

Norfolk Island

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Although research found that no child labor exists on Norfolk Island, in 2024, the government made moderate advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The Australian parliament approved the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Bill in December 2024, which aims to disrupt a key resource stream for organized crime, thus helping prevent illegal activities such as drug trafficking, tax evasion, cybercrime, human trafficking, and arms trafficking. However, despite this effort, the government has not established laws that sufficiently protect children from commercial sexual exploitation because the use of a child for prostitution is not legally prohibited. There is also no law that establishes a minimum age of 13 for light work or describes the activities in which light work may be performed by children. Lastly, Norfolk Island does not meet the international standard for free public education because free education is available only to Australian citizens, permanent residents, or children of citizens or permanent residents.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Norfolk Island.

SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor in Norfolk Island.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of a child for prostitution in line with international standards.
	Establish a minimum age of 13 for light work and specify the activities in which light work may be undertaken by children.
	Establish free education by law for all children on Norfolk Island, including those who are not citizens, permanent residents, nor children of permanent residents.
	Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Norfolk Island is non-self-governing and is included as part of the territory of the Australian Commonwealth. Under the Acts Interpretation Act 1901 (Cth), all laws of the Commonwealth are applicable to Norfolk Island as if it were a part of mainland Australia. Australia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. Norfolk Island is subject to the laws and regulations related to child labor of the Commonwealth of Australia and some of the laws related to child labor of the state of Queensland. Some laws specific to Norfolk Island also remain in force. However, Norfolk Island’s laws do not meet the international standard related to the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children as child prostitution is not prohibited. In addition, its light work framework does not set a minimum age for light work or specify activities in which light work may be permitted.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	15	✓	Article 24 of the Employment Act 1988 (NI)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18	✓	Section 81 and 89(2)(d) of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Qld) (NI)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		✓	Chapter 4 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Qld) (NI)

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		✓	Sections 270.1A–270.7 and 270.8 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		✓	Sections 270.3, 270.7, 271.1, 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		X	Section 122 of the Criminal Code 2007 (NI); Sections 271.4, 271.7, and 271.7F-7G of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		✓	Divisions 309 and 310 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth); Sections 303–305 of the Criminal Code 2007 (NI)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	18	✓	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		N/A*	Canberra Act 2600
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		✓	Sections 268.68 and 268.88 of the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)
Compulsory Education Age	16	✓	Sections 4 and 9 of the Education Act 2006 (Qld)
Free Public Education		X	Sections 4, 50, and 51 of the Education Act 2006 (Qld)

* Country has no conscription

Although Norfolk Island’s Criminal Code 2007 and the Commonwealth Criminal Code prohibit the offering and procuring of a child for sex, the law does not prohibit the use of a child for prostitution. Additionally, the Employment Act 1988 (NI) does not set a minimum age for light work or specify activities in which light work may be permitted, which is not in compliance with international standards. However, local authorities have reported that no children under age 15 are currently employed on Norfolk Island. Norfolk Island also does not meet the international standard for free public education because under the newly applicable Queensland Education Act, 2006, free education is only available to Australian citizens, permanent residents, or children of citizens or of permanent residents. Fees may be charged to attend school for people outside those categories. Lastly, the minimum age for work, 15, is lower than the compulsory education age, 16. In December 2024 the Australian parliament approved the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Bill, which aims to address and eliminate organized crime, including human trafficking.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, in 2024, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies on Norfolk Island took actions to prevent child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement
Australia Federal Police: Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Lead the Australian Center to Counter Child Exploitation.
Norfolk Island Labor Inspectors: Inspect places of employment for violations. Authorized to issue stop-work orders when violations are found, including child labor violations.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor. However, Australia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery: Deals with child labor law enforcement and policy, including the worst forms of child labor, from a counter-trafficking perspective. Comprises 11 government agencies, including the Australian Federal Police, the Department of Employment, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, and is chaired by the Department of Home Affairs. The Committee meets at least twice a year, including once at the ministerial level, and includes an Operational Working Group subcommittee. During the reporting period, the committee met six times.

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor. However, Australia established a policy related to child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020–2025: Sets five strategic priorities for addressing modern slavery, which the National Action Plan defines as trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices, and the worst forms of child labor. Priorities include: (1) prevention; (2) disruption, investigation, and prosecution; (3) support and protection for victims; (4) partnerships; and (5) research. In alignment with the National Action Plan, the Australian parliament approved the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment Bill in December 2024. The bill aims to disrupt a key resource stream for organized crime, thus helping prevent illegal activities such as drug trafficking, tax evasion, cybercrime, human trafficking, and arms trafficking.

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, Australia established programs that include the goal of preventing child labor.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Cash Assistance Programs: The Child Care Subsidy Program provides support for the care of children aged 13 or younger using an approved childcare service, and the Parenting Program provides an income-support payment for the principal caretakers of a child under age 8. The program was active during the reporting period.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports