




Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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### **HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (3.09 pm): “Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.’ That will be the story of businesses throughout the length and breadth of Queensland come Christmas Eve 2019 because of this Labor government—this weak Labor government—that cannot hold the line against its union paymasters. We all enjoy a break. Holidays are something that all of us look forward to, and I am sure that there are many in this place who will be looking forward to spending some time with their family and friends over Christmas. This legislation is not about holidays. The word ‘holiday’ is being used for branding purposes only. This legislation is purely and simply about a weak government kowtowing to its paymasters in the union movement—a government on the ropes, a government bereft of ideas, not that it ever had any, and desperate to hold onto the trappings of power without actually doing anything to benefit Queensland as a state and Queenslanders collectively.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** If the member for Maryborough came up with an idea it would be the first one, but we are not holding our breath in respect of the member for Maryborough, and nor are the people of Maryborough holding their breath waiting for the member for Maryborough!

This is a government on the ropes and bereft of ideas, as I said. The policy rationale put forward in the explanatory notes is weak—in fact, so weak as to be almost laughable. The rationale is continued into one of the most lame examples of a consultation regulatory impact statement I have ever read. It would not pass a grade 12 economics exam. There is no mention of economic benefits, no mention of employment benefits, no mention of business benefits or even the much bandied around flow-on benefits that are often talked about in regulatory impact statements, and we know why that is: because other than some trite, fuzzy and unprovable and unsupported statements about recognising the importance of Christmas Eve, this bill only comes with costs.

This bill comes with costs to taxpayers and it comes with costs to businesses of all sizes, but particularly small businesses in the cafe and restaurant sector, the takeaway food services sector, the pubs and clubs sector, the accommodation sector and small supermarkets employing fewer than 20 people like the IGA in my part of the world. It comes with costs to employees in lost wages because the businesses that they might have worked for on Christmas Eve may well now decide not to open. In fact, you only needed to be at the Queensland Hotels Association event last night and speak to some of the publicans there who were forthright in saying that, given the costs and given the trade, they are not going to open because it is not worth it anymore. That is direct evidence from people who actually write the cheques out from their own pockets to pay the wages and who care about their staff who are making a decision now about Christmas Eve. There will be costs to employees in lost wages because the businesses that they might have worked for on Christmas Eve have decided not to open.

This was a regulatory impact statement that relied on material from South Australia in 2013—more than half a decade ago at the end of the GFC. This is a regulatory impact statement that ignores the costs that were identified in Victoria in 2015 when it was considering exactly the same thing and

decided not to implement a part public holiday on Christmas Eve. The RIS that accompanied this legislation is laughable and one of the weakest and laziest examples of a RIS I have ever seen. It is a regulatory impact statement designed to do one thing only, and that is to support the government's otherwise unsupportable decision. If we adopt the reasoning in that RIS, what next? Are we going to have a part day holiday before Anzac Day? Many Australians would argue that they travel to be at services or to be with family and friends to commemorate the sacrifice that those family and friends made that they want to remember. What are we going to see next time? What about a part day holiday before Labour Day? Is that going to happen—a part day holiday for Labour Day?

**Mr Brown** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I note that the member for Capalaba would be marching in the streets with the comrades over that one, although he might not be marching with the CFMMEU—and certainly the Treasurer will not be. Nonetheless, what next? Perhaps a part-day holiday on the eve of the Queen's birthday for my friend the member for Kawana? Indeed, what I have been able to demonstrate by making those ridiculous statements is just how ridiculous it is, because everyone in this place laughed at the absurdity of it and it is absurd in this piece of legislation as well. It is not supported by the RIS in that respect, so all of the reasoning for it is not supported by anything like evidence that is either measurable, quantifiable or testable.

I have three kids and two of them work as casual part-timers in service industries. One of them is a night packer and a night stacker at one of our major supermarket chains and the other one of them works on weekends and public holidays at Eagle Farm and Doomben for Tabcorp. They are both extremely grateful for the work that they get and the income that they receive, and both work outside normal nine to five hours. Both work either weekends, public holidays or night shifts. My daughter, who is in grade 11, has applied for part-time work after school as well.

I do not need a RIS or the Office of Industrial Relations or this minister—and they certainly do not—to tell them or to tell us what is in their best interests. They know and we know what that is, and that is a job—a job that pays with fair and reasonable conditions and a job that gives them a sense of achievement, money in their account and the opportunity to be independent. That is the thing that young people look for when they go looking for jobs, and predominantly—not always, but predominantly—it is young people who are in those sorts of jobs. Under this proposed law, that chance for many young people will be substantially less and the opportunity to earn that income will be substantially less and the opportunity for that independence will be substantially less.

That last pay packet before Christmas—that last bit of extra spending money—is what is at stake under this legislation for so many employees if a business decides to close, and let us not forget that 48 per cent of the CCIQ responses to the survey it carried out indicated that they would not open on Christmas Eve because of this, and even if that is exaggerated, even if it is 30 per cent, that is 30 per cent of small businesses in Queensland—and there are 411,000 small businesses in Queensland—that will not be open and that will not be paying someone. They will not be paying them that extra \$80 to \$200 that they would have received for working that evening from six o'clock until midnight, and that is not counting the gratuities and tips that would have been available, because we should not forget that most of those businesses are in hospitality, food and takeaway, restaurants and pubs and clubs.

It is not just the wage they were getting but all the tips and gratuities and other benefits that flow from working on that evening, and this at a time when unemployment is going up—and we just need to look at yesterday's *Courier-Mail*—and at a time when Queensland has the highest unemployment rate in Australia both seasonally and trend, and when business confidence is at its lowest according to the CCIQ since the height of the GFC. However, we should not expect any less than that from a minister who only two and a bit years ago told us, 'I don't know what you can do about youth unemployment. The problem is always with us.' That is the excuse.

I can tell the people of Queensland: there will always be youth unemployment as long as we have this minister in charge who kowtows to the interests of the unions and does not stand up for the interests of employees and workers. If one listened to the Labor side of the House, one would think that making a profit is a bad thing. I just heard the member for Pine Rivers talk about gargantuan profits. Those opposite should tell that to mum-and-dad businesses that can barely afford to pay the tax and who will have to work themselves because they cannot afford to put employees on. Profits pay wages. Profits lead to investment. Profits pay tax. This bill cruels all of that.

*(Time expired)*