

Investigation into Proposed Christmas Eve Part-Day Public Holiday 2019

Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Union Queensland Branch Submission

- 1. Do you think a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve (24 December) from 6pm to 12 midnight in Queensland is desirable?**

Yes- we have surveyed our members and overwhelmingly the majority of the respondents have said they are in favour of the introduction of Christmas Eve

- 2. What do you see would be the key benefits of a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve (24 December) from 6pm to 12 midnight? For workers? For employers? For government? For the community?**

The benefits are the improvements in mental health for those who wish to be with their families; economic benefits in the form of more people spending more money around Christmas; recognition of multicultural Qld where a large number of people have traditions that take place on Christmas Eve.

- 3. What costs do you see would be involved in a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve (24 December)? For workers? For employers? For government? For the community?**

We expect that it will pay for itself in the increase in spending and increase in happiness within the workforce.

- 4. Estimates of increased wages costs from observing a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve are based on a 2011 survey of workers employed on Christmas Day. That day is considered to be the public holiday with the most similarity to business and community social practices on Christmas Eve. Is there another public holiday that you consider has a greater similarity to Christmas Eve and should be used for estimating increased wages cost if a part-day public holiday is observed on that day? Does the evidence from the SA review suggest the actual costs could end up being much lower than these preliminary forecasts?**

Additionally

Our members in the transport industry have been asked to provide their thoughts on whether they support it. We received over 60 submissions, all of which were in favour of the additional public holiday. They said:

- I agree that Christmas Eve should be a Public Holiday. It would be good for me, because it would give the family and myself a chance to prepare the Christmas feasts and complete any last*

minute Christmas shopping. And if you don't get that option, you're at least paid extra to provide a service so that others may have the chance to do those things too. If we have to give up these things for others, we should be rewarded with a little bit extra. Businesses can afford to pay that little bit extra for an extra day for their staff, as Christmas Eve is one of the biggest shopping days of the year anyway. This won't upset the economy, and will provide much needed relief to shift workers around Christmas time.

- *Christmas Eve to be a Public Holiday is a good idea. For me spending time with my family during the Christmas holidays is very important. It starts with Christmas eve preparing last minute things with my 6 year old daughter. I work in a crazy roster with hardly any time to rest let alone spent time with my family. This holiday will be good reward for all hardworking workers out there.*
- *Christmas is a time for family. I have not spent a Christmas Eve with my family for the last seven years because I have worked driving a bus so others can go about getting ready for the festivities. I think anyone who works on Christmas Eve deserves to be paid extra.*
 - *Christmas Eve is the day we celebrate Xmas with my maternal family, Christmas Day with my husbands family and Boxing Day with my paternal family.*

We find it a lot less stressful to celebrate Xmas this way as opposed to trying to travel all over the place on the same day.
 - *Christmas Eve is a time to spend time with family and also go to the Christmas Eve Church service as a family.*
 - *I believe that the employee should get paid extra to work Christmas eve, I left QR for 2 years to run a small business it is a struggle in small business particularly in a start up business like to one I had, saying that this time of the year is a time where business is making a lot more sales which equates to more profit and it is only one day of the year, I don't think business are going to go broke because they have to pay their employees penalty rates for one day, I have had to put kids bikes, trampolines ect together in readiness for Christmas day after working a 4PM to midnight shift so the kids don't see them before that day, other people that don't have to work those hours on this day don't have that problem, so this is another reason people working Christmas Eve should be paid extra.*
 - *My wife is of German heritage, so Christmas Eve is celebrated exactly the same as Christmas Day. Also I have family interstate, so need to travel on Christmas Eve to be able to get to the destination for Christmas Day.*
 - *I would love it if Christmas Eve was a public holiday. Christmas is a special time to spend with family and is a significant part of the Australian tradition.*

As suggested it is one time of the year where family comes together to celebrate festivities. Time needed to travel to be with family and preparation for the following day is done on Christmas eve, as well as doing last minute wrapping for presents under the tree.

A public holiday would relieve the stress of time placed on individuals to the big event of Christmas day. Makes perfect sense to me and my family. After all, family always comes first.
 - *For decades, many Australians / Queenslanders in every Industry / Business have put the extra time in for their employers without receiving payment or time off in lieu.*

This is a way to give back to those employees who give their time (Without Complaint), when they could be with their loved ones, instead of staying back late or coming in early to assist their employer in achieving a positive outcome for their business / industry.
 - *It should be a public holiday because 90% of people are off already and workers who can't have the day off should be rewarded for not having the same opportunities.*
 - *Christmas eve is a chance for our two families to come together safely and avoid traveling on roads Christmas day morning. It also allows the children that special opportunity to wake up in the house all together on Christmas morning gather at the same time. And start the*

celebrations knowing that everyone is already there safe together, so in reality Christmas eve starts at the end of a normal 9 - 5 working day for the majority of Australian Christian families and as such any work performed after these hours should fall into the realm of working a public holiday.

- *Contrary to what business leaders have us believe, Christmas is traditionally about family and community, not about business.*

For most Europeans, Christmas Eve is the children's day of Christmas. So, for the children over there, the 24th of December is the actual Christmas Day, the Eve of which they get to unwrap their presents; the 25th is the adults' Christmas. After all, the Christ child Jesus was supposedly born on the 24th, not the 25th. And many European migrant families are keeping up that tradition for their children right here in Australia.

Christmas Eve being declared a public holiday, would make it much easier in the hectic lives of these parents to spend much needed quality family time with their beloved kids, as their parents did, and their parents before them. For these children it would be a very merry Christmas indeed.

But, of course, all Australians are to benefit from such a move, as an extra day of family gatherings promotes more good vibes in an otherwise increasingly bleaker world. We have to consider, Christmas is a time that people remember, reflect on and draw from the whole year through. In that sense, it would be actually beneficial for business to embrace the idea, as a content workforce ultimately is a healthier and more productive one.

- *That's a great idea!*
- *Fantastic if this could come through to fruition.*

- *Christmas time is as important as Easter, neither would happen without the other. After a long year to have some quiet time before the big day is beneficial & fruitful. To be able to calm down & prepare is a gift.*
- *I fully support this initiative, this "global 24/7" world created by these corporate criminals have all but decimated & destroyed any semblance of family life even in our so-called 1st world country. While they & their political stooges are kicking back on their yachts the real people keeping the system alive & moving are in robotic mode with no expectation from above how it effects the individual & their loved ones. No wonder there is record numbers of family break downs, divorces & suicides! This is not life or living, this is merely existence, keeping us alive to keep the wheels of the corporate world from not seeing their record profits & share prices fall. There is no reason to look forward to "the weekend" any more as this no longer exist.*

Yes I support this & any initiative which give the working person some support & to return some of our lives back to us.

- *Yes New Year public holidays would be great, for the reason you have already indicated, but what is the trade off for it.?*

Looking at this from both sides of the fence and not only from the transport industry/ retail too, are there penalty rates in this or trade off of time in lieu if you have to work it?

Be sure we know the full story behind this offer, and not just the glossy part of the picture.

- *What a great idea . It will give people more time to spend with family and friends and enjoy a special time of year*
- *I believe it's a good idea for people to get penalty rates for Christmas Eve particularly those in the hospitality industry Employers should be allowed to have a surcharge to cover the increase in wagers but it should only apply for those who's hours are after 6 pm I also think that a timetable for Christmas Day should start at 7 am & finish at 7 pm & run an hourly service this gives customers plenty of times to travel on the day as long as people know they can plan most city in the world do not even run a service on Christmas Day*

- *'Twould b grand. With our mob, Christmas Day Breakfast is the time our kids n their families come over to celebrate with us. Therefore the Day Prior would really come in handy to prepare the feast.*

Though we're all Aussies, some peeps like to bring their Old Country traditions hither n celebrate Christmas the way they did it in their previous life (am not big on holding onto the Old Ways, but where I come from, their Big Thing is on Christmas EVE; Lunch n then the Gifts!)

- *Fully agree with having Christmas eve as public holiday. This day is great day to spend some time with family where family time may have been short through the year.*
- *It's quite a simple decision, if your are giving up family time on one of the most important nights of year, a special night for young children, being prepared for Santa to drop presents overnight. Why should you not be rewarded for it if you have to work, or at least have the option to be at home. Christmas Eve has to be a public holiday!*
- *Yes more drinking time is always good*
- *I fully support the idea of commencing the public holiday period from 6pm on Christmas eve. I also think this should apply on New Years eve. There is an anomaly in our current EBA that has bus operators who are rostered to work shifts that commence on new years eve but conclude well into new years day paid only at rate of double time for the whole shift rather than public holiday rate of 2.5X.*
- *This applies only to permanent operators. Casuals are treated differently with hours worked after midnight paid at the public holiday rate. I believe the wording in the applicable clause mentions "Timetable Shifts" and in its original intent was to cater for the usual roster which sees the late shifts finish around 2500 hrs (1am)*
- *They create special New Years Eve "Timetable" shifts that sign on before midnight and run through till around 5am. Runprint says sign off time is 29.00. I fail to see how this qualifies as timetable work since the trips do not appear in any published timetable. These shifts also do not qualify for nightlink allowance nor is any security provided. If the Government are serious about commencing public holiday on Christmas Eve then the same arguments apply to New Years eve as well.*
- *Christmas Eve is a family tradition.*

As my family tree goes back to Europe, we celebrate on Christmas Eve with a family reunion and a feast followed by the giving of gifts.

On a personal level, I have found it hard to be with family on this important day as I am usually rostered to work, and find it difficult to have a leave day approved.

Now that my mum is at an age where each year is a bonus, I would love to be with her as I never know if this is her last.

- *Church mass.*
- *Working in the tourism industry means I don't necessarily get public holidays off. The only real day that we don't work is Christmas day. So whether they make it a public holiday or not will not impact me as I will most likely have to work anyway.*
- *I believe it's essential for families to be together to celebrate Christmas Day. And equally just as important as being together Christmas Eve.*

Having Christmas Eve as a public holiday would benefit families to organise for Xmas day. And give families times to travel and prepare.

Thus giving families time to relax and unwind before the big day.

- *I definitely do support the plan to introduce Christmas Eve as a public holiday. The reason for this is that my wife is of European background and they traditionally celebrate their Christmas on Christmas Eve. This would enable us to get together with her side of the family on Christmas Eve and allow us time to celebrate Christmas Day with my side of the family. This has always been a juggling act for both sides of the family and quite often has meant missing valued time with one or the other family.*

- *I came from a background that Christmas Eve is so important that we spend more time on it compare Christmas day itself. We have a culture that we attend and hear the holy mass on the 24th of December at 11:00pm in preparations of our Saviour birth. Then midnight meal with the whole family til maybe early dawn. Hoping that our culture can also be recognised through this simple gratitude of making it a Public Holiday on Christmas eve.*
- *I would vote for this. It's a fantastic idea.*
- *We have seen drastic changes in the last 30 years. The cost of living has increased and other added financial pressures now plague our society. In order to bare these burdens we as a society now heavily rely on 2 incomes, that being male and female. No longer do we have stay at home mum's who sole responsibility was to care for and keep the family a sturdy unit, they have joined the working ranks and thus time is taken away that was once dedicated to family. We as a society are also time poor, the need for working over time too apparent to help ease our finance pressures and the anxiety we feel from those pressures. Christmas Eve may not have been a largely celebrated day before but with all these added pressures in today society, it has certainly become one.*

The need for Christmas Eve to be a public holiday has never been more relevant or important or as needed as it is today,

it's a time of celebration and of coming together and for reconnecting.

Along with all of this we have a staggering amount of split family's, combined family's and valued friendships. It has become increasingly impossible to share the holidays with them all over two days. Stretching ourselves thin and no doubt causing serious fatigue and contributing to accidents and road tolls.

- *Yes ! No objections, so long as it's not going 2 be substituted 4 Boxing Day & will be an additional holiday.*
- *I vote Christmas eve to be a public holiday.*
- *Definitely support the introduction of Xmas Eve being a public holiday, people working within the service industry across the board sacrifice time with their loved ones at Xmas, I believe Xmas Eve, personally, is more a time when families should be together than say Boxing Day. Making Xmas Eve a public holiday should be no brainer.*
- *Christmas Eve to me is spent with my wife and daughter, we watch a Christmas movie together and we bake cookies for Santa. Then when my daughter goes to bed, we prepare for Santa's visit and ensure Christmas Day is ready to give my daughter plenty of surprises. This is what it means to me. I'm 100% for it to be a holiday from 6pm onwards which is still an adequate time for businesses and people to get there last Minute plans/shops done .*
- *In regards to Christmas Eve becoming a public holiday I totally agree that it should. Like many we have a split family and have Christmas on both days which we work around my shifts and both families. It's a hard juggle and I've had 1 Christmas Day off in my 11yrs with Queensland rail.*

I've always been happy to help the company every year as it's a tough time for a lot of families and possible crew shortages with work. I mainly work afternoon shifts as it's easier for us to do Xmas of a morning and I can still help out at work afterwards.

As any other public holiday why shouldn't we be compensated for sacrificing that time

- *I think it should be a public holiday.*
As a shift worker every year family and friends have get togethers which often only takes place once or twice a year.
I rarely have the opportunity to attend due to work commitments.
- *Sounds good*
- *I think it's a brilliant idea and a family oriented assets could give work groups a day to celebrate Christmas which would be good for unity and mate ship in the work force*

- *I think it is a great idea because in this business some families miss out on being with their children as we must work. I feel that people with young children have missed out on spending time with them on this day as sometimes this is the only time, they spend with them. As we run 365 days of the year some of us also miss out on spending time with our families on Christmas day as well. For us to be compensated for this precious time away from families is the right thing to do.*
- *This would then come in line with other states in Australia. It is also a very busy time for parents and if they need to work in any industry they should be rewarded with public holiday rates. I would totally support this.*
- *Christmas Eve is a time to spend time with family and also go to the Christmas Eve Church service as a family.*
- *100%. This will enable families and young families like myself to spend more quality with my young children and partner.*

This is a fantastic idea.

- *I do believe that it should be a public holiday as it is my family's tradition to have our Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve, so that on Christmas day everyone has the day off and we eat leftovers on Christmas day. Also, it is difficult to travel to spend Christmas day with family if you are working the night before. Perhaps it could even be a holiday from lunchtime onwards if that is more feasible?*
- *As Christmas is a religious time for me I find it very important to be able to attend Christmas Eve & Day church services and a like. As I am a casual I need to accept any and every shift offered to me or the likelihood of getting work is much lower. I believe Christmas eve public holiday is an excellent idea as those like me who would prefer not to work then can leave the shift to those willing to do the shift for some extra penalty rates that otherwise would just prefer not to work!*
- *Why is Christmas Eve so important as a family man....?*

As a separated father with 2 young children, the time over Christmas is usually shared with my children's mother, both celebrating Christmas with our children usually on two differing days.

Often it is the case that Christmas Eve is the preferred option for celebrating Christmas when my children are with their Mother for the actual day of Christmas (25 December) and Visa Versa.

This time with my children, or their mothers time with them is valuable time that would otherwise be lost into 'just another day'

- *I just want to give my thoughts.*

I have worked for QR for 23 years.

My job involves always being home Christmas Day, however at times, I have not made it home for Christmas Eve, or have left for work Christmas Day, due to a shiftworker roster.

We were always to be home Christmas Day, and now we are home part of the day.

I wish to spend Christmas Eve with my family as many others do. I do shift work to pay the bills but give up many events, weddings, parties, funerals to work shift work away on long distance trains.

- *Christmas is an important part of my life as I have 2 children under 6. With my roster I do 12hr shifts and when I work day shift my kids are asleep by the time I get home. I Work a rotating roster 6 to 6 around the clock 24/7. There is 1 part of my roster where I work 3 day shifts*

straight and I don't get to see me kids at all for 3 days. If Christmas falls in this part of my roster am I supposed to celebrate Christmas with my family 3 days later??? Higher management and non shift workers ALWAYS have this time off to spend with their families is it only right that i get compensated for working when everyone else is enjoying and creating memories with their families. All the money in the world still won't give me the time back I spend away from my family but it will compensate in some way.

- I try to have that night with my family going to mass, but most of the time I work till about 2300 hrs that night. Thus it is impossible to gather with my family over this special time.
- I am of Eastern European descent and together with Scandinavians celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve, as this is the day that Christ was born, and we have for generations always celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve.

This means I always have to try to get annual leave on that day to keep the tradition alive.

It would be fantastic if the Qld Government introduces this as a public holiday.

- My family has German heritage and we follow the German customs of Christmas, which means... it all happens on Christmas Eve!! We have a family dinner, the dishes are done and then we go for a walk while "Santa" comes. When the cow bell rings its present time!! That's right... on Christmas Eve!!
- Christmas Eve has always been an excellent time in my family's life to be able to catch up with each other every year. As we have moved away from the family home we have always nominated Christmas Eve as the preferred 'catch-up' date each year. What a wonderful innovation to make Christmas Eve a public holiday.
- I was lucky growing up in a time where family gatherings of a Sunday were the norm, no shops open and even the petrol stations were coin operated on a Sunday, one wage earner could support a family of six, watching my father play football and then cricket in the off season , braised steak and onion jaffles and spud Murphy's with the family after we got home from those games will stay in my memories for ever, the laughs and love that filled the house with warmth.

In today's world of 24/7 everything ,we often find ourselves at a gathering with so many people missing due to commitments to work , both of my children working weekends in the hospitality industry which rarely sees them at gatherings, my wife works 5 days a week and myself a lot of the times working 6 , it's fair to say that we have supported our family well with home cooking a good education and warm clothing but it's been a lot of work and not much play. So to have a day at an important time of Christmas to prepare food, travel to the relatives place, we have a gathering each year at somebody's house in the extended family would be great, and hopefully the powers that be can see the importance of family gatherings to us all as a nation. Thanks for this opportunity to express my views

- Christmas eve is a last chance time for final preparation for the most important day of the year for the majority of us. I believe that the government should mandate only VOLUNTARY staff on Christmas day as such a timetable with HOURLY SERVICES at MOST should be implemented for rail services. Penalty rates incentive and compensation both days yes.
- I'm a dual citizen, Australian, and German background. In Europe, the 24th of December for Christmas is far more important than the 25th. Family celebrations for my family, and Europeans, actually occur on the 24th, Christmas eve. At night.
- The main family time is the night of the 24th, and in the afternoon you cooking prepare for the night feast.
- I'm a dual citizen, Australian, and German background. In Europe, the 24th of Christmas is far more important than the 25th. Family celebrations for my family, and Europeans, occur on the 24th.

The main family time is the night of the 24th, and in the afternoon you cooking prepare for the day, to celebrate your special time at night, celebrating "Christmas eve".

The 25th is just a left over day, yes the children and we do open presents in the morning, and relax and as in an afterwards recovery, relaxed day.

I never want to work on the 24th night, it is more important than 25 December to our family, and to Germans.

This is a multicultural country, and this is how we celebrate our Christmas.

Thank you.

RTBU QId