

approval will be spelt out in the regulations and the power to enable this to be done is included in the bill. The provisions in this bill will allow the TIO to operate commercially, but within strategic parameters set by government covering prudential, audit and other responsibilities it deems appropriate. This brings me to the second component of the bill.

Clause 6 makes it clear that it is not intended that the minister should have responsibility for or discretion in relation to day-to-day decision-making. While the minister retains the power to direct the office, all directions so given shall be included in the annual report of the office. With this provision, both the financial sector of the market and the public can be totally confident of the integrity of the government in its dealings with the office. The provision will make the relationship transparent and is balanced by the provisions in relation to the accountability of the board, the third key component.

In this regard, the bill introduces a new declaration of interest and disclosure standards. It allows also for the introduction of prudential and other standards for the office by way of regulations. These prudential standards applied by regulation may take the form of financial institution or Reserve Bank standards if considered appropriate by the government. Furthermore, the financial statements of the TIO, being financial statements conforming with the corporations law, will be audited by the Auditor-General. The office will be treated in a manner similar to a prescribed corporation under the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The Auditor-General's report on the financial statements will conform to the requirements of similar reports under corporations law and related legislation. Adherence to such commercial auditing and reporting practices will ensure that any report of the Auditor-General tabled in the Legislative Assembly will not contain information that may damage the TIO's commercial position in the marketplace. Finally, under the accountability provisions, the board will be required to deliver an annual report of the TIO's operations at the end of each financial year, detailing the board's performance in relation to the goals and targets set down in the statement of corporate intent.

The themes of efficiency and accountability have been adopted in a number of Australian and overseas jurisdictions as part of governments becoming increasingly involved in micro-economic reform - in this particular instance, in the reform of government trading enterprises. Ultimately, the balance that must be struck is to ensure that financial controls are sufficient to enable the government to monitor effectively the board's performance without imposing any undue administrative burden. The Territory Insurance Office is a very important institution in the Territory providing services for Territorians by Territorians. The government is determined to ensure that the TIO remains a strong organisation in the local economy. As the responsible minister, I am confident that this bill, together with the Territory Insurance Office Amendment Bill which addressed the restructuring of the board, will position the TIO for sound growth in the Northern Territory economy for the rest of the decade. I commend the bill to honourable members.

Debate adjourned.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr ORTMANN (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent the Corporations (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill (Serial 187) and the Cullen Bay Marina Bill