



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk Island Government launches strategic vision

The Government of Norfolk Island has today issued a strategic vision statement, setting out a framework for its future policies and programmes. Commenting on the plan, Minister for Community Services, the Hon David Buffett MLA, said that while it had its origins in existing Government strategic directions, it was a fresh and visionary approach aimed at securing the long term sustainability of the Norfolk Island culture, community and economy.

“We have set out three main goals, underpinned by detailed strategies”, Mr Buffett said.
“These major goals are to:

- Reinvigorate the Norfolk Island economy;
- Achieve substantial structural reform; and
- Engage in constructive dialogue with the Commonwealth”.

“All future major decisions and programmes of the Norfolk Island Government will derive from those goals”, Mr Buffett said. “We have already made substantial progress toward their achievement and have announced specific initiatives. More details of government plans and programmes will be included in legislation to be debated by the Legislative Assembly next week, and I expect that there will be further announcements on particular matters over coming weeks.”

The strategic plan, entitled “Norfolk Island – The future” is printed below. Mr Buffett encouraged community members to express their views on the Government’s vision as detailed in the document.

David Buffett
Minister for Community Services

13th April 2006

NORFOLK



ISLAND

Norfolk Island – The future

An outline of leadership action from the Norfolk Island Government

Norfolk Island gained internal self-government in 1979, a major step forward from its earlier colonial style status. Since that time, successive governments in partnership with the peoples of Norfolk Island have created a unique model of a small but sustainable political and economic community. Major features of that successful society have been the delivery of a wide range of appropriate social and infrastructure services, low taxes and continued development of a valuable tourism industry.

Many factors have caused tourism to falter in the past two years. The Australian Government has recently delivered a message expressing concern about the Island's financial capacity. It has stated that it will roll back self-government, presented two alternative governance options and initiated dialogue. The Norfolk Island Government believes that the maintenance of the present extent of self-government is an essential component in protecting the social, cultural and economic values of the community.

The following action will deliver a sustainable future.

Reinvigorate the Norfolk Island economy

- **Promote tourism** as a high priority, with emphasis on both existing markets and new initiatives, including tourism centred on culture, history, education and ecology, with increased emphasis on the use of the internet and information technology
- **Secure airline services** and encourage new commercial airlines
- **Assist the tourist and retail industries** to adapt to changed markets with new or improved products and services
- **Diversify the Island's economic base** with innovative new industries and projects, including many already under consideration in areas such as broadening tourist accommodation choices, maritime services, renewable energy and telecommunications
- **Implement short-term revenue and expenditure reforms** to improve current budgetary situation
- **Develop and implement a long-term business plan** incorporating measures to manage recurrent revenue and expenditure, as well as long-term capital expenditure
- **Develop new consultative processes** between the business and government communities to share information and plan for future growth
- **Seek expert advice** both from within the Norfolk Island community and from outside specialists.

Economic growth will foster business, enhance employment and improve government income (to deliver community services). Neither of the Australian Government options provides evidence of economic recovery for Norfolk Island.

Structural reform

- **Restructure the public sector and government business enterprises** to enhance and streamline the delivery of the services and to maximise community income from public assets and businesses
- **Restructure the revenue base** through implementation of a broad-based consumption tax and removal of some existing taxes and levies
- Review the consultant's report, then **implement an Asset Management Plan** to ensure sustainable improvement and protection of community infrastructure
- **Review legal and policy constraints on competition** within the economy, and implement changes to encourage and support innovation and new investment
- Research and learn from **successful economic and social models** in other small communities, island states and international organisations.

Structural reform in government services will contain public expenditure and taxation reforms will increase income for required community services and infrastructure. This will mean the maintenance of self-government, with reform of some of its method of delivery.

Engage in constructive dialogue with the Commonwealth

- **Work closely with Commonwealth officials and organisations** (such as the Grants Commission and Australian Bureau of Statistics) to ensure that the priorities and preferences of the Norfolk Island community are central to the dialogue process already commenced
- Seek to ensure that the changes already foreshadowed in the Commonwealth result in programmes and services that recognise the important differences between the Norfolk Island society and economy and "comparable" areas of Australia
- **Address the concerns and issues** raised by the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Roads while also ensuring protection of the uniqueness and autonomy of Norfolk Island.

Timing

Timing is crucial. Australia has signalled immediate commencement of a range of studies (eg Commonwealth Grants Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics), with a view to some formalisation of their views before the end of 2006. The Norfolk Island Government negotiations need to move expeditiously.

Have your say

Detail on the action outlined will further develop in ongoing consultation with the Norfolk Island community. The Government will listen carefully to what is said and develop its policies and services based on what is best for the peoples of Norfolk Island. Your contribution to this important dialogue can be made in a number of ways:

- Members of the Legislative Assembly are available to talk and meet with you – telephone 22003
- Write to The Government of Norfolk Island, Old Military Barracks, Kingston 2899
- Attend public meetings and forums on specific issues
- Take part in the discussion forums on Radio Norfolk
- Send an email to clerk@assembly.gov.nf.

April 2006