

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2008

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr E.S. Ripper (Treasurer)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the Treasurer.

Second Reading

MR E.S. RIPPER (Belmont — Treasurer) [12.36 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment Bill 2008. The bill comprises more than 40 amendments to improve the operation of the Local Government Act 1995. The bill is a consequence of the regular act review process undertaken by the Department of Local Government and Regional Development. However, the amendments relating to the removal of graffiti are a key component of the government's anti-graffiti program and the enhancements to accountability were identified in recent investigations undertaken by the Corruption and Crime Commission.

Development of, and consultation on, the amendments has taken place with local government in accordance with the State-Local Government Communication and Consultation Agreement, relevant state government agencies, the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, the Retail Traders' Association of Western Australia and other relevant stakeholders.

The key amendments include provisions for new powers for local governments to enter private land to remove graffiti; widening the circumstances that local government can take gravel and other building materials from land for building purposes; improving various accountability provisions relating to declaring financial interests, elections, donations and restricting the types of gifts that council members may receive; and stronger powers for the minister and the Department of Local Government and Regional Development to obtain information from local governments when carrying out investigations. The bill incorporates a range of technical improvements to the legislation. With respect to the rating powers of local governments, the bill clarifies the powers of local governments to rate mining tenements and provides greater flexibility for differential rating. Improvements are being made to the provisions relating to the disqualification of council members for the failure to attend meetings and the procedures to determine disqualification. A number of the electoral provisions of the act are being amended to clarify enrolment arrangements. New provisions are being added to the act to set out the requirements for entering into contracts using the local government's common seal or other instruments.

The bill also contains several minor drafting improvements. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr A.J. Simpson**.