

**NEWSFEED**

## Self-governance fails on Norfolk Island



Norfolk Island is increasingly reliant on handouts from the federal government and its self-governance should be repealed, a parliamentary committee has reported.

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories tabled its report, “Same country: different world - The future of Norfolk Island”, making eight recommendations to improve the island’s economic future.

The committee recommended improving infrastructure, enhancing existing tourist products and services and developing new ones, as well as complementary industries.

Committee Chair, Luke Simpkins (Cowen, WA), said economic and governance reform have long been a topic of discussion.

“Norfolk Island is effectively bankrupt and self-governance does not best serve the residents of the island.

“The evidence tells us it is time for change. That change, while challenging, will allow for economic viability and prosperity into the future. This is what must be done for the people of Norfolk Island,” he said.

A road map devised by the federal and local government in 2011

recommended that islanders start paying mainland taxes in return for benefits. Even with such a change, the loss of the island’s semi-autonomous status appears inevitable.

The tiny community was settled by ancestors of the Bounty mutineers in 1856 and increasingly relies on federal government funding. The report says it is an ‘unfortunate economic reality’ that the territory’s model of self-governance, established 35 years ago, has failed the island’s 1,800 residents.

Mr Simpkins says the committee is aiming to ensure residents have the same opportunities as the rest of the country.


“At the moment, we’ve got all sorts of economic problems there and we just want what is best for the people,” he said.

The full report is available at [www.aph.gov.au/jscncet](http://www.aph.gov.au/jscncet)

 **LINKS**

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## Social media acknowledged in the Chamber

The rapid growth of social media is shaping the way in which Members communicate, in much the same way as the internet and email changed the way they interacted with their constituents.

This is one of the findings in a Procedure Committee report that examined the current regulatory framework regarding the use of electronic devices and the way they are being used by Members in the House.

Issues such as the potential impact on order in the Chamber, respect for the role of the Chair, and the likely status of comments made by Members on social media were examined during the inquiry.

Committee Chair, Don Randall (Canning, WA), said Members can now reach mass audiences instantaneously from their places in the Chamber, and while many Members have adopted this new technology with enthusiasm, they need to be mindful of the rights of others and the need to uphold the dignity of the House and its formal proceedings.

The first recommendation relates to a Privileges and Members’ Interests

