



Briefing: Parkerville CYC Response to the Working with Children (Screening) Amendment Bill 2025

Our holistic support to children, young people, and families

Parkerville Children and Youth Care is a For Purpose organisation that supports children, young people, and their families to build skills and capacity, address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and develop capabilities that will enable them to be the best versions of themselves.

We see a future where Western Australia is the safest place in the world and all children, young people, and their families feel safe to dream, to thrive, and to reach their fullest potential.

We have been working alongside vulnerable children, young people, and their families for over 120 years, and every year, we support more than 13,000 people across WA through our therapeutic, out-of-home care, and early intervention and prevention services. The future of those we serve depends on what we do in the present to support them to reach their potential.

Our Purpose

Our purpose as an organisation is to support children, young people, and their families to build skills and capacity, address the impacts of trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and develop capabilities that will enable them to be the best versions of themselves.

Our Vision

We see a future where Western Australia is the safest place in the world and all children, young people, and their families feel safe to dream, to thrive, and to reach their fullest potential.

Our Values

As a strong, values-based organisation, we are dedicated to an ongoing journey of self-awareness, learning and improvement in everything we do because the children and young people with whom we work deserve nothing less.



Bold and courageous: We stand up for what is right and amplify the voices of the children, young people, families, and communities we support.



Curious and humble: We search out information and data that will help us remain at the forefront of all that we do.



Caring and respectful: We acknowledge and embrace the diversity and individuality of everyone we meet and those we serve.



Hopeful: We believe in the power of positivity and are optimistic about change, having faith that together we can overcome any challenge we may face.



Truthful and accountable: We are committed to being open, honest, and taking responsibility for our actions.



Parkerville CYC's services

Therapeutic Services

- **Multi-agency Investigation and Support Team (MIST):** co-located, multi-disciplinary, trauma-informed model to reduce harmful impacts of trauma from abuse. It is WA's first truly integrated child sexual abuse (CSA) response, with Child Advocacy Centres in Armadale (2011), Midland (2019), and Rockingham (2024). MIST's core principle is to reduce instances of children having to tell and re-tell their story, and coordinate services (including Police) to wrap around the child and family, through collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- **Therapeutic Services:**
 - CSATS:** We provide a Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Service (CSATS) in a regional area of WA.
 - PACTS:** We also provide a Parents and Children's Therapeutic Service (PACTS) in a northern Perth suburb. 84% of children and young people receiving a service had experienced child sexual abuse.

Out of Home Care

- Parkerville CYC have had children in our care for the entirety of our 122-year history. We are implementing an innovative, award-winning new model, Our Way Home: radically personalised shared care, that focuses on the needs and desires of each child, and deliberately seeking to establish, maintain and deepen connections between children and their families. We care for children through a mixed provision across family group homes, foster care, and temporary care homes.

Early Intervention, Prevention and Youth Services

- **Child and Parent Centres (CPCs):** Parkerville runs two CPCs in Perth, servicing 12 primary schools in vulnerable communities. The centres work to create an entry point into the school system and help with school readiness, but importantly they focus on increasing family capacity and help them provide appropriate developmental experiences.
- **Kids' Hub:** multi-disciplinary approach to providing comprehensive mental health/wellbeing services for children aged 0-12 years, targeting mild to moderate emerging complexity. This service is a collaboration with Koya Aboriginal Corporation, Pregnancy to Parenthood, Lifespan Psychology Services, and MIFWA.
- **Family Support Network:** an early intervention program that connects families with coordinated services to strengthen child safety and prevent entry into out-of-home care.
- **Intensive Family Support Service:** in partnership with Koya Aboriginal Corporation, this service will provide practical, in-home support to families who are engaged with the Department of Communities (Child Protection), where children are either at significant risk of entering out-of-home care or are working towards reunification with their families.
- **Education Employment and Training Program (EET):** For young people at extreme educational risk due to trauma, mental health, family issues.
- **Support and Community Services (SACS):** For families with children aged 4-14 that are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness and living in supported accommodation.
- **Moving Out, Moving On (MOMO):** service for young people aged 15-21 who are experiencing homelessness, or at significant risk of homelessness or transience.
- **Reconnect:** a diversion and early intervention service for families with young people (12-18) at risk of homelessness or family breakdown.
- **Young Women's Program:** medium-term accommodation and support for young women (including those with children) aged 16-25 experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or who need help to live independently.
- **Ruby's Reunification Program:** seeks to prevent youth homelessness through part-time accommodation, whilst engaging and supporting the family with counselling and practical support. It aims to foster hope for staying together or reunification, and keep young people out of the youth (and ultimately adult) homelessness sector.



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Purpose: To assess how the Working with Children (Screening) Amendment Bill 2025 aligns with Parkerville's Phase 2 reform submission and high-level recommendations, and to identify remaining gaps and opportunities for further reform.

At a Glance

The *Working with Children (Screening) Amendment Bill 2025* successfully delivers the reform that Parkerville considers to be most urgent: closing national WWCC loopholes that enable people assessed as unsafe in one State or Territory to work with children in another. The Bill strengthens WA's capacity to:

- Recognise and act upon adverse interstate WWC decisions
- Access and share national risk information in real time
- Rapidly withdraw, refuse, or cancel WWC clearances
- Require employers to take protective action

However, the Bill does not deliver the broader systemic reforms for which Parkerville advocated, including:

- expanded scope of WWC requirements to reflect real-world service contexts
- tiered, risk-responsive screening
- dual notification requirements for student placements
- targeted reforms to exemptions and defences
- explicit CEO powers for pre-prosecution public warnings

We continue to maintain that these should remain priorities for a **subsequent legislative or regulatory package**.

Executive Summary

Parkerville welcomes the Bill's national portability and interstate decision recognition package, which directly addresses the highest-risk gaps identified in our submission.

The Bill delivers Parkerville's key safety priorities by:

A. Recognising and operationalising adverse interstate WWC decisions

- Inserts new definitions (e.g., *adverse interstate WWC decision*, *interstate negative notice*, *interstate WWC authority*, *WWC national reference system*).
→ **Clauses: s4; s5 inserting s8B**

B. Compelling the CEO to act immediately when interstate decisions exist

- CEO must withdraw applications, refuse to issue notices, cancel existing notices, and notify employers.
→ **Clauses: s11A; s13AB; s19A; s20A–s20B**

C. Strengthening employer obligations

- Employers commit an offence if they knowingly engage a person who is the subject of an adverse interstate decision.
→ **Clause: s22(3A)**

D. Enabling national information-sharing and real-time risk detection

- CEO and authorised officers must access the WWC national reference system; ACC-supported information exchange is enabled.
→ **Clause: s34GA; amendments to s34G**

E. Supporting enforcement through evidentiary provisions

- Certificates from interstate authorities become admissible proof; documents carry presumptions of validity.
→ **Clause: s44(3AA), s44(5A)**

F. Requiring retrospective checks across the system

- All pending WWC matters, existing cardholders, and review applicants must be rechecked against the national system.
→ **Clauses: ss78–82**

Together, these provisions substantially align with Parkerville's recommendations for a nationally consistent, timely, and proactive risk identification system.



Intersection With Parkerville's High-Level Reflections & Recommendations

Parkerville's submission emphasised:

1. Child safety as the paramount consideration

Bill alignment: Strong.

The Bill prioritises child safety over administrative neutrality by mandating immediate action whenever interstate adverse decisions arise.

2. Timely access to risk information

Bill alignment: Strong.

Access to the WWC national reference system (**s34GA**) and mandatory retrospective checks (**ss78–82**) directly reflect Parkerville's concern about information delays enabling harm.

3. National consistency to close loopholes

Bill alignment: Very strong.

The Bill embeds interstate decision recognition (**s4; s8B**) and removes gaps enabling 'jurisdiction shopping.'

4. Need for proactive organisational alerts

Bill alignment: Partial.

Employers must not employ individuals under adverse interstate decisions, and the CEO must notify employers at several decision points.

But the Bill does not introduce pre-prosecution public warnings or broad mandatory employer/education provider notification requirements.

5. Whole-of-organisation safeguarding

Bill alignment: Not addressed.

No amendment expands WWC requirements to all adults whose work brings them into children's environments, despite our evidence that risk is not limited to frontline roles.

6. Tiered, context-responsive screening

Bill alignment: Not addressed.

The Bill does not introduce any differentiated risk thresholds or specialised assessment pathways.

7. Sector-specific guidance and implementation support

Bill alignment: Not within the Bill's scope.

We recognise that this will require policy, regulatory or practice guidance to accompany future legislative refinement.

What the Bill Successfully Delivers (High Alignment)

1) Closing portability gaps & acting on interstate decisions

- Definitions and status of interstate decisions (**s4; s8B**)
- Withdrawal of applications (**s11A**)
- Cancellation of interim negative notices (**s13AB**)
- Cancellation of existing assessment notices (**s19A**)
- Limits on substitution processes (**s20A–20B**)
- Employer prohibition & penalties (**s22(3A)**)

2) Real-time national information exchange

- Access to WWC national reference system (**s34GA**)
- ACC-enabled data arrangements (**s34GA(4)–(6)**)

3) Enforcement strengthened

- Certificates admissible (**s44(3AA)**)
- Presumption of validity (**s44(5A)**)

4) Retrospective system-wide safety checks

- Mandatory reviews of existing cardholders and pending matters (**ss78–82**)

What Remains Unaddressed

Scope expansion & tiered screening

- No amendments to **s6** to widen child-related work categories or introduce tiering.

Dual notification for student placements

- Not implemented, despite clear safety rationale.

Public warning powers

- No explicit CEO authority to issue pre-prosecution warnings.

Exemptions & defences

- No change to Parent Volunteer Exemption, private/domestic arrangements, or the five-day defence.



Recommendations (Toward a Phase 2B Reform Package)

1. Expand scope & introduce tiered screening

- Amend s6 to capture ancillary and corporate roles in high-risk child environments, and introduce baseline + heightened screening tiers.

2. Legislate dual notification

- Implement a streamlined digital model:
 - Education provider notifies → employer confirms → CEO system auto-processes.

3. Enable pre-prosecution protective advisories

- Introduce a two-stage publication model:
 - targeted advisory at commencement,
 - public notice upon conviction (subject to court orders).

5. Transparency & implementation KPIs

- KPIs on notification timeframes, national reference checks, and publication of de-identified quarterly dashboards.

Contact details

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