



WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

This information should be circulated as widely as possible within the Association and clubs.

The Victorian Government has legislated that persons who work with children must undergo checks on their criminal records. Persons who have a conviction for a relevant criminal offence (sex, drug and violent offences) will be prohibited from working with children.

The Working With Children Act creates offences carrying very high penalties for non-compliance and those offences apply not just to the persons working with the children but to their supervisors, organisations employing them and Committee/Board members of organisation in which the people work with children.

In representative basketball, the Working With Children Checks will replace police checks.

The Act does have some exemptions. Police and teachers (who have separate checks) do not have to get a Working With Children Check. However, they should give you some proof that they are police or teachers such as a copy of the teacher's Institute of Teaching card. These exemptions will be recognised by Basketball Victoria.

The Act also exempts parents where their children are playing in the team in which the parent is involved as a coach etc. Also exempt are adults where all children in a team are closely related to the person. **However, Basketball Victoria will not recognise these exemptions and will require those parents or close relatives to have Working With Children Checks.** This is in line with most sports and this sort of measure has the support of the Working With Children Office.

The Working With Children Checks will last for 5 years.

In addition, Basketball Victoria has introduced a Statutory Declaration to be completed by each person required to undergo a Working With Children Check. This declaration covers a variety of matters outside the Working With Children Checks. This must be completed at least every 2 ½ years. If a person cannot truthfully sign the declaration, that person should write to the Registrar of the Member Protection Tribunal in confidence setting out the reason why the declaration cannot be truthfully made. A decision will then be made on whether the person should be working with children. A copy of the declaration is attached.

The Act requires all persons working with children to have the check if they have or are likely to have individual and unsupervised contact with children. This will

include coaches, team managers and drivers and will also include referees and referee coaches. Associations and clubs are urged to err on the side of caution in deciding who should be screened and screen a person if there is any doubt on whether or not they required to be screened. All Committee/Board members are also required to be screened, whether or not they have individual and unsupervised contact with children. Persons under 18 are not required to be screened.

Applying for Working With Children Checks is relatively easy and free for volunteers. It is similar to applying for a passport and you will need a passport type photograph and appropriate identification similar to opening a new bank account. Forms and an information pack may be obtained from most Post Offices or by calling the WWC Information Line on 1300 652 879. You will need to attend the Post Office personally to lodge the check. You should ensure that all persons applying name your association or club in the application so that you receive direct advice when they have been approved or otherwise.

Further information can be obtained from:
www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren .

If you have any queries please contact me and I will endeavour to assist.

Gerry Glennen