

Council Adopts 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget

At the June extraordinary meeting of Council, Norfolk Island Regional Council resolved to adopt the 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget, noting the public submissions received and recommended changes to the final documents following the public exhibition period.

Council and its staff have continued their focus on providing services to the local community, in addition to continuing to respond to the conclusions of the Public Inquiry, and implementing the recommendations incorporated in the External Audit Findings during the term of Administration.

The development of the 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget has again focused on ensuring the financial sustainability of Council, and to reinforce Council's current stable financial position for the benefit of the current and future Norfolk Island community.

This approach ensures that Council complies with the sound financial management principle requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (NI).

The 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget, which provides a forecast operating surplus budget position of \$500,000, continues Council's path to ongoing financial sustainability.

The Plan has been developed in a challenging economic environment, in particular high current inflation levels reflected in the retail price index (RPI) for Norfolk Island reaching an annualised rate of 11.09% as at December 2022.

The 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget also includes the continuation of the rating structure introduced for the 2022-2023 year which included the expansion of rating categories from 4 overall categories to 23 rating sub-categories.

For the 2023-2024 financial year, Council is proposing to raise \$1.804 million from Ordinary Rates. This represents an increase in revenue of \$179k from the last financial year.

Whilst the overall increase in ordinary rates revenue has been set in line with the Retail Price Index, the distribution of individual property land valuations issued by the Valuer-General under the Land Valuation Act 2012 (NI) will impact changes for the purposes of rating for 2023-24.

Council will use the revenue collected from Ordinary Rates in addition to other revenue sources such as fees and sales to deliver the following operational services in 2023-24:

- Roads maintenance and improvements - \$1.5 million;
- Workshop & Depot - \$0.3 million;
- Environment, Parks & Reserves - \$0.4 million;
- Community services including Library - \$0.6 million;
- Tourism operation & economic development - \$1.5 million;
- Pest and weed control - \$0.2 million.

The 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget is focused on driving positive change for the Norfolk Island community now and into the future through the financial sustainability of Council and increased efficiency of Council.

The adopted 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget can be read in full on our website.



To view the 2023-24 Operational Plan scan the QR Code or visit the link below.

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/your-council/council-documents/plans>

IN THIS EDITION

- Community Feedback Leads Changes to Plan and Budget

- Rating Categories
- Successful Grant Applicants Announced
- Full Steam Ahead for Infrastructure Team

- Road Safety Front of Mind
- Council Business

Rating Categories

Category	Base Rate \$	Ad Valorem Multiplier	Waste Management Charges \$
Residential - Small	134.07	0.00117301	299.00
Residential - Medium	211.40	0.00117301	409.00
Residential - Large	334.38	0.00117301	614.00
Farmland - Small	277.52	0.00168670	299.00
Farmland - Medium	375.22	0.00168670	409.00
Farmland - Large	837.29	0.00168670	614.00
Business - Accommodation A	2,446.10	0.00837137	138.07
Business- Accommodation B	2972.51	0.00837137	138.07
Business- Accommodation C	3,775.17	0.00837137	138.07
Business- Accommodation D	3,775.17	0.00837137	138.07
Business - Shop/Retail A	958.12	0.00837137	1,359.46
Business - Shop/Retail B	1,696.74	0.00837137	2,407.45
Business - Building Supplies	1,278.35	0.00837137	1,813.82
Business – Café/Restaurant A	684.54	0.00837137	971.27
Business – Café/Restaurant B	1,974.23	0.00837137	2,801.18
Business - Service Station	4,536.09	0.00837137	6,436.14
Business - Car Rentals	1,118.96	0.00837137	1,587.66
Business - Clubs/Bars A	-	-	
Business - Clubs/Bars B	-	-	
Business - Supermarket or Shopping Facility - Small	1,340.21	0.00837137	1,901.59
Business - Supermarket or Shopping Facility - Large	5,195.89	0.00837137	7,372.30
Business - Other	1,473.00	0.00837137	2,090.00
Mining	-	-	
Commonwealth Heritage Buildings in Quality Row	-	-	7,430.00
Hospitals	-	-	13,320.00
Schools	-	-	13,320.00

Community Feedback Leads Changes to Operational Plan and Budget

For seven weeks a draft of the 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget was on public exhibition, with Council inviting the community to provide feedback.

Council received 19 submissions during the public exhibition period covering a range of topics, most notably:

- Inflation and increased cost of living.
- Rates increases, particularly in relation to Farmland.
- Waste management charges.
- Transition to electric fleet.
- Retail Price Index (RPI).
- Linked trail for walking, mountain biking and adaptive use project.

The increased cost of living on Norfolk Island and inflationary pressures were a common theme with suggestions for more economic analysis be undertaken to determine the community's capacity to pay, along with more community consultation.

Waste management charges, particularly to Farmland, were raised noting the lower waste generation outcome for this category compared to other categories due to the dominant land use being cattle grazing.

The methodology that Council uses to derive the Retail Price Index and to determine rating increases was raised, and that electricity fees on the Island should not be increased, with subsidies provided instead.

The rollout of the solar network in 2023-2024 will bring the electricity tariffs down to more acceptable levels.



The Draft 2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget was on public exhibition for 7 weeks, with hard copies available at Customer Care. **Photo: NIRC.**

A suggestion for an updated Economic Development Implementation Plan and the Heritage and Culture Strategy was made, along with queries concerning the Kingston Cattle Management project.

Following this feedback changes were made to the operating budget, the capital budget, and fees and charges.

Changes to the operating budget were inclusion of Broadcasting Services operating costs of \$103k, transferring the \$124k Kingston Cattle Management Capital Project to the Operational Budget, and increasing interest revenue to reflect changes in interest rates and growth in cash holdings.

The capital budget was changed to include the \$7.35 million Commonwealth funded Telecom Satellite uplift, and a reduction in funding from \$2.5million to \$50,000 for the Multi Use Trail.

Community Benefits as Successful Grant Applicants Announced

Council has announced the organisations with successful applications to the Community Strategic Plan Grant Program.

Six organisations have been successful in securing close to \$20,000 in funding to support their contribution to our community.

The 230 Army Cadet Unit who recently celebrated their 25th anniversary will receive \$5,000 to replace the flooring at the Cadet Hall.

Netball players on the Island are set to level up their skills with the Norfolk Island Netball Association receiving \$3,194.50 to host a high-performance netball coaching clinic.

The youngest members of our community will have more opportunities to help preserve our uniquely Norfolk environment with Enviro NICS receiving \$2,273 to establish an environmental program with resources including reusable bags, reusable cups, and information packs.

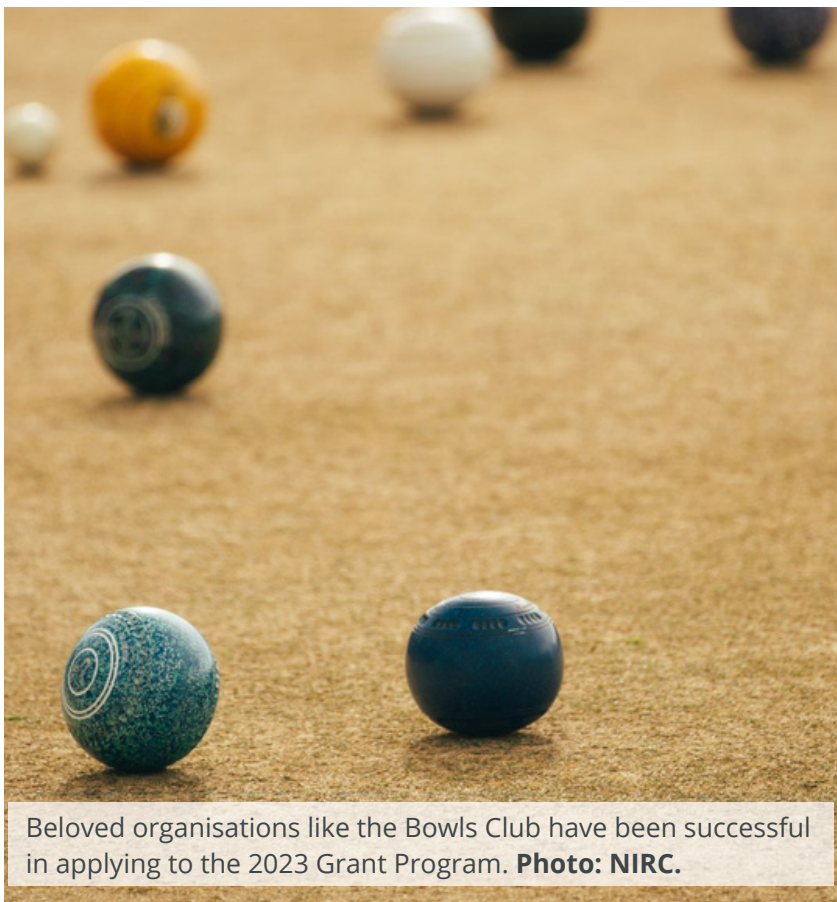
The Queen Victoria Scholarship received \$900 under the grant program, the scholarship awards academic excellence, conduct, attitude, and attendance at the school.

Staying sun safe at the bowls club is about to be a lot easier with the Norfolk Island Bowling Club and Bowls Council receiving \$5,000 to erect a new shade awning on the western road frontage.

Finally, Norfolk Island Mental Health Awareness Group will receive \$3,300 to host adult and youth mental health first aid courses.

A total of \$19,667.50 will be given to these six groups to support their initiatives which deliver a range of social, cultural, and economic benefits to our community.

The Community Strategic Grant Program provides financial support to local community groups, organisations, and clubs to facilitate the delivery of community projects and events that deliver social, cultural, and economic benefits to our community.



Beloved organisations like the Bowls Club have been successful in applying to the 2023 Grant Program. **Photo: NIRC.**



NICS students will benefit from the Grants with scholarships and more. **Photo: NIRC.**

Looking for volunteers

The Norfolk Island Regional Council and Norfolk Island National Park are collaborating on a new native plant propagation project, to restore native forests across the Island. If you share a passion for native plants, then we invite you to join the **Flora Force!**

Sign up today by contacting
Leah Mcleod (56611) or **Sara Freeland** (55089)
sara.freeland1@dcceew.gov.au

No prior experience with plants is required!



The details

When: Every Friday 9 - 11am

Where: National Park Nursery, end of Bishop Patterson Rd

Upgraded Sewage Treatment Plant Designs Underway

Council has been hard at work collaborating with experts at Premise Consulting and Ranbury Management Group to progress the design for an upgraded Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) for our community.

Once completed, the Sewage Treatment Plant will help protect our uniquely Norfolk environment and support our local community.

In 2019 a business case proposal was developed for a new treatment plant.

The business case involved extensive community consultation and supported technology that would improve water quality discharge to the Norfolk Marine Park and produce treated water, suitable for agriculture.

The current condition of the Norfolk Island STP is poor. For this reason, the Commonwealth Government has supported a project for its renewal through \$1.8M in funding for the design and quantity surveying phases of the project.

Future upgrades will provide improved water quality and a more reliable treatment service for the island's Water Assurance Scheme.

Some of the following features are included in the concept design for the new plant.

- New Inlet Works
- Bioreactors and Membrane Filtration for nutrient removal
- Adaptation of existing concrete tanks for balance capacity – these have been included to take advantage of low-cost power that will be available through NIRC's shift to renewables and battery storage
- Reverse Osmosis for removal of residual salinity

While the upgraded plant will be situated at the site of the existing plant, NIRC is also considering other infrastructure that could be coupled with the upgrade, including above ground tanks and holding dams for treated water storage.

The plant design will have capacity for future connections to the Water Assurance Scheme, thereby improving water quality impacts currently caused through outdated septic systems across the island.

Following the July Ordinary Council meeting, it was resolved to continue the design process with Premise consultants. Detailed design of the plant is expected to be finished in the middle of 2024, while NIRC will continue to work with the designers and the Commonwealth Government to secure funding for the project in the future.



The current Sewage Treatment Plant. **Photo: NIRC.**

Anson Bay Rat Baiting Update

The second round of rat baiting in the Anson Bay area has been rolled out. In the lead up to Winter, residents were reporting very high numbers of rats which was consistent across all of Norfolk.

Pre-treatment monitoring showed that rat numbers were higher than during any other monitoring period, however this density decreased by 77% after the 4 weeks of extensive baiting carried out.

The rodenticide of choice was SureFire Difenate (active ingredient difenacoum).

Difenacoum is a low-grade second-generation rodenticide that was chosen for use at this time of year because our precious Morepork Owls are less active and not out hunting to feed their chicks. Baiting commenced on the 27th April, and finished 4 weeks later on the 29th June.

There was a high uptake of bait and the effectiveness is still evident in the low density of rats being reflected in the chew card monitoring data (8.5% density post-treatment).

Baiting all together with your neighbours is a great way to collectively make a difference in the density of rodents on your property.

Through this program, though people are baiting sporadically as well, we combine everybody's efforts every 3 months to carry out a thorough round of baiting that lasts 3-4 weeks.

By ensuring all properties in the area are set with bait there is a higher chance of making a large dent in the population.

If this is something you'd like to kick off in your area, reach out to whoever's over the fence and pitch to them the idea of baiting together.

Feel free to give me a call at any time to see which bait we're using, how we set them out and how we monitor our results.

Seeing the reduction in crop damage, the decreased nuisance in people's home and the increase in native birdlife has been such a positive outcome of this program.

As we continue on throughout the year we hope to see rat numbers reduce even more.

Thankyou to the Anson Bay community for always being proactive and for your combined efforts in this program.

This project is also being supported by the Invasive Species Council and TierraMar, with funding from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation through the Eldon and Anne Foote Trust.

Thaenks f mii.
Lilli-Unna King, Environmental Project Officer



After four weeks of intensive bating there was a 77% decrease in the Island's rat population. **Photo: NIRC.**

Household Expenditure Survey

External Audit Findings (EAFs) were adopted by Council on 24 February 2021 (Resolution No. 2021/3); and conclusions that resulted from the 2021 Public Inquiry were received by Council on 21 December 2021 (Resolution 2021/172).

Key Economic drivers are identified in EAF 65 - Development of an action plan to address known barriers to economic development and accepted opportunities for industry growth and EAF 66 development of business cases to explore the economic viability of identified opportunities to expand the economic base of Norfolk Island.

It was recognized that the data required to meet the obligations of EAF 65 and EAF 66 was not available, that either data was over 10 years old, or did not exist, hence the first steps identified were to correct these gaps in data collection.

Council has undertaken much work to date to fulfil the requirements of EAF 65 and EAF 66, including:

- Reintroduction of the RPI quantifying inflation for Norfolk Island, with comparative analysis against Australia and New Zealand, and similar island communities completed in February 2022
- Presentation of the need for an update of the 2014 Household Expenditure Survey (HES) to the Business Innovation and Tourism Advisory Committee (BITAC). BITAC recommended at the May 2022 meeting that implementing a new Household Expenditure Survey (HES) for Norfolk Island was an important action in understanding the Norfolk Island economy, and to improve the accuracy of the RPI as it underpins the weightings of the basket of goods.
- Preliminary scope of options to implement a new HES were completed in July 2022
- NIRC has engaged Delta Pearl Partners to develop and implement a new Household Expenditure Survey. Work has begun with preliminary questions currently under review. The survey is expected to be implemented in the first quarter of 2023/2024 financial year.

Multi Use Trail

NIRC is currently developing a concept master plan for the Norfolk Island Multi Use Trail providing accessible trails for walking, recreational biking, adaptive biking and mountain bike activities that link existing tourism businesses and experiences.

This would be a multi-tenure trail inclusive of Council's road network, Council and Commonwealth reserve lands, Kingston Arthurs Vale World Heritage site, possibly National Parks though this is dependent on the completion of the Parks Mountain Bike Strategy which is currently in draft form.

It is envisioned as a multi experience trail inclusive of shared walking and bike trail (rail trail concept); adventure downhill and flow experiences in our Eucalypt forest and possibly other private or public land opportunities; and will incorporate adaptive trail accessibility where possible.

The concept draws on preliminary work undertaken in 2014 on the Great Norfolk Walk concept and strategic recommendations from several Economic Development reports.

With the aim to increase tourism visitation by growing a range of new experiences inclusive of Mountain Bike experiences to attract a younger demographic with greater discretionary spend.

Preliminary stakeholder meetings were held in early March with Parks Australia, the Business Innovation and Tourism Advisory Committee, Reserves Advisory Committee, Business Council of Norfolk Island, and Allan Tavener to provide the consultants with critical considerations in the development of the draft plan.

The Multi Use Trail concept is still in the planning stages with the draft concept plan to be reviewed by the Business Innovation and Tourism Advisory Committee and the Reserves Advisory Committee for comment prior to releasing for public comment.

NIRC will seek community comments and insights as part of a structured consultation program to be implemented through the first and second quarters of 2023/2024 financial year.

Private land opportunities are not part of this first stage and will be considered in the future based on an expression of interest from land holders.

Sirius Museum Marks 10 Years

In June 2023 the Norfolk Island Museums celebrated a very special milestone, the 10-year anniversary of the Sirius Museum.

Located in the old 19th-Century Protestant Chapel, the museum is dedicated to preserving the history of the HMS Sirius and providing locals and tourists the opportunity to learn about the ship.

Taking pride of place in the museum is of course the HMS Sirius anchor, the huge wrought iron anchor weighs about 1.5tons and used to sit in the Pier Store. In 2013 the operation was launched to move the Anchor and other artifacts from the HMS Sirius to it's current location to better preserve them.

The anchor in the museum is one of three anchors recovered from the wrecksite of the HMS Sirius and is accompanied by two 18 Pounder Carronades, the collection at Sirius Museum is the most significant display of First Fleet cultural heritage material held anywhere in Australia and its Territories.

A decade after opening, the Sirius Museum remains a favourite attraction to visitors to our Island.



Council Sets Sights on Road Safety Improvements

At the June Ordinary Meeting of Council agreed to implement a number of recommendations to improve road safety across our Island.

The recommendations came from the Road Safety Committee's May meeting and provided 5 ways Council can make our roads safer.

Council will reline the Give Way markings on Ferny Lane at Douglas Drive as well as refreshing the markings and signage at both roundabouts on Taylors Road, Council will check the survey of Taylors Road before line marking.

Following the June Ordinary Meeting, Council will approach the KAVHA Administration team to express concerns about the intersection of Pier Street and Bay Street at Kingston and ask for a review of the intersection.

Finally, Council will install a crash barrier to protect the Hospital's electrical infrastructure, designs for the bollard system are expected to be received by Council shortly.

These improvements and regular road maintenance works are part of Council's commitment to making our roads safer.



Regular road maintenance is part of Council's commitment to make our roads safer. **Photo: NIRC.**

Destination Australia Visits Norfolk

The Norfolk Island Segment of the Destination Australia TV show filmed in late March 2023, was aired nationally on Channel 9's main channel at 4.30pm on the 24th June leading into the evening news.

The episode was scheduled to play concurrently on 9NOW and then to be available on demand for 2 months. It will also be repeated 3 times on 9LIFE.

It showcased some wonderful Norfolk Island experiences inclusive of Wellness opportunities, Food and Beverage experiences, our beautiful national park walks and of course the wonderful cultural heritage.

The head of programming at Channel 9 told us it makes her want to travel to Norfolk Island for a holiday now.



To watch the episode online scan the QR Code or visit the link below.

<https://www.9now.com.au/destination-australia/season-1/episode-6>

Updates to Council's Asset Management Plans

Council is making great strides in improving asset management planning with updates being made to the Roads Asset Management Plan 2020-2029 following a review.

The updated plan is titled the Roads and Drainage Asset Management Plan 2020-2029.

The plan has been updated to include all road and drainage assets across the Island, the review forms part of the asset management improvement program in the External Audit Findings.

Following the updates the plan incorporates the road network, the paved runways at the Airport, bridges, cattle stops, culverts, footpaths, roundabouts, and kerb and channel.

Recommendations from the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia's International Infrastructure Management Manual guided the structure and content of the updated plan.

Improving Council's asset management will help ensure that Council infrastructure lasts well into the future.



More information on the Asset Management Plans can be found in the June Council Meeting Documents, through the QR Code or link below.

<https://norfolk.civicclerk.com.au/web/Player.aspx?id=110&key=-1&mod=-1&mk=-1&nov=0>

Full Steam Ahead for Infrastructure Team

We have acted upon the roads audit findings quickly and have an international expression of interest out seeking suitably qualified contractors to assist us repair the very bad condition 4 and 5 roads.

We have also met with the on Island civil construction contractors as well encouraging them to respond to the EOI so that the local community benefits from upskilling employees, improving the on-Island access to machines.

We have also made a request for tender prices to repair sections of Marsh's Road out on Vendor panel.

We have prepared the design drawings for the new car park on New Cascade Rd and put the designs on public exhibition until 7 July seeking comments, suggestions and/or otherwise for the car park which when completed will be an asset the Community can be proud of.

We are working with the Commonwealth in securing two new purpose built lighterage vessels that will complement and improve our existing capacity to move cargo, break bulk, and 20-foot shipping containers in a much safer and more efficient manner.

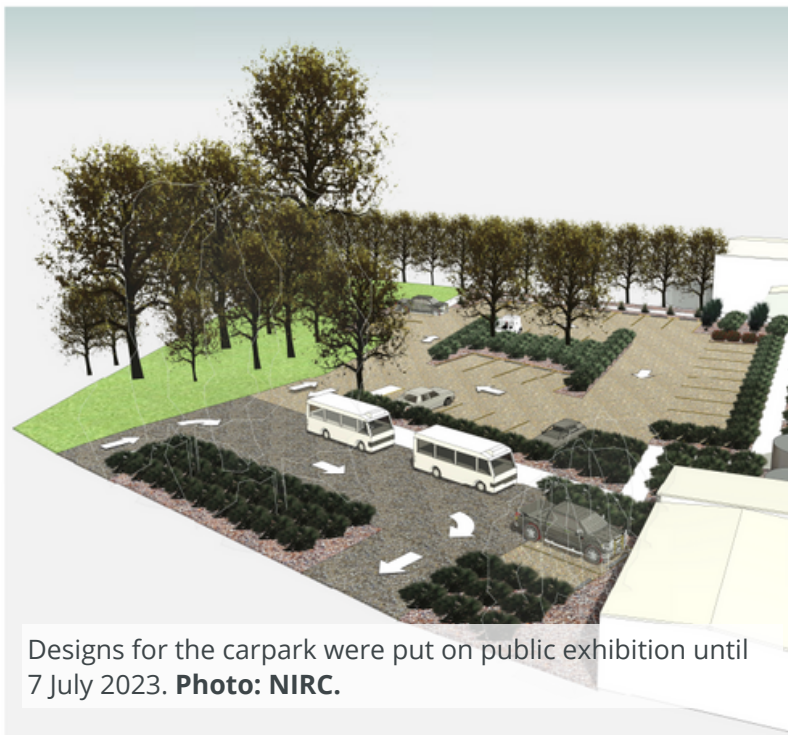
We are working with shipping agents to secure the delivery to Island of the much-needed drilling machines and explosives to carry out the recovery of 13,500 tonnes of rock from the Youngs Rd Quarry site.

The rock is much needed for Council for its ongoing maintenance of the roads network. The need for rock is very high on Island as the rock is used in the supply of concrete.

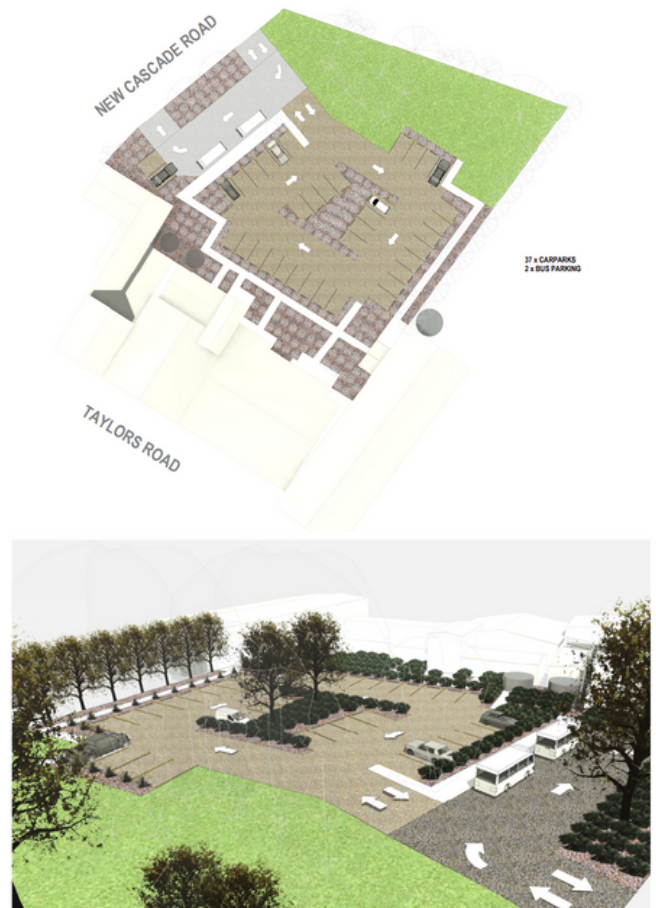


For more information on current tenders and EOIs scan the QR Code or visit the link below.

<http://www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/open-tenders-and-eoi>



Designs for the carpark were put on public exhibition until 7 July 2023. **Photo: NIRC.**



Smart Meter Roll-Out Nearing Finish Line

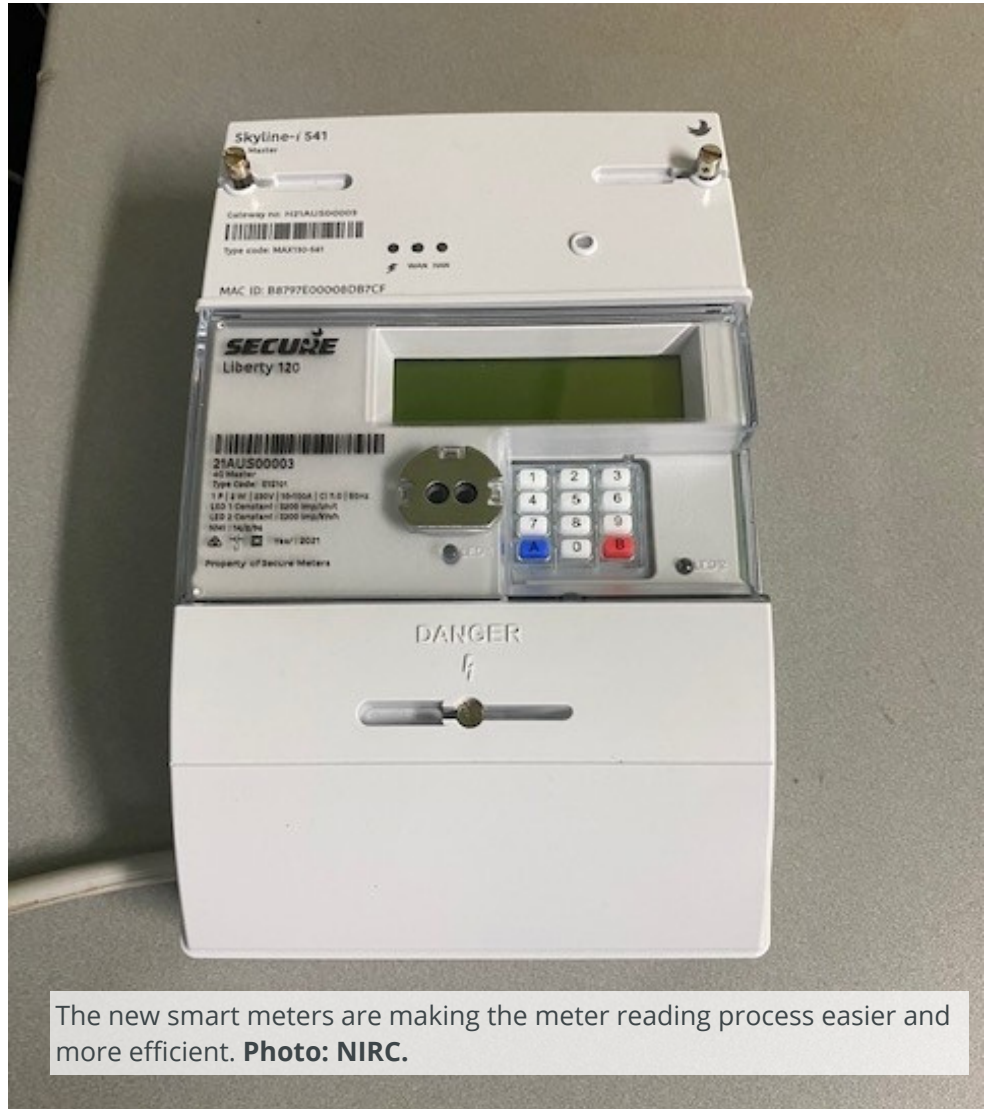
The roll-out of the smart meters is well and truly underway, with 20 meters installed already and the remaining 1,480 meters and SIM cards are expected to arrive on the Island shortly.

Accounts for the installed meters have already been set up and billing is underway, an additional 30 SIM cards will be on Island shortly to cover any damage or malfunctions.

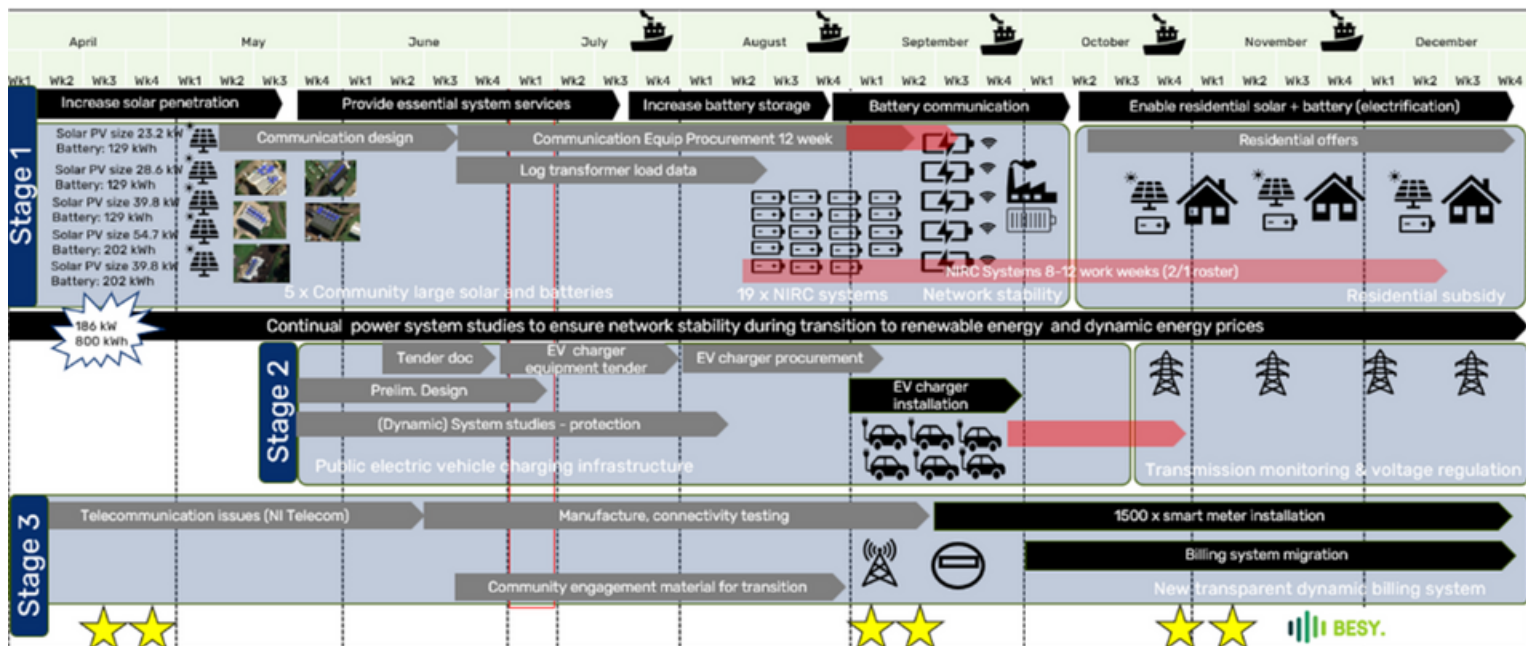
Installation of the remaining meters is set to start in August with Gardel Electrical undertaking the implementation.

The installation is no small task. Besides the meters and SIM cards, it involves more than 400 external antennas and a 10% meter board replacement.

The roll out of the smart meters is part of our wider transition to sustainability, together with initiatives like the solar network, making our electrical system more efficient and more sustainable.



The new smart meters are making the meter reading process easier and more efficient. **Photo: NIRC.**



Community Planting Morning

Yorlyi are all invited to come and plant a tree (or many) on Sunday morning at:

Bumboras Reserve

Date: Sunday 16th July

Time: 9am onwards

Please bring: water, sun protection, a spade, wheelbarrow, and hammer/mallet if you have one!

This planting will take place along the creek edge.

Please be ready to dig a couple of holes and spread some mulch too!

Please WASH YOUR TOOLS before coming to the reserve. Phytophthora, a very harmful soil pathogen, has been identified in various parts of Norfolk. It can spread easily in soil on boots or gardening tools. We will provide a sterilisation station before and after the planting but please ensure your tools are clean of soil and mud before arriving. This will protect the reserve, and equally your property going home.

We'll have cuppa and morning tea to finish up.

Sii yorlyi deya!

Airport Stats for June 2023





Council Meetings

August Meeting of Council

Wednesday 2 August 2023

2:00pm

Council Bicentennial Complex 39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine, Norfolk Island.

Ordinary Meeting Dates for 2023

6 September 6 December

4 October

1 November

Council meetings are scheduled at 2:00pm at the Council Chambers inside the Council Bicentennial Complex, 39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine.

Meetings can also be viewed online with the live link provided on Council's Facebook page prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Public Access Meetings

Requests for Public Access are open to members of the public until 10am on the Tuesday prior to Council Meeting day, with public access meetings to be held at 3pm on Tuesday. See below information to arrange a Public Access meeting with the Administrator.

The Council Administrator Mr Mike Colreavy, can be contacted to discuss concerns, issues or general information by emailing: executiveassistant@nirc.gov.nf.

CONTACT YOUR COUNCIL

Address: Council Bicentennial Complex, 39 Taylors Road, Burnt Pine, NORFOLK ISLAND 2899

Phone: Free local call 0100 and for international callers + 6723 22001

Email: customercare@nirc.gov.nf

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm (closed on public holidays)

Upcoming Events

5 - 13 August 2023

Rugby on the Rock

Norfolk Island

Rugby teams from Australia and New Zealand will face off against Norfolk's own "Creaky Old Convicts."

13- 18 August 2023

NIO Classic Triples Bowls Tournament

Burnt Pine, Norfolk Island

It's triple the fun for teams in the NIO Classic Triples Tournament.

19- 25 August 2023

Grant Burge Pro-Am Golf Classic

Kingston, Norfolk Island

Amateur and Professional golfers will be competing for an attractive prize pool on our Island's spectacular golf course.

May to August 2023

Dancing in the Fetters: The culture of the convict dance

Kingston, Norfolk Island

Explore the lost heritage of convict dance and music at this ongoing exhibition at the museums at Kingston.



To find out more about tours, accomodation, and what's on, visit the Norfolk Island Tourism website.

Follow us

