

Union hits at Boxing Day sales

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THE traditional Boxing Day sales will be cancelled across Queensland this year if unions have their way, because the day falls on a Sunday.

The Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association has lodged a claim with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission arguing retailers should be forced to close on Sunday, December 26 and also New Year's Day, which falls on a Saturday.

The union is arguing that workers should be entitled to two days off, with the sales to begin on the Monday.

But retailers say the loss of one of their most important days of the year would be a disaster.

City Beach's Patrick Woods argued it would be a huge hit to business and employees.

"I certainly understand it's falling on a Sunday, but gee whiz, if we're closed that day it's going to be huge and the way business is at the moment, it's tough out there... I don't think anyone needs it to be made any tougher," he said.

"Everyone's fighting for every dollar they can get out there and if they whack this on it, I don't feel it's necessary."

Mr Woods said staff enjoyed working on public holidays because they earned double time.

National Retail Association (NRA) executive director Gary Black said it had already been a tough year for retailers, with sales down more than 5 per cent.

Falling sales have been compounded by rising uncertainty about the state of the economy, along with hits to the hip pocket from higher interest rates to electricity, rates and water bills.

"It's a day's trading lost and given the post-Christmas week is a pretty substantial trading week, the expectation is that any closure would have a dire effect," Mr Black said.

The case will be heard by the QIRC on July 19.

The NRA is also hoping to extend Sunday trading across parts of the state, including Kingaroy and the Tablelands.

If successful, shops in those areas would be able to open on Sunday until 6pm.

The NRA has also lodged a bid to extend trading in Cairns until 9pm on Saturday and Sunday in the city centre.

Mr Black said the move was to accommodate tourists, especially those arriving on flights after 5pm.

The NRA recently lost an application to extend Sunday trading to Woodford, northwest of Caboolture.

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