



# Reducing, refunding and waiving of fees policy

Working with Children Screening Unit

## Purpose

The *Working with Children (Screening) Act 2004* (the WWC Act) requires fees to be paid in certain situations, however Regulation 8(2) of the *Working with Children (Screening) Regulations 2005* (the Regulations) enables a fee to be reduced, waived or refunded.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define the circumstances in which the Working with Children (WWC) Screening Unit will consider exercising its discretion to reduce, waive or refund a fee.
- ensure that decisions regarding fees are made in a fair and equitable manner and are capable of review.

## Scope

This policy applies to all fees referred to under Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

## Definitions

- Delegated officer – a person with authority delegated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Exceptional – forming an exception or rare instance, unusual or extraordinary
- Fee – a payment made in relation to an application or service
- Financial hardship – a state of more than immediate financial disadvantage, which results in a person being unable meet their basic living needs. Financial hardship may be caused by (but is not limited to) experience of one or more of the following factors:
  - loss of the customer's or family member's primary income
  - spousal separation or divorce
  - loss of a spouse or a loved one
  - a chronically ill child or other family member
  - physical and mental health issues
  - domestic violence
  - other unforeseen factors resulting in a reduced financial capacity, such as a reduction in income or an increase in non-discretionary expenditure.
- Lodgement – when an application or renewal is submitted

- Reduce – make smaller or less in amount
- Refund – pay money back to
- Waive – refrain from demanding compliance with a fee.

## Policy statement

The WWC Act requires fees to be paid; the fee amount is set by the WA government.

The WWC Screening Unit is required to administer the WWC scheme in a cost-effective manner. However, applications for a WWC Check incur processing and administration costs, both internal and external, which cannot be recovered by the WWC Screening Unit post lodgement. Therefore, fees are not transferrable and in most cases are non-refundable, and will not be reduced or waived, unless the following exceptions can be demonstrated.

## Reducing fees

If an application is lodged following a fee increase, consideration may be given to reducing the fee on a one-off basis, rather than seeking an additional payment.

## Refunding fees

Decisions regarding the refunding of application fees will be made in a fair and equitable manner. Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of a person and the reasons they are requesting a refund.

The WWC Screening Unit will consider refunds:

- where it is established that a person has been overcharged due to an error or omission by the WWC Screening Unit or Australia Post. For example, an applicant has clearly nominated on the application form that they are a volunteer and they have been charged as a paid employee
- when a duplicate online payment via the Bpoint system has been made
- if refusing a refund would contribute to financial hardship and therefore the person's circumstances are deemed to be exceptional
- in any other cases determined as exceptional.

## Waiving fees

The waiving of a fee may be considered where a card holder has already paid the required application fee and is required to re-apply for a WWC Check under the WWC Act. For example, where circumstances require a person's assessment notice to be reassessed.

## Responsibilities

Applicants:

- need to pay the correct fee as required by the WWC Act
- must make a request to the WWC Screening Unit for a refund, reduction or waiving of the fee to be considered, demonstrating the exceptional circumstances that apply
- can only request a refund for a fee that they have paid.

The WWC Screening Unit will:

- process requests for a refund in accordance with this policy and by a Delegated officer
- apply the reduction of fees and waivers in accordance with this policy.

## Contact information

If you have any further questions or concerns about this policy, please contact us by:

- calling 1800 883 979 (WA country callers using a landline)
- emailing [checkquery@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:checkquery@communities.wa.gov.au)
- completing an [enquiry form](#) on the WWC Check website.

## Document control

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