



From the desk of the Chief Minister

There are a few things I'd like to share with you this week. They might not seem to be closely interconnected, however the overall theme is about making progress toward a better future.

Rebranding - another leap forward within the 5-year tourism strategy

Another plank of the five-year tourism strategy is now in place, with the very successful launches of our new brand and strategic promotional directions in Norfolk Island, Australia and New Zealand over the past three weeks. We have had much positive feedback and some constructive criticism about the new tourism website, the advertising campaigns, the new logos and slogans and the overall approach to expanding and strengthening our tourism industry. Integral to this is developing a holistic approach so that the positive holiday experience of our visitors extends from the moment they make their booking right through to when they arrive back home. This involves everyone associated with Norfolk Island tourism both here and off-island committing to "Living the Brand" so that the services and communications to our visitors are welcoming, consistent and rewarding for all concerned. I commend everyone who has contributed to the strategic planning process so far, and urge you all to take part in building the industry which is so vital to our economy.

A testing time

I'm sure that for many of us, our least favourite time at school was when the exams rolled around. I hope that our current batch of bright young scholars at the Norfolk Island Central School are not suffering too many traumas, with Higher School Certificate exams underway for another week, and with School Certificate exams starting on Monday. Best wishes to all of you for outstanding results which will help you to move forward toward your chosen career goals! Some of you will be moving on to higher education opportunities away from Norfolk Island, and we wish you every success in your endeavours and a safe return to your island home.

From the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

This week I received a very supportive letter from the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, regarding the relationship between Norfolk Island and the Commonwealth.

Mr Turnbull reiterated the Opposition's desire to maintain close ties with Norfolk Island, noting the visit earlier this year of Opposition Shadow Minister for Justice and Customs (Hon Sussan Ley MP). In his letter, Mr Turnbull said that *"...as a territory of Australia, a near neighbour and good friend, the Government of Norfolk Island deserves open and regular engagement with the Australian Government."*

Mr Turnbull advised that he had written to the Prime Minister seeking an assurance that the federal government will give priority to dealing with a range of outstanding issues and will *"...establish procedures to ensure greater cooperation and a more productive working relationship between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Government of Norfolk Island in future."*

Association of Australian territories

A few weeks ago, following a discussion between Members of the Legislative Assembly, I wrote to the leaders of the various Australian territories, suggesting that it could be worthwhile for territory representatives to meet regularly in a forum which could discuss matters of mutual interest. In my letter, I said that *"...while these territories might have differing populations, geographic areas and systems of governance, we believe that there would be many areas of common interest in which we could share our experience and support each other. These might include relations with the Commonwealth, communications with the ministers and departments with special roles in relation to territories, budgeting, provision of essential and other community services and forward planning, among many others."*

I have received some very positive feedback from other remote territories and we will now look toward progressing the concept. As there is currently a move for greater autonomy in the Torres Strait islands, we will also consider inviting them to participate. This initiative has the potential to be of mutual benefit to all members, and I'll keep you informed about progress.

Open, transparent and accountable government

I am grateful to the Commonwealth Ombudsman for making available to us one of the staff from his Canberra Office, Ms Gabrielle Hurley, who conducted some much appreciated training over three days last week for managers and supervisors in the public sector. The training covered some of the most important areas of open and accountable administration, including the principles and practice of good decision-making, review of decisions, handling complaints and conflict resolution. Since early 2009, Administration has had in place an effective administrative complaints system, which can handle complaints and inquire into administrative process. We have been in discussion over an extended time with the Ombudsman and the Minister for Home Affairs to establish the Commonwealth Ombudsman's role in reviewing the effectiveness of our complaint system and taking on complex or intractable disputes.

Despite our frustration at the slow rate of progress in Canberra on the administrative review reforms that the Twelfth Assembly has advocated since it was elected, it was good to have preliminary visits from a range of Commonwealth officers over the last few weeks to commence consultation on what positive changes might be implemented. The Attorney-General's Department has now appointed an officer to oversee the Commonwealth role in this process, with reference to administrative review mechanisms such as ombudsman, privacy, freedom of information and merits review of decisions. It was encouraging that the visiting officers were able to hold public meetings and conduct radio forums. We expect that there will be more consultation visits to Norfolk Island about these matters as the Commonwealth works through the necessary policy and structural changes.

There are only 48 sleeps until Christmas! No doubt we'll all be busy until then, with lots happening with our tourism promotions and awards, music festivals, sporting events and plenty more in the community. But whether we are all busy or not, I'm always happy to hear from anyone with suggestions about how we can do things better in the community and the government of Norfolk Island. Please feel free to contact me any time if you have a suggestion or question.

André Nobbs

Chief Minister of Norfolk Island

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