
Tuesday, 12 February 2008

INDEPENDENT CHAIR FOR EPA

The independence of South Australia's Environment Protection Authority will be further enhanced by this week's introduction to Parliament of proposed legislation separating the roles of the EPA Chair and Chief Executive.

Minister for Environment and Conservation Gail Gago says up until now the roles have been filled by the same person.

"This move will reinforce the EPA's independence in fulfilling its statutory functions and guide efficient operation by having an independent Chair who can oversee the governance of the Board, allowing the Chief Executive to focus on thorough advice and implementation of board decisions," says Minister Gago.

"We have taken the opportunity to consider alternative arrangements following the resignation of Dr Paul Vogel, who filled both positions and the Government believes that further bolstering the independence of the environment watchdog better reflects community needs and expectations.

"South Australians can be guaranteed of the change for years to come as a result of us formalising the separation of roles through legislation.

"The new Bill will allow the Chief Executive to remain a member of the Board, but no longer be given a vote on any resolutions.

"This will reinforce the Board's power to direct the activities of the administrative unit optimising the work of a strong independent environmental watchdog in line with our Government's green agenda.

"The Bill also provides for the Board to continue to have up to nine voting members, including a Governor and a Deputy and removes the requirement for the Chief Executive to preside at round-table conferences."

Minister Gago said the position of EPA Chief Executive would be advertised nationally and internationally from this weekend.

The Minister will appoint a Board member to be Chair once the Bill has been passed by Parliament.

The Minister will introduce the ***Environment Protection (Board of the Authority) Bill*** to Parliament tomorrow.