

Norfolk Island Regional Council

MEDIA RELEASE

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

VISIT OF SENATOR THE HON. FIONA NASH MP

When Senator Nash met with Council during her brief visit last September she indicated her intent to return as soon as she was able. Senator Nash has written to me this week to advise that she will be visiting again in early December. Whilst dates for the visit are still being settled, I thank Senator Nash for the opportunity to provide her with advice on stakeholders she should meet during her visit. I will be discussing her request with my Council colleagues.

During her visit the Senator is keen to explore with Council several key issues including economic development opportunities for the Island; optimising the use of the KAVHA site for cultural and tourism activities; and the delivery of telecommunication services on the Island.

NORFOLK ISLAND AIRPORT LOAN

The community will recall that I wrote to The Administrator, the Hon. Gary Hardgrave, back in early August requesting he advocate on behalf of the Council for the Australian Government to agree to waive the outstanding balance of \$11.4 million of the Commonwealth loan used to resurface the runway of the Norfolk Island Airport. I am pleased to advise that I have received a letter from Senator Nash this week about the Airport loan and advising a new payment schedule is proposed for the balance of the loan. This will be a matter for further discussion between the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the Council. Details will be provided when agreement is reached.

COUNCIL'S CAPACITY TO BORROW

Under the NSW Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) Council may borrow money for purposes relating to its functions under that Act. However, the proposed loan and activity must be listed in the Council's Operational Plan. Council had sought clarity from the Minister when we met on the Commonwealth's position on Council exercising its power to borrow and has received the following response:

"As the Council is only a few months old, I consider it a priority to finalise its mandatory ten-year Financial Plan. The Financial Plan should identify new measures where the Council can reduce outlays and improve revenues. If Council intends to consider borrowing money, it is important that it can demonstrate that it will be able to repay both new and existing debt.

Borrowing must be worthwhile to support new infrastructure or equipment that will reduce the Council's costs or provide a new source of revenue. I do not consider that borrowing would be appropriate to support the Council's operational costs."

WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Waste Management Advisory Committee met this week for the first time under the chairmanship of Councillor John McCoy. We welcomed Rick Kleiner for the Chamber of Commerce; Rael Donde for the ATA and community member Diane Adams; with apologies recorded for Denise Quintal for EcoNorfolk and community member Phil McDowell, both of whom were off island. The Mayor, the General Manager, Group Manager Services Bruce Taylor and the Acting Team Leader for Waste and the Environment, P.J. Wilson, were also in attendance.

The role of the committee is to provide advice on the following:

- Review the Waste Management Strategy;
- Prepare a report on the waste management facilities and assets;
- Prepare a report on the management of waste streams;
- Review the cost of waste management; and
- Make recommendations to the Norfolk Island Regional Council.

The Committee meets again on Monday 5 December with a site inspection on Monday 21 November.

The Vision in the Community Strategic Plan 2016-2026 – Our Plan for the Future (the Plan) - adopted by Council is –

Norfolk Island: The Best Small Island in the World

Our Achilles heel from achieving this goal is how we currently deal with the waste we create as a community. Norfolk Island has until early 2018 to stop dumping our waste in the ocean – less than 18 months away. Strategic Direction 01 in the Plan is ‘An environmentally sustainable community where we use and manage our resources wisely.’ Our Plan contains the goal ‘To reduce, reuse and recover waste and end disposal of waste into the sea’. To achieve that goal requires the co-operation of each and every member of this community simply because it is a community problem not just a Council problem. I think that the following Japanese proverb says it all.

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."
(A Japanese Proverb)

Robin Adams
Mayor
11 November 2016