

MAYOR'S UPDATE

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED



NORFOLK ISLAND – THE BEST SMALL ISLAND IN THE WORLD

SUBMISSION SENT FROM THE MAYOR TO ASSISTANT MINISTER THE HON NOLA MARINO IN RESPONSE TO HER NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SUSPEND THE NORFOLK ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL UNDER SECTION 438I OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993 (NSW)(NI)

“Further to the Mayors Update on 8 January 2021 in the local press, I covered this week on radio some of the salient points addressed in the submission sent by me on behalf of NIRC to the Assistant Minister on Friday 8 January” Mayor Adams said. “The submission in full can be found on the carousel on the front page of Council’s website www.norfolkisland.gov.nf. The points covered are:

- That Council continues to commit towards an environment of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership with the Commonwealth; and that our actions to date are always focussed on our vision - to be “the Best Small Island in the World”.
- To give context to where we find ourselves today I posed to the Assistant Minister the need to first consider the genesis of the Audit Reports. In particular, it was the Norfolk Island Regional Council that requested the two audits with the firm intention to create a blueprint to address and action the findings of the audit reports. This intention is clearly documented in the Mayoral Minute unanimously agreed by Council 24 June 2020 and the terms of reference for the audits agreed 3 July 2020 were provided in full in the submission. The following was also made clear in the submission –
 - a) the terms of reference endorsed by Council at its Extraordinary Council meeting on 3 July 2020 demonstrate – at the very least - Council’s awareness of the need for the performance audit to ‘determine whether the Council is carrying out its activities effectively, economically and efficiently and in compliance with all relevant laws.’
 - b) that it is disappointing that blame is being levelled solely at Council for perceived short comings in compliance with legislative responsibilities - when in fact it is the Council that recognised and called for the independent External Audits; and brought the Commonwealth’s attention to the significant flaws and short comings in the governance model for NIRC imposed on Norfolk Island in 2016.
- The Assistant Minister’s attention was particularly drawn to the fact highlighted by Grassroots in its report that significant legacy issues were inherited by NIRC upon its establishment in 2016; that NIRC does not have funding capacity for the issues to be addressed in a timely manner and that consequently, there is an urgent need for a long-term funded strategic and financial plan to be developed in a collaborative manner between NIRC and the Commonwealth. The submission pointed out that this is just further evidence of the significant flaws and short comings in the governance model for NIRC imposed on Norfolk Island in 2016.
- The submission further addressed the issue of appointing an interim administrator and the holding of an ordinary election of councillors within 3 months after the making of the order

“The submission concluded by my bringing to the Assistant Minister’s attention that the last four plus years, whilst rewarding for me personally, have been challenging for NIRC – and particularly for the governing body – as it dealt with – and continues to deal with - the significant flaws and short comings – not of NIRC’s making - in the governance model for NIRC imposed on Norfolk Island in 2016.” Mayor Adams said. “I have proposed that the Assistant Minister - in arriving at her decision - that her decision align with the oft quoted aphorism – **‘Not only must Justice be done; it must also be seen to be done.’**”

2021 IS THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE AND TRUST

"I mentioned on radio on Wednesday that it seems fitting following my talking about issues in the submission to the Assistant Minister to mention the United Nations resolution adopted by the General Assembly in 2019 that 2021 be declared as the ***International Year of Peace and Trust***, a declaration acknowledging, quote - *'peace and trust entail accepting differences and having the ability to listen to, recognise, respect and appreciate others, as well as living in a peaceful and united way.'*

"I thank the Mayor of the Norfolk Island Youth Council for bringing this Declaration to my attention and invite the Youth Council to consider and make recommendations on how Norfolk Island might observe the International Year of Peace and Trust in an appropriate manner and to disseminate the advantages of peace and trust, including through educations and public awareness-raising activities" the Mayor said.

AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO ENABLING COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE IN AUSTRALIA'S EXTERNAL TERRITORIES

"I have again received advice that the Australian Parliament's committee on the [National Capital and External Territories](#) has commenced a new inquiry into availability and access to enabling communications infrastructure in Australia's external territories. Further information is available on the inquiry website: <https://www.aph.gov.au/etcommunications> The Committee invites written submissions by Wednesday 27 January 2021." Mayor Adams said.

The Committee intends to visit the Indian Ocean Territories and Norfolk Island in 2021 and hold public hearings. No dates are confirmed at this stage and further details will be announced on the Committee's website in due course.

"And speaking of communications 4G is now live on Norfolk and sincere thanks are extended to all of NIRC staff who have worked tirelessly to bring the project to a successful conclusion. Thank you to one and all" the Mayor said.

Robin Adams JP
Mayor
Norfolk Island Regional Council
14 January 2021

'We acknowledge the Norfolk Island People, the traditional custodians of this Island'