

Elwood Sailing Club

September 26, 2017

Working With Children Check Now a Requirement for Members and Volunteers

Dear Member or Volunteer,

Changes to the Working With Children Act 2005 that came into effect on 1 August 2017 directly affect our club's operations. All members over the age of 18 now need to hold a valid Working With Children Check ("WWCC") so that the club can operate without the need to manage each event or occasion with a case-by-case assessment of 'which roles require WWCC?' and 'who of the people available have WWCC, or have applied for WWCC, or are exempt?'.

Background

The Working with Children Check in Victoria (WWCC) helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and professional conduct, and by preventing those who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them. Not everyone who has contact with children needs a WWCC: only people who are doing child-related work and who are not exempt need a Check. This applies to both paid and volunteer workers.

WWCC applies to adults having direct contact with children under the age of 18 as part of their work, and includes at sports clubs. The term "working" specifically includes employees, volunteers and committee members. Contact with children is defined as being part of the duties, not incidental to the work. Adults who are participating in an activity in the same way as a child, for example both are sailing in a race, are not required to have WWCC for that specific activity.

Amendments to the WWCC came into effect on 1 August 2017. Individuals that previously did not require a WWCC may now need one to undertake their role. The following are included in the amendments:

- Expands the definition of '**direct contact**' with children. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
- Removes references to '**supervision**'. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a WWCC.
- Enables the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Regulation to compel the production of certain information for the purpose of compliance monitoring

Implications for ESC

Elwood Sailing Club is committed to child safety. Our Statement of Commitment includes preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Some clubs have non-sailing volunteers who man the safety boats and perform other duties, and as a result most of their members do not require WWCC. Other clubs are in the same position as ESC, where we rely on the full participation of members and volunteers in club activities, including duties where direct contact with children may be required. Following discussions with a number of

clubs, Sailing Australia, WWCC Hotline and legal advice we have concluded that at ESC the following will require WWCC:

- Committee members, employees, the training team
- Members or non-members who have duties or who volunteer for roles where direct contact with children is or could be part of that duty. Examples include crewing on a start or rescue boat and directing or assisting children who are sailing; supervising a child on a rescue boat; assisting in Discover Sailing days or training activities; directing a child at a working B; potentially some club social activities.

Given the breadth of the requirement for WWCC we have concluded that all adult members and volunteers, with limited exceptions, should have WWCC. This will both support our commitment to child safety and ensure all adult members and volunteers can fully participate in club activities with children who may be present without the need to run each occasion only with people who have WWCC or are exempt.

What is Required of Members and Volunteers?

All members and volunteers need to apply for a WWCC, unless they are exempt. Passing a Check allows you to engage in child-related work or volunteering for five years while your criminal record continues to be monitored.

You may be exempt from this requirement if you are:

- A parent or part of the extended family of a child, who volunteers or has duties in an activity in which that child is participating, or normally participates; or
- A teacher currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching; or
- A Victorian or Federal police officer; or
- A young person under the age of 18 years

Social members do not participate in club events or have duties and are not required to have WWCC however we encourage social members to apply for WWCC. Any social members who may wish to volunteer for club events will require WWCC.

Applying for WWCC

The WWCC application is very simple and is online. It takes 5-10 minutes to complete, followed by a visit to a participating Post Office for a photo. There is no cost unless you are applying as an employee. Application and more information about the check are available at:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/apply+for+a+check/>

1. Complete your personal details, select volunteer, then for “occupational fields select number 42 “clubs, associations or movements of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature”.
2. At the question “do you know which specific organization you will be doing paid and/or volunteer child-related work for” please nominate Elwood Sailing Club, Post Office Box 14, Elwood, Vic 3184, phone 03 9531 4743.
3. You can verify your identity online by selecting 2 documents from a list, for example your driving licence number, passport number, medicare number. There are other acceptable documents.

4. When you have completed your online application you will be sent an email to take to a participating post office along with the documents you nominated on the form. The post office will check your documents and take your picture. If you are applying for an Employee Check you will need to pay the application fee. There is no charge for unpaid volunteers/members.
5. Your WWCC will be sent to you. Delivery may take from 3-12 weeks although we have seen recent approvals in less than 2 weeks.
6. ESC will be advised of your application and your WWCC numbers and expiry date, and can verify that under the act you are eligible to start the "work" before a WWCC is issued.

Working With Children at ESC before Jan 1, 2018

- It is intended that all members and volunteers who are not exempt will have a WWCC by January 1, 2018 at the latest.
- Before that date club will need to review each event and activity case-by-case to determine which roles require WWCC and ensure these roles are filled by members, volunteers and staff who have either have WWCC, or have applied for WWCC, or are exempt. There may be occasions when members or volunteers who do not meet these requirements will not be permitted to take part in a duty or activity.

Information You Need to Provide to the Club

If you have not previously done so please provide the following information to the club manager Amanda Innes manager@elwoodsc.com

- For adults with existing WWCC: provide a scan or photocopy of your WWCC, its number and expiry date, or show the card to Amanda
- For adults who are exempt provide the reason for your exemption
- If you are a life member but you do not participate in club activities other than the occasional social activity, and therefore do not require a WWCC please advise
- If you have applied for a WWCC but do not nominate ESC as your organization provide the date of application and the application number which will be sent to you while your application is being processed.

Questions?

The WWCC website provides full information on the background and processes summarized here.

For questions on the ESC process please contact our manager Amanda Innes on manager@elwoodsc.com or a member of the committee.

Please support this important request and apply for your WWCC ASAP! This will allow our club to meet its legal obligations and supports our commitment to child safety.

David Wilkinson

Secretary Elwood Sailing Club

secretary@elwoodsc.com