

**EASTERN GOLDFIELDS TRANSPORT BOARD REPEAL BILL 2007**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan (Minister for Planning and Infrastructure)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

*Second Reading*

**MS A.J.G. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure)** [11.24 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to repeal the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act 1984 and to amend certain other acts as a consequence, and for related purposes.

The Eastern Goldfields Transport Board was established in 1947 and, trading as TransGoldfields, has legislative authority to operate services for the carriage of passengers within the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and in adjoining areas, as well as to operate charter services. The powers of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board are provided under the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act 1984, and the board reports directly to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. The 2002 machinery of government review recommended that the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act 1984 be repealed and the operations of the board be absorbed into the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia. Over a number of years, the board has had difficulty attracting and retaining suitable staff. The agreements under which the staff are engaged are simply not competitive in the Kalgoorlie environment. As an example, a first-year full-time bus driver with the board could expect to earn \$30 000 per annum, while a Haulpak driver in the goldmining industry would start on \$65 000. The same licence is required, but the bus driver would need an added endorsement. Also, the board cannot compete for qualified mechanical staff, and it is necessary for mechanical work to be outsourced at considerable cost.

Following the commercial focus of the board being improved, it was decided by government that the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act should be repealed; that the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia would absorb into its operations the Kalgoorlie-Boulder public transport operations of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board; that current staff of the board would be offered positions in the Public Transport Authority under relevant awards; and that the Public Transport Authority would be allowed to outsource, through a public tender process, the maintenance of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board's bus fleet.

The bill provides for the existing employees of the board to transfer to the Public Transport Authority on commencement of the act. However, due to the expiration on 31 December 2006 of the enterprise agreement between the board and the union that had coverage of the board's employees, the staff of the board were transferred to the PTA on 1 January 2007. The transfer of the board's staff to the PTA was achieved by the board abolishing all of its staff positions, which rendered the staff members redundant as from 1 January 2007. The PTA created positions in anticipation of absorbing the operations of the board and filled those positions with the redundant board staff. The staff were then deployed by the Public Transport Authority to the board so that it could provide the services under its act. A total of 22 persons were involved, and the changeover was well received by all staff.

Currently, the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board provides services under its act. All of the assets and liabilities of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board will transfer to the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia on the repeal of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board Act 1984. Budget allocations have been made for the transition to occur in 2007-08. Absorption of the Eastern Goldfields Transport Board's public transport functions into the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder fall clearly within the Public Transport Authority's main function under section 12 of the Public Transport Authority Act 2003. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr T.R. Sprigg**.