

**New rules for Working with Children Checks have come into effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017. This advice provides important information on how these rules apply to Dogs Victoria sanctioned events.**

The Victorian Government has made a number of changes to the *Working with Children Check Act 2005* that are intended to assist in protecting children by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, children are subject to a screening process. A summary of these changes and background to the legislation are available on the Working with Children Check website at

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/whats+new/>

### **Who do these rules apply to?**

The new rules apply to a wide range of organisations, business and individuals, and apply to both volunteers and employees/employers. Community/sporting/recreational organisations, which include Dogs Victoria and its affiliate clubs, come under these rules.

### **General conformation shows/trials/dogs sports and activities**

Dogs Victoria has confirmed with the Victorian Justice Department that the requirement for volunteers and officials (including judges) to have a working with children check does not apply in the instance of general shows/trials/dog sports and events. While there may be exhibitors or attendees under the age of 18 participating in these situations, contact with children is considered to be of a coincidental nature.

### **Events or competitions that are solely for those under 18yrs of age**

However, in the case of junior handler events, or events that specifically are aimed at anyone under 18 years of age, the work (which includes volunteer work) is considered to be child-related work. As such, all officials and volunteers (including judges) must have a Working with Children Check.

### **Interstate and Overseas Judges and officials**

The Department of Justice has confirmed is that these rules extend to interstate and overseas judges and officials if they are involved in junior handler comps or events that are specifically for those under the age of 18 years of age. However, if the individual who will have the contact with children already holds an interstate working with children check (or international equivalent) then that pre-existing check is valid in Victoria, (for a total of 30 days per year).

### **Exemptions**

The rules now apply to everyone in Victoria who is doing paid or voluntary child related work and who doesn't qualify for exemption. Exemptions apply to those working with children if they themselves are under 18 years of age, are parents/close relatives volunteering with their children, are engaged in the same activity (e.g. fellow adult exhibitors) or trusted professional, such as police officers, federal police, and VIT registered teachers).

A list of exemptions can be found at

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/exemptions/>.

**For further advice, including how to apply for a Working with Children check, see the Working with Children Check website at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>) or contact Dogs Victoria.**