




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Blue Card System; Morris, Mr K

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (7.12 pm): Everyone agrees that the protection of children should be a top priority and that vigilance is essential, and we have a blue card system in Queensland to provide for that protection. However, more can and should be done. I want to relate to the House a recent experience by a constituent of mine who contacted me. John contacted my office about his dismay at the current blue card system. He was hiring for his business that works with children and interviewed a man originally from India. The man had a current and valid blue card as required to get the job, but John was unsure of the references the man had given and had a gut feeling to follow it up and so paid a company almost \$400 out of his own pocket to do an international criminal background check. After three months, John found out that the man had a criminal history in India for crimes against children. If not for the dodgy references that alerted John and the inkling he had that something was not right, John may well have employed this man in a business that involves children.

John contacted Blue Card Services, thinking it would be horrified at what had occurred and what he had discovered. Instead, he was not taken seriously and so felt compelled to contact my office. I understand that Blue Card Services has a lot of work to do, but if there are any added measures to protect the safety of our state's children then those measures should be paramount. I do note that the requirement for international criminal checks was a proposal put forward by the LNP but was voted down by the ALP earlier this year. It is sad to see that recommendations made by the Attorney-General requesting those international checks were not supported. I call on the Labor Party and the Labor government, including the Minister for Child Safety, Di Farmer, to make these urgent changes to the blue card system so that employing dangerous individuals with an international criminal record will not go unchecked, as the man who applied to John is still able to flash his blue card around in this state and still able to go out and seek work with children—someone with a record and a record that is discoverable.

In the time available to me I want to pay tribute to someone who has played and continues to play an important role in this state, and that is Mr Karl Morris. Karl will be retiring after six years as the head of QSuper. I appointed Karl in 2013 and he was reappointed by you, Mr Speaker, if I recall correctly, to continue his service. Over that period of time he has met the challenges as the independent chair of QSuper including board renewal, including executive renewal and including a period of very high growth and returns of funds to members. Indeed, there may well be further changes on the horizon for QSuper if what we read in the paper occurs. I want to thank Karl, who will continue in his role as chairman of the Brisbane Broncos—and he has perhaps an even bigger task there than he did when he took on QSuper—and also his own business, Ord Minnett, which is now proudly a Queensland owned and run international finance house. Congratulations, Karl. Thank you for your service to the community.