




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.27 pm): The 1891 shearers strike is one of Australia's earliest and most important industrial disputes. One of Australia's first Labour Day marches was held in Queensland in 1891 when striking shearers in Barcaldine marched with flags and banners. Labour Day was subsequently first gazetted in Queensland as a public holiday in 1901. Labour Day was consistently celebrated in Queensland on the first Monday in May for over 110 years until the Newman government moved it.

I am proud to support this bill because in 2016, the 125th anniversary of the shearers' strike, Labour Day will return to its rightful place in May. The LNP's move of Labour Day to October was a disrespectful move: disrespectful to the shearers who started the movement, to the union movement, to the Barcaldine community and to Queenslanders. During the 1891 shearers' strike many shearers were outraged when Logan Downs station manager, Charles Fairbairn, asked the shearers to sign a contract that would reduce the power of their union. The shearers fought to protect their pay, workers' rights, equitable agreements and they did not agree with the use of low-cost Chinese labour. Hardworking shearers like William Fothergill, William Hamilton and George Taylor, who left one of history's most important legacies to Queensland workers, must have been turning in their grave when the LNP moved their day, our Labour Day, which has been consistently observed on the first Monday in May for over 110 years.

The LNP government moved the Labour Day public holiday despite submissions opposing the change. In fact, they moved the public holiday despite submissions opposing the change from their own caucus. Speaking in 2013 about the community of Barcaldine, the former member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, said that moving the Labour Day date to October would be very detrimental to this small but vibrant community. I am very interested to know the position of the current member for Gregory, given that the Barcaldine Regional Council mayor wants Labour Day to return to May. Mayor Rob Chandler supports moving Labour Day back to May and said that the holiday has extra significance to residents and that the move back to May will reinvigorate the town's Tree of Knowledge Festival. Mayor Chandler said—

The Labor Day holiday in Barcaldine has always been on that first weekend in May but especially over the last 10 years, it's turned into a big weekend for western Queensland.

In my electorate of Keppel, I know that the community is looking forward to the Labour Day public holiday returning to its rightful place in May. Despite the fact that Campbell Newman and the LNP took it from us, we have continued to celebrate Labour Day in May. The Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering on an election commitment to restore Labour Day to its rightful place in May. At Labour Day celebrations in Rockhampton and Emu Park this year, the crowd cheered when I told them that the government would be introducing this legislation to bring back our day in May.

In July, I met with Desley Rial and Ken Landsberg of the Yeppoon Show Society to talk with them about what the proposed change in holidays would mean for the Yeppoon Show. The show society

representatives appreciated being consulted and they understand the importance of moving the Labour Day public holiday back to May and for the Queen's Birthday public holiday to move to October. In considering the two alternatives, the committee said it was of great importance to consider the cultural and community significance attached to the celebration of Labour Day in Queensland on the first Monday in May, with no corresponding significance attached to the celebration of the Queen's Birthday in June.

I look forward to celebrating Labour Day with my community in May 2016 and celebrating the 125th anniversary of the 1891 shearers strike. I commend the bill to the House.