



Australian Government

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

# Douwn a touwn

KINGSTON

# Digest



Norfolk Island Community | Issue no. 05 | March 2026

## What's coming up

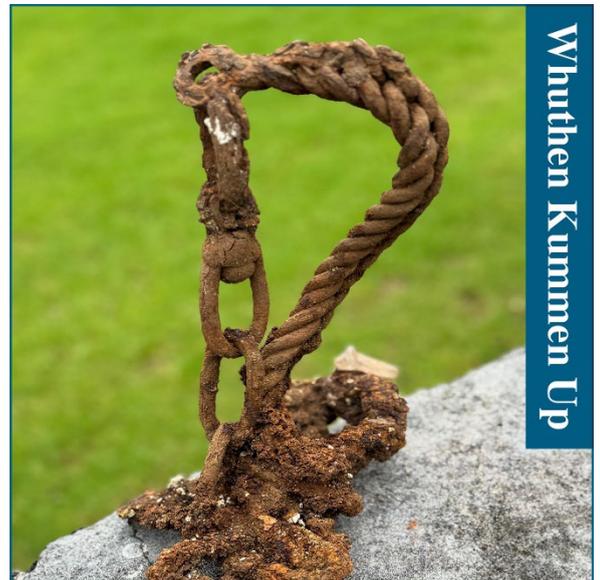
### Unexpected Finds Beneath the Courtyard at No.5 Quality Road

Recent heavy storms on Norfolk Island caused flooding in the courtyard of No.5 Quality Row. The flooding occurred because the convict-era stormwater drainage system beneath the courtyard had become clogged with soil over time, reducing its ability to cope with large volumes of water.

Investigations suggest that when restoration works were undertaken at No.5 in 1971, the original drains were not fully cleared. While this limited their effectiveness, it had an unexpected benefit. The blocked sections of the drain acted like a time capsule, trapping a range of small artefacts that have remained undisturbed for many years.

As the drains were cleared following the storms, a variety of items were discovered including buttons – some from the 99<sup>th</sup> Regiment and others from everyday clothing – along with glass beads, musket balls, shotgun pellets, cutlery fragments, clothing clasps and window glass. Interestingly, there was relatively little ceramic or bottle glass. Instead, the finds relate mostly to personal items, things people wore, carried, or used in daily life, likely dating from the 1870s to 1880s.

The work has also provided the clearest look yet at how the original drainage system functioned. This knowledge will help inform future works across the other houses along Quality Row, giving conservation teams a better idea of what to expect and what hidden pieces of history might still be waiting beneath the surface.



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*Braided steel object – Do you know what this is?  
Contact KAVHA Secretariat if you do!*

## What's been happening?

### Lifesaving upgrades across KAVHA

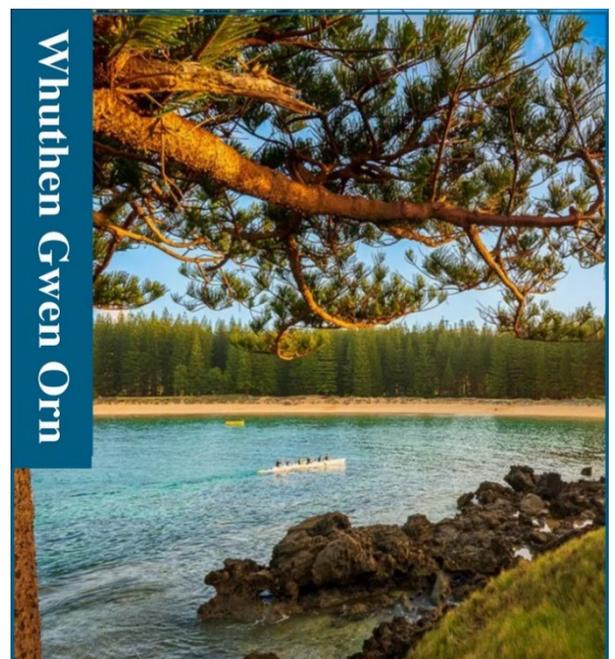
With the delight of Emily Bay continuing to bring visitors and locals to Kingston, it is a good time to remind everyone about the lifesaving equipment available across the site. Seven Automated Defibrillators (AEDs) are located throughout the precinct, including units with 24/7 availability, which are the golf club, the Royal Engineers Office (REO) toilets, the cricket pitch fence next to number 11 Quality Row and the Emily Bay toilets. These units are designed to be used by anyone in an emergency.

Emergency phones and life buoys are also on hand to support quick responses when help is needed. If someone is in difficulty in the water, a life buoy can be thrown toward them to help them stay afloat until assistance arrives. The steps are simple: call for help, keep yourself safe and throw the buoy so it lands within reach of the person in trouble.

Remember, our coastline is beautiful, but conditions can change quickly. Checking local conditions, following directions and reading safety signs are simple steps that can make a lifesaving difference.

To align with international standards, safety signage is under review. Because KAVHA is an internationally significant heritage site, all new signs will go through the development approvals process, giving the community the opportunity to review proposed designs.

St John Ambulance also continues to offer first aid training, including CPR and AED use. These short courses provide practical skills that can make a real difference, we encourage community members and regular site users to consider attending one.



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## Spotlight on

### Kingston works

Work continues across Kingston, with a range of infrastructure and conservation projects helping to protect the site's heritage while improving access and amenity for the community and visitors.

Conservation planning is progressing steadily, a heritage architect visited the island late last month to inspect the Surgeon's Quarters, the Royal Engineers Office and the house museum at 10 Quality Row. This work will inform future conservation efforts, ensuring repairs and maintenance are carefully planned and aligned with the site's heritage values.

The Lions Club has relocated its photo display to 11 Quality Row, ensuring this important local and living history remains accessible for both residents and visitors. Meanwhile, roof replacement works are planned for 8 Quality Row, contributing to the long-term preservation of the historic building, once home to the Commissariat officer and then Arthur Quintal

Also, a quick reminder – Bounty Street Bridge will remain closed while preparations continue to undertake important structural work, with construction on the bridge expected to commence later this year after winter, in line with environmental approvals. These projects reflect ongoing investment in maintaining Kingston as a safe, accessible and well-conserved heritage site for current and future generations.

## Other news

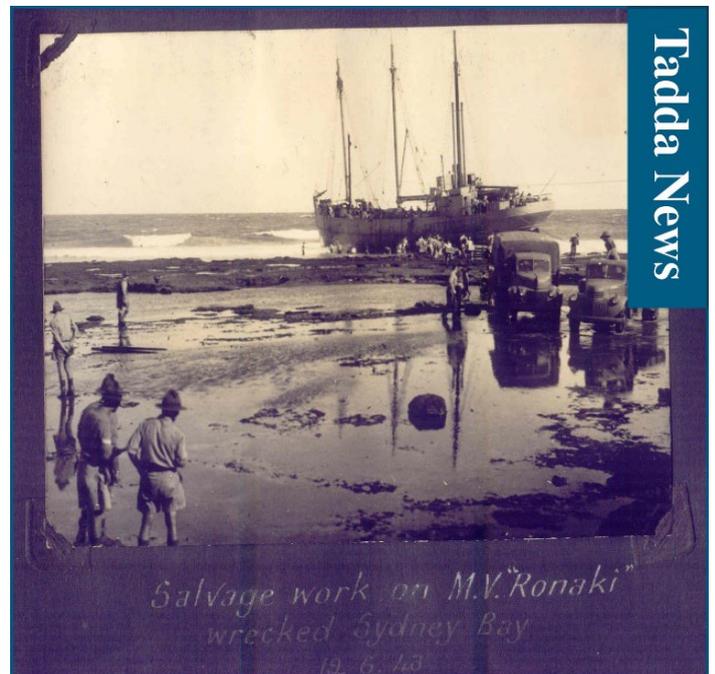
### Exploring Norfolk's maritime heritage

Norfolk Island's maritime history is on full display this season, with new opportunities to explore both above and below the waterline.

At the Pier Store Museum, a new exhibition celebrates the locally built AS Resolution, launched from Emily Bay in December 1925. The vessel became a symbol of island ingenuity, and the exhibition features remarkable artefacts from the ship, including the wheel, bell and telegraph. The Pier Store Museum is open seven days a week from 11am to 3pm, with free entry for locals.

Later this year, underwater cultural heritage experts will be on island to record the wreck of the Ronaki (USS IX-94), which was scuttled at Duffy's Whale after striking the Kingston reef in 1943. Originally built and used in New Zealand, the Ronaki was acquired by American forces during the Second World War to support transport and supply efforts.

No loss of life was recorded from the wreck, although much of the electrical equipment on board was lost. These sites form an important part of Norfolk's maritime story and locals and visitors are kindly reminded that all underwater cultural heritage is protected by law. Nothing should be removed from a wreck or surrounding areas



## Help us protect Kingston's historic sites

Recent incidents of vandalism have caused costly damage to buildings and facilities across Kingston, negatively impacting the amenity of the site and its community facilities.

Rocks have been thrown at buildings, breaking windows (pictured), wall tiles and damaging freshly painted surfaces and recently refurbished amenities.

Public toilets appear to be a particular target, with toilet rolls pushed down toilets causing blockages and locked dispensers forced open so that rolls can be removed and tampered with. This is affecting the site's sensitive plumbing and drainage systems, leading to costly repairs and inconvenience to site users.

Repairing this damage requires funds that would otherwise be used for conserving the historic area.

The incidents have been reported to the Norfolk Island Police Force and the community is encouraged to help protect this special place by reporting any suspicious behaviour.

