



MR SHERIDAN Mr Deputy Speaker firstly I have a question for the Chief Minister as Minister responsible for Gaming. Chief Minister over the past few weeks there has been a fair bit of negative angst shown by residents towards the Norfolk Island Government with regard to the increase in the price of the TattsLotto/Gaming tickets available from the newsagency. Their believe is that the Government has increased the percentage on sales. Can the Chief Minister assure the public that this increase has not been brought about by the Government increasing its percentage take from sales

MR GARDNER Mr Deputy Speaker I can assure Members and the listening public that the concerns that they have are ill founded. The Norfolk Island Government hasn't moved in any form or fashion to increase its percentage on the sale of lottery tickets in Norfolk Island. The advice that I've received as late as this morning is that commissions on tickets, I understand are paid to local agents. The Norfolk Island Government as I said takes a percentage of the ticket price that each of the entries are sold for but there has been no adjustment in that percentage but costs have increased both online and at the agency and that as I understand it is due to the money prize increases from the pools

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Again a question for the Chief Minister as Minister responsible for intergovernmental relations. Can the Chief Minister advise as to how the discussions are going with the Australian Government in regard to the two proposals put forward by the Hon Jim Lloyd for the reform of Norfolk Island's sustainability in governance. Also can the Minister assure the public that this Government is working as hard as it can to deliver a possible alternative proposal for the Australian Government to consider and that this Government is not putting any obstacles in the way of the Australian Government's officials in their attempt at information gathering

MR GARDNER Mr Deputy Speaker if I deal with those three questions in relation to those matters, I can assure Members around the table and the listening public that the Norfolk Island Government has placed no obstacles in the way of any Commonwealth entities that are looking to collect information, facts, figures and the like. There is an open invitation of assistance from the Norfolk Island Government to assist them in the at process. The second matter, the alternative, yes we are working as hard as we possibly can to put together an alternative. That will be dealt with a little later in the sitting, Mr Deputy Speaker at statement time and there will be ample opportunity then to obviously discuss that issue and I've been on radio on a couple of occasions last week about the detail of that and obviously as time progresses further detail will emerge. As far as communications with the Commonwealth are concerned, I have spoken with Jim Lloyd on at least three occasions since his visit, personally, I've talked to him face to face on one occasion and I have written a number of letters to him in relation to the process and also suggesting to him that it is reasonable for consideration to be given to what is termed the alternative to the two Commonwealth proposals. To date I have received no replies to that correspondence.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Minister for Finance. Minister can you advise what is the Norfolk Island Government's total amount of debt in dollars owed to creditors at the end of last month. Also does the Finance Department of the Administration keep a detailed record of all creditors and is this apportioned against the cash flow, forecast each month and also can the Minister advise if the Government owes any creditors for an account which is over three months past due, and if so, why

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I thought that we were pretty well up to date with our expenditure although some of them from time to time have dragged out and they are historical arrangements I understand and I won't go into the exact details of it at this

point in time but I thought one of the main drives in the Finance area was to ensure that we paid out bills on time and I would be very surprised if there were bills which are owed particularly in the local community here which were overdue for any great length of time. I would like some further detail as far as that is concerned so at this point in time without the exact detail I really can't answer the question except to say that I'm a bit stunned to think that we haven't been paying our bills although some of the overseas bills of course take a little bit of time to come in and often are several months late by the time we receive them and therefore they would be over the three month period but I don't know of any local bills that would fall into that category but I would really like to hear what the situation is. As far as what we owe and who owes us are all taken into account when the accounts are done by the Finance section and that's all I can say at this point in time except that I would really like some information on precisely what the bills are that may be considered to be overdue but at this stage, I would say that I'm unaware of any apart from, as I say, there are some overseas accounts that come in which take a little time to get here and would be over the three months I should imagine but there's be only one or two. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I direct this question to the Chief Minister. Is the Chief Minister aware of a letter which has been received by Members of the Legislative Assembly in which a question is asked as to whether the Chief Minister is proposing to move from Norfolk Island. If the Chief Minister is aware of the letter, is there any comment that the Chief Minister is able to make today in relation to it

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I understand that there is a letter which has been sent to all Members of the Legislative Assembly by Mr Norris Buffett suggesting that rumours have it that I, as Chief Minister are leaving Norfolk Island to take up a new position in Australia of all places. Well Mr Deputy Speaker, just in relation to that question, my response to that is that it comes as a complete surprise this news that I am departing however, I am aware of a number of scurrilous rumours, I think that that's probably the appropriate word in relation to this, that have been circulating in the island over the last month or so in relation to various jobs that I'm supposed to be taking up. One was even suggesting that because I had such a good working relationship with the Minister for Territories that I was going to become a senior advisor of his on Norfolk Island matters. Another one had placed me squarely in Adelaide, doing goodness only knows. Nobody's been able to tell me exactly what job it is that I'm taking up down there. Others have put me taking up a job in Melbourne in athletics. All over the place. Mr Deputy Speaker, look I can categorically stamp out any of this rumour mongering which some of these people who certainly don't take the courtesy of giving me a phone call to ask me face to face what my plans are, I'm happy to share with them any plans that I might have but stamp out those rumours. I'm not leaving Norfolk Island Mr Deputy Speaker. Question two, is if that was the case, why am I still acting as Chief Minister. Well I've already answered that. I'm not planning to move on and I will continue in my role as Chief Minister until my colleagues around this table think otherwise and want to move me aside. Question three, why can't the Legislative Assembly Members, and this is directed at all Members of the Legislative Assembly, come forward and tell the truth to the community. Well I would really like to know exactly what it is that we've been misleading the community in and if Mr Norris Buffett would like to detail those things that he would like some truth on, he can call me, he can write a letter to me, he can do whatever he wants, I'll give him the truth, and I think that's the end of the matter. The other perceptions in his mind that he makes in his mind that he makes about rorting and abuse within Government, these are serious allegations that he's directed at Members of the Public Service and I really do think that Mr Buffett probably needs to look a little bit closer at what he's saying and what he's doing. If he's got views, sure, promote them. Stand for the Legislative Assembly. That's the best way to get some of these things off your chest but to go about and look I don't like the word, but to be shitstirring Mr Deputy Speaker is just unacceptable in this day and age

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker Point of Order

MR GARDNER

I withdraw that comment. It is inappropriate but it certainly was an indication of the gravity of some of the rumour mongering and scare mongering within the community that some of these people just want to continue to perpetuate

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I ask a further question of the Chief Minister. Has the Chief Minister yet responded to the offer which was made in a recent local newspaper to assist in airfares

MR GARDNER

Mr Deputy Speaker no I haven't taken up the offer. Some had suggested that I should hold out for a better offer. Others have suggested that I might like to ask the authors of those types of things whether they would accompany me and stay away permanently as well. There's various views around the community about those things. It was a gold plated offer I'm sure, so look, I'm not intending to take it up. I think it's an upset

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Any further questions Honourable Members. Thank goodness for that

## **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS**

Are there any Papers for presentation this morning

MR GARDNER

Mr Deputy Speaker if you would just bear with me for a second. I have a couple of papers for tabling. The first paper for tabling is the updated version of the executive Members and their portfolio responsibilities dated 14 march 2006 and I table that document

Under subsection 31(4) of the Legal Aid Act 1995 and clause 12 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Commonwealth of Australia and Norfolk Island I now lay before the Legislative Assembly a report addressing the matters specified in that subsection. That subsection reads a report of the Legal Aid Advisory Committee for the period 1 July 2005 to 31 December 2005 relating to its activities for that period. All recommendations of the Committee that have been accepted and a statement of reasons for the non acceptance of recommendations, that no legal assistance has been provided to a body corporate and enclosing a summary of the financial records of the fund in relation to the above period and I table that document Mr Deputy Speaker

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I table the Finance Indicators for March 2006 and move that they be noted. On 31<sup>st</sup> march 2006 the Revenue Fund overall income is 95.5% of the approved revised budget and that is \$381,000 short. Customs duty is \$309,000 short of budget and the sum total of other tax categories is \$28,000 short of the budget. The revised departure fees are \$72,000 short but land titles fees are \$56,000 ahead of budget. The revenue funds revised budget income from the liquor bond is currently running \$51,000 under budget. As far as expenditure, overall expenditure which include known creditors and outstanding orders, and I just wanted to make it clear at this time that question raised by Mr Sheridan just a few minutes ago, I've just had confirmation that all local accounts are outstanding and there is one overseas account as I said which is currently outstanding so I'll start again. Overall expenditure which include known creditors and outstanding orders raised in 2005-2006 at the end of March 2006 on a pro rata basis is 4.7% or \$451,000 under budge.. Medical expenses for social service recipients are \$14,000 over the revised budget at the end of March. I just wanted to make one point in particular, if Members wish, the total revenue in comparing this year, the current financial year for the

first nine months, three quarters, is 1% under the total of the corresponding period in the last financial year and the expenditure is actually 2% under the corresponding period last year. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Is there any further debate on the financial indicators. Then I put the question that the paper be noted

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. That paper is noted. Further Papers Honourable Members for presentation. Then we've concluded Papers

### **STATEMENTS OF AN OFFICIAL NATURE**

Honourable Members any Statements this morning

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I have a statement about the appointment of a counselor within Norfolk Island. Honourable Members will remember there was a motion in the Legislative Assembly if I remember correctly promoted by Mr Tim Sheridan that we should exercise our minds about the appointment of a counselor within the island. That was resolved by the house and since then there have been a number of steps to gain such a person and I'm happy to now advise the House that a counselor, Miss Catherine Pahl will be arriving in Norfolk Island on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May to commence duties in this capacity on Wednesday the 10<sup>th</sup> May, and between now and then, there will be advertisements in the local paper which will give reference points where appointments can be made and those things that surround her task in Norfolk Island.

I have a second statement. In fact this is rather an exciting announcement, Mr Deputy Speaker In ten days time, that is one week from next Friday, on the 28th April, Mrs ruby Matthews will achieve her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in Norfolk Island and this is an achievement as Members will know in the sesquicentenary year of Norfolk Island and the sesquicentenary Committee with Mrs Matthews' family support, has arranged a tree planting on House Road, just as the road rises to the Queen Elizabeth Lookout, and this overlooks the Kingston area where Mrs Matthews spent of her childhood and its an area in which she continues to be very fond. Franklyn Randall and Dean Franklyn Randall and Dean Fitzpatrick of the KAVHA Restoration Team, under the expert guidance of the KAVHA Project Manager, Mr Puss Anderson, have worked to ensure that the area is suitable for this celebration. And so on Friday week, that is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April there is an invitation for the entire community to gather at that spot Mr Deputy Speaker at 10.00 o'clock in the morning so that they may be present when there is a tree planting and acknowledgement of Mrs Matthews 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in Norfolk Island

SPEAKER Are there further Statements. We have concluded Statements Honourable Members,

### **MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR – NO 33**

Honourable Members I have received the following message from the Office of the Administrator. It is Message No 33 and reads, on the 2nd March 2006 pursuant to subsection 22(1) of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 His Excellency the Governor-General declared his assent to the Roads (Amendment) Act 2005 (Act No 6 of 2006) and that message is dated the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and is signed Owen Walsh, Deputy Administrator



6. Assume primary management responsibility for all public land in Norfolk Island, including the Norfolk Island National Park

Mr Deputy Speaker, in addressing that motion I want to talk about challenges. We are beset by challenges of late. We've had a drop in tourism, a faltering economy, a reduction in g4 revenue, services are under threat, personal income jeopardized and of course over the last eight weeks we've had a message from the Commonwealth of Australia. All of these things have demanded our attention and correctly so as they are dramatic and they are important. But so much so that we are in danger of losing our vision and the real perceptiveness of where Norfolk Island sits in a much bigger picture. We do have a proud heritage in this place and it wasn't got easily or lightly. It's a heritage that's shaped the character of generations of people who live here. It has molded our laws, peculiar those they may appear to some I might say, and they have dictated our finances and the like and for the past 150 years that heritage has exhibited itself here in this island but previously it was based in Pitcairn Island. Many challenges have been thrust at our people in living memory, probably the most impact that has been presented was the second world war with significant exodus of young people and their experiences beyond the island because many had not really moved beyond the island before that happened. With the influx of outside people into this place. By the battalion and airwing during the second world war and with construction of an airfield which post war opened speedy commercial communication with the outside world. But notwithstanding the like of these challenges, the heritage of the people and their two islands remain firm. They remained strong. Indeed one could say they were virile and tenacious to the extent that when the challenge of the 1976 Royal Commission came along, the policies which were proposed then, those which had the prospect of destroying the island's heritage were recognised and diverted or defeated. For example, Norfolk Island was not integrated into a larger corporate body called Australia. It was not got into any of its electorates. Not into its complex body of laws. Nor into its fiscal and taxing regime. Indeed a large part of the heritage of which I speak was written up in lights in the Norfolk Island Act which resulted from that Royal Commission. Let me just quote you a couple of lines without wanting to bore you too much with the whereas's. But it does state for example, in the preamble, whereas on the 8<sup>th</sup> June persons who had previously inhabited Pitcairn settled here in Norfolk Island. It goes on further to mention that Norfolk Island should be a distinct and separate place. It goes on to say that the residents, further along in the chronology of Norfolk Island include descendants of those settlers, and it says this, importantly, the parliament, this is in the Australian context, recognise a special relationship of the said descendants with Norfolk Island and their desire to preserve their traditions and culture. It goes on to say, that the parliament considers it desirable and to be the wish of the people of Norfolk Island that Norfolk Island achieve internal self government, so you can see those important things were enshrined in legislation so significant were they and to give substance to those lines that I've extracted for you, self Government was re-established in August of 1979 and it's continued for the twenty six plus years between then and now, and in this brief period of some twenty six plus years, we have made huge and significant advancement and substantially paid our way, but across this self governmental path, many challenges have been thrust and let me give you a couple more examples. Electoral laws. Again seeking to throw away our identity and seeking to encompass us in the identity of another. There have been citizenship demands. There have been immigration laws. Public health and related care. This vast array of challenges, compelled the elected representatives the people who sit around this table here, to clearly enunciate and describe the vision we all must share if we value the heritage of this place. If we value the unique environment we occupy and if we value the special methods we adopt to both govern and fund the people who are here. The Seventh Legislative Assembly adopted a vision statement which clearly specified the six goals that I've just read to you in the motion. These are the specifics to be reinforced by today's motion. This is a visionary statement. It is essential to be observed as we move along the track. It's essential to be observed when competing attention seekers come along, and they come along with great regularity. It's essential to be observed when our adversaries seek to divide us. We've experienced that of recent weeks. It's essential to be

observed when the going is made tough and demanding. In lean times especially, and we all experience lean times. But it is also essential to observe when some may try to convince us that their way is better than our way. Living this particular vision is paramount to ensure that our well being in this place is maintained. If you lose one part, you are in very grave danger of losing the lot. I mentioned the vision is essential to observe even, when some may try to convince us that their way is better than ours. May I now reintroduce the matter of the Commonwealth Message. The Commonwealth message says in very brief words, you'll be insolvent in eighteen months or two years, you now have option one or option two and option one or option two removes self Government. Both of them do. There's been no consultation on how they reached that conclusion but it goes without saying Mr Deputy Speaker, that this is another significant, indeed, mammoth challenge to the vision of the Norfolk Island Act of 1979 and the vision statement of the Seventh Legislative Assembly. It's interesting that the two options, firstly do not provide a remedy or provide a relief from the perceived difficulty of prospective insolvency. And secondly, both options ignore the vision which we have set. Neither of them for example preserve or enhance self Government. In fact both of them endeavour to take it away. Neither protects or preserves the unique heritage of this place. Both seek of course to destroy them or more succinctly delete them more stealthily by envelopment. Neither will improve an adequate standard of living throughout the community and of course neither will maintain industry or the economy and employment at an appropriate level to achieve economic self sufficiency. Well you might say, Mr Deputy Speaker, if there is the prospect of being insolvent in the next eighteen months or two years, and the Commonwealth message offers no solution, how do we stand. Can we stand. The answer is very clear. Yes. Yes. We can and let's be very clear about it. Because just as we have met other challenges that I've endeavoured to demonstrate to you this morning, we can meet this one too. Notwithstanding that the doubting Thomas's would give us long odds. Not only can we meet the challenge but we can do so by observing the essential points of our visions statement. Well how are we going to do that. There's been presented detail of a three point plan which was published in the Easter weekend press release and allow me to just identify those key points again. They are to re-invigorate the economy; to undertake structural reform, and thirdly, to engage in dialogue with the Commonwealth and I do encourage not only Members around this table who will have had a first opportunity to read that document but I do encourage Members of the community to read the document and if you haven't got access to it in another form, there are copies available from my office and offices in the Legislative Assembly. Let me just elaborate somewhat on each point. Reinvigoration of the Norfolk Island economy. It includes key points such as securing an airline service to ensure that we have adequate tourism arrangements, continuing with the high priority in this island. That we also assist the tourist industry and retail industries to adapt in the situation that we find ourselves. But not only do we get on and principally promote the principal industry that we have, but we give thought to diversification of the island's economic base. There are a raft of things that talk about reinvigoration of the Norfolk Island economy and where will that lead us. Because that's the important point. It will deliver economic growth which will foster businesses, it will enhance employment and improve Government income which in turn allows us to deliver community services. I've already said that neither of the Australian Government options provides evidence of giving economic recovery for Norfolk Island. The second point of course is structural reform. There needs to be structural reform in both the public sector and in Government Business Enterprise but particularly in restructuring the revenue base. More of that will come with another item on the agenda today. The third point, again in rather abbreviated form, is with those two areas earlier mentioned, we should engage in constructive dialogue with the Commonwealth. With Commonwealth Ministers, officials, and organisations so that they understand and act upon the priorities and preferences of this Norfolk Island community. And this future that I'm talking about here, Mr deputy Speaker, is not just a set of words and dot points. Documenting the financial reality is advancing in the hands of qualified and respected economists. The airline situation and services are being advanced with experienced stakeholders. Different and separate from our most recent

participants. Today we will see the introduction of a broad based taxing measure. What I'm trying to describe is that each day brings a further plank to pay this future path. Now all of that is quite a mouthful and I apologise in a sense, for being so long winded you may say, about it, but it's essential, essential, for all of it to be said, because in all of the challenges of today, no matter how difficult such challenges may seem, we must trumpet our cause. Our cause, Mr Deputy Speaker. And from here at Kingston give the clarion call so that there is absolutely no doubt as to our direction and no doubt about our policies and no doubt about our future and this motion in its form that is presented states them clearly. And it importantly states them clearly in the climate of challenge that we have today. I ask Members to support this wholeheartedly

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the vision is something which has stood the test of time. It is something that first went onto the wall outside our Chamber almost ten years ago in October 1995. And no doubt successive Governments have worked to achieve the aims set out in that vision. But I think it is important that anything we do here is able to be subjected to a reality check and survive it and I wonder if the Minister could, firstly in relation to the first of the goals, the achievement of full internal self Government for the people of Norfolk Island, could the Minister give an outline of the action which he feels needs to be taken in order to achieve that goal, the timeframe involved in that action and the likely cost

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker the internal self Government arrangements for Norfolk Island was firstly set out in the Norfolk Island Act of 1979 so we are talking about it being established some almost twenty seven years ago now. Twenty seven years in August of this year. In that arrangement, it mentioned that there would be a review of how that is to progress, within a period of five years. Now regrettably that was not done by either party and so there was a time frame that was set in that earlier time. Since then, as I've endeavoured to mention, there have been many distractions to try and move us from the path to self Government which has made it very difficult for us to set time frames because there has been rather a reluctance, and I suspect on both parts from time to time, about setting a final date to finalise the whole arrangement, but Mr Brown will no doubt recall my words on an earlier occasions, and indeed, many earlier occasions, especially when we are beset by difficulties such as the present one, from the Commonwealth, where I stated very clearly that one of the solutions if we are able to achieve it, to these significant excursions from afar into our affairs here into Norfolk Island was to tidy and finalise the self Governmental arrangements in a way so that they were unassailable. If you ask me how one sets it all in concrete I'm not able to provide a succinct answer. In fact you will ask many people and the answer is not an easy one to provide but it does deserve both our attention and the attention of people who are expert in making those legal and binding and constitutional arrangements. And so I would answer in terms of what time frame would one like to achieve it, ask yourself how many more of these difficulties do we need to suffer and that will give us impetus to say, we need to achieve it as soon as we are able and we should not continually put it off, and indeed there may be a cost, because you raised the matter of cost. I think the people are exercising in their mind at this moment, what additional costs we need to make to ensure that we preserve our own arrangements in Norfolk Island and especially when you compare it with the Commonwealth models, there is a greater understanding that maybe we've got to make more contribution than we have been making in the past, though that doesn't fully answer the question as to exactly what the cost is, except to say that it will not be without cost. It will not be without cost. But if we value the end product then we should be prepared to make the investment.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I wonder if I could ask the Minister if he could enlighten us in terms of the action that is necessary, the time frame over which that action is planned, and the likely cost in terms of goals 2 and 3, that is the protection and

preservation of the island's unique Protect and preserve the Island's unique heritage, traditions and culture; and sustaining the ecology and natural environment of Norfolk Island

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker the significant point to make about points 2 and 3 is in fact almost the reverse of 1. In 1., we need to get out and get there. In points 2 and 3 we have them. We need to protect them. And so our efforts in terms of 2 and 3 must be against those who would want to come and destroy it, to envelope it, to ensure that it can be proudly sustained and kept. That is a different task, and indeed it may not have the same costs attached to it, but if you are asking me to actually put a dollar value on it, I don't think you can put a dollar value on your heritage and your tradition and your culture but one needs to know that it exists, and one needs to know that it's essential for its preservation and ensure that the decisions that one takes as a law making body as we are, or as Ministers or as Members, that those decisions do not curtail the heritage, traditions and culture, nor does it curtail the preservation of the ecology and the natural environment in Norfolk Island and they are important factors to be taken into account when we walk along this path that we are walking now

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I wonder if the Minister could explain to us his concept as to the action that needs to be taken, the time frame within which that action can be taken and the cost of that action in terms of the goals 4 and 5, that is maintaining and improving where possible an adequate standard of living for all residents of Norfolk Island; and promoting and maintaining industry and employment at a level appropriate to achieve economic self sufficiency in Norfolk Island and so forth

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I think it's reasonably logical that Mr Brown would want to walk through each point and ask the question that he asks. It's the same question that he's been asking in terms of each as we can all clearly see. I think one must acknowledge that there isn't in all of these set of circumstances, a ready figure to be produced, nor a ready time frame to be produced this morning, here on the 19<sup>th</sup> April. In fact if one could, they would have been produced a long time ago. One acknowledges that it's a moving feast in many areas. The costs will vary. One thing is clear. It's that if in fact we want to move along this path which I am continuing to promote, and have promoted now for many years, whilst you can't discount the cost, it should not necessarily be a main factor. We should ensure that it's within the realms of affordability but we have survived over twenty seven years under the self Governmental arrangement that was commenced in 1979, within the realms of our financial capacity. Yes we are in difficult financial times now, but what we are endeavouring to ensure is that the resources within the Norfolk Island community are rearranged to ensure that our way forward is sustainable. The rearrangement is important and it is important in terms of the three points that have been made. The restructuring is the second point and so a lot of that will mean, that the resources can better be put to achieving these six points about which Mr Brown is enquiring now. Is the figure there at this moment. No. It must be acknowledged, it's not. But one of the examinations that is going on, is to more clearly define what those figures might be and therefore give greater clarity at to how and when we might move forward. And if Mr Brown is about to ask me about the last point, I'll give him the same answer in terms of that

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I'm grateful to the Minister for that explanation. It is difficult when you simply look at this. We could be accused of simply saying oh, they are all nice words, but really where's the meaning to them, how will we implement them? I can see that the Minister is well under way towards developing a plan to implement it all. I'm certainly prepared to support the motion today but on the understanding that at the time of our next meeting, the Minister will have a plan for us as to how we can turn this from just words, into a real action plan. Thank you

MR BUFFETT

Mr Deputy Speaker I'll defer to Mr Nobbs if he would like to say some words but I would like to say some further words before we conclude

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I've sat and listened with interest to what's been said by the previous two speakers and at this time you sort of don't doze off, but memories flash back and I remember as a youngster, that these sort of things, they talked about education and all that, and similar to this type of document, that one particular old bloke said, Yu kaa it et!, and that in English I guess is that there's nothing in there that you can eat, and from my agronomic background I guess that's the way it was dealt with at the time. If you couldn't eat it, it wasn't worth having, but things have changed and they've changed markedly and this is a vision statement which was put into the House and passed by the Legislative Assembly at the time in October 1995. I wasn't a Member of the Legislative Assembly at the time but I do recall some of that debate and I won't repeat it, but my point is simply this in relation to this, I support the vision. We need to have a vision and then you flesh it out and you go for it and it's like in anything be it sport or business, Government the whole lot or life in general. I guess. You do need a vision but that's not where it stops. Whilst I don't wish to be critical, I would say this. I've looked back, as I'm a bit keen on the historical facts as you know, particularly in the finance area, and I just put to you gentlemen and ladies, that when the vision statement in 1995 was passed, the previous six revenue funds had ended up, or four of them had ended up in a deficit situation. The tourism numbers, or I'll take a step back, in the last six that we've had now, and we are really in a bad way out here, that three of the six have been in deficit. The tourism numbers now are about the same as they were in that 1995 time. Things were not good here on the island at that point in time. From my memory of it and from the figures that I have available, there was a need for some significant change along the lines that were set out in this and I applauded it at the time. But two things happened. The first was the tourism accommodation restrictions were listed. We then saw in the next four or five years I guess a fairly lively activity in the building industry here. We saw customs duty go up thanks to the importation of building material, not totally but it helped, we saw the tourism numbers increase significantly and we forgot really where we were going. I believe at that point in time. And I'm not being critical of anybody, just by that stage I was on the Legislative Assembly. The situation is at the present time now, is that we seem to be in the same as we were then, what my fear is that we will forget about this vision, we'll just leave it, and things will improve as I'm confident they will and we'll forget about the vision that we have here and that's the most important point I wish to make that we don't forget where we are actually heading because of all the problems that we have at this point in time and that we progress this vision with some vigour. I think that, that's all I wish to say at this point in time, to say that I support it. I've always supported this vision but we need to follow it through and keep going, otherwise we're going to end up on the bottom of the table and that's not the best place in the world to be as you and I know Mr Deputy Speaker

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I've been interested to hear the words of the Minister for Finance. Particularly his assessment of the likelihood of an improvement in the local economy. I wonder if the Minister could let us know the assumptions that he has made in coming to that conclusion and in particular, the constitutional assumptions. Is the Minister saying that he's confident that no matter what change might or might not occur at some stage in the near future we'll start to see rapid improvement or is the Minister suggesting that, that will only be the case if the efforts of the Commonwealth are repelled, or I wonder just what other assumptions are in the background there

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I'll just let the plane come in, which is very good to hear, and then I'll answer it if I may

MR BROWN

It's going

MR NOBBS Oh going, is it?

MR BROWN It should be

MR NOBBS It's going sorry. I'm not a seasoned traveler like Mr Brown so I'm not too sure whether it's coming or going but the situation is that you asked on my assumptions and whether they were.... I'm not looking at the Commonwealth's things, I'm looking at providing the vision for, as we say here, as an achievement for full internal self Government, I mean that's moving along that path towards achieving it, so I'm sure that Mr Brown will agree that there's no chance of us moving along that path with either of those options, that the Minister for Territories has put before us, so I'm looking at other things. I believe that we will turn the corner as far as tourism goes, but we need to do certain things, in that area as well as we do. I think there's a need for improvement in the provision of services, within the Administration. All those particular issues, I believe within the next six months we can achieve some major improvements but we do need to look at alternates as far as other industries if possible, and I know people will say, ah ha, I've heard this all before, but I need t think we need to concentrate within those particular areas and whilst Mr Brown and I have got different views on some of the suggestions that I've made, I believe that we need to progress them to finalisation one way or the other and that will need the Commonwealth's blessing because some of them involve the Commonwealth and those sort of issues, and I believe that we can move along that. And I do believe firmly that we can turn the tables on the present arrangements this calendar year

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker. Vision. We've all initiated a vision at one time or another. Usually it's been related to what we saw ourselves doing when we grew up. Our occupation. Part of that vision involved steps and stages that we had to reach before we could progress onto the next stage and so on and I view this vision as basically, no different, but what it does, is outline the community desire instead of the individuals', but the time frame is undefined. I think it very timely that it be brought out again because while we all sit around and talk of self Government which is the first clause of this motion, we can often fail to expand on the principal behind it, fail to expand into detail which I view clauses 2 to 6 as doing. This Government has been accused of being too reactive and in many instances that's true but rather than doing nothing, which is the logical alternative, I firmly believe it is far better to react with positive policies which deals with changed circumstances on critical issues, and some of the examples of this have been done by the Government is the airline take up, the putting in place of necessary rock crushing legislation and initiatives to manage waste streams and recycling. Two of these tasks remain ongoing. However, the question must be asked if this motion is also a reactive measure and I believe that it is, but then as Mr Brown also states, we have to make a move on it. We've got to take it from the next step beyond the vision. System reality. There is however, one problem with the presentation of this vision and that is, it is not aired enough. We appear to have gone from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly without giving it a voice and perhaps during those intervening years, some modification may have been required. I see Mr Brown saying we haven't given it a voice. We don't keep on bringing the idea forward. We sit and talk in patches but never look at the whole detail. That's my view. I'm not advocating any changes, just merely suggesting that it may not fully reflect where we are today, or reflect that the changes that bring us to, to reflect on it once again at this point in time. I referred earlier to a persons own vision. And we are all aware of how that alters as we grow up. The occupation we may see ourselves in, can change as we realise that we may have been looking at it through rose coloured glasses, or may realise that the subjects we need to study at school or uni are really not for us. We change direction. Whatever the reason the vision is somewhat flexible in order to cover our changing views, our changing likes and dislikes. And our changing beliefs as we mature and experience more of the world. And this vision may also need to show some flexibility and not just because nine Members of an Legislative

Assembly may change but because an outside event may necessitate changes just as an outside event has caused once again, an airing in this forum today. However, Mr Brown also stated that it seems to have stood the test of time and that in itself is a major achievement in this small community. When the Minister for community services spoke to me last week about this reaffirmation and read out the clauses I spoke to him about my concern over clause 6 and of how many in the community would view it and Mr Deputy Speaker, I've not been disappointed. I can only respond to those people by saying that what we are discussing is a vision, that includes no time frame but if we are to look at this vision, and see that it does grow in order for it to have some basis in reality and not remain philosophical, then the time frame needs to be introduced. Proposals need to be introduced, be put forward and accepted. In other words, detail needs to be put in place that can substantiate the vision. It is fair to say that prior to self Government we were in a learning curve and sitting under the protective arm of the Australian Government and that with self Government much of that arm was removed as we got on with doing our own thing. Well, if we are going to continue to work to this vision, we are going to have to initiate some change and let me stress here that the word is initiate. It is interesting to note that the current plans of management for the National Park are currently under review and the Plans of Management for the National Park are in place for seven years and are due for change next year. Considering clause 6 of this vision, then perhaps now is the hour to put forward another submission of an Legislative Assembly view or the island view of the process of change in this area. Let me stress Mr Deputy speaker that I'm not advocating wholesale change, but perhaps a slight shifting in the process of management of the park. Retain the plans of management, retain the EPBC Act, but at the end of the next seven years have in place a possible shift in the management. Without getting into the detail of the proposal Mr Deputy Speaker, let me point out, that over the years local recruitment in this area has seen the upskilling of many local people. Other local persons have gained with the contracting out of some of the park's requirements, such as weed control, and there is in place a very strong National Parks Advisory Committee. We have an opportunity now with the current review of the Plan of Management to restate our objective in relation to the National Park and to negotiate financial arrangements that would allow us to undertake this in a cost effective and professional manner and to this end I would be proposing a time table to be put in place to introduce mutually acceptable management arrangements in the life of the new National Park Plan of Management in a submission. I have no trouble in supporting this vision and perhaps what needs to be recognised is that if we maintain our current status, then this vision needs to become the basis for something stronger and I'm wondering if the word constitution fits the bill. Thank you

MR BUFFETT

Mr Deputy Speaker I'm encouraged by all for the words that's been mentioned, from principally two points of view. First of all it is certainly endorsed that we need to have a vision and indeed, some are saying that we don't talk about it enough. Mr Nobbs cautioned us that we shouldn't forget about it. Not wanting to forget about it is one of the very reasons that it is brought forward today, so it's continually reinforced as we tread this path that we need to tread. But in terms of the detail, this is the visionary part. In terms of the detail which Members have very accurately identified as being the follow up arrangements. It is obviously giving impetus to the detail. Mrs Jack, for example, has just given us some thoughts about the National Park area which I applaud in the context of moving forward in that context. But also the detail in terms of the three point way forward is equally part of the detail of this visionary arrangement. Mr Brown for example says, come forward next sitting with some detail about these points. I just point out respectfully, that in fact the three points that have been in recent days given public airing about how we should move forward is indeed starting the elaboration point in terms of today's environment of how we move forward in this visionary arrangement and each time we come together, there should be additional planks to be laid in terms of that path and I hope that I can be a contributor in endeavouring to lay those planks. I'm encouraged by those who have spoken in their various ways about this vision. I'm even more confident that

this way is something that we share with the Norfolk Island community and will be our guide in the various decisions that we will be compelled to take, especially in these challenging times.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Any further debate? The question is that the motion be agreed to Honourable Members and I put that question

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

Thank you. That motion is agreed to

### **COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES – REVOCATION AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE**

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I move that -

- 1) the appointment of David Ernest Buffett to the Committee of Privileges be revoked;
- 2) the appointment of Neville Charles Christian as the alternate member of the Committee be revoked;
- 3) Neville Charles Christian be appointed as a member of the Committee of Privileges; and
- 4) Lorraine Carol Boudan be appointed as the alternate member of the Committee of Privileges

Mr Deputy Speaker with the changed arrangements with the Speakership and the provisions of the Members Interest legislation there can only be one executive Members under those provisions who sits on the Committee of Privileges. As you would be aware both myself and Mr Buffett sat as Members of the Committee of Privileges and since Mr Buffett has taken up executive responsibility its now appropriate that we now revisit the provisions of the legislation to ensure that there is no duplication and that the committee is operating in line with those provisions as set out. Mr Deputy Speaker as the motion says, Mr Christian was an alternate Member of the Committee. He is now Speaker in this House, unfortunately not with us today, but it is my proposal that under this motion to revoke his appointment as an alternate Member and for his to become a full Member of the Committee of Privileges and for Mrs Boudan to be appointed as the alternate Member in that position that was held by Mr Christian previously and I commend the motion to the House

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I'm prepared to support Mr Buffett's sacking and the appointment of the other people thank you. I should add Mr Deputy Speaker, that it is not a question of sadness for me, it is as the Chief Minister explained, Mr Buffett needs to be replaced, and I wouldn't want people to think that having supported his appointment to executive office a short time ago my views have changed at all. They haven't. I still fully support Mr Buffett and I support this motion

MR GARDNER Mr Deputy Speaker I might add to that. I think that all of the Members who have been identified in this motion are in full agreeance with the provisions of it

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Is there further debate? Then I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The motion is agreed to. Thank you Honourable Members

**SUPREME COURT ACT – APPOINTMENT UNDER SECTION 23 OF THE ACT**

MR GARDNER Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I move that for the purposes of section 23 of the Supreme Court Act 1960, the House resolves to revoke the appointment of Graham Charles Rhead and appoint Jeanette Irene Haviland as a person who may file an information for an indictable offence triable before the Supreme Court. Mr Deputy Speaker this motion is similar to that which was supported through this House at the last sitting in relation to similar provisions under the Court of Petty Sessions Act for similar purposes, the provision of information and the receiving of documentation in relation to matters before that Court. As I said, this is similar in relation to the Supreme Court and I commend the motion to the House

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker this is a formality that does need to be attended to. The previous Crown Counsel has departed. Mrs Haviland has replaced him. I have confidence in Mrs Haviland's abilities. Beside her being a very pleasant lady she obviously has significant abilities in the legal field and I believe the motion is appropriate. I intend to support it

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there any further debate Honourable Members? Then I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The motion is agreed to. Thank you Honourable Members

**APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE**

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the standing orders be amended by the insertion of the following new standing order: "20B. . . A Public Accounts and Estimates Committee to consist of the Speaker (ex officio) and two other Members shall be appointed as soon as practicable after the opening of a new House to scrutinise and assess the financial administration of the Public Sector, and to promote reform where necessary. The Committee shall –

- 1) examine –
  - a. the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of Norfolk Island;
  - b. the financial affairs of authorities of Norfolk Island;
  - c. all reports of the Government Auditor which have been laid before the Assembly;  
and
  - d. such other relevant matters as the Committee deems relevant.
- 2) Report to the Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit, any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Assembly should be directed.
- 3) Inquire into any question in connection with the public accounts which is referred to it by the Assembly and to report to the Assembly on that question.

The Committee may consider any other matter relevant to its inquiry; shall have the power to send for persons, papers and records; and may invite submissions from members of the public.

Mr Deputy Speaker one of the foundations of parliamentary systems in the western world is the committee system. Here we already have a number of committees, set up, pursuant to the Standing Orders and this motion proposes that a further committee be created. I will at a later date, bring forward another motion along similar lines, but in relation to the possible creation of a public works committee. Virtually every parliament in the western world has a committee of this nature. Such committees will be found not only within the Commonwealth

parliament but within the majority of the parliaments of the Pacific and the other parts of the world with which we deal from time to time. In the Australian Senate there's an Estimates Committee. In the Victorian Parliament, it is a Public Account and Estimates Committee. There are differing names for it but they all have reasonably similar functions and this motion and the proposed functions as well as the name of the committee has been largely taken from the existing Victorian system. So if Members wanted to have a look at how this particular committee would ideally work, they could look at the Victorian system but they could equally look at the committees of the Australian Senate, that is the Estimates Committee and the similar committee within the Australian House of Representatives or the Committees of any of the other parliaments of the Australian States and Territories. We have been moving since 1979 towards continual improvement in our Legislative Assembly and in our system of government. Until now the work of the proposed Public Accounts and Estimates Committee has really been done by the Minister for Finance with occasional assistance from special committees that have been set up for a short time. I believe it's time that we set up a permanent provision for a Committee of this type and that the most appropriate way to set it up is by amending the Standing Orders to make specific provision of the Committee. If during the life of any particular Legislative Assembly the Members of that Legislative Assembly felt that they didn't wish to appoint such a committee there are means available to suspend the operation of that particular standing order for the life of that Legislative Assembly. It would not be the first time that a Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly had resolved to not appoint a particular committee for which provision was made in the Standing Orders. I believe that the establishment of this committee if Members do support such establishment, will be a significant step forward in terms of quality of Governance, in terms of answering criticisms which have been made from time to time by bodies such as the Joint Standing Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament in relation to the National Capital and the External Territories, and it will go a long way towards improving the level of transparency in what executives do as a government and in what the remainder of us do as a Legislative Assembly. I don't propose to say any more. Members may wish to think about this for a month. I don't think that there's going to be a lot of difference whether the motion goes to the vote today or in a month's time and I indicate that unless Members are of a view that they wish to progress the matter to finality today, I will at an appropriate time move an adjournment until our next meeting. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker in the last Legislative Assembly there were three committees that were wanting to be put forward. The Scrutiny of Bills committee, which was achieved and it's my belief that a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee was also one of the three along with Mr Brown's intention to put forward a Public Works which was the third one. Doing it bit by bit, salami, slice by slice, is a surer way I believe of getting things achieved. I intend to support Mr Brown in this. I supported the view in the last Legislative Assembly. I continue to support it. My only concerns are whether, if we are going to leave it, if Mr Brown could give us some idea as to the costs of maintaining such a committee, the resourcing both in staff and costs to and back benchers further needs. If we are going to start bringing in more committees, to me there is an obvious relation in an increase of pay for backbenchers and so while I agree with the idea of the committee just the resourcing behind it, I would like to have some detail if Mr Brown could furnish me with that, Thank you

MR GARDNER

Mr Deputy Speaker I too am supportive of the establishment of this committee. Very much Mrs Jack I think it is a signification of our maturing as a parliament and Mr Brown's introductory words are spot on. It's interesting to note when I guess compared to many other parliamentary arrangements, there's an enormous amount that's been achieved in Norfolk Island with the benefit of hindsight of other parliaments in the twenty seven years of parliamentary life in Norfolk Island compared to that, for example of the Commonwealth parliament that took the best part of sixty or seventy years before they started looking at some of the transparency and accountability

mechanisms. I mean, a lot has been achieved and we continue to move along that path, and this is again, a matter that deserves recognition and consideration. Mr Brown was quite right, there has been a deal of criticism directed at us over the years, in relation to the structure or the workings, the processes of the Legislative Assembly in transparency as you mentioned earlier. I think this proposal is another step in addressing some of those concerns raised by bodies that Mr Brown indicated including the Joint Standing Committee of the National Capital and External Territories. I too have some views and ideas that I want to explore about how this committee, and if Mr Brown brings forward at a later date the Public Works Committee, how we are going to resource those issues. I mean, if it's any help I'm certainly very prepared to offer my support to Mr Brown to explore with him costs and support staff implications of this type of thing so that we can bring something solid back to this Legislative Assembly in relation to that, because obviously it's an important consideration in this whole process so that offer of support is there to assist in trying to flesh out numbers and the staff that will support it, but a very important role. I think it is also fair to point out just as an additional comment, to Mr Brown's in relation to the work undertaken by previous Minister for Finance, that has undertaken to a large degree the role of the committee, in working with the Public Service and using the senior officers of the Public Service as almost part of that committee but also the people providing the information to the Minister but also recognizing certainly in the years that I've been here, the role that all Members of the Legislative Assembly have played and for want of better words, the committee of the whole in addressing public expenditure and those sort of issues but this takes this now to another level and provides the committee with a full reporting mechanism that will be open and accountable, open to public scrutiny, obviously reports will need to be tabled and it will have a bearing I would think on the efficiencies and the management of public moneys, revenue, expenditure, across the board. I certainly do support it and as I said earlier, the supporting and maturing of our own processes as a parliament in Norfolk Island

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker it might be hopeful if I could indicate to Members the objectives which I would be hoping that this committee if appointed would be aiming at. And those objectives would be to scrutinise and assess the financial Administration of the public sector and promote reform where necessary and in particular, enhance the economic efficient and effective utilization of public sector resources, present and disclose information to the public and the Legislative Assembly, enhance the accountability of the executive Government to the Legislative Assembly and the public, constructively contribute to the presentation of budget information including key financial management details, to the parliament and the community. Facilitate a greater understanding of the budget estimates, encourage clear full and precise statements of the government's objectives and planned budget outcomes, assist the parliament and the community to assess the achievement of planned budget outcomes, and enable monitoring of the performance of government enterprises and agencies. They are the sorts of objectives that I would be hoping the committee will be seeking to achieve. The cost is indeed an important aspect of any motion which is brought to the Legislative Assembly and for some time we have endeavoured to include costing estimates in these things. The cost of running a committee of this nature would initially be limited to a relatively modest staffing cost and the time of the Members of the Legislative Assembly who were involved. The staffing cost estimate in its earlier years would not exceed \$12000 per year because it would be very much a part time responsibility not involving research initially on the part of the staff, but certainly involving normal secretarial work together with copy and distribution and so forth. But what would it grow to. It's important to ask that question and I would not take it upon myself to really suggest the ultimate form that such a committee would take. In a small place it would not seem appropriate for the committee to have its own policy staff for example, it would seem appropriate for the committee to largely rely on material provided to it by the Administration and the Government but that is not to say that at some future time, the role of the committee wouldn't expand. It would not see it as being a committee that

would require travel in the way that a Senate Estimates committee requires travel. And I would not see it as something which even if it did grow in its scope, would go beyond one policy/research assistant and still one part time secretarial assistant. A further question though is remuneration of Members of the Legislative Assembly. Now when this Legislative Assembly came into office it was acknowledged, that the low level of remuneration to Legislative Assembly Members was a difficulty. Although I don't recall any of us being aware of examples, there can be no doubt that a person needing to support a family could not afford to resign his employment or close his business in order to come down here as a back bench Member on \$11,000 and it may well be that the remuneration should be reconsidered in terms at the very least of a sessional type fee for attending committee meetings of this nature if one is engaged for a day in a committee perhaps an additional fee to Members would be appropriate for that. I'm not suggesting a huge fee but something to recognise that they have spent an additional day that isn't set down. I'm not sure that, that would go as far as we need to be going with Legislative Assembly remuneration. I don't see that as part of the debate in relation to this particular motion, but the time may have come where appropriate Legislative Assembly and executive salaries should be set, even if we all then donate back to the increase so that at least there is something realistic and we don't have a situation where once you take account of the lack of holidays, the lack of provident fund, the lack of long service leave and so on, it will not be very far down the track before an executive Member is paid less than any Members of the Public Service when you take all those things into account, but for the moment, I'm only suggesting that there be a part time secretarial assistant, I do think that could grow as I said, to one other full time person and it may be that it would be the catalyst towards revealing the way in which Legislative Assembly Members are remunerated even if as I said, the amount of any change was donated back. Thank you

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I support the concept but I would just like to reiterate what I said to Mr Brown the other day if I may. I don't like the piecemeal approach. I think it's time we had a review of the operations of the Legislative Assembly and I put that forward to the Members before and I still am and I think issues like this and what committees that we actually put in place and their roles and what is expected of them is something that should be considered and I'm pleased that Mr Brown is prepared to leave it on the table for a month or so and it would be hopefully in that time, that we may be able to have some discussions in relation to those particular aspects because whilst the motion read fairly simply, the objectives that Mr Brown read out sort of extended and complicated it a little in my mind although I understand where he's coming from, but it certainly extended the role of the committee which in itself will create more costs and more time spent by the Members on that. I would be very pleased to have this. It could share some of the joy that I have as Minister for Finance which I can tell you hasn't been too good in either Legislative Assembly's because we are consistently faced with dilemmas in budgeting and the like which we usually overcome and we'll overcome this one, but the sharing of that is usually with all the Members. It's usually fairly difficult for nine people to come up with a consensus so a smaller group is far better. I've used external people in the past and I've got a sounding board of them operating at the present time, actually, but I agree with the concept but I think we need a little more work done on it, and I would appreciate that extra time. Mr Brown if you may

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker the reason why I moved for the appointment of just one committee was that it has been shown in the past that if we try to pick things off one at a time we've got a chance of achieving them. If we try to create something that is complex, there's a fair chance that it will just never happen, but I have said that I'm quite happy to move the debate be adjourned today and if during the period between now and our next meeting Mr Nobbs comes up with a suggested amendment that is a little more extensive well, I'll be delighted to participate in discussion about that. As I've said, I think we do need a Public Works Committee as well. I'm not so sure that there are

any other committees needed at this stage but this is a part of the maturing that has been going on for the whole of the period since the commencement of self Government. It is a maturing which, if we are left to do things in an affordable time and at an affordable cost, will continue. I think that self Government in Norfolk Island has in the main been very successful. I think it's been far more successful than many of the other places that have gone down the same path and frankly, when you look at our achievements I believe that they compare very favourably with not only the Australian states and territories but also the Commonwealth in terms of size per size performance

MR NOBBS

Hear, hear

MR BROWN

But in terms of this motion, I move that debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Brown. The question is that debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

#### **PRIVATISATION OF VISITORS INFORMATION CENTRE, POST OFFICE AND TANALITH PLANT**

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I move that this House requests the responsible Executive Members to investigate, and report to the next meeting of the House, as to the viability of privatising the Visitor's Information Centre, the Post Office and the Tanalith Plant, and to include in such investigation the possibility of providing an incentive to existing staff for them to tender in any privatisation process. Mr Deputy Speaker this isn't a motion seeking Members agreement to privatisation of these entities. It is a motion seeking Members agreement to asking the responsible executive Members to investigate the possibility of privatisation and in particular I refer to Members to the last line or so of the motion, where it asks that in such investigation there be included an addressing of the possibility of providing an incentive to existing staff for them to tender in any privatisation process. Mr Deputy Speaker actions such as this have been a part of the striving of governance in other places to achieve efficiency. It is no longer good enough to simply sit back and take a view that the Government is the best to run everything. Those days have long gone. In Australia in many if not all of the states, local Government bodies are required to address issues such as this. They are required by legislation and if the Commonwealth Government has its way and where a shire council, make no mistake, we'll be required to address this sort of thing. If the Commonwealth has it's way and we are treated as a state or territory Government again, the state and territory Governments have had to address this kind of thing in order to be able to make their dollars spread as widely as possible and provide their communities with the best possible results for the least number of dollars because that's simply a problem that is being faced universally. I expect it's being faced world wide unless we are in somewhere like Dubai. In various of the Australian states for quite some time, areas such as roadwork's, have been either privatized or tendered out. And in many of those places, the existing road gangs and existing staff in general have been given a help along in putting their tenders together and in tendering themselves. They have been give a further help along by being given a form of bonus in assessing the tenders in at least some of those places and in cases that I have seen, that bonus has been in the form of, for comparative purposes, knocking five or then percent of points off the value of the

tender so that the existing staff can tender a little more and still get the job so this is not a case where existing staff should be at all concerned, existing staff if this one is investigated and if there is a recommendation that a form of privatisation occur, existing staff at least, the concept of this motion is that existing staff, would have every opportunity to meaningfully participate in the process. As I said, today I'm simply seeking Members agreement to requesting the responsible executive Members to investigate and report. I'm not seeking that this motion be dealt with to finality today. I'm quite happy for it to lay on the table for a month and at an appropriate time I will move its adjournment. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker just listening to Mr Brown talk of the best possible result for the least number of dollars, and just as a question to Mr Brown, is he aware of what happened in places like the Indian Ocean Territories. Much of what you've given out and spoken of is being privatized or is it done away with altogether and given to another state to have as a problem but when you talk of this is what is happening in the states and indeed, in the shires, would it be that they also have the ability through competitions that exists in those areas, the competition within the private sector that keeps possible charges to the public down. I have no problem with Mr Brown's motion. I will accept it. I see it as a movement forward and assisting me and the Public Service in looking at different opportunities that may exist, but I was just wondering. Is it competition that keeps prices down and not merely the place of having a private sector. Thank you

MR GARDNER

Mr Deputy Speaker. It could probably be argued if the previous motion was successful, next month, that this would legitimately be a matter combined with all of the other undertakings that the Norfolk Island Government are involved in, would be referred to that committee to provide that assessment, but that said, I don't want to tie the two together in any form or fashion. I think it's been very clearly said by the Minister for Community Services in his earlier statement today about the vision and his reference to our strategic directions in that document, that contained within that documentation is the view that there is a need to look at the restructuring of the Public Service and Government Business Enterprises to enhance and streamline the delivery of services and to maximise community income from public assets and businesses and another part of that is to review the legal and policy constraints on competition within the economy and implement changes. To encourage and support innovation and new investment. This goes part way to addressing that, but I think it's fair to say that these are three that have been identified. We can start with. Whack them up as examples and see how the process works that we are going to go through because it's a necessary part of what we do, is to go through every single thing that we do and make sure that we are getting the best bang for buck for want of better words. As far as the Visitors Information Centre is concerned, I've already invited the General Manager of the Norfolk Island Tourist Bureau to address Members next Monday in relation to promotion and marketing matters as far as the Bureau is concerned generally, but specifically on this point of the privatisation of the Visitors Information Centre so that Members can start to understand the implications of that, if it were to go ahead and the pros and cons. It's an information gathering exercise initially, with hopefully then a solid proposals to come back. I understand that Mr Brown wants to leave this on the table for a month, but it starts that process and it starts people thinking about what things need to be addressed when looking at particularly that one. I think it's also fair to say, I know Mr Brown has said the existing staff don't need to worry, I think it's important also to say that nothing in this, that I can read into it or understand about it, is a criticism of any of the staff who are operating in any of those areas at the moment and in actual fact, the acting Chief Executive Officer when we discussed this on one day, spoke in glowing terms of the staff in those areas who have supported the change processes that have been going on for a time in the Administration now so it's no criticism. The Acting Chief Executive Officer supports his staff and they too need to be supported if they are going to be showing an interest in this thing, if and when these things are decided that there needs to be a change. They might come back and say no, they are operating fat the most efficient that

they can and they are delivering the necessary services. We don't know that yet. As I said, there are more like assessments right across the board that are going to have to be made at some time. There already has been. I've had a couple of staff on the he weekend when they saw this in the newspaper that they've already indicated an interest in the Tanalith plant and the post office. If it were to proceed down that track and so I think it's developing a bit of a life of its own and certainly developing some interest and discussion and that's what these things are about. It is important that these be talked about and as I've said that's part of the reason why the General Manager of the Tourist Bureau is going to come down and talk about that with Members. About the Visitors Information Centre, I can't speak for the post office and the Tanalith plant but I think the managers of those sections will be given the opportunity to provide some commentary on this so that a full and thorough assessment can be made about each of those individual areas. I'm conscious that Mr Brown has indicated that he would like to leave this on the table for a month and i appreciate that because it will provide the consultation time with the people operating in those sections but it will also provide time to establish the methodology of the assessments that need to take place. Thank you

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

#### **MUSEUM TRUST ACT 1987 – APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES – MOTION BY LEAVE**

MR BUFFETT Thank you. Mr Deputy Speaker I seek leave to move the motion which appears on the programme in my name

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Mr Buffett

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I move that this House resolves for the purposes of subsection 5(1) of the Museums Trust Act 1987 that the executive member appoint Simone Rena James, Alice Elizabeth Rogers and Ross James Quintal as trustees of the Norfolk Island Museum Trust for the period 20 April 2006 to 19 April 2008. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker there have been these vacancies, one of them for some time, and the other two of more recent times, to be filled on the Norfolk Island Museum Trust. These people have been requested and have shown an interest and they are people who are suitable and I recommend them to you for this work. Can I also at the same time pay tribute to those who have earlier been Members of the trust and have recently withdrawn. Mr Albert Buffett and Mr Alan Tavener. They have been community Members of the trust and they have given their time, and their considerable expertise in furthering the interests of the trust and the Norfolk Island community's collection and I would like on Members behalf to say thank you to them both. There has been an earlier trustee who has withdrawn. Mr Peter Guile who I would also wish to acknowledge and say thank you to him for the work that he has undertaken. But these three are to be new trustees, and I invite Members to give them support in this task

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there debate? Then I put the question that the motion be agreed to





this legislation today, if it is a matter that Members want to address I think it is appropriate that, that be done by separate amendment at a later time, and therefore at the appropriate time I will be moving to delete the reference within the provisions of the Bill pertaining to that 30% taxing arrangement. I think it is a simple amendment. Back to the body of the Bill, it is vitally important to the operation of the court and the delivery of justice in Norfolk Island that those, rules are given standing within our court circles and I commend the bill to the House and at the appropriate time, as I said I would like to refer to the necessary detail stage amendment to extract that 30% provision from the provisions contained within this legislation today

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker as Members will be aware I work as a solicitor in Norfolk Island and it's therefore not appropriate that I participate beyond what I am about to say in the debate, nor that I vote and I in fact propose to leave the room once I've said what I'm about to say. I think it might be helpful to explain to Members that there are two types of legal fees. There's what's called solicitor and client costs, and there's what's called party and party costs. If the Chief Minister and I go along to see a solicitor to get him to do something for us, he'll charge us solicitor and client costs and in many jurisdictions there is a limit on those costs unless a person signs what's called a cost agreement and then there is no limit. Party and party costs are something different. Party and party costs arise when Mr Gardner and I sue someone because he delivered a faulty batch of fertilizer to us for example and we get a court judgement and the court orders costs in our favour. We don't manage to collect all of the costs that we pay to our solicitor. We only collect the tax costs which are taxed in accordance with what the Chief Minister is talking of now. So the important thing to realise there is, that it is not the solicitor that would be being penalized if we chose to knock the fees down by 30%. I suspect the 30% is a confusion because in some jurisdictions Magistrates Court costs are set by discounting the Supreme Court costs and 30% is actually a figure that rings a bell to me. It may even have been what the discount was in the ACT at one stage. But the person who suffers is actually the client because the solicitor charges solicitor and client costs, he gets a judgement that says this many dollars plus party and party costs and if 30% gets taken off, it's really been taken out of the pocket of the successful plaintiff, not out of the pocket of the lawyer, because he'll get paid anyway, so I thought that might be helpful to explain. I propose to now leave the room until the matter is concluded

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I'm wondering if we'll have an explanation from the Chief Minister about this because it says in here that because they don't pay tax here that it be reduced by 30%. Is there a set fee is there. Didn't we do some fees and charges

MR GARDNER

Mr Deputy Speaker there's a schedule of fees, and the application of the rules from the ACT pick up the ACT schedule of fees for the type of work that's undertaken and that's set out. What I'm trying to do by putting this Bill through today is not change the taxation arrangements specifically for Norfolk Island but to maintain, for want of better words, the status quo as far as the application of the rules to the court are concerned. The taxing provision of 30% on Norfolk Island is a new provision. This is urgent legislation to ensure that the courts can continue to function, and as I've said, I prefer to day to leave that out and deal with that by a separate amendment if Members are of a view of dealing with that as a separate amendment, simply because it is not proposed that this legislation sit on the table for a month. That in effect, will prevent the court from operating and may raise serious issues about the application of rules over the last fourteen months within the court in Norfolk Island

MR NOBBS

I accept your explanation and I hope that you progress it at a later date to whatever the finality is. I'm not too sure but it seems a bit strange that the fees are being set by the ACT when we've got our own rules. Maybe you can sort it out somehow. I don't want to do it now

MR GARDNER Just to clarify that. This is proposing no change in that which is applied to the Court of Petty Sessions in the past, other than, instead of the previous legislation that applied which was the Magistrates Court Civil Jurisdiction Act 1982, the ACT have moved into a different legislative arrangement that continues with the courts rules, and so it is proper that our legislation reflect standing legislation and not legislation that's been repealed, so it is to try and maintain the environment as it existed previously without any further amendment taking place at this time, simply because I think for fairness purposes, I just want to ensure that the court is able to continue the delivery of justice in Norfolk Island. If there are other issues, which I'm sure there are in relation to the Court of Petty Sessions, which is the subject of another Bill before the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, that those things can be dealt with at an appropriate time

MRS BOUDAN Mr Deputy Speaker I think I understand what we are coming from and I suggest that we seek to amend the Bill as soon as possible after this sitting

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Boudan. Is there further debate at this time? Honourable Members, then I put the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR BROWN ABSTAIN

The ayes have it. I note Mr Brown's abstention. The Bill is agreed to in principle

We are now at the detail stage. Chief Minister

MR GARDNER Mr Deputy Speaker thank you. I apologise for doing this from the floor in this fashion but I refer Members to clause 4 of the bill before them which is headed Amendment of Section 248. In the subsection (2), the fourth line down is a set of brackets which open and contain the words "(but in respect of work done by a practitioner in Norfolk Island reduced by 30%) it is my intention to move that the brackets and the words contained within those brackets that I've read out, be deleted

DEPUTY SPEAKER Chief Minister The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

MR GARDNER I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any debate Honourable Members. There being no further debate the question is that the amendment be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR BROWN ABSTAIN

I note Mr Brown's abstention. The amendment is agreed

The next question is that the clauses as amended be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR BROWN ABSTAIN

I note Mr Brown's abstention. The ayes have it. The clauses as amended are agreed

The next question is that the remainder of the Bill be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

MR BROWN                      ABSTAIN

I note Mr Brown's abstention. The ayes have it. The remainder of the Bill is agreed to. Chief Minister

MR GARDNER  
be agreed to

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill as amended

DEPUTY SPEAKER  
as amended be agreed to

Is there debate? Then I put the question that the Bill

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The Bill as amended is agreed to. Thank you Honourable Members.

That brings to a close Notices, for today and we now move on to Orders of the Day. Is it the House's wish to continue on or would you like to break for lunch. To continue on. We move to Order of the Day No. 1

### **NORFOLK ISLAND SUSTAINABILITY LEVY BILL 2005**

DEPUTY SPEAKER                      Honourable Members we resume on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Nobbs has the call to resume

MR NOBBS                      Mr Deputy Speaker this Bill was introduced last year and I spoke at length about the Bill at that point in time and there was considerable discussion within the community and also within this House. This Bill was subsequently adjourned and some people may ask quite rightly so, what happened. What's been going on. The Bill was made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting on the 25<sup>th</sup> September last year, which is a little time ago because there was some concern within the Membership that we needed to explore some other options for revenue raising which happened and so on the 25<sup>th</sup> September the Bill was adjourned and then things really started to happen. If Members can recall, on the 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Government agreed to the Commonwealth's proposal to have an independent assessment of the island's current and medium term financial position, which launched the assessment by Acumen Alliance. Acumen provided the final report to the Commonwealth in October and a confidential copy of the report was sent to the Norfolk Island Government with a letter signed by Minister Lloyd dated 11<sup>th</sup> November last. There was an understanding that the Commonwealth and the Norfolk Island Government would then meet and discuss the Acumen findings. This did not happen although this understood meeting was proposed by the Commonwealth prior to Christmas, then post Christmas and January and then again in early February. It was not until late February that the Minister arrived on the island and delivered a decree on the Commonwealth laws applying to Norfolk Island and the two options proposed etc, etc. why I mention that fact, is that during that whole period the current Bill was naturally put on hold and subsequent to Minister Lloyd's visit, a lot seems to have happened, even though it might not seem to the community, a lot has happened, in this particular area here. As a consequence, we've

reactivated the Bill and at an appropriate time I will seek to make a detailed amendment to the Bill, mainly to change specific dates which were relevant last year, but are not relevant this year. What is proposed, it is proposed in the Bill that a levy on sales transactions will occur from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 and due to the inability to map the economy of Norfolk Island the establishment of a precise levy has proven difficult. The bill incorporates the recommendation that for an initial period the levy will be set at 1% during which, data will be gathered. That recommendation is not only from the Norfolk Island service, it's also from the Commonwealth service. The Bill specifies certain exemptions, zero rated items, most relate to areas where we've had reasonable data such as the Administration fees and charges. Those persons or entities with a gross revenue of greater than \$3000 are required to register by the 30<sup>th</sup> June next and there is no reduction in duty proposed in the data gathering period. This is a change from previously. My understanding was that this was not a major issue amongst people and it would complicate the potential for a reimbursement of customs duty in the future. The bill requires that a review will commence on 1 December 2006 and a report on the outcome of the review just be tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007. the report is required amongst other things to review the levy percentage, assess inflationary impact with and without input credit, recommend on reimbursement of customs duty, assess potential exemptions for hardship etc, make recommendations related to reduction or abolition of other taxes duties etc and report on difficulties of compliance. That report must be tabled in the Legislative Assembly by the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007 or the Act will expire. Following receipt of the report the Legislative Assembly has until the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 to decide on the future of the Act or the Act will expire. I don't believe that I need to go into a lot of detail at this point. I believe that with the public meetings and prior t the introduction or following the introduction of considerable discussion on this bill, there's been considerable discussion subsequent to that and so I would rest on that at this time or I will move the amendments, whichever is applicable. Do you want me to...

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Nobbs. We'll have to agree the Bill in principle first and see if there's any further debate

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker a 1% gst and make no mistake, this is a gst, a 1% gst will be lucky to collect enough money to cover the cost of its implementation. So I suggest that we look at just why it is that we are wanting to introduce this. As I understand it, we want to introduce it so that the Minister can gain a picture of the Norfolk Island economy. Now this weekend, a number of officers from the Australian Bureau of Statistics will arrive on the island and will be here for a period of two weeks. They are here in order to do exactly the same task. To map or get a picture of the Norfolk Island economy. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> May as I understand it a number of people will be here from the Commonwealth Grants Commission. In August as I understand it, the c Commonwealth Grants Commission will be holding some form of meetings in Norfolk Island and I'm informed that the Joint Standing Committee proposed to visit the island in earlier August also. I'm not sure why it is that we are wanting to introduce a gst at any rate when we have all of these people coming over to do work which will be made available to us. Better results are likely to be obtained from the other people than we are going to obtain ourselves. Now the Minister will no doubt tell us what he proposes about confidentiality. The Minister will no doubt tell us how he proposes to enforce the requirement that people register and pay their gst but even leaving aside the issues that I've just raised, there is a further very significant issue that does need to be talked through. The Commonwealth Government has made an announcement. That it is going to change the form of Government in Norfolk Island whether we like it or not. Now the Commonwealth has said we will have discussions about implementation and that implementation will either be by way of a state or territory model on the one hand or a local Government model on the other, but the Commonwealth continues to make it very clear that their cabinet has already made a decision and that decision is going to be implemented. Now I certainly admire the Government's courage in endeavoring

to reverse that cabinet decision because that's really what the exercise at the end of the day will be about. Reversing a cabinet decision is a very difficult task and it will have absolutely no prospect of success unless we can show that we are capable of governing properly. That we are capable of cutting our expenses so that we are only paying for things that need to be paid for, rather than paying for waste and we need to show that in a fair fashion we are then able to raise sufficient funds to pay our way. A similar sort of change occurred in the Indian Ocean Territories which were basically integrated into the mainland system but when that occurred, one big thing that wasn't included or wasn't extended to the Indian Ocean Territories, was gst. And there were sound reasons for that and there are sound reasons for Norfolk Island suggesting that the Commonwealth gst should not be extended to Norfolk Island either in the event that the efforts of the Government are unsuccessful. And I suggest that it would not be wise for us to put all of our \$5 on the one horse, that is, to bet everything we've got on convincing the Commonwealth that their cabinet decision should be changed. We need to be doing two things. We need to be saying look, we do not agree with what you are wanting to do and we are going to oppose it, and we are going to continue to oppose it until we are successful but we need at the same time, to be doing a second thing, and that is to be saying, but in the meanwhile, if you are going to try to ram this down our throats, we are going to try to negotiate the best possible outcome for the Norfolk Island community while we continue to argue. Now that outcome has to at the very least, include a decision not to extend gst to Norfolk Island. In that scenario it's most unlikely that we are going to get them to not extend income tax. The lack of income tax has been one of the bugbears of the bureaucrats ever since 1979. The bureaucrats have just disliked the Norfolk Island situation where there is a different system. So I see no prospect of income tax being avoided in that scenario. Sure, there might be the equivalent of the zone allowance. The Minister himself has said that perhaps the taxable income would start at a different threshold figure. The Minister also told the sporting people that they would still be able to compete in the Commonwealth games. The Minister told the White Oaks club that the Commonwealth would be funding a lovely new Aged Care Unit at the hospital. I'm not sure at the end of the day that the Minister will necessarily be able to deliver on those promises or any others that he makes for a couple of reasons. One is that he can't guarantee you that the present liberal national Government will continue in power after any particular election because Governments change. One day, as sure as the sun comes up in the morning, we'll wake up and there will be a labour party Government in Canberra and they might not want to honour anything that Minister Lloyd has promised. But the second thing is that any spending promise must always be subject to budget approval and if the spending promise can't get the support of cabinet, can't get itself into the budget, and can't be then passed by the parliament, it doesn't happen anyway. So I would strongly urge that we forget about the gst, that we rely on the information that will be prepared at no cost to us by the Commonwealth and that we get on with sorting out the remainder of our problems. I've made it clear that I will not be supporting any new tax measure until the Government has shown the community that all of their existing taxes are being wisely spent. We are not yet at that stage. We are not yet at the stage where the confidentiality difficulty has been overcome but more importantly, we are not at the stage where it is sensible at all to endeavour to introduce a gst be it a 1%, 10% or any other rate. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker I appreciate what Mr Brown said with regards to the ABS, the Australian Bureau of Statistics people arriving and going to furnish us with information. My concern regarding the quality of the information that they make available is what I'm hearing from many within the community over a distinct lack of assistance towards the ABS and how if we are going to wait longer for more information to come from these outside sources, albeit done for us at no cost to us, that we could be in the same position just further along down the track. I think room meetings I've been having with various groups in the community there seems to be an overwhelming preparedness to take on board an NSL, a gst, whatever you want to call it, a rose by any other name, but my concerns I voiced to the Minister for Finance over the 1% ability to cover our costs. I've been

assured by the Minister for Finance and the Acting Chief Executive Officer that not only will costs be covered but it will cause a – I don't know if one would say significant inflow of revenue – but revenue coming into the system. I must start to believe and have faith in those people because after all, it's not just the goods that are being ns'l'ed it is the services as well and who knows just how many businesses providing various services are out there that will start to be affected. Mr Brown has highlighted the fact and I fully agree with him, the need to normalize this community is paramount with so many of the beaurocrats in the Australian Government. We are different. The fact that we don't pay taxes urks them something chronic. But if we don't start to make a broader take for income it will either be a gst, nsl or an income tax. The possibility of going after the other taxes or levies that the Australian Government has mentioned should be go state, territory or local, from the numbers around this table and this Legislative Assembly and others have very little chance of being accepted and I refer here to the land tax situation. The land rates. It's an anathema to some people to start looking at that. It's not unusual if you've come from outside as I have, I call myself an expat here, but it is an anathema to many of the local residents so you've got to start looking at numbers and when there's anything come down to it here, it's the 5, 4, the minimum of the 5, 4, count and while I appreciate the concerns continually raised and consistently raised by Mr Brown I feel that they've got to start making the move and I'll support he nsl. Thank you

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I would just like to reiterate what I said before earlier, that regardless of whether, I didn't know that these guys were coming over this weekend but anyhow, that's the way it is isn't it, but the is, on advise from ABS and Taxation Office people last year, their recommendation was the institute of 1% because no way in the world that they could get reliable data by going around the community and seeking it from them and that was their advise last year when they visited in June last year, so I mean, where this idea that they are going to be some grandiose... I've now offered to through the Minister for Finance and whatever he is, mentioned that these figures would be made available to them from us, would be made available to them and it's most important that we do that because they need to be kept in the loop that we can manage ourselves. It's not going saying oh forget it, we're going to pay income tax, forget it we're going to do this. I mean, we've got to fight for this place and that's what it's all about. And this is just one plank in the armour, but there's no way in the world that I'm going to keep cut, cut, cut, slashing in the Administration if we are not prepared to put out hands in our pockets and provide more for the community in general and that's what we need to do, and that's through something like this, will provide us with a greater input. Now the Grants Commission in 1997 said that we had the ability to fund all our requirements or words to that effect, I forget what their words were exactly, but that's what they read to me, but we needed to increase the take from the community. Now the 1997 assessment was made on that five years which I spoke of earlier before and that's the six previous years that we'd been in deficit in the revenue fund. The economy,. Taking out the change in the value of goods and what have you, the economy is in a similar position that we are today. That assessment was made then and I would be very surprised when they do the final assessment on the place, although it's a different assessment and that's what people have to realise, that the Commonwealth Grants Commission are not overall, they are not looking at everything, they are only looking at State and Local Government issues, but I would hope that their assessment could be extended and that they would look at all the particular issues including what we raised under a federal type arrangement which is what we have here. That would be a federal type arrangement for the NSL so Mr Speaker, whilst I believe that I don't want to increase any taxes here, but we just have to do it and I definitely don't want to put in a NSL as a percentage which will completely or even dent the economy under its present arrangement. We've already seen, and I don't know whether people realise this, that there has been a real dent in the economy since the announcement by Minister Lloyd in February and that's been a real concern to me that projects which I was hoping would go ahead and pick up some of the trades and the like have been put on hold, mainly on the advise of some of these people from the Department

of Territories in Canberra and I've already spoken to the Federal government about that. I find that really dreadful, what's actually happened and so I mean we need to move ahead. We need to move ahead very quickly, and we need to make it known to the Commonwealth which is being done, that we've got a problem, and they've got a problem. I can't see that this \$70m magic figure that they say is tipped into Western Australia, I mean, it's like the Aboriginal situation, you hear of millions of dollars coming down from the Federal, supposedly from Canberra for the Aboriginals, well have a look at the condition their in. Even Joe Hockey was horrified at some of the stuff that he's seen. Now this money, this huge millions and millions of money, dissipates on the way down and the people on the ground like you and I Mr Deputy Speaker, here on the island, we won't see it. And that's what happens and those are particular issues that we have to fight against. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I'm not sure whether the minister was suggesting to us that Commonwealth funds are sort of dissipated in expensive freight projects similar to those presently being examined in Australia when he suggested that Commonwealth money is dissipated but if he is making that suggestion I would be interested to hear more details about it. But Mr Deputy Speaker, let's not kid ourselves, if we become a Shire Council, not only will Council rates happen, but they will be virtually our only source of revenue and if we choose not to go along with the imposition of a rate, I'm not quite sure how the Norfolk Island Shire Council if that came to be, would ever hope to pay its way. If we became a State of Territory type body, then land tax is an important part of the revenue of the States and I expect, Territories. There is both, the council rate paid at a local Government level and a land tax paid at the state Government level. When the Commonwealth Grants Commission sits down to write its report, it's going to be trying to make an assessment of what would be raised in Norfolk Island if the usual taxes applied at an average mainland rate, so its workings are going to assume that there is a council rate, and they are going to assume that there is a land tax. And if in that environment the Commonwealth pays back some of the income taxes which have been paid by residents from Norfolk Island for example, when it's working those figures out, it's going to deem us to have received the council rates and the land taxes and it's our bad luck if we've been too stubborn to introduce those taxes. I recognise that people don't want land tax, and they don't want council rates, but if we don't introduce it somebody else will, make no mistake about that. I think we have reached the end of your line in being able to stay clear of the imposition of that type of tax. I've not heard the Minister for Finance say anything today about how he is going to reinvigorate the economy so that people have enough money to pay even his 1% proposed tax. I'm not sure whether or not people have left the island or cancelled projects because of the Commonwealth announcement. There's little doubt that there has been an amount of decline in the population. It's important to be realistic when you assess that though. You cannot compare for example, the middle of July with the middle of the Christmas holidays when you've got a lot of residents home on the island for holidays. So just saying there are x number of residents on the island over Christmas and y residents at July and therefore the population fell, isn't necessarily accurate. I think restoration of the economy has to be a very significant part of any decision if the Minister for Finance is asking the House to support him in introducing a GST. I think the minister also needs to very carefully think through his comments to Senator Minchin, because if the Minister has said that he will make information available from the GST to the Commonwealth, where is the confidentiality. I accept that the minister is unlikely to break it down to a per individual person situation but where is the confidentiality. We are being told Trust Me, but then we are being told the information will be provided to these people. To take it a step further, if the Tax Department wasn't happy with the income tax returns they got from Norfolk Island one of the really interesting sources of information might be to come along with a notice that says, give me copies of all of the returns you've received for your GST since you started. So Joe Citizen who believed in confidentiality, might have just sent all of his information to the income tax department. I don't think this has been well enough thought through. I don't think

it is appropriate to support it and as I said earlier, I do not think it is wise for us to introduce a GST a matter of months just before the Commonwealth is going to decide either to continue with its cabinet decision or to do something different, but if it does continue with implementing the cabinet decision, we should be ensuring that people in Norfolk Island are not lumbered with the GST so that we can carry that through the transition to any Commonwealth taxation situation rather than lose the benefit of the argument that just as the Indian Ocean Territories are not subjected to GST to very good reasons, Norfolk Island should not be subjected to it. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I intend to support this motion. Wholly on the basis that I do believe that Norfolk Island needs a separate new broad based revenue income stream. I'm not going to sit around this table and be accused like this whole Legislative Assembly and past Assembly's have been accused of sitting on their laurels and doing nothing and just waiting for things to happen. I see this as an opportunity now to get on the front foot, put something forward and try and make it work. I don't think it's going to be the death of the island. If it has to be stopped, it can be pulled just like that. I bet it can be stopped quicker than the time it's taken to try and get it commenced. If some of us around this table seem to just welcome to sit back and wait for Australia to come in and introduce all their taxes that they plan to introduce. I see this as an opportunity, as I said, to get on the front foot, introduce, a broad based taxation scheme, monitor the capacity of the island to produce revenue for the island, and then in that sense it will be kept in the island. So just with those few words I intend to support it and I hope that it will go through today

MR BUFFETT

Mr Deputy Speaker I referred to and other have, earlier in the sitting today, about the three point plan to move forward. Let me again remind members that the second point was that of structural reform and one of the planks in the structural reform was restructuring the revenue base through the implementation of a broad based consumption tax and removal of some existing taxes and levies. Now this measure that's before us today, doesn't do everyone of those things, but it is a significant step forward in filing that particular requirement. Again may I endeavour to remind members that unless we take the initiative to construct and move forward then it will be thrust upon us from a far in a way that is undesirable and unacceptable to us. Now taxes are always difficult. Indeed no matter where you turn you can't say that everybody will jump with glee and joy when you want to talk about a structural change that includes a taxing measure, but we also must recognise that there are some inevitabilities about this situation. I wonder if I might just walk you through the taxing structure that Norfolk Island has experienced in more recent times. If you say look, at 50 to 70 years ago, there really wasn't much money around and the taxing revenues if they are good, of course need to determine and identify where money moves. Things were done in a different way in the community and it wasn't always cash based. When you did need to provide funds, it was when you brought something in to the community and so what happened then in a taxing way, customs duty was introduced. So when you imported things from outside, the community gained a share of that monetary transaction via customs duty. But much further down the track when we entered into the realms of the tourist industry how did the taxing regime work then. It worked on the basis of those things that were up front and visible and were seen, they were taxed. For example accommodation houses were built that were readily seen and obviously there was the assessment that money was turning over in that quarter so there was an accommodation levy. People saw a lot of hire cars running around the island and so there was an assumption that there was money turning over there so there was a fuel levy and the like, and one can draw that example through a great many other things. Now they were appropriate one might say for the times. I'm not trying to say otherwise. But what has happened is that whilst those very visible things were growing, there were also a wide range of other things happening in the community but they were not taxed. One could like at a number of things in professional areas, in trade areas, in small and fairly large business areas

that were not necessarily subject to the same taxing regime, but nevertheless, funds that were imported by the visitor were equally being turned over in those other arrangements. This measure difficult though it may be, is endeavouring to restructure the revenue base so that it is broad based and all people who turn over funds in the community are asked to make an equal contribution and that's what I see that this NSL is about. Call it NSL, GST whatever. I'm not going to enter into an argument about its title. It's the real fact of the matter that is important and unless we do this, we in fact will be giving away our opportunity to take initiatives for this community and so one of that base alone, must give it support and ensure that it makes some progress. I've got to say that I too would have preferred that we don't have to go through an introductory stage of a more minor percentage. It would be much better if we could more accurately assess the value of all of that within the community and be able to pitch accordingly an appropriate percentage however I do accept what the Minister for Finance has said, in that it is very difficult to gauge, and we're not the only ones to say that. Other people have said that. Other instrumentalities, both private sector and government sector have said that when they too have been asked to do various work about a revenue base for Norfolk Island so there needs to be an acceptance that all of that information isn't there but an interim period and an interim arrangement will hopefully gather that information so that we might then be able to more properly structure a percentage as to how it would work with the totality of the community and so those who have real mind for Norfolk Island taking its own initiative, and not being subject of the initiatives of others really need to give some very serious thought about ensuring that this matter moves forward, otherwise a significant plank in our path into the future will be removed. Not by others, but by ourselves.

MRS BOUDAN Mr Deputy Speaker I intend to support the introduction of the NSL at a 1% rate. I think that's a good starting point. I see it as an opportunity for us to gauge, get a better idea of the economy and it's a good opportunity to move forward in this, thank you

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker could I now suggest that we now suspend for a lunch break

DEPUTY SPEAKER It appears that is not the wish of the House Mr Brown. Any further debate? The question is that the Bill be agreed to in principle Honourable Members and I put that question

#### QUESTION PUT

DEPUTY SPEAKER Could the Clerk please call the House

MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS JACK	AYE
MR T BROWN	NO
MRS BOUDAN	AYE
MR BROWN	NO

DEPUTY SPEAKER The result of voting Honourable Members, the Ayes five the Noes two, the Bill is agreed to in principle

We move now to the detail stage and Mr Nobbs proposes to move his foreshadowed amendments dated 12 April 2006

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I move that all reference to the Bill be changed from 2005 to 2006. That clause 2.2 be amended by submitting 1 July 2006 for 1 December 2005, that clause 5 be amended by substituting 30 June 2006 for 30 November 2005 and that clause 24.2 be substituted by-

“(2) The review, which must involve at least one public meeting, is to commence as soon as possible after 1 December 2006 and shall among other things –

- (a) review the rate (%) of the NSL;
- (b) compare the inflationary impact of the options of imposition of the NSL without input credits or with input credits;
- (c) make recommendations on the re-imburement of customs duty previously paid by importers;
- (d) assess potential exemptions which may be necessary due to hardship or special circumstances;
- (e) make recommendations regarding the reduction or abolition of any other taxes, levies and duties;
- (f) report on the level and difficulty of compliance within the private sector.”;

That sub-clause 24(3) be amended by substituting “28 February 2007” for “30 June 2006”; and that sub-clause 24(5) be amended by substituting “1 July 2007” for “31 August 2006”.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. The question is that those amendments be agreed to. Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I've spoken at length on these before in relation to these. It's mainly a change in dates from the previous years. It also puts into this Bill in clause 24.2 that the requirements of the review such as the NSL percentage and that we would be looking at the inflationary input credits etc and those other recommendations which I've made earlier must be dealt with in the review and its been put into this amendment to clarify those particular issues. They were issues that some people had concerns with and we need to specify very clearly and openly in the legislation

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker it's important that we not fool ourselves. If a majority of members of the House pass this Bill it is not going to cause the Commonwealth to change its mind. Any change in the Commonwealth's mind will be for reasons other than the passage of a 1% GST Bill. I expect that we are talking of a Bill which would come within schedule 3. that means that the Administrator would need if the Bill is passed, to seek advise from the Commonwealth before assenting to the legislation in Executive Council. Let's not kid ourselves. The Commonwealth may well take a view that to introduce a 1% GST is kid stuff and the Commonwealth may well take a view that they will decline assent and await the outcome of all of their own investigations

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker. Point of Order. I ask the relevance of this

MR BROWN We're talking about the same bill

DEPUTY SPEAKER I believe it is Mr Nobbs and I'll allow it to continue

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I mentioned earlier the cost of compliance. The cost of administering the system, and the cost to the community of compliance with it. I again say that I believe the cost of totally administering the legislation including that compliance cost to the community is very likely to exceed the amount of income and in those circumstances I would not be at all surprised if others looking on don't say, hang on a minute, this is al a bit silly and perhaps go to the extent of saying what we'll do since the Norfolk Island community wants a broad based consumption tax, because five of their members have said so, they may introduce the Commonwealth one. And then those

who have thought oh well, I'll pay 1% GST instead of Commonwealth income tax, Commonwealth GST, compulsory superannuation, compulsory medicare levy and all the rest, will certainly be left scratching their heads. It is not a case of introduce this 1% and solve all the other problems. We have done nothing to restore the economy. We have done nothing to give the community confidence that their money is being spent wisely and we have done nothing to cause me to do anything other than oppose this Bill, Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I just won't respond to that except to say that ANZAC Day is next Tuesday afternoon and I wish all the veterans a happy day and I would hope...

DEPUTY SPEAKER I question the relevance here Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I just wish them well and I would hope I don't have to be in the trenches with Mr Brown

MR BROWN I move that the Member be named

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members if you'll just bear with me for one moment

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I don't wish to cause difficulties. I'm happy to withdraw that motion if Mr Nobbs has finished his tirade

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there any further debate on the amendment

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker I'll just have to take a slight issue with Mr Brown, and no doubt he will correct me if I'm wrong, on this Government has been shown to do nothing to assist the economy

MR BROWN ...restore

MRS JACK to restore the economy. I think our actions of maintaining the airline in the sky is definitely worth a mention here because unlike an other Government who is in close proximity to our border, who let a particular company just go and made all the adjacent private enterprise fall by the side and employees entitlements, and in fact force an addition to airline tickets within that country, we have shown stamina and allowed our tourism industry to continue. Now you probably have a different view because that's your way but I feel that I must say that we have made positive steps

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I'm fascinated. Mrs Jack is a member of the Government, which closed Norfolk Jet. Make no mistake, they made an application to wind them up, they refused to accept the money when it was offered to them, and they caused it to close, and Mrs Jack subsequently said, words to the effect, we didn't go in soon enough and she said them in writing Mr Deputy Speaker. They had no choice but to do what they did afterwards. The Norfolk Island Government caused the problem. The Norfolk Island Government bought upon itself every cent of loss that was sustained and the Norfolk Island Government it could be argued thereby forced the Minister for Finance to try to replace the \$3m, \$4m or \$5m of losses that the Government has seen by bringing in this legislation and that is nothing compared to what has been lost by the private sector

MEMBERS That is rubbish

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker Point of Order. I can't accept that, what has been said

DEPUTY SPEAKER There is no point of order Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS No point of order. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER If you would like to wait your turn I will give you an opportunity later on. I would ask for order in the House. Mr Brown

MR BROWN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I've said what I wished to

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker we all have different memories on past history and I just look forward to the detail stage amendment now if we would

DEPUTY SPEAKER We look now to the detail stage amendments. The question is that the amendments be agreed to

#### QUESTION PUT

DEPUTY SPEAKER Madam Clerk would you please call the House

MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS JACK	AYE
MR T BROWN	NO
MRS BOUDAN	AYE
MR BROWN	NO

DEPUTY SPEAKER The result of voting Honourable Members, the Ayes five the Noes two, the amendments are agreed

The next question is that the clauses as amended be agreed to

#### QUESTION PUT

DEPUTY SPEAKER Madam Clerk would you please call the House

MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS JACK	AYE
MR T BROWN	NO
MRS BOUDAN	AYE
MR BROWN	NO

DEPUTY SPEAKER The result of voting Honourable Members, the Ayes five the Noes two, the ayes have it, the clauses as amended are agreed to

The next question is that the remainder of the Bill is agreed to

#### QUESTION PUT

DEPUTY SPEAKER Madam Clerk would you please call the House

MR BUFFETT	AYE
------------	-----



MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker this has been five years coming and it's time that we tidied the thing because it's been a real hassle and I fully support it

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker I would just like to acknowledge the participation and progression of this fund to Mr John Brown when he was acting as Minister for Community Services and Mrs Lorraine Boudan in pushing forward the motion at the beginning of this Legislative Assembly. I very worthwhile effort. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Is there further debate at this time? . Honourable Members, then I put the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. The Bill is agreed to in principle

We move now to the detail stage and Mr Buffett proposes to move his foreshadowed amendments dated 12 April 2006

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the detail stage amendments dated 12 April 2006 and circulated be taken as read and agreed to as a whole

DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that the detail stage amendments be agreed to

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker these are tidying arrangements. They give specific mention of both the Healthcare Levy and the Medical Evacuation Levy which didn't exist in the original Bill. That's the purpose of this amendment

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Any further debate on the amendments Honourable Members. There being no further debate I put the question that the amendments be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. The amendments are agreed to.

The next question is that the clauses as amended be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. The clauses as amended are agreed to

I put the question that the remainder of the Bill be agreed to. Is there any debate on this Honourable Members. There being no further debate I put the question

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. The remainder of the Bill is are agreed to. Mr Buffett

MR BUFFETT  
be agreed to

Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill as amended

DEPUTY SPEAKER  
Any final debate

The question is that the Bill as amended be agreed to.

MR BUFFETT  
Mr Deputy Speaker I could just make mention that if we give this the nod and I understand that we will as we've got this far with it, it will be the first plank in providing a medical evacuation arrangement that will be funded from within the community and just as Mrs Jack made acknowledgement of those earlier people who have been involved and that does include Mr Brown and Mrs Boudan and also the Chief Minister and there have been officers of the service and elsewhere who have been very active in pursuing that. It's a significant step and I acknowledge them all when we come to finalise this particular matter and I look forward to members also supporting the other plank which will be the Bill which was introduced today

MR BROWN  
Mr Deputy Speaker this is the first and perhaps the simplest stage of a significant package which needs to be introduced. All that's been done at this stage, is we've said we'll introduce a second section of the Healthcare Act. We'll increase the levy and we'll stick the money from that increase into a fund and from that we'll just draw out money when its needed. Make no mistake it's not going to raise anywhere near enough to cover the number of medical evacuations that are likely to be required. There are lots of things that it doesn't really address. For example it doesn't really address the question of HMA patients. In fact, rather than saying absolutely everyone should at least contribute to this part, if my recollection is correct, we're saying well if you earn less than a certain amount of money you won't contribute anyway. But that only deals with local residents who are residents of the Healthcare Fund. What happens when a resident who is not a member of the fund has to be evacuated. Are we going to say no. now the combination of our two bills says that if you are in arrears by more than one healthcare levy you don't have cover. So what happens then. Mr Sheridan has suggested, make sure you pay and that's quite right Mr deputy Speaker. Everyone should pay it, but from time to time there'll be people who won't be able to and we will come to the day where one of those people has an accident and has to be flown out. Are we going to say no. we haven't touched as yet the question of visitors. What are we going to do when a visitor has an accident and has to be flown out and doesn't have evacuation cover in his travel insurance, and doesn't have travel insurance at all. What are we going to do when a resident who has been living on the mainland for a while comes home for Christmas and has an accident and has to be flown out. What we've done so far is only nudging our way partway up the first step. We have not tackled the whole of the issues. We need to go the next step and my proposal is that an additional tax on cigarettes will provide additional funds towards those things. That it will provide funds towards H>MA recipients. Provide funds towards residents who might be home on holiday, provide funds for residents who are not covered by evacuation insurance. But once we've done that, we've still only said okay, we accept whatever the cost is and we'll just share the charge around everyone so that it can be paid. We have done nothing yet about managing the costs. In the time when I had the executive office I was well progressed in discussions with two potential operators who are capable of helping us to manage the cost. Helping us to manage the evacuation decision and helping us to manage the treatment cost once a person gets onto the mainland and that's the third stage of what needs to be a complete package. I'm very pleased to support what's being done today. I just hope though that we won't pat ourselves on the shoulders, think we've done a wonderful job and forget about it because we really haven't done anything of significance yet, other than sharing costs. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker Mr Brown is correct in many of his observations but as he also alluded to in his action be the establishment of a committee,

that at least it's a start and we have one committee in progress, we have the research into another one out of the way but yes, we've only started a small bit of a huge task but at least after how many years did Mr Nobbs refer to, we've made that start and now that it's done, and seemingly effortless time in this Legislative Assembly it makes me wonder why it's taken so long to get to this stage but I commend all of those who have participated and agree with Mr Brown to continue on. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate Honourable Members? There being no further debate I put the question that the Bill as amended be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

Thank you. The Bill as amended is agreed to

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006**

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members we resume on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Brown has the call to resume

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker this Bill at present seeks to reintroduce the first past the post system in the form in which it operated during the later years of the Advisory Council. There's been a lot of discussion about it. Some people have felt that they don't want to have to vote for nine people yet they might not be able to find nine candidates they like. Others have felt that some form of proportional voting system should be introduced rather than what we have. The Chief Minister sought quite a deal of public comment. I understand that he spoke with quite a few people and he has as I understand it, formed a view that it may be appropriate to seek to amend this bill so that people might still use all nine votes but can give up to two of those votes to any one candidate. That would mean every elector would have to vote for no less than five candidates and if they wanted to vote for nine they would be able to but it would go some of the way towards addressing concerns raised by the joint standing committee. More importantly it would take that action after having had fairly considerable local discussion about the issue. I've got no doubt that the grants commission is talking about one vote per candidate. I've got no doubt at this stage the majority of the community are uncomfortable with that for a whole variety of reasons and it would not surprise me at all if the major reason was that one of the ones I've just mentioned, the fact that people didn't want to have to vote for someone they might not wish to vote for but eh Chief Minister has done a lot of work on that, he is absent at present and I would like to suggest that we adjourn the debate until our next meeting. There's not going to be an election between now and then and we will enable the Chief Minister to present to us the results of the work that he has carried out and so I would move Mr Deputy Speaker, that debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. The question is that debate be adjourned and the resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

**FIXING OF NEXT SITTING DAY**

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I expect that I'll have more support with this motion than I've had with some others. I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 17 May 2006 at 10 am

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Is there further debate at this time? . Honourable Members, then I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it. The motion is agreed to

**ADJOURNMENT**

MRS BOUDAN Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the House do now adjourn

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Boudan. The question is that the House do now adjourn. Any adjournment debate. Then I put the question

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker if I may in the absence of the Chief Minister might I just note that ANZAC day is almost upon us. I would hope that all Members of the House who are able to attend the service on that day will do so, certainly it is appreciated when the community sees Members of the Legislative Assembly participating on occasions like that, but I would like to also in this place pay tribute to our veterans and recall the real reason for ANZAC Day and simply to say thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Mr Nobbs I believe earlier in the meeting you had some words to say about ANZAC Day.

MR NOBBS No I just recognise that it was on next Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> and I would just like to join Mr Brown in wishing the Veterans a happy day and I know they will

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further questions Honourable Members. Then I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION  
AGREED

The motion is agreed to. Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 17 May 2006 at 10 o'clock in the morning

