



WHERE TO FROM HERE

**The most effective tool for
development is the empowerment of
women**

(Kofi Annan then UN Secretary General 2006).

The fifth Norfolk Island Women's Forum (NWF) was held on Saturday.

It was attended by over 50 residents and attracted 20 speakers.

Also present at the Forum were Senator, His Hon. The Administrator, Mr Owen Walsh, The Hon. Timothy Sheridan, The Hon. Robin Adams, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Mike King MLA, Ms Melissa Ward MLA, Ms. Christine Tutty, Mr. Adam Mara, visiting from the Offices of The Hon Simon Crean, The Hon, Kate Lundy, Ms. Gai Brodtmann MP and Professor Marie Connolly,



Above L to R: Senator, The Hon. Kate Lundy, Vice Chair NWF, Ms Eve Semple, Secretariat NWF, Ms. Judith Davidson, Chair NWF, Ms. Denise Quintal and Ms. Gai Brodtmann MP



Ms. Eve Semple, Vice Chair of NWF stated in her opening address said that "it is a known fact that what affects women, affect children, affects men. The Norfolk Women's Forum empowers women on the island, it gives women, previously silent, a voice and it provides leadership to make positive changes. The Forum is an advocacy group for the entire community of the island".

Left: Ms. Eve Semple Vice Chair, NWF



Above L to R: Speakers: Ms Jessica Hammond, Ms Debra Hammond, Mr Alan Tavener, Mr Don Reynolds and Ms Jenny Goulding

Speakers called for action to assist young families and the elderly during this difficult time, including access to Commonwealth benefits such as Medicare and the removal of Commonwealth barriers to Norfolk residents accessing services and assistance on the mainland, such as Austudy.

Each speaker at Forum then raised issues that they and those in the community who had asked them to speak felt had to raised and dealt with. It became evident that many residents on Norfolk Island are struggling to make ends meet and to pay for essential services such as health, especially when they needed treatment on the mainland.

Families on Norfolk were concerned for their future and that of their children.

Professor Marie Connolly from the University of Melbourne addressed the Forum on her review to identify how to improve child and family support services on Norfolk Island. The Commonwealth is funding the review and Professor Marie Connolly will provide a report to the Commonwealth and Norfolk Island Governments by 30 January 2012

Left: Professor Marie Connolly, Chair and Head of Social Work at Melbourne School of Health Sciences at the University of Melbourne



Ms. Gai Brodtmann MP addressed the community and said, ‘The Commonwealth has been listening to the concerns discussed at previous forums and are delivering by requiring the services of Prof. Marie Connolly, who has been engaged as the independent expert undertaking this review’

Left: Ms. Gai Brodtmann MP Below : Senator, The Hon, Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs



Senator, The Hon, Kate Lundy, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs addressed the audience and said, “The Norfolk Island Women’s Forum was an excellent opportunity to listen to the issues, challenges and concerns of Norfolk Island women in their lives as students, carers, educators, professionals and businesswomen. “I remain committed to a program of reform to strengthen the social and economic infrastructure of the Island. I will continue to work hard for a fair society and sustainable future for Norfolk Island.”

In closing the Chairperson, Denise Quintal, thanked visitors, sponsors, the community and especially thanked the speakers for coming forward to discuss their personal issues which consistently show, over many forums, the need for action to help people in need on Norfolk Island.

Right: Chairperson, Norfolk Women’s Forum, Ms. Denise Quintal



Finally it is hoped that both Governments will agree and recognise and acknowledge the severity of the problem and need for the swift implementation of the actions listed in the Road Map agreed to by the Norfolk Island Government. Many in this community are experiencing stress and anxiety far beyond acceptable levels because of difficulties in accessing services and assistance that are available to communities on the mainland.



To insist that this community wait longer than January 2012 would be grossly underestimating what many at the grass roots level on Norfolk Island are facing.



If anyone wishes to have copies of papers contact our Secretariat Ms. Judith Davidson email admin@norfolk womensforum.nf she will arrange distribution.

Our committee and members wish to thank you all for coming to listen and they would hope that this latest funding agreement will commence the process of a brighter future for our community.

Members of NWF meet each Wednesday morning in the Foodlands Mall at 9.30am and we welcome new volunteers or visitors to have a coffee and chat. Saturday 17th December 2011