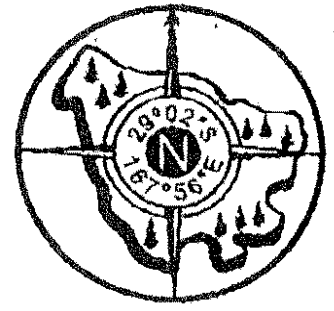




The Norfolk ISLANDER



"Honour Norfolk Island"

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Unilateral electoral changes "disappointing": Chief Minister

The Chief Minister of Norfolk Island, Hon Geoff Gardner MLA, has expressed the disappointment of the Norfolk Island Government and Legislative Assembly at the manner in which the Federal Parliament debated and agreed to changed electoral procedures for Norfolk Island this week.

Mr Gardner said that the Commonwealth had ignored the legislation on electoral matters which was unanimously passed by the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly in March 2003. "We have been awaiting assent from the Commonwealth to the *Legislative Assembly Amendment Bill 2003*, passed unanimously almost twelve months ago", Mr Gardner said. "We have made numerous representations to the Federal Minister for Territories seeking action on this matter, but instead the Commonwealth has seen fit to introduce its own legislation".

"With the passage of the *Norfolk Island Amendment Bill* through both Houses of Federal Parliament, the Commonwealth has now imposed its own interpretation of desirable electoral procedures on Norfolk Island", Mr Gardner said. "This new legislation reduces the period of qualification to enrol and vote to six months, and limits the right for new enrolments to only Australian citizens. However, it is not so much the actual provisions of the legislation to which we object as the high-handed manner in which the Commonwealth has chosen to ignore the deliberations of the elected representatives of the Norfolk Island people and impose its will instead".

(continued overleaf)



Administration welcomes Barkman bequest

The Chief Executive Officer of the Administration of Norfolk Island, Luke Johnson, has welcomed a bequest from the estate of the late Cecil Barkman (pictured above centre). "Mr Barkman has made a most generous bequest to the Administration of Norfolk Island", Mr Johnson said. "In his last will and testament, Mr Barkman has left to the Administration two portions of land on Captain Quintal Drive, together with all fixed improvements on the land, household effects, palms and fruit trees and a motor vehicle".

Mr Johnson said that in due course, the Legislative Assembly would be considering options to ensure the bequest is administered in the interests of the whole community. He said that in the meantime the assets and any income derived from them would be held in trust pending decisions on how these can be best used to benefit the people of Norfolk Island.

Revenue Review Progress - continued

revenue options was undertaken", Mr Donaldson said. "There is a clearly recognised need to determine and implement a preferred option to address revenue issues in the context of current and future financial pressures".

The Minister said that as part of this project the Norfolk Island Government, through the then Administrator (Hon Tony Messner), also sought the assistance of the Australian Treasury in looking at all possible options to broaden the revenue base, and to consider the social and financial implications of any changes. He said that there had been ongoing consultations between senior Administration officials and officers from Commonwealth Treasury, including a visit to Norfolk Island by senior Treasury staff. "I am pleased to announce that the Norfolk Island Government has now received a comprehensive discussion paper on taxation options. I commend the staff from both jurisdictions who have contributed to this detailed and useful document", Mr Donaldson said.

Mr Donaldson stressed that the paper was prepared to facilitate discussion on revenue options, and that no decisions had been taken by the Norfolk Island Government to accept or reject any of the suggestions made.

He said that the paper first identified the following five broad objectives:

1. Reduce, or at least not increase, the taxation burden placed on tourists;
2. Reduce the taxation burden and charges falling on the less well-off residents and increase the revenue contribution made by well-off residents;
3. Reduce monopoly rents extracted from government enterprises;
4. Broaden the taxation base to increase the capacity to collect revenue; and
5. Ensure that the tax regime is one that Norfolk Island can administer.

The paper then lists six options for taxation reform as follows:

1. Adoption of the full Australian taxation system;
2. Modification of existing Norfolk Island taxes;
3. Introduction of a consumption tax;
4. Introduction of land rates or taxes;
5. Introduction of a specific income tax regime for Norfolk Island; and
6. Introduction of a payroll tax.

The paper explores all six options, identifying mechanisms for collecting each form of revenue, impacts on the economy and tourism and the implications for total revenue. It also considers the impacts on individuals and businesses, identifying "winners and losers" and issues concerning the implementation of each possible measure.

The Government has publicly released the paper entitled *Taxation Options for Norfolk Island*, which is available in full on the Norfolk Island Internet site at <http://www.ni.net.nf> Mr Donaldson said that he encouraged all members of the community to study the paper and consider the important choices facing the island.

Have your say on the financial sustainability of government arrangements on Norfolk Island

The Federal Parliament's External Territories Committee has been asked by the Federal Minister for Territories to look into the sustainability of the current governmental arrangements on Norfolk Island.

What range of government activities can the current government machinery on Norfolk Island deliver at an appropriate level - more, less or the same as at present? Can it continue to do so into the future? Will Island revenues meet the costs associated with an ageing population and infrastructure needs? Can the community continue to depend primarily on tourism to significantly fund its needs? How have the Island's lawmaking processes and legal regime kept pace with changing requirements? What changes should be made, if any, in the way individual government services are delivered by the Norfolk Island Government?

The Committee completed the first part of its inquiry into governance on Norfolk Island late last year. It presented its report to the Federal Parliament in December 2003 recommending the introduction of a range of accountability and transparency mechanisms equivalent to those in mainland jurisdictions.

Under the present governmental arrangements, functions normally provided by local and State governments (and some normally reserved to the Federal Government) are discharged by the Island government. The inquiry will focus on the appropriateness of the allocation of functions by Federal Government and Parliament to the Norfolk Island Government to date and the sustainability of those arrangements over time. Issues that the Committee intends to address include:

- budgeting and financial performance, including revenue raising;
- levels of service provision and regulation;
- capital funding, infrastructure, plant and equipment, depreciation;
- Government owned business operations; and
- planning, evaluation and review of government activities

The Committee wishes to hear the views and suggestions of individuals and organisations on Norfolk Island, and is seeking written submissions by Friday 16 April 2004.

Written submissions, addressing any or all of the full terms of reference, or on the more detailed list of issues the Committee believes it should address (both of which appear below) can be sent to the Committee at:

The Inquiry Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, Department of House of Representatives, Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600

For further information about the inquiry or on making a submission, please contact the Inquiry Secretary, Mr Quinton Clements, on (02) 6277 2135 or via email at Quinton.Clements.Reps@aph.gov.au,

(continued overleaf)

Have your say - continued.

or visit the Committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ncet/index.htm

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Federal Minister for Territories has asked that the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories report on measures to improve the operations and organisation of the Territory Ministry and Legislature on Norfolk Island, with particular emphasis on the need for a financially sustainable and accountable system of representative self-government in the Territory.

The inquiry should consider possible alternative measures, such as:

- a) *direct elections for the position of Chief Minister; and*
- b) *fixed terms of government.*

These matters should be considered in the context of the financial sustainability of self-government arrangements on Norfolk Island, with particular consideration of -

- a) the findings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission documented in its 1997 report on Norfolk Island on the Territory's capacity to administer and fund obligations associated with:
 - current and future government functions and responsibilities;
 - the Island's current and foreseeable infrastructure requirements;
 - the provision of government services on Norfolk Island at an appropriate level;
- b) subsequent government and parliamentary reports relevant to the above; and
- c) the role of the Commonwealth and its responsibilities for Norfolk Island as part of remote and regional Australia

LIST OF KEY ISSUES THE COMMITTEE INTENDS TO ADDRESS

1. **Budgeting and financial performance, including revenue raising**
 - How effectively and appropriately has the Norfolk Island Government used the economic management tools available to it to date? For example:
 - Budgeting;
 - financial reporting, accountability and review mechanisms;
 - financial planning and forward estimating.
 - What resources are available to the Norfolk Island Government to improve economic and financial management?
 - How effective and appropriate has the Norfolk Island Government's revenue raising been to date? Has it struck an appropriate and fair balance for Island residents between imposts on residents' wealth, income and consumption? Do the Island's current and proposed taxes and charges fall fairly on all Island residents? What are the realistically achievable revenue raising options available to the Norfolk Island Government?
 - How do the charges imposed on Island residents by Norfolk Island Telecom, the Norfolk Island Hospital Enterprise, the Administration's Electricity Service and other Government owned and administered

business enterprises compare with charges imposed by similar Government Business Enterprises on the mainland. Have these fees and charges changed over time and how are they likely to change into the future? How has and will this impact on the cost of living for Island residents?

- Is there the capacity on-island to administer, monitor and enforce an efficient and equitable revenue raising regime? Do changes need to be made? Is there a need for a Federal Government role or advice and assistance with respect to revenue raising on the Island?
 - Is there a need for a greater or lesser Federal Government role in economic and financial management - such as the recent expert assistance provided by the Federal Departments of Finance and Treasury to the Norfolk Island Government in the Focus 2002 Review and in the Norfolk Island Revenue Review Project? If so, how should that advice and assistance be provided?
 - Should Norfolk Island be included in contemporary financial sharing arrangements that exist between the Federal Government and the other State and Territory Governments, including the role played by the Commonwealth Grants Commission in assisting to determine the level of federal funding allocated to each State and Territory?
2. **Levels of service provision and regulation**
 - How effectively and appropriately are services and benefits being provided to the Island community?
 - Are services and benefits being provided to Island residents at an appropriate standard, fairly and equitably? How do the levels of services and benefits provided to residents compare to those provided to other equivalent Australian communities?
 - What support services and benefits are available to those less well off in the community?
 - How is the level and nature of services and benefits required by the community likely to change into the future?
 - What is the appropriate delivery agent for certain services - the Island government, the Federal Government or agencies of another State or Territory Government or of the Federal Government under service delivery arrangements or contract with the Norfolk Island Government?
 - How effective and appropriate has the Norfolk Island Government's legal regime been? Is there currently a contemporary legal regime that provides appropriate legal protections and rights for Island residents? How has the administration and enforcement of the laws enacted by the Island Government been implemented and resourced? What capacity is available for it to be adequately resourced and administered into the future?
 - Is there a need for a greater or lesser role by the Federal Government. For example, how can the close cooperative arrangements that exist between Norfolk Island Customs and Quarantine and Federal Government Customs and Quarantine be improved?

(continued overleaf)

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Have Your Say - continued.

3. Capital Works, Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment

- State of Island infrastructure, plant and equipment (for example, roads and walkways, electricity generation and transmission, hospital buildings and associated medical and dental equipment, the Norfolk Island school buildings and equipment and materials provided for education, telecommunications, radio communications, satellite and tv services, emergency services including search and rescue and ambulance and fire services, waste disposal, sewerage and water assurance, pier and lighterage equipment, Administration vehicles and equipment)
- Maintenance of real value of assets base and allowances for depreciation
- Life-cycle planning and programming of upgrading and replacement for infrastructure and plant and equipment
- The capacity to fund the Island's infrastructure and equipment needs to date and into the future
- Is there a need for a greater or lesser role by the Federal Government, both financial and non-financial (such as through the provision of technical expertise)?

4. Planning, Evaluation and Review of Government Activity

- Overall planning for the Island's future needs and demographic changes
- Administrative capacity of the Territory's machinery of government
- Training and upgrading of public sector workforce skills
- Corporate management of Government Business Enterprises
- Participation in national forums with Commonwealth, States and other Territories
- Capacity to remedy matters requiring attention, identified in earlier reviews/reports by bodies both on and off the Island
- Is there a need for a greater or lesser Federal Government role, for example, through the provision of advice and assistance?

BACKGROUND

The Joint Standing Committee is a parliamentary committee made up of members of the Federal House of Representatives and the Senate. It was established by Federal Parliament to inquire into matters concerning the Australian Capital Territory, the Antarctic, and the Island Territories, including Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Norfolk Island. Part of its role is to monitor governance in these Australian Territories to ensure that appropriate and effective government services and programs are provided to Territory communities and residents.

The Terms of Reference listed above reflect the fact that the Committee has an interest in how government is being delivered to Norfolk Island's residents and in how the Island's economic and social development is being managed.

POSITION VACANT



NORFOLK ISLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL

*Expressions of Interest -
Casual Teaching 2004*

Members of the Norfolk Island Community who may be interested in casual (day to day) teaching at Norfolk Island Central School in either the Primary or Secondary School during 2004 are invited to submit details of their qualifications and experience to the Principal by close of business on Friday 12th March 2004. Previous approved casual teachers are also asked to resubmit an expression of interest.

Essential Criteria: Tertiary qualifications and successful experience working with children, either teaching or in associated activities. Demonstrated ability to manage children effectively. Excellent interpersonal oral and written skills. Ability to work collaboratively. All applicants will be subject to security and child protection checks.

Desirable Criteria: Preparedness to work at short notice.

Warren Burke

Principal, Norfolk Island Central School

CAFE STAFF required for coffee making and other cafe duties. Flexible hours. Please contact Chris and Anne at Tropicana on 23773

PACIFIC DIRECT LINE
New Zealand/Norfolk Island

	Auckland	Norfolk
Norfolk Guardian V26	14 Mar	17 Mar
Norfolk Guardian V26A	22 Mar	25 Mar

CAF 7% & BAF 13% applicable

Bookings: McKay Shipping
Ph: (09) 309 0229 Fax: (09) 303 2931

NEPTUNE SHIPPING LINE
Australia/Norfolk Island

	Cut-off	Sydney	Norfolk
Norfolk Guardian V27	TBA	TBA	TBA

CAF & BAF 18.59% applicable

Bookings: Neptune Shipping Agency
Sydney - Ph: (02) 9235 2999 Fax: (02) 9235 2912

Norfolk Forwarding Services
Australia/New Zealand/Norfolk Island

	Bris Cut-off	Syd Cut-off	ETD Yamba	Nik Island	Aki Cut-off
Nik Guardian V27	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA

Bookings - Teresa/Chris Kneller
Ph 0061 1300 300 168 Fax 0061 1300 300 169

Norfolk Island Agent

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www.argosy.nf

Telephone: 22836	Fax: 22886
Mobile: 80286	A/h/ 23611