



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 7 September 2017

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Blue Cards**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government welcomes the recommendations made in the review of the blue card system which the Premier has tabled this morning. We are committed to streamlining and toughening the process for working with children checks. The review found that Queensland's current blue card system is a strong foundation and is one of the strongest systems in Australia, but we are committed to making it stronger. We recognise that in order to keep pace with changing community expectations and emerging risks it is timely to update and strengthen this very effective base.

We welcome all of the findings and broadly support the intent of all 81 recommendations made by the Queensland Family and Child Commission. The recommendations are wide-ranging and are framed around four key areas. Firstly, the report recommends overarching reforms which include a detailed legislative review and a review of funding arrangements. Secondly, it includes streamlining the blue card system through new online systems. Thirdly, the report recommends strengthening the blue card system by expanding its scope and coverage, enhancing compliance, improving decision-making, enabling better information sharing and refocusing the system on child-safe standards. Lastly, the report recommends improving support and maintaining public confidence by building capacity and cultural capability and supporting communities and organisations.

These recommendations are significant and will require a planned and considered implementation to ensure that Queensland's blue card system continues to be one of the strongest in Australia. The implementation will be resource and time intensive and require extensive industry and community consultation. It is also extremely important that we ensure our response is informed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which is due to report later this year. We recognise the importance of nationally consistent standards to ensure consistent levels of safeguards for children across Australia.

In line with the interim findings of the royal commission, the blue card report recommends to expand the scope of the blue card system to include a number of new services, including commercial children's services, gym and play facilities, overnight camps and children's transport services. Expanding the scope of screening will introduce stronger safeguards for children participating in activities in these environments and will also better align the screening requirements in Queensland with other jurisdictions across Australia.

It is important we get the staging of these reforms right. Some of the recommendations are dependent on other recommendations being implemented first, and others will require agreement across states and territories. Within the next 12 months a detailed implementation plan will be developed to provide a road map for implementing reforms. The Palaszczuk government is committed to further strengthening the blue card system by increasing the number of people who will require blue cards, broadening the range of offences that automatically exclude applicants and modernising the application process.