




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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HOLIDAYS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.41 pm): It is not even Thursday and we have the union bashing going on. We are starting early for the last sitting week. I rise to speak proudly in support of the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I congratulate the Minister for Industrial Relations for bringing this bill forward. I am very proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government, which is introducing these changes. After listening to the contribution to this debate by the member for Maroochydore—

Mr Molhoek interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): Order! Member for Southport, if I have to say your name again you will be warned. Your repeated interjections are not being taken.

Mrs D'ATH: We talk about supporting small business. The best way to support small business is to make sure that workers are earning a decent income to have a disposable income to spend in our local shops, restaurants, cafes and everywhere else. Once again, as we saw in the Howard years, under the Morrison years we are seeing people carrying the highest level of personal debt. Wages are stagnant in this country. Members opposite talk about people tightening their belts and not spending money, which hurts our local communities and our local economies. We have to look at why they do not have a disposable income—because their wages are not growing. We are making sure that people are paid properly for the hours they work. If they are going to be expected to work Christmas Eve, they should be paid properly for it. We also believe that workers should be able to get time with their family. We are supportive of that and those members opposite should be as well.

We should stop—and when I say; 'we' I mean those on the other side should stop, because we are not doing it—constantly criticising unions for giving a voice to the voiceless, for giving a voice to those who have an imbalance of power in the workplace where the bosses call the shots and the workers do not have the ability to speak up individually and need to work collectively. That is what unions do. For those who argue about the relevance of unions and their membership numbers, let me say that, in terms of membership, their numbers are far healthier than the membership numbers of political parties in this country. If the members opposite think unions are not relevant, they should look at the membership number of their own party. The LNP is probably even less relevant.

I will back the unions any day. I acknowledge members of the SDA in the gallery who are witnessing this debate today. This bill is important. I acknowledge their campaign. We should be proud of the campaign that has been run to bring this bill before the parliament. That is what unions are about—representing workers and giving them a voice and ensuring that they get these improvements in their wages and conditions. That fight never stops, because we saw it with Work Choices. One hundred years of fighting for good wages and conditions can disappear overnight when you have a bad government. That government ripped those conditions away.

Right now we can see what is happening federally with the Morrison government's union-busting bill that it is trying to put in. The LNP constantly wants to undermine unions. Why? It wants to make sure that workers do not have a say so that wages and conditions can be driven down in this country.

What will that do? That will destroy the economy. The LNP wants everyone to be working poor, to not be able to pay the bills. We do not want the American system where people have two or three jobs and still rely on coupons and welfare just to make ends meet. We do not want to be like that. We are proud of our system in this country and this state and we want to hold on to it. If we want small business to flourish, we need to make sure that workers get fair wages and conditions. Then they can put their hand in their pocket so that they can take their family out, buy extra things, buy Christmas presents, give special treats to their family but, more importantly, just put basic food on the table, a roof over their head and pay their bills. They need good wages and conditions to do that.

For me, Christmas is a time for family. I am certain that all of us in this House value the rare opportunity Christmas allows us to be at home with our loved ones. Over recent years the vast increase in retail hours over the Christmas period has meant that workers have found this time increasingly demanding. The new part-day public holiday for Christmas Eve not only acknowledges the sacrifice being made by those working late on Christmas Eve but also that this time of year is a time for family and a time of celebration.

We should be encouraging families to be together. When we go out and see those workers working on Christmas Eve, we should say 'thank you' and acknowledge their contribution. It is the same situation for those who work on Saturdays and Sundays when we are taking our families out. The people who are serving us in the retail shops and everywhere else are giving up their time to wait on us, to look after us, to serve us. We should say 'thank you'. Some business operators keep the extra loading on weekends instead of paying that loading to their staff. When I see the sign, before I make any decisions about whether to purchase anything I ask the person serving, 'Are you getting paid extra for working today?' If they say 'no,' I walk away. I am not going to be charged an extra fee when that is not going to the workers. We should do more of that.

A number of amendments will be moved in consideration in detail outside the long title of the bill in relation to the Liquor Act 1992. These amendments will enhance the existing ID-scanning framework by providing flexibility on lower risk nights and facilitating a system for scanned persons to leave and re-enter venues without the need to be re-scanned. The relevant amendments were supported in principle in the Palaszczuk government's interim response to the independent evaluation into its tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy, which was tabled in parliament on 26 July 2019.

The independent evaluation found that ID scanning improved safety in safe night precincts. The report also stated that the ID-scanning scheme could be further refined by addressing unintended consequences being experienced by licensees. Amendments will be moved to provide that, between Monday and Thursday, licensees will not have to operate ID scanners if they close at or by 1 am. However, this will not apply on the eve of a public holiday, given the higher patronage and desirable risks associated with trading on those nights.

The QANTEM report also found that there were issues with scanning of patrons on both entry and re-entry, particularly in venues with external smoking or toilet facilities. The government interim response to the evaluation report acknowledged that all venues were affected by ID-scanning re-entry issues to some extent not just those with external facilities. The amendments will provide a re-entry pass system that will apply to all regulated premises for reasons of equity, practicality and consistency. A re-entry pass will only be issued to a patron who has already had their ID scanned upon entry to the venue. It will only apply in respect to the same venue during the same trading period. Particular criteria for the re-entry passes will also apply.

These changes are sensible, pragmatic amendments that maintain the effectiveness of the tackling alcohol fuelled violence policy measures and make it easier for licensees to run their business. The government has consulted extensively with relevant stakeholders and there is significant support for these amendments. I thank the minister for moving these amendments as part of the Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill so that we can ensure that these amendments take effect prior to the busy Christmas period. The minister has advocated strongly for improvements not only to make it easier for venue operators and patrons but also to keep our communities safe. The QANTEM report recommended these changes and we now have the right balance. I commend the bill and the amendments to the House.