

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Issued by the authority of the Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories

Local Government Act 1995 (WA) as in force in the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Christmas Island Local Government (Population Estimate) Order 2025

Authority

Subsection 8A(1) of the *Christmas Island Act 1958 (Cth)* (the **CI Act**) provides that, subject to certain exceptions, Western Australian (**WA**) laws are in force in Christmas Island. WA laws in force in Christmas Island by virtue of this subsection are referred to as applied WA laws. Subsection 8A(2) of the CI Act provides that an applied WA law may be incorporated, amended or repealed by an Ordinance or a law made under an Ordinance. Subsection 8G(1) of the CI Act provides that if, under an applied WA law, a power is vested in a Minister or the Governor of Western Australia, the power is, in relation to Christmas Island, vested in the Commonwealth Minister administering the CI Act instead.

The *Christmas Island Local Government (Population Estimate) Order 2025* (the **Order**) is made under section 2.16B of the *Local Government Act 1995 (WA)* as in force in the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands (the **applied LG Act**). This section allows 'the Governor', by order, to specify an estimate of a district's population and provide that the specified estimate is taken to be the district's population for the purposes of sections 2.17 and 2.17A of the applied LG Act.

Purpose for Tabling and of Explanatory Statement

The Order is a notifiable instrument for the purposes of the *Legislation Act 2003 (Cth)* (the **Legislation Act**). Generally, notifiable instruments are not required to be tabled in Parliament, are not subject to disallowance and are not required to be accompanied by an explanatory statement for those instruments.

However, in accordance with applicable legislation and policy, the Order is required to be:

- laid before each House of the Commonwealth Parliament within 15 sitting days after the Order is made as if the Order was an Ordinance within the meaning of the CI Act (see subsection 10(1))
- subject to disallowance in pursuance of a notice of motion given within 15 sitting days after the Order was laid before each House of the Commonwealth Parliament as if the Order was an Ordinance within the meaning of that Act (see subsection 10(2)), and
- accompanied by an explanatory statement for the Order because the Order is a 'deemed document' in the House of Representatives and a 'Clerk's document' in the Senate.

Subsection 9.65(1) of the applied LG Act requires orders made by 'the Governor' under that Act to be published in the *Gazette* (the **WA Gazette**). Subsection 74A(1) of the *Interpretation Act 1984 (WA)(CI)* (the **applied Interpretation Act**) (as amended by the *Interpretation Act 1984 (W.A.)(C.I.) (Amendment) Ordinance 1992 (Cth)* (the **Interpretation Act Ordinance**)) provides that, if an applied WA law requires a person to publish an instrument in the WA Gazette, the requirement must be met by registration of the instrument as a notifiable instrument on the Federal Register of Legislation. The term 'notifiable instrument' is defined

in section 5 of the applied Interpretation Act (as amended by the Interpretation Act Ordinance) as having the same meaning as in the Legislation Act.

Section 42 of the applied Interpretation Act applies to an order made under section 2.16B of the applied LG Act as if the order were regulations made under the applied LG Act (see subsection 2.16B(9)). Subsections 42(1) and (2) of the applied Interpretation Act provide that all regulations must be laid before each House of the WA Parliament within 6 sitting days of the House following the publication of the regulations in the *WA Gazette* or on the WA legislation website and that such regulations may be disallowed by either House.

Section 74H of the applied Interpretation Act (as amended by the Interpretation Act Ordinance) provides that:

- if an applied law requires a document to be laid before the WA Parliament, the document must be laid before each House of the Commonwealth Parliament instead, and
- if an applied law permits the WA Parliament to disallow an instrument laid before that Parliament, sections 10, 10A, 10B and 10C of the CI Act apply to the instrument as if the instrument was an Ordinance within the meaning of that Act.

Relevantly, section 10 of the CI Act provides that Ordinances must be laid before each House of the Commonwealth Parliament within 15 sitting days after the Ordinance is made and may be disallowed by either House.

Unlike legislative instruments, the Legislation Act does not require the rule-maker for a notifiable instrument to lodge an explanatory statement for the instrument that conforms to the requirements set out in subsection 15J(2) (compare subsection 15G(4)). However, the tabling of a non-legislative instrument that is subject to disallowance is required to be accompanied by an explanatory statement prepared for the instrument (see Chapter 5 of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's *Tabling Guidelines*, which is accessible at: www.pmc.gov.au/resources/tabling-guidelines). Documents that are required by law to be presented to the Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament are often referred to as 'deemed documents' in the House of Representatives and 'Clerk's documents' in the Senate.

Purpose and Operation of Order

The Order specifies, for the purposes of sections 2.17 and 2.17A of the applied LG Act, the estimate of the population of the district of Christmas Island.

The Order also provides that the estimate of the population of the district of Christmas Island has effect on and from the next ordinary election day, in accordance with paragraph 2.16B(2)(a) of the applied LG Act.

The Order commences on the start of the day after the instrument is registered. The Order interoperates with the related instrument *Christmas Island Local Government (Councillor Numbers) Order 2025*: the Order's commencement is a condition of that instrument's commencement.

Consultation

Subsection 2.16B(4) provides that, before making a recommendation (to 'the Governor') of the making of a population estimate under subsection 2.16B(1), 'the Minister' must consult the 'Government Statistician'. Subsections 8G(1) and 8G(2) of the CI Act have the effect that a power vested in 'the [WA] Minister', 'the Governor' and 'Government Statistician' in the applied LG Act are vested in the Commonwealth Minister instead of those persons in respect of Christmas Island. Notwithstanding that the Minister need not consult with their self in each

of the vested capacities, the Minister has sought, and based the population estimate on, the Australian Bureau of Statistics regional population estimates for 2022 to 2023.

Following registration of the Order on the Federal Register of Legislation, the Christmas Island community will be informed of the Order through a Community Bulletin issued by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

Impact Analysis

The Office of Impact Analysis (**OIA**) has determined that detailed analysis is not required under the Australian Government's Policy Impact Analysis Framework (OIA reference number OIA24-08255).

Statement of compatibility with human rights

A statement of compatibility with human rights in respect of the Order is not required under section 9 of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* because the Order is not a legislative instrument to which section 42 of the Legislation Act applies.