

DRAFT – check Hansard for delivery

Honourable Speaker, I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

The *Statutory Holidays Amendment Bill 2026* will recognise Easter Sunday as a public holiday in Tasmania, as it already is in every other Australian state.

This Bill is about fairness. It makes a simple, overdue change that will make a real difference in the lives of working Tasmanians.

At the moment, Easter Sunday is not recognised as a public holiday in Tasmania.

That means Tasmanian workers are treated differently – and worse – than workers doing the same job on the same day anywhere else in the country.

If this Bill passes, Tasmanian workers who would ordinarily work on Easter Sunday will be entitled to a paid day off. Those who do work will be entitled to public holiday penalty rates, in line with their award or agreement, and will have stronger rights to refuse unreasonable requests to work.

That is not radical.

That is not complicated.

That is simply fair.

This Bill fixes a clear gap in the law with a simple change.

Honourable Speaker,

I want to begin by acknowledging the thousands of Tasmanians who worked over the Easter long weekend.

These are people who give up time with their families so others can enjoy the break.

They are in hospitals and care homes, looking after our family members who need it.

They are in retail and hospitality, helping the rest of us enjoy our break.

They are in emergency services, keeping us safe.

They are in transport, logistics and industry, keeping Tasmania moving.

OFFICIAL

They are all around Tasmania – in every town – and we rely on them.

For many of them, going to work is not a choice. They are working because they need the shift and they need the income.

They are trying to stay ahead of the bills at a time when cost of living pressures continue to rise.

And the people working on Easter Sunday are often those with the least power at work.

Casual workers.

Shift workers.

Lower and middle-income workers.

Young Tasmanians.

This Bill is about them.

It is about making sure that if you give up a significant day with your family, you are recognised fairly – and paid fairly.

Right now, the system does not make sense.

If you work on Good Friday, you are paid public holiday rates.

If you work on Easter Monday, you are paid public holiday rates.

But if you work on Easter Sunday – in many ways the most significant day of the period – you are treated as if it is just another ordinary Sunday.

That does not make sense.

And Tasmanians know it does not make sense.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Speaker,

Easter Sunday matters.

For many Tasmanians, it is the most important day in the Christian calendar – a day of hope, renewal and new beginnings.

Churches across Tasmania will see some of their largest congregations of the year. Families attend together, often across generations. For some, it is one of the few services they attend each year, and they choose that one because it matters more than every other week.

But its importance goes beyond religion.

It is also about family.

It is about community.

Easter Sunday sits at the centre of the only consistent four-day weekend in our calendar. Families plan around it. Communities plan around it. Businesses operate differently because of it.

It is one of the few times of the year when there is a shared pause in community life.

Families gather and share meals.

Children wake up excited to see what the Easter Bunny has left for them.

Communities come together for events, markets, sport and celebrations.

It is clearly not an ordinary Sunday.

So the question is simple:

If Easter Sunday matters in practice, why does the law not reflect that?

Why should workers who give up that day be treated as if it is just another Sunday?

Why should Tasmania remain out of step with the rest of the country?

This Bill does not create something new.

Easter already exists.

Tasmanians already treat it as a distinct period.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

This Bill simply brings the law into line with that reality.

New South Wales did this in 2010.

Queensland in 2012.

Victoria in 2015.

Western Australia in 2021.

Tasmania is the last state to catch up.

Speaker,

This is not a large or complex reform. It applies to one day that is already recognised across the country and already treated differently by the community.

Tasmanian businesses and workplaces are not being asked to do something new – only something consistent.

In some workplaces, Easter Sunday is already recognised through agreements between employers and employees.

This Bill provides a clear and consistent framework across the state.

It is a modest, practical reform that reflects how Tasmanians live.

It supports workers.

It provides clarity.

And it brings Tasmania into line with the rest of Australia.

I commend the Bill to the House.

OFFICIAL