

## Written Evidence – Chris Pearce (SCT0024)

1. I think it would be better for the UK to align with its main Western European trading partners in terms of having or not having seasonal time changes. I live in the state of Queensland, Australia, which doesn't have daylight saving. States to the south, including New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, have daylight saving. The result is that Queensland is on the same time as those other states for about half the year and an hour behind them for the other half of the year. Twice a year around changeover time, there are always TV segments, newspaper articles, blogs, posts, petitions to the government, etc in Queensland for and against daylight saving, involving a lot of bickering between the two groups.
2. The time difference for half a year tends to cause a lot of inconvenience, particularly along the state boundary at the southern end of the Gold Coast, a city of over 500,000 people. Many people live on one side of the border and go to work or school or the shops on the other side (and families will often have different members on different times). They have to change their watches several times a day. People are often too early or late for their bus or train, appointments, meetings, church services, the shops, movies or shows, television programs, sporting events, etc. It's inconvenient for tourists too as they might be too early or late for a plane flight, a coach tour or other tourism activity.
3. This time difference also causes inconvenience for business and government as well as extra costs and lost sales for businesses. When times are an hour different between two adjacent states (or countries) on the same longitude, common operating hours are as little as four hours due to different start and finish times and a different lunch hour. This tends to restrict the time for phone calls, meetings and other business although it's probably somewhat less of a problem these days with flexible working hours and so much business done electronically. Tourism operators in Queensland say they lose a lot of business as darkness falls quite early in summer at around 7pm compared with around 9pm in Victoria and Tasmania. Problems similar to some of these could emerge between Northern Ireland (and also Great Britain) and Ireland if they have different time schemes.
4. The only study I'm aware of that estimated the costs of the time difference in terms of higher costs and lost sales between Queensland and the southern states was one done by the Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland in 2013. It surveyed 2300 businesses across the state and concluded that the time difference for six months cost firms \$4.35 billion a year. This was based on the sum of figures given by the businesses. However, this figure is derived from information given by

only a little over a quarter of businesses, the proportion who said they were disadvantaged by the time difference. This fell to about a tenth of businesses in regional Queensland, which is almost all of the state geographically but only about a third of its population. Business groups are often asking the state government to do an in-depth study on the costs of the state not having daylight saving time, although there is no sign of the government wanting to spend the time and money on this.

5. Basically, the populated south-east of the state (which includes Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast) wants daylight saving time and the regions don't. Queensland is very large and daylight saving isn't suitable in the tropical north and the west due to the heat, dark mornings, and the small difference between length of day and night through the year. Overall, the majority of the population wants it but neither major political party has daylight saving on its agenda as there would be a lot of votes and seats to lose in the regions and probably not much to be gained in the south-east of the state. Views against daylight saving tend to be very strong in the regional areas while views in favour of daylight saving in the south-east tend to be less strong. Daylight saving is also unsuitable in the Northern Territory and in much of Western Australia which has a large tropical area. There is little or no sign of the other states (New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and the Australian Capital Territory) wanting to abandon daylight saving, so the time differences over the summer months are likely to continue indefinitely. Australia is very large and has a number of time zones anyway. I think the country is quite used to this, so the different policies towards daylight saving time probably don't add as much drama as they might in some other countries and regions of the world.
6. Some of the disadvantages of a different time scheme in Queensland compared with other Australian states would probably be evident in the UK if it continued with daylight saving. Possible time confusion for international travellers comes to mind. Also, conducting business with offices or other outlets in several countries may be more difficult too.
7. Daylight saving time does seem to be less useful now than decades past. Energy savings are minimal these days as people put on electric heating or air-conditioning in the morning, largely negating energy savings in early evening. Most of the benefit is perhaps in tourism, sporting events and other outdoor activities due to the lighter evenings. Health studies, however, often find negative impacts, and farming communities have never liked the change but work by the sun in any case.
8. I think the UK should undertake consultation across the community and also conduct a representative sample survey to determine if

people want to continue with daylight saving time and if not, whether they want to stay on summer time or winter (standard) time all year. The result of a 2019 government poll in France found that well over 80% of people wanted to abandon the twice yearly clock change while around 60% of people wanted daylight saving time all year. The 2018 EC poll found a similar percentage of people didn't want the clock change. Neither poll was a sample survey (people with stronger views are more likely to participate, perhaps boosting the percentage who want no clock change) although people do seem fed up with the clock change. I'll be surprised if many European countries go with permanent winter time although a few northern countries might.

9. A 2018 sample survey in Ireland found that 67% of people wanted to stop changing the clocks (88% in EC poll) and that 81% would prefer year round summer time to winter or standard time. It would make little sense for the UK to be on a different time scheme to Ireland, especially for Northern Ireland. There will be disadvantages with permanent summer time of course, such as some very late winter mornings and in Scotland too, with children going to school in the dark and other negative issues.
10. In summary, I think the UK will need to align as much as possible with time schemes in other European countries, especially with its major trading partners and with Ireland, and to do this regardless of Brexit. There will be enough problems with Brexit (if indeed it eventually goes ahead) without the UK being out of sync on the clock too (other than the one hour standard time difference between the UK and the Continent, as now). This might make summer time as the new standard time a necessity. As the EC 2018 directive on summer time notes (based on a 2014 ICF study), "asynchronous arrangements would generate higher costs, greater inconvenience and lower productivity in the internal market for goods and services".

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