

## Second Reading

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE** (Parliamentary Secretary) [5.21 p.m.], on behalf of the Hon. Eric Roozendaal: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to incorporate the second reading speech in *Hansard*.

### Leave granted.

Police officers employed prior to April 1988, typically known as pre '88 officers, are covered by the compulsory Police Superannuation Scheme.

The Scheme provides for a pension to be paid if an officer retires from the NSW Police Force on medical grounds.

The benefit is received following the determination of an application made to the SAS Trustee Corporation, or STC, the trustee of the Scheme.

Currently, the STC can only accept medical discharge papers from the individual officer.

This means that the Commissioner of Police cannot exercise his power to medically discharge an officer without running the risk of the officer losing their membership of the Scheme and therefore access to benefits.

The bill enables the Commissioner to apply for a determination of the trustees, without the risk of loss of entitlements. The discharged member will be entitled to the relevant superannuation benefit, depending on whether the infirmity was or was not caused by the member having been hurt on duty.

The bill before the House proposes amendments to the *Police Regulation (Superannuation) Act 1906*, in relation to the discharge of pre '88 officers who have been on long-term sick leave, whose health is unlikely to improve to enable a return to duty and who are determined by STC, on the advice of a medical practitioner, to be incapable of continuing to exercise the functions of a police officer.

In relation to what constitutes a medical practitioner under the proposed amendments, I can advise that the bill will not amend the definition.

A medical practitioner continues to be required to hold current registration, as prescribed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

As noted in the Agreement in Principle speech, the bill will require the Commissioner, or his nominated representative, to undertake extensive consultation with an officer prior to the submission of discharge papers with the STC.

More than that, the bill requires the Commissioner to provide the officer in question time to notify of any injuries which may not have been listed in the proposed application.

And, at the specific request of the Police Association, who have been extensively consulted as part of the development of the bill, the NSW Police Force has agreed that copies of applications will be delivered to an injured officer by personal service.

I understand that the Police Association has indicated their support for the proposed amendments.

The amendments will go some way to fulfil the agreement made last year between the NSW Police Force and the Police Association as part of negotiations on the salaries Award.

There are around 2,200 pre '88 officers, with around 180 having been on long term sick leave for more than 12 months.

The aim has always been to assist injured officers return to duty as soon as possible—fit and able to work.

If this is not possible, these amendments will enable pre '88 police officers who are genuinely injured to be nominated for discharge by the NSW Police Force. This in turn will assist injured officers to exit the organisation with dignity and with some financial security.

The successful passage of the bill through the House will also lead to savings to the NSW Police Force budget.

While it is difficult to quantify at this stage, reduced costs for higher duties allowances and for police overtime are expected.

The amendments will also allow the organisation to maintain suitable levels of frontline policing, providing Commanders with greater flexibility to deploy staff in an effective and efficient manner.

I commend the bill to the House.