

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS AMENDMENT BILL 2009

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Hon Anthony Fels**, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON ANTHONY FELS (Agricultural) [9.08 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill, when originally proposed last year, was to terminate the third year of the daylight saving trial before it commenced in November 2008 and to defer any referendum until the time of the next state election.

Under my bill, Western Australia would have no daylight saving prior to the referendum, which would be up to four years from now, depending on when the next state election is called.

This bill will save the taxpayers of Western Australia \$10 million, which is the direct cost of holding a referendum next month. It will also save all voters in Western Australia the inconvenience of having to go to the polling booth in May 2009, knowing that an overwhelming majority of Western Australians remain opposed more than ever to the concept of daylight saving.

There is a case for getting on with the referendum, knowing that it will fail—even if it costs us \$10 million. However, I continue to hold the view that whenever such a referendum is held, it will fail, just as it has on every occasion in the past. We do not need a “trial” for any period of time for us to form a view. Most Western Australians are clever enough to work out for themselves if they want daylight saving or not. They do not need politicians to impose any trial, let alone the three-year trial that they have recently been put through. Western Australians should never have endured a three-year trial.

If there is to be a referendum, it should have been held at the time of the last election, after Western Australians had already endured two years of the so-called trial. At the 2005 state general election, voters were given the referendum question on the deregulation of retail shopping hours in Western Australia. This is the time and place to hold referendums, when there is a large turnout of voters at a general election. If this had been the case with the proposed daylight saving referendum, we would have by now saved the \$10 million cost of the referendum, and I believe we would have ended daylight saving at the last election in September and avoided the ridiculous third year of the trial imposed on every Western Australian. However, an early election was called by Alan Carpenter, the Labor Party lost that election and we now have a National-Liberal government in Western Australia. I, like many other Western Australians, am disappointed with the National Party for not insisting on Colin Barnett abandoning daylight saving as one of the National Party’s conditions in forming government, given that it was negotiating the terms of government with both the ALP and the Liberal Party. I believe the National Party could have included the daylight saving issue as one of its requirements in forming government with the Liberal Party.

I would hate to see a future government ever again try to introduce any trial of daylight saving in Western Australia without first asking the people at a referendum whether they would like a trial. If we pass this bill, we can still have a referendum at the next election, and we will save taxpayers \$10 million at a time when we have a major financial crisis within the Treasury of Western Australia. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.