

DAYLIGHT SAVING AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 3) 2007

First Reading

Bill read a first time, on motion by **Mr G. Snook**.

Explanatory memorandum presented by the member.

Second Reading

MR G. SNOOK (Moore) [4.02 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill has its origins in the other place and was first introduced into the Legislative Council by Hon Norman Moore on 25 October 2007. The Legislative Council passed this bill on 3 April 2008 and it has been transmitted to this place.

The Daylight Saving Amendment Bill (No. 3) 2007, unlike its predecessors, provides for a three-year trial period before a referendum is held. Previous acts relating to daylight saving have provided for a one-year trial before a referendum is held. This bill seeks to amend the Daylight Saving Act 2006 by providing for a referendum to be held after two trial periods. It therefore provides for the referendum to be held in 2008 rather than 2009.

One of the objects of this bill is to ensure that the referendum is not held in conjunction with the next state election. The purpose of the bill is threefold: first, because daylight saving is a divisive issue in the community, its future should be determined as soon as possible. It is an issue that should be resolved one way or the other before the next state election.

Importantly, because it has the capacity to divert public attention away from major election issues such as health, education, law and order and the future development of this state, we should endeavour to avoid allowing it to dominate a state election. Presumably, the majority of political parties would accept the outcome of a referendum held before the election and it would not be a distracting issue at the election.

Secondly, the bill will guarantee that a referendum is actually held. It is not inconceivable that an incoming government, after the next state election, could legislate to remove the referendum requirement before the referendum is held. Governments and political parties do not always accept that commitments made in one Parliament are commitments that should survive an election. This bill will ensure that the referendum is held during the term of this Parliament and will guarantee that all Western Australian voters have a say on the future of daylight saving.

Thirdly, the bill is a proactive response to significant community pressure for the referendum to be held sooner rather than later. Two trial periods, rather than three, are considered by a large number of Western Australians to be sufficient time for them to make a judgement on the merits or otherwise of daylight saving. It is acknowledged that the first trial period was a shortened period in view of the timing of the introduction of the legislation and it is therefore, under the circumstances, accepted that a second trial period was appropriate and, thankfully, has just recently been completed. However, the bill is predicated on the view that a third trial is unnecessary and that Western Australians will be ready to vote at the referendum this year rather than waiting until 2009.

The bill is not for or against daylight saving; it simply seeks to bring forward the referendum by a year. Opponents of daylight saving are understandably keen to express their opposition to daylight saving in the referendum ballot. Similarly, supporters of daylight saving are keen to have a decision made on the issue and to have daylight saving entrenched in the future.

During debate on the Daylight Saving Bill 2006 all members of the government and the opposition were given a free vote on the bill. In their consideration of this bill, it would be appropriate if all members were afforded the same opportunity to vote according to either their conscience or to the wishes of their electorates. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr C.J. Barnett**.