

## Presidents Report

Thank you David and good evening everyone. The next matter on the agenda is the TREASURER'S REPORT and with Treasurer Geoff Bennett off Island until next week, I have been asked to include this report along with my Outgoing Presidents report. I am happy, with the assistance of the outgoing committee, to answer questions on either report at the end.

You will note in the paperwork provided the independent Audit Report and the accompanying Financial Statements outline NIPD's Income and Expenditure for the 18 months to 30 June, 2017, which are self-explanatory. Some notations in relation to these are:

1. Whilst the Statement of Receipts shows Income of \$137,171 (funds received from Donations; Sale of Merchandise; Fund raising; etc.), there were considerably more funds made available and provided directly by NIPD committee members, sufficient to cover major items way beyond NIPD's resources, examples such as: -

- the Travel & Expenses of the NIPD Delegation to the UN in New York,
- the Airfares etc. of Geoffrey Robertson QC from the UK to Norfolk and return, and his fares & expenses to and from the UN in New York,
- and some of the considerable Legal Expenses incurred, especially during the development of the Petition to the UN and associated papers, etc.

2. The Auditor made one qualified statement in her Report in relation to the internal controls over donations and the proceeds from the sale of merchandise. The new controls as recommended are now in place, and for your information refer to amounts that were not receipted because they were dropped anonymously into the Donation Box, and for some small sales of merchandise.

3. You will also note the Auditor reported that: -

- (a) The financial statements show a true and fair view of the financial result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year
- (b) The accounting and associated records have been properly kept in accordance with accounting standards
- (c) Money received as a result of fundraising appeals conducted during the year has been accounted for.

4. The Treasurer points out that, from the outset, considerable effort has been made to ensure a full accountability of funds received and expenses incurred in the running of NIPD. Procedures put in place to ensure this are:

- the appointment of an acting Treasurers Phil McDowell to assist Treasurer Geoff Bennett;
- all expenditure approved by motion at NIPD meetings and reported in Minutes of NIPD Meetings
- an updated Treasurers report provided to and for approval at NIPD meetings
- dual signatories/approvals required for all expenses paid (both cheque and internet banking)
- initiation of an independent Audit by a Chartered Accountant.

NIPD's accounts, this report and the financial statements were produced by Treasurer Geoff Bennett, Phil McDowell, and by Cathy O'Sullivan, and I thank them very much for ensuring that due process and the highest possible degree of scrutiny has been applied to the management and expenditure of all NIPD funds.

As the outgoing President of the committee, and before a new committee is elected, I would like to offer a personal tribute to my fellow committee members for their selfless contribution; for the thousands of hours they have put in, and for the tens of thousands dollars of their own money they have contributed in the name of returning democracy to Norfolk Island.

To Geoff Gardner, Lisle Snell, David Buffett, Andre Nobbs, Robin Adams, Geoff Bennett, Chelsea Evans, Mitchell Graham, Brett Sanderson, Albert Buffett, Troy Hamilton-Irvine, Phil McDowell, Mary Christian-Bailey, and to Ron Nobbs who has also been an integral part of the NIPD since its inception in 2015, thank you.

On behalf of the outgoing committee I would also like to pay tribute to all of our 1428 registered supporters, and to thank them for their time; for their advice; and for their support with fundraising, and for all that that they have contributed to assist NIPD over the last few years.

The committee has respected and appreciated the manner in which all of you have chosen to remain calm and respectful in the face of the constant mistruths and disrespect. The committee is very much aware that Canberra's continued obstinacy, single-mindedness and disrespect have pushed many of the peaceful people on this Island into having dark thoughts and forced them to deal with an unhealthy level of distress and anxiety.

For me personally, one of the greatest sadness's of the last few years has been to witness the passing of some of the older Norfolk Island people broken hearted at what has happened and is continuing to happen to the home they helped build and to the community they have loved and fought for their entire lives.

It is timely to recollect the 1978 report of the United Nations Association of Australia which noted: *"It is a tribute to the Islanders' general temperament of civilised tolerance and*

*introspective humility, nurtured by their isolation, that they have endured this state of affairs so quietly. Elsewhere political ferment would not only have been inevitable; it would have erupted into more violent forms of conflict long before this”.*

Having said this, NIPD as a committee have no doubt that, as in the past, it will be our communal ability to stand tall and to fight this fight with dignity and grace that will help us once again win our fight.

Our committee has witnessed the immense power of this first-hand through the kindness of people whose good will and charity towards the Norfolk Island people have enabled us a committee to achieve things which we would have otherwise not been able to achieve.

One notable example of this is when the committee received cost estimates in the order of \$250,000.00 to produce just two of the critical geographical and anthropological studies we needed to move forward. A daunting prospect when we never had \$250,000.00. However, in true Norfolk Island spirit we were able to find the eminently qualified ‘friends of Norfolk Island’ to perform this work at a small fraction of that cost.

And, here I pause to pay a special tribute to Professor Peter Muhlhausler, a man who has a deep admiration for this community, and to our very own Dr Ceaira Cottle – who between them put in countless hours to help produce one of the most important and defining documents in Norfolk Islands history, namely Norfolk Island’s Petition to the United Nations.

Whilst NIPD was still required to meet certain and quite significant costs to produce and publish the Joint Legal opinions and the Petition to the United Nations, it is noteworthy that, whilst we did cover some travel costs for Peter and his assistant, neither Peter nor Ceaira wanted or received any money for their time and effort.

Another notable example of kindness and generosity is this very building which Di Menghetti has kindly offered to NIPD totally rent free – I think we can all agree this building has become a meeting hub and an important place where people can gather to share their ideas and their frustrations. Di your support is very much appreciated - thank you.

In my first draft of this report I elaborated over a long list of our achievements, including the joint legal opinions prepared by two of the world’s leading international and constitutional lawyers; the United Nations Petition; the assistance of Geoffrey Robertson; the thousands of letters we have written; our book mail outs to every federal politician; lobby trips to both the NSW and Federal Parliaments; the production of a draft 30-year vision for Norfolk Island; meetings with international diplomats; visitations to the United Nations in New York; the visit of Pauline Hanson; a 183 page complaint to the United Nations Humans Rights Committee; and the list went on, however I am sure most of you will be pleased to hear that I am not going bore you with what we have done rather I have decided to focus on what we have learned and the important work still ahead of us.

First of all, what have we learned and what we now know to be the truth. We know Norfolk Island does not belong to Australia - we know international law declares that, when it comes to Norfolk Island, it is the interests of the ‘inhabitants of the Territory of Norfolk Island’ that

must be paramount – and we know that the Norfolk Island people have an absolute, 100% guaranteed, right to self-determination - and we know the Australian Government knows this.

We know the Australian Government knows this because they were a party to the relevant UN declarations in 1960; because the Norfolk Island Council unanimously appealed to the United Nations in 1978 resulting in Australia's decision to backtrack from taking us over at that time; we know this because NIPD reminds them on almost a weekly basis; and we know this because they acknowledged the fact in their very own Parliament whilst abolishing our parliament and self-government in 2015.

During the passage of that Act, the Norfolk Island Legislation Amendment Act 2015 (Cwlth), the Australian Government said: *“One of the key issues is whether the Bill allows for the human rights and freedoms of the residents of NI, especially the Norfolk-Pitcairn population. Some of this population identify as a people with rights to self-determination under Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.”*

Unfortunately for us, the Australian Government was able to deceive the Parliament and the world by saying, and I quote: *“The proposed measures are a result of extensive consultation and one of the key objectives of the legislation is to provide for sustainable economic and social development of NI, an important aspect of the right to self-determination in maintaining the Norfolk-Pitcairn culture”*.

In other words, according to them, we decided to trade away our government so the Australian Government could fix our economy. It is hard to reconcile the magnitude of the deceit, that whilst 70% of Islanders were voting in favour of their right to self-determination, Australia's Parliamentarians were boasting how pleasing it was that Norfolk Islanders and I quote, *“are excited and expressing their support at the prospect of the changes ahead”*.

So again, let's break this down in to simple language. Australia knows the Norfolk Island people have a right to self-determination. Australia knows that their actions are in breach of international law. And we know that Australia is prepared to lie and deceive its own Parliament and the world to achieve its long term goal of unlawfully misappropriating the Territory of Norfolk Island from its rightful heirs, the Norfolk Island people.

It is clear that a great injustice had been perpetrated against the Norfolk Island people, and I hope that whoever is elected tonight can finish the work started by the outgoing committee, and right this wrong.

As you are all aware, it is NIPD's unanimous view that in the face of an uncompromising Commonwealth Parliament, and with the benefit of sound legal advice, and with the benefit of being able to look back at Norfolk Island's previous incursions with Australia, that Norfolk Island's best path forward must involve seeking to have Norfolk Island inscribed onto the United Nations List of non-self-governing Territories.

We knew that unless we have the protection of the United Nations we faced winning this battle again, as we did in the 1970's and in 2006, only to have Australia do it again some time into the future. From the outset, the NIPD committee decided, we should fight to give Norfolk Island a firm constitutional foundation upon which we can build a peaceful and constitutionally secure future.

From the start we stated our goals and prepared a plan on how to achieve our goals. This was important because it allowed the new committee to focus all of its limited resources towards achieving the immense task before them and it enabled us to ensure that every decision we made and every cent we spent was measured against our ability to achieve our stated goals.

This will also be relevant for the incoming committee, who will also need to wrestle with an expectation from many of NIPD's supporters to take on a broader representative role more akin to that of a government in exile. Very early on the outgoing committee made the tough decision that if we want any chance of success we would need to dedicate all of our limited time and all of our resources toward achieving our goals and objectives.

We discussed our concerns with the Council of Elders and to the great credit of Albert Buffett and the Council; they agreed to fill much of the political vacuum left by the abolition of our Government. Today NIPD and the COE meet regularly and the COE has been a wonderful support to NIPD in helping us achieve our goals. I trust and hope the incoming committee continues this important relationship with the Council of Elders.

To the credit of the outgoing committee, and for the benefit of the incoming committee, you will be pleased to know that all of the mechanical and legal steps necessary to have Norfolk Island listed have been done, and now, we hope that a new and re-energised NIPD committee will be able to achieve the last and arguably most important step.

Of all of the steps Norfolk Island requires to do to achieve listing the last step is the least prescriptive and the most challenging. The incoming committee will have a plan to work to in order to to achieve this goal, a plan that has already been successful in the listing and re-listing of New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

Whilst I will leave it up to the new committee to determine how widely they will advertise their plans, I can say the new committee will be required to travel off the Island in search of 'friends' wider afield, and there will be an opportunity for supporters of NIPD to play a meaningful role to assist NIPD in achieving this final step.

Again, whilst I will leave it up to the incoming committee to decide how they can best co-opt this help I would like to ask two things:

1. Please, anyone that has friends in high level roles in the Government or in the Church in the Pacific Islands can they make these relationships known to the new committee members; and

2. Can everyone please, irrespective of the outcome of this election, get behind the new committee and help them to achieve “Self-determination for Norfolk Island”

To the outgoing committee, I thank you, to the incoming committee you have the best wishes of the outgoing committee. To our supporters, to the Hands-Up group, to the Tent Embassy people, to the No Land Rates group, to the Council of Elders and to everyone else who is also working towards returning democracy to Norfolk Island – to Chris Nobbs and David Buffett and their helpers for organising the election process - and to Greg who turns up here just about every day to man the office – thank you.

Chris Magri  
27 December 2017