

Agreement in Principle

Mr JOHN AQUILINA (Riverstone—Parliamentary Secretary) [11.54 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now agreed to in principle.

The Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Amendment Bill 2010 clarifies arrangements under the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1971 for certain members of the Legislative Council and the treatment of a parliamentary pension when a beneficiary returns to the Parliament. Members would be aware that before amendments to the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act 1971 can be passed in the Legislative Assembly, the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal must certify that the amendments are warranted. I am pleased to advise that, following assessment, such certification has been provided by the tribunal.

The bill corrects uncertainty arising from the Parliamentary Superannuation Legislation Amendment Act 2005, which closed the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund to members first elected at the 2007 general election. The fund was also closed at that time to former members re-elected after a break of more than three months from the Parliament. A member eligible to remain in the fund after the 2007 election is termed a continuing member under the Act. The bill firstly amends the definition of a "continuing member" to confirm that a member of the Legislative Council elected in 2003 may retain membership of the fund. This includes a person who filled a Legislative Council vacancy for a member elected in 2003. The person must, however, have been a member during the period of three months before polling day at the 2007 general election. The member also needs to serve the Parliament after that election without a break of more than three months to remain a continuing member of the fund.

The bill also clarifies the treatment of a parliamentary pension when a beneficiary returns to the Parliament. The bill ensures that the pension for a person who is not a continuing member is suspended when the person re-enters the Parliament. The pension then resumes once the latest period of parliamentary service ends. This would be the case, for example, if the person is a former member who re-enters the Parliament after a break of more than three months. The bill has been prepared with the assistance of the trustees and administrators of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Fund. I thank them for their support. I commend the bill to the House.