transition Assembly election a person must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be enrolled to vote in accordance with applicable election rules
- be an Australian citizen (including dual citizens)
- have been ordinarily resident on Norfolk Island for at least one month before election day.

The eligibility requirements to vote in the election were informed by the agreed nomination requirements and by discussions among NIGC members.

The residency requirement for voting in this election is consistent with other jurisdictions in Australia.

2. Why are there still references to the governance model being based on Queensland law? *New*

The governance model is not about replacing applied New South Wales laws with applied Queensland laws.

The Transition Assembly will use the Queensland local government model as a reference, which has law making powers unlike the New South Wales model. But as outlined in its Charter and supporting guidelines, the Transition Assembly is expected to develop recommendations which reflect the distinct needs and context of Norfolk Island and reflect community aspirations.

The supporting guidelines specifically state the Transition Assembly may recommend a different approach from Queensland arrangements.

3. Will Transition Assembly members be paid? *New*

Yes. Transition Assembly members will be part-time and paid $39,000 per annum, plus 12% superannuation.

4. As Transition Assembly members will be part time, will they need to work on set days of the week and/or a set number of hours? *New*

The Transition Assembly will have flexibility to decide how it does its work and this includes when and how members will do their work.

We want to encourage as many people as possible from across the community to consider nominating to be part of the Transition Assembly. People with diverse skills and experiences, and regardless of other time commitments, are encouraged to read the information and consider taking up this opportunity.

The Transition Assembly's Charter and supporting guidelines provide clear information about what it is required to deliver and the timeframe. The Transition Assembly members will need to consider and agree amongst themselves how best to operate within the parameters set out in those documents.

5. How will the Transition Assembly operate? *New*

The Transition Assembly will develop its own procedures for how it will operate which will cover:

- how often members will meet and how meetings will be run
- arrangements for the chairing of each meeting
- arrangements for public observation of meetings
- how decisions will be recorded and records kept
- how consultation and public reporting will be managed.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts will make provision for secretariat support for the Transition Assembly. The exact nature of the support will be negotiated through a memorandum of understanding once members are elected.

6. Will the Transition Assembly be able to change continued law? *New*

The Transition Assembly will not have the power to make or change any laws. It can provide advice to the Government about laws that may or may not apply to Norfolk Island, including continued laws.

If any changes are needed to laws applying to Norfolk Island during the Transition Assembly's term, these will be made through the current Ministerial process for amendment to legislative instruments.

7. Is there a change to how Commonwealth law applies to Norfolk Island while the Transition Assembly is in place? *New*

Existing legislative, governance and service delivery arrangements for Norfolk Island, including Commonwealth laws and current arrangements with the Queensland Government to deliver services under applied Queensland law, will continue.

During this period, the Australian Government will continue to make new laws for Norfolk Island (in consultation with the Transition Assembly) and amend existing laws where needed. This will also continue after the new statutory Assembly is established for matters that sit outside the scope of the new governance framework.

8. Why do you have to be an Australian citizen to nominate and vote? *New*

This is consistent with arrangements for governments in Australian jurisdictions that have similar remits to the Transition Assembly. It is also part of the nomination criteria agreed by the NIGC.

9. What transitional arrangements are in place for the Norfolk Island Regional Council? *New*

Existing arrangements for the NIRC will not change during the Transition Assembly's term. The Australian Government has extended the appointment of NIRC's Administrators Mr Scott Mason and Mr Gary Mottau for a further two years. Extending the appointments will provide continuity, corporate knowledge and leadership during the transition to the new governance model.

During its term the Transition Assembly will engage with Norfolk Island institutions, including the NIRC, to ensure that institutions that will support the future, statutory Assembly are robust and sustainable.

Arrangements for a transition to the future statutory Norfolk Island Assembly will be part of the Transition Assembly's work and need to be covered in its Final Report.

10. How will the new model be funded? *New*

The Transition Assembly members will be paid roles. This payment will come from the Australian Government.

The statutory Norfolk Island Assembly will need to be financially sustainable and self-fund all local government-type services, as the NIRC is currently required to do. The Government will continue to provide assistance in the form of funding similar to the Financial Assistance Grants available to local governments in other parts of Australia.

The Government will also continue to provide funding for Commonwealth services to Norfolk Island, and state-type services – as it does now with NIRC through service delivery arrangements for functions such as motor vehicle registration and ports management.

11. Where will the Transition Assembly meet? *New*

This will be a matter for the Transition Assembly members to determine, taking account of relevant accessibility and workplace health and safety considerations.

Previous FAQs: as published 27 August 2026

12. What is the revised approach?

The Australian Government has listened to the Norfolk Island community, and the Norfolk Island Assembly (the Assembly) previously announced by the Australian Government will now be implemented through primary legislative changes instead of by ordinance, reflecting the community's preference. This approach will take longer, but the Government heard a clear message from the community that the legislative pathway was more important than the timeframe.

Drawing on the important work done by the Norfolk Island Governance Committee (NIGC) and its community representatives, and noting the extended timeframe, the full governance model will now be established in two stages.

Initially a Norfolk Island Transition Assembly (Transition Assembly) will be established with an election to be called in the coming months. The Transition Assembly will comprise five elected members.

Transition Assembly Members will be elected for an initial period of two years, with the final duration to be determined by the Minister for Territories depending on the time needed to establish the permanent Assembly. During this period, the Transition Assembly will make recommendations to the Minister on the future statutory governance framework for Norfolk Island, including amendments to the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*. The initial two-year period is a transition period for Norfolk Island, giving Transition Assembly members the autonomy to shape the Island's future governance.

13. Why is the Australian Government taking a staged approach?

The Australian Government acknowledges the Norfolk Island community's desire for democratically elected representation.

This approach draws on aspects of a phased model recommended by the community representative members of the NIGC directly to the Minister for Territories.

This approach reflects the community's strong preference for a model established by legislation passed by the Australian Parliament, while enabling democratically elected local representation to be established sooner. The development and passage of legislation takes time, and this approach means the community will have an interim representative body and voice while changes to the *Norfolk Island Act 1979* are developed.

14. Is this just another version of the Norfolk Island Governance Committee?

No. The Transition Assembly succeeds the NIGC as the next stage in Norfolk Island's governance reform journey. While the NIGC was a collaborative forum bringing together community representatives and government officials to discuss governance issues to inform a governance model via ordinance, the Transition Assembly will be a democratically elected body with a specific focus on developing and recommending a governance model for consideration by the Minister for Territories. The governance model will build on the work and recommendations of the NIGC and inform policy advice and legislative drafting instructions for primary legislation to establish a statutory Norfolk Island Assembly with law-making powers.

The Transition Assembly's role is focused and substantive. It will move from consultation and dialogue to developing detailed recommendations that can inform legislative drafting and implementation. Its work will be informed by the NIGC's recommendations, which already reflect substantive community consultation.

15. What will the Transition Assembly look like?

The new body will be called the Norfolk Island Transition Assembly.

There will be five elected members. The Norfolk Island Administrator will participate in Transition Assembly proceedings in accordance with the Operational Framework agreed with the Minister for Territories.

Detail about the election, including Candidate Packs with more details on the nomination process, will be provided to the community shortly.

16. How will the community have input during the Transition Assembly's term?

The Transition Assembly will develop its own coordination and consultation frameworks required to efficiently and effectively administer its responsibilities. It is expected the Transition Assembly will consult the Norfolk Island community and key stakeholders on matters arising during the transition phase.

17. Will the Preamble be reinstated?

Yes. The reinstatement of a Preamble in an amended *Norfolk Island Act 1979* will be part of the legislative changes to establish the future governance model.

18. Will the Norfolk Island Transition Assembly make laws?

No. The Transition Assembly will not have power to make laws. Its role is to develop and recommend a governance model to the Australian Government for the design of a future statutory governance body for Norfolk Island. It may also provide advice and recommendations on matters relevant to the Australian Government about future laws applying to Norfolk Island, including continued laws, during the transition phase.

The future Norfolk Island Assembly will be established through primary legislation. Its functions and powers will be determined through that legislative process, informed by the Transition Assembly's recommendations.

19. Will Norfolk Island return to self-government?

No. The Australian Government has not agreed to return Norfolk Island to self-government – this was not in line with recommendations in the November 2023 report from the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories and not in line with the Government's response to that report.

20. Will there still be any applied state laws in Norfolk Island?

Yes. The legal framework for Norfolk Island will remain unchanged during the period the Transition Assembly is in place.

There may be changes to state laws that need to be applied in Norfolk Island to support the new model in its second stage. Those laws necessary for the functioning of state service delivery partners will remain in place.

21. When will the Transition Assembly commence?

The Transition Assembly can commence its work as soon as practical once the election results are declared. More details on the administrative and operational arrangements for the operation of the Transition Assembly will be available shortly, informed by the advice of the community representatives on the NIGC.

22. Why isn't the Assembly being established immediately through legislation?

The Australian Government listened to the Norfolk Island community's preference for the governance model to be delivered via primary legislation rather than an ordinance. Establishing the Assembly through legislation will take longer, but it provides an opportunity for the community and elected Transition Assembly members to help shape key elements of the future governance model before legislation is drafted and introduced to Parliament.

23. Will the Norfolk Island Regional Council continue to operate?

Yes. While the Transition Assembly undertakes its work, the NIRC will continue to provide local services, and existing administrative and service delivery arrangements will remain in place. The Transition Assembly will provide democratic representation, develop policy advice for the future governance model, and prepare a Transition Plan to support continuity of administration and service delivery at the end of the transition period.

The Transition Plan will build on the recommendations agreed by the NIGC and reflect consultation with the Norfolk Island Regional Council, service delivery providers and the Australian Government.

24. Will current arrangements for health, education and other services change?

No. Existing service delivery arrangements will continue during the transition stage. This includes arrangements with service delivery partners for health, education and other state-type services.