




Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 19 May 2020

**WORKING WITH CHILDREN LEGISLATION (INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.11 pm): Today I rise to make my contribution to the Working with Children Legislation (Indigenous Communities) Amendment Bill put forward by the member for Traeger. This bill will amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984 and the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 to provide a new blue card framework. This suggested reformation of the current blue card framework and the current system undermines the protections of our First Nation children—in fact, all children right across Queensland.

This bill proposes impractical legal solutions which could never translate to real-life application. It is not sustainable. These impractical solutions offered by the bill exist in the form of, firstly, the inclusion of a community justice group in the blue card decision-making process and, secondly, the ability to offer work to an applicant while their blue card is being processed. This bill proposes a new framework which would enable a statutory community justice group to make a binding recommendation to the chief executive of Blue Card Services to issue a restricted positive notice to an applicant who would otherwise have been issued a negative notice under the existing blue card framework. A restricted positive notice would enable that person to be employed in child related employment or to carry on a child related business in a defined community area. We should never allow for the standards that have been established to be eroded in any part of Queensland, especially not in the areas of Queensland where our children are our most vulnerable.

The bill states that a community justice group consists of key stakeholders who typically include elders, traditional owners, respected persons and community members of good standing. This new framework places these good people in an untenable position where they are making decisions that may compromise the safety of children in a whole community. This is a serious responsibility that should never be imposed on a group of community members. I have spent my whole career protecting the safety of children. As a former principal and teacher, I understand the importance of protecting our children and I applaud the Palaszczuk government's approach to maintaining our high standards and to serving the needs of Indigenous communities without compromising the safety particularly of our First Nation children. I oppose this bill.