

## **Legislative Assembly Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

### **New Directions for Norfolk Island – 2007/09 strategic plan**

Mr Speaker, at the last sitting of this house I undertook to provide further information at the October meeting on the Norfolk Island Strategic Plan for 2007/09. The strategic plan - New Directions for Norfolk Island – will form the blueprint for the many changes and improvements the Norfolk Island Government intends to implement in its term of office.

Members will recall that earlier this year I identified five key areas within which the goals of the strategic plan would be framed. My Ministerial colleagues and I have spent considerable time refining the broad objectives and the more specific outcomes we aim to achieve over the life of the Twelfth Assembly. The key result areas are as I previously outlined, although we have slightly refined the descriptions to the following:

- Growing prosperity for all of Norfolk Island;
- Delivering better services;
- Ensuring a sustainable environment for living;
- Promoting fairness, opportunity and responsibility; and
- Enhancing leadership, communication and consultation;

In each of these key areas, we have set challenging goals to improve the programmes of Government and Administration over the extensive range of community, social and essential services which we provide. There are over 30 identified goals, each with specific and measurable outcomes.

Mr Speaker, the goals we have set are ambitious and we will have to work extremely hard to achieve the many positive outcomes we have established. Work in most of the areas has already commenced, and in fact we are well down the track toward reaching some of those objectives.

For example, the facility for individual tourist accommodation licences to be traded is about to commence. This gives us the opportunity to encourage greater flexibility in the tourist accommodation sector, and will enable those licensees who are unable to upgrade or fully utilise facilities to trade them to new owners who can make the investment necessary to improve the quality of the services offered. This is a vital component of the tourism plan to attract more high-yielding visitors.

Another example is in the area of air transport, where we continue to make progress toward the goal of expanding and improving services. Next week, Norfolk Air launches its weekly service to and from Melbourne. This means that Norfolk Air will have regular services to Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle and Melbourne. Forward passenger bookings are strong and visitor numbers continue to grow at a rate faster than that set in the Econtech report.

Strategic planning is a complex and challenging task, as can be illustrated by looking at another goal we have set in place – that is, to move toward creation of a deep-sea harbour for Norfolk Island. Various administering authorities and governments have identified the need for a harbour for Norfolk Island for over 200 years, but until now have been unable to overcome the necessary engineering and financing hurdles.

The Norfolk Island Government will shortly receive a report from a consultant we have engaged to explore the feasibility of three different sites for a deep-sea harbour, along with associated surrounding activities such as wave energy power generation, small boat marina and repair services, commercial fishing and tourist cruise ship visits. The challenge for us is to find innovative ways to fund such a major project, so that recovery of the likely very substantial cost does not in fact add to freight rates and costs of importing goods to Norfolk Island.

Because of that issue, we have set another goal to explore with the Commonwealth Government the possibility of a freight equalisation scheme to underwrite the cost of freight as it does for some other areas under its jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, my colleagues and I have set the framework of the strategic plan, and the next step is now in the hands of the Chief Executive Officer of the Administration, who is working with all senior managers to complete the details of the process and strategy necessary to achieve the outcomes in the plan. This includes identifying the people, resources and timelines involved and establishing key performance indicators. The CEO has produced a template for all officers to complete and I am confident that work is progressing well on this “nuts and bolts” component of the strategic plan.

The magnitude of the task should not be underestimated. The Norfolk Island Government and Administration is responsible for the delivery of services in a huge range of areas, and we are seeking to move forward in all of those simultaneously. Programmes include provision of tourism promotion, education, health, social welfare, transport, immigration, energy, communications, environment, waste management and customs - just to name a few of the multitude of matters for which we are responsible.

Mr Speaker, one of the aspects of developing the Norfolk Island strategic plan which I am finding rewarding is the logical and detailed areas of “ownership” of sections of the plan. This enables areas of Government and the Service and statutory bodies to know their directions – and why, and allocates some accountability to the process of delivering the planned outcomes.

I know that there are some in the community who would have liked to see a comprehensive strategic plan before now. Whether we like it or not, any detailed plan much earlier than this would have been in some ways irresponsible given

that outcomes from the GST were unconfirmed and the removal of other levies and duties left a multimillion dollar hole.

I felt that as an incoming government we also needed to assess the resources of the public service and the new CEO before launching a plan that relies on many areas of the public service to drive the delivery of the planned outcomes. I am pleased to say that this stage has progressed, and I have great confidence in the ability of the CEO and her team to push back the boundaries as we achieve the many challenging objectives we have set. The groundwork is in place, and we are now well on the way to achieving New Directions for Norfolk Island.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

André Nobbs  
**Chief Minister**