



19 September 2017

CALL TO KEEP BOXING DAY A FAMILY DAY

Today the NSW Legislative Council will vote on amendments to the Retail Trading Amendment (Boxing Day) Bill 2017 which will allow retail stores and banks across the state to open on December 26.

This change in legislation will mean workers across NSW will miss out on spending this public holiday with their family and friends.

Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher OP today called on all politicians in the Upper House to put families ahead of economic pressures.

Archbishop Fisher said it is important parents can balance the pressures of work and the fast pace of modern society alongside the joy and challenges of raising a family. Proposed changes to Boxing Day trading laws will only make this much harder.

"I am very concerned by the erosion of quality family time that this legislation will have" said Archbishop Fisher.

"Many of us lead incredibly busy lives and now more than ever we need to ensure parents and their children are able to spend precious time together. None more so than over the Christmas period when we should be able to put work to the side to spend time together in prayer and celebrate all the beautiful festivities associated with this holy time.

"Opening stores on Boxing Day will only strip many workers and their families of this increasingly rare time with their loved ones."

Archbishop Fisher said there is also the potential for shop workers to be subject to pressure to work when they would rather spend time with their family.

"Families are already subject to a vortex of social and economic forces and this measure will only heighten community fragmentation and family breakdown. We would do well to recall John Paul II's words that men and woman have intrinsic worth and dignity and 'that work is for man, not man for work'. Workers are not simply economic units.

Director of the Life Marriage and Family Centre, Christopher Gordon, said the Bill was part of an ongoing encroachment of the economy on family, worship and community family time.

"We don't believe this is right or just, the Catholic Church has always believed that people are not a means to another end but an end in themselves and having time for family, community and worship is a part of recognising that inviolable dignity," Mr Gordon said.

"All families and communities should be able to come together and celebrate culturally significant days – regardless of their religious beliefs and backgrounds. With just four and a half days exempt from trading throughout the year, we feel any further increase in retail trading days is unnecessary and would have negative ramifications for our social fabric."

ENDS

For further information please contact:

Anita Quigley
Director of Communications and News Media
Archdiocese of Sydney
Ph: (02) 9390 5313 | Mb: 0421 612 978
E: anita.quigley@sydneycatholic.org