

Public Holiday Review

CONSULTATION PAPER

Version 1.0 | July 2025

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Introduction

This paper seeks feedback on potential changes to Western Australia's (WA) public holiday schedule to better align with the rest of the country, support economic activity and productivity, while also celebrating Western Australia's spirit, diverse culture and achievements.

Any reform to WA's public holiday system would require legislative change and would require a reasonable transition period, in recognition that members of the community, businesses, and organisations will require lead time to adjust to any changes.

This document serves as a Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (CRIS) in line with the WA Better Regulation Program. It sets out the review's objectives and potential impacts, including benefits and risks of implementing any changes.

Why public holiday reform?

There are currently 11 public holidays in WA, which along with New South Wales (NSW) and Tasmania is the fewest number of public holidays across Australia, noting Tasmania also has an extra legislated day (Easter Tuesday) for the Tasmanian public service. Queensland and South Australia (SA) have 12 full days, while the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), the Northern Territory (NT) and Victoria have 13 full days.¹ Ensuring WA's public holiday benefits are competitive with other jurisdictions will help make WA an attractive destination for people to live and work, particularly critical workers.

Currently, none of WA's three state public holidays (King's Birthday, WA Day, and Labour Day) are observed on the same day as any other jurisdiction, impacting businesses and organisations with interstate dealings. It also reduces opportunities for Western Australians to have shared holidays with family and friends who live in other states and territories.

WA and Tasmania are the only jurisdictions that do not observe Easter Saturday as a public holiday. This means most WA employees working on Easter Saturday do not receive similar benefits to workers in other states and territories. Recognition of Easter Saturday would bring WA in line with most other jurisdictions.

1 Note: Queensland, SA and the NT also have additional half day holidays for Christmas Eve (Qld, NT and SA) and New Years Eve (SA and NT only).

In the past three years, WA Day celebrations in Perth were disrupted by adverse weather, impacting our ability to effectively celebrate WA's spirit, culture and achievements. Moving the public holiday date to a month with lower rainfall would reduce the risk and cost of event cancellations and mean that Western Australians can observe the day in a manner that best celebrates our State, such as with large outdoor events or sporting matches.

Your feedback

The WA Government recognises that any public holiday reform will impact people and businesses in different ways. Any decision to reform the schedule needs to include consideration of the impact of the change to the private and public sectors as well as the broader community.

The WA Government welcomes views from the community, businesses, industry and interest groups on the possible impacts to help shape our review of WA's public holiday schedule. The feedback received will help inform advice to Government.

Send your feedback on the types of reforms outlined throughout this paper before **5:00pm (AWST), 8 August 2025** using this submission form <https://forms.office.com/r/S8hzaHRsSS>.

Alternatively, responses can be posted to:
Public Holiday Review
Locked Bag 3001
WEST PERTH WA 6872

WA's current public holiday system

There are 2 ways that public holiday dates are set in WA:

- » **By legislation:** WA's public holidays are authorised through the *Public and Bank Holidays Act 1972* (PBH Act), administered by the Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety (DLGIRS). This legislation specifies the exact date on which certain public holidays should be observed.
- » **By proclamation:** Under the PBH Act, the Governor of Western Australia can declare any special day a public holiday via a proclamation published in the Government Gazette at least three weeks before the date. The King's Birthday is set by proclamation each year.

The current list of WA public holidays and their date is as follows:

Public Holiday	Legislated date
New Year's Day	1 January
Australia Day	26 January or, when that day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the first Monday following 26 January
Labour Day	Monday on or first Monday following 1 March
Good Friday	Easter is observed on the Sunday after the first full moon that occurs on or after the Northern Hemisphere's spring equinox. This means Easter can fall on any
Easter Sunday	Sunday between March 22 and April 25. ²
Easter Monday	
Anzac Day	25 April
Western Australia Day	Monday on or first Monday following 1 June
King's Birthday	Day to be appointed for each year by proclamation published in the Government Gazette at least 3 weeks before the day so appointed. It is usually held in late September / early October.
Christmas Day	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December

Note: The PBH Act provides that when New Year's Day, Anzac Day, or Christmas Day falls on a Saturday or Sunday the next following Monday is also a public holiday. When Boxing Day falls on a Saturday the next following Monday is also a public holiday and when Boxing Day falls on a Sunday or Monday the next following Tuesday is also a public holiday.

A comparison of WA's public holidays with other jurisdictions is provided at **Appendix A**, with summary of historical information for each of the State public holidays at **Appendix B**.

Any changes to WA's public holidays will require amendments to the PBH Act and the *Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993*.

Objectives

The purpose of a review of the public holiday schedule in WA is to support the following objectives:

- » Greater alignment of WA's public holidays with those in other states and territories, reducing scheduling complexities and efficiency impacts for WA businesses, organisations and government agencies with interstate dealings.
- » Ensuring WA employees receive similar benefits to employees from other states and territories.
- » Better supporting the social and economic benefit of the celebration of WA Day.
- » Maintaining a spread of public holidays across the calendar year.

2 Dates for Easter for 2026 and 2027 are available at [Public holidays in Western Australia | Western Australian Government](#)

Statement of issue

While WA's public holiday schedule generally maintains a good spread of days throughout the year, its misalignment with public holiday systems with the rest of Australia can disadvantage Western Australian businesses, organisations and employees.

None of WA's three state public holidays are held on the same day as any other state or territory public holiday, impacting efficiencies and leading to scheduling complexities for businesses, government agencies and organisations with interstate dealings.

All states and territories, other than WA and Tasmania, acknowledge Easter as a four-day holiday and compensate workers by treating Easter Saturday as a public holiday in line with Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. The majority of WA employees do not currently receive a higher rate of pay if working on Easter Saturday.

A review of WA's public holiday schedule to better align with other jurisdictions also offers the opportunity to consider when we observe WA Day. Our State day of celebration recognises our spirit, diverse culture and achievements, and is currently observed in June, one of Perth's wettest months of the year.

Public Holiday Reform

In reforming the public holiday schedule to achieve the objectives of the review, there are three types of change that the WA Government is seeking feedback on:

- » Moving existing public holidays to align with other jurisdictions
- » Moving WA Day to avoid the winter season
- » The addition of a new public holiday(s).

The existing state public holidays that are under consideration for change are the King's Birthday, Labour Day and WA Day. National holidays, such as Anzac Day, Australia Day, Christmas and Boxing Day are not in scope of this review.

It is also important to consider whether days should be 'fixed' or set by proclamation to allow for regional and date variation. Proclamation allows for regional flexibility of the date, as Local Governments can request that a public holiday set by proclamation be observed on a different day in their locality.

Aligning existing public holidays with other jurisdictions

Rearranging WA's existing state public holidays to align with a majority of other Australian jurisdictions is expected to have minimal impact as it maintains the current number of public holidays.

Aligning existing state public holidays would mean that WA businesses are operating on a similar calendar to the rest of Australia, making interstate scheduling, banking, and business simpler.

There may be other benefits, such as employee wellbeing and social benefits from holiday alignment with friends and family who live in other parts of WA or outside of WA. This may involve benefits for WA's tourism industry and economy. In the year ending December 2024, 30% of interstate trips to WA were for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives.³

Feedback

We are interested in hearing from you on how a rearrangement of existing WA public holidays would impact you and/or your business/organisation.

Things to consider include:

- » Impacts (positive or negative) to work-life balance, employee wellbeing, productivity, staffing costs/wages, and operational planning.
- » Financial implications and any industry-specific challenges or benefits (e.g. tourism, hospitality).
- » Any unintended consequences (positive or negative).
- » Community benefits that could arise from alignment.

3 (Tourism Research Australia, 2025) <https://www.tra.gov.au/en/domestic/domestic-tourism-results#ref4>

Moving WA Day to avoid the winter season

Moving WA Day to a more appropriate time of year is expected to have little additional cost as it does not require the addition of a new public holiday. Moving the day to a day outside of the winter season, with significantly lower rainfall, would reduce the weather disruption to events and potentially improve the spread of public holidays throughout the year.

In the past three years, bad weather forced partial and full cancellations of WA Day events. WA Day events had an economic impact of almost \$23 million in 2019 and \$34 million in 2022. Future events would likely have a similar economic impact.

As a result, CelebrateWA, the non-profit organisation that organises the free WA Day events, rescheduled their 2025 metropolitan event to November to coincide with the Spring weather.⁴

Moving WA Day to benefit from a warmer climate, such as in November, could also help to attract events, such as any future Test cricket matches held in WA.⁵ Consideration would need to be given to secondary school Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and university exams, which typically take place in early November.⁶

Feedback

We are interested in hearing from you on how moving WA Day to a suitable date in a warmer climate, such as in November, would impact you and/or your business/organisation.

Things to consider include:

- » Impacts (positive or negative) to work-life balance, employee wellbeing, staffing costs/wages, productivity, and operational planning.
- » Any differences between a public holiday taking place on a Monday or a Friday.
- » Financial implications and any industry-specific challenges or benefits (e.g. event attraction, tourism, sports).
- » Any unintended consequences (positive or negative).
- » Community benefits that could arise from moving WA Day from the winter season to a period with lower rainfall.

4 (CelebrateWA, 2025) <https://www.celebratewa.com.au/wa-day-metro/>

5 In 2025, WA will host the 'West Test' from 21-25 November, the opening Test match of the Ashes and the first time in more than four decades that the Australian Ashes cricket series will begin at a ground other than the Gabba. (Cricket Australia, 2024) <https://www.cricket.com.au/news/4149723>

6 (School and Curriculum Standards Authority, 2025) <http://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/examinations/examination-timetables>

New public holiday(s)

A new public holiday could be introduced to maintain the spread of public holidays throughout the year and better align the number of public holidays in WA with the country.

A new public holiday may create economic opportunities for tourism and high-profile events (cultural, sporting, arts and entertainment) by increasing attendance from people within WA and across Australia. Attraction of these events, such as the West Test 2025, will enhance WA's reputation as a world-class visitor destination. In 2023-24, major regional and mass participation events contributed \$286 million to the WA economy.⁷

The Perth Royal Show is usually held during the first week of the September/October school holidays, with the King's Birthday public holiday aligned with the first Monday of the Perth Royal Show. Should the King's Birthday public holiday be moved, consideration may need to be given to how a potential new public holiday could continue this tradition and support the benefits of the Perth Royal Show.

The cost for business of introducing a new public holiday needs to be considered, as there is a larger difference between the weekday pay rate and public holiday penalty rate.

Easter Saturday is observed as a public holiday in all other jurisdictions except Tasmania and WA. Recognising Easter Saturday as a public holiday is an opportunity to align with other Australian jurisdictions and ensures WA employees working the Easter long weekend receive similar benefits to workers from other states and territories.

Some workers in WA already receive additional benefits for working on Easter Saturday under their industrial award. The state awards covering retail pharmacists, local government and the social and community services sector designate Easter Saturday as a public holiday. The state awards in the retail, hair and beauty, and construction industries, whilst not specifying the day as a public holiday, provide a higher rate of pay for working on Easter Saturday.⁸ State-wide recognition of Easter Saturday would ensure all workers are receiving equitable benefits.

Public and private sectors that rely on continuous operation, such as police, prisons, mining and healthcare, may experience disruptions and increased costs associated with maintaining essential services on public holidays.

Public holiday penalty rates will increase staffing costs for business and organisations that open on Easter Saturday, with employees who work the public holiday receiving extra income. Some businesses may offset the increased staffing cost by introducing a surcharge or choosing to close for the day.

7 (Government, 2024) *West Test Summer Fest to celebrate cricket, culture and community* | *Western Australian Government*

8 <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/private-sector-labour-relations/wa-award-provisions-easter-saturday> (Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety, 2025)

Feedback

We are interested in hearing from you on how introducing a new public holiday and/or classifying Easter Saturday as a public holiday would impact you and/or your business/organisation.

Things to consider include:

- » Impacts (positive or negative) to work-life balance, employee wellbeing, increased wages, productivity, and operational planning.
- » Financial implications of implementing a new public holiday (e.g. increased staffing costs, whether your business would close for the day or introduce a surcharge).
- » Any industry-specific challenges or benefits, such as increased trade (e.g. tourism, hospitality).
- » Any unintended consequences (positive or negative). For example, businesses in regional areas without trading variations may have to close for the whole Easter long weekend.
- » Community benefits that could arise from recognising Easter Saturday.

Request for feedback

This CRIS aims to gather information and feedback on the potential impacts of reforming WA's public holiday schedule. Submissions are sought on the proposed approach to public holiday reform and the feedback prompts outlined in this CRIS.

You can also provide feedback in relation to any other issues that you consider relevant to a potential reform of WA's public holidays. Where possible, please provide reasons or examples to support your view.

Send your feedback on the types of reforms outlined throughout this paper before **5:00pm (AWST), 8 August 2025** using this submission form <https://forms.office.com/r/S8hzaHRsSS>.

Alternatively, responses can be posted to:

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Submissions and feedback provided to this review will be used to inform advice to Government. Submissions or parts of submissions may be included anonymously in that advice. Submissions will not be reproduced in whole or part by reference with the name of the submitting party unless you have agreed to that. If you are happy for that to occur, please indicate in your submission. Please indicate in your submission any information you consider should be kept confidential and whether you agree to your name or organisation being published.

Please note that submissions made in response to this paper are subject to the ***Freedom of Information Act 1992 (WA)***.

Appendix A – Interjurisdictional Comparison

Table 1. Public Holidays observed by State/Territory

Excludes National public holidays = New Year's Day, Australia Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, ANZAC Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	NT	QLD	WA
			2nd Mon in Feb Royal Hobart Regatta				
	2nd Mon in March Canberra Day	2nd Mon in March Labour Day	2nd Mon in March Labour Day	2nd Mon in March Adelaide Cup Day			1st Mon in March Labour Day
Easter Saturday	Easter Saturday	Easter Saturday		Easter Saturday	Easter Saturday	Easter Saturday	
Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday	Easter Tuesday*	Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday	Easter Sunday
	1st Mon on or after 27 May Reconciliation Day				1st Mon in May May Day	1st Mon in May Labour Day	
2nd Mon in June King's Birthday	2nd Mon in June King's Birthday	2nd Mon in June King's Birthday	2nd Mon in June King's Birthday	2nd Mon in June King's Birthday	2nd Mon in June King's Birthday		1st Mon in June WA Day
					June or July Show Day		
					1st Mon in Aug Picnic Day	Wed in Mid Aug Royal Show Day	
1st Mon in Oct Labour Day	1st Mon in Oct Labour Day	Late Sep/ early Oct Friday before AFL Grand Final	Thurs in late Oct Royal Hobart Show	1st Mon in Oct Labour Day		1st Mon in Oct King's Birthday	Late Sep/ Oct King's Birthday
		1st Tues in Nov Melb Cup					
				Christmas Eve (7pm-midnight)	Christmas Eve (7pm-midnight)	Christmas Eve (6pm-midnight)	
				NYE (7pm-midnight)	NYE (7pm-midnight)		
#11 full days	13 full days	13 full days	11 full days, 1 public service	12 full days, 2 part days	13 full days, 2 part days	12 full days, 1 part day	11 full days

Note: In states and territories that recognise Easter Saturday and/or Easter Sunday as a public holiday, only those employees working on this day/s will receive the benefit of the public holiday.

*In Tasmania Easter Tuesday applies to a person who is a member of a class of persons referred to in section 6 of the *Industrial Relations (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2009* (generally Tasmanian Public Service only).

All totals include national holidays.

Appendix B – History of State Public Holidays

Labour Day

From 1921, the Labour Day public holiday (originally referred to as Eight-Hour Day) was on 1 May and in 1948, it was moved to March. Labour Day has its origins in the eight-hour working day movement and celebrates the union movement's economic and social achievements.

WA Day

WA Day has been observed the Monday on, or the first Monday following, 1 June since 1832. Originally called Foundation Day, it was declared by Governor Stirling to mark the founding of the Swan River Colony.

In 2012, the previous Foundation Day public holiday was renamed Western Australia Day as a means of recognising the diverse culture of WA by acknowledging indigenous people as the original inhabitants and traditional custodians of the land, and to unite all who have made WA their home. WA Day brings Western Australians together through public celebration to foster a sense of belonging and unity.

King's Birthday

In WA, the King's Birthday is traditionally observed on the first Monday of the Perth Royal Show, in the September/October school holidays. The King's Birthday has been observed in WA on this date since 1981, when the State Government made the decision to use this holiday to support attendance at the Perth Royal Show. The Perth Royal Show is organised by the Royal Agricultural Society of WA and has been held since 1834.⁹

Officially the 'Celebration Day for the Anniversary of the Birthday of the Reigning Sovereign', this day is appointed by proclamation of the Governor. This approach provides flexibility for the day to be used when it best suits the State's needs. It has previously been observed as a State holiday in October and November. The King's Birthday is currently observed on different dates in August in the City of Karratha and Town of Port Hedland.

WA and Queensland are the only states to celebrate the King's Birthday outside of June.

9 (Royal Agricultural Society of WA, n.d.) <https://www.raswa.org.au/history/history/>