



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 October 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Blue Cards**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.16 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement. I make no apologies for requiring blue cards for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services personnel before they get into a uniform and on the end of a fire hose. We hold the highest standard for the men and women on the state's front line because we have to. We need to make sure every possible step is taken to ensure the safety of young Queenslanders. Each and every day QFES personnel come into contact with children, whether that is an SES volunteer searching bushland for a missing child, a firefighter evacuating a town or a road crash rescue crew attending a road traffic incident.

QFES already undertakes criminal history checks on new staff and volunteers. Legal advice now indicates the blue card screening should be introduced for all staff and volunteers serving our community as firefighters or rescuers. QFES is a values based organisation and this decision brings it in line with community expectations. We know that some personnel already have blue cards because of their other commitments elsewhere in the community. I realise for some without blue cards obtaining one may be a small inconvenience. QFES is working proactively to support its workforce, its volunteers and its staff in making their applications. QFES has more than 30,000 frontline staff with about one-third having already applied for their blue card. I know for the vast majority of QFES staff there will be no objection to the blue card. I know it will go some way to help recruit young volunteers, particularly in rural areas. As a parent myself, I would have a very clear expectation that my child was safe.

Our firefighters have worked under some very challenging conditions in recent years and rightfully have earned the respect of the Queensland community. It is not an unusual or unreasonable standard, with most other frontline staff already required to hold similar accreditations. As I have mentioned, QFES is working closely with our staff and our volunteers to help them obtain a blue card. Unfortunately, those unable to obtain a blue card for whatever reason may be ineligible to continue frontline work with QFES, but I expect that they will be few in number.

I have filled out the blue card form myself. It is not hard—it only takes a couple of minutes—but the message it sends is significant. Parents teach their children to trust men and women in uniform. This requirement ensures we meet this community standard. When the going gets tough and Queenslanders are in need, they deserve to know that those who wear the QFES uniform are worthy of their trust.