

Government Employee Housing Authority Bill

NOTES ON CLAUSES

Clause 1 is a provision in the usual form as to short title, proclamation of the date of commencement and division of the Act into Parts.

Clause 2 contains the interpretation provisions including the definitions of "Government employee" and "participating department".

Clause 3 provides for the establishment of the Authority and sets out its functions which include a provision of housing role, an advisory and review role and a requirement to establish and maintain a register of Government Employee Residential Accommodation.

The Clause provides that the Authority shall consist of seven members.

In addition the Clause provides that the Authority is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal and that judicial notice shall be taken of its seal.

Clause 4 enables the Minister to appoint deputies of members of the Authority.

Clause 5 provides for the payment of expenses and allowances to members.

Clause 6 provides for the removal or resignation of any member.

Clause 7 regulates meeting procedures. It requires meetings of the Authority to be held as necessary with the first meeting being held as soon as practicable after the commencement of the Act. The Chairman, or in his absence his deputy, shall preside at meetings and three members shall form a quorum.

Clause 8 enables the Authority to form committees for the purpose of advising or assisting the Authority in relation to the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers and to dissolve such committees.

Clause 9 is the Authority's power of delegation.

Clause 10 enables the appointment of officers and employees to carry the Act into effect.

Clause 11 repeals the *Teacher Housing Act 1970* and vests all assets and liabilities of the Teacher Housing Authority in the Authority.

Clause 12 enables the Governor in Council to declare a department of the Public Service or a public statutory authority to be a participating department and to transfer land and buildings to the Authority. The Permanent Head of a participating department shall establish an Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Authority concerning the needs of Government employees in the participating department to be provided by the Authority.

Clause 13 enables the authority to exercise certain powers for the purpose of providing suitable houses for Government employees in participating departments including the acquisition of land and houses, the construction of houses, the letting, maintenance and repair of houses and the fixing of rents. The Authority is restricted in the provision of accommodation to Government employees in participating departments to those cases where the Government employee is unable

to obtain privately housing accommodation that is of a reasonable standard, in a reasonable location and available at a reasonable rent, except where the special nature of an office makes it necessary for the officer to reside in a particular house. The Authority may appoint the Housing Commission to act as agent for the Authority for the purposes of this Act. The Authority may let or sell any land which it does not require for the purpose of providing suitable houses for Government employees in participating departments.

Clause 14 requires the Authority to set up a Government Housing Accommodation Register to contain particulars of all Government employee housing.

Clause 15 enables public statutory authorities and Government departments to request a search of the Register.

Clause 16 enables the Authority in certain circumstances to give advice in relation to the provision of housing for Government employees.

Clause 17 requires the Authority to keep under review, and (on request of the Minister) to report on practices of departments and public statutory authorities in relation to the provision of housing accommodation for Government employees.

Clause 18 enables the Authority to accept gifts, devises or bequests free of duty.

Clause 19 empowers the Authority, with the approval of the Treasurer to borrow money on certain conditions.

Clause 20 requires the Authority to establish in a bank an account entitled the "Government Employee Housing Authority Account" into which shall be paid all money received by or on behalf of the Authority.

Clause 21 requires the Authority to submit an estimate each year of its probable expenditure in the following year. The Minister may approve the estimate. The Authority is forbidden to spend money except in accordance with an approved estimate.

Clause 22 provides for the keeping of proper accounts and reports of the Authority and for the audit of its accounts.

Clause 23 requires the Authority to submit to the Minister an annual report of its operations, which is to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

Clause 24 contains the regulation-making power.

Clause 25 provides for a consequential amendment to the *Public Service Act 1974*.