



From the desk of the Chief Minister

It is getting on for six months since the election of the 12th Norfolk Island Assembly, during which much has been achieved in the five major result areas which I outlined to the Assembly early in the life of the government. Of course, an enormous amount remains to be done. I have been trying to communicate and consult with as many members of the community as possible, in as many ways as possible. From now on, this will include an occasional column in *The Norfolk Islander* where I can share my current thinking and perhaps get feedback from readers.

This week I would like to offer some thoughts on a couple of areas of interest – strategic planning and immigration/population policy.

At the May sitting of the Legislative Assembly, I tabled the strategic plan framework and made clear our commitment to provide a comprehensive planning document. I envisaged the overall document drawing from the major changes taking place within our revenue raising systems and utilising data from other areas such as the Econotech report. The plan will also capitalise upon the introduction of integrated financial reporting systems within government areas. Importantly, the strategic plan for the 12th Assembly will not be just a wish list.

At the next sitting of the Assembly in October, I will present a final draft version of a comprehensive strategic plan detailing aims and objectives, and not only outlining expected outcomes from those objectives but also the “ownership” and performance indicators that will enable public service areas and statutory bodies to have a clear direction associated with those aims, objectives and outcomes. A great amount of work has been done on this plan so far, and in particular I thank my fellow ministers and the CEO for their continuing input.

There are many views in the community about what is the optimal population for Norfolk Island and about how (and even whether) population growth can be achieved in the interests of growing economic activity and achieving greater prosperity for the community. In my role as Immigration Minister, I am faced on a regular basis with making decisions about individual applications for immigration permits.

I am now seeking to widen the focus so that we can take into account the many issues raised in the population policy report and consider the creative use of our immigration programme to seek out particular types of people we might wish to attract to boost our economy and enrich our society.

We could choose, for example, to encourage people to move here who would provide specialist skill training in post-secondary areas of technology, trades, arts or marketing. Or we might want to target particular occupational groups or classes of people willing to invest in areas which would stimulate economic growth. Any such initiatives would have to occur within overall targets for a sustainable population. I would welcome any comments from readers about these issues.

A final comment on immigration issues. Please remember that if you are travelling away from Norfolk Island and wish to return, you should make sure that you hold the necessary documentation. In some recent cases, people have faced hurdles when arriving at airports

without evidence of their immigration status in Norfolk Island. It is important that if you hold the status of resident, you have the appropriate stamp in your passport. If you hold a General Entry Permit or a Temporary Entry Permit, it is wise to take a copy of your permit approval from the Immigration Office with you when you travel. And finally, be sure to check that your passport has not expired or will not expire before your return! If so, make sure to have it renewed before you leave. Travel safely, and come home soon!

André Nobbs
Chief Minister

20th September 2007