




Speech By
Hon. Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 3 June 2015

HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.55 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Holidays Act 1983 and the Industrial Relations Act 1999 to restore the days on which public holidays are to be observed for Labour Day and the Birthday of the Sovereign, and to amend the Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Tow Truck Act 1973, the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 [\[520\]](#).

Tabled paper: Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [\[521\]](#).

I present and table the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 to amend the Holidays Act 1983 and the Industrial Relations Act 1999 to restore the days on which public holidays are to be observed for Labour Day and the Queen's birthday. The bill also amends the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 for the purposes of achieving operational and financial efficiencies for government and improving the customer experience in obtaining high-risk work licences issued by the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland.

The Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 will, commencing in 2016, return the Labour Day public holiday from the first Monday in October to its rightful place on the first Monday in May and move the Queen's Birthday public holiday from the second Monday in June to the first Monday in October. Without consultation or without taking it to an election, the former Newman LNP government shamelessly ruined over 100 years of Queensland tradition by moving the public holiday for Labour Day from May to October. Due to changes made to public holidays by the then LNP government, it has been necessary to reconsider the current arrangements in respect of these public holidays and we are confident the amendments finally get the balance of public holidays right.

In 2013, the then LNP government moved the Labour Day public holiday from the first Monday in May, where it had been observed since 1891, to the first Monday in October and moved the Queen's Birthday public holiday back to the second Monday in June. The observance of Labour Day in May gives proper recognition to the struggles and achievements of the labour movement on a date of true significance. Entitlements such as the eight-hour day, collective bargaining, fair and safe working conditions and minimum wages would not exist in modern society without the labour movement.

The Labour Day public holiday long weekend in May has also been significant for cultural and winter sport events. For example, that May long weekend has developed into a major community event surrounding the Barcardine Labour Day March. Barcardine was the scene for the first Labour

Day procession on 1 May 1891 and commemorative events associated with each year's procession created a major tourist event that brings tourist dollars to the town. Despite protests from the Barcaldine Regional Council that moving the public holiday to October would make it too hot for the community to enjoy festivities, the former LNP government still moved the Labour Day public holiday from May to October.

In 2012, the then Labor government moved the Queen's Birthday public holiday from the second Monday in June to the first Monday in October. This move responded to preferences expressed by the Queensland community in a review of public holiday arrangements—that was after consultation. The movement of the Labour Day and Queen's Birthday public holidays as proposed by this bill also spreads public holidays across the calendar year similar to other states and territories. Western Australia, New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory all observe a public holiday in the second half of the year around October.

The proposed amendments, however, do not affect public holidays in 2015. Making them effective from 2016 delivers certainty and stability by giving prior notice to Queenslanders, including the business community, of the changes and no extra costs from additional 2015 public holidays as part of a transition to the new arrangements.

This bill also amends various transport legislation within the portfolio of the Deputy Premier to give effect to an online application service for high-risk work licences issued by the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. There are approximately 260,000 high-risk work licence holders currently in Queensland and approximately 30,000 applications for high-risk work licences are made each year to authorise operators of high-risk equipment such as cranes, forklifts and the erection of scaffolding.

The proposed amendments will enable the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland to use digital photographs and digitised signatures that have been captured and stored by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to issue a high-risk work licence. If a worker already has a driver licence, adult proof of age card or other licence issued by the Department of Transport and Main Roads, they will be able to apply for or renew their high-risk work licence online at any time and from any location, whether in Birdsville or Brisbane, without needing to take a passport photo and attend an Australia Post outlet to lodge their application. Similarly, the bill will allow image sets used in a high-risk work licence application to be used to issue a transport licence or authority in future, such as renewal of the person's driver licence. The amendments also provide flexibility for other types of government licences to use the Department of Transport and Main Roads's bank of digital image sets in future if so desired. The bill also simplifies transport legislation by consolidating the existing provisions about digital photos and digitised signatures contained in five different transport acts into the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994.

This bill is the product of effective collaboration between two agencies and will improve the delivery of government services to customers across Queensland. The proposed amendments will allow existing government service delivery channels and technology to be used more effectively, removing duplication, reducing costs and improving the customer experience for a large number of workers to obtain the licences they need for work, particularly for those living in rural or regional areas.

With this bill, we are honouring the real Labour Day and ensuring that the public holiday commemorates the hard fought advancements of the labour movement and that it is held on its rightful place on our calendar, in May.

First Reading

Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.01 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date



Hon. CW PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.02 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 10 August 2015.