



Speech by

## Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 24 November 2010

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Public Holidays 2011

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.23 am): Last month, this parliament passed the Holidays Amendment Bill 2010 to ensure that workers who are required to be on duty on Christmas Day and New Year's Day get the penalty rates they deserve. This is because this summer, Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on a Saturday—a situation that generally occurs every six to seven years. In the past, workers who have been required to work on these important days have missed out on public holiday penalty rates because the public holiday has been transferred to the following week.

Since the passage of the legislation, the Australian Industry Group has lodged an application with Fair Work Australia seeking changes to public holidays across Australia. The Ai Group's application, if successful, would negate the Queensland legislation. For workers covered by federal awards, it means that they would miss out on public holiday penalty rates for working Christmas Day or New Year's Day this summer.

The Bligh government acknowledges that the changes to public holidays will have some impact on businesses, but we also believe that workers who are unable to spend these important days with their families should be paid the penalty rates they are entitled to. Accordingly, the government will intervene in the proceedings before Fair Work Australia to make submissions to defend this important principle. The matter is listed for a hearing in Melbourne today before a Full Bench of Fair Work Australia. Queensland workers remaining in the state industrial relations jurisdiction will not be affected by any decision of Fair Work Australia and will still receive their appropriate penalty rates if they work. In the interests of equity, the Queensland government will seek to ensure that private sector employees are treated equitably and also receive their penalty rates.

Although I understand that the Ai Group may be interested in seeking consistency across Australia in relation to public holidays, I will not stand by and see Queensland workers disadvantaged in the process. Christmas Day and New Year's Day are important religious and cultural celebrations and Queenslanders deserve to be paid appropriate penalty rates for being separated from their families at these important times.