

MEDIA RELEASE

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HONOURING A TREASURED NORFOLK ISLAND TRADITION

For generations, Norfolk Island has cared for its dearly departed with dignity, compassion, and deep respect - reflecting a tradition that is as much about community as it is about farewell.

In earlier times, loved ones were carried on foot from All Saints Church, supported by neighbours and family who understood the importance of walking together on that final journey. As the island grew and changed, so too did the means - first by horse and carriage, then by the back of a truck - each adaptation ensuring every islander received a respectful last ride down to Kingston.

For more than 40 years, that responsibility has been carried by a much-loved 1984 Ford Falcon hearse. Faithfully servicing the island for four decades, the vehicle became a familiar and quietly revered part of farewell services, accompanying generations of islanders to their final resting place.

After long and dedicated service, the old girl will soon be retired with gratitude and respect. Vehicle parts are now unfortunately almost impossible to obtain. The Ford Falcon will remain in operation until a replacement, and when retired will be well cared for until her respectful final resting place, which is yet to be determined.

In her place, a new chapter will begin with the arrival of a 2025 Mitsubishi Pajero in the near future, carefully retrofitted to continue this important role. While modern in form, the vehicle upholds the same values that have long defined this service - dignity, reliability, and respect - ensuring every islander continues to receive a fitting farewell.

In modern times, the journey itself remains a powerful expression of community respect. Vehicles along the route pull to the side of the road, members of the public stand quietly in acknowledgement, and businesses close their doors as staff line the roadside. School children pause beside their bicycles or stand alongside; heads bowed in respectful stillness as the hearse passes - a simple yet powerful gesture of shared respect for a life lived.

The tradition extends well beyond the journey. Community members generously donate flowers and greenery, with local wreath makers giving their time and care to create tributes of beauty and meaning. Alongside this are the kindness of grave diggers, the craftsmanship of Council coffin makers, and services thoughtfully delivered to honour the wishes of the departed and their families.

Providing this service is a treasured and revered Norfolk Island tradition - one that reflects the island's enduring respect for life, community, and remembrance. From footpaths to horsepower, from Falcon to Pajero, the journey continues - ensuring no one makes their final ride alone.

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