



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING:

10 October 2026

NOTICE PAPER ITEM:

5. MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY INTEREST

5.1 Statement on Norfolk Island Transition Assembly announcement by Australian Minister Kristy McBain MP

Purpose:

To present the Government of Norfolk Island's position concerning the Australian Government's proposed Norfolk Island Transition Assembly and its announced process for determining a future statutory governance framework for Norfolk Island.

On 15 September 2026, the Chief Magistrate wrote to the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories formally recording GNI's position.

Statement:

Norfolk Island Transition Assembly

The Government of Norfolk Island does not endorse the proposed Norfolk Island Transition Assembly and does not accept its characterisation by the Australian Government as a restoration of local democracy.

The Australian Government has announced its intention to establish a five-member Transition Assembly which, for the following two years, is to make recommendations to the Australian Government concerning a future statutory governance framework for Norfolk Island.

GNI records this as an announcement of the Australian Government's intended process. It does not constitute acknowledgement by GNI of the legitimacy, adequacy or democratic authority of that process, or of any future governance arrangement arising from it.

On the functions presently announced, the Transition Assembly will remain advisory. The Australian Government will retain authority to determine the governance framework it ultimately proposes for Norfolk Island.

Election to an advisory body does not restore democratic government.

Within the Australian administrative arrangements, Norfolk Island has had no elected governing body since the Regional Council was placed under administration in 2021. The Norfolk Island Governance Committee subsequently provided elected community participation, but remained advisory. The proposed Transition Assembly continues that pattern while a further governance model is developed.

The Australian Government has also announced that an eventual statutory Assembly is proposed to be established through Commonwealth primary legislation rather than ordinance, and that a preamble will be reinstated in the *Norfolk Island Act 1979*.

GNI notes those announced changes. They do not resolve the absence of Norfolk Island consent to the governance model being developed or confer governing authority upon the proposed Transition Assembly.

The Joint Standing Committee's *Restoring Democracy* inquiry recommended that the final governance model be put to the Norfolk Island community through a compulsory vote. No determinative community vote on the final model has occurred.

GNI does not seek to direct the choices of Norfolk Islanders who may decide to stand, vote or otherwise participate in the Australian Government's process. The important distinction is that **participation is not consent**.

Participation in an election for the Transition Assembly cannot reasonably be taken as community endorsement of a governance model that has not yet been determined, nor has consent to any change in Norfolk Island's constitutional relationship with Australia. This position was formally conveyed to the Minister before the proposed election process proceeds.

Outcome Sought:

That the General Assembly receive the Statement Norfolk Island Transition Assembly and support its release as a public statement of the Government of Norfolk Island.

Resolution:

That the General Assembly:

1. receives the Statement *Norfolk Island Transition Assembly*;
2. confirms that participation by members of the Norfolk Island community in the proposed Transition Assembly election or associated consultation does not, of itself, constitute consent to any future governance model, constitutional relationship or broader integration not approved by the Norfolk Island People; and
3. supports publication of the Statement as a statement of the Government of Norfolk Island.

Moved: Chief Magistrate, Peter Christian Bailey

Date: 10 October 2026