



How we helped the WA Working with Children Screening Unit make checks accessible to everyone

Australia Post's identity and data-capture services and extensive network of retail outlets have made applying for a WA Working with Children Card simpler for customers, giving the unit the reach and customer-facing presence it requires.

Customer: WA Working with Children Screening Unit

Website: www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au

Industry: State government

Challenges:

- Offer access to Working with Children Checks across the state.
- Conduct 100-point identity checks.
- Capture images and check form compliance.

Solution: Australia Post's extensive retail network, identity check and data collection services.

Results:

- Over 220 Australia Post retail outlets conduct identity checks for the WA Working with Children Screening Unit.
- More than 100,000 applications currently being received and processed each year.
- High standards maintained, making the Working with Children Check highly regarded.

Background

The WA Working with Children Screening Unit is part of the WA Department for Child Protection. With about 50 staff and an annual budget of around \$10 million, the unit's aim is to contribute to the protection of children by checking whether there is a criminal record that indicates that a person may harm children in the course of child-related work.

To this end, the unit conducts rigorous identity and background checks on anyone who works with children in Western Australia. Successful applicants are issued with a Working with Children Card, which must be renewed every three years.

The challenge

Western Australia is Australia's largest state in terms of size and has a population of around 2.5 million. One of the greatest challenges facing the unit was providing people with enough access points to submit their applications. "People apply from all over the country," says unit director Sandie van Soelen.

This meant that applicants in other states who were moving interstate for a new job also needed to be able to apply for a WA Working with Children Card. Also, forms could not simply be posted in: a 100-point identity check had to be conducted in person and the applicant's photo had to be taken to complete the application.

The strategy

From the outset, the Working with Children Screening Unit recognised that setting up its own network of outlets was not a

WA Working with Children Screening Unit – Identity Services

logical business solution. Instead, it looked for a partner with an existing national presence and good representation in WA. “A major reason for us choosing Australia Post was the number of retail outlets,” says van Soelen. “No other agency has that coverage.”

Australia Post also provides identity services for passport applications and other licensing requirements. This meant that staff members were already familiar with conducting identity checks, handling form compliance and related tasks that would be required for the Working with Children Checks.

The solution

Australia Post prints and distributes application forms for the Working with Children Check. Applicants complete the form then take their form, proof of identity and application fee to a selected Australia Post retail outlet. There, a staff member conducts a 100-point identity check, makes sure the form is completed correctly and takes the applicant’s photo. The form and image are transferred to the unit electronically for processing. Staff members do not have access to any sensitive or confidential information about the applicant during the submission process.

Australia Post accepts the application fees and issues the applicant with a receipt that they can use as proof of their application. The unit receives daily transaction reports to aid financial reconciliation.

Successful applicants receive their Working with Children Card in the post.

The results

The service debuted in 2006 and about 23,000 applications were processed in the first year alone. Over five years, check requirements were phased in that applied to different forms of child-related work. This year, van Soelen anticipates that there will be between 100,000 and 110,000 applications.

“The Working with Children Check is incredibly rigorous, and we have access to personal and criminal record information about applicants not available to many other agencies, in order to make decisions where the best interests of the children are paramount,” she says. “As people have seen the value of the Working with Children Check, one challenge is holding people back from

applying if they are not doing child-related work as defined by the legislation.”

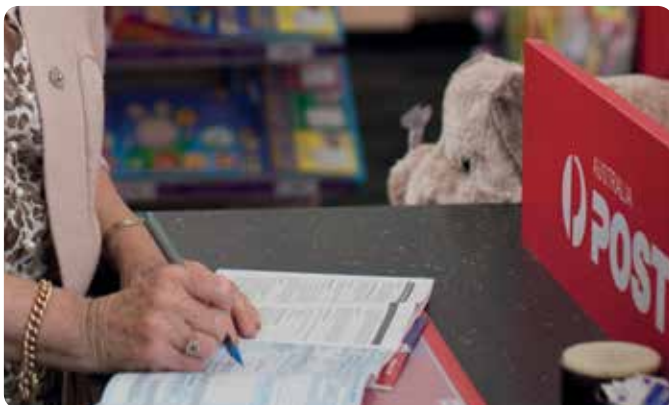
Despite huge growth, the unit continues to streamline service, says van Soelen. “We rely on Australia Post to maintain high standards when conducting the identity checks,” she adds. “If there are issues, we work together and we continue to improve. We’ve found that the retail outlet managers are excellent at following up.”

Van Soelen says that as the population grows and people move to smaller towns, the unit is always looking for more Australia Post retail outlets to process applications. “When we don’t have Australia Post access, it’s a real pain. We have to provide alternative ways for an applicant to submit their form and complete all the required identity checks.

“We see Australia Post as our front line. There’s no way we could check identity and forms, accept payments and process check applications across a state the size of WA without it.”

Australia Post and the Working with Children Screening Unit have also collaborated on the creation of a smartform that van Soelen hopes will be launched later in 2013. “The problem with printed forms is that if you need to make a change, it’s time consuming and expensive,” she explains. “A smartform can be downloaded and completed online, then printed out to take in to an Australia Post retail outlet. Once a smartform is available, we expect that the majority of our applicants will use it.”

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This campaign was delivered using Australia Post’s Identity Services. For more information, visit auspost.com.au, call 13 11 18 or speak to your Client Sales Executive.

This case study is based on information provided by the WA Working with Children Screening Unit and illustrates how one organisation has used Australia Post’s Identity Services. Many factors contributed to the results and benefits described. Australia Post does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.