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9th September 2005

The Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2602

By e.mail to; jscncet@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Members

My submission on Norfolk Island's sustainability under it's existing governance arrangements/structure are prefaced with the following comments:

- We have very little if any unemployment.
- We have an excellent educational system serviced by modern infrastructure.
- We have an electricity generating system in place which although still oil fired, is in the current economic climate, the most efficient and cost effective available for a remote location such as Norfolk Island. I understand that the generating machines have an estimated 10 year life.
- Importers of freight and goods to the Island seem to be of the view that the existing lighterage service is still the best for Norfolk Island in that even if an extended wharf is built to allow for containerization (but one still exposed to the open sea), adverse weather conditions will continue to affect discharge of cargo as is the case with the lighterage service. The cost of the lighterage service is not the problem, it is the adverse effect of inclement weather which prevents or delays discharge of cargo.
- Although in need of replacement, for the moment, the current hospital infrastructure functions.

- We have a system of governance which like all such systems has its failings but despite this, it functions and provides the governance performances necessary to keep Norfolk Island functioning as a community.

It follows that what is lacking for Norfolk Island is its inability to accumulate reserves to provide the funds as and when required for capital works associated with replacing or renewing essential infrastructure.

That inability aside, it is my view that Norfolk can manage with “what we have”. By this I mean that financially, we can manage our day to day financial commitments either from our existing taxation base or from any revision thereof – but in that comment, I exclude the introduction of the proposed Norfolk Sustainable Levy. Refinements, adjustments or modifications to that financial base is possible with our present system of internal Government.

We can manage to overcome a number of glaring fundamental rights such as lack of an ombudsman and limited if non-existent government accountability. The Norfolk Island community has the opportunity under its present form of Governance to address these and similar issues.

Provide the funding (or ready facility for long term borrowings as and can be permitted under the Norfolk Island Act), for capital works and Norfolk can well progress as is.

Sincerely

Mike Zande