



# News from Gilbert House

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## Message from the Chair

*MLA Ian Hansen – Health and Social Services*

Obviously the big talking point of the last week or so has been the announcement of the second flight. The Penguin News headline used the words dismay and praise. This has

been the general feeling across the Island, some are definitely for a second flight with a stopover in Argentina being part of the deal if it is to happen, while others have voiced their disapproval. There are also those who are pragmatic about it all and have the attitude of 'lets wait and see how it goes'. MLAs continue to engage with the public this week with another meeting in Stanley and three others at Goose Green, Fox Bay and Port Howard in that order.

I am sure my colleagues and I will listen to everyone's different views on the matter, and take them into consideration before making the final decision.



On my portfolio matters, last week at HMSC we were given an update by the Chair of the Public Health Strategy Group. There is a lot of data yet to be collected and a member of the group will be included in the project design and management team for the new system we are in the process of procuring and implementing.

There was also a very encouraging report on school dental screening which indicates strongly that our youngsters have very good teeth, and we are well above the UK and European average of dental care in our children

On the 5th of this month I have the dubious pleasure of being on the panel to choose a name for the VPU. I believe something in the region of 105 suggestions have been received for consideration. I am sure there will be some very good ideas, and some that may have to be disregarded immediately!

I will end this brief article for this month by wishing everyone in the Falklands a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.



Members of the Legislative Assembly and staff would like to wish the people of the Falkland Islands and friends all over the world a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Last month I attended the Executive Committee of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in London; an interesting event, bringing together more than 40 Speakers and Parliamentarians from all over the world.

The CPA is made up of more than 180 Commonwealth Parliaments and Legislatures and works towards upholding and promoting the values and principles of parliamentary democracy and of the Commonwealth. An effective, properly functioning parliament is one of the foundations of a strong democracy. It's an important principle - particularly at a time when democratic values seem to be coming under threat across the globe. Membership of the CPA not only supports that

principle, but is also a valuable opportunity to build relationships within a broad range of governments.

A newly updated CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures was launched at an event the Houses of Parliament during the meeting. These benchmarks help parliaments judge themselves against international norms and identify areas for strengthening.

I was also privileged to be able to take part in the Remembrance Sunday parade and joined our FIGO Representative, Sukey Cameron, to "march" with the SAMA contingent. Always an incredibly moving event, this year's commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War One added an even greater level of poignancy. To say that I was honoured to represent our community is an understatement.

However, the big talking point of the last few weeks has been the announcement on the Sao Paolo flight. This has been discussed at great length and this Assembly's position has been quite clear, so I won't labour the point further here. All I will say is that our aim (and the aim of several Assemblies before us) is always been to create opportunities for our community and to strengthen the Islands for the future. There is a lot of support for this development but I in no way dismiss the concerns or fears that some have expressed about elements of the agreement; I hope that those will be further allayed as we progress.

Finally - may I wish you all a very happy and relaxing Christmas!

## MLA Teslyn Barkman

### *Natural Resources*

There is currently a Foreign Affairs Select Committee inquiry named "the Future of the Overseas Territories". We submitted written evidence and the FASC have been engaging representatives, academics and leaders to gather information on the wide ranging different areas of interest of the UK family.

The opportunity was taken whilst I was attending JMC to take questions and present further information in person to the committee and in all the session ran well. Our largest point of focus has been to request that the UK Government look at ways to increase direct contact between themselves and regional administrations of OTs.

There are often, we hear, sweeping statements made in Whitehall or departments that contain assumptions or misinterpretations about OTs as a group. We are all different and the Falklands have a great story to tell in every respect.

There can often be a lot of information to absorb from OTs which is why meetings with UK ministers and departments can be so valuable. We have certainly seen this in regards to Brexit. We have a powerful headline for trade in the Brexit debate and the point hasn't been missed by the Department for Exiting the EU. We have done some excellent preparatory and analytical work that encapsulates the potential risk areas but without the direct contact we've assured, we would have risked being missed in the conversations.

It is hoped that an outcome of this FASC inquiry will support more contact like this in areas of specific relevance. Importantly so that we can feed into areas of UK policy and avoid any sweeping assumptions. We definitely rather legislation or policy that could involve OTs be cooperative, discussed and considered between governments rather than isolating or imposing upon us.

You can find out more or read submitted to the inquiry here <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/inquiry13/>

Or watch in real time on parliament TV portal <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/5543ac12-62f5-48dd-b05b-3dfb126c3f26>





Given some comments on the second flight I copy below a letter I published in Penguin News in September 2016

### One way agreements and sell outs

*I refer to the two letters published in last week's Penguin News.*

*I was thinking of the divisions in our community there was when the Lan Chile agreements were first brought in and think it might be worth reminding people of the benefits that have been felt by all sectors of the Falklands by better air and sea links. The benefits I can see are-*

- 1. Medical referrals to Chile. Many young and elderly people have benefitted from this.*
- 2. Visits by medical personnel such as the heart pacemaker check-up many people have benefitted from.*
- 3. Cultural links such as the ice hockey, badminton, football, holidays, etc. many families have benefitted from these.*
- 4. Trade goods by air DHL, fruit, spares for vessels and vehicles, labour for example how would the abattoir and many farms and businesses have operated without the LAN link.*
- 5. The many Chileans that have settled in the islands since the flights started I believe make it more difficult for Argentina to lean on their neighbours to cut such links when their internal politics change. Those family links are a powerful voice for Falkland's rights in South America. Remember the Chilean community stood by us all when the link was threatened.*
- 6. Tourism- 25% of on shore tourists came from Argentina! If Chile and Brazil are included 30% of land based tourists are South American. It was the growth area and a link with Brazil I am sure will get Brazilians interested in visiting Penguins etc. It must also be a key plank in opening up our tourism market to the rest of the world.*
- 7. Better links have reduced the costs of operating for the Fishing and Oil industries. Crew transfer costs and medical costs have reduced as a direct result of these links. Every business climate survey has had better links high up on the list of items to improve business confidence.*
- 8. The opportunity to improve on air links has obviously had to wait for a change of politicians in Argentina and I like 99% of people in the islands view Argentina's motives with a great deal of caution but if we do not explore these opportunities seriously the potential benefits everyone could enjoy in the future may never be achieved and we all could be left wondering what might have been if we fell on difficult economic times.*
- 9. The attractiveness of the Falklands as a gateway to Antarctica and South Georgia is enhanced by better links into the Islands.*
- 10. Better links has enabled more South American politicians and opinion formers to visit the Falklands and form their own opinion on the sovereignty issues rather than just being fed Argentine inaccurate propaganda. A visit to camp to see settlements that have been farmed by Falkland families for many generations is an extremely powerful statement.*

*We are fortunate to have an extremely supportive Government in the UK who have not forgotten the sacrifices made in 1982 and still provide and continue to invest in our defence. Our MLA's who know the sensitivities I am sure will have drawn appropriate red lines for any negotiations and I would support them in reaching agreements that clearly benefit everyone in the Islands.*

Nothing much has changed since 2016 except that the flight is closer to happening and I am now an MLA. I look forward to the opportunities this link may bring. I hope you all have a Merry Xmas and are looking forwards to a prosperous New Year.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) 2018 Westminster Seminar on Effective Parliaments

I have just returned from a seminar in London hosted by the CPA. It was designed for both parliamentarians (MPs and MLAs) and Clerks to enhance their ability to deliver effective oversight, scrutiny and representation in their respective parliaments.

The aims were to give us a deeper understanding of Westminster and other Commonwealth parliamentary systems. Also to give us a chance to network with other politicians and clerks from all over the world and finally to increase our knowledge of our roles and responsibilities.

The sessions were many and varied from a whole host of experienced politicians, clerks and experts in their respective fields. On subjects such as "The Political Scene at Westminster", "The Impact of Committees", "Behaviour and Etiquette", "How to Communicate Effectively" as well as a trip to see the Welsh Parliament and a day in a constituency with the local MP.

There were 40 MPs and MLAs from over 30 Commonwealth countries. Literally and A-Z with Australia to Zambia. As well as some of the larger countries (Australia, Pakistan, Canada, South Africa and Ghana), there was also a handful of Overseas Territories (Turks and Caicos, Saint Helena, Montserrat, Gibraltar, Cayman Islands) and finally some Crown Dependencies. All with their own problems, solutions and aspirations.

It was an incredible time to be immersed in Westminster with almost everything we did taking place in the Houses of Parliament. To say this is an important time in UK politics would be a vast understatement.

As well as learning from others. Listening to their problems, solutions and aspirations for positive change I also took the time to press the issues of the Falklands. In particular that although some Commonwealth countries support our right to self-determination, not all do. I took the time to remind them that the UK is steadfast in its support but that the support of their nations would help to show the rest of the world that Falkland Islanders wish to remain British.



## MLA Roger Edwards

*Public Works*

People Carriers?

I wonder when we will see the first passenger carrying drone in the Falkland Islands and will we hinder its introduction by over severe regulation?

By now, everyone is familiar with the small, lightweight drones which can be purchased for under £10 but rapid change is occurring. Electric motors are becoming more power efficient, batteries are becoming smaller, more powerful and quicker to charge and the biggest advance of all is the progress in propeller technology.

Helicopter rotors tend to be incredibly complex with multiple hinges to allow for lag and lead plus flapping. Controls are also complex with a collective to "collectively" increase or decrease pitch to the blades, with a cyclic to go forwards, backwards or sideways. In addition, control forces have to be input at 90 degrees to the direction of rotation. Clearly, you can begin to see the complex problems.

On the other hand, drones have multiple, moulded, solid blades attached directly to the power source without complex fittings; lift is increased simply by increasing the speed of the propeller and moving forwards, backwards or sideways is achieved by increasing the speed of some blades while slowing the opposite ones.

Already, we can see the Chinese Ehang Corporation 4-engine drone being able to carry a single passenger (weighing up to 100kg) at speeds of up to 100 km/hr for about 23 minutes on a single charge. Moreover it is eco-friendly. Control is totally by computer, with a built-in fail safe system. In the case of the Ehang 184, all that you need to do is to input take off position and landing position and everything else is done for you. Admittedly, the current cost of the 184 is around £140,000 but that is less than a new Aston or Roller!

There are, of course, many problems still to overcome but what's the betting that we will have passenger carrying drones in common use in my lifetime? But... Will we be allowed to use them as we do cars or will we insist on aviation rules thereby restricting their use and development?





## MLA Stacy Bragger

### *Education and Community*



It feels like an awful lot has happened since the last Gilbert House newsletter. The main topic for debate in the last couple of weeks has been the second flight development. Since the announcement we have held two public meetings in Stanley to outline the process to date with further presentations taking place at Goose Green, Fox Bay and Port Howard. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to the discussion on the issue whether that has been at the meetings, online, by email correspondence, or when I've been out and about. It has been a long road to get to this stage spanning a couple of Legislative Assemblies but we have arrived at a positive place. Issues of concern have been explored at the meetings held and a number of these will have to be addressed if Executive Council approves moving to the next stage.

However, I believe that if the flight is approved and we proceed to establishing the link with Brazil it has the potential to bring huge social and economic benefits for the Islands as reflected in comments made during our recent meetings.

This coming week the Child Minding and Day Care Bill 2018 will be considered at a meeting of the Legislative Assembly. I believe that it is a very significant piece of legislation that will be a major milestone for the childcare project. Extensive work has been carried out to assist the childcare sector in being best placed to meet the new legislation and the childcare providers have put a huge amount of work in developing what they do. The childcare 'top-up' subsidy is up and running which will assist the viability of the sector. It was wonderful to see a large number of childcare workers receive certificates in Caring for Children at Government House recently. It was a lovely reminder of the strides that have been made in the last year.

Speaking of reminders, I will take this chance to plug unsubtly that I have a website dedicated to my work as a MLA. Head over to [www.stacy-bragger.com](http://www.stacy-bragger.com) where you will find news, diary highlights, and my Legislative Assembly speeches. I'm slowly adding material to the site which has been challenging with my extremely limited technical abilities!

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a great 2019.

# Chief Executives Address to the Legislative Assembly

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Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to update you today on the Government's progress towards implementing the ambitious agenda contained within the Islands Plan 2018-2022. This being the last Legislative Assembly of the 2018 calendar year, and marking just 1 year since Members were elected and took office, it seems right at the right time to report on what has been achieved to date and to look forward to what is still to come.

In preparation for today, I have reflected back on the work of the public service and was reminded it is only nine months since the publication of the current Islands Plan, which sets out the priorities of the Government. Even before the publication of the Islands Plan, these priorities had already shaped the spending commitments set out in the 2018/19 budget and laid the foundations, for amongst other things, of the Government's ambitious commitment to invest more than £100 million in economic and social infrastructure projects that will position the Falkland Islands for a strong and prosperous future.

Since its publication, the civil service has worked hard to translate the Islands Plan priorities into our Corporate Plan, which is our commitment, a blueprint and timetable for delivering the actions that will turn the Islands Plan into reality. It is a tool for the Corporate Management Team and Members to gauge the progress we are making, and ensure that the Falkland Islands Government and its partners are focused on important tasks ahead. I recognise that progress is often slower than we would like for a range of reasons, but I am pleased to inform the Assembly that I have worked hard with my team to implement improved planning, programme and project management and to keep us better informed of potential problems before they arise and ensure that we maintain momentum towards delivery. I am acutely aware; it is what is delivered which will deliver the success of the Government and your political administration.

As I move on I will provide highlights of the progress we have made in these first nine months since the Plan was published, it is important to remember that this is only the first year of a four-year plan. It is true that the current Islands Plan builds on the ambitions and achievements of previous Assembly's, but equally, much work has been done over the last year by this Assembly to ensure that this Government has committed to invest in the capacity and focus and leadership to deliver results for the people of the Falkland Islands.

## Self Determination and Good Governance

In the area of Self Determination and Good Governance, my team and I have embraced the commitment to investing in improved communication of Falkland Islanders on the issues of importance to them.

We are supporting Honourable Members in their recently announced review of the Falkland Islands Constitution, which aims to ensure that we have a modern Constitution that reflects our maturing relationship with the UK Government. We also are working with Members to support their intention to hold a referendum in November 2019 on electoral reforms - specifically the proposal to move to a single Constituency.

The Falkland Islands Government continues to focus on prudent fiscal management, we have significantly enhanced our ability to more accurately forecast revenues based on past experience as well as future expectations; this has allowed us with confidence to commit to a bold and ambitious spending programme that will benefit the Falkland Islands for decades to come. We recognise that sustained economic prosperity and social well-being can only be achieved if we have the right infrastructure to support our needs - and the political commitment demonstrated in the allocation of capital budget is only the first step. I will take the opportunity later to report on progress on a number of projects, however I am pleased that a number are moving forward and we are seen to be building momentum.

However, we also know that the Falkland Islands is a resource-based economy, heavily reliant on one sector for much of our wealth. Therefore, we remain committed to ensuring that both our capital investments and the services we provide with the public remain affordable and present good value for money. Whilst it is right to be bold and invest in the future of our public services and the country's infrastructure, we have not done this recklessly. A prudent, well informed evidence based approach will be maintained in our management of public finances.

The public service continues to improve its engagement with Falkland Islands citizens, standardising its public consultation procedures for major policy and legislative initiatives, seeking feedback on existing services such as the Community Development Scheme.

I am also pleased to report that work to totally overhaul and improve the Falkland Islands Government websites is nearing completion. A long time in the making however our new website presence will be a single portal designed with the public in mind. It will be simple to navigate and allow people to quickly and easily find the information they are looking for. The website will also allow us to add more interactive features in the coming months, starting with online job applications.

Over the last year, Falkland Islands Government has focussed significant efforts to engage with the UK Government and ensure that the importance of maintaining our existing trade terms with the EU is not overlooked during Brexit negotiations. Falkland Islands Government officials have supported Members and the fishing industry, as well as our agricultural sector, by developing strong awareness campaigns aimed at the UK Cabinet and Government ministers, and politicians of all parties, as well as providing detailed and credible information on expected trade impacts. We have also raised our concerns directly with EU officials. And I am happy to report, Mr. Speaker, that we have by working together with the Foreign Commonwealth Office on this issue, put ourselves in the strongest position possible.

While the negotiations, of course, for the UK Government to conclude, the Prime Minister and other officials now publicly affirm that the interests of the Overseas Territories are being properly considered.

There is still work to do, and we will continue to support our fishing and agricultural sectors as the next phase of Brexit discussions move forward - including planning for all contingencies.

To support our ambitions to strengthen awareness and access to markets in Uruguay and Chile, building on our learning from the pilot project launched last year with a part-time trade representative in Montevideo, we have worked with the British Embassy in Uruguay to establish a full time Falkland Islands Advisor to be based in Montevideo.

### Population, Workforce, Community & Culture

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members - during the past nine months, we have moved forward with the development of a long term labour force strategy. Our new Labour Force Specialist arrived in May and has made significant progress in understanding both our current and future workforce and skills requirements and the roots of our challenges in attracting and retaining people we need to build the Falkland Islands both today and into the future.

If we are to be successful in our ambitions, first and foremost we will need to ensure that all Falkland Islanders have all the tools they need to access the many opportunities here in the Falklands - whether that is receiving careers advice, getting that all-important first job, support for lifelong learning or returning home after undertaking higher education abroad. To this end, we have appointed a new Careers Advisor, and we are investing in a new training facility for further education and life-long learning, which will be named the Falklands College. The design stage has recently concluded, following the late addition of new, modern space to house our public library and we expect procurement of materials to begin shortly to allow construction to start in the 2nd quarter of 2019.

We are also finalising a new post-16 education strategy that will include all students and will place equal emphasis on academic and trades training - both of which are valuable career options and reflect our labour force needs. With respect to our support for lifelong learning and professional development, and to ensure that Falkland Islanders are equipped to succeed in the 21st century, the Government has just launched a public consultation on the future of the Community Development Scheme. The results of this consultation will inform our commitment to improving access, simplifying processes, removing unintended barriers to funding and ensuring that the CDS supports our workforce development objectives.

At the same time, we recognise that relying on the current population alone will not be sufficient to achieve our objectives to provide the infrastructure, goods and services that Falkland Islanders expect and deserve. Therefore, my senior staff have worked to establish credible and realistic population growth scenarios, based on significant investments that are currently underway and planned, as well as our future ambitions. Whether or not we achieve a successful oil development project in the near future, the population of the Falkland Islands can continue to grow and prosper if we create the right conditions.

Over the coming months, we will be supporting our MLAs in launching a conversation with Falkland Islanders about how to grow the population while maintaining the unique characteristics that make the Falkland Islands such a special place. To inform this important discussion, we are currently reviewing our policies and programmes, with a view to understanding how to target, attract and keep the individuals and families who will contribute to our society now and form part of our future in the longer term. This work will include the ambition to support growth in both Stanley and Camp.

One of my most immediate concerns has been to implement the immigration reforms already agreed and brought into law by the previous Assembly, reaffirmed in the Islands Plan as a priority. The process has been slower than I would like, and I am pleased to inform this Assembly that I have appointed a Programme Director for Immigration, reporting to the Director of Emergency Services to work with the existing team. This resource will help to accelerate the full implementation of the Immigration changes required, as well as working with senior officials to streamline our approach. I anticipate that we will require further amendments to our immigration policies and procedures to help us meet our labour force requirements

and help more people make a long term commitment to the Falkland Islands.

I am pleased to inform the Legislative Assembly that the Government is moving forward to implement a new Health & Safety standard for all Falkland Islands Government employees, which we extended to our suppliers in due course. It is important that the Government leads the way in ensuring we maintain proper standards to provide a safe working environment, empowering our employees and minimising the possibility of workplace accidents all within the unique context of the Falkland Islands. This first step will provide us with valuable evidence that will inform legislation to extend to all workplaces in the Falkland Islands. I recognise that some in the private sector have already implemented excellent health and safety standards, and we will learn from their experience.

## **Economic Development (incorporates elements of Infrastructure, Transport & Communications, Housing)**

The Government has made progress in the implementation of the actions contained in the economic development strategy refreshed in 2017. Our priority has been to make sure that the Government moves forward with the strategic investments and initiatives that will create and ensure the right conditions for economic growth. To this end, I and my officials have worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce and other business leaders to identify how Government might support new private sector investment - this work recently has resulted in a review of our tax policies for example to ensure that they are clear and consistent and support our development ambitions.

I have already described how we are addressing our workforce and population challenges, but just as important is the significant commitment by this Assembly to a bold and ambitious capital programme I referred to at the beginning of my statement.

This programme is testing the capacity of Government's resources and our ability to deliver - however, although slower than I would like I am pleased with the progress we have made to date. As mentioned earlier, we have invested in project and programme management capacity, both within the Government and through establishing a professional services framework agreement with Ramboll earlier this year this provides much needed design and procurement support for our capital works teams. Further strengthening is on its way, with the expected arrival of a Deputy Director of Development and Commercial Services early in 2019.

Over this past year, we have also collaborated closely with the Ministry of Defence to further our mutual goals of creating 'One Economy' for the Falkland Islands - identifying opportunities for joint working and for additional areas where our local businesses have opportunities to become more involved in the delivery of capital projects, goods and services at MPC.

Specific infrastructure projects that have progressed this year include plans to develop a new Port to replace FIPASS - including market testing to identify interested potential partners from the private sector and subject to the necessary ExCo approvals early in the New Year we hope to appoint a preferred Port Development Partner in quarter two of 2019.

Yesterday, ExCo has agreed to finalise an agreement that will see a second flight from South America, originating in Sao Paulo, to the Falkland Islands. This will open up new opportunities for tourism, reduce cost to businesses, increase our ability to attract labour and provide options for more efficient travel. This new flight will allow access to the world through a well-connected international hub. This initiative alone will add millions to the local economy.

The developments I have described will strengthen the position of the Falkland Islands as a Gateway to the Antarctic, particularly for expedition tourism and for science research in the South Atlantic. Over the last few months, officials have worked closely with our partners at the Falkland Islands Tourism Board and SAERI to understand the requirements of both sectors - including the need for reliable connectivity to major transport hubs, enhanced marine support services, good quality internet availability and sufficient accommodation and hospitality services both in Stanley and Camp.

A business case for encouraging growth in these high value sectors is currently under development, including the understanding of the spin-off benefits to the economy. This work is happening in conjunction with a joint undertaking by FITB and the Falkland Islands Government to develop a long term strategy for Falkland Islands tourism that will support our Gateway plans and incorporate the new opportunities now at our doorstep.

With respect to improving the reliability of air travel to and from the Falkland Islands, Falkland Islands Government officials have been working closely with our colleagues at Mount Pleasant to commission and implement technology with the UK Met Office that should allow them to improve the ability to predict the occurrence of rotors with greater precision. This information may allow Aerodrome operators to dynamically manage the response to these phenomena. This work however is at a very early stage, but we are committed to investing if there is any likelihood of improvement, and have sought independent consulting advice to inform the Government's final decision making.

# Update on the Islands Plan

We have also moved ahead with plans for improvement of the MPA air terminal facilities and will provide an update to MLAs and ExCo early in the New Year.

Sticking with the subject of infrastructure investments, I can report that our Public Works department has accelerated the programme of tarmacking of the MPA road, and we are now on target to deliver our commitment to re-surface at least five kilometres per year.

I can also report that we have progressed on the development of a new power station. Preparation of preliminary plans, assessment of sites is underway and a public consultation process will be launched in late January, following which the location will be finalised and detailed design can begin.

Falkland Islands Government officials and the Regulator continue to work with the telecommunications provider to ensure continuous improvements in quality and quantity of broadband and mobile telephone services. A cross-sector Technology Development Group was established this year to identify both the current technology asset base available in the Falklands and the business, scientific, education and health care improvements that could be supported with enhanced telecommunications. I expect to come forward to Members in the second quarter of 2019 with options for increasing the provision of this essential service, which is critical to supporting our economic development goals.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members - the last months has seen the Government make significant progress in preparing the Falklands for the expected development of our offshore oil resources. Whilst ensuring that we remain focused on maximising the benefits of oil development for Falkland Islanders, my team and I have worked to understand and address where the Falkland Islands Government's processes or policies may act as an unintended barrier to investment. We have reviewed the Minerals Ordinance and updated our offshore environmental and safety and dangerous goods ordinances, to ensure the highest international standards are in place. And I was pleased to note the commitment of the industry to a robust and meaningful local content policy, which will soon be supported by legislation.

Both our fisheries and agriculture industries have had an excellent year, and I am pleased to report that the Falkland Islands Government is furthering the direction set out in the Islands Plan by continuing to work with the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, investing to support our farmers to improve wool quality, increasing domestic and international markets for our high quality, EU-Certified meat and implementing the recently updated Rural Development Strategy. This also includes ongoing work of how to strengthen our ferry service, which is a victim of its own success. Alongside this, work on improving connectivity across the Islands continues, including a heavy investment to strengthen FIGAS.

We are working closely with the fishing industry to implement a new accord which will ensure the Falkland Islanders realise benefits and increasing economic opportunities from this critical sector for decades to come, while ensuring appropriate protection of the marine environment which is so critical to the sustainability of our fisheries. The outcome of this work will be reported to Members in the first half of 2019.

As I described earlier, it is clear to me that we cannot achieve our economic development goals or recognise the true potential of the Falkland Islands if we cannot deliver sufficient temporary and permanent housing to accommodate the expected growth of our workforce and resident population. Alongside our development of labour force and population projections, Falkland Islands Government officers have been working on implementing strategies to meet expected short-term housing requirements for the Falkland Islands. These include the acceleration of Phase 6 of the Sapper Hill development agreed in the 2018/19 budget, and the identification of public/private partnerships that will help us deliver temporary workforce accommodation to house the skilled trades people needed to build our infrastructure.

I am also pleased to report to this Assembly that I have seen increasing interest from the private sector in new rental housing options. Looking forward officers have been evaluating various ways to stimulate more robust private sector housing solutions while never losing sight of the need for affordability and fair access to the housing market. Policy options will be presented to Members for review as part of a wider Housing Strategy in sufficient time for consideration during the 2019/20 budget deliberations.

## Quality of Life (incorporates Health, infrastructure, education, transportation, waste and environment)

While economic growth and development is crucial to the success of the Falkland Islands, we cannot afford to neglect our social development and the quality of life - as has been made clear in the priorities outlined in the Islands Plan.

Over the last nine months, we have launched a review of all current income support programmes, to ensure that no Falkland Islander is left behind when it comes to benefiting from our strong economy. This work, along with recommendations for streamlining procedures and making benefits simpler to understand and access, will come before Members for discussion in the next month. At the same time, we are reviewing whether our current living wage is truly reflective of the reality's facing Falkland Islanders and whether changes to the minimum wage are required. As with all significant changes of this kind considered by Government, we will ensure that our business community, as well as individuals, have a chance to provide their perspective on this matter. This review and recommendations will be complete in time for consideration during the future budget process.

Some specific Islands Plan social objectives have been a priority for Members, and I am pleased to report significant progress on two new initiatives that will improve quality of life and affordability.

First, we have implemented comprehensive reforms to regulate, subsidise and improve the quality and safety of nursery and childcare provision. I was recently pleased to hear that all our existing nursery providers have achieved provisional registration under the new regulations and look forward to the investments in facilities improvements that will be supported through the new Government grant programme. We know that this is the beginning of a journey of improvement in this sector, which provides a vital service to so many people in the Islands.

Second, my officers have been working closely with elected Members over the last few months to design and launch the new Travel Credit Scheme, which will make international and local travel more affordable for working families. Travel credits for Falkland Islanders have been accruing since July 2018, and full implementation is expected early in 2019.

Earlier, I mentioned the work of the cross-sector Technology Development Group. This group includes representatives from all major stakeholders and has emphasised the importance of FM and 2-metre radios in the lives and safety of our residents in Camp. I am pleased to report the Falkland Islands Government has made a significant investment this year to improve the quality and range of radio coverage and we continue to engage with Camp residents to ensure they have dependable communications.

Enhanced communications are also critical to delivering modern, high quality education to all our young people whether located in Stanley or in Camp. Our Director of Education is reviewing with her Senior Team how to provide safe, modern and technology-enabled classroom environments, which will provide opportunities for closer integration of Camp students through video participation and enhance our ability to provide higher education for students between 16-18 years of age through facilitated distance learning.

We have also recently appointed a consultant to help us assess the future needs for an integrated education campus that will ensure the Falkland Islands have the right facilities in place to accommodate our growing student numbers and to meet the needs of future generations of young people.

Many initiatives are also underway to implement Islands Plan objectives relating to the continued provision of high quality health care and to support the current and future wellbeing of everyone in the Falkland Islands. Groundwork for the hospital extension is now expected to begin in the new year, and the additions will include an updated imaging suite with a CAT scanner and mammography facility, and a new operating theatre. Construction of the new Extra Care Facility - recently named 'Tussac House' will begin in the second quarter of 2019.

Preparation of a comprehensive Public Health Strategy began in July of this year, with the engagement of a Public Health Advisor, who has been establishing a picture of the current state of the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Recommendations on the need to invest in a permanent public health role will be brought to Members in time for deliberation of the 2019/20 budget. We have also recently published a comprehensive community services directory and the Advisor has also provided support for promoting healthy eating and exercise.

The Health Directorate has also been reviewing its mental health services and will work with practitioners and community members to develop a proactive and comprehensive mental health strategy.

Mr. Speaker - although we are a small and relatively isolated population, the Islands Plan rightly highlights the need to continually improve our ability to provide public safety and security. Over the last nine months, Falkland Islands Government has proceeded with implementing the Police Improvement Plan, resulting in a considerable strengthening of the capacity of the RFIP and an enhanced focus on community policing. I am very pleased to report that RFIP and our Human Resources department have implemented a policy of supporting local recruitment, improving career progression and ensuring compensation is attractive and commensurate with the important work that we are asking our officers to do.

We have also recently appointed a new Commanding Officer for the Falkland Islands Defence Force and are close to concluding an updated Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Defence. These changes will allow us to implement the recommendations of the recently completed FIDF review, to ensure that they have the capacity and capability they need to carry out their important function both now and in the future.

In November, we brought forward the new maritime legislation, which ensures that the Falkland Islands have responsible and fit-for-purpose maritime management that safeguards our waters and meets our international maritime commitments. Separately, the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan has been finalised and presented to ExCo, as have the proposed regulations for Offshore Safety related to oil development which has now moved to the legislative drafting phase.

The issue of waste management has been high on the list of priorities for MLAs and the community, and features prominently in the Islands Plan. We have been working to implement the waste management strategy brought before Members in April. We have established a joint waste management approach with the Ministry of Defence, worked with retail partners and the media to raise public awareness. Our initiatives include the installation of water chillers in all Falkland Islands Government and public buildings, finalised plans for improved glass collection and recycling, and implemented a range of immediate improvements in the management of Eliza Cove.

A solution for recycling tins and cans has also been identified and will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2019. We are currently developing options and cost estimates for a new incineration facility and for a new, engineered landfill site.

Finally, you'll be pleased, I am very pleased to report to this Assembly that the Falkland Islands Government has made good progress in implementing the wider environmental commitments laid out in the Islands Plan. Finalisation of the Commons Management Plan is almost complete, and a second public consultation will take place next week, with the final plan presented to Members in the first quarter of 2019 following committee scrutiny.

We are also working with our partners to progress the implementation of the Biodiversity Framework. We have made good progress on compiling all of our existing environmental legislation, policies and commitments and strategies - as a first step towards completing a comprehensive environmental strategy, which will identify dependencies together with gaps in our current approach.

## Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members - in conclusion, the nine months since publication of the Islands Plan has been busy and productive for the Falkland Islands Government. In the time available today, I have only been able to provide a taste of the work that is underway across the organisation. I'm sure you will agree we have established momentum, our focus is stronger and the entire public service is committed to working with our partners across all sectors to deliver tangible results identified in the Assembly's Islands Plan. We should never forget that this administration will be judged on what it delivers, not on what it plans.

It is inevitable when discussing the Islands Plan that we focus on the future and our development ambitions. However, should remember the present and that 600 staff who work for us day to day providing essential services.

The Public Service and MLAs do not stand alone in undertakings set out in the Islands Plan. It's the Falkland Islands Government working together with its community, and investing in partnership working that will guarantee our future success. Together we are stronger.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to the debate.

Office Hours 08:00-1200 / 13:00-16:30

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MLA Recess	Monday 17th December 2018 – Friday 4th January 2019  Please note that although MLAs will be on recess the office will be open until noon on the 24th December 2018 and will open again on the 2nd January 2019.
Next sitting of ExCo	Wednesday 30th January 2019, 09:00, Government House
Next sitting of Legislative Assembly	Thursday 31st January, 09:00, Court & Assembly Chambers
Public holidays	Tuesday 25th, Wednesday 26th, Thursday 27th December  Tuesday 1st January
Government Holidays	Friday 28th, Monday 31st December