

# Guide to selecting volunteer leaders



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Keeping  
Children  
Safe



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This guide shows the process to be followed when selecting **volunteer** leaders in congregations – these may be elders, church councillors, other appointed leaders, or people applying to work with children. When planning to **employ** anyone in a congregational role, contact the Synod's People and Culture Unit for assistance:

<https://www.victas.uca.org.au/UCA%20Resources/PeopleAndCulture/Pages/Congregational-Resources.aspx>

## The importance of screening

Before any person can work with children, an appropriate screening process must be undertaken. The Synod actively seeks to exclude from leadership people who may harm or abuse children.

Our screening process requires that all applicants for volunteer leadership do the following:

- hold a current Working With Children's Check/Registration,
- complete a written application and declaration,
- participate in an interview/conversation about their application, and
- provide the names of two people who can confirm their suitability to safely work with children.

Until 1 August 2017, volunteers who do not have a WWCC/R may begin their duties under supervision of a person with a current WWCC/R. After 1 August 2017, volunteers must NOT commence working with children until the Church Council receives a copy of a positive Working With Children Check/Registration from the applicant.

## Important information re young applicants

### **People under the age of 18 in Victoria and NSW, 16 in Tasmania**

In **Victoria and NSW** young people **under** 18 years of age, are exempt from needing a WWCC.

An example: David is 17 years old and a member of his local youth group. David leads a younger group of scouts but because he is under 18 years of age, he does not need a Check.

In **Tasmania**, young people **under** the age of 16 years of age are exempt from obtaining a Registration

An example: Mavis is 15 years old and a member of her local youth Bible study. Mavis leads a younger group of children but because she is under 16 years of age, she does not need a Registration.

Although young people need not apply for a WWCC/R as specified above, young applicants must still complete the Application Form and Declaration (SSL2). It must be signed by the young person and someone able to give consent.

## Protecting privacy

The application process should be undertaken in an open and honest manner. The applicant, referees, and members of the councils of the Church and their delegates should observe confidentiality and privacy. Information is to be shared only with those who have a legitimate reason to know in order to assess the application; or where there is a legal obligation to share the information. Where applicants choose not to provide the information requested, the Church may be unable to consider the person for engagement. Applicants may request access to personal information about them that is held by the Church.

## Guide to Selecting Volunteer Leaders - Flowchart

### *Phase*

### *Action*

Identify a role to be filled

Church Council to read and understand – Recruitment, Selection and Screening (SSL1) for guidance on best practice

Encourage to apply

Prospective volunteers should complete the application form and declaration (SSL2), attach the relevant documentation and return to Church Council.

Conduct interviews

After considering the applications, hold interviews using Volunteer Leaders Interview Guide (SSL3)

Contact referees

If interview is positive, check referees using Volunteer Referee Check (SSL4)

Make appointment

If referees are positive, appoint volunteer. Issue a Letter of Appointment (SSL5) and obtain signed Code of Conduct (KCS4). Provide copy of procedure for reporting child abuse (CC5)

Arrange induction and training

Refer to Procedure for Induction and Training (SSL6) for guidance. Newly appointed volunteer will need to complete Safe Church Training (SCT1)

### *After a year of volunteering*

Seek feedback and input from volunteer

Seek feedback and input from the volunteer using Volunteer Annual Review - Feedback and Declaration (SSL7)

Provide support

Consider implementing suggestions offered. If required, consider working with leader on volunteer development plan (SSL8). Set future review date.