

**HEALTH PROFESSIONALS REGISTRATION (MISCELLANEOUS
AMENDMENTS) BILL 2008**

Second Reading

Ms GIDDINGS (Franklin - Minister for Health and Human Services - 2R) - Mr Speaker, I move –

That the bill be now read the second time.

The Health Professionals Registration (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill amends the 11 health professionals registration Acts to provide flexibility for the appointment of a Registrar for each of the health professionals registration boards. The boards are independent statutory bodies established under their respective acts. They are –

- the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Registration Board,
- the Dental Board of Tasmania,
- the Dental Prosthetists Registration Board,
- the Medical Council of Tasmania,
- the Medical Radiation Science Professionals Registration Board of Tasmania,
- the Nursing Board of Tasmania,
- the Optometrists Registration Board,
- the Pharmacy Board of Tasmania,
- the Physiotherapists Registration Board of Tasmania,
- the Podiatrists Registration Board of Tasmania, and
- the Psychologists Registration Board of Tasmania.

Each board is required by its governing act to appoint a registrar who acts as secretary to the Board. In the case of the Nursing Board, the term used is 'Executive Officer' rather than Registrar. For clarification, in this speech any reference to a 'Board' includes the Medical Council of Tasmania and any reference to a 'Registrar' includes the Executive Officer of the Nursing Board. Each act currently provides that the Registrar is an employee of the board. As worded, there is no scope for the Registrar to be a contractor, or a person made available by a company or another body.

Many of the boards have a relatively small professional membership and income and their Registrars are employed on a part time basis. Only the Medical Council and Nursing Board, which both have a large professional membership, employ a number of staff in addition to a full time Registrar.

For some of the smaller boards it is not practical for them to continue to undertake the corporate functions required of an employer/employee relationship. It would be more efficient for these boards if there were alternative appointment options for their registrars.

The amendments proposed in the bill offer flexibility for these boards and will allow for the appointment of an independent contractor as Registrar or for the use of a person's

services as Registrar through an arrangement with a company or another body. The option of continuing to appoint a Registrar as an employee will, of course, remain.

The acts provides that persons who are employees or committee members have protection from liability for acts done in good faith and in the administration of the act. Consequent upon amending the Registrar provision, there is a need to ensure that the Registrar and other persons who provide services to a board, whether or not they are employees, have protection from liability for acts done in good faith for the purpose of administering or executing the relevant act. The boards have been consulted and support the proposed amendments. I commend the bill to the House.