

Di Iulio, Tiana (REPS)

From: CameraHouse [camerahouse@cameralines.nf]
Sent: Thursday, 20 February 2003 6:53 AM
To: Lightfoot, Ross (Senator)
Cc: Committee, NCET (REPS)
Subject: Norfolk Island Electoral Matters



Ken Nobbs
Taylors Road
NORFOLK ISLAND
Wednesday, 19 February 2003

Senator Ross Lightfoot
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee
National Capital and External Territories
CANBERRA. A.C.T. Australia.

Sir,

Time does not allow me to prepare for a verbal presentation/submission during your present hearings on the Island. In these uncertain times caring for family and running a business are full-time activities with minimal time in reserve to assist members of our Legislative Assembly, and other organizations, in defending Norfolk Island's constitutional rights.

Twenty-four years ago, following the notorious Nimmo Report, the world witnessed a unique political stunt that changed the course of history on Norfolk Island. That stunt - the Norfolk Island Act - introduced by the Federal Government of Australia, was an Act to provide for the Peace, Order and Good Government of Norfolk Island with the promise that FULL INTERNAL SELF GOVERNMENT would be granted within TEN YEARS. It was stated, and recognition given, that Norfolk Island need not have the same laws etc. as governed Australia. Norfolk Island was different.

Over these 24 years the Australian Government has effectively "watered" down their promises to offer Full Self Government to a "form of self government" or an

“appropriate type of self government”.

Now they want to castrate the Norfolk Island Act.

This unspeakable act that is about to happen is so cruel, so calculated and so utterly mindless of what the Norfolk Island community and culture is all about. To the Australian Government's eternal shame, they are hell-bent on implementing changes to the Norfolk Island Act that will seriously affect the community balance forever.

Over the past two decades there has been a simmering discontent and resentment towards Australia and its many highhanded unilateral attempts to incorporate us totally within their system. The Canberra politicians and bureaucrats see Norfolk Island as being too free, too laid-back, too contented with their lot, and so much happier than taxpaying Australians, that for them it has become an anathema.

The Australian Government should be Norfolk's greatest friend and our staunchest ally. Many Australians are. We are bonded to Australia by history, culture, and blood. Many Norfolk Islanders have Australian spouses. A little over half a century ago, many Norfolk Islanders went to war as part of Australia's forces, many died for their freedoms, as well as ours.

These days however, you don't have to be a Philadelphia lawyer to feel the rising of an anti-Australian spirit here. It appears that Australian Federal Politicians have become power crazy and have now adopted the position of “we are the power here; we can do anything with Norfolk Island without having to ask permission”.

History will record that Norfolk Island has behaved with enormous restraint since Australia assumed authority over it, despite their many colonialist attitude.

Remember...Queen Victoria gave Norfolk Island to the Pitcairn Islanders, descendants of the Bounty Mutineers. They have been callously and maliciously mistreated by Australian Governments since then. Norfolk Islanders have never retaliated – like their forefathers did on the Bounty - for the way they have been treated.

So a few Australian would-be residents felt they were "locked out" of the Island's political process. Pass the KleenexNorfolk's tax-free system and the control of our immigration is the envy and chagrin of Australian politicians and bureaucrats. Whilst the system is very good – it's not perfect – there is no provision or allowance for bludgers and criminals to become residents. (We can breed our own if we have to.) Given the changes to our Electoral process, that the Australian Federal Government plans to make, this control on emigrants into Norfolk Island would end.

Australia's forced changes to democratic processes may be acceptable for East Timor but is not an acceptable thing for Norfolk Island. How many of their politicians will have the guts to say that the strategies being used to implement the changes to the Norfolk Island ACT are an atrocity? An abomination?

As freedom-loving Norfolk Islanders we should thank our lucky stars that Australia is a powerful force in this part of the world, but it is incredible that in their dealings with Norfolk Island their colonial attitudes of the past survives to this day.

Australia should neither hate nor envy us because we want to be free, strong, open and optimistic; not ground down by the past, or religion, or some caste system; it should be the best friend Norfolk Island ever had.

Yours truly,

Ken Nobbs

PS A copy of this letter has been sent to:

The Editor, The Norfolk Islander, NORFOLK ISLAND.