

which was Emily Bay which featured in her life almost daily. In the late 70's Ber and Ria Howell opened a Florist and Gift shop and with her wry sense of humour called it "Emma Chiset" based on the question that was often asked by the New Zealand visitors to the island. During this time schooling became a priority for her girls and Ber decided to return to Australia in 1984 where she enrolled them both into Somerville House in Brisbane. During her time there, and being a registered nursing sister, she returned to work at the Wesley Hospital. In late 1985 she and the girls returned to Norfolk where she re-immersed herself in things that she was passionate about on the island. Her background in the arts served her well and she became involved in the area of Graphic Arts and quickly mastered the new age of the computer and in keeping with her humour, nicknamed her machine "Costa Bomb". Coupled with the graphics was her desire to do beauty therapy and after graduating in 1987 opened the Aura Beauty Clinic. Around this time her family expanded to include Rick, Kerry, Steven and Bugs when she and Gary were wed in September 1988. In 1998 she was appointed to the Hospital board on which she served for the next three years. At the age of 50 she took up golf as a recreational activity and it wasn't long before she found herself on the committee. She carried on with her golfing right through until her illness forced her to stop but she continued to cheer for her golfing buddies. Yoga had been an interest in her youth and in 2000 she decided to become involved again and this led to her training to become an instructor. After attending workshops in Bali and Byron Bay she gained her level one accreditation. She had a dedicated Yoga Studio built in 2005 and was about to attend a further workshop in Byron to increase her instructor's qualifications to level 2 when she was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. For the next 18 months she endured intensive treatment on the mainland for the cancer and whilst given the all clear in June 2006 was advised two weeks later that the cancer had spread to other parts of her body. She died peacefully on the 28th January at St. Vincent's Hospital in Lismore surrounded by her loving family. To the family and friends her instructions were brief. We should all Celebrate her Life with a toast of French champagne and a taste of Lindt 60% cocoa dark chocolate balls. In accordance with Ber's instructions, this House celebrates her life. Thank you Mr Speaker

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.

PETITIONS

We move to petitions. Are there any petitions this morning?

GIVING OF NOTICES

Are there any notices?

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any questions without notice?

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Chief Minister which is an ongoing one. Chief Minister over the last seven or eight months I've asked you when you are going to commence the Legal Professions Act which has been passed by this House and I wonder if it has been commenced since I last asked the question and if not, why not

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker it has not commenced at this stage. There are Regulations to be made if I remember correctly, they have been drafted but my last consultation with the Legal Services Unit indicated that they may not have been some consultation in some legal areas, and I'm endeavouring to clarify that prior to actually bringing those forward and that's the state of play with it

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Minister for Tourism. Minister I asked you at a recent meeting in relation to the tourist accommodation grading which was assessed by AA Tourism and some accommodation was not graded. Are you aware, and I assume you are, that the executive member shall cause to be graded in accordance with the prescribed grading system tourist accommodation Houses registered under the Act. Why is it that some tourist accommodation Houses were stated in the gazette as being not rated and have these units been subsequently deregistered

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the first point is that every licenced tourist accommodation property is indeed graded. That is the requirement of the legislation. The Australian Automobile Authority is appointed to carry out those gradings, and the gradings are carried out in accordance with such decisions as may be made by that authority. I do not have any information as to the precise reason as to why the Authority chooses to grade only some rooms in some properties. If Mr Nobbs would like me to seek that explanation I would be happy to do so

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary if you please. Are you aware that there are only two tourist accommodation Houses which had units that were not rated at the time and I ask you, it's been suggested and do you agree with this, that the units not rated are in fact potentially of a lower standard than those which were rated and as a consequence would reduce the overall rating of that facility

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I certainly would not agree with that. It is a question for the grading authority as to how they go about their grading but I'm not aware of any suggestion that where a property has a number of different types of rooms, failure to grade one of the types causes a difficulty. I'm not aware of any such suggestion

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker would the Minister take as he offered the matter on board and report his findings at the next meeting please

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I would be happy to make enquiries and as soon as the response is received to those enquiries I would be happy to distribute it to Members

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I have a question here for the Minister responsible for the Public Service. Minister considering the verdict in the Supreme Court of Norfolk Island whereas the employees entitlements upon resignation or retirement to payments under the Provident Act 1958 is dependent upon continuous service, whether the service be broken by separate contracts or not, was recently found in favour of the employee, can the Minister advise what repercussions this will have for the Administration

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker the Chief Executive Officer has had discussion with me about this situation. He has projected that there are a number – the exact number is not in my mind at this time but I could check on that, there are a number of people who may well be in a similar situation and therefore be able to draw the same entitlements. There has been a referral if I remember the details correctly to the Legal Services Unit to examine that range to see if they all are in exactly the same boat as was prescribed by the court. I'm unsure at this stage as to whether that process is completed but it has been requested to be done. Once that is done, then there will be a calculation of the amounts that would relate to that overall situation and the CEO has foreshadowed then he would need to seek funds to meet that commitment. I think that's it in a nutshell Mr Deputy Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker one for the Chief Minister. Will you be making a statement on problems encountered by Norfolk Air Operations in recent days and what is being done to ensure disruptions such as has occurred, are reduced

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I could probably endeavour to respond to that at this time. I do have a statement in terms of airlines but maybe I could handle this as Mr Nobbs has raised it, now. There has been a significant disruption over the last weekend with the airline servicing Norfolk Island and it basically related first of all to a mechanical difficulty which was experienced on arrival in Brisbane. The result of that was that another aircraft was repositioned from Melbourne to Brisbane to undertake the remainder of that days flying. There was a delay obviously in that. The aircraft then continued, that is the second aircraft continued, as I am able to interpret that, it led into difficulty in terms of crew time and then weather difficulties entered the lists. There were a series of difficulties in terms of weather, that continued not only over Saturday, but Sunday also and on to Monday. The service was able to be resumed if I remember correctly, leaving Norfolk Island on the Tuesday at about 10.30 in the morning. That is a difficult situation, whilst the mechanical difficulty was the first part of the process, the weather difficulties that followed, was significant, and they are not things regrettably, that we are able to control. In terms of what are we doing to endeavour to not be placed in this position again, I think I should first of all say, that weather isn't something that we can control as I've just said, and there will continue to be difficulties no matter what we are able to do but there are some things that will assist us. And the first ism, that we may have a backup crew that would be available so that if crew time expires then we are able to cut in the back up crew. That may not be the technical term for it, but that's really what it means. At this stage and with this particular period of time, that crew has not been available but we've had discussions with Ozjet to achieve that. The other is, that over a much longer period of time when we entered into a contractual arrangement which we are about to do with Ozjet, that we may ensure that over a period of time that we upgrade an aircraft that is not as susceptible, it won't cancel out that possibility altogether, but may not be as susceptible to that particular difficulty. I hope that's helpful to Mr Nobbs but also in a general sense for people to just know about that

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker could I have a supplementary to that. Minister on the street I understand from word out on the street that this proposal will have a change in the management of the airline operation. Is that correct and can you give a date and a time if this is to occur

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker the answer to that is yes and I have a statement that I'll make in statement time. That was what I foreshadowed when I was responding to this

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I have a couple for the Minister for Finance on the airline. Minister with a change of management being undertaken in the airline operation will the Minister ensure that an internal audit is done as soon as possible and that the results are made available to all Members of the airline working group, if not all MLA's

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker the answer to that is certainly. I'll endeavour to do everything that Mr Nobbs has requested that I do

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary please just on the airline. Minister is it correct that with changes to the Norfolk Air booking arrangements, and I'm not too sure whether it should go to the Minister for Finance or the Chief Minister. With changes to the Norfolk Air booking arrangements the Administration is now holding significant funds in forward bookings. Given problems encountered by some airlines in the past utilising such funds for other purposes, what arrangements have been put in place to account for such funds and what guarantees

have been given to the community that such funds will not be utilised as general revenue by future Governments

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker Mr Nobbs is quite correct. As a result of part of the seat inventory residing in the Ozjet reservations system or more exactly the Norfolk Air if you access it via the web, we do have a significant amount of money sitting in the Administration's airport account at this time which is prepayments for future travel, that is, we haven't yet earned the money. I've had discussions with the Finance Manager in the Administration. The proposal is that we not put that money into a trust account at the moment because it becomes difficult to deal with it in trust, but a separate line will be included in future cash balances for the Administration where that money is clearly identified and one would hope that all Legislative Assembly are responsible in nature and don't try and raid money which is in effect, trust type money but not necessarily held in trust, if you can understand that explanation. So that's the procedures that have been put in place now and I would expect that the amount that's contained within the account will be a fluctuating one, it will go up and down, probably on a weekly basis. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I have a question here for the Tourism Minister in virtually in regard to the airlines, along the same lines. Minister considering the lower number of visitors from Australia over the past month or so do you consider that the preferred treatments of some wholesalers in regard to access to the reservations system is working well and what are the wholesalers' reasons for the lower level of bookings

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker perhaps Mr Sheridan has access to information that I don't have access to. Later today I will be tabling the January visitors statistics and they show a growth over both 2005 and 2006. I would like the growth to be more, but I'm not aware of there being a decline

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I suppose Minister where I was getting at was that in most of January and early February there was considerable space on the aircraft. I was just wondering whether you had an opinion whether the restrictions on the wholesalers are attributed to that, or whether it's across the board

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I have found it impossible to ascertain the number of seats available for sale on each aircraft. As I understand it, Qantas refuses to provide that information and I certainly don't receive it from the Norfolk Air management. There are a number of initiatives that I would have liked to have seen in place for January and February for whatever reason, they were not put in place by the Norfolk Air organisation. I certainly have full confidence in the existing wholesale system. It is the mechanism by which bulk distribution of the Norfolk Island holiday product is provided and I will be reluctant without being provided with compelling information, I would be reluctant to support change

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary please. Minister how do these wholesalers quantify the advertising moneys that they receive from Norfolk Tourism and do they produce figures to justify the ongoing advertising costs

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I'm not sure whether Mr Sheridan has in the past had difficulty in obtaining that information from the Tourist Bureau. He has been a Board Member. My understanding is that the Bureau Manager as part of providing co-operative funding, does seek that type of information. I do not have it available to me but I can certainly ask that it be collated and provided

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker a further supplementary please. The Minister referred to my being a Board Member, that is correct, I'm no longer on there because my tenure expired at the end of last year, and that brings down the number of the board to...

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there a question Mr Sheridan

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker yes I have. That brings down the number of the board to four I believe. Minister when do you intend to replace myself and the other vacant position on the Tourism Board

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker as Members will be aware there is a Bill which has been in the House for several months, following a motion to the House. That bill seeks to give effect to the House's motion by the House in effect supporting any candidate's appointment to the Board before the actual appointment. That Bill will hopefully receive its final reading today and I propose to assuming that it is assented to within the period of the next week or so, I propose to bring a motion to the House at our next meeting

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question to the Minister of Tourism. Minister given that we are eight months into the current financial year, will tourism figures in your opinion reach those which were predicted I think by yourself earlier in this year

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I doubt that I would have been so bold as to make a prediction in visitor numbers. I expect that I spoke in terms of a target. At this stage bearing in mind that Friday flights to Sydney are expected to resume on a full time basis this month, bearing in mind that a Friday flight to Brisbane is expected to commence for 32 weeks of each year, next month, and bearing in mind that a once weekly service to Newcastle is expected to commence in May I remain hopeful that we will exceed 35,000 for the present year and I remain hopeful that we will achieve 40,000 for the following year. All of that will require co-operation between the Bureau and Norfolk Air. The Chief Minister has assured me that, that co-operation will be available. It will require forward planning rather than the last minute planning that Norfolk Air has had to cope with over the last six months or so, and with the benefit of forward planning, with the benefit of additional services, and hopefully with the benefit of the regional partnerships grant which we have sought, the 35,000 figure is not unrealistic, nor is the 40,000 unrealistic for next year

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Chief Minister. Minister will you be making a statement on the latest report to creditors which includes the community of Norfolk Island from the liquidators of the Norfolk Island company, Norfolk Jet Express following a public examination of the directors held late last year

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker no I had not planned on making such a statement. Certainly I can make that information available. I haven't got it in front of me, but there is a report, from the liquidators and I'm very happy to make that report available. If I could just put you right on that, I am unsure if there is any confidentiality about that. I would think not, but maybe I should just say that provided my advisors don't advise me otherwise, so I think I can say that the report could be available. I don't see any reason why it shouldn't

MR NOBBS A supplementary please. Is the Government pursuing the directors of the company given the liquidators view that "it appears the company traded whilst insolvent" and he stated further that "we have assets of substance owned by the directors of the company that maybe recovered if an insolvency trading claim was successfully pursued". Minister is the Government pursuing the directors

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker there is no initiative on my part to do that at this moment. I'm just now trying to recollect the advise that came forward in respect of that situation, it may well be that it is still under examination. Senior officers of the services were examining for the government the prospect of being able to gain some of the debts accruing and whether the expenditure to do that was justifiable. I think that's really it, in a nutshell. I think I probably would prefer to take it on notice to see whether that matter has been finalised or whether that is continuing to be examined

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Minister for Tourism. Minister your report of your travel in October was distributed to MLA's in December. Has this been circulated to industry Members given the comments that were included in the report

MR BROWN No, Mr Deputy Speaker is the answer. That was a report to Members. I haven't sent that report to anyone else

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary please. In the report, it covered a five day working period in which you visited Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sydney and Auckland. I thank you for the report. It's very enlightening. Minister it was a very busy schedule yet on day 1 which was Monday, 9th October, it was an all day meeting with Norfolk and Pacific Holidays, Mrs J. Jarvis in brackets, I ask, given Mrs Jarvis history and expertise on Norfolk Island issues why was there a need to spend a whole day in such a meeting

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I can't think back to the precise day. There is little doubt that I did other things on the day but I certainly value the input of all of the wholesalers, and if I choose to spend a whole day with one wholesaler it's not spent making paper aeroplanes I can assure you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary please. Minister you refer to a comment in the report that there was little consistency by various accommodation Houses in the new NSL and some appears to want to charge more than the NSL would cost them which to me is a fairly damning comment. Have you provided such a complaint to your colleague the Minister for Finance who under the NSL provisions could investigate and if necessary take action

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker if my recollection is correct I had discussed the issue with the ATA, if my recollection is correct the ATA was somewhat offended that I would make such a suggestion but the comment that I made was borne out shortly after my trip when one of the wholesalers contacted me to complain about the inconsistency and to complain that the rate of increase which some properties indicated that they wished to charge from 1 April onwards and then stressed they were not yet to 1 April, the rate if my recollection is correct, was on some occasions even greater than the proposed 9% level of the GST and one of my concerns was to ensure that the ATA made it clear to its Members that there would be compensating savings at the time of any increase in the NSL or introduction of GST. Those savings would include for example, the removal of the financial institutions levy. Now some have said to me, well we don't pay that now so that's not a saving. My response to those people have been, that whether their circumstances are such that they pay the FIL now or not, they will no longer have to pay it, and it is indeed a saving. The bed levy is another where I'll acknowledge that from property to property the bed levy as a percentage of turnover will vary, but by removing the bed levy there will be a significant saving and it will indeed resolve the difficulty that some tourist accommodation proprietors have complained off where they suggest that if they have low occupancy and the bed is a cold bed tax as it presently is, they are being unfairly treated. Well with those changes they will be very fairly treated because it will revert to being a very easy to manage hot bed tax as part of the GST. Not a separate tax, but the GST will only be based on the revenue that they

achieve. Other savings are harder to quantify, such as the savings resulting from the changes in customs duty. But Mr Nobbs, if come the 1st April, any tourist accommodation House seeks to profiteer from the introduction of the NSL or the GST at the higher rate then the responsible executive member will have causes of action open to him. The difficulty of course is that if someone simply recalculates the whole of his costs and comes to the conclusion that the whole of his costs have increased substantially, it is very difficult to take any action about that but if a tourist accommodation House seeks to blame a 15% increase in its rates solely on the increased NSL or GST well that would clearly be inappropriate

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker just a final supplementary on the report if I may, Minister have you investigated the comments made to you and recorded in your report that "Norfolk Island undersells itself and room rates are low compared to other parts of the Pacific" and what are your recommendations to me and also to the industry

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker that comment has been made to me by a number of people. It's ironic that we are talking about it now at a time when Fiji has savagely discounted rates, Vanuatu and some of the other countries of the Pacific have substantially discounted rates or buy one take one free, or certain other packages. I think that the first part of the answer would relate to our tourism plan. The Tourist Bureau is in the course of developing a new tourist plan. It is to the stage where it requires the assistance of an outside consultant to finalise it. I've had discussions with the general manager of the Tourist Bureau during the last fortnight about that, and my understanding at this stage is that a consultant has been retained and I understand that the consultant will be coming to the island at the beginning of March in order to try to get that new plan closer towards completion. I understand that the consultancy will take some weeks to conclude. The plan will then be distributed to Members of the Legislative Assembly once it's been dealt with by the Bureau and that will be stage 1. Stage 2 will resolve itself to some extent by the increased visitor numbers which we are targeting through our existing marketing plans, both in terms of the air service and in terms of tourist visitors. It's a fact of life that as occupancy rates increase, room rates will begin to move back towards a more normal level. I would suggest to you that many properties on the island are presently charging rates which must leave their operations very marginal if not loss making, because it simply does cost a lot of money to properly operate a property and the ones that I'm speaking of are being properly operated so it's not a case of the quality of the product being depreciated it's simply a case of the accommodation house deciding to run its sales and marketing efforts on the basis of attracting pricing but I think the prices will begin to increase on their own, but if that is not the case and it becomes obvious that properties are allowing their standards to fall, if the guest expectations are no longer being met, and if as part of all of that, prices continue to fall because customers can't be found at normal prices, well that will be a difficulty that will have to be addressed

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a question for the Minister for Finance. Minister is it correct that the revenue fund budget for the year 2006/2007 was brought down with a surplus of some \$60,000. That will be a surplus at the 30th June this year. If the revised budget arrangements sees a predicted deficit of some \$700,000 will this exceed the reserves and what is being done to overcome this particular problem

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Nobbs's assumptions are quite right. The projected budget for this year which was a conservative one compared to last year, intended to try and deliver a small surplus of about \$96,000. Currently, if we don't change anything between now and the end of this financial year we will go out at the end with a \$697,000 or \$700,000 deficit. We currently have reserves totalling \$514,000 so all of those reserves would be consumed and we would in fact go out at the end of this financial year with a net loss if you like of \$183,000 so that makes all of the reserves are consumed plus \$183,000 which we would obviously have to find

from somewhere. If Members cast their minds back to meetings that we have had prior to Christmas, I flagged then that we would need to try and either save at least \$100,000 per month on expenditure for the remainder of the financial year or increase income or a combination of both to try and come out of this financial year somewhere near breaking even. And that's the situation there. Budget review papers have been done by the Finance Department and I expect Legislative Assembly Members will sit and consider them through the course of next week and we will decide an appropriate course of action from there until the end of this financial year. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I have a question here for the Chief Minister, responsible for heritage. Were you going to make a statement Chief Minister about national heritage and world heritage. Should I leave it until then

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I'm happy to answer questions

MR SHERIDAN Chief Minister during the past few months you've been off island frequently to attend meetings and in the main this has had to deal with national or world heritage in certain areas in Norfolk Island. Can the Minister table the latest dated map of affected areas and advise the community what stage the discussions have reached

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker there are three things that are running in terms of the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area and that's what this is about. The first is a revision of the Conservation Management Plan for the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area. The groundwork for that has been extensive and continues. The heritage architects office in New South Wales, one of its senior officers, Mary Naggs, is leading a team to prepare that CMP. The prospect of this has been advertised locally and a consultant has been active, that is, Crystal Buckley in gaining community views about values and attitudes to the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area. A couple of months ago now, that is, in 2006, towards the end of that year, a series of public consultations took place with Crystal Buckley and others, so that various organisations and various individuals including landowners within the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area might have an opportunity to put their views. They have been collated and are part of the evaluation in presenting the revised CMP. A draft of the revised CMP, is projected at this time to be firstly considered by the KAVHA Board during the month of March, and then also within March for the draft to be publicly exhibited so that its draft contents can be seen and commented upon by the community. One of the things that seems to be shaping within the plan at this moment, but it's wrong for me to try and say that this will be its result, but I think it is relevant to the questions that you have asked Mr Sheridan, there seems to be shaping a recommendation that there should be some greater flexibility in what may or may not be done within the area, particularly in those areas that may be more towards the borders of the centre of the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area but that will become more apparent once the draft is publicly displayed and as I say again, that is scheduled for March. The CMP has basically three values. One, that it is required for daily administration in a number of ways within the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area, for example, the Board and the Project Manager to go about the conservation and maintenance tasks within the area, the second is that there has been consideration of nomination on the national heritage and the world heritage listing and there needs to be an upgrading of the CMP for that to be done. The national nomination, two things deserve mention in respect of it. One is that there has been an external nomination for the National Heritage listing, that is, from outside Norfolk Island, for a much larger area then the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area. The Norfolk Island Government wanted to put that in context so has countered with a nomination that really covers the Kingston and Arthurs Vale Historic Area only and no other part of Norfolk Island. But the second part of that is that, if there is to be a World Heritage consideration, there must first be a national recognition of the site and so there are two reasons that, that has been pursued. The third areas which is

the World Heritage nomination examination is still going on. It is part of the consideration of a serial listing of convict sites within the Australian scene, and there are eleven sites that have now been settled in respect of the serial proposal. They range from Tasmania to Western Australia, New South Wales and Norfolk Island and they cover a range of convict activities from the very earliest times. The Norfolk Island perspective of that is something that I have endeavoured to set out before, and that is, that Norfolk Island's at present, principle industry is tourism. There are absolutely thousands of competitors within the Australian and New Zealand scene all vying for the visitor, and of course, many of them are extremely attractive places, but notwithstanding that there are thousands of attractive places, the number that have the World Heritage cache are quite small. In New Zealand they number three, and whilst I think the figure is changing in the Australian situation, we are still only talking I think something like within the twenty or thirty out of the many thousands, tens of thousands that are available in terms of holiday and tourist destinations and if Norfolk Island is serious about wanting to continue and find permanency in terms of its tourist industry, it needs to work hard to gain the edge and to be able to quote world heritage standing has an immediate recognition both in the domestic scene and in the international scene and that is one of the principle reasons. There are obviously heritage and conservation reasons why, what we have, we want to preserve, but there is the additional cache of world heritage that can significantly, significantly, maintain our status as a high class, world class, tourist destination and so my activities have been involved in those three areas and that's the latest information

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker Chief Minister can you confirm that the area within 100 metres of the cliff line on Norfolk Island I still being considered for I believe National listing

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I'm just thinking for a moment. I'm not aware of any proposal. If it is, it is certainly not a Government proposal. There may be some other conservation organisations that may have made nominations. I would have to double check that but I don't recall that, that is the case

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker if I might ask a supplementary please. Chief Minister would you be able to advise how much these trips have cost the Norfolk Island community in monetary terms

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I'm just trying to think, because I don't think it has cost the Norfolk Island Government any dollars. The attendance on my part and on the part of other officers have been Commonwealth funded so that's not been a charge against the Norfolk Island public purse. There may have been times when I have undertaken that exercise when there may have been some Norfolk Island Government business and that might have cost us for that purpose but not for this purpose

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker a supplementary please. I don't want to talk about KAVHA or anything but I just want to talk about travel arrangements. Wouldn't it be more appropriate Minister to conduct these meetings by telephone hook up which we can do here quite easily. It's the time factor that I'm concerned about at the moment. At the moment the money is Commonwealth funding but wouldn't it be more appropriate to instead of travelling over there for a meeting and taking three days, that the issue be dealt with by telephone

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker Mr Nobbs is correct and there are telephone hook ups that take place. There are a series of methods and they are these. One is a telephone hook up and we do that from time to time, and in fact there is one next week to pursue matters and that's the method that is being adopted there. However there is a requirement from time to time for all of the parties to come together face to face and that does happen from time to time. The third of course is that I encourage the group to come to Norfolk Island and whilst the next cycle in terms of

coming together is likely not to be in Norfolk Island the one after that will in all likelihood be here so there are a series of ways that it's handled and they are the three.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker just one final question for the Chief Minister having responsibility for the public service. Chief Minister can the Minister update the community on the public sector's wage claim that is now some two years old

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I had discussions with the Chief Executive Officer and representatives of the Public Service Association earlier this week. We have had earlier discussions. The Public Service Association has a long standing claim and they paused that claim when we entered into the more difficult financial times which we have been recently experiencing. However, within the last month or so, they have renewed their contact and negotiations. At this stage I have needed with the Finance Minister, to explain that there isn't an availability of funds for significant consideration in terms of their claim at this time. That doesn't mean that we wouldn't want to have further discussions, but that has needed to be explained. The Public Service Association has indicated that their next course may well be to go to the Tribunal so that the Tribunal may evaluate their situation and that may indeed be the fairest and most straightforward way to handle that. It may well be that Members would like to say to me, something different about that. If Members wish to say something different and to have further discussions in a certain direction, I would be very pleased have views about that.

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker another question for the Minister for Tourism. Minister I was asked, and I ask you, are you aware that some tourist accommodation Houses blatantly run an overbooking policy and whilst there is a lack of numbers which if you were to think this wouldn't happen, I notice that there have been some letters in the paper and other things to support that question that was asked of me. Is this not a damaging policy for Norfolk Island and the much touted phrase of invigorating the economy

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker that's a very interesting question. I wouldn't suggest that any property runs a blatant overbooking policy but I would suggest that every well managed property runs a deliberate overbooking policy. And that's the case throughout the world. In the Norfolk Island environment for example, groups might book twelve months ahead of travel and 60 days before travel something like 50% of those groups are likely to cancel the rooms they've booked, and the way that the tourist accommodation property, not only in Norfolk Island but elsewhere handle that, is to determine an overbooking policy, they might overbook by a certain number of rooms in off peak periods, and a lesser number in peak periods for example, but its not an unusual situation as I said, virtually every well managed property will operate that booking policy

MR NOBBS So I assume that what you are saying is that its okay to operate like that. But isn't the main point really, is how the establishment actually handles those people when the overbooking occurs. That's what you are saying

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker not only in terms of overbooking policies but the way a property deals with its guests is important in all situations and in general Norfolk Island has a good reputation in that regard. You'll always have the odd guests no matter what the tourist accommodation proprietor, might do, might not be happy. We're all aware of that type of difficulty across the whole spectrum of the industry but I'm not aware of there being a significant problem in Norfolk Island

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I have another question which was asked of me and I don't have a clue what the answer is. It is noted in the advertisement for All Season Hotel on the island, and Minister in your role as Tourism

and Immigration Minister can you advise the status of All Seasons, what is their immigration status; has there been a change in ownership and if so, does this comply with the tourist accommodation ownership legislation

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker firstly I'll remind Members that I am a director and shareholder in that property. I'm not sure whether Mr Nobbs correspondent is seeking to grandstand or seeking to obtain information. If they would like to have information they can ring me at any time, but the record book will show that there is no change of ownership, the arrangement with All Seasons is in fact an arrangement with a core of hotels, possibly the largest worldwide group of hotels which has a range of brands ranging from Sofatel to Novatel, Mecure, All Seasons, Ibis, Formula 1 and then there are a range of other brands that are not as widely used in Australia and all that has happened in that case is a franchise with All Seasons brand has been taken. There is actually no change of ownership, there is absolutely no change of management, there is no change other than obtaining the benefit of branding through a worldwide chain and the benefits of that, such as training, marketing, purchasing etc

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I ask the Chief Minister would you be providing a statement to the community on the current relationship with the Australian Government and if not, what is the current relationship with the Australian Government, and in particular, Minister Lloyd and are there any current demands on the performance of the Norfolk Island Government

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker the current relationship with the Australian Government is as announced by Minister Lloyd when he was in this chamber in December and that is, the arrangements as are prescribed by the Norfolk Island Act and the relationships that have been more informal outside and beyond that legislative arrangement. Minister Lloyd at that time indicated that Norfolk Island was to continue the path provided by that legislation. I have of recent times, and I have circulated a copy to all Members of the Legislative Assembly of a letter from Minister Lloyd in which he has expressed his view in a number of areas. He has asked for information in a number of areas also and I have explained to Members that some of those areas are ones that we have attended to some time ago. There are areas which we are continuing to attend to and some other areas we are yet to tackle but we have foreshadowed that we will do so. I have equally advised Members that a response to Minister Lloyd's letter is in the process of being prepared to respond and explain that situation to him.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Honourable Members, any further Questions this morning. We conclude Questions Without Notice and we move on

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR MR GARDNER MLA

MRS JACK Mr Speaker I seek leave for the sitting for the Speaker, Mr Geoff Gardner

SPEAKER: Thank you Mrs Jack. Honourable Members, is leave granted? Thank you. Leave is granted?

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Are there any Papers for presentation this morning

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I table the Norfolk Island inbound passenger statistics for January 2007

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker I table the Norfolk Island Hydrology Study, the background to water and waste water management on Norfolk Island and ask that it be

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker the title of this hydrology study Mr Deputy Speaker is the first in a series of three. The funding for this study has come from the Commonwealth through a grant through the Natural Heritage Trust, and is one of three that has been made available at the same time, the others being revegetation of certain reserves, and the money being provided for a natural resource management plan, which has been undertaken at the moment by the firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. Mr Deputy Speaker this stage one of this programme has been carried out and stage 2, the island wide survey is currently under way. This survey is being undertaken through the Environmental Officer Nicole Diatloff, and with the assistance of a student, P J Wilson, who was from Norfolk Island and is currently enrolled in Griffith University undertaking Environmental Engineering. He is being paid to go around taking water samples, and that funding for his services is being provided through the funding grant. I would just like to congratulate Mr Wilson also Mr Deputy Speaker as I understand that he obtained the University Medal as the best first year student in the area of Engineering Studies throughout the University in first year, so he's to be congratulated there. The third step will be the results when the past and the present samples are compared and also I must give recognition to Mr Neil Tavener who for years has been collecting water data throughout the island and his data will be used in that comparison. At present bores, wells and open water streams are being sampled. My understanding is that they are half way through and some 150 to 200 samples have been tested and I'm not sure when the second stage will be completed but no doubt I'll be presenting that report when it's done. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate 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 BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I table as an information document the Children and Young People Bill 2006 and I move that the paper be noted

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker as Members can see this is quite a big bill. It is aimed at updating our Child Welfare legislation which goes back to something like 1913. there is not time for it to be dealt with in the life of the present Legislative Assembly but I seek to table it today so that the community will be able to consider it. A copy has been provided to the counsellor at the Hospital and she has kindly agreed to get some advise about the mechanism that will be required in order to implement the bill. It's one thing to pass a big piece of legislation. There is very little point in it if you are not going to then have the facilities to implement what you are trying to implement. This is one of the areas which was referred to by Minister Lloyd in his recent letter. It is a shame that it is in fact in a form able to be tabled for something like a year, and I understand that it may be the case that a previous Chief Minister may have tabled it as an exposure draft in about March of last year but I do so today for the purpose of the community having the opportunity to look at it, and for the purpose of

Members having a look at it if they have the time to do so before the end of this Legislative Assembly. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate 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 Deputy Speaker financial indicators for December 2006 and I move that the paper be noted

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker the revenue fund income continues to fall behind budget projections. The difference between actual and budgeted income stands at \$881,000. the principle area of difficulty remains income from customs duty which is \$537,000 short of projected income. The financial indicators for November 2006 tell us that revenue fund income was running at 82% of projected income and that the December 2006 financial indicators tell us that we have achieved 87% of budget which is a slight improvement in the right direction. Mr Deputy Speaker overall expenditure at the end of December 2006 stands at 97% of budget with drawdowns to the Tourist Bureau and hospital running at \$200 and \$107,000 ahead of budget respectively. I expect these two expenditure items to fall into line as marketing funds from the airline flow into the Tourist Bureau and recently announced fee increases to the hospital take effect. Mr Deputy Speaker after taking account of everything the revenue fund deficit currently stands \$389,000, that is, at the end of December 2006. if we look at the page titled Capital Works and Purchases, you can see that we intended to spend \$143,000 on capital items but we have spent or have committed to spend only \$14,500 of that amount to date. If we now turn to the page titled Revenue Fund Estimated Position, it tells us that at the end of December 2006 we had sufficient current assets to meet all our known liabilities including police and education and still hold \$248,000 in reserves. If we turn to the Cash at Bank page, it tells us that the funds held in our bank account, exclusive of trust accounts stands at \$8.3m which is identical to the amount held at the end of November 2006 which is also consistent with the monthly long term average. Mr Deputy Speaker if we now look at the Norfolk Air page we can see that the airline operation achieved total sales of \$7.8m for the July to December 2006 period and incurred operating costs totalling \$7.3m leaving us with an operating surplus of \$500,000. Mr Deputy Speaker this is a pleasing result and something that we in the community should be proud of. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate in this matter 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 BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I table a notice which was printed in the Norfolk Island Government Gazette on Friday being No. 8 of 9 February 2007 setting out the new charges for Health Services at the Norfolk Island Hospital and I move that the paper be noted

DEPUTY SPEAKER
be noted

Honourable Members the question is that the paper

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker section 8 of the Norfolk Island Hospital Act requires that health services be provided by the hospital at the true economic cost. The hospital does receive a subsidy from the Norfolk Island Government but from time to time, it is necessary to review the charges. The increase is in all cases but one, an increase of 10%. There is no increase in the area of pharmaceuticals and I note that in fact, for someone who pays his bill when he collects his pharmaceuticals, the cost of pharmaceuticals has gone down in the last year because we applied the prompt payment discount for pharmaceuticals without increasing the cost of pharmaceuticals in that time. Pharmaceuticals are a problem area at the hospital in that the price which must be charged here, is considerably higher than what might be charged in Australia where people have the benefit of the pharmaceutical benefit scheme. The hospital Advisory Board is looking at whether a degree of improvement would be achieved by changing freight arrangements and the Board is also looking at the question of whether a recommendation should be made to the Legislative Assembly that the Government partly subsidise the cost of pharmaceuticals. Those are matters that the Advisory Board will attend to in due course but the legislation requires me to table these details of the increases which are to come into effect immediately. Thank you

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, Minister given the discount provided to people at the time of service, has the debt to the hospital been lowered through having that facility offered.

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the most recent debtors list which I reviewed indicated that the level of debtors was below that which had applied a month before but that can fluctuate quite substantially for a few reasons. If the Healthcare Fund is a few weeks late in making a payment, the level of debtors can appear to increase. If social services on behalf of HMA is a little late or a little early, that too can cause a variation in either direction. The arrangements with the Department of Veterans Affairs have been working smoothly for quite some time, and certainly I would like to express my thanks to the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the effort which they have put in to helping to achieve that, and for the assistance which they provide to the Norfolk Island veteran community. There have been a few other large accounts which are about to be sorted out. The basis of resolving those accounts have now been agreed on and in fact one was paid, one which went back some years, was paid in the last week or so but the unknown in all of this, is that as the local economy struggles, and as some of the population leave the island in particularly I'm talking there of temporary entry permit population, perhaps it's a case of the hospital's turnover reducing and therefore you can expect that as a result of that, the levels of debtors would reduce. The situation is not satisfactory at the moment where the level of debtors is far higher than one would like it to be, but it is necessary to bear in mind that other parts of the Administration are able to extract funds by threatening to cut off power, or cut off telephones or whatever else, and it is certainly inappropriate for the hospital to suggest that it will cut off fingers or decline to provide treatment or whatever the case may be. The debtors situation is under review, at all times, but it is under review in what we hope is a humane matter. Thank you

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Minister you spoke of pharmaceuticals before. Does that include the review of the immunisation costs of parents of young children in young families. I know that you had spoken to me regarding possible outside assistance there. Could you let me know where that is please

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I'm still awaiting advise about the immunisation question. There is a hope that the cost of immunisation will be able to be reduced or removed altogether but we don't have an answer on that as yet

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker just a query in relation to, and I haven't the paper with me, to the percentages deducted for early payment, or the likes and I think that the first one was up to eight days and the second one was up to fourteen days from memory and please correct me if I'm wrong, and the third one says you get the same as you do for fourteen days if you pay on account. Is there any explanation for that

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I don't have those papers with me. I will be more than happy to check them and get back to you

MR NOBBS Yes. Alright

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate Honourable Members. The question is that the paper be noted and I put that question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

SPEAKER Thank you. That paper is noted. Are there any further Papers this morning

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I table the draft revenue fund budget for the year 2007/2008 and move that the paper be noted

DEPUTY SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker the paper that I have just tabled is without doubt an historic document. It is historic because as far as I'm aware it has never been presents to the Legislative Assembly a draft revenue fund budget document that is peppered with unrealistic and largely unachievable wish lists and therefore includes huge projected deficits. The Legislative Assembly Members are then left to try and construct a working document in a relatively short time frame. Mr Deputy Speaker the draft 07/08 revenue fund budget is a template from the Legislative Assembly to the Public Service and the principle message it conveys is this. The draft budget is the Legislative Assembly blueprint for the next twelve months. Please work within the framework provided by the document fullstop. Mr Deputy Speaker the paper encompasses the reforms to our taxation system that is currently under way and is the first step in achieving the outcomes identified in the Econtech study as being crucial to Norfolk Island's future wellbeing and sustainability. The draft 07/08 revenue fund budget has a projected income of \$13.5m. As I have said, this takes account of our changed taxation arrangements, and includes an amount of extra income that additional visitors are expected to deliver to the island. Mr Deputy Speaker on the expenditure side ti is proposed to spend \$11.9m. this is a factual figure arrived at by using the actual figures from the 06/07 budget, adjusted downwards to remove expensive trial costs and costs incurred in presenting our case to the Commonwealth during the recent discussions on governance and other matters. The \$11.9m figure covers such things as salaries and wages and recurrent expenditure but does not include any capital expenditure. I stress that it does not include any capital expenditure whatsoever. Mr Deputy Speaker the draft 07/08 revenue fund budget projects a surplus before capital expenditure of \$1.6m. \$1.6m. Therefore the new Legislative Assembly has had all the hard work done for them and their principle task will now be to decide how to responsibly spend the surplus in a way that delivers maximum benefit to the community of Norfolk Island. Areas in which the funds could be spent include but are not limited to, firstly, rebuilding reserves after three years of deficit budgets and in response to a question from Mr Nobbs today, I indicated that if we were unable to generate additional income or significantly reduce our expenditure we would go out at the end of this financial year with a small deficit. We should also make a contribution to the accumulated depreciation and currently you can

see in the financial information that we get provided to us, that basically unfunded accumulated depreciation at the moment stands at about \$5m. This amount rises relatively each year by about \$6 or 700,000 and there is an accounting principle that is arrived at there to determine the number. We can provide for depreciation in a number of ways, but principally two ways. We can either put it in as a line item and put a figure alongside it or any surplus left over at the end of the year is automatically offset against it. Other things we might be able to do with the \$1.6m surplus is to get cracking with the upgrade of the Administration computer system so that we can actually get actual real time financial and other information as we require it. We may also be able to make an additional contribution to the Burnt Pine upgrade, bearing in mind that all roadworks now are performed by the Roads GBE and the Roads GBE has dedicated but limited income from sources specific to it so it gives the Legislative Assembly the opportunity if it wants to, to make an additional contribution to have additional work performed in Burnt Pine. We might also decide to improve the school in some shape or form. Could be by additional maintenance, additional buildings or additional facilities for the kids or for instance, we may be able to increase our contribution to tourism marketing in Norfolk Island and I would probably say that that's an area that we should give some serious thought to be cause if we look at our revenue fund budgets over the last few years, the number that we put in there has generally been stagnant at around \$800,000 and in this day and age with the rising costs it is clearly an inadequate amount. So they are the sorts of things that the Legislative Assembly can turn its mind to in how they spend the money and Mr Deputy Speaker, just in closing I would like to say that the numbers contained in the draft 07/08 budget, that is the revenue fund budget, clearly show hat Norfolk Island does have a bright future if we all pull together. Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I only just received this document this morning and I haven't got the actual results for 05/06 and they haven't been included in here and I wonder why, and I haven't got them with me so I'll leave my comments to another day but this tabled document is up to the next Legislative Assembly to finalise whatever they want as their particular budget for that time, and it's a guide to them on what can be done, but at this stage that's all I can comment on. I haven't had time to read the thing. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Any further debate 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
No. We move on

STATEMENTS

Are there any Statements this morning Honourable Members

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker section 34(2) of the Immigration 1980 requires that the executive member reports to the Legislative Assembly not later than 31 March in each year as to the number of declarations of residency were granted under section 33 of the Act during the year ended on the previous 31 December. I now accordingly report that there were 23 declarations Of those, eight were for spouses of residents, who had received their general entry permits pursuant to section 18 of the Act, that is the special relationship provisions, four of the declarations were for children of residents who received their \general entry permits pursuant to section 18 of the Act and eleven of the declarations were for persons who obtained their general entry permits pursuant to section 19 of the Act and subject to the quota. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Honourable Members the question is that the

statement be noted

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker I just have some concerns in relation to the Newcastle announcement the other day and I wasn't too sure whether the Chief Minister was saying that the press actually leaked their story or what but I've had some complaints that people have been unable to book that flight and that it's apparently not on the system at this point in time and I would just like the Chief Minister to check that at least. He might be aware if it is or somehow or other these people couldn't get on to it, but apparently it's not and we had agreed I think on the airline committee, that there would be no announcement until those seats were available. We've run into this particular problem before and I am just wondering whether in referring to the press announcing, I just wondered whether it was a leak or whether it was a deliberate press release from the airline committee or the chairman of the airline committee himself. Could you answer that Chief Minister

MR BUFFETT

Mr Deputy Speaker there have been basically two announcements in terms of the Newcastle service. One was in the local press last weekend that was the first, and the second one was in the Newcastle area on the Tuesday so there have been two sectors in terms of that. To my knowledge there hasn't been a leak situation but that's not necessarily a difficulty. Its also my understanding that the booking arrangements are now in place. If there is some glitch that I need to attend to I will do so and I'll check that out as soon as we finish the House here

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Honourable Members the question is that the statement be noted and I put that question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you. Are there any further statements this morning

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I wish to make a brief statement in relation to the hospital. Members will recall that some weeks ago I advised that a pay claim which has been made by the nursing staff at the Norfolk Island hospital, had been resolved. It was resolved by the pay for the nurses being increased to a level equally 70% of the NSW mainland awards as to their base rate of pay. But there was no change in the method of calculation of penalty rates. That is, the Norfolk Island penalty rates continued but they are now based on the higher base pay. I understand that some within the community had misunderstood the arrangement that had been made and had thought that the nurses had received a 70% pay increase. That is far from the case. In fact, one level of the nursing staff received no increase at all because 70% of the New South Wales award was what they were receiving. Another level received only a very small increase but I thought that I should correct that misapprehension. There was not a 70% pay rise. There was an increase to 70% of the New South Wales award in terms of the base pay. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker I would just like to bring forward a question without notice response that was asked by yourself in the December meeting and it was, could you please advise the House as to the number of planning applications that have been lodged with the planning office, both building applications and subdivisions since the planning officer ceased employment and how many of these applications have actually been dealt with. Mr Deputy Speaker I can say that in response to your request for an update the planning officer position became vacant in late October. Thirty new development applications have been received. 21 have been approved. Measures have been undertaken to improve our processing time and these

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister

MR BUFFETT

Mr Deputy Speaker before I embark upon the substance of this motion, may I acknowledge on behalf of us all who are here the work of the Acting Chief Executive Officer who has held the post together for almost two years now. That is Mr Steve Mathews, a permanent officer of the service, who in his substantive role manages the IT responsibilities of the Administration. He has acted in this role with some considerable skill. He has not been an applicant for the substantive post of Chief Executive Officer and I on your behalf would like to thank him warmly for his contribution during the time that he has exercised skill in that post. This substantive motion recommends Rhonda Wheatley to be Chief Executive Officer of the Public Service. This recommendation is made pursuant to the statutory requirements of the Public Sector Management Act and this piece of legislation demands a merit selection to be undertaken to fulfil this post, and this has been done. A report on the process has been prepared. I've received this report and I've circulated a copy to each Member of the Legislative Assembly. After advertisement of the position and panel selection of a short list. The three top candidates were brought to the island. Members will each have seen the CV for those persons and they had the opportunity each to address the Members of this Legislative Assembly. Mrs Wheatley was the preferred candidate after that process and she is therefore formally proposed, for recommendation in accordance with the legislative requirements. Mrs Wheatley has strong financial management skills, she is experienced in Information Technology and Human Resources, in Corporate Planning, she has proven leadership and successful management in medium sized public sector organisations and she's experienced in a range and scope of governance issues associated with public sector agencies and is able to demonstrate that she can work within the legislative framework. Her formal qualifications major in finance and public sector management. She is presently engaged with the Sydney catchment authority. She was New South Wales public sector certified practising accountant of the year in 2003 and in 2005 received a Presidents Award in appreciation of her contribution to New South Wales Public Sector committee of the CPA in Australia. Mrs Wheatley is married with an adult family and her husband plans to accompany her to Norfolk Island. Mr Deputy Speaker we will all recognise that placement of a permanent CEO is an essential step in a range of necessary reforms within the Public Service and should we endorse this motion Mrs Wheatley should be able to be positioned in this task by say mid March or the end of March. I commend this motion Mr Deputy Speaker. I think I just should correct something that I mentioned earlier. I gave an incorrect citation in terms of the legislation in which this motion is promoted. It should be the Public Sector Management Act 2000. I think I said 2004

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister. Any further debate? The question is that the motion be agreed to Honourable Members and I put that question

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you. That motion is agreed to

IMMIGRATION ACT 1980 – SETTING OF QUOTA

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I move that for the purposes of subsection 21(1) of the Immigration Act 1980, this Legislative Assembly resolves that it be determined by instrument in writing that 60 General Entry Permits be granted during the period 17 February 2007 to 16 February 2008. Mr Deputy Speaker in February each year it is necessary for the Legislative Assembly to set a quota for general entry permits for the following year. It might be helpful to go back a little in history. In February 1996 the then Legislative Assembly adopted a population policy by which it provided that there would be general entry permit quotas set so as to enable a growth of 2% in the permanent population per year until otherwise decided. No Legislative Assembly since

1996 came to grips with what that actually meant and each year when it came time to set a quota the Legislative Assembly would set a quota no greater than the number of people who were likely to leave the island during the following year. Because to allow for a 2% growth you needed to take in the initial population, deduct the number of people you expect to leave during the year, deduct any you expect might pass away, add any you expect might be born, and then work out what the difference would be if you were going to allow up to that 2% growth. I think it's important to recognise that the policy was not to see a 2% growth, it was to allow if the applications came along, but not to go and seek it and so the criticism that you will hear from time to time that we were not able to achieve the growth that we were looking for, is in fact unfounded. The policy was simply to allow a growth of up to 2%. Quotas during the years from 1997 through to 2006 was set variously at 30, 45, 35, in 2003 it was set at 55, then 35, 45, 35. It is clear when we look at the long term component of the island's population that is general entry permit holders and residents, that there has been very little movement over the last ten years. More alarmingly it is clear that there was during that time a growth in the elderly component and a shrinkage in the component below 35 years of age and roughly status quo in the middle and that has meant that less and less people are needing cater for the more and more expensive needs of more and more of our elderly citizens and we certainly need to address that. We have begun to prepare a new population policy. We have a draft document which still requires some work and in particular, the draft document requires economic input. Some would suggest that the solution may be to encourage wealthy retirees to settle in Norfolk Island. Others would say, oh look, many years ago people who felt they were wealthy at the time settled on the island and eventually found that the spending power of their dollar was so eroded that they needed to seek assistance from the social services scheme but if we obtain competent economic advice now we will be able to assess where that really should sit, we will be able to assess whether a new category of general entry permit holder, that is wealthy retirees will be beneficial or whether it would be not beneficial. That economic work is estimated to cost somewhere between \$30-50,000. It has not been commissioned at this stage but I do have one proposal which I intend to circulate to Members to give Members an idea of what in my view needs to be looked at in economic terms and Members will no doubt have valuable comment about that which might take out some parts of it and put in some new parts but the question for today is what number should we use for the general entry permit quota for the next year. It might be helpful to tell Members about the number of general entry permits which have been issued in the past year. The quota as I mentioned earlier for 2006 was 35. 23 general entry permits were actually issued. Four of those were for business entrants. Nine were for people who were in employment. The bulk of those would have come from the ranks of temporary entry permit holders, having spent some years on the island, indicated a desire to remain on the island and made an application for general entry permits, eight of them were dependent school age children and there were two others who fitted into categories such as spouse of resident, family reunion and so on. So in the year just passed, we set a quota of 35. Only 23 permits were issued. Setting a quota of 60 for the current year will be well below the quota which has been suggested to us by one of the responsible officers who quite rightly has commented that perhaps the quota should be set for a longer period than one year so that there is room for more planning to be put into it. The quota suggested for that five year period is 55. I'm not suggesting that we proceed with that, at this stage because obviously we need to finalise our population policy before we do so. But I am asking Members to support a quota of 60. That would enable the usual number of persons to leave the island and it would enable additional general entry permits to be granted such that the increase would not exceed 2% for the year but I do not suggest to Members that I am aware of a queue of people waiting to make application. In fact as Members can see, from what I've just said, there are still 12 quota positions available in the current year but we do need to set a quota each February. I ask Members to join with me in supporting a quota of 60 for the twelve month period up to 16 February 2008

MR NOBBS

Mr Deputy Speaker as usual I won't be supporting this. I think the nil would be appropriated until we actually draft a revised Immigration Act

and systems and have them in place which are better than we have at the present time and whilst I was actually very quickly grabbing some books etc from my office before it was passed over to the court a couple of weeks ago I found somehow or other I grabbed the Immigration System of Norfolk Island, volume 3, Discussion, draft legislation by Bronwyn Paddick drafted in 2000. that document I guess, and I don't know the full cost of it, but I believe that there was something over \$100,000 paid to consultants and there was other works and I don't know how much Ms Paddick got but I would suggest that it may be as much as \$200,000 was expended and this is a three volume report, a very detailed look at what the island's immigration arrangements and like many others it is resting and collecting dust. Now I believe that the incoming Legislative Assembly will need to look very closely at its immigration arrangements. It will need to look very closely at its planning arrangements in relation to proposals for immigration. I believe that there is room for some increases in the population of the island but I think that it needs to be done very carefully. Whether rich people are the answer to it all, I don't know. It will bring out what some people have considered for years that the island's future lies purely in rich people and dead people but I would hope, and I know that's not going to be the case really over time, that this island can pull itself back to better times than it's having but I firmly believe that there's a need for economic activity which would then create its own population arrangements as happened in about 1998,99,2000,01 when we had considerable surpluses in the budget and that was caused largely not by tourism but by activities related to tourism, but not actually the number of tourists on the island. Even though the tourist numbers were a record high, and those are the things that we need to get back to, other economic activities which will then flow on to the population per se. So as I said I've done it for a few years now that I don't support this until we have a review of the immigration. I'm pleased that the Minister is actually taking the policy which has also been sitting gathering dust I thought for a while on population, I would hope that, that can be proceeded with to some sort of finality. A basic 2% increase each year is a bit... I don't want to be critical of previous Assembly's but I think it's not the way to go and we need to look at what can attract people here apart from the fact that we have a lovely island, because in reality what happens with a lot of retired people who may come in here, they come in, build a house, put in a concrete driveway, do a few other things and then live peacefully ever after. If that's the sort of activity we need, well we should have proceeded with the retirement village arrangement of a few years ago but that wasn't the case at the time. It may come in again in the future but at this stage I won't be supporting the motion for no other reason than I believe we need to look very closely and very quickly at the incoming Legislative Assembly will have to do the immigration arrangements. If we get our finances reasonably satisfied on the basis of population at this point in time, there is a need to look at additional activities if we are to go beyond that point. Thank you

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker it certainly brings back memories to hear about the Bronwyn Paddick draft document. In fact I recall sitting in Miss Paddick's office in Paddington in Sydney on a particular day and I received a phone call whilst I was in that office to tell me that Mr Gardner was mounting a coup to seek my removal as a Minister and in fact that was done and the person who succeeded me as the executive member didn't take the Bronwyn Paddick material any further. Mr Nobbs referred to the cost of it. There was actually two components to that work. The one which concerned me the most was the immigration one where I was seeking assistance in having a new immigration act drafted but while that work was being done the Government of the day also commissioned some further work in relation to constitutional issues and that work was indeed quite detailed. I greatly doubt that the cost was as high as that suggested by Mr Nobbs but obviously there would have been a cost. The draft new act that Miss Paddick completed was substantially based on the Australian legislation as I felt that was a sound concept because the Australian authorities could hardly criticise a new Norfolk Island piece of immigration legislation in circumstances where it was based on their own but unfortunately as the years passed, the draft bill became out of date and it needs to be further reviewed. I have no difficulty with the concept of arranging for that to be done. No difficulty at all. There certainly are aspects of immigration that need to be

rethought for example, at present applications can be sent to us from anywhere in the world and if we received 50 applications from upper Timbuktu we would be bound to process them and if the applications satisfied the present requirements then if they were refused there would be an appeal process which might cause them to be approved. Some have suggested over the years that some form of points system would be preferable so that if there were more applicants than there were positions available the applicants could be ranked on that points basis. I don't recall that form of points system being in Miss Paddick's draft but it is certainly something which I had discussed with her during the time that she was preparing it. As always I was interested to hear what Mr Nobbs has said. He has been consistent over the years in not wishing to support a quota for the reasons that he's given. I take it that he's not saying we don't want anyone to come here, I take it that he is saying that he would like to see some new legislation in place before I support anything, but let me just say one thing about the concept of not allowing anyone to come here because there are many people with that view. The difficulty is that when you plan to stand still, you are actually planning to go backwards and the best example of that is the one that I gave a few moments ago when I mentioned the fact that although long term population has remained reasonably static over a period of years, the working component of that population has shrunk while the portion of the population which is dependent on social service assistance, health assistance and so forth has grown and if we are to properly care for the aged component of our population and that's clearly our obligation, if we are to properly care for those people, if we are to spend whatever we regard as appropriate moneys on the hospital, on the school, on policing, on roads and whatever, we have to be prepared to get to grips with the economic reality that without an amount of growth, we are doomed to go backwards, but for the purposes of today I am simply seeking the support of Members or amendment of the motion as the case may be in order to set a general entry permit quota for the next twelve months. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Deputy Speaker I have no trouble supporting 60, in fact I would prefer it just to be open. I think the numbers that Mr Brown has spoken of, and what was actually granted up until the end of January shows a lack of demand and that lack would be caused by the lack of viability in certain areas on the island. I'm troubled by the leaving of many of the temporary entry permit holders, some general entry permit holders and in fact some residents, owing to concern over governance matters, let alone the increase in cost of living but the Minister is quite right. You have a disproportionate push on the elderly and you have demands at the hospital catering for the elderly and while that is no problem with me, the viability of keeping open the maternity ward; the viability of having a strong requirement for an ob-gyne doctor starts to decrease. The push on the school is lessened and so requirements to cater for the range of grades that we currently cater for can be put on hold and questioned as a cost factor so we need to keep a certain balance here of youth, of that middle age in our population. I'm quite troubled by the Australian scene where its expected by the year 2017 that half the current over 65's will be doubled what they are today and the expected increased demands on welfare, aged care is going to be astronomical. That's digressing a bit but the push is being seen of our raising the pension age, of that, but no, I have no problem with agreeing to 60. as I say, I think it should be open and I believe it should be open for a few years. We need to encourage people to come here through the current, hopefully as the Minister for Finance has said today, through the GST and lowering of the revenue sources but increasing the viability of some of the commercial businesses will see some movement there of increasing the tourists to the island will also encourage growth but no, I'll be agreeing to this no problem at all. Thank you

MR CHRISTIAN

Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I too will support the motion that's before the house to set a quota of 60. I do so for different reasons to Mrs Jack and Mr Brown. Both of them have actually indicated that Norfolk Island is at risk of having an ever increasing aging population that then becomes dependent upon the working class to support them and that largely probably would be true, however, the most recent statistics in the census don't bear that out. I think we've had an increase of one

deals with disputes with the Chief Revenue officer when a review of an assessment has been made and the provisions of guidelines to establish what is exploitation. Part 5 deals with administration of the legislation and establishes the Chief Revenue Officer and provides for acting appointments, delegations and the provision of secrecy generally. Part 6 deals with confidentiality of information provided, price exploitation, penalty notices, continuing offences, GST certificates, the making of Regulations, repeal of the Norfolk Island Sustainability Levy Act 2006 and transitional issues. Mr Deputy Speaker on the topic of Financial impact there will be administrative costs to the Administration in implementing the new legislation. There will also be compliance costs to registered persons in recording, calculating and remitting their GST liability. Most businesses are believed to already have the information and systems to enable calculation of the GST as well as to record and maintain business records. The process is a simple one and it is believed can be readily understood. The likely impact of the 9% non-compounding GST upon the community at large, when considered in light of the offsetting abolition of certain existing fees and charges, is considered to be moderate. For most retail businesses the financial impact is anticipated to be minimal. The greatest anticipated effect will be on food where it is expected increases ranging from 0.2% to 3.6% will arise. The financial effect of the GST however is certainly expected to be materially lower than a compounding consumption tax such as the NSL. Registration costs are expected to be small and the cost of compliance with the requirements to display the NBN on various documents should be very small. Most businesses will already be registered for NSL and if so they do not need to register again. The principal benefit to the community apart from the collection of revenue is expected to be the collection of that revenue on a broader basis in a more equitable manner. A further benefit will be the gleaning of greater information about the business economy of the Island to enable future decisions to be made with a higher degree of certainty than ever before and to better control the nature and number of revenue raising activities that are in force at present. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any further debate. The question is that the Bill be agreed

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I understand that the Bill will lay on the table until our next meeting and that will be a good opportunity for the responsible executive members to let us know what is proposed in terms of some of the undertakings we gave to the community when we started to develop the concept of this form of revenue raising. One of those in particular was that we assured the community we would demonstrate to them that we will better spend the revenues that they entrusted to us and my eventual vote on this bill will depend on what we do during the next few weeks in that regard

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I assume this will stay on the table until our next sitting. In the main the legislation is along the same lines as the NSL I believe and it's a long time coming that we introduce a more broad based taxation system to Norfolk Island and with the mechanisms of the operation along the lines of the NSL but with it in the main having the ability to obtain input credits against the GST payable will make this a lot easier to swallow for the community. Of course this concept enables a business the opportunity to claim back their GST component of their general running costs and for those in business this will go a long way to ease the pain you might say, to reduce the duty and then being able to have the input credits, credited against their general running costs, it certainly makes it appropriate. The thing that I notice is not attached to the Bill is the exempt GST items and I would hope the Minister will provide those very shortly. There were a couple of there that I would like to make mention of. One in particular was the child care that the Minister mentioned at the public meeting and I would support that wholeheartedly that the child care is exempt from GST. I know that in Australia it is GST free and in some areas they actually get a rebate. The other one that came up for discussion and I believe that in general we decided that it would attract the GST is rental properties. Now doing a bit of research I believe that this should be split in two. Residential rent should be GST free and commercial rent should

attract the GST component. I'm well aware of the cost of living on Norfolk Island and I believe that the RPI has gone up something like 43 points in the last five years. It's virtually doubled in the last five years to when they started in 1990 so just taking the cost of living, the wages haven't really kept up with that and people who rent properties are people who are short term visitors here, they don't earn a great income and if they are of permanent residency they are in the main not wealthy enough to obtain a house for themselves. They may be saving for one and this little bit of saving would go a long way towards making that dream come true so with just those few words, I'll have more to say about this in a couple of weeks time Mr Deputy Speaker

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I haven't actually read the bill fully as yet because it appeared actually this morning, but I'll just ask the Minister does the Customs Amendment bill, is that included in the package under this particular arrangement or are you introducing that Bill today as well. It's a complimentary one I understand to the Goods and Services and I think it should be

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker Mr Nobbs is quite correct, if we adopt either the GST or the amended NSL there would be flow on effects to the Customs legislation and I had omitted to place this on the Notice Paper today but at the appropriate time I will be introducing the Customs Amendment bill 2007 and it too shall lay on the table for the intervening period between meetings. Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker can I just say that there are other issues in relation to the FIL and that would be just to cease the FIL to exist wouldn't it. Will those be brought forward because... The bed levy, the financial institutions levy and also liquor Licencing. Why I say that is because if we are fair dinkum that this is what the deal is, we don't want to be passing it and the next mob come along and say oh don't worry about that, we'll leave the accommodation levy on and we'll leave these others on. If that's the part of the deal it should all be done at the same time I believe

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker yes, once again Mr Nobbs has come up with a valid point. The consequential changes are being made to the other affected pieces of legislation that is the FIL and the accommodation levy. The person instructing the Legislative Draftsman spoke with me this morning and asked me whether I had a preference for keeping the existing legislation in place and zero rating it, or appealing the legislation and I instructed him that my preference was to repeal the legislation and documents to that effect are now being prepared and I would have thought that as we are taking something away which does to a degree form part of the GST legislation it wouldn't have to sit on the table for the corresponding period and we could just deal with it to finality at the next meeting

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker just another point. I'm just wondering when we will be receiving the report that's required under the NSL legislation that is existing now into the operation of the NSL because I think that, that's something we need if we are going from an NSL to a GST it's fine saying input credits and that but there are other ways of skinning the cat which will reduce the impact and I was just wondering if that document which is required by legislation by the end of February, when will it be available

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker the legislation in respect of NSL requires me to table a report into the review no later than the 28th February so it is my intention to table the report when we next meet but I would expect to be able to have the report distributed to Members later next week. It's being prepared now

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any further debate. There being no further debate Mr Christian I look to you

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

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

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

SUSPENSION

We will now break for lunch Honourable Members. We suspend until 2.00 pm

RESUMPTION

We resume Honourable Members from our lunch break and Mr Christian you have the call to resume

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007

MR CHRISTIAN Mr Deputy Speaker I present the Customs (Amendment) Bill 2007 and move that the Bill be agreed to in principle. The purpose of this Bill is to make consequential amendments to the Customs Act 1913 as part of the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax. Under the Bill goods imported for home consumption for resale only will be exempt from customs duty but will remain subject to the control of the Collector of Customs until they, meaning the goods, are either sold or destroyed. Goods imported for home consumption for resale which are disposed off and are not resold must be declared to the Collector and duty plus interest will be applied to such goods. Penalties will apply where a person fails to make a declaration of the disposal of such goods. Basically Mr Deputy Speaker that's legal speak for what the amendments to the Customs Bill will do, but principally its just to reflect the introduction of the GST

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any further debate. There being no further debate Mr Christian I look to you for adjournment of the matter

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. I put the question re the adjournment

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

IMMIGRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker, I present the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2007 and I move that the Bill be agreed to in principle.

DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that the Bill be agreed to in principle

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker back in 1994 the Legislative Assembly passed a Bill which received assent and became known as the Immigration Amendment (Visa) Act of 1994. Although the Bill received assent it has never been commenced and the Bill was overtaken by subsequent events when further amendments were made to the Immigration Act following on from discussions with the Commonwealth. Today's Bill is by way of housekeeping. It is simply removing the Immigration Amendment (Visa) Act of 1994 from the books. It won't have any additional impact because of the fact that the Act was never commenced as I said. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Brown. Is there any further debate. There being no further debate Mr Brown I look to you for adjournment of the matter

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. I put the question re the adjournment

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

PRESENTATION OF BILL BY LEAVE

EMPLOYMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to introduce the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2007

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is leave granted Honourable Members. Leave is granted. You may continue Mr Brown

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I present the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2007 and move that the Bill be agreed to in principle

DEPUTY SPEAKER The question is that the Bill be agreed to in principle

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker this Bill seeks to simply the arrangements within the workplace and also recognise that the minimum wage has not been adjusted in Norfolk Island for quite some time. It is not intended to seek to pass the Bill through all stages today and in fact there is some more work to do in relation to the bill. It's proposed to increase the minimum wage from \$8.50 to \$10.50 and it is proposed to remove the compulsory payment of overtime if the person works more than the normal working week but the Bill still leaves in place the ability for an employee to say that he does not wish to work any overtime so overtime would not be compulsory but it would be paid at such rate as maybe agreed between the employer and employee provided that it is not less than the minimum wage. The Act immediately after the section in relation to the minimum wage provides for a minimum wage for young people and we need to ensure that any movement in the adult minimum wage does not cause young people to not be employed. I sought the advise of the largest employer on the island who employs young people, in particular, school children after school and I've been provided with the views of that employer in writing which I will circulate to members during the next few days, and I will then seek the view of Members as to whether those suggestions should be adopted by way of detail stage amendments when the Bill comes back before the House in two weeks time

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker I notice the subsequent changes to the working hours put forward by the Minister and in reading what was in the Act I do have some concerns that should a person come in from offshore that they could be unfairly disadvantaged in some way. I just feel that by taking away a basic overtime rate that those coming in from offshore may not be aware of full conditions and that perhaps something should also be written into the contract that general entry permit holders negotiate with their employer. I'm not sure. As I say I only saw this, this morning and so as the Minister is leaving it on the table for further debate amongst ourselves, I'll take full advantage of that, but I have my concerns there and as regards the percentage of children from 16 to 18 years, I take that on board too but is it time that they were able to have a small increase in pay as well so whether we keep it on a pro rata basis the same percentage, if we could discuss that with the Minister as well

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I intend to support the amendments that are before the House at the moment. One of the unintended consequence of requiring overtime to be paid penalty rates is that it has the immediate effect of causing individuals who want to work longer hours to actually earn less money because if a boss is compelled to pay the extra hours work, at penalty rates the boss exercises his discretion and doesn't allow that employee to work extra hours, but he will be forced instead to give the extra work, if he still requires it to be done, to someone else outside of his normal organisation, so the current law clearly disadvantages those who work in an existing job and would like to do additional hours in that existing job, and the amendments that are before us now, actually take the Employment laws back to what they were when they were first introduced and I think that's a sensible step forward. Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker we just got this, this morning and I haven't had a chance to look at the Employment Act and see what subsections 2,3 and 4 are and section 23, but I just seem to think that here you are giving in one hand and taking away in the other so I'm not too sure what it is, until I have a look at the employment act, I can't make a comment but I do support it. I think there's a need to increase and I've said so in the past, the basic wage and also that should be pro rata for the children as well

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker Mr Nobbs has hit the nail on the head with his comment about giving with one hand and taking away with the other. It is because of the introduction of the overtime penalties that the lid has had to be kept on the minimum wage because otherwise the impact of a higher minimum wage and overtime penalties would most definitely have exacerbated the problem that Mr Christian referred to, and there is absolutely no doubt, that there are many on the island who would like to simply work more hours with their existing employer but cannot do that at present, and then choose to have a second job so they might go to work for exactly the same hours for somebody different. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Brown. Is there any further debate. There being no further debate Mr Brown I look to you for adjournment of the matter

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker, I move the adjournment

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

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members. That concludes Notices Honourable Members and we move to Orders of the Day

NORFOLK ISLAND GOVERNMENT TOURIST BUREAU (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006

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

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker. Members will recall that this bill arose from a motion which was passed by the House several months ago and the purpose of the bill is to bring appointments to the Board of the Tourist Bureau in line with appointments to some of our other Boards by requiring that the Legislative Assembly consider the question and vote in terms of the persons who are to be appointed. That is the sole purpose of the bill and I seek Members support today to have that Bill passed so that we honour the intention of the motion of the House, as I said, several months ago

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I intend to support the amendment. They basically were brought about by a motion to the House by I think Mr Nobbs, where he thought the Legislative Assembly should have some involvement and agreement in fact with those people who are being put forward to serve on effectively what is our statutory boards and I don't have a difficulty with that so I will support the motion

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

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

I think the Ayes have it. The motion is agreed. The Bill is agreed to in principle. Is it the wish of the House to dispense with the detail stage. We so dispense with the detail stage. Mr Brown I seek a final motion

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the Bill be agreed to

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

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

I think the Ayes have it. The motion is agreed. The Bill is agreed

ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006

MR BUFFETT Mr Deputy Speaker I wonder if in terms of Order of the Day No 2, the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2006 whether you are happy to consider a request from me not to call that matter on for today but we call it on when we next meet on the 28th February

DEPUTY SPEAKER That is no problem Chief Minister. In that we move to Order of the Day No 3

DEPARTURE FEE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006

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

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the purpose of this bill is to remove some of the exemptions that presently exist under the Departure Fee legislation

and Members will need to give consideration separately to two existing exemptions. It may be that Members support one exemption continuing but maybe Members don't support there being any change at all. The Bill in section 4 provides that paragraphs 3(2)(k) and (l) of the principle act be deleted. 3(2)(k) is the section in relation to persons going away for medical treatment. 3(2)(l) is the section in relation to students between the age of 16 years and 25 years who in the opinion of the person authorised by the executive member is leaving Norfolk Island primarily for the purpose of receiving full time education at a school, college or university so that section relates to someone who is going from Norfolk Island to Australia, New Zealand or elsewhere who is between the age of 16 and 25 and is going primarily for the purpose of receiving full time education at a school, college or university so it doesn't cover a trade unless the trade is being undertaken full time at Tech College. The purpose of the Bill is to simplify the Administration of the Departure Fee legislation number one, and number two, to overcome a difficulty which has been experienced time and time again where people who are frequently covered by the healthcare fund or by HMA go to the hospital, consult with the doctor, seeking to obtain from the doctor a certificate in order to obtain exemption from the departure tax so additional work is created at the hospital, no net revenue is really created because it comes out of one pocket and into another, then the exemption form has to be processed and no payment of the departure tax is made. I had looked in the context of the hospital, at whether more detailed guidelines could overcome the problem. Members will be aware that frequently people will go away and the one trip might combine a medical appointment, a holiday and perhaps some business activities. It didn't seem appropriate at the end of the day to break the thing into hours and say that if you had a one hour medical consultation while you're away for a fortnight that you get one over fourteen times 24 as a percentage deduction from the departure tax. It didn't seem possible to put onto the doctors the burden of ascertaining whether the purpose of sole purpose of a trip was to obtain medical attention, or whether the patients would be doing other things while they were away. At the end of the day the only simple resolution in my mind was to simply withdraw the exemptions and I seek the agreement of Members to do all that. Thank you

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Minister how much money are we talking about. How many people travelling are we talking about

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker the Minister would be amazed at the length that people will go to if they think that they might be able to save a \$30 departure fee. I do not have statistics. I am not aware that a list is kept of the number of people provided with exemptions but it is substantial

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker my view here is that if we are going to take away the exemptions for one, then we do it across the board for 2(k) and 2(l) in this instance. I mean, maybe we should just make it that those with medicals do have to pay and then they can try and reclaim it back from healthcare when they are back. I don't know whether that's just compounding it or just putting it in another area and still making it not workable. I can understand some people complaining about having to pay the \$30. I hear that some people are complaining about having to pay the HMA equivalent to the DVA costs, so there are charges creeping in throughout cost of living everywhere at the moment on Norfolk Island but I'm in two minds Mr Speaker I'm sorry

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker as Members are aware, there has been discussion about the possibility of incorporating the departure tax into the ticket taxes so it will be paid as part of the ticket. I think there's been fairly wide spread agreement around this table about that but I learnt to my dismay this week that certain Members of the Public Service had, had a meeting of which they had decided that they did not wish to implement that change, notwithstanding that I had understood that it was to have effect from the 1st April. Had that change occurred, it might not have been necessary, to deal with this bill because for example the social service beneficiaries would have simply been able to deal with the departure tax in the same way as he or she

after you or is it an elderly person automatically gets a carer to assist them. What are the guidelines in that regard

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I will need to dig out a copy of those guidelines. I recall having read something in the course of the last few days about that very thing, but I don't recall whether it was in the context of social services or in the context of healthcare but that information can be obtained and we can look at it. I move the adjournment Mr Deputy Speaker

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

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The Ayes have it. Debate is so adjourned Honourable Members

BANKRUPTCY BILL 2006

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

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I actually introduced this Bill in the September meeting but it's been sitting as an exposure draft on the table here for some considerable time and I thought at that stage that it's time that it be brought in because in fact, its been an issue as part of the commitment of the Norfolk Island Government in 1989 that they would look at meaningful Bankruptcy legislation for the island and then it was dealt with later on and came up again I think in 1996 when the then Norfolk Island Government formally advised the Commonwealth that it was preferred that it enact its own legislation and that it would be proceeding along those lines, but anyhow, nothing really has happened. I brought it up in the House in the past and one of the issues that has come up is that oddly the Australian Bankruptcy legislation actually applies to Norfolk Island and I've done a fair bit of research in relation to that in the past and whilst it is possible that the Act can apply to various jurisdictions including Norfolk Island, if at least part of the activities are conducted in Australia but a debt owing in Norfolk Island by a resident of Norfolk Island to others in Norfolk Island, the application could not be made to a court in Australia to declare a Norfolk Island resident bankrupt, and what it really means is that the Commonwealth legislation does not extend to Norfolk Island in that type of activity so what it appears, and I mentioned I think when I spoke of it first, that what does apply here is the old English law prior to 1828, and the old English law still apparently applies to the island here and that includes I think, it's fairly stringent penalties in regard to that law. The law is pretty archaic and it was three years after 1828 in 1831 that it was replaced in England but that original act still applies here or so I'm led to believe by the people who I understand know about these things. But anyhow, the situation is that it is a very simple bill that's been put together here. It's not as complex or complicated as the Australian arrangement. It's something that the island has undertaken to bring in, in the past and its an opportunity to follow that. Coupled with that the Commonwealth last year was looking at the need here to include our various forms of legislation including bankruptcy and even the latest correspondence from the Minister to the Chief Minister, that is the Minister Lloyd, the Minister for Territories, that the Chief Minister referred to today, included in that was the need for bankruptcy legislation so I'm giving the opportunity here. I know that one of the original movers in relation to that, Mr Gardner, is not here, but I'm between a rock and a hard place, being belted by a stick in that I may not be able to be present at the next meeting if it's held on the 28th and therefore I'm bringing it forward today and it's up to the Members to decide whether they wish to proceed with this Bill or not. As I say, I would have preferred it if Mr Gardner was here, but unfortunately he is not and therefore as I said, I want to proceed with the Bill. I

spoke at length on the issue originally and one of the issues really was, how does it fit in to Norfolk Island. It's believed that the legislation is well attuned to a small society. It's not expensive to run and it has the benefit of being far less onerous. It is an improvement on the legislation as I said a few minutes ago, and therefore I ask the Members to support the Bill

MR BROWN

Mr Deputy Speaker I'm uncertain as to what would be achieved if this bill were passed. Bankruptcy legislation does not apply to companies. The companies' legislation makes provision for the liquidation of companies. If the goal is simply to be able to release people from their debts so that they don't have to pay them then I would have thought that, that would be achieved without going to the extent of a orphaned bankruptcy act. If the intention is to pursue people for payment of their debts, then that can be done through the courts. Once one has a judgement through the Court of Petty Sessions, or from the Supreme Court, it is quite possible to seek to enforce that judgement and if the particular debtor has no assets, then whether it's done through the bankruptcy or pursuing through the courts system, if there is no assets there's no difficulty. So I'm unconvinced of the need for the legislation. But if Members felt that there is a need to have such legislation I would prefer that we adopt the Australian bankruptcy legislation as it stands from time to time and in that fashion the legislation is kept up to date at the expense of others number one. Number two you can go and buy the book that tells you what the legislation is all about and number three, if we choose to administer it here, we can get hold of the procedure manuals because those manuals, most Commonwealth departments are available to the general public for a fee, but they are available. So if we were to embrace the existing mainland legislation we could do that by simply going through the legislation and providing where the legislation refers to Insolvency Trustee Association of Australia, ITSA, that shall mean such and such in Norfolk Island so that a Norfolk Island person could administer the bankruptcy legislation using the mainland policy and procedure manuals, the mainland practice books and the mainland legislation. That too could be done in the case of companies and I've recently suggested to Members that we do exactly that. Our companies' act is another piece of legislation that is now some years old. It is in fact getting to 22 years of age and it may be time that areas of company law were updated so as to allow for example, for single director companies. I'm not aware of this bill having been considered by the Impact of Bills Committee. I'm not sure what view the committee would take of it but it seems to me that if we simply pass one piece of legislation which is not similar or identical to the legislation in other places we create a difficulty in terms of keeping the legislation up to date, we create a difficulty in terms of having a suitable person to administer it and we create a difficulty in terms of not really knowing what it means until such time as it has been determined by the courts. So my preference is that if we feel that we need such legislation, then we adopt the Australian legislation whether by having it simply extended to Norfolk Island or by passing mirror legislation ourselves and having our own personnel administering it. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN

Mr Deputy Speaker the advise that I've received on this bill is that it is long pass due for Norfolk Island to have some sort of bankruptcy legislation in place. As the minister has advised, it doesn't apply to companies. It's to individuals and Mr Brown has said that this legislation would protect the bankrupt you might say so that he doesn't have to pay his dues. I see it the other way. I see it that a company trading whilst insolvent, they get the kybosh put on them and they can no longer trade. It's like an individual who's way past their credit limit, and they can't pay their bills. This is a way and means of limiting the damage that they could cause. There's always going to be somebody who will give them credit whether or not they believe that they are going to get it back or not but this is the way of limiting the damage for both parties. The bankrupt or the bankruptee. One doesn't spend his money miserly and the other doesn't get himself too deep in debt so that's my main reason why I would support this. The advise I've had from people around the island who know about these things is that it is needed here and I just see this as the start of some reform that the Government does need to take here on Norfolk Island

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker the complex nature of companies I can certainly appreciate us adopting Australian legislation and having it amended as the need arises, or as amendments are done offshore in Australia. I can't see the need for the same adoption for bankrupt laws so I'll be supporting the bill of Mr Nobbs. I agree with Mr Sheridan that it is past the time to do it and we just need to have a better form of legislation and I believe this will assist us in attaining that

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I listened with interest to Mr Sheridan and I wondered if Mr Sheridan was actually looking for some form of credit control and if that's what we are looking for, this bill won't do it. The same people will extend credit to the same people. Those things won't change. The only thing that will change is that the person who owes the money will be able to avoid paying it and I'm not sure that, that's what we really want without a lot of careful thought. If it's appropriate I would like to move that the bill be referred to the Impact of Bills Committee for its consideration so that we can assess in particular whether we have adequate personnel and resources available to give effect to the Bill

DEPUTY SPEAKER Are you actually moving that motion Mr Brown

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker I so move

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there any debate on the question Honourable Members

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I think the Bill's been around for long enough actually, to need to go through all this business is just putting things off. We were just referring to the companies act. My understanding of the companies act was that we actually took the Australian companies act in the 1980's or late '70's and that the problem with it now is that it's never been kept up to speed with the amendments that are going on and whilst we have problems with companies here, there's been no move to actually amend it and that's another area which I believe that the incoming Legislative Assembly must really look at. As far as mirror legislation is concerned we might as well do the lot because the GST is the perfect example of mirror legislation if you really needed one, so that's a huge legislation. It frightens me a bit to think that we might be doing something along those lines but there you go. As far as I'm concerned with this particular legislation I can't find the people who will tell me, and I keep clicking my pen and I'm sorry about that, so I'm told from the recorder man, and I apologise to you Sir, and I wonder why if there's a requirement here that you can't be a Member of the Legislative Assembly if you are bankrupt. I mean, we haven't any legislation in place for a person to be classified as bankrupt in this place so I find it difficult. It's not an issue that will mess up the economy. It's an issue that will actually assist the economy and the raking up of debts and all those sorts of things, and there are some things that are really controlling us so I think to try and confuse the companies act and the bankruptcy act is a little misleading and I do agree that the companies act requires urgent attention but I wouldn't like to see this Bill being pushed around any further. It's been sitting around for 18 months or more now. Probably closer to two years actually. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MRS JACK Mr Deputy Speaker I think if this should have gone to the Impact of Bills Committee it should have been nominated for that back in September or whenever it was put forward by Mr Nobbs. I think the options for that has lapsed in my personal view

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I feel the same as Mrs Jack. If this Bill was to be referred then it should have been done earlier. It's been sitting on the table. I think it is time to deal with it. People have had ample time to lodge their concerns.. it's been in the community, it's been before us and it's time to deal with it

MRS BOUDAN Mr Deputy Speaker just thinking that if the New South Wales legislation does not extend to Norfolk Island in the event of in house say to Norfolk Island then I really think there is a need for us to bring this in. we really need to consider this. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is there any further debate Honourable Members on the question that the Bill be referred to the Impact of Bills Committee. Then I put the question

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

MR BROWN

NO

The ayes have it. Do you wish the House called Mr Brown. No. That motion is lost. Any further debate Honourable Members

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. We've spent a heckova lot of resources convincing the Commonwealth not to extend their laws to us. If we look at recent changes to the electoral system in Norfolk Island they came about as a result of a motion by Mr Brown whose justification for doing so was to make adjustments to our system of voting that the Commonwealth thought were appropriate. That follows the same thread that we are doing things in our own way to respond to things that the Commonwealth has suggested we should do and in order to preserve or improve on the working relationship we had with the Commonwealth I will support the Bill today. However, for any business owner or creditor around there who things this gives them any extra protection they are fooling themselves, because what this bill actually does is allow somebody to run away from their responsibilities. The downside of this piece of legislation is that we may well find that it's used by the majority of our school kids to doge having to pay mobile telephone bills to the Administration so that's the downside of it. It doesn't do what people think bankruptcy laws do. What this does is actually allow people to run away from their responsibilities totally scott free. Once they've served the penalty period that allows them to do it again and you only have to look at Peter Foster's of the world to see how they operate but having said that, the last time this Bill was on the table or the Legislative Assembly was considering it, there were three or four points of contention that I had with it. I have spoken with Mr Nobbs about those and I've sought my own legal advise and been given advise that clarifies and lays the fears that I've had so I have no difficulty supporting it today

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I move that the question be put

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Honourable Members, I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT

AGREED

MR BROWN

NO

Mr Brown would you like the House called. No. Your vote will be recorded. I believe the ayes have it. The motion is agreed. The Bill is agreed to in principle

Is it the wish of the House to dispense with the detail stage? Thank you. Could I therefore have a final motion please Mr Nobbs

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill be agreed to

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Is there any further debate? Then I put the question that the Bill be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
MR BROWN NO

Mr Brown would you like the House called. No. Your vote will be recorded. I believe the ayes have it. The motion is agreed. The Bill is agreed to

We won't be bringing on Order of the Day No 5 so we move on

FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING DATE

Thank you Honourable Members that concludes the Notices of our paper today and I look now to Mr Sheridan for a motion in terms of our next sitting day

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 28 February 2007, at 10.00 am.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Sheridan. Is there any debate. The question is that the Motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

The motion is agreed; we've fixed our next sitting day

ADJOURNMENT

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Boudan. Is there any participation in adjournment debate Honourable Members

MRS BOUDAN Mr Deputy Speaker I really would like to say a few words about the Burnt Pine cattle free zone to be expanded that was placed in last week's The Norfolk Islander by our Minister for Finance. I believe that any moved to be made where this project is concerned should be put on hold until the community be granted the opportunity of fair and proper consideration of this matter. I certainly have no desire to see what to me, seems to be a sudden urge to get a less important project under way when there are other pressing concerns that need to be attended to where our roads are concerned. Long standing major safety concerns that we should not be continually turning a blind eye to. When we have a road that services many residential properties and is inaccessible by an ambulance and or a fire tender then, Mr Deputy Speaker we have a problem that deserves to be acted upon with our haste. If funding is the restriction in solving our major problems here then this minor unimportant issue of expanding our Burnt Pine cattle free zone should be placed on the back burner immediately. I know that our grazing cattle at times gets the blame for some of the road accidents. I wonder just how many accidents have occurred in this area because of cattle. I'm sure that tourists don't mind if one of, and probably the first roadside sighting on arrival to Norfolk Island is our precious cattle grazing as well as enjoying the privilege of right of way over motor vehicles. It must certainly contribute to very different conversation topics on our uniqueness and undoubtedly would spark and unexpected interest and sense of adventure in our God given corner of the world. I don't believe we should be placing such a huge restriction on grazing cattle in this area, especially when we are all ever so conscious of rising food costs including meat from the butchers. Added to all of this of course is the extra costs involved in maintaining roadsides. This does not make sense to me when we have already collected monies from cattle owners for grazing rights. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker I wonder if Mrs Boudan could just give me some advise. She has just said that we collect money from cattle owners to allow them to raise their stock on the road and therefore we shouldn't reduce the amount of grazing available to them. But I just wonder whether Mrs Boudan can explain to me how the Administration redistributes some of that money to people who have paid for cattle stops and fences in front of their own properties to prevent those same animals that enjoy grazing benefits from enjoying the grazing benefits in an individual's front yard, where they cause thousand and thousand and thousand's of dollars worth of damage and the property owner has no recourse against the owner of the stock. I wonder if she can give me some explanation there

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker if the stock are running on public land it is up to the individual landholder who abuts that land to maintain their barriers and that's the rule of law as far as I'm aware. Or it always has been. It might have been changed but that was it. That's why we've all got fences where we abut the road. To keep the cows out. The Commonwealth doesn't contribute to that fence. I do. Or the landowner I should say, does and that's the reason. If I can't keep my fences up. Well. See you. Thank you

MR BROWN Mr Deputy Speaker Mrs Boudan's adjournment debate has been very thought provoking. It's caused me to think back to my old friend Brian Bates when he was sitting in this place and Brian announced on one occasion that he felt that black cattle on the island should be fitted with reflectors. And he did that immediately before having a scotch with my other good mate Bill Sanders but Brian eventually decided not to pursue his concept of fitting black cattle with reflectors but I would like to commend the Minister for Finance for his initiative in looking into the relocation of cattle stops. I would like to commend him for his initiative in consulting with the various affected landowners because he's done that. I think it's important to understand why he did it. We were bout to put some more cattle stops at the entrance to the road to the Waste Management Centre and some Members of the community said to him, that's silly, why don't you beautify the whole area by shifting the cattle stops that are on the road. He hasn't dug a hole to make the move. He's consulted. Now there have been two letters I understand written expressing concern or seeking additional consultation and it may well be that whatever the problems behind those letters are, it may well be that they can be resolved, but lets' not discourage someone from looking for more efficient ways to use the public's money. Let's not discourage someone from going to the trouble to consult. Let's me a bit more forward thinking than that. Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Deputy Speaker I've been inundated by complaints about the cattle stops. I don't know. I mean it was brought up when I was a Minister and it was put aside because of the reasons that people are putting up now and whilst the Minister can be commended for going round and having a chat to people, this is Norfolk Island you know and everything's happy until people have time to have a think about it and then they start thinking and as they do elsewhere, a lot of them change their mind from what Mr Christian's been telling us, so I would have thought that putting it in, in five days, that's it, fullstop, we're going ahead, was a bit harsh under the circumstances and I would have thought that maybe a little bit longer maybe the answer but we discussed it on Monday. Mr Christian knows my views on it but I have had quite a number of people objecting to it, and one of the objections is that we expect the Administration to do additional works whilst pruning them back and that's a complaint that's around and people might say well they've got a bit of slack to pick up but I think they've just about run out of slack at the moment and that's an area of concern and whether people so desperately need to see a row of frangipani's or red hibiscus or something on the road because they've seen that where they've come from, particularly in Queensland, and to see a cow walking along there is quite different and maybe Norfolk Island should try and be different. That's all. Thank you and I've a conflict of interest here as well because I do have two cows I think on the road. Thank you

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I didn't intend this to generate so much discussion but I did consult with the landowners in the area and I did put a time line on it, in which I would make a decision, and that time line was to try and fit in with the work programme in respect of the Waste Management Centre road because we are rapidly approaching the stage where the cattle grids would have to be installed. One of the property owners that I had consulted with has since changed her mind. Not so much about the principle of installing the cattle stops but the proposed location on Douglas Drive. Since the press release went into the paper I've been inundated with requests to take it all the way out to near Bishop's Court because there really is no effective grazing on that part of Douglas Drive, it's largely steep banks, so I will take that into consideration as well, and include it in the discussions with my counterparts within the Administration. Thank you

DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any further participation in adjournment debate Honourable Members. There being no debate I put the question that the House do now adjourn

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Therefore Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 28 February 2007, at 10.00 am

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