



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

TELEPHONE 6723 22003
FACSIMILES 6723 23378
6723 22624
EMAIL ministers@assembly.gov.nf

OLD MILITARY BARRACKS
KINGSTON NORFOLK ISLAND
2899 SOUTH PACIFIC

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10 May 2015

His Excellency General the Honourable
Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia
Government House
Dunrossil Drive
YARRALUMLA ACT 2600
Via fax: +612 6281 3760

Your Excellency

8 MAY 2015 - REFERENDUM ON NORFOLK ISLAND

I write to advise you of the results of the referendum held on Norfolk Island on 8 May 2015 on the question:

"Should the people of Norfolk Island have the right to freely determine their political status, their economic, social and cultural development and be consulted at referendum or plebiscite on the future model of governance for Norfolk Island before such changes are acted on by the Australian Parliament? YES/NO"

The results: YES vote of 624 to a NO vote of 266. There were 22 informal votes. That is 68.42 per cent voting in favour and only 29.17 per cent voting against. Therefore, the electors are deemed to have clearly expressed their opinion in favour of the question.

The result clearly undermines the assertion by the Norfolk Island Administrator, the Hon. Gary Hardgrave and the Federal Minister with responsibility for Norfolk Island, the Hon. Jamie Briggs, that they have "overwhelming support" from the community for the abolition of self-government and the Norfolk Island Parliament. Clearly the community wants proper information and consultation at referendum or plebiscite.

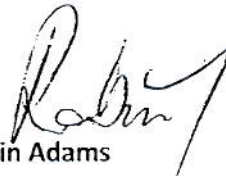
The level of consultation to date by the Commonwealth, and the want by the Norfolk Island community to have a say in their future governance arrangements was also considered at a meeting of the Australian Region Management Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in Melbourne on 10 April 2015. The Management Committee supported further consultation with the people of Norfolk Island on the proposed governance model prior to the current legislation before the House of Representatives is progressed (copy attached). Assistant Minister Briggs has responded that he believes that the consultation process has been adequate. The Norfolk Island Government refutes this claim.

The *Referendum Act 1964 (NI)* clearly states in Sections 4 through 6 how a referendum on Norfolk Island can be directed by the Commonwealth Minister, directed by the Speaker, or ways that they can be requested by electors. Assistant Minister Briggs made it clear that he did not want to direct a referendum. One has to ask why he is so opposed to hearing what voters want, and also be disappointed that he did not use this opportunity available to him to get a true representation of the Norfolk Island community on such an important issue.

It was further distressing to the Norfolk Island Government and many in the Norfolk Island community that the Administrator vilified the Legislative Assembly of Norfolk Island for proceeding with the referendum and appeared to be discrediting a democratic process. I attach two media releases on his public comments.

The Norfolk Island community has clearly spoken. They require full information on any future governance model and they want to be consulted at referendum or plebiscite before any changes are acted on by the Australian Parliament. They do not want a model of governance imposed on them. The House of Representatives are due to vote on the *Norfolk Island Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (Cth)* on 12 May 2015.

Yours sincerely



Robin Adams

Minister for Cultural Heritage and Community Services
Acting Chief Minister and Minister for Tourism

Cc The Hon. Jamie Briggs, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development