



Local Government Amendment (Mayoral Elections) Bill.

Second Reading

Mr NEVILLE NEWELL (Tweed—Parliamentary Secretary) [9.41 p.m.], on behalf of Mr David Campbell: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Local Government Amendment (Mayoral Elections) Bill reflects the Government's commitment to the proper functioning of local government. It will ensure that mayors who were elected by and from council between March and August 2004 will have sufficient time to implement their policy programs. This means more consistent management for councils. The bill is required due to crossbench amendments made to the Local Government Amendment (Elections) Act 2003. Those amendments resulted in the deferral of ordinary elections from September 2003 to March 2004 only. Subsequent ordinary elections will be held in September 2008 and each four years thereafter. The Act provides that a mayor elected by councillors holds office for one year and that a popularly elected mayor holds office for four years. The Act also provides that the first election of the mayor by the councillors is to be held within three weeks after the ordinary election with subsequent annual mayoral elections in September.

Without this bill, mayors elected by the councillors between March and August 2004 will have to be elected again in September 2004. The bill will provide for a one-off 12-month extension of the term of office for those mayors, with the effect that their term will expire in September 2005 rather than in September 2004. Such an extension will allow those mayors sufficient time to negotiate and implement their policy programs consistent with the business of council. A number of councils have expressed concerns about the need to conduct two mayoral elections by the councillors this year within such a short period of time. The peak industry bodies, including the Local Government and Shires Associations and the Country Mayors Association, have also supported the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

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