



Australian Government

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Down a town

KINGSTON

Digest



Kingston
Norfolk Island

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Last Chance to See the Historic Tahitian *Penu* at the Pier Store Museum

Hurry to the Pier Store Museum, it's almost your last chance to see the Tahitian *penu*. A remarkable object with deep connections to Norfolk Island's *Bounty* story, this beautiful Tahitian *penu* – a traditional stone food pounder – has been on extended loan from Queensland Museum Tropics since 2013. Used to mash taro into poi and prepare breadfruit and bananas, it also carries a dramatic history beyond its everyday purpose.

The *penu* was recovered from the wreck of HMS *Pandora*, which sank on the Great Barrier Reef in 1791 while pursuing the *Bounty* mutineers. By the time *Pandora* reached Tahiti, Fletcher Christian and his companions had already sailed on to Pitcairn, but sixteen former crewmen had remained behind.

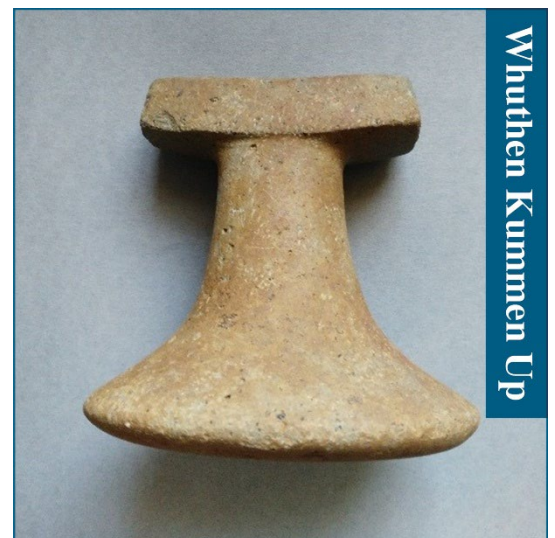
Fourteen were still alive when the ship arrived; all were captured within days and confined in the cramped, windowless cell known as "Pandora's Box."

When the ship struck the reef, thirty-four men drowned, including four mutineers — one still locked inside the cell. The surviving prisoners endured a gruelling open-boat journey to Timor before being taken to England for trial. Some were pardoned, others executed, and their stories remain deeply entwined with the wider *Bounty* narrative.

This *penu* is believed to have belonged to either Peter Heywood or George Stewart. Its remarkable survival in the wreck and its subsequent recovery provide an extraordinary link to the *Bounty* mutineers who remained in Tahiti, and the other events that unfolded over the course of the *Bounty* story. For Norfolk Islanders, it is a tangible reminder of the connection between ancestors who settled on Pitcairn and their shipmates, whose stories took a very different path.

It is displayed at the Pier Store Museum, positioned across from the *Bounty* cannon and the *Pandora* interpretation panel, a quiet but powerful witness to this shared Pacific history.

Visit before it leaves! The last day to see the *penu* on display in the Pier Store Museum is 22 May 2026. The Pier Store Museum is open daily from 11 am to 3 pm, with free entry for local residents and school students.



Bounty Day Exhibition – We Need Your Photos!

The Norfolk Island Museum is putting together a special temporary exhibition to celebrate the 170th anniversary of the Pitcairn Islanders' arrival.

This exhibition, which will be held at the Pier Store Museum in Kingston, will celebrate the enduring cultural tradition of Anniversary Day (*Bounty* Day) through displays of historic and contemporary images of the community and our cultural traditions. We know the best photos are the ones tucked away in family albums, phones and memory boxes across the island.

The museum team warmly invites community members to loan photographs and memorabilia that capture the spirit and significance of this day.

These contributions will help ensure the exhibition reflects the depth, pride and strength of the island's shared story. If you have any photos to share or any questions to ask, email Maree Evans at Maree.evans@infrastructure.gov.au, or pop into the museum office in the New Military Barracks main building.



Around the Kingston Precinct: Community Updates

There is a sense of momentum right now across the Kingston precinct, with staff, specialists and community members working together to care for this special place. Here's a rundown of what's been happening — and what's on the horizon.

Steady Progress, Strong Foundations

The Greenkeepers Shed has now completed its EPBC referral, and the next step is the Development Application.

At 8 Quality Row, planning is underway for major roofing works scheduled for August 2026. These works will help protect the building and keep it in good condition for years to come.



Pier Precinct: Getting Ready for Restoration

Surgeons Quarters: Works are coming up for the Surgeon's Quarters. Planning is now complete, and roofing shingles have been carefully chosen to match the Pier Precinct Roofing Strategy.

Royal Engineers Office: A detailed condition report and works plan prepared by REO's Heritage Architect will guide the conservation works, making sure everything is done thoughtfully and in keeping with the building's history.



Tree Care & Landscape Stewardship

Trees play a huge role in Kingston's character and looking after them remains a priority.

An experienced on-island arborist continues to help assess tree health and guide ongoing care. Recently, this included some routine maintenance work, such as adjusting cobra netting in Government House White Oaks.

One area getting extra attention is Aunt Jemima's pine plantation, where some trees are showing signs of decline. The arborist is carefully investigating what might be causing this, while being very mindful of the deep family and community connections to the area. This work is being approached with care, respect and transparency, and the Office of the Administrator remains closely involved.

Did you know?

There are close to 5000 trees on the Crown land of KAVHA, with the vast majority – probably 98 per cent – being pines.

Lime Kiln Picnic Area: Changes After the Flooding

Recent flooding has caused significant damage to the Lime Kiln picnic area, and unfortunately some tough decisions have had to be made.

The picnic tables are being removed as they're no longer safe, and the rock face between Lime Kiln and Slaughter Bay has been assessed as unstable. For everyone's safety, visitors are asked not to climb on the rocks or enter the sea cave.

The picnic area is now being decommissioned — but this is where we'd love your help.

👉 Where would you like to see new picnic tables located elsewhere across the site?

Your ideas will help shape future visitor spaces.



January 2026 flooding at Lime Kiln Picnic Area

Fresh Colour, Fresh Possibilities

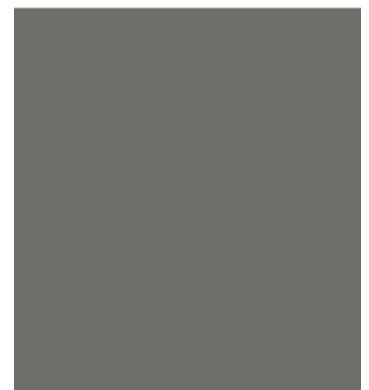
You might soon notice a change at the Lone Pine toilets. They'll be getting a fresh coat of paint in the colour 'Rockslide', chosen in consultation with a Heritage Architect.

This colour helps the buildings blend more naturally into the landscape and aligns with the site's approved materials palette. In fact, it's already used across Kingston on window trims and doors — so it fits right in. *See the colour swatch on the right, for how it looks.*

The biggest change will be moving away from green to this more subtle, muted tone. Because the building isn't heritage-listed, the update is entirely appropriate.

The Lone Pine and Slaughter Bay toilets will be painted first, with Emily Bay scheduled for next year.

The end result? Buildings that sit more comfortably in the landscape — and a little extra room for creative expression.



The Salt House and Its Trees: Caring for a Shared Heritage

The Salt House and the trees surrounding it create one of Kingston's most evocative heritage settings — a place where the natural landscape and built history they tell a story of work, resilience and connection.

Current work in this area is focused on caring for both the building and the significant trees that frame it. An experienced arborist is guiding detailed assessments to support long-term tree health, while also helping protect the integrity of the Salt House itself. This careful, balanced approach recognises that the setting is just as important as the structure.

One of the key trees near the Salt House is estimated to be around 175 years old, dating back to the early Pitcairn settlement period. As a living link to the past, it stands as a quiet witness to generations of change and a powerful reminder that heritage isn't only found in buildings — it's also alive in the landscape.

💡 Did you know?

- In **1850–51**, Norfolk Island is believed to have produced around **14,000 pounds of salt** — that's about **6,350 kilograms**.
- Seawater only contains **about 35 grams of salt per litre** (roughly the same as **two tablespoons**).
- To produce **6,350 kilograms of salt**, you'd need to evaporate around **181,000 litres of seawater**.
- That's roughly the amount held in a tank **10.3 metres wide and 2.7 metres tall** — an enormous volume by any measure.
- And in **1850**, just **three convicts** were recorded as working at the Salt House to produce it all.

👉 It's a powerful reminder of just how labour-intensive salt production was — and how important this small site was to the wider settlement.

A few months ago, we shared an update showing that tree roots were beginning to place pressure on sections of the Salt House walls.

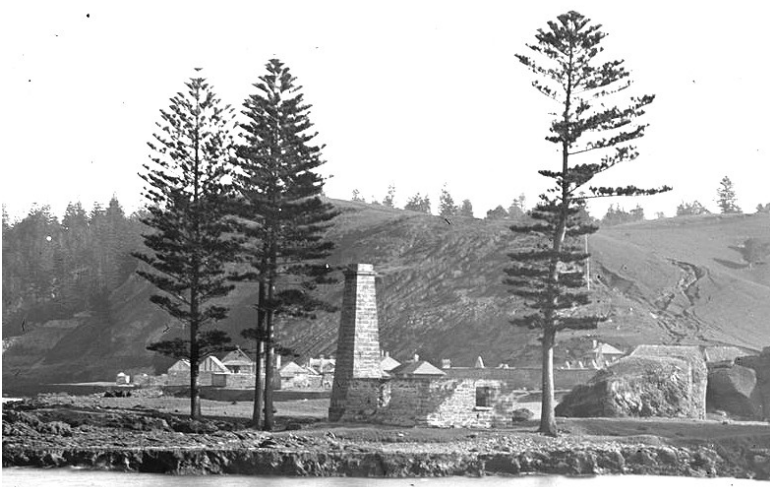
Since then, specialist arborists from Queensland have worked closely with the KAVHA team to oversee carefully planned protection works. A root barrier has now been installed around the entire structure, designed to gently guide root growth away from the walls rather than harm or remove the trees.

This solution allows the trees to continue growing and remain healthy, while reducing further impact on the building. It's a preventative, long-term measure that reflects a strong commitment to caring for both the natural landscape and the historic fabric of the site — helping ensure the Salt House and its setting can be enjoyed by future generations.



As preservation work continues, the Museum and KAVHA team are looking closely at the Salt House through multiple lenses. Archival notes, early records and community knowledge are being brought together to better understand how the building was used, how the landscape evolved around it, and how the trees became part of the site's identity.

Historic and contemporary images will also play an important role in telling this story, helping to show continuity and change over time. Together, they highlight why the Salt House and its trees matter — not just as heritage features, but as enduring symbols of resilience, labour and connection to place that continue to belong to the wider community.



Images above right: backfilling the root barrier around the salt house

Image above: 1884c Salthouse with bent tree – approx. 175 years old

AEDs Across Kingston: Know Where They Are

Looking out for one another is part of what makes the Kingston precinct such a special place and having access to life-saving equipment is an important part of that.

A new, easy-to-use map is now available showing the locations of seven Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) across Kingston (KAVHA). It's a simple tool, but one that could make a huge difference in an emergency.

Where You Need Them

Several AEDs are available 24/7, so help is always close by if it's ever needed. These include units located at:

- the Golf Club
- the REO toilets
- the cricket pitch fence
- the Emily Bay toilets

Clear signage is in place across the precinct, making AEDs easier to spot — whether you're a local who knows the area well or a visitor seeing Kingston for the first time.

A Small Thing That Matters a Lot

AEDs are designed to be used by anyone. They talk you through what to do, step by step, and they play a critical role in responding to sudden cardiac arrest — where acting quickly can save a life.

Taking a moment to notice where AEDs are located as you move around the precinct is a simple way we can all help support each other. Hopefully they're never needed — but knowing where they are means we're better prepared, just in case.

👉 **Keep an eye out for AED signage, check out the new map, and help us look after our community and visitors here at Kingston.**



Any comments or questions please contact KAVHASecretariat@infrastructure.gov.au, for urgent site maintenance out of hours, call 55177