



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 18 November 1998

TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.57 p.m.): I speak in support of the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill. A number of months ago, I had my first inquiry from a constituent in my electorate about the public holiday for Boxing Day 1998. She was the manager of a small shop in the Mount Ommaney Shopping Centre and was concerned about having to work on Saturday the 26th and again on Monday the 28th while her family were celebrating the festive season.

Shop assistants work longer hours than most people in other occupations, as a general course, during the year for the convenience of their employers and the general public. They are rarely rewarded for the dedication and time spent away from their families. Governments talk about the family unit and promote strong families for the welfare of our children, yet retail workers are prevented from spending precious time with their families on public holidays. It is just not fair. The rest of the community can have this time with their families, but not retail employees.

I have had a number of calls about this issue over the course of the last few months from people in a similar situation. It was with great relief that I heard about this Bill from the Honourable the Minister, Paul Braddy. To close non-exempt retail shops on Boxing Day, 26 December, will allow retail workers in Mount Ommaney the three-day Christmas break to enjoy time with their families. During the public holiday on 28 December, retail workers in my electorate will have a choice about working and, if they so choose, will be rewarded with penalty rates applying for that day. On the other hand, the shoppers in the Mount Ommaney electorate will be able to access their chemist and buy a loaf of bread or a newspaper from those shops which are exempted from trading hours provisions.

I am delighted that our hardworking retail employees have been given a well-earned day off and a freedom of choice about working on a public holiday. I support the Bill.
