



**NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
14TH NILA HANSARD –19TH MARCH 2014**

MR SPEAKER Good Morning Honourable Members, we commence with the Prayer of the Legislative Assembly.

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 SPEAKER Honourable Members are there any condolences today.

MR EVANS Mr Speaker it is with regret that this House records the passing of **Carolyn Clare Edward** who was born in August 1944 to May and Cam Quintal. Clare is survived by her husband Paul, her sons Vince and Glenn, her beloved grandchildren, James, Anna May, Amy, William, Ben, Brooke and Claudia and her brothers and sisters Cam, Robbi Ann, Ruth and Larry. As a child, rheumatic fever damaged Clare's heart and this stayed with her throughout her life. She had open heart surgery a couple of times and had just returned home after having a new pacemaker inserted. Clare was loved by all who knew her and she will be fondly remembered for her laugh which could be heard wherever she went; her enjoyment of music and her love for her family. She was immensely proud of her sons Vince and Glen, and they and her grandchildren James, Anna May, Amy, William, Ben, Brooke and Claudia brought her the greatest joy. Clare enjoyed socialising. She had morning tea with the Tuesday ladies group and joined the Thursday ladies lunches. She was a member of the Bumboras Yuuk band, the R.S.L. Ladies Auxiliary and every year for the Bounty Ball she taught school children ballroom dancing. There were Friday nights at the R.S.L. and she was a long standing member of the Uniting Church. To her husband Paul, to Vince and Glenn, to her grandchildren, family and friends this House extends its deepest sympathy. May she rest in peace.

Mr Speaker it is with regret that this House records the passing of **Peter Hubert Standfield** who was born in Basingstoke England in October 1928. Peter came from a stock of struggler's, who were farming the tenant lands of the Lords of old England for a meagre existence. His ancestors rebelled against this and formed the first farm workers union. They gained the name "The Tolpuddle Martyrs" and were transported to Australia for treason. They were the only convicts repatriated back to England, after much hue and cry from the English public. Peter was the son of a farmer and during the war years, would help his father deliver milk by horse and cart, and later followed in his father's footsteps and farmed wheat on the family's 400 acre farm. Pete had a phrase that described the futility of things. "Just like that!", and just like that, England joined the common market and Peter retired from farming. He had a block of land in the Bahamas' and at a landowners meeting he met Shirley. They enjoyed 37 years together. After building a home

in the Bahamas' they lived there for about five years. They restored and built a few houses in England, and with their usual lust for adventure, then moved to Cyprus and built a home there. As they seem to do wherever they go, they promptly adopted a Cypriot family as their own, contributing to their mortgage and the education of three daughters who today are all professionals. They lived there for about six years then the wanderlust struck again and Peter and Shirley toured her home country Australia, before deciding on a whim to settle in Maryborough. Peter was an active man, who loved working in the garden and around the house, and became frustrated with the fact that he could no longer do what he'd done when he was younger. Pete was in a rut so Shirley took him for a holiday to Norfolk Island, and they fell in love with the place. After purchasing a little bit of "Paradise" they couldn't wait to return. Pete was troubled with ill health over the latter years, and several months ago he suffered a stroke. He appeared to have recovered well, but "Just Like That" he left. To his wife Shirley, to his many friends here and overseas, this House extends its deepest sympathy. May he rest in peace.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Evans, Honourable Members as a mark of respect I ask that all Members stand for a period of silence in their places.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Honourable Members. Are there any Petitions this morning? Any Notices? Questions Without Notice.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker , My question is to the Chief Minister. Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Manager recently received a \$10,000 bonus and if so, would the Minister with responsible for Tourism please advise the House on the basis of this \$10,000 increase.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker, thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Mr Speaker it's basically part of his contractual arrangements that he be provided with \$10,000 gratuity payment after 12 months of satisfactory employment and satisfactory performance. It was ratified by the Board of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and on recommendations of that Board and myself. The payment was made accordingly to his contract Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD Supplementary if I may. Would the Minister responsible for Tourism be able to give an indication or an example of what satisfactory performance actually means.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. Yes, part of it of course is the continuing operation and marketing for Norfolk Island, the financial affairs of the Bureau have been put in much more satisfactory manner. The completion of the Strategic Plan and many other factors relating to the good conduct and performance of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau has been met and the Board and myself are very satisfied with the dedication and the performance of the current General Manager.

MRS WARD Thank you if I may a Supplementary to the Minister again as to whether the performance measures are tied to the number of visitors arriving to the island, whether an increase or decrease in those numbers, whether that is factored in.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward, an interesting question. On his KPI's it is not Mrs Ward tied to the number of passengers arriving as visitors to

Norfolk Island but it is certainly an uncontracted requirement that everything possibly be done to improve tourism to Norfolk Island, it goes without saying that it is part of his position and it he's well aware of that. The more he encourages visitors to Norfolk the better the community and the economy of the island will be and it goes without saying/ Thank you.

MR NOBBS Chief Minister is this \$10,000 an increase on the base or is it a one off payment to the Manager.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs. It is part of his contractual arrangements that's been set previously prior to my taking on the Portfolio. It has been a part of previous contracts that have been extended to applicants for the position of General Manager of the Government Tourist Bureau. It is a contractual arrangement that also applies to other members in some positions within the Service Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS So it's actually just a one off payment? It's not an ongoing. He doesn't go from \$100,000 to \$110,000 and stay at that for the next financial year? It's just a one off?

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. It is a one off payment for that year, it's ongoing though for future years. It's part of his yearly salary base. He gets \$90,000 salary plus \$10,000 gratuity bonus payment.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. A question to the Minister for Cultural heritage and Social Services as the Minister with responsibility for Health. Will the Minister be providing a Statement to the House today on the accreditation, standard or processes that relate to the visitors who are on island at the moment in relation to the Hospital.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. It hadn't been my intention to make a Statement today but there will be a Press Release in the papers. This is a process that is occurring over the week, I have an exit meeting with them on Thursday afternoon at which time I will be able to put together for the community a Press Release.

MR SPEAKER Further Questions Without Notice.

MR NOBBS Thank you I have one for Minister Ward if I may. It's in relation to fishing Mr Speaker and a letter from Senator Collback to the Minister. Minister the letter from Senator Collback made reference to the inshore fishing zone. Can you explain to the community in general what he means by the inshore fishing zone.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for the question. The issue of the inshore fishing or the revisiting the possibility of having a fishing industry here was initiated when I met with Minister Hunt in Melbourne last October and it was something that I put to him. I realized it was an overlapping area for the two Portfolios for him and Senator Collback but it was worth raising it with Minister Hunt while I had that opportunity and most specifics were gone into about the fishing industry, only to refer to a previous application that had been put in by the Minister responsible at the time Chris Magri, and Minister Hunt then referred that query on to Senator Collbeck and he made reference to the inshore fishing. My understanding of that would be that it refers to the box, but I really couldn't say for sure if that was what he intended.

MR NOBBS Just a Supplementary if I may. Your aware of course that the Minister went on to say that the additional cost would be included in developing a commercial fishing industry was that accreditation under the Environment Protection Conservation Act infrastructure necessary and the compliance and regulations required. have you followed this up with them and asked them what compliance and regulation requirements they are actually complying with at the present time in the EEZ?

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. The short answer Mr Nobbs is no. The query that I have for them and perhaps I will follow up with the Department in the foreseeable future is the question of what data they were relying on to make the assessment that they made initially. I would be really interested to know what data is available out there but other than that I have no other intentions of contact on the matter. I've had no, since airing this matter originally there's been no contact made to me from anyone on island expressing any interest in taking it up so unless there is an interest there to push it from the private sector, I don't intent to pursue it unless the interest is shown to be there.

MR NOBBS Wouldn't you think Minister it's a chicken and egg situation. If you known that you've been told that you can't fish in that area that people will not really take an interest? So isn't it possible that there is a view, there is a view I can tell you, that there is a fishing industry available to the island.

MR WARD So the question Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS The question is, isn't it a chicken and the egg situation right, from the island's perspective you would suggest that there was, and I know there is an opportunity for a fishing industry from the island here sourcing fish outside the box and isn't it the chicken and the egg situation waiting for somebody to come along and say that there is you know, that they've got an interest in it and they've done all their homework and what have you when you know darn well that the Commonwealth have already told people they can't have access to the box anyhow and it's been done in this room here, not by the present Minister but by the previous one.

MR WARD Well with respect Mr Nobbs I would expect that if somebody was seriously wishing to invest in this industry and having heard the material that has been aired about it, that they would have made some sort of contact and perhaps expressed some degree of interest in taking up with the fishing industry here.

MR NOBBS I have a question for the Finance Minister. Minister we've got increases in the tourism, we've got a \$10,000 bonus to the Manager of the Tourist industry and the GST, I've got the figures here somewhere is a figure which is extremely low in the estimates for this financial year. I mean we had two years ago I understand it was \$7.5m was sought, this year it's \$6.5m and that will be it and we're three quarters of the way through the year so we should have, what is going on. That's all I can say.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for the question. All I can say in regards to the GST Mr Nobbs is that in the latest Financial Indicators for January which I plan to table and the comments contained therein is that the revenue is now estimated to be in line with the budget of \$6.5m. So what we originally estimated for at the beginning of this financial year \$6.5m, we believe that we will receive. It is a little bit lower than previous years, but in previous years we have reached over \$7m but it's reflected upon the decrease in activity within our local economy as to the downward trend you might say in GST

revenue. We do have in the budget some money set aside for compliance and the Service is working through with that to ensure that that does happen before the end of this financial year and so that's hopeful that if there is any leakage or that leakage will be able to be put a stop to.

MR NOBBS A further question to the Minister for Finance, it's in relation to the internet carrier projected O3B. There's \$311,000 setting up cost for O3B. What is the projected recovery period for the \$311,000 to be expended. Over what period will that be repaid.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for the question. That \$310,000 still sits in the budget, it hasn't been expended as yet because no agreement has been signed with a carrier as yet for our next foreseeable future for our telecommunications. So to ask what the period of income, what sort of period we expect to recover that is a bit sort of, horse before the cart you might say, what's that saying? The horse before the cart or something like that, cart before the horse, but in saying that the increase, I'm just looking for some figures on Telecom for this financial year, they are in front of budget by some 200 plus thousand dollars there Mr Speaker. So we don't see it as a negative you might say in the Telecom industry that that money will be difficult to be recovered. We see it as a good way of improving our infrastructure into Norfolk Island. That's of course is what the economy is crying out for, some improvement so that they can move forward and better their own business.

MR NOBBS I totally support him Mr Speaker of the proposal, but I thought that there would have been some indications from the cost benefit analysis which I understood was to be done on the project.

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I'll have to take that On Notice and I'll get those figures to Mr Nobbs. With no contract been signed I don't want to go into details at this stage.

MR NOBBS I have one for Mr Ward. Minister the cost of the Headstone Bridge was \$120k, does that include the cost of actually sealing the road and when will this be completed.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. My recollection is that the \$120,000 was for the construction of the bridge and there will have to be some earthworks undertaken in another part of the island which will yield some substantial fill material that's needed to bring the road level up there. So no I would assume that that sealing, that short section of sealing would be additional cost, but that can't be done until the fill works are done to bring the soil levels up to a necessary level.

MR NOBBS Thank you. A question for Minister Adams if I may. There was a Report done I think it was in October last year about the Hospital and there was six recommendations. There was a draft Health Services Plan and there was a list of recommendations. One was recommended that Norfolk Island be replaced by a multi purpose centre etc etc. What has happened with these recommendations.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for the question. I'll take this opportunity just to refer briefly Mr Speaker to a letter that I received from Minister Briggs and a draft response that's currently being fine tuned to go to Minister Briggs. I

mentioned this yesterday in the context of appointments to the Hospital Advisory Board. Members will recall...I

MR SPEAKER

Is this in the context of responding to Mr Nobbs' question?

MS ADAMS

It is, it is thank you. Minister Briggs in declining to put a Commonwealth representative on the Hospital Advisory Board has stated to me in his letter of 26 February; "As you know significant issues have emerged around the viability of the current model of health service delivery on Norfolk Island which will need to be considered in the last or recent reviews. I note in particular that both the review of the existing Child and Family Support services on Norfolk Island and the Health Services Plan have recommended that the current Hospital be transitioned to a health service which more closely aligns to the needs of the community. I note also that the Australian National Audit Office cannot determine that the Hospital Enterprise is a going concern". He goes on to recommend that the recommendations in these reviews be progressed as quickly as possible and the Norfolk island Hospital transitioned to a Health Service provider model. My response will be and I was heartened yesterday in discussion with the ACHS assessors who are here on the accreditation process for the Hospital to be told that as part of any movement to an NPS system there must first and foremost be community consultation, or part of that process must be community consultation. Members will be aware that in the NEXUS Report it was made quite clear that they did not have the time to undertake community consultation nor did they have the time to speak in a meaningful way with the staff. On that basis because of the holistic approach that I have always said that I would take around all the reviews that have been done around health, first and foremost we need to assess the needs of the community in respect of health going forward, and to assess the needs of the community you must consult with the community. So in short with that lengthy response Mr Nobbs, my intention is, and this is being forwarded to Minister Briggs, for the Norfolk Island Government to participate in the delivery of health services in a sustainable way commitment from the community is not simply required it is essential. Both the Australian Government and the Norfolk Island Government are aware of the complexities and challenges being faced in the provision of viable health services on Norfolk Island. To progress recommendations from the reviews, including transition to another Model, whatever that model might be, a thorough community engagement process is required. Opportunities will only be realised when the community voice is heard and their energy is harnessed. The outcome of engagement will be the identification of community health needs now, and in the future, determination of the needs of vulnerable groups as was proposed to be done under the Nexus Consultant proposal which was submitted to secure the consultancy but not completed. Ground reports on the basis of community understanding the unsustainable costs, the current model of health service delivery on the island and harnessing the commitment of the people and solution generation, and a practicable and actionable action plan for the Norfolk Island Government in moving forward. I will be seeking to appoint an independent and appropriate qualified facilitator to assist with this process. I hope that is helpful.

MR NOBBS

The question on that is will there be a final report from these people, the Nexus.

MS ADAMS

I'm perhaps looking slightly in a different direction that whatever body is contracted to undertake the facilitation process then I would have an expectation from that process that a report would emerge, that would then give the way forward.

MR NOBBS

Just another one for Minister Ward in relation to the Waste Management Centre. Is there any proposal to vary the current opening hours of the Centre. I

believe you've had some concerns from people in the tourism industry in relation to the actual days its closed. Has there been any change in the present arrangements PROPOSED.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs for the question. This has been an ongoing issue. The need for a change of hours is well known and well recognised by the Government and by the CEO. The issue is with the CEO, he's looking at his staffing arrangements in various areas. He's looking to try and rearrange the way things are done to free up staff from other areas to be able to work there at some point. How that's done and who would be affected as yet I wouldn't like to foreshadow but certainly every possible arrangement is being considered and worked through to have that happening. Thank you.

MR WARD Isn't there an answer. What you are saying really is that somebody is going to lose their job. Isn't there a better way of doing things by spreading the hours and there are ways and means of doing that,

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. The spread of hours is one issue that they have looked at or one possibility they have looked at. Because staff numbers were reduced there it does limit their options significantly as to how many they of on there. They have to have a certain number of people on for OH&S standards to have a safe working environment for those operators, you can't only have one person on at a time and they have very limited options to work with with the existing staffing level, and until they are able to make some adjustments in other areas then there is very little option open to them. As your side question is anybody to lose their job - no but some people may find if they wish to continue holding a job with the Administration that there will be some rearrangement of duties.

MR NOBBS I just want one for the Minister responsible for KAVHA. Minister you probably won't know the answer to it but I hope you'll look at it. There was a change in employment arrangements by some members of the KAVHA staff and I don't want to go into it very well and two people have been reduced from a full time job to what I understand to one day a week, that's my understanding of it. Have you or will you look at what the reasons behind that was, was it the decision of the Board, was it a decision of the agreement between both the Governments or what was the actual, if you can't answer it, what were the actual reasons for this to have been allowed to occur.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I'm hesitant in responding off the cuff on this. Yes I do know the answer but however Standing Order 72A issue here I do believe and on that basis I'll take it On Notice. I will have discussion with Mr Nobbs and come back to the House as best I can at the next Sitting. However what I can say after my discussions with the Chair of the CMP Review Richard Mackay in Sydney, these are issues that will be under consideration clearly under consideration in development of the new CMP, the governance arrangements and the new CMP plan. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS I've only got one Mr Speaker and I'm directing this actually to maybe it's to the Minister responsible but I would have thought that the Minister responsible at the time was Tim and he may wish to answer it. The Revenue Fund apparently and you may not have been, June 2010 made an advance, a loan to the Healthcare Fund, so it says here. I was wondering what the conditions were of that loan.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. I don't believe that there are any conditions upon the loan to the Welfare Scheme. The only reasons why it's down on the paper as a loan because they are outside the Revenue Fund, they

are a statutory body so the money that's been transferred from the Revenue Fund to the healthcare Scheme is virtually a loan. Chances of that ever being repaid are very slim particularly in the state the Healthcare Scheme is in at this point in time but I don't believe there would have been any conditions attached to it but I can follow that up for Mr Nobbs and get back to him.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. I think we have concluded with Questions Without Notice this morning and we move to Questions On Notice.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. The question No 41 reads, Will the Minister assure the House that municipal rates will not be implemented prior to a household income and business survey being carried out and considered as stated in Schedule 2, 19.6 of the 2013-14 funding agreement? Mr Speaker the response is the matter of municipal rates has been discussed for a long time now and as far back as May last year the Commonwealth were advised of our intentions in regard to a implementation schedule for the introduction of property valuation of a property valuation and relating matters for future financial years. This issue has been the subject of funding agreements over the past two years and a fair bit of work has been undertaken in an attempt to achieve the aim of implementing a rating system for Norfolk Island. This matter has been difficult to achieve as first, when we attempted to obtain interest from valuers to undertake land valuations we had no response from any state valuers from Australia to undertake the valuations and become the valuer general for Norfolk Island. We also have a requirement under the latest Funding Agreement to have a strategy for the implementation plan for the commencement of property taxes (Minister for rates) from 1 July 2014 which was a second point of requirement contained in the milestones 17.4 of which is dependent on the assent of the Land Valuation Bill 2012. Mr Speaker the Land Valuation Bill 2012 is only just now being assented to although not yet commenced as we are awaiting gazettal. Also in the Funding Agreement in the areas of undertaking household and business surveys there was a requirement to provide to the Commonwealth a design of these two surveys in the first quarter of this year with a requirement to undertake the two surveys in the fourth quarter. Mr Speaker this is proving to be a difficult task as these survey are very complex to a Minister and to analyse and the Norfolk Island Administration have limited resources and expertise in this area. Work is still being progressed in an attempt to achieve the requirements under the milestone and it is anticipated that these surveys will be completed during the fourth quarter. The question asking me if I can assure this House that municipal rates will not be implemented prior to the Household and business survey being carried out and considered is dependent upon the ability for the Norfolk Island Administration to be able to complete this task. As this House is aware I as the Minister for Finance have the responsibility to ensure that funds are available to provide for the expenditure that this House approved each year. At the moment the Commonwealth is tipping at \$4.4m for this current financial year and the half year budget revealed that an additional \$1.6m needs to be found to fulfil the Governments obligations for this financial year. Whilst it would be preferable that these surveys be completed prior to the introduction to municipal rates we as a Government must be prudent in our revenue raising and it is planned that municipal rates will be introduced into Norfolk Island during the coming financial year. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question No 42. Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island Administration requires assistance to design household income and business surveys and if so; has this assistance been sought from the Commonwealth, has assistance been provided and when can the community expect to

engage in the survey process? Mr Speaker I reiterate part of my answer to Mrs Ward's Question on Notice 14 from the July 2013 Sitting of the House. It was made clear to the Department when negotiating the Funding Agreement that the Administration did not have the financial ability to retain external expertise in the design of the surveys. Professional involvement was considered essential if the data collected was to have value for decision making purposes. It is for this reason that the deliverables at Section 2 items 1, 6.4 and 1.6.5 include the statement - The Department will assist Norfolk Island through provision of in-kind support. At the Funding Agreement negotiations it was explained that the Department had a seconded officer from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that would be sought to assist. Given that the ABS continually completes such tasks this was seen as extremely beneficial. We sought this assistance, unfortunately the Department has not been able to progress the level of in-kind from the ABS as first envisaged. This is very unfortunate. Nevertheless the CEO proceeded to develop questions as the Norfolk Island Government is committed to achieving these milestones. The completion of the household and business surveys was a quarter 1 milestone which was moved to quarter 2. The surveys have been completed and were submitted in January to the Commonwealth Department. Initially it has been proposed that one survey document be completed that could allow for both households and businesses to complete different parts of the same document. Feedback received from the Commonwealth required that two separate documents be created and they are with the Commonwealth Department for final sign off. The surveys have to be released in the fourth quarter and whilst a date is yet to be established funds have been identified as part of the budget review process to enable the surveys to be completed similar to a census. As we all recognise the importance and need for the collection of the correct data by undertaking the survey similar to a census this compels completion. Further information will be provided in the lead up to the release of the surveys to all households and businesses on the island. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Mr Speaker. Question on Notice No 43. Will the Minister provide the following information in relation to the supply of fuel to the Island and there are five parts to the question 1) When does the current fuel supply contract end, 2) Is there an option for the current contract to be extended and if so for how long. 3) Has an appropriate tender document been developed yet, 4) When will the tender request be Gazetted, and 5) Who will oversee the tender process and ensure that the community receives value for money? The responses to those five parts to the question are Mr Speaker 1) The current fuel supply contracts on the 2nd October 2014. 2) There is no option to extend the contract beyond the 2nd October 2014. 3) A request for tender and draft contract have been developed 4) The request for tender and draft contract have been forwarded to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and will be gazetted and advertised following receipt of their comments and 5) The tender process must comply with the Administration Policy and Guideline on Procurement of Goods and Services. The Chief Executive Instructions Chapter 4 on procurement and the Commonwealth Finance Minister's Norfolk Island orders 2011 part 5,? to spend public money. Mr Speaker the final arbitrator on the letting of the contract is the responsible Commonwealth Minister who has the right of veto of any arrangements to commit public monies in excess of \$1m. A request has been made of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development to provide a tender panel member who is a Commonwealth Officer with relevant expertise in fuel tender evaluation.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker The question No 44 reads - Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island Government is committed to scoping and implementing land tax in addition to municipal rates, in order to broaden its revenue base and in preparation

for integration into the Federal taxation and social security system? Mr Speaker I was not expected to be at this Sitting of the House due to being off island for a personal matter and Minister Sheridan has prepared an answer to the question in my absence. He has shared the answer with me and Mr Speaker I therefore ask Mr Sheridan to respond to this question.

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Mr Speaker. The answer to the question - the short answer to this question is no at this time, as a full implication of a tax on land is unknown. Over the past couple of years the Norfolk Island Government has been identifying ways of broadening its tax base in an attempt to lessen the budget deficit. The Government is working on the implementation of municipal rates model which includes a component of which could be based upon the value of land, but at this time with no ability to value land on Norfolk Island this component will not be included. The possibility of a separate tax apart from municipal rates on land will be considered as part of diversifying our tax base as we as a Government cannot rule out any one thing until it's been assessed. Mr Speaker there is an expectation by Minister Briggs that the Norfolk Island Government scope and implement land tax as a means of normalizing its tax base and improving its financial position and as mentioned this will have to be carefully addressed. I see this as part of the overall bigger picture with the introduction of taxation and entering into the Social Services systems of the Commonwealth, not a pre-requisite, and when the bigger picture becomes clearer, it will be possible to identify the amount of taxes needed to be raised locally to fund those responsibilities normally funded by these taxes. I have to make it very clear that it is not the intent of the Norfolk Island Government to fund the budget deficit through different types of taxation on land.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the Question. No 45. Is it a fact that the absence of contemporary Public Service legislation is seen by the Norfolk Island Government as a barrier to reform? No. Reform is continuing whilst we await assent to the new Public Service legislation. The Public Service Bill 2013. The purpose of the Public Service Bill very broadly and I am paraphrasing from the explanatory memorandum here is to create a more contemporary Act that will continue to meet the needs of the Public Service and provide flexibility simplicity and certainty of responsibility and accountability. Simplify and remove some processes currently contained in the Act, emphasizes the application of principals underpinning the Act as the basis for administrative action, administration of the Public Service and conduct of its employees. It emphasizes employee conduct and performance and the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer in delivering high quality services. Changes to the appeal mechanism in the Act through the abolition of the Public Service Board and the appointment of a Commissioner to hear appeals. Once the legislation is enacted the administration of the Act will become the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer. For the listening public the Norfolk Island Government assented to the Public Service Bill 2013 on the 29th May 2013 with this Bill meeting the requirements of the Funding Agreement applicable at that time. Namely, that it be similar to that used by either the Commonwealth Public Service or one of the mainland States or Territories. It was seen as appropriate that Norfolk Island chose to model their Bill similar to that of the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth have suggested amendments to the Bill, in order they meet Commonwealth Public Service standards. I wrote to Minister Briggs on the 29th January 2014 addressing these concerns. I have not yet received a formal response to my letter therefore the current status of the Bill is that it remains with the Commonwealth

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker a supplementary if I may to the Chief Minister and in talking about the beginning of that Statement, in talking about underpinning the Bill is about underpinning the needs of the community or of the Public Service

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker I would contemplate at this time without going into detail that it would be of the Public Service but I would have that clarified for Mrs Ward

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I seek your indulgence please that I deal with questions 46 and 47 together. They both relate to immigration matters. No 46 reads given that the Minister has publicly stated that recent amendments to the *Immigration Act 1980* have created unintended consequences; will the Minister update Members on what is being done to address unintended consequences, particularly in relation to Section 33A which states that a foreign national who is already residing on island must be entitled to reside permanently in Australia before they can be granted Norfolk Island residency? And 47 reads given that there is no legislated timeframe in which immigration permit applications must be processed; will the Minister propose an appropriate timeframe and seek to amend the legislation accordingly? I have indicated previously it is my intention to establish a committee to review the *Immigration Act 1980* and identify areas of the Act which hinders the administration of the Act and provide recommendations on potential solutions to maintain robust border control and ensure timely, accurate provision of advice on all immigration applications to the Minister. Mr Speaker, a draft of Terms of Reference were prepared and members of the community with working experience of the *Immigration Act 1980* were contacted to establish their agreement to being appointed as part of the Review Committee. Due to lack of resources within the Customs & Immigration Service, the Terms of Reference are still to be finalised and therefore the Review is yet to be progressed. Mr Speaker, I will ensure that the issues raised by Mrs Ward are included in the matters to be considered by the Review Committee.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. Question 48. Given that a key Norfolk Island Government policy objective is to grow the population; will the Minister outline the measures which have been put in place to ensure that the Government's '*Sustainable Growth Strategy*' objectives are being met and provide an update to the community on the rate of success or otherwise? Mr Speaker, by necessity, this response is somewhat lengthy. Thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Yes, the Government's policy objective is, and I quote from the Norfolk Island Government's Sustainable Growth Strategy: "to reverse the population loss from the Island and target a return to ordinarily resident population levels of around 2100 people over the medium three to-five year period through a program of promotion and positive encouragement of settlement on the Island." The measures that have been put in place to monitor the success towards the population goal are:

- Starting from the 1 October – 31 December 2013 quarter, Immigration statistics are being published. These will start to be tracked in these statistics to measure progress. These statistics include Temporary Entry Permits holders, General Entry Permit Holders, holders of a UEP and Residents on the island.
- All investment and immigration enquiries are recorded to show success of any certain advertising campaign and to quantify overall enquiries.
- Webpage visits to both www.immigration.gov.nf and www.norfolkisland.com.au/about-norfolk/live-and-invest are monitored.

For the purpose of answering the question today, Members will recall that the immigration statistics were previously collected on a Burroughs system which for many months was inoperable. So I provide figures for the first week of each month from September 2013:

| | 05-Sep-13 | 03-Oct-13 | 08-Nov-13 | 05-Dec-13 | 09-Jan-14 | 06-Feb-14 | 07-Mar-14 |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Resident | 1342 | 1379 | 1446 | 1395 | 1494 | 1346 | 1324 |
| GEP | 32 | 36 | 36 | 32 | 33 | 39 | 41 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| TEP | 78 | 81 | 81 | 77 | 74 | 77 | 75 |
| UEP | 219 | 208 | 217 | 205 | 188 | 225 | 214 |
| Total | 1671 | 1704 | 1780 | 1709 | 1789 | 1687 | 1654 |

Of course, Members will appreciate that there is a spike over the Christmas period when many of our students and family return back to the island. As we continue to track these figures the information will become more useful. Mr Speaker, this highlights that work has been done in this area, but much is still to be done, that is acknowledged. We continue to work to achieve our objective of reaching our objective of 2100. Mr Speaker, I will briefly highlight some key activities that have been undertaken from the Immigration and Investment Promotion Strategy:

An eBook for potential migrants and investors has been created; Two flyers have been created – one to highlight the investment opportunities on Norfolk Island, the other to highlight the opportunities for living on the island. These double sided flyers were received from the printer this week, which will be available in such places as the NIGTB, Airport, Immigration and offered to real estate agents, travel agents and wholesalers, tour companies, local sports clubs, etc to promote Norfolk Island as a place to live and invest, and will provide a tangible item that can be taken by visitors for their family and friends back home; a webpage has been created to promote living and investing opportunities on the island and provide contact details for those wanting more information. It also provides an avenue for download of the eBook and flyers; Advertisements have been placed in both the Sunday Telegraph and the Sunday Mail on 15 December 2013, 12 January 2014 and 16 February 2014. A full page advertisement in Your World Magazine; 12 monthly adverts will be placed in Norfolk Online; pertinent information has been sent to a number of databases; gazette notices to promote the changes to the Tourist Accommodation Act which allows further investment in that industry and to explain the changes to ensure adherence; a number of periodic government media releases.

I thank the Commonwealth and I do this sincerely, for their significant contribution towards us undertaking a significant amount of that work. Now Mr Speaker, let me briefly highlight some key activities that will soon be undertaken:

Advertising in Australian magazines using barter card dollars; a YouTube clip is almost complete for more interactive online marketing; an education evening will be conducted for all interested persons to attend, including local tour operators, real estate agents, bus drivers and business operators. This education evening is designed to encourage everyone, especially those who deal with our visitors, to promote the immigration changes and also provide and seek suggestions for further marketing and promotion opportunities. It is important that locals who come into contact with the 24,000 visitors to the island and their own extended personal contacts, are able to provide factual advice and be strong ambassadors to encourage migration and business investment to grow our island and economy.

Mr Speaker in closing, let me thank all of the people, not only in the Administration who work with me to achieve this goal, but also to the people in the community that are working extremely hard to achieve this outcome also, in particular I would like to acknowledge the work that Destination Norfolk undertakes.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. Questions 49. Is it a fact that children are being denied access to education at the school because they are classed as visitors and if so; will the Minister highlight the documented policy and sections of legislation which would show why visitor children are unable to access a public school education while on island? I can confirm that there are children other than children who are Australian or New Zealand citizens currently in Norfolk Island who have been granted a visitors permit to remain in Norfolk Island and that I have given instructions to the Principal of the Norfolk Island Central School not to enrol a child who is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen and who does not hold either a general entry permit or a temporary entry permit. The Education Act 1931 provides, Duty of parents subsection 16.1. The parent or guardian of any child between the

ages of 6 and 15 years shall, unless the child is exempted from the provisions of this section by the Administrator, cause the child to attend either a public school or a private school registered under this Act for the full period of each half-day during which the school is open. As Minister with responsibility for Education the Administrator on 9 April 2013 delegated his powers under the Act to me. In making the decision not to allow these visiting children to enrol at the school I have exempted the children from attending the school during the duration of their visitors permit. If the immigration status of the children changes, that is, they are granted a temporary entry permit, then enrolment at the Norfolk Island Central School can immediately occur. I share Mrs Ward's concern Mr Speaker. She and I have had discussions around this. There is a broader issue. It was an issue that was satisfactorily dealt with pre the passage of the Immigration Amendment No 2 Bill last year where we had an Immigration Committee and the children of respective people coming to live on this Island was taken into consideration as part of the issuing of the permit processes. That's now been removed and this too will be part of an overall look at immigration going forward.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker is it the intent of the Minister to exempt any visiting foreign national children from being enrolled at the school from now on

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. That's not a question which can be answered in isolation of the broader issues surrounding this issue. I certainly have it firmly on my immigration platform for consideration at this time and it will be dealt with as quickly as possible but that's the decision at this point in time

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. Question 50 asks, Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island Government produced a position paper on the introduction of community title and if so; will the Minister provide a copy of the document to Members? Mr Speaker I table a copy of the Position Paper on Strata/Community Title. Following receipt of the Notice Paper on Friday 14th March I requested the Position Paper on Strata/Community Title be forwarded to all Member and you should now all have an electronic copy. This paper was forwarded to the Commonwealth Department by the Administration in October 2013 in accordance with clause 16.1.7 of the Funding Agreement for the quarter ending 30 September 2013. Thank you Mr Speaker

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Question 51 reads, given that appointment of a Director of the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise is a required condition of the funding agreement; will the Minister explain why the position was not filled prior to the acting Director leaving the island? Mrs Ward is correct that clause 16.1 Appointment Processes under the Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth Government and the Administration of Norfolk Island contains a condition relating to recruitment of the Hospital Director. Mr Speaker – The Director of the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise is appointed by the relevant Minister on the recommendation of the Norfolk Island Hospital Advisory Board. I am currently that Minister. Applications for the position of Director closed on 11 October 2013. The protracted delay in recruitment and appointment of a replacement Director appears to be due to a number of factors including a delay because Mr Terry Clout the then Chief Executive of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and a member of the Advisory Board agreed to be on the selection panel, as required by the Funding Agreement; then he claimed a "conflict of interest" and said neither he nor any member of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District or the Sydney Children's Hospital Network could be involved in the selection panel. The Chief Executive Officer Norfolk Island Administration wrote to the Commonwealth Department on 8 November 2013 to advise in relation to Mr Clout's declaration of a conflict of interest and advising that the requirement of the Funding Agreement could not be

met and advising: "In addition, the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Community Services has indicated that she will be requesting the selection panel to progress the recruitment as a matter of priority so that the new Director can commence prior to the end of the year.". On 8 November 2013 applications were supplied to the recruitment panel members who were given a week to read and to short list. On 11 November 2013 the Executive Director of the Commonwealth Department advised the following: ""...I have discussed the timing for interviews and the week beginning 2 December will not be possible for either of us, given Parliament will be sitting from tomorrow until mid December. We were both intended to be on Island in the week beginning of 15 December (subject to the availability of flights), and would be happy to progress the interviews at that time, Subject to – and this is important - the resolution of the issue outlined below. "On Friday, the Norfolk Island Government requested a variation to the current funding agreement in relation to the composition of the panel. We are looking at this request now as a matter of urgency, and intend to consult with the South East Sydney Area Health District on a number of matters raised. While we note Mr Clout's disclosure of a potential conflict of interest this is directly related to the process and scope of market testing. Short listing and interviews cannot be conducted until this issue is resolved." Mr Speaker, notwithstanding the earlier decision taken by Mr Clout not to provide a SESLHD member on the recruitment panel, the Minutes of the Norfolk Island Hospital Advisory Board dated 17 December 2013 record that SESLHD considered that there was no longer a conflict of interest and Mr Clout could support a SESLHD member sitting on the selection panel as per the Funding Agreement specification. "It was proposed that this be done as early as possible in January 2014 to ensure no gap in services noting the current Director's departure February 14, 2014." On 24 December Mr Clout advised he will be the SESLHD representative on the panel but that he was not returning to work until 20 January 2014. A similar advice was received from Mr Paul McInnis as the Commonwealth representative on the panel that he would be available from 20 January 2014. Accordingly it was not possible for the reasons stated above for the interviews to be conducted until last month and I will be making a statement later on Mr Speaker on the results of the recruitment process. Unfortunately, the process could not conclude before the Director left. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. Question 52 reads will the Minister outline which Australian National Audit Office recommendations have been implemented in relation to the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise, which have not and give reasons for any non-compliance? To respond. The Australia National Audit Office identified five audit issues in their Management Letter for the 2011/12 financial year, which was issued in June 2013. The recommendations regarding two of these issues, namely *Application of Goods and Services Tax* and *Inventory Management Process*, have been implemented and the ANAO considers those issues as resolved. Three issues, identified in the 2011/12 Management Letter, remained unresolved in the Draft ANAO 2012/13 Management Letter received in December, 2013, namely *Lack of Defined Policies and Procedures*, *Management of Employee Superannuation Arrangements* and *Employee Liability Management Process*. A lack of resources did not allow these issues to be resolved prior to December, 2013, however all three will be resolved by 30 June, 2014. The Australia National Audit Office identified one additional audit issue *Contract Management* in their Draft Management Letter for the 2012/13 financial year. The Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise has provided the ANAO with an updated Contract Register as evidence of compliance with this recommendation. I hope that's helpful

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker a supplementary if I may just for clarity. As the Minister has said, there is a lack of resources so I'm wondering where the resources are going to be found now to meet the milestones by 30th June

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker I'm very comfortable that with the engagement of a new Director that this will very quickly be dealt with thank you

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for Question No 53 which reads, given that the Norfolk Island Administration has demonstrated its inability to meet 2013-14 funding agreement milestones in a timely manner; when will the Government put in place mechanisms and adequate resources to ensure the completion of all milestones by June 30? Mr Speaker as Members would be well aware, current budget constraints prevent the Government and all the Administration from engaging additional resources. Many of the milestones are complex and lengthy and achievement within the timeframe provided has been and will continue to be a drain on available human resources. It needs to be recognised that continued cost cutting within the Administration and other bodies to enable the Government to become more sustainable has meant that there are less resources to complete more tasks, including the completion of milestones. Officers including the Chief Executive Officer and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer are working far in excess of normal working hours to provide this Government with support and I take this opportunity to thank them for their tireless efforts. I can advise that in recent weeks the CEO has raised at the teleconference with Commonwealth officials held at the Office of the Administrator the need for milestone co-ordination capacity team assistance as well as economic development assistance from the Commonwealth. Discussions are continuing on this matter. Mr Speaker that is all I can provide at this stage.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker given that only \$200,000 has been received to date from the 1st quarter, as part of the Funding Agreement milestones, the question remains, when will the Chief Minister do something to ensure that the remaining milestones will be met by the 30th June

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker that issue is under consideration at this present time. There have been discussions with the Chief Executive Officer and the Department on finalising some of the matters of the milestones and they are still to be resolved

SPEAKER Members we have concluded Question on Notice and we turn to Papers

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker I have here a letter from the Chief Minister to the Hon Jamie Briggs MP Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development and this is to do with the Cascade Pier Project. I'll read this into Hansard if I may –

“18 March 2014

The Hon. Jamie Briggs MP
Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and
Regional Development
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

CDG010 – CASCADE PIER PROJECT

Thank you for your letter dated 12 February 2014 where you cover, amongst other things, the Cascade Pier Project in response to my letter to you dated 19 December 2013.

Thank you for clarifying the conditions that are attached to the Cascade Pier Project CDG0101 (formerly RDAF4), namely that there is a requirement under the Funding

Agreement to implement an appropriate municipal rates regime by 1 July 2014 and that the Cascade jetty extension project is dependent on satisfactorily meeting this requirement.

In accordance with your letter dated 10 December 2013 in which you advised that "Funding for this project is conditional on your reaffirmation of that commitment to engaging constructively on the reform agenda", I confirm that the Norfolk Island Government is committed to the reform agenda including the introduction of municipal rates in line with the June 2013 Funding Agreement.

Separate to the Cascade pier extension project you expect the Norfolk Island Government to scope and implement land taxes as a means of normalizing its tax base and improving its financial position. I again confirm that the Norfolk Island Government is committed to improving its financial position including scoping and modelling land taxes for the island.

I further note in your 10 December 2013 letter that funding is subject to confirmation that the project can continue according to the original scope and other agreed arrangements. Mr Bruce Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Administration of Norfolk Island is the Project Manager for the Cascade Pier Project and he will now liaise with your Regional Programmes Branch to progress the project.

The Norfolk Island Government extends its sincere appreciation to the Australian Government for its commitment to funding the uncontracted RDAF projects, including this pier project, as it will contribute greatly to our economy.

Yours sincerely

Lisle Snell

Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism"

Regarding the Cascade Jetty Project this project has attracted mixed opinion in the community since its inception. Many people have openly questioned whether this is the priority area in which to commence our port upgrade. Others question the chosen design as to whether it will withstand extreme weather. Mr Speaker I'm not a civil engineer and cannot guarantee that the design is adequate to every test but there are times when we need to trust the skills of those who are qualified in such matters and ensure that all reasonable guarantees are built into the construction contract. This project had already been scoped and designed when this Legislative Assembly took office. Projects of this scale are not on offer here every day. If this project grant was of sufficient scale to substantially construct the west side port, this would have been the priority from the outset. This project should be a lifeline for contractors, subcontractors and those who secure employment on the project. There should also be a moderate flow on through the Island's economy. When finished we will have an improved jetty and potentially a greater percentage of successful shipping movements. There will be consequential issues like should we sell off our interest in the GBE's to fund barges or a bigger crane, and how do we envisage supporting infrastructure to handle containerization. We will still need to seek out opportunities for developing a west side port. Only with that development will we have the improved reliability and capacity to commit to containerized sea freight. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Mr Speaker just a couple today for virements under section 32(b) of the Public Monies Act 1979 I'm required to table directions in regard to the transfer of expenditure through divisions and therefore I table the virements for the month of February and part of March 2014.

I would also like to table the Revenue Fund Financial Indicators for January 2014 and material departures from budget.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker I table the report to the Legislative Assembly made under the Immigration Act in respect of declarations of residency. Mr Speaker paragraph 34(2) of the Immigration Act 1980 requires that the Minister report to the Legislative

Assembly not later than 31 March the number of declarations of residency granted during the year ended on the previous 31 December. I now accordingly report that there were 160 declarations of residency granted during the year ended 31 December 2013. They are made up as follows: 134 declarations of residency by citizenship in accordance with section 28(a) of the Act; 9 declarations for children of residents by section 28(2); 11 declarations for persons who obtained their General Entry Permits in accordance with section 19 of the Act and six declarations for persons who obtained their general entry permits in accordance with section 18 of the Act. Thank you Mr Speaker

SPEAKER We concluded Papers Hon Members so we turn to Statements of an Official Nature

STATEMENTS OF AN OFFICIAL NATURE

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker I would just like to make a statement to clarify and make clearer my answer to the Question Without Notice this morning regarding the General Managers contract of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. Mr Speaker his past contract was \$80,000 plus \$10,000 performance related payment. His renewed contract is still \$80,000 not \$90,000 as I believe I did mention earlier. \$80,000 plus a gratuity in lieu of superannuation and long service leave, which is 5% of the base salary, and amount of \$4,000. He also has a performance related incentive payment which is an annual amount up to \$6,000 7.5% of the base salary, paid at the conclusion of each completed successful 12 month period. The amount of the payment will be determined by me as Minister having regard to certain conditions Mr Speaker. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Further Statements.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I foreshadowed earlier on this morning that I'd be making a Statement to the House in regards to the recruitment of the Hospital Director or the **appointment of the Hospital Director**. Mr Speaker the recruitment process has concluded and the recruitment panel has provided their recruitment report to the Hospital Advisory Board. Subsection 19 (1) of the Norfolk Island Hospital Act of 1985 provides that the Minister on the recommendation of the Advisory Board may appoint a person to the Director of the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise. Mr Speaker I have received the Board's recommendation and it is my intention to appoint the person they have recommended to the position of Director effective 31 March 2014 provided contractual arrangements have been concluded. However, Mr Speaker it is my intention as a courtesy to the staff at the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise to advise them first of the appointment before making a public announcement. I'm meeting with the staff at 10.00am on Thursday the 20th March 2014. A Press Release will then be issued on the following weekend. I take this opportunity to thank the recruitment panel for the professional manner in which they undertook this task and in particular the local member of the panel for giving up their time as unpaid volunteers. The recruitment panel was Mr Terence Grube, Chair, Dr Candice Snell, Dr Brian McNamara, Mr Paul McGuinness and Mr Terry Clout. I particularly want to record my thanks to the professionalism of the Chair of the panel and for the volume of documentation provided to me which showed just how professionally the process was undertaken. Mr Speaker the Deputy Director Mrs Helen Dowling is on leave from yesterday, returning to work on 31 March and I have on the recommendation of the Advisory Board appointed Mr Reece Walden to act as Director from 19 to 31 March inclusive in the absence of both a Director, and the Deputy Director. MR Walden has acted in this capacity on previous occasions and I thank him sincerely for agreeing to be appointed. Thank you.

MR WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. Since taking up this environment Ministry, there has been one issue that continues to attract complaints to the Police and to my office, that is the problem of **inconsiderate use of trail bikes**. These complaints are from many areas across the island, too many areas and too many people effected to ignore. It is a reality that many people find the high level of noise generated by this activity aggravating and offensive. It is a reality that Norfolk is a small area with homes spread across the island. In other words there is no isolated area where noisy or otherwise offensive activities can occur without causing aggravation to neighbours. It is also a reality that Norfolk markets itself as a tourist destination offering a peaceful, pleasant environment. If something emerges that is impacting this then we cannot afford to ignore the problem. Mr Speaker the range and substantial number of complaints has been logged and today I am putting trail bike riders on notice that they need to lift their game and consider the people they are causing distress to. I do not wish to bring legislation to the House to control trail riding, but will have to do so if the issue continues as it is. I note that some bike riders have gone to considerable effort to set up tracks and barriers in quite a professional way. I urge them to extend this practical approach by setting practical defining times and encourage others who engage in trail bike riding to do the same, to avoid riding too early or too late in the day and not at times that conflict with events such a public gatherings and Church services. If neighbours know there is a reasonable defined time that the activity will be happening this makes for easy planning and a more tolerable situation for all. Some fitting or proper maintenance of mufflers on trail and motocross bikes would also help. To those who have been using common lands at Anson Bay you do not have permission to use Crown or Commonwealth land in this way. The absence of a fence does not imply any legal right of access. To use that land a licence must be obtained from the Administrator under the Crown Lands Act. You are trespassing if you have no written permission to be there. In the past trail bikers have been well organised and respected community concerns with properly organised events, standards and venues, and I encourage them to return to such practices. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker. At the last sitting of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday the 19th February 2014 when reporting on the **visit of the Honourable Jamie Briggs MP**, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development I advised the House that and I quote "We understand that a report of the Australian National Audit Office has been prepared to identify the systems and legislative changes, if any, in this regard. The report is still to be tabled in the Federal parliament and we are yet to receive a copy". Mr Speaker the Administrator, the Honourable Neil Pope on the 25th February 2014 forwarded an email from a Mr Pusba Dash from the Office of the Auditor General of Australia which had been sent to Mr Paul McGinnis of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development seeking advice on the best approach to correct a statement in the statement I made. Mr Speaker I have written to the Attorney General for Australia Mr Ian McFee PSM and advised that the reference to a Report being tabled was based on what I, and my Ministerial colleagues understood was to occur on comments made by Minister Briggs. I apologise to the Auditor General for this misunderstanding and for the alleged mis-statement as it is implied in the email from Mr Dash that there is no such report. Mr Speaker I table a copy of the correspondence relating to this issue and take this opportunity to apologise to the House for any comment I have made which may have unintentionally misled the House. Please note that the correspondence has been copied to Mr Dash, the Administrator, and Assistant Minister Briggs.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. A Statement on the review of the **KAVHA Conservation Management Plan**. At the February Sitting of this House I issued a Statement to introduce the review of KAVHA's 2008 Conservation Management Plan and to

encourage the community to utilize the opportunity to engage with the visiting heritage professionals who have been engaged to undertake the review. The review team visited the island 24 February to 3 March and during that time made themselves available in a number of ways, including one on one interviews with the broad range of people, key round table discussions with landowners, lease holders, the tourism industry, heritage, environment and community groups, as well as KAVHA staff. This formal time was provided at the Sunday market and several open house half days at the A & H Hall. Official briefings were held with Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Administrator, the Project Review Group and Norfolk Island members of the KAVHA Management Board. Site inspections with KAVHA staff, the Norfolk Island Museums Curator and Cemetery Sexton gave the consultants a valuable insight into the broad range of responsibility within the heritage site. My special thanks also to the private land owners who allowed the team to inspect their sites and the Administrator for access to Government House. The inspections greatly enhanced the team's appreciation of the place. Team leader Richard Mackay was also interviewed on VL2NI twice during the week where he invited the community into this review process, as well as informing the community about the consultations undertaken over the week. I met with Professor Mackay in Sydney, because as you know I was not on the island during the review period, and was given a comprehensive debrief on the consultation week and the remaining work on his project. Richard spoke highly of the amount of information provided to the team and the great response with 200 people attending sessions in person and some 120 people to date having completed the online survey. I think that's pretty, 120 people, I think that's an excellent response and is such a positive response and clearly demonstrates the passion and interest in this special place within this Norfolk Island community. I'm advised that the online survey closes this Sunday the 23rd March and for those who have not yet completed the questionnaire I encourage you to make use of this opportunity. If you need access to a computer the KAVHA office will provide that support to you. Once the survey is closed, soon after a report documenting the consultation outcomes will be delivered which identifies the key issues to be addressed through the Conservation Management Plan Review. The next project update will also provide this information to the community. Thank you to all who have contributed this far and particularly in my thank also to Minister Ward for attending meetings in my absence. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS Thank you. At the February Sitting I provided an update to the House and the community on progress with the **Education Review** that Mrs Ward is so capably undertaking on behalf of myself, the Parliament and the community. We are progressing to stage 2 of the review at this time and the Education, stage 2 of the Review is to investigate the expansion of educational opportunities for tertiary and vocational education, including apprenticeships, and you might recall that at the last Sitting I added into that review that the review panel consider and make recommendations on the possibility of the provision of facilities with fee paying international students at Norfolk Island Central School. Mrs Ward is now putting together a list of names. Mrs Ward has recommended to me, and I have consulted with Mrs Ro Peterson who is a member of our valuable long term teaching staff at the Norfolk Island Central School who has played a big role in this area over many years, and I have invited her to be a member of the review team and she has undertaken to do that enthusiastically and I thank Ro very much for taking on that role. Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR - MESSAGE NO 9

MR SPEAKER I will read this in conveying this Message. I Neil Pope, Administrator of Norfolk Island furnish the following Message in accordance with Section 24 Of the Norfolk Island Act 1979. Her Excellency the Governor General acting on the advice of the Federal Executive Council declared on the 17th February 2014 which she, (first dot point)

withheld assent to the following sections of the Land Valuation Bill 2012. Section 74 - deferral of lapsing Subsections 82 (2) C and D Notice of Objection Decision, Subsection 86 (2) Appeal right, Section 87 New Owner, Subsection 88 (2) How to Appear, Section 89, Late Filing, Section 91=93 Amendment of valuation by agreement, Section 94, Order of Valuation Appeal, Section 95, Costs, Section 96, Member not disqualified for owning land, Section 148, Evidentry Provisions for Valuation appeals. Next dot point, Declared assent to the remainder of the Land Valuation Bill 2012. The Message continues. The reasons why Her Excellency withheld assent to parts of the Bill are as follows - two dot point, the first dot point. the Attorney General's Department advised that Section 25 of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975 (AAT Act) sets out how jurisdiction can be conferred on the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to review decisions made under enactments in Subsection 25 (2) of the AAT Act provides that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations 1976 (AAT Regulations) may provide that applications may be made to the AAT for review of decisions made in exercise of powers conferred by a Norfolk Island enactment. Schedule 4 to the AAT Regulations lists the decisions under Norfolk Island Enactments which the AAT can review. Jurisdiction or the AAT in relation to the Norfolk Island Government decisions requires an Amendment to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations 1976 (AAT Regulations). It cannot be done solely through Norfolk Island legislation. The next dot point. The Attorney General's Department advise that the content of the withheld sections of the Bill either overlapped or were inconsistent with existing provisions of the AAT Act and accordingly the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development advised the Governor General those provisions should not receive assent. The Message continues. In conjunction with consideration of the Land Valuation Bill 2012 Norfolk Island on the 17th February 2014 Her Excellency acting on the advice of the Federal Executive Council made the following Regulations. Administrative Appeals Tribunal Amendment (Norfolk Island Land Valuation Decisions) Regulations 2014. These Regulations provide that decisions made under Section 79 of the Land Valuation Act 2012 Norfolk Island may be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. These Regulations also make minor amendments to the AAT Regulations which are consequential to the passage of the Interpretation Amendment Act 2012 Norfolk Island. These Amendments update reference to the Executive Member in Schedule 4 to the AAT Regulations to the Minister. That Message is dated the 10th March 2014 and signed Neil Pope, Administrator.

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

MR SPEAKER

We are now to commence Notices Honourable Members but before we do that I would want to convey to you a Message from Her Majesty the Queen head of the Commonwealth. This message is about Commonwealth Day and Commonwealth Day occurred on the 10th March 2014 and this is the closest Assembly Sitting that we have to that occasion and I would wish to read in conveying that message to you Honourable Members. In July this year, the opening of the 20th Commonwealth Games will be marked by the arrival in Glasgow of the baton that started its journey from Buckingham Palace five months ago. Many of us are following closely the news of the baton relay as it passes through the 70 countries and territories whose teams will gather for the Games. The images bring vividly to life what we mean by the Commonwealth family: it is wonderful to see the warmth, shared endeavour and goodwill as the baton is passed through the hands of many thousands of people. Affinities of history and inheritance from the past are strong, yet we are bound together by a sense that the Commonwealth is a powerful influence of good for the future. People of all ages from different cultures are weaving an ever-growing network of links which connect us in our diversity and our common purpose. It is this unity that is expressed in this year's theme: 'Team Commonwealth'. While national teams will be concentrating on the competition in August, Team Commonwealth will have a longer focus, working together to achieve a more enduring success. Experiences of

months ending on 30th June 2014. Clause 4 authorises expenditure in accordance with the schedule of monies raised in accordance with the enactments referred to in the Clause. Clause 5 deals with expenditures made in accordance with other laws that authorizes expenditure and provides an estimate of expenditures to be made in accordance therewith. Clause 6 repeals the Appropriation Act 2013-2014 but provides that any expenditure made in accordance with it's terms is deemed for all purposes to be made under this Act. This also includes the added clarification that this Bill replaces the previous repealed Act and the Schedule sets out in usual form the various items of expenditure authorised or estimated as required to be expended as provided in the body of the Act, and it's dated the 19th of March 2014. Mr Speaker at the last sitting of the House in February I tabled the Mid year Budget Report for the 2014 financial year and talked to this Report at length. The result of this mid year budget review was that there was a further deficit to the original budget of \$1,604,976 a total deficit of just over \$6m to the original budget. As a result of this I requested that all Ministers in collaboration with the CEO Mr Jon Gibbons attempt to reduce this shortfall and I expected that programmes that had not yet commenced and/or contracts signed then consideration be given to delaying these until the next financial year. All non essential tasks and even those deemed to be essential were to be reviewed and I expected that if items had not been budgeted for then these activities would not proceed. I requested that all savings be identified to the Deputy CEO no later than the 5th March 2014, so if necessary I could work on additional appropriation for the March Sitting. This further review of expenditure identified approximately \$825,000 of savings and/or improved income which necessitate the funding of the remaining \$790,000 out of savings in the Revenue Fund at this time. Mr Speaker no request to date has been forwarded to the Commonwealth to ascertain as to whether or not they would consider further funding this financial year, and at this stage no decision has been taken to approach them. This further addition to the original budget is predicated on the original \$4.4m emergency funding for essential services from the Commonwealth being eventually fully released to assist the Norfolk Island Government as approved by the Commonwealth Parliament. This of course is dependent on the Norfolk Island Government meeting the milestones under the Funding Agreement of which at this time is proven to be difficult due to limited resources and many other difficulties encountered in attempting to achieve the milestones. Mr Speaker this is where we are now, having to contemplate additional funding so that essential services can be delivered to the community for the rest of the financial year. This Appropriation Bill details these new requirements. The result of \$1.6m deficit that the original budget was short is a compounding factor of both income reduction and expenditure blowouts and the main items of income reduction were in the Customs Duty area, a reduction of \$300,000 due to reduced imports and the time lag in having the duty increased on personal imports. A reduction of income of \$100,000 from the Electricity business due to reduced consumption of electricity and a further shortfall of \$471,000 from the Airport business due to the proposed passenger movement charge of \$10 per person per sector not agreed to by the Commonwealth. Mr Speaker under the, just to explain that under the air services Funding Agreement there is a requirement that any proposed increase to fees and charges including any additional regulatory compliance costs would require the Commonwealth's written approval prior to being introduced. The Airport Manager had reviewed the fees and charges upon my request and had established a set of fees that achieved cost recovery for the many operations that he is in charge of at the Airport. Unfortunately the Commonwealth deemed that due to the fragile tourism sector and the costs of the Commonwealth for Airline underwriting they could not agree to the request. It is understandable as the increase may have placed greater costs onto the Commonwealth but by this decision it does not make addressing a budget deficit any easier. Mr Speaker the main expenditure blowouts are at the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise where an additional \$700,000 will be required by them to meet their obligations for the rest of the financial year. This is on top of the \$1.2m in initial subsidy identified in the regular budget of which a total of this subsidy has been

drawn down except for \$90,000 which will be released early next month. This was not unexpected but as the original budget was completed by the seconded Hospital Director and the Commonwealth Chief Financial Officer there was an expectation that this budget could be kept to a minimum. I say it was not unexpected as in the past few years the subsidy had been \$1.8m \$2m and \$1.5m and this year it will be a total of \$1.9m. The healthcare Fund has also a forecast of a need for an additional \$460,000 and this is on top of the recent increase to the Healthcare levy. This has come about by having to expend funds on the previous financial year to finalise accounts to the tune of some \$245,000 and the additional cost of Medivacs of which are currently \$380,000 or some \$130,000 over budget so far for this financial year. Service pay increase of which resulted in an additional \$300,000 having to be found and I would like to note that in the original budget, salaries and wages totalled \$10.375m but with this review completed the salaries and wages total should be under that at \$10.243m. Mr Speaker these are the main parts of the original budget that necessitated this additional appropriation and I must thank all the Heads of the Administration Departments including the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and the Norfolk Island Central School for identifying savings no matter how small. Some areas have not been affected but in the main all Departments have in some way contributed to the additional savings. Mr Speaker I now ask for debate and the bill lay in the House until the next sitting.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker. Firstly I would like to thank all the areas that examine their budgets yet again to identify savings. We understand and appreciate it is not an easy task as all Departments are already operating on tight budgets. I also thank the office of the CEO for co-ordinating this task and extend my thanks to Minister Sheridan for the work he has done in my absence and for presenting the Bill today. Minister Sheridan has covered most things in his debate so I just want to add that these are tough time and the Norfolk Island Government acknowledges that and we continue to work to strengthen the island's economy. We have an obligation to our community to provide important services such as Education, Social Security, Pensions and the like, the Hospital and Healthcare. It is a balancing act to be able to fund services to community service level expectations. Mr Speaker it highlights again the importance of working with the Commonwealth on the options that will be presented to the Federal Cabinet for consideration. Whilst here Minister Briggs undertook to consult with the Norfolk Island Government on the options prior to them being submitted to Cabinet. We look forward to receiving information on those options soon. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker. I'm surprised the other Minister's aren't contributing to debate however. Minister Sheridan knows that I have some concerns over this and I have expressed those to him and what I have asked that he provide to me that may allay some of my concerns, considering we are diving into the realm where we're using the last of our working cash, is that he provide to all the Members the cash projections, the projected cash flow with consideration being given to the possibility that we do not meet milestones. I've already said earlier in the Sitting that to date we have received \$200,000 that's over 2 quarters and there's \$1m attached to each quarter. I've also expressed concern that this Government has been in place for 9 months and yet as a Member I have seen little indication of what assessment has been done to increase the efficiency of the Public Service and GBE's, I'll say across all areas. I'm still missing when I sit at this table a recognition of the real reality that we face, and it's a question about expectations from the community. It's a question about the evaluation of those, the level of services. and how those services are provided, and the longer we leave it the more difficult it will become to face those in a way that allows people who are employed by or under the Service provision to make plans for their future and to be recognised and to be given packages which will allow them to plan for their future with some dignity. My point is that I do not want to see us get to the point where we literally run out of cash, and

Minister Sheridan providing us with those cash flow projections may allay those concerns. So this Bill will sit on the table and we can all have a very close look at where we are potentially heading. The other has already been raised by my colleague Mr Nobbs and it was to do with the Telecommunications proposals that the Minister is looking at. He has my full support to improve Telecommunications to the island but I certainly haven't seen any cost recovery analysis on that and I certainly trust that assumptions are not being made, but when the Minister is seeking the support of the House to ensure expenditure in that area then I'm sure the Minister will have no problem in supplying that to Members. So if those four points that will assist me to support the Minister in overcoming this hurdle and listening to the Presentation of Papers where Minister Ward read out on behalf of the Chief Minister a letter to Minister Briggs, which did give an update on the Cascade Pier project and how we're to move forward and that we will work within the Funding Agreement so there is no intention of the Department or this Government to breach that Funding Agreement, and I'm talking about assessing people's capacity to pay when we're talking about Municipal rates and ensuring that it is a progressive rating system, not a regressive one, I have renewed faith so thank you to the Chief Minister for sending that or will be sent I assume onto the Honourable Jamie Briggs MP, and I would ask the Chief Minister to publish that letter in the local paper and the media. He certainly had no problem in publishing Minister Briggs' letter where those questions were raised and clarification was given. I think on behalf of the community I request that the Chief Minister publish that paper. It would certainly help and it highlights that our decisions moving forward will be evidence based, they won't be just based on back of the envelope figures put up by other bodies and reports and review. So thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I'll be brief. Before my departure overseas I contacted the two areas within my Portfolio responsibilities which were being requested to make considerable savings, they being the Norfolk Island Hospital, being asked to reduce expenditure by \$250,000 and the Norfolk island Central School similarly by \$250,000. Certainly it was somewhat tongue in cheek request, especially to the Hospital knowing full well that that is an absolute impossibility for them at this time to make such a reduction. The question mark remains is that what services can be removed or reduced in the health services area at the Norfolk Island Hospital. In respect of the School the Principal put up certain suggested deductions which included funding for learning support staff for our disabled children, removal of the Norfolk Island language, both of those for me Mr Speaker are not negotiable, they are not negotiable, and so with the best of intentions the Principal put up potential savings, taking in the bursaries and scholarships put potential savings of \$73,320 . My understanding from Minister Sheridan is that saving amounts to only \$30,000 out of that amount, roughly that figure because he had not intended to abolish the student bursaries and scholarships, it's not intended to remove the disabilities funding for our children who are in need at the School nor the Norfolk Island language which is required under the LOTE provision of the NSW Department of Education. Both of these, this area of course operates under a Memorandum of Understanding between the NSW Government and the Norfolk Island Government and the Commonwealth Government under the 1988 MoU and therefore under present arrangements, the area, the ability to move is minimal. However they are all issues that we as the Norfolk Island Parliament and the Norfolk Island community are going to have to face going forward into the future. Discussions at community level have to occur. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I just very quickly want to say that \$1.6m is not a small amount of money, it's quite a significant amount of money in the context of things and the issues that have come out of this are that there are areas where the returns are not as good as they should be and or were expected but their expenditure still remains the same, and I think those are the areas that you should drill down into and try and work through

the issues with them. Now we're talking about we've got a lack of people to do things. I would suggest that in some areas we've got an excess of people and the excess of returns anyhow which suggests that we have an excess of persons in that particular area and I think personally, and I've mentioned this in the past before, that we should be looking at all the individual persons within the Administration. You will find in any organization and I know this very well how well this applies in the Administration that there are some significantly talented people in all organizations that are, I won't say pigeon holed but their actually placed in areas and they are left there and that there is no development of the potential of those people. Now there was supposed to have been done with the Administration a series of, I don't know how they did it, but tests to work out precisely and in simple terms what that persons capabilities are, what an employees capabilities are. I can't believe that we cannot take that information that you have and just change people from one position to the other where they will be more suitable, the progression of those people would be and the persons I believe would be, has been shown to me, by moving people around to areas that are more suited to, you would gain greater productivity. I would suggest to you that there is about a 20% productivity loss in a number of the areas in the Administration and I think that we need to get serious with it. We need to get serious and talk it through with the various unions, the Section Heads and the like and get the productivity side of it up within the Administration itself. Now there are ways and means of doing it and I'm not going into it here but that's an area that we could improve and we should do it before the next financial year. The issue of having people incapable supposedly incapable of undertaking works for the, not the Roadmap, what's the other thing you've got Tim, the financial agreement with the Commonwealth, we haven't got the people to look at particular developments like the Cascade Jetty and those sort of things. We just haven't got the people, that's rubbish, we have got them, we've just got to get them out there, get them organized and into a better framework than we have at the present time in the Administration. The funding is difficult and Tim's got my support on the \$1.6m and the way he's doing things. It's not the best way that I would like to see but I cannot see any alternative at this present time. I think the subsidy arrangement with the Hospital, I don't know what happened there but it's obviously there was a miscalculation in the original business but it's still fairly significant. I think that we need to look at the Hospital arrangement I mean the flying people offshore all the time, and obviously that's been said that the returns to the Hospital are down. That's it. So how do we get around that sort of situation. How do we do that. And that's the way that I urge the Minister to really look at those sort of issues. As far as the other issue with the changing within the staff arrangement within the Administration. Right. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for that. But I think that the Government is responsible in the long run. The buck stops here! The Chief Executive Officer should have the backing of the Government to proceed with that type of operation. Not the way it appears to be which is for the Chief Executive Officer to carry the can and then we oh well, then we'll fix it up It should be the other way., What do we want him to do? This is how we believe that you can do it. Go for it. And if he has arguments against it, if the Union groups or the PSA have arguments against it. Well that's fine. You can deal with it then, but go ahead and look at it. Go into it positively not waiting on things to happen. Anyway that's all I want to say. I'll support Tim on his Bill but there's got to be some changes and there's got to be some massive changes between now and June when we do the budget for the next financial year. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker, we all understand the situation before us. It's easy to criticise this Government for lack of cut backs. The reality is that both the Commonwealth and the Norfolk Island Government have had to rethink the time frames that were established when the Roadmap was set up These moving goalposts indicate how much was underestimated when the reform process started. We have to do the best we can with what we have to work with and we have to ensure that we maintain clear lines of communication with

the Commonwealth. It's no use just continuing to play the blame game and grandstanding that we've been seeing lately. I think that Minister Sheridan has done the best he can with a very tight set of numbers to work with and I applaud his efforts and will certainly be supporting the Appropriation Bill today. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR PORTER Thank you Mr Speaker just briefly as I don't want to risk going over ploughed ground. Of course if support the Minister for Finance, we have no option, but again it highlights the necessity to stay the course. I'm heartened by the Chief Minister's statement earlier in reaffirming our commitment to moving to a better place. It's quite obvious we can no longer live in the world we've occupied in the twenty years past, and as I've just said, it just reinforces my belief that we have to stay the course. I commend the Minister for Finance in taking those hard decisions and encourage him to keep going

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker if I could just make a couple of other comments and respond to a couple of the queries. Just in regard to cash flow projects there, the cash flows are presented there as part of the monthly financial indicators, the ones that I've tabled just before which indicates the actual and the projections which excludes the \$4.4m and including the \$4.4m subsidy from the Commonwealth. I do get additional cash flow statements from the Public Service which plays out a couple of other scenarios which is purely for my use and that of Cabinet and those are the ones that we keep in House but the normal cash flow projections are tabled there this month and they will continue to be so tabled. Just to clarify that of the \$4.4m that we had agreement with the Commonwealth Government of receiving this year for essential service funding, we had a \$400,000 up front payment upon signing that agreement in June/July last year and they have agreed to pay us \$250,000 out of the initial first quarter payment of \$1m. Mr Speaker as of last Monday, that money has yet to be seen in our account so whilst they've made that commitment it still hasn't been transferred to the Administration. In regards to some actual areas within the Public Service I would just like to make comment that KAVHA money, that had not been affected in our re-assessment. The police, we did not take any money of the Police and in actual fact since the Appropriation in July last year, they've actually received an increase of \$21,000 and this is to do with increased custodial costs at the Police Station. Education, whilst we request that all Departments look at savings, and the Education Department did put up a couple of their capital projects like a new toilet block, they will put off until next year, their actual total budget for the financial year compared to the original budget has only shrunk by \$9,000. Because there have been some other transfers within items but the overall picture is only a reduction of \$9,000. I take on board from all Members here saying that we have to do things and we have to look at all areas of service and I said this last month, at the mid year budget review, I put everybody on notice that the forthcoming budget, we will have to look at not just reducing services, because I believe that we have reduced our service delivery to the bare minimal now. The next step is as somebody put it to me the other day, is amputation. We will have to stop providing the service altogether in an attempt to try and reduce our deficit in the budget and this is what the four Minister have to come to grips with and within the next two to three months, we will have to make some hard decisions as to what we are going to do in an attempt to try and rationalize our expenditure. There was comment about the \$310,000 that I had in there for Telecom for a new provider. Yes, it's no secret that we are looking at an alternate provider for our telecommunications. The actual costs over the year would be the same as the current provider. The additional \$310,000 is set up costs. \$70,000USD is actually a deposit so that when the contract is finalized we get that back. \$30,000 is an activation fee and a couple of hundred dollars, about \$180-\$190 is for equipment set up and spares that they deem essential that we hold here on Norfolk Island. So for the expenditure of that \$300,000 we will receive, it is planned, and I wasn't going to make a great deal about this today because we haven't signed the contract, but it is planned that our

bandwidth will be increased by some 150%. Our latency our speed for our data, will come down from \$650 to less than \$150 which in itself will give a greater benefit to the community and an ability for the private sector to enhance their operations. Mr Speaker I've just had a quick message. I said before that the Commonwealth had agreed to pay \$250,000 and I made mention that it had not yet been received, I've just been handed a message to say that it has been received and I apologize for that mis statement because I don't believe it was in that paperwork that I received on Monday but it was received on Friday the 14th so that was last Friday so we've received a total of \$650,000 from the Commonwealth out of that \$4,4m that had been budgeted for. The Hospital. This is one of the main reasons why, the previous Government had agreed to enter into the Australian taxation system because we realized that we cannot provide for all the services that a community wishes to entertain. At this point the Hospital exp endure is around the \$5m per year and we subsidise them, in the last few years, what I said was \$1.8m last year; \$1.5m the year before, \$1.9m this year, so it's about 40% of their funding that's made up from grants from the Norfolk Island Government. In any other jurisdiction those monies would be coming from State and Federal Governments as a subsidy to those areas in health so this is the reason why we cannot do it alone. We have asked, we have told the Commonwealth that we wish to enter into that system, so that we can participate in that transfer system. Until that is achieved we will still have this underlying deficit. Make no bones about it, we cannot remove the deficit even if we close down the Public Service we virtually would still have a deficit. I mean the Public Service wages. The wages Bill alone because we have to keep education, we've been told by the Commonwealth we can't touch that. We can't touch Police. We can't touch KAVHA. Those wages Bills make up roughly 40% of our total Bill. So just removing all of the Public Service wages Bill would not really solve the problem. The only solution is for the extension of the Australian taxation system and the extension of the transfer of payment system and I urge the Commonwealth to introduce this sooner rather than later. We are already trying to come to some grips with our funding deficit and that's through changing our revenue base through municipal rates. We will look at land tax though I know the Chief Minister says that he will not support land tax, but I believe he's come around, and we have to look at everything. It's not to say that it will be implemented but we do have to look at it. We have an obligation to look at all these local tax raising measures but in the same vein, I want to set up our business activities in their own right so that the funds that they generate, their profits and be reinvested back into their business. We can't do that at this point in time. We can't do that because those funds that we draw from them as a dividend assist the Norfolk Island Government in paying the subsidy to the Hospital. It pays the pensions. It pays the wages for the Education of our children. So its very difficult. We're caught between a rock and a hard spot. We know what we want to do but we can't do it in isolation. We need the bigger picture before we can fully transform the financial management of Norfolk Island so that's all I'd like to say now. I'll thank Members for their comments. If there was another way we would surely be looking at it, but unfortunately with three months to go in the current financial year, it's just not possible, but believe you me, come the budget in May or in June when we table it in the House, the Ministers will have to make some hard decisions as to how we can, and as Members have said, we have to look at all our business activities and see whether we can rationalize them, can we do it better, can we do without. Those are decisions that will have to be made and it will not be easy Mr Speaker

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Minister Sheridan for his acknowledgement of the situation which I take on board and I think every Member around this table takes on board as well. The seriousness of the situation here on Norfolk Island in regards to its financial situation. In recognition of some of the savings that have been instigated I wish to acknowledge with thanks to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, their contribution of \$35,000 and as Minister Sheridan has already mentioned, we couldn't ask for

any austerity measures through the Norfolk Island Police Force but I would also like to mention that the Public Service Review is under way, it's all underway with the new Chief Executive Officer, he's doing his utmost to be able to satisfy the demands of his position. It's extremely stressful for him at this time and I want to congratulate him on being able to assimilate into the community into his job, and he's doing a very sterling work in being able to address the matters which are before him, and the staff that he works with as well. It's a difficult situation, it's a difficult time, and having this type of Appropriation Bill presented and the lack of finance makes it that much more difficult and I applaud everybody for their efforts in trying to come to an amicable and a reasonable approach to what is before us here today. Thank you Mr Speaker

SPEAKER Minister Sheridan, adjournment

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker I move that debate be adjourned and resumption of debate made an order of the day for a subsequent day of Sitting

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan. The question is that debate be adjourned and resumption of debate made an order of the day for a subsequent day of Sitting

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

That motion is so adjourned

NORFOLK ISLAND CULTURAL STRATEGY 2014-2018

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. It gives me the greatest pleasure to table the Norfolk Island Cultural Strategic Plan 2014-2018. A Plan endorsed by and formally presented by the Council of Elders on 18 March 2014 to me as Minister with portfolio responsibility for cultural heritage and to move that, having noted the Cultural Vision, the Critical Success Factors and the Action Plan contained within the Norfolk Island Cultural Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018 prepared for and endorsed by the Norfolk Island Council of Elders and tabled by the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Community Services (the Minister), this House supports the Minister engaging with the Commonwealth, the Council of Elders and other key community stakeholders re progression of this overarching cultural strategy for Norfolk Island. Mr Speaker today Norfolk Island comprises a wonderful tapestry of people; a global community made up of people who have left their homelands around the globe to make Norfolk Island their home. They have come from Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Europe, the UK, Canada, America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other places too many to name here today. And then of course there are the people born and raised here, also making Norfolk Island their homeland. Many have stayed for the long haul, in some cases for nearly all their lives; others have come, stayed short letl and departed. And Norfolk Island has welcomed them all. However, the fact remains Mr Speaker that Norfolk Island is first and foremost the homeland of the descendants of the settlers from Pitcairn Island who in 1856 were moved as a community by the authority of Queen Victoria from Pitcairn Island to Norfolk Island; they came as a fully self governing ethnic community with its own laws, language, culture and traditions; and I am confident that each and every member around this table agrees that the special relationship of the said descendants with Norfolk Island, and their desire to preserve their traditions and culture, should be recognised. Mr Speaker, in tabling this historic document – the Norfolk Island Cultural Strategic Plan 2014-2018 - is a first and valuable step in achieving the recognition of the special relationship of the said descendants with Norfolk, and their desire to preserve their traditions

and culture. The Infrastructure and Business Development Committee of this House on 19 February 2014 in its Third Quarterly Report to the House recommended “That the Government develop a specific policy related to the protection, preservation and dissemination of the Island culture”. The Cultural Strategic Plan tabled today commences that process in a strong and positive way. It gives credibility and recognition of Norfolk Island’s culture; it will give stakeholders a cultural perspective from which to make decisions; it will crystallise the thinking of people about what is Norfolk’s culture and what we need to protect. Mr Speaker there has been a number of discussions in recent years with the Commonwealth on the question of recognition and protection of Norfolk Island’s cultural heritage. I will mention two. The Norfolk Island Parliament on 5 October 2011 passed a motion requesting the then Chief Minister the Hon David Buffett AM to enter into urgent dialogue with Federal Minister the Hon Simon Cream MP to discuss an approach being made to certain named eminent persons respected by the Commonwealth and the Norfolk Island Parliaments with a view to such an eminent person being co-opted to independently oversee the changes to the 1979 partnership, thereby assisting the Commonwealth Parliament, the Norfolk Island Parliament and the Norfolk Island community to have certainty that the proposed new partnership adequately protects the rights of the Pitcairn descendants and the rights of the Norfolk Islander and the rights of the long term permanent residents of this Island. The Chief Minister wrote to Minister Crean on 7 October 2011. For the record I table the letter to Minister Crean. The Norfolk Island Council of Elders on 30 October 2012 wrote to Minister Crean and to then Chief Minister David Buffett and I quote in part from the Council of Elder’s letter. “This Council determines to encourage both governments to engage an Island Cultural Officer to map, acknowledge and protect the Island’s traditions, language, expressions of culture and heritage and encourages further actions by both governments to acknowledge and commit to the preservation of the island and its peoples traditional and cultural heritage by clear identification in the Road Map”. It is important to record the Commonwealth’s view at that time and I quote from Minister Crean’s response of 31 December 2012: “The Australian Government...continues to support objectives that are consistent with the council’s aims of preserving, protecting and promoting Norfolk Island’s heritage. The Government recognises the importance of such groups such as yours in maintaining the Island’s important heritage for future generations.” The letter goes on – “I have asked my Department to consult with the Norfolk Island Government regarding your proposal of a cultural officer for the island. I also acknowledge your determination that future agreements between both governments should continue our joint commitment to the preservation of the island’s traditions and cultural heritage.” For the record I table the letter from Minister Crean. As an interesting aside while we are acknowledging the Pitcairn descendants this morning, Norfolk Online on 14 December 2013 published an article that appeared under the heading “Norfolk Islanders genes yield a Bounty of insight into heart disease” and I quote briefly from the article: “Genetic studies of descendants of the Bounty mutineers have identified places on the human genome that contain expressed genes associated with cardiovascular disease...” The study, published in *the American Journal of Human Genetics* looked at the genome and family tree of hundreds of descendants of the island’s founder population – the people who moved to Norfolk Island from Pitcairn Island in the mid 1800’s. The Pitcairn Islanders were descended from a small group of founders involving Caucasian men from the Bounty and Polynesian women.” I table the article as published on Norfolk Online. Mr Speaker I believe the foregoing sets the scene for us to now look in depth at the Cultural Strategic Plan which has as its Cultural Vision: *“The Norfolk Island community is enriched by having a unique culture. Our vision is a future picture of Norfolk Island where residents are connected to their history, their culture and share and protect their cultural identity, experiences and stories”* The Cultural Strategic Plan was developed as a result of a group of private citizens who wanted to ensure the ongoing robustness of the Norfolk culture and language coming together and meeting regularly over many months, and they deserve recognition – Louise Tavener, Patricia Magri, Terence Grube, Mary

Christian-Bailey, Archie Bigg, Andre Nobbs, Donald Christian-Reynolds and Albert Buffett – and they were assisted with input from the Council of Elders, the Pitcairn Descendants, the Community Arts Society, CDANI, Norfolk Island Museums, Norfolk Island Administration, Norfolk Island Tourism, KAVHA, Norfolk Island Central School and many other Norfolk Island individuals. On behalf of my Assembly colleagues and the Norfolk Island community I give thanks to this band of committed residents for the wonderful work that they have gifted not only to the Council of Elders, but to the Norfolk Island community and to future generations. Mr Speaker the Cultural Strategic Plan is too lengthy to try and do it full justice today but it will be available electronically in the near future as well as being published in the Norfolk Islander and Norfolk Online over the coming weeks. Allow me to briefly put on record today Mr Speaker the 5 point Action Plan summarised briefly covers –

- Action 1. Preservation of the Norfolk Language and Culture, including the establishment of an Office of Norfolk Island Culture reporting to the Minister and the appointment of a Norfolk Culture Officer;
- Action 2. Education through Norfolk Studies and Norfolk language being taught through the Norfolk Island Central School, the goal being that every student could read, write and speak Norfolk with basic fluency and being able to explain the history of Norfolk Island accurately by the time they graduated;
- Action 3. Accessing external funding for initiatives such as the Cultural Centre (CDANI) and others that promote the extension of the use of Norfolk Laengwiji and the sustainability of Norfolk cultural pursuits;
- Action 4. Reinforcement of the importance of the role of the Council of Elders, including the involvement of the Council of Elders in all ceremonial occasions, traditional celebrations and significant political and cultural events; and
- Action 5. To ensure that all Norfolk Island Tourism Promotion has a strong emphasis on the unique Norfolk Island culture and language.

Mr Speaker I will conclude my debate today with bedding down into history the objectives of the Council of Elders as recorded in the Cultural Strategic Plan, and I quote – “The Council, as the traditional leaders and custodians of the traditional knowledge and expressions of culture of Norfolk Island, asserts its cultural identity, rights and dignity. This is done, mindful of the community’s spiritual, historical and environmental origins. The Council shares the following objectives:

- a. Protect, preserve and promote, Norfolk Island’s traditional knowledge and expressions of culture, in all spheres, especially in respect of:
 - i. Distinct and collective Norfolk Island identity;
 - ii. Norfolk Island’s language;
 - iii. Norfolk Island’s unique cultural heritage
- b. Explore and encourage the creation of dynamic new cultural expression;
- c. Benefit from the wisdom and values of Norfolk Island elders;
- d. Support the aspirations and guide the development of Norfolk Island youth;
- e. Advocate a culture of peace and understanding among all people of Norfolk Island;
- f. Integrate cultural development into the social, economic and political development of Norfolk Island.

Mr Speaker at the request of Mrs Ward it is my intention when debate is concluded to move that the motion be adjourned to allow Members appropriate opportunity to absorb the contents of the Plan and speak further to it in due course. Mr Speaker, it is with pleasure and some humility that I commend this historic document and motion to the House. Thank you Mr Speaker

MRS WARD

Thank you Mr Speaker and I thank the Minister for agreeing to adjourn the debate. I think the document is too important and we did have quite a bit

of discussion on it yesterday but if I can just make a couple of notes of my quick reading last night, we were only circulated with the document yesterday so that's really why it's not adequate time to give it proper consideration but at page 5 under Norfolk Island Government and Cultural Policy, history appears to have stopped at 2007 and it doesn't go on to acknowledge any work or change of direction or governance issues that were brought into the House in 2010 and 2011 and then again supported by this Government more recently, so that's just something to look at 1.2.2. The other is that of course, there do appear to be dollar figures attached to this document and while people are of course free to make their own comments, we've just had a pretty heavy debate about our financial position, so while of course we can look at injecting these types of things where it comes with a dollar attached, it's all about priorities really. I'm sure every Member understands that, we've just had as I said a big discussion about where our priorities lay and lie at the moment, but tourism certainly I know for most Members an economic development, tourism and technology, it really is at the top of the list. So I'm not speaking against the document, I'm just saying we all need to recognise that this document has dollars attached and the other one which has been raised with me, and it's on the very back of the document is about the Norfolk language, and, it's on page 27 or 26 and it's where the use of Norfolk and at 5 (2) it says Norfolk may be used as a language of learning and instruction in schools in Norfolk Island but no child shall be compelled to learn or be instructed in it, and while there is great respect for the Norfolk culture it does take me back to the debate that we had in 2011 around the Motion where the Speaker at the time, Madam Speaker introduced a Motion into the House which spoke about the rights of people on Norfolk Island and it spoke about people with Pitcairn cultural heritage, and it spoke about long time residents and it's probably worth refreshing our memories because the last thing we want to do is create any division within our community and I ask the question of the Minister and perhaps she can take this on board and when we speak about it further at the next Sitting, is actually clarify once and for all whether it is intended that there is to be different rights for different sets of people within the community. I'm sure that's not the case, but I think that that does need, when it's segregated and pulled out about the rights of a particular group I would like people to think about that and consider the impression that it may give to some other people, particularly minority groups within our, what is a multicultural and diverse community. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS

If I may just respond very quickly. I went to great pains Mr Speaker I do believe in my introductory remarks by saying, Norfolk Island comprises a wonderful tapestry of people, a global community made up of people who have left their homelands around the globe to make Norfolk Island their home. They have come, Micronesian, Melanesian, Polynesian, Europe, UK, Canada, America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other places too many to name here today, and then of course there are the people born and raised here, also making Norfolk island their home. Many have stayed for the long haul and in some cases for nearly all their lives. Others have come, stayed short letl and departed. Norfolk Island has welcomed them all and they are an integral part of this community, an integral part of this community. There is absolutely no intention to create groups, minority groups within this community. This is a recognition of the fact that Norfolk is first and foremost the homeland of the descendants of the settlers from Pitcairn Island who in 1856 were moved as a community, as a whole community from Pitcairn to Norfolk Island and gives recognition to their desire to preserve their culture, heritage, traditions, language that they brought with them from Pitcairn Island. That is all this document is endeavouring to do, but it's about the Norfolk culture as a whole contributed to, by all people within this community. Let's make that quite clear at this point in time. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS

I obviously support the document. It's quite interesting that you put a report in at one meeting and the next meeting you get a response, and it is quite

MR SPEAKER

Thank you. Further debate. I put the question.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

That motion is so agreed

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

MR SPEAKER

The second Motion requiring leave. Is leave granted Honourable Members? Leave is granted. Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS

Mr Speaker I move THAT this House agree that the third Quarterly Report of the Infrastructure and Business Development Report tabled on 19 February 2014 be passed to the Norfolk Island Government for its progression.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Speaker. It's very quick ladies and gentleman. This is just a formality to pass. I've seen too many Committee reports just sitting before the House and never get done. So it's just to pass it on to the government for its progression and as it's always been done I, unless there is further debate I will seek leave to deal with it at the next meeting Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you I'll interpret that as a Motion that this matter be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of Sitting.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

MOTION BY LEAVE

CUSTOMS ACT 1913 - EXEMPTION FROM PAYMENT OF CUSTOMS DUTY

MR SHERIDAN
2014

Mr Speaker I seek leave to move a motion dated 18 March

SPEAKER
Mr Sheridan

Is leave granted Honourable Members? Leave is granted.

MR SHERIDAN

Mr Speaker I move – that, under subsection 2B(4) of the Customs Act 1913, this House recommends to the Administrator that the goods specified in column 1 of the Schedule imported by the person specified in column 2, and on the conditions mentioned in column 2 of the Schedule, be exempted from duty.

SCHEDULE

Column 1

Column 2

Goods

Kits for removing glass car screens
and battery pack light
- amount of duty applicable \$220.75

Importer/conditions

Norfolk Island Rescue Squad Inc
Conditions: Nil

Archery Targets

- amount of duty applicable \$239.45

Archery Norfolk Island

Conditions: Nil

MR SPEAKER

Any debate. I put the question.

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

ORDERS OF THE DAY**CHILD WELFARE AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

MR SPEAKER

We're resuming debate on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principal and the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Community Services, Minister Adams you have the call to resume.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I'll just repeat some words that were said at the time when I introduced the Bill. The interest of the child or young person is of paramount consideration under the Child Welfare Act 2010 and the Amendments before the House today will build on those parameters that have been set by the Act. Prior to bringing the Amendments to the House consultation was had with the stakeholders in the community including the Police, Counselor, Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise, Social Welfare Advisory Group, Clerk of the Court, Child Welfare Officer and the Legal Services Unit. The impact of these Amendments for the community are that they will bring greater accountability for those persons who are mandatory reporters and provide a more robust system of protection and reporting, while at the same time providing guidelines for the effective functions of the position of child Welfare Officer. It will also provide protection for those persons who are reporting in good faith, support for those persons who are in crisis, as well as provision for the contribution to the costs of an application where the Court makes a specific issues border. It provides for the definition of abuse to be expanded to include the hearing and/or seeing of sexual, physical or psychological abuse by a young child or a young person. An additional section has also been included in respect of pre natal reporting where there are reasonable grounds to suspect before the birth of a child that it may be of risk of significant harm. The issue of homelessness and how it is to be reported and treated is also addressed in the Amendments. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you. Further debate. No debate. Well I will just wait until Mrs Ward returns. You may know that there is a process when a Members is absent. I'll ring the bells, I turn the clock, I've locked the door, I don't normally do that. I don't think I've ever done it and I don't intend to do it now. We'll just pause for a moment until Mrs Ward returns to the Chamber and the I'll call the vote on this matter. Honourable Members what I plan to do, I plan to call on the next matter. In other words I think we might conclude the business of the day before lunch, we shouldn't have any difficulty with that, that's the way I'm thinking at this moment. It probably depends on how long you speak in terms of the next matter. Ok Honourable Members the matter that is before us now is this vote on the matter that the Bill be agreed to in principal.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

MR SPEAKER Do you wish to dispense with the detail stage. We so dispense. A final Motion please Minister Adams

MS ADAMS Mr Speaker I move that the bill be agreed to.

MR SPEAKER The final question is that the Bill be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

HEALTHCARE AMENDMENT BILL 2014

MR SPEAKER We are resuming debate on the question that this Bill be agreed to in principal.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker, I'll be brief and just repeat the Explanatory Memorandum which reads. This Bill is intended to ensure that reimbursement of medical expenses in accordance with the Act does not exceed the maximum prescribed benefit payable under the Medicare Benefits Schedule of the Commonwealth for that particular service. While this limitation does not apply to services provided by the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise it does apply to all other services whether provided in Norfolk Island or in the Commonwealth or other places outside of Norfolk Island and whether provided as a referral by the Hospital medical Staff or as a self referral. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Debate.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I wish to abstain from this Motion on the grounds that I have a conflict of interest.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Further debate.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. As the Chief Minister is claiming a conflict of interest, I think we might all have that, we're all going to get crook sooner or later. Mr Speaker I'd just like to say a few words. I think I made mention of this at the last Sitting. This Amendment has ramifications for the healthcare Scheme, but also for it's members. The ramification for the healthcare Scheme is that its putting into line some limitations on the payment of benefits to the 100% of the Medicare Schedule item. So whilst that in itself will be good for the Healthcare Scheme and as I mentioned before in debate, we're currently looking at subsidizing the Scheme something like \$460,000 this financial year to ensure that it can meet its commitments to its members Mr Speaker, because we must acknowledge that the healthcare Scheme is there for the members of the Scheme and the payouts in the main are for payment for Norfolk Islander's who in the main go offshore for treatment that is not available here on Norfolk Island. There will be some benefits available for treatment on Norfolk Island but in the main it's for treatment offshore and that treatment can get very expensive. In the past we have had a system where people could really go to whichever State or to whatever Doctor they liked, whether it's private or public and if the item was in the Medicare Schedule well then that fee was covered. This puts a limitation to that. So it transfers the liability from the healthcare Scheme to

the members of that Scheme and it has to be realized that the members of that Scheme will now be liable for that additional expense, but only if they do go outside of the systems that are set up in place at the Norfolk Island Hospital and that is for access to treatment offshore through a NSW Hospital but in particular the South East Sydney local health district. We do have a MoU there and it's proven to be a very valuable MoU. People who go through that system have reported back to me some very good results, and in the main they go in there as a public patient and they do as a public patient their fees are virtually covered under the Medicare Schedule. So in other words if you do get referred offshore, the best way to ensure that you personally are not out of pocket is to go to NSW but in particular to a system like South East Sydney that we have a relationship with. They acknowledge, they know that Norfolk Island residents by now, and they do go out of their way a little bit to make sure that we are comfortable and feel at home. So whilst this limits the payments of benefits payable to its members by limiting the fees payable or the benefits payable I should say I'd just like to reiterate that small section that I did talk about last month, it is transferring the burden onto its members. So we have to be very well aware of that and this is why in the last couple of years I haven't progressed this part because the inability of private health insurance to cover Norfolk Island or treatment on Norfolk Island was one of the main reasons why it never progressed. But it comes a time now, and this is about taking hard decisions. It's what I was talking about before, this Government has to make hard decisions and this is one of them. We are now putting back onto the members that additional burden of expense for them when they do procure medical services in the main offshore. So just with those few words Mr Speaker I'll leave it at that, but I'll support the Motion at this time. Thank you.

MR SNELL Mr Speaker whilst I did declare a personal interest I do have some concerns and I will come to them at the time. Mr Speaker there are concerns and the concerns are for members sometime one is forced by circumstances beyond their control to go elsewhere for medical treatment, for example availability of flights, Medivacs etc. So when they are forced to go elsewhere they run into problems, and I know of members who have been forced to go to Brisbane when they would have preferred to go to Sydney and have copped the financial penalties by having to go there due to the lack of transport. Some like myself have been forced to go to New Zealand because of lack of transport to Australia at the time. So it raises the question as to whether we are going to through this increase the Medivac situation for Norfolk, whether there will be more Medivacs out of this. Hopefully not but it's a consideration that needs to be taken into account. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. I will be supporting the Bill today. Minister Sheridan is absolutely right, this is an area where there is a clear demonstration of action being carried out by Minister Adams and I know it pains her to do so, but it's one of those realities we face. This has been a Scheme which has been I think the Chief Minister referred to it as the "best in the world" or you know, very generous. Well it certainly was, it certainly has been and unfortunately we have seen the results of that which is something we can't sustain and that's why it's here on the table today. I think for the listening community Mr Speaker if I may, because questions will arise in terms of understanding about what their covered for but the simplest thing to do is to go to the Healthcare Manager, there is a very simple document, I'm not sure if it's available online but it is the Norfolk Island Healthcare Scheme, and it says "what is it, and what will it do". Actually I'm probably going a step ahead and I should say "hold off" there will need to be an urgent reprint if this Bill is passed today. So yes please to bear with me the CEO and the Administration if they update that, if the Bill is progressed today. But the point I'm really getting to is where there were no such limits around, as minister Sheridan has already said and I'll second his words, where there were no such limits of capping in this scheme and its benefits. Today I will support a Move by the Minister to do that. The question about private

health insurance and peoples access to private health insurance. Norfolk Island residents are able to obtain private health insurance but it cannot be used on Norfolk Island at the Norfolk Island Hospital. It can only be used on Mainland Australia and I'm sure that there are schemes that cover New Zealand, but again that is for the individual to assess. Yes it's expensive, we've spoken here about it costing maybe \$3,000 for an individual up to \$5,000 per annum for a family but the point is that it is an option for people who seek to do that. I thank Minister Sheridan for clarifying my point. When I referred to 75% in the previous Sitting which anybody was wondering what my confusion was, it's no longer. I was confusing the Australian Medicare Scheme and their contribution of 75% to the benefit schedule. What this Bill does is continues for the healthcare Scheme to continue covering 100% of that. So I hope that those comments just help members of the community to know that there is a Officer within the Administration that they can go to to answer their queries or concerns. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I think the, what was spoken of before was a choice, you either but unfortunately under the current arrangements with the or the current condition of the Fund there is a need to ensure that everybody is dealt with equitability to the best ability of the Scheme can offer and the choice has to go out the window I'm afraid. I'd say that we have no choice ourselves but to support the Motion, the proposal. It's one of those things that has to happen and should have happened some time ago, sorry Tim but it should have happened some time ago and that also there are other issues in there including one that I brought up just recently that has to be dealt with and that is when do you no become a member of the healthcare Scheme. I mean that is to me just a joke, at the moment I'm sorry it is a joke. No other insurance has been referred to as an insurance scheme, this one, no other insurance scheme allows you to be a non financial member and that's the way it has to be I believe. As far as the issue of choice goes, really as to where your going, hopefully it will bring home now that we need to get an arrangement with Queensland, and possibly New Zealand or try for it. I don't know whether we've ever tried for an arrangement with New Zealand, but those sort of issues, so that's what we have to do and that's a firm couple of things that need to be done straight away. I know that Minister has been progressing it but we need to really push it and I'm not grandstanding here. As far as its concerned it's a thing that has to happen and I'm going to support it. Thanks very much.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Further debate,

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. I support all the comments that have been made around the table here today, particularly those of Mr Nobbs and I look forward to seeing those developments as they occur. I'll certainly be supporting where we're at today. Thank you.

MR PORTER Thank you Mr Speaker. I endorse those remarks and also reiterate that at our previous meeting when we discussed the increasing of the Healthcare Levy and I was extremely concerned that we would not only put up the levy but that we would reign in the cost because the community can't afford to just keep on digging deeper into an ever diminishing pocket to fund these things. So I support this initiative because that is proof positive that this Government is working to lower the debt requirement or the fiscal requirement from our members and I guess further to that if you look at this further integration towards the Australian model this is the normal. We had an overly generous Scheme, this is a correction and it's a correction we must have and it supports my belief that we have to attack this problem from both ends. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that the Bill be agreed to.

MR SPEAKER The question is that the Bill be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED
MR SNELL ABSTAIN

Honourable Members that Bill is so agreed to

FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING DAY

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that this House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday the 16th April 2014 at 10.00am

MR SPEAKER Thank you I put that question to you.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

ADJOURNMENT

MR WARD Mr Speaker I move that the House do now adjourn

MR SPEAKER Thank you. The question is the House do now adjourn. Is there any adjournment debate.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker I want to make a quick comment on the letter to the community by the Commonwealth Minister Jamie Briggs. I'd like to thank Minister Briggs for his letter and congratulate him. We had discussions about the communications with the community and the like and possibilities of him addressing a public meeting at some stage and so on and this is the first stage. I hope it will be just stage 1 of a robust public consultation process which has been somewhat lacking in the past. The other point I wish to make Mr Speaker is that I encourage all members of the community to respond. Now this is your opportunity to sit down take a few minutes and write a few things. You don't have to have a 10 page document, you don't have to have the Queens English 110%, you don't have to have anything. In fact some of those letters like that, they look at them and put them on the side, but if you can have an interesting letter and make the points that you wish, please do so, because it's most important that you respond. I've heard from people that they can't really write it and they are going to get somebody else to write it, that's not the way things are done. That's not the way you are going to get your message through. The way your going to get your message through is to just sit down and write it, and that's it. If the spelling's wrong, it doesn't really matter as long as the thing is there. I think then that the good old Aussie terminology they will know that you are "fair dinkum" and really take some notice of it providing that it's not too many funny sort of words in it. But anyhow that's all I wish to say Mr Speaker, to thank the Minister and to encourage the community to respond. Thank you.

MS ADAMS Mr Speaker I seek your final indulgence today.

MR SPEAKER Is this an official statement.

that was reaffirmed by this Government and I'm going back to the motion of the 3rd of August 2011 that was then reaffirmed by the 14th Government and part of it was the House resolving to reaffirm a preferred model for future self-Government as set out in the motion of the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd of August. And I think it may assist the community if that was printed and I understand that this Government was going to re-send that, that's been in the media too, that this Government was going to re-send its preferred model of self-Government just so that the Commonwealth had it so that we could be sure that the Commonwealth did have it on list or on their agenda or on their books and I think we all remember the Senate Estimate Hearing where a senior officer at the time thought that the previous Government hadn't sent one. So I think that that move to ensure that the Commonwealth does have it is a good one, that's already in the hands of this Government but I think it would be prudent to republish that for the Norfolk Island community to see what this government has put up, so what is our option and I think if you ask probably 90% of the community mightn't be too sure what that is. So that might be a good starting point if we're starting to talk about referendums. Needless to say the other thing is the arrival of the Commonwealths preferred model and then we can have the new vote. But then we can try and get a bit of motive about it without the information being put out to the community is perhaps pre-emptive. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Thank you. Any further adjournment debate Honourable Members. Then I will put the question that the House do now adjourn.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

MR SPEAKER Honourable Members this House therefore stands adjourned until Wednesday the 16th April 2014 at 10.00 am.