



**NORFOLK ISLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
14TH NILA HANSARD – 26 JUNE 2013**

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR MR DAVID PORTER MLA

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the House for Mr David Raymond Porter

SPEAKER: Thank you Mr Evans. Honourable Members, is leave granted? Thank you. Leave is granted?

CONDOLENCES

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

MR EVANS Mr Speaker it is with regret that this House records the passing of **Britney Quintal Christian** who sadly passed away on the 8th June. Britney was born in October 1993 the daughter of April and Darren. Britney was the most loyal sister to Dylan and Carissa and was so proud to become an Aunt to Taj and later Zya. She will be remembered by her friends as a powerful and influential young girl. Brit was a straight shooter and knew what she wanted in life. "She was on a mission". At three years old Brit was already on her motor bike. A girl of action, dedication, determination, little stubborn and always in momentum. Brit did nothing by halves. Brit grew up on Norfolk with the freedom of youth offered to all at Carscade Heights, surrounded by carefully constructed shortcuts of holes through and under hedges between the houses of her extended family and friends. Growing up with the fun, support and love of her uncles, aunts, grandparents and copious amounts of cousins and friends, she was a true Norfolk Island girl. She idolised her sister and cousins and valued nothing more than her family and close friends. Brit was a Godmother, Daughter, Niece, Goddaughter, great granddaughter, partner in crime, best friend and extremely devoted partner to Tom Robertson. She was so many beautiful things to so many people and was extra special to her Pa and Pop. Her life was numerically short but she lived each day in the fast lane. In her 19 years her achievements and outgoing lifestyle fitted in so much living. Britney exhibited the sporting ability and talent that every parent would be proud of. She loved sport and was a natural at anything she tried. From the Kindy Cup, the first girl to ever win, and holding that place right up until she was Captain in her last year at school. Brit's sporting victories continued until she left us, with achievements and cupboards full of trophies in athletics, netball, and touch football both on and off island. Mr Speaker I may as well chuck in there that she was a very good player at rugby league, that was just omitted there, but I have great privilege to note Brittany in her rugby league career and if half of the boys could play as good as she was we'd e a very good team. She was proudly captain of Nepean and excelled in the role, leading the team and she still holds many records at the school - "Green goes faster" according to Brit. She was an avid netballer and her skills saw her represent Norfolk Island, on numerous occasions as Captain as well as representing in discus and shot putt where she won Bronze, playing against girls three times her size. Valerie Adams, New Zealand Olympic medallist and World Champion said "Britney was by far the best athlete she had

seen on Norfolk Island". In 2010 Brit received the Australia Day Sports Woman of the Year Award. The loss of such a vibrant, lively character with such a big personality and dynamic, positive attitude, is a loss to our community. To her mother April, her father Darren, Dylan, Carissa and her family, to the extended family and many friends, this House extends its sincere sympathy.

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

PETITIONS

We move to the matter of petitions. Are there any petitions this morning?.

GIVING OF NOTICES

Are there any notices?

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Are there any questions without notice Honourable Members

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker my question is to the Minister for Finance. Would the Minister outline the policy objective behind the proposed increase in duty and explain the process that must be followed leading up to the introduction of the Bill to increase taxes including duty.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mrs Ward for the question. Mr Speaker I did touch on this in my Appropriation Bill speech but the essence of the increase in the duty to 18% for personal imports is that now with the advent, it's so much easier for the community to import directly from a manufacturer or a wholesaler off shore. You might say the Government's tax take was being reduced somewhat. So just to ensure that the Government's tax take you might say is maintained at a certain level the increase to 18% ensures that a product that's imported by an individual direct and/or if the same individual bought the same product from a retailer on island the tax take to the Government would be virtually the same. So that's the intent behind it and the process for the implementation of this increase is of course an amendment to the Act will have to be done and then that of course follows the normal process where it will have to come before this House and get evaluated by the Members here and then see whether or not it is approved. There is the possibility that it may not be approved. I will say Mr Speaker that the increase to 18% is only for personal imports, it does not affect food at all, food remains at 6%.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker a supplementary if I may. Would the Minister be prepared at this stage to indicate whether or not he was open to examining other proposals including the reduction in duty threshold and the personal item duty rate.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. Of course I'm always open for suggestions about ways that we could further maximise some income to the Governments tax take you might say, but I think 18% on the import of personal items is sufficient I don't think we will consider that again, but the reduction in the threshold, that was considered in the construction of the budget. Currently it sits at \$100 per item or import and the assessment that was done indicated that by removing that or reducing that would not have brought any significant funds into the Government's tax machine.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker , again to the Minister for Finance. Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island legislative Assembly recently reaffirmed its commitment to adopt the Australian Competition Principles Agreement and if so would

the Minister explain how competitive neutrality principles are being applied to the Post Office retail section.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and again Mrs Ward for the question. Yeah that's correct the Government has adopted the Competitive neutrality principles and in relation to the Post Office the goods there that they do import, and they do compete against the private sector in some areas but the costs under the Competition Neutrality Principles they have to ensure that full Commonwealth State or Territory taxes or tax equivalents are imposed on those goods and in this instance the full costs of freight, lighterage, rent, profit margin are included in the mark up and Norfolk Post of course pays the GST to the Government on these items. So where possible the full cost of importing those goods are placed onto those goods so there is no advantage over the private sector. The only advantage that they may have is through their buying power through Australia Post and local businesses can take advantage of this purchase power that Australia Post have and make an order of items through the Norfolk Island Post Office and they would be landed and provided to these people at cost plus GSY>

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Can I have a supplementary to that. I have a question in relation to the Competition Policy Principles and the Minister dais at the last meeting the services retained in the public ??? placed on the level playing field with the private sector. What do you mean by this Minister. You've just mentioned something about the well paying all duties but is there any other requirements.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. The requirements for the other entities I spoke about two weeks ago or last month whenever it was that these business activities that the Government runs, if they are corporatised they would be, what would be imposed on them is that the full cost of the cost of the goods that they deliver would be imposed upon them. There would not be any benefits or reductions that the Government would give them, exactly the same as the retail sector, the private retail sector. They have to pay the full cost of everything and the Government would not subsidise them in any way.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. So the principles actually bind the public sector should a GBE be divested to the private sector, so the principle is still involved.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Yes the principles would still be involved, yes.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Does that relate to mark up on the goods. Is there control on that or not.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. The control on mark up is something that we have to come to grips with and that would be done by a independent regulator. That would ensure that your mark up on your goods are not overly done and that they are comparative to the private sector you might say. So that's something that we do have to introduce and that is the intention when we go through this assessment process of our business activities that the introduction of a independent price regulator would have to be brought on board, somebody like IPAC which is mentioned in a couple of reports.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Would that then apply to across the board, to all private enterprise, this price regulator or just eh GBE's that are divested.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I'm quite sure that it would apply to the private sector as well ,across the board. Say for fuel, or if we're talking

about electricity prices, or if there was another electricity provider or another telecommunications provider, yes it would apply to all of them.

MRS WARD A supplementary if I may on that. Setting aside the Competition Policy Principles is it this Governments intention to continue to compete with the private sector in areas such as postal supplies or does the Government intend to move away from competing with the private sector in the next 12 months.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. I don't believe that a firm decision has been made as to whether or not we will not compete with the private sector accept at this current time there is a policy such as the Post Office that they do and they do it on a full cost basis. I believe that's the policy at the moment. When we assess these business activities these GBE's as they are called of course whether or not they are privatised it's how they are going to be reorganised, commercialised. If some of those activities are that they do compete with the private sector they would be done on a full cost basis equivalent to what the private sector has to put up with.

MRS WARD Is it a fact that the Norfolk Island Government Revenue has become so reliant on the profits made by for example the Post Office which competes in competition with the private sector that it cannot wean itself from those activities at this stage.

MR SHERIDAN No it's not a fact Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD So then would the Minister explain why the Government will not consider at this stage moving away from competing with the private sector.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Because at this point in time the policy is that, in particular we're talking about the Post Office the policy there is that they do participate with any products that Australia Post supplies and they supply them to the community with the full cost imposed upon them. They allow themselves to sell any products that Australia Post has in their brochures. So ok it does assist in them being more profitable but that's not the sole aim of it no. It's providing a service.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Just a two part question to the Minister for Finance if I may. Minister do you agree for the islands long term sustainability it is essential to urgently strengthen the economy including diversification and expansion by new investors or investment.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. Yes I agree, it's very essential.

MR NOBBS The second part if I may. In relation to new investment opportunities what do you see as the islands competitive edge in attracting such investment.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Very difficult question there Mr Nobbs because if it was so simple it would have already been done. I won't say that I'm a wizard of, and I know all the answers. I rely on maybe the private sector to come here and talk to us about some endeavours that they may wish to introduce and where we can assist them in achieving their aims. I don't have a clear view you might say Mr Speaker on exactly what are the areas that should be looked at. We're hoping that with the removal of our quarantine you might say restrictions after this AQUIS Pest and Disease Survey, that may open up some opportunities for exports. The recent announcement for the grant for the upgrade of the Cascade Pier may open the door for some further opportunities. But It's very difficult to say and if anybody does have any areas that they believe that the economy could improve I'm all ears.

MR NOBBS Just a third part. I was really looking at the competitive edge that the island may have in relation land taxing and those sorts of things really but in the preparation for the budget did you or your officers see any issues with new policies included in the budget that could possibly impact on the competitive edge that we hold well we believe we hold at this present time through a low taxing arrangement.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. No I don't believe that any increases in the budget you might say have removed any advantage that Norfolk Island has already you might say. We may be a low tax environment at the moment but there is a lot out there in the business industry that believe that we should be taxed so that they get the benefits from being in the taxation system. So whether or not just being a low tax environment creates the benefit I'm no too sure. The truth will be in the pudding you might say and we are yet to see it.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I just have a couple of questions for the Chief Minister if I may. Would he be so kind as to provide details of how the recent Funding Agreement with the Commonwealth was negotiated. I've been asked the question and I pass it on.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. Mr Speaker the Funding Agreement proposal was handles by Officers of the Service and as Members would be aware the meetings were conducted over the period of the 11th to the 14th June and the Norfolk Island representatives were the Acting Chief Executive Officer, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the Acting Chief of Staff Mr John Gross. Secretarial services were provided by the Acting Senior Policy Adviser Sharyn Quintal. On behalf of the Department of Representatives were the First Assistant Secretary Robin Fleming and the Assistant Secretary Bruce Tullone. The Administrator Chaired the meetings and was assisted by his Executive Officer Mr Keith Young. The consultation and clarifications of these meetings Mr Speaker conducted by George Plant and Alison Savoury and the Funding Agreement was discussed at that time and reported back to the Government.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Was there a facilitator at that. Was the Chairman the Administrator actually in the role as a facilitator or a Commonwealth representative.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. As I understand it Mr Speaker the Administrator was the facilitator for the meetings.

MR NOBBS I just have a question here. It might be going over the line Mr Speaker and you can pull me up whenever you like. Is it the role for an Administrator to be such a facilitator and how is the variation to what is the Administrator's role as established in stone as they say by the Commonwealth's own legislation and Norfolk Island Act being so varied.

MR SPEAKER Yes I think I'll allow that to be responded to. It's an endeavour to give a statement and you might like to try and respond to that Chief Minister

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. It is a question that has legal ramifications Mr Nobbs and I would have to take that question On Notice.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker . Again to the Minister for Finance. Is it a fact that the April milestones issues as mentioned by the Administrator were in the area of telecommunications specifically the ADSL contract and if so, would the Minister explain what the compliance concerns were and what changes have been made to satisfy the Commonwealth Departments requirements.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. Yes there was for the April milestones there was a requirement to have an access to the telecommunications infrastructure and in particular to ADSL to interested internet service providers. The product that was put out was sent to the Department for certification that it met the milestones and the Department had the ACCC run their eyes over the document and they came back with a few concerns. These concerns were passed on to the Administration and those concerns were rectified and they were the areas that such as the terms that should be defined to ensure that there is an obligation of Norfolk Island Telecom to act bona fides. They say there would appear to be anti competitive. There was a clause in there that restricted line sharing and again they believe this clause needed to be removed. There is a section in there about a notice period for suspension of services which they believe that could lead to services being cut without notice. They believe a notice period needed to be included. A dispute resolution process wasn't tight enough and they wanted that enhanced. The actual in the document it provided the Norfolk Island Telecom with access to the property of the access seeker. They believe that there is an excessive demand you might say for Norfolk Island Telecom to have this unlimited period of access to competitors property. So that needed to be adjusted as well. There was no time frame in there that Norfolk Island Telecom has to fix its faults which could impede a competitor, so they wanted a time frame in there so that these faults would be fixed by a certain time etc. The last one was that the document required access seeker staff needed to be accompanied at all times by Norfolk Telecom staff creates potential conflict. This is in the ACCC's views, so that needed to be redrafted and addressed. So those items were addressed and the document has been forwarded to the Department for assurance that it does meet the April milestones and to date I don't believe that we've heard anything back whether or not it has milestones or not. But those were the areas and that document has been tidied up to satisfy the concerns of the ACCC.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. I've got a question for the Minister for Finance also. Minister there is confusion in the community in relation to the terminology being used when stating that the GBE's will be divested. What does this actually mean.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. When we talk about the divestment of the GBE's we're talking about a process that is currently underway, well a contract's been let by the Commonwealth for an assessment process to be written up and there to assist us with the assessment of two of the Business Enterprises which are the Liquor Bond and Norfolk Telecom. That's just the assessment process, then they would during this process they would provide to the Norfolk Island Government a template so that we could assess any or each or all of the GBE's as we may wish, but at the end of the day, after this assessment it's the decision of this House, of this Government as to what we would do with it, whether we would privatise them, whether we'd keep them in Government hands, whether we amalgamate them with somebody else to make them profitable, whether we close the business down. All of these options are on the table but until the assessment process is undertaken there will be no certainty as to what will happen to these business activities.

MR NOBBS Thank you Mr Speaker. Minister is it correct that the Federal Government budget showed assistance to Norfolk Island well in excess of \$5m yet only \$4.4m is included in the Norfolk Island Government budget. Where is the remaining money.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs for the question. I believe this has been stated many a time. Yes there was some \$5.4m allocated in the budget line item \$4.4m was for current expenditure, \$500,000 of the extra was to provide for the provision of the ANAO and the Ombudsman services to be delivered to Norfolk Island and the other \$500,000 was to allow some additional services in the area of age care assessment, some social services, apprenticeships and there

what the formal process is with newly granted residents by citizenship under Section 28 (a) who literally within days, weeks or months decide they are departing the island, clearly with no intention to reside ordinarily in Norfolk Island.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. It is an issue and I will respond by taking it On Notice and come back to you with an authoritative response on that one, but yes it is an issue.

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. In the case of the PRNIV or Permanent Resident of Norfolk Island Visa label being placed in passports and particularly newly granted residents who then decide to depart the island. Can the Minister advise if the PRNIV label is cancelled upon departure as this clearly shows no intention of residing ordinarily in Norfolk Island.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Again I'll take that On Notice. They are question that require authoritative response, not off the top of my head.

MR EVANS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker to Ms Adams. What is the validity of the PRNIV label.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, that's a very good question. I would have thought it was ongoing until such time as the provisions in the current legislation were invoked which allows the Minister by certain processes if people have been absent from the island for 3 years to take certain action to revoke residency, but there is a process under the law that can be followed but I'm equally prepared to take that On Notice and give you a more authoritative response on that.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. A supplementary if I may to that question thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Is it a fact that the Immigration Officers have been instructed not to process residency applications because the Immigration don't have the right forms, and if so, does that mean that those people who have already received their residency using the old forms are invalid.

MS ADAMS On the basis that that is perhaps is requesting a legal advice asking if those forms are invalid, I will take it On Notice. I can say to you however I raise that concern myself and no, definitely not. The existing form is my advice was appropriate at ?? either in this weeks Gazette or next weeks Gazette new forms which I have the power to make under the Regulation 9 I think it is 9 or 10 of the Immigration Act we'll be putting out new forms.

MRS WARD A supplementary if I may Mr Deputy Speaker because that wasn't particularly clear to me. So is the Minister saying that yes, she did give instruction to the Officers to not accept or process residency applications because there are not the correct forms to be used at the moment.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I had doubt myself around this issue, I have not issued an instruction but I've said I would look at it immediately and did with the legal Department who advised me that there was no problem with actions that had been taken and the actions that would be taken into the future once the forms were gazetted.

MRS WARD So in other words the question is is there anything wrong with the Department using the current forms. So what I said is actually incorrect. The Immigration Officers have not been instructed to stop processing residency applications under 28 (a)

MS ADAMS No absolutely not. I've got them on my desk now....

DEPUTY SPEAKER Order order. Can we have questions and answers Q and A style, not conversations please. I

MS ADAMS I've completed my answer thank you.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I ask a question of the Chief Minister. Chief Minister at our last sitting which was just after an announcement by Federal Minister King on the Cascade Pier project. At the time I asked there did not seem to be clarity about the content of the \$13m. Is the Chief Minister able to now give us clarity in terms of the content of the \$13m about the Cascade Pier project.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett for the question. Yes there is some clarity regarding the content of that \$13m allocation but if the Deputy Speaker may, because I didn't bring those papers with me, if I could ask my Minister for the Environment if he has any, could he answer that.

MR WARD Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes I do have some material here from the Service about the Cascade Pier and what they have advised me is that while formal public announcements have been made as to the success of our application there are a number of preliminary steps that need to be addressed before the project can be commenced. The Australian Government requires that a signed Funding Agreement be in place before any of the IGAF ? grant is paid and the agreement will set out the terms and conditions on which grant funding is provided. It is usual practice that there will be schedules and annex ures to the agreement that will set out milestones regarding the projects payments, schedules and reporting requirements. The milestones will be derived from the grant application as lodged and approved. The agreement will be reviewed prior to execution on behalf of the Norfolk Island Government. It would be inappropriate to enter into any binding financial commitments before the Funding Agreement is fully executed by both Governments. We expect that the draft Funding Agreement will be received within two to three weeks. It is also common knowledge that because of the Federal election to be held on 14th September 2013. As a result in accordance with the caretaker conventions the caretaker period will commence on 12th August 2013. Under the Caretaker Conventions Governments avoid entering into major contracts during caretaker period. This might give rise to complications if the Funding Agreement regarding the grant is not executed before the caretaker period commences. Our understanding however is that the Funding Agreement for the Cascade Pier project should be formally executed well before caretaker ? issues arise.

MR BUFFETT A supplementary Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank you for those responses and the information there is interesting and useful. It doesn't come to the number of questions I asked however. Maybe if I could phrase it in another way to the Chief Minister. The Cascade Cliff Project as I understand it and you may correct me if I am wrong in this had a total cost of \$14.9m. It had three main components, that is the pier, barges and the crane. Is the Chief Minister able to indicate in the \$13m allocation which of those three components are endeavoured to be covered.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and thank you Mr Buffett for the question. Yes regrettably it has been indicated to us that the allocation of funds for the barges and the crane are not included in the \$13m. The \$13m is for the construction and improvement to the Cascade Jetty and associated costs.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. A supplementary please. Thank you chief Minister for that answer. Could I ask then in the context of that answer whether the \$13m is designed to cover all of the pier costs.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett for the question. It is my understanding that there will be detail survey work conducted and it is

understood from expertise advice that the \$13m will be adequate to cover the proposal of the extensions to the Cascade Jetty.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Chief Minister for that information. Could I just share this with the Chief Minister and ask him. There is an understanding in some quarters that maybe the cost of the pier is \$13.2m therefore there may well be a shortfall in terms of Commonwealth funding and the cost of the real project. If that is the case well then I invite the Chief Minister to let me know whether that is the case or not and if it is the case is the Chief Minister able to tell us where the \$200,000 may come from.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I might ask the Minister for Finance within the budget if there is an answer to that question.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and yes the funding for this project as the Chief Minister has alluded to and Mr Buffett that the ??? grant was for only \$13m The cost for the jetty and our estimates was \$13,2m as Mr Buffett has said. Also the cost of the crane was \$1.4m and there was some geotechnical investigation and a shed construction of some \$270,000. This equated to the \$14.9m for the total project. The \$14,9m was requested through the funding. We got \$13m and it left us \$1,9m short and this funding has had to be put into our forward estimates and I will talk to that later when we talk about the Appropriation Bill but it will have to be sourced from other sources, whether it's the Administration or Government sources or some partner funding arrangements that we can have with some private sector enterprises. So that's where the money is sitting at this point in time.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank the Minister for Finance for that very helpful response. Could I then ask in the context of all of that, the Chief Minister a further question which is really following on the Minister for Finance's response just now. In terms of a need for further funding and whilst I can understand that that has been projected in the years that are to come, does the Chief Minister have in mind any areas of exploration to gain those funds totalling \$1.9m so that the totality of the Cascade Pier project may be fulfilled.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett for the question. It's a little bit hypothetical at this time but we are...

MR BUFFETT The project's not..

MR SNELL The project's not but the question is Mr Speaker. I'm trying to answer that the hopefully in the near future we may have some private interest in providing some of the requirements, funding for the provision of barges and/or the crane, but at the moment there is nothing in concrete over that proposal Mr Deputy Speaker so the answer to the question is that no there is not unless the Minister for Finance can give me some more detail on it, but in my opinion there is no further...

MR SHERIDAN I'll just say Mr Deputy Speaker. In our forward estimates for 14/15 years it's \$4.5m deficit. In the forward years of 14/16 this is where this \$1.9m has been injected into and it takes it out to an \$8.9m deficit and of course in 16/17 \$3.5m deficit. Of course these deficits are deficits because they are unfunded at this point in time. How we are to fund those will have to be worked out between now and then. Now whether it's through application through some further grant assistance, whether it's through a private, joint arrangement with some private enterprises, whether we obtain monies through the divestment programme for our GBE's, if the decision is made to divest a couple of these GBE's to private enterprise, the monies from those sales would be quarantined for capital work, capital expenditure work as has been indicated in the ACEL Tasman Report. That's the recommendation there that any monies made from sale of assets would be provided for future infrastructure work you might say. So there are a couple of options open to us already that we can pursue and

that's what we must do in the immediate future, because as I say those deficits are unfunded at this point in time.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank Minister Sheridan for those helpful responses, and again given those responses could I ask the Chief Minister whether he has set a time frame to address this matter of the unfunded amounts of money to complete the Cascade Cliff project, to identify such funding arrangements, has he set a time frame.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett. Only to the extent to which the Finance Minister has detailed in his last reply. Up until 2015/16. But to answer the question no I don't have any more information than what has been transferred this morning.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Could I ask the Chief Minister when he might be able to advise us when he does have information about this important project.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett for the question. The contract hasn't been signed, the details haven't been worked out yet. We're hoping for the Funding Agreement which as indicated by Minister Ward will come to us within the next two to three weeks. When we have that we will have a clearer understanding of what our requirements will be.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and I thank the Chief Minister for that information. That information related to the \$13m where there is money. My question really was about the unfunded area. When the Chief Minister might be able to advise us about options for covering the unfunded areas of \$1.9m

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett. I can't give a clear answer on that at this time and I'd have to take that On Notice.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. A further question to the Chief Minister. I thank the Chief Minister for the briefing that he arranged for all Members of the Assembly yesterday when we had a meeting of members, that's our weekly meeting, and this was about the forward movement in terms of the Funding Agreement, and the Funding Agreement does indicate a number of studies to be undertaken. Some questions were raised on this matter earlier in question time. My question to the Chief Minister now is are there a number of studies that have been listed for us and explained for us in that briefing that present Officers of the Service may well be able to undertake, but in fact the Chief Minister has indicated that he is about to dispense with the services of at least one person who may well be able to undertake such reports.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett. As I understand it is Mr Buffett asking that will there be studies undertaken by the Service in regards to the Funding Agreement.

MR BUFFETT Yes in terms of the briefing yesterday there are a number of studies identified and my question is to seek confirmation from the Chief Minister that he is dispensing with a member of staff who may well be able to undertake some of these studies in lieu of going outside, which means additional cost.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. The conditions of the Funding Agreement milestones will be adhered to. Any studies related to compliance with those conditions will be conducted by the Service.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. It has been noted that there is an advertisement for an Administration Painter in the Government Gazette.

Would the Chief Minister explain the justification behind the advertisement considering the Norfolk Island Government budget statement which said that there is a recruitment freeze on.

DEPUTY SPEAKER Is that directed to the Minister for Finance.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Could I ask for the question again please. I was distracted at the time.

MRS WARD It has been noted that an advertisement for an Administration Painter is in the Government Gazette. Would the Chief Minister explain the justification behind this advertisement considering that the Norfolk Island Government budget statement which has been tabled by the Minister for Finance has said that there is recruitment freeze on.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. Yes you are quite right, there will be a freeze on the Public Service recruitment and people leaving the Service as we have indicated will not be replaced. That position that has been mentioned is under review and there will be some response to the review given to the Members in due course, but it is being reviewed and you are quite right that it doesn't contravene an earlier statement.

MRS WARD A supplementary if I may Mr Deputy Speaker. Is that saying that there is some question over the justification position that was put forward originally by the Acting CEO. Is the Government now questioning that justification.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. What we are trying to do is to comply with earlier considerations and commitments by this Government. We will discuss the necessity of these positions with the respective Departments on applicability of whether they should be continued with or they should be put on hold for the time being.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Is the Chief Minister saying that it is now the Government that will ascertain whether these positions are justifiable or not.

MR SNELL Mr Deputy Speaker. No the Government doesn't micro manage. The Government will give assistance to the CEO, the CEO will make that decision through his Officers.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I raised some questions earlier and others have raised questions about the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement sets out requirements to be done by the Norfolk Island Government. I'd like to ask the Chief Minister the other side of the ledger.. The Roadmap sets out those essential items required to be done by the Australian Government as opposed to those things to be done by the Norfolk Island Government and the Australian Government things are taxation and social welfare, GST, PSB and the like. Could I ask the Chief Minister what is the Norfolk Island Government doing at this moment to advance the persuasion of the Commonwealth Government to take decisions for Norfolk Island's entry into those areas that I've just exemplified.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett for the question. We are in an awkward situation as Mr Buffett is quite well aware with the Australian political situation in the current position that they are in. There is a danger Mr Deputy Speaker that there will be caretaker mode introduced shortly. The concerns that Mr Buffett has raised has been raised on a number of occasions and it is one certainly that this Government also is concerned about, the Commonwealth's commitment to its own recommendations within the milestones, but it's certainly something that we are not ignoring and we're hoping that there will be some development with those milestones in

the future, but to answer the question by Mr Buffett it is ongoing but we do have a difficulty with the political situation as it stands in Australia at this time.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. I so have a supplementary. Will the Chief Minister let us know some sort of time frame so that Members may know and the community may know about what advances the Norfolk Island Government wishes to make to achieve those things that we've just talked about.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett. I can't give any indication of when we would have a satisfactory answer to the questions as raised by Mr Buffett.

MR BUFFETT So the Norfolk Island Government is doing nothing.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mr Buffett. The Norfolk Island Government has written to all Departments within the Australian Commonwealth to indicate our disappointment at the lack of confirmation and commitment by the Commonwealth in regards to particularly the previous milestones and those letters have been sent off as Mr Buffett would probably be well aware and we have received very little responses to those but we have sent out our concerns on a number of occasions.

MR BUFFETT Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Might I ask the Chief Minister whether that's the extent of the Norfolk Island Government's persuasion efforts to pursue those things that we're talking about.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Buffett we have on occasions raised the matter with the various representatives who have visited Norfolk Island and the answers have always been that they are considering it, there are certain aspects that would not be agreed to within the time before the elections in Australia. I can't give any more assurances.

MR BUFFETT A further supplementary if I may Mr Deputy Speaker. May I ask the Chief Minister whether he has considered the prospective change of Government in the Australian scene and doing some preliminary work in any prospective Government that may be offering in that particular quarter.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes we have written to various Departments to express our desire to move onwards with recommendations as proposed by the previous Government and this Government.

MR BUFFETT May I ask the Chief Minister if he recognises the difference between the Department and the political arena and I've asked a question about the political arena and the Chief Minister has given me one in respect of the Departmental area. Could I ask him whether he recognises the difference between the two.

MR SNELL Yes I do thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and we have written to others in the political arena as well as those in the Department.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is to the Chief Minister as Minister responsible for the Public Service and staffing within this Compound. Would the Chief Minister explain why the Chief of Staff position has not been advertised when notice was given by the previous employee in April this year.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. Yes it is an ongoing consideration by myself and the Government in regards to the staffing of the Chief of Staff's position here. It's one of austerity for a start that we're considering one of combination of the two services of the Senior Policy Roadmap Advisers position and that

of Chief of Staff and the Human Resources Policy's Manager has been away and also she has been very busy with the recruitment of the CEO's position and once we get those finalised we will be working on and advertising the position of the Chief of Staff.

MRS WARD A supplementary if I may Mr Deputy Speaker. The question is why it was possible for a painter's position to be put into the paper within two weeks of the departure of the incumbent or the employee but it has taken over two months for a Chief of Staff recruitment to be organised.

MR SNELL I have no answer to that Mr Deputy Speaker.

MRS WARD A supplementary if I may. Is the Chief Minister's intention to move immediately with the recruitment process, obviously that's going back to the HR Manager to get this position recruited immediately.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and Mrs Ward. The consideration of that will be done in due course. I won't say immediately.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker. My question is to Minister Adams. Would the Minister inform the House whether or not any of the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise Advisory Board recommendations on the health service delivery on the island have been considered critical enough to make their way into the 2013/14 Hospital budget.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward. You did alert me to part of this question I believe yesterday and that was in respect of mental health. There is \$10,000 for ongoing training in the budget but I think that's more generic across various issues but bearing in mind that the Commonwealth's relocated the \$100,000 grant funding that came into three parts, delivery of the island's health service plan \$25,000. This was the \$100,000 that was to be allocated for another purpose and the Commonwealth's funding under the last allocation of funds in this financial year. The advancement of critical pathway toward accreditation of island health services another \$25,000 and complimentary adjustment to Norfolk Island health legislation to achieve accreditation that was for another \$50,000. Specifics, very clearly as part of the overall review of the legislation all of this will be addressed and I can't really give you anything categorical at this time. But certainly documentation that's been put before me it is intended and this is in a letter from the Chair of the Advisory Board on the 12th March to the then Minister for Community Services Minister Sheridan. I'll just read this paragraph. As you are aware within the funding arrangements between the Commonwealth Government and Norfolk Island Government there is an amount of, here it say a million but it was only \$100,000 allocated for the collection of documentation health related population information. So that's been put to another purpose as I've just flagged to you. As discussed with you this exercise will know become part of the process for the preparation of a Norfolk Island 5 year health services plan which the Director of the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise will lead over the next 6 months. South Eastern Sydney local health district has indicated that it will provide support through its planning directorate in the development of this plan. The Norfolk Island 5 year health services plan will be monitored in its development by the Advisory Board and it is anticipated that it will be available for consideration by the Norfolk Island Government by the end of September 2013. The Advisory Board and the Director will of course keep you appraised with progress and the development of this plan at regular intervals. Time is moving along and I'm quite sure that the Hospital Director and the Advisory Board are very well aware of the requirements that they have before them to meet this time line. So I know your perhaps looking for specifics, I can't give you those specifics but in general terms under the progression of the health services plan all of these things should be identified. And of course there will be a degree of picking up once we get the report that was done on the children's review. You know there are elements in there as well which will all be taken into account. It's a bigger picture perhaps than what we've got before us at the moment and I understand your concern and I share it.

MR SPEAKER Time for questions without notice has expired

MR NOBBS I move that question time be extended for five minutes

SPEAKER The question is that time for questions without notice be extended for five minutes

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Mr SPEAKER we have an extension of five minutes

MR NOBBS Couple of question. First for the Minister for finance. Is it correct that the Government is to enter into negotiations for a new fuel contract later this year and if not when does the contract for the supply of fuel to Norfolk Energy due for renewal.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Mr Nobbs. I though he said Pool contract there for a minute, fuel contract. I believe the current contract expires in approximately must be around 18 months maybe, don't hold me to that 16-18 months it expires and in the very near future a request for tender will be prepared together with some assistance from the Territories Department, the Commonwealth Department. They've told us that they can assist us in that area and that will be going out well in advance of the expiry of that contract. So that's the intent and the Service is working on that at this point in time

MR NOBBS Second question for the Minister for Finance, is following on from what was called earlier and I couldn't ask the question up there Mr Speaker. You mentioned Minister on the forward estimates. What is the basis for income estimates for forward estimates. Are they based on today, today's income projections or projections that will be coming along down the line.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker and Mr Nobbs. I believe that the income forward estimates are based on the current circumstances as they are now on Norfolk Island. They are not based on the extension of any taxation or the extension of any medicare PBS etc. They are based on the current environment and they would up to percentage points to those in each year.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. My question to the Chief Minister. Would the Chief Minister outline where substantial cost cutting has taken place within the areas of his responsibility in addition to the Roadmap Advisor position and I remind Chief Minister of his statement where he said that he was looking at other areas including Police etc.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker and Mrs Ward for the question. It was agreed that through the Government that we would look at a 15% reduction in all areas of responsibilities of the Government, including the Policing and I did raise this matter with the Detective Sergeant and he said that he had some difficulty regarding policing but there is to be a meeting with the Acting Commissioner in the very near future and the Memorandum of Understanding will be discussed at that time. I had hoped to be able to give some indication as to what savings would be obtainable within that area of policing but as members would know under the new Funding Agreement no austerity measures are to be implemented with Policing here on the island. So that will probably not take place.

of this being raised in any discussions with the Commonwealth departments in regard to the reform processes.

7 Mr Nobbs asked the Minister for Finance -

MR SHERIDAN Has the Minister an indication of the actual amount paid into the Commonwealth tax system on an annual basis from Norfolk Island? As this question is one that the Australian Government could only respond too, I referred the question to the Administrators office for a response and they have indicated that they discussed this query with the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport and they were unable to provide advice in relation to the question, indicating that this was not information that would normally be provided. I myself don't have any idea of what persons on NI would actually pay into the Commonwealth tax system on a annual basis.

8 Mr Nobbs asked the Minister for Finance -

MR SHERIDAN Is it a fact that an employee under contract (or some other arrangement) to the Commonwealth or a State, based on the respective Commonwealth or State remuneration scale, who is so employed and "ordinarily resident" on Norfolk Island, is excluded from and thus avoids payment to, the Commonwealth under its taxation regime? and b) If so, has there been a calculation of the tax due to the Commonwealth annually if those salaries so specified were subjected to assessment under the Commonwealth's taxation arrangements and if so, what is the figure so calculated? This query was also referred to the Administrators Office for attention and they have responded as the previous question that they cannot provide advice in relation to this question. I can advise that under the ATO there is an exemption from tax on income derived from employment who's duties are performed wholly or mainly in Norfolk Island. The ATO must also be satisfied that at the time the duties were commenced the tax payer intended to remain on Norfolk Island for a continuous period of more than 6 months. So it stand to reason that these employees of the Commonwealth or State if they fit this criteria are exempt from paying tax and there is no way to assess the amount of tax due of these employees if they were subject to taxation.

9 Mr Nobbs asked the Minister for Finance -

MR SHERIDAN If, as proposed in the Roadmap, the Commonwealth taxation regime was applied to the salaries of Norfolk Island Government employees, whose salaries/contracts are based on the current Norfolk Island remuneration scale, what would the total take to the Commonwealth tax office be? The response Mr Speaker, if the Australian tax rates for the 2012/13 were applied to current Administration salaries and wages excluding the Police, teachers, Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise and the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau a total take to the Commonwealth Tax Office is estimated to be approximately \$950,000. This is prior to any deductions being allowable to reduce persons taxable income and rebates offsets which directly reduce the amount of tax payable. There are many variables in the Australian tax system of which could affect these numbers and also an individual may have income form other sources, reductions and rebates for that income which may move the individual into a different tax bracket. It is not possible to identify what the take to the Commonwealth Tax Office would actually be.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I wish to present a paper regarding the **Funding Agreement** for the Norfolk Island Territory between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Administration of Norfolk Island. Mr Speaker the Funding Agreement is between the Commonwealth of Australia represented by and acting through the Department of Regional Australia, local government, arts and sport and the Administration of Norfolk Island, a body politic constituted by Section 5 of the Norfolk Island Act 1979. Briefly Mr Speaker for the benefit of those listening, this Agreement is made in the following context. Norfolk Island has requested funding from the Commonwealth to assist it to provide essential services to the Norfolk Island

community for the remainder of the 2013/14 financial year. The Commonwealth has agreed to support the provisions of the essential services by providing the funding to Norfolk Island to be used for the specified purposes on the terms and conditions of this agreement. The Department is required by law to ensure accountability for public money and to be accountable for all funds provided by the Commonwealth. Norfolk Island agrees to accept and use of the funding for the specified purposes and otherwise subject to the terms and conditions set out in this agreement which was signed on the 14th June 2013 and I so table that paper.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Section 2 (b) 2 of the **Customs Act 1913** makes provision for the Minister to exempt goods from duty where the duty payable is less than \$200. Section 2 (b) 5 of the Act provides that the Act where the Minister has exercised this power shall lay a copy of the exemption on the table of the Legislative Assembly and I so table those exemptions Mr Speaker. There is only one and it's the sum of \$64-68 on the importation of stainless steel shackles and lifting swivel for the Kingston fishing crane by the Norfolk Island Fishing Club.

MR WARD Mr Speaker I present the **Norfolk Island Fishing and Marine Report for June 2013**. This being the 2nd Annual Report prepared in accordance with the Norfolk Island Fishery management Policy 2009 and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority 2010. The Report outline the Marine Working Group meetings over 2012, discussions between Norfolk Island Fishing Association and Australian Fisheries Management Authority, discussions about the temperate East marine reserve and the Marine Safety Bill. The Report includes an attachment being the white paper on Marine Safety and a copy of the explanatory Memorandum for the Marine Safety Bill 2012 and catch data for the 2011/12 reporting period. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of members of the Norfolk Island Fishing Association have made in their collection and presentation of catch data and their members input into marine management, in particular the Marine Safety Bill and the marine Reserve issue. I would also like to acknowledge the former Chief of Staff Mrs Sheryl Davenport for her extensive efforts in the marine management area and I table the paper.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. Under the Public Monies Act 1979 Section 32 B (2) I am required to lay before the House any transfers of monies between division, subdivisions or item **virements** as they are normally called, that have been approved within 2 sitting days of making such a direction. Mr Speaker unfortunately with the movement of staff in the Accounts Section the election in march over here, these virements have not been tabled for some time. It was only on Monday that it became apparent that the requirement under Public Monies Act had not been adhered to and I thank the Accounts staff for making these virements available for the sitting day today. I therefore table the virements for the period end of December 2012 and from January through June 2013.

MR WARD Mr Speaker I have an update here from the Co-ordinator of the **Pest and Diseases Survey Project** and this paper details the studies that have occurred so far, the various Specialists that have been here to the island up until June and those that are due to come here from now through until the end of this year and I'd just like to table that paper also.

STATEMENTS

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd like to make a statement on the recently signing of a **Funding Agreement**. This statement is in relation to the Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Administration of Norfolk Island. The Funding Agreement is for the \$4.4 million funding which is to be received from the Commonwealth for the 2013-14 financial year. This \$4.4 million in funding, as Members around the table are aware, partly covers the costs borne by the Administration to provide essential services such as health, education, utilities and the

police – the essential services that span all three levels of government (Federal, State and Local) that Norfolk Island provides. This Funding Agreement was signed on Friday, 14 June 2013. I thank the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport representatives Ms Robyn Fleming and Mr Bruce Taloni and the Norfolk Island representatives, Mr Wayne Richards, Mr Bruce Taylor and Mr John Grose who undertook the Funding Agreement negotiations. The \$4.4 million will be paid to the Norfolk Island Administration as follows. There is an initial sign-on payment of \$400,000 to be paid in July 2013, followed by quarterly instalments of \$1 million each - which are payable subject to compliance with the relevant outcomes and milestones identified in Schedule 2 of the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement specifies that the funds must be used solely for the purpose of enabling Norfolk Island to continue to provide essential government services for example: health, education, utilities, etc. The Acting CEO is developing an Implementation Schedule and Strategy for each specific requirement so management and implementation of the requirements is commenced immediately and tasks are assigned and supervised to ensure the required outcomes and milestones are met. As we all know around this table, if the outcomes and milestones are not met, the funding is not received. To not receive this funding would put Norfolk Island into an untenable position. Mr Speaker the Funding Agreement commits Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth to a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening Norfolk Island's economic diversity, social cohesion and resilience. Through these reforms we will be continuing to build Norfolk Island Administration information capacity and capability, including more robust asset and financial management. I particularly refer at this time Mr Speaker the appointment to be progressed of a new Finance manager and I take the opportunity at this time Mr Speaker to thank the contribution of the past Finance Manager Mr Barry Wilson in his over 20 years of contribution to the Administration of Norfolk Island and I thank him for his time. He has resigned from the Service. I also refer to the ANAO recommendations listed in the Funding Agreement as part of that financial management. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Department for their in kind support and offers of professional expertise in the areas such as the design of the Household and Business Surveys and the request for tender documentation for the renewal of the fuel contracts, etc. This is very valuable to Norfolk Island and I thank them. Mr Speaker the signed Funding Agreement is online at www.info.gov.nf for anyone that would like to view the document in its entirety and I table a copy of the Funding Agreement now. Mr Speaker whilst in New Zealand last week, Minister Adams foreshadowed on a Radio Norfolk Interview that it is my intention to invite the community together in the near future in a public forum to discuss with the community how we can build in a positive way on the opportunities outlined in this Funding Agreement as well as discuss other concerns the community may have. We are just working out a suitable timeline for this to happen, as I would like to give the community the opportunity to forward questions and/or topics to be discussed. Mr Speaker I anticipate a press release on this Public Meeting to be released on 5 July 2013, if not before, and it will outline the date of the public meeting, expected to be some time in late July, and it will also detail the period of time when the community can send in any questions and topics. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR NOBBS
note of the Statement

Thank you Mr Speaker. I move that the House take

SPEAKER
Statement. Any debate Honourable Members

MR NOBBS
Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd like to join the Chief Minister in thanking Mr Barry Wilson for his services over the years. He was a great help to me on two occasions I was Finance Minister and I wish him well in his activities as he moves on in life, and I'd just like to say how I really appreciated his efforts because without him I'm sure that a lot of the reforms that actually were made in the past were not possible even though people may think that there's no reforms until today. The reforms in the past, a lot of those were with the great assistance of Mr Wilson and other senior members of the Public Service at that time. Thank you Mr Speaker

used and it is N/A it's simply not applicable because it's been used in the past, it should continue to be used in my opinion until a new form is created for regulations in the House. But there's no applications because the Officers are saying "we don't have a valid form, a relevant form". That is my suggestion and my comment based on two reports that have been made to me. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. That could be the case and I would understand that if you know that confusion, and I can only apologize. My error, I did not go back and tell my Officers and if that has created any difficulty for the Officers that is regrettable.

SPEAKER Any further debate? I put the question that the motion be agreed to

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

That motion is agreed to

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I have several this morning, some lengthy and the first one is around the policy paper on **Sustainable Growth Strategy**.

Under the May milestone in the December 2012 funding agreement there is a requirement to develop and publish a sustainable growth strategy showing how it is intended to attract new businesses and Australian residents to Norfolk Island. A Population Paper titled A Sustainable Growth Strategy for Norfolk Island has now been developed and I table the document here today. The Policy Paper can now be accessed on www.info.gov.nf under the heading Immigration, it's a new insertion onto that URL and I have asked that it also be on the Telecom site www.ni.net.nf and I extend my sincere thanks to the Road Map Policy Adviser Mr George Plant for the work he has done in preparing this comprehensive Policy document. The Policy Paper, which sets out the Government's approach to the issue of growth in population levels, proposes two stages; the first being the medium-term population growth capacity; and then determining a long term sustainable population for the island. This morning I will just touch briefly on the medium-term strategy for population growth which focuses on reversing the population loss from the island over the last 10 years and targets a return to ordinarily resident population levels of around 2100 people over the medium three to five year period. This is to be achieved through a program of promotion and positive encouragement of settlement on the island; thus taking the ordinarily resident level of population back to what it was 10 years ago prior to the current economic depression. The Policy Paper gives the statistics on which this policy is based and I encourage people to go online and read the paper or if they chose they could phone in to the Secretary of the Assembly and an electronic copy of the policy document can be provided to them. Comment in writing of course is welcomed. Members are aware of my stance in the 13th Assembly of being opposed to open immigration without proper checks and balances being put in place. Honourable Members the Sustainable Growth Strategic policy document that is tabled today addresses these concerns in both the medium term and the long term. In the medium term the strategy is to fill the gap that has occurred between 2001 and today by the contraction of our population; it takes the population back to what it was 10 years ago and this is a responsible strategy. The medium term strategy in principle proposes that the existing physical infrastructure already exists on the Island to support the 2001 population number and that the environment theoretically is also able to accommodate this number of people. That is not to say of course that there is not a need to upgrade that infrastructure or that we should not continue to monitor the ongoing environmental impact on a return to previous population numbers. The government of course is required to monitor the success of the strategy and publish quarterly statistics from the June quarter 2013 on the number of new residents that have moved to the Island. Turning to growth in the long term the Policy Paper first acknowledges the issue of community values and expectations which are very very important to this community and I quote "The well-being of the Norfolk Island Community

is not based entirely on economic growth and the island's population in the long term needs to consider the range of other intangible factors. This is common to any discussion on population levels¹. Some people on the island see the increase in the island's population to be at the expense of these intangible factors. The Government is in favour of a balanced population growth for the island that takes into account community values and expectations and addresses community social, economic and environmental objectives –the triple bottom line” The Policy Paper acknowledges that the government has not established a long –term population target for the island. However it does acknowledge that the existing Norfolk Island Plan was not developed based on a scientific assessment of the availability of natural resources, ecological assessments, economic issues associated with the costs of supplying infrastructure or technology. Accordingly the Plan needs to be reviewed, that is the Norfolk Island Plan if it is to play the role envisaged of it in guiding growth consistent with a long term population strategy. The Policy Paper therefore proposes the following actions needing to be taken: 1) The Government to source funding to undertake the following scientific work as background evidence for discussion of long term population targets:- A) Assessment of the land-use capability of the island examining land forms their environmental suitability and the extent that existing use is consistent with environmental sustainability. B) Assessment of hydrology examining the island's surface and groundwater resources the existing use and sustainability. C) Assessment of the island's ecosystem and biodiversity and the requirements for ecological sustainability. D) Assessment of technologies and systems that have applicability on Norfolk Island that could be considered to redress existing unsustainable practices in land use, hydrology or biodiversity management. Secondly the Government will use the scientific evidence obtained from Action 1 to engage the community in discussion on a long term population target based on the scientific evidence and the economic/ social expectations of the community. The Government will have a review of the Norfolk Island Plan undertaken to bring in a system of planning controls that reflects the long term population target and community economic and social expectations. Honourable Members I will leave comment on the Sustainable Growth Strategy there for today and encourage people to read the policy paper. Written comment is invited which can be done by letter or by email to the secretary@assembly.gov.nf.

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. The second component is **Immigration**. As is required under the December 2012 Funding Agreement which contractually bound the 14th Assembly on taking office, the Norfolk Island Government is to continue to actively promote the changes to immigration to Norfolk Island for Australian and New Zealand citizens, including highlighting changes to immigration through online newsletters and promotional materials to Australia and New Zealand. I table a copy of a Media release dated 21 June 2013 and an electronic newsletter to be published on a regular basis by the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau which has a data base of around 11,300 subscribers. Ongoing media coverage will be achieved through a partnership between the public and private sector and in particular with the private sector constituted Immigration Development Working Group – the IDWG - and I thank that Group for its ongoing commitment to assist in rebuilding our population back to the levels it was in 2001 and attracting business investors to the Island who will assist our community to achieve growth in our economy and a prosperous and sustainable future for our Island. At the 17 July sitting of the House I will table the revised Immigration Policy and Guidelines. So I table those two documents which members have already received copies of and just for the record I will read into Hansard from the policy paper which was developed in September 2012 titled Policies to improve Immigration in Norfolk Island. There were questions asked of me at a Members meeting yesterday about the ongoing role of the DWG and I will read from that document. The NIG will work with the IDWG to refine the package of information required to attract potential applicants. It will seek further information on the cost of establishing and maintaining an appropriate immigration website. The Government will instruct the Administration to establish an appropriate evaluation measurement system that allows

independent monitoring of the administrative processes of immigration applicants and will continue to work with the IDWG and other stakeholders to ensure that these reforms to the Immigration policy are well understood by the island community and I am hoping today that we can press the button at the Tourist Bureau so that the newsletter goes out the first time to 11,300 on that data base. I had the assistance of the Acting CEO to assist to give me an Officer to assist within the Administration to work with the IDWG in a partnering arrangement between public and private sector to continue to carry forward these objectives into the future. I think that's all I have to say on that particular matter. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MRS WARD Mr Speaker may I move that the Statement be noted.

MR SPEAKER The question is that the Statement be noted.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. Minister Adams has sort of crossing between two documents, it is the policy statement for sustainable growth and the work that has already been done to meet the milestones and I hear that there is a lot of what we're going to do and we're getting this in place and we're going to going to and we're getting there, getting there getting getting, but I am asked almost daily where it's actually at and when we're going to see some action. So a lot of preparatory work going on which I can see but the community is not seeing it and the Minister has said that hopefully today a Tourist Bureau site will go live. That is a visitor site and that a website will go live. There's something in the back of my mind which says at the end of July..

MS ADAMS No 1 July

MRS WARD On the 1st of July, thank you. The information packs, the media releases apart from one initially I haven't seen. I guess I am expressing a frustration on behalf of the community here who are really wanting to see action in this area. The Real Estate Agents still need to be provided with the information packs as I understand it, as the Minister may suggest and may clarify that but they've already been provided with that. I refer back to the budget but I'll touch on it there as well. I just don't see funding for promotional ideas. I actually see in this policy statement and I have raised this previously with the Ministers and members of my concern is that, promotional material such as brochures, posters and paid advertising space outside of Norfolk Island would be useful but expensive promotional ideas, and the question is out there. Why is the attraction of new investors and people to stimulate the economy and assist with rebuilding the economy not seen as important enough to allocate some money to, some spending, whether it was through the Tourist Bureau or the Immigration Department for information packs, its like there's no money, and that's the story. Well there's no money, well the community is saying it should be put up there as a budget priority and it hasn't been. So that's one question. And then there's a point here on page 4 that the Norfolk Island Government has no resources to undertake the activities at this time. So that's a sentence which has really offended some people, and if the existing activities fail to generate interest it will consider approaching the Australian Government as a partner in promoting promotion and advertising to attract migrants, and the question of course is well what are you waiting for? You need to move forward now. If there's nothing really in the local budget then don't hold back. And the other question is how do the Norfolk Island Government is actually to measure success. It's still not clear to people who are being identified as the potential investors. I read in the Immigration Working Development Group the target is self funded retirees from memory. Whether any thought has been given to young families or other investors in that area, where the government is saying that it will constantly assert the benefits to the island for more people coming here. Again I'm being asked regularly for that website, for that tag so that those of us who use social media can put that on the site, because there are actually locals away who are either thinking of coming home or they want to be able to spread the word, and I think everybody at this table knows that word of mouth is actually a very powerful and inexpensive way of disseminating information. So I would ask the Government to consider that as well. The Policy Paper has my support of course and

MS ADAMS I'm happy to table it – yes. Are you talking about the whole document or what I'm reading from now.

MR SPEAKER What your reading from now

MS ADAMS And would you like that to be tabled in preference to my reading it is that what your saying? Happy to do that.

MR SPEAKER If it's been circulated

MS ADAMS It has been circulated to Members. I'll table that thank you.

MR SPEAKER The question is that the Statement be noted.

MR NOBBS I just sit here and listen with interest and whilst Mrs Ward might have some pressure from particular people for whatever reason they may have, I have had pressure from other people which says basically, if your going to go through with this operation get it right, because that's what has to be done. Otherwise there are difficulties and I've been through them before and I'm not going through it again. There are potentially difficulties for the island community in its present arrangements, that's financial and other. So that's the difference that we're getting. Your getting people that's saying hang on just get the thing right before you release it, and others are pushing, pushing, pushing and I'm not surprised that there's 25 people that have put up their hands for residency, that's fine. I haven't seen a lot more activity around the joint at all. I haven't seen a lot more businesses opening up. I haven't seen anything that people expect. We're talking about self funded retirees. I can tell you from personal knowledge that self funded retirees were good about ten years ago but their not too bright now, their not too dusty at the moment when you looking at very low interest on investments. A lot of these people obviously haven't had the advantages of younger people or whatever the generation may be x,y,z or something that have had this all laid out from the superannuation schemes. They haven't had that opportunity and they are, would be at risk coming here, a lot of them under the current arrangements. The younger people, I say again, what do you put first the chicken or the egg, that's the answer. What are young people going to do if they come here, really? That's what I ask you. Are they going to come here on hope faith and charity or what? So those are the things that we need to look at I believe and I think we need to get it right. I would also like to say and please don't get carried away Minister, but when we came in here I was aghast, that's in march, I was aghast at the lack of work that had been done in preparation for the changeovers that were happening in Immigration and the like. I congratulate the Minister on her Minister on her efforts to date. I've done it before and I'm going to do it again that the efforts to date have been tremendous and without her drive and initiatives we'd still be paddling around looking at what and trying to get some sheets out to the whoever contacts, Mrs Ward and the like. It's the efforts of the Minster and her drive and initiative that have got us to where we are at the present time, and I congratulate her and I thank her. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER Thank you any further debate. The question is that the Statement be noted.

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MS ADAMS Thank you Mr Speaker. I have two thank you's to record today and these are to the **visiting Councillors from the Education Department** and to Professor Muhlausler Mr Speaker, firstly on behalf of the Norfolk Island Government and the Norfolk Island community I extend sincere thanks to Mr Frank Potter, the Executive Director for Public Schools with the NSW Department of Education and Communities who facilitated two Department of Education counselling staff to travel to

The Isle of Man flag will be flying alongside the Norfolk Island and Australian flags outside the Legislative Assembly building at Old Military Barracks and at 8.00 am that morning I am talking live to air on our local Radio station about their national day. Manx music will play regularly throughout the week Monday 2nd to Friday 5th on Radio Norfolk. As Members will be aware the Honourable Claire Christian BSc MLC, President of Tynwald, the Parliament of the Isle of Man, visited from Friday 7 June to Tuesday 11 June, specifically to join us on Norfolk's National Day, Anniversary (Bounty) Day. Accompanied by her sister Pam, President Christian joined in the celebrations by laying a wreath at the Cenotaph during the march and addressed our community in the pre picnic welcome in the compound. A number of people have asked whether a copy could be made available of President's speech and Mr Speaker I so table that document. The cultural agreement entered into between our respective parliaments acknowledges our historical links through Fletcher Christian and William Bligh and encourages cultural activity to be developed between our two islands. President Christian's visit has certainly strengthened those ties. Next year is the Isle of Man's Year of Culture and discussions are taking place with some of our local actors, to see how Norfolk Island might be involved in their celebrations of travelling to the Isle of Man.

MR SPEAKER Thank you . Further statements.

MS ADAMS Just one short one. I had copied Members with a letter that I have written to First Assistant Secretary of the Department of Local Government Territories and Regional Programmes Division Ms Robin Fleming just alerting her and now I'm alerting the community at large to amendments being proposed to the **Child Welfare Act** in the following areas. Dealing with procedures and controls relating to interviewing children and young persons, this is under the Child Welfare Act, extension of the meaning of abuse and neglect to mirror those in contemporary Mainland legislation, provision for exchange of information relating to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young persons between defined entities, extension of the mandatory reporting requirements to include other help practitioners such as Counsellors, Nurses, Dentists and Therapists and introducing support for homeless and in crisis children and young persons. In my letter to Miss Fleming I state " As you will be aware we are still to receive the final version of the Children and Family Support Review which had an initial time line for release of 31 January 2012. A draft Consultants Report was provided to the Administration in June 2012 as a draft in confidence, and a comprehensive 5 page response was provided by the Administration on 17 July 2012", and I have read that response with great interest. I intend to give notice of my intention in the House on Wednesday the 26th June that amendments are being proposed (I'm doing this now) to the Child Welfare Act to achieve the outcomes defined in the above dot points. I would like to be able to table the final review document at the same time if you are able to provide me with an electronic copy of the final document. Before coming up here this morning no I am yet to receive that but I will continue to make those inquires on your behalf. However I am led to understand that these amendments can proceed without that report. I know you will appreciate that the embargoed report contains much valuable information, information which it is time to have released to the community for public discussion as part of the legislative process. I will table that document.

MR SPEAKER Are there any further Statement this morning Honourable Members.

MR SNELL Mr Speaker I wish to make a Statement on my recent **visit to New Zealand** which was for personal reasons and at my expense. Mr Speaker during my time down in New Zealand I took the opportunity with the General manager for Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau to visit Air New Zealand on Wednesday the 19th of July and that meeting in my opinion was a positive. Mr Speaker I will just detail some of the points that ere raised with Air New Zealand in Auckland together with Mr Peter Walsh who is the Air New Zealand Manager, Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Pacific region, together with Joe Kennedy who is the product pricing manager New Zealand and Islands market development. Points of the discussions with Air New

Zealand in Auckland centred around areas such as within the last 12 months the marketing effort, Norfolk Island has seen an environment of growth and we now feature in overall marketing plans and campaigns for all major wholesalers. This financial year we discussed and we will continue to build on these numbers but also seek to increase the yield in various areas, particularly ticket pricing to Air New Zealand. We will look to air New Zealand to assist us with the consistent seats for media fails to Norfolk Island. We will also ask Air New Zealand and have asked Air New Zealand to assist us to provide agent famils which are essential for information and education of agents selling Norfolk Island and we need seats directed at larger wholesalers supplier sale staff and that has been put to Air New Zealand. We are also looking to introduce the family market with a view to initially target the December 13 to February 14 travel period. During the evening of Wednesday the 19th Mr Speaker Mr Glen Buffett the General manager at the Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau and Mr Mike Hogan our Norfolk Island Government Tourist Bureau representative in New Zealand went on radio 106fm to promote Norfolk Island. This was a 30 minute interview slot time which was very much appreciated. During that period of promoting Norfolk Island, answering questions Mr Buffett also promoted to New Zealand citizens that were listening that Norfolk Island had now opened its immigration policy to Norfolk Island and that New Zealand citizens could now move, work, reside and invest on Norfolk Island, and in due course Mr Speaker I will have a transcript of that interview available to Members. During the course of the meeting Mr Speaker it was suggested that I should and could I accompany Mr Buffett to Australia the following day to have a meeting with Air New Zealand representatives in Sydney. I took the opportunity to inquire and with permission from my wife I was able to go across to Australia for the day. She wasn't very happy about it but I went, and Mr Speaker in Australia within a period of 1.5 hours we had a very productive meeting with the Air New Zealand representatives in Sydney Mr Michael Zorbas Commercial Operations Manager, Quinton Boss, Leisure Sales Manager and Rachael Menzies Online performance Manager. We discussed areas within the structure of the current contract. It was not possible to achieve growth in the June – August period which was disappointing but under the current situation they did not see any way that it was possible to achieve growth in that area, in ht e June – August period but we should seek to do something different with capacity over this time and I'll touch on that in a few minutes Mr Speaker. There is a greater need to explore utilising what market leverage is available internally within Air New Zealand to promote Norfolk Island and at that time Mr Speaker I raised the question of education to their sales agents and even their travel centre staff in relation to a complaint which had been forwarded to me about Air New Zealand travel centre staff not knowing that Air New Zealand actually flew to Norfolk Island and referred them to Virgin. So that matter was raised with Air New Zealand in Sydney. We also discussed Air New Zealand assistance with consistent seats again for media famils for Norfolk Island. We needed and asked for an increase. We also asked Air New Zealand to assist us to provide familiarisation visits for wholesale partners and niche market opportunities to promote that area of visitation to Norfolk Island. We also indicated to Air New Zealand in Sydney that we hoped to introduce the family market with a view to initially market December 13 to February 14 travel period. Again like we did in New Zealand. We also promoted that to them in Sydney, and we advised them that we are looking to introduce a conference market targeting travel for 2014. I also flagged to them the possible increase within the budget of a \$10 passenger services charge increase in the 2013/2014 budget and that proposal was received with no surprise by the members of the meeting. During that period Mr Speaker Air New Zealand advised me that there was to be a Commonwealth Air New Zealand meeting discussing the contract on the 5th July of this year. So I took the opportunity Mr Speaker to emphasise to the meeting that Norfolk Island needed to be considered again with the possibility of a Melbourne/Norfolk Island service and they took that on board and they agreed that they would consider another destination city out of Australia and would speak with the Commonwealth on it on the 5th July how they could arrange a Melbourne to Norfolk Island service whether it be direct or via Sydney. They are concerned of course at the time slots that they have in Sydney, they've had it for years and the connection of Virgin to the Sydney Norfolk Island service is very tight and they would be looking at a solution of that possibility. So it was encouraging. We also discussed the

possibility of shifting capacity from the low season of July etc into the high season of October through to the January, February period. When it was quiet in July could we shift capacity over to the peak periods that were required and this is an important proposal from the Accommodation and Tourism Association and I was pleased also that they response to that request, they did also advise that they had brought that request up to the Commonwealth on a previous occasion but it was not agreed to, but they will again ask the Commonwealth if they could make those adjustments to the contract for shifting and combination of services. I also raised with them the possibility of exploring of issues combine with ticketing passengers on a fare Auckland/Norfolk/Brisbane and back to Auckland and they agreed that maybe they would look at that and of course Auckland/Norfolk/Sydney etc so that we may be able to have a more attractive package to visitation to Norfolk including the Australian segment from Auckland. We also explored the possibility of the chance to promote the Norfolk stopover to international passengers coming from anywhere within the world on Air New Zealand services and through ticket type arrangement. They discussed that. They weren't overly committed to it but they agreed that they would look at it which is encouraging for us. Mr Speaker it was heartening though that we had the opportunity to be able to discuss these issues and I do quote that I did this at cost effective basis. I don't expect any travel allowance but I do ask the Members note that I will be claiming for the cost of the Airfare from Auckland to Sydney and back to Auckland and possible small expenses for the taxi fares accordingly but I won't be huge amount of money and I was very pleased with the outcome of both meetings.

MR SPEAKER Thank you Chief Minister. Any further Statements. There are no Messages from the Office of the Administrator and no Standing Committees to report today.

ORDER OF THE DAY NO 1 – APPROPRIATION BILL 2013/2014

MR SPEAKER Resumption of debate from last sitting. We resume Honourable members on the question that the Bill be agreed to in principle and Mr Sheridan you have the call to resume please.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. In my comments today I would like to address some of the items contained within the Appropriation Bill 2013-2014. I released a media statement last week in relation to the increases in the budget and I would like to restate some of the objectives of these increases. The increase to the customs duty for personal imports to 18% has been necessitated primarily due to the change in the way that the community goes about its purchases. In times gone by, the majority of purchases would have been direct from one of the retailers located within Norfolk Island, but now with the ease of which the community can buy direct from the supplier with access through the internet etc. for consideration of their purchases, the NIG has had a direct reduction in its GST returns. This 18% duty on personal imported items will go some way to ensure that the NIG receives a similar amount it would receive by way of GST on a similar item sold by a retailer on NI. The proposed increase to the Passenger Movement Charges is budgeted to provide an additional \$500k but of which the increase will need to be substantiated to the Commonwealth prior to implementation. This will mean that the PMC are \$35 per sector, well within limits of other operators of Airports within Australia, and will ensure that the Airport will fully cover operational expenses including depreciation, which includes the recurring costs of the runway overlay. The last increase to the budget is that of telephone charges during peak periods for calls to international numbers for both landline and mobile phone users. International calls via landline to landline in Australia and New Zealand will rise to 40cents per minute and the rest of the world to \$1 per minute. The charge for off peak phone calls have not been affected with calls to Australian/New Zealand landlines only 10cents per minute. Mobile phone charges have increased by 50% across the board, which means a mobile call to Australia and New Zealand will be 90cents per minute and 60cents during off peak periods. Full details of the new call rates can be found at www.ni.net.nf. These new rates are planned to commence on the 1st August. Only some

\$400k has been allocated to capital works and whilst it is acknowledged that this area is being under funded, the dire nature of the budget necessitates that only vital work can be completed. There has been money made available to Telecom for the acquisition of a new PABX switch, monies provided to Lighterage of \$70k for the construction of a new lighter. There has also been \$35k provided to the School for essential works there, \$30k to Norfolk Energy for the maintenance of the Ball Bay storage area and \$30k for essential repairs at the Liquor Bond, with other smaller amounts throughout the Administration for essential items. I made mention in the Government's Financial Policy and Objectives Statement of the long term financial objectives to place NI into a financially sustainable position of the preferred model of territory self-government of which the 13th Assembly was working towards and endorsed by this current Assembly. The position can only be achieved by working with the Commonwealth to achieve the aims under the Roadmap. The forward estimates are provided without the transfer payments of which NI would be entitled too for entering the Australian taxation and transfer payments system. If the NI Government is to fund the forward estimates, it will require the NIG to find an additional \$4.6m for 2014/15, \$8.9m for 2015/16 and \$3.5m for 2016/17, this would require both massive local taxing increases and expenditure reductions. Increases and reductions that the NIG and community just cannot fund. It was only in the May sitting that this House moved to amend the PS HR Policy to remove a contingent liability in the form of payments on redundancy, even though the Government is still exposed to some \$2.5m dollars with the current policy. It appears though that some in the community are still unaware of the dire financial circumstances that the NIG has to operate in. I have received a letter (table) from the PSA commenting that they are disheartened by my comments during the debate on the redundancy reform package, but they make a pertinent point that Norfolk Island does not have access to unemployment benefits or the ability to move for employment. I appreciate the PSA position on this issue and their concern for their members, but this policy has to be balanced with the requirements of the NIG and the ability to fund these benefits if required, the PS still has provision for redundancy in the HR Policy of which the NIG would have to provide for if needed. It would be very unlikely that the NIG would have to call upon the total amount of contingent liability but this is based upon the funding from the Commonwealth being continued. Each year there is no guarantee that this will occur and circumstances may change in the Australian political environment of which may require the NIG to fully fund its operations. In mentioning the Government's Financial Policy and Objectives Statement, I have had to amend the statement that I tabled into the House two weeks ago, and I would like to now table a replacement Statement and forward estimates, which I would like to be considered during this discussion. I so table. This statement has had to be amended due to the amount of funding recently received under the RDAF Round 4 of \$13m. The project that is being undertaken by this RDAF funding is the upgrade of the Cascade jetty, purchase of a mobile crane, barges and related equipment for the discharge of cruise ship passengers and containerised freight. The total cost of this project is some \$18.8m of which \$14.9m was identified through the RDAF grant scheme. With only \$13m being provided the NIG has had to place into the forward estimates the shortfall of \$1.9m to facilitate the total project. The forward estimates has provided a total of \$5.545m over the 2014/15 and 2015/16 years for this purpose. The NIG in its discussions with the Commonwealth have made it very clear that its position is to participate within the Australian taxation and GST systems, for, in return access to the transfer payments schemes and the extension of services of which are normally provided by the Commonwealth to all Australians, Norfolk Island is an integral part of Australia or so I am led to believe. Since 2010 the NIG has indicated that it wishes to participate in these systems and to date the NIG has had to undertake a series of reforms to its public service, its tourism industry, its immigration system etc., all with the aim of improving our economy by removing constraints. The NIG is committed to continue these reforms to create a better environment for business development and economic growth. The problem is that the NIG cannot do this all by itself, the Roadmap was signed up too with the intent that by the FY13/14 the Australian tax system would apply to NI, from 2012/13 the Social Security Act 1991 (Commonwealth) would have been extended to NI and that by 2015 with all this work done prior, the Commonwealth would have extended appropriate Commonwealth laws and associated support agencies, to NI

on a portfolio by portfolio basis, including full community consultation and education programs. It appears that we are years behind in our goals. I had only last Saturday night placed in my truck the report by the JSC on the National Capital and External Territories, by persons unknown, the report NI Financial Sustainability 'The Challenge – Sink or Swim'. I don't understand the intent of this person, or maybe I do, because back in 2005 when this report was completed there were two recommendations: the committee recommends that a new taxation model be developed whereby NI is gradually incorporated into the taxation regime of the Commonwealth, and the committee recommends that, on acceptance of recommendation 1, the Commonwealth make transitional financial arrangements to ensure the NIG is adequately funded prior to the implementation of the new tax model with particular emphasis on: replacing and/or maintaining depreciating infrastructure, notably the hospital and the school, key service provision, specifically health, aged care, and social services, structural adjustment programs first, to sustain and increase the Islands tourism industry, and second, to diversify the economy to the extent practicable; and engaging in wide-ranging consultation and discussions with the NIG and with the NI community. The same JSC in its report of the visit to NI during 29-30 April 2013, made one recommendation, this being; "...the committee recommends that the commitment of the NIG and the Australian Government to reform should be documented in a joint statement and timetable. This timetable should document the legislative changes required of both the NIG and the AG to improve governance and administration and integrate NI into the Australian taxation and welfare system. Any timetable should be predicated on the NIG introducing its own revenue streams (such as municipal rates) immigration reforms and divestiture of their Gibe's..." It appears to me that the NIG has undertaken, or in the process of undertaking all of these requirements but the timeline of the Roadmap has expired with still no relieve to the NIG from the Commonwealth in the way of extension of services nor even its taxation model. This appears to be the stalemate with the extension of services, NI does not pay tax. This came to light in the recent budget estimates hearings of 30th May, whereas a question was asked by Senator Humphries in regard to a light at the end of a tunnel, and when would it culminate in decisions that actually provide those services, and reference to PBS to cover the cost of medicines that would on the mainland be basically free. The answer by Mr Eccles of the Territories Department 'but they would pay tax'. (referring to Australians). This is exactly what these discussions have been about for the past 3 years but it is quiet clear that neither the Territories Department nor the Territories Minister has the ability to make this happen. The NIG Government cannot extend Australian taxation with its benefits, but instead relies upon the Australian Government to live up to its part of the undertakings. I note that in the same budget estimates session, that Ms Fleming is quoted as saying 'It is our view that the NIG should lead the discussions about the scope and scale of its commitment and negotiations with the government in this process'. With respect the NIG has been requesting the extension of these services for 3 years now. Again a response to a question on notice by Senator Humphries where he asked 'is it the case that the Commonwealth distrusts the NIG' the response was 'the NIG has shown leadership and a willingness to work closely with the Commonwealth to address the Islands challenges in delivering appropriate levels of economic, social and environmental services for the NI community. Both governments remain strongly committed to working in close partnership with the NI community'. I note that the question still remains unanswered. All this leaves the NIG in having to request assistance funding on a yearly basis, of which to date has been forthcoming, and the NIG is appreciative of the funding to ensure that the deliver of services can continue, but without the willingness of the Commonwealth to extend its taxation and services to NI, the precarious position of the NIG will continue and its requests for continued support will only increase. Note the forward estimate figures that I have previously stated. It is in both the NIG and the Australian Government's interest to have a strong, vibrant Norfolk Island, one that can deliver in its own right, with assistance of services from Australia, to the community of Norfolk Island. A partnership so that the community can stand tall and proud of their Island, not feel as if they have been relegated to being a beggar, a beggar in their own country and exist on handouts from the Commonwealth, as can be inferred at the moment. The NI community has voiced their wants, and that is

a partnership with Australia and the sharing of the benefits that come with this relationship. It is up to the NIG and the Australian Government to make it happen. I encourage the Chief Minister to have direct discussions with Minister King in regard to the extension of services and taxation to NI as a matter of priority. All of the reports are in, dissected and discussed, all it requires now is for the Commonwealth to commit to a timeline (or lifeline) and commence the roll-out, but I have this very uneasy feeling that considering the political position in Australian politics' at this time, the Norfolk Island agenda will be forgotten and we cannot allow this to happen. Mr Speaker I present the Appropriation Bill to the House and I'll leave it in their hands.

MR SNELL

Thank you Mr Speaker. At the 12th June 2013 Sitting of this House, when the Appropriation Bill 2013-2014 was presented, I spoke on, and detailed, specific areas within my portfolio responsibilities. Today I want to speak about some of the Government policy and objectives which are identified in the Appropriation Bill before us today. Long Term Financial Objectives. The Norfolk Island Government's long term financial objective is to place Norfolk Island into a financially sustainable position and to assist in this process I am indebted to the work of the Infrastructure and Business Development Committee who are showing initiative and will progress inquiries regarding this matter. To move to this financial sustainability revolves on the preferred model of Territory Self-Government that was presented to the Commonwealth being endorsed, as we know, we are yet to receive the Commonwealth's endorsement of that model for Norfolk Island; we continue to seek that endorsement. In the meantime we are continuing to foster economic growth by removing constraints to investment. We will be looking at Government Business Enterprise reform, which does include the assessment on the feasibility to privatize or corporatize Gibe's. We also are, which is a requirement under the new Funding Agreement, and was a requirement under a previous Funding Agreement also, looking at our local tax reform. The Funding Agreement for the 2013-14 financial year sets out that a strategy will be developed for the implementation of a property tax (municipal rates), I can also confirm that the same Funding Agreement provides that Norfolk Island will update that implementation strategy having regard to the results of the Household and Business surveys, as this information will give us evidence of the community's ability to pay property tax (municipal rates). I can also assure the community that meaningful public consultation will occur on property tax (municipal rates) which will help form the implementation strategy. Short to Medium Term Financial Objectives. The Minister for Finance is conducting a review of all fees and charges levied by the Norfolk Island Administration in conjunction with reviewing Public Service expenditure. The immediate effects of his initial reviews are shown in this budget with the proposed increase of some telephone charges, the increase of customs duty and the proposed passenger movement charge increase, which the Minister for Finance has detailed. There is also a freeze on all non-essential public service recruitment and capital expenditure has been reduced to balance this budget. I would now like to comment on the Forward Estimates, that is the budget for future years. Modelling has been completed and even with the above reforms there is still an underlying deficit. We therefore continue to seek commitment from the Commonwealth to allow Norfolk Island into the Australian Taxation System and transfer payment arrangement, this will help with the costs the Island faces in paying all three tiers of Government responsibilities; Federal, State and Local. In conclusion, the Norfolk Island Government remains committed to strengthening Norfolk Island's economic diversity, social cohesion and resilience. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER

Debate Honourable Members. When Minister Sheridan presented this budget, I said I hoped this would be the last budget of this type we get to see. Since the budget was presented to the house I have been approached by so many people in the community from all walks of life clearly portraying the difficulties they face, and I say again, I hope this is the last budget of this kind we get to see. I thank those people who have trusted me with the details of what they are enduring, and I don't say enduring, lightly. This is true of long term business operators through to employed workers and those who seek

employment. Despite the efforts of many previous assemblies to lift the economy, and more increased imposts than any one can keep track of, the downturn has persisted for much longer than the last four years that are commonly spoken of. There are some who think cutting down the Admin workforce is the solution to our problems. This is not new, but after years of cutbacks, any further reductions only serve to choke service delivery and intensify the downward spiral. In the circumstances this is a responsible budget, but does not address the needs of this community. The last Assembly embarked on the Roadmap reform process, seeking Commonwealth assistance and committing to a range of reforms to try and turn the island's finances around. If the Roadmap reforms deliver their anticipated results, the next budget should be a less challenging process. While many have sought and researched new industries and sources of income, our geographic isolation and small landmass have continued to preclude or limit the success of these business concepts. Most countries have multiple income streams and closely monitor their gross domestic product and balance of trade numbers. Norfolk has one main industry and a few incidental sidelines but is trying to maintain three levels of government service delivery. In hindsight, some things could have been done differently along the way, but we can be proud of how much this island community has achieved over the last three decades but we should never lose sight of the cost burden people have borne in that time, a burden that has driven many off island to seek a more secure and rewarding life. We are working to implement the incinerator and Cascade jetty extension projects as quickly as possible to boost the economy and for both the immediate and longer term and the Pest and Diseases Survey results may pave the way for export of produce. It is critical, as we develop a new system based on the Roadmap/funding agreement reforms that we do not place unrealistic tax burdens on a community living within the constraints of so little local area income. Government finances are tight today because the community is doing it tough - not because of lavish government spending. We have been successful in having a home income and expenditure survey included in the latest funding agreement. This should identify what taxes and charges can be borne by the community – I believe a lot of very real hardship will be exposed. I reiterate that we look to the Commonwealth Government to start to meet their undertakings in the areas of education, health and welfare which will reduce pressure on our revenue raising, or at least free up the funds we raise for use in essential areas not currently being addressed. In turn this should translate into lower costs to make a more attractive visitor destination and drive greater certainty. I support the budget as presented.

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Minister Ward. Further debate?

MS ADAMS

Thank you Mr Speaker. At the last meeting on the 12th June I mad a comprehensive statement in respect of the various areas which I had ministerial responsibility and I don't plan to go through that again today. It is recorded into Hansard. I understand the difficulties. I understand the difficulties for the Staff who are in their areas for which I have responsibility and I know that all of them will work to their best endeavours to work with the reduced funding that they have been given, they will continue to provide the best service to the community and I look forward to working with them throughout the next twelve months to see how we can work to achieve new goals in their respective areas and there's an offer that I put out to them on the 12th June, I reinforce that today and I will conclude by restating the words that I said at the conclusion of my Statement on 12 June. I remain firmly of the view that we cannot tax an already depressed economy into prosperity. I further remain firmly of the view that we have to diversity in how we do business into the future. Tourism alone cannot bring economic prosperity. We have to find new revenue streams that are not dependent on taxing. I look forward to this Government working in that direction, and I again state as I stated when I stood for the 13th Assembly and again for the 14th Assembly Norfolk Island has the potential to be Australia's showpiece to the world with the right intention. We have the potential to be Australia's hub within the Pacific and we have the potential to be Australia's bridge to the Pacific. I invite Australia to recognise that and work with us to achieve that because out of that will come a different story. Thank you.

MRS WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. I might just touch on the comment by the chief Minister that he was indebted to the Infrastructure Committee. Other Members have had a signal from the Infrastructure Committee Chair that they will have a report ready to deliver to us in 3 months time. That was probably 4 weeks ago so we just have to bear in mind that other Members are unaware of what the Chief Minister is referring to at this stage. I think Minister Ward has made it very clear that the Government intends to maintain the status quo in the public sector and that it will continue to tax the broader economy community in order to maintain and support that. Picking up on Minister Sheridan's words the Minister for Finance that there is a chance that the Norfolk Island Government may have to fully fund its operations in the future and he has an uneasy feeling. I will remain hopeful of a positive result coming from the Commonwealth and a commitment but I remained positive that that would happen in this financial year and for reasons far beyond our control it didn't happen, and that there was the determination of the Honourable Simon Crean who is the Minister responsible for us at that stage. So the Government obviously is very sware that at a political level and this is the point that Mr Speaker made when he came on the floor earlier in the sitting is that we have a political battle ahead of us and while I was happy to sit with the status quo over the last two or three budgets which was to maintain the status quo because I believed that the Commonwealth would honour their commitment to bring Norfolk Island back into the Federal taxation and social system I was happy to support the previous budgets. But that's just something we need to be very aware of and I support Minister Sheridan wholeheartedly in his full debate that he has just made. There are two documents that are relevant to this debate now and that is the Norfolk Island Government statement of financial policy and objectives, so that's a longer term view which I fully support and this Appropriation Bill clearly is about how we get through the next 12 months which is a short term issue, and the other document is the Funding Agreement. Fortunately, both documents demonstrate a willingness by the Norfolk Island Government to take further steps in both micro-economic and public service reform. I say willingness Mr. Speaker but as we touched on earlier today it is their capacity to take those steps that I question particularly when the Chief Minister is continuing to refuse to move immediately on the recruitment of a Chief of Staff who is a top political Adviser and doing away with the Roadmap position which again is a top political adviser and when we have a political fight on our hands I question the wisdom of that. The Chief Minister has reiterated his position on why he's doing that and that is that he believes he is demonstrating austerity by not replacing this high-level Road Map advisor position and that he is demonstrating that to the Commonwealth. My point is if the Chief Minister is really mindful of what the Commonwealth thinks then in my opinion they are not going to find this decision a very prudent one. Financial policy statement - the fwd estimates (budget statement) may interest some more than others when we can see a \$2.5M drop in salaries and wages in the 14-15FY (following year). This is not something that we should shy away from – this is a reality to be faced and the Chief Minister (Minister for Public Service) must be out there working with his Acting CEO to explain to the PSA Members and others, exactly what this means. So unfortunately for me this short term 12 month budget remains structurally unchanged and it has been made clear today that its about maintaining service even when its in competition with the private sector and that will continue to worry me. There is no provision within this budget for the future, it relies heavily on the Commonwealth and that commitment from them. In other words, we are still not doing enough to help ourselves at this stage knowing there is uncertainty out there and having that uncertain feeling and knowing and acknowledging that there is a chance that the Norfolk Island Government may have to fully fund its operations in the future. I hope not, but we're not shying from that reality because we have been gutted before. I am not denying the work that Minister Sheridan or other Members have put into this budget. I have no doubt that Minister Sheridan he has been through it line by line – again and again but for me that's where the problem lies. until the Minister and his Government is able to step back from the budget and look at it with their heads rather than their hearts, understanding the negative spiral effect of loss of jobs within the Public Service I do but you can't continue to provide less and less funds to the same number of costs centres, you just can't. that's when you have statements coming from the Chief Minister which basically amount to an appearance fee

being paid because people are turning up and don't have the equipment to do work. I made reference 12 months ago in debate to areas where small saving could be made and I spoke about divestment and outsourcing, the Chief Minister knows where they are in Hansard for reference. I'm happy to share those with other Members. I'm not going to go through them again. Basically across the board - without cash being freed up by making tough decisions and hard sacrifices you can't make efficiency gains and you can't reinvest and your only option is to start divesting the non-productive areas and that's again when we look at the forward projection we can see that is happening but that's my concern, it's not happening now. We have sat for 2 years understanding an agreement and it just hasn't come off. Where are we going to be in 12 months time if we continue to sit and procrastinate. I believe that some of the Ministers can see exactly what I'm talking about. I understand the reluctance but the very strong point is we all understand that and we can see that through some outstanding debate today is that this is not a passing phase, it's not something that we are going to recover from overnight. It's taken years to get to this point and it's going to take some years to get us out of it. The forward estimates again, I think I've just made the point. All we're doing is delaying the inevitable. I would liked to have seen and prolonging the pain basically. So I acknowledge that waiting for the Commonwealth is till a high risk option. I support the Minister for Finance in that. Besides, they are not going to fix all our problems. There are many things that we need to do for ourselves if we are serious about retaining self government. Mr Speaker if I can just touch on a couple of community questions that were raised, I will attempt to answer them and it was about expenditure. Where are the cuts because this looks like a revenue raising budget, and the Minister has already pointed out where they are and I think contrary to popular opinion there are cuts, there are millions of dollars worth of costs in this budget – planned maintenance will not occur and that means that there will be very little stimulus to the private sector if any. So there is that negative spiral. We are all very aware of that. The undergrounding electricity and telecommunications in the KAVHA area did not take place. Other electricity maintenance did not take place. Vehicles replacement is not taking place/ the Chief Executive Officer of the Administration Salary has been reduced from \$130,000 package to \$100,000 package. Again I question the wisdom of that. The Roadmap Adviser position appears to be gone. The Education budget is down \$25K on this Financial year. So it's actually a reduction. The Tourist Bureau Budget is down and the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise budget is down. So I just want to make it very clear to the listening public when you think there may not be cuts there have been cuts. Where is the stimulus to the private sector is the other commonly asked question. In direct funding I would say there is next to nothing. I don't have the figure in front of me for the Tourist Bureau Marketing and Promotion Funding but that I understand remains in place which is about brining visitors to the island obviously. The School has some minor works and Telecommunication the Minister has said. So there will be some minor stimulus to the private sector and particularly contractors by the look of it in that area. Sadly as I've already pointed out I don't see any additional funding specific to immigration promotion. If we consider however the result of the Commonwealth's efforts in providing funds to Norfolk Island in the next financial year we have the incinerator installation and I think there is \$60,000 to partner with that. There is the Cascade Pier project which has been outline already today and there are programmes again already outlined today which have to do with child use and aged programmes and apprenticeship schemes which will hopefully link with local provision in that area. But none of us are obviously where that is up to and we look forward to some determination in that area. Of course there is indirect stimulus through the Air New Zealand contract continuing to be provided by the Commonwealth. The other question relates to increase in the duty but I think that Minister Sheridan has covered that already very clearly and that's not going to happen overnight. It will come through the House in a full debate. I had thought that there was no allocation to the repayment of the runway loan or saving for the next one but Minister Sheridan has pointed out that the increase in passenger movement fees will be used specifically for that area in some way. The question that's important to all of us is what budget support is there for the Funding Agreement. It's a big concern. How are we going to afford to comply and meet the milestones and we can see that there is \$400,000 allocated to the land valuation which will move to the municipal rating system

or some property based taxation and there is a cost line put away for the Minister's discretion to partner with the Cascade Cliff Project. So there is allocation of money to do that. Mr Speaker I just finish by saying that I do appreciate that Minister Sheridan has found what he believes is the best short-term balance and I know from his comments on radio that he was prepared to look more closely at jobs, he stated that publically but clearly his colleagues were happy to provide rhetoric for example using election statements such as "you can't tax a community into prosperity" and "there will be cost cutting and austerity measures" but when it came to the crunch they've obviously stopped short at taking real action in that area. I believe that the community would have accepted a reduced level of service (in fact in some areas they are demanding it). We should understand that these debates are challenging but unless we have the courage to openly discuss and challenge the status quo, then the status quo will remain and taxes will continue to increase, and the people who Minister Ward referred to or who have approached him, I will also acknowledge the people in business who have shared private information with me and I will speak further with the Minister for Finance on that. Their confidentiality will be secured, but these people are showing trends of staffing hours and reduction. So hopefully this will all help to continue to argue our case with the Commonwealth that we're not making up stories out here. These people are going to the wall and I appreciate that that happens in every town in Australia but as has already been pointed out there is no youth start allowance, there is no safety net there is nothing for these people. I will express my appreciation to the Federal Minister the Honourable Catherine King who has clearly chosen to carry on supporting NI as the Hon. Simon Crean did before her. His Hon. the Administrator Mr. Neil Pope because it is abundantly clear that if it were not for his efforts and his commitment to NI we would not be passing a 12 month Appropriation Bill today. Thank you Mr Speaker

MR SPEAKER

Thank you.

MR WARD

Mr Speaker my previous comments about the budget relate in entirety to the fiscal year ahead. It should not be interpreted to mean that I am against changes where needed. Mrs Ward knows full well we are not in a position to offer redundancies. Maybe she'd like to somehow shake employees of without compensation. There could be Public Service cuts. As the GBE divestment occur but hopefully most of those affected staff would transfer over to the new entities however they are structured. There is no value in the slash and burn approach and I repeat this is a responsible budget. Thank you.

MR NOBBS

Thank you Mr Speaker. I've listened with interest and what's been said and I haven't got a lot to add to it. I was just a bit disappointed at these questions, the answers to my Questions on Notice that apparently the Administrator's Office says that they can't provide any information and that's as far as it went. The issue really is that I have information that was calculated by the Norfolk Island Government in 2009 that a figure of \$5.8m was estimated as being revenue received by the Australian Tax Office from Norfolk Island and its various entities and persons who are actually resident here, and apparently as far as I can gather was recognised as such by the Commonwealth finance people as being accurate so I would assume..

MR SPEAKER

Mr Nobbs we're on the Appropriation Bill and your referring to the Questions on Notice.

MR NOBBS

I'm just coming to that Mr Speaker. What I'm saying really now Mr Speaker is simply this, that if we've got, it's really a coincidence that I think that the Minister for Finance said that the actual funding in the budget for Norfolk Island was \$4.4m and then \$1.1 which makes \$5.5. Well we've got \$5.8m so they must owe us \$300,000. That's what its about Mr Speaker. Ok so it's no big deal. As far as the political fight well we're in a political fight. We've been in a political fight from day 1. Everywhere is in a political fight from day 1. Ask the Chief Ministers in the Territory for the last I don't know, you can add it up '78 to here is that what they believe

is their biggest problem. The biggest problem is the Commonwealth. So I mean we're in a political fight full stop. That's it, and we've got to live up to it. I don't think that the Norfolk Island Government has realised that but boy you better get used to it because I ask quickly will the request for funds not continue as they are now. We'll still be requesting funds from the Commonwealth, there's no worries about that and also Commonwealth interference. There's interference now. I class it as interference having to put somebody on the selection panel for a Public Service position which we've just advertised and that's the CEO. I find that fairly strong political interference. I appreciate what, and I said last time and I wished him well and I just want to tell him this. You might think you've got a hard job now Tim, you think it's hard at the moment, well it gets no better I can tell you when you've got a surplus because they'll be all up around this table all trying to get their fingers in the pot. So I mean your not going to sleep any better when we swing the corner so don't look forward to it

MR SHERIDAN

I long for the day Ronny

MR NOBBS

Well that's good. The other thing is, is what's been on the import duty and the increase to 18%. I put in an issues on fairness. Now fairness to me is a huge thing as far as taxation is concerned. We had a further example I think was that the FIL, I don't know whether your Financial Institute Levy for all the new people which we had a few years ago, something was like \$1m per year. We did a investigation into it and it was recognised, not by just me or Barry or whoever was working the show but it was recognised from the finance side of the industry that the FIL the \$1m was collected from the lower 1/3 of the economy. They were the ones they couldn't put their money over to Brisbane where they were sending it to actually get to not have to pay the FIL. So I thought at the time this is one of the most unfair taxes we have so we scrubbed it. Whether you think the GST as it turned out is not too fair at all well I think its fairer than this. The issues that I have with the import duty is one of fairness as well. We increased the import duty to 18% and that will, because the ?? GST money goes. The GST funding goes into issues like the school, the hospital, all those places and I don't want you all crying about how bad the things are, but the thing is that's where it goes. Won't be don't hear is that we've increased the import duty to 18% to take account of the fact that if I, well I don't want to make it personal, but Joe blow goes up to a shop and he buys something, that component there that he pays at 12% includes, and I repeat includes that original purchase price, all the costs associated with getting it to he wharf, the transport fees, the lighterage fees up to the shop, putting it on the shelf, doing all those things, that includes that figure. Import duty did, and I hope it still does, because that's what I said it was supposed to be, it is purely on the purchase price of that particular item wherever it was originally purchased. So it can be Taiwan and they get it for two bob or something so they pay 20c sorry now, 20c on whatever it is on 6% or 10% it was on 20c right so that would be 2c. They come over then they add that on. Food now is not, is on the purchase price where that person purchased the food and that's what I'm saying is unfair because those people that are dodging the increase, dodging the 12% GST are in fact cheating on themselves because they are dodging that funding that is not available to those particular areas, and I find that completely unfair, I can tell you that. And that's why I'm saying that if 18% is the calculated figure and I would say that that seems reasonable as a calculated figure that goods brought overseas onto the island here, it it's 18% the fairness issue is that they all should be 18% because we pay 12% on food OK?

MR SHERIDAN

We pay 6% Ron

MR NOBBS

What now under the GST. When did you drop that.

MR SHERIDAN

If you talking about GST on food

MR NOBBS

Yeah I know that's what I'm saying we pay 12% on GST on food., and that' what I'm saying there. It should be, if we're going up to 18% on the other goods it should be the same, we should go up the same. That's my view.

FIXING OF THE NEXT SITTING DAY

MRS WARD I move that this House at its rising adjourns until Wednesday the 17 July at 10 am

SPEAKER Thank you Mrs Ward Is there any debate on that question. Was that a smoke signal of some sort. No further debate. I put the question that this House at its rising adjourns until Wednesday the 17th July 2013 at 10 am

QUESTION PUT
AGREED

Thank you I believe the ayes have it. That motion is agreed to

ADJOURNMENT

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

SPEAKER Thank you Mr Nobbs. Honourable Members, is there any further participation in adjournment debate Honourable Members

MR WARD Thank you Mr Speaker. Mention was made at a previous sitting of this House that the Planning Officer Mr Alan McNeil has resigned from his position here to take on a new job in Swan Hill in Victoria. I'd like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr McNeil who have been with the Service for some 6 years and has had involvement way beyond his Planning Officer role. Alan had a significant role in the review of the Norfolk Island Plan, he was Secretary to the Planning and Environment Board and to the Toon Trust as well as fulfilling the role of Manager of Land use and Environment Department. The recent successful RDAF bids for the Cascade jetty upgrade and the high tem incinerator are largely due to Mr McNeil's efforts. I wish Alan well in his new position and thank him for his efforts here. Thank you.

MR SHERIDAN Thank you Mr Speaker. If I could just add a few words in support of Minister Ward's in regard to Mr Alan McNeil. I had the pleasure of working with Alan for those three past years with his role as Planning and I found him to be a very competent Officer and He'll be sorely missed here on Norfolk Island. I'd just like to inform the community that I believe Mr McNeil is actually buying a few beers at the Rumours I think this afternoon about 5.00pm if anyone would like to come up and partake in a drink with him, but I wish Alan well in his next venture.

MR SNELL Thank you Mr Speaker. I'd like to reiterate the words spoken this afternoon in respect to Mr McNeil. I haven't had the opportunity to work with Mr McNeil on any occasions but on any inquiries that I have had in regards to the short time that I've been here he's responses have been well appreciated and I wish him well in the future in his new direction.

MR SPEAKER Any further debate. Honourable Members then I put the question

QUESTION PUT
QUESTION AGREED

MR SPEAKER Therefore Honourable Members this House stands adjourned until Wednesday 17 July 2013, at 10.00 am

