



**NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
12<sup>TH</sup> NILA HANSARD – 21 JUNE 2007**

**PRAYER**

Almighty God we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this House, direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory and the true welfare of the people of Norfolk Island, Amen

**CONDOLENCES**

Honourable Members I call on condolences, are there any condolences this morning?  
Mr Tim Sheridan

**MR SHERIDAN** It is with regret that this House records the passing of Eleanor Jean Ormsby Sim on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2007 at the Royal Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney. Jean was the second daughter of Ward Buffett (Billy Dickie) and Kathleen and in later years was adopted by Jules Laing whom she adored. She began her formal working life behind the counter at Ferny lane Store, went on to work for Ken prentice in his shop and also in his shop on the Oriental Queen. She spent her later years working in the Philatelic Bureau for twenty years, however her favourite pastime was working the soil and tending her cattle. To Jean's husband Tom, to their nephew Glen, his wife Helen and their children, to their family and many this House extends its deepest sympathy. May she rest in peace

Mr Speaker it is with regret that this House records the passing of Alexander Horrocks on Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> June. Sandy was born in Longreach, Australia in 1930. He had a varied career, was always resourceful and enjoyed the simple things in life. A fine sportsman, Sandy was very athletic and played both soccer and tennis. Sandy met Mary at a dance in Parramatta and in 1958 they were married. They had four children, Louise, Greg, Peter and Steve. In 1960 with two partners Sandy took over a service station business. It was hard work and involved long hours. After a few years each moved into their own ventures. Sandy ran tow-trucks and a car mechanics business before extending to include a successful but demanding panel-beating business. Sandy and Mary came to Norfolk Island for a holiday in 1977. They returned to Sydney, sold their house and business there and bought their home and business at Cascade. Mary, Sandy and Louise moved immediately to Norfolk while Greg and Peter finished their high school studies in Sydney. Steve had already left school and also stayed in Sydney. The Norfolk business mainly involved general carrying, especially working the ship, making water tanks with galvanised iron sheets and using the trucks to deliver water from the bore at Cascade. Sandy had found his niche. It was hard work and though often exhausted, he was always cheerful. He was gentle, patient, thoughtful and compassionate, had a varied taste in music, was a keen observer of politics and enjoyed reading history and science. Sandy loved his wife Mary, his children and their children. He will be sadly missed in this community. To his family and many friends this House extends its deepest sympathy. May he rest in peace

**MR SPEAKER** Thank you Mr Sheridan. 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 the matter of petitions. Are there any petitions this morning?.

**GIVING OF NOTICES**

Are there any notices?

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker I just want to give notice of my intention to introduce the Tourist Accommodation Amendment Bill 2007 at next weeks sitting of the House rather than to bring it on today. It just allows me to collate some extra information that I had sought in regard to planning matters that might affect that Bill and also some minor amendments to the bill as proposed to be introduced. Thank you

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

Are there any questions without notice?

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I've a couple of questions here. Fairly short ones. Firstly to the Minister responsible for tourism. Minister in regard to the Newcastle leg of the airline operations can the Minister advise as to whether or not passenger yields have reached their expectations and if not are there any plans in place to encourage extra utilisation of this service

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker I just wonder whether that is a question that is better direct to the airline Minister as it deals with airline capacity and yield

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I'm happy to respond to that. As far as I'm aware the Newcastle service is performing quite well. Whether we can sustain the initial success within the next twelve months or so, only time will tell but one of the rationales if you like behind the commencement of the Newcastle service was not only to encourage visitors from Newcastle to visit Norfolk Island but was also to provide an additional gateway of people from the southern parts of Australia to visit Norfolk Island and in doing so avoiding the necessity to change airport terminals in Sydney and when we look at the Tourist Bureau's budget for the 2007/08 financial year they are in fact proposing to conduct a number of road shows in the Victorian region in order to promote the Newcastle service and the existing Sydney gateways as well, so that's the situation there. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I've got one for the Minister responsible for the airline. Minister following on from questions in the House last month where you indicated that the Chief Executive Officer had been directed to engage the Airline Manager for the next twelve months and other positions were being advertised in the near future, Minister can you update the community as to where we are now in relation to filling these positions and the engagement of an airline manager

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I welcome that question. At the moment the Airline General Manager was engaged by way of a letter of appointment and that letter of appointment was originally issued by the previous Chief Minister and in recent days I have continued the conditions of that letter of appointment. I had earlier indicated that I would do a number of things. Firstly an Accounts Administrator and a Yield Manager would be recruited into the airline operation and that the airline operation would in some shape or form be formalised in its structure. In recent days the Yield Manager and Accounts Administrator's position for the airline had been advertised and applications had been received for those positions. What I've requested the ceo to do is to suspend the recruitment process at this time, possible for only a week or two whilst the Legal Services Unit at the Administration prepares a statutory type structure for the airline so for the statutory organisation to be implemented obviously this Legislative

Assembly has to consider it and approve it and I would hope to be in a position at the Legislative Assembly meeting next week to try and deal with the creation of the airline as a statutory authority. What will happen then is that the statutory authority will engage its own staff including the Airline Manager and the other two positions I've mentioned and part of the reason for doing this is to honour obligations given by me and I think a number of other members at the previous election that the airline needs to be semi removed from the political process and have an advisory board of management of its own. We also find in the airline world that it's a very dynamic environment to be working in, decisions have to be made fairly quickly and the Administration recruitment process is time consuming and cumbersome. It doesn't suit the sort of environment that the airline has to work in. so it's proposed that the airline be set up as a statutory authority and the airline will recruit staff on terms and conditions decided by the airline board in conjunction with the executive Government of Norfolk Island so that's the situation at the moment and I would hope that by the end of this week, or certainly Monday or Tuesday of next week I would be in a position to put the draft legislation before Members for their consideration

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a supplementary, thank you Mr Speaker and following on from that, as indicated in the House last month with regard to the creation of the Airline Advisory Management Board from 1<sup>st</sup> July this year, can you advise apart from the Chief Executive of the Airline, who are the other two appointments to this board

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, no decision has been made on that and that's obviously for consideration by the membership of this table, but what I've instructed the Legal Services Unit of the Administration to do is to consider the relevant parts of the Norfolk Island Tourist Bureau legislation and the relevant parts of the Hospital Enterprise and come up with a system which has three probably no more than five board Members. Some of them would be Legislative Assembly Members and some of them would be made up of Members of the public

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a supplementary, thank you Mr Speaker so Minister you're saying that as from the 1<sup>st</sup> July the airline will be running under their own steam, in their own separate area and you indicate that this will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> July so are you saying that this operation will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> July without a board of management in place

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, some time lines I might not be able to meet. I had sort of indicated to Members that if they were happy with the legislation as presented to us we may be able to deal with it as an urgent Bill at the meeting next week and pass it through all stages so that we can actually create the authority before the 1<sup>st</sup> July. The 1<sup>st</sup> July time line might not be able to be met and might not actually become an entity if you like until the following meeting in July and I'm not sure what date we've selected for that yet because we've not that far progressed but that's the way I see us moving forward

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker a question for the Minister for Finance would the Minister inform the house if all registered businesses have complied with the payments of NSL and GST and if not how does the Minister intend to address this problem

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I wonder if I could respond to the question in a more encompassing manner because I can actually share with Members a fair bit of information I have available on GST. What I can say at the moment in respect of GST, we have 570 registered businesses for GST. That number is a bit lower than the 700 or so I think I indicated to this house on a previous occasion and what's happened there is in the early days a lot of businesses had multiple registrations where they thought they may in fact be able to register a number of

businesses and keep them all under the \$3000 threshold and thereby not have to pay any GST. Well I've got to tell you that the Chief Revenue Officer quickly sorted those people out and hence the reduction and a number of other business operators where a single person has more than one business interest has in fact combined them to simply the accounting but it's not a tax evasion measure, so in short we have 570 registered businesses for GST now. In respect of the April returns, 520 returns were lodged so we have approximately 50 that haven't been lodged, but there are mechanisms there now where if you don't lodge a return you eventually have to lodge your return to make your payments and pay a penalty so that's the process there. In respect of outstanding NSL issues, the Chief Revenue Officer is working very closely with the Legal Services Unit now to recover outstanding NSL liabilities. It's very hard to quantify what the outstanding NSL liability is, although as we move forward with the GST system we will be able to work backwards, and estimate what somebody's NSL liability should have been and that's particularly so in respect of the businesses that didn't register for NSL when they didn't register and didn't lodge returns when they should have lodged returns. The external auditors estimate the amount of money that we would probably be able to collect under the scenario that I've just outlined is about \$70,000. Mr Speaker, in total NSL receipts to date stand at \$548,000. GST total receipts for April stand at \$292,000, total GST receipts because some people have already paid their May dues stands at \$375,000 so that gives us a total income for NSL GST to date of about \$920,000 so it's quite a pleasing result. Mr Speaker in respect of duty drawbacks, that is we were going to give credit for duty already paid when we switched from the customs type arrangements to the GST arrangements, we have now quantified our liability in respect of duty drawbacks, at \$2.25m so once again that is right in the middle of the range that we were expecting and quite a pleasant result. Thank you

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker another question for the Minister for Finance. What measures have the Government taken to gauge the impact of the GST on the cost of living generally and more specifically the financial impact on young families and the lower income earners

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, we haven't taken any specify steps but what I have said consistently is that we will monitor the situation and if problems arise, we will deal with it as best we can. I'm aware that there are some Members who have asked me to reconsider the application of GST to residential rental properties and we will look at that. If it turns out that we've had a negative impact on the importability of food and such for low income earners, well then we will have to look at probably a minimum wage system and we will also have to look at our welfare system and try and pick them up with a multi approach safety net

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker we seem to be giving this Minister a flogging today, but a question for the Minister responsible for Telecommunications. Minister can you advise if the commitment with REACH has been completed and if so who are the carriers to the island telecommunications now and also, when the residents of Norfolk Island expect some relief from the cost of those overseas calls

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I welcome this question. I find it quite frustrating personally that the process has dragged on for far too long. We are still using REACH as far as I am aware for our communications into and out of the island. Another service provide has been selected. I understand that arrangements have not yet been concluded with that service provider. I am also advised that are waiting the arrival of what we will call, hardware or physical equipment into Norfolk Island to facilitate the changeover but I haven't had an update as to when that equipment is arriving, but in recent days the Chief Minister has taken this on board as well and the intention is that we list this for discussion at the MLA's meeting on Tuesday with a view to getting an update from the public service and finding out the timelines from then on

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker another question for the Minister responsible for Telecom how is the mobile phone system recently installed performing and is it achieving the expected revenue outcome

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, yes I think the mobile telephone system is probably exceeding our expectations at the moment. Information I have available to me is that approximately \$700 sim cards have been sold by Norfolk Telecom. Approximately \$120 of those sim cards are to visitors or tourists to the island so they obviously bought the sim card to put into their own phones, and at the moment it would appear that gross revenue from incoming and outgoing mobile calls and by incoming and outgoing I don't mean into and out of Norfolk Island I mean calls made from a land line to a mobile or a call made from a mobile to a mobile or from a mobile to a land line and combined daily gross revenue at the moment is running at about \$1000 so on an annual basis that is \$365,000 and that was the target that I thought we would eventually get to but it appears that we've arrived at it quite dearly so it's a very encouraging result

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I've a question for the Minister responsible for the Cascade Cliff stabilisation project, a follow on from last month and my question regarding as to whether the claim against SMEC has been settled and monies paid to the Administration are you in a position now to advise how much was claimed for costs and whether these monies have been paid

MRS JACK Mr Speaker this matter came up I believe in budgetary discussions the other day and unfortunately I am still in no position to give the final pay out figure. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I'm just wondering if the Minister responsible for motor vehicle licences, Minister Magri, Minister is it correct that here in Norfolk Island the licensing arrangements allow for a driver to lose points for driving to a maximum of twelve points prior to losing their licence. Minister who administers this point collection and who removes their licence

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker I can't provide Mr Sheridan with a complete answer on that but I will have to take that on notice and come back to the house

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker just a supplementary, thank you Mr Speaker Minister could you also find out if there's any drivers currently still holding a licence and driving on the roads on Norfolk Island who have accumulated more than 12 points and who's licence have not been cancelled

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker I will be happy to find that information and come back to the house with an answer on that thank you

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker a question for the Minister for Tourism. Minister is there any allowance in the Tourist Bureau marketing budget to assist sporting bodies on the island to promote events to attract competitions and visitors to the island

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker I guess the quick response to that is there's no specific funding made available for sports goodies as such as there's no specific funding made for other specific events, whether it's jazz or opera or things like that, other than the programmes that are run by Government Tourist Bureau itself. There has been funding made available to sports bodies for specific purposes under the Sports Grants Programme and as has been discussed with Members of the Legislative Assembly during the budget process it's been made quite clear that there are avenues that sporting bodies can explore either through myself, through the manager of the

Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau or through the tourist bureau Members to get funding to assist in the promotion and marketing of those events. It really just needs a detailed programme put together and be submitted for consideration by the Bureau

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, a question to the relevant Minister for Finance who is responsible for the Retail Price Index and Benefit Adjustment Factor. Would the Minister agree that the Retail Price Index and Benefit Adjustment Factor are in need of review to give a more accurate and up to date indication of the realistic increase in the cost of living on Norfolk Island and if so, what does the Minister intend to do to progress this problem

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, yes I can provide a bit of information in respect of the Retail Price Index but not so much the Benefit Adjustment Factor because that falls outside my area really but I suppose that once we deal with one, some of the work will flow to the other. In the last two or three days we have received confirmation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that they will have a look at the Retail Price Index for us. They have requested all of the relevant material be sent to them. That, if it hasn't happened, is about to happen. They will review the operation of the system and come up with recommended changes to the system if any are needed and an indicative cost for them to do the work for us, so I will expect in the next few weeks we should have something back from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on what we should or shouldn't do with the Retail Price Index

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker I have one more question to the Minister for the Public Service. Has the Public Service recruitment freeze been effective in reducing the number of employees in the Public Service and if so has this decreased the salaries and wages expense in the upcoming budget

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I've got to deal over probably three financial years. Yes the recruitment freeze will remain in place. If we go back to the 05/06 financial year the 06/07 financial year definitely did produce savings so the cost of running the Public Service in the financial year just ending is lower than what we had budgeted for the previous year but going forward to this year, the dollar amount that we have in the budget is more or less the same for the financial year just ending but I would still expect that within the global figure that's been provided for salaries and wages into the 07/08 budget we could probably realise a little more savings but to be on the conservative side I've left the number the same as last year

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker I have one or two more, really a follow up to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister as a follow up on the gazettal of the Minister's responsibilities as indicated last meeting to be published last month but as far as I'm aware this has not been so. Minister is there a specific reason as to why this has not happened

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker a very good question Mr Sheridan. I will pursue that this afternoon and find out exactly why and get it happening

MR SHERIDAN Mr Speaker a final question here for the Minister for Telecommunications. Minister have you progressed the buy back for replacement of the cheap mobile phones of which trunking mobiles will replace as was indicated in reply to a question in this House last month

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, no I haven't progressed the issue yet but it is an issue I intend progressing. I think it may have cost us somewhere in between \$50-90,000 to provide what I think have been called cornflake phones, so obviously it's a heckova lot of money involved. I'm just not sure how we handle it but one of the options that I've been talking to the CEO about and the relevant Executive director and Telecommunications Manager is that we probably ask people if they are not happy

with their phone to hand them back and we give them a cash rebate of whatever is the quantum is decided and they go and get their own phone so that we don't have the problem coming up again with somebody not being happy with the phone that Telecom happens to issue them. That's the scenario that I would like to progress

SPEAKER Thank you Minister. Any further questions. We conclude Questions Without Notice and we move on

### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

Are there any Papers for presentation this morning

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker I table the Inbound passenger statistics for April 2007 and move that the paper be noted

SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker we continue to have an upward trend in our arrival figures to Norfolk Island and in saying that I may just qualify that to say that these figures for May this year are approximately 10% on the same month last year and about 15% on the 04/05 financial year. They are still lagging a little on the year to date compared with two years prior to now which is the 02/03 and 03/ 04 years and I would project from these that the total that we can probably expect for this financial year will be a little under the 35,000 which is close to our budget projections and closely aligned to the projections that were made by Econtech in their sustainability report. I am trusting that Members are going to provide significant support for the budget process for 07/08 and that is certainly going to be required Mr Speaker if we are going to achieve the 40,000 target which is the next step in line with our sustainability targets. We have – and I don't mean to pre-empt discussion on the budget at this time but we have made a significant further contribution to tourism promotion this year and that combined with the Regional Partnerships programme should put us in good stead to achieve those dollars. I think that the results that we have today and we've been seeing these consistent results building over time are a positive result and a credit to the tourist bureau, the board of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau our industry partners and the airline of course which is a very important partner in the development and furtherance of our aims with tourism on Norfolk Island. Obviously there's a need to maintain that momentum and I've touched on that as far as the budget provisions for 07/08 but there is also a reminder that it is not just numbers alone. They are an important part of our growth and the solution to our ongoing sustainability. There are other factors that need to be borne in mind and with the introduction of the new tourism strategy soon to be launched and other initiatives that are contained in the Tourist Bureau's budget for the next financial year, I think that we are going to see a better result all round for the economy in Norfolk Island. I do note Mr Speaker that in those numbers that our New Zealand numbers have been down consistently in the first five months of this calendar year and again the Tourist Bureau have taken that on board and have dedicated significant additional funding to the New Zealand marketplace to arrest that decline and actually see them return above and beyond the figures that we've enjoyed in the past coming out of New Zealand with additional marketing and promotion funding and the actual physical presence on the ground of people in New Zealand. Just if I could return to a question that Mr Sheridan asked earlier in the morning in relation to Newcastle numbers. Looking at those figures for May which I think everybody appreciates is the first month that the Newcastle service was run there were five flights, a little over 400 passengers out of Newcastle in total which equates to about an 80% load factor out of Newcastle for the month of May. Obviously it's too early at this stage to see what sort of impact the service out of Newcastle may have on our other primary gateway for people out of the Hunter which is Sydney but obviously we will continue to monitor that. There are budget initiatives within the 07/08 budget to continue to maintain the momentum in

the Newcastle region with road shows and increased advertising and the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau have recently conducted a survey

SPEAKER Honourable Members is there further participation in debate. The question is that the paper be noted and I put that question

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

SPEAKER Thank you. Are there any further Papers this morning

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, table the financial indicators for April 2007 and move that the paper be noted

SPEAKER Honourable Members the question is that the paper be noted

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, at the end of April 2007 the good news continues. Revenue fund income was 101% of the revised budget and expenditure was contained at 97% of budget. On a pro rata basis I had expected that the budget would be in deficit by \$211,000 at the end of April 2007 but the budget is in fact an estimated surplus of \$184,000. At the corresponding period last year the actual deficit was \$815,000 and I consider a \$999,000 turnaround in our financial position to be a welcomed change. The budget provides for capital works and purchases expenditure totally \$62,500 and to date the actual amount spent or committed stands at \$52,700. The revenue funds current assets and liabilities at the end of April 2007 is as follows. We have assets totalling \$2,532,000 against known liabilities totalling \$2,612,800 resulting in a small deficit of \$81,800 which is an improvement on the situation when compared to March 2007. Once again Mr Speaker I can cope with this deficit as not all of our known creditors actually require payment at this instant. Cash at bank in non trust accounts total \$11,721,600 inclusive of \$3.3m held in prepaid ticket sales on behalf of Norfolk Air. After deducting the prepaid ticket sale amount, the balance of cash held is \$8.4m which is consistent with the long term average cash held of \$8.3m. Mr Speaker the reason I continue to make this comparison is to demonstrate that there is not a sustained downward trend in the Administration's cash position. I do not have airline financials for April at this time but I do have the March financials for the airline. For the month of March the airline achieved an operating profit of \$382,000 on totalling \$1,693,900. For the July to March period the airline has achieved an operating profit of \$1.3m on sales totalling \$12m. . Mr Speaker I am pleased to inform you that at the end of March 2007 \$414,000 of this profit has been spent on promoting Norfolk Island and I expect that by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 an additional \$250,000 will be provided to market and promote Norfolk Island. Thank you Mr Speaker

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

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

SPEAKER Thank you. Are there any further Papers this morning. Are there any further Papers this morning No. We move on

## STATEMENTS

Are there any Statements this morning Honourable Members

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker thank you. Just a brief statement in relation to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and again in an effort not to

pre-empt a motion on the table for the appointment and reappointment of Members to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. I just want to provide some overview of matters that arose as a result of discussions on that motion by Members of the Legislative Assembly in the last couple of weeks and that discussion centred on the ongoing structure and role and responsibility of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. There are within the new tourism strategy that I alluded to earlier in debate on the visitor arrival numbers provisions within that seeking the Government and the industry to give consideration to the restructure of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and I think it's fair to say that that strategy followed some fairly extensive industry consultation over the last few months. That strategy recommends the consideration of a new structure and I'm pleased to advise that MLAs have unanimously agreed to consideration of an overhaul of the makeup, the roles and responsibilities of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and in line with that I will be bringing to Members a number of options over the next few months that will be in line with the tourism strategy and the recommendations for the restructuring of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau for consideration of all Members and that is bearing in mind the fact that across the Administration, Administration-wide we are looking at the roles, functions and structures of all of our statutory boards and authorities to ensure that they are delivering what is expected of them, delivering in a maturing environment the outcomes that we want for them and recognising the fact that so many of those statutory boards and authorities have been staffed, manned for want of a better word, by volunteers and over the years they've had to carry the burden of some fairly significant responsibilities, particularly in the area of tourism and dealing with a significant budget and the disposal of those sorts of funds, so really this is just an opportunity to indicate that it is a matter that will be given close consideration by Members of the Legislative Assembly and I look forward to progressing that matter over the next few months.

**SPEAKER** Thank you Mr Gardener. Are there any further Statements this morning?

### **APPROPRIATION BILL 2007-2008**

### **MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR - NO 3**

**SPEAKER** Honourable Members, I have received the following Message from the Office of the Administrator and it is Message No 3 which reads that in accordance with the requirements of section 25 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979, I recommend to the Legislative Assembly the enactment of the proposed law entitled an Act to authorise expenditure from the public account for the year ending on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008, dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of 2007 and signed Grant Tambling, Administrator.

### **APPROPRIATION BILL 2007-2008**

**SPEAKER** Honourable Members, we move to Notices. Notice Number 1 is the Appropriation Bill 2007-2008 and Mr Christian, you have the call.

**MR CHRISTIAN** Thank you Mr Speaker, I present the Appropriation Bill 2007-2008 and move that the Bill be agreed to in principle. Mr Speaker, I present the Appropriation Bill 2007-08 and the budget for the Administration of the Norfolk Island Revenue Fund for the next financial year. The 2007-08 budget provides for expenditure of \$13.9m and revenue of just over \$14m, resulting in a surplus of \$100,000. On an earlier occasion, I informed the Assembly that budget processes had reached a historic point. Today, I can advise honourable Members that history is unfolding before their very eyes. I believe that I am the first Norfolk Island Minister for Finance ever to present five budgets to this Assembly. I might say, Mr Speaker, that all four of my previous budgets have been beautifully constructed and highly successful. But this one marks a truly new era in Norfolk Island public finances, and I am proud to be able to say that the restructure of our revenue, expenditure, and financial accounting is well underway. This

budget lays the framework for economic growth and prosperity in Norfolk Island and also provides new funding to develop existing industries and for innovation to broaden the scope of our commercial sector. It has been framed to move forward on the five major areas outlined to last month's Assembly meeting by the Chief Minister as the strategic priorities of this Norfolk Island Government. It also takes into account the advice of Econtech, which conducted a thorough study of Norfolk Island public finances in the second half of 2006. Mr Speaker, Members will be aware that in the last few months we have commenced the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which is one of the largest changes ever made to Norfolk Island public finances. This change has not always been easy for the community and the government to digest, and I am particularly pleased at the high level of compliance with the new arrangements. I thank the community for its acceptance of the GST and for its patience while some teething problems were sorted out. Many businesses and individuals took up the offer of accounting advice at government expense, and a small team of dedicated Administration staff have done an excellent job in ensuring that the new tax is up and running successfully. Of course, there are still some grey areas which need attention, but that is to be expected in a change of this sort and is similar to the experience of other governments implementing such measures. I also want to commend the CEO and the staff of the Finance Branch of the Administration who have put together the budget figures. We have known for some time that we would not be in a position at budget time to accurately forecast the total revenue for the year that would accrue from the GST. Revenues from that tax are being kept under constant review to ensure that the income figures in the budget can be achieved. There will be a formal review of the budget with all Members of the Assembly no later than 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007, when we will have a much clearer idea of revenue flows from the GST. The Goods and Services Tax is just one of the recommendations from the Econtech Report which has been implemented by the Government. Econtech highlighted the need to increase visitor numbers to Norfolk Island, and it is pleasing to see that so far each of the interim goals for arrivals have been met along the way to achieving an annual rate of 50,000 visitors by the end of next year. Visitor numbers have increased on a month-by-month basis for 13 consecutive months and the upward trend now appears to be sustainable. This budget provides a grant of over \$1.15 million to Norfolk Tourism to be spent on its tourist promotion activities. When contributions from Norfolk Air and the Commonwealth Government's Regional Partnerships Programme are added, we will have an unprecedented total of approximately \$2 million to spend on tourism promotion in 2007-08. I expect in the very near future to be able to present to the Assembly plans for a business and management structure for Norfolk Air. Also on the horizon are some promising possibilities for further expansions of Norfolk Air services and destinations, which I hope will commence within the 2007-08 financial year. Mr Speaker, from this financial year the Government is also taking up Econtech's recommendation to provide for infrastructure replacement. We have made great progress in restructuring the revenue base and supporting tourism promotion and airline services to ensure that provision of community services is on a sustainable basis. Now we must also pay serious attention to infrastructure replacement. With that in mind, this budget allocates \$900,000 for a depreciation sinking fund, including \$200,000 towards the construction of a new hospital. My colleague the Minister for Tourism and Health is also pursuing some funding possibilities to help toward that project. The budget papers were circulated to Members earlier this week, and I thank them for the serious consideration given to each of the detailed areas of expenditure. I now seek the approval of the Assembly to that expenditure through the passage of the Appropriation Bill. In doing so, I would like to highlight a few areas of expenditure which illustrate the Government's commitment to growing prosperity and improving service delivery to the community. This year we are allocating almost \$2.4m to education programmes, most of which will be spent by the Norfolk Island Central School. The budget includes smaller amounts for bursaries, scholarships, vocational education and grants to community organisations involved in educational activities. This means that almost one dollar in every five from the budget goes toward education, indicating the high priority which we place on continuing to provide excellence in educational opportunities for the young people of Norfolk Island. The budget gives a subsidy of \$800,000 to the Norfolk Island

Hospital, which continues to supply a range of high quality medical, dental, pharmaceutical and emergency services to the community. Norfolk Island is fortunate to be able to attract and retain dedicated medical professionals and the budget indicates the Government's determination to maintain a high level of health services for the community. This year, we have also provided almost \$300,000 for police salaries. My colleague the Minister for Commerce and Industry has consulted local fishing operators and has been in communication with his Commonwealth counterparts to develop a comprehensive fisheries management plan for Norfolk Island inshore and offshore fisheries. This budget allocates \$30,000 toward the achievement of that significant objective. The budget includes a funding allocation of \$400,000 to upgrade Administration computer hardware and software. We are committed to achieving International Financial Reporting Standards in our financial accounting and reporting, making this expenditure essential. The appointment of a new CEO who is a qualified accountant is already facilitating our progress toward greater transparency and accountability in all of our financial and accounting processes. The 2007-08 budget includes \$168,500 for other capital items, including vehicles, furniture, general plant and building upgrades. We recognise that there is still a need to restrain expenditure overall, so that the freeze on general public sector recruitment will remain in place over 2007-08. Vacancies and possible new staffing needs will be looked at on a case-by-case basis, but recruitment will only be undertaken when recommended by the CEO and approved by the Government. Mr Speaker, this is a responsible but expansionary budget. I believe that it is another significant step toward ensuring the long-term economic sustainability of Norfolk Island. I commend the budget and the Appropriation Bill to the Assembly. Thank you

SPEAKER  
Members

Thank you Mr Christian. Any debate Honourable

MR NOBBS

Mr Speaker the Appropriation Bill as its being tabled is the result of collective consideration by the Minister for Finance, the CEO, various managements and GBE's and cost centres and the Public Service Accounts Department and the full membership of the Twelfth Legislative Assembly. The outcomes from this budget process has been formulated to ensure our best way forward recognising Norfolk Island 's service requirements as well as allocation of financial resources to implement elements of the Twelfth Legislative Assembly's strategic plan framework. Now as we enter the new financial year and we are able to begin analysing the financial data associated with the GST we will also be able to provide the detail stage of the Strategic plan as well as the priorities and time lines or process associated with many if not all elements detailed within this plan. Many elements are already under way with their view of social services, immigration, all Government Business Enterprises, the KAVHA conservation management plan as well as Administration's financial process, management transparency and reporting. This budget invests in the financial reporting measures recognised internationally and by the Commonwealth and that will not only aid our longer term financial planning but also enable efficiency in customer service and movement towards centralised information processes. In a nutshell we will have a more universally understood system of financial management that will give us a clear picture of Norfolk Island current and long term economic position and that is critical. Critical because Norfolk Island has very few allowable revenue streams, therefore we have to not just manage our budgets but balance our budgets. Perhaps with the implementation of new reporting systems, Norfolk Island's management of resources will be better understood by the Commonwealth enabling more open discussion with regard to investment into Norfolk Island and the ability to utilise other responsible revenue opportunities in the future. In closing I would like to commend the finance minister for his presentation of the Appropriation Bill and make known my appreciation to all Members of this House and the Public Service for the commitment to this document and the further review of the financial data over the next few months. Thank you



over the last two or three years for provision of services and advise generally within the service. They've struggled along at sometimes it's best to say, dinosaur type equipment as far as photocopiers and the like are concerned, they've worked within their remaining budget of this financial year to overcome some of those difficulties so that they don't become an impost on the next financial year and that's recognised in the budget. Policing continues to be an expanding area of drain on the revenue fund but something that obviously will be given appropriate attention over the next few months as we discuss with the AFP the review of the Memorandum of Understanding that provides for policing services in Norfolk Island and also the courts and registry area, that I think we are probably somewhat a little relieved to see that the imposts in that area on the revenue fund budget are not as significant in the next financial year for obvious reasons. We've had some significant court cases and operations involving courts and registry department over the last twelve months and certainly the figures that they have had in previous budgets are not reflected in next years budget, however it is still a very important role. We have visits from the supreme court additional sittings of the magistrates court, and other issues that officers have appropriately and properly addressed in the budget this year. I think those are really my introductory remarks. I will have more to say next week, once I've had an opportunity to really chew over some of the figures that have appeared in the latest draft which is the one that the Minister has brought to the House and hope to provide further information, update and discussion of debate next week. Thank you

MRS JACK

Mr Speaker I agree with much of what was said by my predecessors here. One thing I was happy to see in subsidies and grants was the increase for the Banyan Park Playcentre. It's gone up to \$12,000 I believe which has gone from \$7,000 to \$12,000 this year and I know from having a meeting with their committee that, that will be a very exciting increase for that group. In my own areas of land use and environment, figures have tended to stay relatively similar and as the previous Ministers have stated, the fact that we are going to go to review in the end of September will certainly I hope see me able to get some funding for certain environmental monitoring that needs to be done around the island. Health and Quarantine I think have done quite well, planning, rather the same, education yes we are spending almost one in every five of our dollars is going towards education, we do need to make commitments though to the school for rolling improvements to things such as our computers, we need to make a policy there and stick to it, so that it's done on a far more sensible and caring method in keeping our technology up to date. We need to make a policy there and stand by it, and that will cost money but we certainly in the review in September if the figures that we have before us is conservative, then it will be one policy I certainly will be pushing for. Welfare is always an unknown factor. I must congratulate the previous Minister and the current officer within the Administration for managing to keep such a tight control on our welfare payments. It's not making people go without, it's just sticking to the legislation and it is an unknown quantity and it is growing every year and it is a hard one to judge when I see there's been a slight decrease there so I'm hoping that the efficiencies of the price can be maintained. Again I'm just looking forward to the review in September. Forestry, Livestock and Noxious weeds, the Tanalith plant, all seem to be somewhat maintaining current figures and as said by the Minister for Health and tourism, I just need to start going over these figures in detail, in order to give a much clearer view to the public next week. Thank you

MR SHERIDAN

Mr Speaker like the others I'll leave most of my debate until next week but just listening to the Minister for Finance's talk on the Appropriation Bill and the budget it seems that Norfolk Island is on the up and up. Plenty of money to spend, some \$13m this year and we expect to bring in something like \$14m. Of course it's always good to see monies being spent on education because youth is our future, as well as monies being spent on our health system, because they were our past and we have to look after our past. So increases in those areas are very welcome. There's also increase in the money for tourism well tourism is Norfolk Island's lifeblood and if we don't get the tourist numbers up well then this budget won't come to fruition.

It's all well and good to expend money, it's nice to put it down on paper, and say this lot will be expended for the year but first we have to get that money in and I note looking through the income that there's been some forecasting being done you might say on the additional \$5,000 visitors that we expect to reach this financial year and going on this years figures I think which will just come in under about 35,000 so we are looking at around 40,000 for next year. If that number is not reached, then we are going to be in some strife with our monies you might say. There's been something like some \$980,000 budgeted on an extra 5000 visitors for this financial year. Also there's been an allocation of income for \$1m, half a million for reimbursement for the murder trial which is ongoing and \$500,000 for legal costs awarded to Administration from SMEC. Now these figures in the least would have to be deemed to be a little rubbery as the Minister could not put a figure on how much money we are going to get back from SMEC,. As for the money from the Commonwealth for the murder trial, I don't know whether there's an agreement that's been reached or not whether that money is forthcoming but sadly it's not in the bank as yet, so it is with the 5000 visitors. They are not on the island as yet. So that's nearly \$2m of our income budget that we have put up there, we expect to get in, that's something like 15% of the actual income from the budget so Mr Speaker whilst I applaud the expenditure, and the increases in those areas that we need to look after, just a word of caution that if we don't work hard and get these tourist numbers up, there will be cuts later in the year, and specifically at the first review I would assume. So thank you Mr Speaker and I'll have a few more words next week

MR ANDERSON Mr Speaker I applaud the budget. It's been a difficult budget from the point of view of the revenue base and with the GST just coming in we really don't know how much is going to come in so I applaud the fact that the Minister for Finance is going to review this as soon as we get some clearer figures which we should get over the next couple of months. Thank you

SPEAKER Honourable Members. There being no further debate I seek a final motion Mr Christian

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I move that this matter be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting

SPEAKER The question is that this matter be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting. I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you, that matter is so adjourned

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we move to Notice Number 2 which is the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee and Mr Magri you have the call

MR MAGRI Thank you Mr Speaker, I move the motion standing in my name on the Notice Paper in the amended form foreshadowed on today's programme namely, that, in addition to the powers conferred on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee under standing order 20B, this House resolves that for the purposes of clarity it is agreed that under standing order 20B the Committee is able to (1) Examine matters relating to economic and business development, small business, tourism, market and regulatory reform, public sector management, taxation and revenue and sustainability; (2) Establish a Budget Development Cycle (the BDC) which codifies precise timelines for the Budget process; (3) Make visits of inspection within Norfolk

Island, and with the approval of the Legislative Assembly given by resolution in the House, within other States and Territories of Australia; (4) Retain specialist consultants to work with the Committee as and when required; and (5) Establish an appropriately staffed Committee Secretariat on terms and conditions determined by the Committee and in accordance with funding provided by the Assembly for this purpose.

SPEAKER  
Members

Thank you Mr Magri. Any debate Honourable

MR MAGRI

Mr Speaker the changes to the motion on the notice paper are in the opening paragraph where I remove the words "the committee has power to" and replace them with the words "for the purposes of clarity it is agreed that under Standing Orders 20b the committee is able to". Mr Speaker by way of background at the April 2006 meeting of the Legislative Assembly Standing Orders were amended to include the new Standing Orders 20b. for the record Standing Orders 20b reads, a Public Accounts and Estimates Committee to consist of the Speaker ex officio and two Members shall be appointed as soon as is practicable after the opening of the new House to scrutinise and assess the finance and Administration of the Public Sector and to promote reform when it is necessary. The Committee shall (1) examine (a) the accounts of the receipts of the expenditure of Norfolk Island (b) the financial affairs of authorities of Norfolk Island (c) all reports of the Government Auditor which have been laid before the Legislative Assembly and (d) such other relevant matters as the committee deems relevant (2) report to the Legislative Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit in any itemable matters in those accounts, status and reports or any circumstances connected with them to which the committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Legislative Assembly should be directed, and (3) enquire into any question in connection with public accounts which is referred to it by the Legislative Assembly and to report to the Legislative Assembly on that question. The committee may consider any other matter relevant to its enquiry, shall have the power to send for persons, papers and records and may invite submissions from Members of the public. At the April 2007 meeting of this House Mr Snell, in his role as Speaker, Mr Brendon Christian and myself were appointed Members of the committee. One of the first tasks undertaken by the committee was to investigate the workings of similar committees in smaller Australian parliaments. Paragraph 1 of the motion mirrors paragraph 4 of the terms of reference of the Standing Committee on public accounts of the Australian Capital Territory and it is intended to give clarity as to how wide the committees investigations may extend. Paragraph 2 in the motion refers to the a budget development cycle, in other words, the establishment of time lines for all facets of the budget process. The budget development cycle is mentioned in depth in a paper provided by the Chief Executive Officer entitled budget methodology. Mr Speaker I table that paper. The committee also considered whether it was beneficial to seek the endorsement of the House to some aspects of the motion relating to the formation of the committee foreshadowed by Mr Gardner last December. Paragraphs 3 4 and 5 of my motion have been taken from Mr Gardner's motion. Mr Speaker I wish to make it clear that the committee is not looking for additional powers to those already provided under Standing Orders 20b. what this fledgling committee is endeavouring to achieve by this motion is that the committee and the House clearly understands the committees role and its powers. Mr Speaker I believe this motion assists in achieving that goal and on behalf of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee I ask that this House favourably consider and support the motion before you today

MR GARDNER

Mr Speaker my opening words are at last. I think this is something that we've been waiting for in Norfolk Island for many many years and I compliment the Minister in bringing the motion to the House following a deal of discussion with his colleagues on the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. They obviously have been toiling I guess to establish the ground rules under which they will operate and I think that the motion covers most areas. If I could just maybe work through them. I've only a couple of comments to make but I just am not quite sure and would

hopefully encourage other Members of the committee to come forward with their thoughts on clause 1 of the motion which says that the committee has the power to examine matters relating to economic and business development, small business, tourism, market and regulatory reform, public sector management, taxation and revenue and sustainability. Now there's probably some of those headings that might arguably might include matters such as health, social welfare and education. They are three significant areas of public expenditure in Norfolk Island and I just would be interested in the thoughts of the committee Members in just where they see those fitting in those headings because I don't want to see this committee exclude themselves from enquiring into virtually any matter that they see fit and it might be referred to them by the Legislative Assembly so if I could get some views on that I would appreciate that and then if I just jump to clause 5 where it talks about establishing an appropriately staffed committee secretariat. The budget very clearly indicates that a provision of some \$12,000 or thereabouts have been provided to do exactly that and again I commend the committee on being on the front foot and making sure that they get some dollars and cents in to support this very important process in Norfolk Island. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker Paragraph 1 certainly in my opinion seems to give the committees wide powers of investigation and your question seems to relate to even wider powers being necessary. I think the motion today was merely to bring to the House that this committee does have very wide powers including the things that you talked about, and this is really a motion to give clarity to the Membership and to the community as to how wide the committees investigations may extend. As to 5, I agree that we do have those powers and that we do have \$12,500 in this years budget, and I commend the Minister for Finance to making that allocation. Thank you

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker just referring again to clause 1 and I thank Mr Magri for that explanation, I think in his introductory remarks he made reference to the particular Standing Orders which was put in place by the previous Legislative Assembly and it referred to a number of matters but it gave I guess the general inclusion statement that talked about relevant matters, some words, like that, again, I'm just mindful, I don't want to see a committee of this type which is vital in my view to assuring we've got the accountability and transparency arrangements in place which so many people are so passionate about, I don't want to see them exclude from their consideration any matters simply because we bind them in, and I just wonder whether we may consider and I'm not proposing this at the moment but I'd like some feedback from Members, maybe after the word examine, put "amongst others, matters relating" so that it doesn't exclude anything, and basically says that they can consider absolutely anything but these are the matters of priority that the committee sees so that way it's all inclusive. I think that's what I'm attempting to try and get across. Thank you

MR NOBBS Mr Speaker I support what Mr Gardner has pointed out there because it will give a wider power of investigation in terms of point 2, it definitely would be of assistance to us in the longer term financial planning as well as ensuring the budgetary process is run well and I thoroughly commend Mr Magri on this

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker if it is appropriate, I wish to move an amendment to the motion as I earlier alluded to which would be to include the words after the word "examine" in clause one "amongst others,"

SPEAKER Debate on the amendment Honourable Members

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker could I just point out to the Minister for Tourism that the amendments that were made to include 20b of the Standing Orders under the heading "1. Examine" 1d says, such other relevant matters as the committee deems relevant so I wonder whether that is enough to satisfy what you were saying

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker that being the case, I don't have Standing Orders in front of me but that being the case I'm comfortable to withdraw that amendment if that's appropriate now that I have had that clear explanation I have no difficulty with including that. Thank you

SPEAKER Is that agreed to Members. Is there further debate. There being no further debate I put the question that the motion be now agreed to

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

I think the ayes have it. The motion is agreed

### **NORFOLK ISLAND GOVERNMENT TOURIST BUREAU ACT 1980**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we move to Notice Number 3 which is the Appointment And Re-Appointment Of Members To The Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and Mr Gardner you have the call

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker, I move that this House in accordance with subsection 4(2) of the *Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Act 1980* recommends to the executive member that he appoint Nadia Lozzi-Cuthbertson; and Morgan Evans to be members of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau for a period of 12 months from 1 July 2007, and further, that under subsection 4(5) of the Act, that this House recommends to the executive member that Marion Christian; and Mathew Christian-Bailey be re-appointed to be members of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau for a period of 12 months from 1 July 2007.

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Gardner. Any debate Honourable Members

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker as of the 30<sup>th</sup> June this year there will be four vacancies on the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau, with a total Membership of the bureau at the moment standing at six according to regulations attaching to the Act. The other two Members, Mr Wally Beadman who was appointed in March and therefore his appointment won't expire until March of next year, and Mr Ian Anderson who is the Legislative Assembly representative on the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and he was appointed I think at the April sitting so his appointment won't expire until April for next year. Mr Speaker there are provisions within the Act that allows myself as the Executive Member to designate groups of people and invite them to nominate representatives to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and this year I have invited again the ATA and the Chamber of Commerce to nominate persons for appointment to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau. There were a total of twelve names that came forward for those four positions and they also included the Members of the current board, Members of the ATA, the Chamber of Commerce and two independent Members who were aligned to the ATA and the Chamber of Commerce in any event and both of those organisations were comfortable for those names to be considered. I think it is important to point out that Mrs Cuthbertson has been a member of Government. She has been nominated as the chamber representative after discussion with Members of the Legislative Assembly. Her experience extends to tourist accommodation in Norfolk Island, retailing in Norfolk Island and obviously a very important part of her experience is her experience in governance not just in Norfolk Island but also in NSW. Mr Morgan Evans has been nominated as an ATA representative and as I think most Members of the Legislative Assembly and many of the listening public would be aware, Morgan has vast experience in both tourist accommodation and as a hire car operator and a business operator in Norfolk Island. Marion Christian who is the current chair of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau is a bus tour operator and Matt Christian Bailey is in both tourist accommodation

and hire cars and has been active in many business ventures and as an employee in Norfolk Island so I think we have a very good spread of representation from these appointments. I would also like to acknowledge in the body of my debate the efforts of Mr Lance Poulton who had been a Member up until recently of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and Mr Lindsay Ford for their contribution over the last twelve months. Both avid and passionate supporters of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and our efforts to improve the lot of everybody on Norfolk Island by driving the tourism industry and they've made a tremendous contribution over that period of time. Thanks also to those other nominees from both the ATA and the Chamber of Commerce for making themselves available. Obviously there is a heightened sense of persons wanting to become involved in the area where in the past it has been difficult at times to get people who have been willing to sit on the boards and I think in some areas that continues but I think there is a recognition that the Tourist Bureau has a particularly important function to play in everything we do in Norfolk Island. The Tourist Bureau has lots of challenges ahead in the this next twelve months and I revert back to what I said earlier about the need to maintain momentum in the number of visitors coming to Norfolk Island. They will also be charged with managing in part the implementation of the new tourism strategy when that is launched, and they will also need to manage and give consideration to any transition and structural arrangements to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau that may be considered and implemented over the next twelve months amongst a great deal of other responsibilities obviously. The purpose of trying to get representatives from both the ATA and the Chamber of Commerce on board is that those persons, as Ian Anderson sits, as a representative of the Legislative Assembly on the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau is to provide an additional conduit for consultation and discussion between the Legislative Assembly, the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and the industry and Nadia is the representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Morgan as the representative of the ATA will be charged with that important function of making sure there is clear and adequate communication between the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and the organisations that they represent and obviously I will monitor that because I think that it's too often been said that maybe the communications between the Bureau itself and the industry may have become a little fractured at times so it's very important that we keep those lines of communication clearly open so that the industry partners as I like to refer to them in Norfolk Island are kept fully abreast of any developments in the tourism industry. Under the Act at this time of year I am required to call the Tourist Bureau together for their first meeting after the end of the financial year and that will occur in that first week in July I hope subject to the new Members being available and one of their first roles obviously according to the provisions of the legislation will be the election of a Chairperson for the next twelve months, so Mr Speaker just in closing my thanks to the current Members of the current Members of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau for a job well done over the last twelve months and to Mrs Marion Christian, thanks for the chairing of the Bureau for that period. I commend the motion to the House

MR ANDERSON

Mr Speaker yes I fully endorse everything that Geoff has said. I've only been on the Board for a short time but I've been very impressed with the manner in which businesses have been carried out and I'm sure the two new Members are a good selection for the Board. The Board is operating well and we always have to bear in mind that the amount of work that volunteer people put in and if you get the right people there it increases what we can achieve. Working on the sub committee system and I might mention that there are a couple of sub committees which are doing a lot of work. There's a Norfolk Island tourism events committee and they have been talking to various people who would like assistance to run events and as we know, sporting events and other events which volunteers run on Norfolk Island are very much part of our lifeblood and these events are very important. There's also another initiative with a sub committee in young ambassadors committee and this is headed up by Matt Christian Bailey and is going out to the younger people in the community to train and work as ambassadors to Norfolk Island and I think this will be a wonderful achievement

when this gets going and I really commend the Board on that initiative. I fully endorse Geoff's selection for the Tourist Bureau. Thank you

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I just would like to record at this time that as my wife is a current Member of the board and is seeking reappointment I don't intend to participate in the debate or vote

SPEAKER Honourable Members. There being no further debate I put the question is that the motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you, the motion is agreed to

### **ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1982 – USE OF A BREATHALYSER**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we move to Notice Number 4 which is the Road Traffic Act 1982 – Use Of A Breathalyser and Mrs Jack you have the call

MRS JACK Mr Speaker I move that this House requests the responsible executive member to bring forward legislation to amend the *Road Traffic Act 1982* to provide for the use of a breathalyser to ascertain whether a person is driving under the influence of alcohol over the prescribed limits

SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Jack. Any debate Honourable Members

MRS JACK Mr Speaker some weeks ago I called for interested women to come to a couple of meetings on a particular day. To me they were very well received and this motion comes as a result from those meetings because during those meetings there were several topics that received interest over both groups and the one that received the most interest and concern by the young mothers and women of the island was a drug and alcohol concern present on Norfolk Island and while they considered there to be a problem regarding both, the one that gave them the most cause for concern was alcohol, the misuse of alcohol within the community. Now the misuse of alcohol was over troubled economic times and whether the troubled economic times were causing greater consumption of alcohol or whether those already having a alcohol problem were drinking more. The rises they saw of domestic violence within the community. Concerns with drink driving and the responsible serving of alcohol but today I'm just going to concern myself with the drink driving aspect. Now in the past the current Minister for Finance when he had responsibility for roads, was considering and moving towards amending legislation that would see the introduction of a breathalyser and new equipment coming onto the island along with the legislation that would allow that to happen. The equipment was also money being put aside for that piece of equipment to be purchased however the management of the roads has gone to another Minister and a different view has taken place. While it is still unacceptable its no having a go at the Minister but I'm just not wanting it to fall off and be ignored, this concern that women have, and I believe others, it's not just the women's problem, but I just believe that it needs to be considered by this group,. I'm not asking that we go out there and introduce random breath testing, God knows although many people have misread the motion and there has been an effort made by me to say to people, no it was to introduce the ability to use the breathalyser to that we could be looking to perhaps where that breathalyser is going to be placed, who can operate it and its allowing the courts to get a faster result. It's a less expensive use of equipment so that the costs are down for both the person undergoing the testing as well as the administrative costs. It will be able to have people that may have been in an accident, that have been picked up as a result of drink driving,

taken to the police station, and if they are dangerous or aggrieved that they are taken out of the hospital system and into a police system, more manageable, but I just want to bring the concerns that came out of the meeting to this house for discussion. Where it goes from there will evolve over the period of time of the course of the motion, if it continues to remain on the books but I believe that there needs to be some introduction of the breathalyser myself and I look forward to debate on the matter

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker I thank the Minister for her motion. I understand this motion stems as a result of meetings held by the Minister last month and I commend the Minister for her initiative to canvas issues of concerns in our community. I understand these meetings are well attended and instructive and that the Road Safety issues were one of the many issues raised. If the House directs me today to progress this motion I will of course do so but I would hope not to deal with issues in isolation but rather bring forward legislation that has been drafted to take account of all road safety issues rather than a piece meal manner as has occurred in the past. Mr Speaker I've previously indicated that road safety is one of the priorities in my area of responsibility and that once the budget has been finalised I would devote my time to re-examining current regulations to the Road Traffic Act as well as legislation that's previously been drafted but not introduced and legislation that's previously been tabled but not progressed. Mr Speaker my preference today would be for the Minister to adjourn her motion and to make it an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting to give me an opportunity to give due consideration to all the issues involving road safety and an opportunity for me to consult with stakeholders including my colleagues around this table, the Road Safety Committee and the Registrar of Motor Vehicles so that I can bring forward any necessary amendments. Thank you Mr Speaker

MRS JACK Mr Speaker I have no real concerns there but the motion will stay on here and I just forewarn the Minister that if no action is forthcoming by the August meeting of this House that I will be driving my own amendment to the Road Traffic Act

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I just wonder if Mr Magri would reconsider his position because the motion doesn't actually require him to do anything other than what he is already considering

MR ANDERSON Mr Speaker I think it's a very important issue and personally I don't see any reason why we shouldn't have breathalyser. I know there are contrary opinions to this but to me we should have a breathalyser. Okay if you want to tie up aspects of it, and look at aspects so that there is not random breath testing, well that's another matter but there is no reason why we shouldn't have a breathalyser on the island in my opinion

MR B CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I'm not sure really that the debate that I have with the issues of the breathalyser being introduced into Norfolk Island would be relevant to be brought up now. I've no problems with Mrs Jack's motion at all. I think it would be something that is well worth looking into by the Minister so any further debate that I have on this matter, and I have quite a vast amount of debate on it, I will leave until the Minister decides if he's going to introduce it or not. Thank you

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker Mr Brendon Christian points out an important factor in the consideration of matters like this, and that is that the motion such as this that requests the Executive Member to do something, I think as Mr Neville Christian has already point out, it was something that Chris was considering anyway, not something that necessarily was a blanket approach but a specific approach to deal in part with another specific and related problem to drink driving on the roads so I think it is fair to say and Mrs Jack's ladies that were at the meeting I'm sure she will pass on the them at her next such meeting that it is a matter that is taken seriously by this Legislative Assembly and is being addressed by the new Minister amongst all this other raft of

responsibilities and things that he is pursuing and I guess the debate on whether we are going to do something like that or not will come with the legislation when it is introduced into the House so this motion if it is passed today or next week or passed in a month doesn't mean that we are going to have a breathalyser all it does is a mechanism to ensure that something comes to the House to allow us to debate the fact whether there is going to be one or not but obviously there are concerns within the community. I was interested in the Minister's introductory remarks in relation to this motion which talked about domestic violence, responsible service of alcohol, but targeted drink driving and I think that even though we might be looking at the drink driving factor there are other issues that we really need to give some serious thought to, particularly in the area of domestic violence, and I know that the responsible service of alcohol is something that's been high on the agenda of the DAA Working Group for quite some time now and it is interesting to see that one of the written submissions that have been made to Members of the Legislative Assembly though it centres more so on some of the business environment and some of the taxation issues that are impacting on the business community it also does talk about the need to give careful consideration to some of the aspects of just a blanket introduction of this type of legislation, and the impact that it may have on business and through the rest of the community I really don't have a strong position at this time one way or another in relation to that was made to us and the only thing that really jumps out at me was the suggestion that before a motion such as this is brought to the House that maybe the Minister should have gone out and spoken to all of the other groups and stakeholders on the island. I think this really just brings me back to re-emphasising the point. The motion doesn't mean that a breathalyser is going to come in. That happens with the Act. That being said, if the Minister wishes to adjourn this, I would be happy with that. I know that the Minister responsible for this matter is active in the area of trying to address this issue. I commend him for that. I commend the Minister for bringing the matter to the House so I certainly would be intending to support it whether it goes through today or it waits for another sitting. Obviously that will give some time for wider ideas and perspective from the community on the issues and maybe trigger some areas that need to be addressed in tandem rather than just dealing with the drink driving side of things. Thank you Mr Speaker

**MRS JACK** Mr Speaker just let me say too that I did speak to the Counsellor because people may say that a lot of this was hearsay, coming from the women that needed more factual backing and so I did speak with the counsellor who is located at the hospital over the concerns of drug and alcohol abuse and she agreed with them totally that the primary cause for concern for domestic violence and for a lot of the troubles within the island is the abuse and misuse of alcohol. One thing that arrived on my computer this morning was an email or one that I opened and it was sent rather late yesterday afternoon. I did forward it to all Members but whether it made it before the sitting I'm not sure but it came from one of the women who was at the meetings and it just reminds me, asks me to remember to say that if the breathalyser or other aspects of better serving of alcohol whatever comes in, one thing the women's group was insistent on was a decent educational programme to back it up so that there were no people with the ability to say, oh I wasn't aware of that. They believed that everybody needed to be fully educated for any changes that come into the community and so I would like to re-emphasise that. This is just a motion asking the Minister to make way. I really think it could be finished with today and agreed to but if he wishes or if Members wish to put it to one side, it's up to them but I think it's just a motion and we can just agree that I've asked him to do this and we can just agree or not agree that he does it please

**MR MAGRI** Mr Speaker could I move that this matter be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting

**SPEAKER** The question is that this matter be adjourned and resumption of debate be made an order of the day for a subsequent day of sitting. I put the question

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you, that matter is so adjourned

**MUSEUM TRUST ACT 1987 - APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we move to Notice Number 5 which is the Museum Trust Act 1987 - Appointment Of Trustee and Mrs Jack you have the call

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Speaker this is formalising the appointment of Ron Nobbs to the Museum Trust. Can I say that Mr Nobbs has been a Member of the Trust in earlier years prior to his appointment to the Legislative Assembly, I think the year was 1994 he was a Member and he now becomes one of seven Members on the Museum Trust and that he has the full support of all Members in taking up this position. I move that, for the purposes of subsection 5(1) of the *Museums Trust Act 1987*, this House resolves that Ronald Coane Nobbs be appointed as a trustee under the Act for the period from 22 June 2007 to 19 April 2009.

SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Jack. Any debate Honourable Members. There being no further debate Honourable Members I put the question that the motion be agreed to. I put the question

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you, the motion is agreed to

**EMPLOYMENT ACT 1988 – MATERNITY AND PATERNITY LEAVE – REQUEST FOR REVIEW**

SPEAKER Honourable Members we move to Notice Number 6 which is the Employment Act 1988 – Maternity And Paternity Leave – Request For Review and Mrs Jack you have the call

MRS JACK Thank you Mr Speaker, I move that this House requests the responsible executive member to review the leave provisions within the *Employment Act 1988* with a view to bringing forward draft legislation to amend the Act to provide for maternity leave and paternity leave and to enable parent/s to return to their place of employment at the conclusion of that leave

SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Jack. Any debate Honourable Members

MRS JACK Mr Speaker this motion also comes as a result of the women's meetings and I must say that it is an aspect that I had forgotten all about and am now past the point of childbearing but it is a quite genuine concern raised by the young mothers who were present at the meetings and we have two employment Acts on the island Mr Speaker we have the employment Act 1988 that this refers to which covers private enterprise and we also have the Public Sector management Act 2000 and that covers people within the Public Service. Within that Public Sector Management Act we have the Human Resources Policies and Procedures manual. Now for people within the Public Service and I applaud the strength of the policies for leave entitlements, but you come in there and you can see that they have, I'll just find it, they have their annual leave, sick leave, family and carers leave, they have long service leave, they have bereavement leave, jury service, emergency services leave, paid maternity leave,



was something that was set aside that was deemed to be worthy of giving consideration to at a later date. Well the later date has arrived some thirteen years later and so certainly I've got no barrier and I'm willing to give it further consideration. Thank you

MRS JACK Mr Speaker Mr Gardner was asking for specifics and as he again said, those that come out in the debate that we are bound to have around this table, both in this forum and in smaller groups, but it comes from the very basic, of a woman being able to return to work after giving birth, but that is being denied to at least one woman and that is just not acceptable and so just that basic right of return to work, right through to best case scenario but lets always be aware, of economic ramifications and what is doable and what is achievable within making this happen and again, it's all the considerations, and there'll be lots of meetings also with those in the private sector but I just would be happy to get a positive response for this motion for the responsible Minister to deal with. Thank you

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I intend supporting the motion and I hope the Chief Minister can look for ways of improving the lot for women as Mr Gardner has said, some employees are very generous, others may not be able to be so generous, but if we can just find a base or some common ground somewhere I think it's a reasonable thing for us to strive for. The Chief Minister earlier wondered if somebody would come up with an acronym or something like that and I've noticed Mr Speaker in my own mind that what I witnessed today is a subtle shift in the Chief Minister's political power base from NAG to WAG

MRS JACK The tail may well wag the dog

MR MAGRI Mr Speaker I don't really have too much to add except that I have no problem in supporting this motion and again I applaud Vicky on her initiative to go out there and address women's issues

MR CHRISTIAN Thank you Mr Speaker, I too intend to support this motion that Mrs Jack is planning to move but just to point out one aspect. Everyone seems to be mentioning it's the women's right to return and that but in the modern day world we do have men, fathers who stay at home and look after their children so whilst we do say its in the interests of women I think it's more in the interest of parents and their right to return to the workplace and I've thought of this debate to be brought forward myself. Thank you

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

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it thank you, the motion is agreed to

#### **FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING DATE**

Thank you Honourable Members we now move to the fixing of our next sitting day

MR GARDNER Mr Speaker I move that the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 27 June 2007, at 10.00 am.

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Gardner. Is there any debate Honourable Members. The question is that the motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT  
AGREED

The ayes have it, that motion is agreed

### ADJOURNMENT

MR BRENDON CHRISTIAN            Thank you Mr Speaker I move that the House do now adjourn

SPEAKER                            Thank you Mr Christian. Is there any further participation in adjournment debate Honourable Members.

MR NOBBS                            Mr Speaker I would just like to say that following the discussion today the Minister for Finance and myself will be on Norfolk Island radio from 8.30 am this Friday to discuss a wide array of issues and to respond to questions that may be phoned in prior to or during the interview process. I understand that Radio Norfolk is already compiling faxed and emailed questions so it should be an interesting alternative to one on one issues or broadcast statements. Thank you

I just have one more and it's to do with the immigration system and process review. I commenced a review of immigration practices and processes after obtaining the portfolio of Immigration and I would like to invite public comment on various areas of the Immigration process and planning for Norfolk Island in the future. I would ask that suggestions, questions and commentary be delivered to the Immigration Officer at the Bicentennial Complex before the 16<sup>th</sup> July to enable that input to be part of the discussions progressed by the Minister, Immigration Officer and the Committee held on that date

Just one more. And it's to do as was queried earlier in the sitting about the Gazettal of the Legislative Assembly's portfolio positions, Madam Clerk has advised me that it is going in the next Gazette and the one directly following and I might also add to that by saying that in the July sitting I will be approaching Mr Neville Christian to return Public Service to my portfolio and I would like to thank him for holding it over the past few months so that I could get my feet under the desk. Thank you

MR GARDNER                        Thank you Mr Speaker. As Members are aware I was away over the weekend on private business and took the opportunity whilst I was in Vanuatu on the weekend to visit the National Cultural Centre in Vanuatu and was given a guided tour and thank you to Tracy Yager for organising that but it gave me an opportunity to better understand I think the drive by Members of the Norfolk Island community for the establishment of a similar type centre on Norfolk Island. The Vanuatu Cultural Centre is a fairly extensive building and incorporates both the National Museum the National Library, Youth Centre type activities, in other words encouragement to youth for seeking employment and just general discussion amongst the community about youth issues in general. Also it houses a fairly significant set up as far as archives and records are concerned particularly in relation to Vanuatu's 150 odd different languages and the various customs throughout the islands of Vanuatu. They have a full recording studio where they produce their TV documentaries for TV broadcast on the national TV service in Vanuatu and also programmes for radio broadcast which is done a couple of times per week and I was very impressed and very grateful to the Vanuatu Cultural Centre for providing I think a couple of hours of fairly intensive but educational insight into the workings of the Cultural Centre in other areas of the Pacific and I've bought some material back, mainly in the form of brochures and a couple of books from the Cultural Centre which I intend to donate to the group that are pursuing the Cultural Centre ideas on Norfolk Island and there are some interesting documents amongst that to do with land tenure and the understanding of the ownership of land within the Melanesian system which was very thought provoking and I'm sure Members will take the opportunity to look at some of that documentation it will get them thinking too about ownership and custodianship of land and the import of that to people throughout the

Pacific not just within Melanesia. I was also given the opportunity to meet a wonderful bloke who took me under his wing and gave me a guided tour and showed me things of great import to the cultural side of things in Vanuatu, a bloke by the name of Eddy on Pentecost Island and he gave me a bit of a history lesson in the relationship between Norfolk Island and Pentecost and the village that he comes from on Pentecost Island actually had the first connection from Vanuatu from Norfolk Island as far as the Melanesian Mission was concerned and in his village they are very aware of Norfolk Island and the role that it played in bringing Christianity to Pentecost Island and the rest of Vanuatu and what stemmed from that basically was a request from him to try and get as much information as he possibly could about the relationship of particularly the Pentecost Islanders and their relationship to Norfolk Island and attendance at the Melanesian Mission so I guess my request to Members of the Legislative Assembly I'll be following it up both with the Cultural Centre proponents and through the Museums and other sources, whether there is information on that connection which I can relate to them because they are very keen and obviously want to renew the links with Norfolk Island particularly in light of the push by Members of the community to establish a cultural centre here. Thank you

One further thing Mr Speaker the Minister for Finance earlier today in his debate on the budget for 07/08 had talked briefly about funding options for the development of a new hospital in Norfolk Island and indeed we are pursuing that. The original budget bid had requested some \$200,000 as basically the start of a sinking fund for the construction of a new hospital. In discussion with the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Minister for Finance we had agreed not to include that in the budget primarily because of the direction that we've agreed to take that relates to the Econtech projections for sustainability of Norfolk Island and the need to establish a general sinking fund to deal with infrastructure in those sorts of matters, so that is being pursued. I think the Minister had indicated a figure that has been set aside generally to kick start that process and it's something obviously that we are going to need to commit to over the next three years of this Legislative Assembly to building that fund and also to get consideration to how we are going to prioritise the expenditure of those monies across all the varying areas of demand for infrastructure replacement in Norfolk Island. I just wanted to say that, that is an important area that is being given consideration not just by myself, but also by the Advisory Board to the Norfolk Island Hospital and the Director of the Hospital and I know that there are Members of the staff and plenty of people in the community who are quite passionate about seeing the construction of a new hospital further developed in Norfolk Island and in that regard the Director has already provided to me schematic drawings of various health institutions elsewhere, some very general indicative costs of the construction of something to replace the current level of services that we have in Norfolk Island and they are daunting figures but I don't believe the project and the realisation of a new hospital is insurmountable in Norfolk Island's context but it is obviously something that requires a lot of work and in relation to the general provision of health services on Norfolk Island and it's been something that's been floating around in the community for quite some time now is the need to look at vaccinations for children in Norfolk Island, it's something that we are progressing with one of the Service clubs looking a little further at, looking at how we can best utilise the resources of the Healthcare Fund to ensure that children in Norfolk Island do not go without the necessary vaccinations, particularly in the first three or four years of life and also there is the additional aspect that's been floating around for some time now in the Australian context is the cervical cancer and again it's something that I'm pursuing to see if we can introduce that into Norfolk Island and I'm sure Mrs Jack would be thrilled with that from her women's group that those things are being progressed. I'm not saying there's an instant fix or solution to it, there's nothing in the budget for that, but obviously over the next two or three months as I'm able to get a better grasp on quantifying the figures that are attached to those sort of things, it will be something that I'm sure I'll have further discussion with the Minister for Finance and Members of the Legislative Assembly to see how we can actually make provision for the provision of those services across the community in Norfolk Island. Thank you

