

NATIVE TITLE AMENDMENT (TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS) BILL 2007
Second Reading Speech

Mr RUDDOCK (Berowra—Attorney-General) —I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Native Title Amendment (Technical Amendments) Bill 2007 will make a large number of technical and minor amendments to the Native Title Act 1993. These amendments are one of the six components of the package of native title system reforms which have been underway since 2005. Together with the Native Title Amendment Bill 2006, this bill will implement the bulk of legislative change stemming from the native title system reforms.

The bill is the result of significant consultation with people involved in all parts of the native title system, and the amendments in it reflect issues raised for consideration by those stakeholders.

The bill contains around 40 different measures which, when taken together, will increase the effectiveness of the processes in the Native Title Act.

While many of the amendments will clarify ambiguities in the Native Title Act, some will have a more substantive effect.

The bill will amend provisions relating to future act and Indigenous land use agreement processes, processes for making and resolving native title claims, and the obligations of the registrar in relation to the registration of claims. Provisions in the bill will also clarify the scope of alternative state regimes under section 43 and establish a more flexible scheme for payments held under right to negotiate processes.

The technical amendments part of the bill will commence by proclamation, a measure designed to give adequate time to all parties to understand and prepare for the changes.

The bill will also partially implement two recommendations of the report on prescribed bodies corporate, which was released in October last year and will amend provisions relating to representative bodies to complement the reforms made by the 2006 bill.

While these amendments are minor and technical in nature, they will substantially improve the workability of the Native Title Act. These changes, together with the amendments made by the Native Title Amendment Bill 2006, will result in system wide improvement to processes for future acts and for the resolution of native title claims, without undermining the existing balance of rights and interests under the Native Title Act.

I commend the bill to the House.