
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Report on the visit to Norfolk Island

2–5 August 2006

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

September 2006
Canberra

© Commonwealth of Australia 2006

ISBN 0 642 78840 5 (printed version)

0 642 78841 3 (HTML version)



Foreword

The Committee undertook its recent visit to Norfolk Island in order to renew its association with the Norfolk Island Government and to engage in discussions with the Norfolk Island community on matters of concern, particularly in light of foreshadowed changes to the Island's governance arrangements.

It was a great pleasure to return to Norfolk Island, and the Committee expressed its gratitude for the warm welcome it received on Island and for the generosity of the Norfolk Island Government in its capacity as host. We believe that our visit did much to reinvigorate what the Committee views as an important relationship.

This Committee has always maintained a close interest in the affairs of Norfolk Island, and takes seriously its brief to oversight the governance and administration of Norfolk Island, for the benefit of the people of Norfolk Island and of the Commonwealth as a whole.

The Committee is conscious of the far reaching potential changes to the governance of Norfolk Island which are now being considered, and the challenges the community will necessarily face as a result. The discussions the Committee held with the Norfolk Island Government and Legislative Assembly, and with the wider community, did much to assure the Committee that the community will make a success of whatever changes are undertaken. We hope that this report, which examines matters raised during our recent visit, will provide some guidance to the Commonwealth Government on the current concerns and future needs of Norfolk Islanders.

Senator Ross Lightfoot
Chairman



Contents

Foreword iii

Acknowledgements vii

Membership of the Committee viii

List of abbreviations ix

1 Norfolk Island Visit Report 1

Introduction 1

Australian Government decision to change Norfolk Island’s governance arrangements.. 2

 Commonwealth Grants Commission review..... 3

 Australian Bureau of Statistics survey 5

Relationships..... 6

Governance Issues 7

 The need for change 7

 Norfolk Island Government Finances 9

 Taxation 11

 Tourism 12

 Infrastructure 13

 Social Services..... 14

 Immigration 14

Committee Conclusions 15



Acknowledgements

A number of people made significant contributions to the success of the Joint Standing Committee's visit to Norfolk Island on 2-5 August.

The Committee wishes to thank the Administrator of Norfolk Island, the Hon Grant Tambling, his Official Secretary, Mr Owen Walsh, and their staff for their assistance in putting together the program and assisting to ensure that everything ran smoothly.

The Committee also wishes to thank the Chief Minister of Norfolk Island, the Hon David Buffett, and members of the Norfolk Island Government and Legislative Assembly for their time and assistance, and their positive and constructive comments during discussions.

The following people gave their time during the Committee's tour of the Island:

- Norfolk Island Hospital: Hon John Brown MLA, Mr David McCowan and Dr Candice Snell
- Waste management facilities: Hon Vicki Jack MLA, Mr Peter Davidson, Mr Fred Howe and Ms Nicole Diatloff
- Kingston Pier: Mr Peter Davidson, Mr Ross Hogan and Mr Simon Batt
- Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area: Mr George Anderson and Ms Liz McCoy.

Finally, the Committee wishes to thank those who by their hospitality or their contribution during discussions with the community made the visit both pleasant and a valuable means of renewing links with the people of Norfolk Island.



Membership of the Committee

Chair Senator Ross Lightfoot

Deputy Chair Senator Kate Lundy (from 29/03/06)

 Senator Trish Crossin (to 28/03/06)

Members The Hon. Ian Causley MP

 Ms Annette Ellis MP

 Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP

 Mr Paul Neville MP

 Mr Patrick Secker MP

 The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP

 Senator Kim Carr (from 08/12/05)

 Senator John Hogg

 Senator Barnaby Joyce (from 16/08/05)

 Senator Kate Lundy (from 10/08/05)

 Senator Kerry O'Brien (to 10/08/05)

 Senator Nigel Scullion (to 16/08/05)

 Senator Natasha Stott Despoja

Committee Secretariat

Secretary Mr Stephen Boyd

Inquiry Secretary Dr Bill Pender

Research Officer Mr Justin Baker

Administrative Officer Ms Natasha Petrovic



List of abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CGC	Commonwealth Grants Commission
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
KAVHA	Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area
NIG	Norfolk Island Government
NSL	Norfolk Sustainability Levy

