

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2008

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Hon Kim Chance (Leader of the House)** on behalf of the Minister for Employment Protection, and read a first time.

Second Reading

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural — Leader of the House) [8.04 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2008 will amend the Industrial Relations Act 1979. The primary objective of the bill is to abolish the position of President of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Over the past three years, the president's position has been filled on an acting basis. This bill will abolish the position on 16 October 2008, concurrent with the expiry of the appointment of the acting president. This bill will allow many of the president's existing functions to be undertaken by a Supreme Court judge. Other functions of the president and full bench will be undertaken by the chief commissioner or the commission in court session. The president is one of three members who constitute the full bench of the commission. The full bench hears appeals from decisions of members of the commission and the Industrial Magistrates Court. The full bench also deals with questions of law. To enable the full bench to continue to deal with these matters, the bill provides for a Supreme Court judge to perform the president's role as presiding member of the full bench. The full bench and president currently play a role in regulating the registration, operation and membership of employer associations and unions. The bill provides for this important role to continue once the president's position is abolished. Those functions currently performed by the president will be performed by the chief commissioner, while those functions performed by the full bench will be taken up by the commission in court session. The act currently requires the president to consent to questions of law being referred to the full bench. In a move to simplify full bench procedures, the bill will remove this requirement. This bill modernises the commission yet allows it to retain judicial oversight of commission and Industrial Magistrates Court decisions by using the services of a Supreme Court judge. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.