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Education, Employment and Small Business Committee
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Response to the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

On behalf of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) I would like to restate our concerns with the government's proposed changes to the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*. I want to draw specific attention to the undue burden that this change will place on small businesses. Our stakeholders and business operators emphasis that there is no compelling rationale to support the introduction of Christmas Eve as a part day public holiday. We therefore urge the State Government not to pass this bill.

Representing 2,500 tourism businesses in its regional membership, QTIC is the peak body for the tourism industry in Queensland and acts as the voice of industry. Tourism is a \$27billion industry for the state and employs almost 1 in 10 Queenslanders across predominantly small to medium businesses tourism. We work in strong partnership with the State Government on countless initiatives to foster tourism and applaud the government's commitment and investment in tourism.

This piece of proposed legislation unfortunately works in the opposite direction and will adversely affect the industry. In assessing the submissions in response to the proposed legislation introduction, the majority of those in favour of the proposal are individuals who generally provide little evidence of the benefits that will be derived from this change. In her speech to Parliament, Hon. Grace Grace stated that only 28% of respondents to the inquiry oppose the proposal. We accept this but it is worth noting that the following employer group submissions represent the collective voices of a large number of individual businesses:

- Clubs Queensland representing 425 members across the state.
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry representing 448,000 businesses.
- Hotel and Tourism Management Pty Ltd representing approximately 210 outlets
- LGAQ representing 77 local councils.
- Australian Meat Industry Council representing 2,000 enterprises.
- Baking Association of Queensland representing 2,143 bakeries.
- Master Grocers Australia representing 760 supermarkets.
- Caravan Parks Association of Queensland representing 420 members.
- Retail Drinks Australia representing the majority of packaged liquor retail licences.
- Restaurant and Catering Industry Association representing 45,000 businesses.

Proudly supported by:



- Queensland Hotels Association representing 800 companies.
- National Retail Association representing 28,000 businesses.
- Leading Age Services representing 170 members.

These collective voices should not be ignored and need to be given the appropriate weight. It is those businesses that can support jobs growth in Queensland. Additional wage costs will for many small businesses either mean trading at a loss or closing early.

This of course means that communities will miss out on access to services and staff will miss out on evening shifts which they may rely on. In a period when many households find it hard to make ends meet, these employees would see their earnings diminished.

The social disadvantage argument, based on religious grounds, is also weak, with the most recent census (2016) identifying that 29.2% of Queenslanders do not affiliate with any specific religion. Of those who do, 21.7% describe themselves as Catholic, 15.3% as Anglican and 10.0% did not state.

Finally, businesses have planned and budgeted based on existing legislation. Changes this late in the year will impact the bottom line of businesses, will put undue strain on businesses and their employees. All of which may make for a very unhappy Christmas for many.

These changes will reduce our capacity to meet customers' service expectations and may affect the reputation of Queensland. QTIC urges the Government not to introduce this bill.

Kind regards



Daniel Gschwind
Chief Executive