

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — LONG SERVICE LEAVE REGULATIONS

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Local Government) [12.20 pm]: I am proud to inform the house of new local government long service leave regulations, introduced by the Cook government, that clarify and give certainty to the entitlements for Western Australian local government employees.

The new regulations will take effect from 1 September this year, replacing laws that have not been substantially updated since the 1970s. Around 23 000 Western Australians serve our community through their employment in local government, including many part-time and casual employees. These new regulations have been designed to ensure that their dedicated service is reflected in contemporary long service leave entitlements. Importantly, the new regulations improve the operation of the local government long service leave portability scheme. This means that when staff change employment from one local government to another, their previous service continues to count towards their long service leave entitlements. The new regulations provide for a longer permitted break in employment between local government employers while maintaining the employee's continuity of service. They also allow parental leave to count towards long service leave and provide options for employees to request advanced leave or to cash out long service leave. The regulations also deliver administrative improvements to streamline the transfer of entitlements when an employee moves from the employment of one local government to another.

Parents and caregivers, younger workers, and the thousands of women who work in local government in WA are particularly expected to benefit from these changes. I am advised that policy work on these regulations has been ongoing since at least 2013, and I am proud to finally deliver them on behalf of our government. I also acknowledge the important work of my predecessors in the local government portfolio—Ministers Michael, Carey and Templeman—during the development of these regulations. These new regulations continue the delivery of the Cook government's landmark local government reforms, which are the most substantial changes to the system of local government in Western Australia for more than 25 years. I thank the sector unions, the Western Australian Local Government Association and Local Government Professionals Australia WA for their engagement and input. More information on the new regulations is available on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' website.