



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING:

10 October 2026

NOTICE PAPER ITEM:

5. MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY INTEREST

5.2 Statement on Norfolk Island Land – Our Inheritance

Purpose:

To present a statement by the Government of Norfolk Island concerning the Norfolk Island Regional Council announcement that 25 parcels of land are proposed for sale for unpaid rates and charges, and the broader implications for Norfolk Island land, community and intergenerational inheritance..

Statement:

Norfolk Island Land — Our Inheritance

The Government of Norfolk Island is deeply concerned by the announcement that 25 parcels of Norfolk Island land are to be offered for sale for unpaid rates and charges. GNI does not seek to enter into the circumstances of individual landowners or their dealings with the Norfolk Island Regional Council. The wider issue is what this development means for Norfolk Island.

Land has a significance in Norfolk Island that extends well beyond its monetary value. For the Pitcairn–Norfolk Island People it is bound to family, home, inheritance and belonging. When the Pitcairn community came to Norfolk Island in 1856, land was allocated to establish and sustain their new homeland. The historical record surrounding that settlement speaks of the **“happiness and welfare of the people”** and their **“future well being.”**

Compulsory land rates came to Norfolk Island through the Australian local government arrangements imposed following the removal of self-government. Valuation-based rating commenced in 2018. Eight years later, that system has reached the point where 25 portions of this small and finite Island are proposed for sale for unpaid rates and charges.

This is a significant consequence of a governance model that was not designed by, or for, the Norfolk Island community.

Rates and annual charges represented approximately 8 per cent of NIRC's total income in 2024–25. The potential consequence of recovering that revenue must now be weighed against something much harder to replace: land held by Norfolk Island families, including homes and inherited land, and the connection of future generations to this Island.

Whether individual debts have arisen through financial hardship, circumstance or objection to the imposed rating system is a matter for those landowners. GNI's responsibility is to recognise the broader consequence for our community.

The GNI Governance Charter recognises that Norfolk Island is sustained by the balance between land, sea, culture and economy, and that stewardship of that balance is both an inheritance and a responsibility. It requires consideration of the long-term wellbeing of our people and the inheritance left to generations yet to be born.

The prospect of Norfolk Island families losing land under a compulsory rating system introduced only eight years ago demands more than an administrative response. It demands serious examination of whether the system itself is appropriate for Norfolk Island, its economy, its culture and its people.

Outcome Sought:

That the General Assembly receive the Statement *Norfolk Island Land – Our Inheritance* 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 Land – Our Inheritance*; and
2. supports its publication as a statement of the Government of Norfolk Island.

Moved: Councillor, Timothy Brown

Date: 10 October 2026