

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2006

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by **Mr M.P. Murray (Parliamentary Secretary)**, and read a first time.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the parliamentary secretary.

Second Reading

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Wellington - Parliamentary Secretary) [12.28 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment Bill 2006. The purpose of the bill is to change the date for local government ordinary elections from the first Saturday in May to the third Saturday in October, and to introduce the state parliamentary system of voting for local government elections. The government has agreed to the change of election date following a request from the Western Australian Local Government Association. The association believes this change will provide the benefit that new councillors elected in October will have more time in an election year to become familiar with the local government and the budget process prior to the adoption of the budget. Presently, council members are elected in May, and the proposals for the budget are usually already finalised at that stage.

The bill also provides for the removal of the first-past-the-post system and the inclusion of the same system that applies for the state Parliament. For both single member and multi-member electorates, the system will be based on the proportional system applying for elections for the Legislative Council. The proposed amendment will provide greater uniformity in the method of voting used for state, commonwealth and local government elections.

The bill also contains an amendment that will correct an anomaly identified by the State Solicitor's Office. That is, there are unintended provisions in the Local Government Act 1995 that enable a person who is 17 years of age, and who can be registered to be included on the electoral roll, to also vote in local government elections even though the person is not yet 18 years of age. This has not occurred in practice. However, the act needs to be amended to remove this unintended consequence. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr A.J. Simpson**.