



Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015

Submission to the
Finance and Administration Committee

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Queensland Teachers' Union
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Overview

1. The Queensland Teachers' Union ("the QTU") notes the purpose of the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* ("the Bill"), and will address the issue of the Government's pre-election commitment 'Honouring the real Labour Day' by restoring the Labour Day public holiday to the first Monday in May. The commitment also provided for the movement of the Queen's Birthday public holiday from June to October. The QTU strongly supports the gravamen of the changes contained in the Bill in relation to reinstating the Labour Day public holiday on the first Monday in May in 2016 coinciding with its 125 year anniversary.

Historical legislative analysis

2. In 2011, the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011* was explicitly and publicly endorsed by the Liberal National Party ("LNP"). At no time in the lead up to the 2012 Queensland election did the LNP indicate that support for this position had been removed or was under review.
3. Prior to the 2012 state election, Mr Newman stated on 4 November 2011 outside of parliament that "*the majority of Queenslanders want to move the Queen's birthday to the second half of the year.*"¹ In support of Mr Newman, Mr Seeney issued a media release on 29 November 2011 stating that the "*LNP resolved to support the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011.*"² The media release specifically distanced the LNP from the dissenting report of three LNP members, stating that the dissenting report was "*not the LNP's position.*"³

¹ Hurst, D. (2011), 'We do support holidays, LNP insists', Brisbane Times, 19 November: <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/we-do-support-holidays-lnp-insists-20111128-1o36m.html>

² Seeney, J. (2011), 'LNP supports public holiday change Bill' [media release], 29 November: <http://lnp.org.au/news/leader-of-the-lnp/lnp-supports-public-holiday-change-bill>

³ Ibid

4. Less than 10 months after the introduction of the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2011* (Qld), the former LNP government introduced the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012* to order to change the date of Labour Day as an immediate action to the first Monday in October.

Cultural significance

5. Notwithstanding the historical significance of Labour Day in Queensland, namely, the nationally significant 1891 Shearer's Strike and first Labour Day celebrations held in May in Queensland, Labour Day has international cultural significance and is celebrated widely across a variety of countries.
6. For example, in Argentina, celebrations include rallies and meals featuring local dishes held at the workplace or at local unions. The Workers' Day holiday was established formally in 1930 on 1 May after 40 years of unofficial celebrations.
7. In France, 1 May is a public holiday and is, in fact, the only day of the year on which employees are legally obliged to be given leave (with some exceptions around emergency workers).⁴ Parades and marches are a tradition in France. It is also customary to offer a lily to family or friends, a tradition dating back to 1561 where Charles IX offered a lily to all ladies present in the court.
8. In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland street fairs and parades are synonymous with Tag der Arbeit, held on 1 May. In Croatia, celebrations occur across the country complete with parades, music, marches with participants given a bowl of bean soup and red carnations as a symbol of the fallen workers of 1886 as a result of the Haymarket affair, Chicago. In 2014, 60,000 portions of free bean soup were given to the Zagreb attendees alone.⁵

⁴ ["Fêtes légales et jours fériés"](#) (in French). Government of France. 24 April 2012. Retrieved 1 May 2012.

⁵ <http://www.croatiaweek.com/croats-celebrate-may-day-with-free-bean-soup/>

9. 1 May is also a public holiday in the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia (amongst others) and celebrations ensue in these countries, inclusive of parades. In particular, in Pakistan respect is given to all those who worked, to those who are working and those who played a part in social as well as economic reform.
10. In fact, May 1 is a national holiday in more than 80 countries and is often celebrated in many other countries (see Japan as an example). It commonly sees organised street marches and celebrations by working people and their labour unions throughout most of the world.
11. The QTU is proud to support the Bill and notes the significant cultural and historical celebrations attached to the Labour Day holiday being returned to May.