

MAYOR'S UPDATE

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL

“It gives me pleasure to repeat my Christmas Message at the conclusion of our Council meeting yesterday” Mayor Adams said –

‘2020 has been a year of challenges for many and our resilience has at times been well and truly tested as we have had to learn to adjust to a world with the Corona virus. However, we are now seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, visitors are returning to our shores, we have been blessed with rain and sunshine and families are heading home for Christmas.

‘So may I on behalf of Councillors wish all in the community including the General Manager and his team of willing workers; and the Administrator and his team of staff, the very very best for a wonderful festive season spent with family and friends.

‘Stay strong and resilient in your aspirations for the future of Norfolk Island and may 2021 continue to bring us all on Norfolk Island blessings, health and happiness, always being mindful that we live on the best small island in the world.’

The following Mayoral Minutes were agreed by Council –

SEA FREIGHT SERVICES - IN CRISIS

“For many years, Norfolk Island has been on a path of deteriorating Sea Freight Services, and community members have repeatedly turned towards Council in recent months demanding answers. While break-bulk sea freight has historically served this community well, recent legislative and regulatory changes and other difficulties have forced Council to explore the provision of a barge service. Preliminary barge operations have demonstrated that a large amount of freight can be moved to and from the Island in both an efficient and cost effective manner.

“Unfortunately, Council has not been able to garner support from the Department of the Environment to utilise an existing groyne in Ball Bay, even for the existing length of the permit, and has been frustrated by the legislative challenges effecting the Ball Bay site, and a real resistance from the relevant Government Departments to find a solution.

“It has been extremely frustrating to myself and my colleagues that it was easier to remove the temporary groyne than it was to allow 4-5 barge movements as an emergency measure to help the Island through the current period of crisis in shipping freight to and from Norfolk Island. Additionally, while it is clear to Council that Cascade Reserve meets most of the government departmental criteria as an alternative landing zone, that is, being an established port, a first point of entry and providing better road access than from Ball Bay, it too has encountered the same bureaucratic bottlenecks and barriers as Ball Bay. (See attached an application from the General Manager and his team to seek emergency approval to install a temporary groyne at Cascade Port).

“And so, the Island now finds itself again at Christmas time extremely low in food and other supplies, with increasing numbers of visitors. Given that the current barriers to the construction of a groyne and providing an efficient barge service reside almost solely in Commonwealth legislation and regulation, it has now become evident to Council that resolving this crisis in a timely manner can only be achieved through intervention at a Commonwealth Ministerial level.

MAYOR'S UPDATE

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED



“Accordingly, I call on the Administrator to request urgent Ministerial assistance to create a solution for this unfolding sea freight crisis on Norfolk Island.”

ADVOCACY FOR ROYAL COMMISSION

“Council by resolution 2020/143 on 23 September 2020 called on the Assistant Minister for Regional Development and Territories the Hon Nola Marino MP, to advocate to the Australian government that a Royal Commission funded by the Commonwealth be formally established by the Governor-General to inquire into and to report and make recommendations on:

Options to provide for the most appropriate form of government for the non-self-governing territory of Norfolk Island that can achieve the majority support of the Norfolk Island people; and build a pathway to peace.

Council notes the response to the Mayor from the Assistant Minister dated 12 November 2020 received in the mail on 9 December and tabled herewith for inclusion in the minutes.” (The letter from the Assistant Minister will be available in Council’s minutes of the meeting)

URGENT BUSINESS WITHOUT NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SUSPEND NORFOLK ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 4381 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993 (NSW)(NI)

“I brought to Council a letter received on the evening of 15 December 2020 from Assistant Minister Nola Marino MP in which she stated –

‘In accordance with section 438K of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)(NI)* (APPLIED Local Government Act), I give notice of my intention to suspend the Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) under section 439I for a period of three months.”

“The letter concludes with the following –

Invitation to make submissions to me regarding the proposed suspension

‘In accordance with section 438K of the applied Local Government Act, I invite NIRC to make submissions to me in respect of the proposed suspension within 28 days after the day on which this notice is given to NIRC.

‘I will consider all submissions made to me by NIRC during this period before deciding whether to suspend NIRC’.”

“In the interests of transparency and accountability the letter, along with relevant documentations, were tabled for inclusion in the Council minutes so that the community can make themselves fully aware” the Mayor said.

Cr Robin Adams JP

Mayor

17 December 2020

We acknowledge the Elders past and present, and we acknowledge the Norfolk Island People, the traditional custodians of this Island