

NORFOLK



ISLAND

THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Reform of Island finances gathers pace

Minister for Finance Ron Nobbs is greatly encouraged by the wide-ranging community discussion on reform of Norfolk Island revenues and expenditure. Mr Nobbs said today that he has been consulting all parts of the community and has also received a number of written submissions.

“I have already announced the general thrust of reform to the Island’s finances”, Mr Nobbs said. “The centrepiece will be the Norfolk Sustainability Levy, a broad-based consumption levy which will replace a range of existing taxes and charges. The concept is being developed by a small team of senior officials, who are obtaining specialist advice from external experts. I am more than willing to take into account all views and suggestions from the public, so that we can tailor the details of this important initiative to the real needs of our unique community”.

Mr Nobbs said that he wished to correct the perception that the Norfolk Sustainability Levy would commence at the start of the new financial year on July 1st. He said that he hoped to introduce legislation for consideration by the Legislative Assembly at its July sitting, with a view to implementing the new levy system before the end of 2005.

“The scheme is very much dependent on the actual cost of running Government services”, Mr Nobbs said. “Reviews are being undertaken, but I want to make it perfectly clear that education, welfare, tourism promotion and the hospital subsidy constitute a major part of Revenue Fund expenditure. Savings can be made, but not to the extent required”.

Mr Nobbs encouraged members of the community who wished to comment to contact either himself or Executive Director Anthony Middleton, who heads a small NSL Team (phone 22001 or email amiddleton@admin.gov.nf), or to approach any Member of the Assembly.

The Minister said that there would be an intensive phase of community education and training once the full details of the levy scheme were finalised. He envisaged the production of detailed training manuals and educational materials and hoped to establish a shopfront enquiry service in Burnt Pine in the months leading to the commencement of the scheme. Mr Nobbs said that he would be making a further public statement on the Norfolk Sustainability Levy, after consideration of public comments and the finalisation of the detail of the scheme.

Ron Nobbs

Minister for Finance

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