

**HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2013**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Bill introduced, on motion by **Dr K.D. Hames (Minister for Health)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the minister.

*Second Reading*

**DR K.D. HAMES (Dawesville — Minister for Health)** [10.45 am]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

These amendments to the Hospitals and Health Services Act 1927 are the first tranche of legislative changes that WA Health is undertaking to enable Western Australia to take full advantage of the National Health Reform Agreement. The National Health Reform Agreement aims to improve patient access to services and public hospital efficiency through activity-based funding and the establishment of a number of agencies, such as the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority and the National Health Performance Authority, and the establishment of local health networks. The decision of the state government was not to establish local health networks but to streamline the structures presently in existence within the public health system to take advantage of federal government funding and improve local accountability and responsiveness.

In August 2011, cabinet endorsed the creation of new health service boards to replace the existing legal and employing structures of the Metropolitan Health Service and the WA Country Health Service. Four new health service boards will replace the existing administrative area health services and will be known as North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service and WA Country Health Service.

The creation of these four legal entities will occur in June 2014; however, in researching the creation of these four independent health services, it became clear that the increase in the number of entities from two to four would disadvantage staff and increase the administrative workload. Currently, hospital and health service staff are employed by the MHS in the metropolitan area and by WACHS in regional areas. Hospital and health service staff regularly move between hospital facilities. The volume of relocations is estimated to be in excess of 2 000 hospital and health service employees each year. Where staff move between country and metropolitan locations, they will be terminated from one employer—for example, the MHS—and re-employed by another—for example, WACHS—resulting in additional human resources processing, the reissue of employment contracts and taxation forms, and production of multiple payment summaries.

The amendments in this bill allow for the creation of a single employing agency that will ensure convenience and flexibility for staff working across and with the four public health service entities, as well as reducing administrative workloads of the present HR shared service. These amendments will enable WA Health staff to be employed by the State Health Service Agency Board and work in any of the state's public hospital facilities without a break in service in the move to the new health service structure, and into the future. The legislation aims to provide legal surety by clarifying the minister's powers to create an agency for such a purpose, defining a number of terms associated with setting up the State Health Service Agency, the roles the hospital boards may perform and the delegation necessary, as well as the impact of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981 on staff working within a health service while employed by a separate agency.

As stated earlier, the bill is about providing legal surety and ensuring that staff are not disadvantaged by the formal restructure Western Australia is undertaking to comply with the National Health Reform Agreement. The majority of hospitals and health service staff will be unaware of their change of status from either the MHS or WACHS to that of the State Health Service Agency; their entitlements will remain the same.

Pursuant to Legislative Council 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.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Ms S.F. McGurk**.