

14.4 WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

1 PRINCIPLE

Legislation in Western Australia requires people working with children to have a Working with Children Check.

The Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 is a comprehensive criminal record check that aims to increase the safety of children in our community by helping to prevent people who have a criminal history that indicates they may harm children from working with them. Commenced in 2006 the Working with Children Check (WWC Check) is for a person who is working as an employee, volunteer or in an unpaid capacity and has any contact with children, even in a 'public' setting.

The Working with Children Check applies to child-related work carried out by an individual as a minister of religion or in any other capacity for the religious purposes of a religious organisation.

Contact with a child includes any form of:

- physical contact
- oral communication, whether face to face, by telephone or otherwise; and
- electronic communication.

Ministers and those in placement must have a Working with Children Check.

2 VALIDITY

A WWC check is valid for **three (3) years**. The WWC Check is only valid in Western Australia. Other States have their own legislation and criminal record checking procedures. An expiry date is printed on the Working with Children Card.

3 PROCEDURE

Application & Cost

- An 'Application for a Working with Children Check' form is available from authorised Australia Post outlets.
- Applicants are required to complete the first part of the form and forward it to the General Secretary who is required to complete Parts 6 & 7. *PLEASE FORWARD THE WHOLE FORM - DO NOT SEPARATE THE APPLICATION FORM FROM THE BOOKLET.*

Synod Privacy Officer
Uniting Church in Western Australia
GPO Box M952
PERTH WA 6843

- The Privacy Officer will return the completed form to the applicant.
- Applicants then present the completed form along with payment and identification (100-point check) at an Australia Post outlet. (It is suggested that a passport and Drivers Licence be used).
- Current application and renewal fees for a WWC Check are:

- for employees and self-employed people: **\$84.00**
- for volunteers, unpaid people and students on unpaid placement: **\$11.00**
- for replacement Cards: **\$11.00**
- Online renewal applications are possible if you have more than 3 months still valid on your current card. Please follow this link and put in the privacy officer's email address for authorisation.

<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/applicants-card-holders/online-services/re-apply-online>

The link will be sent through and get approved by the Synod Privacy Officer and you can complete your online application. Currently Amanda Badenhorst is the Synod Privacy Officer (amanda.badenhorst@wa.uca.org.au)

Process Once WWC Obtained

- Once your WWC Check has been processed, advice will be sent to the JAGS. *The Uniting Church Centre is required by law to keep a current register demonstrating compliance with the WWC legislation.*

4 MATTERS TO NOTE

Retired Ministers

Retired ministers must have a Working with Children Check if they have **any form** of continuing ministry. If a retired minister:

- takes any supply service with anybody under 18 years of age present;
- has any oral communication or electronic communication with anybody under 18 years of age in their capacity as a minister,

they must have a Working with Children Check. There are no exemptions. Ministers cannot assume that leading worship in the presence of others can be seen as an exclusion.

If retired ministers are non-stipended they can apply for a **Volunteer** WWC Check for a cost of \$11.00. (Valid for 3 years)

WWC Check through Other Avenues

It is normally expected ministers in placement and retired ministers will have their forms filled in by the Associate General Secretary (Pastoral).

If you source a Working with Children Check through an institution such as a school, hospital or the defence force, Ministers are required to forward a certified photocopy of their current WCC card once it has been issued.

5 REFERENCES

Working with Children Check website:

<http://www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au>