

BUILDING SERVICES (REGISTRATION) BILL 2010

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Simon O'Brien (Minister for Commerce)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Commerce) [10.27 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Building Services (Registration) Bill 2010 brings much-needed reform to the registration and control of persons and entities operating in the building industry today. The current Builders' Registration Act has its genesis in the period before World War II. Despite being amended no fewer than 27 times since 1939, it remains an antiquated and inflexible piece of legislation with significant anomalies, inconsistencies and anachronisms. The Painters' Registration Act, which commenced in 1963, is similarly outdated.

This bill replaces the Builders' Registration Act and the Painters' Registration Act with a modern and flexible scheme that allows for any type of building service to be prescribed in the regulations, as well as classes within each of those services. Initially, it is anticipated that builders, painters and building surveyors will be required to be registered. However, this may expand or contract as circumstances require, including in response to the direction of national licensing proposals. This flexibility is also needed to support streamlined building approvals under the Building Bill 2010.

Individuals with relevant skills, qualifications and experience and who are deemed to be fit and proper persons may seek registration within a building service occupation as registered building service practitioners under this bill. Individuals who provide building services to others under a contract must also be registered as building service contractors. The bill sets out various requirements, including financial and supervisory standards, that must be satisfied before registration as a building service contractor may be granted. Partnerships and companies can be registered as building service contractors in a relevant occupation only if they have a nominated supervisor who is a registered practitioner, to ensure such entities have competent persons in charge of the building service.

The bill will abolish the Builders' Registration Board of Western Australia, the Painters' Registration Board, the Building Surveyors Qualifications Committee and the Building Disputes Tribunal. The principal regulator of building service providers and building standards in Western Australia will become the Building Commissioner, who will be assisted in carrying out the functions previously performed by those bodies by a generic Building Services Board in accordance with the government's policy of reducing the number of government agencies, statutory boards and committees.

The bill significantly strengthens consumer protection by bolstering controls over the supervision requirements of building service providers, and in providing capacity to take fast action to suspend the registration of building service providers who engage in conduct that puts consumers' money or safety at significance risk. There has been extensive consultation in the development of the bill with the public and industry stakeholders, including the Housing Industry Association of WA, the Master Builders Association of WA and the Western Australian Local Government Association. There is strong support among those stakeholders for these reforms.

In summary, this bill provides a modern and flexible scheme for regulating building industry occupations, and supports other reforms aimed at streamlining the building process and the expedient resolution of building disputes.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

House adjourned at 10.30 pm