

Norfolk Island Regional Council

MEDIA RELEASE

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

WHAT IS A MAYORAL MINUTE?

The Council's Code of Meeting Practice gives the Mayor the ability to put to a Meeting of Council a written and signed Mayoral Minute on any matter or topic that is within the jurisdiction of Council or of which Council has official knowledge. A Mayoral Minute put to a meeting takes precedence over all business on the Council's Business Paper for that Meeting. A recommendation made in a Mayoral Minute if adopted by the Council becomes a resolution of the Council. As the designated chairperson of Council meetings the Mayor is restricted from putting matters on the Notice Paper. A Mayoral Minute gives the Mayor the opportunity to bring forward a matter that he or she would otherwise be precluded from raising in other business.

At the first Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 20 July 2016 Mayor Adams moved, and the Council unanimously agreed, the following Mayoral Minute:

'That the Council agrees the Mayor and the General Manager enter into discussion with the Commonwealth Government that the Airport Loan from the Commonwealth be deemed fully discharged with effect 1 September 2016 as a gesture of goodwill to the Norfolk Island community as part of the transition to a sustainable Regional Council.'

Speaking to the motion Mayor Adams provided the following background:

'In March 2015, the Australian Government announced comprehensive reforms for Norfolk Island. It was stated that the action was taken to address issues of sustainability which have arisen from the model of self-government requiring Norfolk Island to deliver local, state and federal functions since 1979.

'The Australian Government further stated that these significant reforms will help deliver equity and economic stability to Norfolk Island and ensure residents have access to essential services that all Australians deserve.

'Currently expenditure in the draft Operational Plan Budget 2016/17 is budgeted to outstrip income by \$4,200,000 with an outstanding loan of \$11.4 million dollars for the last upgrade of the airport. This debt, along with the obligation to not only fund the next overlay; but to also fund the ongoing maintenance and depreciation on the rest of the airports assets - the Fire engines, the airport terminal, the Emergency Services Building etc. – we are left with the conclusion that the Norfolk Island airport is currently a demonstrably financially unsustainable asset.

'I hold the view that the Norfolk Island Regional Council should commence its operations from a platform where it can reasonably achieve economic sustainability as promised by the Commonwealth without having to commence its operations with a deficit budget as is currently being proposed.

'To conclude, I submit that the Commonwealth agreeing as a gesture of good will to deeming the Airport loan as fully discharged with effect 1 September 2016 would from the outset assist the Regional Council to address the issues of sustainability for Norfolk Island moving forward.'

Robin Adams JP
Mayor

22 July 2016