



Australian Government
The Treasury



Competition
Review



Australian Government
Department of Finance

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National Competition Policy

National approach to worker screening in the care and support economy

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Manager
Media Unit
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
Parkes ACT 2600
Email: media@treasury.gov.au

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Consultation Process

Request for feedback and comments

The Department of Finance (Finance) and the Treasury are consulting on the feasibility of potential options to implement a national approach to worker screening in the care and support economy (CSE). This reform could improve labour mobility and efficiency for CSE workers while enhancing quality and safety for CSE recipients.

Questions are included throughout the paper to guide comments. Interested parties may wish to respond to some or all of the questions, or comment on issues more broadly.

Personal information collection

The Treasury collects your personal information to seek your views on a national approach to worker screening.

We may also use your name and email to:

- ask you for more feedback or
- invite you to future-related consultations.

If you don't provide this information, you cannot submit your response via Converlens.

We collect the following personal information:

- full name
- email address
- location and
- the organisation you represent.

We'll only use or share your information for the consultation, unless:

- you agree otherwise
- you'd expect it or
- the law allows or requires it.

Information may be shared with Treasury staff, contractors, ministerial offices or relevant agencies.

Closing date for submissions: 7 October 2025

Submissions must be submitted online at this [link](#).

Enquiries can be directed to CareSectorWorkerScreening@finance.gov.au.

Summary

The care and support economy (CSE) – comprising of paid personal care and support across the aged care; disability support; early childhood education; and care and veterans' care – is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Australian economy. It contributed an estimated 8 per cent of Australia's GDP and 12 per cent of the workforce in 2022-23.¹ The CSE workforce more than doubled over the past 20 years to 2020 with more than two million people currently employed in care-related roles.²

Workers in the personal CSE are required to undertake different screening processes depending on their role and jurisdiction. The fragmented nature of this screening creates information gaps that may expose those requiring care to harm. It also creates a system that is complex, challenging and costly for workers. Reducing fragmentation would improve worker mobility and increase safety.

Some reforms have already been made to improve worker screening arrangements in specific sectors, such as those in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which requires all key personnel and all those in risk assessed roles (both paid and volunteer) to undertake a NDIS Worker Screening Check. The Australian Government has committed to expanding the NDIS Check to aged care. In early childhood education and care and other child related work and volunteering, the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) has agreed to strengthen and improve consistency of Working with Children Checks (WWCC) based on mutual recognition and remove barriers to information sharing. Further reforms are underway to implement worker registration in the aged care and early childhood education and care sectors, including through the establishment of worker registers.

A national approach to worker screening would aim to leverage and enhance these existing reform efforts over the longer term, promote integration, and minimise duplication of effort and administrative burden across the care and support sector (including the scope of existing WWCC/WWVP checks outside of the care sector).

Options

Under the National Competition Policy (NCP), Finance and Treasury are considering longer-term options to reform worker screening to improve labour mobility and efficiency for CSE workers, while enhancing quality and safety for CSE recipients. This paper outlines two preliminary options:

- **Option 1: Expanded mutual recognition of worker screening checks.** The WWCC, Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Check, and the forthcoming NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check would all remain as standalone checks, however; they would be mutually recognised as valid across sectors and jurisdictions. This would reduce the number of times a worker needs to get a sector or jurisdiction specific check. This would also mean that a person who has received a negative outcome under any of these Schemes, would be prohibited from doing any paid or volunteer work across any of these sectors.
- **Option 2: Single national check across the care economy.** This would reset current worker screening arrangements by removing sector specific checks (e.g. the NDIS and

¹ Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 6.

² Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 5.

Aged Care Worker Screening Check, WWCC, and WWVP Check) and developing a single national 'care and support economy' check. This single check would still be able to be used for workers and volunteers outside the CSE (such as those in scope of existing WWCC/WWVP checks outside of the care sector, e.g. volunteers, coaches and others).

These options are non-exhaustive and reflect initial policy thinking. Finance and Treasury welcome further views or options on how these could be improved.

Next Steps

Government will consider all feedback provided to inform further detailed design of the national model and next steps with states and territories through the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR).

Introduction

Demand in the care and support economy is growing rapidly

The CSE workforce is growing three times faster than any other sector with the total demand for care and support workers expected to double by 2049-50.³ Most workers will need to undergo screening assessments to be eligible to work in the CSE. Over time, worker screening systems will experience increased pressures to meet rising demand, while maintaining high levels of quality, safety and efficiency. Worker screening processes need to be more user friendly for workers and governments to handle the increased workload associated with higher demand, more thorough screening checks, and continuous monitoring.

Worker screening is critical to protect Australians

Worker screening in the CSE is critically important for protecting Australians. It prevents individuals with high-risk backgrounds from entering certain roles where they are an unacceptable risk of causing harm to vulnerable people, in the provision of the relevant service. It has a preventative effect in deterring individuals who pose a high risk of harm from seeking work in the sector and reducing the potential for providers to employ workers who pose an unacceptable risk of harm to vulnerable people. Worker screening also has a corrective effect in prohibiting those persons who pose an unacceptable risk, or are proven to have previously harmed vulnerable people, from having more than incidental contact with vulnerable groups

Screening requirements vary across sectors and jurisdictions. These checks generally review the applicant's previous criminal history, adverse conduct findings, and self-declarations⁴ to determine the suitability of the prospective worker to work with vulnerable cohorts. Further safeguarding requirements may be applicable before working in certain sectors, such as

³ Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Economic impact of care and support](#), 2023.

⁴ For example, this could include international criminal history.

diverse training and qualification requirements, professional and maintaining relevant work-related registrations.⁵

There are currently four types of checks used to screen workers across sectors and jurisdictions:

- **National Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC):** This point in time check reviews the individual's criminal history (i.e. 'disclosable court outcomes') across all states and territories, as well as federal jurisdictions at the point in time the request is made. It provides information for organisations to make informed decisions about the suitability of applicants for employment, registration or licensing reasons. Unlike other checks, the NCCHC does not involve a risk assessment by worker screening units (WSUs). In 2023-24, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) conducted 7.2 million criminal history checks across Australia.⁶
- **Working With Children Check (WWCC):** This check is required for anyone who works or volunteers in a child-related area, such as early childhood education and care. Each jurisdiction has their own WWCC arrangements and application processes. There are approximately 6 million WWCC and WWVP checks in total across jurisdictions.
- **Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Check:** This check is used in the ACT and Tasmania for individuals who engage in work involving children or people with disabilities. It can complement (i.e. Tasmania) or replace (i.e. ACT) the WWCC.
- **NDIS Worker Screening Check:** This check is required for workers of registered NDIS providers in risk-assessed roles. Unregistered providers and self-managed NDIS participants can request their workers undergo NDIS worker screening. There have been approximately 1.4 million NDIS checks undertaken in total.
 - **Proposed NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check:** There are currently reforms underway to expand the NDIS Worker Screening Check to cover the aged care sector. This check will only be required for risk-assessed roles, including responsible persons, and Ahpra-registered workers only working in aged care will be exempt from screening requirements. A clearance decision or exclusion decision will automatically apply in either sector. Once implemented, workers in the NDIS and aged care industry will be able to work across both sectors and all jurisdictions. It is expected that over five years, approximately 870,000 aged care workers and responsible persons will be covered by the proposed check.

Fees are levied on worker screening checks to help fund the operation of WSUs and ACIC, who provide the National Police Checking Service. Research by ACIL Allen as of November 2023 notes application fees for workers range from \$45 per police check in Tasmania to \$146 for a WWVP Check in the ACT. Unless it is sooner cancelled, an NDIS WS Check is valid for 5 years, and a WWCC is valid for either 5, 3, or 2 years depending on the State or Territory in which it was issued. The majority of volunteer-based worker screening checks are free, however, fees are applied in three jurisdictions – ranging from \$8 per WWCC in the Northern Territory to \$21.36 for the same check in Tasmania.

Australia's worker screening system is fragmented across the CSE. Jurisdictions and sectors operate separate screening schemes – creating a complex, challenging and costly system

⁵ This is out-of-scope for this consultation paper, but the proposal will consider how reforms to worker screening may interact with other CSE safeguards to avoid introducing conflicting obligations.

⁶ ACIC, [ACIC Annual Report 2023-24](#), 2024.

for workers to navigate. This disproportionately affects women and migrants who comprise the majority of workers in the CSE. Critical gaps across screening schemes may expose Australians to harm and exacerbate pressure on CSE funding. Reducing fragmentation across jurisdictions and sectors would improve efficiency of worker screening and improve safety outcomes.

There is an opportunity to reform worker screening arrangements to improve safety and efficiency

On 29 November 2024, Commonwealth, state and territory treasurers signed two agreements to revitalise National Competition Policy (NCP).⁷ These NCP agreements seek to improve living standards and create opportunities for Australians by supporting the implementation of competition and productivity-enhancing reforms.⁸

Through the NCP Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) schedule, the Council on Federal Financial Relations (CFFR) agreed to improve labour mobility in human services.⁹ In consultation with the states and territories, the Commonwealth was tasked with leading the “development of a business case to enhance the safety and efficiency of worker screening in the CSE”.¹⁰ This would leverage existing Commonwealth and state-owned databases and ICT infrastructure.

The Productivity Commission in their interim report on “Delivering quality care more efficiently” has also called for greater alignment in quality and safety regulation of the CSE.¹¹ Draft Recommendation 1.1 of their interim report states:

To align care worker regulation, the Australian Government should, within three years, develop a national screening clearance for workers in the aged care, NDIS, veterans’ care and early childhood education and care (ECEC) sectors in collaboration with state and territory governments.”¹²

A national approach to worker screening would leverage and enhance existing reform efforts across the CSE – covering workers in aged care, disability support, and veterans’ care, as well as those who hold WWCCs, ranging from religious services and sporting clubs to early childhood educators and school bus drivers.¹³ This reform would improve regulatory alignment of the CSE to improve labour mobility and efficiency for CSE workers, while enhancing quality and safety for CSE recipients.

⁷ The Hon Dr Jim Chalmers MP, Treasurer, [National agreement to revitalise competition – for consumers, businesses and our economy](#), 2024.

⁸ Federal Financial Relations, [Intergovernmental Agreement on National Competition Policy](#), 2025.

⁹ Federal Financial Relations, [Federation Funding Agreement on National Competition Policy](#), 2025.

¹⁰ Federal Financial Relations, [Federation Funding Agreement on National Competition Policy](#), 2025, p 21.

¹¹ Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 2.

¹² Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 2.

¹³ For example, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act* 2012 No 51 lists the following services as requiring a WWCC: child development; child protection; children’s health services; clubs or other bodies providing services for children; disability services; early education and child care; education; entertainment for children; justice services; religious services; residential services; transport services for children; and others prescribed by regulation.

The current system is fragmented across jurisdictions and sectors

Under Australia's federated system, worker screening checks are almost entirely independently administered by states and territories, often across different departments. This has created a fragmented system requiring users to navigate multiple state-based systems to obtain worker clearances to operate across sectors and jurisdictions within the CSE. This siloed approach has led to jurisdictions implementing their own worker screening terminology, processes, systems and ICT infrastructure. This fragmented system reduces the safety of CSE recipients due to incomplete or inaccessible information, restricts the labour mobility of CSE workers, increases the regulatory burden on individuals and businesses, and raises administrative costs for governments. It also increases risk to vulnerable people by enabling bad actors to continue offending by crossing borders and evading detection.

Information and data sharing is not comprehensive or expeditious

Some legislative provisions and agreements currently exist to facilitate data sharing between Workers Screening Units (WSUs) to ensure fulsome consideration of worker screening applications and improve safety outcomes for CSE recipients. However, these differ in both scope and implementation across jurisdictions and sectors.

States have identified significant limitations in current information and data sharing arrangements for worker screening. Depending on the type of clearance, relevant information for worker screening assessments is not always shared between jurisdictions and sectors or made available to WSUs. The differences in record-keeping and lack of standardised communication between jurisdictions and law enforcement further complicate data sharing. For example, this information may not be: a) available due to legislative, connectivity or cultural barriers; or b) processable due to technical barriers such as information being stored in scanned hand-written notes or unsearchable PDFs.

Due to lack of appropriate information sharing, WSUs may have to make clearance decisions without comprehensive access to relevant information in other jurisdictions or sectors. This creates a situation where someone unsuitable to work with vulnerable cohorts may be cleared in one jurisdiction or sector because relevant information from other jurisdictions or sectors is not shared or considered.

The lack of integrated data systems and real-time data sharing across jurisdictions and sectors poses significant challenges to regulators. This can reduce the efficacy of worker screening and reduce safety outcomes for vulnerable cohorts. It can also create gaps in monitoring and enforcement – allowing unsuitable individuals to circumvent adverse findings by moving between sectors or jurisdictions. Improving data and information sharing via legislative and technical reform will enhance the overall safety of CSE recipients.

As noted by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General on 15 August 2025, the Commonwealth has committed to developing a National Continuous Checking Capability

(NCCC) to mitigate this limitation in relation to criminal records.¹⁴ There was also agreement to - strengthen and improve consistency for a national approach to WWCC, based on mutual recognition, remove information sharing barriers and undertake technical assessment of IT systems to enable interoperability with the NCCC.¹⁵ Once this capability is fully deployed, this will allow WSUs and regulators to actively monitor WWCC holders to provide greater assurances nationally.

Misconduct reporting requirements vary across jurisdictions and sectors

Reportable conduct schemes provide a clear mechanism to overcome barriers to reporting. Reporting schemes differ in most areas of the care and support economy, such as the early childhood education and care, education, health, aged care and disability sectors. All schemes facilitate reporting by employees and providers to regulators. Regulators may then assess allegations and take appropriate action in relation to notification and reporting.

Reporting requirements for misconduct and offences vary significantly across states. There is no uniform framework mandating the reporting of all relevant misconduct or allegations to WSUs. The lack of mandatory reporting obligations in some sectors and jurisdictions creates gaps in the information available to WSUs. For example, under the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth) (NDIS Act)*, there are clear reporting requirements for registered providers around misconduct. This will be replicated when the NDIS system is extended to aged care. Similar requirements are not consistently applied or enforced for unregistered providers or across other sectors. This creates a situation where there can be information suggesting an individual working or seeking to work with vulnerable cohorts is high risk, but their clearance is granted or not revoked as non-criminal offences (e.g. workplace behaviour) are not being reported to the appropriate authorities.

Adding context to criminal history information through additional datasets (e.g. workplace behaviours), reportable conduct and additional police information (e.g. offence summaries) will further increase the quality of worker screening assessments and improve safety outcomes for vulnerable cohorts. Sharing of sensitive data and information between WSUs will be undertaken in the context of appropriate safeguards with due regard to privacy considerations. Adherence to these safeguards will assist in promoting public trust in data sharing and ensure best practice.

Most check holders are not continuously monitored for new criminal offences

Most worker screening checks are only accurate as of the assessment date and not always continuously monitored when new offences occur in other jurisdictions. This creates a situation where individuals, who are initially cleared to work with vulnerable cohorts, do not have their worker screening checks revoked when they commit relevant criminal offences.

¹⁴ Attorney-General's Department, [Standing Council of Attorneys-General \(SCAG\) Communiqué – 15 August 2025](#), 2025, p 1.

¹⁵ Attorney-General's Department, [Standing Council of Attorneys-General \(SCAG\) Communiqué – 15 August 2025](#), 2025, p 1.

Currently, the extent of continuous monitoring of screened workers varies across jurisdictions and schemes. For example, continuous monitoring arrangements exist for the NDIS Worker Screening Check, but these are incomplete as they only consider state and territory based offences and do not include Commonwealth offences. This increases the risk of harm for vulnerable cohorts and may erode public trust in government regulators and businesses across the CSE. Continuous monitoring would help to ensure CSE workers continue to be suitable to work with CSE recipients while they are holding their check – ensuring the integrity of the workforce.

Duplicative worker screening checks are costly for workers and governments

Workers across the CSE are often required to hold more than one clearance. For example, many registered NDIS providers offer services to participants who are under 18. As such, many of their workers are required to maintain both a NDIS Worker Screening Check and WWCC. There is also anecdotal advice that providers may require additional checks above the screening checks. For example, NDIS providers may ask workers for police checks in addition to their NDIS Worker Screening Check.

This cost is borne by CSE workers through the additional time taken to complete multiple worker screening applications and money spent on worker screening fees. Furthermore, WWCC holders often have to repeat their screening assessment if they move to another jurisdiction as these checks are not recognised across jurisdictions.

Duplication of worker screening checks across sectors and jurisdictions is administratively inefficient. Preliminary estimates by the Department of Finance found removing duplicative checks could reduce administrative costs by \$20 million annually from application and compliance cost savings for CSE workers. These benefits could be achieved through mutual recognition of worker screening checks across the CSE.

Consideration will need to be given to the intent of specific workers screening checks for sectors (e.g. fraud offences are currently considered in NDIS but not WWCC) to ensure that safety is maintained while balancing any workforce impacts of this cross-sector banning.

Application processes are inefficient and inconvenient for care and support workers

Many worker screening systems require applicants to physically verify their identity. For example, Western Australia requires WWCC applicants to lodge their physical application form at an authorised Australia Post outlet to verify their identification and pay the worker screening fee.¹⁶ Travelling to verify identity documents in person is both inefficient and inconvenient for CSE workers, particularly as many CSE workers balance their jobs with informal care work. Many jurisdictions have the underlying ICT infrastructure to digitally verify individuals however face other regulatory barriers to enabling this. These factors can disproportionately affect people living in regional and remote communities, including First Nations people, who must travel long distances to physically verify their identity.

¹⁶ WA.gov.au, [Working with Children Check – Application and Renewal Process](#), 2025.

The Department of Finance provisionally estimates improving identity verification processes and removing in-person requirements would reduce compliance burdens by \$122 million annually for CSE workers. These benefits could be achieved through targeted ICT investments to integrate worker screening checks with the Australian Government Digital ID System (AGDIS) to improve efficiency.

Delayed clearances for worker screening reduces wages and productivity

Some states, territories and sectors require workers to receive their finalised check before they commence employment (i.e. 'no card, no start' jurisdictions like Queensland). Others allow individuals to begin work while their application is being processed. States and territories are moving towards requiring approved Working with Children Checks before a person can start working in the early childhood education and care sector. Due to ICT maturity differences across jurisdictions, worker screening is administered with differing standards for inclusion/exclusion of relevant workers and varying degrees of productivity. WSUs assess nearly all clearance applications manually, which has substantial resourcing implications for regulators. Automated processes are incorporated in some jurisdictions where they use interfaces to collect and review data in assessing applicant suitability. Delays in receiving worker screening checks can lead to foregone income¹⁷, labour productivity¹⁸, and prevent CSE recipients from receiving those workers' services during this period.

Current reforms to worker screening checks will address some immediate issues in the care and support economy

The CSE is a crowded reform landscape with multiple changes to worker screening checks across the early childhood education and care education, health, aged care and disability sectors. These reforms have or will address some immediate issues experienced by the CSE.

NDIS Worker Screening Check

Commenced in 2021, the NDIS Worker Screening Check assesses the suitability of care providers to work with NDIS participants. It is mandatory for key personnel and risk-assessed roles delivered by registered NDIS providers, accounting for roughly 10 per cent of providers in 2022-23¹⁹. It is not mandatory for unregistered providers, but they can choose to opt in. Self-managing and plan-managing participants receiving services and supports from an unregistered provider can also require their workers undergo worker screening.

States and territories conduct worker screening checks and assessments in their jurisdictions via dedicated WSUs. These operate on a partial cost recovery basis. WSUs conduct a risk assessment and determine whether to clear or exclude a worker from working with people with disability. The Commonwealth provides ongoing administration of the NDIS Worker

¹⁷ If the person is not employed while they are waiting for the check and they are living in a 'no card, no start' jurisdiction.

¹⁸ If the person must be actively supervised while awaiting their check.

¹⁹ NDIS Review, [Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme - Final Report](#), p 207.

Screening Database to record the outcomes of NDIS Worker Screening Checks and enable employers to verify workers and confirm their check status. The Intergovernmental Agreement for Nationally Consistent Worker Screening for the NDIS sets out the national policy for worker screening and outlines the responsibilities of the Commonwealth and states and territories.

The NDIS worker screening check is national and portable between states and territories and the NDIS screening requirements are aligned across jurisdictions. This means workers do not need to re-apply if they move interstate, reducing paperwork for workers and employers, while increasing the safety of NDIS participants.

Workers are continuously monitored across all jurisdictions by jurisdictional WSUs and the NDIS Worker Screening Check considers broader sources of information than convictions, such as civil penalties and relevant workplace misconduct findings, and apply a nationally consistent framework to maintain high safety standards for people with disability.

Aged Care Worker Screening Check

The Commonwealth has responsibility for the delivery of funded aged care services, which are regulated by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Aged care providers must ensure all aged care workers and responsible persons (e.g. CEO or Board Members) have:

- A police certificate (less than three years old) that does not record certain offences; or
- A NDIS worker screening check.²⁰

Work is currently underway on the proposed expansion of the NDIS worker screening check to cover the aged care sector. This would see the NDIS and proposed Aged Care check be mutually recognised across both sectors and nationally. The National Worker Screening Database will use existing NDIS ICT infrastructure and jurisdictional WSU suitability assessment processes to register aged care workers. This check will apply to risk-assessed roles in aged care, but Ahpra-registered workers who work only in aged care will be exempt from undergoing a screening check. Similar to the NDIS, a risk-assessed role is:

- A responsible person (for example a CEO or board member);
- A person involved in the direct delivery of aged care services to older people; or
- A person likely to have 'more than incidental contact' with older people accessing aged care services as a normal part of their duties.²¹

This will reduce the risk of harm to individuals accessing funded aged care services, while allowing workers to more easily move between the NDIS and aged care sectors and geographically between jurisdictions. This reform responds to worker screening component of Recommendation 77 of the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*.

²⁰ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, [Screening requirements for the aged care workforce](#), 2025.

²¹ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, [Screening requirements for the aged care workforce](#), 2025.

Working with Children Check / Working with Vulnerable People Check

Mandatory pre-employment screening for child-related work commenced in 2000. Since then, each state and territory has legislated and implemented their own worker screening processes resulting in jurisdictional differences. For example, each jurisdiction assesses criminal convictions and patterns of behaviour at different standards to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children.

Most jurisdictions use WWCCs, while the ACT and Tasmania operate WWVP Checks, which also apply to other vulnerable groups. All jurisdictions have dedicated WSUs, which operate on a full or partial cost recovery basis, with the remainder of costs subsidised by the relevant State or Territory Government.

These checks are not national or portable – limiting the labour mobility of WWCC/WWVP holders. Ongoing monitoring of WWCCs or WWVP holders is conducted within the jurisdiction in which the Card was issued and information sharing between states is limited. This affects quality and safety as WSUs are unable to consider criminal offences in other jurisdictions, unless they are specifically made aware of these, when monitoring the applicant's continued suitability to work with children and vulnerable people.

The Commonwealth Government has been working with states and territories to strengthen and improve national consistency of WWCC schemes. Following the release of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Working with Children Checks Report*, all jurisdictions worked together to develop the National Standards for WWCCs. These were published in 2019. Although these standards were developed, national consistency is complex due to the variations in state and territory child safety-related legislation, differences in criminal laws, and provisions regarding the sharing of information.

In 2021, the *National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030* was launched and the National Office for Child Safety (NOCS), within the Attorney-General's Department, has worked with state and territory governments to build and promote child safe cultures and enhance national arrangements for sharing information across sectors and jurisdictions, including WWCCs and reportable conduct schemes.

The Commonwealth is now leading work through the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) to secure agreement to short- and medium-term initiatives to strengthen WWCC oversight. As agreed on 15 August 2025, this includes:

- A Commonwealth commitment to establish a National Continuous Checking Capability (NCCC), which will be a secure system that continuously monitors WWCC holders against new criminal history information from national and state and territory datasets;
- Urgently working towards implementation, by the end of 2025, of mutual recognition of negative notices (WWCC declines and revocations) so that a person denied a WWCC, or whose WWCC has been revoked, in one jurisdiction cannot be granted or hold a WWCC in another jurisdiction;
- Strengthening and improving consistency for a national approach to WWCCs, based on mutual recognition, which will not diminish existing safeguards and will include a consistent risk assessment framework and exclusion criteria, for consideration at SCAG in late 2025; and

- Removing barriers to information sharing and reporting back to SCAG in late 2025.²²

This work will contribute to strengthening worker screening across the CSE – further enhancing safety for Australians and improving workforce productivity.

Veterans' Care

There is currently no legislated approach to veterans' care worker screening. Regulation of veterans' care services is a function of the contracting arrangements between the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) and its providers as compared to the legislative arrangements underpinning the NDIS and aged care sectors. A National Criminal History Check and WWVP Check are the primary requirements for veterans' care workers. Additionally, the inclusion of a care worker on the NDIS Worker Screening Database is considered acceptable evidence in lieu of police and WWVP checks.

DVA estimates approximately 82 per cent of veterans' care providers also operate across the disability and aged care sectors. This suggests that adjacent reforms in the disability and aged care sectors will help ensure some multi-sector care providers are covered by worker screening obligations when delivering veterans' care services.

Linkages with Worker Registration

While worker screening focuses on the workers' risk of causing harm, worker registration is the process of formally recording them as part of the CSE workforce. Although these are separate issues, holistic consideration of worker screening and registration may enhance quality and safety for CSE recipients.

There are currently several reforms to worker registration at the Commonwealth level. The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing is working on establishing a national registration scheme to support personal care workers employed in aged care (further responding to recommendation 77 of the *Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety*). Similarly, the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority is implementing an early childhood education and care (ECEC) National Educator Register in partnership with all states and territories. These reforms will support the professionalisation of workers and ensure there are appropriate protections for individuals accessing care.

Questions

1. Do these challenges resonate with your experience of worker screening? Are there any other issues that we should consider?
2. What components of the existing worker screening systems work well and should be kept under a national approach?

²² Attorney-General's Department, [Standing Council of Attorneys-General \(SCAG\) Communiqué – 15 August 2025](#), 2025, p 1.

A national approach to worker screening would address long-term issues across the care and support economy

Recent reforms across the care and support economy, such as the NDIS Worker Screening Check, have demonstrated the benefits of enhancing worker screening systems. While these reforms have made significant progress within their respective sectors, worker screening across the broader CSE remains complex and costly for workers to navigate.

National leadership is essential. Without deliberate intervention to coordinate reforms on worker screening across sectors and jurisdictions, there is a risk of further entrenching fragmentation across the system. The Productivity Commission recommends “greater alignment in quality and safety regulation of the care economy to improve efficiency and outcomes for care users”.²³ Their recommendations included developing a national worker screening clearance and adopting a unified approach to worker registration if registration is required in multiple care sectors.

A pragmatic, staged approach to national care worker screening would ensure alignment with existing reforms, while improving quality, safety and efficiency for CSE workers and recipients. National consistency will support better and safer care by removing impediments to information sharing and lessening the compliance burden for care providers operating across state borders and care sectors.

National worker screening would improve quality, safety and efficiency for care and support recipients and providers

A national approach to worker screening across the CSE would increase safety for Australians by strengthening clearance integrity and information sharing between jurisdictions. It would enable jurisdictional WSUs and regulators to share and use all available information, including criminal and non-criminal (e.g. workplace behaviour) offences and child protection/reportable conduct information in other jurisdictions, in accordance with relevant secrecy and privacy provisions to inform risk assessments and decision making. It would also reduce the potential for care providers to employ or engage workers who pose an unacceptable risk of harm to individuals accessing care services. Similarly, this would exclude an unsuitable worker that was banned from one sector from working in another. Consideration will need to be given to any workforce impacts of this cross-sector banning (e.g. fraud offences are currently considered in NDIS but not WWCC). This would improve safety outcomes, while increasing employer and user trust in the worker screening process.

Who could benefit from national care worker screening?

A national approach to workers screening could benefit:

- **Care and support recipients** – enhancing safety outcomes by strengthening clearance integrity and improving information sharing between jurisdictions.

²³ Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 2.

- **Care and support workers** – increasing labour mobility across the care sector by enabling portability of worker screening checks and reducing clearance delays.
- **Care and support providers** – reducing administrative burden and enhancing public trust by streamlining application processes and improving safety outcomes.
- **Workers Screening Units** – increasing administrative efficiency, freeing up resourcing and minimising safety risks by optimising worker screening systems.
- **Federal and State Governments** – improving quality, safety, efficiency and productivity by aligning worker screening checks across sectors and jurisdictions.

A national approach would reduce screening delays by improving administrative efficiency, expediting processing timeframes, streamlining existing processes for non-complex cases across jurisdictions. This would enable applicants to receive clearance decisions faster and start work earlier.

Workers would further benefit from national portability across jurisdictions and sectors, similar to the NDIS Worker Screening Check, which would increase their labour mobility and improve productivity across the CSE. A national approach would also reduce duplicative screening requirements and deliver economy-wide time and cost savings for workers and businesses. For example, workers in the disability sector may no longer need to apply for WWCC/WWVP Checks alongside their NDIS Worker Screening Check. Similarly, people who work with children across Australia, especially those working online or over the phone, may not need to apply for eight WWCCs to comply with each jurisdiction's laws. This reduces the administrative burden for workers as they spend less time submitting applications and businesses as they can more easily provide care services across jurisdictions and comply with more streamlined regulatory obligations.

Questions

3. To what extent do the anticipated benefits of the proposed reforms reflect your expectations for an improved worker screening process? Are there any additional benefits you believe we should consider to further strengthen the outcomes?
4. What are the key issues with national consistency in worker screening for the care and support economy? How could these issues be overcome?
5. How can the government ensure safety outcomes are upheld, while improving the simplicity and efficiency of worker screening processes?
6. Are there specific barriers to, or opportunities for, improving worker screening to make it more efficient and suitable for particular groups or organisations, such as First Nations care workers or Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations?

Key design elements for national care worker screening

A national approach to worker screening will need to consider various design elements, including key features of the care worker check, governance arrangements, legislative amendments, digital and data infrastructure, and other requirements placed on CSE workers. This consultation paper outlines several high-level design principles for national care worker screening. These principles should aim to enhance screening integrity, increase labour mobility, reduce administrative burden, improve information sharing and ensure cultural safety.

Safety of vulnerable cohorts is paramount

Every Australian who relies on care services deserves to be protected by systems that prioritise their safety and wellbeing. A consistent, rigorous and national approach is essential to safeguarding Australians. A nationally consistent model will prevent individuals with high-risk backgrounds from entering roles of trust, deter misconduct and ensures only those who meet the highest standards of integrity and suitability are entrusted with providing care. By strengthening screening processes, improving information and enabling continuous monitoring we reinforce public confidence and uphold the dignity of those receiving care.

Regulation should enhance safety at the lowest possible cost

Regulation must be targeted, risk-based and proportionate.²⁴ A national approach should maximise the net public benefit for citizens, businesses and governments – balancing the need for appropriate and fit for purpose regulation to protect vulnerable cohorts, while improving quality, maximising efficiency and addressing emerging skill shortages across the CSE. These impacts must be considered in designing the national approach to care worker screening.

Checks should be portable across sectors and jurisdictions

National portability of worker screening checks would allow cleared CSE workers to move between sectors and jurisdictions. This would increase labour mobility across the CSE as workers could move to where they are most needed. There is empirical evidence linking increased job mobility with greater bargaining power, higher wages, and larger productivity growth – both in Australia and across the OECD.²⁵ Similarly, this would exclude a worker that was banned from one sector from working in another. Consideration will need to be given to any workforce impacts of this cross-sector banning (e.g. fraud offences are currently considered in NDIS but not WWCC). Workers would also benefit from reduced administrative costs as they would no longer have to apply for multiple worker screening checks. For example, individuals living in border towns – such as Queanbeyan (NSW) Canberra (ACT),

²⁴ Department of Finance, [Regulatory Policy, Practice and Performance Framework](#), 2024, p 7.

²⁵ Durrett et al., [Understanding productivity in Australia and the global slowdown](#), Treasury Round Up, 2022; Calvino et al., [Declining business dynamism: structural and policy determinants](#), OECD, 2020; Wong, [Climbing the Wage Ladder: Linking Job Mobility and Wages](#), e61 Institute, 2024.

Albury (NSW) and Wodonga (Victoria), and Mungindi (NSW/QLD) – and working across both jurisdictions would not need to seek multiple worker screening checks. A single check would further provide regulators with greater visibility of CSE workers who require a clearance to better monitor quality and safety outcomes.

Worker screening should be continuous and near real-time

At present, some worker screening checks reflect a “point-in-time” evaluation of the applicant’s suitability for working with people in the CSE.²⁶ In these sectors, it is only updated as of the date of the screening assessment. The lack of national continuous monitoring is a systemic gap, which increases the risk of harm to Australians receiving care services.

Continuous and near real-time monitoring should be implemented in future worker screening reforms to overcome this issue. This monitoring capability should consider both criminal history and non-criminal information, such as workplace behaviours and reportable (mis)conduct. This should increase quality and safety by uplifting regulator’s capabilities to identify high risk individuals.

The Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) is co-designing a National Continuous Checking Capability (NCCC) with jurisdictions. The NCCC seeks to provide ongoing, continuous, near real-time monitoring of national changes to the entitlement holder’s criminal history information.

Information about worker screening applicants and check holders should be expanded and shared across jurisdictions

Screening requirements and disqualifying offences differ across jurisdictions and sectors, while identity verification and data matching processes are currently time-consuming and manual. Future reforms should help improve alignment of these standards, where appropriate, and enable regulators to quickly share information and data about CSE workers or prospective workers across jurisdictions and sectors. By allowing national data sharing of screened workers, while ensuring adherence to relevant privacy and secrecy safeguards, WSUs can better assess the eligibility of workers moving across sectors and jurisdictions.

Furthermore, consistent standards for triggering an assessment across various worker screening schemes for reportable conduct, mandatory reporting obligations and risk monitoring capability would help WSUs to remove harmful workers sooner. This would streamline assessment processes and improve quality and safety outcomes for CSE recipients.

Existing systems should be integrated and uplifted where possible

Significant investments have already been made by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments to design, build and uplift existing ICT systems and infrastructure. Future reforms to worker screening should leverage existing Commonwealth and state-owned

²⁶ A state- or territory- based continuous check is undertaken for WWCC holders in each jurisdiction. However, worker screening units are only able to monitor criminal offences within their own state or territory. It does not provide details of offences committed by the applicant in other jurisdictions.

databases and ICT infrastructure. Where possible, existing systems should be uplifted rather than creating new infrastructure. This could include the Commonwealth myGov, Digital ID, and verifiable credentials, as well as the NDIS Worker Screening Database, ACIC's National Reference System and relevant state and territory databases, noting there is uplift required. One potential avenue could be linking these existing systems and enabling them to more easily exchange data. Leveraging existing systems would enable future reforms to be designed and implemented more quickly than building new infrastructure. This approach would minimise ICT expenditure, while improving service delivery and ensuring taxpayer resources are being used efficiently.

This reform would not replace non-digital approaches to applying for worker screening checks. This will ensure older Australians, people in remote communities, and those with low digital literacy can access the new worker screening check process – improving accessibility, flexibility and choice for all Australians.

Reform efforts will need to be aligned

Overlapping regulation and incompatible regulatory systems can lead to confusion for individuals and businesses, create administrative inefficiencies for regulators, and reduce policy efficacy. The Government understands the reform environment across the CSE is crowded. A national approach would leverage previous and existing reform efforts across sectors to minimise disruption, while working to strengthen and streamline arrangements across the broader CSE to maximise safety and efficiency. This includes alignment with reforms to the NDIS and Aged Care, Working with Children Check reform, National ECEC reforms such as the National Education Register and national law amendments and the Government progress on the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* recommendations. Potential reforms to national worker registration across the CSE should be considered in designing a national approach to worker screening.²⁷ This will ensure consistency and coordination across all levels of government and care sectors.

Cultural safety should be embedded

Cultural safety ensures individuals – particularly those from First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and LGBTIQ+ backgrounds – feel respected, understood, and supported. Cultural safety actively creates spaces where people from all cultures can engage without fear of discrimination, misunderstanding, or harm. There are broader Work Health and Safety obligations to address psychosocial hazards, and cultural safety is especially important in environments like healthcare, aged care, education, and social services.

Cultural safety must be embedded into the design of the national care worker check. This includes incorporating common definitions and training standards for screened workers on cultural safety, which are currently being developed by the NDIS First Nations Group for release in early 2026. It also means ensuring all people and organisations can understand and navigate the worker screening process. For example, this may involve communicating in languages other than English, such as First Nations languages, and providing alternative identity verification processes to support remote communities. This will help reduce

²⁷ Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 2.

discrimination and bias experienced by vulnerable people, as well as improve health and wellbeing outcomes for marginalised communities.

Questions

- 7. Are these key design elements comprehensive? What other considerations should be included and why?
- 8. What synergies and tensions do you see between these elements? How should these be addressed?
- 9. How should these key design elements be incorporated into a national approach? Which elements will be most important to ensure proper operation and sustainability of the scheme?

Potential models for care worker screening

A national model for care worker screening would enable cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional mobility. A national model would cover workers in disability support and aged care, as well as veterans’ care and those who hold WWCCs, such as health workers, primary teachers, early childhood educators and a wide range of volunteers. This national model would be aligned and integrated with potential reforms to national worker registration.

This consultation paper considers two options to operationalise national care worker screening. These are **preliminary longer-term reform options** which reflect Finance and Treasury’s early policy thinking. The final model will reflect stakeholder feedback and be subject to the usual policy development and Government decision-making processes. These options build on existing reform efforts to date across NDIS, aged care and WWCC sectors.

Option 1: Expanded mutual recognition of worker screening checks across sectors. The WWCC, WWVP Check, and the forthcoming NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check would be mutually recognised as valid across all sectors and jurisdictions. This would enable individuals with the NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check to work in other sectors, like early childhood education and care. This option would also seek to consolidate and standardise WWCC across jurisdictions to support mutual recognition across sectors, building on the work led by SCAG.

Option 2: Single national check across the care and support economy. This would replace the existing NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check, WWCC, and WWVP Check, and consolidate into one ‘care and support economy’ check. Under this Option, workers in one sector and jurisdiction would apply for the check, undergo a consistent assessment process and, if cleared, be able to work in any other sector and jurisdiction.

Table 1: Comparison of proposed options

| Current State | Option 1 | Option 2 |
|--|--|--|
| Multiple checks are needed to work across the care and support economy: | Maintain each of the existing workers screening checks as standalone checks (e.g. | Reset the current worker screening arrangements by removing sector specific |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Coordinated Criminal History Check • WWCC • WWVP Check • NDIS Worker Screening Check (forthcoming NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check) | <p>WWCC, WWVP, NDIS, Aged care).</p> <p>Reduce the number of times a worker needs to get a sector specific check through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating and standardising WWCC requirements across jurisdictions (As if progressing through SCAG), so a WWCC in one jurisdiction can be used in another. <p>Cross sector mutual recognition of the NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check with the standardised and consolidated WWCC/WWVP checks Retain the National Coordinated Criminal History Check for use at employers' discretion</p> | <p>checks (e.g. WWCC, NDIS checks, etc).</p> <p>Replace all existing checks with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single national check for worker screening across the care and support economy that applies to all jurisdictions and sectors. <p>This would build on existing ICT, policy and reform efforts to deliver a new fully national system and would incorporate existing risk assessments across sectors. It would look to harmonise requirements to ensure one check is achievable across all sectors.</p> <p>Develop a single front door for this single check.</p> <p>Retain the National Coordinated Criminal History Check for use at employers' discretion</p> |
|--|---|--|

Common design features

Both options could share common design features to enhance efficiency, accessibility and safety. Noting these may change based on stakeholder feedback, design features could include:

- **Creating a single front door through myGov** for individuals to apply for worker screening regardless of jurisdiction, sector or occupation. This would simplify government touchpoints and streamline the user experience for CSE workers as they are able to apply and manage their worker screening check in one location.
 - Alternative entry points, including non-digital approaches, will be maintained to support communities without reliable internet access and ensure equal access for people with lower digital literacy.
- **Using a Digital ID** could be one option to verify the applicant's identity when they are applying for worker screening. This service would enable jurisdictions to remove in-person requirements for worker screening checks. By enabling applicants to digitally apply for their worker screening check, rather than requiring them to present physical identification at the relevant jurisdictional shopfront, this should improve administrative efficiency, reduce compliance costs and deliver time and cost savings for CSE workers.
 - Digital ID could be further integrated with trusted government processes for identity verification, such as those required to receive Commonwealth supports. This could

address key barriers to employment in remote communities where access to identity documents is a common challenge.

- Alternative identity verification pathways will remain available to those unable to meet the required identity proofing levels for online verification, such as those citizens and non-citizens.
- **Creating a verifiable credential** to allow CSE employers, worker and recipients to confirm the status of the worker's national check in near real time. This verifiable credential could be held and presented from a trusted and interoperable digital wallet, for example the digital wallet in the myGov app.
- **Creating an automated database checking service** to expedite processing times for 'simple' applications and allow individuals to start work earlier without compromising safety outcomes. This system will allow WSUs to focus on reviewing more complex cases requiring greater consideration and intervention.
 - The automated database would use Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to undertake an initial screen of applicants against all relevant databases and information registers at the federal and state level.
 - Applicants who receive no flags through the automated checking process would be granted their national worker screening credential and allow them to work across all sectors and jurisdictions.
 - Workers receive a flag against the databases would be referred to the relevant jurisdictional WSUs for further risk assessment. The WSUs would manually assess these medium-to-high risk applications against agreed parameters and then decide whether to grant the national check or exclude the applicant from the working in the CSE.
 - We would expect approximately 80 per cent of worker screening checks to be cleared almost instantly by the Commonwealth's automated database with the remaining 20 per cent needing to be assessed by the relevant jurisdictional WSU. The Department of Finance indicatively estimates that reducing clearance delays through this automated database checking service could deliver a national benefit of \$143 million in 2028-29.
 - The automated database checking service will be designed to align with existing legislative frameworks, such as the use of automated decision-making by government. There will be regular auditing of automated checks to ensure these are functioning accurately.
- **Creating and/or leveraging existing review and appeal mechanisms** will be key to ensuring that there is fairness, and clear avenues to appeal adverse decisions. This would seek to utilise existing appeal mechanisms in each jurisdiction, and where necessary reform these to develop a national approach.
- **Developing a National Continuous Checking Capability** to provide ongoing and near-real-time monitoring of clearance holders' and applicants' criminal history information. This would integrate information from Commonwealth, state and territory databases. This national approach will improve safety for vulnerable people by enhancing jurisdictional WSUs' ability to assess and continuously monitor clearance holder suitability.

- **Enhancing cross-jurisdictional data and information sharing and processing** will be an important pre-requisite to enable automated database checking and national continuous monitoring. This will likely require amendments to data sharing and privacy legislation, as well as developing cross-jurisdictional agreements and processes for information sharing. These legislative amendments will need to maintain public trust and privacy protections, while enabling continuous and full disclosure of information across jurisdictions, sectors and regulators.
- **Legislative alignment:** both options will require legislative alignment to enable information sharing and standardisation of application requirements, forms and assessments. Noting each sector may still require specific requirements.
- **Aligning with potential reforms to national worker registration** will improve efficiency for workers and outcomes for CSE recipients. Noting existing work to develop an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) National Educator Register and a National Registration Scheme in aged care, this would address the Productivity Commission's recommendation to "adopt a unified approach to worker registration".²⁸

Early stage modelling undertaken by the Department of Finance estimates a national approach to workers screening could create up to \$275 million in annual benefits in 2028-29 by removing duplicative worker screening checks, increasing application efficiencies through digital services and reducing delays with Commonwealth-developed automated database-checking service.²⁹ Overall, this reform would improve labour mobility and reduce compliance burdens, while enhancing quality and safety outcomes.

Option 1: Expanded mutual recognition of worker screening checks and standardisation of WWCCs

Key features

This option proposes an expanded mutual recognition model of existing worker screening checks across sectors and jurisdictions within the care and support economy. Currently, the NDIS worker screening is recognised nationally and has paved the path for future reforms. The proposed expansion of this mutual recognition to the Aged Care sector, proves mutual recognition across jurisdictions and sectors is possible. Under this option, the NDIS worker screening check and the proposed aged care check would be mutually recognised across sectors and jurisdictions, ensuring portability and reducing duplications for workers operating across sectors, or jurisdictions (for example, those that work in border towns or individuals wanting to relocate across states). This model, alongside the important work SCAG is progressing to strengthen and harmonise WWCCs nationally through mutual recognition, lay the groundwork for the potential consolidation of WWCC nationally.

Under this model, we would see a system of mutually recognised checks (WWCC, WWVP, NDIS and Aged Care checks). This would represent a significant step towards a more integrated and efficient screening system. Jurisdictions and sectors would need to trust and accept the other check, even though they would remain separate for each sector. Further

²⁸ Productivity Commission, *Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report*, 2025, p 2.

²⁹ Note these figures do not quantify the socio-economic benefits from improving safety, behavioural responses to portability, or other second round impacts, such as government spending on unemployment benefits. These would likely increase the estimated national benefit.

work would be required with states and territories to understand the specific requirements for mutual recognition.

Fees would continue to be set and revised by individual jurisdictions to help fund their WSUs. Mutual recognition across sectors and jurisdictions would ensure that CSE workers would not bear unnecessary costs and duplicative processes.

Case study: How this option would work in practice?

Nora has applied through the NDIS portal and been accepted to work in the NDIS sector. Nora is required to register with a primary WSU in the state in which she resides/seeks employment. A couple of years later, Nora decides to pursue a career in childcare. As the NDIS check is mutually recognised with Aged Care and Working with Child Checks nationally, Nora can work across sectors or relocate interstate, removing the requirement for Nora to apply for an additional check.

This option would be divided into two phases. Stage 1 would involve standardising and mutually recognising all worker screening checks, as well as building the automated database checking system. Pending successful completion, Stage 2 could invest in uplifting and expanding existing ICT infrastructure, including a single application front door for some or all checks (e.g. NDIS checks through myGov), digital ID verification option, and verifiable credentials.

Advantages

Implementing this option would require minimal change to the current reform trajectory. This option would build upon the existing reforms led by Department of Health, Disability and Ageing on the forthcoming NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check, Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Education on mutual recognition of WWCCs across jurisdictions, and ACIC on the National Continuous Checking Capability. Option 1 seeks to expand these reforms to veterans' care and early childhood education and care workers, leveraging investments in ICT and infrastructure such as the forthcoming National Worker Screening Database which will contain both NDIS and aged care data, to support the national system. This is lower cost and easier to implement than Option 2 as existing Commonwealth investments are repurposed and expanded to implement national worker screening.

Limitations

Under Option 1, CSE workers and recipients will still need to navigate four separate (but mutually recognised) checks – only partially reducing the complexity and fragmentation of the current system. This option requires national alignment of legislation, policy and operations of WWCC. The fees for worker screening checks currently differ between sectors and jurisdictions. Mutual recognition could lead to some individuals applying for worker screening checks in the lowest cost jurisdiction and sector (i.e. forum shopping) – regardless of whether they live in said jurisdiction or currently work in the sector. Registered providers are required to verify the worker screening checks of their employees to ensure they have applied in the correct sector and jurisdiction however, further analysis will be undertaken to mitigate any ability to forum shop. This option is further contingent on continued investment from Commonwealth, state and territory governments over time, as well as the successful

implementation of the NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check and National Continuous Checking Capability.

Option 2: Single national check across the care and support economy

Key features

This option would create a single national check for the care and support economy (including the scope of existing WWCC/WWVP checks outside of the care sector). A single national check would incorporate existing risk assessments and harmonise requirements for the NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check, WWCC and WWVP Checks (including volunteers) to ensure one check is achievable across all sectors.

Similar to Option 1, this proposal would incorporate the common design features identified above, including the National Continuous Checking Capability, automated database checking, and single application front door through myGov. Considerations will be given as to how the fees are set and WSUs are appropriately funded.

Governments will need to consider how Option 2 is prioritised, aligned and implemented alongside existing reforms to the NDIS and Aged Care Worker Screening Check and WWCC to address these systemic regulatory gaps.

Case study: How would this option work in practice?

Brady has applied for a role in an early childhood education centre and is required to undertake pre-employment screening. Brady applies for a *National Worker Screening Check* through a single Government portal and is accepted to work in the early childhood education and care sector. A couple years later, Brady decides to pursue a career in disability support services. As Brady holds a current National Worker Screening Check, Brady can seamlessly move across sectors. For this to occur, Brady logs into the single Government portal and registers his employment with the new provider. Bradys new provider verifies his national worker screening check and is now connected to Brady in the system. This allows for the provider to monitor the status of Bradys clearance and receive updates should Bradys clearance status change.

Advantages

Option 2 is an easier and simpler screening system for workers to navigate. It creates national uniformity by aligning risk assessments and consolidating the four existing checks into one check. This option could establish the foundation to implement a national worker registration scheme with public facing registry as recommended by the Productivity Commission.³⁰

³⁰ Productivity Commission, [Delivering quality care more efficiently – Interim report](#), 2025, p 2.

Limitations

This option is likely to be more expensive to establish with longer implementation timeframes. Option 2 requires a substantially greater degree of intergovernmental collaboration and carries larger implementation challenges than Option 1. Alignment of risk assessments across the care and support economy may be difficult to negotiate and agree across jurisdictions. Existing regulatory requirements will need to be considered in further scoping and developing this option.

Questions

10. Do the common design features appropriately and effectively support a national approach to worker screening? Please provide reasons why/why not.
11. Are there additional design features that we should include under both options? Are there any gaps or opportunities that have not been identified yet?
12. Which proposed model do you prefer? Please provide reasons why/why not.
13. Are there alternative models which improves efficiency and labour mobility, while enhancing safety and quality? If so, please outline your proposal.
14. What risks, challenges or unintended consequences could arise when implementing a national approach to worker screening? How should we mitigate them?
15. What transitional arrangements may be required when implementing a national approach to worker screening? This may include a phased introduction, grandfathering of existing checks until expiry, and/or public education program to clearly outline the changes.