

ROTTNEST ISLAND AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2007

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Adele Farina (Parliamentary Secretary)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON ADELE FARINA (South West - Parliamentary Secretary) [10.07 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

Rottnest is one of Western Australia's iconic holiday experiences. Its unique environment has been enjoyed by generations of Western Australians and other visitors to our state. In 2004, the government accepted the majority of the recommendations of the Rottnest Island Taskforce report "Open for business: a sustainable future for Rottnest". The government remains fully committed to implementing the Rottnest Island Taskforce report. We have invested over \$26 million over six years to fund the many major upgrades required for Rottnest Island to ensure the ongoing sustainability of its infrastructure.

However, other reforms are needed in order to improve the overall financial sustainability and governance. The Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill 2007 addresses the need for appropriate changes to be made to corporate governance. The bill will ensure financial accountability systems in the Rottnest Island Authority's operations and will implement the government's commitment to create the Rottnest Island Wadjemup Conservation Reserve. The new reserve is intended to raise awareness of the value of the A-class Rottnest Island reserve. The name Wadjemup, meaning "land across the water", has been chosen to highlight the Indigenous history of Rottnest Island. The creation of the Rottnest Island Wadjemup Conservation Reserve provides the opportunity to amend the boundary of the settlement area to include the entire area of the heritage-listed Kingstown precinct including the Bickley Battery at the southern side of the island. This amendment is provided for in clause 5. The most efficient cost-effective way to create and manage the Rottnest Island Wadjemup Conservation Reserve is for the reserve in its entirety to remain under the care, control and management of the Rottnest Island Authority. This will ensure the decision-making responsibility will remain with one minister and one government agency, whilst at the same time acknowledging the importance of seeking support, consultation and agreement on decisions, as appropriate, with key stakeholders. In particular, clause 14 of the bill provides that in the development of all future management plans, the Rottnest Island Authority will seek agreement with the Conservation Commission on all conservation matters within the Rottnest Island Wadjemup Conservation Reserve. The Conservation Commission will be consulted on all such matters, but the decision-making role will remain with the Rottnest Island Authority. In the same way, clause 14 of the bill provides that all future management plans concerning the marine environment within the reserve will be developed in consultation with the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority.

One of the prime considerations of the Rottnest Island Taskforce was how best to achieve greater financial accountability. A criticism of past management plans was that they were not fully costed. Accordingly, the existing legislative requirement for the development of a five-year management plan will be strengthened by an additional legislative requirement for the development of a fully costed five-year strategic development plan and a statement of corporate intent. This will bring the Rottnest Island Authority broadly in line with government commercial enterprises, and ensure greater financial accountability. This is reflected in clause 21 of the bill. A strategic development plan will ensure the provision of clear objectives, performance targets and financial information, including the nature and extent of any community service obligations.

Other governance matters included in the bill to address task force recommendations are as follows. The membership of the Rottnest Island Authority Board will be increased by one member. There will be a chairman and six other members of the authority. The current prescribed conditions of membership based on specified areas of knowledge and/or experience or practice will be removed, thereby facilitating a broader range of skills and expertise on the authority board to achieve good management. The act will be amended to allow for a contemporary approach to written submissions on management plans by allowing other forms of submissions. The act will be amended to allow authority board members to use instantaneous communication technologies where necessary to meet their obligations to attend meetings. The act will also be amended to specify a maximum penalty of \$10 000 for breaches of the act or the Rottnest Island Regulations 1988. Currently, the act does not prescribe a maximum penalty for a breach of subsidiary legislation, and the maximum penalty prescribed under the act is \$1 000. That penalty has been ineffectual as an enforcement tool.

This bill reflects sensible changes to the management of Rottnest Island that will provide for increased accountability, both financially and environmentally, and will provide more effective forward planning for the Rottnest Island Authority. The approach builds on sustainable management improvements being realised on the

island. These amendments also give effect to recommendations in the task force report. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.