

**Norfolk Island 2006
Submission**

DOCUMENT TITLE:

**WORLD TRADERS NORFOLK
ISLAND
NORFOLK ISLAND INQUIRY 2006**

**RESPONSE TO ISSUES PAPER
CGC 2006/1**

SUBMISSION NUMBER: NI2006/SUB/007

DATE RECEIVED: 14/03/2006

World Traders - Norfolk Island

From: World Traders - Norfolk Island [shop@worldtraders.nf]
Sent: Thursday, 23 February 2006 3:11 PM
To: Dotars
Cc: grant.tambling@dotars.gov.au; j.lloyd.mp@aph.gov.au
Subject: Norfolk Island ensuring a stronger and sustainable future

Dear Sir,

Unfortunately, neither my wife nor I were afforded the opportunity to hear what the Minister and the Dotars representatives had to say in group discussions, so I am hopeful that what has been passed on to me is an accurate assessment.

Preamble

My comments assume that the following is correct :

Firstly, that the Australian Government will take over responsibility for customs, immigration and welfare, and that this is not negotiable.

That health and education are, as yet, not decided but are fairly certain to follow customs, immigration and welfare.

As a Norfolk Island resident of eighteen years I am appalled at the inactivity of our Legislative Assembly and their inability to face reality. Our Chamber of Commerce has not performed much better.

The "Norfolk Way"

Whilst I don't necessarily agree with the Australian Government's decision or manner of approaching the problem, I do believe that we, on Norfolk Island, will need to live within the framework of what has been projected but must fight for those things that are important to us as a community. There are many laudable customs and practices on Norfolk Island that are not always found on the mainland. However, if we claim we want to maintain the "Norfolk Way" this must be backed by details of just what this means. Otherwise it is no more than a glib saying.

Work Ethic

There is an extremely high work ethic in the private sector on Norfolk Island. It is most important that this is not destroyed, which could very easily happen. As a small business proprietor for 25 years in Australia and 18 years on Norfolk Island I feel I am in a position to comment on this matter.

This work ethic is evident not only in the staff employed directly in our business but also in the tradesmen with whom we come in contact. We purchased the Broadwalk Arcade, a small shopping complex, some twelve months ago and have just spent half a million dollars on refurbishments, so I have seen first hand our builder's workers as well as the plasterers, painters, electricians, plumbers etc., who have been involved in the project. An excellent work ethic can also be found amongst the large number of school children who have part time jobs after school and on weekends. For example, we have employed for three years an exceptional young lady who is not only a top notch employee to whom we pay an adult wage but who is also a straight A student and winner of a citizenship and sports awards.

Unemployment

Currently, there are very few unemployed people on the island. Anyone who wants to work can find a job. It is very important that this situation be maintained. It would be very detrimental to the island if unemployment benefits were easily available. They should only be paid to Norfolk Island residents in genuine cases of need.

Industrial System

Norfolk Island tradespeople are very adaptable and will usually turn their hand to small jobs that fall within the scope of the main job in hand. There are no demarcation issues and, in such a small community, there is no place for them. Therefore it is also important that any changes to the Norfolk Island industrial system be carefully assessed.

Immigration

Past Legislative Assemblies have been paranoid about limiting the numbers of new residents on the island to a point that growth has stagnated and no fresh ideas or initiatives have been welcomed. It is unlikely that Norfolk will be overrun by undesirables. By limiting any welfare payments to current residents this can be controlled.

The Retail Sector

At present a large percentage of the island's revenue comes from customs duty paid by importers and retailers. By purchasing judiciously many retail businesses on Norfolk Island are able to offer very competitive prices compared to retail in Australia and New Zealand. They offer employment to a significant portion of the population. Until details are made available of what tax system will be introduced by the Australian Government, it is difficult to assess whether we have a chance of surviving in the new environment. It is hoped that if the system is such that it will no longer be

possible for retailers to survive, that at least we will be given time to restructure and diversify under the new arrangements.

My wife and I look forward to having the opportunity to offer further input during the consultation period.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Anderson

Norfolk Island 23/2/06