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Formed three million years ago, Norfolk Island is a large volcanic outcrop although the restless sea has eroded the island to one third of its original size and formed a coastline of high cliffs. The Federal Government has released a national and Queensland Tender that is looking for people interested in providing a flight service to the island.

A subtropical island, Norfolk is a picturesque tapestry of forests, gardens and rolling, pine-dotted meadows - a pretty-as-a-picture landscape framed by fluted cliffs plunging into the surging sea.

National parks and reserves cover one third of the island, protecting the remaining rainforests as well as the islandâ€™s precious fauna and flora. See more than 78 species of native plants, 40 of which are unique to the island including the Norfolk Smooth Treefern that grows up to 20m in height and is the tallest treefern on Earth.

Harder to find are Norfolkâ€™s three endangered birds â€“ the Norfolk Island green parrot, the boobook ov and the â€˜bird of providenceâ€™ petrel. More common is the wedgetailed shearwater and ghostbird (liste for its eerie call at night).

Walking tracks fan across the national park and include the islandâ€™s highest points, Mt Pitt and Mt Bates, which provide breathtaking vistas right across Norfolk. The Bridle Track along the wild, unspoiled coastline from Captain Cookâ€™s monument back to Bird Rock is one of the most spectacular walks and is highly recommended.

Phillip Island is an uninhabited and undeveloped island just 7kms off Norfolk Island. This sensational island is home to many species of birds â€“ and locals who are up for a getaway of their own, housed in a little fishing hut wedged between two rock formations, over looking a natural rock pool. During your trek, you will view scores of birds up close as they soar above you. Between the wildlife and the view, you wonâ€™t be thinking of much else while youâ€™re there. A half day trek is a mu see for anyone who visits Norfolk Island.

Norfolkâ€™s stormy heritage, tiny size, isolation, incredible beauty and relaxed pace have together cultivated a culture like no other. Norfolk Islanders are proud, sturdy, independent, warm and resourceful people who cherish the uniqueness of their origins and love to share their intriguing lifestyle with visitors.

Around a third of islanders descend from the rebellious Bounty crew and their Tahitian partners. There are eight common surnames, including Quintal, McCoy and Christian. As a result, Norfolkâ€™s telephone book is the only one in the world to list by nicknames. This includes â€œTarzanâ€•, â€œLettuce â€œDiddlesâ€•, â€œShagsyâ€•, â€œCarrotsâ€•, Kik (and his son â€˜Kik Kikâ€™) and â€œPinkyâ€•.

While living on a small island like Norfolk with just 1800 residents does have its limitations, there are also many benefits. There are no rat race pressures, no unemployment (in fact most locals have multiple jobs), free range scenery for children and adults to revel in, no traffic jams (although there are sometimes two cars queued up at the islandâ€™s single roundabout), no fast food outlets, no high rises, little crime and bountiful supplies of kinship, warmth, camaraderie, a sense of belonging, a spirit of community and a zest to really live life to the fullest.

The biggest day on the localsâ€™ calendar is Bounty Day, June 8. The entire population turns out on this special public holiday, to honour the Bounty descendants who left Pitcairn Island to settle on

Norfolk Island in 1856. Each Bounty Day, islanders wear traditional period dress, some even original, and join the giant family celebration. A re-enactment of the bounty mutineer forefathers landing at Kingston Pier. Direct descendants of the mutineers march down quality row to the cemetery as tourists or other Islanders watch from the side of the road. For further information on the island go to www.norfolkisland.com.

Those who are interested in the provision of air services to Norfolk Island should check the Australian Governmeent website for this Queensland Tender.

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