



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING:

10 October 2026

NOTICE PAPER ITEM:

5. MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY INTEREST

5.3 External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026 and Supporting Charter Amendments

Purpose:

To present the *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026*, adopted by the House on 14 September 2026, and to seek General Assembly endorsement of the associated amendments to the *Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026* required to support its operation.

Background:

The Governance Charter establishes the authority, responsibilities and accountability requirements applying to GNI's external relations, representation, correspondence, consultation, communication and official records.

The *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026* brings those requirements together into a practical system for conducting GNI's external relations. It provides arrangements for governmental and diplomatic engagement, official visits and delegations, representation and mandates, regional and international participation, briefing, agreements and commitments, communication, recordkeeping and follow-up.

The Framework does not create constitutional, executive or representative authority. Authority continues to arise from the Governance Charter, adopted Protocols, decisions of the House and properly authorised appointments or delegations. Where any inconsistency arises, the Charter prevails.

The House adopted the Framework on 14 September 2026 and referred it to the Norfolk Island Council of Elders for comment, recognising the cultural and community dimensions of Norfolk Island's external relationships.

Following adoption, a review of the Charter Protocols identified amendments required to provide clearer governing rules for official visits, delegations, mandates, consultation, communication, correspondence, media, records and representative authority.

The proposed amendments strengthen the Charter framework under which the External Relations & Diplomacy Framework operates. They do not transfer authority from the Charter to the Framework.

Proposed Charter and Protocol Amendments

The amendments are set out in full at Attachment B – Proposed Charter and Protocol Amendments to Support the External Relations & Diplomacy Framework.

They provide for amendments to:

- **Protocol 29 – Communication:** requirements for communications associated with official visits and delegations;
- **Protocol 31 – Consultation:** consultation requirements where external engagement concerns constitutional status, major community interests, culture or matters requiring higher-level decisions;
- **Protocol 32 – Correspondence:** authority and recordkeeping for invitations, credentials and official external correspondence;
- **Protocol 34 – External Relations:** governance of official visits and delegations, including authority, coordination, protocol, hospitality and the External Engagement Register;
- **Protocol 35 – Media:** authority and controls for public communication associated with significant external engagements;
- **Protocol 36 – Records:** engagement files, records of discussion, post-engagement reporting and follow-up;
- **Protocol 37 – Representation:** written mandates, delegation authority, conflicts of interest and limits upon representatives; and
- consequential amendments to **Section 9 – Definitions, Section 13 – Chief Magistrate, Section 15 – Officers of the House, and Section 24 – Decision Categories.**

The amendment instrument identifies the precise insertion point for each amendment within the Charter and provides for consequential renumbering and cross-references.

Of particular importance, the amendments preserve the distinction between representation and authority. A representative may engage, discuss and convey established GNI positions within an authorised mandate, but may not exceed that mandate, alter GNI's constitutional position, claim an unconfirmed community mandate or bind GNI without the required approval.

General Assembly Consideration:

The Framework provides GNI with the practical machinery required to develop external relationships in a consistent and accountable manner. It also recognises that some external matters may require General Assembly consideration, community consultation or a broader community mandate. The House retains responsibility for determining when those requirements are engaged.

The proposed Charter amendments ensure that the authority and safeguards governing that work remain in the Charter itself.

This is particularly important as GNI develops relationships with governments, Pacific and international organisations, cultural institutions and other external bodies. External engagement must be capable of continuing between office-holders while preserving Norfolk Island's established positions, institutional records and the authority of the community where a matter requires its mandate.

Outcome Sought:

That the General Assembly:

1. notes the adoption by the House on 14 September 2026 of the *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026*;
2. recognises the Framework as the operational system through which GNI will coordinate, authorise, prepare, conduct, record and follow up its external governmental, regional and international engagement, subject at all times to the Governance Charter;
3. endorses the proposed amendments to Protocols 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36 and 37 and the specified consequential amendments to Sections 9, 13, 15 and 24 of the Governance Charter; and
4. confirms that matters requiring General Assembly consideration, community consultation or broader community mandate will continue to be brought before the people in accordance with the Governance Charter.

Resolution:

That the General Assembly:

1. notes the *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026*, adopted by the House on 14 September 2026;
2. endorses the proposed Charter and Protocol amendments contained in Attachment B;
3. refers those amendments to the House for adoption in accordance with clause 7 of the *Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026* and the applicable decision category;
4. confirms that the Framework remains subordinate to the Governance Charter and does not independently confer constitutional, executive, representative or decision-making authority; and
5. authorises, following adoption of the Charter amendments by the House, any strictly consequential updates to the Framework and its operational tools required to maintain consistency with the Charter, provided those updates do not alter substantive authority.

Moved: Chief Magistrate, Peter Christian Bailey

Date: 10 October 2026

Attachments:

- **Annexure A: *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026***
- **Annexure B: *Proposed Charter and Protocol Amendments to Support the External Relations & Diplomacy Framework***

Annexure A: External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY FRAMEWORK

Implementing Governance Charter Protocol 34 – External Relations
2026





PREAMBLE

This Framework gives practical effect to the external-relations provisions of the Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026. It brings together the Charter's existing requirements for external relations, representation, correspondence, consultation, communication, media and records and provides one practical system for their application.

The Governance Charter governs; this Framework implements; the schedules and operational tools enable the work to be carried out consistently.

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External Relations and Diplomacy Framework 2026.

This Framework has been prepared by the Government of Norfolk Island to establish the policy and institutional arrangements for the conduct and coordination of GNI's external relations, regional engagement and international representation.

It is intended to guide GNI office-holders, authorised representatives and delegates, and to provide governments, regional and international organisations, Norfolk Island institutions and other interested parties with a clear understanding of GNI's approach to external engagement.

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1. Governance architecture

GNI's external-relations arrangements operate through three clear layers.

Each layer has a different function, and none is intended to duplicate the layer above it.

Layer	Instrument	Function
1 – GOVERN	Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026, including adopted Protocols	Establishes authority, decision-making rules, responsibilities, limits, accountability and the governing requirements that apply to external relations.
2 – IMPLEMENT	External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026	Brings the relevant Charter requirements together for external relations and states how GNI will organise, authorise, prepare, conduct, record and follow up external engagement.
3 – ENABLE	Schedules and Operational Tools contained in this Framework.	Provide the practical reference material, forms, checklists and registers used by Members and officers to carry out the Framework.

In simple terms: The Charter governs. The Framework implements. The tools enable.

1.1 Relationship with adopted Charter Protocols

The Framework does not replace, amend or reproduce the adopted Charter Protocols. Those Protocols remain the source of the governing rule. Where an external-relations activity engages one of them, the Framework applies that rule operationally.



Adopted Protocol	What it governs	Application through this Framework
29 – Communication	Accuracy, authority and integrity of official communication.	Applies to communications arising from all external engagements.
31 – Consultation	When and how GNI consults the community.	Applies where an external matter requires consultation, General Assembly consideration or community endorsement.
32 – Correspondence	Preparation, authorisation, receipt and recording of official correspondence.	Controls all formal external and diplomatic correspondence.
34 – External Relations	All external engagement and the External Engagement Register.	Primary Protocol implemented by this Framework.
35 – Media	Media statements, publications and digital communications.	Controls public communications connected with external engagements and visits.
36 – Records	Creation, custody, security, registers and archival preservation.	Controls preservation and institutional custody of external-relations records.
37 – Representation	Who may represent Norfolk Island or GNI, forms of representation, limits and accountability.	Controls representative authority for every engagement under this Framework.

1.2 Authority and inconsistency

Nothing in this Framework, its Schedules or Operational Tools creates representative, executive or decision-making authority. Authority must arise under the Governance Charter, an adopted Protocol, a House decision, an assigned portfolio or a valid delegation or appointment.

Where this Framework or an Operational Tool is inconsistent with the Governance Charter or an adopted Protocol, the Charter and adopted Protocol prevail.



2. Purpose

The purpose of this Framework is to ensure that GNI can build and maintain external relationships confidently and consistently, while preserving clarity about who speaks for Government, the authority they hold, the position they are authorised to convey, what may be negotiated or committed, and how the engagement is recorded and followed through.

The Framework applies to governmental, diplomatic, regional, international, cultural, technical and institutional engagement conducted in the name of GNI or where a person is authorised to represent Norfolk Island.

3. Responsibility and authority

The House has overall responsibility for external-relations policy, significant governmental positions, strategic priorities and negotiating authority. It determines when an external matter requires General Assembly consideration, consultation or broader community mandate.

The Chief Magistrate is the primary constitutional representative of the people of Norfolk Island and GNI in accordance with Protocol 37. Councillors may represent GNI where authorised by the House or within an assigned portfolio or delegated function. Other delegates and representatives may be appointed for a defined purpose, scope and duration in accordance with Protocol 37.

Official GNI correspondence remains governed by Protocol 32. Nothing in this Framework changes the authorisation required for correspondence or permits an officer or representative to commit GNI through correspondence without the required authority.

4. External Relations and International Engagement Function

The External Relations and International Engagement Function is the administrative coordination point for GNI external relations. It is a function of Government, not a separate authority or representative office.

The Function will coordinate proposed governmental visits, formal external meetings, regional and international engagement, negotiations, membership or affiliation processes and official delegations.

For each significant engagement the Function will:

- identify the counterpart, purpose, status and intended outcome;



- identify the relevant Charter Protocols and the appropriate authorised GNI representative;
- determine what House approval, consultation, mandate or briefing is required;
- coordinate cultural participation, diplomatic and ceremonial arrangements, media and administration;
- identify proposed commitments, constitutional sensitivities and any need for without-prejudice engagement;
- ensure substantive discussions and outcomes are recorded; and
- coordinate follow-up and ensure information required for the External Engagement Register is supplied and preserved.

5. Categories of engagement

Category	Examples	Authority pathway
Constitutional and political	Status, self-determination, governance, constitutional development, government-to-government relations	Protocol 37; ordinarily Chief Magistrate unless expressly delegated.
Administrative and technical	Agencies, technical cooperation, health, education, fisheries, environment, infrastructure, research	Protocol 37; relevant portfolio, officer or authorised specialist.
Cultural and community	Culture, heritage, language, identity, kinship and community relationships	Protocol 37; authorised cultural/community representation, with GNI coordination where governmental matters arise.
Regional and international institutional	Pacific and international organisations, membership, affiliation and partnership	Protocols 34 and 37; House direction where significant or commitment-bearing.



6. Levels of engagement and authority

1. **Relationship building** – meeting, listening, exchanging information and establishing contacts.
2. **Representation** – presenting established GNI positions and receiving information or proposals.
3. **Negotiation** – exploring an identified outcome within an approved written mandate.
4. **Agreement or commitment** – requiring the approval prescribed by the Governance Charter and applicable adopted Protocols.

A representative may receive and explore a proposal without committing GNI. Where an engagement moves beyond an established position or may create an obligation, the matter must be referred for the authority required under the Charter.

7. Official visits and delegations

All proposed official visits and delegations are to be referred to the External Relations and International Engagement Function.

On receiving notice of a proposed visit, the Function will:

1. confirm the identity, official status, purpose, proposed dates and principal contact of the visitor or delegation;
2. identify the appropriate GNI host and representative and confirm authority under Protocol 37;
3. obtain House direction where the engagement is governmental, political, constitutional, sensitive, involves a senior governmental or diplomatic representative, or may involve a commitment;
4. determine whether consultation, General Assembly consideration or cultural participation is required;
5. prepare the External Engagement Brief and, where required, the Authority/Mandate form;
6. prepare the program and participant list and arrange precedence, forms of address, introductions and seating;
7. coordinate cultural welcome, Council of Elders participation where appropriate, hospitality, gifts, flags and emblems, transport, venue, accessibility, security and other logistics;
8. coordinate media, photography and public communications under Protocols 29 and 35;
9. ensure a Record of Discussion is prepared for substantive meetings; and
10. complete post-engagement reporting, allocate follow-up and update the External Engagement Register.



Visits by a Head of State, Head of Government, Minister, Ambassador, High Commissioner or equivalent senior representative are to be notified promptly to the Chief Magistrate and House. A proportionate visit plan is to be prepared.

Pacific governmental visits should facilitate direct governmental dialogue and, where relevant, appropriate cultural welcome and participation.

Australian governmental visitors are received according to office and purpose, consistently with adopted GNI positions and, where appropriate, on an expressly without-prejudice basis.

Outgoing GNI delegations must have an authorised lead, defined purpose, confirmed representation authority, briefing, itinerary, budget authority where applicable, protocol contacts and reporting requirement before departure.

8. Representation and mandates

Protocol 37 is the controlling authority for representation. This Framework does not create a separate delegation regime.

Where the proposed engagement involves substantive negotiation, constitutional or political matters, a possible commitment, or a need to depart from an established GNI position, the authority is to be recorded using ER-02 – Authority/Mandate to Represent GNI.

The mandate records the authority already granted, its purpose and duration, the matters authorised for discussion, matters not authorised, desired outcome, referral points and reporting requirements. Completion of ER-02 does not itself confer authority where a House decision or other Charter process is required.

Where a letter of introduction or formal credential is appropriate, it must comply with Protocol 32 – Correspondence.

9. International Engagement Strategy

The House will maintain a concise International Engagement Strategy identifying priority relationships, the purpose of each relationship, responsible GNI lead, current status, next action and intended outcome. The Strategy is an internal management tool and does not itself confer authority to represent or commit GNI.

Priority relationships may include Pacific governments and institutions, constructive governmental engagement with Australia, regional and international organisations, and academic, legal, diplomatic, environmental, maritime, cultural and technical partnerships.



10. Regional and international participation

GNI may explore participation, cooperation, affiliation, partnership or membership with regional and international organisations where this advances Norfolk Island's interests. Before a formal arrangement is entered, the House will consider purpose, benefit, obligations, costs, constitutional implications, consultation requirements and the authority required to proceed.

11. Diplomatic and ceremonial practice

Official engagements are to be conducted with dignity and appropriate regard to diplomatic and cultural practice. Schedule 1 contains the GNI Table of Precedence for House approval and operational use.

The External Relations Function will confirm forms of address for visiting dignitaries, arrange introductions and seating appropriate to office and purpose, and coordinate use of flags, emblems, cultural welcome, gifts and hospitality.

A visiting Head of State or Head of Government is ordinarily accorded highest guest precedence. Visiting Ministers, Ambassadors, High Commissioners and equivalent representatives are placed according to office, purpose and diplomatic custom. Ceremonial placement does not determine or imply GNI's constitutional position concerning another office or government.

Cultural welcome and participation are to be planned with the Council of Elders or relevant cultural representatives where appropriate to the nature and purpose of the engagement.

12. Briefing

A significant external engagement requires a proportionate briefing. ER-01 – External Engagement Brief is the standard tool and records the counterpart, purpose, context, participants, applicable authority, established GNI position, desired outcome, sensitivities, matters not authorised, cultural and protocol considerations, media position and anticipated follow-up.

GNI will maintain an External Relations Briefing Pack containing an approved account of Norfolk Island's history, constitutional position and contemporary governance, relevant constitutional instruments, the Governance Charter, significant General Assembly resolutions, legal opinions and issue-specific briefs.



13. Records and reporting

Protocol 34 requires all external engagements to be recorded in the External Engagement Register and assigns responsibility for that Register to the Administration Executive Officer. Protocol 36 governs custody and preservation of the broader official record.

For significant engagements, the operational record will ordinarily comprise the External Engagement Brief, any Authority/Mandate, relevant correspondence, ER-04 Record of Discussion, ER-05 Post-Engagement Report and the External Engagement Register entry.

The Record of Discussion is not a transcript. It records the principal matters discussed, positions conveyed, proposals received, commitments made or expressly not made, matters reserved for further authority and agreed next steps.

The Post-Engagement Report identifies outcomes, relationship implications, actions, responsible persons, due dates and matters requiring House direction.

Official external relationships belong institutionally to GNI. Contact history, correspondence, commitments and outstanding actions must be preserved so that responsibility can pass between authorised office-holders without loss of continuity.

14. Agreements and commitments

No operational tool under this Framework creates authority to bind Norfolk Island or GNI. Before substantive negotiation of a proposed agreement, memorandum, joint commitment, membership obligation, funding arrangement or governmental undertaking, the External Relations Function must identify the parties, purpose, authorised representative, decision category, consultation requirement and negotiating authority.

Before proposed signature or acceptance, GNI must identify the obligations, duration, financial implications, constitutional or jurisdictional implications, confidentiality, termination arrangements, reporting requirements and authority required. Legal or specialist advice is to be obtained where warranted.

No signature, letter or public statement may be used to bypass General Assembly, community or House authority required under the Charter.

Where necessary, negotiations or instruments should preserve GNI's constitutional position and clarify that cooperation does not imply acceptance of another party's asserted jurisdiction or political status.



15. Media, communication and confidentiality

Media and public communications connected with external relations are governed by Protocols 29 and 35. Public statements must distinguish established GNI positions from matters under discussion and must not announce commitments before the required authority has been obtained.

Confidentiality may be necessary in diplomatic, negotiating or sensitive governmental engagement. Confidentiality does not remove the requirement to create an appropriate institutional record or to maintain accountability to the House.

16. Schedules and Operational Tools

The Schedules and Operational Tools contained in this Framework provide the practical means by which its requirements are implemented.

They form part of the Framework but do not create independent representative, executive or decision-making authority. Their purpose is to provide consistent reference material, forms, checklists and records for use by Members, officers and authorised representatives in conducting GNI external relations.

Schedule 1 – GNI Table of Precedence establishes the ceremonial order to be applied at GNI-hosted governmental, diplomatic and formal occasions.

Schedule 2 – External Relations Operational Tools contains the standard forms, checklists and registers used in preparing, authorising, conducting, recording and following up external engagements.

The Operational Tools may be reproduced and used separately for administrative purposes, but remain instruments of this Framework.

The House may approve administrative amendments to a Schedule or Operational Tool where necessary for effective operation, provided the amendment is consistent with the Governance Charter, adopted Protocols and this Framework and does not alter substantive authority.



Instrument	Purpose
Schedule 1 GNI Table of Precedence	establishes the ceremonial order to be applied at GNI-hosted governmental, diplomatic and formal occasions.
Schedule 2 ER-01 – External Engagement Brief	Pre-engagement briefing and position preparation.
ER-02 – Authority/Mandate to Represent GNI	Records the scope of authority already granted for a particular engagement.
ER-03 – Official Visit Planning Checklist	Ensures all required visit, protocol, cultural, logistical, media and records steps are completed.
ER-04 – Record of Discussion	Creates the institutional record of substantive external meetings.
ER-05 – Post-Engagement Report & Actions	Records outcome, actions, responsibilities, due dates and matters requiring direction.
ER-06 – External Engagement Register	The register required by Protocol 34, administered in accordance with the Charter.

17. Implementation and review

On adoption of this Framework, the House will confirm responsibility for the External Relations and International Engagement Function, approve Schedule 1 – Table of Precedence, approve the Operational Tools, establish the External Relations Briefing Pack and prepare the first International Engagement Strategy.

The Framework will be reviewed after its first year of operation or earlier where experience, a change to the Governance Charter or Norfolk Island's external circumstances demonstrates a need for amendment.



Schedule 1 – GNI Table of Precedence

This Schedule establishes ceremonial order only and does not confer constitutional, executive or representative authority.

Order	Office / representative	Application
1	Chief Magistrate	Primary constitutional representative under Protocol 37 and principal GNI host for governmental occasions.
2	Councillors of The House	Treated equally unless an adopted internal order or event-specific role requires otherwise.
3	President / nominated representative of the Council of Elders	Cultural and community precedence; may be elevated for cultural or customary occasions.
4	Clerk of the General Assembly	Formal procedural office; prominence increases for General Assembly or parliamentary-style occasions.
5	Secretary to Government	Senior governmental administrative role.
6	Any authorised External Relations delegate	Placement reflects the purpose of the engagement; delegation does not create independent authority.
7	Other GNI office-holders, authorised representatives and senior advisers	Ordered according to office, authority and relevance to the occasion.

Visiting dignitaries are integrated into the order according to their office, the nature of the occasion and diplomatic custom.

The Chief Magistrate remains the principal GNI host unless the House determines otherwise.

Approved by the House on 14 September 2026.



Schedule 2 – External Relations Operational Tools

These tools enable implementation of the Governance Charter and External Relations & Diplomacy Framework. They record and organise authority established elsewhere; they do not create authority.

ER-01 – External Engagement Brief

Engagement / counterpart: _____

Date and location: _____

Category: _____

Purpose: _____

Authorised GNI lead: _____

Participants: _____

Applicable Charter Protocols: _____

Authority / mandate: _____

Background: _____

Established GNI position: _____

Desired outcome: _____

Matters not authorised / not to be conceded: _____

Consultation requirement: _____

Cultural / protocol considerations: _____

Media position: _____

Risks / sensitivities: _____

Required follow-up: _____



ER-02 – Authority / Mandate to Represent GNI

Representative: _____

Engagement: _____

Existing authority under Charter / House resolution / portfolio / appointment:

Purpose: _____

Scope and duration: _____

Desired outcome: _____

Matters authorised: _____

Matters not authorised / not to be conceded:

Referral points: _____

Reporting requirement:

Approved by / date: _____



ER-03 – Official Visit Planning Checklist

- ☐ Incoming approach logged under Protocol 32
- ☐ External Engagement Register entry opened
- ☐ Visitor status and purpose confirmed
- ☐ Representation authority confirmed under Protocol 37
- ☐ House direction obtained if required
- ☐ Consultation requirement assessed
- ☐ ER-01 briefing completed
- ☐ ER-02 mandate completed if required
- ☐ Program and participants confirmed
- ☐ Table of Precedence applied
- ☐ Forms of address confirmed
- ☐ Council of Elders/cultural participation considered
- ☐ Venue, seating and logistics confirmed
- ☐ Hospitality and gifts approved
- ☐ Flags/emblems confirmed
- ☐ Media arrangements cleared under Protocols 29 and 35
- ☐ Record-taker nominated
- ☐ ER-05 responsibility assigned



ER-04 – Record of Discussion

Meeting: _____

Date / location: _____

Participants: _____

Authority / capacity of GNI participants:

Purpose: _____

Principal matters discussed:

GNI positions conveyed:

Proposals received: _____

Commitments made:

Matters expressly reserved:

Agreed actions: _____

Next step: _____

Prepared by: _____

Classification: _____



ER-05 – Post-Engagement Report & Actions

Engagement: _____

Representative: _____

Outcome: _____

Significance for the relationship: _____

Issues requiring House direction: _____

Actions: _____

Responsible person(s): _____

Due date(s): _____

Correspondence Register updated where applicable:

External Engagement Register updated:

Records filed under Protocol 36:

Recommended next step:



ER-06 – External Engagement Register

Required by Governance Charter Protocol 34.

The Administration Executive Officer is responsible for keeping the Register current; preservation and records custody are governed by Protocol 36.

Date	Counterpart	Purpose	GNI lead	Authority	Outcome	Follow-up	Status
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Annexure B: Proposed Charter and Protocol Amendments to Support the External Relations & Diplomacy Framework

These amendments align the *Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026* with the *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026* by strengthening the governing requirements for communication, consultation, correspondence, external relations, media, records and representation.

The Charter governs authority, limits and accountability. The Framework is subordinate to the Charter and operates as an implementing instrument. It does not confer independent constitutional, executive, representative or decision-making authority. Where an inconsistency arises, the Charter prevails.

The following amendments are to be incorporated into the Governance Charter following endorsement by the General Assembly and adoption by the House in accordance with clause 7.

Protocol 29 – Communication

Insert at the end of Protocol 29 – Communication:

Official Visits and Delegations

1. Communications concerning an official visit or delegation must be clear, accurate, timely and consistent with the approved engagement category and written mandate.
2. Before an engagement, the responsible officer must prepare a communication plan identifying:
 - (a) the intended audiences;
 - (b) authorised spokespersons;
 - (c) approved messages and terminology;
 - (d) authorised internal and external communication channels;
 - (e) confidentiality, cultural and consent requirements applying to information, images and recordings;
 - (f) translation and accessibility requirements;
 - (g) clearance responsibilities; and
 - (h) the timing of communications.
3. Every participant must receive the approved communication plan and refer any unapproved enquiry or proposed statement to the authorised spokesperson.
4. A communication that exceeds the approved mandate or may imply recognition, agreement or commitment by GNI must not be issued. If issued inadvertently, it must be withdrawn or corrected promptly and referred to the approving authority.
5. Material communications, approvals, corrections and instructions must be retained on the engagement file and, where applicable, linked to the External Engagement Register.

Protocol 31 – Consultation

Insert at the end of Protocol 31 – Consultation:

Consultation for Official Visits and Delegations

1. Consultation must be undertaken where an official visit or delegation:
 - (a) concerns constitutional status, sovereignty, self-determination or a major community interest;
 - (b) materially affects culture, heritage, language or community relationships; or
 - (c) may produce a Category A or Category B decision.
2. The Council of Elders must be consulted where cultural diplomacy or ceremonial practice is involved.
3. The engagement proposal must include a consultation assessment identifying:
 - (a) affected interests and required consultees;
 - (b) the method and timing of consultation;
 - (c) accessibility and cultural requirements; and
 - (d) the decision points at which views must be considered.
4. Consultation must occur early enough to influence the mandate or proposed position.
5. The engagement file must record the information provided, views received, areas of agreement or concern, how those views affected the decision and any reasons for proceeding differently.
6. If the scope or likely impact of the engagement materially changes, further consultation must occur before approval or implementation.

Protocol 32 – Correspondence

Insert at the end of Protocol 32 – Correspondence, immediately before Protocol 33: Correspondence Concerning Official Visits and Delegations

1. A formal invitation, acceptance, decline, credential or acknowledgement concerning an official visit or delegation must follow the applicable authorisation pathway.
2. Correspondence must identify the purpose and status of the visit, proposed participants, and whether negotiations or commitments are contemplated.
3. No invitation, acceptance or other correspondence may imply recognition, agreement or commitment beyond the authority approved by the House.
4. Draft correspondence must be prepared or reviewed by the responsible officer, checked against the approved engagement category and mandate, and cleared by the authorised decision-maker before issue.
5. Each item of correspondence must state its date, sender, recipient, subject, status and engagement reference, together with any conditions or limits on participation.
6. Official visit correspondence and related approvals and responses must be retained on the engagement file and linked to the External Engagement Register.
7. An urgent oral or informal communication must be confirmed in writing as soon as practicable.

Protocol 34 – External Relations

Insert at the end of Protocol 34 – External Relations:

Official Visits and Delegations

1. Official visits and delegations are external engagements governed by the Charter and the *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026*.
2. The External Relations and International Engagement Function coordinates significant incoming and outgoing visits, maintains the required administrative systems and supports the relevant approving authority, but has no independent executive, approval or representative authority.
3. External engagement must be conducted with dignity, restraint, reciprocity, consistency and respect for the office and institutions of each participant. Representatives must seek constructive relationships, distinguish dialogue from recognition or agreement, avoid partisan or inflammatory language, preserve Norfolk Island's constitutional position, and express disagreement calmly and without unnecessary prejudice to future relations.
4. Before any commitment is made, the responsible officer must open an engagement file and record:
 - (a) the proposed purpose and engagement category;
 - (b) the authorised host or delegation leader and participants;
 - (c) the itinerary and proposed outcomes;
 - (d) the applicable decision and approval pathway;
 - (e) communication arrangements; and
 - (f) relevant risk, cultural and protocol considerations.
5. For each significant incoming visit, the responsible officer must appoint a visitor liaison who is the principal administrative contact for the visitor or delegation, confirms requirements in advance, communicates programme changes, coordinates arrival and departure, supports the authorised host and ensures that agreed hospitality, cultural and accessibility arrangements are delivered.
6. A constitutional, political, negotiating or potentially binding matter must be referred to the House before the visit.
7. The level of reception and protocol must be proportionate to the visitor's status and the purpose of the visit.
8. Hospitality for an official visitor or delegation must be appropriate to the visitor's office, the purpose and duration of the engagement, cultural practice, accessibility needs, approved expenditure and the principle of reciprocity. Arrangements must provide a clear welcome, accurate introductions, reasonable comfort, timely movement between activities, appropriate opportunities for cultural and community engagement, and a courteous departure without implying recognition, precedence or commitment beyond the approved mandate.
9. Every significant visit must be entered in the External Engagement Register.
10. A material change to the purpose, participants, proposed outcomes or authority for an engagement must be referred for renewed approval before it is acted upon.
11. The engagement file may be closed only after the visit has concluded, all required records have been completed, all required entries have been made in the External Engagement Register, and follow-up actions have been assigned in accordance with Protocol 36.

Gifts and Hospitality

Immediately following the above provision, insert:

A gift or hospitality offered, received, accepted or declined in connection with an external engagement must be handled in accordance with the applicable approval, valuation, disclosure and retention requirements and recorded promptly in the Gift and Hospitality Register.

These provisions preserve the Framework's important distinction between administrative coordination and governmental authority.

Protocol 35 – Media

Insert at the end of Protocol 35 – Media:

Media Concerning Official Visits and Delegations

1. A public announcement concerning a significant visit requires prior authorisation.
2. For each significant engagement, the responsible officer must prepare a media and publication plan proportionate to the sensitivity of the engagement.
3. The plan must identify:
 - (a) the authorised spokesperson;
 - (b) approved key messages and terminology;
 - (c) photography, recording, consent and cultural requirements;
 - (d) confidentiality restrictions;
 - (e) publication timing and sequence;
 - (f) joint-clearance arrangements; and
 - (g) the process for correcting errors.
4. No outcome, agreement or commitment may be announced before approval.
5. A joint statement must be approved by the relevant authorities before publication.
6. Releases, speeches, captions and joint statements must be checked against the approved mandate and outcomes, retained on the engagement file and, where relevant, cross-referenced in the External Engagement Register.
7. A material error must be corrected promptly through equivalent channels.

Protocol 36 – Records

Insert at the end of Protocol 36 – Records:

Records of Official Visits and Delegations

1. A single engagement file must be maintained for each significant official visit or delegation, using consistent identifiers across the External Engagement Register, correspondence and financial records.
2. The engagement file must include, as applicable:
 - (a) written mandates and approvals;
 - (b) invitations and acceptances;
 - (c) visitor and delegation lists;
 - (d) briefing materials;
 - (e) itineraries and programmes;
 - (f) records of discussion;
 - (g) documents exchanged;

- (h) hospitality, gift and ceremonial records;
 - (i) media releases; and
 - (j) post-visit reports, commitments and action items.
3. Decisions and commitments must be recorded contemporaneously. Final drafts and any draft materially relied upon must be preserved, with applicable access or confidentiality restrictions identified.
 4. Every follow-up action must have a recorded owner and due date.
 5. The delegation leader or authorised host must submit a post-engagement report to the House within 14 days after a significant engagement. The report must identify material discussions, decisions, commitments, expenditure, gifts or hospitality, risks, follow-up actions and any departure from the written mandate. If the 14-day period cannot be met, the reason for delay and a revised submission date must be approved and recorded.
 6. Within five working days after a significant incoming visit, the authorised host or visitor liaison must send an approved acknowledgement or letter of thanks, confirm any agreed next steps that may be communicated, provide approved photographs or materials where appropriate, and ensure that outstanding visitor requests are assigned and recorded. No follow-up communication may create or imply a commitment beyond the approved authority.
 7. After a significant visit, the responsible officer must conduct a proportionate operational debrief with the authorised host and relevant delivery personnel. The debrief must record what worked well, any protocol, logistical, cultural, accessibility, media or security issue, feedback received from the visitor or delegation, corrective actions and improvements to be incorporated into future visit plans and operational tools.
 8. The engagement file must not be closed until outstanding commitments have been transferred to the responsible work programme.

Protocol 37 – Representation

Insert at the end of Protocol 37 – Representation:

Delegations and Representative Authority

1. A participant who has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in relation to an external engagement must disclose it before participating in any recommendation, approval, negotiation or decision concerning that engagement. The disclosure and the measures taken to manage the conflict must be recorded on the engagement file.
2. Before an outgoing delegation is appointed, the approving authority must issue and record a written mandate identifying:
 - (a) the delegation leader and members;
 - (b) the engagement category, purpose and duration;
 - (c) approved positions;
 - (d) matters that may be discussed;
 - (e) matters reserved for further decision;
 - (f) financial and communication limits;
 - (g) reporting obligations and deadlines; and
 - (h) the officer responsible for support.

3. Constitutional and political delegations are ordinarily led by the Chief Magistrate unless the House expressly authorises another representative.
4. Administrative, technical, cultural and community representatives may act only within recorded authority.
5. A cultural representative must not be treated as holding governmental authority unless expressly appointed to do so.
6. The delegation leader must brief every member on the written mandate and maintain a record of substantive discussions.
7. A delegate must not exceed the mandate, alter GNI's constitutional position, claim an unconfirmed community mandate or bind GNI without approval.
8. A request outside the written mandate must be referred immediately to the approving authority.
9. No statement, document, omission or conduct may be represented or reasonably understood as binding GNI unless expressly authorised. A representative who becomes aware that their conduct may have created a contrary impression must notify the approving authority promptly and take any authorised corrective action.

Consequential Charter Amendments

Section 9 – Definitions

Insert the following definitions into Section 9 – Definitions in alphabetical order:

Approving Authority means the House or another person or body expressly authorised by the Charter to approve the relevant engagement category, mandate, expenditure or commitment.

Delegation means two or more persons authorised under a written mandate to represent GNI in an external engagement.

Delegation Leader means the person appointed in a written mandate to lead a delegation and ensure compliance with that mandate.

External Relations and International Engagement Function means the administrative function responsible for coordinating external engagements, including official visits and delegations, without independent authority to approve, represent or bind GNI.

Gift and Hospitality Register means the official record of gifts and hospitality offered, received, accepted or declined in connection with an external engagement.

Official Visit means an incoming or outgoing visit undertaken on behalf of, hosted by or formally recognised by GNI for a governmental, constitutional, political, administrative, technical, cultural, ceremonial or community purpose.

Significant Engagement means an external engagement that requires formal approval, a written mandate, consultation, public communication, material expenditure, or the creation of continuing obligations or commitments.

Written Mandate means a written authorisation issued by the approving authority that states the purpose, participants, approved positions, authority limits, duration and reporting obligations of a representative or delegation.

Section 13 – Chief Magistrate

Insert at the end of Section 13, immediately before Section 14:

The Chief Magistrate is the principal governmental host and constitutional representative, subject to the Charter, any applicable decision category and any written mandate issued by the House.

Section 15 – Officers of the House

Insert at the end of Section 15, immediately before Section 16:

Officers may coordinate logistics, records and protocol but may not independently represent or bind GNI.

Section 24 – Decision Categories

Insert at the end of Section 24 – Decision Categories, immediately before the next Charter section:

1. A routine ceremonial or technical visit is generally a Category C or Category D decision.
2. A visit involving negotiations, a proposed agreement, a constitutional position or a significant continuing obligation may be a Category A or Category B decision.
3. If the applicable category is uncertain, the matter must be referred to the House for determination before approval is given or the engagement proceeds.

Effect of Amendment

Following adoption, the above provisions form part of the *Governance Charter & Operational Manual 2026*. The *External Relations & Diplomacy Framework 2026* and its operational tools are to be read and applied consistently with the Charter as amended.

Any strictly consequential amendment required to the Framework or its operational tools to maintain that consistency may be approved by the House, provided that it does not alter substantive authority.