



Patrons

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Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA

Minister for Volunteering

7th floor Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
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By email: Minister.Beazley@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Minister Beazley,

Re: Volunteer Screening Checks – Feedback from the Volunteering WA Expert Reference Group

The Expert Reference Group (ERG) on Volunteer Screening Checks met on 12 February 2026 and resolved to write to you to congratulate you on the successful roll-out of the new digitised NDIS screening check renewal. This is an important step towards reforming Volunteer Screening in Western Australia.

We are grateful that the Executive Director Regulation and Quality, Strategy and Partnership at the Department of Communities, Angelo Barbaro, continues to attend our ERG meetings. Mr Barbaro provides the group with valuable updates on progress with the government's program to digitise volunteer screening checks.

The ERG wish to take this opportunity to affirm our readiness to assist government with beta testing of the new online Volunteer Working With Children Check Portal, which Mr Barbaro has confirmed is on track to be launched in around July 2026.

We understand that the project to fully digitise Volunteer NDIS screening check applications will then commence, with anticipated completion by the end of 2026. Again, the ERG is ready to assist government with advice and beta testing, to ensure this vital service improvement is delivered as soon as possible.

In February, Mr Barbaro also updated the group on progress with legislative reform in this area. We understand that legislative amendments to better align the WA legislation with Working with Children Screening Checks Nationally is currently before the Western Australian Parliament.

Mr Barbaro also explained that you will shortly be considering a report on public submissions proposing further reforms the Working With Children Check legislation, which were made in response to a government discussion paper issued in 2025. The ERG made a submission and we are ready to provide you with a briefing on the volunteer sector's perspectives on proposed legislative reforms.

Enclosed are findings of case study feedback that the Expert Reference Group on Volunteer Screening have collected from Volunteers and Volunteer Managers in 2025 and 2026. These findings emphasise that while efficiencies and improvements to the current system are needed, the transition to one volunteer portal to enable fully digitised applications and renewals for all volunteer screening checks including the NDIS and Working With Children Checks, and a digital wallet or volunteer passport, need to be the priority focus for government.

We are pleased to continue to advise the government on these priorities.

Yours sincerely,



Tina Williams
CEO, Volunteering WA
3 March 2026



Kane Blackman, CEO Good Sammy
Chairperson, Expert reference Group- Volunteer Screening
3 March 2026

Enclosure
Case study analysis

Case Study Feedback – Volunteer Screening Checks

Background

In October 2025 the Expert Reference Group on Volunteer Screening Checks approved online collection of case studies for volunteers and volunteer managers via a [short form](#) on the Volunteering WA Expert Reference Group webpage.

A detailed analysis is attached.

The majority of Volunteer respondents were aged care visitors who had received assistance in completing their National Police Clearance application.

Although fewer responses were received from Volunteer Managers, those who responded came from a broader range of organisations and provided richer data.

The suggestions received for improvements to screening check processes received from Volunteers and Volunteer Managers were aligned.

Analysis of case study responses

Volunteer demographics:

Volunteers range in age from 16 to 85. Many volunteers are on a low income.

The Volunteer Manager responses received highlighted 12 key issues which we have grouped into 3 sections, positive feedback, current issues and suggested reforms:

Positive feedback for the WA Government

1. The WAPOL Volunteer National Police Clearance process is easier than the process required by private National Police Clearance providers, and seems to require less ID.

Current issues

2. Volunteer Involving Organisations spend an average of 3 hours a month providing assistance to each volunteer applicant with screening checks.
3. The Department of Transport, which processes the NDIS checks, is regarded as the most significant barrier for aged care service providers.
4. There are lengthy delays with obtaining WWCC checks (decisions on applications are taking up to 4 weeks now). The delays are resulting in volunteer hours lost; as organisational child safeguarding policies prevent the volunteers starting before the check is approved.
5. Online renewals for Working With children Checks (WWCC) are not working and applicants are having to attend a post office and apply for a new screening check.
6. The exceptional circumstances process for Volunteer National Police Clearances where volunteers lack ID is time consuming.
7. Low- income earners who volunteer often have no access to the internet- except at libraries which makes it difficult to complete screening checks and online induction

Suggested reforms:

8. There should be simple online application and renewal processes.
9. There should be a single process/ one screening check. If we had a one screen fits all, NPC, NDIS, WWC that would save a lot of time and money for both the volunteer and the organisation.

10. There is a need for a centralised service that provides support to individuals who need assistance to apply for these checks.
11. There is a need for a centralised system where the details are logged and accessible by VIOs. This would provide access to credentials such as National Police Clearances and screening checks obtained for other roles and reference checks.
12. Clearer guidance is needed.

The Volunteer responses received highlighted 7 key issues which we have grouped under the categories of current issues and suggested reforms:

Current issues

1. The waiting time for the results and verification for the NDIS took longer than expected.

Suggested reforms:

2. The need to streamline the number of screening checks conducted.
3. Volunteers want a Volunteer Passport, i.e. a system that allows volunteers to share verified credentials with Volunteering Involving Organisations instead of having to repeat the same checks every time they join a new organisation.
4. Volunteers want free screening checks.
5. Volunteers want clear, simple, online checks.
6. Volunteers want in-person assistance to complete checks for those who need it.
7. Providing a short guide or video explaining each step, expected waiting time, and common issues would help new volunteers feel more confident during the screening process.

Key documents/links

TAB A- Detailed summary of Volunteer Manager responses

TAB B- Detailed summary of Volunteer responses

TAB A – Detailed summary of Volunteer Manager Responses (N=6)

Type of work done by the respondent organisations

Helping people with a disability to reach their employment goals, Assistance for Refugees and Asylum seekers, Residential Aged Care, Community Aged Care Services and a Volunteer Resource Centre

Volunteer demographic (total number of volunteers in the organisation, estimated average age, describe other known volunteer demographics)

The mean number of volunteers engaged was 120 with the minimum number of volunteers engaged by a respondent being 24 and the maximum being 200.

The age range of volunteers engaged by the organisations was 16-85 years old.

One organisation gave a more detailed breakdown of their volunteer demographic:

About 60% are older i.e. self-funded retirees or aged pensioners, the remainder are mixed with many low-income students and many full-time employees and many volunteers with lived experience as humanitarian entrants who want to give back and who may be in low paid jobs or on benefits.

Type of work done by volunteers for the organisation

- Disability employment support;
- Support for asylum seekers and refugees including Emergency Relief, a Food Pantry and one-on-one support:
- Residential Aged Care:
- Volunteering with the aged
- Volunteering with people with a disability
- Volunteer Drivers
- Volunteer Kitchen support
- Volunteer Day club support
- Supporting Volunteer Resource Centre/ Community Centre / Toy Library / Library programs mainly Digital Tech help

All respondent Volunteer Managers needed their volunteers to complete 2 different screening checks

4 Volunteering organisations required an NDIS screening check and a National Police Clearance

2 Volunteering organisations required a National Police Clearance and Working With Children Check

Number of volunteer applicants per month who do not complete the volunteering screening process

A mean of 18 volunteers a month did not complete the volunteer screening process

Number of potential volunteering hours lost per month as a result of volunteer applicants not completing screening process

The figures provided ranged from 0 to 1800 hours per month with the mean being 451.75 hours lost per month.

Estimated number of hours taken by the organisation to assist each volunteer to complete the screening process (e.g. reimbursement of fees, explaining the process etc)

The mean was 3.125 hours per month per volunteer with the lowest figure being 30 minutes and the highest being 10 hours.

If you could change anything about the screening process, what would it be?

- Allow people to do everything online
- If we had a one screen fits all, NPC, NDIS, WWC that would save a lot of time and money for both the volunteer and the organisation.
- A centralised system where the details are logged and accessible by VIOs. This would provide access to credentials such as National Police Clearances and screening checks obtained for other roles and reference checks.
- A single process.

- Clearer guidance
- Online portals need to be working effectively and simplified
- The Working with Children new website is not working, and applicants have to go to Post Office to apply or reapply.
- A centralised service that provides support to individuals who need assistance to apply for these checks. Low- income earners who volunteer also often have no access to internet- except at libraries which makes it difficult to complete screening checks and online induction.
- The company uses a private screening check provider for our National Police Clearance (NPC) (Staff renewals and Volunteers), see attached the ID requirements – which include both sides of ID documents AND a ‘selfie with one of their ID documents’. This process has progressively gotten harder and harder for volunteers to complete a check in the past 3+ years. We use an online portal that Volunteers who are tech savvy can complete themselves from the comfort of their home – which is great but for our older volunteers it is problematic. Without one commencement and secondary document, you need to complete a special provision application but those who are eligible for that are very limited. This often means our 70+ aged volunteers are sometimes expected to go through the rigmarole of applying to Births, Deaths and Marriages and paying for a copy of their birth certificates or in some cases, marriage certificates (as their names have changed), in order to satisfy the ID requirements for the NPC.
- The DoT being the institution to process the NDIS checks is our most significant barrier and would be our key issue that we would hope to be resolved for the Aged Care Screen. We have often had to spend time meeting with volunteers to help them to set up a DoT account online due to low computer literacy, lack of access to technology and/or lack of an email address. There have been multiple (typically older female) applicants who never drove, and all vehicles had been registered in their partner’s names, who have needed to set-up a DoT account solely for this purpose; although we have no data on numbers – many have dropped out because they found this part too involved. If/when we overcome that hurdle, we also then need to support them through the actual online lodgement process which is another cause for drop-outs.
- Another provider was saying they found [private National Police Screening Check provider] too involved and we had the same experience. Whilst awaiting the rollout of the new check, we elected to move away from [Name of provider] and transitioned to the VNPC facilitated by WAPOL about 6 months ago. This check requires less ID documents and has a simpler online portal (on both the applicant and administrator end). We’re finding that applicants are more successfully completing the process independently on this portal, requiring less time-spend on our end, so a mirroring of this platform (with an added option for online lodgement) would be an improvement over the NDIS process. Originally, there had been intent that the WAPOL VNPC could also be lodged at a post office, which was part of the reason we originally elected to go with this check. This functionality was removed just before we started using the check, but we do find that whenever volunteers have struggled with [name of provider] or other providers, that they’re often inclined to want to go to a post office to obtain a check there. If there was a physical location to go to for online support, Australia Post’s local footprint would likely best suit volunteer applicants.

Is there anything you feel may support potential volunteers through the screening process?

If we had a one screen fits all, NPC, NDIS, WWC that would save a lot of time and money for both the volunteer and the organisation.

Do you have any other information to share?

On 2 February 2025 a tech savvy volunteer sent an email to the charity providing assistance to asylum seekers explaining the WWCC online renewal kept dropping out and so they were going to have to lodge a new paper form instead of completing an online renewal. The Volunteer Manager explained that this process means the volunteer would either need to come to the office to collect a form or the office would have to post it (\$3), and the volunteer will then need to attend a post office in person to lodge it:

Hi (Name of Volunteer Manager)

I hope you had a lovely weekend. I've been trying for the last month to do this renewal online, but there's problems with the system so I'm giving up and going with the paper form. I will be at Star Street this morning. Any chance you'll be there so I can get your signature?

Thanks (Name of volunteer)

The Volunteer Manager from the respondent Volunteer Resource Centre explained she had had difficulties using the Working With Children Check service herself:

I had to use this service. What a nightmare! No phone number to call. Mine was just a renewal, but in the end had to go through full Post Office application again.

TAB B – Detailed summary of responses from individual volunteers (N=17):

Type of volunteering undertaken:

Aged Care, Community Aged Care, Education, a Charity Opportunity Shop and Surf Lifesaving.

Proportion of respondents who volunteer for more than one organisation:

18% of respondents volunteered for 2 different organisations.

Types of screening checks required by the respondents:

- 94% of respondents required a National Police Clearance for their role. The majority of respondents (82%) were aged care visitors who received assistance in completing their national police clearance through the Aged Care Visitors Scheme.
- 12% of respondents required a Working With Children Check, one of these was in a Surf Lifesaving Association and the other worked in a school.
- 12% of respondents required an NDIS check for their volunteer role.

Proportion of respondents required to provide proof of vaccination:

- 12 % of respondents provided proof of vaccination for their volunteer role in Aged Care.

Number of respondents who required multiple screening checks:

- 30% of respondents were required to obtain 2 screening checks

Breakdown of multiple screening check group by type of checks:

- 2 respondents required both a National Police Clearance and an NDIS check for their volunteer role in Aged Care.
- 1 respondent required a police clearance and a Working With Children Check for her 2 different volunteering roles.
- 2 respondents required 2 polices clearances each, for 2 different volunteering roles.

Specific Feedback from volunteers is grouped by screening check below

Working With Children Check (application)	
What did you find straightforward about the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was clear what had to be completed
What did you find challenging about the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting photos taken and aligning a time with a post office. Also it can be confusing if payment was meant to be made.
What would you change about the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make application online
Is there anything you feel may support potential volunteers through the screening process?	N/A
NDIS check	
What did you find straightforward about the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online application was clear, and the organisation provided helpful instructions, so completing the forms and uploading my documents was easy and well-organised.
What did you find challenging about the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The processing time for NDIS Worker Screening Check can be lengthy. The challenges related to vaccine side effects. • Waiting for the results and verification took longer than expected, and understanding the difference between the police check and NDIS check was at the beginning a bit confusing
What would you change about the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would make the process faster by improving communication and providing updates quicker so applicants can easily track the progress of their screening checks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hope vaccinations won't be mandatory.
<p>Is there anything you feel may support potential volunteers through the screening process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Passport, Advocate for or use a system that allows volunteers share verified credentials. This prevents from having to repeat the same checks every time they join a new group. • Providing a short guide or video explaining each step, expected waiting time, and common issues would help new volunteers feel more confident during the screening process.
<p>National Police Clearance</p>	
<p>What did you find straightforward about the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was done for me. I just provided ID's and that was it • I had nothing to do with it - Advocare applied for and obtained it. • The online application was clear, and the organisation provided helpful instructions, so completing the forms and uploading my documents was easy and well-organised. • Once the details are finalised it doesn't take long for the results. • Form was easy to follow • The whole process was smooth and straightforward • Yes. With the help of volunteering team the process is straightforward. • ED Connect WA paid for this and the procedure via their coordinator was very efficient and smooth • The process was straightforward, but it took some time to gather all the documents and wait for the checks to be completed • I just completed a form and presented ID infinity • The police check was easy. The low fee was not a barrier to becoming a volunteer. I hold AFP police certificates and security clearances for work • Easy online application
<p>What did you find challenging about the process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling in all the details which is time consuming, and the cost, which paid yearly can be expensive for volunteers who are not paid for their services. • Each role needs a separate Police Clearance
<p>What would you change about the process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This check should be free for volunteers, or it may deter some from offering this valuable service. Volunteers saves huge amounts of money where otherwise paid services would be required. • It could be improved by making it faster • If the registrations had a longer validity date I think costs could be saved but maybe some people could slip through the checking unless there was a 'flag' with Police • Free police checks. Volunteering is an act of community service and volunteers give their time and skills to support others. Removing this cost encourages people to volunteer and ensures fairness. • A simplified, straightforward method would be more beneficial, especially when it has to be renewed annually, and removal of cost of screening. • One application for both roles [applicant was volunteering for 2 different organisations and required 2 police clearances] and longer timeframe [assume his respondent means before check expires]
<p>Is there anything you feel may support potential volunteers through the screening process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free police checks would be the most effective ways to support potential volunteers. Many people are willing to help but are deterred by the cost especially for the low incomers. • No Fees for obtaining the NPC certificate • Free police screening tests, especially for new volunteers who might find this a stumbling block. • The process in place used by Ed Connect WA would be a vey positive model to follow. • Unemployed or retired volunteers should have the WA police check fee waived so it is not a burden for them to become a volunteer. • Awareness of documents required