



Speech by

## Hon. Cameron Dick

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

Hansard Tuesday, 14 September 2010

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Christmas-New Year Penalty Rates

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.53 am): The Christmas-New Year period is a special time of the year, with a number of public holidays allowing families to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and to spend valuable time together. The importance of this period to families is reflected in the penalty rates that apply in many occupations. For the inconvenience of being separated from their families, particularly on Christmas Day, workers have been eligible to receive extra financial reward through penalty rates. But in the past this benefit has been denied to workers when Christmas Day and New Year's Day have fallen on a Saturday.

The Bligh Government is moving to right this wrong and will introduce legislation today to ensure that Queenslanders working on these special days and who are required to be away from their families will get the penalty rates that they deserve. The only person likely to object to workers being paid their proper entitlements on Christmas Day would be Ebenezer Scrooge himself.

The Holidays Amendment Bill 2010 will allow the government to declare extra public holidays on Christmas Day this year and New Year's Day 2011. In adopting this position, the Queensland government will ensure that Queensland workers will be treated the same as their counterparts interstate. Workers in New South Wales and Western Australia already have this entitlement for Christmas Day 2010 while workers in New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria will receive it on New Year's Day 2011.

This move is good news for those seven-day occupations where workers have to work over the Christmas-New Year period. This includes many health workers, firefighters and ambulance officers who sacrifice so much of their family lives for their communities. These changes will also benefit the hotel and hospitality workers who work at numerous Christmas Day functions throughout the state, bus and train drivers who provide public transport, staff at fast-food outlets and even workers at suburban medical centres.

In a busy world, when so many people are trying to balance work and family commitments, it is important to ensure that families are given the opportunity to spend important occasions such as Christmas Day and New Year's Day together. This decision, which has been well received by the unions and Queensland workers, corrects a substantial inequity in our public holiday regime and ensures that workers in Queensland will have the same entitlements as their interstate counterparts over the Christmas-New Year holiday period.