



The Hon Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo 5am 13 June 2012

SAFER AND SIMPLER CHECK FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

The system for running background checks on people working with children will be made simpler, safer and more widely available, under new legislation tabled today by Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello.

“The NSW Government is modernising the Working With Children Check by extending its breadth and depth and making it consistent with other states,” Mr Dominello said.

“The new Working With Children Check will provide the same check for all people working with children, whether they are paid workers, self-employed, volunteers, carers or other adults living in a foster carer’s house.

“It accesses broader criminal histories and has only two outcomes – a clearance or a bar. This is a significant departure from the current system where some employers can choose whether or not to employ a high risk person.

“The check is valid for five years for all child-related employment, with new NSW criminal records continuously monitored. This is another improvement on the current legislation, which requires workers to be checked at recruitment only.

“All new Working With Children Checks will be conducted by experts at the Commission for Children and Young People rather than several agencies. People will be able to go online to apply for or verify a Working With Children Check, meaning less paperwork for employers,” Mr Dominello said.

As with the current Check, an adult convicted of a serious sex offence or serious violence against a child, or with pending charges for such an offence, will be automatically barred from working with children.

The new Working With Children Check will be phased in over five years, with the first new Checks starting later this year. The new Check will be free for volunteers while paid workers will pay \$80 – which works out at just \$16 a year over five years and is below the national average.

Not everyone who comes into contact with children is required to undergo the Working With Children Check – it is reserved for people whose work is focussed on children and whose work requires ongoing role-oriented contact with children. Regulations will outline definitions of child-related work and exemptions from the Check, including for parents volunteering with their own children.

“NSW was the first state in Australia to establish a Working With Children Check and these changes will ensure it remains an internationally recognised safeguard for protecting children and young people,” Mr Dominello said.

Media contact: Laura Hofman 0411 261 837