



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Thursday, 7 October 2010

HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (11.55 am): I too rise to speak on the Holidays Amendment Bill 2010. It seems that for at least one of my constituents in the seat of Glass House good things do come to those who wait. Mrs Wilma Denholm of Palmwoods first raised this issue with me back in November 2009. Mrs Denholm wrote—

As you are aware in 2009 Boxing Day falls on a Saturday. Unfortunately, in Queensland, the public holiday has been declared on the following Monday. This means for people who work in industries that go beyond Monday to Friday will be paid ordinary Saturday rates when working the actual Boxing Day on Saturday.

I work in retail ... I now find out I must work Boxing Day at normal rates. For me this is \$16.92 ph. Tell me, would you work this day or like your spouse or other family member to be working this day for that paltry amount? I appeal to you to seek to make amends to this decision and any other similar in the future. Some other states have declared both days to be paid penalty rates if working. Insist that Queensland workers also be treated more fairly.

On behalf of Mrs Denholm, I wrote to the Attorney-General and I do thank him for the response that he provided to me and to Mrs Denholm in February this year. Unfortunately, back then it was deemed a bridge too far. The Attorney-General wrote—

The Holidays Act 1983 ... provides for the appointment of public holidays in Queensland. The Act also provides that, in respect of certain days, a substituted day is to be appointed as the public holiday.

...

Of the other State and Territory jurisdictions, in 2009 only Victoria and Western Australia declared both 26 and 28 December as public holidays. In Queensland, the Act allows for the substitution of another day for a public holiday, but not for the appointment of an additional day.

The Attorney-General continued—

The legislative position regarding the appointment of holidays in Queensland has been developed over a number of years taking into account issues such as historical precedent, public expectation and uniformity with other State jurisdictions and has been adopted by the various Governments over this time. Following deliberations of a Council of Australian Governments Working Group on Uniformity of Australian Public Holidays in 1993, it was determined that the current public holidays observed in Queensland were appropriate.

It is interesting to note that something has obviously changed from when the Attorney-General wrote that in February this year and now in October as we debate this amendment. It is worth noting that the Attorney-General subsequently put out a media statement in relation to this bill, where he said—

This change finally puts right a situation that has been wrong for some time.

The Attorney-General certainly cannot claim that he was not aware of it. His media statement continued—

Under the Holidays Amendment Bill 2010 ... people who work on Christmas Day this year and New Year's Day 2011 will be entitled to receive penalty rates.

This puts us in line with our counterparts in New South Wales and Western Australia in relation to Christmas Day, and New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria in relation to New Year's Day. In his media statement, the Attorney-General made this comment—

The government has made this decision after workers and unions outlined to the government how the existing arrangements disadvantage many people.

I would like to note that I hope it was Mrs Wilma Denholm who also helped to convince the Attorney-General to make these changes. The Attorney-General did say that there will be some costs to businesses, and the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee also raised that in its *Legislation Alert*.

Mrs Miller: Hear, hear!

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Bundamba. The committee raised concerns about the rights and liberties of individuals. It stated—

The committee draws the attention of the Parliament to clause 3 which would increase costs to individuals to employ staff to work on Christmas Day 2010 and New Year's Day 2011.

I think it is fair to say that the outcome is a good one for workers and it is certainly a good one for Mrs Denholm.

I want to pick up some comments made by the member for Mundingburra regarding show holidays. I know this is not covered by this bill, but it is a concern for people on the Sunshine Coast, where we have seen, through amalgamation, the loss of two holidays. The council has put forward the proposal that the Nambour show holiday be the one recognised by the entire Sunshine Coast Regional Council area. That certainly puts the town in which my electorate office is located, Maleny, in a difficult situation.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr POWELL: There are great people in Maleny and they certainly do deserve a Maleny show day. They formerly represented the whole of the Caloundra city council. It is a great show. Last year the Governor of Queensland came to open the show. It was the 100th show. I attended the AGM of the Maleny Show Society recently.

Mr Ryan: Was Ivan there?

Mr POWELL: Ivan Hankinson, the president, was there and he will continue to serve in the coming year. It is disappointing that we had to have the conversation. There were already expectations within the group that the council would be putting forward a proposal to go to one show holiday for the whole of the Sunshine Coast. They certainly wanted to object to that. There was some realism in the room that this would be the case. I can assure honourable members that the Maleny Show Society, proudly led by Ivan Hankinson, will push forward regardless of the final decision. There will be a Maleny show next year. It will continue to start on Friday. We will continue to make sure that it is one of the most successful shows not only on the Sunshine Coast but in all of South-East Queensland.

Mr Roberts: There was a great quilting exhibition up there two weekends ago.

Mr POWELL: I take the interjection from the member for Nudgee. There was a great quilting exhibition up there. We utilise those facilities up there in Maleny extensively for all sorts of shows and exhibitions, and quilting is just one. I would ask the member for Nudgee if he reached into his pocket and purchased a quilt while he was up there in Maleny.

Mr Roberts: I bought some raffle tickets. They weren't cheap.

Mr POWELL: The Maleny community does thank the member for Nudgee for his contribution. They are not cheap, but neither is the petrol to get up the range to visit Maleny.