



## THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

### MEDIA RELEASE

## Call for comment on pension income and asset testing

Norfolk Island Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare, the Hon Vicky Jack MLA, said today that in conjunction with Administration officers, she has completed a detailed review of the *Social Services Act 1980*. This has resulted in the Social Services Amendment Bill 2009, which is currently before the Legislative Assembly.

“One of the key proposals in that Bill is to introduce an assets test for pension eligibility in addition to an income test,” Mrs Jack said. “If that proposition is agreed to by the Assembly and Commonwealth assent to the Bill is ultimately given, there will be an ability to treat various forms of income in a more diverse manner than at present”.

The Minister said that current provisions within the Commonwealth jurisdiction mean that bulk incomes such as prize winnings, legacies or gifts tend to affect benefit levels more as a result of the assets test than the income test. In the absence of an assets test in Norfolk Island, the main mechanism to ensure equity in pension and benefits levels is to treat all amounts received as income.

“The Social Services Amendment Bill 2009 will remain before the Assembly until at least the May sitting,” Mrs Jack said. “Prior to the final debate on that Bill, I would welcome any comments from groups or individuals within the community about specific mechanisms for assessing income and assets in relation to pension and benefit eligibility and payment levels, and how these might operate in a fair and reasonable manner in Norfolk Island”.

Comments and suggestions should be forwarded by mail to The Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare at Kingston or emailed to [kedward@admin.gov.nf](mailto:kedward@admin.gov.nf) by 29 May 2009.

Stephanie V Jack  
**Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare**

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