

**Question on Notice
No. 295
Asked on 11 March 2008**

MR FOLEY asked the Premier (MS BLIGH) –

QUESTION:

As most constituents believe the Government has good intentions with Blue Cards, but some constituents remain in fear because of not knowing the rules regarding what is required of them –

What plans are in place, or what intentions does her department have, to increase the awareness of (a) those individuals who will require a Blue Card and (b) the penalties that apply for failing to do so?

ANSWER:

a) The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's communication strategy for blue cards focuses on increasing community awareness of the legislative requirements.

Since 1 July 2007, the Commission has provided information and education to over 200,000 people in relation to the requirements of the blue card system. The provision of this information has been facilitated through the Blue Card Contact Centre, responses to correspondence and email requests and the delivery of free presentations and workshops to the community. In addition, the Commission publishes on-line resources and support materials and has developed partnerships with key stakeholders in the community.

The Commission is committed to providing on-going training and development for the Contact Centre consultants to maintain a high standard of client service delivery. The consultants provide blue card information to the community via the telephone and an email enquiry system accessed through the Commission's website.

Since 1 July 2007, the Commission has also engaged with an additional 2,000 stakeholders through face to face meetings, industry forums and industry reference groups. These communication strategies assist to:

- educate the community about the requirements to identify and manage risks of harm to children in essential and developmentally focussed child related service environments, including appropriate blue card screening;
- provide opportunities for community members to clarify blue card obligations; and
- provide the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian with a better understanding of industry specific needs which in turn informs the development of tailored resources to support service providers in understanding their blue card system requirements and build organisational and individual capacity to comply.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian has a dedicated community engagement schedule for Indigenous communities in Queensland, including remote communities. Since 1 July 2007, the Commission has visited 12 Indigenous communities aiming to better understand the individual needs of communities and provide operational support to Indigenous applicants to enhance compliance.

Further initiatives currently being progressed by the Commission include:

- the development of on-line resources and workshops for regulated businesses and organisations to assist in the development of child protection risk management strategies for their particular service environment;
- the development of pro-active tailored information sessions for stakeholders about the blue card system;
- drafting and disseminating information sheets for employers and card holders about their blue card system obligations;
- developing child-specific material in relation to identifying and managing risks;
- developing additional Frequently Asked Questions for the Commission's website in response to stakeholder feedback;
- updating the 'What's New' section on the Commission's website to provide advanced notice of any changes that may affect service providers;
- a letter to employers and people carrying on a regulated business advising them of relevant recent developments in the blue card system; and
- the development of newsletter articles for publication through stakeholders information networks.

b) The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's approach to compliance is focussed on education and capacity building. Accordingly, a penalty is only likely to be imposed after individuals and organisations have been made aware of their obligations and been given an opportunity to comply.

The Commission publishes information about blue card requirements and associated penalties on the Commission website through Information Sheets and the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Any person with concerns or enquiries about the blue card system should contact the Commission's Blue Card Contact Centre on 1800 113 611 or 3247 5145 between 8:00am-5:00pm. Alternatively, general information and application forms can be accessed from the Commission's website at <http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au>.