

**To:** Publichol <publichol@oir.qld.gov.au>

**Subject:** LGAQ Submission on proposed public holiday on evening of Christmas Eve

I refer to the call for submissions following the release of the Office of Industrial Relations Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement to consider the benefits and costs of the part-date public holiday proposal for Christmas Eve (24 December) between the hours of 6pm to midnight.

A survey of councils confirmed that while larger councils and councils with high tourism density may need to roster staff to ensure continuity of services in public facilities, the effect on most councils will be where staff rostered on call for emergency purposes are required to work. The vast majority of the 40,000+ local government workforce do not work those times, with councils commencing a compulsory close down from close of business (circa 5pm) on Christmas eve.

Accordingly, the LGAQ concurs with the Impact Statement in that the overall additional cost to local government will not be overly exorbitant on its own. However, it will pose an additional cost to some councils and must be assessed in the context of the cumulative effect of a number of additional costs for councils in any year. While the nature of the additional costs might vary between councils, all councils are subjected to unforeseen cost increases relating to service provision, general labour market pressures and infrastructure construction and maintenance costs. This places pressure on council's budgets and invariably need to be passed onto rate payers.

It is against these additional costs to council that the benefits of the proposed gazetting of an additional public holiday must be considered. At this time, the LGAQ does not believe that a sufficient case to support the proposal has been made. The vast majority of state and local government personnel are already not scheduled to work during that time. Where people are rostered such as hospitals, police, emergency call-out etc, that complement of personnel needs to be maintained, given the nature of the service they provide. Those staff would be eligible for appropriate existing penalty rates.

This would undermine any suggestion the proposal will increase family time opportunity for personnel whom already have Christmas day and Boxing Day to celebrate with family and friends. Accordingly, it seems prima facie that this proposal is fundamentally an exercise to increase penalty rates for those people required to work on Christmas Eve which is not , and never has been to our mind, acknowledged as a special time on the calendar.

Further, a number of councils have expressed concern on the likely impact on small businesses in their communities who might opt not to open due to the additional costs of the higher penalty rates. This would have implications for community members denied access to the services, owners of the business as well as the staff who would be denied the opportunity to work the evening shift with the penalties that are already available. Some member councils also expressed concern that increasing the wages of people already in receipt of penalty rates at a time when other members of the community are struggling financially (homeless, unemployed etc) may not be received well by the community.

In summary then, the LGAQ submits that the case for the granting of an additional part-date public holiday has not yet been made.



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