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# STANDARD POLICY

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## **Document Title**

Child Protection

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**1. DOCUMENT SCOPE**

This Policy covers all The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory Corps and Centre staff

**2. POLICY**



**AUSTRALIA SOUTHERN TERRITORY  
Official Minutes**

(Documents Attached)

<b>Issued To:</b>	<b>ACTIVE OFFICERS</b>	<b>CODE CPP 0509 SECTION 1 - THQ</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>CHILD PROTECTION POLICY</b>	

**POLICY OBJECTIVE**

This policy is established to provide guidelines for the procedure of police checking 'Youth and Children's Ministries' (YCM) workers within The Salvation Army, Australia Southern Territory. It is a basis for processing and assessing all applications for a satisfactory police check.

This minute now encompasses the Federal Government's Working With Children Check (also referred to as Working with Children Card or "Green Card") currently only functioning in Victoria and Western Australia that The Salvation Army, Australia Southern Territory have incorporated into the police checking procedure.

**RATIONALE FOR POLICE CHECKING**

There are three main reasons for conducting police checks and WWCC for all Officers and workers in The Salvation Army, Australia Southern Territory. The police checks are conducted to provide protection for the young people, the workers and The Salvation Army.

**Protection for the Young People**

YCM workers in The Salvation Army aim to provide a safe environment where children under 18 years of age feel accepted, cared for and esteemed. They aim to help young people discover Jesus and their place in God's world, in an environment that is age appropriate and conducive to learning. It is YCM workers responsibility to care for young people by protecting them from anything that may be harmful whilst in our care. In our best efforts to protect these young people, we need to offer them the best workers, who are dedicated to providing high quality care on behalf of The Salvation Army.

**Protection for the Workers**

YCM workers hold positions of responsibility and trust in The Salvation Army. In accepting YCM workers in The Salvation Army, it is important to ensure that they are suited to their position and, as part of the team, want to

provide the best possible care for the young people. The implementation of police checking demonstrates our commitment and support for adequate care and prevention of insecure and dangerous environments for young people. Police checking will help to detect, deter or make it unlikely to have undesirable or inappropriate people engaging in work with young people in The Salvation Army. Police checking and adequate screening of potential YCM workers protects the worker's self esteem and the reputation and effectiveness of the whole team.

### **Protection for The Salvation Army**

It is an unfortunate fact of life that some people are not suited for work with children. Some of these people seek access to children through their position of trust in churches and volunteer organisations. It is now documented that unsuitable people may spend many years in an organisation before abusive behaviour is displayed or discovered. Churches' credibility to provide adequate safeguards against potential situations is increasingly being questioned. Police checks are expected by the community as an effective procedure in screening suitable applications for working with children. The Salvation Army has a moral and legal responsibility to minimise the risk of potential abusive situations, by adequately screening YCM workers through the police checking procedure.

### **Definitions**

**Youth and Children's Ministries (YCM) Worker** - any person who has a role, which requires direct ongoing contact with young people in Salvation Army activities.

**Children/Child** - any person below the age of 18.

**Officer** - all active Officers (including Cadets and Envoys) serving in the Australian Southern Territory. (Retired Officers serving in YCM are to be viewed as volunteers (non-paid) for Police Check purposes).

**Volunteer** - any person providing services for The Salvation Army without remuneration.

**Activity** - elements that make up a programme e.g. a bush dance, a picnic, a lesson, a Drama, games, a Bible study, a hike or a fundraising event, etc.

**Paid employee** - any person who receives income from The Salvation Army.

**Child Safe Coordinator** - person within The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory authorised to record WWCC or divisional police check notifications.

**Suitable for Youth and Children's Ministries** - the applicant has no disclosable police record of convictions associated with sexual or violent crimes, involvement in pornography, or domestic violence.

**Unsuitable for Youth and Children's Ministries** - the applicant has a disclosable police record of convictions associated with sexual or violent crimes, involvement in pornography, or domestic violence.

**Nominated Person** - a nominated person from the Personnel Department at Territorial Headquarters who is authorised to deal with the appeal process. The current nominated person is Director - Employee Relations.

### **Working with Children Check (WWCC)**

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) helps to protect children from sexual or physical harm by checking a person's criminal history for serious sexual, violence or drug offences and findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWCC offers a mandatory minimum-checking standard, Victoria and Western Australia utilise WWCC with the remaining states continuing with a state-based police checking system.

### **ChildSafe**

The Risk Management system The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory have adopted as a benchmark for the appointment of safe people and the delivery of safe programmes in Youth and Children's Ministry.

### **Checking Procedure**

1. The Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator will send out an updated annual list to all corps (with a copy to the person responsible for Divisional Youth and/or Children's Ministries) of YCM workers on the Police Checks Database listed for their Corps/Division. An updated annual list of Officers will be sent to the respective Divisional Secretary for Officer Personnel/Divisional Commander/Regional Officer. Prospective Candidates and Envoys will receive forms as part of their application process.

Cadets will complete a new Police Checks Application forms in September of the 2nd year of their training.

2. YCM workers, officers, cadets, prospective candidates and envoys are to complete either a WWCC (Vic & WA only) or a state-based police check (Tas, NT, SA).
3. YCM workers, officers, cadets, prospective candidates and envoys are to indicate that they have completed ChildSafe (LAPS) level 1 training (quiz) at the time any new WWCC or police check is applied for. This training is provided by divisions throughout the year.
4. For the benefit of corps officers YCM workers should also complete form if not previously completed. This is on the CD located in the ChildSafe "A ChildSafe Organisation" manual.

### **WHO DOES NOT NEED TO OBTAIN A POLICE CHECK OR WWCC?**

#### **Working With Children Check (WWCC)**

Any individual who does not have ONGOING contact with children. This may include corporate volunteers and THQ/DHQ/Officer Training College staff who do not work directly with children.

#### **State-based Police Checks**

Any Divisional Employee who does not work directly with Children.

#### **Confidentiality**

The Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator is to ensure that confidentiality is the main priority in the police checking and WWCC procedure. Police check notifications, WWCC assessment notices and all correspondence to applicants will be kept in a locked cabinet. All correspondence with applicants, corps officers, and Divisional Youth and Candidates Secretaries will be marked "strictly confidential". Any telephone calls to discuss confidential issues with applicants will be conducted in an isolated area. All documentation and recording of information will be stored on computer, which is accessible only to the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator.

Once individuals have received their WWCC card and number, the card must be sited by the Corps Office and the number recorded in a locked database held at the Corps. Individuals should carry their WWCC with them at all times whilst engaging in work with children.

Information regarding completion of ChildSafe (LAPS) training can be requested by Corps Officers in writing through the person responsible for divisional youth and/or children's ministries.

## **PROCEDURE FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA, TASMANIA, NORTHERN TERRITORY**

### **Police Checks**

South Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania are to obtain police check forms from DHQ/RO and submit to their local police authority. The local police authority will send the police check result to the DHQ/RO address listed by the applicant.

If the applicant is deemed suitable for YCM work, a letter to the applicant stating their suitability will be sent from DHQ/RO. The letter is to be sent through corps mail, and is to be sealed and marked "strictly confidential".

- a. In Tasmania, this will be sent by the Divisional Children's Ministry Coordinator.
- b. In South Australia, this will be sent by the Divisional Police Checks Coordinator.
- c. In the Northern Territory, this will be sent by the Regional Youth and Children Secretary.

The corps officer is to receive notification of suitability of applicants in a letter, to be marked "strictly confidential".

If the police check certificate discloses a police record deeming an applicant unsuitable to work in youth and children's ministries, the Divisional Commander/Regional Officer is to contact the corps officer and the person responsible for Divisional Youth and/or Children's Ministries, by telephone, to inform them of the applicant's unsuitability. All details of conversations and outcomes will be confidentially documented and forwarded to the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator for recording on the territorial police checks central database. A letter to the applicant's home address through Registered Post and is to be marked 'strictly confidential'.

A letter of notification is also sent to the corps officer.

Once results are received at DHQ/RO, notification is to be forwarded to the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator at THQ for recording on the Police Checks central database.

Any records disclosing offences concerning officers, cadets, envoys, prospective candidates and applicants to become an envoy are to be forwarded confidentially to the Secretary for Personnel. These are to be dealt with by the office of the Secretary for Personnel.

If the applicant is deemed unsuitable, the corps officer and the person responsible for Divisional Youth and/or Children's Ministries (in consultation with the Divisional Commander/Regional Officer) are to ensure access to young people, through YCM work, is denied.

### **Who Requires A Police Check?**

Anyone over the age of eighteen years who has a leadership or supportive role, which requires direct ongoing contact with young people in Salvation Army activities, must have a satisfactory police check. A person under the age of eighteen years (but over 16) who has a leadership or supportive role, which requires direct contact with young people in Salvation Army activities, must have a satisfactory police check

### **Spent Convictions Scheme**

On 30 June 1990, new Commonwealth legislation relating to the collection, use and disclosure of old conviction information came into effect. This new law is commonly known as the Spent Convictions Scheme. A spent conviction is a conviction for a Commonwealth, Territory, State or foreign offence, which satisfies all of the following conditions:

1. It is 10 years since the date of the conviction (or 5 years for child offenders);
2. The individual was not sentenced to imprisonment or was not sentenced to imprisonment for more than 30 months;
3. The individual has not re-offended during the 10 year (5 years for child offenders) waiting period; and
4. A statutory or regulatory exclusion does not apply.

## Appeal Process

If an applicant wishes to appeal a decision of unsuitability, they are to contact the Divisional Commander/Regional Officer in writing within 14 days of receiving their letter of notification. The Divisional Commander/Regional Officer will consult with the Nominated Person from the Personnel Department to further examine the situation. If the applicant wishes to pursue the appeal, the Nominated Person will be given all relevant information to review the decision.

## Police Record Rechecking

Corps Officers will be required to ensure that prospective YCM workers receive a police check, have commenced the process for the WWCC and have completed the ChildSafe (LAPS) Level 1 training before they begin work with children. Each Corps' YCM worker and Officer will be required to be police-checked every three years and a WWCC every five years. If an applicant is transferring corps within three months of receiving their police certificate letter, it may be presented to the Corps Officers, who will notify the Police Checks Co-ordinator of their transfer. If the applicant is transferring corps more than three months after receiving their police certificate letter, they must reapply for a police check.

Divisional Youth and Candidates Secretaries and Corps Officers must ensure that all leadership personnel involved in camps hold a current Police Check Result letter and current WWCC where State legislation applies.

## PROCESS FOR VICTORIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Working With Children Check (WWCC)

Victoria and Western Australian applicants are to obtain a WWCC with attached Endorsement Form from their corps officer and submit to their local Australia Post Office. The Endorsement Form is to be retained by the corps officer and forwarded to the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator.

Payment (for officers and employees only) is required on lodgment of form at Australia Post.

If the applicant is deemed suitable for YCM work, an assessment notice will be sent directly from the Department of Justice with duplicate copies forwarded to the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator and corps officer/head of department.

If the WWCC process discloses a record deeming an applicant unsuitable to work in youth and children's ministries (referred to as a "negative notice" or "interim negative notice") the following procedure applies:

- a. Under law, the applicant has seven (7) days to notify the organisations they work or volunteer with of their interim negative or negative notice.
- b. The appropriate state government body notifies The Salvation Army (**each applicant should state their employer or volunteer organisation as: The Salvation Army, PO Box 479, Blackburn, VIC 3130**) of the applicant's interim negative or negative notice.

If the applicant is deemed unsuitable, the Territorial Corps Programme Secretary is to contact the corps officer and the person responsible for Divisional Youth and/or Children's Ministries, by telephone, to inform them of the

applicant's unsuitability. All details of conversations and outcomes will be confidentially documented by the Territorial ChildSafe Coordinator, and followed up by letter. Any records disclosing offences concerning officers, cadets, envoys, prospective candidates and applicants to become an envoy are to be hand delivered by the Territorial Corps Programme Secretary to the Secretary for Personnel. These are to be dealt with by the office of the Secretary for Personnel.

If the applicant is deemed unsuitable, the corps officer and the person responsible for Divisional Youth and/or Children's Ministries in consultation with the Divisional Commander/Regional Officer are to ensure access to young people, through YCM work is denied.

## Employees

Employees should also refer to The Salvation Army HR Policy for employees on this matter.

## Assessment of Suitability

Information disclosed in police checks is one of the factors considered in determining an applicant's suitability for having direct contact with young people through the work of The Salvation Army.

**If the applicant has any convictions of sexual or violent crimes, involvement in pornography, or domestic violence, they will be deemed as unsuitable for having direct contact with young people through The Salvation Army.**

Any other convictions disclosed on a police certificate are not to be taken into account in assessing an applicant's suitability. The Salvation Army recognises that an applicant, through the grace and forgiveness of God, may have become a Christian since being convicted. However, it is important for The Salvation Army to make a decision based on the information on the police certificate. The decision may be reviewed if the applicant wishes to appeal the decision.

## WWCC Rechecking

Corps officers will be required to ensure that prospective YCM workers apply for a WWCC, and have completed the ChildSafe (LAPS) Level 1 training before they begin work with children. Each Corps' YCM worker and officer will be required to renew their WWCC every five years.

Divisional Youth and Candidates Secretaries and corps officers must ensure that all leadership personnel involved in camps hold a current WWCC.

On the recommendation of Territorial Policy Council on 12 May 2009 this Minute is issued on the instructions of the Territorial Commander.

Raymond Finger (Colonel)  
**CHIEF SECRETARY**

12 May 2009



[Volunteer Application.doc](#)



[WWCC Flow Chart VIC.pdf](#)



[WWCC WA.pdf](#)



[Police Checks Flow Chart.pdf](#)

## Associated Forms / Attachments

Hard Copy Location : Divisional Secretary, Bookshelf, Policy & Procedures Folder

Soft Copy Location : QuickR: SA Division Library> SA Division Policy Manual

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## 3. PROCEDURE

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## 4. TRAINING

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## 5. INTERNAL/EXTERNAL DOCUMENT REFERENCES/DEPENDENCIES

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## 6. DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

### **Authorisation:**

On the recommendation of the South Australia Divisional Expenditure Board on 30 November 2012 this document is issued on the instruction of the Divisional Commander.



Gordon Jones (Major)

**Divisional Secretary**

30 November 2012

## 7. ASSOCIATED FORMS

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