



Patrons

His Excellency The Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM
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and Mrs Darrilyn Dawson

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Angelo Barbaro

Acting/Executive Director, Regulation and Quality Professional Standards, Regulation and Legal
Department of Communities
PO Box 8553, Perth BC, WA 6849

CC The Hon. Hannah Beazley, Minister for Volunteering;
Mike Rowe, Director General, Department of Communities

By email

Dear Angelo,

Re: Expert Reference Group scoping recommendations for the new online screening check portal.

Thank you for inviting Volunteering WA’s Expert Reference Group to provide our scoping recommendations for the design of the Department of Communities’ new online screening portal.

As discussed at the Expert Reference Group meeting on 15 September, we are keen to help the Department of Communities with this design process by offering advice and assistance with beta testing of your new screening checks prior to launch.

We have recently made two submissions on volunteer screening checks to the Department of Communities and to the Federal Departments of Finance and Treasury. These submissions are relevant to your design process and we recommend that they be provided to the project consultants so that the recommendations can be incorporated into the project plan. The federal submission is especially relevant. It is vital to take this opportunity at a State level to build the best possible online portal to enable a smooth and effective transition to one nationally recognised screening check. We have included links to our submissions below:

Name of submission with hyperlink	Date submitted
Volunteering WA Submission to national Worker Screening Check Consultation	October 2025
Volunteering WA submission to Phase 2 Working with Children Check legislative reforms consultation.	September 2025

In addition to the recommendations in our submissions, we ask that the consultant's scope for the project design include the following key recommendations, presented in four sections; volunteer applicants, volunteer involving organisations, data and reporting, and other considerations:

Volunteer Applicants

1. One portal for all volunteer screening checks, will allow one, seamless and clear entry point for all volunteers. This should be separate from the entry point for paid employees.
2. Aligned with our national screening check submission, we suggest designing a system which will be able to accommodate a tiered single check screening check approach, with a base Working With Children Check with no fraud records, followed by a combined NDIS and Aged Care check.
3. The screening check must be available in digital format for those with access to digital wallets and should also be able to be printed in hard copy format if required.
4. The screening checks must be portable between Volunteer involving Organisations.
5. A zero-dollar fee for volunteers seeking a screening check. Invoicing and payment are an administrative burden for the volunteer and for the Volunteer Involving Organisation (VIO) as volunteers need to provide personal bank details to the VIO for reimbursement. This is an un-necessary privacy and fraud risk and an administrative burden for all parties. A free system is the most efficient and aligns nationally with free volunteer screening checks already in place around Australia.
6. Applicants should be able to access the online portal on mobiles and other smart devices as well as on PCs.
7. The process and language need to be clear and simple and in plain English with features such as address prefilling prompts to assist applicants.
8. It should be easy to upload multiple documents.
9. Where a volunteer applicant is unable to complete an application through the online portal, the portal should clearly direct them to the alternative analogue process.
10. If it is possible to translate the online form into the most common community languages then we encourage you to do so.

Volunteer Involving Organisations

11. The VIO point of contact should be able to delegate their portal access to another staff member of their team as required. Having only one VIO point of contact in large organisations is problematic and inefficient.
12. Ability for VIOs to upload details of new or renewing or former volunteers in bulk to the portal.
13. If possible, the portal should be able to integrate with other commonly used VIO platforms such as membership databases.
14. The online portal must comply with and meet the Office of Digital Government's accessibility guidelines.
15. A dashboard should be provided to VIOs so that each organisation can see the progress of their applicants and can also see when one of their volunteer's screening checks is expiring. Similarly, organisations need to be able to easily upload changes of details to the portal when volunteers leave the organisation or change their name or address.
16. VIOs want volunteers to continue to be able to commence on lodgement but also require rapid streamlined responses for simple checks.

Data and Reporting

17. The new portal must allow accurate de-identified data collection and reporting to promote transparency and enable effective evaluation and where necessary improvements to volunteer screening check processes.

Other considerations

18. Many volunteers are older with no email address and no computer literacy, others are financially disadvantaged with no device nor internet access, while some might live in remote areas with no reception and poor or no internet access. A parallel and equally simple and clear and well-resourced analogue process is needed for the digitally excluded. The process must be streamlined, efficient and involve contact with only one agency or government department.
19. The alternative analogue process should not be auspiced by the Department of Transport. Australia Post is preferred.
20. Where older or disadvantaged volunteers have insufficient identification to obtain a volunteer screening check, then there should be pathways for those applicants to apply for a free Identity card and where necessary a free birth certificate.
21. Where necessary, organisations such as Volunteer Resource Centres and Community Resource Centres should be resourced to assist volunteers to obtain screening checks.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these recommendations which will ensure a successful transition to the new online screening portal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my Manager, Policy and Research, Dominique@volunteeringwa.org.au if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



Tina Williams

CEO, Volunteering WA

17 October 2025