



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (5.16 pm): This afternoon I rise to make a contribution to the Holidays Amendment Bill introduced into the House by the honourable Attorney-General. The bill before the House amends the Holidays Act 1983, which prescribes which days will be considered as public holidays. This particular amendment relates to Christmas Day 2010, being 25 December, and New Year's Day 2011, being 1 January 2011, both of which fall on a Saturday. Essentially, without amendment to the act those who agree to work on Christmas Day 2010 and New Year's Day 2011 would receive only their usual Saturday payment for the day and would not have any right of refusal to work on that day. I note that in the explanatory notes to the bill there is a reference to the consultation sought and mention of the key government agencies that were consulted on the proposed amendment. Clearly, the business community was not consulted, because it will have to pay the penalty rates for four days as opposed to two days, as has been described by the honourable shadow minister and the honourable member for Moggill.

I point out some inconsistencies with the introduction of this legislation and the hypocrisy of this government. The bill before the House will mean that for the Christmas/Boxing Day weekend this year, there will be public holidays on Saturday 25 December, Monday 27 December and Tuesday 28 December, as Christmas Day falls on a Saturday. I have no problem with those who work on Christmas Day being afforded penalty rates. Otherwise, it would be unfair for those who are missing out on spending time with their families. As parliamentarians, at times we all miss out on being with our families on important occasions. However, why the need for a gazetted public holiday on the Tuesday? I believe it should be one or the other. I would be more than happy for the Saturday to be declared the official public holiday.

In terms of having to work on special days in one's life, for over five years I worked at Kentucky Fried Chicken and the only day they take off is Christmas Day. They work New Year's Day, so the stores are open every day other than Christmas Day. I was a young fellow and I was happy to have a job, because many of my mates did not have one. You get what you are given in casual employment environments. I was happy to have a job so that I could save up to buy my first car.

Why was this rule not applied to Anzac Day 2009? This day fell on the Saturday and the Saturday was gazetted as a public holiday. There was no public holiday on the Monday. If it is good enough for Christmas and New Year's Day, then surely it is good enough to do the same in recognition of the troops on Anzac Day—maybe have an Anzac weekend, instead of just one day.

Another inconsistency is the Easter weekend. For those who do not know, the public holidays currently fall on Good Friday, Easter Saturday and Easter Monday. If the rule applying to this year's festive season is applied to Easter, then why is the Tuesday not a public holiday as well in conjunction with the Saturday? The big losers will of course be business, and in particular small business which always struggles to absorb the additional costs where no additional revenue is applied.