



## The Hon Jamie Briggs MP

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure  
and Regional Development  
Member for Mayo

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*PDR ID: MB14-000663*

Dr Dennis Jensen MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter dated 1 December 2014 about a petition on the governance of Norfolk Island submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions. I apologise for the delay in responding.

In November 2014 I asked the Hon Gary Hardgrave, the Administrator of Norfolk Island, to lead community consultation following the release of the report on Norfolk Island by the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories (JSCNCET). The report makes significant recommendations for the future of Norfolk Island, including that the *Norfolk Island Act 1979* be repealed and a local government type body be established on Norfolk Island to ensure ongoing local representation. The Administrator has now reported to me on the outcomes of the consultation process and I am considering his report.

Given the consultation that has already occurred, it is not my intention to call a referendum or plebiscite on the governance arrangements on Norfolk Island. I note the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly may pass a resolution to direct a referendum and does not require the approval of the Australian Government (the Government). However, on 11 February 2015 the Hon Lisle Snell MLA, the Chief Minister of the Norfolk Island Legislative Assembly, withdrew his intention to call a referendum at this time.

Addressing the fundamental challenges facing the Norfolk Island economy is key to preserving Norfolk Island's culture and ensuring families can remain on the Island. The Government is committed to reforms to strengthen the Norfolk Island economy, preserve its culture and heritage and improve the Island's sustainability.

The Government is currently considering its response to the JSCNCET report and it is encouraging that so many in the Norfolk Island community have taken the time to contribute to the consultation process.

I trust this information will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Jamie Briggs**

**10 MAR 2015**