



Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Training
Committee
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
BRISBANE QLD 4000

By email

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: Enquiry into the operation of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990
Exemptions – Mossman and Port Douglas Tourist Area**

The Douglas Chamber of Commerce IA 33775 ABN 61 802 182 319 represents multiple business members within the Douglas Shire. The Chamber has a diverse membership base and represents retail industry businesses, service industry businesses, tour and accommodation businesses and agricultural industries.

To the extent that the Department of Education, Employment and Training has invited commentary on the terms of reference for the Inquiry, the Chamber would like to comment in particular on the impact of the 2017 moratorium applicable to shops in Mossman and Port Douglas Tourist Area (Section 56 of the Act) and recommendations following its enquiry.

The Douglas region is one of the most visited and desirable regions for domestic and international tourism.

Previous studies have suggested that the Douglas Shire is dependent upon a Tourism related businesses and service industries to those businesses to the extent of some 70- 80% of the local economy.

Prior to 2017, restrictions on trading hours during Sundays or public holidays potentially restricted retail and tourism related business operating on such days.

In 2012, officers from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General took issue with a number of businesses in Port Douglas that it determined were improperly trading during public holidays. The Chamber of Commerce subsequently wrote to the Office of the Premier and Cabinet on 27 and 8 October 2012 seeking clarification of the trading hour restrictions in the region and future dispensation as the restriction on trading during public holidays greatly penalised the region.

Representations were made to government that given the particular nature of the tourism dependence of the area, there is an expectation that tourists (who will obviously wish to visit such

tourist areas and designations during public holiday periods) be presented with a region or area which appears to be bustling and where tourism related activities and services abound.

Tourism is greatly dependent both upon social media and word of mouth referrals from visiting tourists to friends, colleagues and social media contacts. **Images or perceptions of a town or region that is dead, closed or has no significant activity during one of the most visited days of the year (public holidays) has far reaching consequences and may significantly damage both industry, economic and population growth or perception of desirability of such areas.**

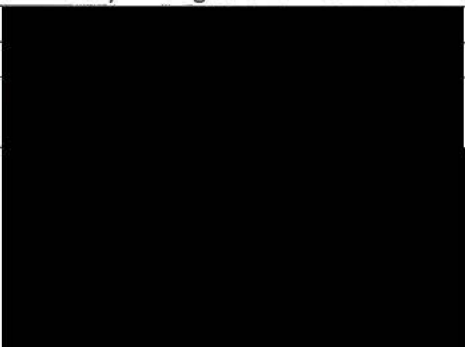
A tourist visiting on a public holiday still expects to be able to shop and avail itself of any need for that tourist to fully enjoy their holiday. The Port Douglas Region is also somewhat unique in that the majority of accommodation available is available is serviced apartments which encourage and indeed are dependent upon longer term stays by tourists. A tourists need during such longer term stays relies upon them being able to avail themselves all food related businesses ranging from butchers, bakeries, and supermarkets, and of course cafes and all fashion, retail and accessory shops.

The Douglas Chamber of Commerce requests the government grant a further 5 - 10 year moratorium (to allow businesses to trade on all public holidays) and indeed expand that moratorium to apply to all of the Douglas Shire given the shire wide dependency upon the tourism economy.

In particular, townships of Port Douglas, Craiglie, Mossman, Daintree and areas north of the Daintree River to Cape Tribulation would greatly benefit from businesses being able to trade and to service the diverse needs of tourists during all public holidays and throughout the year.

The Chamber does not see any negative impact to businesses or community within the region (given the community's heavy reliance on tourism related employment) for such businesses to be able to operate every day of the year, but again particularly during public holidays.

The Douglas Shire has been greatly impacted by Covid related border closures. The region badly needs to be able to operate at its full potential during the next 5 years to recover from the 2020 and 2021 position.

Relevant Details for submission	
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Should you require further information or wish consultation with the Chamber and or our members regarding the enquiry please call or contact the writer.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Tranter', enclosed within a simple, elongated oval shape.

Martin Tranter

Secretary