



Chamber of Commerce
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Getting the balance right: A proposal on holidays in Queensland
Government Liaison and Projects
PO Box 15033
Brisbane City East QLD 4002

Submitted via email: enquiries.schooloperations@deta.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Queensland business community, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the State Government on the discussion paper *Getting the balance right: A proposal on holidays in Queensland*. CCIQ is supportive of reviewing the spread and allocation of public holidays in Queensland to determine what will work best for the community, families and businesses. Overall, CCIQ is supportive of national consistency in regards to public holidays to ensure minimal disruption to Queensland businesses, particularly for those who operate across state and territory borders.

State school holidays

CCIQ is supportive of extending the Easter state school holidays from six weekdays to two weeks starting in 2012. As New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia already have two weeks school holidays at this time of the year, CCIQ is supportive of adopting the same approach to ensure consistency across the country.

CCIQ is also strongly supportive of this proposal due to the positive flow-on effects for the Queensland tourism industry. Adopting an extended school holiday period during the Easter break should also coincide with targeted campaigns to encourage Queenslanders to holiday locally, subsequently supporting local businesses. CCIQ is keen to work with the State Government on such campaigns to deliver the best possible economic stimulus to the Queensland economy during the extended holiday period.

Public holidays

CCIQ is supportive of reviewing Queensland's public holidays to deliver a more even spread throughout the year. Currently, the concentration of public holidays and long weekends in the first half of the year disrupts production and services for business and industry. Once again, CCIQ stresses our support for national consistency in regards to public holidays.

Table 1 (overleaf) looks at the existing public holidays around the country. Currently, the majority of public holidays are observed on the same date around Australia. This includes the Queen's birthday public holiday which is observed on the second Monday in June in all states and territories, except Western Australia. Subsequently, CCIQ is supportive of preserving the second Monday in June as a public holiday to ensure national consistency is maintained.

However, Labour Day is currently observed at different times of the year throughout Australia:

- First Monday in October in ACT, New South Wales and South Australia;
- Second Monday in March in Victoria and Tasmania;
- First Monday in March in Western Australia;
- First Monday in May in Queensland and Northern Territory.

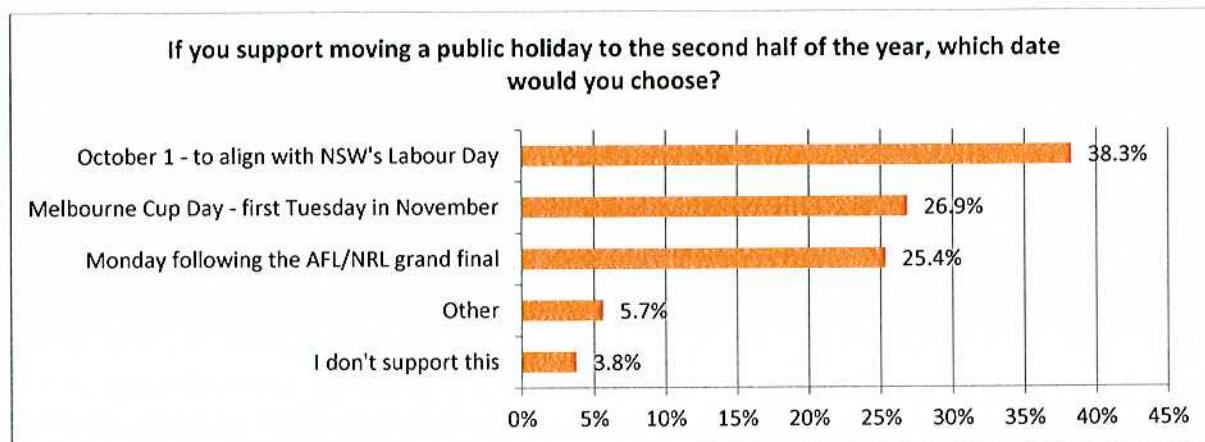
CCIQ is supportive of moving the Labour Day public holiday to the second half of the year to deliver a more even spread of public holidays throughout the year in Queensland. Considering New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT currently hold their Labour Day on the first Monday in October, CCIQ is supportive of moving Queensland's Labour Day public holiday to this date to ensure consistency with southern states.

Table 1: Proposed Public Holidays throughout Australia in 2012

	QLD	NSW	Victoria	SA	TAS	WA	NT	ACT
New Year's Day	Monday 2 January	Sunday 1 January and Monday 2 January	Sunday 1 January and Monday 2 January	Monday 2 January	Monday 2 January	Sunday 1 January and Monday 2 January	Monday 2 January	Sunday 1 January and Monday 2 January
Australia Day	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January	Thursday 26 January
Good Friday	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April	Friday 6 April
Easter Saturday	Saturday 7 April	Saturday 7 April	Saturday 7 April	Saturday 7 April	n/a	n/a	Saturday 7 April	Saturday 7 April
Easter Monday	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April	Monday 9 April
Anzac Day	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April	Wednesday 25 April
Labour Day	Monday 7 May	Monday 1 October	Monday 12 March	Monday 1 October	Monday 12 March	Monday 5 March	Monday 7 May	Monday 1 October
Queen's Birthday	Monday 11 June	Monday 11 June	Monday 11 June	Monday 11 June	Monday 11 June	Monday 1 October	Monday 11 June	Monday 11 June
Christmas Day	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December	Tuesday 25 December
Boxing Day	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December	Wednesday 26 December
Other:	Show holidays eg Brisbane Wednesday 15 August	Easter Sunday 8 April; Bank Holiday Monday 6 August	Melbourne Cup Day Tuesday 6 November	Adelaide Cup Monday 12 March	Royal Hobart Regatta Monday 13 February (S.Tas); Recreation Day Monday 5 November (N.Tas); Restricted public holiday – Easter Tuesday 10 April; Show holidays	Foundation Day Monday 4 June	Show holidays eg Darwin Friday 27 July	Canberra Day Monday 12 March; Family and Community Day Monday 8 October

Source: www.australia.gov.au

This position is also supported by more than 1,100 respondents to CCIQ's snap poll that was featured on our website seeking feedback on where businesses would support moving a public holiday to in the second half of the year. 38.3 per cent of businesses supported moving a public holiday to align with NSW's Labour Day. Overall, CCIQ urges the State Government to consider the need for achieving national consistency around the country when deciding on Queensland's future public holidays.



Source: CCIQ snap poll, 25 - 27 October 2011

Public holidays that fall on a weekend

CCIQ is strongly opposed to declaring a public holiday for both the actual date as well as an additional public holiday when Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day fall on a weekend. This proposal would create a significant additional liability for employers, effectively creating an additional public holiday for businesses that operate 7 days a week and/or over the weekends. This would undermine business profitability and the capacity of businesses to employ during this period due to the substantial increase in labour costs.

CCIQ believes that employees who work on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day should be entitled to penalty rates if that day falls on a weekend. However, Queensland businesses that are open during this period are not supportive of being required to pay penalty rates for their employees for both the actual and substitute public holiday. This will impact on the competitiveness of these businesses compared to those that are only required to pay staff for one public holiday. Every business and employee in Queensland should be entitled to the same number of public holiday entitlements to ensure a consistent approach across the state and an even playing field for all businesses.

CCIQ is supportive of maintaining the *Holidays Act 1983* as it currently stands to require the following Monday to be substituted as the public holiday in circumstances where the actual day falls on either a Saturday or a Sunday. Making legislative changes to allow additional public holidays when the actual date of the holiday falls on the weekend will only result in additional costs and imposts on Queensland businesses, negatively impacting the economy and communities. CCIQ can not emphasis enough our strong opposition to this proposal.

Summary

Overall, CCIQ urges the State Government to consider the need for achieving national consistency in regards to public holidays in order to ensure minimal disruption to Queensland businesses, particularly for those who operate across state and territory borders. Furthermore, CCIQ is not supportive of introducing measures that will result in additional public holidays in Queensland, subsequently increasing business costs leading to negative impacts on businesses, employees and local communities.

CCIQ looks forward to working with the State Government on the public holidays' proposal to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for Queensland businesses, employees and the community. If you have any questions regarding this correspondence please contact Senior Policy Analyst Leanne Connell on (07) 3842 2237 or email lconnell@cciq.com.au.

Yours Sincerely



Nick Behrens
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Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland