



Speech by

Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (11.41 am), continuing: It is great to be able to continue this debate today where I left off yesterday on the Holidays Amendment Bill introduced by the government. Obviously I support penalty rates on public holidays, but, if members recall, I was making the point about the additional burden and costs that the additional two days would have on businesses. Unfortunately, just as I was making those points yesterday and the government was getting very excited about it, we adjourned the debate. So it is great to be able to continue the debate today.

As I indicated yesterday, potentially the big losers of the fallout of this will be business—the employers—and in particular small business who always struggle to absorb additional costs where no revenue is applied. I made the chamber quite aware yesterday that of course I support penalty rates on public holidays. I was simply making the point that an additional two public holidays is going to have an impact on how small businesses operate and how they budget.

It is incumbent, in my view, on all members of this place to rise in this House on all issues associated with bills, not just ones that are going to be popular with certain aspects of the electorate, and represent both sides—the case of the employees and the case of the employers, because the reality is that without the employers the employees will not have jobs. This addition will have a negative impact to a certain extent on business owners. They will be paying penalty rates for two additional days. They will be adding that cost to customers, who again suffer—it is the consumer eating on those public holidays who will suffer the cost of the additional penalty rates.

The point I made yesterday is that certainly some people do enjoy working on public holidays. I worked for five or six years at a KFC restaurant. I was a young lad at the time. I always wanted to work on a public holiday because it assisted me in buying my first \$3,000 yellow Corolla.

Mrs Miller: A canary car.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was a canary car; I admit it. My first \$3,000 car was a yellow Corolla, and working on the public holidays, receiving the penalty rates at KFC, helped me to achieve my dream of owning a Corolla for my first car.

Mrs Miller: And you are still skinny after working at KFC.

Mr BLEIJIE: And I still eat KFC, member for Bundamba. Getting back to the bill, during the Sunshine Coast's busy tourism period—tourism of course is a huge industry in our region—additional surcharges will be applied now on four days as opposed to two, and the hospitality industry in particular will certainly discourage, I believe, additional patronage on those four days. This will be at the time of the year when our local tourism industry on the Sunshine Coast makes the bulk of its income, and to penalise it to a certain extent by the addition of two public holidays I think will be detrimental to the industry at a time when it can least afford it given the current economic environment in which we live.

Mr Scott Driscoll from the United Retail Federation, which is a national industry body in Australia which represents thousands of businesses across the country and is based in Brisbane, said on 14 September this year—

"This will now see a further cost burden on small businesses in particular and they will be forced to pass on these new costs to consumers across the Christmas period and beyond,"

...

"This is a double-whammy that will see higher prices across the board.

"The Bligh Government is the Grinch that stole Christmas for many Queenslanders,"

I reiterate that this government has flip-flopped on this issue—one position today; another the next day. Given the current economic environment in particular, the business community would appreciate certainty and consistency so if it is dealt a cost imposition it can determine some strategies to help deal with this issue, which will continually arise from time to time in the future.

I would like to endorse the contribution of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his speech yesterday. In closing my contribution today, mixing it with yesterday's contribution, if the Labor Party really wanted to stick up for their so-called support base of working families, do you know what they would be doing? They would be seriously looking at ways to ease the cost of living pressures on working families. They would look at working families' fuel bills. They would look at working families' electricity bills. They would look at working families' car registration costs. They would look at implementing a public transport system in Kawana that would get people out of their cars on to public transport. And do you know more so what they should be looking at? The Labor Party members who sit on that side of the House, with the hypocrisy of it all, should be looking at people's water bills. They should be looking at working families' water bills.

People are struggling. Businesses are struggling. People need every penny they can get. But when they go about their daily lives—when they pay huge amounts for their fuel, their groceries, their rates, their car registration, their electricity and their water—let it be known that the fault lies at the feet of this Labor government and no-one else.