

## MYTHBUSTERS

Jonno and André asked you last week to pass on any myths which circulate around the Norfolk Island *dem tull* network, and a few could be answered each week in our version of **MYTHBUSTERS** in *The Norfolk Islander*.

A few have been received during the week and are answered below. Actually, there were not that many myths received, but those that came from four different sources are dealt with below. A political organisation sent in 15 questions that were either political statements or implied attacks on a named individual. They described their own comments as “tomfoolery and ratbaggery” and Andre agrees with them that he has more important responsibilities than to engage in answering them. But amongst their collection was one item that could be called a myth, and that has also been answered.

Here are this weeks “myths” and Andre’s comments:

### **Cruise ship tourism has the potential to double the size of the Norfolk Island economy**

It’s great that in the last few weeks Carnival Cruises have made their public announcement of six cruises calling at Norfolk Island next year. They expect to greatly expand that programme in future years. Each cruise ship can carry 2,000 or more passengers, and cruise ship tourism is extremely important to many of our South Pacific neighbours. In some countries, it is almost the only form of inbound tourism. There is clearly huge potential for growth in Norfolk Island tourism from cruise ships, and time will tell the degree to which it contributes to growth in our economy. **This myth: watch this space!**

### **Norfolk Island has saved the Commonwealth Government well over \$3 billion in today’s dollars in the past 30 years**

This seems to relate to a comment made in a Legislative Assembly meeting that if the Australian government applied the same governance model to Norfolk Island that it does to other external territories, the cost to the Commonwealth would be very much higher. Put another way, Norfolk Island government is a very cost-effective way of providing a full range of social and community services compared with what the Commonwealth spends in places such as Cocos and Christmas Islands. *The Australian* reported on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2009 that the cost to the Commonwealth of providing services alone in Cocos Island this year was approximately \$42,000 per resident. If that figure was applied to Norfolk Island’s population, it would work out at \$80 million a year – and that does not include capital expenditure or the maintenance of Commonwealth assets or the salaries of Canberra public servants, which would bring the annual total to more than \$100 million – or a total of \$3 billion in today’s dollars over the past 30 years. The

model of self-government which we have in Norfolk Island serves us well and is cost-effective for the Commonwealth. **This myth: confirmed**

**Is it a fact that CASA insisted that we be a Category 7 airport?**

There is no single system of classifying airports as such. Classification codes exist in a range of requirements of Airservices Australia (ASA) and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) concerning fire services, overall airport facilities and safety issues. Individual airlines and international organisations also have specific requirements. In short, there must be compatibility between the safety facilities and fire services provided and the needs of the largest type of aircraft which does or could regularly use our airport. CASA does not “insist” on a category (in fact, category 7 is a classification that relates to fire services legislation and regulations administered by ASA which bases its categories on a range of factors including the equipment available and staffing levels). The key is that when the current works at the airport are completed, we will meet all of the requirements for the foreseeable future in relation to tarmacs, fire services, RESA and overall safety standards to protect and grow our tourism industry.

**This myth: busted!**

**The government should “correct, with a special urgency, attitudes and behaviours destructive of its desired peaceful co-existence” – specifically racism in Norfolk Island**

This may not fit into the category of a “myth”, but is worthy of comment. The Norfolk Island government does not in any way support racial discrimination nor behaviour which could be described as racist. Commonwealth legislation which extends to Norfolk Island (*Racial Discrimination Act 1975*) makes racial discrimination unlawful and provides processes by which complaints can be made and remedies achieved. Anyone suffering racial discrimination is encouraged to exercise their rights under that Act. Further information can be obtained from my office, the office of the Administrator or on the web at [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial\\_discrimination/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html)

**At least two of the existing Assembly members are members of a political party in Norfolk Island**

This one is easy to bust. No Members of the Assembly are members of a political party in Norfolk Island. In fact, there are no Norfolk Island political parties at all. There is one group purporting to be local which is a sub-branch of an Australian political party and has its registered office in Braddon, Australian Capital Territory. As a sub-branch of an Australian party, it has to have any policies approved by the annual convention of the party in Canberra and to comply with 79 pages of party rules. In any case, that local group has no Members in the Assembly, nor has it ever stood a candidate for election. **This myth: busted**

Got a myth you want to put to the Mythbusters? Email it to [news@islander.nf](mailto:news@islander.nf)