



WUGU NYAMBIL
"Holding onto Work"

To whom it may concern,

Wugu Nyambil are a Yarrabah based Indigenous employment service providing a suite of government funded employment services to local residents. We have been operating since July 2018 with the support of the Yarrabah community, external organisations, Australian and Qld Governments to secure employment, develop economic activity, deliver training and work experience programs.

Wugu Nyambil have over 800 Yarrabah clients (approximately 25% of total community residents) registered to our service with many of these experiencing issues obtaining work due to the increasing need by employers to source employees with a Working with Children's Clearance (Blue Card). Through our experience we have found that clients are unable to obtain work with local employers (noting there are only 5 larger employers here and about 18 in total) with most requiring a Blue Card to work at their organisation. This severely impacts employment opportunities for a number of individuals but also impacts the employers and their ability to conduct business as many of these employers are short staffed and regularly recruiting.

Therefore, I would like to offer this letter of support to the Working with Children (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill 2021 on behalf of Wugu Nyambil.

As a local community based organisation Wugu Nyambil work closely with local Yarrabah organisations including the Yarrabah Justice Services who could make informed judgements on individual circumstances relating to Blue Card approvals. Should the Blue Card approval process involve stakeholders similar to this, a Blue Card system for Indigenous Communities would be far more beneficial to both employers and applicants. Wugu Nyambil also recognize that the approval process has limitations. This can be affected by the below:

- We are believers that employment can and does have a positive effect on individuals (it can actually act as a preventative to criminal activity but also be rehabilitative for those that have previously committed offences).
- Some cases of criminal offences were committed as juveniles. One such case that we had recently reviewed was for a now 24 year old that had committed a minor offence as a 15 year old. Note that his Blue Card has now been processed after a 6 month process. These circumstances could have been expedited through a process using the Yarrabah Justice Service to mitigate any risk.
- Many employers recruit not necessarily for the 'future' but generally for the 'now'. If they have a vacancy available due to new funding, a resignation, restructure etc generally an employer recruits knowing that they need to fill the role quickly. Employers will generally not wait until a Blue Card is processed sometimes months later and that the applicant can be sometimes overlooked.
- The types of offences committed that are not necessarily directly related to children such as theft, drug use etc need to be re classified to allow more applicants to obtain a Blue Card whilst minimizing risk to children.
- The process also needs to take into consideration the maturation of an individual, their current standing within community as a citizen, supports that can be provided by an employer, references, whether a guarantor could be used etc to help mitigate any risk to a child.



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- Note that we agree with the No card no start policy but the process needs to be much quicker to obtain a Blue Card and this can be supported through use of a Community Justice Group or similar to speed up the approval process.

Wugu Nyambil as the local employment service provider and also an employer of approximately 16 staff, also see benefit when we are recruiting ourselves. We have previously experienced issues in our own recruitment of staff whereby we were initially unable to assist a staff member to obtain a Blue Card. After persistence, regular contact with Blue Card services, reference letters etc we were able to assist that staff member to get a clearance which took nearly 2 years. For most, if not all employers, this is way too long and that opportunity would have been lost for that individual with another employer. The process needs to be streamlined to make this far more accessible noting that the crimes committed by that individual did not really have any impact on children.

Please note that on behalf of Wugu Nyambil we are also fully supportive of the Blue Card system which aims to protect vulnerable people and children from harm. Under no circumstances do Wugu Nyambil want to see any individual affected so the Blue Card system process needs to remain robust but we believe that there can be systems put in place such as the Restricted Working with Children Clearance that will enable those with lesser offences to be cleared to work in Indigenous communities.

I hope that you will view the submissions favourably and consider any recommendations put forward as a way of improving employment opportunities in Indigenous Communities. If needed, I can be contacted on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Robert Friskin
General Manager

4th January 2022