

Question on Notice

No. 1493

Asked on 30 October 2018

MR J MCDONALD ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General advise why a photograph is not required on blue cards, despite the Queensland Family and Child Commission 2017 recommendation that this would strengthen identity check processes and therefore should be included?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Lockyer for his question.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission review *Keeping Queensland's Children more than safe: Review of the blue card system* ("the review") found that Queensland's blue card system is one of the strongest in Australia.

The Palaszczuk Government is further strengthening this system with the introduction of the "No Card, No Start" scheme and the government's commitment to expand the number of offences classified as automatic disqualifications.

Blue cards are one of a range of measures in place across government to protect children.

The 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;
- monitoring all blue card holders and applicants on a daily basis through an electronic interface with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) for changes in their Queensland police information; and
- legislatively requiring child-related organisations to implement policies and procedures to manage risks to children.

In 2017–18, Blue Card Services processed 362,766 blue and exemption card applications, renewals and authorisations.

Each application goes through a thorough process of checking and validating information and the obtaining and consideration of a criminal history, before a decision about the application is made.

Presently, the current blue card product has a number of security features including:

- the identifying details of the card holder;
- an embedded electronic signature; and
- unique holofoil image which minimises the likelihood of fraudulent blue cards being produced.

Additionally, if an organisation engages a person in child-related work, they have a legislative responsibility as part of their child and youth risk management strategy requirements to:

- check the details (full name and signature) on the blue card against a photo identification such as driver licence or passport; and
- confirm with Blue Card Services that the card is valid and that the card has not been cancelled or suspended.

As part of the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to keep our communities safe and to implement a 'No Card, No Start' blue card policy, I can advise the Member that there is a Bill before the House that seeks to amend the definition of a 'positive notice blue card' contained in Schedule 7 of the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* to ensure a blue card includes a photograph of the approved holder.

I can also advise the Member that work has commenced on a number of other initiatives to streamline the blue card application process, reduce processing timeframes and assist organisations through the development of an online organisation portal to more effectively manage their blue card system obligations.