

NORFOLK



ISLAND

## THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **Workers Compensation for self-employed workers**

The Minister for Community Services, John Brown, has announced that he has approved a change to workers compensation arrangements to encourage more self-employed persons to join the Workers Compensation Scheme. “I have decided to vary the procedures for a limited time to provide incentive for self-employed people and small business operators to join the scheme,” Mr Brown said. “These changes will make workers compensation available for individual employers and self-employed persons without a waiting period for claims, provided certain conditions are met.”

Mr Brown said that the public Workers Compensation Scheme was established under the *Employment Act 1988*, and since November 1991 it has covered all employees in Norfolk Island. The scheme meets all approved medical and travel costs, and holds reinsurance with an offshore provider for total permanent incapacity and for lost wages (apart from the first five days, which is funded by the employer).

Changes gazetted on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April are aimed at encouraging self-employed workers and employers as individuals to join the scheme on a voluntary basis, through the waiving of the 90-day waiting period for claims for such new members in specific circumstances. Mr Brown said that applications to join the scheme will be accepted if the applicant complies with the following requirements:

- An applicant must undertake that any work-related accident, whether or not resulting in an incapacity (as defined in the Act) to the applicant and arising out of or in the course of the applicant’s self-employment, will be notified to the Employment Liaison Officer within seven days of the accident;
- An applicant must at the time of applying to join the scheme provide the Employment Liaison Officer with all required information concerning the nature of the applicant’s earnings; and
- A 90-day no claim period will apply to applications made after 30 June 2005.

Premiums payable for new applicants will be 20 cents per hour per person employed, the rate which applies for current members. Information on the new requirements and on the overall arrangements for the Public Workers Compensation Scheme may be obtained from the Employment Liaison Office, Debbie Simpson, on 22001, extension 3.

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2005