



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard

Royal Blind Society (Merger) Bill

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Wednesday 19 October 2005.

Second Reading

Mr GRAHAM WEST (Campbelltown—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.18 a.m.], on behalf of Mr Bob Debus: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill will give full effect to the recent merging of three charitable agencies supporting the blind and vision impaired into a new combined agency. On July 6 2004 the Royal Blind Society of New South Wales, the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind Ltd and Vision Australia Foundation were merged into a combined agency, RBS.RVIB.VAF Ltd, now known as Vision Australia Ltd. All of the undertakings, property and liabilities of each of the three separate agencies were, where legally possible, transferred to the new body. The corporate existence of the three agencies has continued. However, it is the intention of the combined agency to wind up or deregister each of the three agencies as soon as possible. Each of the three agencies and the combined agency rely heavily on public fundraising, volunteer works, gifts, bequests, dispositions and trust funds.

It was always intended that legacies and bequests left to each of the respective three agencies would be transferred to the combined agency. However, the Royal Blind Society received legal advice that bequests, gifts and dispositions made to each of the three agencies cannot be automatically transferred to the combined agency. There is also a risk that other bequests, gifts or dispositions might fail, particularly after the Royal Blind Society is wound-up or deregistered. The Royal Blind Society's legal representatives requested that legislation be passed to enable bequests and gifts created or granted since 6 July 2004, and in the future, to be transferred to the combined agency. The three Agencies will be wound up after legislation securing bequests, gifts and dispositions—past and future—to each organisation is enacted.

A similar request was made to the Victorian Attorney General, as two of the three agencies were incorporated in Victoria. Victoria has passed legislation, which was assented to on 20 September 2005. Each of the three agencies has a long and distinguished history of providing services to the blind and vision impaired communities in New South Wales and Victoria. The merger will allow them to provide a better and more effective service to those communities. This bill will ensure that the valuable work of these agencies continues. I commend the bill to the House.