

**Legislative Council
Hansard
Tuesday 18 August 2026**

[excerpt...]

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

STATUTORY HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 14)

Second Reading

[9.58 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - It's a real pleasure to stand in support of this bill, and congratulations to the Labor Party for bringing it forward to this Chamber, putting the work in and consulting and walking us through it, providing briefings as required. I think that's a great effort and well done to you. Also, congratulations to the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association (SDA), United Workers Union (UWU) and the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) as the unions who were working alongside the Labor Party to advocate for this bill and these changes, particularly for the members of those unions who have done that in a really active, personal way, including coming to speak with us here in briefings. It's no small thing to do that. It's out of the ordinary, and no doubt was an interesting new challenge, so well done for all the individuals who did that and were prepared to generously give their time to assist us in understanding the full impact of the bill.

I don't really need to speak too long on this bill; I just want to make a few clear points. I think others have made very comprehensive and very articulate contributions on the bill, which I concur with absolutely. Key things are this: this is a fair way to treat Tasmanian workers, to bring us into line with other states and to have Easter Sunday, a special day, recognised as a public holiday, as it should be. Tasmanian workers deserve to be treated fairly in this way. In particular, we're talking, in many instances, about workers who would be at the vulnerable end of the scale for workers. People who are in potentially low-paid jobs in industries like hospitality and the like, but also workers who are essential workers in our community who we have great appreciation for in terms of being prepared to work to make sure we've got key services delivered and available on days like Easter Sunday. Those workers deserve to be treated equally and fairly as well as others around the country.

I think, in terms of impact, we can look to other states who all have this in place already, and learn from there that the sky is not going to fall in. Having said that, I absolutely acknowledge that we have heard from a range of industries where there will be an impact. The sky not falling in is certainly not a risk, but it will impact certain particular businesses, and I'm not dismissing that from the equation. It's just that we always have to take these things in a broad perspective and in balance and figure out on balance and on fairness where we think the best course lies. In this, when we think of it generally and broadly, the cost is modest for business and in various sectors. When you think about, yes, it will cost more to open on Easter Sunday for businesses that will be paying workers for that day, in the context of a whole year, it's a fairly small increment.

I appreciate the modelling and the bits of maths, even here on the Floor, bits of maths

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being thrown around about it. I don't need to do the maths down to the last cent to appreciate that all businesses are going to have busier days and less busy days. They're going to have costs higher on some days and lower on others. and smoothing those things out across the course of the year is something that's a challenge that all businesses have to face and grapple with and figure out what works best for them. There are of course some adjustments that can be made in some instances for businesses to help offset the direct impact here.

In terms of an economic impact broadly for the state, I take members' points that we don't necessarily fully understand, particularly the regional impact of this around the state that will remain to be seen. I don't think it's an argument to stand against the bill. I think it's one for us to be particularly mindful of seeking to find out more about once the bill comes into play. I do think there are so many opportunities to creating an Easter Sunday public holiday and having more time available potentially for Tasmanians to actually be out in the regions and exploring the regions with their family as a holiday period, as it is extended across that whole weekend.

I really appreciated hearing from a range of Tasmanians on this bill from all sides of it. I know that there will be people who are disappointed if we pass this bill tonight and will find it a challenge and more difficult. I'm sorry we weren't able to deliver on what you were hoping, but for the thousands and thousands and thousands of Tasmanian workers who will benefit from this, be better supported by this and, importantly, be treated more fairly by this bill passing here today, I really welcome this change as an opportunity going forward for those workers and for our state as a whole.

That's really, in a nutshell, my thoughts on the core components of this. I really do thank the Labor Party for bringing it forward. Look what you can do, Mr President, even if you don't happen to be in government. It's positive to see the Labor Party step up and do something very positive for Tasmanian workers and for our state.