



# Seventh-day Adventist Church (SAC) Working With Children Check Guidelines

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*On working with children check screening.*

*For employees and volunteers appointed to Child Related Roles in Local churches and the Conference in South Australia.*

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## 1 Rationale

The safety and wellbeing of all children who become members of our church communities is of paramount importance to the Directors of the Church Company, Church Board members or its equivalent, the senior leadership of each church, those volunteering to work with these children, parents and community members. The first line of defence in ensuring the ongoing safety of these children is the screening of all adults who are involved in child related work. Screening involves a number of different approaches not limited to the working with children check. Screening then includes Referee checks, Probity checks, Screening with Adsafe against a database of known persons representing a heightened risk in addition to the legal requirement of a working with children check (WWCC). The other screening approaches are outlined in the Role Requirement Guidelines. The Screening Unit makes the following observation:

“A working with children check is not a determination of a person's suitability to work with children. A working with children check that does not result in a person being prohibited from working with children is not proof of good character or that the person does not pose a risk to children. It is an assessment of one person's prior conduct, it is a point in time assessment of past behaviour in order to predict future risk.

The fact that a working with children check is conducted in relation to an employee does not satisfy an employer's obligation to ensure that a workplace is safe for children. It is one part of a range of strategies to be employed by employers and the community to keep children safe.

Employers and caregivers cannot rely on working with children check to absolve them of responsibility for safeguarding children. Organisations and employers must have in place comprehensive strategies to ensure child safe environments.”

<https://screening.sa.gov.au/about-checks/legislation/working-with-children-check-guideline>

For the purpose of this guideline the meaning of “employee” has a wider meaning as defined by *the Act*. “Employees” include, in addition to persons engaged by the organisation for remuneration, volunteers appointed to roles in the local church or conference.

The WWCC as a protection strategy involves employed persons who are engaged in child related work being assessed against certain criteria to determine if they pose an unacceptable risk. Under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA) (the Act)* it is an offence for an organisation to engage a Prohibited Person in child-related work.

The object of *the Act* is to protect children:

- a) by not permitting Prohibited Persons to engage in child-related work; and
- b) by requiring persons engaged in child-related work to have undergone a working with children check assessment in the last five years.

The Screening Unit (SU) as part of the Department of Human Services is responsible to conduct an assessment on each Child Related Worker. Persons who have been assessed by the SU are subject to ongoing assessment against any newly acquired assessable information. If this results in a determination that the person represents an unacceptable risk then their status will be changed to a Prohibited Person. The SU will inform all employers who have engaged this person of the change in status.

It is the responsibility of the child-related worker to ensure that when they are required to apply for a check or when their check is up for renewal that they do so.



## 2 Aims

This Guideline aims to:

1. ensure the compliance of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Australia) Ltd and all its local Churches (church context) to the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)* and the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019*.
2. ensure that every appointee in a church context to a role that involves **child-related work** is not a **Prohibited Person** prior to them commencing in the role.
3. ensure that any **child-related worker** whose status is changed to **Prohibited Person** is stood-down from the role immediately.
4. ensure that appropriate records are maintained and procedures are in place to ensure that each **child related worker** has been checked at least once within the last five years.

## 3 Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Adsafe</b>	Entity established by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific to provide protection services for Children and Vulnerable Persons within a church context.
<b>Australian Union Conference (AUC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church</b>	The Union Conference administrative body encompassing all the local Conferences in Australia including the South Australian Conference of the Seventh-day Church.
<b>Authorised Officer</b>	The appointed senior officer in the South Australian Conference with the authority to make recruitment and employment decisions about the individual being screened with the screening unit.
<b>Child-related work</b>	In the state of South Australia one of the services or activities defined in the Act as <b>child-related work</b> is:  <b><i>services or activities provided by religious organisations.</i></b>
<b>services or activities provided by religious organisations</b>	services or activities provided by or on behalf of a <b>religious organisation</b> in the course of which an <b>employee</b> of the religious organisation has, or would reasonably be expected to have, <b>contact</b> with a child;
<b>contact with a child</b>	an employee of the religious organisation will be taken to have contact with a child if the person—  (a) has physical contact with the child; or  (b) is in close physical proximity to the child; or  (c) communicates with the child (whether orally or by written, electronic or other means).



Term	Definition
<b>Employed, employer, employee or employment</b>	a reference to a person <i>being employed</i> will be taken amongst other things to include a reference to a person who—  (c) carries out work as a <i>minister of religion</i> or as part of the duties of a religious or spiritual vocation; or  (e) carries out work as a volunteer.  and a reference to an <i>employer, employee</i> or <i>employment</i> is to be construed accordingly.
<b>Prohibited Person</b>	A person assessed by the Screening unit to pose too high a risk to work with children.
<b>Requesting Officer</b>	The primary contact at the South Australian Conference for administration matters related to working with children check applications. The Screening Unit will send notification emails to the requesting officer, including the outcome of individual applications. Requesting officers do not have access to any confidential information used as part of the check process.
<b>Screening Unit</b> Department of Human Services (DHS)	South Australian Government agency set-up to assess the risk a person poses if engaged to work with certain vulnerable groups including children. The Check for risk associated with child employment is referred to as the Working with Children check.  This assessment may result in a clearance or if the risk is assessed too high in a prohibition notice. An applicant who receives a prohibition notice is called a Prohibited Person and must not work with Children.
<b>Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Australia) Ltd</b> (Church Company)	The incorporated body established to manage the administrative work of the church including the employment of Ministers
<b>South Australian Conference of the Seventh-day Church</b> (The South Australian Conference)	The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Administrative body for all the local churches (sisterhood of churches) found in the state of South Australia
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	The screening unit will maintain continuous assessment of Persons with a working with children check. This will involve the ongoing monitoring of assessable information that may change the status of a person previously cleared in a working with children check.



<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	The screening unit will inform all employers who have previously checked on behalf of an employee if this risk associated with the employee now represents an unacceptable risk. (the person has become a prohibited person)
<b>South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SPD)</b>	A division of the world wide Seventh-day Adventist Church that incorporates Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Islands in the South Pacific
<b>Verifying officer</b>	If appointed, the person in the South Australian Conference who assists wwcc applicants to meet the requirements of a 100-point identification check
<b>Working with Children Check (SA)</b>	<p>A working with children check in respect of a person consists of the central assessment unit assessing assessable information in relation to a person against the prescribed risk assessment criteria to determine whether or not the person poses an unacceptable risk to children.</p> <p>On completing a working with children check, the central assessment unit must determine whether the person is, or is not, to be prohibited from working with children. Persons who pose an unacceptable risk to children are to be prohibited from working with them.</p>

## 4 Responsibilities

### 4.1 The South Australian Conference

The South Australian Conference will establish a service to all its local churches where it performs WWCC screening on behalf of the local church. To this end it will:

1. Register as an employer with the Screening Unit.
2. Appoint staff to the following Screening Unit roles:
  - a) Site Administrator,
  - b) Authorised Officer, and
  - c) Requesting Officer
3. Optionally, if wishing to provide a verifying service, appoint a verifying officer.

#### **Site Administrator**

The Site Administrator will:

4. register the South Australian Conference with the screening unit.
5. keep the South Australian Conference's registration details up-to-date including creating new users and deleting old users' access to the screening unit's portal.



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### ***Authorised Officer***

The Authorised Officer will:

6. receive notifications that a screened person is a prohibited person from the Requesting Officer
7. seek advice from Adsafe if needed
8. notify the local church Adsafe Responsible Officer if the employee is from a local church
9. stand-down the prohibited person if the person is an employee of the South Australian Conference

### ***Requesting Officer***

The Requesting Officer will:

10. Create and maintain a conference records system to store information about screening requests on behalf of the local churches including the local church name.
11. Receive requests to screen local church employees from the local church Adsafe Compliance Assistant
12. Receive requests to screen conference employees from the conference Adsafe Compliance Assistant
13. Create requests for screening in the Screening unit's portal.
14. Notify the local church or conference ACA of all successful screening requests for their employees.
15. Notify the Authorised Officer of all failed screening requests.
16. Update the conference records with screening results.
17. Receive notification from the Screening Unit's Portal that a person's WWCC will expire in 6 months.
18. Check that the person currently is in a child related role with the appropriate ACA. If in a child related role reapply for the person in the Screening Unit's Portal
19. Create a routine check of the conference records for employees whose check is nearing the five year limit.
20. Notify the relevant ACA that a check needs to be renewed.

### ***Verifying Officer***

If the service is offered, the Verifying Officer will:

21. assist the applicant to satisfy the ID Verification requirements.



## 4.2 Local Church

### ***Adsafe Responsible Officer (ARO)***

The Adsafe Responsible Officer will:

#### **Matters from the Role Requirement Guidelines**

1. Prior to the commencement of the new church year with the assistance of the ACA review the church's schedule B: Roles appointed in the church including Child Related Work roles.
2. Seek Church Board or equivalent approval for the revised schedule
3. Provide the approved schedule to the Nominating Committee to assist it with its work.
4. When notified by the ACA stand-down any appointee to a child related role if a wwcc clearance has not be given.

#### **WWCC Responsibilities**

5. Receive notification from the Authorised Officer of a new appointee or an existing employee's status as a prohibited person.
6. Seek advice from Adsafe if needed.
7. meet with the Prohibited Person to discuss how to safely manage the disclosure and stand-down the employee from all child related roles.
8. Notify the ACA with the change of status.
9. Receive notification from the Authorised Officer if a Prohibited Person who status on review by the Screen Unit is now cleared.
10. Seek advice from Adsafe if needed.
11. Meet with the successful applicant to discuss how to manage the change in status and if appropriate reinstate the employee.
12. Notify the ACA with the change of status.
13. Receive notification from the ACA and Stand-down any employee presently working in a child related role whose last check was more than five years ago.

### ***Adsafe Compliance Assistant (ACA)***

The Adsafe Compliance Assistant will:

#### **Matters from the Role Requirement Guidelines**

14. Assist the ARO in the review of church's schedule B

#### **WWCC Responsibilities**

15. On receipt of the approved appointments (Schedule B with appointee names) for a new church year assess any presently unfulfilled requirements for each of these appointees.
16. Discuss these requirements including any WWCC requirements with each appointee requesting the required WWCC information to perform a WWCC application.
17. Receive the required information updating the church's records.





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18. Request a WWCC for each of the appointees by providing the required information needed for the check to the Requesting Officer.
  19. Receive the result of the check from the Requesting Officer and update the church's records.
  20. Prior to the commencement of the new Church Year notify the ARO of all appointees in child related roles who have not as yet had the check completed.
  21. Receive notification of failed checks from the ARO and update the church's records.
  22. Receive notification from the Requesting Officer of employees whose last check is close to the five year limit.
  23. Create a routine check of the local church records for employees whose check is nearing the five year limit.
  24. Notify the employee that their check is about to expire requesting it be renewed prior to its expiry.
  25. Notify the ARO of any employee presently in a child related role whose last check was more than five years ago.

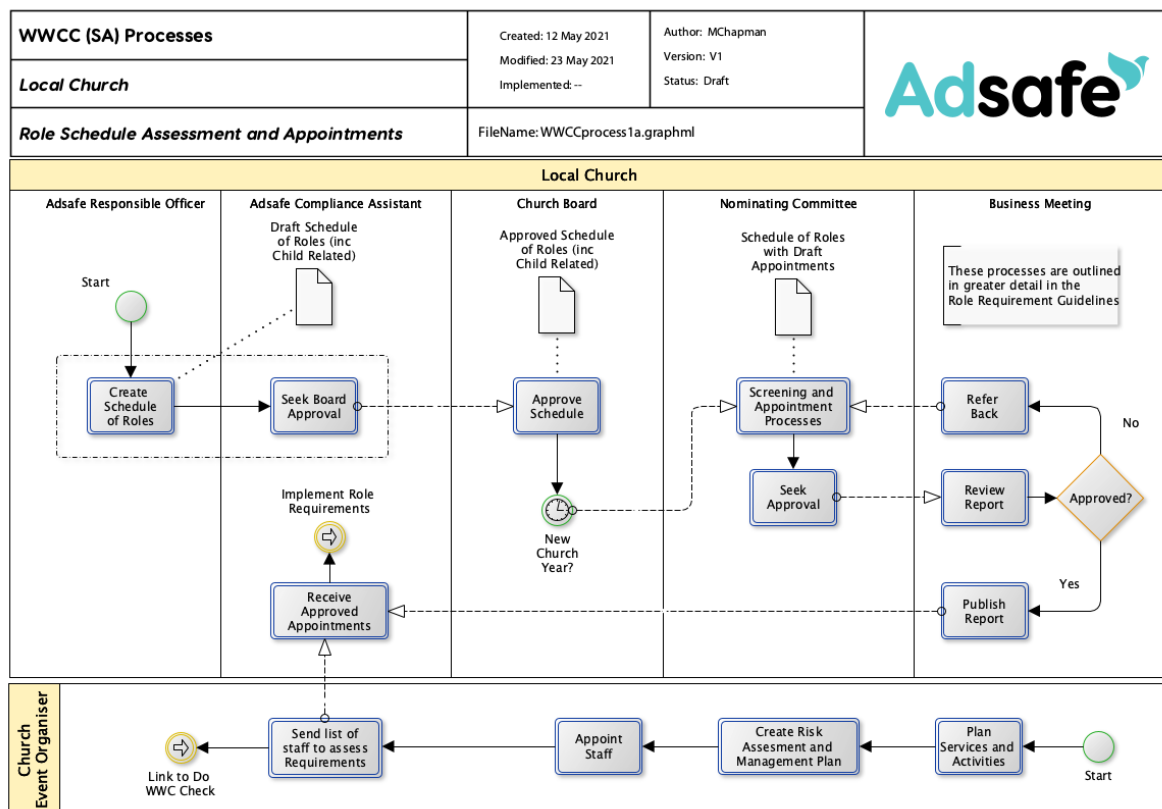


## 5 Implementation

### 5.1 Establishing a WWCC Process

1. The South Australian Conference (the conference) will develop and implement a service to its local churches to complete a working with children check for their employees who perform child related work.
2. The conference will appoint a **Site Administrator** who will register the conference with the Screening Unit and keep the its registration details up-to-date including creating new users and deleting old users' access to the screening unit's portal when necessary.
3. The conference will appoint an **Authorised Officer** who is a senior manager who will respond when applicants are found to be Prohibited Persons.
4. The conference will appoint a **Requesting Officer** who will create applications for WWCC on behalf local churches and the conference.
5. The conference may appoint a **Verifying Officer** to assist applicants with the ID verification process.

### 5.2 New Church Year Processes

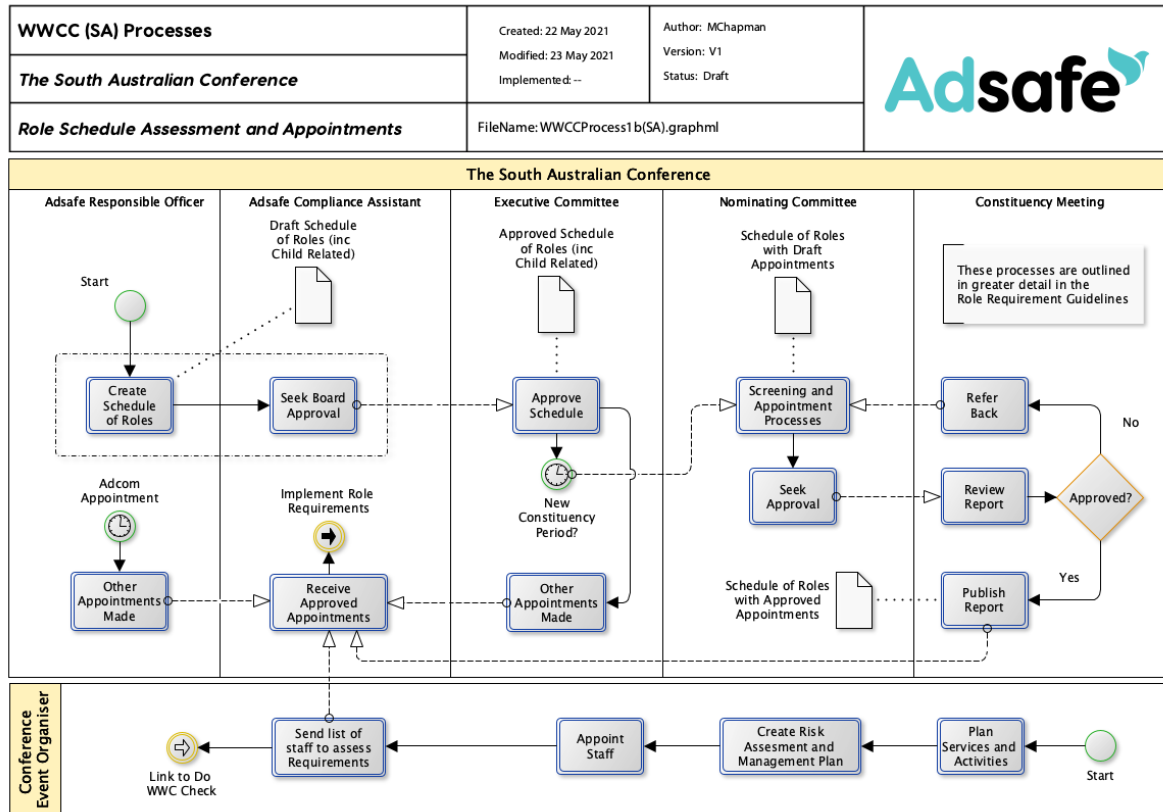


1. Prior to the commencement of the New Church Year Processes (Nominating committee work) the local church ARO in conjunction with the ACA will review the present local churches schedule of roles (Schedule B1) and reassess roles that are Child Related.
2. This revised schedule will be taken to the Church Board or equivalent for approval.



3. The approved schedule without names will be given to the Nominating committee to screen and propose names for each role.
4. The Schedule of Roles with draft appointments will be presented to a business meeting for approval.
5. The final Schedule of Roles with approved appointments will be given to the ARO to process.

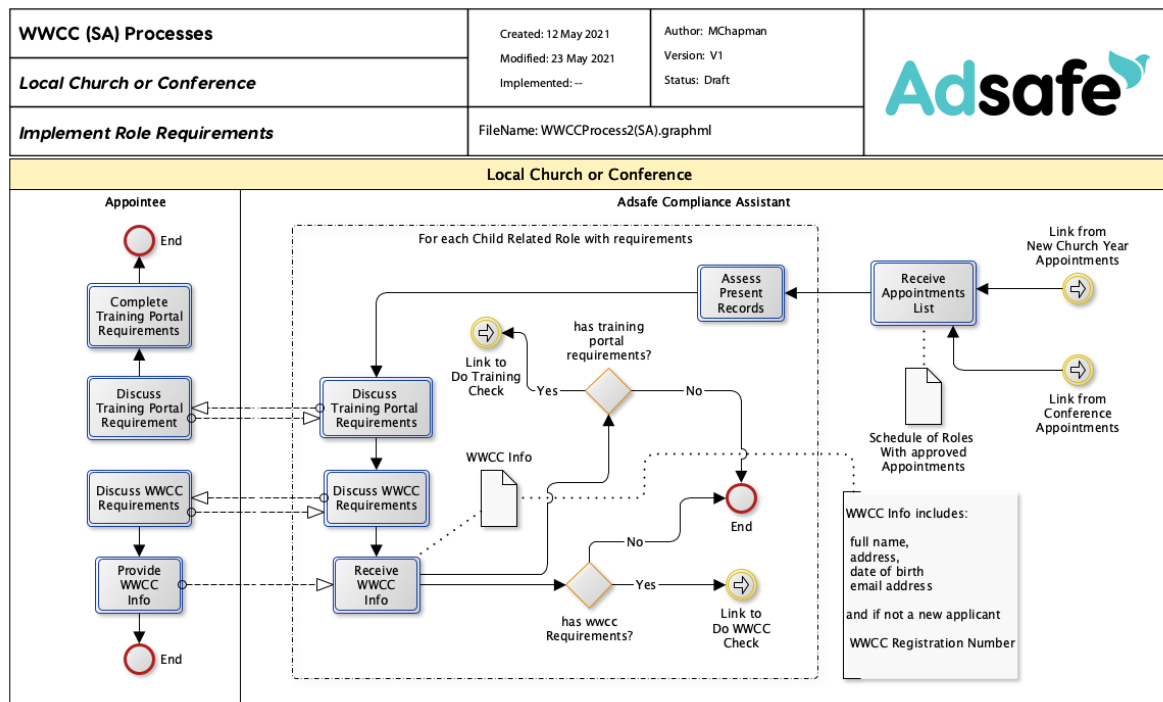
### 5.3 Church Entity Processes



1. Initially and again prior to the commencement of a new conference constituency period the South Australian Conference ARO in conjunction with the ACA will review the present conference schedule of roles (Schedule B2) and assess whether the roles are Child Related Work.
2. This revised schedule will be taken to the Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Australia) Ltd Board for approval.
3. The approved schedule without names will be given to the Conference Constituency Nominating Committee to use in their work in screening and proposing names for each of the roles requiring appointment.
4. The nominated appointees will be presented to the constituency meeting for approval.
5. The final Schedule of Roles with approved appointments will be given to the ARO to process.
6. The names of persons appointed outside of the Constituency Meeting process to Conference roles either as employees or volunteers for either regular roles or for roles at conference organised events will be given to the conference Adsafe Compliance Officer to review against the list of role requirement.



## 5.4 Assessment of Requirements



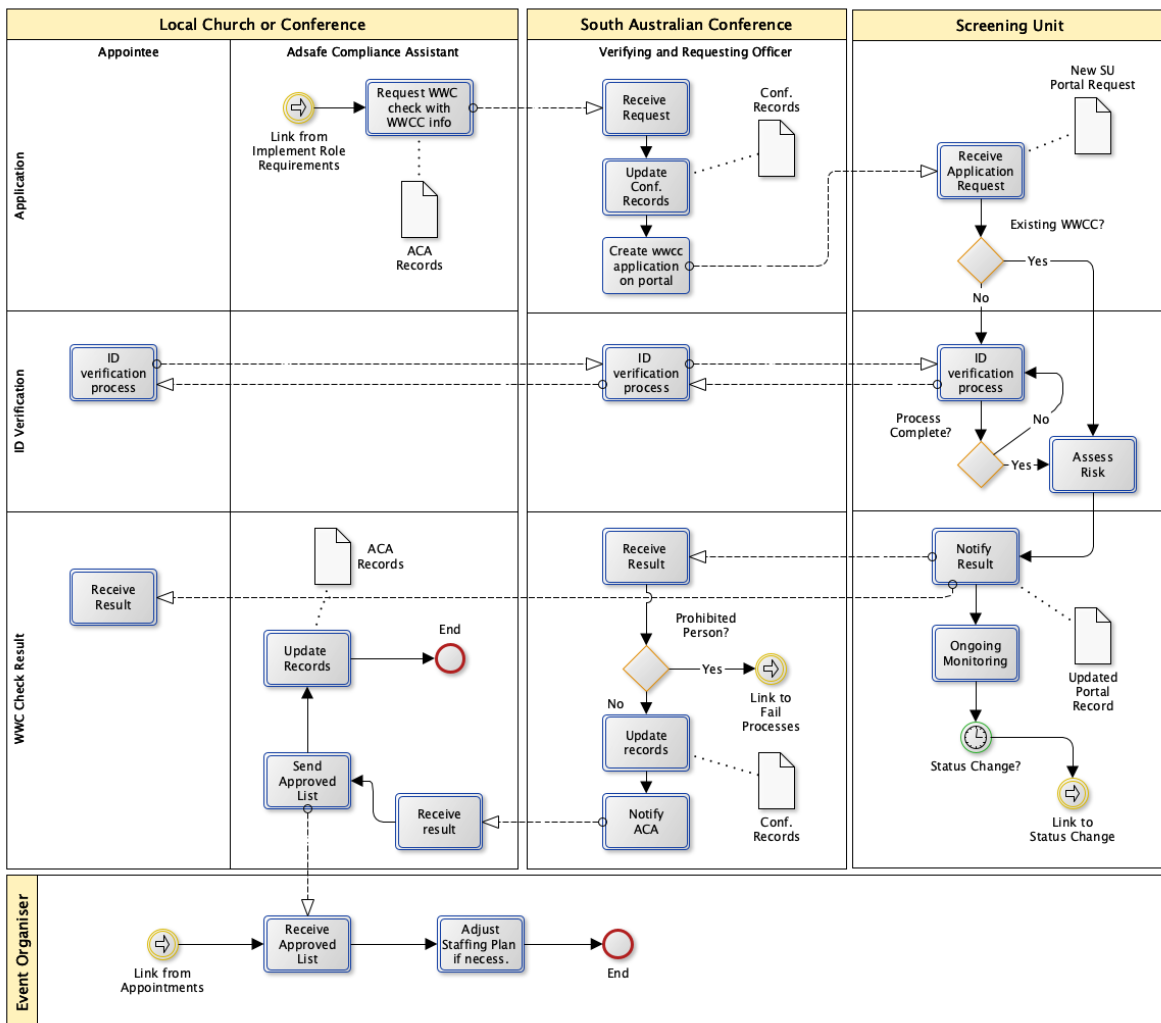
1. The ACA will review the Schedule of Roles with Approved Appointments and assess each appointee for incomplete requirements.
2. The ACA will update these requirements in the ACA's records
3. The ACA will discuss with each appointee any incomplete requirements for their new role giving them instruction on how these can be completed with a date for completion.
4. If a WWCC is required the ACA will request the relevant information need to register a check with the screening unit by the conference.

## 5.5 Requesting a check

1. Once the WWCC info has been received, the ACA will request that the **Requesting Officer** complete a check in the Screening Unit's Portal using the conference as employer.
2. The Requesting Officer will update the Conference's Records for the request including the entity name for the employee.
3. If the applicant for the WWCC is new to the Screening Unit then an ID verification process is required. This consists of producing certified documents that meet the required number of ID points.
4. If the conference provides an ID verification service the Verifying Officer will assist the applicant with the verification process. If not the applicant will need to complete this task externally.
5. Applicants with an existing Screening Unit record can skip the verification process by providing the ACA their WWCC Registration Number. With this information the screening unit will commence their assessment.



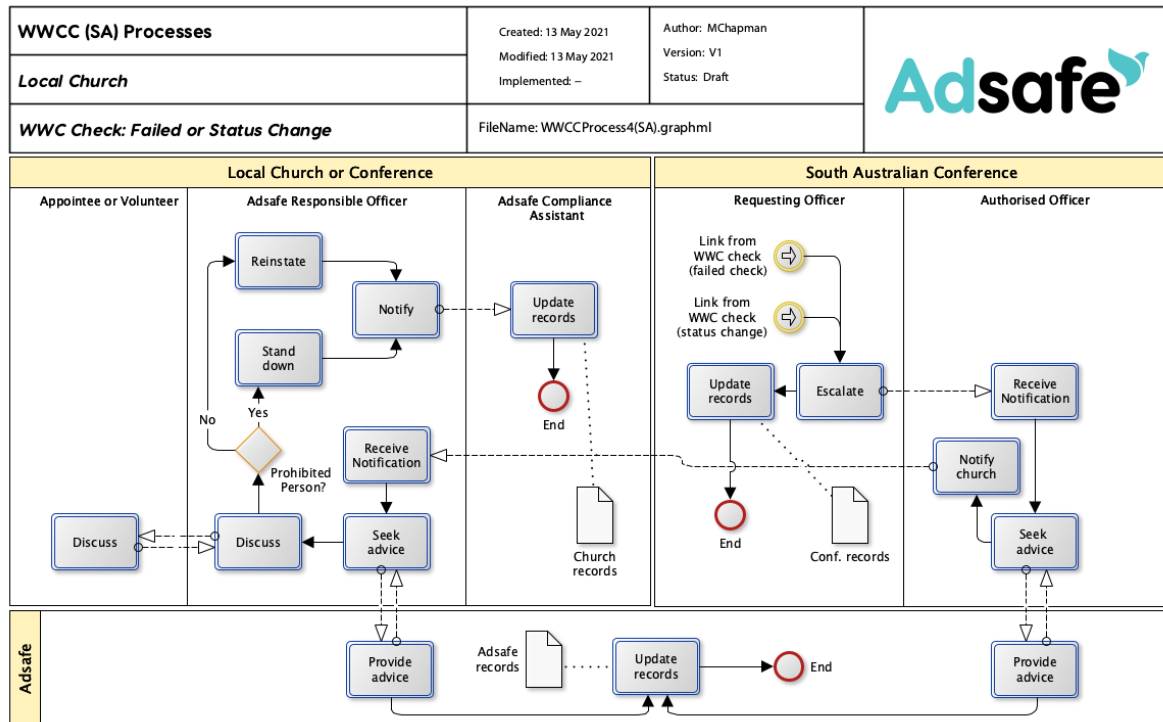
<b>WWCC (SA) Processes</b>	Created: 13 May 2021	Author: MChapman	
<i>Local Church or Conference</i>	Modified: 23 May 2021	Version: V1	
<b>Do WWCC Check</b>	Implemented: --	Status: Draft	
		FileName: WWCCProcess3(SA).graphml	



6. Once assessment is complete the screening unit will update the portal record with the result of the check.
7. If the result is clear the Requesting Officer will update the conference records and notify the relevant ACA.
8. On receipt of a notification that an applicant is not a prohibited person the entity ACA will update the ACA's Records.
9. Prior to the commencement of an appointee's child related work the ACA will notify the ARO of all appointees to child related work who are yet to meet the requirements including those:
  - a) whose check hasn't been completed and
  - b) who are Prohibited Persons
10. The ARO will stand these appointees down from the role until they are cleared.



## 5.6 Failed Checks



1. When one of the following events occur and is notified through the Screening Unit's Portal the **Requesting Officer** will update the conference records and notify the **Authorised Officer**.
  - a) an applicant is assessed as a Prohibited Person,
  - b) an current employee has a status change to a Prohibited Person or
  - c) a Prohibited Person's status is reassessed to give a clearance.
2. The Authorised Officer will seek advice from the Offender Management and Investigation team at Adsafe.
3. The Authorised Officer will notify the relevant Adsafe Responsible Officer.
4. The Adsafe Responsible Officer will seek advice from the Offender Management and Investigation Team at Adsafe.
5. The Adsafe Responsible Officer will meet with the relevant person and discuss the safe handling of the matter.
6. If the relevant person is a Prohibited Person they will be stood down from their role.
7. If the relevant person's status has be changed from Prohibited Person to be cleared to work in a child related role consideration would be made to reinstate the person to the role.
8. The Adsafe Responsible Officer will update the Adsafe Compliance Assistant with the change in status.
9. The ACA will update the ACA's records accordingly.



## 5.7 Record Keeping

1. The following records will be maintained:

Record Name	Maintained by	Notes
Screening Unit Portal	Screening Unit, Requesting Officer	Fields include: WWCC Registration Number, full name, address, date of birth, email address and would include the date/s when checks were completed
Conference Records	Requesting Officer	In addition to the information above would include: Organisation, Role and result of the check
ACA's Records Schedule B: Roles with Appointees' names	Adsafe Compliance Assistant	Fields include: role, child related?, WWCC Registration Number, full name, address, date of birth, email address and would include the date/s when checks were completed the result of the check <b>for all child related roles.</b>  Fields include: Role, Name and email address <b>for non-child related roles.</b>

2. For the Conference and Church Records a system will be established by each of the record managers to provide reminders when any last check date is greater than 4 years and 11 months previous.

## 5.8 Expired Checks

1. The SU Portal will notify the Requesting Officer for the conference six months prior to the expiry of a Person's WWCC.
2. The Requesting Officer will notify the relevant ACA of this pending expiry and confirm that the person is in a current Child Related Role.
3. If the person is in a current child related role the Requesting Officer will reapply on behalf of the relevant entity.
4. This will result in the reapplicant being sent a notification with a list of requirements to complete for a successful reapplication.
5. The completion of this reapplication process will result in an updated last screening date. The Requesting Officer will update the conference records and notify the relevant entity's ACA of the successful reapplication.
6. The ACA will update the ACA's records.
7. The Requesting Officer will notify the appropriate ACA of any person's whose Last Checked Date is greater than 4 Years and 11 months.
8. The relevant entity's ACA will check that the person is currently in a child related role and if so remind the person that a reapplication for the check is required



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and if not completed when 5 year deadline passes they will need to stand-down from the role until completed.

9. The ACA will notify the ARO of any person in a current role whose check has expired.
10. The ARO will stand-down any person whose check has expired until renewal has been completed.





## Appendix A: The WWC Act: Possible penalties

### Part 4—Restrictions on working with children

#### Division 1—Persons who cannot work with children

##### 15—Prohibited persons not to work with children

(3) A person (prohibited person) who works with children in contravention of subsection (1) is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty: \$50 000 or imprisonment for 1 year.

(4) An employer who employs, or continues to employ, a prohibited person in a prescribed position is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty:

- (a) in the case of a natural person—\$50 000 or imprisonment for 1 year; or
- (b) in the case of a body corporate—\$120 000.

##### 16—Working with children without current working with children check prohibited

(1) A person must not work with children unless a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the person within the preceding 5 years.

Maximum penalty:

- (a) for a first or second offence—\$20 000;
- (b) for a third or subsequent offence—\$50 000 or imprisonment for 1 year.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to an excluded person.

#### Division 2—Steps employers must take in relation to employing person

##### 17—Steps employers must take before employing person in prescribed position

(1) An employer must not employ a person in a prescribed position unless the employer has—

- (a) obtained from the person their full name, address, date of birth and unique identifier; and
- (b) verified, in accordance with the regulations, that—
  - (i) a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the person within the preceding 5 years; and
  - (ii) the person is not prohibited from working with children; and
- (c) provided to the central assessment unit—
  - (i) the name, address, telephone number and email address of the business at which the person is to be employed; and
  - (ii) the name and contact details of the person who verified the matters referred to in paragraph (b).

Maximum penalty: \$50 000.

##### 18—Employer to ensure working with children check conducted at least every 5 years

(1) An employer must not continue to employ a person in a prescribed position unless a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the person within the preceding 5 years.

Maximum penalty: \$50 000.



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(2) An employer who employs a person in a prescribed position must, at least once in every 5 year period, verify, in accordance with the regulations, that—

- (a) a working with children check has been conducted in relation to the person within the preceding 5 years; and
- (b) the person is not a prohibited person.

Maximum penalty: \$50 000.