



WOMEN OF COLOUR AUSTRALIA
Championing Australia's Women of Colour

Volunteer Checks Policy

Introduction

Women of Colour Australia (WoCA) has a responsibility to ensure that volunteers engaged or intended to be engaged by WoCA are suitable for the intended roles. The National Police Record Check is an important part of WoCA's screening process. Volunteers may also be informed about the requirement to obtain a Working with Children Check if their role requires them to come in regular contact with children.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this policy is to preserve the safety and wellbeing of the WoCA community and any other persons who choose to participate and engage with WoCA.

Policy

To comply with this policy, all volunteers must undergo a National Police Record Check. A Working With Children (WWCC) Check is only required only if the volunteer's role requires them to come in contact with children (those under the age of 18). Volunteers will be informed if they are required to obtain a WWCC.

National Police Record Check

A National Police Certificate, alternately called a Police Check, is a list, at any given point in time, of the offences a person has committed. Police checks are undertaken to ensure that volunteers have no disclosable court outcomes that should preclude them from being engaged with WoCA.

Where a police check is returned with a disclosable court outcome, the nature and relevance of the court outcome will be considered in relation to the intended position. A meeting will be set up between a nominated WoCA member and the individual to discuss the disclosable outcome and the potential consequences regarding engagement. A police check is a point-in-time check and is valid as of the date of issue till a time specified by the requesting party or organisation.

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

The Working with Children Act 2005 requires that any person doing child-related work must have a valid WWCC. Any volunteer over the age of 18 who is likely to come into regular contact with children through their work is required to hold a WWCC. WWCC are valid for 5 years, during which time the holder is periodically screened for reported criminal activity or professional misconduct. As of February 2021, all WWCC have continuous monitoring, where relevant new records can lead to the clearance being cancelled.

How Can Volunteers Apply for a Police Check and WWCC?

Volunteers can obtain a police check and WWCC by visiting or contacting their local police authority. A National Police Certificate is different to a WWCC and each must be applied for separately.

What is the Difference Between a Police Check and a Working with Children Check?

Unlike police checks which screen for all unspent convictions, Working With Children Checks look for relevant offences that indicate unsuitability to work with children. These generally include, but are not limited to, crimes of a violent or sexual nature against children. In addition to checking criminal records, Working With Children Checks may include checks against sex offender registers and adverse findings on professional disciplinary registers held by professional organisations, for example, teachers, nurses, child care workers, health practitioners, foster carers, etc.

Once obtained, volunteers are required to email their background checks to their volunteer coordinator to be engaged with WoCA.