



GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MOTION PAPER

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING: 30 May 2026

MOTION # 6: CONCEPT PAPER for Community Consultation – Norfolk Island Land Trust

Purpose:

This Concept Paper is presented to begin community consultation on whether Norfolk Island should explore the establishment of a Norfolk Island Land Trust as a long-term stewardship mechanism supporting land protection, community benefit, cultural continuity, and future generations.

The purpose of consultation is to hear community views, concerns, opportunities, and safeguards before any future proposal is considered by the General Assembly.

Consultation Principle

This paper seeks community discussion only. No Land Trust is proposed for establishment at this stage and no decision regarding land ownership or governance has been made.

Rationale:

Norfolk Island is a small island with a limited land base, sensitive natural environments, and places of deep cultural and historical importance.

For many people, land is not simply property or investment. It is family history, identity, belonging, and connection to place.

Across the community there is growing concern about:

- housing affordability;
- access to land for younger Norfolk Islanders;
- environmental pressures;
- protection of culturally significant places;
- increasing pressure on infrastructure and services; and
- the long-term ability of future generations to remain connected to Norfolk Island.

Norfolk Island is increasingly confronting questions about affordability, land access, environmental protection, population pressures, and intergenerational opportunity. This proposal recognises that the decisions made today may shape the Norfolk Island inherited by future generations.

Many people are also concerned about how quickly things are changing and whether Norfolk Island has enough local tools to protect what matters most over the long term.

This proposal is not presented as a complete solution. Rather, it explores whether a community-based land trust could become one practical mechanism to strengthen long-term stewardship, community resilience, and future opportunity.

What is a Land Trust?

A Land Trust is generally a not-for-profit organisation established to hold and manage land for long-term public or community benefit.

Land Trusts are used in different forms throughout the world to:

- protect natural environments;
- preserve cultural heritage;
- support affordable access to land or housing;
- maintain community spaces; and
- strengthen long-term stewardship of important places.

The basic idea is simple: land considered important to the community is held and managed in a way that protects it for future generations rather than short-term private gain.

Any Norfolk Island model would need to be designed specifically for Norfolk Island's own needs, values, and circumstances. It would also need to reflect Norfolk Island's cultural identity, community values, and long tradition of collective responsibility and stewardship.

What Could a Norfolk Island Land Trust Do?

At this early stage, the proposal being explored is that a Norfolk Island Land Trust could potentially:

- acquire land through voluntary purchase, donation, bequest, or partnership arrangements;
- protect culturally or environmentally significant places;
- hold land for long-term community benefit;
- support conservation and sustainable land management;
- support housing opportunity and intergenerational connection to Norfolk Island where appropriate;
- provide land for community purposes where appropriate;
- create long-term lease opportunities that may assist future generations of Norfolk Islanders;
- strengthen community resilience through stewardship-based land models; and
- reinvest any income generated back into land stewardship and community benefit.

The concept also explores whether a Trust could help support affordable long-term lease arrangements for eligible Norfolk Islanders through carefully designed community benefit programs.

What the Proposal Would Not Do

This proposal would not:

- take privately owned land;
- alter existing land ownership without community endorsement;
- change existing property rights;
- force anyone to participate;
- prevent lawful private ownership of land; or
- allow private individuals to profit personally from Trust-held land.

Participation would be entirely voluntary.

Land would only enter the Trust through agreement, donation, purchase, or other lawful arrangements accepted by the owner.

International Examples

Community and customary land trusts have been used internationally to protect land, strengthen local participation, and preserve community benefit.

Examples include:

- community land trusts supporting affordable housing and stewardship models;
- customary and collective land arrangements in Pacific communities; and
- conservation trusts protecting environmentally and culturally significant places.

Any Norfolk Island approach would require its own locally designed model.

Governance and Accountability

A key principle of any proposed Land Trust is that the Trust must remain locally accountable and community based.

Issues that would need careful consultation include:

- how board members are appointed;
- community representation;
- cultural and environmental expertise;
- transparency requirements;
- conflict-of-interest safeguards;
- public reporting obligations; and
- how decisions are reviewed and monitored.

Funding and Financial Sustainability

Potential funding sources that might be explored include:

- grants;
- philanthropic contributions;
- partnerships;
- voluntary donations;
- lease arrangements where appropriate; and
- possible community investment mechanisms if supported by the community and legally viable.

Any Trust model would require clear safeguards, transparent reporting, and strong public accountability.

Any income generated by the Trust would be intended to support the Trust's defined community and stewardship purposes.

Community Questions and Concerns

The Government of Norfolk Island recognises that land is an important and sensitive issue.

Community feedback is being sought on questions including:

- Is a Land Trust something Norfolk Island should explore?
- What types of land, if any, should be protected through long-term stewardship?
- What safeguards would the community expect?
- Should affordable lease pathways form part of the model?
- How should community representation work?
- What concerns would need to be addressed before any future proposal proceeds?

There may also be other ideas, risks, or opportunities the community wishes to raise as part of this discussion.

Next Steps

This paper is released for public consultation only.

Following consultation:

- submissions and feedback will be reviewed;
- further community discussions may occur;
- options and safeguards may be refined; and
- any future proposal would return to the General Assembly for separate consideration and decision.

No Norfolk Island Land Trust will be established unless and until a future proposal is formally considered and supported through the General Assembly process.

Invitation for Community Feedback

The Government of Norfolk Island invites all members of the Norfolk Island community to participate respectfully and constructively in this consultation process.

The purpose of this discussion extends beyond land ownership. It asks how Norfolk Island wishes to care for land, strengthen community wellbeing, preserve cultural identity, and create opportunity for future generations.

It is about how Norfolk Island wishes to care for land, community wellbeing, cultural identity, and future generations in the years ahead.

Submissions can be made by email to: contact@govni.org or in person at the Hub, Norfolk Mall. Feedback will remain open until 30 June 2026 and a summary of community response will be tabled at the 11 July 2026 General Assembly to inform further development, or not.

Moved: Chief Magistrate, Peter Christian Bailey

Voting: Adjudicated by Returning Officer