

7 July 2015

The Research Director
Finance and Administration Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Submitted via email: fac@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Research Director,

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Finance and Administration Committee (the Committee) on the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* (the *Bill*). This submission seeks to comment principally on the proposed amendments to the *Bill* as per the policy objectives stated in the corresponding explanatory memorandum. Specifically, the following will provide a Queensland business community perspective on re-instating Labour Day to May in 2016, moving the Queen's Birthday public holiday to October, and the proposed implementation of online application service for high risk work (HRW) licenses.

Public Holidays

At the outset, CCIQ supports 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. Overall, CCIQ is not supportive of introducing measures that result in additional public holidays in Queensland; as such measures increase business costs leading to negative impacts on businesses, employees, and local communities. Nevertheless, with respect to the *Bill* currently being considered by the Committee, CCIQ is pleased the State Government resisted creating an additional 12th public holiday in Queensland in 2015. CCIQ believes the decision to move the Labour Day Holiday from October to May – but not until 2016 – shows that the State Government is being true to its commitment to prioritise economic growth and jobs creation. CCIQ is of the view that the economy and jobs take precedence over the timing of specific holidays, and supports moves by the current government to respond to requests from the business community to not impose additional public holidays in 2015.

CCIQ urges the Committee to note that the Queensland business community's preferred option is to leave the Queen's Birthday Holiday as it is as it is the same date across Australia, with the exception of Western Australia. However, to achieve an even spread of holidays across the year, this infers leaving the Labour Day Holiday in October. This option has positive implications for tourism and economy, but relegates the current government's commitment to the union movement to reinstate Labour Day to May.

CCIQ notes that national consistency and an even spread of holidays across the year are the two outcomes that best grow the economy and create jobs. Despite this however, CCIQ requests the Committee note that most important to Queensland businesses is the core 11 public holidays and no more. In this light, the decision to move Labour Day in 2016 allows for ample planning and does not unnecessarily slug employers with an additional impost that would have been at odds with any credible jobs prioritization.

High risk work licence applications

CCIQ strongly supports the implementation of an online application service for HRW licences using electronic identity verification and the Department of Transport and Main Roads' (DTMR) digital bank of customer image sets and card production processes. CCIQ overwhelmingly supports the introduction of better procedures for the sharing of information and identity verification between relevant departments, ultimately having the effect of easing the red tape and administrative burden of those businesses that require HRW licences. The Queensland business community reads these changes as demonstrative of a government well-equipped to implement efficiencies where necessary to ease the burden on business in this area.

With the number of applications made for HRW licences sitting at approximately 30,000 per year, with over 260,000 existing HRW licence holders currently in Queensland, the proposed consolidation of current legislation to streamline requirements will in practical terms save around \$1.6 million per annum for the Department. Additionally, allowing access to applications on a 24/7 basis due to electronic information share grants businesses the freedom to not take time out of their workday to acquire the relevant licences for the operation of their businesses. Overall, the proposed changes work to stem the flow of regulation, while deregulating unnecessary bureaucratic procedures which acts as a perfect example of government making it easier for businesses to comply with their obligations. To this end, CCIQ believes similar efficiency finding models can and should be rolled out across the whole-of-government in the interests of making it easier to do business in Queensland.

For the above reasons, CCIQ confers in principle support for this part of the *Bill*. CCIQ would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to further explain the arguments contained herein.

Sincerely,



Nick Behrens

Director – Advocacy and Workplace Relations