



Water Workshop – joint media release by the Controller, Bruce Walker, Emergency Management Norfolk Island (EMNI) together with the Administrator, Eric Hutchinson.

Water security is the reliable availability of an acceptable quantity and quality of water for health, livelihoods and production, coupled with an acceptable level of water-related risks. As such, water security is fundamental to the sustainability of any community, particularly to isolated communities such as Norfolk Island, as we all know well. While we are a most responsive and resilient community, shifting rainfall patterns, together with other extreme events or unexpected factors, could put our water security at risk. Fortunately, measures can be undertaken to reduce and manage this risk.

During the recent record-breaking dry weather, many members of the community raised concerns about Norfolk Island's water security. In response, the Administrator, Eric Hutchinson, asked Emergency Management Norfolk Island (EMNI) to address the risk of a water emergency by treating water scarcity as it would a cyclone or tsunami. In line with EMNI's motto of prepare for the worst, but hope for the best, EMNI has sought the support of Norfolk Island Regional Council to obtain information from landowners and business operators about water capacity and water usage. In addition, CSIRO has been engaged by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities to help understand the island's ground and surface water resources. This information will assist in preventing and planning for an emergency water situation, that we hope will never occur.

The Department is also bringing to the island representatives from Emergency Management Australia, the Department of Defence, the CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology for a workshop with the EMNI Committee and Functional Service Coordinators established under the Norfolk Island Disaster and Emergency Plan (NORDISPLAN). From this workshop, two key pieces of work can be progressed by the Norfolk Island Regional Council:

1. Development of a Water Response Plan to guide local capability in the event of a water related emergency.
2. Development of a water resource strategy that considers short-, medium- and long-term measures to sustainably manage an increasingly scarce resource, shore up our water security and strengthen our ability to avoid a situation where we have a water emergency.

To complete this work, we need information from the community in the coming weeks. The EMNI Controller and the Administrator encourage all community members to work with the Council and CSIRO to build a better understanding of Norfolk Island's water resources so that the best strategies may be put in place to manage our water and to protect the island's water security. This includes information about domestic and business water holdings and consumption. We will provide more information about how the community can contribute to this vitally important exercise in the near future.

The Controller of Emergency Management Norfolk Island and the Administrator thank all participants for their involvement and thank the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities for assisting EMNI by bringing us all together for a workshop.

If you have any questions or comments or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Administrator on Office.Administrator@infrastructure.gov.au or visit the Emergency Management page on Council's website.

Eric Hutchinson and Bruce Walker
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