



Speech by

Mr S. SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard 18 November 1998

TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (9.49 p.m.): On behalf of the Opposition, I am pleased tonight to be able to offer the Minister and his Government bipartisan support for the contents of this amendment Bill. This amendment Bill, as the Minister indicated in his second-reading speech, amends the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990 in relation to shops covered by the order titled "Trading hours—non-exempt shops trading by retail—State" to permit all shops to trade on Monday, 28 December 1998, and prescribe the closure of shops except in certain designated tourist areas on Saturday, 26 December 1998.

These changes result from a decision made by me as a Minister of the former Government to declare Monday, 28 December 1998, a public holiday substitution for Boxing Day, which falls on Saturday, 26 December 1998. The original decision was made by me and without any opposition from all of the interested parties on the expectation that retailers would not open on Saturday, the day after Christmas. The expectation was that this would allow employees within retailing outlets to enjoy a long Christmas 1998 weekend. As Boxing Day is normally a public holiday, it was decided to gazette a public holiday on the Monday after Christmas, thus giving Queensland retail workers a decent Christmas long weekend.

Honourable members would appreciate that normally Boxing Day does not fall on a Saturday. In fact, it falls on a Saturday only once between 1993 and 2008. However, what was originally missed by everyone concerned was the requirement within most of the lease agreements between shopping centre owners and retailers that shopping centres open on a normal working day.

Because Boxing Day 1998 was not gazetted as a public holiday for the above-stated reasons, the requirement for shopping centres to open on Boxing Day, and as a consequence all other retail outlets within a shopping centre, kicked in. It was an unintended consequence which was not picked up by anyone, including the departmental officers making the recommendations to me as the Minister or the unions or employer organisations, who were notified of the decision almost one year ago. However, as soon as the issue came to light it became obvious to all that it could be quickly resolved in an efficient and apolitical manner. Because of the desirability of the amendments that we are considering tonight, I was pleased to immediately offer the Minister bipartisan support for such amendments.

I particularly commend the role that the Retailers Association of Queensland played in helping to bring about this resolution. I particularly mention its executive director, Mr Pat McKendry. My intention as the then Minister in the then coalition Government was to always look after workers within retail outlets. This is still the Opposition's predisposition and for this reason I am again pleased to advise the Government of our support for the amendment.
