



## NSW Children's Guardian extends WWCC clearances in response to COVID-19

26 March 2020

As news about COVID-19 continues to develop the primary concern for the Office of the Children's Guardian is the safety of children.

A NSW Working With Children Check clearance lasts for 5 years and then needs to be renewed. There are more than 100,000 clearances in NSW that are due to expire in the next six months. This includes teachers and medical staff who require a clearance and may be restricted in their capacity to go to a Service NSW centre to finalise their renewal application.

On 25 March 2020, the NSW Parliament passed the [COVID-19 Legislation Amendment \(Emergency Measures\) Act 2020](#) making legislative changes across various portfolios. Importantly, the changes

enable the Children's Guardian to extend Working With Children Check clearances where appropriate, to help prevent any unforeseen disruptions to services as a result of COVID-19.

The Children's Guardian has extended all clearances that were due to expire from 26 March 2020 to 26 September 2020 for a further six months. The six-month period applies from the date of the person's current expiry date. Further extensions may be applied should they be needed.

People who are granted an extension will be advised by email and the system will be automatically updated. Employers should update their records to indicate the change in their employee's expiry date.

People who need a new WWCC will need to go through the regular application process, which includes attending a Service NSW centre to verify their identity. This is to maintain the integrity of the Working With Children Check and ensure that children are not put at undue risk.

One of the strengths of the NSW system is that it is underpinned by ongoing, continuous checking. By extending these clearances, the Children's Guardian will also be able to continuously monitor the people working with children and advise employers should anyone become barred through the continuous monitoring process.

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