

Professional Standards Update – December 2018

** No More Police Checks – Free WWCCs in SA **

(Note: this article only applies to South Australia)

Volunteers in SA can no longer obtain a background screening check in the category of *Working with Children* from SA Police. Note however, that background screening checks are still required.

The Department of Human Services (DHS/DCSI) now offer Working with Children Checks (WWCCs or Child-related employment screening) at no charge for volunteers. The process for obtaining a new DHS check is a little different, but it appears to be working smoothly and there are a number of advantages in the new system. These include:

- streamlined identification checking – if you have a current driver's license and a passport that is current or has expired within the previous two years, your identification can be checked immediately online! Other streamlined options also exist.
- one check will cover you across schools, other community groups, our church and also interstate
- they will only expire after five years (not three)
- they are a much more comprehensive check

DHS also provide a range of other screening checks. These include:

- Disability services employment screening
- Aged care sector employment screening
- Vulnerable person-related employment screening
- General employment probity screening

So which screening applies to you? The LCA specifies a WWCC. Other workplaces may specify one of these other checks. The good news is that, as a volunteer, you can now apply for all five types of screening free of charge! One streamlined process – just tick the boxes, even if you don't think you'll need the other checks! That is what we are recommending for volunteers, because if you discover at a later time that you need a check that you don't already have, it may cost you.

A WWCC will cost employees \$107.80 and other fees apply for other types of screening. So our recommendation for employees is to only apply for the screening you need. Once again, the LCA specifies a WWCC for most employees (but please check your role description to confirm if other requirements exist for you).

It is not necessary to apply for a new background screening check until 3 months before your current check expires. It is necessary to apply if your current check will expire in less than one month.

The process starts with a simple single-page LCA application form which is available from your congregational administration. They also have detailed instructions for the rest of the process, which occurs online. Both the applicant and the LCA are kept informed via email.

SA Legislation

The *Children's Protection Act 1993* was de-commissioned on 22 October 2018, and has been replaced by the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*. The LCA PSD anticipate that a second new relevant Act, the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*, along with associated regulations, will also be enacted in the very new future.

More detailed information will be provided as it becomes available, but you can view:

- the new screening process at <https://screening.sa.gov.au>
- the new legislation at <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au> and
- the LCA policies and procedures at <http://www.lca.org.au/policies>

Dave Biar/Holly Koning (08) 8267 5211 psd.sa-nt@lca.org.au