




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 13 November 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Blue Cards

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.58 am): The Palaszczuk government takes the safety of Queensland's children extremely seriously. Thanks to previous Labor governments, Queensland was one of the first jurisdictions to introduce a working with children check scheme in the nation. A review of the blue card system by the Queensland Family and Child Commission found that Queensland's blue card system is one of the strongest in Australia and has enhanced protection for children in regulated environments since 2001. The Palaszczuk government made a commitment to further strengthen and enhance this system. In this year's budget, the Palaszczuk government allocated \$17 million over the next three years to implement our commitment to a no-card no-start initiative and streamline the blue card application process.

I can inform the House that I intend to introduce a bill later today that delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to implement a no-card no-start framework. The bill will: introduce automated blue card application processes to prevent people commencing paid work while a blue card application is pending; uncouple the requirement for paid employees to have an existing job, allowing applicants to apply prior to confirmation of employment so that they can be job ready; introduce a requirement for a blue card to have a photograph of the authorised person on it to reduce the prospect of fraudulent misuse; introduce an automatic stay of QCAT decisions in circumstances where QCAT overturns a decision to refuse an application for a blue card—the stay remains in place until either the appeal period has expired or until an appeal is finalised; deem additional offences to be disqualifying offences; introduce a new framework of 'restricted person' to capture negative notice holders, suspended and disqualified persons and persons who have been charged with a disqualifying offence; and introduce new offences and increase existing penalties for breaching the act.

The bill will, if passed by this House, implement the bulk of the recommendations of both the QFCC reports, including a new information-sharing register. The Palaszczuk government will continue to build on the strong reforms of Labor governments to do all we can to protect our communities and keep our children safe.