



THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

High Court Decision – Bennett & Ors v Commonwealth of Australia

The Chief Minister, André Nobbs, today acknowledged the outcome of the decision by the High Court of Australia in *Bennett & Ors v Commonwealth*.

The High Court held that the Commonwealth's Norfolk Island Amendment Act 2004 is valid. The Amendment Act requires Australian citizenship as a qualification for new enrolments, and re-enrolments, on the Norfolk Island electoral roll and requires Australian citizenship as a qualification for election to the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly.

The Chief Minister said, "The Government of Norfolk Island agreed to be a plaintiff in this case because the Government of the day sought to uphold the democratic rights of all people resident in Norfolk Island regardless of their nationality. It is regrettable that a significant proportion of the Island's population, who are not Australian citizens, have been disenfranchised from standing for election to the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, and those non-Australian citizens in our community not already on the Norfolk Island Electoral Roll are prevented from being enrolled.

Despite the outcome of the case, the Chief Minister said "my Government will be seeking to work co-operatively with the Commonwealth Government and in particular the Minister for Territories, Local Government and Roads, the Hon Jim Lloyd MP to ensure the best outcomes for Norfolk Island. " In this respect the Chief Minister and other Ministers will visit Canberra later this month to meet with the Federal Minister.

5 May 2007