



Summary of Checks and Screening

Clearance processes

Clearance processes apply to all licensed clergy and almost all lay church workers, whether paid or voluntary, elected or appointed. The requirements vary between the different roles but might include:

- Completion of a Safe Ministry Questionnaire (SMQ)
- Completion of a Church Worker Summary (CWS)
- National Register check (NR)
- National Police Check (NPC)
- Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- Attendance at an approved safe church training program (SCT)
- Formal referee checks
- Other certification specific to the role as may be determined

Safe ministry questionnaire (SMQ)

A standardised form developed by the Anglican Church of Australia General Synod office. This forms part of the clearance processes for some church workers (non-clergy) and includes a declaration of an individual's history relevant to involvement in a Church role. (A clergy-specific version is also required for all clergy.)

Church worker summary (CWS)

The Church Worker Summary is a form that is required for some lay roles. It was developed as a simpler alternative to the Safe Ministry Questionnaire, to be used for roles that are determined as having lower responsibility and a lower risk profile.

National Register check (NR)

All clergy and some other roles are reviewed by the Director of Professional Standards, which might include a check against the Anglican Church's National Register.

The National Register is an essential part of the Church's response to the prevention of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct. The Canon provides for a national, transparent and accountable process to ensure appropriate checks are made before all ordinations, licences or appointments are made.

The National Register contains only information primarily pertaining to complaints or findings of child abuse and adult sexual misconduct as well as adverse findings against or adverse admissions made by clergy or lay people within the Church. Details about the operation of the National Register may be found in Canon 15, National Register Canon 2007.

Source: Anglican Church of Australia website - <https://www.anglican.org.au/national-register>

National Police check (NPC)

National Police Record Checks search for criminal history within Australia for an individual. Following a Police Check a National Police Check Certificate is issued that lists any criminal history a person may have. The certificate details any court outcomes that can be disclosed, from any state or territory in Australia, along with pending charges. The certificate won't include any restricted court outcomes.

A Police Check might be required for employment, voluntary work and occupation-related licensing or registration purposes. In the Diocese of Wangaratta Police Checks are required for all members of clergy and for some lay ministry roles.

Police Checks can be applied for online through the police service in the State in which a person normally resides or through national services such as Australia Post and specialist security services such as CV Check. Prices for a Police Check might vary depending on which organisation a person applies through.

Where a Police Check is a clearance requirement, the Diocese of Wangaratta will recognise Police Checks up to three months from the date of issue. Any Police Check issued more than three months prior will not be accepted and a new Police Check must be obtained.

In the Diocese of Wangaratta, a Police Check, if required, must be provided prior to commencement in the specified role OR evidence provided that an application for a Police Check has been made prior to commencement. Once in a role, a new Police Check must be provided every three years.

If a Police Check has not already been provided during the current clearance cycle and an additional or new Church role is commenced that requires one, a Police Check issued no more than three months prior must be provided. However, where a Police Check has already been provided as part of clearance requirements in that cycle, and an additional role is commenced that also requires a Police Check, no new Police Check is required during that clearance period.

The responsible organisation (parish or diocese) is encouraged to pay for or subsidise Police Checks for voluntary positions. Where a position is remunerated, the individual employee could reasonably be expected to cover the cost of the Police Check, however, this is something that should be clarified in each ministry unit.

Police Check certificates will be noted as received, however, certificates are not to be stored in hard copy or electronic form. A certificate must be returned to the individual who has provided it, or destroyed/deleted.

Where a Police Check contains an adverse report the matter will be referred to the Diocesan Director of Professional Standards who will evaluate if the offence history is relevant to the role being undertaken and recommend a response.

The Diocese will accept a current registration card from the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) in lieu of a police check.

For those applying for a Police Check in Victoria the Diocese has arrangements in place for reduced application fees for those doing voluntary work. To be eligible for the Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) you must enter the Diocese's organisation code (02-96) when applying through Victoria Police. For more information regarding the Diocese's discount or the police check process contact the Registrar. Parish Priests can endorse the police check application on behalf of the Diocese.

Working with children check (WWCC)

Each state in Australia has a Working with Children Check (or equivalent) program and related legislation. They aim to enable organisations to protect children (or in some states, other vulnerable people) through screening of employees and volunteers. The Checks are mandatory for people engaged in organisations or roles that provide services to children or where children are likely to be involved. They look at relevant information from national criminal records over a person's lifetime as well as reports from courts or other relevant agencies and departments.

The checks are issued free for volunteers and a small fee applies where the person is employed or self-employed in a relevant role. A Working with Children Check is valid for five years but might be revoked if something occurs to invalidate the Check.

The government requirement for who must have a Working with Children Check is a minimum. Individual organisations, under Victorian legislation, can set additional requirements as part of their child safe and risk management policies and systems.

For more information of Working with Children Checks relevant to the Diocese of Wangaratta go to:

- For those engaged in work or relevant roles in Victoria - <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>
- For those engaged in work or relevant roles in NSW - <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/apply>

In the Diocese of Wangaratta a Working with Children Check, if required, must be provided prior to commencement in the specified role OR evidence provided that the WWCC application has been submitted.

For anyone involved in children's or youth ministry, the provision of a Licence and commencement of full duties cannot occur until the valid WWCC is received.

If a current WWCC is part way through the period of issue when starting in a new or additional role, the validity of the current WWCC must be verified. This can be done online by an authorised representative of the diocese and/or parish (as applicable). An authorised representative might be the parish priest, Parish Safe Church Officer or program coordinator, the Director of Professional Standards, Diocesan Registrar or Diocesan Safe Church Officer (as applicable, or as determined by Parish Council). The authorised representative will ensure the updated status of the Check is documented. Please refer to the Fact Sheet on Verifying WWCC for more information.

If an individual has an existing WWCC originally issued for the purposes of undertaking a role with a different organisation, as well as checking to ensure it is still valid, the WWCC official record must be updated to reflect the new employing or responsible organisation (i.e. the parish and the diocese).

When applying for a WWCC for the purposes of working, or engaging in a formal role, in a parish of the Diocese of Wangaratta, when identifying the relevant organisation/s in the application both the parish and diocese should be listed.

If an individual is deemed to be unsuitable to be issued with a WWCC, or if the WWCC becomes invalid during the period of issue, the Director of Professional Standards should be consulted to determine the most appropriate course of action.

A current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) card will be accepted by the Diocese in lieu of a Working with Children Check. When used in place of a WWCC the currency of the VIT registration must be checked annually. The registration status can be verified through the VIT website - <https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/search-the-register>.

Please note:

New notification requirements apply to VIT registered individuals from 1 September 2019.

VIT registered teachers and early childhood service workers... must notify Working with Children Check Victoria (WWCCV) of any child-related work they do outside of their school or early childhood service based position (whether paid or voluntary).

If a teacher's VIT registration is suspended or cancelled, WWCCV may notify the organisations listed that the teacher exemption no longer applies.

To notify WWCCV of their other child-related work, teachers must complete the 'Teacher notification' form. This form must be completed before the end of the 2019 school year.

To access the form, go to <https://service.vic.gov.au/services/teachers-notifications/>

This applies to anyone undertaking child or youth related work in the Diocese of Wangaratta who has submitted a VIT card in lieu of a WWCC.

Safe church training (SCT) / Safe church awareness workshop (SCAW)

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia has determined benchmarks for safe church training, with all dioceses expected to have a suitable training program in place. The Diocese of Wangaratta is a signatory to the Safe Church Training Agreement which provides a multi-denominational national training program including Safe Church Awareness Workshops and Safe Church Refresher Workshops. Training is provided across the Diocese several times a year. SCTA training provided in other areas and by other denominations is open to anyone wishing to register.

Safe Church Awareness Workshops are designed for all congregational members, all ministry leaders, and children, youth and family program leaders. Completion of the endorsed Safe Church training is a requirement for all licensed clergy and most lay ministry roles.

The responsible organisation (parish or diocese) is encouraged to pay for or subsidise safe church training, particularly for voluntary positions. However, this is something that should be clarified in each ministry unit.

This training is valid for 3 years and requires a refresher course when that period has expired.

Formal referee check

A referee check involves contacting a person's nominated referees to verify that they are suitable and safe for the role/s they are undertaking. The Safe Ministry Questionnaire developed by General Synod requires that two referees be nominated. In the Diocese of Wangaratta anyone in a role that requires completion of a Safe Ministry Questionnaire who has been in the parish for 2 years or less will require formal referee checks to be conducted and documented.

The parish priest or Parish Safe Church Officer will conduct the referee checks. The outcome of the check will be recorded on the Diocese's Referee Check Record form and a copy provided to the Registry. Should an unsatisfactory result arise from any referee check, the matter will be referred to the Director of Professional Standards for further investigation. The DPS will determine whether the subject of the check is suitable to undertake the role/s in question.

Other role-specific certification

Some roles might require certification or completion of training relevant to that particular role, such as safe food handling, privacy, governance, risk management or ministry-specific training.

A note on certified documents

In the event that you need to provide certified copies of clearance documentation, be aware that any member of clergy who is an authorised marriage celebrant can legally certify your documentation. Alternatively, you can have documents signed by a Justice of the Peace or other authorised person. Click on the following link for more people who are [authorised to certify](#) documentation.