

The gas pipeline access code details matters which need to be included by the pipeline owner in an access arrangement, and specifies the pricing principles for determining the tariff for specific haulage services. The access arrangement for a pipeline, to be approved by the regulator, subsequently governs third-party access terms and conditions to that facility for a specified period. The monopoly component of a pipeline business is to be separated from related but contestable components of the business - for example, the transportation of gas will be separated from retailing of the gas commodity - to reduce the likelihood that related businesses will receive preferential treatment.

The arrangements provide a balance between the rights of parties to procedural fairness through an appeals process, and the timeliness of regulatory outcomes. In this regard, there is provision for judicial review of decisions and administrative appeals for specified decisions of the regulator. The scheme also contains arrangements for resolving disputes between access seekers and the pipeline owner over the terms and conditions of access. The uniformity in the rights of parties created by the adoption of a national scheme of access to natural gas pipelines must flow through to greater predictability in interpretation and, where appropriate to the case, to decisions. Accordingly, it has been agreed that the Commonwealth's *Administrative Decisions (Judicial Review) Act 1997* will apply to decisions taken under the national third-party access law and for concurrent jurisdiction to be conferred on the Federal Court and the Northern Territory Supreme Court.

The common-carriage provisions in both of the *Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Acts* will be displaced for gas transmission pipelines offshore covered by the scheme. The gas pipeline access scheme is to apply to gas transmission and distribution pipelines in the Northern Territory.

This bill ushers in a new phase of development in the domestic natural gas industry. The scheme it introduces, to be implemented by all jurisdictions, is the culmination of extensive development and discussion with all stakeholders in the gas industry and users. I commend the bill to honourable members, and remind the Leader of the Opposition that I will be seeking urgency next week to progress this legislation.

Mr Bailey: We will be seeking an explanatory memorandum.

Mrs HICKEY (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, I shall be seeking an explanatory

memorandum, as my colleague said, and a briefing.

Debate adjourned.

TERRITORY INSURANCE OFFICE (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (Serial 52)

Continued from 25 February 1998.

Mr STIRLING (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, this is a minor technical bill. The *Financial Institutions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act* in April 1997 allowed individuals and organisations to invest in building societies and credit unions. This amendment bill simply extends the same opportunities to invest in the Territory Insurance Office. There are consequential amendments to the *Agents Licensing Act*, the *Commercial and Private Agencies Licensing Act*, the *Local Government Act*, the *Unit Titles Act* and the *Legal Practitioners Act*, as well as amendments to a series of regulations. The opposition supports the bill.

Mr REED (Deputy Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Attorney-General, who is ill, I thank the opposition spokesman and the opposition for their support for this bill which, as the member has just indicated, is one of commonsense and will enable more activity to be pursued in these matters.

Motion agreed to; bill read a second time.

Mr REED (Deputy Chief Minister) (by leave): Madam Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to; bill read a third time.

UNCLAIMED SUPERANNUATION BENEFITS BILL (Serial 51)

Continued from 25 February 1998.

Mr STIRLING (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, this bill is required to ensure that amounts of money left unclaimed in superannuation funds can be returned to the Northern Territory Treasury rather than to the federal Commissioner for Taxation. It certainly makes sense and we support the bill.

The concern I have with unclaimed superannuation is that it exists at all, particularly in the public sector. Although the amount of money is not large, every single dollar of it rightfully belongs to former public servants who cannot be located. If the Northern Territory Public Sector Superannuation