

Getting the balance right:
**A proposal on holidays
in Queensland**

Getting the balance right: A proposal on holidays in Queensland

Holidays observe important public occasions like Anzac Day and Australia Day but they also give workers and families a chance to rest and have fun together. They let us all balance our work and family life better.

When the government chooses holidays it needs to consider what best suits community, family and industry needs, as well as what happens in other states.

This is why the Queensland Government has decided to review the spread and allocation of public holidays in Queensland, as well as the arrangements for student free days in state schools.

The review will be conducted by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Education and Training.

The purpose of this consultation paper is to provide an opportunity for Queenslanders to provide input into the review.

The government is seeking feedback on three proposals relating to holidays in Queensland:

- spreading public holidays across the year
- allocating an extra public holiday when Christmas Day, Boxing Day, or New Year's Day fall on a weekend
- expanding state school Easter holidays to two weeks.

Have your say

We are interested in feedback from all Queenslanders, and especially from parents and teachers on the proposal to change the Easter state school holidays.

You are invited to have your say on these proposals by:

- completing and returning the questionnaire attached to this document or
- completing the online survey: www.qld.gov.au/holidayproposal

Please submit your completed survey by 31 October 2011

By post to:

Getting the balance right: A proposal on holidays in Queensland
Government Liaison and Projects
PO Box 15033
Brisbane City East 4002

Or by fax to:

(07) 3237 0102

Or online at:

www.qld.gov.au/holidayproposal

Do you have any questions?

Contact us on: enquiries.schooloperations@deta.qld.gov.au

State school holidays

What is proposed?

It is proposed to extend the Easter state school holidays from six weekdays to two weeks, starting in 2012. This will bring Queensland into line with New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, and make state school holidays more consistent with many non-state schools in Queensland.

It will mean that student free days currently at the start of terms 2 and 3 and linked to the relevant Show holiday, will be shifted to the Easter school holiday break. By grouping these three student free days together at Easter, students and teachers will gain only one additional day of holidays to make up the full two-week break.

The student free day allocated on the third Monday of Term 4 will remain and continue to be used for statewide moderation of student work.

Proposed 2012 school holiday and student free day placement

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 15 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
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SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
S M T W T F S 30 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	S M T W T F S 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

- School holidays
- Public holidays
- Student free day
- Flexible student free day
- Queen's birthday holiday date under review

Why change the school holidays?

Term 1 usually finishes at Easter. This often means that the first term is longer than the other three school terms.

Many children, especially in the early years, find Term 1 too long and tiring.

- By extending the Easter holidays from six weekdays to two weeks, and adding the days before or after Easter depending when Easter falls, the duration of the four school terms will each be closer to 10 weeks.

Many parents do not like the student free days scattered throughout the year, especially at the start of the academic terms – they find this disruptive.

- By moving the student free days from the beginning of the school term to Easter we can send a clear message to students, families and schools that the academic term is starting in earnest.

Families and employers may also benefit from an extended holiday at Easter instead of single student free days throughout the year.

- This may help parents plan for childcare or holiday arrangements.
- Opportunities for families to take a holiday within a two-week Easter break may make it easier to access accommodation across this season.

We recognise that some families may experience difficulty in obtaining childcare arrangements.

There may also be other members of the community impacted such as education-related businesses, holiday and after school hours care operators and bus operators.

What does this mean for non-state schools?

This proposal does not affect non-state schools, which set their own holidays. Many currently provide a two-week holiday over Easter, so families with students in both state and non-state schools may find the proposal helps to better align their Easter holidays.

What does this mean for our state school teachers?

The Queensland Government recognises that teachers take responsibility for a great proportion of their own professional development. This includes university study, professional development workshops after hours, study tours and other activities to build professional capacity.

But there is also a need to provide professional development through student free days and under these proposals there will still be six student free days per year.

These days may be organised by schools and attended by teachers during any student school holiday period or at other times outside school hours. This can be a local decision at the school level. Because these student free days will be taken in school holidays, families won't be affected.

How will student free days change?

NOW <i>Teachers now work on these student free days</i>	PROPOSED	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
The two days before the start of Term 1	No change	Teachers start Term 1 two days before students return to school.
The first day of Term 2 The first day of Term 3 One local day, usually next to Show holiday	Teachers will now work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• each of the last days of the Easter, Spring and Winter student holiday periods; or• three days as decided at the local level, in consultation with the school community.	Students have two weeks holiday at Easter, instead of student free days in terms 2 and 3 and the student free day next to the local show. Because teachers will undertake the three student free days while students are on holidays, these days will not affect families.
The third Monday in Term 4	No change	Students do not attend school on this day. Teachers use this day for statewide moderation of student work.

Teachers are encouraged to provide feedback on these proposed changes.

What do you think?

Do you agree with the reallocation of the student free days?

Yes No

If yes, what are your reasons for supporting this change? (You may tick more than one box)

- The extended Easter holidays would be a welcome break for students.
- The extended Easter holidays would provide a chance for my family to plan a holiday.
- I prefer a continuous block of holidays in Easter to “one-off” student free days throughout the year.
- Childcare is easier to organise for a block period of time rather than “one-off” student free days.
- This arrangement will provide benefits for my business.

Other reasons

You may wish to state other reasons for *supporting* this proposed change.

If no, what are your reasons for not supporting this change? (You may tick more than one box)

- I don't agree with the allocation of an extra holiday for students
- I don't agree with the allocation of an extra holiday for teachers
- I would find it difficult to organise childcare for an extra four days after or before Easter
- I am happy with the current organisation of student free days
- This arrangement will have an adverse impact on my business

Other reasons

You may wish to state other reasons for *not supporting* this proposed change.

Public holidays

The majority of Queensland's public holidays currently fall within the first half of the year with a particular concentration from March to June. There are no statewide public holidays between mid-June and late December and Queensland is the only state in Australia where this is the case.

While the Queensland Government is responsible for setting the dates for all statewide public holidays, there are only two – Labour Day and the Queen's birthday – which we think have the potential to be changed because the others are based around annual holidays such as Easter, Christmas and New Year's Day.

Labour Day has special significance for Queensland because of its links to events in the labour movement of the late nineteenth century. One of the first Labour Day processions in the world was in Barcaldine on 1 May 1891 and the public holiday has been celebrated in Queensland on the first Monday in May since 1901. Labour Day is celebrated by workers across the state and May 1 is deeply ingrained in Queensland's history as a day to recognise workers' rights.

In contrast the Queen's birthday public holiday originated in 1912 to observe the birthday of King George V on 3 June. Over the years Queensland, along with most other states, has continued to observe the Queen's birthday in June even though the actual birthday of Queen Elizabeth II is 21 April. In Western Australia the Queen's birthday public holiday is held in either September or October. The Queen's birthday is observed as a mark of respect to the sovereign but is not widely celebrated in community events like other public holidays.

For these reasons, it is likely that the Queen's birthday holiday would be relocated with less disruption to current community events and celebrations than would be the case with a relocation of the Labour Day public holiday.

What is proposed?

It is proposed to move the Queen's birthday public holiday in Queensland to the second half of the year from 2012, ideally to September or October. In order to avoid the September school holidays, a day in October would seem the best option.

Why change the Queen's birthday holiday?

The advantages of observing a public holiday in the second half of the year include:

- It will spread the celebration of public holidays throughout the year instead of the current concentration of public holidays between March and June. This would give some additional respite and rest to workers during the second half of the year.
- It would lessen the disruptions to production and services for business and industry resulting from the concentration of public holidays/long weekends often falling in quick succession in the first half of the year.

What do you think?

Do you agree with moving the Queen’s birthday public holiday from June to the second half of the year?

Yes No

If yes, do you agree to move the Queen’s birthday public holiday to a Monday in October each year?

Yes No *If no, when would you prefer?*

Weekend public holidays

Some holidays may fall on a weekend. Under the Queensland *Holidays Act 1983*, when this situation occurs, the Queensland Government can move the public holiday to the following week – usually on the following Monday.

When this happens, the original date on the weekend ceases to be a public holiday.

On public holidays workers are entitled to either a paid day off or, if they work, they receive penalty rates as prescribed by the relevant award or agreement. In instances where a substitute holiday is declared on the following Monday, people who are rostered to work on the date of the original holiday are not paid penalty rates, while those who work on the Monday are.

What is proposed?

It is proposed that when Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year’s Day fall on a weekend, a public holiday is declared for both the actual date of the holiday as well as an additional public holiday in the following week.

This would bring Queensland’s legislation in line with other states. Allowing for an additional public holiday when the actual date of the holiday falls on the weekend is part of the public holiday legislation in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Why change?

The major reason for consideration of the appointment of additional public holidays is to maintain consistent treatment and entitlements for the greatest number of Queensland workers.

This new system would mean that workers who work Monday to Friday and those who work weekends have equal access to the public holiday and the public holiday penalty payments.

Such arrangements may lead to increased labour costs for businesses that operate over seven days due to the payment of penalty rates for work performed on both the actual weekend public holiday and the additional weekday public holiday. We are seeking the views of both employers and employees in this consultation process.

EXAMPLE

	NOW	PROPOSED
Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. The public holiday will be on the following Monday.		
Worker One Works on Sunday 25 December (Christmas Day).	Will not receive public holiday penalty rates for Sunday 25 December. Will have the public holiday on Monday or if rostered to work on Monday will receive public holiday penalty rates.	Will receive public holiday penalty rates for work on 25 December. Will have the public holiday on Monday or if rostered to work on Monday will receive public holiday penalty rates.
Worker Two Works from Monday – Friday with no weekend rosters	Will receive the public holiday on full pay for the Monday.	No difference to current arrangements – will receive the public holiday on full pay for the Monday.

Alternative proposal

Alternatively if no additional public holidays are appointed, it is proposed that all arrangements for appointing substitute days for Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day, when they fall on a weekend, should be automatic and formalised in the Act, enabling an automatic substitute public holiday in the following week.

What do you think?

Do you agree with the proposal that, when Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day fall on a weekend, a public holiday is declared for both the actual date of the holiday and for an additional public holiday in the following week?

Yes No

If no, do you agree that when Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day, fall on a weekend, the substitution arrangement for the public holiday in the following week be made automatically?

Yes No

Do you wish to make any other comments?

About you

Which category best describes you? (Please tick all boxes that apply to you)

Employer

- Small business
- Medium business
- Large business

Employee

- Small business
- Medium business
- Large business

Parent/caregiver

- Early childhood aged child(ren)
- Primary school aged child(ren)
- Secondary school aged child(ren)

Educator

- Early childhood educator
- Primary school teacher
- Secondary school teacher
- Academic

Student

- Primary school
 - Secondary school
 - Other
 - Community member
 - Other (please specify):
-

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