

President: **John Battams**General Secretary: **Ron Monaghan**Assistant General Secretary: **Amanda Richards**

28 August 2012

The Research Director
Legal affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Holidays & Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2012
Submission 007

Dear Sir/Madam

Re Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012

The Bill seeks to amend the *Holidays Act 1983* so that the Labour Day public holiday will move from May to October and the Queen's Birthday public holiday will move from October to June from next year.

The Queensland Council of Unions is opposed to moving the Labour Day public holiday from May.

The Labour Day celebration in May each year is of special significance to workers and the labour movement as it recognises the first ever Labour Day procession held in Barcaldine on May 1, 1891.

Further, the Labour Day public holiday is an important annual event that commemorates the granting of the eight-hour day for Australian workers and remembers those who struggled and succeeded to ensure decent and fair working conditions for Queensland and Australian workers.

Whilst Labour Day is of special significance to workers it also forms part of Queensland's history. The battles undertaken by workers in the late 1800's and early 1900's to achieve better working conditions are recorded as major events in the history of this state.

Moving the public holiday from May will take away the relevance of commemorating our industrial and general history on or around the anniversary of the first Labour day procession. For this historical reason the Labour Day public holiday should occur in May each year.

In addition to supporting the retention of the Labour Day public holiday in May we oppose the movement of the Queen's Birthday public holiday as part of the plan to move the Labour Day public holiday.

The Queen's Birthday public holiday which is observed as a mark of respect has no relationship with the current monarch's actual birthday, which is in April. Therefore, the proposal to move this public holiday to June serves no purpose.

The current arrangement where the Labour Day public holiday occurs in May each year recognises and respects the tradition of Labour Day. We believe the recognition of Labour Day should take precedence over moving the birth of the monarch to a date in June which has no pertinence to the birthday of the current Queen.


Changing the Labour Day public holiday from May will cause disruption to long entrenched arrangements that see thousands of workers participate in community activities at various centres throughout the state. In May each year public marches and other events are held in Brisbane, Bowen, Bundaberg, Cairns, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Thursday Island, Toowoomba and Townsville.

The Government should undertake wider consultation on this matter before proceeding with the legislation. The Explanatory Notes for the Bill indicate that "there has been no community consultation on the Bill". This statement supports the view more consultation is required.

The Explanatory Notes also indicate there is community and business support for the movement of the Labour Day public holiday to the second half of the year. In response to this statement the Queensland Council of Unions, which represents 34 unions and over 350,000 workers in this state, advises that a considerable section of the community (working people) support the retention of the Labour Day public holiday in May.

We urge the Committee to hold a public hearing on this Bill so as to provide interested parties with the opportunity to be heard. The Government will be provided an accurate view of the community opinion on this matter through such a process.

Yours faithfully



Amanda Richards

Acting General Secretary