



## **From the desk of the Chief Minister**

Sometimes it's easy for good news stories to be pushed aside in the hurly burly of life and the challenging issues that we all have to face. In recent times, we've had to focus on global recession, a tight Norfolk Island budget situation, tragic news of personal loss and air disasters and the wide spread of Swine Flu, among others. But in this column, I want to focus on some really good things happening in the life of our Norfolk Island community.

### **Service to the community**

Last night, I was one of a number of guests at the annual Rotary handover dinner, when the club's new executive members take over for the coming year. They were full of enthusiasm and ideas for new projects and continued social contributions. The reports of various activities of the club in the last 12 months reminded me of just how much great work is done by the many service clubs and voluntary organisations in our community, and how they help to enrich the lives of all of us. Many of the volunteers give generously of their time and resources without thought of thanks – but perhaps on your behalf I can offer them all a heartfelt word of gratitude. Well done yorley!

### **Community information centre and email information network**

It's great to see the Community Information Centre fully operational and open five mornings a week to provide advice and information to anyone seeking assistance. Congratulations to CIRCA for this great initiative, which I hope will grow and prosper over time. Jason Adams from the Centre also coordinates an email network which provides updates on all sorts of things of interest to the community – local and overseas events, training opportunities, forthcoming conferences and seminars, recent reports and published papers, calls for submissions and comments, grant and funding opportunities and much more. If you are interested, drop in to the Information Centre any weekday morning, or phone on 22447. If you haven't been to the Centre and would like to look at its resources or access a range of internet information sites, you'll find it next to Classic Collectables in the House of Perfumery building in Taylors Road.

### **Let's hear it for the Red Hatters!**

Isn't it amazing how a bit of organised silliness can give you a lift when the world seems glum? We certainly saw that last week with the invasion of the Red Hatters, who took over our streets and shops and won our hearts with their inexhaustible good humour, enjoyment of life and positive attitude towards each other and the world in general. It seemed as if there were red hats and scarves everywhere – even down at Emily Bay for a picnic on a cool drab day, or bouncing along with an umbrella and a smile in the midst of a shower of rain. Thank you, ladies, for the brightness you brought into our lives. We hope to see you again before too long.

### **With some songs in our hearts**

I have mentioned previously that there were some delightful songs among the prizewinners in the 2009 Norfolk Song Contest – all of which were in the Norf'k language. I have now written to all of the winners, asking them to agree to have their songs professionally recorded. I am hopeful that they will all consent to recordings being made, following which we will arrange a special radio presentation so that everyone can share in the creative talents which have resulted in great new melodies and moving lyrics. I'll let you all know when we are ready for the radio spectacular!

**Progress on the public sector efficiency dividend**

It has been really heartening to see that many areas of the public sector have already begun work on improving productivity and taking seriously the target of a 2-5% efficiency dividend to help us achieve our goals for better community services and long-term sustainable finances. We are a close-knit community in Norfolk Island, and I am sure that the public and private sectors can build on existing partnerships to deliver better outcomes for all of us. The senior managers of the Administration are working together with staff across the service to put in place more efficient and effective work practices and structures to best provide services and to ensure optimum productivity. This will be a major project spanning a lengthy period, but I expect to see the first significant results throughout this financial year.

Some of the ministers will be travelling to Australia next week for further meetings with travel wholesalers and governance discussions. I will report back to you on the outcomes after those meetings.

André Nobbs  
**Chief Minister**

3 July 2009