

Five years of the NSW Working With Children Check

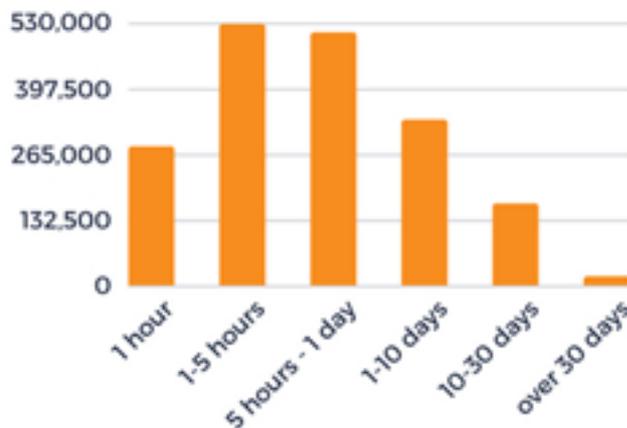
15 June 2018

This week the NSW Working with Children Check celebrates five years of operation. In those five years, 1.7 million NSW

employees and volunteers and 27,000 employers, have embraced the Working With Children Check.

"It is really great to see the rapid take-up of applications in just five years," Children's Guardian, Janet Schorer said.

Checks last for five years, and then they need to be renewed. So at this point, the initial Checks expire and applications for renewal need to be made. People must keep their contact details up to date in the system, and then the Office of the Children's Guardian is able to contact them when it is time to renew.



80% completed in less than a day
"The 1.6 million children in NSW are learning and growing up in safer places where the adults in contact with them are checked and verified. With 1.7 million adults now having the Check, it's clear that the wider community is working with us to help create safe places for children."

The NSW Working With Children Check was acknowledged by the Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse as one of the most



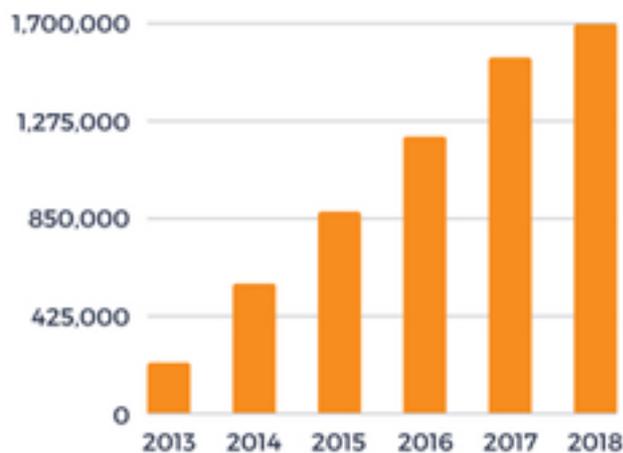
comprehensive Working with Children Checks in the country. Many of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission are already in place or align with the NSW scheme.

“One of the strengths of the NSW system is that it is underpinned by an ongoing, continuous checking system,” Ms Schorer explained.

“Child related employers need to go online to register with the Office of the Children’s Guardian. By registering and then telling us who in their organisation is working with kids, we can contact them should anyone become barred through the continuous monitoring process.”

5 YEARS OF THE CHECK

The Working With Children Check began 15 June 2013.



1.7 million clearances in five years

Through a recent legislation update, employers can be fined if they don’t verify workers.

“Across the past five years, there have been over 1000 people who received a check initially but were later barred through the continuous checking process. We then tell the employer and they can be removed from working with children,” Ms Schorer said.

“While the Check is an important screening tool, it is only one part of what every child-related organisation needs to do to keep children safe. We know that

many offences are opportunistic and occur because the environment allows it. Building a child safe culture is the best preventative option.

“Organisations that work with children also need to embed child safe practices. For example volunteers at the local soccer club need to be supervised and supported, and know how they should behave towards children – having a code of conduct would help achieve this. And all child-related organisations should be making it easy for children to raise concerns and give feedback.

“NSW is to be congratulated for working together to help create safe places for children,” Ms Schorer said.