




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.31 pm): I too rise to address the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Like previous speakers from the opposition, I oppose this bill and I do so for a number of reasons. I think it is important, especially for the constituents of Glass House, to understand a few things. When the changes were made a couple of years ago, no changes were made to the names of the holidays or to the number of holidays. There was still Labour Day and there was still the Queen's Birthday. All we did was shift those around to ensure that there was a more even spread across the year, which, for the people of people of Glass House, particularly our small business owners, proved to be a huge windfall. I will come back to address that in a moment.

The first reason I oppose the bill is on the grounds of consistency. Given that we all agree that one of the holidays needed to go from the first half of the year to October, to me and to those of us here on this side of the chamber the obvious choice was Labour Day. We have heard from those opposite that somehow we were upsetting a huge tradition and that we were offending the rights of workers and the unions, in particular. Well, nothing more need be said there. If that was the case, it is interesting to note just when Labour Day is held around the nation: in New South Wales, it is the first Monday in October; in Victoria, it is the second Monday in March; in Tasmania, it is the second Monday in March; in South Australia, it is the first Monday in October; in Western Australia, it is the first Monday in March; in the Northern Territory, it is the first Monday in May; in the ACT, it is the first Monday in March; and if this legislation does not go through, in Queensland it will stay the first Monday in October. There is great consistency in that Labour Day is shifted around, because, on the other side of the coin, the Queen's Birthday is celebrated on the second Monday in June in every state and territory with the exception of WA. For the sake of consistency, moving Labour Day to October and celebrating it in October made eminent sense and to shift it back is nothing more than kowtowing to the unions, which is something that we know those opposite have not stopped doing since the day they walked into this chamber.

The second reason I oppose the bill relates to the windfall that it has afforded small business owners in the seat of Glass House. We have the pre-eminent drive-tourism market in South-East Queensland. Many people from across South-East Queensland come to places such as Mount Mee and the Blackall Range to enjoy a weekend away and our fine food and wines and holiday accommodation. I can honestly say that the feedback we received following this year's October long weekend was extraordinary. There was an extraordinary number of bookings. Places were completely booked out. The streets were packed. Money was spent in all of the restaurants.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection. It is still going to be there, which is fantastic, but what will be missed is the opportunity for businesses to pitch a seasonal long weekend: one in autumn, one in winter and one in spring. Next year we will go back to them all being in autumn. We will lose that winter opportunity. It is really frustrating for tourism businesses.

Mr Rickuss: Why do they hate western Queensland?

Mr POWELL: Why do they hate small business is probably more the question, member for Lockyer. The October Labour Day offered tourism operators on the Blackall Range an opportunity to package up seasonal activities in autumn and winter, which is a particular high point for the Blackall Range with its cooler climes, and then do so again in October. Last night I was on Bribie Island and I received the same feedback. October was the best season they have ever seen and they too want the opportunity to have Easter and Anzac Day in autumn, the Queen's Birthday weekend in June and Labour Day in October.

If the Labor Party truly meant to do what they keep saying they would do, which is to listen to Queenslanders, they would listen to the many councils that fed into the committee process. They would listen to the feedback from the small business operators in my electorate and from the neighbouring electorate of Pumicestone. They would listen to the CCIQ. They would realise that what they are doing is nothing other than tipping their hats to the unions again. This is payback to the unions for all of the funding, all of the investment and all of the manpower that they put into the election in January, which has meant that Labor is sitting on the government benches now. This is not about doing what is best for Queensland; this is about doing what is best for the unions. I implore them to reconsider and oppose the bill.