



Australian Government

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

Douwn a touwn

KINGSTON

Digest



Norfolk Island community news | Issue no. 03 | Jul 2025

What's coming up? *Whuthen Kummen Up*

The Council of Elders Language Commission recently published the English to Norf'k dictionary.

Norf'k is recognised as an endangered language by UNESCO and the dictionary is an important way to preserve and promote the language. A KAVHA Heritage Management Plan policy is to support the use of the *Norf'k* language and this dictionary will help inform the use of language where appropriate on signage in KAVHA and associated publications.

Tarla-bird (Purple Swamp Hen, Tarla bud) culling using live weapons is continuing as a part of the Norfolk Island National Parks Restoring the Bounty project. In the past three rounds of culling, Parks has already reduced the Tarla-bird population in Kingston by 31. Please keep an eye out for announcements on radio, newspaper and SMS on upcoming culls so you know when to avoid the area.

Maintenance works are scheduled for the Bridge Street cattle grid, including installing vibration reduction measures, removing built-up debris and cleaning the area. The road will be closed to Bay Street while these works are under way.



Tell-tale slides (pictured) have been installed on several heritage buildings to monitor cracks in the stone work. This is a part of regular cyclical maintenance and helps in identifying changes in the condition of buildings.

A gas BBQ has been ordered to replace the failing BBQ at Munnas. Even better, it is a double BBQ to allow for better access to facilities.

What's been happening? *Whuthen Gwen Orn*

Conservation of the Settlement Guard House - You might notice works under way on the southwestern wall of the Settlement Guard House. This side of the building is highly exposed to wind and rain, making it more vulnerable to damage over time.

We're using traditional lime render and hot limewash to help the wall 'breathe'. This means moisture can escape from the stone, rather than becoming trapped inside - just like it did before modern paints and coatings were introduced. That's why you'll see the wall change colour: it's darker when damp and lighter when dry. This is completely normal.

Because many of the historic buildings in KAVHA don't have gutters or moisture barriers, this breathable finish helps manage internal dampness, which is an ongoing issue at the site.



We're also testing a lime mix designed for harsh marine environments to cope with the wall's exposed position. To further protect the base of the wall, we've added a hand-cut stone V-drain from local calcarenite and set with lime mortar, this will help redirect surface water.

Once the work is finished, we'll keep monitoring the area. If it proves successful, we'll use the same approach on other vulnerable parts of the site.



Spotlight on *Si Dar*

Did you know that of the 6,473 convicts transported to Norfolk Island during the Second British Settlement between 1825-1855, 70 per cent of the crimes committed were 'non-violent assaults' and 40 per cent came on a first conviction!

The Worst of the Worst "myth and truth" exhibition commemorates the anniversary of 200 years of the notorious British Penal Second Settlement on Norfolk Island. The exhibition, located at the Royal Engineers Office (R.E.O) in Kingston explores some of the myths and truths of this settlement, including rare items such as: a baby-feeding bottle along with more sinister artefacts such as 'double' or 'top' leg irons and, for the first time, a sample of linen made from flax by the convicts. Kum look orn.

Other news *Tadda News*

Why is the wall curved?

To the north of Government House, there is a strange 50-metre free-standing wall with a noticeable curve in it, which doesn't connect with any other buildings or other walls.

The wall first appears in a historical record when Royal Engineers surveyed it on 20 January 1859, and it stood then as it is today.

It wasn't on an 1849 map, so it must have been built from 1850-1855. But why did they curve it? One possible reason is that it may have been part of an attempt at growing plants that prefer a warmer climate. Curved walls absorb more heat during the day than straight walls, and when this heat is released at night it can create a sort of microclimate in the curved portion. Such walls had already been in use in Britain, Europe and North America for hundreds of years, so their use was not an unknown technology.

However, this is only a guess and it's unlikely we'll ever be certain about why this curious wall was built as it was. We welcome other ideas!



The Worst of the Worst

Myth and Truth exhibition explores the stories of the Second British Penal Settlement.

R.E.O. Mon – Fri 9am – 3pm



Norfolk Language exhibition explores changes in language over time.

Research Centre. #9 Quality Row.

Mon -Wed 11am – 3pm.