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MEDIA RELEASE

Immigration Committee's important role: Minister

The Minister for Community Services, the Hon John Brown MLA, has thanked the four community members of the Immigration Committee for their diligence and commitment in providing advice to the Minister on immigration applications.

“Norfolk Island is indeed fortunate to have so many community members who willingly give of their time to serve on statutory boards and committees” Mr Brown said. “These people receive no payment for their time or expenses, and are frequently required to deal with large amounts of documentation and to consider complex and even controversial social and administrative issues”.

Mr Brown said that he was aware of much community discussion on some recent issues that had been considered by the Immigration Committee. He said that it was important for the Norfolk Island community to understand that the Immigration Committee's role was thoroughly defined by the *Immigration Act 1980* and the Immigration Policies and Guidelines.

“I am concerned at reports that some members of the Immigration Committee have been personally attacked about their work as Committee members”, Mr Brown said. “This is particularly unfair, since members are unable to discuss cases outside the Committee and so cannot defend themselves from unwarranted criticism. One of the key requirements binding all members of the Immigration Committee is that they maintain absolute confidentiality in relation to all information on applications they are considering”.

The Minister asked the community to respect the role of members of the Immigration Committee by raising any issues of concern directly with him through the Legislative Assembly offices at Kingston.

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