



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Discussion paper on review of the immigration permit system

Chief Minister André Nobbs said today that he would welcome feedback from the community on a discussion paper which proposed some significant changes to the immigration permit system.

“We have had a working group, of which I am a member, reviewing our immigration and population policies for some time, with a view to achieving sustainable population growth while protecting the essential nature of our community and economy”, Mr Nobbs said. “They have now produced a discussion draft, which will be available next week on the government website at www.gov.nf. MLAs are also considering the proposal to broaden the permit system to overcome some current anomalies and make it more readily understood by the community and by potential applicants. The suggested new easily identified categories will be clearer and will remove most of the subjective decision making from our immigration system. In providing the list of possible new permits, I should clarify that within each category there are appropriate arrangements for foreign nationals”.

Categories of new entry permits proposed in the discussion paper are:

1. TOURIST PERMIT (previously deemed visitor permit)
2. VISITOR NON-WORK PERMIT (allows tourist not related to anyone in the Territory to remain beyond 30 days up to 120 days)
3. VISITOR WORK PERMIT (allows visitor to work up to 28 days especially if awaiting employment permit)
4. EMPLOYMENT PERMIT (previously TEP - allows employment of non-resident up to 12 months – previously TEP)
5. BUSINESS PERMIT (allows non-resident to operate or be involved in or lease or manage business or asset on Norfolk Island up to 12 months)
6. INVESTMENT PERMIT (allows non-resident to invest in Island businesses or assets and employ persons to manage or operate such assets with an inspection visit required up to 30 days in each quarter granted either annually or for period up to 3 years)

7. OFFICIAL PURPOSE ENTRY PERMIT (allows entry for official purposes e.g. judges, Commonwealth and other government officials, members of parliament, police officers, or other official purposes approved by Chief Minister and Immigration Executive Member)
8. SPECIAL PURPOSE ENTRY PERMITS (allows entry for special purposes e.g. sporting events, conferences or conventions, lawyers and witnesses in court trials held on Norfolk Island – lawyers entitled to practice during such entry, aged and respite carers if not related, specific development or infrastructure project workers/experts, self funded retirees, exchange students, school group tours, continuing professional or community education providers, charitable or religious ministers)
9. FAMILY ENTRY PERMIT (separate permit for spouses and children – previously co-applicants on worker TEP – also permits visits by relatives of permit holders living or working on Norfolk Island if intending to reside with the worker while on the Island, also aged and respite carers if related)
10. INTERIM RESIDENCE PERMIT (previously GEP - conditions to be flexible to allow work or investment or operation of business where lawful to do so - same as at present but granted pending application for resident declaration)
11. PERMANENT RESIDENT (same as at present)
12. TEMPORARY / EMERGENCY ENTRY PERMIT (issued for only brief temporary or emergency entry where person arrives or seeks to enter while still a prohibited immigrant or prescribed person or whose entitlement to enter Norfolk Island or Australia is in doubt and they wish to enter and apply for revocation or verification of that status within 7 days of arrival or some other emergency reason exists to permit brief entry to a person not otherwise entitled to enter)

“For a long time, we have said that Norfolk Island needs to grow its population in order to achieve economic growth”, Mr Nobbs said. “I believe that the proposed new permit system will give us a basis for proactively seeking new residents who will add to our community and help us to achieve economic progress through more investment and new employment opportunities. The revised permits will help us to more effectively target our efforts and will remove the discretionary and subjective procedures in the current system. I look forward to receiving the feedback of the community on these proposals”.

André Nobbs
Chief Minister

20 February 2009