

LEGISLATION UPDATE - LABOUR DAY

Sunday 5th May 2013!

As per my previous advice (*Code 2 Vol 26 Number 71 24/10/12*), the current state government has, without any consultation, introduced legislation to shift Labour Day from May to October 2013 (and to return the Queen's Birthday from October to June 2014).

The government's move has been described in some quarters as being spiteful.

Members will recall that in late 2011 the former state government, after public consultation, altered the date of the Queen's birthday from June until October. A state government survey recorded an 85% support for the change.

The Queen's birthday originated in England in 1912 to observe King George Vth's birthday of 3rd June. The current Queen's actual birthday is 21st April.

Labour Day is Queensland's oldest surviving public holiday, originating in 1891 and being continuously legally recognised since 1901. Every state government of all political persuasions has continued to recognise the May Labour Day since then.

The current government's legislation was referred to the legal affairs parliamentary committee for consideration prior to being enacted as law.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the change be deferred until 2014, to allow for planned 2013 events to go ahead without disruption. The government did not accept the recommendation, so the government legislated "Labour Day" public holiday will occur in October instead of May.

The parliamentary committee report can be found at this link:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/committees/LACSC/2012/HOLAB/rpt-009-6Sep2012.pdf>

The Hansard transcript of the parliament on 30/10/12 pages 2189-2214; and pages 2224-2228 records some of the debate about the bill if you are interested to read it.

http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/2012/2012_10_30_WEEKLY.pdf

As I have stated previously I am very disappointed that the government would attack the day where workers of all types have celebrated their achievements and struggles for over 110 years.

The Attorney General, Mr Bleijie, stated in parliament on 30th October 2012:

“I’m giving them October to march and they will get paid in October to march and they will march in October”.

The state government has a majority vote in parliament, but it does not have the right to take away our day, it is not their day to give or take. Labour Day belongs to all Queensland workers and not to any government. The Attorney General will not dictate to firefighters when we can and cannot march.

I can report that your union, will join with other Queensland unions on Sunday 5th May 2013 to continue our traditional celebration.

It will be more important than ever for us to join together and celebrate how far our collective efforts have brought us over the last 110 years and how far it will take us into the future. A strong turn out will be required to demonstrate our current strength in the face of increasing adversity.

I want next year to be the biggest and best turn out of firefighters and our supporters at a Labour Day march and party in the history of Queensland!

Mark your diaries now for Sunday 5th May 2013!!

John Oliver
State Secretary