



Christmas Eve Part-Day Public Holiday Becomes a Reality

The Palaszczuk Government has passed legislation to establish a part-day public holiday on Christmas Eve, starting this year.

The *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019* was passed by the Queensland Parliament today, making amendments to legislation for a part-day public holiday for six hours from 6pm on Christmas Eve.

Industrial Relations Minister Grace Grace said the night before Christmas is an important one for families.

“It’s a very special time for family and friends as well as communities and churches to come together,” she said.

“Many Queenslanders do have to work Christmas Eve and the change will ensure proper compensation for them.”

Ms Grace said the proposal attracted strong community support during public consultation.

“Of the almost 1800 submissions we received, 71 per cent were in favour of creating the public holiday,” she said.

“The feedback was overwhelming with submissions from bus drivers, mothers and religious leaders.”

Retail worker Cassandra Leigh said she supported the change wholeheartedly

“As someone who has worked in the retail industry for 10 plus years and was often give no choice but to work until sometime midnight on Christmas Eve to set up for Boxing Day sales, this is a great and necessary move for workers’ rights.

“Thank you for putting forward the proposal.”

Minister Grace said there were a number of people like Cassandra who made submissions during the committee process.

“Many workers told of the ever-growing importance of Christmas Eve as a special time for family and friends,” she said.

“They told us it was a time to come together and celebrate the season and they should be properly compensated those who were required to work.

“The Palaszczuk Government strongly agrees with them.

“Christmas Eve should be spent with loved ones, but if you have to work there should be appropriate pay.

“Making it a public holiday gives those who have to work, like essential services personnel, retail staff and shop employees, better pay for having to give up that family time.”

The Education, Employment and Small Business Committee considered and conducted additional consultation on the *Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* and made only one recommendation—that the Bill be passed.

Queensland is the third Australian jurisdiction to implement a Christmas Eve part day public holiday, following similar moves by South Australia and the Northern Territory.