



THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Caring for Our Country Update

In the past month, the Administration of Norfolk Island has published notices on two occasions, inviting participation from interested individuals or groups in an integrated regional application for project assistance from the Commonwealth's *Caring for Our Country* fund.

Meetings have been held with the groups and individuals interested in seeking more information, and in most cases plans are well advanced for important environmental works, with Non-government Organisations (NGOs) developing working relationships with major land managers to bring about positive outcomes for the environment.

Caring for Our Country recognizes that much of the expertise in regional areas is within NGOs, while the majority of the infrastructure, labour force and equipment is available in government departments. One way *Caring for Our Country* differs from previous grant systems (such as NHT) is that public and private land managers may apply for funding that will allow projects to be undertaken that are not considered their core business. Land managers, educational institutions and NGO's are encouraged to build partnerships with each other to achieve common goals. Both on-ground outcomes and knowledge and skill advances remain as targets sought through the grants.

Once grants have been approved, the Commonwealth will enter into an agreement with the main proponent (in this case the Administration of Norfolk Island) on behalf of the partners and NGO's in the proposal. The agreement will detail the funding that has been provided under CFOC for the successful projects proposed by partners and NGO's. The distribution of the funds can be undertaken in two main ways. The portion of the integrated grant that has been requested by an NGO may be paid directly as a devolved grant. Or if the organisation doesn't have the administrative capacity to manage the reporting and auditing required by the Commonwealth, and prefers, the Administration can hold those funds in trust, paying accounts on behalf of the NGO and absorbing the load of reporting and auditing for them. The preferred method for distributing the funds will be discussed with the individual NGO.

It is envisaged that a proportion of funds will be paid at the time of signing the contract with the Commonwealth, and the balance paid in increments as Milestones and reporting requirements are met.

Detailed audit and acquittal procedures are in place which will need to be met by grant recipients, whether as the major proponent or devolved grants to smaller groups. The level of monitoring, evaluation and reporting by the Commonwealth is commensurate with the amount of the grant.

Some exciting new projects are being considered which could have lasting effects on the Norfolk Island environment, and bring interested individuals, groups and land managers together in positive ways.

Please contact Margaret Christian at 22001 ext.124 if you require any further information.

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