

# Appointments to the Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme Panel

Information pack for applicants

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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Available from the [Boards.Vic](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/) <<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/>>.

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# Information for applicants

## Introduction

The Minister for Children, Hon. Lizzie Blandthorn MP, is pleased to invite applications from suitably qualified people for appointment as members of the Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme Panels (WCES Panels) in Victoria. This document provides information to candidates who are interested in applying.

These critical Panel roles represent an important opportunity to contribute to the safety and protection of children and young people in out-of-home care, and to contribute to the child safeguarding scheme that achieves this – the Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme (WCES).

The WCES commenced on 1 July 2024 and is part of a strengthened regulatory framework for social services. The scheme is established under the Social Services Regulation Act 2021 (the Act).

WCES covers workers and carers in out-of-home care, such as residential care, foster care and secure care, but increases protections for children and young people in out-of-home care by broadening the scope of conduct that can result in a worker or carer being excluded from the out of home care sector. The scheme is administered by the Social Services Regulator (the Regulator).

Under the WCES, an out-of-home care worker or carer is excluded from working in the sector if the WCES panel finds they have:

- engaged in certain misconduct; and/or
- pose an unjustifiable risk of harm to children.

## Requirements

WCES panel candidates will be appointed from a variety of disciplines. Under section 67(2) of the Act, Candidates **must** have qualifications and experience in:

- law
- social work
- psychology
- the behaviour of criminal offenders or
- any other discipline that is relevant to the functions of the panel.

The **Chair** and members of each panel is appointed by the Regulator, and the **Chair must have legal qualifications**.

## Application process

Vacancies for board positions will be advertised on the [Boards.Vic](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/) website <https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/>, the SHK website [www.shk.com.au/jobs](http://www.shk.com.au/jobs) (scroll down to the Board advertisement) and on LinkedIn, as well as through a range of other relevant sector organisations and discussion groups.

Assistance is available if you are unable to access the internet or the [www.boards.vic.gov.au](https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/) website.

## Accessibility

SHK will assist all applicants to ensure the appointment process is accessible and inclusive.

If you need further information or assistance about the application, please phone Penny Wilson, Senior Partner at SHK on +61 434 589 284 or email [penny.wilson@shk.com.au](mailto:penny.wilson@shk.com.au) or Lilli Vagnarelli, Associate Partner at SHK on + 61 417 947 028 or email [lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au](mailto:lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au).

## Confidentiality and privacy

The selection process and all matters relating to it are strictly confidential.

All personal information received will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

## How long does the process take?

From beginning to end the process will take approximately six months.

Applications open on 4 April and are closing on 18 April (this may change, check the advertisement). If you cannot meet that deadline, please contact Penny Wilson at SHK as above.

Shortlisting and interviews will take place over April to June 2025.

Appointments are expected to be made in July to August 2025, noting this can change. The final stages of appointments may take place over months, due to the nature of the formal process requirements.

## What should I include in my application?

### Application form and résumé in Microsoft Word format

To help us assess your application you should submit:

- Up-to-date **Résumé** (also known as your CV), include the information summarised against the Key Selection Criteria on Page 11
- Completed **Application Form** as a word document. Please note, the Application Form is uploaded in place of a cover letter, please upload it where it asks for a 'cover letter' on the SHK website application point.

Your résumé and application form should highlight the skills, knowledge and experience you have that are relevant to the selection criteria outlined in the position description.

You should also provide contact details for two referees who have knowledge of your capabilities and experience and can support your application.

**Please submit your application via the SHK website**, at [shk.com.au/jobs](http://shk.com.au/jobs) (scroll down to this Board), click 'apply for this job' button (top right-hand corner). You need to upload your **Resume** (CV) and **completed Application Form** (in place of a cover letter) in Word or PDF format

## Position terms and conditions

Successful WCES panel applicants will make up a pool of candidates that can be called upon by the Regulator to convene individual panels when required.

The Governor in Council appoints a pool of candidates for the WCES panels on the recommendation of the Minister. These candidates can be called upon by the Regulator to constitute individual panels when required.

Membership terms are for **3-years**. More information about the WCES can be found at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/worker-and-carer-exclusion-scheme>.

## Anticipated time commitment

Members will be appointed on a sessional basis. The number of sittings for sessional members is dependent on the number of matters referred to the panel. A commitment to be available for approximately four hearings a year, involving up to 3 to 4 days per hearing including preparation and documenting Panel determinations where required.

## Conflicts of interest

Board members are required to disclose any pecuniary interests or other interests that could conflict with the proper performance of their duties or potentially present a significant risk to the operation of the board.

Board members are required to comply with section 17 of the *Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018* relating to conflicts of interest.

All applicants are required to complete a 'Declaration of private interests' form prior to their initial appointment, annually during the term of appointment, and whenever there is a material change in their interests.

You will be asked to complete this declaration as part of the application process on the Get on Board website.

The declaration form asks you to tell us about any financial or other private interests that could conflict with the proper performance of your duties.

You should clearly identify any conflicts of interest that may arise if you are appointed to the board and specify how any conflict will be managed.

## Legal obligations

Panel members have legal obligations and duties under common law and under the constituting legislation, being the *Public Administration Act 2004* and any other relevant state and federal legislation.

Board members are also bound by the *Code of conduct for directors of Victorian public entities* issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

## Remuneration

In accordance with the *Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines*, WCES Panels are classified as a Group B organisation. As stated in Schedule A of the guidelines with the current sessional payment range of is \$441 to \$719 (per day) for the Chairperson and \$338 to \$622 (per day) for ordinary members. This payment is inclusive of all reading and preparation time.

The guidelines can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/guidelines-appointment-remuneration>.

Superannuation obligations will be paid to members appointed to the board in accordance with the Commonwealth's *Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act 1992*.

## Public sector employees

Public sector employees include people employed in the service of the State of Victoria by:

- a government department
- a statutory body, instrumentality
- public bodies such as public hospitals
- local government.

Employees of universities and schools are also considered public sector employees for the purposes of remuneration.

For further information on public sector employees, refer to the *Public Administration Act*.

Public sector employees, whether full time or part time, are only eligible for remuneration in certain circumstances, as outlined in the appointment and remuneration guidelines.

Applicants who are public sector employees will be required to provide a letter from their employer indicating:

- approval to undertake the position
- specific details regarding their employment such as:
  - management responsibilities
  - budgetary responsibilities
  - policy interaction with the employer
  - level of remuneration
  - whether there is any conflict of interest between the appointment and their current employment.

A copy of the job description must accompany the employer letter.

## **Can I get help to review my application?**

The Disability Leadership Institute offers free coaching support for people with a disability applying for a role on a Victorian Government board or committee, including reviewing résumés and applications.

You can ask about this assistance by visiting the [Disability Leadership Institute's website](https://disabilityleaders.com.au/boards-and-committees-project/)  
<https://disabilityleaders.com.au/boards-and-committees-project/>.

## **What happens once I have applied?**

### **Shortlisting and interviews**

Once the closing date for applications has passed, all applications will be reviewed and assessed against the requirements for the role. Interviews from candidates who were contacted directly may begin before the closing date. Candidates will be assessed against the criteria in the position descriptions and their ability to work effectively on a board, according to the values and behaviours applicable to the Victorian public sector.

The selection panel will then decide which applicants will be shortlisted.

Shortlisted applicants may be asked to attend a panel interview and will be contacted by phone or email to arrange a suitable date and time.

During an interview, the selection panel will ask you a series of questions to further assess your suitability.

Interview questions will focus on the selection criteria and will ask you to reflect on your capabilities and talk about specific situations you may have encountered in the past.

Following interviews, the selection panel will determine which applicants progress to the next stage.

### **Safety screening and probity checks**

All appointments and reappointments to the board are subject to the satisfactory completion of safety screening and probity checks, specifically:

- an Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) disqualification register check

- a National Personal Insolvency Index check through the Australian Financial Security Authority
- a national criminal records history check.

If you have lived overseas for more than one year in the past 10 years you will also be subject to an international police check.

If you are shortlisted, you will be asked to complete a form so a national police check can be undertaken. We will send this form to the email address used as part of your application. You must complete the form and provide four forms of identification.

You may be asked to bring your identity documentation if you attend an interview.

## **When will I know the outcome of my application?**

All applicants will be contacted by email or phone as soon as possible once an outcome has been reached and after each stage of the selection process, which will run across months, due to the nature of the formal requirements.

If you are recommended for appointment to the board, you will be formally advised of your appointment details in writing. This may take some time after you are notified.

## **More information**

If you have general questions about the appointment process that are not covered in this document, advertisement or the Application Form, please call Penny Wilson at SHK on +61 434 589 284 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required (free call), or by emailing Penny Wilson, Senior Partner at [penny.wilson@shk.com.au](mailto:penny.wilson@shk.com.au) or Lilli Vagnarelli, Associate Partner on [lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au](mailto:lilli.vagnarelli@shk.com.au).



# Checklist

## Have you included this information with your application?

- Completed application form** that includes the following **contact details for two referees**:
  - Full names
  - Their relationship to you
  - Phone numbers
  - Email addresses
- Résumé (CV)** that includes:
  - Full name and address
  - Phone number and email address
  - Employment and/or volunteering history
  - Education history
  - Information about past or current membership of any Commonwealth or Victorian Government public entities, statutory bodies or advisory committees
  - Information about past or current membership of any non-government bodies (for example, board or committee memberships)
- On the Application form complete the required statements as requested**
  - Statements complete

# Panel member – position description

## The Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme

### Position Statement

Title:	WCES Panel Members
Division/Branch:	Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme
Work Location:	Hybrid -
Employment Type:	Sessional
Position reports to:	Social Services Regulator
Closing Date & time:	18 April 2025 (subject to change)

### Organisational Environment

The Worker and Carer Exclusion Scheme (WCES) commenced on 1 July 2024 and is established under the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (the Act). WCES is administered by the Social Services Regulator (the Regulator).

WCES panels conduct hearings and determine if an out-of-home carer or worker who is alleged to have engaged in misconduct or pose an unjustifiable risk of harm to children as outlined in the Act should be excluded from working in the sector.

Successful WCES panel applicants will make up a pool of candidates that can be called upon by the Regulator to convene individual panels when required. The Governor in Council appoints a pool of candidates for the WCES panels on the recommendation of the Minister. These candidates can be called upon by the Regulator to constitute individual panels when required.

The Governor in Council does not appoint a Chairperson or members for the panels – rather, this role is appointed for each panel by the Regulator when the panel is convened. If the Regulator refers a matter relating to the conduct of a WCES worker or carer for consideration by a panel, the Act requires the Regulator to convene a panel from this pool of candidates. The Regulator must appoint a panel candidate with legal qualifications and experience as the Chairperson and a minimum of two further panel candidates as panel members.

### Commitment to Diversity

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that government boards and committees reflect the rich diversity of the Victorian community. We encourage applications from people of all ages, Aboriginal people, people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and from lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse and intersex people. We will provide adjustments to the recruitment process upon request and consider requests for flexible working arrangements.

### Panel Members - General

WCES panel candidates will be appointed from a variety of disciplines. Under section 67(2) of the Act, Candidates **must** have qualifications and experience in law, social work, psychology, the behaviour of criminal offenders or any other discipline that is relevant to the functions of the panel.

The **Chair** and members of each panel is appointed by the Regulator, and the **Chair must have legal qualifications**.

## Duties

- Participate in hearings as a member of a panel
- Contribute to the decision-making process as to determine if an out-of-home carer or worker who is alleged to have engaged in misconduct or pose an unjustifiable risk of harm to children as outlined in the Act should be excluded from working in the sector, and draft panel determinations as required
- Commit the necessary time to satisfactorily discharge the duties of the position
- Attend member meetings as required
- Attend training and professional development as required
- Assist in the development of panel procedures and policies.

## Key Selection Criteria

### 1. Knowledge and technical skills

- Knowledge of the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021*
- An understanding of the rules of natural justice and their relevance to the conduct of hearings and decision making
- Knowledge of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and an understanding of its relevance to hearing procedures and decision making.

### 2. Sound judgment

- Experience as a decision maker as member of a Tribunal or similar body
- Demonstrate an understanding of Tribunal processes including the conduct of hearings
- Experience in assessing evidence and credibility of witnesses
- Appreciation of the need for evidence based and consistent decision making
- High level analytical skills.

### 3. Knowledge of out-of-home care

- Demonstrated understanding of the out-of-home care sector particularly relating to foster carers and residential care workers
- Demonstrated understanding of the impact of trauma on children and young people in out-of-home care and its impact on children and young people participating in a Tribunal hearing.

### 4. Sound oral and written communication skills

- The ability to clearly and appropriately communicate complex and sensitive matters orally or in writing
- Computer literacy and the ability to participate in hearings and meetings in an on-line environment.
- An ability to construct clear, analytical and legally correct written decisions is highly desirable.

### 5. Professionalism and integrity

- Participate effectively in hearings as a member of the panel
- Deal with difficult situations sensitively
- Exhibit integrity and impartial judgement
- Exhibit awareness of one's own performance and preparedness to seek feedback and further training
- Display efficiency and timeliness in the exercise of duties.

### 6. Time commitment

- The ability to commit sufficient time to discharge the duties expected of panel members
- A commitment to be available for approximately four hearings a year, involving up to 3 to 4 days per hearing including preparation and documenting Panel determinations where required.
- Availability to attend hearings in country Victoria, which may require an overnight stay, noting this is infrequent.

[See overleaf]

## **7. Qualifications**

- Qualifications and experience, in law, social work, psychology, the behaviour of criminal offenders or another relevant discipline.

## **Privacy and probity**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet affirms that the collection and handling of applications and personal information will be consistent with the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.