



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MOTION PAPER

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: 30 May 2026

MOTION # 1: Adoption of General Assembly Procedural Orders

Purpose:

To formally adopt the procedural framework governing the conduct and operation of the General Assembly.

Motion:

That the General Assembly adopts the General Assembly Procedural Orders, as set out in the Governance Charter and Operational Framework, to regulate the conduct, order, participation, continuity arrangements, and decision-making processes of the General Assembly.

Rationale:

These Procedural Orders establish a clear and transparent framework ensuring that all General Assembly proceedings are conducted consistently, fairly, and in accordance with the principles of direct democracy.

Whilst the 1838 Constitution enables the General Assembly to operate without extensive procedural regulation, the Government of Norfolk Island has determined that clearly defined procedures are appropriate for the modern exercise of direct democracy.

The General Assembly Procedural Orders support respectful participation, orderly deliberation, transparency in decision-making, and fair opportunity for community contribution, providing the procedural foundation through which the principles of openness, accountability, participation, and collective decision-making are practically exercised within the General Assembly.

As the Procedural Orders form part of the Governance Charter, adoption of this motion ensures that the General Assembly has an immediately operational framework for orderly proceedings, direct democratic participation, and continuity of governance pending final consideration of the broader Charter.

Outcome Sought:

Formal adoption for immediate application.

Impact Assessment:

This motion relates to the internal procedural operation of the General Assembly. No additional Sustainability Assessment or secondary review process is presently required beyond consideration by the General Assembly.

Resolution:

The General Assembly adopts General Assembly Procedural Orders 01–94 as attached, including the Temporary Vacancy and Continuity of The House provisions arising from the public review process, and authorises their immediate application to all proceedings of the General Assembly.

Moved: Councillor, Rebecca Hayes

Voting: Adjudicated by Returning Officer

GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURAL ORDERS, 2026

Convening the General Assembly

1. The General Assembly may be convened by resolution of The House or by the Chief Magistrate.
2. Notice of a General Assembly shall be publicly issued.
3. Matters for deliberation and access to relevant information shall provide reasonable time for community deliberation.

Business of the General Assembly

4. Daily routine includes opening, petitions, notices, questions, papers, statements, matters of public importance, committee reports, notices, orders of the day, and reports.
5. The House may arrange the order of business by agreement or motion.
6. Members may propose matters of public importance, requiring support of two Members.
7. Debate may be concluded by motion.
8. Leave of The House shall be granted without dissent.
9. The House may adjourn only by resolution.
10. A motion to adjourn requires support from at least two Members.
11. A motion to fix the next meeting may be moved without notice.
12. Committee reports and recommendations, once tabled, proceed to the General Assembly for debate, resolution, and response as formal business of The House.

Notices of Motion

13. The Clerk provides the Notice Paper for the General Assembly meeting in accordance with the process prescribed under this Charter.
14. Notices become effective only when listed.

Questions

15. Questions on notice shall be submitted to the Clerk.
16. Answers are given openly in the General Assembly.
17. Questions without notice may be asked.
18. Questions shall not contain argument, inference, or opinion.
19. Answers shall be relevant, concise, and without reservation.

Papers & Documents

20. Papers may be tabled by any Member of The House.
21. Tabled papers become part of the official record.

Petitions

22. Petitions shall be respectful, properly formatted, and signed.
23. Petitions shall be tabled into The House and gazetted.

Motions & Resolutions

24. Motions require notice unless otherwise provided.
25. Unreached motions are carried forward.
26. Amendments are voted on by the General Assembly before The House resolves the main question.

Orders of the Day

27. Business set down for future consideration is an Order of the Day.
28. Orders are taken in the sequence determined by The House.

Laws

29. A law can be introduced by The House by giving Notice to the Clerk.
30. The Member of The House ensures the necessary assessments required to support introduction of the proposed law is included for consideration by the General Assembly.
31. Once agreed to in principle at the General Assembly, the proposed law may be referred to a select committee to review and make recommendation to The House.
32. If the proposed law returns from review with amendments, The House reviews these changes.
33. Amendments shall directly relate to the proposed law and cannot repeat or contradict previous decisions.
34. Amended clauses require approval of the General Assembly, and any clause can be postponed.
35. A law must not be finalised at the same sitting of the General Assembly it was first introduced on the Notice Paper. Time must be provided for community education.
36. Adopted laws commence from the date of public notice by Government Gazette that introduces the law of Norfolk Island.

Participation of the General Assembly

37. Participation in the General Assembly is open to the Norfolk Island community in accordance with the criteria determined by the GNI Governance Charter and Operational Framework 2026.
38. Reasonable steps shall be taken to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and informed participation.

Conduct and Proceedings

39. The House meets with the General Assembly at the time notified.
40. A quorum of The House is all three Members, except where continuity arrangements have been activated in accordance with these Procedural Orders.
41. If a quorum is not present at the appointed time, the General Assembly adjourns unless a quorum is expected shortly.
42. The Clerk shall call The House and General Assembly together and open the sitting with the Prayer, followed by Condolences.

43. The Chief Magistrate shall address the General Assembly.
44. General Assemblies are conducted in a manner that is respectful, orderly, and focused on collective deliberation rather than adversarial debate.
45. The Clerk facilitates proceedings to ensure fairness, clarity, and participation.

Temporary Vacancy and Continuity of The House

46. Where a Member of The House is unable to perform their duties due to resignation, death, incapacity, prolonged absence, conflict of interest, suspension, or other circumstance creating a temporary or continuing vacancy, continuity arrangements may be activated to preserve the operation of The House and General Assembly.
47. The remaining Members of The House may, by unanimous resolution, declare the existence of a temporary vacancy and initiate a continuity appointment process.
48. A person appointed under this provision shall:
 - a) be enrolled on the Norfolk Island Electoral Roll;
 - b) satisfy eligibility requirements applicable to Members;
 - c) consent to appointment; and
 - d) not be disqualified under this Charter.
49. Before appointment, expressions of interest may be invited from eligible persons on the Electoral Roll wherever practicable. Where urgency exists and continuity would otherwise be impaired, an expedited appointment process may be used.
50. The remaining Members of The House may appoint an eligible person by resolution to serve:
 - a) for the duration of the temporary absence; or
 - b) until an election or other determination of the General Assembly where the vacancy is continuing.
51. An appointment under these provisions shall:
 - a) be publicly notified;
 - b) be entered into the Norfolk Island Register; and
 - c) be reported to the next General Assembly.
52. A continuity appointment is temporary in nature and does not alter the constitutional structure of The House or prejudice future constitutional modernisation.
53. The General Assembly may review continuity arrangements and provide guidance at the next available sitting.

Rules of Debate

54. The Clerk maintains order.
55. The Clerk will open the floor for community participation for matters on the Notice Paper before The House.

56. The Clerk shall recognise the orderly sequence of speakers to ensure fair participation.
57. Unless otherwise resolved by the General Assembly, individual speaking time shall normally not exceed **five minutes** per contribution, with the opportunity of a brief right of reply where necessary.
58. The Clerk may extend or reduce speaking time where required to maintain balanced participation and orderly deliberation.
59. Contributions during General Assembly deliberations shall be relevant to the matter under consideration.
60. The Clerk may direct a community participant to discontinue their contribution where it is irrelevant, repetitious, or exceeds reasonable time limits.
61. Members shall not interrupt or cause disturbance.
62. Members speak by addressing the Clerk.
63. The Clerk determines who speaks.
64. Members may speak to motions, amendments, points of order, or personal explanations.
65. Explanations shall not introduce new debate.
66. No speaking after a question is put.
67. No reflection on votes.
68. No offensive or disorderly words.
69. No digression from the subject.
70. Members may raise points of order.
71. The Clerk may direct a Member to discontinue for irrelevance or repetition.
72. Certain motions (e.g., closure, suspension) are put immediately without debate.
73. The House may resolve that the question be put or that a Member be no longer heard.
74. When discussion on a matter has been reasonably exhausted, any person may move that debate be concluded.
75. If supported by the Clerk and agreed by a majority of persons present, the General Assembly shall proceed to resolution of the motion under discussion.
76. Points of order suspend debate until the Clerk provides procedural guidance. The House shall determine the matter in accordance with that guidance.
77. A ruling of the Clerk on a point of order may be affirmed or overturned by resolution of The House without debate.
78. All participants in General Assembly deliberations shall conduct themselves with respect for others and for the integrity of the General Assembly. Personal attacks or conduct that materially disrupts proceedings may be ruled out of order by the Clerk.

Disorder

- 79. The Clerk may direct a Member to withdraw for disorderly conduct.
- 80. Persistent disorder may result in suspension for the sitting by vote of Members.

Voting

- 81. Decisions made by The House are by direct democracy via the General Assembly.
- 82. The will of the General Assembly is expressed by the vote of those registered on the Electoral Roll.
- 83. Decisions of The House are taken by majority vote and made by resolution.
- 84. The Returning Officer facilitates and determines the outcome of voting; the Clerk records and preserves the ballot determination in the Norfolk Island Register.
- 85. If a quorum is not present during a vote, The House adjourns without voting.

Committees & Witnesses

- 86. All Committees have adopted Terms of Reference that define the work and operation of the Committee.
- 87. Committees shall include at least one Member of The House or their Delegate, who shall be the Chair.
- 88. Committees shall include or consult representatives of partnering advisory bodies where the subject matter falls within the respective institutional remit, in accordance with the Committee’s Terms of Reference.
- 89. Committees may call for documents, hear from persons, and report to The House.
- 90. Witnesses may be invited to provide information relevant to Committee business.

Administration

- 91. The Clerk maintains the Norfolk Island Register that includes a roll of Members, including dates of election and cessation.
- 92. Attendance is recorded in the Minutes.
- 93. The Clerk records all proceedings in the Norfolk Island Register and has custody of all records and documents.

General Assembly Procedural Orders (Procedural Orders)

- 94. These Procedural Orders remain in force until amended or replaced by resolution of The House.

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Note: Direct Democracy — Procedural Application

For the avoidance of doubt, the principle of Direct Democracy is given procedural effect through the proceedings of The General Assembly and The House conducted in accordance with these General Assembly Procedural Orders.

Community consultation, assemblies, referenda, and other participatory processes inform and guide the exercise of authority; however, formal decisions, resolutions, and legislative acts take effect only when duly considered and resolved by The House and the General Assembly.