

NORFOLK



ISLAND

THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Further recognition of the Norfolk language

Chief Minister André Nobbs has announced further progress in achieving international recognition of the unique Norfolk language.

“The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has agreed to include Norfolk in the next edition of its *Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearing*”, Mr Nobbs said. “This follows submission to UNESCO by the Norfolk Island Government of a research paper prepared by Prof Peter Muhlhausler setting out the case for recognition and protection of our language”.

The Chief Minister paid tribute to the small group of enthusiastic community members who had initiated the approach to UNESCO and thanked his predecessor Hon David Buffett for his efforts in promoting the use and recognition of the language.

In 2004, the Legislative Assembly passed the *Norfolk Island Language (“Norf”k) Act*, which recognised and affirmed “...the Norfolk Island Language (Norf”k) and the right of the people of Norfolk Island to speak and write it freely and without interference or prejudice from government or other persons”.

The language was defined in the Act as “...the language known as ‘Norf”k’ that is spoken by descendants of the first free settlers of Norfolk Island who were descendants of the settlers of Pitcairn Island”. The legislation established rights to use the language within Norfolk Island in all forms of communication and for it to be taught in schools.

“The advice from UNESCO is a significant step in building recognition of the unique language and culture of Norfolk Island”, Mr Nobbs said. “Other exciting cultural initiatives are underway, including the progress toward establishing a cultural centre. The Norfolk Island Government will continue to support and encourage the projects to recognise and promote our special cultural values”.

André Nobbs
Chief Minister

17th August 2007