PUBLIC SERVICE AMENDMENT BILL 1983

Date Introduced: 24 August 1983
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. J.S. Dawkins, M.P., Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Public Service Matters

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

Primarily, to permit the operation of the Government's Community Employment Program in the Commonwealth Public Service.

Background

The 1983 election policy speech of the Australian Labor Party contained a commitment to create an estimated 70,000 new full-time jobs, for an average duration of six months, through a Community Works Program. At the National Economic Summit Conference, held on 11-14 April 1983, delegates from the Federal and State Governments, trade unions, employers and welfare organisations supported the "introduction of ... stimulatory fiscal policies which enable ... effective job creation schemes to be implemented".[1] The Community Employment Program was announced on 19 May 1983 in the Treasurer's Ministerial Statement on the Economy. The aim of the Community Employment Program is to provide employment for the long-term unemployed and for the unemployed who are specially disadvantaged. Preference is given to those who have been unemployed for more than nine months. The Community Employment Act 1983 provides $300 million for the Community Employment Program. Of this amount, $50 million is to be made available for job creation programs through Commonwealth Departments and Authorities.

Outline

This Bill makes two technical amendments to the Public Service Act 1922, one in relation to the definition of 'Department' in the Public Service Act 1922, and an amendment to section 82 of that Act relating to temporary employment in the Public Service.
Main Provisions

By Clause 3, section 7 of the Public Service Act 1922 is amended to effect the transfer of offices that existed in the 'parent' Department immediately before the amendment made by the Public Service Acts Amendment Act 1982 which redefined 'Departments' to include those branches or parts of the Public Service which previously had a substantial degree of autonomy from the Department of State to which they belonged.

Clause 4 amends section 82 of the Public Service Act 1922 to allow the temporary employment provisions of the Service to be applied to the operation of the Community Employment Program (CEP), the National Employment Strategy for Aboriginals and the Commonwealth Work Experience Program. Under existing law, employees for temporary work are selected on merit. However, the amendment proposed by Clause 4 will mean that this requirement will not apply to positions funded under the Community Employment Program. Instead, for programs in the Public Service funded by CEP funds, preference will be given to applicants who have been unemployed for more than nine months.

For further information, if required, contact:

Law & Government Group
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

6 September 1983

References