



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development,  
Communications, Sport and the Arts

# Down a town

KINGSTON

# Digest



Kingston  
Norfolk Island

Norfolk Island Community | Issue no. 04 | November 2025

## What's coming up?

### Next steps for Bounty Street Bridge

Before conservation works begin at Bounty Street Bridge, the KAVHA team is laying the important groundwork to protect the surrounding environment.

A water quality monitoring program is now underway in Watermill Creek and Town Creek, just upstream and downstream of the bridge.

This program helps build a clear picture of the local ecosystem before any construction begins. Officers from the department are visiting weekly to measure turbidity, pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen and nitrates – all indicators of water health.

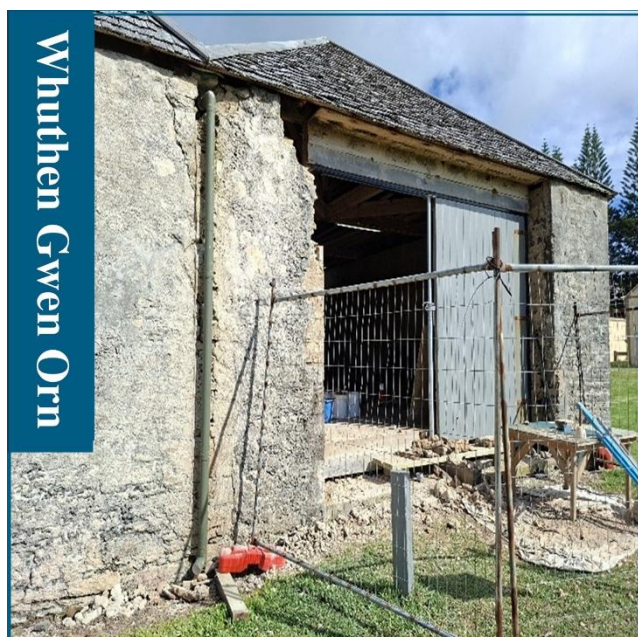
Monitoring is part of national environmental requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)*, known as the EPBC Act, ensuring that heritage works are carried out responsibly. Early trends show a gentle rise in water temperature as summer approaches and a slight dip in pH levels.

And in a delightful twist, some curious eels have been spotted inspecting the water probes, a reminder that Kingston is home to more than just history.

As the bridge works draw closer, the community can be confident that every step is being taken with care.



Whuthen Kuumen Up



Whuthen Gwen Orn

## What's been happening?

### Preserving the Past: Conservation Works at the Double Boat Shed

The KAVHA team is working hard to conserve a treasured part of Norfolk Island's historic past. The Double Boat Shed at Kingston, a familiar landmark along the foreshore, is undergoing essential repairs after a recent condition report revealed severe wall cracks, unstable stonework, and failing mortar and render.

Using traditional techniques, the team is removing loose materials, repointing and re-rendering with lime-based mortar. Original stones have been recut and reset and stainless-steel rods will reinforce the wall-to-door connection. Custom marine-grade hinges will rehang the doors.

This is the first major work on the shed since the 1960s, and it's being carried out by KAVHA's skilled stonemason, ensuring the structure's integrity and honouring Kingston's maritime legacy.





## Spotlight on

### Representing Norfolk at the National Heritage Table

KAVHA isn't just a local treasure, it's part of a remarkable group of eleven convict sites across Australia that together form a UNESCO World Heritage property. These diverse places tell the full, complex story of the forced migration of more than 166,000 men, women and children from Britain and Ireland between 1788 and 1855.

Kingston, once known as 'hell in paradise', was built for secondary punishment, the harshest system for re-offenders. Today, its haunting ruins and dramatic landscape offer a powerful glimpse into that past, making it an irreplaceable piece of global history.

KAVHA has a seat at the table on the Australian Convict Sites Steering Committee, where representatives from all eleven sites come together to protect and promote this shared heritage. At the recent meeting hosted at Fremantle Gaol in Perth, the KAVHA team presented updates on its Heritage Management Plan, sharing the challenges and progress of conservation work.

It was also a chance to collaborate – swapping ideas, refining strategies and making sure the stories of these sites continue to resonate with communities across Australia and beyond.

KAVHA's presence on the committee ensures Norfolk Island's voice is heard, its history respected and its future protected.

## Other news

### Caring for Exposed Ruins

Recent wet weather and vehicle movement have caused some sinking across the site, exposing fragile ruins through erosion. If you come across exposed stonework, please avoid driving over it – even the smallest impacts can cause lasting damage. Your care helps protect Norfolk's heritage.

### Lifesaving Upgrades Across the Site

Two new defibrillators have been installed at KAVHA, bringing the total to seven across the site. Emergency phones and life buoys have also been upgraded to improve safety for all site users.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are available 24/7 at the Golf Club, REO toilets, cricket pitch fence, and Emily Bay toilets. Look out for signs and enjoy your summer.

### Research Spotlight: UNE Grant Success

Congratulations to the University of New England on securing a major Australian Research Council grant. The five-year project will focus on the First Settlement of Norfolk Island, with support from the KAVHA team during on-island fieldwork. The findings will deepen our understanding of Kingston's earliest chapter and help guide future heritage management.



### A Wall, A Dog and a Long-Lost Story

As we covered in the last edition, just north of Government House stands a curved stone wall – a quiet feature that has long puzzled visitors and historians alike. Its original purpose has never been confirmed, but a recent discovery may offer a new lead.

Letters recently donated to the Norfolk Island Museum Trust include a first-hand account from someone who lived at Government House in the 1840s and 1850s. In it, the writer recalls a grave in that very spot – believed to belong to Glaucus, a dog once owned by a former Commandant.

Glaucus was clearly a much loved-companion. A headstone marking his grave was reportedly visible until the 1920s, though no trace of it remains today. The curved wall may have been built to mark or protect the site, though its exact origins remain a mystery.

