



**NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
13TH NILA HANSARD – 19 SEPTEMBER 2012**

SPEAKER Good morning Honourable Members, we commence with the Prayer of the Legislative Assembly.

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.

Honourable Members, gentleman feel free to remove your coats if you so wish and ensure mobile phones are turned off. Right.

CONDOLENCES

SPEAKER The first matter on our programme today, condolences, Mr Snell.

MR SNELL It is with regret that this House records the passing of John Worthy and Mavis Angeline Tullner. John Worthy was born at Concord New South Wales, the fifth child of Gordon Charles Barton Worthy and Millicent Anderson. His father was a master tailor and had a shop in the strand arcade in Sydney. John attended the local primary school and Homebush Boys High. His family had a strong brethren tradition and attended the gospel chapel at Burwood each week. These beliefs stayed with John throughout his life. His family were very musical and John sang 2nd tenor with the Sydney Male Voice Choir for many years. His love of music encompassed all styles but particularly sacred and classical. At the age of 19 John joined the citizen military forces in January, 1942 and was immediately called up for full time service. He was transferred to the AIF in December and served in the 2/1st infantry battalion at the Kokoda Track. He survived the war unharmed except for malaria. He was discharged in June 1946. On his return to Sydney, his brother, now himself a master tailor, gave John two three piece suits which John wore with pride. He was proud to have served his country and was proud to march with his mates each ANZAC day. In later years he was joined by his son and grandsons on several occasions. He married Coral Isobel McInnis in July 1946. They lived in Sydney with John's sister Dorothy and her husband Ken. In the following year they had their first child, John Charles Barton who tragically died in 1977. Their second son Stephen Gordon was born in May 1953. While raising their young family, John attended Sydney University where he studied law. He played soccer at Uni and continued until 1954 for which he was awarded a university blue. On

graduating he did his articles and worked for two years and then moved his young family to Warialda, where John and colleague, Stuart Johnston went into practice. During the time in Warialda John became an accomplished horseman. Coral was an accomplished seamstress and made all her own clothes as well as the boys clothes and John's shirts. In 1961 the family moved to Kempsey for better education for the children. John bought into Jack Murray's law firm and practiced for 40 years. He also had a successful practice in Sydney. At one stage he took a partner but John always preferred to work as an individual and later sold his share in the practice. In 1965 the family welcomed a daughter, Susan Jane. Coral had longed for a girl and Susan was adored by her mother and brothers and became the apple of her dad's eye. John loved sport and played golf, tennis, and snooker acquiring many trophies along the way. He played snooker with Eddie Charlton and was a keen member of the Crescent Head Blue Water Fishing Club for many years. He also had a love for the land and owned acres at Collombatti and a 375 prime grazing property, "Frogmore" where he raised Murray Grey's as export beef. He spent many hours at "Frogmore" ploughing and mustering and growing corn for Kellogg's. In 1989 John purchased a travel agency Kempsey Travel. He had a staff of four to whom he was very good and they repaid him with fierce loyalty. The agency allowed him to indulge his love of travel and during those years he saw most of the world. Sadly Coral's health deteriorated over the years and in October 1995 she passed away with all the family at her bedside. John had met Sally Rosser and her family in Kempsey in the 1980's. Over the years John gave Sally much support especially when she went to complete her nursing degree and was extremely proud of Sally when she graduated. Following her divorce in the early 90's Sally and her youngest daughter moved to Kempsey and lived out at Frogmore. During Coral's last year, Sally spent much time with her, reading and talking to her. Over the next few years John and Sally became best mates and very close. During his travels John had fallen in love with Norfolk Island, which he had visited many times since the 1970's. In 2001 they moved to Norfolk and in 2003 John asked Sally to marry him. They married in Sydney in April and retired to Norfolk where they ran a small piggery and had chooks and cattle as well as a very productive vegetable garden. Several times they travelled with close friends. As John became frail his children and grandchildren were regular visitors and he looked forward to their arrival. Sally cared for John at home until he had to be admitted to the Norfolk Island Hospital aged care unit. He was given great care by the staff of "Daa Randa" and all the nurses. Both Stephen and Susan visited during this difficult time and Susan came to live in 2010 to spend more time with her Dad. He had regular visits from his friends as well. To Sally, Susan, Stephen, Gillian and the grandchildren, Curtis, Adam Lauren and Liam and to John's many friends this House extends its deepest sympathy. May he rest in peace. Madam Speaker Mavis Angeline Tullner was born in February 1938 at Bishop's Court. She had brothers, Thornton George Ellis (Boof) Quintal, Francis Evelyn (Butch), half brothers John Quintal and Dan Yager. She attended school on Norfolk Island and her early childhood was difficult. At an early age she found a lot of her chores, many of which had to be done before school, very hard. They

included trying to find cows and milking them, collecting eggs and cooking. At the age of 13 she moved to Sydney and later became an usherette for Hoyt's Theatres. Ann was an entrant in the Miss Australia contest and following that became a model for June Dally Watkins. Anne married Robert Tullner and they returned to Norfolk with their two children, Ray and Kathy. Anne and Robert managed Valley View Restaurant and also Pine Valley Apartments. There she met Frank, her partner for over 40 years and they had Jeremy. She had a flair for cooking, and catered for many occasions. Once Ray and his mates had a great feast on food waiting to be delivered! Anne made great pickles. Although an excellent cook, she always avoided gardening. One time at the Hotel Norfolk she over balanced on the bar stool and took out all the patrons! After that Anne slowed down with her drinking. Another day a tourist told her to put sugar around the base of a mandarin tree to sweeten the fruit. All that happened was it attracted thousands of ants and still today the mandarins taste sour! Enid Weslake taught Anne to drive. After many heart stopping moments, they eventually arrived at Kingston and Enid's words to Registrar Danny Lusk were "please give her a Licence but don't go on the pier and don't ask her to reverse!" Anne found driving a car after a few drinks somewhat difficult and coming home after a Bunny Walter's concert her car looked like it had been hit by a Panzer tank! Many people have wonderful memories of this lovely lady, who will be sadly missed in our community. To Frank, Ray, Kathy and Jeremy, to her grandchildren Reece, Sarah, Ryland, Cheyenne, Jaden and Jemma and to her many friends, this House extends its sincere sympathy. May she rest in peace. Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Snell. Honourable Members as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased, I ask that we all stand in silence. Thank you Honourable Members.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

SPEAKER We move now to Presentation of Petitions, are there any petitions for presentation this morning?

GIVING OF NOTICES

SPEAKER Giving of Notices, are there any notices to be given this morning Honourable Members? No Giving of Notices.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

SPEAKER Questions without Notice, any questions without notice Honourable Members? Mrs Ward.

MRS WARD Thanks Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Tourism & Industry & Development. A question has been raised

about the possibility of a private business selling raffle tickets as part of normal business operations and I understand that this would require amendments to the Lotteries and Fundraising Act, is the Minister prepared to examine this matter further and I am quite happy for the Minister to take that question on notice.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, thank you Mrs Ward for the question, yes, I am aware of that enquiry and from memory I responded to that in August, I am quite happy to evaluate the options for those lotteries through the Act.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister for Health. Minister what are the early indications of the Stop Smoking Campaign, has there been good take up?

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you Mrs Griffiths for the question, actually I was going to make a couple of comments in regards to the Quit Smoking Programme in some papers that I was going to table, but in short there has been 44 people who have taken up the programme and they have had a success rate of 38, so it's pretty good.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is again to the Minister for Community Services, can the Minister advise the take up for the Seniors Card?

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and Mrs Griffiths once again on the question with regards to Seniors Card. Madam Speaker whilst I am unable to give specific numbers, there has been a fair uptake of the card, and it has proven successful when these people have travelled to the mainland in regards to obtaining discounts for travel, cinemas and even in pharmacies and the like. So I will try and get some numbers for Mrs Griffiths, but there has been a good uptake of it.

MR KING Thank you, a question to the Chief Minister Madam Speaker. Does the Chief Minister intend at this Sitting to table the recent report of the Public Service Board, as required by governing law.

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker I don't at this stage have a report to table in terms of the Public Service Board.

MR KING Madam Speaker, perhaps a further question, did the Chief Minister not receive an emailed report in recent days from the Chairperson of the Public Service Board setting out their Annual Report?

MR BUFFETT I see the context that Mr King has raised the question, I have received such a report, that report has to be examined by me, and it will be tabled. I don't have it for tabling at this stage.

the Airport, can the Minister please give us any indication and any progress of installation of such an Air Curtain Burner to assist with the disposal of garbage?

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you Mr Snell for the question. Madam Speaker I believe Mr Snell is referring to, at the last Sitting I referred to the possibility of relocating the Air Curtain Burner around to where the fire fighters burn out cars and use it as a practice ground for their fire fighting skills. As at this time the Planning Officer was investigating that and I am unsure of the outcomes of that, but I will get back to Mr Snell with that. But it is interesting to note, as I have had discussions with people who manufacture these Air Curtain Burners in America, and I had, just this morning, had an email from a firm in Christchurch New Zealand who has purchased one of these Air Curtain Burners, and he has asked me, well invited me you might say, if I am able to come down and have a look at the operation of it. So Madam Speaker that could be on the cards, but as for the location of it, as I mentioned before we did look at relocating down to the Headstone so that we could have a better burn, the advice that we had received, as previously advise is that it wouldn't be suitable down there, just purely due to the prevailing conditions and the amount of wear and tear that would be created on such an item. So this is why we are now looking at an alternate site, otherwise we will have to go down the track, and it is a long term ideal solution is for a high temperature incinerator to be installed at the Waste Management Centre eventually, and of course the funding is the issue there, thank you.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is to the Chief Minister with responsibility for Policing. Chief Minister can you inform us how many police officers and how many gaolers we have on our books?

MR BUFFETT I'll take that detail on notice to give you the exact detail. I know that there have been some recent adjustments in the appointment of gaolers what gives that in a figure term, statistical terms, is not in my mind at this moment, but I can provide that Madam Speaker, I can provide that before our next Sitting to Mrs Griffiths if that would be useful to her.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker, my question to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister why have you been unable to provide to Members a portfolio of works programmes across the full spectrum of Administration?

MR BUFFETT Yes, Madam Speaker, that hasn't been practicable to date in terms of the board spectrum of activity of the Administration, as we know, covers the three tiers of Government that is experienced in the Australian context. There has been some interim discussion about how we might achieve that in the broader sense, that will need to be seen in the context of the essential services to be provided in the Island and of course what we need to achieve in the Roadmap to move forward, I will have a

statement about various activities under the Roadmap in how we are moving forward when we come to Statement time Madam Speaker.

MR KING Well a supplementary Madam Speaker, am I to comprehend Chief Minister that there is obviously some difficulty in understanding of staff of what they are supposed to do on a particular day when they arrive at work, if there are no works programmes?

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker, I'm not too sure on whether Mr King is drawing upon his personal interpretations but certainly it is my understanding that those who manage in the Public Service have programmes of work for those who work in those particular areas. I do acknowledge that we might be short on training programmes at this time, but the daily work programmes in various areas are reasonably well set.

MR KING A supplementary Madam Speaker, I'm sorry Chief Minister, are you saying that the works programmes are set on a day to day basis, or are they a planned programme of works, and why can't those programmes of works be provided to Members, as requested on previous occasions. It's not a hard ask.

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker, I am not aware of previous [unclear on recording] occasions where every section in the Administration has erected a programme and those programmes have been available to Members. I'm not saying that that is an undesirable thing, but I have don't have a recollection that that has been the case. But nevertheless I am happy to have a discussion with the CEO as to how he has erecting programmes in various areas, and to what extent that might be shared in a wider public sense. I am happy to have that conversation.

SPEAKER Through the Chair Mr King.

MR BUFFETT No, I am saying that I am happy to discuss that with the CEO.

SPEAKER Moving along.

MR KING I'm sorry to raise my voice there above the frog in my throat. A question for the Chief Minister, Chief Minister is it not a fact that the Administration has not been supplied with a list of Government legislative and administrative priorities and is therefore unable to effectively allocate its resources in a balanced and productive manner?

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker I have a statement which will cover the legislative programme when we come to Statements, might I just

MR KING A supplementary Madam Speaker, Chief Minister, can you point to any positive Economic Indicators?

MR BUFFETT The positive indicators are quite sparse at this time Madam Speaker.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister for Tourism & Development. Can the Minister provide this House with an update on Barges and our progress in securing Cruise Ships?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, what I might do, is give a brief overview, but I hope at the next Sitting to give a detailed chronological order of where that has progressed. The progression up to this point is that the Commonwealth has certainly worked with the Norfolk Island Government and Carnival Cruises have provided the engineering expertise to analyse the barge system, the infrastructure to support the barges, not only for placing them in and out of the water, but also for the movement of containers for sea freight cargo have commenced evaluation and as I understand it there is some expertise that the Commonwealth has engaged that will soon be on the Island to evaluate the pier structures and the ability to manoeuvre the barges and containers.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is again to the Minister for Tourism & Development and can you provide us with an update on your alternate energy initiatives.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, I think at the last Sitting that I gave the advice as to the legal documentation that had been worked on between LSU and the company Redemptech, as I understand it, that has reached an agreeable document, and we now await the final stages of Redemptech's testing to then give us an arrival date to Norfolk of the equipment.

MR KING Can I please ask a supplementary in relation to that?

SPEAKER Okay, Mr King then Mrs Griffiths who is equally looking for a supplementary – no a new question, okay, Mr King, please.

MR KING Well given that the question sought advice on the Minister's initiatives, is he claiming the initiative for the Redemptech proposal?

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker I am always prepared to answer serious questions, I have already answered that particular inference that Mr King has made that the Government is attempting to take...

SPEAKER Any inferences are out of order anyway.
Moving along Mrs Griffiths.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is again to the Minister for Tourism & Development. Can you provide this House with an update on your Gaming initiatives, or your Gaming progress? Progress, I'm after progress!

MR NOBBS Yes, thank you Madam Speaker and thank you Mrs Griffiths for the question, certainly at the next Sitting I can provide an outline of the work that is being done in the Gaming and further progressions that are moved along.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker, whilst talking recently, just recently about alternative energy, I would like to ask Minister Nobbs a certain questions in relation to the photovoltaic arrays and the recent press release issued by the Chief Executive Officer, in which it was advised that the Government had placed a moratorium on the installation of further photovoltaic arrays and secondly that the existing photovoltaic set ups will be turned off as required to prevent power cuts. The question is, is it a fact that the decisions to turn existing units off are taken on a random basis, without regard to equity or fairness?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, that is actually an operational issue for the Public Service, and I would be extremely surprised if it was being carried out on a random basis, my understanding through the CEO is that there has been an appropriate consideration of the methodology for the managing of the oversupply of photovoltaic electricity.

MR KING A supplementary, I take it Minister that you can't advise the basis on which properties are selected to be turned off, in other words, is there are written policy to which the community has access, which sets out the criteria for selecting who's going to be turned off, when they will be turned off and how long they will be turned off for, or will this remain forever a mystery?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, as I've said, it is an operational matter for the Service, I will seek their advice and also if possible, we will publish the formula in the newspaper.

MR KING On the same, it goes to the heart of the photovoltaic solar generation issue Madam Speaker, Minister Nobbs to what extent were the difficulties with the infiltration of solar generation considered before the Government announced its policy position and plans in relation to supporting solar power generation? To what extent did planning take account of a future need to shed power to prevent outages?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, best if I take that question on notice so I can do some research.

MR KING A supplementary Madam Speaker. Thank you, you may care to take on notice Minister Nobbs this question as well. Well why has it taken until just now to decide that a dummy load solution is required or perhaps you may care to venture a guess now, an answer.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker they say that sarcasm is the lowest form of wit, and I think I've got half of some sarcasm over here! Perhaps I could answer it by just saying that the photovoltaic oversupply has been monitored for a considerable amount of time, and also there have been a number of evaluations made to the lead up to the decision that was made recently for the dummy load arrangement. It is not the final solution, and obviously the optimum for Norfolk Island is a storage solution, however, as with any of these arrangements, Norfolk Island is certainly not alone in having to find the appropriate balance for photovoltaic or renewable energy on its grid. Every area that is using these facilities is having similar challenges.

MR KING Could I please have one more supplementary Madam Speaker? Could I ask whether the Government has considered the possibility that the turning off of the photovoltaic arrays might well constitute a breach of contract for which a penalty might be paid?

SPEAKER Mr King I will have to decline that, you are really looking for a legal opinion here and that is out of order.

MR KING I beg your pardon Madam Speaker, I am merely asking whether the extent to which the Government has considered that question, I am not asking for a legal advice.

SPEAKER Well it's as close as it's coming to a legal opinion, I'm asking if you would respond in that form Minister Nobbs if you are comfortable, if not, I will leave it to you.

MR KING It is a yes or no question I guess, whether that aspect has been considered.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker I am happy to respond by saying that I have certainly documented in the past, and in November of last year that that needed to be a consideration in the progression that the Public Service took in the operational basis of switching off the photovoltaic's.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you my question my question is the Minister for Tourism & Development. Minister this community's budget is

delicately balanced on 26,000 visitors for the year. How are we tracking and what action do you plan to take when or if we don't meet that figure?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker I think I can certainly speak on behalf of the General Manager of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau to say that he is placing every endeavour out there that is within our capacity to raise the profile of the Island and encourage the tourism visitation, at my latest meeting with the GM he still was reasonably confident that we will attain those numbers, although we have had a particularly impacted low season with some very low numbers over the low season. One of the things I will say, at the start of this Sitting, Mr King said have we got any good financial news or something along those lines, some of the forward bookings and the booking outcomes for areas such as Air New Zealand Holidays, have had a significant spike upwards in the last few weeks, which they have certainly put in email to comment to us about, and has given some confidence to us that the television commercial programmes have had an impact. As to what actions we'll be taking if we do not meet that figure, we want to take the actions as early as possible to make sure that we are attaining that figure.

MRS GRIFFITHS I was looking for a little bit more substance Madam Speaker than every endeavour.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker at the last Sitting I provided a summary that went on for quite some time as to all of the initiatives that we are currently running through the Bureau, it's certainly in Hansard and I'm certainly happy to provide a further copy of that to Mrs Ward that went into significant detail, I do not have that detail with me at the moment. But there is extensive initiatives that are being utilised by the Bureau and the GM.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister with responsibility for Health, and it is based on a point in the recent media release by the Norfolk Island Government on the Roadmap progress report. It states under point three, the public sector management, the Norfolk Island Hospital has been registered with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards and has begun the assessment process against equip standards, the question is, what is the timeframe or is there timeframe for the assessment process?

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question, yes the Hospital Enterprise signed up to this programme, this accreditation programme, I think it was in April this year, it is a four year programme with ACHS, the first 12 months is a self-assessment and the Hospital plans to undertake a full self-assessment in November this year, with a full assessment of where they are at conducted by ACHS 12 months later, so that is November 2013 and during Papers Madam Speaker I'll be tabling the

Hospital Annual Report and they do make mention of that in that report, and Mrs Ward may want to get a copy of that, it might give her some more information.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan, further questions without notice Honourable Members? Mr Anderson were you looking for the call?

MR ANDERSON They are having such a good time Madam Speaker that I thought I'd let them go! A question for the Chief Minister Madam Speaker, Chief Minister could you tell us whether there has been any progress in relation to the report which has been coming for quite some time related to the low duty packaging exemptions, particularly given the trial is now in its second year.

MR BUFFETT Yes Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker there is a report, a very brief report which I had thought had been tabled back in the June Sitting, I'll table it again now, it basically provides almost a one page report, in terms of the period that commenced in August last year and ran for a period of six months, this report is not provided immediately at the end of that six monthly period, a brief period after that, and I'll table that, and it gives a summary of that activity, but at the same time there was a recommendation which I approved, that the review period run for a further 12 months to see how that was running, that further 12 months period is still continuing, so I haven't a further report there, but I table this one. Which covers the first period, because I don't think I actually tabled that at an earlier time if that might be useful to you.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister for Tourism & Development, Minister bearing in mind that a good survey has to be better planned than making a few phone calls, which certainly doesn't guarantee the anonymity of the person being surveyed, when can I expect to see the radio station survey that you've been telling me is imminent since March?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker I did actually query the Radio Station Manager just recently on their progression of the survey and to assist the process I have commenced a Minister through the CEO to the management suggesting a range of areas that the survey could get involved in so that I can report that back to the House.

MR KING A supplementary to the Minister on his proposed radio survey, did you just inform the House that you had made suggestions as to the nature of the survey to be undertaken?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, I have certainly suggested that the survey be undertaken and there were some dot points

provided by the Manager at that point which I have included in the Ministerial that should assist the process.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is of the Chief Minister, Chief Minister for the past two years we have heard about alternate energy, cruise ship barges, tourism strategies, gaming potential, radio station surveys and various other economic development initiatives from the Minister for Tourism & Development, when do you expect any of these initiatives to bear fruit and are you content with your Minister's pace and outcomes.

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker the Minister is one who is committed to his task, the task is difficult, and the task is wide ranging, he continues to have my confidence. Those examples that you have given are not five minute wonders, in other words flick of the switch arrangements, many of them have long lead times, and to be quite frank, some of them, although examined may not have the outcome at the beginning might have thought available. But they need to be explored, you don't know unless you explore some of these things. Some of them might have significant benefits if they come to fruition and we won't know whether they come to fruition unless there is extension exploration, some of them, for example, electricity examination have had years and years of research and we still don't know whether some of them will be delivered, but they are worth continuing to be fostered and encouraged if they have the prospect of giving long term benefits to Norfolk Island. We should not close our minds to such prospects.

MR SNELL A supplementary yes please if I could. A supplementary Chief Minister, Mrs Griffiths mentioned the apparent delay or apparent lack of information in certain areas, and in particular dating back to the Twelfth Assembly Madam Speaker there was reference to Gaming, and promises were made by the Officer in charge of Gaming that certain benefits would be available to Norfolk Island in areas of Lottery and other things, and there has been no improvement, we believe that there has been no further information coming forward, so Minister any indication that something will happen in that area?

MR BUFFETT I'll turn to the appropriate Minister to give the latest detail about that, but just as there are changes in a number of areas in the commercial world, there are obviously changes in the Gaming world as well, there are changes in proprietorship of major gaming arrangements, there are changes in how Gaming is conducted in the international arena using information technology, all of those change significantly and move quickly, I don't claim to have that detail in front of me, Mr Nobbs is the Minister who has responsibility for Gaming activities would have that, I would welcome his participation. But Norfolk Island has endeavoured to remain within the sphere, and that is not easy, given the competition that is around, and endeavoured to remain competitive in terms of the fees and the taxing regime that it entertains. Do you want too?

SPEAKER Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, and I appreciate the question from Mr Snell, many of the areas that I dedicated attention to at the start of this Assembly, in particular with regard to gaming, included the web access and promotion, as well as the prospectus which have been completed. On the 12th of June I provided to all Members, a document, which included all the licences which were operational and those that were pending that demonstrated that there were some new arrangements occurring there. So although, as the Chief Minister has pointed out, there are challenges along the way, there are some advancements along the way as well.

MRS GRIFFITHS A supplementary question Madam Speaker, I'm asking why the Minister is able to give that answer to Mr Snell, when he wasn't able to answer mine, and in fact fobbed me off until the next Sitting? On the progress, an update, that was more than I got when I asked the question.

SPEAKER Further questions without notice Honourable Members, Minister Nobbs, no, further questions without notice Honourable Members?

MR KING I had a supplementary Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER Certainly, certainly, please.

MR KING But I've forgotten it!

SPEAKER I can't help you I'm sorry! Further questions without notice Honourable Members?

MR KING Madam Speaker, it was a reflection on what the Chief Minister's response about his Minister's performance, I wonder whether Chief Minister I might interpret your response on that issue, as that you being entirely satisfied that your Minister has not achieved anything significant during his term of two years and seven months?

SPEAKER I'm not comfortable with this line of questioning, we are moving into inferences, imputations.

MR KING Well may I have an opportunity to rephrase Madam Speaker?

SPEAKER One opportunity to rephrase Mr King.

MR KING Just one?

SPEAKER Just one.

MR KING Can the Chief Minister point to any area where significant achievement has been made by his Minister?

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker this is really not asking for a particular, this is just trying to attack one of my Minister's.

SPEAKER And that was my concern.

MR BUFFETT And I have clearly stated just a moment ago that both Minister's have my confidence in getting about their very difficult tasks in the very difficult time that the Norfolk Island faces at this moment. It is hard to make achievements in any areas at this moment, let that be soundly said amongst us all. And in that climate, the Minister's in this Government all three of us, have done our best to ensure that we've kept the Island afloat in its various areas and that has been a significantly difficult task, but to date the Island, in its total concept does remain afloat, we are making some significant way forward although there are difficult times, in the tourism area, we are endeavouring to maintain and not loose further, where others are falling and that is an achievement, although it is difficult to move the graph upwards. But to maintaining our 26,000, although it is at the bottom end of the graph, is something that we are aiming to do, and eventually lift that, the Minister in this particular instance has recruited, of recent times, a new General Manager, he has addressed the membership here on a number of occasions, although I might say that Mr King is not always present when Members gather, if he were to be present on all occasions, he might be better equipped to know what advancements are being made and kept up to date on how we are moving to try and ensure that Norfolk Island remains afloat, survives, until we are able to move into a sustainable long term arrangement. And we musn't lose sight of the fact that that has been achieved at this moment.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Further questions without notice Honourable Members? Mr King.

MR KING I have a question to Mr Nobbs. Mr Nobbs said a few moments ago that the tourism numbers are on the up from New Zealand and that is very good. I congratulate him for that if he has been involved in that success. Would he inform that House now whether the tourism numbers, the visitor numbers for the Island are on track to achieve the underpinning number of 26,000, which underpins the budget, and can he advice the House on a month by month basis, that is for June, July and August of this year, that whether on a month by month comparable basis, we are ahead or behind previous years, or the last year, and can he advise what the trends are, upward or downward from each of our major sources/markets.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, this question was asked before in terms of whether we were likely to achieve the 26,000 for the budget year, and as I answered then, the General Manager has certainly been reviewing those numbers, and has certainly been doing his best to maintain that number, however I did also point out in that time that through the low period, the June, July August, that Mr King has referred to, we have had significantly low numbers.

MR KING A supplementary. Minister can you inform the House how we are tracking visitor number wise, if that is the correct expression. How many tourists have we had in the first three months of this year, how does that compare to the same period of last year?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, although I don't have the specific data with me right here, I can say that those numbers for travel through the low season this year, do not compare favourably to last year, but I'll provide the numbers and the comparison.

SPEAKER Through the Chair Mr King.

MR NOBBS I just said to you I'd provide the numbers.

SPEAKER Further questions without notice Honourable Members? Are there any further questions without notice before I close questions without notice? Mr Anderson.

MR ANDERSON Thank you Madam Speaker, Mr King had pre-empted some of my questions on PV's, I have just been through my others, three more questions in relation to the PV's. Does the Minister know how the businesses that have been disconnected were chosen and when they are disconnected does the Minister know whether or not they are being compensated for the units that they are not putting into the grid?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, as I stated before, this is an operational matter. I am not aware of the formula that they are using at the moment, I am happy to seek that information.

MR ANDERSON One more question in that regard then. Is it correct that when the disconnections are occurring that the Government has authorised them to use an emergency power and is it an emergency if it is a routine matter which is being investigated over several months.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker without referring to the legislation I am aware that there is a provision within the Electricity Act that

enables suitable actions to be taken to preserve the electricity generation equipment and as I understand it, that is the provision that they are using.

MR SNELL Thank you Madam Speaker, just a supplementary if I may Madam Speaker, Minister if there is a disconnection of the photovoltaic system from any premises, is the owner of the premises notified that the photovoltaic system is being turned off?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, as I have said, and not to be too repetitive, but this is an operational matter for the service, I am happy to find out what notification process they're using.

MR KING I wonder if Minister Nobbs could inform the House of what he means by saying that, referring to things as operational matters, is that simply a way of absolving himself of executive responsibility?

SPEAKER I don't think that that question is in order Mr King.

MR KING It is a question in relation to the exercise of executive authority Madam Speaker.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker I am happy to take that question.

SPEAKER Alright Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, perhaps it is an educational opportunity for Mr King, when these issues come to the Government they come to a Government on a policy basis, to provide the impetus to the Administration to carry out these objectives. When they develop their operational parameters for how they are about to do that, that is within their operational gambit.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs. Further questions without notice Honourable Members? I think we have seen that there are no further questions without notice. Mr King, Mr King.

MR KING Chief Minister I wonder whether you might advise if there is some reason why the financial statements for 10/11 haven't been posted on the website, and whether that might be rectified?

MR BUFFETT I'll do that yes, thank you Mr King.

MR KING Another question for the Chief Minister, Chief Minister could you advise if the maternity leave entitlements throughout the public

sector, that is the Administration and other Government Agencies, are the same, and if not, why should there not be equality of treatment?

MR BUFFETT I'll make those enquiries also. It is not in my mind that there is inequality, but if that be the case, I'll be able to identify that.

MR KING A supplementary, would the Government's position be one of concern if there was inequality?

MR BUFFETT If there would be, yes, are we talking about the one service.

MR KING I'm talking about public sector, yes.

MR KING Question for Minister Sheridan, has the testing of the integrity of the water assurance scheme system commenced, and if not, will you be now moving to outsource the testing as you undertook recently or previously?

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, Mr King for the question, yes, I know at the last Sitting I was questioned on this, and I advised that if it wasn't commenced by the start of September, I would act to have the Administration outsource. I must confess that I have not followed that through, I am unaware as to whether or not the programme has commenced, but I will get back to Mr King before the next Sitting on where we are at with this testing.

MR KING A question for the Chief Minister, Madam Speaker. Chief Minister given your most recent advice on the last occasion to this House, on the matter of allowing commercial access to the Administrations copper wire network, you referred to the difficulties in bringing the threads together and the ongoing efforts by your staff to bring this matter to a conclusion. Can I ask you what progress has been made in the ensuing six weeks?

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker I was just conferring with my colleague because he has a question on notice in respect of that matter, and I was just wondering if there might be a cross. Well it actually came from Mr King, and I was just wondering how well co-ordinated he is in asking questions to me, and asking them in questions. No, I offer an apology it is from Mrs Ward, it is from Mrs Ward, never the less, it is the same question.

SPEAKER If it is the same question, questions on notice take priority over questions without notice and that will be responded to, I believe, at that time. Further questions without notice Honourable Members? Mr King.

MR KING For the Chief Minister Madam Speaker, is the Chief Minister yet able to advise the House and Members of the implications of

SPEAKER Is this a supplementary question Mr King?

MR KING Well he is engaging in commentary Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER I didn't take it as that, he was responding to your question. Is there a supplementary question, I am happy to entertain that Mr King.

MR KING I will just settle down just for a minute. Madam Speaker a brief supplementary in relation to that. In addressing that question, would the Chief Minister kindly take account of the fact that permit holders are allowed brief periods of absence from the Island, anything up to six months, and in fact longer in some cases, so that the nature of my question was not all that inaccurate.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Speaker, it is hard to know how to come to that conclusion, but never the less, I am very happy to examine that which Mr King has brought forward.

MR KING A question to Mr Nobbs, Minister Nobbs please. Minister I refer to your intention to entertain on the Island, individuals from an organisation involved in a fibre optic communications cable project, which might, or might not, have some benefit for Norfolk Island. Can the Minister give an unequivocal undertaking that neither he, nor the Government, will enter into any commitment or agreement in any form, until any proposal is fully and properly documented and assessed by all Members of this House?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, in actual fact, there would be no commitment made without the engagement and arrangements through the Commonwealth, and they would be at the forefront prior to any of the further development of any such proposal. However, we are certainly welcoming the opportunity to find out exactly what is proposed in this fibre optic cable, and I have certainly invited the Commonwealth representatives who will be on the Island, to join with us tomorrow morning, when the project team for the Hawaiki Fibre Optic cable will be on the Island.

MRS GRIFFITHS A supplementary Madam Speaker. Can I just ask the Minister who is paying for these peoples trip?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, they're coming at their own cost, under their own steam.

MRS GRIFFITHS I think so, this was the same term that was used by the Economic Development Australia people, is it not a fact that the Tourist Bureau funded some of those peoples travel to the Island.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker I made no claims that they travelled for free. I did say that they are pro bono, as in the Economic Development Team, they provided their skills and services pro bono.

MR KING A supplementary to that, how much was provided from the public purse and where was the budget allocation to be found?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, budget allocation was found in the appropriate area of Economic Development, given that they were here on an Economic Development programme, and total funding from recollection was around about \$1700, plus travel costs which were picked up by the Tourist Bureau.

MR KING Well might I ask where in the Tourist Bureau's budget was that allocation made, provision made? How was the Tourist Bureau involved itself in expenditure matters relating to Economic Development?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker the Tourist Bureau and the Board was offered the full brief of what the Economic Development Australia team were offering to Norfolk Island in coming over, they saw the benefit in supporting it, any further information regarding what line item they supported that from, I would need to seek that information.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker, a question for Minister Nobbs, in a recent press release, Minister Nobbs informed the community of his intention to publish a business analysis of Norfolk Island as a whole to demonstrate the industry community linkages, opportunities and challenges. Who will be conducting this analysis, and if it is intended that the Minister himself is to be involved, what business expertise and experience will he draw from to give credibility to this analysis?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, the expertise that will be drawn on is a member of the Economic Development Australia team, however there is certainly some input that will come from Norfolk Island, whether it is through the Tourist Bureau, or various other areas, I certainly aim to offer the Chamber of Commerce for example, an opportunity to put input into that.

MR KING A supplementary in relation to that, Minister Nobbs mentioned the further involvement of Economic Development Australia, what additional funding will be provided for that purpose, and from what source.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, nil. There is none required, I have set up quite a productive working relationship with the team from Economic Development Australia and they have an ongoing interest in seeing good outcomes from the programme that they have carried out on Norfolk Island.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs, any further questions without notice Honourable Members? We are approaching three minutes from time, Mrs Ward.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to ask the Minister for Community Service, where the plans of management review is up to, and if he would follow that through please, particularly interested in the Ball Bay Reserve and being able to fence that off ultimately from cattle grazing and further environmental degradation of that area.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and Mrs Ward, I'll take that on notice and get a firm response from the Conservator, but I do know that he is working his way through the plans of management for each reserve, I just don't know where he is at at this stage.

MR SNELL A supplementary Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker on the fencing of reserves, can the Minister give any indication whether the fencing of reserves is in fact a degradation of the environment in those areas, when you consider Madam Speaker that some fencing of reserves, for example at Cockpit, as resulted in further weed infestation that is now out of control.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you Mr Snell. Again I will seek some advice from the Conservator, but in response to that question briefly, I suppose it would depend on who you would talk to, and what side of the fence they are sitting on in regards to what sought of advice they would give. I think you could get both answers.

SPEAKER Further questions without notice Honourable Members? There is one minute to go, it would seem that we have exhausted questions without notice.

SPEAKER We will now move to answers to questions on notice. And the first question we have today is 437, Mr King to the Chief Minister, Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker, 437, asks of me, what consideration has been given by the Government to the acquisition of barges to assist in cruise ship disembarkation? b. What processes are being followed in developing a Government position in relation to this matter? c. What factors are or have been considered, by whom and with what expertise? And d. Why, if it is

the situation, is a Minister of the Government involving himself in formulating advice on this matter and what expertise does he bring to the table? And I respond to these questions Madam Speaker, a. The Government has been pressing Madam Speaker for increasing access to the Island, including by utilising barges, repairing the pier and crane lifting capacity, that can handle both cruise ship passengers and freight containers, and the feasibility of this was raised in our discussions with Minister Crean when we had a meeting with him in March in Canberra and he was a supporting Minister in terms of responding to that. The Government has placed this as a high economic development priority with the Commonwealth, and it has budgeted funds to assist in the development of the project, there has been in an overall sense, a \$4000 allocation, with \$150,000 from the Norfolk Island Government, \$150,000 from the Commonwealth and \$100,000 from Carnival Cruises in terms of that package to try and move that on. In response to b, the Government position in relation to this is that it has seen the benefit of the successful arrival of cruise ships has on the local economy and it's aware that the cruise ship industry would like to include Norfolk Island in its cruise itinerary more frequently, but it is reluctant to do unless the success rate of getting passengers ashore and loaded again can be improved. It is therefore very supportive of utilising local dual purposes barges, manned by local cruise to both reduce the risk to ship equipment and increase the success rate of successful stops. And it sees this project as an immediate step in seeking long term improved port facilities in the Island, which would eventually allow all planned stops to take pace. C of the question, there are several factors that are being considered by a range of stakeholders in this particular project at an overall level, at an overall level, the Norfolk Island Government has been working with the Commonwealth and Carnival Cruises to advance the proposal. There is a local working group, comprising the lighterage, shipping agents, shore agents, public works and local boating expertise and they have been examining draft barge designs. These have been commissioned by Carnival Cruises, by a firm of Maritime Architects. From the group that has considered the barges proposed length, weight, propulsion speed, controls, passenger and container carrying capacities, fendering, bollards, and provided thoughts on these back to the architects that I have just referred to, and a basic design has been endorsed. Further work is required on infrastructure to safely transfer passengers from ship to shore and to lift the barges from the water. We have been advised that the Department of Regional Australia can procure an appropriately qualified consultant to undertake this work, and we understand that the consultant will be on Island in the first week of October, so there is some advancement in this project. D, my colleague, the Minister for Tourism, Industry & Development is highly supportive of this project, and so am I, he is the Minister responsible, and he is welcoming the input of information from the range of both local and overseas stakeholders and he is encouraging their enthusiasm for this economic initiative.

SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister, we move on.

the Administration and to what extent is it lawful that permits be granted subject to conditions relating to the conduct of public accounts? Madam Speaker in terms of the first part, there was a practice in the past where the Administrations finance branch would provide the Immigration Section with information in respect to permit holders who might have had outstanding financial commitments, but that is not a current practice that is being done. There are two factors in this question, firstly the capacity for Immigration authorities to require people to pay their public accounts, and the other of course is the authority for people, including themselves, to respond. But in respect of the first, the capacity for the Immigration authority to require people to pay their public accounts, the Immigration Act itself provides that when Temporary Entry Permits are granted they are subject to any matter that the Executive Member considers beneficial to Norfolk Island and the Immigration Policy and guidelines set out matters which the Minister or authorised officer shall have regard to before issuing a permit, and one of these is the applicant is to maintain an up to date membership of the healthcare scheme, or any other approved scheme. So given that, that is the current legislative backing, it is appropriate that permits be conditioned, with conditioned in respect to the healthcare scheme and the like, so that is the first part of it. The second part is, that how do people respond to know that they have kept these things up to date, the current practice for permits is that they need to provide to the Immigration Section proof that the conditions of their permit are being met and that's mainly Temporary Entry Permits, because General Entry Permits run for a much longer period of time. Thank you Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister, the next two questions are Mr King to myself as Speaker, the first is 440 Mr King has asked, will Madam Speaker now advise, perhaps in detail which might lift community spirits, what benefits might flow from a twinning partnership with Northern Territory and Niue and when might they be evident in some tangible and meaningful form to the community? I welcome the question and thank Mr King for the opportunity to provide the community and Mr King with the following response. The parliamentary partnership between Norfolk Island and Niue is a new partnership. It is additional to the pre-existing parliamentary partnership between Niue and the Northern Territory. It is planned that Speaker Levi of the Niue Legislative Assembly will be travelling to the Northern Territory and Norfolk Island in the not too distant future on a study tour; further it is hoped that the Speaker of the Northern Territory will also travel to Norfolk Island accompanied by Mr Andres Lomp, who is the Regional Director of the International and Community Relations Office for the Australian Parliament, who works to build stronger relations between the Australian Parliament and parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region; Mr Lomp is also CPA Regional Secretary for the Australian Region. This trip will then allow the three Speakers, with the support of the Regional Secretariat, to discuss funding avenues, the development of a Strategic Plan for us to create goals, set objectives and progress this new relationship for the mutual benefit of all involved. Even though this Strategic Planning meeting is still in the discussion phase, I can give an indication of what could be expected to

be gained from this parliamentary partnership but let us remember, building parliamentary partnerships is not just all about us receiving, they are also about us giving.

MR KING Point of order Madam Speaker, does the question explain the benefits?

SPEAKER If you would be so kind as to allow me to continue Mr King, you may find some.

MR KING Can I ask whom might adjudicate on the point of order?

SPEAKER That is a very good question Mr King.

MR KING That's why I am asking it.

SPEAKER There is no...

MR KING I will withdraw it...

SPEAKER There is no point of order Mr King, but I thank you for raising it. I will start again!

MR KING Oh no please don't!!

SPEAKER I think that is poetic justice! Even though this Strategic Planning meeting is still in the discussion phase, I can give an indication of what could be expected to be gained from this parliamentary partnership but let us remember, building parliamentary partnerships is not all about us receiving, they are also about us giving. We obviously can not give in a monetary sense, but Speaker Levi has expressed in letters to me that he wants to develop their Parliament, and there may be areas in which we can offer advice and guidance to them. The reverse of that, is of course, it will also allow us to foster a closer relationship with the Northern Territory and also with Niue, and when we are seeking advice and guidance on an issue, they may have expertise in that area that we can call upon. Secondly, Regional Secretary Andres Lomp, is looking into funding avenues for training sessions for all twinning parliaments to happen here on Norfolk Island. I see that as a major benefit. Mr Lomp shares my belief that the Norfolk Island CPA Branch, which is part of the Australian Region of the CPA, can be a bridge to the Pacific Region. Without Norfolk Island having joined the twinning/partnership programme, we would not be considered as such a high priority venue for such training. The training being considered includes such workshops as Public Accounts & Estimates, Legislative Scrutiny, new Member induction training, and others. Having the training on Norfolk Island, will not only bring numerous people to our Island, and we all know the

importance and benefits of that at this time, it also will allow all of our MLA's, our Parliamentary Support staff and some Administration staff to attend the workshops and training sessions. If the training were elsewhere we would only be able to look at possibly flying one person to the training, therefore we will be beneficially up-skilling, potentially all of our Members and Staff which will in turn benefit our Legislature as a whole whilst also welcoming many people to our Island. Given the above, I can not provide full details and timelines as Mr King has requested in his question, however rest assured I am working on this matter for the benefit of our Legislature and our community. Question 441.

MR KING I withdraw that question Madam Speaker 441, am I permitted to do that?

MR BUFFETT I will move onto question 442 Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER Thank you, I will deal with this in statements, thank you. Thank you, that question is withdrawn, that question on notice, and I will give it as a statement, thank you.

MR BUFFETT 442 Madam Speaker, thank you. The question is can the Chief Minister advise the costs associated with the development of the Wills Bill presently before the House and whether Cabinet had considered those associated costs and approved the allocation of resources and whether Cabinet has agreed to the high priority for resource deployment which was accorded the Bill? Madam Speaker there were three questions contained in this, and I'll answer them in order, first the costs associated with the development of the Wills Bill presently before the House, Madam Speaker, most Norfolk Island legislation is prepared internally within the Public Service, I am advised that there is no system of cost accounting or cost allocation to each piece of legislation developed for introduction into the Legislative Assembly, the drafting services are provided on a paid consultative basis by Mr Peter Macsporrán, who is located in Victoria. Members may recall that Mr Macsporrán was previously employed in the service as Legislative Council from 2004 to 2007, but since that time his services have been retained on an external consultancy, instructing officer functions in this matter was provided by the Legal Services Unit, and expenses attributable to the LSU are not necessarily allocated across particular tasks, no other expenses were incurred with respect to any other party with respect to this Bill. Madam Speaker as indicated in the Explanatory Memorandum for the Bill, the legislation seeks to introduce legislation broadly consistent with the national model being introduced in Australia and close attention was paid to New South Wales, Queensland and Victorian legislation in preparing the Bill, secondly in terms of the question, whether Cabinet considered those associated costs and approved the allocation of resources, were legislation is developed internally, Cabinet doesn't necessarily consider the costing on each piece of legislation, by way of background to the Bill, the LSU sought approval to

proceed with amendments to current legislation in early November of 2011 and this request was prompted by circumstance which arose in the estate of a long time resident of the Island who passed away in June 2009, there are some time frames attached to a lot of this, a documenting purporting to be the deceased's will had emerged, one of the deceased biological children was the intended beneficiary, however the document wasn't executed in accordance with the formal requirements under the Wills Act 1973 for a valid will, and unlike most Australian jurisdictions, the Wills Act 1973 does not contain the remedial provision which would allow the Supreme Court, if satisfied that the deceased person intended that a document was to be their will to dispense with strict compliance with the formal requirements of a will, arguably had the Norfolk Island Wills Act 1973 contained such a remedial provision the Supreme Court would have granted probate on the document, the absence on the remedial provision and the factual circumstances of the estate are such that the estate now raises a number of complex issues regarding succession and status of children. The estate is currently the subject of court proceedings in the Supreme Court before Justice Lander. In these circumstances I have approved the proposal to reform Norfolk Island's legislation, so that is the background of bringing it forward. Thirdly whether Cabinet had agreed to the high priority for resourced deployment which was accorded to the Bill, given what I have said it is in correct to say that a high priority was for resourced deployment had been accorded to the Bill. In the period since November 2011 a number of legislative proposals had received higher priority, the existence of a fairly uniformed legislative approach has made progress in developing the bill considerably easier. Ultimately this Bill is merely an example of achievable law reform which methodically pursued as and when possible, it light of challenging circumstances, that this House and the wider community faces, it has been able to proceed to the state that we have it now and it is to be considered by the House. 443 Madam Speaker, 443 a series of questions in five parts which relates to CIRCA and the Administration partnership. I make this response at this time Madam Speaker. The Administration CIRCA partnership has been in place for some years, it appears to serve a useful and helpful service to the community and on the Administration part it was authorised by an earlier CEO. I note the criticism raised by Mr King, I have asked the present CEO by letter to examine this arrangement in light of the circumstances of today and I have sought his consideration as to whether the earlier identified benefits remain and whether or no such an arrangement should continue.

SPEAKER Right, thank you Chief Minister, we move to 444, Mr King would you like to withdraw that as well from the Notice Paper? It stands in my name.

MR KING No, I'll allow that one to stand thank you Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER You would like that to be answered.

MR KING

Thank you.

SPEAKER

Certainly Mr King. This question is addressed to myself and the question reads, is Madam Speaker able yet to report to the House on the appropriateness and propriety of the Office of the Speaker and the Clerk using the Government's Legal Advisors for advice in relation to complaints against Ministers of Government lodged by backbenchers and if not, given the relatively simple nature of the question why is Madam Speaker unable to report? I will answer the last part first Mr King, this is the first opportunity since you had asked me to undertake, and in order to undertake I had to undertake and therefore the second part of the question could only be answered now.

MR KING
Speaker?

Are you not addressing the House Madam

SPEAKER

No, I'm speaking to you Mr King. So let's respond to the question. I thank Mr King for the question and respond as follows. The practice of this House since 1979 is for the Office of the Speaker and the Office of the Clerk to use the services of the Administration's Legal Services Unit, which we commonly refer to as LSU, when legal advice is required. For example a document purporting to be a complaint under Section 11 of the Legislative Assembly (Register of Members' Interests) Act 2004 was forwarded to LSU as recently as 23 May 2012 seeking legal advice from LSU regarding the procedural and other requirements of the Act arising in the context of the complaint. On receipt of Mr King's question advice on the matter was sought from the Office of the Clerk in the House of Representatives and I quote from the response received from that office. "On the matter you have raised in similar circumstances here we would most likely seek advice from the Australian Government Solicitor, AGS, our equivalent I assume of the LSU. We see the AGS as being independent, even though they are the Government's legal advisers and have no concern about them providing us with independent advice. I hope this is helpful." Accordingly Mr King I remain of the view that there is nothing inappropriate or improper in seeking such advice.

MR KING

A supplementary Madam Speaker if I may.

SPEAKER

Which I will take on notice.

MR KING

LSU in compiling the answer?

Thank you. Did you seek the advice of the

SPEAKER

I took advice from the House of Representatives Mr King and I thought it was quite clear that that's who I referred too, the House of Representatives in Canberra. Thank you.

MR KING Can I ask another question Madam Speaker?
A supplementary, how many am I allowed?

SPEAKER You are walking a fine line. Yes Mr King you can ask me another supplementary.

MR KING I beg your pardon? Why is the line that I'm walking fine Madam Speaker?

SPEAKER You have another supplementary question Mr King?

MR KING Are you asking the House to accept that simply because it has been the practice since 1979 to use the LSU for advice in relation to the duties of your office, that it is a practice which is locked in forever as appropriate and proper?

SPEAKER There have been occasions where I have moved away from LSU, I think maybe twice in the time that I was the Clerk, and that was because the complaint was lodged by LSU. In that case we took very expensive advice from off Island, from a private firm of Solicitors. I would not want to have to continue to put Norfolk Island to that expense. Especially when our procedure mirrors the House of Representatives practice on whom we rely under Standing Order Number One when we don't have an answer. Does that help you?

MR KING One more supplementary question.

SPEAKER The last, yes.

MR KING How much money would you be prepared to spend on gaining advice to satisfy the enquiries of an elected Member of the House?

SPEAKER I don't think that is a relevant question to be asking me, but if you would like to put it on notice, we will give it some consideration.

MR KING Madam Speaker alluded to the fact of costs.

SPEAKER Moving now to question on notice 445, Mr King to the Minister for Community Services, Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, given the decision by the Norfolk Island Hospital to curtail non-urgent medical treatment for those with overdue accounts, will the Minister advise the

House if this is a punitive measure and advise how it can possibly serve the best interests of community health? At the same time the Minister might advise a. how it is decided that a particular person will receive this "special" attention, b. how it is decided that the treatment sought is urgent or non-urgent, and c. at what point will a supposedly delinquent account holder be told to pay up front; in the car park, at the door or will the Doctor be called from his rooms to make an initial assessment in the hallway? Madam Speaker the response is, the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise has not curtailed non-urgent medical treatment for those with overdue accounts. In fact no-one has ever been refused treatment. In order for the Hospital to ensure sufficient cash flows to pay for the services that are provided to the community it is required to collect those fees and charges that are due for services rendered. It is certainly not a punitive measure against persons with overdue accounts, but a tool to ensure that bad debts are recovered so that the Enterprise has sufficient funds to maintain the services of which is provided, of which is in the best interests of community health. Madam Speaker funds that ensure the Enterprise can keep operating are supplemented by the General Revenue Fund and if accounts aren't paid then the more funds that are required, of which ultimately comes from the community's purse. The subsidy for the last Financial Year for the Hospital Enterprise was \$2,038,000. There are a significant amount of outstanding debts to the Enterprise and this policy has been in place for a number of years now. As at the end of the Financial Year some \$267,000 was owed by debtors for 90 plus days. The Enterprise must be seen to be reducing the amount of debt owed and each debtor account holder that has a payment agreement must be seen to be reducing their account on a monthly basis. Unfortunately there are a small number of debtors who pay nothing nor make any attempt to enter into an agreement toward their hospital debt. Currently there are some 22 delinquent debtors with a total of just over \$50,000 who make little or no attempt to reduce this debt, despite legal action including summonses, default judgements, etc. Madam Speaker seven haven't paid one cent of their debt, with the largest debtor of \$12,010, no payment since July 2011. These debts go back as far as 2007. Madam Speaker there is also another 13 delinquent debtors, with debts of over \$32,000, whom have done a runner and left the Island. These debts are now being processed by an off-shore collection agency. Is it fair that the majority of debts are paid in a timely manner, as the majority of patients do, but a number of debtors refuse to pay and therefore the rest of the community are supporting these bad debtors in the provision of health services, or put it another way these bad debtors are bludging of the community. Madam Speaker anyone who has an outstanding debt, even though they may be paying off that debt are requested as part of the payment plan agreement to pay for all non-urgent treatment at the time of service. This serves two purposes, one the Enterprise receives the money at the time of service, and two the patient does not increase their debt, which assists them in the long term. If a person makes an appointment to see a Doctor then that would be considered not urgent and a consultation must be paid at the time. It is determined that if a patient is able to make an appointment then surely they can bring some sort of payment with them. Should these persons be unable to pay then they are asked then to

discuss with the Director a repayment option. Urgent treatment is where someone is brought in through accident and emergency following an incident and of whom would require emergency urgent medical attention. It would be expected that the payment for these types of emergency treatment would be paid when they present next and the emergency has passed. At no time has it, nor is it intended, that a person would be refused service, even if a delinquent account holder presents, treatment would be provided, but it would be expected that the services be paid for at the time of treatment unless in an emergency situation. Madam Speaker, as an aside, it is interesting to note that some of these peoples or persons with long outstanding accounts can be the most demanding and the rudest when expecting treatment, but they are treated all the same and are not turned away, with the staff expected to cope with their attitude and provide care in a professional manner, of which they do.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan. Mr King, a supplementary?

MR KING A supplementary. Was that an answer to my question or an exercise in justification?

MR SHERIDAN Madam Speaker there was an answer to Mr King's question, he opened the door, I took the opportunity.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan. Moving along now Chief Minister, 446, 447, 448 and 449 are all to you.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Speaker, what is the justification for allowing holders of Temporary Entry Permits to remain in Norfolk Island in reduced or casual employment when so many residents are struggling to obtain sufficient working hours? Madam Speaker some time ago my predecessor in the Immigration portfolio took a sound decision that at the request of employers and employees, the Immigration System provide greater flexibility in the hours worked under a TEP, that is reduced hours, and this was in light of significant downturn in the principle industry of tourism, so that good employees could be retained and be available if and when work hours moved upwards. This policy is still in place. Having said that, I should equally advice Members that the Immigration authorities continue to encourage local employment, but at the end of the day, the responsibility for local employment rests with the local employers and they to need to see the contribution they make to the circulation of the dollar, the contribution to the local economy by employing locally, it's not just down all to Government dictates. We are just coming out of the lower visitor numbers of the year and as November, December approaches, we can expect improved visitations, this will hopefully improve the working hours available, more for those in presently restricted hours, and hopefully more job prospects. 447 Madam Speaker, in April of this year the Chief Minister commissioned a former Chief Magistrate of Norfolk Island Mr Ron Cahill to independently inquire into matters

relating to the conduct of one of his Ministers. A. Notwithstanding the Chief Minister's interim verbal report given in June, why has the final written report not been provided to members and made public? Does the Chief Minister ask the community to accept that it is appropriate that such issues remain unreported and therefore unexamined for over 5 months? Madam Speaker, this matter was reported on to the House at the 6th of July 2012 Sitting, I provided an interim report from Mr Ron Cahill, former Chief Magistrate, and I read to the House his interim findings from an email, which answered two of the three issues put before Mr Cahill, the third issue continued to be acquired upon. And subsequent to that Sitting I received a written up interim report, and I table a copy of that report. It is consistent with that that I reported to the House at the July, June 2012 Sitting. Mr Cahill has signalled, that given that he does not have the power to compel witnesses to give evidence, he has not been able to conclude the third issue. His most recent advice is being sought on that third matter.

MR KING

Dars et?

SPEAKER

Thank you Chief Minister. 448.

MR BUFFETT

448, a. To what extent did the Chief Minister influence the outcome of the recent report of the independent Immigration Working Group and can the Chief Minister identify those matters, understood to be two in number, which he did not wish to have included? b. In light of political or Government involvement in the outcome of the report how can the report be regarded by the community as truly reflective of an independent viewpoint? Madam Speaker the question really infers that the independence of the members of the Immigration Development Working Group has been breached. And this is not the case, and I indeed speak up for them. I strongly reinforce the integrity of the members of the Immigration Development Working Group, they are volunteers, they are sound, they're community members. Nor has there been an attempt on my part, as Minister to influence their examination and outcomes. I have assisted the process to examine and report, I have not sought to influence their considerations.

SPEAKER

449.

MR BUFFETT

449, wait a minute, Madam Speaker, I received some information this morning in respect of this question, I do need to have some further information before I can answer that further.

SPEAKER

Okay, that will stand deferred.

MR BUFFETT

Yes, thank you, 450.

SPEAKER

Is Mrs Ward to the Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT 450 Madam Speaker, would the Chief Minister outline the Norfolk Island Government's action plan for the remainder of its term in office; including a prioritized legislative program? Madam Speaker I have a statement on the Government's programmes which will take up responses to this question and so I will handle that in that context, thank you.

SPEAKER Okay, 441 Mrs Ward to the Minister for Tourism, Industry & Development, Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, what action is the Norfolk Island Government taking to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to reinvigorate the island's economy? I will do these in dot points Madam Speaker so we are not here for a lengthy period on this question. We have the engagement that the Norfolk Island Government has had with the Commonwealth and Air New Zealand to facilitate regular and sustainable air services to Norfolk Island; we have the Tourism Strategy Review, development of a recovery strategy and vision development; we've had the commitment to the Peter Kenyon community strategy for tourism; Government commitment to the Economic Development Australia Workshops, designed to analyse the situation and objectives to provide pathways; we've had the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau an events support formula; we've had engagement with key bodies such as the ATA, Accommodation and Tourism Association and Chamber of Commerce through the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Advisory Board representation; as indicated by the Chief Minister when he tabled the report on the Customs Duty changes, that was aimed at encouraging local purchasing through a change in the duty arrangements; we have reduced the travel costs and tax imposts on visitors by around \$70 in the round trip; the immigration review to allow self-funded retirees and business investors to invest and move to Norfolk Island; where possible we have kept local taxes and fess and charges increases to a minimum in the face of budget deficits, we have adopted the recommendations of the Economic Development Report; we've maintained a high level of engagement with the Tourist Bureau and industry stakeholders as well as funding of tourism promotion marketing; comprehensive work to implement a barge system which may offer a reduced sea freight costs, obviously impacting on resale and retail sector through containerisation, and can also provide a methodology to transfer cruise ship passengers from ship to shore, the barges have the full endorsement of Carnival Cruises and will see scheduled arrivals to Norfolk escalate between 30 and 50 cruise ships per year, enabling a much needed fiscal injection and diversification of our revenue streams; we've made the amendments to the Lighterage legislation to enable other unloading methodologies to be considered, and we have also proposed within the full budget a stimulus program for private sector. Thank you Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs, a supplementary Mrs Griffiths?

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker the Minister mentioned a Tourism Recovery Strategy and a Peter Kenyon Community Strategy, can he explain the difference between the two?

SPEAKER Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, the Community Strategy, as I have mentioned a number of times, about the engagement with the community and the stakeholders, so that there is ownership of the strategy and so that the issues and opportunities are well understood by all players, rather than a strategy that is independently devised without that engagement, and therefore, as in the last strategy's case, didn't get the full ownership from those areas. So in answering the question, one is the Recovery Strategy, the other is the facilitation to build the components to work with that strategy so it becomes more of a community strategy than just a bureau strategy.

MRS GRIFFITHS A further supplementary if I may. Minister who will be taking responsibility for implementing the Community Strategy?

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker, and thank you Mrs Griffiths for the question, on a tourism strategy level it all forms part of the Recovery Strategy, so it is a community engagement with the strategy for tourism. So it forms the one strategy, so it is not a separate community strategy, as I said earlier, it forms the building blocks to ensure that we have the ownership and the engagement with community and stakeholders.

SPEAKER Mrs Ward, a supplementary?

MRS WARD Thank you, I do appreciate that the Minister has given a brief overview of the points, and there are two points that I will probably put on the Notice Paper for next month to expand, particularly on the Economic Development Reports recommendations which have been taken up and proof of how the barge system is going to lower sea freight costs, bearing in mind that the supporting infrastructure, which needs to be put in place, will be very expensive. But if I can just ask this question, is for the Minister to explain the dot point events support formula. What exactly that entails?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker and thanks Mrs Ward for the question I've had, quite some time ago, discussion with the General Manager of the Tourist Bureau to create a formula that has a support parameter for events held on Norfolk Island that bring tourism to Norfolk Island over a certain number they gain a certain amount of support, and the way that that formula is built is in effect, there is some comparative work that has been done to analyse what it would normally cost to bring that number of people to Norfolk through our marketing and the like, so there's some analysis there that is being

used to then get a better outcome for tourism and also for the event co-ordinator or promoter.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker, if the Minister would just clarify, is the intention of this formula something that would be used by people in the private sector?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, thank you Mrs Ward, yes, there is every opportunity for a private sector provider of an event to make themselves aware of this formula.

MRS GRIFFITHS Sorry Madam Speaker, I was just asking whether or not the Minister would be prepared to table that shortly?

MR NOBBS I would need to gain that from the General Manager, but I don't have any difficulty with tabling the formula.

SPEAKER Chief Minister the next two questions on Notice are in your name, 452 and 453.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Speaker, 452 first thank you. The Norfolk Island Public Service Review 2011 recommends that the Public Sector Management Act 2000 and the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual be replaced and repealed. What action has been taken in this regard? Madam Speaker the CEO upon his new appointment which is now into a number of months, quickly grasped the need and the Public Service Review Recommendations for the review of the Public Sector Management Act and for the Human Resources Policies and Procedure Manual. And he has commenced the process within the Service, there is being developed amending arrangements to the Public Sector Management Act, so that is already in train. Accompanying that of course, because they go hand in hand, is the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual, that to is being worked upon. I expect, and the CEO reports, that we should have quite soon, drafts of those to be able to consider. In terms of our legislative projections, we would see that by January of 2013 I would hope that by December of this year that we might see the actual legislation come forward, but that is an estimate at this point. It will depend upon various processes, but it is being worked upon in that context. The next Madam Speaker is 453, Madam Speaker the question is this, the Immigration Development Working Group delivered its report on immigration last month. What action has been taken by the Government to implement any or all of the recommendations? I do have a statement Madam Speaker which will report and therefore respond to this particular question.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister, we will move to 454, Mrs Ward to the Minister for Tourism, Industry & Development, Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, the Minister stated that telecommunications competition will be addressed early in this financial year. Has this process commenced and when will Norfolk Island be in a position to declare its telecommunications infrastructure open for business? Madam Speaker the process commenced quite some time ago by the Norfolk Island Government, the Federal Minister's Department, ACCC, the Executive and Management levels of Public Service, as previously highlighted by the review of telecommunications competition from 2010, there is no easy fix to enabling private sector competitive access. The customer, the service provider, private sector operator and Administration all need a suitable framework for access that is supported by legislation, as independent oversight capacity and protects the consumer. The Norfolk Island Government has not obstructed the progression of this matter, it is a complex issue for all Departments, the Norfolk Island Government and Commonwealth. The Government has moved to allow third party access to the Norfolk Island telecommunications infrastructure for the provision of competing internet services an interim access price has been calculated and the policy awaits the supporting legal service agreement covering non-priced terms and conditions. It is anticipated that this will be completed and made available to interested parties by the end of October this year.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs, a supplementary Mrs Ward?

MRS WARD Yes, so is that process with the Legal Services Unit is the question?

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker, as I understand it, that is where the process sits at the moment.

SPEAKER Thank you, moving to 455, Mrs Ward to the Minister for Community Services, Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, a person in receipt of the low income GST rebate is subject to a quarterly review of their income. Would the Minister explain why this benefit is subject to a quarterly review and why applicants are required to reapply quarterly? Madam Speaker the response, when the Low Income Special Benefit was introduced back in 2009 in response to the increase of GST from 9% to 12%, it was intended that the ability to qualify for the rebate be reviewed quarterly. Also, in the Memorandum from the CEO to the Social Services Officer of 17th June 2009 it also states that the benefit will be reviewed quarterly and that proof provided by the applicant that they continue to qualify for the benefit. Madam Speaker, this policy has been in place since that time and all recipients of the Low Income Special Benefit have been required to resubmit the paperwork together with evidence that they are still eligible to receive this benefit. I am fully aware that this is the only benefit, apart from the Special Benefit, that the interpretation of

review has meant a new application is made. I did request from the Social Services Board a recommendation as to whether or not this Low Income Special Benefit should be reviewed on a quarterly or yearly basis, as are other benefits because the ability for me to make a determination in regard to determining a Low Income Special Benefit is to be in accord with a recommendation of the Board. Although, this determination does not particularly pertain to the review period, I thought that it prudent that their advice be sought. The result as Mrs Ward is aware, was the recommendation that the review to be conducted on a quarterly basis and that the Low Income Special Benefit should be reviewed in its totality. The Social Services Officer who administers the benefits also recommended that the review and re-application be on a quarterly basis, this is to take into account any income changes during the past period. And Madam Speaker I have taken heed of their recommendations and left the review period at 3 months. Madam Speaker as an aside the Social Services Board has also recommended that this Low Income Special Benefit be reviewed in its totality and I'll be tasking the Social Services Board to make some comments to me in the near future.

SPEAKER

Thank you Minister Sheridan, Mrs Ward.

MRS WARD

A supplementary thank you Madam Speaker. Would the Minister publically acknowledge that the recommendation of the Board was in fact split?

MR SHERIDAN

Yes Madam Speaker, yes, the recommendation from the Board was not unanimous, it was a two to one vote you might say of the people present at that time. But fortunately in our democratic society, as we all know, the more in favour of it carries the favour you might say, so unfortunately that is where I took the recommendation from Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER

Thank you Minister Sheridan, moving along now to 456, another question to yourself.

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, would the Minister explain why he has directed the Hospital Director to quarantine staff entitlements when no other area of the Administration has been guaranteed entitlement protection? Madam Speaker the response, the reason as to why I have directed the Hospital director to quarantine staff entitlements into a separate account is that the external auditors for the past two years have indicated on the quantum of employee entitlements that have accrued for annual and long service leave, some \$523,000, as at the end of June 2011. Whilst the auditors appreciate that this is a difficult issue to address they firmly believe management needs to be proactively managing this risk. As the Hospital Enterprise is a separate authority outside the Administration, these leave entitlements are budgeted for each and every year but the funds are not

necessarily put aside for this purpose. The account set up is an attempt to have these funds quarantined into this account for the purposes of which they are budgeted for, and the shortfall will be attempted to be addressed over the next couple of years. If this was not to be and several employees retired, as is possible over the next few years, then it would more than likely that the Hospital would need to call on the General Revenue fund to fund these entitlements. And on the other part of the question Madam Speaker, as I am not the Minister responsible for the Administration I cannot comment on why no other area of the Administration has not been guaranteed entitlement protection.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker, I appreciate the final response to the part of the question, but as a Minister of the Government is the Minister aware of any other areas that the external auditors suggested the same process was to take place, that is the quarantining of employer entitlements.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, no I'm unaware of any other area of the Administration that those recommendations have been made, I'm not aware of it.

MRS WARD So is the Minister saying that this was an exclusive recommendation for the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise?

MR SHERIDAN Madam Speaker, I'm not saying it was exclusive to the Hospital Enterprise, I'm saying that I'm not aware of any other recommendations in regards to the Administration in general.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan, 457, Chief Minister is in your name.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Speaker, 457 reads, what revenue was raised last financial year by the Immigration Department as a result of processing both Temporary and General entry permits? Madam Speaker I am advised that the total revenue raised last year from Temporary Entry Permits and General Entry Permits was \$55,295.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister and 458 Mrs Ward to the Minister for Community Services, Minister Sheridan, as is 459.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, the question reads, what revenue was raised last financial year by the Norfolk Island Hospital as a result of implementing health checks for Temporary, General and Resident permits? Madam Speaker the response, the Norfolk Island Hospital cannot provide the specific amount of revenue raised in the last financial year as a result of implementing health checks for permit holders. All revenue from permit health checks, which include visa medicals for those who do not hold an Australian or

New Zealand passport are included in the Outpatients Consultations Income and as such are not split into a separate category. But just for information, the amount raised last financial year for Outpatients Consultations was \$301,792. And the charges applied to a permit application medical is a normal consultation fee of \$47 with a visa medical charge of \$103.

SPEAKER

Thank you Minister Sheridan and 459.

MR SHERIDAN

Question 459, the question reads, would the Minister detail the response the Norfolk Island Government gave the Federal Department on the Family and Child Support Review? And the response Madam Speaker, unfortunately I cannot give too many details of the response to the draft Family and Child Support Review because the draft was made available to the Government on a strict confidentiality basis, and therefore the response to the draft should remain confidential. To table the response without the draft report being available would be asking for assumptions to be made as to what the authors of this report made mention of and the possibility of the wrong interpretation being made would be a risk. The response provided was detailed in regard to the whole report and in particular to the draft recommendations. This response was provided on the 17th July. Madam Speaker, as indicated at the last sitting, we are now awaiting the final report from the consultants. When this has been provided to the Norfolk Island Government from the Commonwealth it is the expectation that it will be able to be provided to all, but as it is a Commonwealth Report, it will be up to the Commonwealth to publicly release it. And Madam Speaker as a further aside, earlier this week I have had information that the authors of the Report have presented their final report to the Commonwealth Department, so that is where it sits at this time.

SPEAKER

Thank you Minister Sheridan, and our final question on notice this morning, is 460, Mrs Griffiths to the Chief Minister, Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT

Thank you Madam Speaker, the question is, Prime Minister Gillard has recently announced that all communities, state and local Governments, and other stakeholders can now submit detailed proposals to the \$6 billion Regional Infrastructure Fund. Given the importance of the Roadmap to Norfolk Island's partnership and supposed integration with the Commonwealth, can the Chief Minister advise if Norfolk Island is eligible yet to access this funding? What efforts have been made to ensure that we have access such initiatives? Thank you for that question, Madam Speaker, I have recently made enquiries from Minister Crean's officer about eligibility to access the Regional Infrastructure funds, those referred to here. There are really three streams in terms of these funding arrangements. Stream One closed, it is no longer operational, it closed last year, so that is off the list at this moment. Yesterday I was informed by Minister Crean's office that Norfolk Island may now be eligible under the Regional Infrastructure Fund guidelines to access Stream

Two infrastructure planning projects, and this particular stream will provide Australian Government funding for projects that will help create integrated regional infrastructure plans for a region. And the objective of Stream Two is to provide an improved overarching analysis of the infrastructure needs for a resource region, both social and economic infrastructure, to allow for a more systematic approach to project assessment and prioritisation. Now that does sound like a lot of words, but nevertheless it does give us some opportunities to be examining whether we might gain something that will give social and economic infrastructure benefits and given that response from that area, we are now exploring how Norfolk Island might put together a comprehensive, we have asked them to give a comprehensive review of how Norfolk Island's public infrastructure, both social and economic, and that is talking about port facilities, hospital facilities, the whole range of infrastructure arrangements might be considered in the context of all of that. Access to other grants, I've got to say, remain part of the process being negotiated with the Commonwealth along with the model of governance, access to annual GST transfer payment, access to the Australian taxation and the safety net in terms of social welfare. I've also been advised, so that's Stream One and Stream Two, I've also been advised that there has been a Commonwealth freeze on some federal grant programmes including the Regional Development Australia Fund. This was apparently a Cabinet decision of August 2012 and it is referred to in an article published in the Australian newspaper on the 13th of September 2012, that is just last Thursday I think that. Minister Crean's office has further indicated that he expects a further three rounds of grant funding to become available from this particular area which was referred to as Stream Three, and that is saying that Stream One has finished last year, Stream Two we may have some access, Stream Three is on freeze at this time. In May 2012, this is relevant to how we might access grants, in May 2012 Regional Australia paid the registration for four Administrative employees, they were Bruce Taylor, Lisa Richards, Melissa Graham and Doug Creek, and the Norfolk Island Administration paid airfares, to enable them to attend a grant writing seminar in Melbourne, so this is relevant to this question about grants, grant writing seminar in Melbourne, to upgrade their skills for writing grants submissions for when the Island might become eligible for all grant programs, so it is looking for the days ahead. Further to that, last week, a very successful programmes of grant writing workshops were conducted here, on Island, by Patrick Moriaty, Director of Training and Development Australian Institute and Development, and thanks to His Honour the Administrator, the Administrator and his Staff for providing the funding to bring Mr Moriaty to Norfolk Island to conduct training, which was attended by some 70 people, both from private sector, non-government organisations and some public servants additional to those that had earlier undertaken this task. So that is equipping Norfolk Island to enter the sphere when we know how we might access these grants and as we progress other discussions. There are already some small grants programmes that can be accessed by Norfolk Island, for example, Caring for Country environment grants and heritage grants, and this training however has prepared local organisations, businesses and individuals with the necessary skills required for successful grant

writing now and in the future. In terms of the Regional Infrastructure Fund guidelines, I have a document which I table which may be of interest to Members, and I do so.

SPEAKER That paper is so tabled.

MR BUFFETT Thank you.

SPEAKER Mrs Griffiths?

MRS GRIFFITHS A supplementary if I may Madam Speaker? Chief Minister, given that the Stream One has closed and Stream Three is frozen, I would assume that there would be some priority to try and access funds from Stream Two, which is current at the moment, what initiatives have you taken to ensure that some of the Government funded staff that were sent to this grant writing programme, have you given them any instructions or are you intending to give them any instructions to put together a grant, and on what basis would you prioritise a port or a hospital.

SPEAKER Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT Yes Madam Speaker, no, no instructions have been given at this stage, but obviously it means that we do have people who may well be able to enter the lists, we've got to more clearly define the grant areas that we might make bids, we have already indicated that the port area is one of the significant economic development arrangements that we need to give priority to. Given this advice here that we may be eligible in a much wider sphere then we need to look further than just those that we have identified to date.

SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister, just before we move to presentation of papers, I understand Minister Nobbs you would like to add a further response to question on notice, is it 454?

MR NOBBS Yes, thank you Madam Speaker, it actually relates to a supplementary that Mrs Ward asked me with regard to where the documentation was at whether it was with LSU and I said that to my knowledge it is with LSU, I just need to point out that in the instance of the on Island private sector operator, who is keen, they were written to on the 3rd of August and offered the opportunity to provide feedback into the process, I'm, from last being informed which was Monday of this week, they hadn't responded, I just bring that into the answer, I don't think it is in anyway holding up the process, but I also don't want to omit it by leaving it out.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs; that concludes answers to questions on notice this morning Honourable Members.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SPEAKER We move now to Presentation of Papers, are there any papers for presentation this morning? Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Madam Speaker, I present the Virements that have been made since our last Sitting, and I table those documents.

SPEAKER They are so tabled. Further papers for presentation this morning? Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker I would like to table the Annual Report for the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise together with Financial Statements for that same period, and I have a short statement to make Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I am obliged under the Norfolk Island Hospital Act 1985, Section 38 to table into this House a Performance Report no later than three months after the end of each financial year. I do so now. The report provides information as to the financial position of the Enterprise, the financial performance of the enterprise, the cash flows of the Enterprise and the achievements of the Enterprise in respect of the performance of its functions and implementation of any current strategic plans. The Financial Statements of the Enterprise have not yet been audited for the Financial Year 11/12 and are to be audited as part of the overall audit of the Administration by the Australian National Auditors Officer, which is currently being undertaken. Madam Speaker under Section 38 it is not necessary that the information provided are audited before presentation of the Report. Madam Speaker I would just like to touch on the report briefly. In brief the total income for the Hospital Enterprise was \$5,031,718 compared to \$4,633,210 for the previous year, with expenditure of \$4,808,481 compared to \$4,837,189 previously. This resulted in a net surplus of \$223,237 for the Financial Year against a loss of \$302,979 previously. Madam Speaker, the funding of the Enterprise is funded by income generated by the Enterprise and a subsidy from the Norfolk Island Government, this subsidy was \$2,038,643. Overall debtors as at 30th June 2012 was \$555,249, and with some \$267,965 being for 90 plus days. Attached to the Financial Report is an income and expenditure status of each trading entities of which encompasses the following areas: Hospital General a loss of some \$953,000, Pharmacy a loss of just over \$27,000, X-ray department a loss of just under \$36,000, the Laboratory a loss of \$93,000, the Dental Clinic a loss of \$100,000, Physio department a loss of \$87,000, Aged Care a loss of \$46,000, the Emily Channer District Nursing actually ran in the black of some \$11,500, St Johns Ambulance ran at a loss of \$6,000, Welfare Counsellor ran at a loss of \$114,000, nearly \$115,000, Local and Overseas treatment negated each other out, and a Corporate surplus \$1,676,000, which is virtually the grant. Madam Speaker as can be seen the majority of areas operate at a loss and this is where the subsidy comes into play, providing services for the community's health. Of

course there are a few other areas of which the Enterprise would love to have in place but unfortunately cannot afford to have in place, areas such as breast screening, cancer facilities, mental health support, etc. These areas are well supported by referral to off shore facilities, with better support being provided when possible such as the agreement with the South East Sydney Local Health District. Madam Speaker this report also advises some statistical information in regard to services provided with a few being, a total of 8,831 outpatients seen for the year, 16,647 prescriptions filled by the pharmacy, 145 ultrasounds, only 3 births, due to the limitations of Doctors, they have had 19 deaths on the Island for the year, a daily bed average of 9.63, 223 immunisations an increase of 44 from the previous year, 208 off-shore referrals, 265 appointments for visiting specialists, and also figures on the quit smoking programme as I indicated prior of 44 with a success rate of 38. Madam Speaker this report also gives thanks to the various community organisations and individuals who support the Hospital Enterprise in many years throughout the year. And Madam Speaker I would also like to thank them.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan, further papers for presentation this morning? Minister Nobbs.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker I table a direction to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and I would like to read through it just for information Madam Speaker. Thank you Madam Speaker, the direction reads as follows, I Andre' Neville Nobbs, Minister for Tourism, Industry & Development, under sub section 15(1) of the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau Act 1980, (a) revoke with effect from 1st of October 2012 all directions under sub section 15(1) given prior to the date of this instrument and (b) give to the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau the directions set out in the schedule. Madam Speaker just to assist the listening public and Members around the table, although I gave an explanation of this at yesterday's Members Meeting, it might be advantageous to provide the purpose and application of the direction. It comes upon advice from the Australian National Audit Office and the Commonwealth Financial Officer, and has been worked on by both the CEO of the Public Service and the General Manager of the Tourist Bureau. These directions establish minimum financial reporting management and accountability requirements to be met by the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau (the Bureau). The directions seek to promote transparency of the Bureau's financial position to help ensure accountability of the Norfolk Island Government of its financial management, to present and future generations, these directions should be read with, and are subject to in descending order of preference: the Norfolk Island Act 1979, regulations made under the Norfolk Island Act 1979 (in particular any regulations regarding Territory Authorities made under Section 48s of that Act), the Commonwealth Finance Minister's Norfolk Island's Orders 2011 (the CFM Orders 2011 made under the Norfolk Island Act 1979) including CEO's instructions made under clause 46 of the CFM Orders 2011 and the Act and the regulations made under the Act. Thank you Madam Speaker I table it.

SPEAKER That document is so tabled thank you. Further papers for presentation this morning, Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker, I also have a requirement under the Employment Act 1991 Section 75, I would like to table the Employment Conciliation Board's Report, Madam Speaker I do so now.

SPEAKER Thank you, that is so tabled.

MR SHERIDAN The Employment Conciliation Board performs a vital duty to the community by being a referee for employers and employees to sort out some differences. I would like to publicly thank those persons who contribute to this Board, these being Dick Massicks and Carolyn O'Doherty with two members resigning during this period, Jenny Goulding and Polini Boseto. I have on the notice paper today a further appointment to this Board. Madam Speaker persons such as these give their time freely and at times put themselves in difficult positions between employees and employers. I thank them for the important service of which they provide. Madam Speaker this past year, and this is coming from the report, has been spent providing assistance and advice of an informal nature without involving formal processes. Not all complaints are of the informal type and this past year the Board has dealt with seven complaints of which three were resolved, three not and one complaint involved Workers compensation, which was outside of their terms of reference but they were still able to achieve a partial settlement informally. All complaints involve dismissal and problems with notice, entitlement and final pay. Madam Speaker the Board makes note of persons whom are residents and do not have any formal agreement with their employer and thus have problems with entitlements upon termination. The Board also makes note that the Employment Act needs amendment in certain areas to clarify difficulties that they have encountered. I have requested that the Employment Officer and the Board to provide me with some recommendations for consideration to have the Act amended. Madam Speaker t the Board makes a conclusion of which reads "This past year has seen fewer disputes than in other years, which is a good sign that in very difficult economic time's employers are treating their employees with respect. Many workplaces have been forced to reduce hours and change staff from permanent to casual and we are not seeing any increase in complaints from these decisions". Madam Speaker I thank the Board members for their diligence in what is a very difficult economic climate but employee entitlements are important and must be respected.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan, further papers for presentation? Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Madam Speaker I have a Report to table, which is a survey on community and school survey which was conducted by the

Social Awareness Advisory Group. And if I could just read out a brief statement again Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I would like to table a report which has been compiled for the Social Awareness Advisory Committee on the two surveys which were undertaken earlier this year. I would like to thank the Administrator, Mr Neil Pope, for organising a friend of his, Mr John Harrifield to compile the report and analyse the numbers at no cost to Norfolk Island. The knowledge of what the problem areas are and what the community thinks in regard to alcohol and drugs together with other social, economic and community issues are of extreme importance to any Government when an attempt to rationalise what services would, could, should, can be provided to its community. The Social Awareness Advisory Committee take this task very seriously, not because they enjoy getting together on a monthly basis and talk drugs and alcohol, but they are seriously concerned in regards to the effect of drugs and alcohol and how these can affect individuals, relationships, careers, etc and have the community's best interests in mind when they undertake surveys such as this. Madam Speaker these two surveys conducted were a follow up from the 2001 survey of which the Church Report was written and was the instigator for various reforms to be introduced into Norfolk Island. Services such as the Counsellor, seatbelts, drink driving laws and many others. Madam Speaker it was a disappointment when the surveys were conducted, well this immediate one, that not more community members took the time out to fill out the survey, I did receive a couple of responses to requests to complete the survey indicating that it was a waste of time and that the Government does not heed what the community says. Well Madam Speaker all I can say is this; is that surveys such as these that the Government takes note of when considering implementation of measures, and if the community can not take time out to make their thoughts clear in a survey of which is designed to elicit responses to questions which may frame future legislation then these people don't have the best interests of Norfolk Island at heart, or the community. But Madam Speaker I would like to thank those persons who did take the time to fill in the survey, and in particular the 60% of the secondary school students from Years 7 to 12 who completed the survey. Their responses and information is a good guide to where this Government's legislation needs to head. Madam Speaker just a small bit about the survey's, they were two separate survey's, they were conducted back in March/April of this year, a survey of the wider Norfolk Island community and a survey of students from Years 7 to 12. The surveys contained a significant number of common questions, neither survey was a representative or stratified sample of target populations, but were designed to allow each stakeholder group an opportunity to provide feedback. Madam Speaker Chapter Two of the Report provides an overview of various areas and those areas are cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, drinking and driving, illicit drugs, support services for drug and alcohol use, employment, cost of living pressures, caring for the aged, students and sexual experience, bullying and peer pressure, racial intolerance, counselling services and that's the list. Madam Speaker one item that is consistent throughout the report, is the need for further community information and education in regards to various issues such as the drugs and the alcohol and the

repercussions of their use and for further support services. So Madam Speaker I would like to table the report and make it available to the general public.

SPEAKER That Report is so tabled, thank you, further papers for presentation this morning. Minister Sheridan.

MR SHERIDAN Last one Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I would like to take this opportunity to table a Land Evaluation Exposure Bill, mainly for comments. Madam Speaker over the past years talk has been had on the need to be able to value property on Norfolk Island for various purposes including taxation or rating of land based upon its value. Back in 2009 an attempt to pass similar legislation was not assented too as the Bill did not define what the legislation was providing for except to value land and for other purposes. As stated by the Administrator at the time, "It is a constitutional tenet that proposed laws such as the Bill must serve an apparent purpose. Valuation for the sake of valuation is not an apparent purpose". Madam Speaker this Bill, that I have just tabled, as an exposure draft, although while not the instrument for proposing any land taxes or rates will provide for a regime for the valuation of Norfolk Island land which will, as well as providing for the first time a comprehensive valuation of Norfolk Island land, sorry I am repeating myself, where am I. As well as providing for the first time a comprehensive, current and even-handed picture of land value, also provide a valuable tool in helping to understand the economy of the Island by establishing a basis for future form of taxation or rating of land based upon its value that may be established, upon consultation. Madam Speaker the objectives of the Bill are to; establish the post of valuer-general to be responsible for valuing land in Norfolk Island; establish the form of valuations that are made using the unimproved capital value for rural and the improved capital; introduce regular valuation cycle where by every property will be valued each year having regard to market movements and less often by means of physical inspection; provide for the maintenance of a roll of land values; and provide an objections and appeal process. Madam Speaker over the past couple of years it has become apparent that the current taxation model for Norfolk Island is flawed and will not support the Islands needs. Whilst we are in discussions with the Commonwealth in regard to our fiscal relationship with them, the Norfolk Island Government needs to provide a sustainable financial base for its own purposes, purposes of which entail providing facilities for the community's use and enjoyment. These include, but are not limited to, better waste management facilities, improved roads, enhanced infrastructure, community complexes, better health services, electricity supply, telecommunications, etc. All these cannot be provided by a GST tax regime only and a user pay system for services, it is just not sustainable, as it is today. Madam Speaker this Bill will provide the Government with the necessary information to enable its taxation base to be expanded, so that those services mentioned and more can be provided for the good of the community. Madam Speaker I have tabled it today as an exposure draft to enable initial comment to be received from the public prior to presentation at the next Sitting, next month. I have done this as the Members have only just

received a copy of the Bill, as have I only receiving the final cleared copy this morning myself. Madam Speaker I look forward to comments and discussion from the community and Members, thank you.

SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan, further papers for presentation.

MR KING Can I move that the statement...

SPEAKER That the paper be noted?

MR KING The paper be noted.

SPEAKER Yes.

MR KING Just very briefly. Obviously it is a very contentious matter and that is part of the reason why you are bringing it forward as an exposure bill, I'm interested to learn, and of course it is, and probably no hiding behind the fact that it is a necessary prelude to some sort of land taxation, many of us hide away from that, because it is so contentious, but if we are to make a reasonable revenue raising effort as part of our contribution to the sustainable future, then we have to accept the inevitability of that. I understand that it is going to be very contentious, as I understood what Minister Sheridan has said, it merely sets out the mechanism for deciding the valuations of land etc. So it escapes me why that ought to be put into the House itself. I wonder whether the Bill in its present form, the exposure draft as it is, reflects the position of the Government, the agreed position of Cabinet, and whether, or to what extent other Members around the table have been involved in discussions leading up to the exposure draft. I certainly haven't seen or heard about it. Although I understand that it was inevitable that it come forward sooner or later, thank you, I will reserve any further.

SPEAKER Thank you Mr King, further debate Honourable Members, Mrs Ward.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker, I second the words of my colleague Mr King, I think we all know that this is a controversial matter, however this is part of taxation reform for Norfolk Island. It does point out, I think the point that Mr King was not struggling on, but just to clarify, it is just establishing what form of valuation would take place, whether that is one of unimproved or improved land values. So it's a Bill that has to be dealt with, I congratulate the Minister for bringing it forward and I also encourage any Member of the community to take this opportunity to have their comment, to have their say, no doubt they will. But that is what it is about, it is reforming the taxation system for Norfolk Island in its entirety and it has to be dealt with, thank you.

MR SHERIDAN Is there anybody first? Just briefly Madam Speaker just in response, the reason why the Government had consultation on this Bill, the reason why the other Members haven't had it at this stage, we are at that time now, where we ask for their participation, I could have withheld this from tabling it today and just gave it to Members and then table it as a Bill at the next Sitting, but I thought this may be the better way to do it as an exposure draft, so as well as the Members views, and discussion that we have with them, we can also obtain some community views as well, at the same time, before the final Bill is presented at the next Sitting at next month.

MR SNELL Thank you Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker I'm concerned at the implications that maybe gathered by the discussions this morning that the submission of this proposed Bill is one directed at infusing taxation where it is, as I understand it, a legislative framework for valuation of land, for whatever purpose other than taxation for example. The valuation of land for resale, etc, etc and to give a clear and concise description and explanation and valuation of land other than just for taxation, is that correct?

MR SHERIDAN Madam Speaker the general purpose of the land valuation is to establish the base for raising revenue for the purposes of the Administration of Norfolk Island to assist with the process of tax reform, to provide statistics to assist with economic analysis of the economy, to establish a record of land values of the Island as they may change from time to time and related purposes. Now that has come from the preamble of the Act. There is also in the body of the Act the ability for private individuals to utilise the services of the valuer-general for purposes as Mr Snell says, if they wanted another personalised valuation of their property, this will be done for all properties on the Island, that is the intent, but if the land owner wants to utilise their services for another purpose, there is the ability under the Act for them to be able to do that.

SPEAKER Further debate Honourable Members on the question that the paper be noted? No further debate, I put the question.

QUESTION PUT

QUESTION AGREED

The paper is so noted. Are there any further papers for presentation this morning? There being no further papers for presentation we move to statements.

STATEMENTS

SPEAKER Chief Minister.

MR BUFFETT Madam Speaker thank you, in terms of statements Madam Speaker I have an update on Government programmes, firstly I report to Members that notwithstanding constant requests to the Commonwealth they have not responded to our needs for funding in this present

financial year, however there is on Island the Deputy Secretary of the Department, who, we will trust that his visit will reinforce our needs within the community. That is the needs of both the continuity and provision of essential services and the dire needs of the business sector at this moment and that his visit will have results. The Government's action for the way ahead of course is we know, is determined by the Roadmap and the Roadmap is of course a five year plus programme, it is a long term arrangement, we will all recall that there are seven headings. One is governance reform, economic development, public sector management, immigration health welfare and education, taxation, the environment, the extension of Commonwealth laws to Norfolk Island. I need to state clearly Madam Speaker, my Government is not thinking the narrow confines of the balance of this Legislative Assembly. We continue to map out the longer essential road that we must tread, yes we will give maximum effort in the time of this Legislative Assembly, but in accordance with the bigger picture of this Roadmap, allow me to work through the major headings that I have just identified, with some further identification of major work for this Government in this assembly. In terms of governance, we do need to achieve from the Commonwealth decisions and timeframes of some essential components, including the model of governance, and we have proposed, subsequent to a public meeting in Norfolk Island that model of governance, we need to tie down the taxation arrangement, the GST extension, the benefits of Medicare, Pharmaceutical Benefits and access to social welfare benefits. There is not an expectation that all of that will be operational in the time of this Assembly, but we need to tie down decisions about participation and provide timeframes. There are projected timeframes in the Roadmap but they need to be revised in some instances and we need to have Government Commonwealth decisions about participation. Economic Development, in this area, we have done a number of things, but the Economic Development Study is a major study and a guide in this process and that has been identified in a number of areas. It indicates that we need to reduce restrictions associated with new business investment and the tourist industry, that is a matter on our agenda today. Remove legislative barriers to business investment in the loading and unloading of cargo, we have already addressed that particular area, and we need, in the Immigration area to free up arrangements, we have already proposed legislation to give more automatic lengthy visitor stays, we have amended in July and October Immigration Guidelines to allow self-funded retirees and business investors, implementation of further deregulation is yet to be achieved in this Assembly, and the Immigration Development Working Group has given us reports that we are now working upon, and indeed will provide some implementation as we move forward. In terms of Public Sector Management, we know that we have here a Report on the Public Service Review, and there is a working collaboratively with the Department of Regional Australia as a result of some of those recommendations. One of them is the Capacity Building Team on island now, and that will continue for the major part of the life of this Assembly. The review to the Public Sector Management Act, I responded to a question earlier, indicated that that was being processed by the CEO and the associated Human Resources Policy and

Guidelines. In another Ministerial area, in Tim Sheridan's area, the Norfolk Island Hospital has been registered with the Australian Council on Healthcare standards and has begun the assessment process against equipped standards. So in the Public Sector Management area there are things that have been done and continue to be done. Immigration, Health, Welfare and Education, what is to be achieved in this Assembly? Well certainly we need to have a Commonwealth decision about access to Medicare and Pharmaceutical Benefits for Island residents, we have made a number of proposals as to how that could be done both in the short term to lead to longer term extension and other social security benefits. And Norfolk Island residents needs to be able to assess assistance for tertiary education and training, so there are a number of areas there that need to be pursued and are being pursued. Taxation, the Government agreed to participate in the Australian taxation system, this is about moving from a smaller pool to a larger pool, and that was November of last year, we committed to that arrangement. The Assembly agreed to a motion, confirming its commitment, the Government's commitment to that process, and also requesting entry into the Australian GST system, and again, as I've mentioned earlier, early access to Medicare, PBS and Social Security System. The aim is for the Legislative Assembly to be able to gain decisions and put timeframes upon those being slotted in to the Norfolk Island community's participation. Extension of Commonwealth laws, there are a range of these, but some of them have relevance for some of the things that I have just said. For example, if the taxation arrangement is to be secured, then there needs to be, the taxation law already applies here, there needs to be some amendments to pick up the applicability that we are talking about with the Commonwealth at this moment, there will no doubt need to be GST legislation that extends to Norfolk Island, we are troubled at this moment about the lack of extension of Australian Insurance legislation to Norfolk Island. So there are a range of things that the extension of Commonwealth laws to Norfolk Island need to be achieved and would aim to be achieved as we move along this track within the life of this Assembly. Given what I have said Madam Speaker, I table a legislative programme with priorities and where practicable, dates, which covers the known Roadmap arrangements. It covers Roadmap Bills being worked upon, it includes the Tourist Accommodation that is on the Agenda for today, it includes the Land Valuation Bill that Mr Sheridan has provided an exposure draft upon, it foreshadows Public Sector Management Act, that I've had questions on today. It foreshadows Immigration (Amendment) Bill which will flow from the Immigration Development Working Committee's Report and the like. There are non-Roadmap Bills in this matter, because without a date, notwithstanding that we are having priority for Roadmap matters, other things will come out of the woodwork. There are needs that are other things that will exhibit as we move along, and they too are listed as we are able to see them at this time. But there are longer term Roadmap future requirements, there may be an adjustment to our Goods and Services once we secure our arrangement with the Commonwealth, so we will need to make arrangements there to adjust our legislation, the same with the Healthcare Levy

and the like, so those things are listed and I table that particular programme Madam Speaker.

SPEAKER

That paper is so tabled.

CHIEF MINISTER

As a final note I say this Madam Speaker. I've mentioned those things, I've mentioned those things that might require legislative attention but in terms of a conclusive document really the next substantive stage is what I would call Roadmap Mark 2. to draw together the range of matters that I have mentioned here but really be meaningful about that we need to secure some decisions from the Commonwealth Government in the range of things that I too have mentioned just here. Once we have got that then we might be able to progress to document a Mark 2 arrangement. I report to Members upon that at this stage Madam Speaker.

CHIEF MINISTER

I have another Statement about Immigration Madam Speaker. Immigration has featured in a number of Reports to date. I example 2, one is the Economic Development Study and the other of course is that that I've just referred to just now, the Immigration Development Working Groups Review and in respect of that latter Report it's been earlier circulated Madam Speaker to all of the MLA's I today table the Governments first response. The application for applicants for a General Entry Permit is revised and the basic form I table will be the format to be recommended by the Executive Council to the Administrator for such a revision. This too has been circulate earlier to Members Madam Speaker. This revised form is designed to be less intrusive, user friendly and after made by Regulation pursuant to provisions of the Immigration Act will be distributed and accompanied by a welcoming letter which I also Table. The welcome letter is not a statutory form but the Immigration application form is a statutory form, and so I announce that and I table that and I advise members as to how that is progressing. The next stage will be to consider further the recommendations of this same report and the aim would be to be further less in restrictive in terms of Immigration's arrangements, given Norfolk Islands needs for additional people, we need to grow. We need to grow residents and we need to grow business population in addition to growing our visitor numbers, and this is all designed for that purpose and I emphasise that we're doing it under Norfolk Island legislation and Norfolk Island is seen to be wanting to move along this track, to better our own ends and using the facilities that are available to us. I table those Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER

Those papers are so tabled thank you Chief Minister.

MR SHERIDAN

Thank you Madam Speaker I won't keep you long. I have a short Statement on the Hospital Director position I have an update on the recruitment for the position of Hospital Director. The recruitment process has been undertaken, with 6 persons applying for the position, of these two were short-listed to be interviewed. Interviews took place in Sydney on the 13th August. Of these two interviews, one applicant was considered to have the necessary qualifications for the position and was advised. Unfortunately, due to family reasons the applicant turned the offer down. The second interviewed applicant had limited experience in a similar position and was deemed not to be

suitable. This leaves me in the position of having to re-advertise the position, and this will be done over the coming months. In the short term, the current Hospital Director, Mr David McCowan was requested and accepted to remain in the position of Director on the basis that upon recruitment of a new Director, his tenure would be terminated. I thank David for his understanding and willingness to fill the breach until the recruitment process is completed once again.

MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR – MESSAGE NO 31

MADAM SPEAKER On 21 August 2012 acting pursuant to Section 21 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979 I declared my assent to the following proposed laws passed by the legislative Assembly, Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012 Act No 7 of 2012 dated 21 August 2012 signed Neil Pope Administrator.

MADAM SPEAKER I look to you for guidance as to when you would like to return from lunch 2.30pm? I see nods, fine. This House stands suspended until 2.30pm.

NOTICE NO 1 – APPOINTMENT OF PERSON TO ACT AS CLERK TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

CHIEF MINISTER Madam Speaker. I move that in accordance with Section 48 of the Legislative Assembly Act 1979 this House recommends that the Speaker A) appoint Sharon Louise Quintal to be a person to act as Clerk to the Legislative Assembly during a vacancy in the office of Clerk or while the Clerk is absent from duty for the period 20 September to 31 December 2012 and B) determine that the terms and conditions of appointment of Ms Quintal as are applicable in her contract for services to the Administration of Norfolk Island which expires on the 31st December 2012.

MADAM SPEAKER The question before the House is that the Motion be agreed to?

CHIEF MINISTER Madam Speaker this matter comes forward because our esteemed Clerk Mrs Evans needs to be absent from the island during a Sitting that will happen before the 31st December and we do not at this moment have a person to act as Clerk whilst our substantive Clerk may not be available, and so this is a proposal to meet that gap. You will note 2 things. First of all that it's only for a brief period of time, in other words to the end of this financial year and it coincides with the period of time that Ms Quintal has a contract to equally provide relief services within the compound of this Administration. So drawing those things together was a fortuitous opportunity. It allows us to have the services of a person who I speak confidently about in terms of her ability and therefore with your wish Madam Speaker I am very pleased to

promote this Motion which will give the Assembly coverage for that period of time. I commend this Motion to the House.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker. I had indicated to you earlier and privately that I wouldn't be supporting this Motion. It doesn't mean that I'll vote against it but I won't be supporting it. I want to make it very clear that my position on this has no bearing what so ever on the individual herself who is a capable charming and engaging person and more than able to do that particular job. I have ongoing difficulties which haven't been satisfied in my mind about the processes of recruitment that take place in this place here. I have some ongoing difficulties about the nature of expenditure that takes place here, I have ongoing difficulties about the letting of contracts for jobs and tasks in this particular Military Barracks. For those reasons I do not feel that I am capable of supporting the Motion in its present form and for those reasons I will be abstaining. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER Further debate. I put the question.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

Would you like the House called Mr King or are you happy that we record your abstention.

MADAM SPEAKER Mr Sheridan your seeking leave to move a Motion in relation to the Employment Act, appointment of a Member to the Employment Conciliation Board. Is leave granted Honourable Members.

AYE

MR SHERIDAN Madam Speaker I move that for purposes of Subsection 65 (2) of the Employment Act 1988 this House resolves to appoint Elizabeth Nowell being a person with relevant qualifications and experience to the Employment Conciliation Board for the period 20 September 2012 to 19 September 2015.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Minister Sheridan. The question before the House is the Motion be agreed to.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker. As Members are aware and as most probably most in the community are aware the Employment Conciliation Board provides a valuable service to the community where it interacts between employers and employees when they have difficulties with regards to their conditions of service in the main. Madam Speaker this Committee or this Board has had a couple of members resign in the last 12 months and I currently have 2 members there but to bring it up to its full

membership Elizabeth Nowell has indicated that she would be willing to participate on this Board. Miss Noel responded to an advertisement in the paper back in 2010 and we've had this on file ever since. Just her qualifications to participate on this Board Madam Speaker is particularly her experience as a, she's got a Bachelor of Commerce from the Griffith University in Queensland which majored in Human Resource Management, Industrial Relations and Organizational Psychology and she has also undertaken conciliation skills training course with the Australian Industrial Relations Commission Queensland. She's had experiences as an Industrial Officer with the Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and as a HR Officer Anglo Cole Australia Limited in 2000 and 2002. Madam Speaker Mrs Noel is very well experienced and I feel that she will be a great asset to the Board and I recommend her nomination to the House.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker. I'd like to add my support to Mr Sheridan's Motion. Miss Noel's education and background make her imminently qualified to take on this role but Miss Noel's has more than that to offer. I've had the opportunity to watch Miss Noel's perform in another community orientated role, that of Secretary to the ATA. I personally witnessed the dedication and skills she brought to this position. In her time and with her energy the ATA advanced some long overdue activities. I'm certain that Miss Noels will bring the same energy to this position. I wish her and other members of the Board well. I know they too have worked hard to bring some long outstanding issues to close. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER Further debate. I put the question.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

NOTICE NO 2 – CUSTOMS AMENDMENT BILL 2012

CHIEF MINISTER Madam Speaker I present the Customs Amendment Bill 2012 and move the Bill be agreed to in principal and I table the Explanatory Memorandum in terms of this Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. The question before the House is that the Bill be agreed to in principal.

CHIEF MINISTER Madam Speaker this is introduction only at this stage. It's not asking for a decision from Members. This is the Customs Amendment Bill and is designed to provide for a collection point to be available in the Norfolk Island Airport whereby tobacco products, low duty tobacco products may be, after they have been prepaid, ordered and prepaid, to be collected before passing through Customs to enter into Norfolk Island. Madam Speaker the reason that this is brought is that we are searching to endeavour to provide

business opportunities on the island and this is one, limited though this may be, and I understand that there may be varying views about it. But I have undertaken to bring this to the House so that Members may give it consideration and then it will move forward in whatever way Members so decide upon it. The Bill is not a huge Bill, it's a single page Bill but nevertheless it's one that covers that that I have described to you. Members will know that we don't at present in the inwards arrangement have any facility of this nature, so this will be a new arrangement there in that context, and Members will equally know that we don't have a shop arrangement where people can buy on the way as you might experience in other places. I've got to say that my own view is that there should be some exploration about that so that there are greater opportunities for sales to be made, business to be done as people enter the Norfolk Island environment. But this Bill doesn't go to that at this stage. I understand that some people may wish to have that. It doesn't mean that we should cancel it on our list, but this Bill is a bit more restrictive at this time. I place on the table this Bill at this stage Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER

Debate Honourable Members.

MRS GRIFFITHS

Thank you Madam Speaker. My contribution is not going to come as any surprise to the Chief Minister, especially as I've been advocating for some action for some months. It's a shame that Chief Minister Nero sat on his hands and fiddled while Rome burned. What really happened was

CHIEF MINISTER

Madam Speaker I might just point out that the Airport is still there standing, not burnt at all.

MADAM SPEAKER

It's encouraging to know Chief Minister

MRS GRIFFITHS

I will continue Madam Speaker. What really happened was the only outlet to sell low duty cigarettes closed down in the face of the Chief Minister's procrastination. What is even more disappointing

MADAM SPEAKER

I would ask that you withdraw those words

MRS GRIFFITHS

I withdraw

MR KING

interjection, twice now

How can you raise a Point of Order with

MADAM SPEAKER

of Order

Please proceed Mrs Griffiths there is no Point

MR KING

Point of Order

MADAM SPEAKER
Griffiths

No Point of Order. Please proceed Mrs

MRS GRIFFITHS

What is even more disappointing that this law is not good enough that only allows people leaving Norfolk to pick up cigarettes at the Airport that they have previously purchased. Aside from the obvious there is now no retail outlet to sell low duty cigarettes and there is not enough vision in this Government to think about creating a commercial area in the Airport, that's still standing. The Chief Minister will tell you that this has been done before and it didn't work. I find that response unacceptable. We don't know why it didn't work. It could have been management related, it could have been product oriented, it might possibly be because unbelievable as it may seem the Government made it too hard to operate. While the Minister for Health will vote against this Bill as is his right this issue is not about smoker versus non smoker, it's not a debate on health, it is an always was about reducing barriers and creating opportunities for small business on the island. I only wish we hadn't lost a business in the meantime. Madam Speaker one thing about working on Norfolk it makes us grateful for small mercies so therefore I will support this Bill, even though it's too little too late. Thank you.

MR SNELL

Thank you Madam Speaker. I have no intentions ever of supporting this Bill and the principal of it is that it selects one particular business over many others and doesn't give any other business on the island a fair chance of also seeking exposure to the area that has been mentioned here at the Airport. My recommendation would be if we're going to continue down this line of allowing goods to be sold in the incoming area or pre selling of goods and collection in the incoming area that it be extended on a much broader and wider scale. Madam Speaker on the same type of subject it is my intention at a later time to ask the Minister responsible to introduce such things as a GST tourist refund scheme and on the similar lines of trying to raise revenue and trying to stimulate the economy in shopping but I just want to mention that I don't support the introduction of anything of this nature when it's selective such as this.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Madam Speaker This is a difficult one from my perspective, on the one hand we're enabling opportunities for commerce, on the other hand we're challenging some of the Government initiatives for giving up smoking and better health outcomes. For me the enabling opportunities for commerce has one the tussle, however I just wanted to present a couple of responses to some of things that have been raised already around the table and that is that with regard to the Airport and commercial opportunities that Mrs Griffith has raised. We've certainly invited private sector suggestions and involvement in the airport, particularly over about a 9 month period. In that 9 month period we had two initial expressions of interest that later percolated down to a single area of interest from a private sector operator. As I understand it the Service is evaluating how that might work. It's also worth noting that although an

operator has ceased to function through their outlet there has certainly been some other impacts I would think on that operator in much the same way as for a lot of the retailers on the island, but in particular the legislation that alters the amount of cigarettes that a person can take into Australia out of Norfolk. So there are a number of factors to be considered in this. Thank you.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker. I agree that it's a selective piece of legislation. It's also a reactive piece of legislation. To me it doesn't serve any useful purpose what so ever. I mean does it go towards discouraging cigarette smoking? No it doesn't. Does it go towards enhancing or propping up revenues? No it doesn't, on fact quite the contrary. The effect on revenues hasn't even been quantified and if I was looking for one single reason to oppose it I'd oppose it on those grounds. I know it's only very early in the piece, the first reading but I flag my intention to oppose the legislation.

MR ANDERSON Thank you Madam Speaker. I'm on the record of being opposed to smoking and a supporter of every possible assistance being given to smokers to overcome their habit. I obviously also support encouraging people never to take it up. That said I was also a supporter of allowing the delivery of cigarettes in the arrival hall for incoming passengers should they wish to pre purchase them. This meant it would only really be a scheme that benefited a very small pool of probably only locals. I supported the initiative in the interest to encourage any business to seize any opportunity to expand and grow. Where possible commerce should not be restrained in my view by the limitations imposed in this case by the Airport or by Customs. I think the circumstances have changed since the concept of presales and Airport delivering in the arrivals hall was first raised some time ago. Provided an exclusive benefit to such a limited group as the pun intended die hard local smokers now seems to me to be too restricted and probably for any operator totally uneconomic as a stand alone business. If sales to incoming passengers are going to be allowed then it should be available to all incoming passengers, not only those fortunate enough to know about the pre purchase system. I appreciate the Chief Minister envisages this as a possibility down the track. If this is permitted all the wholesalers and potentially anyone, it's not just limited to a particular business, all the wholesalers and potentially anyone else could apply for a licence and could turn up to meet the plane to deliver pre purchases cigarettes. There is nothing wrong with that if they want to make the effort in my opinion, they would also be innovative and find a way to promote this opportunity to all incoming passengers. I'm not going to suggest how, although that would be difficult while still enabling pre sales to be completed prior to arrival. I think it is a situation of all or nothing personally. Sell cigarettes to all arriving passengers if anyone want to do it, maybe no one does. It could also be extended to alcohol but realistically for spirits there is already a generous system available for purchases made by visitors after they arrive and it's particularly generous to locals before they leave. So I say treat everyone equally and allow low duty cigarettes to be sold in the arrival hall and then there is no need for a complicated and exclusive system for pre sales to basically the

local smokers. Realistically if this Bill proceeds then it's passed, all it achieves is the transfer of some local cigarette sales from local retailers to the Airport with a corresponding reduction in revenue for the Government. Given the Commonwealth must consent to the legislation I cannot see them agreeing it, it provides any real commercial benefit unless it applies to all arrivals why should legislation support such a small local group? I think if we're going to do it let's do it now and let's progress, letting everyone have the opportunity to purchase, and it is an opportunity for anyone on the island who chooses to commence to selling this way. So in this current form I can see no reason to support this Bill.

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. I acknowledge all of those points that have been made and I think I just need to re emphasise one. Mr Anderson in speaking before me has mentioned it but I give it reinforcement. This particular Bill is designed that any business, that is people who are in the wholesaler arrangement with tobacco products may make use of this in terms of pre ordering and pre paying and collecting in the Airport Terminal. It's not just for one business who may be active or immediately previously active in the Airport Terminal itself. It is for all those who would wish to enter into that arrangement. Madam Speaker I thank you for those comments, this was an introduction only as I mentioned to you. I move that this matter be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

NOTICE NO 3 – STATUS OF CHILDRENS BILL 2012-09-21

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. I present the Status of Children Bill 2012 and I move that the Bill be agree to in principal and in saying that I table the Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. The Explanatory Memorandum is so tabled and the question before the House is that the Bill be agreed to in principal.

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. Again this matter is one for introduction only today. It has relativity to the Wills Bill, it's independent of the Wills Bill but there are inter relationships in how these two pieces of legislation travel but this Wills Bill we'll tackle further in a moment. But the State of Children's Bill 2012 is a Bill to reform the law concerning the state of ex-nuptial children to enact provisions relating to parentage presumptions and parenting testing procedures that are in conformity with model provisions accepted by States and Territories in the Australian context today. Norfolk Island's situation if children are born outside that that I have described they are not accorded the same rights, and this is endeavouring to ensure that they are not out in the cold, that they are covered by modern pieces of legislation that give them recognition,

and therefore this Bill is brought forward. It obviously in terms of its content gives the normal definition of words, it provides status of children and disposition of property, it talks about parentage presumptions, acknowledgement of paternity, declaration of parentage, evidence of Court findings and paternity acknowledgements and those things that are miscellaneous associated with those processes. It's not a huge Bill, it's a Bill of some eleven folios and you may think a Bill of that nature is taking up a lot of paper but there are certain definitions and arrangements that do need to be covered and I introduce it today so that Members may absorb it, it may be publically available and we will look at it further on another day.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Debate on the question that the Motion be agreed to.

MR KING Thank you Madam Speaker. Eleven folios long is substantial Bill, it's too much for me to understand in such a short period of time. I accept that there is a month for me to absorb and read and understand this and I must say I've started with a very low base because I don't understand what difficulties exist in existing legislation, whether there is a repeal and replace provision in this Bill. I don't think there is at first glance, so it appears that the status of children hasn't been separately addressed in our legislation. So in that respect it's a good thing. What are the major changes that are sought to be brought about here so I accept that it's a valid objective to bring us in line with the other States and Territories of Australia. On that basis I'll probably support it but I will be looking in my support to ensure that the modern thinking in relation to the rights of same sex couples are respected and also the rights of perhaps the deceased person who was not afforded the love and affection of a child in the normal course during his life, where such a child may be now seeking to benefit from an Estate. Those are minor things and I know a lot of that touches on the provisions of the Will Bill itself which comes up at a later time about which I'm equally confused, but thank you I'll reserve any further comments.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Madam Speaker. I have a couple of words. I think this is a sensible Bill in the main because it will give some status to ex nuptial children on Norfolk Island if there are any, in regards to their status, in regards to their ability to claim against an Estate etc and things like this. Mr King did make a comment in regards to same sex marriages. It was only just at lunch time I was home I had the telly on watching, there was a debate in the House of Reps and they were debating same sex marriages there, and the way that it's going over in Australia there I think that maybe shortly that same sex marriages will be recognised and of course that then may then well be extended to Norfolk Island because the Marriage Act extends to Norfolk Island. How this will affect this Bill because I see they talk about man and father and all this sort of thing of children who are born out of a fertilisation process, how would that then affect this? I suppose we would have to readdress it if, same sex marriage Act was applied to Norfolk Island, if Australia was of the mind to accept those, but in the

main how it stands now and in our current circumstances I think it affords some clear guidelines and some certainty to the people who are affected by it. So I'll do some more research in the next month but I'll most probably support this Bill at the October sitting.

MR SNELL Thank you Madam Speaker. ????? democratic system ?? to keep up with modern trends, some of our legislation is obviously old legislation and may not be relevant to the circumstances that we find ourselves in in 2012. Madam Speaker looking at of course the areas of the Explanatory Memorandum we see in clause 8 sets out for rebuttal presumptions arising from marriage. First presumption is that a child born to a woman during a marriage etc etc and the second presumption and so on. It clarifies some of the areas that will or may come up here on Norfolk Island at some stage and I guess move forward Bills of this nature are inevitable. I intend to support the Bill.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you any further debate. No further debate?

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you for the contributions that have been made to date. I move that this matter be adjourned and made an Order of the Day for a subsequent day of sitting.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

ORDERS OF THE DAY1 – WILLS BILL 2012

MADAM SPEAKER We're resuming on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principal.

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. Just to pick up from where we left this earlier. The Wills Bill is one where we are updating legislation that exists in Norfolk Island but to include provisions that have now been accepted in other States in Australia and other Territories in Australia but not to this stage be implemented in Norfolk Island. It particularly provides that where the strict adherence to the law in terms of the making of a Will may not have been observed but there is no capacity to allow the Supreme Court to give remedy to that and that provision is certainly in this legislation now and a range of other factors. Let me just give you a number. Significant changes to the law of Wills affected by the Bill include these: The introduction of Court authorised Wills for people who lack testamentary capacity. The provision of statutory guidance in relation to the matters to be taken into consideration by the Court in authorising a minor to make a Will. New rules about beneficiaries who witness Wills. New rules about survivorship. Revision of the law relating to foreign Wills to bring Norfolk Island law relating to choice of law issues into line with the law on other jurisdictions. New provisions about who is entitled to see a Will on the death of a

Testator. New provisions for the deposit of Wills and provisions relating to the admission of limited evidence to aid in the interpretation of Wills. So you can see there are a range of things that give more modern recognition to that that relates to our particular piece of legislation which if I remember correctly the last adjustment then was in 1973. Madam Speaker there is a small Amendment that I would move at an appropriate time and it relates to Clause 8 (5) which really relates, I mentioned at an earlier time that a great deal of this is to bring it in line with other States and other Territories in the Commonwealth sphere, so there is uniformity within the Australian sphere about how these matters are handled, and so we've picked up pieces of legislation elsewhere. 8 (5) still has one of the terms and so 8 (5) says; This section applies to a document whether it comes into existence within or outside the State. It needs to state outside Norfolk Island, and there will be an Amendment proposed in respect of that, when we come to that stage which will be the detail stage.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Debate Honourable Members on whether the Bill should be agreed in principal.

MR SNELL Thank you Madam Speaker. This is another instance of legislation that is to keep up with the times and even though in some areas it is difficult to understand in areas for example, the minimum age for making of a Will when you consider a Will made by a minor is not valid. A minor being under the age of 18. However if that minor decides to get married, then makes a Will, then it is valid. You have to ask yourself why, if he gets married is he any more, obligations, or is he more intelligent than that person who is not married and so on. So there are areas that can be regarded as confusing but it is a Bill of some length and there are many areas that certainly would apply to Norfolk Island and I intend again to support this introduction even though it is in some ways complicated.

MR ANDERSON Thank you Madam Speaker. I'd just like to make one comment Madam Speaker as a Practitioner who has worked in this area yes I believe that all of the changes that are there are worthwhile. They have been prepared by the National Committee for Uniform Succession Laws, they have been discussed by every State and Territory of SCAG and they will be an improvement in any jurisdiction that adopts them and I would certainly support them.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Mr Anderson. Further debate. I put the question that the Bill be agreed to in principal.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MADAM SPEAKER We move to detail stage and Chief Minister so much as leave is required of the Chair for the Amendment that you have foreshadowed. Leave is granted.

CHIEF MINISTER Thank you Madam Speaker. May I read this Amendment. It is as I foreshadowed that the Bill be amended as follows. In Clause 8 (5) delete the words "the State" and substitute the words "Norfolk Island".

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister.

CHIEF MINISTER I'm happy that the Amendments be taken as a whole

MADAM SPEAKER That's very kind of you Chief Minister thank you. Debate Honourable Members on the Bill and the Amendment collectively as is appropriately. Debate. Chief Minister do you want to lead in. No further debate. No further debate then I put the question that the Amendment be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MADAM SPEAKER Question is that the Clause as amended be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MADAM SPEAKER Question is that the remainder of the Bill be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

CHIEF MINISTER The Bill as amended be agreed to Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. The question before the House is that the Bill as amended be agreed to. No debate I put the question.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

**ORDER OF THE DAY NO 2 – TOURIST ACCOMMODATION AMENDMENT
BILL 2012-09-22**

MADAM SPEAKER We are resuming at the Detail stage Honourable Members. Minister Nobbs you have the call to resume.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker. I seek your leave to move an Amendment dated 17th September 2012.

MADAM SPEAKER I take that to mean this is the second Amendment of ? that's been circulated this morning?

MR NOBBS yes

MADAM SPEAKER So much as my leave is required that leave is granted. Please proceed.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker. I tabled the Tourist Accommodation Amendment Bill in this House a little over 2 months ago. The Bill followed on from evaluation of current policies affecting competition and investment in Norfolk Island. A discussion paper was released by the Government in February of this year and submissions were welcomed. From this process a Norfolk Island Government Policy Paper was developed to reflect our aspirations of competition and investment in Norfolk Island that was made public. Members have in their possession today a detail stage amendment, a mock up of the outcome of the Act subject to those changes, and a copy of the Bill that was originally presented. Madam Speaker representatives from the Accommodation Tourism Association as well as information provided by local Bank Manager's and a Valuer familiar with Norfolk Island properties has led to this DSA seeking to amend the Bill and that is to retain provisions in the principal Act relating to quota and unit licence. In the current challenging economic environment I propose a staged transition for the Tourist Accommodation sector whereby the enabling of non resident ownership, removal of Government involvement in management arrangements and removing the compulsory nature of the grading system make solid changes to the ability to invest and diversify in the Norfolk Island Tourist Accommodation sector. Given the feedback I have had on this Bill I feel as a responsible Government we need to be mindful of the refinancing and revaluation implications that the immediate removal of the quota and unit licence system will have on this sector, particularly over the next 12 months. I seek to improve the competition and investment landscape in line with the Roadmap commitments to net benefit and avoid unnecessary displacement of our community members Madam Speaker and at a later part of the Sitting I'd like to also talk about the revision of the quota system. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Minister Nobbs. Debate on the question that the Detail Stage Amendment dated 17#2 be taken as read and agreed to as a whole. Debate.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker. Today we have a choice. We have the ability to vote to open the accommodation market or we vote to keep it closed, and what the Minister is proposing here with this Detail Stage Amendment is to keep the quota in place. Madam Speaker I have considered both sides of this argument and I was prepared and am prepared to support the original Bill but it's obvious that Minister Nobbs has had a change of heart and he's now wanting to keep a quota in place for the time being. He says he's going to discuss that further, that's uncertainty in itself but obviously he will have the opportunity to clarify that. I want to highlight that I've carefully considered all of the submissions that were received on this question. I attended the public ATA meeting and I've met privately with many many stakeholders and I need to say this. That while the ATA submissions were by far the most aggressive, they were not the only ones received. Over 30 submissions were received and whether some members of the ATA like it or not many people are in support of deregulation of the accommodation industry including the removal of the licence system and the quota system. Now the ATA threats have been serious but I understand that many of these people are financially and emotionally exhausted. I do understand that but to continue protection of this industry is not the answer. The removal of ownership and immigration restrictions is what is going to help these people along with deregulation of the industry and I'm particularly referring to the people who already have their properties on the market and who have indicated that they are desperate to sell. What we must face is that we need to reinvigorate our product and accommodation is part of that equation, and there is no doubt in my mind that these are the tough decisions that we need to make that will be in the best interests of the tourism future for Norfolk Island as a whole. What the Minister is proposing today is to continue Government protection. He wants to continue to make entry into the industry uncertain and expensive for the time being. The Minister wants to continue to restrict expansion and renewal for the unforeseeable future. He wants to keep the reigns pulled in on the construction sector and he wants to continue to dampen innovation and investment. He wants to continue to maintain the status quo basically which is not serving us well. I appreciate that the Minister may genuinely believe that he has the ability to maintain the value of an accommodation property by keeping the quota in place. But in my opinion he doesn't, and if he is successful in this attempt today to maintain the status quo, that being that the quota and the barrier to investment remain in place then the consequences are potentially disastrous and the last thing that our economy needs is to prolong the uncertainty and/or to delay opportunities for investment. Not only that, this proposal goes against the joint agreed objective in the Roadmap under economic development on page 5 – where the relevant aspirational goal is and I quote “tourism is focused on delivering a high quality and high value offer to attract tourists with the removal of

barriers to this as the highest priority”, and add to that the September 2011 Funding Agreement in Clause 12 (b) which said “the Government is required to reduce any regulatory or barriers to competition for any business activity” and it went on and that was supposed to have been by the end of the financial year we’ve just finished. If the Minister’s real concern is the possible devaluation, possible devaluation of accommodation businesses then why wasn’t the same concern shown for other businesses, for example the retailers and restaurateurs and cafes and when Norfolk Island changed its Immigration Policy last year which meant that new immigrants were no longer obliged to buy a business to reside on Norfolk Island. It is that policy change which is affectively eliminated a captive market of buyers wanting to come and live on the island. So I’m a bit confused as to why the Minister is asking us to continue to protect this industry when not a word was said about the other businesses. I do feel for those who have invested at the top of the market and since the tourism peak which was probably about in 2001 property values have fallen. There is no doubt and you only need to look at the recent Hotel sale to understand what I’m talking about. Some people felt that their Norfolk Island investment was going to be their retirement fund. However the outcome for some has been very different as the island is now economically depressed and I also sympathise with those who have paid substantial amounts of money in order to enter the industry in recent years, 2 or 3 years perhaps, but they have made personal business decisions. What I’m trying to say is that some perhaps unfortunate and perhaps unintended consequences have occurred as a result of past Government or individual actions, but we cannot continue down the same road allowing these things to happen again and again because somebody’s property value or ability to pay a loan may be affected. And I understand that if you were the person being protected by the current system that it’s never the right time to implement change and take that protection away from those industries. But what the changes to these laws must be about Madam Speaker is making way for the creation of a product that the consumer wants. What an expansion and/or repositioning within the industry will do is give the consumer greater choice as that is what is needed if we are to have a future. And when the industry responds by saying that there is plenty to chose from then in my opinion, sadly they are missing the point. It is true that there is already a massive over supply of tourist accommodation on the island but might I respectfully say that some of it is not what is going to attract the demographic that we are trying or supposedly trying to attract, which the high yield demographic. Norfolk Island is not a high yield destination, lets just face the facts. It’s another one of the reasons why the economy fare is so expensive across the board because there is no people up in first class or business class to subsidise the rest of the plane. It’s always been the way. And from my experience in talking to visitors over the years there is a demand for a more new opportunities for larger families and smaller groups it would appear wanting to visit the island, and we need the marketplace to be free to respond to those needs, because if we don’t those potential customers will continue to go elsewhere. We all need to ask ourselves this question. How has the quota benefited the tourist industry or the tourism industry and therefore the general

non resident investor does not have to enter into the grading system if they chose not to and they no longer need a registered Manager, big thrill. An investor will understand the value of proper grading but if an investor is looking to spend money to develop a property here, these changes will not encourage any major influx of investment, they will in fact discourage them and they will go elsewhere. I fail to see that they in any way open up the tourist accommodation sector to greater competition and therefore they don't achieve any of the objectives outlined in Mrs Wards debate. I cannot therefore support the detail stage amendments but I'm happy to support the Bill as it at least attempts to remove the real barriers and it should be progressed. Thank you.

MR SNELL

Thank you Madam Speaker. This has been a difficult time for the Minister and I congratulate him on his endeavours to come to some amicable arrangement, not only with the intended purchases of accommodation on Norfolk Island or investors into Norfolk Island but also his efforts to try and protect those in the industry that have been here for many years and have invested a lot of money in a business which they thought was going to give them adequate return. I know that some of them have met with difficult times and those we sympathise with. I intend to support the Amendments Madam Speaker on the grounds that it's a starting point but I am concerned at some of the Clauses that have been repealed, such as certain registrations of homestays and so on but I guess they can be covered elsewhere. I think the Minister has already taken into account for those in the tourist accommodation and have responded to their concerns. I don't think the conditions of the Roadmap in this respect is correct and I'm not in favour as I have said on many occasions. I think the Roadmap is flawed in some areas. The Tourist Accommodation Act was introduced for a reason, many many years ago to control an industry that could snowball to an uncontrollable level if not for the quota, and I think in the best interests of Norfolk Island Madam Speaker there needs to be some control on accommodation. I intend to support the Amendments. Thank you.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Madam Speaker. Look I'd have to say from the outset that from some of the discussion around the table including Mr Anderson's and Mrs Ward's that I agree that there needs to be the capacity for that broad innovation. However I do think that as a responsible Government decision we need to make that a staged approach. We need to take into consideration the ability for those operators in the marketplace now who have dedicated capital and time to Norfolk Island, who may need to refinance to reinvest or may need to go through any revaluation process within the next 12 months to give them the best opportunity to be able to manage that and I think by removing the quota and everything in a single swoop at the moment rather than doing a staged implementation is not the responsible way forward. There was some talk about innovation and the ability for innovation and investment particularly from when Mrs Ward was talking. Through the removal of the compulsory grading system there is plenty of room for innovation. Through the

for another Milk Bar next to half a dozen the value of the existing premises will theoretically fall, of course they will. So would the value of existing hire cars the moment you approve a new hire car licence, theoretically the value of that existing licences will decline, theoretically, perhaps imperceptibly but theoretically indeed that is what will happen. In the case of the unit licences and the values that have been placed on them well those are normal marketplace activities that have occurred. We haven't played any part in that. Our job is to create the legislative environment in which people operate and how they conduct themselves within that and trade in a normal commercial sense licences and the like is entirely up to them. Any Bank which taken them upon themselves to add significant weight in their lending valuations to the value of a licence probably doesn't deserve to be in the marketplace in the lending game because quite frankly they would in fact take a lean? over a licence but they would not give it any other than make weight value. The lending margins in a lending situation at the Bank lies with the value of mortar and brick and cement or whatever the expression is, land and buildings. It doesn't lie with the value of those licences. So I mean I accept valuers will value something as a going concern but it doesn't mean that a Bank will necessarily lend against that going concern value. So do not give that a great deal of weight. So where is my position now? I think my position is a little bit unclear to me because if we decline or turn down the detail stage amendments I would probably be inclined to agree to the Bill in its original form, even though it does not, I don't think it does. I may need to be informed about this, the Bill in its original form removes the need for a licence, correct? And the Bill in its original form removes grading entirely yes? Non compulsory well I can live with non compulsory but I believe that there ought to be an ongoing involvement in terms of licencing. So I would regret if the detail stage amendment was voted down and I was left to vote for the original Bill that I think I would have to support it even though it doesn't address those particular issues that I'm talking about there. But as far as the detail stage amendment's are concerned I don't think they go anywhere near to meeting the original objectives that was set out to be met. If there was an attendant increase in the quota then I would have a different view.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr King for that contribution because it does highlight some of the challenges that have been associated with bringing us to this point in the debate. Members will be well aware that I earlier, at least a month ago circulated the feedback from the Banks and the Value Agent as well as a proposal to engage a part of the legislation that reassesses the quota and engages a group called the gatekeepers. Now the original intention was to work on this detail stage amendment at the same time as bringing a Motion to the House to engage the gatekeepers to propose an increase to the quota. The difficulty with that within the legislation is that that is the only methodology that I can use to increase the quota. In times gone by perhaps there was another methodology that didn't require the gatekeepers to be involved but 8 (b) of the Tourist Accommodation Act deals with that and it details not only how the review should be carried out by the gatekeepers but also, and this is

unfortunately a further restriction if the gatekeepers were to endorse an increase to the quota, unfortunately in 8 (b) 4 (j) of the Act it says the Legislative Assembly shall then by resolution select those developments which are to be included in the quota increase up to the number of the increase set pursuant to this section, and the difficulty there Madam Speaker is that it's introducing another hurdle rather than introducing a staggered approach to the removal of the quota. One of the things I gave advanced warning of in the discussion today is that my intention, if the detail stage amendment is successful is to bring to the next sitting a proposed change to the Tourist Accommodation Act that deals with the quota that in effect enables an increase to the quota, through a review process but does not mean that that outcome of that review is then subject to the Assembly then further deciding who is eligible to gain a licence and who is not. So that's where I'm heading in that regard. I similarly to Mr King when he mentioned before about the Banks and the lending arrangements, at the start of this progression of evaluation to a change in the legislation had been reasonably informed by the Banking fraternity that it was bricks and mortar and the operational parameters of the business. What later came to light after commentary from the Valuer for Norfolk Island was that the values of the Unit licences had been a component and continued to be a component of the valuation, thereby leading me to the position I am now at where to take a responsible migration away from the quota I would like to put a timeframe in there that enables people to cope with it, particularly over the next 12 months as I've said.

MR KING I'm sorry I wonder if I could just ask the Minister to just explain a bit more fully his timeframe that he just spoke about in his closing words.

MR NOBBS Thank you Madam Speaker. This will be in a proposal in just the same way as the original Bill had a 3 month arrangement whereby 3 months after the first commencement of the non compulsory grading management and the third which is escaping my memory at the moment, foreign ownership thank you, that from there there was a 3 month delay to enable planning and health to encompass any of the shortfalls to assist in the deregistration of the accommodation houses of tourism. In the same vein I would seek to make an alteration to where the quota can be adjusted to enable a review of the quota, expansion of the quota and also in effect potentially a dissolving of the quota in a 12 month period.

MRS WARD Can I just add that in not supporting the detail stage amendment I understand that there is the delay mechanism within the original Bill which is 3 months so that gives those people opportunity to readjust their affairs if they so wish, but I cannot support then what goes on to being a gatekeeper, a group of people who then decide. Your leaving a hurdle in play, your leaving the hoop, the very barriers and obstacles that we are trying to get rid of in place. So I can't support that either. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER Any further debate. It seems we have exhausted debate. I will put the question that the Amendments be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT

MADAM SPEAKER I'll ask the Clerk to call the House.

MS ADAMS	AYE
MR SNELL	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	NO
MRS GRIFFITHS	AYE
MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS WARD	NO
MR KING	NO
MR ANDERSON	NO

MADAM SPEAKER The result of the voting Aye's 5 No's 4. The Amendments are agreed to. Next question that I need to put is that the Clauses as amended be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT

Would the Clerk please call the House.

MS ADAMS	AYE
MR SNELL	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	NO
MRS GRIFFITHS	AYE
MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS WARD	NO
MR KING	NO
MR ANDERSON	NO

MADAM SPEAKER The result of the voting Aye's 5 No's 4 the Clauses as amended are agreed to. Next question is that the remainder of the Bill be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT

Would the Clerk call the House.

MS ADAMS	AYE
MR SNELL	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	NO

MRS GRIFFITHS	AYE
MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS WARD	AYE
MR KING	NO
MR ANDERSON	NO

MADAM SPEAKER The result of the voting Aye's 6 No's 3. The remainder of the Bill is agreed to. Minister Nobbs I look to you for a final Motion.

MR NOBBS Madam Speaker I move that the Bill as amended be agreed to.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker. I can't let the opportunity pass without saying three points and a statement on the process. First point I'm not afraid of reform but reform must make sense. It's not the business sectors fault that its operated for decades under a predictionist's regime, in fact the business sector has survived more in spite of it, and three, this Government's responsibility is to the wellbeing of its people and that takes priority over fulfilling the obligations to the Commonwealth. Madam Speaker this Bill in its process optimizes the failings of this Legislative Assembly and I hold the Chief Minister responsible for making us all look stupid, and rest assured we do look stupid. Madam Speaker only here on Norfolk would be present a Bill to the House and then proceed to run around afterwards and do the policy development work. I know I go on and on about policy development but I do resent having to make the same contributions every time a piece of legislation is thrown in front of us or several versions of the same legislation, or legislation that is yet to come. Madam Speaker how I cringe to see the Minister for Tourism holding a Public Meeting on this issue after the Bill had been presented to this House. Also I cringe with the fact that after the Bill had been presented to the House does the Minister decide to contact the Banks and the Land Valuers and hence these Detail Stage Amendments. The Minister has once again a good idea and run with it. What compounds our current problem is the Chief Minister thinks that optimism, commitment and an agile mind are qualities that should see us through, that he should continually support and that these qualities will see us through our darkest times – I don't think so. Madam Speaker it's not just the process that's been a joke, it's our message. If we do this to those who invested their savings in Norfolk, what are we really saying to those we want to attract. If we pass this message our Bill is come and bury your money on Norfolk Island where your investment will be valued as long as we don't have any bright ideas, and we need to change our fine print to read – our terms and conditions are subject to random ???? changed. We can open this island as much as we like to investors but that will work if and only if investors feel that they play a valuable role in this community. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Griffiths. Further debate on the question that the Bill be agreed to.

MRS WARD Thank you Madam Speaker. I'm just going to highlight as people have noted that I have voted finally for the remainder of the Bill. That is because there are very important Clauses within this Bill, that is the removal of the non resident restrictions, the non compulsory grading etc so they are good pieces. It's a democracy you know, I have to accept that 5 people voted to retain the quota system in place. All I can do now to represent those people who believe that the decision that was made today was the wrong one, protectionism stifles innovation. I will work and support the Minister to move forward with whatever mechanisms and changes he can make to the legislation to increase the quota, because that's effectively what he's going to do. It's going to be the same result colleagues, it will be the same result. It's just a mechanism is left in place where there continues to be some Government control. Whether I like it or not that's what 5 Members here voted for. So that is why I have supported the remainder of that Bill and I will now support the Minister in the Government's direction to move on. I thank Minister Sheridan for his courage because I don't know what's happened to the Norfolk Island Government that was committed to creating a private sector economy that was diverse and robust and drove growth. You know a couple of months ago the Government was saying that proposed changes to the tourist accommodation area was important because they had the ability to create immediate new investment to the island. So I'm disappointed with what happened today. I thought that we as an Assembly had a responsibility to do everything that we could to open both our economy and our society particularly in these difficult times. It's our job to plan for the future to put policy in place and changes to legislation that would reboot and drive the economy as quickly as possible, not to just delay the process further. We all have a job to do. I'll leave it at that thanks Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER Any further debate before I put the question.

QUESTION PUT

Would the Clerk please call the House.

MS ADAMS	AYE
MR SNELL	AYE
MR SHERIDAN	NO
MRS GRIFFITHS	AYE
MR BUFFETT	AYE
MR NOBBS	AYE
MRS WARD	AYE
MR KING	NO
MR ANDERSON	NO

MADAM SPEAKER The results of the voting the Aye's 6 the No's 3. The Bill as amended is agreed to. Honourable Members that concludes the substantive matters on the Notice Paper on the Programme today. We move now to dicing of the next Sitting Day.

MRS GRIFFITHS Thank you Madam Speaker. I move that this House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday 17th October 2012 at 10.00am.

MADAM SPEAKER Thank you any debate?

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MADAM SPEAKER We move now to Adjournment.

MR KING I move that this House do now adjourn.

MR SNELL Thank you Madam Speaker I'd like to make a Statement in the Adjournment debate regarding my recent representation at the CPA conference in Sri Lanka. For those who were at the Members meeting yesterday this is a bit of a repetition for them and I will of course accept if they wish to leave the House Madam Speaker, I won't be insulted. Madam Speaker the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is a very important part of Norfolk Island's democracy here on Norfolk Island we've been members of the CPA for many years and it's a very important tool in regards to accountability, transparency and democracy in any small State or Territory and of course larger ones at that. The conference was represented by 54 countries, there are up to 800 delegates, supporters at the conference in Colombo in Sri Lanka. For Me it was a very interesting and sometimes unnerving cultural experience. It's a totally different environment to which I have experienced anywhere else in the world. The conference itself covered many areas, in particular the small branches conference, and this was the 32nd small branches conference. There were also areas of the CPA Working Group that also met there for which Norfolk Island is part of the Australian contingent and the CPA Working Party was chaired by members from Western Australia Barry House from the Senate Steven Parry and also Senator ? Polly. Many areas were covered there in particular concerns relating to the administration of the CPA of the General Secretary Dr William Sheja and there were concerns in that area of which Australia is looking at making some amendments which will be discussed obviously at CPA Meetings at a later time. Madam Speaker the areas that I was concerned with I've dot pointed. I won't go into too much detail but firstly I'd like to mention a previous remark I made concerning the GST tourist refund scheme which is applicable in Australia, in Singapore but I didn't have the opportunity to see it in Sri Lanka as I left at some ungodly hour of the morning. But I think Madam Speaker that's an area where Norfolk Island should look at to assist the failing shopping here on Norfolk and to assist the retailers in their efforts to try and keep their head above

water. We've looked at the proposed amendments or the amendments to the Tourist Accommodation Act. We should also look the opportunity to help with the retailers here on Norfolk to move some of their product and I think a GST tourist refund scheme could work here on Norfolk Island. Obviously with proof of payments, goods presented before check in, minimum amounts and the other details to be worked out. I will of course in due course ask the Minister responsible if we could look at this further and I'm sure it would be a benefit to the retailers in Burnt Pine and elsewhere on the island. But getting back to the conference Madam Speaker. some of the points discussed in the Small Branches Section is again the security of Bills and the impact of Bills on island's such as this where the population is small and it was discussed that Bills should be put before, details of Bills should be put before a Committee in our case the Impact of Bills Committee before they are then brought to the House. Other areas is the Association of small semi autonomous countries like ours in relation to sovereign powers that any decisions made by the sovereign power or the Government of that place should be as approval and a recommendation from the people. The people makes the decision in these areas and that was also discussed. Referendums in our case where impacts are of great importance to the people should be made by the people. There were discussions on the relevance of the GDP gross domestic produce for areas and whether the GDP which was introduced in 1930 which once measured produce and was what was produced and the measures of the progress of the economy, not the wellbeing of the economy and whether Norfolk Island should relook at what GDP does here and of course smaller islands have also reviewed GDP in their areas. We also looked at the importance of the modern technology as it is today and areas like St Lucia confirms the importance of modern technology, areas like St Helena, the islands of Jersey, Guernsey the Isle of Man and many others of that small nature relies very heavily on modern technology and without modern technology Madam Speaker is the need to improve our communications and connectivity, and hopefully tomorrow we'll hear a little bit more about the importance of that. But certainly it was a very very important part of the conference that without modern technology the ability to connect is a detriment in any community and certainly effects immigration. If we were to improve the financial status of Norfolk Island the immigration, the revenue source, we've got to have the technology to do it. And I think technology now takes more precedence over immigration and it's something we should wholeheartedly embrace and support. We also discussed areas of what will happen to Norfolk Island once we've changed the setup that we have here. If we lose our independence as we have or our uniqueness that we have here today. If we sign over all our responsibilities to our sovereign power Australia, is there any chance of going back, and there is none. Once we sign anything away there is no possibility that the conference discussed as going back to how it was before. So we have to take particular note that anything we do in this regard of signing our responsibilities over to another power we will probably never get it back again. We also discussed the importance of women in parliament and women in parliament is of course a very important section of any democracy and the general agreement was that women of course should stand

for parliament on equal status of men and they should be encouraged but no special provision should be made to accommodate them as is the reserving of seats specifically for women. They did state that many women parliamentarians could not go to conferences like this one simply because of family commitments and that that was appreciated but they didn't put any reservations on whether they should protect a particular seat or give any particular benefits to women to enter parliament. We talked about parliamentarians and their pay. In Falkland's parliamentarians don't get paid, they do get paid but not on a salary basis like we have here. They get allowances for attending meetings and the Executives of those Parliaments get paid a lot more. It was discussed dual careers for Parliamentarians, that is obviously like myself and many others with different jobs. It is understood that that is a necessary part of being a Parliamentarian in small countries like ours where we have different jobs to supplement the salaries or the allowances from Parliament. They also spoke of the barter or small car boot sales type employment within an island or any small community. Something where people sell goods or services in a small scale. It's one that even though the returns are small it's something that should be allowed to continue and we have that type of infrastructure on the island here with small businesses that we know carry on, and they contribute to our GST. Some may and some may not, but it is a part of any small community and it's one that was discussed and one which was accepted that should go on. Fair competition in any area was discussed but they did also note that in some areas some competition is necessary. They also made reference to again the similarities of Norfolk Island to other areas and the question of constitutional relationships also came under discussion. Madam Speaker I won't go on with too much more but it was an opportunity, it was an area that I'm appreciative to have been to. It does highlight the similarities Norfolk Island to other places and it was certainly I think in the future, it is certainly necessary that Norfolk Island attend these conferences. Thank you Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER

Thank you Mr Snell. Is there any further

debate.

MS ADAMS

Thank you Madam Acting Deputy Speaker. I'll be as brief as possible. At the August Sitting I gave notice of my intention to move a Motion re Norfolk Island building on our links with the Pacific with the mutual benefit of the Commonwealth of Australia, Norfolk Island and our friends in the Pacific, and at that time I indicated that the precursor to moving the Motion was to consult with my colleagues, my Assembly colleagues, and this I did at our meeting on the 28th August our weekly meeting. Members present were in general agreement that the CPA Executive Committee already had the ability to progress the concept and supported we quote "just get on and do it". On the basis that if a future activity requires endorsement to give further substance to it then that is the time to bring it to the House. I have on my hat at the moment which I could have performed up there at the Chair but I have on my hat of CPA Branch President of the Norfolk Island Branch, and as Branch President I can

advise that we're proceeding on that basis and today for the listening public and for recording in Hansard I'll now give some brief background to the initiative and provide an update of where we are travelling hopefully into the future. But just to recap so to set the tone. In 2007 CPA London posed a twinning relationship between developed and developing branches of the CPA, and as a consequence the Australian States and Territories entered into twinning relationships with the Pacific island branches. Today the concept of twinning relationships has been renamed as one of building Parliamentary partnerships and at the suggestions earlier this year of Professor Richard Her OAM and Regional CPA Secretary Mr ? the Norfolk Island Branch of the CPA took a decision that Norfolk enter into a parliamentary partnership with Nuie and other Pacific island in Polynesia with whom Norfolk shares a number of parliamentary similarities, namely we have non party political parliaments, we are small in size and we have limited resources. So Norfolk's potential role in the Pacific present and future. To set the tone of why Norfolk Island has the potential to be a bridge to the Pacific I turned originally to a report published in November last year by Professor Richard her and Dr Anthony Bergin. The publication "strategy, our near abroad, Australia and Pacific Island's regionalism" was produced under the auspices of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute ASPI, and organisation established and partly funded by the Australian Government and an independent non partisan policy institute. Norfolk Island is mentioned in the report several times and whilst I won't repeat all of those I will mention one of them. Under the particular comments that adds weight to the bridging concept is on page 70 and it says "Australia has a substantial Pacific Island population as Table 7 demonstrates. Moreover 2 communities within Australian Territory have ethnic linkages with the region. The people of the Torres Strait Islands are well aware of their Melanesian heritage as are the Norfolk Islanders of their Polynesian ancestry. Both groups can be bridges from Australia into the region". CPA Regional Secretary ?? visited here in April this year, his first visit. On his return to Canberra he wrote to me proposing a number of possibilities and I won't go into all of those today but this one it topical to the statement that I'm making here. Norfolk Island be considered as a venue for any workshops that may be co-ordinated by the Australian Region CPA Secretariat, including under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships Programme recognising the opportunity to use Norfolk Island as a bridge between the Australian and the Pacific regions of the CPA and Australia and the Pacific more broadly. Discussions with Regional Secretary ??? are ongoing on how to build the bridge including the holding of workshops or seminars on professional development, public accounts committee, legislative scrutiny, new member induction, etc etc and we are currently waiting to hear whether we are to host a Pacific presiding Officers 2 day workshop in December if new Caledonia is unable to, and for a public accounts committee being hosted here early next year. Fundings for all of these activities will be met from sources outside of Norfolk Island. Honourable Members I believed it was important for the community to have an understanding of the benefits that potentially can accrue to the Commonwealth of Australia to Norfolk Island and to our friends in the Pacific by Norfolk Island actively working with the Commonwealth to build on Australia's

links to the Pacific by using Norfolk Island as a bridge between the two regions.
Thank you.

ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER Thank you. Is there any further debate.
I then put the question that the Motion be agreed to.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

This House stands adjourned until Wednesday 17th October 2012 at 10.00am.