




Speech By  
**Joan Pease**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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## **WORKING WITH CHILDREN (RISK MANAGEMENT AND SCREENING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.01 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. The main policy objectives of the bill are to give effect to the Palaszczuk government's election commitment to amend the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, the WWC Act, to improve the safety of all Queensland children. The bill exemplifies the Palaszczuk government's continual commitment to shaping the future of Queensland's wonderful children through stronger and safer services, as well as improving job satisfaction and employment across Queensland in the sector, through the improved online application process.

The changes introduce automated blue card application processes to prevent people commencing paid work while a blue card application is pending—the no-card no-start election commitment. The bill will also implement the recommendations from the Queensland Family and Child Commission report *Keeping Queensland's children more than safe: review of the blue card system and Recommendation 28 supplementary review: a report on information sharing to enhance the safety of children in regulated home-based services*.

These objectives will be achieved by establishing a register for recording and reporting on child related employment or business conducted from the home; requiring all adult household members of a stand-alone care service to hold a blue card; and amending the WWC act to include DoE within the definition of 'notifiable person' so that it receives notifications about changes to the blue card status of individual family day care educators and adult household members. This register is not designed to replace existing information exchanges between agencies but is to be used as an additional tool to provide more comprehensive information to help facilitate information sharing between relevant government agencies to promote the safety of all children accessing these home based care service providers.

Whilst the no-card no-start approach is contrary to the findings of the royal commission in its 2015 working with children report in which it recommended allowing participants to start regulated employment while the application is processed provided appropriate safeguards are in place to protect children, the no-card no-start implementation will guarantee the safety of all Queensland children through these extra precautions and will strengthen the system. At the same time the amendments to the legislation will not slow down or deter educational professionals' employment opportunities. The reduced time frames and streamlined blue card application process will allow educational professionals to seek employment and apply for the blue card without an up-front link to an employer. These streamlined changes, along with the development of the online organised portal, will enable organisations to more efficiently and effectively manage their blue card obligations. The implementation of all these provisions will help alleviate any added difficulties that may be implied with the no-card no-start changes.

The new Queensland blue card system mitigates past, present and future risks to children through screening people working with children and deeming people ineligible to work with children based on their known police or disciplinary information. It also introduces an electronic interface with Queensland Police for changes in blue card holders' and applicants' Queensland police information to monitor this information on a daily basis and legislatively requires child related organisations to implement policies and procedures to manage risks to children.

This bill delivers another of the Palaszczuk government's election commitments and illustrates the serious commitment made by the Palaszczuk Labor government to improving education for all students throughout Queensland.