


Cultural & religious holidays

Australia is a vibrant and multicultural nation boasting significant cultural and religious diversity, with workplaces across the country reflecting this diversity.

Recognising and embracing diversity in the workplace helps staff feel valued for their unique qualities, ideas and perspectives and extends to recognising that staff may wish to celebrate culturally important or religious days and events throughout the year. Some examples of cultural or religious holidays include Lunar New Year, Diwali, Ramadan and NAIDOC Week.

Visit the Department of Home Affairs Harmony Day website to see their [calendar of cultural and religious dates](https://www.harmony.gov.au/events/calendar/) (<https://www.harmony.gov.au/events/calendar/>) .

What employers and employees need to know

Lots of religious and cultural holidays observed in Australia aren't recognised public holidays. This means that your employees may wish to take time off work to celebrate these holidays.

Employers can support the needs of employees participating in cultural or religious holidays by:


- agreeing with employees to use leave entitlements to take time off work
- acknowledging or celebrating these holidays in the workplace to promote awareness and inclusion
- agreeing to flexible working arrangements, such as a change to hours, patterns or locations of work to accommodate the holiday.

Embracing celebrations of cultural or religious holidays benefits the whole workplace and can lead to increased:

- job satisfaction
- workplace morale and culture
- productivity.

Just remember, it's illegal for employers to discriminate against employees because of their religion or national extraction. To avoid legal issues, it's a good idea for employers to agree to employees taking time off to celebrate cultural or religious holidays. Visit our [Workplace discrimination page](https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/rights-and-obligations/workplace-discrimination) (<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/fact-sheets/rights-and-obligations/workplace-discrimination>) to learn more about unlawful discrimination.

What to do next

- Read about [Workplace discrimination](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/flexibility-in-the-workplace/flexible-working-arrangements) (www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/flexibility-in-the-workplace/flexible-working-arrangements) to learn more about unlawful discrimination
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For TTY: 13 36 77. Ask for the Fair Work Infoline 13 13 94

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