




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2023

WORKING WITH CHILDREN (INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.38 pm): We know that more needs to be done to reduce the barriers experienced by First Nations peoples when they are interacting with government services, and the Palaszczuk government is prioritising options that provide greater cultural context to this decision-making process. I acknowledge the great work of the committee. I know it travelled the length and breadth of Queensland on this bill in its research and it gave it a lot of heartfelt thought and heartfelt consideration. The submissions that were made to the committee highlight the complex issues experienced by First Nations communities right across Queensland when they are engaging with the blue card system. In this regard, I, too, commend the member for Traeger. He has done a wonderful job in highlighting the challenges faced by First Nations communities and he should be proud of where we have landed on this policy as a parliament.

We are piloting a blue card liaison officer project that will be co-designed in consultation with community to ensure that First Nations people have a genuine voice in how services are delivered. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak is working with urban, rural and remote First Nations communities to research and analyse the impact of the blue card system on kinship care approval processes. Blue Card Services are also developing a suite of resources for the kinship care sector, and that will include a number of resources like videos and easy language information for prospective carers.

The Palaszczuk government will be working to reduce the barriers experienced by First Nations Queenslanders by working to provide a more supportive system at each step of the blue card process and empowering First Nations people by embedding cultural capacity into the blue card system. We do recognise it can be a tricky system to navigate. In saying that, I recognise that the inquiry has raised this as a really important issue. I commend, as I said earlier, the member for Traeger for raising it and also the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee—the member for Toohey, the member for Cooper, the member for Caloundra, the member for Scenic Rim and the member for Noosa—for their travel throughout the state in looking into this important matter. It is a great example of bipartisan committee work to get a much better policy outcome.

I finish by commending the member for Traeger for bringing this up. I know he will be heavily involved in the process that will ensure that his community gets the best possible outcome. In this particular case I cannot commend the bill to the House, but I certainly commend the work of the committee and the intent behind raising this important issue.