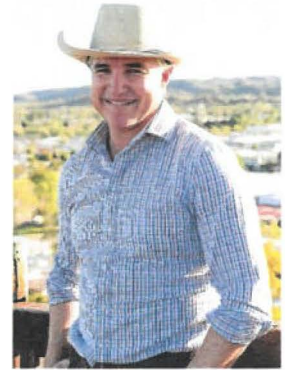


PO Box 1968
Mount Isa QLD 4825

Mount Isa
74 Camooweal Street
P: 07 4730 1100

Charters Towers
Stock Exchange Arcade
2/76 Mosman Street
P: 07 4787 2139



Robbie Katter MP Member for Traeger

REF: MO

10th March, 2022

Peter Russo MP
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee Chair
Via email: lasc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Chair,

RE: Written response to submissions to the *Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2021*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief written response to the 15 submissions received relating to the *Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2021*.

It has been encouraging for me to note that – with the exception of two submissions (#12 – Queensland Family and Child Commission and #14 – Confidential) – the response from the community into this important bill has been overwhelmingly positive.

I note that some submissions, including #13 – Wugu Nyambil, have predicted positive, local impacts of the bill on their own communities should it be passed, and therefore have supported the legislation in its original form. During the development and stakeholder engagement phase of preparing this legislation for introduction (for the third time), I made sure that the numerous First Australian communities to which it would apply were adequately consulted on the bill's intentions. It is very encouraging to see support being provided by those to whom it would directly impact.

Many other submitters have commended the bill's intent but have critiqued it for "not going far enough". The majority of submissions have provided recommendations that any legislative changes dealing with the application of the *Working with Children Act* must be sweeping and applicable state-wide in order to address the many social problems caused by the current Blue Card system that are damaging not only to the lives of individuals, but Queensland communities more broadly.

I very much welcome these suggestions, and agree whole-heartedly with those submitters who have decried the Blue Card system's inflexibility, specifically its: negative impact on kinship care; the callous but common 12-14 month delays in finalising applications and appeals; and the tendency of the Chief Executive to routinely apply 'exceptional case' rulings that result in negative notices to people who, on balance, pose no discernible threat to children. The current Blue Card system is unworkable at best, and destructive to people's futures at worst. This needs to change.

I trust the LASC will be able to explore these broader issues in the context of my bill.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robbie Katter".

Robbie Katter
Member for Traeger