



**NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
14<sup>TH</sup> NILA HANSARD – 11 DECEMBER 2014**

**PRAYER**

Almighty God we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this House, direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of Norfolk Island, Amen

**CONDOLENCES**

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Speaker. It is with regret that this House records the passing of **William Joyce Adams** affectionately known as Bill Pumper who was born on Norfolk Island in 1927. He was the 6<sup>th</sup> child of Ethylene Pumper Adams and Ruth nee Christian. Bill did all his schooling on Norfolk Island and at age 15 left school to work for Don Hickey delivering bread first on horseback then upgraded to a pushbike. He joined the Department of Civil Aviation as Groundsman in 1949 working his way up to Airport Foreman. He loved his job at the Airport and he and his workmates took great pride in the Airport grounds. He was Safety Officer when the Airport was upgraded to jet standards and he was employed with the Department of Civil Aviation until the Airport was handed over to the Norfolk Island Government. He retired in 1992. In retirement Bill enjoyed his leisure time fishing with his mates. Bill married Clara Adams in 1949 and from that marriage came four children Joe, Phyllis, Wayne and Joyce. He was a keen tennis player at the Methodist Tennis Club, a golfer and a football player for the Cascade Football Club when he played union and he was a keen and active instigator in reforming Cascade Football Club in the 1960's. He was a keen supporter of the Reds and hosted many Reds victory parties at this home in Cascade. He left golf and took up bowls and was the Club President in 1970, 71 and 99. He represented Norfolk Island in bowls at the Commonwealth Games in Auckland where he had luncheon with Queen Elizabeth, Canada and Fiji where he won silver and bronze, Cook Islands winning Gold and Silver, Veteran Games, Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea and Canada. He was a winner of Bounty Fours for four years, Club Championship singles, pairs for four years, triples and fours. He was a Life Member in 2008. Bill loved his family, his entire family, brothers sisters nieces and nephews and especially his children and theirs. To Joe Phyllis and Joyce, to his seven grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren and his sister Cath, to his many, many friends this House extends its deepest sympathy. May he rest in peace.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Evans Honourable Members we record the passing in this last month of **Nelson Mandela** who was the former President of South Africa, a person who has been an international symbol of resistance, peace and moral leadership for decades. Nelson Mandela was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> July in 1918 in South Africa. He was the first member of his family to attend school but he progressed to tertiary education and gained Arts and Law degrees at South African universities. He

later founded a Law firm Mandela and Tambo with Oliver Tambo and the pair provided low cost counsel to black Africans who could not afford representation. In 1944 Mandela joined the African National Congress the ANC which is multi racialist movement advocating change within South Africa. Following the 1948 elections the African dominated national party came to power and began implementing laws forcing segregation based upon race apartheid. Nelson Mandela ANC response was first passive, non violent resistance which progressed to armed resistance. In 1962 Mandela was arrested. He was brought to trial again in 1963 and along with a group of ANC figures was sentenced to life imprisonment for sabotage and other political offences. His statement from the dock ended with the following now immortal words and I repeat them for you. " I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve, but if needs be it's an ideal for which I am prepared to die". He spent 27 years in prison. The South African came under intense pressure both within Africa and abroad for his release. Mandela finally walked free in February 1990 and the ban on the ANC was simultaneously abolished by President F.W. DeClerk and in 1991 Mandela became the ANC's party leader, and after two years of negotiations Mandela and DeClerk achieved an end to apartheid and at the age of 75 Mandela became South Africa's first black President in the Country's first multi racial election in 1994 with DeClerk as his Deputy. He voluntarily retired from the Presidency in 1999. In post Presidency Mandela used his influence to support a number of humanitarian causes and he retired from public life in 2014. He died at the age of 95. His endless campaign for the freedom of his people, his unwavering commitment to justice, and his contribution to making our world a more free and equal place is said to be unparalleled. May he rest now in peace. As a mark of respect to those we have offered condolences to this morning Honourable Members I invite you all to stand in your places for a period of silence.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Honourable Members.

### **PETITIONS**

MR SPEAKER

petitions this morning?.

We move to the matter of petitions. Are there any

### **GIVING OF NOTICES**

MR SPEAKER

Are there any notices?

### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

MR SPEAKER

Members.

Are there any questions without notice Honourable

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to the Chief Minister. Given that the Chief Minister assured the Federal Minister, Minister Brigg that he would bring the Remuneration Tribunal matter to the House in the December Sitting for discussion will the Chief Minister explain why there is nothing on the Notice Paper in relation to the Tribunal.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Mr Speaker Mrs Ward was kind enough to forewarn me of this particular question and she did so in a number of emails and it started with that just the question that with regard to the 30<sup>th</sup> November Paper printed your radio interview four days earlier and it read; In regard to the last pay increase and Brigg's concerns expressed to you in Canberra we have agreed it would go before the House at it's next meeting, why isn't it on the Notice Paper. I did reply to Mrs Ward; Yes I did think about it but as I will not be moving to have the Public Service Remuneration Tribunal determination disallowed I saw no reason to have it included in the Notice Paper. Mrs Ward came back with the comment " The fact is that you didn't just think about it, you said publically we have agreed it would go before the House at its next meeting. You lead the community to believe that you are taking the Minister Brigg's concerns seriously. You can expect to be asked questions in the House and I confirm". I replied to Mrs Ward " I took Minister Brigg's concerns seriously and it is annoying for me when you continue to infer I don't and I asked what are the potential ramifications you speak of or are you privy to information which I am not". And I note Mr Speaker that it reply to that you were copied in on the reply. Mr Speaker Mrs Ward came back to me "If what is reported in the local paper 30<sup>th</sup> November is correct then you have mislead both Minister Brigg's and the community". And she goes on to say "On behalf of the community I will be asking how well considered your decision to disregard the Minister's advice is. You might like to assure the community that you have considered all the risks, for example a non favourable decision on RDAF 4, a cut in the Commonwealth's contribution next financial year or a complete loss of self government based on the fact that we are unable to make tough decisions and manage our own affairs. It would be interesting to know what your risks analysis included. Clearly it concluded that there will be little or no adverse reaction from the Commonwealth and that a Motion is unnecessary", Mr Speaker I am unsure as to how Mrs Ward arrived at that conclusion. As I indicated to you I have no intention of moving a Motion to disallow but as Mrs Ward is obviously very strongly concerned about this matter I suggest of course that Mrs Ward can certainly move a Public Service Remuneration Tribunal determination disallowance which I foreshadow now that I will not support. However Mrs Ward I can confirm that the Federal Minister was concerned at the financial implications of the Public Sector Remuneration Tribunal determination and I did indeed say that we would look at it in the December meeting. Since the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013 with the Federal Minister I have written to him to try and allay his fears, his concerns that the Norfolk Island Government is not being prudent in the management of its budget and it's approach to Public Service wages and conditions and that by giving the increase there has been no breach of general conditions of eleven of the June Funding Agreement. As I have advised previously the increase has been funded from savings identified in the salary and wages allocation in the budget for the financial year 2013/14 and from postponing filling of key vacant positions. The letter to the Federal Minister explains the administration salaries and wages allocation in the budget and pointing out that the \$10.375m in salaries, wages and expenditure vote includes Police, Teachers, contribution of Hospital and salaries and wages for those administering Commonwealth functions. The component for the Norfolk Island Administration is \$6.327m. I also explained that the 7% increase commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 is the equivalent of less than 1.25% increase per annum since 2008. Mr Speaker I table a copy of the letter to Honourable Jamie Briggs MP, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development dated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. A supplementary if I may. Would the Chief Minister identify the risks or list the risks and threats that were identified and discussed in Cabinet as part of this process of ignoring the advice. I do appreciate the letter in an attempt to allay a fear. So perhaps I could ask for the risks and threats that were identified and whether there has been a response from Minister Briggs.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. There are several questions to that. Firstly, as to ignoring the Minister's request that the determination not be presented I could not comply with that request. In accordance with the provisions of the Act the process is as follows. The determination had to be tabled in Parliament in the first Sitting after the determination was made, namely the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The employer, that is the Norfolk Island Administration is required to give effect to the determination. The determination gave a general adjustment to wages from the beginning of the first pay period which commenced on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to public sector employees up to and including Level Executive Officers Level 1 with a top bracket of \$49,948, and there is a period of 65 days in which a Motion can be moved to disallow the instrument and monies recovered. Now the risk factor. I didn't consider any risk factor Mr Speaker. I don't consider any threats that would come from any party that would be concerned about this Government not following the correct procedures. So no risk was taken into account.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. And If I may just ask for an answer to whether there has been a response from the Honourable Minister Briggs's.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. Not as I recall.

MR PORTER Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to the Chief Minister. During the Adjournment debate at the last Assembly Meeting, the Chairman of the IBDC remarked on the evidence he has been collecting leading him to believe that there is no advantage in Norfolk entering Australian taxation system. Mr Speaker my question to the Chief Minister is this. Given the information we have received in the last two Annual Financial Reports and Revenue Fund Financial Indicators for November 2013 and the ones prior to that and his attendance at the IBDC Meeting can the Chief Minister tell us if he supports Mr Nobbs view and what are his plans to make the island viable without entering into the taxation system if he supports those views.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I understand and Members of this Assembly would understand Mr Porter is also a member of the IBC Committee. The subject of a tax system for Norfolk Island and the reform process that this Government has committed itself to, they and us, the previous Assembly and this Assembly have reaffirmed our decision to enter into some taxation agreement with the Commonwealth and that decision still applies to the net benefit Mr Speaker of the island.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I'm asking the Minister for Immigration and I'm not too sure if she has this sorted out as yet but, is it correct that the New Zealand residents seeking to enter Australia other than as a visitor have distinct advantages if they first apply for and are granted Norfolk Island residency.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker, thank you Mr Nobbs. This is a question, a question asked similar to this some time ago. I think we're talking around Section 33A of the Immigration Act, I don't have it before me today so I can't quote from

it totally. Whilst this might not directly answer what your saying it's relevant to it Mr Nobbs is that we are having to relook in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection how we can ensure that we are not taking an action under Section 33A that may not be in keeping with Australia's immigration regime. That's currently being dealt with as I speak. Are you asking is there a distinct advantage. I can't answer that off the top of my head. I'm certainly prepared to take that component of it On Notice.

MR NOBBS Can I just ask a supplementary. Is this issue being reported or are figures available for those people who fall into this category. Are they being recorded at all do you know Minister,

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. Since the commencement in May 2013 of the Immigration, the changes to the Immigration Act as a result of the Immigration Amendment No 2 Bill there have from memory been 46 grants of residency to New Zealand residents. We are currently looking at those to make sure that there are no difficulties with them and that's been done in conjunction with the Department,

MR NOBBS A further supplementary. Given the previous Commonwealth Government involvement in changes to the island's Immigration legislation is the Commonwealth Government concerned about the potential of such an action occurring as I asked in Question 1.

MS ADAMS That's a matter under discussion Mr Speaker. If I could please just to conclude I need to make this clear. The disuse has arisen because in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Immigration Amendment No 2 Bill in respect of Section 33A it was clearly spelt out that it was not intended that it apply to Australian or New Zealand citizens. Regrettably the law didn't reflect what was in the Explanatory Memorandum and we're endeavouring to sort that aspect out in conjunction with the Commonwealth at this time.

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to Minister Ward regarding Public Reserves. Minister can you provide an update on the review of the Norfolk Island Public Reserves Plans of Management and when they are likely to be available for public comment.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Evans for the question. As I mentioned in the previous meeting here in this House the Plans have been referred back to the Conservator to develop some zoning arrangements in the Reserves that will enable us to manage the grazing aspect of the Reserves. There are areas within the particular Reserves that are affected where there are some areas that need to be have total cattle exclusion. There's areas where the steep terrain dictates that you could have managed grazing. So that's with the Conservator to have that zoning concept developed and then I would expect it will come back to us and there will be an opportunity at that time for public comment and input.

MR EVANS Also to the Minister for the Environment. Local observations has noted that there has been a significant decrease in the number of whale birds that now nest in the exclusion zone in the East end oh Phillip Island since the zone was introduced. Due to this information being found to be correct would the Minister consider opening the area back up in the future.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Evans. It's a decision that will have to be worked through. We don't have the direct management of Phillip Island the National Parks and Wildlife Service has that management right. They have indicated in discussions back in September that they would like to make part of the East end a permanent exclusion zone but that is certainly a matter that will be raised and discussed in the future as the original concept was for an exclusion zone for one season only but has been expanded I believe for three years and it certainly needs to be looked at and considered carefully into the future.

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Speaker. It's believed that the swamp end or commonly known as the Tala Bird as it's known locally has infested the regions that the exclusion zone covers due to the fact that human activity has been non existent in this area. As has been proven by the locally imposed trumpeter restriction during its breeding cycle would the Minister consider this as a possible option to allow egg harvesting to once again commence in the region to ensure an increase in bird numbers back to where they were before the exclusion zone was introduced.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. It's an area that will have to be worked through. It is possible that the human activity passing through the area does help to deter the swamp end activity there and it is possible that there is actually a beneficial effect to the whale birds in having people going through there. There is a whole lot of factors involved there, there's all your habitat questions and the amount of cover in the area and all those sorts of things that come into it, but the whole issue will have to be looked at in the future, certainly before the next Whale bird season.

MR EVANS Is it possible or true that observations cameras that were set up around the exclusion zone which was supposedly set up to record Whale bird activity were never directed at the bird colony but were directed at recording human movements in and around the exclusion zone.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Evans. I had a look at the cameras as they are installed in September this year and certainly some of those cameras appear to be for purposes other than monitoring birds. They seem to have a very strategic position over the landing areas and but the purpose of those, it would be very hard to say that that is for that. As to whether they have ever been set up for monitoring birds only I couldn't tell you, I would have to research that question with the Parks and Wildlife.

MR EVANS Just one more thanks Mr Speaker. Is the Minister aware of any programmes or policies that Norfolk Island Parks and Wildlife may have to deal with the problem of the Tala bird or the swamp hen numbers on Phillip Island.

MR WARD Mr Speaker in the past the Parks and Wildlife actually had a policy of removing numbers of the swamp hen when it was first identified as an issue on the island and they have an arrangement where they issued a permit within their own Department to allow for the removal of those birds or a number of those birds out there. Change of management has seen a different approach to that and certainly I've witnessed a large number of the swamp hens out there in September and others have constantly mentioned it to me that there's numbers of them. I believe there is a case for affecting control on them and again that will have to be worked through with

Parks and Wildlife. I believe many of the Parks people are aware of the issue and hopefully it can be resolved in the near future.

MR EVANS

Thank you to the Minister for answering those.

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. My question relates to the Canberra meeting between the Norfolk Island Government and Minister Briggs. Is it a fact that Minister Briggs has said that he and the Commonwealth Government are committed to the Roadmap reform agenda and assessing various options being provided to him by the Department. If so how will the Norfolk Island Government remain engaged in this assessment process and ensure a good working relationship is maintained with the Commonwealth.

MR SNELL

Mr Speaker I presume that question is to me. Yes thank you Mrs Ward for the question. We are working through the issues that was raised at that very brief meeting Mr Speaker. We are committed to the reform programmes that have been set through the Roadmap and through the Funding Agreements and as we all know we've been successful in working through all of those Mr Speaker. The Norfolk Island Government is committed to the reform programme and I can state though that Minister Briggs did express his deep concern at the financial implications regarding the current situation here on Norfolk Island and the reports that he had received, the draft reports that he had received from the ANAO offices at that time we were in Canberra. But to answer Mrs Ward's question yes we are working on it and we hope to be able to put some initiatives in place that will save revenue expenses in the future but we are certainly concerned as Minister Briggs was also concerned at the declining financial situation of Norfolk Island.

MR PORTER

Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Given the Press Release in the paper of Saturday and the comments by the Administrator on radio this morning. Can the Minister inform this House of the progress of work towards having all of ? in place to allow for construction of the Cascade Pier to commence in time to ensure that the funding of the project will not be in jeopardy.

MR WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Porter. Mr Speaker we have had information come in this morning about the conditions tied to the funding of the Pier. I wasn't privy to the Administrator's speech on the radio but it is something that we will have to work through quite thoroughly before we make any public comment on it but we will certainly be aiming to progress the project and work through it and bring it to fruition as quickly as possible but there are some ambiguities in the material we received this morning. Thank you.

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to the Chief Minister and relates to the radio interview which was held by the Administrator this morning and it touches on the Chief Minister's previous answer which said that the Norfolk Island Government and Minister Briggs were working though issues. Is it a fact that protocol was raised as an issue and the way in which the two Governments communicate. The response to a question this morning from the Administrator would indicate that there are still some matters to be ironed out in that regard. Is the Chief Minister able to expand on that point.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Like Minister Ward I did not hear, well I heard the start of His Honours radio interview this morning but I have no idea what was said but to answer the question on communications protocol. It was an issue Mr Speaker that we felt had to be addressed for example the Minister Briggs requested that all communication from my Government Ministers and myself in the first instance be directed through His Honour to the various counterpart Ministers within the Commonwealth. There was some debate as to whether that was a correct way to handle communication in Government. There is the system of accountability for example. The directions that we needed to have and in the first instance was the question mark and at this present time I can confirm though to Mrs Ward that all communications with the Commonwealth have been copied to the Administrator since that meeting in Canberra. But in the first instance that's not happening.

MRS WARD Supplementary if I may. Can the Members be assured that all further communications from now on for the time of this Assembly will be through the Office of the Administrator.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. No I can't say that that will happen.

MRS WARD Would the Chief Minister please provide reasons as to why that might not happen.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. It has always been protocol as far as I'm aware in my experience here in this House that Minister's have had the ability through the Westminster system of Government to be able to work on a counter basis with their counterparts in the Commonwealth and any other areas that they felt was under their portfolios and the need to be able to direct inquiries, seek advice from their counterpart Minister's is a standard form of government particularly under the Westminster system and it was felt that having to go through the Administrator could be a delay in some areas. I must admit though Mr Speaker that the Administrator has always been courteous, he as always attempted as quickly as possible to get the results as asked for but in some circumstances again it is felt that some requests is better going direct to the Minister involved and that will continue for this time.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. A Supplementary. Does the Chief Minister appreciate that he is giving the impression that he is ignoring another. I was not at the meeting so I don't want to use the word direction but the Chief Minister has just said that, another direction given to him by Minister Briggs that all further communications will be via the Office of the Administrator and really that it's to have the best coordinated approach and ensure that everyone is on the same page. But the question is does the Chief Minister appreciate that he's giving the impression that he is ignoring another one of Minister's Briggs' directions.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. One in this festive season has to regard those questions without, or take umbrage at them. I don't ignore anything from Minister Briggs and when he asks something to be done I don't just jump and say "yes it will happen" I discuss it with my Cabinet colleagues and we come to a decision as what is the best way forward for this House, this Government.



MRS WARD Just a Supplementary if I may ask whether the Chief Minister has set himself a timeframe so that not only the community but the Members and the Administrator and the Honourable Minister Briggs understand where the Norfolk Island Government is going to sit in relation to what I call crucial areas given that the Minister is to come to the island in January and these things need to be ironed out before he gets here. Has a timeframe been set.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. I have no idea at this time what the programme for Minister Briggs' visit, what conditions he will be putting to the Government, what is going to be on the Agenda, we have no idea. So I can't answer. I've got no idea what's going to be put before us Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS Can I have a Supplementary to that. Chief Minister isn't it correct that, or would you agree that the role of the Administrator is a difficult one Particularly under these types of arrangements that we seem to have inherited over the last two or three years. He's head of the Norfolk Island Government and now he's representing directly the Minister for Territories. Wouldn't it be more appropriate for an independent person to be appointed, acceptable to both Governments, to be appointed who would take on the negotiating role between the two Governments and leave the Administrator to report the activities himself to his Minister.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. I think Mr Speaker that's asking for an opinion that I can't give at this time.

MR NOBBS Thank you. To the Minister responsible for Gaming. Minister is it correct that Gaming licences are issued which are of a specific level of financial activity or punting or whatever they do beyond which the Norfolk Island Government can levy no additional fees and if so what are the conditions on which the individual Gaming licences are issued.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Most of that I will have to take On Notice because I don't have with me the individual conditions that the licence are issued under. But there is a cap on the levy that is placed upon some of the gaming activities and that is \$300,000 per financial year and then after that yes the operators, the Gaming operators would no longer provide any revenue to the Government for the rest of that financial year. I think that's what Mr Nobbs is after and I'll follow up the other information for him.

MR NOBBS A Supplementary. Does the Norfolk Island Government or its agencies monitor the turnover of each licensee, how is this achieved and is this information publically available.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Again I'll have to take most of that On Notice because I would presume that these operators would have to table their financials in some way or another so that they would be publically available yes but as the Gaming Director and the Gaming Authority yes they do have access to all of the operators who are licensed on Norfolk Island to their books. So they would know what their turnover in each year would be.

MR NOBBS Just a Supplementary. Would you also take it On Notice to have a look at how other licensing areas actually, because some actually have to go through the Parliament. Thanks.

MR SPEAKER May I just offer a reminder about Questions On Notice. I've said this before but for questions to be On Notice they need to be placed by a Member.

MRS WARD My question is to the Minister for Finance and it's given my obvious, very serious concerns around the protocol and communications for the future and my belief that the Chief of Staff or the Chief Policy Advisor of the Government is a key strategic position would the Minister explain how postponing the recruitment of this position is saving money.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question. The result of the non recruitment of the Advisor to Government or Chief of Staff position will in fact save approximately I believe it is \$50,000 over this next financial year and the decision to not recruit was taken in conjunction with other positions within the Administration to facilitate the pay increase to the Public Service. This was felt that there needed to be some reductions across the board you might say and the Assembly is not immune to that. So it was agreed amongst the Cabinet that that existing relationship where we have an Acting person in that role will suffice for the next 6 months and that's the way we're going. The way that we have achieved those savings is the cost of the or the salary of the position and the savings saved in the person who's acting is only receiving a higher duties allowance and it's so there's some funds there that are still left over from that position. That's where the savings have been made.

MRS WARD Supplementary if I may and Minister for Finance may not be at liberty to answer it but can the community or Members be assured that it is the intention of the Government to fill this key strategic position as soon as possible in the new financial year.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. Yes it certainly is the intention and we have had discussions that we will have to recruit in March April to facilitate a July start for that position.

MRS WARD Another question for the Minister for Finance. Given that the Norfolk Island legislative Assembly appropriated half a million dollars into the Minister for Finance's discretionary fund which was to cover the Cascade Pier project and emergencies for this financial year, will the Minister inform the House how much has been spent and on what, how much is committed and to what, and how much is left.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. Not much left but yes there was \$200,000 put aside for some Commonwealth activity under the RDAF four grants and also \$300,000 as you have indicated for discretionary's being in items that haven't been funded for and that are important. I did have some figures written down before and I've lost that bit of paper but just going off memory we've had to dip into the fund \$120,000 for the repair of the Headstone bridge. There was some custodial costs for a person who was in custody off island in Australia and Norfolk Island and those costs amount close to \$40,000 \$38,000. We had to dip into the fund to provide for the half fare entitlement for the Public Service because under,

when the budget was formulated it was the intent that the Public Service would receive a 3% increase, this is what we negotiated with them or that's what our want was at the time and for that we would remove the half fare entitlement. That hasn't come to fruition. We have had a pay increase over and above that and that \$30,000 has been taken and placed into their half fare entitlements fund. There was also a shortfall in our insurance costs for the financial year. The Administration's insurance costs and that was around \$50,000 that was short and that's just due to we didn't budget enough and the insurance premiums increased further than we imagined. There was some \$6,000 that we've utilised for the Vast TV installation which occurred yesterday, and this amounts to just over or about \$250,000. So out of that \$300,000 there's just under \$50,000 left in the discretionary fund. The \$200,000 for the RDA still sits there but that hasn't been earmarked for another project if the RDA project does not take place this financial year, if the agreements and what not doesn't get signed and depending on the timelines on that project those funds may be able to be used for another project.

**MR NOBBS** Minister with the pay rise for the Public Service. Is a person on contract, do they get that pay rise in their actual contracted rate or not?

**MR SHERIDAN** Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. Yes they do. If they are on contract they are under the same condition of the Public Service the people who are on contract, the same conditions, theirs leave entitlements etc and I believe. I'm just trying to reflect back to a paper where it indicated that 3% increase whether or not it affected the contracted people. I wouldn't like to say yes at this point in time Mr Nobbs. I'll just have to research that a little bit because I've got a feeling that it doesn't, the ones on the contract doesn't. Most people who are on a contract receive a gratuity so I don't believe it does. I'll have to clarify that for you Mr Nobbs.

**MR NOBBS** A question to the Minister responsible for KAVHA. Minister would you please advise the status of the position of Site Manager of KAVHA because it appears to have been vacant since July. Is the guy still operating in it or is he still being paid by them, is he still part of the scheme or what's happening.

**MS ADAMS** Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a question mark around that myself and made that very inquiry this week and Mr Nobbs I will report back to you as soon as I have that. That's a matter of concern to me as to whether or not he is continuing to be paid out of the Commonwealth's contribution and is still holding the title of Site Manager. I'll keep you informed.

**MRS WARD** Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is to the Chief Minister and it is the Minister for Finance who has alerted my attention to whether or not the Chief Minister asked Minister Briggs about the whereabouts of the Land Valuation Bill and the Public Service Bill.

**MR SNELL** Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. No we didn't have the opportunity to ask about those issues.

**MRS WARD** A Supplementary. Would the Chief Minister please undertake to do that on behalf of Members.

**MR SNELL** Thank you, yes.

MR NOBBS This one for the Minister for Finance. Have all the issues of major accounts involving monies owed by Telecom been satisfactorily settled.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Buffett and thank you Mr Nobbs. I presume you refer to the monies that was owed to Telecom New Zealand, yes they have been settled.

## **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **QUESTION NO 40 – Mrs Ward to ask the Minister for Finance.**

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. The question reads Will the Minister answer the following questions in relation to municipal rates and there is four parts to the question. What is the time frame attached to the introduction of municipal rates. At what stage will the community be invited to submit their concerns. Who will decide the tax base and why isn't there a taxing Bill in the draft legislation programme. And the response Mr Speaker. The following information is provided in relation to the four questions. The Acil Tasman 2012 Report has clearly indicated that microeconomic reform is positive for economic development. Part of the reform strategies indicated was to tax reform and it was clearly stated that a tax based on land was the preferred way to increase the Government's revenue. The whole economy knows that Norfolk Island Government has for the past 30 plus years been delivering services to the community on which normally would be the responsibility of the Commonwealth, the State and also that of local municipal council. It is recognised in the Acil Tasman Report that a reform ...Norfolk Island economy is unlikely to provide a tax base of the size required to support the level of infrastructure investment required on Norfolk Island and also allow an appropriate level of service provision across health, education and social welfare. It is with this in mind and has always been my intent that some form of tax or rates would apply from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014 to enable the Norfolk Island Government to accommodate some of the expenses that have come with providing all of these services. The interaction with the Commonwealth's fiscal equalisation payments and ? funding for services is the only way that Norfolk Island can fully deliver all of these services. The Service has been working hard on the draft method of collecting a form of municipal rates and the Government had an update and brief by the CEO at Cabinet last Monday and also just two days ago. It is planned that in the near future this draft concept will be available for community input and should be ready by early next year at the latest. In this Funding Agreement for the second quarter there is a requirement to have developed a strategy for the implementation of a property tax/municipal rates and this is the paper that the Service is working on. It is quite clear that a target of \$1m is to be achieved after a phasing in period and agreed formula on the tax base, a discount policy in the design of the concept is to be completed by the end of this year with the implementation strategy planned by the end of this financial year. The updated legislative programme tabled in the House at the November Sitting included a Bill for municipal rates.

## **PAPERS FOR PRESENTATION**

MR SPEAKER Are there any Papers for Presentation this morning.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Under the Norfolk Island Act 1979 Section 48 and also Part 3 of the CFMO which is the Commonwealth Finance Minister's Orders 2011 I as Minister for Finance am obliged to table into the House the

yearly **financial statements for the Norfolk Island Administration**, together with the two Territory Authorities the Norfolk Island **Hospital Enterprise** and the Norfolk Island Government **Tourist Bureau**. Mr Speaker I also table the **financial Statements** for the financial year 2012/13 of the three entities. Mr Speaker these financial reports are accompanied by the independent Auditors Report for all three entities as required under law and Mr Speaker if I could just make a few notes in regards to these.

MR SPEAKER

Yes Minister

MR SHERIDAN

Mr Speaker I don't intend to make a grand statement in regards to these financial statements except to say that it has been a long time since the financial statements of the Norfolk Island Administration have been tabled so soon after the end of the financial year. This has been enabled by the working relationship that has been forged between the Australian National Audits Office and that of the Norfolk Island Administration and the work that the Norfolk Island Administration has done in making sure that the recommendations of the Australian National Audit Office are worked through and process changed to enable this outcome. It is intended that next year this timeframe may even be shortened somewhat more with the continued improvement in the management of the financial management information system of the Administration. The statements that the Norfolk Island Administration total comprehensive loss for the financial year 12/13 was just over \$6m including depreciation of some \$6.2m and without the support of the Commonwealth in providing \$3.2m the Norfolk Island Administration would certainly not been able to operate. It is clear and identified that this continued support from the Commonwealth will be required in the years to come until a new funding mechanism is agreed by between two parties. It is envisaged that the Norfolk Island Administration net cash flows will be in the negative to the tune of approximately \$7.4m for financial year 14/15 \$7.4m for the financial year 15/16 and \$7.8m for the financial year 16/17 as recoded in the Auditors report. Mr Speaker the Auditors Report discusses the financial assistance provided by the Commonwealth over the past three years and as no further financial assistance has been negotiated for after June 2014 and no commitment by the Commonwealth at this time to provide for any shortfalls the Auditors were not in a position to conclude as to whether or not the going concern assumption is appropriate and therefore remove a significant amount of the Norfolk Island Administration and the consolidated groups ability to continue as going concerns. Mr Speaker these reports will be available on the Norfolk Island Administration website later this week and they should be up some time tomorrow.

Mr Speaker I would also like to table the **financial indicators for October and November 2014**

I have one more Mr Speaker. I would also like to table under the Public Monies Act 1979 Section 32 B 2, it's a requirement that I lay before the house any transfers of money between division or subdivisions items. I am to table these direction which are known as **virements** which have been since they were last tabled in the House. I so table those Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you.

**STATEMENTS**

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd like to give a statement regarding **Counsel of Elders**. An initiative began on Anniversary Day 2008 by the then Minister for Culture inviting traditional Norfolk Island families to nominate members to a Counsel of Elders. The publicly stated purpose of the Counsel was for members to be able to help inform the Norfolk Island Government about the promotion and preservation of culture and traditions in our community including future directions and considerations across a range of matters. The Counsel is an informal yet significant means of establishing clear and sincere two way communication on critical community Government issues and a key plank in a strategy to grow the knowledge of and respect for the Norfolk culture and language, especially among younger generations of Norfolk Islanders. On Thanksgiving Day following their rules of procedure the Counsel voted in new family representatives. I welcome Mr Ken Christian in his role as President. I take the opportunity to thank Mr Albert Buffett who has been President for the past 2 years. The Counsellors for the next two years are as follows; Mr Albert Buffett, Mrs Colleen Crane, Mr Joe Adams, Mrs Helen Dowling, Mr Ross Quintal, Mrs Robyn Butterfield, Mr David Evans, Mrs Edie Christian, Mr Greg Quintal, Mrs Gaye Evans, Mr Ken Christian, Mrs Mera Martin, Mr Shane McCoy, Mr Roy Nobbs and Mrs Jan Nobbs and again we thank all of those for their participation Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister

MR SNELL Mr Speaker I'd also like to make a Statement regarding possible moves within **Norfolk Tourism**. Mr Speaker Norfolk Tourism has advised that the November tourism figures visitor numbers for November are up 17% on 2012. This is the best November result since 2008. The baby boomers market 40-70 approximately rises at 58%. This equates to overall passengers numbers up by 21% ex Australia dn 6% ex New Zealand over 2012. n This means in the first 5 months of the 2013/14 year we are 11% up on 2012/13. The Channel 7 Sunrise weather Show live crossed over here 30<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December. As Members will appreciate the show was a great success to helping build the Norfolk Island profile in Australia, highlighted by an increase in weekend traffic to the destination website by 285% compared to previous year a 31% spike over Norfolk Island Tourism social media network. The public relations promotions was also backed up by cooperative advertising in major newspapers, promoting an airfare sale with Air New Zealand which also produced immediate tangible results in an increase of weekly booking across all distribution channels of more than 200%. Mr Speaker Minister Sheridan, Minister for Finance indicated to me earlier that the ANO audit for the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau over 2011 was favourable and once again provided a surplus in difficult circumstances to cover pre commitments to staff entitlements and advertising and developed and implemented a number of key policies for human resources and accounting, and I would like to take this opportunity Mr Speaker to acknowledge and thank one of the Board members Mrs Megan Christian who has resigned from the Board and we thank her for her time and efforts in assisting on that voluntary position. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Mr Speaker. I have a couple here today. The first one is about the VAST TV Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker I will just make a short Statement on the **TV services** which have just been upgraded. Yesterday the VAST or the viewer access satellite television service was provided to the community of Norfolk Island. This was a necessity because the old analogue signal which was rebroadcast around Norfolk Island was switched off and the new digital service platform of VAST has

taken over all of these services. This is a big improvement for viewers of free to air TV as there are now 16 TV channels and 12 radio channels to choose from and with these being digital the reception and the clarity is also improved. I have been informed that the switch over went without any major problems and that by now the community should be able to access this new VAST platform. I would like to thank the crew from Norfolk Telecom and also Gary Summerscales for the work they have done over the past month to ensure that TV services would continue without interruption. I have been informed that four of the original digital settings have been left up to persons who have not yet converted their equipment especially since I'm aware that a lot of businesses are waiting for top set boxes which are held up in air freight to receive this new service. So for a while the old channels of ABC 1 Channel 7 SBS 1 and ABC 3 will continue to be broadcast. The old analogue TV service has now been completely discontinued. If any members of the public are having difficulties in accessing this new service advice can be obtained from their service provider or by discussing this with Norfolk Telecom who are only too willing to provide advice and assistance if necessary. I trust that the community enjoys the early Christmas present provided by Norfolk Telecom and Gary Summerscales.

MR SHERIDAN

I also have another one on the **Electricity Working Group** Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker in my media release last weekend I advised that the Electricity Working Group is now at a point where broader community consultation can be effectively carried out. I know the community is interested in this process and constructive engagement from the community is welcomed. The Working Group has spent considerable time working through the complexities of the increasing costs of fuel, lack of funds for infrastructure replacement and the need for storage solutions for excess pv. Research has been done into the cost and challenges facing other Pacific islands in generating electricity. In relation to the costs relevant to our electricity account holders the Electricity Working Group created a spreadsheet to model possible scenarios. They did this after removing all personal information and randomising the data to protect the people's privacy. The modelling was based on the four quarterly accounts sent from June 2012 to March 2013. In that process a variety of scenarios were considered. The bigger question of how much funding is required by the Electricity Undertaking has also been considered. Mr Speaker contrary to information circulating in the community there is no \$1.2m dividend being paid to the Government annually and the amount needed to replace aging infrastructure is of concern, and just to put a figure to that Mr Speaker. In the financial years 2010/11 I think there was a surplus of \$925,000. In the year 2011/12 there was a surplus of some \$490,000 and the year just past 2012/13 there was only a surplus of \$229,000 and the budgeted figures for this year are somewhat similar to last year Mr Speaker. The Working Group has looked at the various elements of service delivered to consumers, why and how we deliver these services and the many benefits Norfolk Island Electricity provide to the community including the very welcome programme of services such as the Christmas lights setup that have been installed this week. I thank the Working Group for their commitment and dedication for what is a large task. Community consultation is planned to take feedback from key stakeholder groups including the MLA's, organizations representing business owners who have an interest in the financial viability of their members, organizations and community members with an interest in environmental matters, green power, alternate energy options etc, electrical contractors, fuel suppliers and others involved in electricity supply chain, electricity consumers who have PV panels installed and who are benefiting from the kilowatt per hour that they make, the kilowatts that they make, electricity consumers who do not have PV panels installed. The Government and Administration and others involved in ensuring the ongoing financial viability of Norfolk Island Electricity and the Norfolk Island

Government and Public Services. Mr Speaker some stakeholders have already been invited to small focus groups tomorrow. Members of the public are invited to attend the public stall at the Norfolk Mall this Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> from 9-12 noon. There will be a presentation to MLA's next Tuesday and depending on the level of interest and feedback there may be another session in the Mall at a later date and some further focus groups the following week. Mr Speaker if members of the public want to attend the small focus group they should contact the Electricity Working Group at their email address which is simply [ewg@admin.gov.nf](mailto:ewg@admin.gov.nf). An information pack has been prepared and will be available at the public stall to take away. This will also be available online at [info.gov.nf](http://info.gov.nf) from tomorrow or by emailing [ewg@admin.gov.nf](mailto:ewg@admin.gov.nf). Mr Speaker the Working Group have created a formal submission template for completion and return which will help target responses to some key issues and Mr Speaker I know this is we're asking a lot of the community but the EWG or the Electricity Working Group would like feedback as soon as possible but preferably before the 29<sup>th</sup> December. Mr Speaker I'm hopeful of the process that will involve the revised pricing structure commencing soon. This will depend very much on the nature of the feedback. I urge all interested members of the community to participate constructively in this process and further information is available from the EWG from their email address [ewg@admin.gov.nf](mailto:ewg@admin.gov.nf). Thank you Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD

Can I move that the Statement be noted.

MR SPEAKER

The question is that the Statement be noted.

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd just like to take a step back because people in the community are asking why is this happening, what's brought it on because it was in 2008 that we first started to see real, a lot of installation amounts of solar panels being put on photovoltaic panels being put on to people's roofs. What has brought this on I think if I can just very briefly say if we look back to the roadmap which is where we're heading one of the key objectives or themes was the environment and why we needed to address areas in relation to the environment and the key objective was and I quote from the Roadmap "To ensure that the island's environment and heritage is protected and improved to provide the key component for the tourism industry and is a healthy and attractive place to live. That was the aspirational goal that the environment be protected and enhanced and was assured by affective management, community consultation and participation, and that of course has led on to the current Funding Agreement which in the Feb quarter, so which is between January and March next year at point 18.4 it said "Norfolk Island shall with the Commonwealth collaboration develop strategies regarding the issues arising from excess photovoltaic electricity generation". So when we talk about the roadmap being a flexible document or a discussion paper the two points that were listed at that time were the waste management strategy and the AQUIS pest and disease survey, but when it's re looked at and updated and when key objectives are prioritised then of course we're going to put photovoltaic onto that list. The Chief Minister may care to put that on his Agenda to discuss with Minister Briggs when he comes. But that's where it's coming from. The fact is that we, and people could refer back to 2008 Hansard, everybody is able to do that, it's publically available to the debate that took place in this House in November and December where the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly put up and installed and supported a scheme that was all about having a clean green island and if that remains the overall objective for the Norfolk Island Government which does have my full support then these are the sorts of issues that need to be addressed because if you just put it in very loose terms, we're



currently producing twice as much as we need and that's why we've put the dummy load in so some people might refer to it as a good problem that people have taken up the scheme with such enthusiasm, but the result is that without battery storage we're producing too much and we're basically having to dump it and it's a complete waste. So that's what the Minister is tackling. It's going to be decisive, it's going to be controversial for some. People will jump onto a band wagon of how it's going to lead to all sorts of things. I can't even comment on that because I don't have the information in front of me. The Minister has assured Members that we will have that later today or tomorrow. So I'm looking forward to the discussion. I certainly congratulate and thank the Minister for broaching this very important issue for around energy and the environment on Norfolk Island for our future. So it's about finding practical solutions and just to second the words of the Minister for everybody who wants to engage in this process the opportunity is there. I encourage everybody to do that because it's about finding practical solutions rather than trying to tear each other apart as the Chief Minister would say, particularly during the festive season. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I applaud the work, time and dedication that these members of the Electricity Working Group has given towards trying to find an equitable and fair solution to the situation that we find ourselves in, as Mrs Ward has indicated, too much electricity. It is a difficult task and when we peruse the pricing structure for the power supply, the terms of reference and so on. We take note that they have looked at different forms of electricity such as wind generation, and tidal generation. They concentrate on the greater electricity usage is also desirable for both generator health and for revenue reasons so the modelling has examined reducing the cost per unit charged in conjunction with increasing some of the fixed fees. There are many things that this Working Group has had to deal with and I certainly congratulate them on trying to come to an equitable solution. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Having being involved in quite a number of alternate energy proposals and suggestions and what have you for the island here I can fully understand the concerns that are faced by the Group just with the excess requirements to the island at the particular times of the day and so on. I wish them well and I hope they can come up with some solutions that are not too costly. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Any further debate. No further debate I put the question that the Statement be noted.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

## NOTICE

### **SOCIAL SERVICES ACT 1980 – REAPPOINTMENT OF COMMUNITY MEMBER TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that for the purposes of paragraph 4(3) b and Sections 6 and 8 of the Social Services Act 1980 this House resolves to recommend the reappointment of Raewyn Lawrence Evans as a community member of the Social Services Board for the period of three years commencing 17 November 2013 and recommend to His Honour the Administrator that he sign instrument

of the appointment on the basis that the said person is capable of appointment as a community member on the grounds that the proposed appointee is a resident, either they nor their spouse is a beneficiary and that they are not a member of the Legislative Assembly.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Minister Adams. The question is that the Motion be agreed to.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd just like to briefly take the opportunity to thank Raewyn Evans for her community mindedness in agreeing to serve on what is a very valuable Board in this community, sometimes a thankless task. Some times very difficult decisions having to be made and I applaud her community mindedness and thank her very much on our behalf.

MR SPEAKER Thank you , Any debate, No debate. I put the question to you Honourable Members.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

### **NORFOLK ISLAND TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN 2013/2023**

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that this House endorse the Norfolk Island Tourism Strategic Plan 2013/2023 tabled on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. Members will recall that I tabled the Norfolk Island Tourism Strategic Plan 2013/2023 at the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013 Sitting of this House. I put this formal Motion forward today so the House can endorse the plan as I inadvertently stated it had been at the last Sitting. This Motion allows Members the opportunity to make substantive debate if they so wish. I said a few words when I tabled the Norfolk Island Tourism Strategic Plan back in October Mr Speaker and I would just like to reiterate a few of those points. This document is comprised of two parts, the first provides for ten year strategic elements providing guiding principles, strategic themes and direction for growth, development and investment. The second part is a two year schedule including action plans from the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and a graph to highlight other organizations, departments and bodies who play major roles in the success of the tourism industry, encouraging them to submit their own two year action plans over the life of the document. The strategic section of the Plan will be reviewed every two years and the action schedules each year. Mr Speaker as mentioned in my Statement earlier we are seeking some welcome positives in tourism. We all want these positives to continue. Tourism is still our major industry here on Norfolk Island. It is important that government and industry work together and I urge stakeholders to include their own commitments to the Plan and action plans. Mr Speaker I again thank the General Manager for Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, not only for his commitment to his role but also for ensuring this plan reached finalization. Mr Speaker I commend this Motion to the House.

MR SPEAKER  
Members.

Thank you Chief Minister. Debate Honourable

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you to the Chief Minister for giving members the opportunity to voice either their support or their concerns or their lack of support for the document. As the Chief Minister has said the purpose of the Strategic Plan in this case is based on tourism, it provides a vision and it sets a direction based on the community's aspirational goals and their hopes for the future over the next 10 years, and if people are wondering whether or not they are a keen stakeholder when the Chief Minister refers to stakeholders I'll just go through towards the end of the document, there is a page which highlights who those people are and that is the Government as we know of the Assembly, the Tourist Bureau, the whole of Administration and I won't go through those areas but the obvious are the Airport the Land and Environment area, Emergency management. There is a whole list of those which encompasses all of the Administration services, and the environment which includes the National Parks, Landcare Norfolk Island, ECO Norfolk Flora and Fauna Society. It touches on industry and the two key stakeholders there of bodies are the ATO and that includes Accommodation, Tour Operators and the Car hire people and the Chamber of Commerce which covers retail, tour operators, and the trades people and professional services. There is a point that talks about history and heritage and that of course is the KAVHA Board, the Museums Trust, and the Historical Society. It touches on culture. In fact when I say touch on there is a substantive point here which is culture and that includes the Council of Elders, Society of Pitcairn Descendants and Community Arts Association. The other organizations which are listed are NICHE, CIRC, all Service Clubs, the Amateur Sports and Commonwealth Games Association and Primary Producers. So that should cover everybody I would say and if it doesn't then I'm sure there are areas that people can move into and would be welcomed with open arms. The key overarching themes of this document and there are five of them I think are worth highlighting in this debate today. Number one is to increase visitor numbers arriving by air and cruise ship. I don't know who is going to argue with that. Number two is provide an environment conducive to investment. This government has set up the Infrastructure Development Committee, that should show our interest and commitment in that area. Number three is to seek to provide the best in our visitor experiences. Number four is to develop sustainability, infrastructure and capacity and number five is to build employment capacity and skill within the sector. If you go to the second last page of the document. Sorry Mr Speaker if anybody would like to argue with those key themes they probably need to take that directly to the Chief Minister and/or the Tourist Bureau General Manager, because if people want to argue with that after two years of consultation, they should be ironed out, they should be discussed and this is what this debate is about today, is Members being able to bring those concerns to this House in an open, public and transparent way. If we go to the back of the document there is an actual Schedule attached and the only person, or the only area that has an action schedule attached is the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. So there is plenty of space left for people to start to engage and develop their own strategies and programmes of how they are going to engage in this process, based around those five key themes. The Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Action Plan is written in some detail and I wish them well with the implementation of that, and it's very important that this House considers their budget requirements for the next, for the coming financial years. The Advisory Group clearly states in this document, will be working hard to report on a variety of actions that have been put in place at the Tourist Bureau. And again bases on the key objectives, including the increase in the visitor numbers. The three

areas that should hold our focus and particularly that of the Government is number one, a promotion of investment. Secondly is the infrastructure development and number three is the development of skills and employment, and all of those key areas, I believe need to be done in cooperation with the Commonwealth and the focus being on developing the use of KAVHA and the National Park areas. I say that as a representative Mr Speaker, not off my own bat and it is worth noting that this Strategic Plan is based on almost 2 years of community consultation. So it was not rushed and what the key stakeholders have now is a chance to follow a plan that they were involved in creating, or at least they were invited to be involved in creating. This Plan is about industry and the government working together and understanding what is expected of each other. So again the Advisory Group members will have a task ahead of them in setting those priorities and advising the Norfolk Island Government and this House on future needs, but at the same time we're all responsible for our future and it's genuinely in our own hands as I've tried to demonstrate. We just need to realise that. So Mr Speaker having said that we need a clear understanding of what is expected of who this Plan sets that out, people now need to follow the path and I would like to congratulate the Tourist Bureau General Manager Mr Glenn Buffett for compiling the Strategic Plan, it's a ten year Strategic Plan for Norfolk Island's tourism future and again I say compiling, because that is what Glenn has done. He and the previous Minister Andre Nobbs have gone through a thorough community consultation process in forming this document. It's an in House document and I think that we should be proud of that, but it's only the start. I encourage everyone to read the Plan and on speaking briefly to a couple of the Tourist Bureau Staff members last week I'm led to believe that a communication strategy is being developed to actively inform the community of the existence of this Plan and to encourage stakeholders to become involved in continuing to build a sustainable tourism industry. So I would hope that as I've just said if any Member has an issue with the Plan or represent somebody who has a concern, then they need to speak up, because if we're not united in supporting those five key themes, then we will not succeed. I would like to acknowledge the members of the community particularly who have engaged in this process because they really have created this document and the point now is that it is the Chief Minister's responsibility as the Minister for Tourism to ensure that the Plan is put into practice and that the review that as stated within this document are carried out and that performance is measured, because there is no point in having a plan if it sits in the bottom drawer. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Mrs Ward. Further debate.

MR PORTER

Thank you Mr Speaker. I commence my remarks by saying that I'm a Director of the Tourism Board and also obviously an operator of a tourism business on the island so, but having said that, I'm looking forward to being able to implement this new Plan as a Director of the Board. One of the things I'm looking forward to, is the new formal structure, its in early stages now but the General Manager is setting up a situation where Directors will report on various facets of the business. That will give Directors a much more structured input into the Board, given now that we are an advisory board, not a board of management. I believe that will be a very good outcome and I look forward to being a part of that. As I said before I have a vested interest in tourism on Norfolk Island and as the Minister, the Chief Minister and Mrs Ward said, everybody does. I often make the comment "tourism is not our prime wealth generator, in all aspects it is our **only** wealth generator" and that we all need to bear that in mind in everything we do in every day of our business and social life. The Plan itself obviously has to have a balance, it has to be realistic and achievable but at the same



MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that this House resolves that the Minister responsible for Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic area KAVHA as it's known undertake a review of the administrative arrangements between the Commonwealth, the Norfolk Island Government in relation to the management of KAVHA, including the review of the memorandum of Understanding and particularly the reasons why proposed Norfolk Island legislation related to KAVHA and its management has never been enacted. The Minister is further requested to report to the House within 60 days.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs,

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker the Kingston convict settlement is an area of great importance to Norfolk Island, not only its occupation by convicts in the period 1788 – 1813 and 1825-1855 but also to the Pitcairn people who occupied the area from 1856 to the infamous eviction in the period 1905 to 1908 after the island was assumed by NSW. Who owns what and when is part of the Pitcairn history and has still not been clarified is an issue for another day. I need to go through the history of the KAVHA area in some little degree because people ask me why is this all happening. I put the Motion up because in a call I had from elsewhere the issue was brought up when the person asked me, I believe you asking questions at the last meeting about KAVHA, and I said "I certainly did: and he said "well I can't tell you much but I can tell you, you want to be on your bike and do something about it". So I said "what's the go?" He said "I can't say anymore". All right so that's when I thought that there is something going on. So I thought what's the best way of dealing with it. Where is the problem? Where is the issues? Well one of the major issues is in relation to the governance arrangements. So I'll just give you, if you can bear with me for those people who are in the community who don't know anything about the Kingston and Arthurs Vale historical area I will give you just a brief run down. I guess it commenced in the 1960's with an interest in preserving the former convict area Kingston, with some reconstruction undertaken. The 1970's saw an increased interest in the area by the Commonwealth the restoration programme commenced in 1973 and ceased in 1988 was funded by the Commonwealth, and managed by an intergovernmental committee. The conservation area was registered on the Australian National Estates Register in 1974 and is understood this activity was a result of Her Majesty the Queen's visit to Norfolk Island that year. A meeting of landholders near the Kingston Common which comprises some three or four Reserves, I'm not too sure was held from memory in 1978 when the future management of the Kingston area as a historic precinct was floated. I was present at this meeting visiting the island. There appears to be record of that meeting available although representatives of the Commonwealth and Norfolk Island Administration were present. I recall some reference to the area extending into private land abutting the current Reserves and I was concerned that this land being included for the whole island had been utilised by the convicts. The landholders supported at the time, at that time inclusion of the those relics and the like within the Reserves only. However it was known, I knew, because I was working in the area that there was no Federal legislation which provided serious controls over heritage sites and the Federal Government of the day was encouraging States to provide their own. Following the initial meeting it was not long before Canberra produced its great plan and for what it called KAVHA, Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area. This plan established the current boundaries encompassing a significant area of privately owned land. Whilst I being away was not present for further discussions I was advised by my father that there was agreement by

landholders to the new boundary. Whilst surprised the reasons for their agreement were simple. The management of the proposed area of KAVHA would be under Norfolk Island legislation which would be passed by the newly created Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly. This of course never occurred despite the agreement and other specific references but the Commonwealth are known for changing the gold posts and the field and the rules and all that happened. At this stage, I wish to make it clear that I live in the Kingston and Arthurs Vale area and a large part of the land I inherited from my Grandfather and Father was assumed into the area known as KAVHA which was established I guess from the first management plan produced in 1980. If I have to declare a pecuniary interest it would be a negative pecuniary interest. The first management plan in 1980 made rather vague reference to the responsibilities of the Commonwealth and the Norfolk Island Government following passage of the 1979 Norfolk Island Act which created self government. As the plan was created by a Committee of six Commonwealth Public Servants and one Member of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly who was also a local probably serving at the time, the document paid little heed of the governance arrangements. It appears as a typical Commonwealth bureaucratic document – don't worry, we'll look after you. The plan established a cost year basis. The Norfolk Island Government take responsibility for management and general maintenance of KAVHA while the Commonwealth funded Conservations, Works, Government House grounds, and Government House Reserves and maintenance and grounds etc. The 1980 plan remained in force until 2008 although it was reviewed in 1988 and 2001, the 1980 plan remained as the primary document. Interesting the 2001 review noted that certain 1980 recommendations are yet to be implemented. While the plan was established in 1980 it was not until 1989 that a Management Board was established. Subsequently in 1994 a memorandum of Understanding related to KAVHA was signed by the Norfolk Island Government Minister responsible and the Commonwealth's Minister for Environment. The document to me, like all MOU's at the time was a fairly wishy washy document but it did in Clause 23 record – "The intentions of the governance to establish the Board by local statute, drafted in consultation with the Commonwealth etc". Nothing happened. The 2001 review also made reference to creating KAVHA as a legal entity. A proposal for World Heritage listing of KAVHA ended in 1998 following a Referendum with the results of Yes 276 – No 626 , informal 72. The referendum was largely lost on the basis of no legal entity as promised as this needed to be sorted out before inflicting another load of external bureaucracy nonsense over the area. An attempt discovered in 1997 in the Norfolk Island Plan to include additional private land as a viewshed area around KAVHA. This was not realised until the document was actually tabled in the House. But it was tabled and then it was actually a real mix up, but anyhow it was subsequently removed. In 1999 the Norfolk Island Government contributed with KAVHA and the Commonwealth 1/3 of the purchase price, purchasing of the lease of No 9 Quality Row. The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act commenced in 1999 and unfortunately the playing field was changed dramatically. The Act actually enshrined the master role of the Commonwealth and whilst the Islanders may have felt that they were always running up a slight slope most of the time they were now attempting to climb a pretty steep hill all the time. The Norfolk Island Plan was changed in 2002 to apply for an application within KAVHA which shall be considered with referral to the KAVHA Plan and its provisions shall prevail. In 2006 the then Government decided to agree to the nomination of KAVHA for World heritage listing on the basis of a number of things which were stated would happen including a major boost to tourism and finalisation of the governance issue and a few others which still have not happened. KAVHA was then listed on the Australian national Heritage list on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007. Finally in 2010 KAVHA was

placed on the World Heritage List. There was no Referendum or anything prior to that. Governance issues have not been addressed nor, even to this day. Funding arrangements have continued and its understood that it's still at a 50/50 basis, but I've been very concerned over the last three or four years on a couple of points and I'll put them right before you. The Commonwealth appointed and actually paid for a Site Manager for the area. There's been development of a Research Centre and other activities such as Café's and what have you which seems to, complete with the operation of the Norfolk Island Museum in my opinion, they should all be together. Finally I don't know how long ago it happened but I suddenly noticed that there were a lot of vehicles running around here with Commonwealth A plates on them and I'm very concerned at where we are going with KAVHA at the moment. I've spoken just the Minister has been away obviously and she's now back and looking pretty good again. I talked to the Minister and what I would propose to do now is to move that the Motion be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for the next day of Sitting or a subsequent day of sitting.

MR SPEAKER I only make that intervention Mr Nobbs because our next sitting will actually be a ceremonial sitting.

MR NOBBS Well subsequent.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Debate.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I took it that Mr Nobbs is not actually moving that at this time but is intending to do so. Have you just moved adjournment.

MR NOBBS I did before so I suppose that what you say goes, I don't know

MR SPEAKER If you've moved a Motion of adjournment I will put that Motion Mr Nobbs. Mr Nobbs has moved that this matter be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

### **ABSENTEE LANDOWNERS LEVY AMENDMENT ACT 2013**

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I present the Absentee Landowners Levy Amendment Bill 2013 and as usual is the norm I'd like to read the Explanatory Memo into Hansard. This Bill seeks to make provision for the situation faced by some residents who may under the existing provisions be required to pay the Absentee Landowners Levy by reason of having to take employment off the island and leave family members in the family home. The Bill seeks to establish status of exempt persons who is not liable to pay the levy. The Bill provides at Clauses 1 – 3 are the usual preliminary revision setting at the short title of the Bill, its commencement, and the description of the principle Act to be amended. Clause 4 provides a Schedule of Amendments to the principle Act. Item 1 inserts the definition of an exempt person. Item 2 inserts provision with the effect that an absentee is a person who has been absent from Norfolk Island for a period or periods aggregating 183 days or more, but this



does not apply to a Company (dealt with in a separate provision) or an exempt person. Item 3 inserts a provision that has the effect that an exempt person is not liable for payment of the levy. Item 4 has the effect of removing from the Minister the power to declare that the delay in the sale of property in a deceased estate has been done in order to avoid the levy as it is considered redundant because the estate has two years to dispose of the property and if the delay is longer the exemption automatically ceases. Item 5 inserts new Clauses 6A and 6B to make provision for qualification and application for classification as an exempt person. Proposed Clause 6A provides that a person who might otherwise be required to pay the levy may apply for exemption in a particular year. If the person was absent from the island during the levy year and has after a levy year but within 60 days after the end of that year applied to the Minister to be recognised as an exempt person and satisfy the Minister that the applicant was absent for reason of employment and was in fact employed or actively seeking employment, had a dependent family as defined in Sub clauses 3 and 4. Residing in a family home on land subject of an assessment had continued during the levy year is to be a member of the Norfolk Island Healthcare Fund and was not in breach of payment to the levy, did not when leaving the island declare the intent to leave permanently. The Section provides that if and when the Minister informs the applicant that the application is granted the person is there upon an exempt person. The new provision goes on to enable the Minister to revoke the exemption if the applicant has wrongfully stated by way of falsely declaring land to be occupied by dependent family or by manipulating the occupation of a home in order to obtain the exemption. If the Minister does revoke an exemption then he may cause an assessment to issue where upon the person is assessed, must pay the assessment and any penalty interest as if the person had been in default of payment of assessment from the levy date. The new Clause makes it an offence to make an untrue statement and an application for exemption or to arrange affairs in such a way that the Minister revokes the exemption and a further new Clause 6B requires persons responsible for the collection and maintenance of information concerning the arrival and departure of persons to provide when requested information to the Minister for the purposes of the Act and to do so despite the provisions of any other Act to the contrary. It's dated 3 December 2013. Mr Speaker this Bill has been a little late in coming to fruition but this is in recognition of times that Norfolk Island has found itself in. Over the past few years since the global financial crisis it's crippled some of the economies around the world, Norfolk Island has suffered throughout this period and still has not recovered. During this period and to this day some members of the community have had to look to overseas for work in an attempt to provide for their families, their mortgages and living expenses, and at times this meant that the family unit has had to be split by one member of the family offshore and their partner has had to remain on island to maintain the family home. It has been pointed out by some that the placing of the levy on these persons is through no fault of their own and it made their financial position worse and that it's an unfair levy. Mr Speaker I have listened to these issues and it is with this Bill that recognition is provided that where one member of the family member is offshore for employment and the member is on island and living in the family home and then the person would be exempt from the Absentee Landowners Levy. Of course there are some qualifying conditions to ensure that the intent of the Amendment to the legislation will not be abused and this is to ensure that the integrity of the Bill is maintained. Mr Speaker this is a simple amendment and I hope that the House endorses it today.

MR SPEAKER  
Members.

Thank you Minister Sheridan. Debate Honourable

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. Just briefly acknowledging and thanking Minister Sheridan for taking this on because it's a response to the community changing circumstances with the fly in and fly out and some families were finding that the male particularly was being hit for the healthcare Levy but also Absentee Landowners Tax so they were sort of saying well am I here or am I not? So this is a response to that. I've already raised an issue with Minister Sheridan by email and that's probably how I'll continue to do it rather than spend time on it today because I haven't had a thorough look but just for clarity on the exempt person in relation to land ownership. So whether that person would be exempt just for that portion of land where they were primarily resident or the family was primarily resident or whether it means that an exempt person means that every piece of land that that person owns would also be exempt. So I would ask the Minister to clarify that and also what I urge the Minister to ensure that all criteria in relation to Clause 6A 2B (1) and 6A (3) D anywhere where it's stating that there will be a criteria, please be documented criteria. I think the Members will understand why in this day and age we are needing to ensure that everything is documented. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Speaker. Further debate. No further debate.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that debate be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. I put that question.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **PAPER ON THE DRAFT SERVICES PLAN BY NEXUS MANAGEMENT CONSULTING**

MR SPEAKER We're resuming debate on the question that this Paper be noted.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I thought that there was a need for some debate on this subject seeing that it's put before us and therefore I so move. My total contribution to this debate really is well the first one is that that it's a Draft Health Services Plan. I don't know when we'll be getting the final Health Services Plan. I haven't been asked apart from this for any contribution to it that I can recall or comment so I'll make my comments now. The issue really is that seven years ago, I guess, I was a Minister here and I spoke with one of the former Minister's for Territories who was acting in another role at that time and he said, we got talking about various things and it came up about the Hospital and he said to me "For goodness sake if you want to keep your Hospital don't start kicking up anything about it being not good enough, because what they'll do is they will set up a two bed hospital unit there with a couple of Sisters, maybe a Doctor" these are his exact words "maybe a Doctor if your lucky and fly you in and out" and I said "your joking" and he said "no that's the way it's

going” and so I was not surprised to see this Plan being put up before us. I don't agree with it. I think that the ability to service people on an island which is so isolated has to be only accessible quickly by aircraft and not have it's own medical facility which is capable of doing the service is to me a travesty of justice. I think people who may say to you “oh well if your Whitecliffs or something they just get a plane in and fly you out”. Well that's right Dubbo is just up the road to them, just up the road to us is either Auckland or Brisbane or Noumea and it's a considerable distance, and it takes a considerable time to get a plane here, get the person on it and back again to the hospital. I think that it might seem a good idea to the people that are running their pencils through all these things but I don't believe it's a practical way for us to proceed into the future and I think that we need to maybe liven ourselves up a bit on our health provision here. We need to really work I believe on providing the services that we get a few years ago. I know it's difficult to gain Doctors. It's difficult to do a lot of things but there are ways and means of doing it and I think we've got to work very hard on that and not accept that we will be just a fly in fly out operation. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for bringing this back to the House. I tabled the Nexus Report at the last Sitting. I've had comment made to me since that time as to why did I table and why did I go out to the community seeking comment on what was a draft plan. I'll explain to you why. In the draft Health Services Plan the methodology is spelt out at Page 6 as to how the Consultants went about preparing the draft Health Services Plan, and the key part that caused me concern was it should be noted that they say “It should be noted that the planning process had significant resourcing and timing constraints, the precluded and more comprehensive consultation process with the Norfolk Island community. Moreover there is a porosity of available data on the health status of the Norfolk Island population which should underpin help service planning. Accordingly this Plan does not purport to be a detailed Services Plan rather it sets out a broad direction for the future of health services. The final Health Services Plan will incorporate feedback on this draft plan”. So in order to incorporate feedback I have to invite feedback and that's the reason why it's gone out to the community, put it up on info.gov.nf and the Norfolk Telecom site, I believe that's where they are at this time and have invited comment through from the community in general, and also I have invited and have received partial response from SWAG which is the Social Welfare Action Group, SAR which is the Social, Minister Sheridan please remind me what does SAR stand for.

MR SHERIDAN It used to be the SAR drug and alcohol

MS ADAMS It used to be drug and alcohol abuse but it became.... Anyhow the SAR group, those groups have been invited to make comment and I have received some preliminary comment. Where to from here. I don't have a timeline at this time but what I said at the last Sitting during my Statement and tabling of the NEXUS Report was, and have been consistent in the health review that this needed to be a holistic approach. We now have the three documents that we're funded by the Commonwealth, Dr Tim Smeyers legislation review, the draft health Services Plan, and the other funding of course was accreditation which is an intrinsic part of all of this but not part of this in the holistic review of our health services going forward. I'll be having a discussion with the Administration to the CEO and the Community Services Manager how we can turn this into a meaningful process for community consultation and as soon as I have further detail on that., my apologies I just haven't been on the island for three weeks and so I haven't taken it any further than where I was at the last Sitting, but

certainly I hear what Mr Nobbs is saying. It's certainly a view that is being put forward to me. Certainly we have to look very very very closely at this possibility of an EPS system for Norfolk Island. We certainly have very many different views within this community around our Hospital. Personally I believe we're blessed in the Hospital that we have and the services that are being provided to us as a community, but if there is change to happen in order to reflect more modern practices, well that's a discussion that we as a community have to take and then ultimately agree as a Government along with the Commonwealth Government have to come to a decision. At this point in time I think that's all that I'm going to say.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Ms Adams, Any further debate.

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. I think it's beneficial to provide context again to this issue and also give my support to Minister Adams on a point that she's raised about the draft document being made public. If we go back to the Roadmap again which both Governments are saying they are committed to and I believe they are committed to is that under the area of health the aspirational goal was for a sustainable population with access to health, social welfare and education services comparable with the broader Australian community and that led onto a dot point saying that both Governments, both Governments would work together to consider ways to provide facilities to ensure access by the community to contemporary health services, and of course since the signing of the Roadmap we saw the work that was done by various people including Minister Sheridan to ensure that a Memorandum of Understanding was put in place with South East Sydney which is working to do a range of things including accreditation which is all about providing contemporary health services to the island. The question that was put to Minister Adams about the draft being made public at this stage, I hear that could be a valid concern for people who don't completely understand our context, and by that I mean that everybody on Norfolk Island is a key stakeholder. Somebody coming from the Mainland might think that the people at the Hospital are or the people who represent certain groups are but in this place for my limited experience it is far better to be open and transparent with everybody, even at this early stages, and I think that point is important because even by the authors own admission there was very limited consultation. So that's why I'm pretty strong on that point. It's not always appropriate, there are different times where draft is draft and it's in House and it's in confidence and that is appropriate. But I think given that by the authors own admission, this is very limited consultation, I support the Ministers move. I certainly haven't done enough leg work on this document to go back to various people I can see there has been probably an emotive response to some of the comments that have been made, and I would like to certainly hear some more of the Hospital Advisory Boards comments and feedback. In terms of general direction, it's in the Roadmap, we are about doing better and providing contemporary services. So if the Minister asks whether I give my in principle support to this draft document, then the answer is yes, yes I do. A general direction, a broad direction, yes this document has my support, but if the Minister says, you need to take a holistic approach in this and we need to incorporate the child family support, the report, this report and the Minister will find that she will probably be well taken into the education review which will be delivered to her later this month, because they are all interconnected. Everything about childcare, family services, health, you can't just single one out. So that's my answer on the overall direction, on the broad direction. Having said that the point that needs further examination is where you come to the implementation of the model. So while I can support a broad direction, I can say well. No I won't go into what happened in 2001 but I won't go into detail now. It will



emergency centre we'd find that it's contrary to the development aims under the reform programme, your so called Roadmap programme. I mean if your wanting to attract people to the island they are not going to want to come to a place that doesn't have adequate medical facilities. It's somewhat impractical when it's balanced against likely increased demands as a result of an aging population, and that is a reality for us, we do have an ageing population here as does Mainland Australia but it's probably more pronounced here, and a reduced local medical facility is a deterrent to potential visitors, particularly to the age demographic that are our main customer base. So those are the areas that are of concern to me with this concept.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd just add to that what Minister Ward has just referred to is this plan indicating that we will become, it would be downgraded to an emergency centre ok, that's what he said. What I would like to point out that recommendation No 1 in the report says this and I'll quote "It is recommended that the Norfolk Island Hospital be replaced by a multi purpose service that includes residential care beds, acute care beds, community health services and out patients services". So I just put that on the table. I'm pleased that Minister Ward has brought that up, has mentioned that as an assumption perhaps? There are going to be plenty of assumptions out there in the community and that is what I'm sure is Minister Adams will work to overcome. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Are there any other Members who have not spoken who would want to speak this morning.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. Like Mrs Ward and others that have spoken there are some concerns in the document. The list of recommendations has been mentioned, in recommendation 1 really includes exactly what we have already existing today, but there are other recommendation 4 – It is recommended that the health services of Norfolk Island be contracted to an offshore position in line with a model for police and school education on the island. Now that needs some clarification. I feel that could cause again some emotive reaction out of the community. Recommendation 6 – It is recommended that existing legislation covering individual public health measures be consolidated into a single Public Health Act. That in itself may not create a great deal of problem but it certainly, the NEXUS Report required consideration and I again applaud Minister Adams for bringing it to the attention of this House and also of the public for comment. It is interesting to note Mr Speaker that during the visit of Her Excellency the Governor General of Australia her comments to me at a luncheon meeting which we attended when I asked her about the facilities here and how did she find Norfolk Island, she remarked that she was very impressed by the Hospital and also equally impressed by the Norfolk Island Central School and she commented and commended Norfolk Island for achieving what we have in those two areas that she had visited. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Thank you chief Minister. Further debate. We have concluded debate. Question is that this paper be noted.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR SPEAKER We have concluded Orders of the Day Honourable Members.

**FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING**

MRS WARD Mr Speaker I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 at 10.00am

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Ward. May I just make a confirmatory comments that this is planned to be the ceremonial sitting in respect of the Queen's Baton and the Commonwealth Games. I put that Motion to you Honourable Members.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

**ADJOURNMENT**

MR EVANS Mr Speaker that this House do now adjourn.

MR SPEAKER The question is that this House do now adjourn. Is there any adjournment debate. Are there any backbenchers. May I just make the point that the Ministers have opportunities in terms of Statements and Papers and a whole range of other areas to have their say. Adjournment debate particularly has a focus that backbenchers may have their particular say at the conclusion of the meeting. So I'm going to give them the first call.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker, thank you very much. You made reference earlier to the life of **Nelson Mandela**. I was hoping that we would have an opportunity to just say something and I have now got it. So, his life is Nelson Mandela's life was a significant, significant really as a flag bearer for people, particularly the young, who feel they cannot achieve. The difference may be that Mandela was prepared to put in what we now claim as the hard yards. He will be missed as his memory will unfortunately fade in time, and I was sadly reminded of this on talking to the Chief Minister in the past couple of days on his recent chat with the Minister for Territories, Minister Briggs who I understand and I don't quote him exactly but, did not wish to hear any talk of the island's community history since 1856 or words to that effect. Whilst the commitment by our predecessor be not know be compared with the lifetime work of Nelson Mandela it is an indication of what may happen to such a wonderful contribution. Thank you.

MR WARD Mr Speaker with this being our last meeting before Christmas.

MR SPEAKER It won't be

MR WARD Well it will be for me in a way. With this being our last meeting before Christmas, I feel it is timely to address the uncertainty out there and update the community as to what is happening, and what we are focussing on. It is all too easy for us as members to be so concerned with dealing with the barrage of issues that come across our desks, that we can be seen to have forgotten the concerns of this community.

People are asking questions along the lines of:

What has happened to the Roadmap?

Is Norfolk meeting its commitments in the reform process?

What is happening about income tax, which GST will apply here and are we to be wiped out with land rates?

Is there any move to reduce the Admin workforce?

As a member of this Government I have seen the commitment of my fellow members and can confirm none have lost sight of the major issues.

As for the questions –

1. What has happened to the Roadmap? While many of the Commonwealth's actions are yet to happen, and the original times have lapsed, the general intent to drive reform remains and we look to a visit from Minister Briggs early in 2014 to establish some new timelines and to work toward a better defined and refined Roadmap process.
2. Is Norfolk meeting its commitments in the reform process? To date Norfolk has met every milestone required of it with the exception of those that were dependent upon action from the Commonwealth area. Where they have not progressed on particular commitments there is no way we can do our part of that particular reform.
3. Is there any move to reduce the Admin workforce? There is currently very little option for further workforce reduction until there is a safety net. In reality the Admin workforce is markedly reduced from previous levels and many areas are chronically understaffed with no allowance made for specialised employees to take leave or to have adequately trained and skilled people to take the place of those retiring or otherwise moving on. The 7% increase awarded to them by the remuneration tribunal, is viewed by some in the private sector with understandable angst given the commercial area has no means of attaining any sort of increase. However the massive devaluation of the Admin wage over the last 15 years should be remembered.
4. What is happening about income tax, which GST will apply here, and are we to be wiped out with land rates? The multiple reshuffles & change of Australian Government did delay working through these issues but we look to progressing these when we meet with Minister Briggs in the New Year. As for land rates, while we are required to develop a rating system to raise revenue for local services, there is a strong focus on achieving a system that does not threaten our capacity to retain our lands.

Chief Minister Snell has shouldered the brunt of one of the most uncertain times in our history, tasked to deliver on unprecedented commitments entered into by both this and the previous Assembly.

Minister Adams continues to push reform and robust process in health and education and KAVHA. Minister Sheridan continues to take lessons in dollar stretching.

In my area of Environment, people need to see improvements in the Waste Management processing and management of public places both areas that have had their workforces and budgets cut to the bone.

Mr Speaker, I believe much of our problem rests with the first portrayals of Norfolk's economic woes some three years ago with terms like failed state being recklessly thrown around by the mainland media and others.

Over 30 years of governing this place on a miniscule budget, carrying the bulk of costs to provide three levels of government services including Commonwealth is no small achievement. Try putting that burden on any town or group of this size across Australia and see how long they last. This is where the Roadmap comes into the picture. Norfolk has met and continues to meet its commitments to the reform process, largely thanks to





MR SPEAKER I thought Minister Adams that maybe closer to the Christmas mark for that opportunity.

MS ADAMS Yes thank you. It was I just didn't think we would have that opportunity. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER Was there any others signalling in terms of participation in adjournment debate.

MS ADAMS There was one thing I'd like to say please. Ok I'm leaving the Christmas message until the 23<sup>rd</sup> but however we have a very important activity happening on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December and that is the **Annual Christmas Pageant** and may I encourage all members of the community to go along and continue that wonderful activity for another year. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER No further participation? Honourable Members the question is that the House do now adjourn.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR SPEAKER Therefore Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013, at 10.00 am

