

To: <Review@oir.commerce.nsw.gov.au>
Date: 31/08/2009 1:15 pm
Subject: Public Holidays

I have always thought it strange that in a multi-cultural country such as Australia, so many of our public holidays are linked to Christian festivals. Why, when so many of us are either non-religious or religious but non-christian, do we all require Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Sunday etc off work? Perhaps you could look at the example of other countries such as Singapore - where a couple of days (in our instance it could be Christmas Day which has become a non-religious festival in any instance, Anzac Day & Australia Day) which are national holidays, with, for example, 3 other paid days of leave to be nominated by the employee (who may choose to celebrate ramadan or ones birthday rather than easter) and / or negotiated with the employer.

With regards to additional days etc: I think when the public holiday is a date, it should be ONLY this date that is a public holiday, regardless of what day of the week it falls. Our business was severely affected this year, being forced to close Easter Saturday & Anzac Day Saturday. Given that Saturday is half of our weekly revenue, it was very unfortunate for us and really affected our bottom line. HOWEVER, I fully accept that once in every few years this is going to happen. If public holidays are about everyone in the community being able to celebrate particular occasions, it should only be an added bonus when that day falls on a work day resulting in additional paid leave. Employees who work Mon-Fri will benefit in most years, but not in the years that the public holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

Thank you
Nicola Sheppard