

Standard Time Amendment (Co-ordinated Universal Time) Bill 2005

This explanatory note relates to this Bill as introduced into Parliament.

Overview of Bill

The *Standard Time Act 1987* (the ***Principal Act***) currently sets out the standard time in New South Wales by reference to the mean time of a designated meridian of longitude east of Greenwich in England. This time scale is known as Greenwich Mean Time (***GMT***). The object of this Bill is to amend the Principal Act to change standard time in New South Wales from GMT to Co-ordinated Universal Time (described generally as ***UTC***). In November 2004, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General endorsed the change from GMT to UTC.

The Bill sets, in accordance with existing arrangements, standard time in NSW at 10 hours in advance of UTC (except for Broken Hill, which is set at 9 hours and 30 minutes in advance of UTC, and for Lord Howe Island, which is set at 10 hours and 30 minutes in advance of UTC). The Bill does not make any changes to daylight saving (or summer time) arrangements.

GMT is a solar time scale based on the rotation of the Earth whereas UTC is a time scale maintained by a network of more than 200 atomic clocks around the world. As a result of the irregularities in the Earth's rotation, UTC is the more consistent and accurate time scale.

The use of UTC was endorsed in 1975 by the 15th General Conference on Weights and Measures (***CGPM***). The Metre Convention (a diplomatic treaty), signed by Australia in 1947, gives authority to CGPM to act in matters of world metrology.

The *National Measurement Act 1960* of the Commonwealth was amended on 30 June 1997 to provide (in section 8AA) that UTC is the time scale that is to be maintained (currently by the Chief Metrologist).

Outline of provisions

Clause 1 sets out the name (also called the short title) of the proposed Act.

Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the proposed Act on 1 September 2005.

Clause 3 is a formal provision that gives effect to the amendments to the Principal Act set out in Schedule 1.

Schedule 1 Amendments

Schedule 1 [2], [3] and [4] substitute sections 3, 4 and 5, respectively, of the Principal Act, having the effect described above in the overview.

Schedule 1 [1] inserts a definition of ***Co-ordinated Universal Time*** (UTC) into the Principal Act.

Schedule 1 [5] contains a transitional provision.