



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PAPER

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: 22 August 2026

NOTICE PAPER ITEM:

2. GOVERNANCE CHARTER AMENDMENTS

2.2 Minor Operational Amendments No.1: Community Submissions and Official General Assembly Records

Purpose:

To report Minor Operational Amendments No. 1 to the Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026, adopted by resolution of the House on 3 August 2026, and provide the General Assembly with a public record of their purpose and effect.

Motion:

Motion for noting. No further approval or endorsement of the amendments is sought.

Rationale:

Clause 7 of the Governance Charter provides that the Charter may be amended by resolution of the House. Formal endorsement by the people is also required where an amendment affects constitutional authority, sovereignty, institutional structure or rights.

The House determined that Minor Operational Amendments No. 1 are administrative and procedural. They do not alter the constitutional authority or composition of the House, diminish the role of the General Assembly, change any decision category or affect community rights. The amendments therefore took effect upon adoption by resolution of the House on 3 August 2026.

The amendments address two matters identified during the early operation of the Charter.

First, they clarify how community correspondence and submissions are received, recorded and considered. They confirm that a written submission does not, of itself, become an agenda item, formal business or a motion before the General Assembly.

It does not create an entitlement to priority consideration, a particular outcome, an individual written response or action within a timeframe stipulated by the correspondent. The House remains responsible for determining whether, how and when a matter is progressed.

General Business remains the opportunity for members of the community attending a General Assembly to raise matters directly with the House.

Second, the amendments establish the process for recording General Assembly proceedings and preparing the official transcript or Hansard. They provide for:

- an authorised audio recording;
- preparation of the transcript by the designated support Officer;
- independent proofreading against the recording;
- certification and publication by the Clerk; and
- confirmation of voting outcomes by the Returning Officer.

The amendments have been incorporated across clause 17, Protocol 32 – Correspondence, Protocol 36 – Records, Protocol 39 – General Assembly Meetings, and Schedules 3, 5 and 6.

Outcome Sought

That the General Assembly notes the House resolution of 3 August 2026 and the resulting amendments to the Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026.

The amendments will provide clearer processes for community submissions, General Business and the preparation and preservation of official General Assembly records.

Impact Assessment

- Environmental Sustainability

No direct environmental impact has been identified.

- Social Sustainability

The amendments provide clearer information about how community submissions are received and considered while preserving the opportunity for community members to raise matters directly during General Business.

Publication of authorised recordings and certified transcripts will improve public access to General Assembly proceedings.

- Economic Sustainability

No material financial impact is anticipated. Implementation will require administrative time, secure digital storage and support for transcription, proofreading and publication within available Government resources.

- Cultural Sustainability

The amendments preserve the General Assembly as the principal forum for direct community participation and strengthen the record of proceedings for future generations. They do not alter cultural rights or the constitutional identity of the Norfolk Island People.

- Governance & Constitutional Sustainability

The amendments strengthen transparency, procedural clarity, record integrity and public accountability.

They preserve the separate responsibilities of the officers of the House:

- the Clerk oversees the recording and transcript process, certifies the Hansard and authorises publication;
- the designated Support Officer prepares the Hansard;
- an independent proofreader checks the transcript against the authorised recording; and
- the Returning Officer determines and confirms voting outcomes.

The amendments do not alter constitutional authority, sovereignty, institutional structure or rights.

Resolution

That the General Assembly:

1. notes the resolution of the House dated 3 August 2026 adopting Governance Charter – Minor Operational Amendments No. 1: Community Submissions and Official General Assembly Records, attached as Annexure A;
2. notes that the amendments clarify the administration of community correspondence and submissions, General Business and the official recording and transcription of General Assembly proceedings;
3. notes that the House determined the amendments to be administrative and procedural and not affecting constitutional authority, sovereignty, institutional structure or rights under clause 7 of the Governance Charter; and
4. notes that the amendments took effect upon adoption by resolution of the House and will be incorporated into the consolidated Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026

Moved: Councillor, Rebecca Hayes

Date: 11 August 2026

Annexure A: Governance Charter – Minor Operational Amendments No. 1: Community Submissions and Official General Assembly Records, adopted by resolution of the House on 3 August 2026.

ANNEXURE A

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PAPER – ITEM 2.2

GOVERNANCE CHARTER – MINOR OPERATIONAL AMENDMENTS NO. 1

COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS AND OFFICIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS

Adopted by resolution of the House on 3 August 2026

Reported to the General Assembly on 22 August 2026

ADOPTED AMENDMENTS

4.1 PART C – GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Clause 17 – The General Assembly

Added:

General Business provides an opportunity for members of the community attending a General Assembly to raise matters directly with the House.

Unless included on the published Notice Paper, accepted as formal business by the House, or otherwise progressed in accordance with the Procedural Orders, a matter raised during General Business does not of itself constitute a motion before the General Assembly or require determination by the Assembly or the House.

4.2 PART G – PROTOCOLS

Protocol 32 – Correspondence

Inserted after section 7:

8. Community Correspondence and Submissions

The Government of Norfolk Island welcomes correspondence and submissions from members of the community as a means of informing the work of Government.

Community correspondence and submissions may:

- identify matters of community interest;
- inform policy development;
- support committee inquiries;
- contribute to consultation;
- inform the Government's programme of work; and
- identify matters that may warrant future consideration by the House or General Assembly.

All correspondence and submissions received by the Government shall be logged in accordance with this Protocol and the Records Protocol and made available to the appropriate office-holder, committee or the House for consideration.

Receipt of correspondence or a submission does not, of itself:

- require inclusion on a General Assembly Notice Paper;
- require consideration during General Business;
- constitute a motion before the General Assembly;
- require debate or determination by the General Assembly;
- require a formal resolution of the House;
- require an individual written response, progress report or implementation timetable;
- require the Government to respond or act within a timeframe stipulated by the correspondent or submitter;
- establish priority over matters already adopted by the Government; or
- create an entitlement to a particular administrative or policy outcome.

The House shall determine whether, how and when a matter is progressed, having regard to:

- this Charter;
- the Operational Priorities and adopted Action Plan;
- resolutions of the General Assembly and the House;
- the nature and significance of the matter;
- available resources and Government capacity; and
- the orderly administration of Government.

Where further action is considered appropriate, the matter may be progressed through:

- consideration by the House;
- referral to a committee or advisory body;
- policy development;
- public consultation;
- incorporation into an existing programme of work;
- inclusion on a future General Assembly Notice Paper; or
- another process authorised under this Charter.

Where practicable, receipt of correspondence may be acknowledged. The Government may provide a substantive response where the House or an authorised office-holder considers one appropriate.

4.3 PART G – PROTOCOLS

Protocol 36 – Records

Amend section 3, Scope of Records:

1. Replace:

Minutes and records of General Assembly deliberations

with:

Minutes, authorised audio recordings and certified transcripts of General Assembly proceedings.

2. Insert the following additional responsibilities of the Clerk under section 4, Responsibility:

- retain or ensure the secure retention of authorised audio recordings and certified transcripts of General Assembly proceedings;
- oversee the preparation and independent proofreading of General Assembly transcripts; and
- certify completed transcripts as the Official Written Record of Proceedings.

Amend section 7, Accessibility and Transparency:

Replace:

summaries of General Assembly deliberations may be published

with:

authorised audio recordings, certified transcripts, minutes and summaries of General Assembly proceedings may be published in accordance with the General Assembly Meetings Protocol.

4.4 PART G – PROTOCOLS

Protocol 39 – General Assembly Meetings

Insert after section 6:

7. General Business

General Business provides an opportunity for members of the community attending a General Assembly to raise matters directly with the House that are not otherwise included on the published Notice Paper.

A matter raised during General Business may be heard, noted, answered where practicable or referred for later consideration.

Unless the matter is accepted as formal business by the House in accordance with this Charter and the Procedural Orders, it does not of itself:

- become an item on the Notice Paper;
- constitute a motion before the General Assembly;
- require debate or determination at that meeting;
- require an immediate decision or commitment by the House; or
- require a separate written response.

Written correspondence or submissions lodged before a General Assembly are administered under Protocol 32 – Correspondence. Their receipt does not automatically place them before the General Assembly as General Business.

Nothing in this section prevents the House from referring a matter raised during General Business for further consideration, future consultation, committee review or inclusion on a later Notice Paper.

8. Official Record of Proceedings

8.1 Recording

Proceedings of the General Assembly shall be audio recorded unless the House resolves otherwise because of a legal, privacy, safety or other substantial concern.

Public notice of the meeting shall state that proceedings will be recorded and may be published.

The recording made under the authority of the Clerk shall be the authorised audio record of the proceedings. A private or unofficial recording does not constitute an official record of the General Assembly.

8.2 Custody and Authorisation

The Clerk shall:

- ensure that the authorised audio recording is complete and securely retained;
- preserve an unaltered master copy as part of the permanent records of Government;
- authorise a publication copy for upload to the Government of Norfolk Island website as soon as practicable; and
- provide the authorised recording to the officer or person designated to prepare the written transcript.

Publication may be delayed or limited where reasonably necessary to protect confidential information, personal privacy, legal obligations, security or the integrity of the proceedings.

8.3 Preparation of Transcript

The designated Support Officer shall prepare a typed transcript of the proceedings, to be known as the General Assembly Hansard.

The transcript shall reproduce the proceedings as accurately and completely as practicable.

No statement, decision, vote or material contribution may be added, removed or substantively altered.

8.4 Independent Proofreading

The draft transcript shall be proofread against the authorised audio recording by an officer or person who:

- * did not prepare the transcript; and
- * has been approved by the House or the Clerk for that purpose.

Any correction identified during proofreading shall be referred to the Clerk.

Where the transcript records a vote, the outcome shall be checked against the result determined by the Returning Officer and recorded in the Norfolk Island Register.

8.5 Certification

Following independent proofreading, the transcript shall be submitted to the Clerk for final procedural review.

The Clerk shall verify that:

- the required preparation and proofreading process has been completed;
- the transcript is consistent with the authorised audio recording;
- resolutions and voting outcomes have been correctly recorded; and
- no material alteration has been made to the substance of the proceedings.

Where satisfied that these requirements have been met, the Clerk shall certify the transcript as the Official Written Record of Proceedings.

Certification does not authorise the Clerk to amend, interpret or determine the substance of any contribution, decision or resolution.

8.6 Publication

Once certified by the Clerk, the General Assembly Hansard shall be published on the Government of Norfolk Island website and retained as part of the permanent records of Government.

If an error is identified after publication, a corrected version may be issued with the approval and recertification of the Clerk. The nature of the correction and date of republication shall be recorded.

If an inconsistency arises between the certified transcript and the authorised audio recording, the authorised audio recording shall prevail as evidence of what was said.

Resolutions, voting outcomes and formal decisions shall also be verified against the minutes and the Norfolk Island Register. A voting outcome shall be verified against the result determined by the Returning Officer.

4.5 SCHEDULE 3 – OFFICER APPOINTMENT INSTRUMENTS

Instrument of Appointment – Clerk of the House

Insert the following additional duties:

The Clerk shall:

- authorise and preserve the official audio recording of General Assembly proceedings;
- oversee the preparation and independent proofreading of the General Assembly Hansard;
- certify the completed Hansard as the Official Written Record of Proceedings; and
- authorise publication of the recording and certified Hansard in accordance with Protocol 39.

Instrument of Appointment – Returning Officer

Replace:

Pursuant to Part B and Protocol 31 of this Charter

with:

Pursuant to Part C and Protocol 33 of this Charter.

No transcript preparation, proofreading or certification function is to be added to the Instrument of Appointment for the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer remains responsible for:

- maintaining the Electoral Roll;
- verifying eligibility;
- administering ballots and referenda;
- safeguarding electoral integrity and data security; and
- determining voting outcomes in accordance with the Charter and Procedural Orders.

The correction from Part B and Protocol 31 to Part C and Protocol 33 is a technical cross-reference correction and does not change the Returning Officer's functions.

4.6 SCHEDULE 5 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURAL ORDERS

Officers of the House – Clerk of the House

Insert the following additional responsibilities:

The Clerk is responsible for:

- authorising and preserving the official audio recording of General Assembly proceedings;
- authorising a publication copy of the audio recording;
- overseeing preparation and independent proofreading of the General Assembly Hansard;
- certifying the completed Hansard as the Official Written Record of Proceedings; and
- authorising publication of the certified Hansard.

Officers of the House – Returning Officer

Replace:

for implementing Protocol #34 as defined in this Charter

with:

implementing Protocol 33 as defined in this Charter.

No transcript preparation, proofreading or certification responsibility is to be assigned to the Returning Officer.

Business of the General Assembly

Insert the following provisions after existing order 12:

12A. General Business provides an opportunity for members of the community attending the General Assembly to raise matters directly with the House.

12B. A matter raised during General Business may be heard, noted, answered where practicable or referred for later consideration.

12C. Unless accepted as formal business by the House, a matter raised during General Business does not constitute a motion or require debate, determination or resolution at that meeting.

12D. Written correspondence or submissions lodged before a General Assembly do not automatically become General Business or formal business of the Assembly. They shall be administered in accordance with Protocol 32 – Correspondence.

12E. Formal business requiring deliberation, determination or resolution shall be included on the Notice Paper or otherwise admitted in accordance with the Charter and these Procedural Orders.

Administration

Insert the following provisions after existing order 93:

93A. Proceedings of the General Assembly shall be audio recorded under the authority of the Clerk unless the House resolves otherwise for a substantial reason recorded in the minutes.

93B. The Clerk shall preserve an unaltered master recording and may authorise a publication copy for release on the Government of Norfolk Island website.

93C. The authorised recording shall be provided to the designated Support Officer for preparation of the General Assembly Hansard.

93D. The draft Hansard shall be independently proofread against the authorised audio recording. Any voting outcome recorded in the Hansard shall be checked against the result determined by the Returning Officer and entered in the Norfolk Island Register.

93E. Following independent proofreading, the Clerk shall review and certify the Hansard as the Official Written Record of Proceedings.

93F. Once certified by the Clerk, the Hansard shall be published and retained as an official record in accordance with Protocols 36 and 39.

4.7 SCHEDULE 6 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY NOTICE PAPER TEMPLATE

Insert under Meeting Details:

Recording of Proceedings

This General Assembly will be audio recorded for the preparation of the official transcript and public record. The authorised audio recording and certified transcript may be published on the Government of Norfolk Island website in accordance with the Governance Charter.

Insert after Questions Submitted:

General Business

Members of the community attending the General Assembly may raise matters directly with the House during General Business.

Matters raised during General Business do not automatically constitute motions or require determination at that meeting. Written correspondence and submissions do not automatically become General Business or formal business of the Assembly.