

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (ELECTIONS) BILL 2009

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Peter Collier (Minister for Energy)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Minister for Energy) [8.00 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment (Elections) Bill 2009. The purpose of the bill is to replace the provisions for the preferential proportional representation system of voting for local government elections with provisions for a first-past-the-post system. The effect of the bill will be the restoration of a system that is easy to understand and apply at the local level.

Since the previous government introduced the preferential proportional representation system, the local government sector has been constantly expressing a strong desire to revert to the provisions of the first-past-the-post system that was previously in place. The sector's concerns with the unpopular preferential proportional representation system are that it is complicated and difficult to understand; that it is time consuming, requiring new and additional resources to apply; and that it was hastily introduced without prior consultation.

Further, both the Western Australian Local Government Association and Local Government Managers Australia expressed disappointment that they were not given the opportunity to comment on the preferential proportional representation proposals within the communication and consultation time frame provided in the previous government's state-local government partnership agreement. The Western Australian Local Government Association has also advised that a large majority of local governments surveyed supported the return to the first-past-the-post system for local government elections.

This government is responding to sector dissatisfaction with the preferential proportional representation system and its desire for the first-past-the-post system to be reinstated. I seek the support of members to expedite the passage of this bill. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.