

## Question on Notice

No. 982

Asked on 1 September 2021

**MR R KATTER** ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND MINISTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON S FENTIMAN) –

### QUESTION:

With reference to the operation of the Blue Card system in Queensland's 18 Indigenous communities —

Will the Attorney-General advise what the annual Blue Card applicant approval rate has been for these communities for the last five years?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Traeger for his question.

While the approval rate may fluctuate in some years, the statistics show that most people, who live in discrete communities, who apply for a blue card, get one.

I am advised that over the last five years, Blue Card Services (BCS) has implemented several strategies to improve participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the blue card system.

When BCS commenced these strategies, their efforts were concentrated on 10 discrete communities (Aurukun, Bamaga, Cherbourg, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart (including Lockhart River), Mornington Island including Gununa, Palm Island, Thursday Island).\*

As a result of BCS' strategies, there has been an increase in the percentage of blue cards being issued from 78.1% in 2016/17 to 86.2% in 2020/21 in these 10 discrete communities (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

<b>10 Discrete* Remote Communities applicant approval rate over past 5 financial years</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Applications Finalised	908	1030	1003	897	881	<b>4719</b>
Blue Cards issued	709	779	788	727	759	<b>3762</b>
Applicant Approval Rate	<b>78.1%</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>86.2%</b>	<b>79.7%</b>

More recently BCS extended their reach to other remote communities including Boigu Island, Coen, Darnley Island, Injinoo, Mabuiag Island, Mapoon, Mer Island, Moa Island, Mossman, Murgon, Napranum, New Mapoon, Normanton, Pormpuraaw, Saibai Island, Umagico, Warraber Island, Weipa, Wellesley Island, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal, Yam Island, Yarrabah

and Yorke Island. Bringing the total number of remote communities which BCS actively engage with, at this stage, to 34.

As a result, there has been an increase in the percentage of blue cards issued in these 34 communities from 82.0% in 2016/17 to 88.6% in 2020/21 (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

<b>34 Remote Communities applicant approval rate over past 5 financial years</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total Applications Finalised	2240	2386	2320	2340	2404	<b>11690</b>
Blue Cards issued	1837	1895	1899	2029	2129	<b>9789</b>
Applicant Approval Rate	<b>82.0%</b>	<b>79.4%</b>	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>83.7%</b>