

CITY OF PERTH BILL 2015

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by **Hon Helen Morton (Minister for Mental Health)**, read a first time.

Second Reading

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [2.06 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

An important focus of this Liberal–National government is the ongoing growth and development of Perth as the capital of Western Australia. This government envisions Perth as a thriving centre of business and as a focal point for all Western Australians, while maintaining and strengthening its local, national and international reputation as an innovative, sustainable and vibrant global city. The Elizabeth Quay development is just one practical example of how the state government is advancing this. Perth is the only mainland state capital that does not have capital city legislation. This bill, once enacted, will give Perth the special status it deserves as Western Australia’s capital and will highlight the special roles and responsibilities of the City of Perth that flow from this.

This bill contains a number of provisions to enhance the City of Perth’s status and the role it plays representing the broader metropolitan Perth area. Key among these are: providing for the objects of the City of Perth; setting out the constitution of the City of Perth Council, recognising the unique roles and responsibilities of the City of Perth Lord Mayor and councillors; establishing a City of Perth Committee as a means of facilitating collaboration between the state and the City of Perth; and specifying the boundaries of the enlarged City of Perth to include the University of Western Australia, Kings Park, the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and the new Perth Children’s Hospital.

The bill sets out 10 objects of the City of Perth. These objects outline the responsibilities that should guide the City of Perth in its actions and decision-making. The objects recognise that those with a stake in the city include the thousands who visit the city on a daily, weekly or an ad hoc basis. This may be to work, to shop or for restaurant and entertainment services. Some are tourists, but many others are Western Australians who reside in other districts.

The council will continue to comprise eight councillors, plus a popularly elected Lord Mayor. It will continue to be a district without wards. The roles and responsibilities of the City of Perth’s Lord Mayor and councillors have, however, been enhanced. The bill recognises the Lord Mayor’s role as an ambassador for the City of Perth. The Lord Mayor’s role to develop and maintain intergovernmental relationships at regional, state, national and international levels is also highlighted. In addition to the general roles and responsibilities set out in the Local Government Act 1995, the councillors, including the Lord Mayor, must have regard to the objects of the City of Perth in making decisions and taking actions.

A City of Perth Committee will be established. Membership of this committee will include the Premier, the Minister for Local Government, the Lord Mayor, the deputy mayor and the chief executive officer of the City of Perth. The Premier or his nominee will be the chair of that committee. Ministers, parliamentary secretaries and other members of Parliament may be invited to attend when discussions are relevant to their portfolio or area of responsibility. The committee will be an advisory body that will facilitate collaboration between the state and the City of Perth to further the objects of the bill. The committee will identify and promote opportunities and strategies for strengthening the economic, cultural, social, physical and environmental development and growth of the Perth central business district and other residential and non-residential areas of the City of Perth. It will meet at least twice a year and will play a role in promoting greater collaboration on issues and projects of interest to both. The role and functions of the committee will be conducted in the context of state government planning, transport and other priorities.

This bill sets out the boundaries to the City of Perth to come into effect on 1 July 2016. We currently have the ludicrous situation in which our oldest and most prestigious university is divided between three local government districts and the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre between two. The new boundaries will correct this and will include the key icons of the University of Western Australia, Kings Park, the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre and Perth Children’s Hospital. These will provide an educational, health and recreational focus and will underpin the objects of the city. The operations of Kings Park will not be affected, with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority continuing to have authority over the park.

The bill provides that the district of Perth cannot be abolished, it cannot be divided into wards and the boundaries cannot be changed without legislative change being made by Parliament. The City of Perth will be able to use the process within the Local Government Act to make changes to councillor numbers in the future.

The proposed City of Perth act will sit alongside the Local Government Act, the provisions of which will apply when they do not conflict with a provision of the proposed City of Perth act.

A number of provisions will assist in the transition following the passage of the bill. The City of Subiaco will be able to conduct a review of its ward structure and councillor numbers prior to 1 July 2016. Under the current legislative provisions, the City of Subiaco would not be able to undertake the review until after the new boundaries come into effect. The City of Perth Restructuring Act 1993 is no longer relevant and will be repealed. A provision relating to the City of Perth superannuation scheme has been included in this bill to preserve the rights of City of Perth superannuation scheme members.

The bill provides that regulations may be made where necessary or convenient for achieving the objects and giving effect to the purpose of this bill. This includes regulations that deal with transitional matters. This bill not only gives Perth the recognition it deserves, but also provides an important mechanism for the state and the City of Perth to work together to support the growth and development of this great capital city of Western Australia.

Importantly, this bill also amends the Local Government Act 1995 to provide for greater transparency and accountability of local government elected members to the community. All elected members will be required to disclose gifts and travel within 10 days of receipt, rather than on an annual basis as is currently the case. These disclosures are to be published on the local government's website so residents and ratepayers have better access to this information. This brings local governments into the modern age, both in the use of technology to make information more readily available and in meeting consumer expectations.

Pursuant to standing order 126(1), I advise that this bill is not a uniform legislation bill. It does not ratify or give effect to an intergovernmental or multilateral agreement to which the government of the state is a party; nor does this bill, by reason of its subject matter, introduce a uniform scheme or uniform laws throughout the commonwealth.

I commend this bill to the house and table the explanatory memorandum.

[See paper 3646.]

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.