

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATION WEBSITE — COPYRIGHT

Statement by Attorney General MR J.R. QUIGLEY (Butler — Attorney General):

I rise to inform the house of a change to the way that copyright applies to WA legislation and the WA legislation website. In June last year, while second reading the Legislation Bill 2018, I flagged my intention to consider relaxing the current approach, which is quite conservative and restrictive compared with other jurisdictions, such as the commonwealth, Queensland, South Australia and the United Kingdom. These jurisdictions take a more open approach to the re-use of legislative data. Their legislation websites are covered by what is known as creative commons, or equivalent licences, which enable users to share and adapt content for any purpose.

The copyright notice on the WA legislation website currently warns that users can download and reproduce material from the website only for personal non-commercial use or non-commercial use within the user's organisation. The scope of the permission is quite limited and, arguably, would not extend to a law firm printing material from a website as part of work undertaken for a client. Under the current policy, publishers can reproduce hardcopy only under certain circumstances and are required to give written notice to the state of their intention to reproduce a piece of legislation in published material. For electronic republication, individual publishers must negotiate separate licence arrangements with the state.

I advise the house that I have approved the granting of creative commons licences for the WA legislation website and hardcopies of WA legislation. The adoption of the creative commons approach will reduce red tape because users will no longer need to obtain permission or a licence from the state to reproduce legislation. They will be able to copy and redistribute WA legislative material in any medium or format, and remix, transform and build upon the material for any purpose, including commercial. Users will still have to acknowledge the state of WA as the source of the material. The approach is also consistent with the WA "Whole of Government Open Data Policy", which seeks to ensure that the state's data and information resources are shared widely across government and the community.