

To the Royal Commission,

Background:

In my capacity as member of [REDACTED], the Management Committee for the [REDACTED], I gained much experience over the 6 years I was on that committee. However, I was appalled when a member of staff [REDACTED] was convicted of child sex offences. [REDACTED] I could no longer be a part of [REDACTED] when I learned that [REDACTED], had not employed [REDACTED] with a current Working With Children Check. I believe that a current check would have prevented [REDACTED] and saved a 14 year –old-girl from sexual assault. [REDACTED] had current AVO's in place for family violence, and there were children involved. When I brought up the allegations, without staff at the last meeting that I attended, the issues were sidelined for "Investigation" [REDACTED], and the assault downplayed to a question of consensual sex. In any case, it was said, that is now an issue for DoCS and the Department of Education. Both of those departments were informed about the negligence of having employed someone to work directly with vulnerable young people, while having an AVO, yet without submitting a Working With Children Check. I feel as though the system let down this young woman because the basic checks were not applied, in the first instance.

I think a national WWCC should be applied, and be "current" have 'clearance' for three years. Anyone with a history of assault, including sexual assault (current AVO's) should be ineligible to work with children. This should apply for those also seeking to do voluntary work 'parent volunteers' with children, like : Little Athletics, Taekwondo, swimming, Football, school reading and religious or ethics classes; etc.

The person should not be allowed to commence work until the check is completed. There should be obligations with overseas entrants to Australia, to have their check, and be cleared, before commencing work in Australia.

Child related work should be defined as having a responsibility to care for any vulnerable individuals, including Intellectually Disabled people, and those with other disabilities (and the Aged should have a similar "WW Aged Check.") Out of Home Carers should also be required to keep the "check", annually.

The WWCC should apply to those with juvenile records. However, exemptions should apply if the person can warrant gaining back that trust, on a per –case basis: ie: through an appeals process.

Automatic barring is a good thing. (if it's for assault, and/or sexual assault or breach of AVO etc.). As said previously, if the person who was barred and is seeking employment in a child –related area can demonstrate compliance with the requirements not to reoffend, (as with

stealing or drug offences, etc) and be screened at tighter intervals (say 12 monthly) then after satisfying an appeals process, may be allowed to work again with children.

The clear process and guidelines for the institution should still exist, for reporting and responding to inappropriate behaviour of staff in child –related positions. There could be a whole spectrum of things like immediate stand –down, (and leave without pay, pending investigation)witnessed: grounds for dismissal, caution, counselling, etc.The victim should always be central to any actions (including consulted as to what disciplinary actions should be sought).

Effectiveness of WWCC could be evaluated and /monitored by enacting the safety policy and keeping the children safe.

Yours sincerely,

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