

the early '60's where he played for the Reds as the Cascade team was known. Rhonda arrived on the island in 1969 when Jim had been here about three years. She was invited to a party Jim was throwing and two days later they went out on their first date and began their 37 year romance. Jim was interested in life. He was into building, CB Radio, fishing, football and his children, Brendon, Dion, Mandy and Brooke. Horse riding, fishing, camping on Philip, any and every activity they were interested in, and this extended to his grandchildren as his family grew. A specialist, who obviously didn't know Jim well, gave him three months to live and for the next three years his family witnessed a whirlwind of activity as he tidied his affairs. Jim Gardner will be sadly missed by this community and to Rhonda, to his family and many friends, this House extends it deepest sympathy.

Olive May Longsdale was born and raised in Henty, New South Wales where she met and married Ned O'Leary and had two children, Rosemary Ann and Eric. In 1946 the family moved to Norfolk Island, renting a property at Steeles Point. There, Dolly grew beans and flower seeds and made many friends. She and Ned enjoyed the relaxed living and clean fresh air that helped Ned to recoup from his illness after the war. Eric settled in with new friends and enjoying his tennis. Tragically he passed away whilst serving in the Navy. He was on the HMAS Voyager that collided with the Melbourne in 1964. Rosemary also settled into life on Norfolk, fell in love and married Carl Schmitz. They had four children, Helen, Judy, Leonard and Shane. In 1960 Dolly and Ned moved to the Blue Mountains where Rose's children visited to build many fond memories. In the late '70's Dolly and Ned again moved, this time to the warmer weather of Perth where she grew beautiful orchards and discovered a passion for horse racing. So much so, that she bought a horse named Fair Sapphire which came first in the Moonie Valley Races and gave her one of the best days in her 90 years of living. Leonard and Leanne moved to Perth to be near her, but Rose's passed away in 1997 and Carl's needs brought them home. In time Dolly came back to Norfolk, staying with Leonard and Leanne until she required full hospital care. Over the last three years she made many friends at the Hospital and White Oaks and she will be sadly missed. To Helen, Judy, Leonard, Shane, their families and friends, this House extends its deepest sympathy

MR SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Honourable members as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, I ask that all members stand in silence please. Thank you Honourable members.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Are there any Petitions please?

GIVING OF NOTICES

Are there any notices please?

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

We move to Questions Without Notice. Are there any questions without notice?

MRS BOUDAN Mr Speaker I have one question directed to the Minister for the Environment, please would you inform the House your comments on the accumulation of unburnt rubbish in Anson Bay over the last few days. Thank you

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Speaker. I'm aware of the accumulation of unburnt rubbish and I would like to thank Mrs Boudan for addressing the issue and asking the question. Mr Speaker I have this to say. Waste Management is an important issue and one that the island as a whole needs to play a part in addressing. We are addressing the

waste streams as we can and establishing systems where-ever possible. As Members would be aware Administration received a grant from the Natural Heritage Trust for the development of a green waste management system in 2005. the primary piece of equipment for that process has arrived on Norfolk Island on the Boral barge last week and will be commissioned by the manufacturer over the next two weeks. Waste management staff will be trained in its use and the work shop staff will be trained in the service requirements. The process of dealing with the green waste stream has the funding, has the equipment, and is now working on the systems. A similar approach needs to be taken if we are to eliminate rubbish on our beaches. To that end, officers of the Administration are actively working on the problem. Incineration of waste and an efficient facility would appear to be the most logical solution to the problem however, this involves up front investment and decisions as to the siting, running and maintenance costs as well. We are currently looking at the costs associated with transporting waste to Headstone as a first step in determining the costs currently incurred in our existing practice. While incineration is an option it is not the only option. The least cost options put considerable onus on the community to take greater responsibility for the waste that they generate, to recycle, to reuse and to overall minimise waste. Sending our waste off island is an option and we currently do this where we get a return. It is not a favoured option for general waste given the shipping costs and quarantine issues inherent in going down this path. While I can't offer an immediate solution to the issue of rubbish on our beaches, I look forward to the support of the Members of this Legislative Assembly when the time comes to spend dollars necessary to implement a strategy. What I can tell Mrs Boudan is that in the meantime I have asked the responsible areas of the Administration to do what they can to minimise the visual impact of the rubbish by collecting it before the impacts are too confronting. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker supplementary if I may. Mrs Jack, you talk about some things are recycled. Can you tell the community what is actually being recycled at the present time and sent off shore

MRS JACK Mr Speaker at the moment we are sending off, for recycling, mainly aluminum cans. I did make a statement some months ago on matters that were sent off on the last Boral barge. Mainly aluminum cans. We are now being asked to assist in several tonnes of copper, further aluminum from windows etc, the insides of some of the old electrical large pieces of equipment, the conductors was it? I think it was the transformers, thank you Mr Speaker. Some of those have been sent off as well so it's those that are currently being sent off for monetary gain. Of course the other thing that is sent off which we don't derive any funding for is the asbestos which is of concern to the community and that first shipment went off on the barge some months ago, and that has gone to deep land fill in Queensland. Particular issues had to be covered as regards the health and safety of all people concerned in the transportation of that product, as well as quarantine issues having to be met in taking it from the Norfolk Island environs into the Australian environs.

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a supplementary if I may. In relation to that, Mrs Jack, do you feel that the Waste Management Centre is providing sufficient encouragement to people to separate their rubbish and is it a fact that the majority of the rubbish is being bulked and sent straight to Headstone for burning and this has caused a reduction in interest by the community in separating their rubbish

MRS JACK Mr Speaker some of what Mr Nobbs has said, it's unfortunate that I would have to agree. It is a fact that a lot of the rubbish is again joined up and taken out to Headstone and burned and some of the reasons for that would be that while it is cost effective or we get money back for sending off aluminum cans the same can't be said for our steel cans and so at the moment they are put back into that stream and taken to Headstone and burnt. The efficiency there is that burning helps in the initial stages of breaking down when unfortunately it is put into the sea. I mean, we all had great

expectations for the Waste Management Centre and a lot of recycling. Unfortunately not all of that has come to pass and some of those streams are slow in coming on line. We haven't been able to initiate the grand plan at the start of the project and we are now bringing green waste and others into the process and hopefully making the mulch that will see the importation of that product onto the island become less of a requirement and greater use of our own ability here. Money staying on Norfolk Island rather than going offshore so it takes time. It's unfortunate but it is taking time and it hasn't progressed as speedily or perhaps as efficiently but then a lot of it requires funding and considerable use of integration with other offshore systems, integration of those, and that all takes time and money and resources for this Administration. Nonetheless Mr Speaker we are not alone as an island community in the Pacific with this problem. Many of the other South Pacific Island nations are also finding trouble in dealing with waste and waste streams. We are somewhat better off than some of these communities in being able to get funding from the Australian Commonwealth and assisting us in helping us get our waste management. Can I also say that a lot of that rubbish that has been coming up is a result of the unfavourable weather which at all times places greater stress on the island due to it all coming back. It's unfortunate but some of it doesn't sink. Some of it is thrown back onto the beach and I ask people to assist in keeping the beaches tidy. I know that I go down to the beaches and pick up the waste. It's just unfortunate. Thank you

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker this is a supplementary for the Minister. Minister you mentioned aluminium cans as the main item which is recycled, but is it correct that the aluminum cans were being recycled by the private sector before the Waste Management Centre in its current form came into effect

MRS JACK Yes they were and then when the Waste Management Centre, and in fact there were more than one, there were a couple of people that were dealing with the compaction of aluminum cans and sending them off and as I believe were gaining the monetary benefits from that. After the Waste Management Centre came into being we were asked by at least one of those people to take over that matter and we took over the cans and then subsequently paid him, but it is not the main factor, but it is one of the main issues that we do recycle

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I ask a question of the Minister responsible for the airline, I think it's called Norfolk Air now. Minister the price of a holiday, airfare and accommodation on Norfolk Island currently is advertised for as low as \$280 plus taxes of some \$150 for seven days, that's a total of \$430 for seven days. Would the Minister please provide details of the cost of airfares in such packages, bearing in mind that a normal airfare exceeds that figure

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker there are scheduled fares, which are available with your normal retailer and wholesaler. I don't have that fare at the tip of my tongue, but in more recent times, which I think is really related to the question that Mr Nobbs has asked, there have been some incentive fares that have been placed upon the market and they have for example been two for one which have allowed wholesalers to be able to spread that over obviously two people and market them accordingly but that initiative is up to the individual wholesaler as to how they put some packages together. They have an airfare component yes, but they also have other components such as accommodation, hire car, as has been exemplified by Mr Nobbs. I certainly can come forward with some detail of published fares but I am not able to necessarily give the components of a wholesale package because that is in the confines of the commercial arrangement undertaken by individual wholesalers

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a supplementary. Chief Minister the air fares are thus not available to independent travelers or they are tied specifically to wholesalers and their associated travel centres, is that correct

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker as I understand it, that is the case but if I am in error I will quickly let you know about that

MR NOBBS The third one, you may be able to answer this, how many and who are the wholesalers to which these special deals apply

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I can speak to the airline people and provide such a list of the wholesaler arrangements by which arrangements are made

MR NOBBS Supplementary. Given that the airfare component would be significantly lower than what I understood was the previous wholesalers airfare, what is the projected loss by the airlines in relation to this exercise and can you explain why we are actually doing that when I feel that we are possibly running into a negative return as far as the airline is concerned

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I think I would explain this. In terms of the occupancy rate graph for various times of the year. At the time that we are in at this moment we are in a lower part of the graph, in other words, there are a number of vacancies and in other words, it's a low time. In the normal set of circumstances within tourists visiting Norfolk Island and within that context, to endeavour to attract more visitors we're putting specials into the marketplace. It's as simple as that and Mr Nobbs would be aware of that of course. That is the environment. It is one to endeavour to increase visitation over a low occupancy period

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a supplementary if I may

SPEAKER Sorry Mr Nobbs. Mr Tim Brown you had the call

MR T BROWN I can go after Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Brown. In relation to that Chief Minister, I understand, and this is only from looking at the various web pages and some adverts in the paper, that there are a selected group of wholesalers who have access to these really super special fares. Wouldn't it be more appropriate to extend those more widely and to have a basic super cheap fare which is available to everybody at that point in time and to also if I may just passing on from that, is this part of an arrangement that we are looking at having a projection of 40,000 tourists and how much if we carry on down this road, how much will that actually cost the island

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker the role in the tourist industry, that is in the Tourist Bureau area and in the airline area, is to maximise the number of visitors to the island. At this stage from the airline's perspective, the primary dealership is being aimed at those who can deliver such quantity of people to the island and the airline people advise me that they have targeted those who have a good track record in bringing people to Norfolk Island and those who have prospects of doing so and that's the basis of approaching people who are in the wholesale or any other industry that might bring people to Norfolk Island and that's the basis of assessment. There is a want on the part of those who are involved in the tourist industry and the airline industry to move our numbers from presently in the year that we've just concluded something like 22,300 if I remember the figure correctly, that is at the end of this financial year, to endeavour to lift that figure to some 40,000 visitors in this particular year, the year that we have just commenced. That figure is approximately

equal to the best years that we've had. That is a significant ask and a significant task, but it is one that we need to aim at in the economic well being of Norfolk Island and what the methodology has been adopted in an endeavour to achieve that is as I have said to deal with those people who have shown a capacity to be able to bring people to the island and that's the overall rationale behind it

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker. My question is also to the Chief Minister as the Minister with responsibility for the airline. Chief Minister are you aware of the potential level of disruption to the local tourism industry that would be caused by the recently released schedule for the airline, that being a 6 am departure, and, is there any possibility of making it friendlier to the local industry by delaying it by two hours or so

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Brown for that. That was really a statement that I have prepared to equip Members with the latest information but I'll respond to it now. You will remember that I announced on the radio and in the press last weekend the latest airline information including detail about airline relocation, that is, to be based in Norfolk Island and I just remind Members of the context in responding to this question, that the locally based operation provides local employment, purchase of local facilities and the like and I don't want to be overly repetitive about those benefits but they are real, but this relocation has also meant a rescheduling of the first flight time in each flight rotation. Three out of the four flight times have remained unchanged but this however, has meant an early start out of Norfolk Island and this comes to the real question that Mr Tim Brown has raised with me, an early start out of the island on each of the Wednesday Saturday and Sunday flights, that is at 6 clock in the morning. A 6 o'clock departure from Norfolk Island to Brisbane and this early departure has been raised as a difficulty as Mr Brown has just identified also with some local businesses, particularly those who are in the accommodation industry and in response to that, I've consulted my colleagues and I've asked our airline people if they can negotiate a prospect of a later start and this is in the context of the request also. Say one and a half or two hours later. This is presently being examined and discussion will include being had with Sydney airport authorities to see if our existing slots there and be traded to another time frame but in the context of saying all of that can I just say at the same time that we are putting into place that adjusted schedule and location locally at the aircraft, we are introducing an additional flight, that is a Friday series which will start on the 18th August and you will recognise Mr Speaker that this additional flight is starting to deliver on the reinvigoration of the Norfolk Island economy. Additional services, additional visitors. I hope that is helpful in terms of the 6 o'clock start update

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker. Chief Minister you slightly touched on my next question. You've continuously spoken about the three-point thrust to move forward. Reinvigoration of the economy, restructuring with respect to our revenue raising, and more importantly, our expenditure, and finally, dialogue with the Commonwealth. Chief Minister can you advise what has been done, and more importantly, what further action is planned to be taken in respect of these three points

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker can I respond in respect of the first matter. That is reinvigoration. Mr Speaker you will know with Members of the community that we have moved into difficult financial times within the community and that is demonstrated by the low visitor numbers and I quoted that to you earlier and the Norfolk Island Government considers that although the Commonwealth has a view about our sustainability and have delivered a message to us which they did on the 20th February and foreshadowed a number of things, Members will remember that those things foreshadowed don't necessarily relate to a reinvigoration programme within the Norfolk Island community. But the Norfolk Island Government sees reinvigoration of the programme as a prime concern and a prime priority. In terms of reinvigoration the primary context there is to ensure that we have an air service that serves us well and Mr Speaker you will know that, that is now in place, and we have a

reliable aircraft, a 737 aircraft, which carries a respectable number of people, their bags and still has room for appropriate freight arrangements and that's a plus over and above the service that we were able to muster before but that's part of the reinvigoration programme. I've just mentioned a few minutes ago that in that context we are lifting the game by being able provide an additional service on the Sydney flight on each Friday so that too is part of the reinvigoration programme. There is hope that with that sort of moving forward in confidence that people within the community, especially those who are in the business area, might see opportunities to be able to encourage their existing clients to know about the continuing existence of Norfolk Island and to be able to market to them especially approaching the spring months and into the Christmas area where in that general area we have good prospects of attracting additional people. The Tourist Bureau and Members will recall in the budgetary arrangements, has been allocated a sum of \$800,000 and that sum is in the hands of my colleague, the Minister for Tourism, but there are plans there to significantly undertake marketing and promotional programmes, a good deal of them of course, in conjunction with the airline that we have talked about earlier so there are some examples of reinvigoration that are being pursued within the Norfolk Island community. There can be others but that's a prime example and I think a good one to be able to share this morning. In terms of some of the restructure arrangements, the restructure arrangements on their own account are probably of little use. They need to be viewed, in conjunction with the reinvigoration programme just as reinvigoration needs to be viewed in conjunction with the restructure arrangement. It's all part of the dovetailing arrangement. They are not to be seen in isolation but in terms of endeavouring to lift the economy there is also a restructuring arrangement in how public revenue is gained and Members of the Legislative Assembly will know that we have already introduced an NSL legislation to be able to do the preliminaries and commence that as a broad based revenue raising scheme. The long term aim of course, once that is up and running and it is quantified in terms of its revenue power, that there may be some more targeted taxes that may be able to be relinquished in the overall budgetary programme but the restructuring arrangement is a significant one in terms of the revenue base being revised. Coupled with that are things such as doing things better in a range of areas within the Norfolk Island community. Certainly in our capacity we are able to pursue some things within the Public Service arena but there are also things in the private sector that could well be done to restructure and be more amenable, welcoming and fitting to the visitor that we want to attract but to just elaborate a little in terms of the restructuring in the service, Members will recall that we had a motion before the House month before last if I remember correctly which asked for examination of some areas within the Public Service as to whether they might be corporatised, they might be privatised, or whether they might be handled in some other more efficient way. And that's a commencement of looking within the service as to how we might do better than we have been doing to date. Just a reminder also that in terms of some of the things allied to restructuring there is the process of doing it better and I remind you that I reported to the House that in terms of the wages bill within the Administration, significant savings have been made. Most of these savings have been achieved by lessening of overtime, by spread of hours and associated methods. The savings were in two parts. For those areas that are paid out of the revenue fund, there were in the last year, that is the year we've just concluded, the sum of something like \$480,000 savings achieved in that arena, but in addition to that, in the Government Business Enterprises area, there is a sum of approximately \$500,000 savings in that year, so there have been allied savings that have made the operation of the Norfolk Island Government's Enterprise in its total sense more efficient. that is a total savings of almost \$1,000,000 so Mr Speaker they are further examples of some restructuring and allied arrangements that have been pursued and are continuing to be pursued. The matter of dialogue with the Commonwealth which is the third thread, I have a statement on, to give an overview as to how that particular matter sits and I'll do that at statement time Mr Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a supplementary to that. Thank you Chief Minister. That's something I think that Members will agree with the majority if not all of those issues were covered in the time that the previous Chief Minister, yourself Mr Speaker that is, Mr Gardner, was in office and that not a lot has happened in the nearly two months

SPEAKER Mr Nobbs I'll draw your attention to this being Questions Without Notice. If you could contain your input to Questions Without Notice

MR NOBBS Most certainly Mr Speaker. May I ask the Minister if he was so reinvigorating the economy as one of the major planks, why is it that we do not have an operating tourism board. Is it not correct that in not having this board the operations of the Tourist Bureau is stymied and that the payment of funds and the like have no legal basis at this point in time

SPEAKER Mr Nobbs might I just ask with questions like that, not to be seeking a legal opinion from the Minister but there are facets of those questions that the Minister might be in a position to be able to respond to

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker thank you. I'm not responding in terms of trying to provide legal advise. If I could just make that quite clear at the beginning. The matter of a Board has been raised by Mr Nobbs. I understand that the time of the present Board in respect of most of its Members, I think that some of them have differing times in terms of their completion, has concluded just recently and I know that the Minister who has responsibility for appointing Board Members has consulted with his colleagues and is in the process of finalising that. In fact he may have even done that. If not he is on the verge of doing that so that, that matter is tidied and so I respond and advise Mr Nobbs accordingly about that

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker a question to the Chief Minister again. Chief Minister you mentioned the introduction of spread of hours in order to reduce wage costs. How does this spread of hours impact upon the new airline schedule

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker it may have an impact. The two may have a relationship, put it that way. It will have an impact in terms of the 6 o'clock start because that is either at the beginning or the end of the band in terms of the spread of hours arrangements. If there are adjustments it may lessen that, but if it is adjusted to much it appears at the other end of the band. In other words, the beginning or the end of the band it might not totally escape that, so there may well be some impact in fact in respect of the spread of hours, in terms of the new schedule and I think that, that needs to be seen in context because sometimes, the service gets rather lambasted in terms of the time that they need to spend attending to their duties, especially if they are out of hours or unusual hours. In this case, it should be seen that it's the airline arrangement that has been put into place, it's not necessarily the choice of those people in those particular jobs, that they would need to work those hours and I think that needs to be seen in context

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I think most of my questions have really been touched on by other Members today, but I do have one here for the Minister responsible for tourism and the Chief Minister touched on it briefly just before. Re the Tourist Bureau Board. Since it's been operating Minister can you advise how the Tourist Bureau Board has been operating since the 1st July considering that no new Board Members have been appointed and this leaves us just one Member currently appointed to that Board

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I'm not aware of the Board having needed to meet during that period. Today I'll be tabling the appointment of a new Board

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a supplementary to that. Minister this situation that we find ourselves in for the last three weeks, where usually the Board sat every two to three weeks, it leaves the Board in the situation, unable to make a decision and if that is the case, I believe no monies could be expended from the Tourist Bureau vote because there would be no call to authorise the expenditure. Minister who has been authorising the expenditure of monies during this period

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I'm not involved in authorising the expenditure of money. Mr Sheridan has been a board Member for quite some time. I would have thought that he would know the answer to that question but I'm more than happy to ascertain that for him

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker supplementary again. Yes I am quite well aware of who authorises the expenditure Minister and it usually comes down to a Member of the Board in conjunction with the Tourist Bureau Manager but considering that the Tourist Bureau Manager is not a voting Member of the Board but is only to offer advise to the Board and he hasn't anybody else to counter sign his signature again I ask you, who has been authorising expenditure from this vote in the last three or four weeks

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I repeat my earlier answer

MR NOBBS Mr Brown has there been any expenditure made by the Tourist Bureau since the 1st July

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I don't propose to hypothesize. I do not at this stage have a list of the payments that have been made by the Tourist Bureau during that time. I'm quite happy to ask for such a list if Mr Nobbs would like to be made aware of it

MR NOBBS Mr Brown what was the result of the meeting you said that you were going to have with the Board on Monday, with all Board Members before you made these appointments which I understand are coming up. What was the result of those meetings. Was there a meeting

MR BROWN Mr Speaker Mr Nobbs is confused I think. I've not met with the previous Board. I've not intended to meet with the previous Board. The previous Board's time expired on the 30th June as both Mr Nobbs and Mr Sheridan have noted. I'm now appointing a new board and I will be working for the remainder of this financial year with the new Board

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker again this has just been touched on previously. A question to the Chief Minister in regards to the airlines. Chief Minister considering now that its been approximately fourteen months since the Government commenced chartering an aircraft to fly to and from Norfolk Island would the Chief Minister undertake to table at the next meeting a full profit and loss statement for the airlines operation during the first twelve months of operation

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I can undertake to provide appropriate financial figures. How they will be couched I would need to consult about but appropriate financial figures which will equip Members to know about the operation in a financial sense. If I am able to do that by the next sitting I would certainly aim to do that. I don't want to make a promise that may be the accounting people are not able to meet, but certainly as soon as soon as I practically can.

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker virtually this is a supplementary on the last one, on Thursday the 29th June an Airline Working Group meeting was held. Can the Chief

could gather, although I think you said at the last meeting it was \$3 to 400,000, has this funding been made available, or what's actually happening in relation to that

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I'm aware of certain negotiations that have been going on and probably the Minister for Tourism would be the more appropriate one to respond so if I could hand the question over to Tourism Minister

MR BROWN Mr Speaker Members will be aware that Mr Graeme Hallet, a special advisor to the Minister for Territories has visited the island on a number of recent occasions. On one of those occasions he had discussions with Members of or people connected with Members of the Tourist Bureau and he, I am informed, encouraged those persons to make an application under the Regional Partnerships Programme for a grant to go towards tourist promotion in the current financial year. I had similar but separate discussions and it wasn't until quite late in the piece that I realised there were two separate sets of discussions and as a result of that I urged that the application go forward from the Tourist Bureau. That application was lodged approximately three weeks ago. It was lodged with the Northern Rivers section of the Regional Partnerships Programme. I have confirmation that it has been received and if my recollection is correct it has been in the hands of the Regional Partnerships Programme people for either two or three weeks. It now awaits processing and the estimate that was given for the processing time by the Northern Rivers section was if my recollection is correct, two to three weeks, so I'm expecting that it will either be completed today or it will certainly be completed within the next week and I'm very hopeful that we will have a response to that application within the next three to four weeks that is, a final response. The application had been framed by the Tourist Bureau as an application for funding of \$300,000 to be matched by \$100,000 which is to be put together by the Bureau and \$100,000 which is to be put together by the local industry, so the package is intended to be a \$500,000 package with \$100,000 from the industry, \$100,000 from the Bureau and \$300,000 from the Regional Partnerships Programme and when I have some more news on that I will certainly convey that news to Members

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker just a supplementary. Minister when this was originally brought out, could you please explain, I'm a bit confused, how it was originally suggested by the Minister for Finance on advise from yourself that the money would be provided by the Commonwealth Minister for Tourism and he in fact went on at the next meeting to say that you were to meet with the Minister for Tourism but had been unable to because of the aircraft rescheduling and that you would be doing so in days, I understand. How has this now changed from a direct grant from the Minister for Tourism as was originally proposed to the Minister for Finance, that's the new Minister for Finance, to the current situation where is a partnership arrangement

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I don't have the benefit of the hansard of what might have been said at an earlier time, but there have certainly been discussions over a reasonably lengthy period. Those discussions ranged through a number of possibilities, but the track that has been gone down, is the Regional Partnerships Programme

MR NOBBS Is it correct Minister that the Commonwealth actually reneged on that particular proposal, using the Commonwealth Minister for Tourism's, some sort of funding through them

MR BROWN Mr Speaker if I have ever said that the Federal Minister for Tourism was planning to provide funds then I do not recall having done so and if I did do that, I was in error because there has never been a proposal that the Federal Tourism Minister that I can recall. I have had discussions with the Federal Tourism Minister but in the context of the Regional Partnerships Programme

MR NOBBS I just want to correct very quickly if I may, that I didn't say Mr Brown. I said this was part of a statement by the new Minister for Finance

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I have a question for the Chief Minister. Chief Minister has the Norfolk Island Government had any discussion with any Commonwealth Ministers, especially Ministers who have recently visited Norfolk Island, with regard to the possibility of the location of a refugee processing centre on Norfolk Island

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I know of no discussions with recent Commonwealth Ministers. The most recent Commonwealth Minister of course has been Mr Downer in the last week. For my part there has been no discussion. I know of no other Ministers but I don't necessarily speak for them. Whether that has been raised with other Members of the community that may be the case, but it has not been raised by the Norfolk Island Government nor has it been raised with the Norfolk Island Government

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I ask a question to the Minister responsible for legal aid. Can the Minister explain to the community how the legal aid fund may be accessed

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I don't have at the tip of my tongue the full criteria for legal aid. Certainly I can have that available forthwith to Mr Nobbs and if he is really signaling that there is a real need in the community I can publicise that in some way so that the community can unknown the criteria

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a supplementary. I really also ask, what are the checks and balances in place to ensure that claims for financial assistance made under provisions of the legal aid scheme are in fact appropriate as well if you wouldn't mind. Can you deal with that now or not

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I can just at this stage mention that there is a group that oversees that, a community group and they include people who are knowledgeable about the legal processes but I can come with a full answer to respond to Mr Nobbs about the criteria. It might be also useful to say that the legal aid arrangement we have has been set up in conjunction with the Commonwealth and so in terms of the standards that might apply there have been benchmarks that have been used. That just might be useful in terms of checks and balances and the concerns that Mr Nobbs raised

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker. A question for the Minister for Finance. Minister how much has the JE Road roadworks cost and why were none of the roadworks put out for tender

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I can't give a total cost for the reconstruction of J E Road at this stage. I can certainly find out and provide Mr Brown with that information. As far as why the work wasn't tendered out, I don't have an answer for that as well. I mean the Administration or the Works Depot and the Road Section is the principle contractor there and from time to time they hire outside help. That could be in the form of plant and equipment, I understand in respect of the curbing they engaged people who were in the business of installing curbing. I'm aware that the first section of JE Road where it connects with Selwyn Pine Road, one curbing contractor was engaged to do the first section and the second curbing contractor was engaged to do the remainder of the section so the work was spread around those able to do the works. In respect of formally or not formally tendering for the work as I understand it, work under \$50,000 isn't required to be tendered out but in most cases quotes are sort from those able to do the work and I understand that did in fact happen with JE Road but if Mr Brown wants a more detailed response he can

either put the question on notice or just accept my word that I will give him a more detailed response at the next meeting

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a question for the Chief Minister. Chief Minister following your elevation to the role of Chief Minister last month you advised the community over the air and I think in the paper as well, that all your Minister's would be located at Kingston and would divest themselves of other business interests by July 1st. Can you advise the community whether such things have happened

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker, thank you Mr Nobbs. I can report that all Ministers have offices in Kingston. They've been allocated space and facilities and Mr Speaker I thank you for facilitating that because prior to that situation that wasn't necessarily the case. The area of other interests that you just mentioned, two things about that. Firstly there is a Register of Interests that Members and the community may view as to the interests of both Ministers and Members and that the Ministers have indicated that they will give whatever time is necessary to be available, whatever hours it takes to undertake the community duties, using of course the skills which they were called upon when they were elected to that office

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I have a question for the Minister for Finance. Minister during the recent budget discussions I think there was something like \$275,000 put into your discretionary vote. You were to advise Members and also the community, I requested you advise the community what actually was entailed in that amount of money, what was it actually for, and when did you actually expect to spend it. Have you any details for the community in relation to such a large sum of money which is unusual for a discretionary vote for a Minister

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, no I'm not able to provide the detail at this stage but I will do so

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker my question is for the Minister for Finance. Minister it's my understanding that the Administration recently purchased a grader for the roads department. How many hours a year would one get used and why was this decision made to purchase a grader when as it's my understanding there is one available for hire in the private sector

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, what I think I'll do there Mr Speaker is hand the question to somebody else to answer. I wasn't involved in the decision making to buy the grader but I do work for a company that has a grader that is available for hire so I would obviously have a conflict so I think I'd best not respond

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. I would probably look to the Chief Minister to provide some detail

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker let me give a preliminary and if there are still some outstanding things maybe we could have this on notice so that detail can come forward. I recall that this matter went to the Tenders Committee if I remember correctly. I don't recall all of the detail and it has not been in my ministerial area but it went to the tenders committee. It was thought at the time that there was a need in terms of various roadworks. I also think at the time that there was a significant query as to whether there was ongoing availability elsewhere within the community although there's been mention maybe with another view about that and an additional factor which was a significant factor if I remember it correctly was the prospect of being able to get this grader onto the barge that was coming. Now that signalled a significant saving of freight. I just don't remember the amount of saving but some thousands of dollars if I remember correctly and so in the

purchase programme there was a significant saving to be able to secure within that time frame because of that facility being available. I also seem to remember that this is not a new grader. It's a used item but had significant qualities attached to it given its age group and the price was advantageous accordingly. Now I don't know whether that's helpful in the process that I remember that detail. If there's anything further I'll need to take it upon notice and do some further sussing out about it

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett and thank you Mr Christian for your declaration of conflict in relation to that question. Members the time for questions has expired

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I move that it be extended by ten minutes

SPEAKER the question before us is that time for Questions Without Notice be extended for ten minutes and I put that question

**QUESTION PUT
AGREED**

Thank you Honourable Members. Time is extended by ten minutes

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I just really have a supplementary on that last one. When Mr Tim Brown asked that question it brought something to my mind and the Chief Minister's replying to it or even the Minister for Finance. On the new grader, now that the Roads Department has purchased this grader have they finally figured out how to turn it off once they've started it up

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I'm not too sure that that is quite a serious question. I'll try and respond to serious questions Mr Speaker

SPEAKER Do I read that as a no Chief Minister

MR BUFFETT I do not see that as a serious question Mr Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a question for the Minister for Finance if I may. In relation to roading, has the Roads GBE budget been finalised for this current financial year and what road works are supposed to be done during the year

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I've not yet been briefed by the officers in the Administration responsible for roads but I do understand that major roads scheduled for work is a continuation of the upgrade of Burnt Pine or the commencing of rebuilding the road from the bottom of Mission Road to Anson Bay and as I understand it though I've had nothing formally put to me, that the decision will be mine to make in conjunction with consultation with the rest of the Legislative Assembly. So that's the situation as I understand it at the moment

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker my question is for the Minister with responsibility for tourism. Minister you've recently been away to speak with wholesalers and travel agents and another trip is planned in the near future. What have you and what do you get out of these meetings and what further strategies do you have for Norfolk Island tourism

MR BROWN Mr Speaker my initial goal is to put confidence back into the existing travel wholesalers and existing group operators because it is by rebuilding the traditional markets that we will most quickly get back to a viable number of visitors. Once

that is achieved, there will be room to look at creating additional segments of the market but I do not envisage that at any time we will again have wholesalers and group operators feeling that the markets that they provide to us are not wanted on the island so what I'm trying to do initially is to rebuild confidence, to obtain commitments to work with the air service and the island including the Tourist Bureau, to obtain suggestions as to how we can best restore our numbers within the limited budget that's available to us, and generally to ensure that everybody is back on the same team so that's the purpose of calling on wholesalers and group operators. I intend to continue to do that such that at intervals of not less than two to three months I will be attempting to call on each of them in Australia and New Zealand. I intend to also speak to them regularly by phone. That's what I'm doing. That's what I'm trying to achieve.

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Honourable Members, any further Questions this morning. It appears that we've exhausted all Questions Without Notice and there being no Questions On Notice, we move on to Papers

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Are there any Papers for presentation this morning

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker pursuant to the provisions of the Removal of Prisoners Act 2004, I table a document. One of the provisions of this particular piece of legislation that I need as the appropriate Minister to approve a form which relates to removal of prisoners. I have done that in the context of some respective happenings and a further provision is that having done that, I am obliged to table the form itself. This doesn't mean that I am executing the document itself, it's a matter of bringing the form forward in its improved sense and I table that particular document this morning

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I table the appointment of members of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau for the period to 30 June 2007

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I move that the paper be noted

SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR NOBBS Can the Minister tell us who he has appointed please

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I have no problem with that. That's the purpose of tabling the document. The persons whom I have appointed is Marion Janette Christian, Mathew Charles Christian-Bailey, Lindsay Ross Ford, Ian Cameron Menzies and Lance Bert Poulton. Mr Speaker there is a wide mix of experience amongst those five. Two are in the ground tour industry. One of those two is also in the restaurant industry. Two are in the accommodation industry, one with a larger property, one with a smaller property, one of those is in the rental car industry and the remaining Member recently sold his interest in one of the travel wholesalers. He does still operate a small travel agency by any involvement in travel to Norfolk Island would be absolutely minimal. In earlier years he worked with East West airlines and later with eastern airlines and in earlier years he in fact worked as a consultant to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. I've consulted widely before making these appointments Mr Chairman, and I realise that it is unlikely that I would please Mr Nobbs or Mr Sheridan because it is unlikely that you can please absolutely everybody, but what is important is that there be no further delay in the appointment, that I make a decision and that I bring the decision to attention by tabling the appointment in the House and that's what I've done. I would like to thank the outgoing Board Members and the fact that I've chosen to move two new appointments to these five positions is not intended to

be a reflection in any way on any of the five outgoing Members. I would also like to thank the new Members for offering themselves for appointment. Members may recall that the previous Chief Minister sought expressions of interest from various groups on the island and from people generally as to appointment to the Bureau and quite a number of expressions of interest were received. The suggestion made by the Accommodation and Tourism Association has been partly adopted, they made a suggestion of three people and one of those has been appointed; the Chamber of Commerce I am advised did not seek to nominate a possible appointee but various other Members of the community did. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I would just like to take up the issue with Mr Brown in relation to myself being in favour of the appointment. We didn't have the opportunity, as we normally would, and I've been on this Legislative Assembly since 1997 for the discussion to be held in relation to appointments, this has always been previously done by Minister and in fact in the majority of the times they've actually gone before the House in a formal motion, so as that opportunity is not provided to us, and that's where my concern is, and there is no Member. There need not be a Member, the Minister need not appoint a Member from the House but it's been the practice since I've been here that a Member from the Legislative Assembly was appointed to the Board and sometimes there were two

SPEAKER It might help if I clarified Mr Sheridan's appointment as a Member of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. His representation on this body still stands as I am aware, that hasn't been revoked and continues in force until December of this year

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. But I'm just wondering whether we will continue that. Whether that will continue after that day or not and it will be interesting to see. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a quick word. I'm thankful for the Minister for supplying a new board and I look forward to our next meeting. I've got no disagreement with the appointments. I've never said so. I don't know where Mr Brown got his opinion from that I wouldn't be happy with it but I'm quite happy that he's finally gotten round to appointing a new board so that we can get on with the business of trying to increase tourism to Norfolk Island

SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted and I put that question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

SPEAKER Thank you. Are there any further Papers this morning

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, pursuant to section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1979 I table the Norfolk Island Sustainability Levy Regulations 2006. Thank you

Mr Speaker I wish to table a direction I have given in respect of the Public Moneys Act 1979 and I shall read that direction. I Neville Charles Christian Minister for Finance pursuant to subsection 32(a)(2) of the Public Moneys Act 1979 hereby direct the Finance Manager for the Territory to transfer for the financial year 2006-2007 the amount specified in column three of the schedule for the purpose of meeting commitments entered into in the year ended 30 June 2006 in respect of matters specified in column 2 of the schedule. Mr

Speaker, the amounts specified in column 3 of the schedule total \$34,900, and I table that direction

Mr Speaker, I seek to table the Asset Management Plan prepared for the Administration of Norfolk Island with Commonwealth funding by the consultants Asset Technologies Pacific Pty Ltd. In doing so, I wish to make a brief statement on this collection of documents. The Asset Management Plan is just what it says – it is a plan for managing the many public assets of the Norfolk Island community. It is not an asset replacement programme. The Asset Management Plan is very detailed and comprehensive. It covers 25 areas of major assets ranging from the powerhouse to the road system and areas of great cultural or community significance such as the Kingston Heritage buildings, the hospital and the school. The Plan details life cycle costings of major assets over a 15-year period and also details those areas where immediate maintenance or upgrading is recommended. In tabling the Plan, I must stress that the Government and Administration do not necessarily endorse all of the conclusions of the consultant, nor all of the figures it places on asset management in the immediate future or over the next 15 years. We believe that in a number of cases the consultants have overestimated the amounts of money required, and that some of the standards applied are not fully relevant in a Norfolk Island context. A prime example of this would appear to be the estimates on management of the road system, which appear to be based on standards of road construction well above those which we believe to be adequate for Norfolk Island traffic conditions and the needs of our community. Mr Speaker, despite these apparent shortcomings, the Asset Management Plan forms another useful addition to the data required to enable the Norfolk Island Government to plan for current and future capital works and asset maintenance. I now table the Asset Management Plan. Thank you

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Any further Papers Honourable Members for presentation. Then we've concluded Papers

STATEMENTS OF AN OFFICIAL NATURE

Honourable Members any Statements this morning.

MRS JACK Mr Speaker I have two statements that run close together and I would like to say them together if I may.

I wish to make a brief statement on the stock health programme, which has been subject to some discussion in the community in recent times. The stock health programme is closely allied with the community health programme, although it has different goals and outcomes. It focuses on the livestock slaughter process, namely the kill itself and the breakdown of the carcass. It encompasses cattle, pigs and sheep. The process will involve the observation of the kill itself (to ensure clean and humane methods), inspection of the carcass for signs of disease and swabs taken for testing of tuberculosis and other zoonotic diseases. Both Norfolk Island vets have previously undertaken this process at abattoirs off island. Premises will also be inspected for hygiene and sanitation as part of the overall slaughter process, and this is where there may be some overlap with general slaughterhouse inspections. I believe that comparison of the information gained from both processes will assist in improving hygiene practices. With the data we get, we will be able to determine the disease status of livestock on the Island on an ongoing basis and with minimum effort. Mr Speaker, the stock health programme and the health checks on facilities such as slaughterhouses will continue to be two separate processes. I believe both to be important aspects of the overall community health programme. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Further to my earlier statement, I would like to outline some related developments in the field of public health. The *Public Health Act 1996* was assented to in July of 1996, but only a few of its provisions have been commenced. The Act contains coverage of a range of areas

which are important to the well-being of the community. It is my intention to commence substantial parts of the Act as soon as it is practical to do so. Those sections include the following matters under the general heading of Environmental Health: Division 1: Sanitation: Requirement to provide permitted sanitary facilities; Cleaning, maintenance or alteration of permitted sanitary facilities; Closure of permitted sanitary facilities; Prohibited facilities; Closure of prohibited facilities; Water Assurance Area; Closure of septic facilities in Water Assurance Area; Sewage deposit area; Prohibitions and Drainage

Division 2: Water supply: Control of water sources; Contamination of water sources

Division 5: Animals; Keeping animals; Disposal of dead animals

Division 6: Swimming pools; Swimming pool safety

Mr Speaker, I will be meeting with officers in the next week or so to consider the operational and resource implications of the commencement of these additional parts of the Act. The Act also requires the preparation of a Public Health Code, which would be developed on a priority basis over time. The development of a Public Health Code, and the subsequent requirement for compliance with the code, will set new standards for service delivery, standards that many providers may already meet and possibly exceed. In turn this can only act to strengthen consumer confidence and further enhance service provider reputations. In bringing this forward I don't wish to leave the community with the impression that public health is somehow in jeopardy due to a legislative gap, as this is not the case. For example, the *Sale of Food Act 1950*, prescribes conditions for the preparation and sale of food, including licensing and inspection requirements. Some of that Act's provisions might more appropriately fit into a Sale of Food Code. Mr Speaker, I will continue to review the legislation concerning public health, with a view to commencing more of the provisions of the Public Health Act as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Jack. Are there any further statements this morning Honourable Members.

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker Thank you. I would like to provide a statement which is an update on the Norfolk Island Commonwealth of Australia Governance Issues and Negotiations. I've reported over the past number of weeks on various happenings relating to Norfolk Island and Commonwealth Governance issues arising out of Minister Lloyd's messages to Norfolk Island from the Commonwealth of Australia first delivered on the 20th February in 2006 and this as I've mentioned is a further update. Let me firstly provide an update on the various activities and particularly reports that are progressively now being collated so that they might assist us, that is both the Norfolk Island Government and the Australian Government on the best way forward in this overall quite difficult matter. The Australia Bureau of Statistics presented and published its report on the 23rd June 2006. It's a report which gives some quantum to the business activity in Norfolk Island and the name of that report is Norfolk Island Business Statistics. This report found that there were some 339 businesses in the island with a total income of \$94m and some 1,267 people in employment. I understand that this particular report may well be available on the web. If not, it certainly can be available through Administration sources. The Asset Management Plan in its final form was presented on the 28th June and the Minister for Finance has today tabled that report in this House. On the 6th July the Commonwealth Grants Commission released a preliminary report. This is a brief four page document which assesses the cost to provide state and local Government type services and the estimated capacity to raise revenue by comparable taxes and charges levied by state and local Governments. This brief document was to be elaborated and supported by a further paper and this staff paper with supporting information of some 142 pages was delivered yesterday. The Joint Standing Committee to mention another activity in this overall context is scheduled to again visit Norfolk Island from the 2nd to the 5th August. They won't be holding formal meetings as I understand it, from them but will be meeting with Members of the community and I report that the Norfolk Island Government certainly will be meeting with them, and it may be your wish also to facilitate meetings amongst all of the Members. In

respect of the Commonwealth Grants Commission that I referred to just a few moments ago, the commission itself has scheduled a community conference in Norfolk Island on the 17th and 18th August to discuss that preliminary report. I also share the information that Minister Lloyd has invited the four executive Members to Canberra for discussions on Government issues, and we have mutually agreed a date on the 21st August. The Norfolk Island Government in this context is collating information from the reports that I have already mentioned and other information to assess the best way forward and sustainability for Norfolk Island into the future and with that information to be able to have in depth discussion with the Commonwealth when we meet in August. To be part of this process I have commenced the formation of a community reference group to assist assessment of information and the best way forward and to assist presenting it amongst the community. Further on in this year of 2006, an economic impact study is to be presented by consultants. I understand that these consultants are yet to be announced although they may have been appointed I'm not too sure of that. Certainly what I am able to know is that the period has expired for lodgement of bids to undertake this task but that is a Commonwealth activity and they are the people who are making the appointment. But they are to present their report by the documentation available to us by the end of September of 2006. the final report, I mentioned a preliminary report by the Commonwealth Grants Commission, a final report by them is expected by the 30th September and an Australian Cabinet decision has been foreshadowed by the conclusion of 2006. That's just an update of various projections and activities in terms of that matter.

May I also add to that that during the latter part of last week and last weekend the Australian Cabinet Minister Alexander Downer spent a brief holiday in Norfolk Island and whilst that was a private and holiday visit the Norfolk Island Government did have an opportunity to meet with him and brief him on Norfolk Island's situation and our aspirations to be both sustainable explaining the methods we are taking towards this, and to be self governing to the maximum extent which is compactable with sustainability. I've got to say that one can't claim to have won his view to match ours on every point but without doubt Mr Downer will be better placed to understand the Norfolk Island perspective when this matter eventually proceeds to cabinet of which we all know he is a senior Member. I just provide that update
Mr Speaker

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Buffett. Are there any further statements this morning Honourable Members. There being no further Statements. We move on
There being no further Statements. We move on

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR – NO 40

Honourable Members I have received the following message from the Office of the Administrator. It is Message No 40 and reads, on the 26th April 2006 pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I declared my assent to the following, the Court of Petty Sessions (Amendment) Act 2006 (Act No 9 of 2006), the Healthcare Levy (Amendment) Act 2006 (Act No 10 of 2006) and that message is dated the 26th April 2006 and is signed Grant Tambling, Administrator

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR – NO 41

Honourable Members I have received the following message from the Office of the Administrator. It is Message No 41 and reads on the 27th June 2006 pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I declared my assent to the following, the Appropriation Act 2006-2007 (Act No 15 of 2006); the Telecommunications (Amendment) Act 2006 (Act No 16 of 2006) and the Health (Amendment) Act 2006 (Act No 17 of 2006) and that message is dated the 27th June 2006 and is signed Owen Walsh, Deputy Administrator

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR – NO 42

Honourable Members I have received the following message from the Office of the Administrator. It is Message No 42 and reads that on the 4th July 2006 pursuant to section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I declared my assent to the Norfolk Island Sustainability Levy (Amendment) Act 2006 (Act No 18 of 2006) and that message is dated the 4th July 2006 and is signed Grant Tambling, Administrator

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Honourable Members we move on to Reports of Standing Committees. Are there any Reports this morning. No

NOTICES

We move on to Notices

HEALTHCARE LEVY INCREASE

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I move that this House, in accordance with paragraph 6(1)(a) of the Healthcare Levy Act 1990, on the recommendation of the Minister for Community Services, resolves that the healthcare levy payable under paragraph 6(1)(a) of that Act be increased by \$7.50 (that is \$30 per annum) with effect from 1 September 2006. Mr Speaker this comes about because a decision has been made to self insure the healthcare fund and that decision came about for a few reasons. Firstly the amount of the levy, I take that back, the amount of the reinsurance premium for the current year would have increased by \$10,000 beyond last year. Secondly the threshold at which claims could be made against the reinsure would have increased by \$200,000. if we are to self insure the fund, it is essential that what would have been the premium be set aside in our reserves so that the reserves increase by that amount and in my view it is necessary that a further amount of about \$30,000 per year, so that \$100,000 a year would be set aside, be generated by a small increase in the healthcare levy. Now that increase is not for the purpose of spending the money, it is for the purpose of increasing the reserves and making the fund more secure and once the amount of the reserves has increased to what is thought to be an appropriate level it will be possible either to reduce the levy or at the very least to minimise future increases in the healthcare levy. Thank you Mr Speaker

MRS JACK Mr Speaker I've already spoken in the Members meeting on Monday of my opposition to this proposed increase and while I appreciate the Minister's desire to self insure and to increase the pool, I find that the pressure already on the community is such that even though it can be seen and viewed as a small amount it is asking yet another impost, or putting yet another impost on an already struggling community. It's an extra \$30,000 and if it came down to the immediate need or if there was a severe accident, I mean \$30,000 isn't going to do anything substantial overall into the scheme of things in my view and I can't. what my view is, is that we should wait and let the NSL come into being and be reviewed and realise just what the percentage impost would be on the NSL and work back from there. I'm not prepared to place any more additional impost on the community. I was against the 10% to 13% and I'm against this as well, thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker we heard about this on Monday morning actually and apparently the decision has been made in relation to it, from what I can gather from what's been said. Very briefly on Monday and very briefly now, that there's been a decision taken that we will not be self insuring and it is sort of putting pressure on Members at this point in time to follow the recommendations of the Minister by \$30,000 for a year, I'm

like Mrs Jack I think it's really peanuts in context of things at the present time and that I won't be supporting this on this day to pass it today anyhow. I think the community should be given some time at least to consider proposals like this. Whilst somebody said on Monday that it's just loose change in your pocket I can assure you that it's not loose change in your pocket of quite a number of people on the island be they old or young. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a few words on the proposed increase. I would like to refer to the Minister's comment on Monday when he said that he wasn't really too concerned if we didn't pass this today because he believed that it could be achieved by proper management. Now I don't know what he means by proper management, whether he means that the funds are being mismanaged at this point in time, but if he believes that the \$30,000 can be achieved by proper management as he puts it, then there's no real reason to increase the fee. Let's just knuckle down and reduce our expenditure and this is what we should be trying to do anyway instead of raising everything from electricity to duty healthcare levies etc, so I won't be supporting this Mr Speaker

MRS BOUDAN Mr Speaker I think we could leave this in abeyance for a period of time and revisit it later on if necessary. That's how I feel about it. Thank you

MR T BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker. I was just wondering if the Minister could clarify for me, I think I understand the decision was made to self insure because we probably couldn't get reinsurance anyway. If the Minister could either confirm or set me straight that would be much appreciated

MR BROWN Mr Speaker reinsurance is available for the current year. But complications with the healthcare fund is that it has been treated in different ways over the years in terms of HMA beneficiaries and if we choose to fund what was HMA expenditure by directing it through the healthcare fund then for the future there certainly will be difficulties with reinsurance and it is for that reason as well as the desire to save the premium and direct it to reserves it is because of the complications with redirection of HMA expenditures that I feel that the best course is the course that we are going down. Now I don't mind whether this matter is dealt with today or not. I'm certainly proposing to move its adjournment until the August meeting which is plenty of time if it is passed and if it isn't passed then it's of no consequence

MR BUFFETT Mr Speaker I wonder if I could just request Mr Brown to mention a couple of additional figures which he may have but I might not have in my kit. He did mention to us that there was a premium increase of \$10,000 for the year. The actual figure might be useful so that we can see the perspective of it and there was the mention of an increase in the threshold, in other words, \$200,000. That means that we would have to carry any claim up to \$200,000 and that might be assisting to see it in perspective also. I would support an adjournment at an appropriate time so that the information we are talking about can be further known and digested within the community. If those two figures are available, and I don't know whether they are in Mr Brown's head at this moment, but it might be useful. If not we could research them and bring them forward

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I can give Members approximate figures and I can then provide detailed figures shortly. But in approximate figures the premium would have increased from approximately \$65,000 to approximately \$75,000 and the excess, that is the amount that we need to pay before we can call on the reinsurance was have in increased from \$500,000 to \$700,000

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I would just like to ask the Minister, and he may be able to answer or not but you referred to the HMA recipients being in and then out and what have you and I know that there has been some change in the time that I've been

here. Where are we at with that at the present time, and the second point that I would like you to clarify if you may, is in relation to the reinsurance. Is this only one quote that's been obtained or have we other quotes, and where are we at. Somebody else might be able to tell me with the total reinsurance of the Administration I understand that it was coming up for renewal at some time or other and has this actually occurred in the last month or so

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. I read a couple of questions into that. One Minister is obviously responsible for the HMA and healthcare and the other one would be responsible for the Administration insurances in general but maybe Mr Brown may want to lead off with a response to your question in relation to the healthcare and HMA

MR BROWN Mr Speaker as Mr Nobbs will know the Administration has engaged a broker to take care of its insurances and my understanding is that the engagement of that broker was recently extended without going back to tender. I'm aware of only one quote being received to reinsure the healthcare fund for the current financial year. Just how many quotes was sought I do not know, but I'm only aware of one being received and the suggestion was made quite strongly to me that it would be most unlikely that any would be received in the following year

MR NOBBS So really in relation to the HMA recipients, are they part of the fund now or not

MR BROWN Mr Speaker there are two aspects to the question. One is, who has Membership of the fund and the other is what parts of the expenditure of the fund are covered by the reinsurance. The Act makes provision for everyone over eighteen from recollection to receive the healthcare levy notice and to be required to pay the levy but if a person has private health insurance which is regarded as adequate, that person can apply to be exempted from the requirement to be a Member of the fund and if a person does that and the application is approved then that person has no coverage at all from the fund and one of the reasons for many people who have private insurance choosing nevertheless to also be Members of the healthcare fund is that if you chose to be exempted and then sought to come back into the healthcare fund at a later time you may have difficulties with a pre-existing condition. In addition to that most private health insurance policies contain a limit on the amount you can claim in a year whereas the healthcare fund doesn't have an upper limit. It does have a requirement that you be accommodated on a shared ward public hospital basis. It will probably cover you for a hip replacement but not a breast enhancement so things that are regarded as cosmetic are not covered whereas things that might be regarded as elective such as a hip replacement might nevertheless be seen as critical for someone to go on enjoying a reasonable standard of life so the first type of person who isn't required to be a Member of the fund is a person who has private health cover and who makes an application for exemption. The next type of person is a person who receives less than the threshold amount of income and if you receive less than a certain amount of income a year you can apply for suspension of the requirement to pay the levy and a person who has a suspension as distinct from an exemption, is a Member of the fund, they just don't have to pay the levy. But when the healthcare fund was originally put together it was done with the benefit of considerable actuarial advise and the concept was that insurance would not be sought in relation to the healthcare costs of people over a certain age. As a matter of practice that was managed in different ways. Initially people over a certain age if my recollection is correct who had HMA entitlements had their healthcare covered by HMA. Later people had concerns that the cost of HMA seemed to be high and that was reduced by transferring into the healthcare fund some of those costs. It didn't make any difference at all to the total costs, it only made a difference to where they lay. Then all of a sudden people looked at the accounts of the healthcare fund and thought, by Jove, why has this gone up by several hundred thousand dollars almost overnight. Well the reason was the inclusion of HMA expenditure and so it got changed again. And in more recent times it was changed

IMMIGRATION ACT 1980 – RE-APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER OF THE IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

SPEAKER A matter has arisen Honourable Members. Mr Brown has, I give him the call to seek leave to move a motion in relation to an appointment to the Immigration Committee

MR BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker. One of the Members of the Immigration Committee will reach the end of his term in a few days time and I seek leave to move a motion to reappoint that Member

SPEAKER Is leave granted Honourable Members? Leave is granted Mr Brown

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I seek leave to reappoint Andre Neville Nobbs to the Immigration Committee

SPEAKER Leave is granted Mr Brown

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I move that for the purposes of subsection 6(4) of the Immigration Act 1980, this House recommends the re-appointment of Andre Neville Nobbs as a member of the Immigration Committee for the period 22 July 2006 to 21 July 2008. Mr Speaker the Members of the Immigration Committee carry out a really thankless task in quite an efficient manner. Andre Nobbs has served the committee well and I seek the support of Members to reappoint Andre to the committee for a further term of two years

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Any further debate? The question is that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you. That motion is agreed to

We move to Orders of the Day

ORDERS OF THE DAY**CREATION OF TRUST FUND FOR ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES' ANNUAL LEAVE AND LONG SERVICE LEAVE**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we resume debate from the 21st June 2006 on the question that the amendment be agreed to namely that the words "over the next 2 years" be inserted before the word "transfer" (first occurring) and Mr Brown you have the call to resume

MR BROWN Thank you Mr Speaker the purpose of this motion is self evident from its terms. It seeks the agreement of Members of the creation of a trust fund to hold Administration employees annual leave and long service leave entitlements. Initially the motion suggested that such a fund be created immediately. On hearing the views of Members, I moved a motion such that the funds would be put together over a period of two years, so that it would occur progressively over a two year period. At this stage I'm seeking the agreement of Members to that amendment

that the extent of this particular value of employee entitlements is identified in the books. I would prefer not to do this at this moment

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, having listened to the wider Membership around the table, there are pros and cons for going either way. Where I sit personally I have no difficulty at all with making provision for funds to be transferred to a trust account over the next couple of years to provide for employees annual leave and long service entitlements. The principle reason that I say that, is whether we like it or not when we produce our financial statements they do appear on there as a liability and if you look for instance at the collapse of Ansett and other major businesses in Australia, where they did just in fact what the Membership around this table is talking about. Some of the Members. That is, they used the staff entitlements to continue trading in the hope that there would be light at the end of the tunnel and at the end of the day, everything would be rosy and when the inevitable happened, and the companies collapsed, there was nothing there for the employees entitlements and whilst I'm not suggesting that we are in that situation in Norfolk Island at all, I do think it would be prudent and wise to make provision for them and quarantine them, so I have no difficulty at all supporting the motion

MR GARDNER Mr Deputy Speaker. Thank you. I must admit that over the last month or so I haven't had the opportunity to be involved in any discussion in any detail on this matter with my colleagues around the table but I said six weeks or so ago when there was a change of Government that I was prepared to support this Government because ultimately it's for the benefit of everybody on Norfolk Island that, that must happen, but I think having listened to the Minister for Finance there's a couple of issues that need to be raised when comparing Norfolk Island say with the Ansett collapse, I have confidence in this Government's fiscal policies that have recently been announced to ensure that there are adequate funds to sustain Norfolk Island into the future and that every endeavour has been made to ensure that, that happens. I am also conscious, and I stand to be corrected, but in the last annual reports, despite some of the financial difficulties that we are encountering, the Norfolk Island Administration as an entity with its Government Business Enterprises total combined has assets totaling some \$38m or thereabouts so there is a significant difference between the Ansett operation and what is proposed in Norfolk Island because I understand that Ansett may have been somewhat short on the assets to meet any of its outgoings and certainly its employees entitlements. Certainly my limited knowledge of company insolvencies do suggest to me that one of the primary concerns for anybody handling a failed company are the employees entitlements and I am confidence knowing that the level of assets that the Norfolk Island Administration has would be more than sufficient to meet any of those employee entitlements in the short medium or even long term and so I don't accept at this early stage in my consideration of this matter that there is a need for those funds to be earmarked and put aside. In fact, as I said earlier in my introductory remarks, I have confidence in the Minister for Finance and the current Government to address our serious financial position, which was being undertaken by the previous arrangements and that, that will continue and that there will be no need to have to revisit this issue in the future and that said, I'm not supportive today of proceeding with this motion. Thank you

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker recently a statement of available cash was prepared. It was prepared from recollection in relation to the April month and we later got one in relation to the May month. We haven't seen one yet in relation to the June month. April showed from recollection the returns of the revenue fund and we had \$163,000 of available cash. May showed that we'd gone negative. We were negative from recollection by \$85,000. the reason for this motion is to give confidence to employees that their entitlements are set aside in a fashion where they cannot be spent on anything other than paying the employees. Now if Members around the table are confident that there's never going to be a problem, then Members must acknowledge that they are confident that setting aside the reserves won't create a problem either. If on the other hand Members are saying,

we want to spend that money and because we are not confident that we'll always have it available we are not prepared to put it into a trust fund, then I don't think that's a real good message for us to be seeing to convey. I propose to ask that the motion be dealt with today. I propose to ask that Members support the amendment such that the change would be made over two years rather than immediately, but we will not be sending a good message if we are not prepared to safeguard those entitlements particularly having regard to what has been revealed with the April and May available cash statements. Thank you

MR NOBBS I just refer to those particular statements that Mr Brown mentioned, those took into account the entitlements of the staff at that point in time. It was purely for the revenue fund that we are talking about. It didn't include the Government Business Enterprises or any other organisation that the Administration may have under its wing and there was a lack of action in relation to the May figures which would have seen it actually in the blue and not negative as the Minister has said, zero or whatever it was or a very low figure, it was considerably higher but this action wasn't taken so I assume that the June figure because that action that was to be taken, and I assume it has and I'm not in the role of going behind the Minister's back and finding out what's going on but I'm assuming that it has happened and therefore the June figures should be far better than those, but unless there's been a major expenditure which I'm not too sure of, and therefore I think that those figures, as I said, taken into account, those actual commitments to the staff are taken into account in both the April and May figures. I still won't be supporting it. I was a little concerned at the Minister for Finance's statement but I'm pleased that the former Chief Minister stepped into the breach and delivered what I think is more of an even approach to what is actually happening

MR BROWN I move that the question be put

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. I believe Mr Sheridan had the call Mr Brown so I will call him and come back to you

MR SHERIDAN Mr Deputy Speaker just a few words. As I indicated last month if Mr Brown would like to amend this motion again and remove the annual leave component I would most probably support that long service leave be put aside. I don't believe there is actually a necessity to put aside annual leave requirements as most employees they take their annual leave annually and as the Chief Minister stated before it comes out of recurrent expenditure but for the long service component, it could sit there for twenty, thirty years as long as the employees gain interest on their contributions or whether they do or not, I suppose that would go to the Administration but if he was in the mind to delete the annual leave and just leave long service leave over the two year period I would support that but as it currently stands, I will not

MR BROWN Mr Speaker I thank Mr Sheridan for that. I shan't seek leave to further amend because I have counted around the table and even with Mr Sheridan's support the motion is not going to be successful therefore I leave it to the House to vote

SPEAKER Honourable Members the question before the House is that the amendment be agreed to

QUESTION PUT

Could the Clerk please call the House

MR BUFFETT AYE
MR GARDNER NO

MRS BOUDAN
MR BROWN

NO
AYE

The result of voting Honourable Members, the Ayes three the Noes six, the motion is not agreed to

PUBLIC MONEYS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2005
PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2005

Honourable Members appearing on the Notice Paper are Orders of the Day Numbers 7 and 8. Mr Nobbs I would look to you for a motion to withdraw

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I seek leave of the House to withdraw from the Notice Paper the Order of the Day 7 and 8 and if that's approved I would like to say some words

SPEAKER Is leave approved Honourable Members? Leave is granted Mr Nobbs to withdraw those matters and for the sake of clarification they are the Public Moneys (Amendment) Bill 2005 and the Public Sector Management (Amendment) Bill 2005

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker as you said, these are two Bills that were placed on there by me in the time of the previous Government and it should be up to the present Government if they wish to proceed with these. The Public Moneys Amendment Bill provides for the encouragement of those to pay bills early and a penalty for late payment of bills and the Public Sector Management (Amendment) Bill 2005 which is the second one is based on the recommendations from memory, from the latest selection panel involved in interviewing candidates for the position of CEO and some recommendations were included which seemed to get a lot of support at that particular time and both of these have been left on the notice paper and I seek obviously for those to be withdrawn

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs and leave has been granted for the withdrawing of those particular matters and you've provided a personal explanation. There is no question before the House and so no debate will be entered into thereon. Thank you. Those matters are withdrawn

FIXING OF NEXT SITTING DAY

MR CHRISTIAN Mr Speaker I move that the House at its rising adjourns until Wednesday 16 August 2006 at 10 am

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any debate Honourable Members. There being no further debate I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The motion is agreed to

ADJOURNMENT

Honourable Members we now move to adjournment and Mr Nobbs I look to you

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

SPEAKER
Members

Thank you Mr Nobbs. Is there any debate Honourable

MRS BOUDAN

Mr Speaker I wish to make a brief statement concerning land rights for descendants of the Pitcairn settlers. By the Grace of God Norfolk Island was granted by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, in 1856 to the Pitcairn settlers and their descendants for their homeland and so the whole community was transported to Norfolk Island at that time. The Pitcairn settlers and their descendants were granted special rights by the Crown. Such rights have been and are continuing to be eroded away and will undoubtedly vanish should the Norfolk Island Government not include in their negotiations with the Commonwealth the proposal for recognition and acknowledgement to the descendants of the Pitcairn settlers in particular, where land rights are concerned. The Norfolk Island Act states in the preamble that the parliament recognises the special relationship of the descendants of the settlers from Pitcairn Island with Norfolk Island and their desire to protect their traditions and culture. As far as I am aware that has been no concrete grounding or protection put in place through acknowledgement and recognition and I firmly believe that it must begin with land rights. It is important that the Norfolk Island Government and the Commonwealth make solid provision for the descendants of the Pitcairn settlers when negotiating the future of Norfolk Island and its people. I realise there is the annual Anniversary Bounty Day public holiday or day off in lieu on the 8th June for the celebrations but that is the day that has been claimed by the people and no-one dare take it away. It most certainly deserves more. The Crown granted special rights, the Parliament recognises the special relationship – now the Norfolk Island Government and the Commonwealth need to secure it once and for all. Traditional rights to the land for the descendants of the Pitcairn settlers. Thank you Mr Speaker

SPEAKER
debate

Thank you Mrs Boudan. Is there further contribution to

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I would just like to thank Mrs Boudan for her contribution. For years the people of Norfolk Island have considered themselves to be different and I think in other reports of life they've actually shown that they are different and I would think that this is a key issue in any negotiations and the Government is talking about going to Canberra to meet with the Minister for Territories in about a month's time, a month and a few days, and the issues that Mrs Boudan has brought out are some of the key issues that must be taken into consideration by the group that goes over there and I wish them well and I will be definitely pushing as much as I can to see that whilst it may not be the land rights proposition, there is an in built belief that the island was given by Queen Victoria to the Pitcairn descendants and as long as I'm alive that's the way it's going to be. Thank you

SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Nobbs. Is there further contribution to debate. Honourable Members as a matter of note you may have noted this morning that there are a number of furnishings absent from the Chamber, including the Coat of Arms, the Prayer, the ceremonial Chair and the flag, and some other items. Those furnishings are being used in a display at the Norfolk Island Museums entitled "Signed and Sealed". It's an exhibition at the Norfolk Island Museums of matters of governance, it incorporates records of the Legislative Assembly, Registry and the Records department, showing the process of governance in Norfolk Island and I would encourage Members and the listening public to avail themselves of the opportunity to inspect that exhibition. It's very worthwhile. Thank you. Honourable Members there being no further debate I put the question that the House do now adjourn

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Therefore Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 16 August 2006 at 10.00 am

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