



Policy on Working with Vulnerable People

Purpose: This is a policy to assist the Association, centres and members to comply with their responsibilities under the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT). It will be incorporated into the Child Protection and Risk Management Policy presently under development by Little Athletics Australia.

For the attention of: Board members, office staff, ACT team managers, Centre committees, members

Date: September 2014

Background: The *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT) (WWVP Act) commenced on 8 November 2012. It requires background checks for individuals in the ACT who work with children or disadvantaged adults. The new rules are being phased in over several years. For Associations like Little Athletics ACT, in which volunteers provide coaching to and otherwise deal with children, our volunteers are required to comply with the Act between 8 November 2014 and 7 November 2015. That means that by 8 November 2015, all our volunteers who are required to comply with the WWVP Act must be compliant or they will not be allowed to undertake volunteer work for Little Athletics ACT.

Who is required to be registered: The WWVP Act says that volunteers who deal with children in the ACT must be registered if they are involved in that activity for more than 3 days in any 4 week period and 7 days in any 12 month period.

Each of our centres decides for itself how to arrange competition and training days. For example, some centres have the same person as age manager working with a particular group of children for a whole season; in other centres, the age manager will change from week to week depending on parents' availability and willingness to help. It is Little Athletics ACT policy that parents are expected stay with their children while they compete and assist in the running of events, but that is not always practical if parents have more than one child competing in different age groups. There may be occasions when parents are not always present while their children are competing or being coached.

For these reasons, it is difficult to be prescriptive about who must technically be registered at a centre. In deciding who in a Little Athletics centre should be registered, the guiding principle ought not to be what is required to achieve the minimum technical compliance with the WWVP Act but instead what best protects children who do Little Athletics. That is our core business. We should aim to be the model of how community sporting organisations conduct themselves. Therefore, the

Association and centres should err on the side of requiring registration if there is any doubt about whether a volunteer needs to be registered.

With that in mind, the following people involved in the sport of Little Athletics should hold WWVP registration:

Association level

- Board members
- Office staff
- Team managers and team coaches responsible for ACT teams (eg ALAC squad, U13 squad)
- Carnival managers and referees at Little Athletics ACT carnivals (including multi-event, relay, northside or southside, ACT Championships)

The following volunteers working at Association level would usually not need WWVP registration:

- Officials at Little Athletics ACT carnivals working under the supervision of carnival managers and referees (because they are only engaged in that activity for less than 3 days in any 4 week period and for less than 7 days in any 12 month period).

Centre level

- Committee members
- Coaches
- Anyone who is likely to be an age manager more than 3 times in a season
- Anyone who is likely to be an official more than 3 times in a season (eg starters, finish marshalls, timing gate operators)
- Anyone who is likely to work in the canteen more than 3 times in a season

The following volunteers working at centre level would usually not need WWVP registration:

- Parents who accompany their own children in the course of competition or coaching, even if they are assisting a group under the supervision of age managers (eg by raking long jump pits, retrieving throwing implements, adjusting high jump bars). A parent in this position is exempt under section 12 of the Act, on the grounds that close relatives of all children taking part in the activity are also present, or should be present, during the activity, based on Little Athletics ACT policy; and
- People under 16 years old

What do Little Athletics ACT and centres need to do: Little Athletics ACT and all Little Athletics ACT centres are incorporated associations. That means that each of them is a separate employer for the purposes of the WWVP Act.

Employers must be satisfied that their employees (including volunteers) who engage in regulated activities (see above of who needs to be registered at Association and centre level) are registered. Volunteers must be able to present registration card at all times while they are engaged in activities for the Association or centre.

The Little Athletics ACT administration director will be responsible for ensuring that board members, office staff and ACT team managers and coaches are registered and will ensure that registration details (registration number, duration of registration and any conditions) are recorded and kept in the Little Athletics ACT office.

The Little Athletics ACT competition and technical director will be responsible for ensuring that Carnival managers and referees at Little Athletics ACT carnivals are registered and will ensure that registration details (registration number, duration of registration and any conditions) are recorded and kept in the Little Athletics ACT office.

Centres will be responsible for ensuring that volunteers requiring registration are registered and will ensure that registration details (registration number, duration of registration and any conditions) are recorded and kept. A person on the centre committee, preferably the secretary, registrar or officer of officials) should be allocated to this task. WWVP registration should be a recurrent item on a committee meeting agenda at least once per season (eg at the beginning of the season) to be satisfied that all volunteers required to be registered are registered.

What do volunteers need to do: Volunteers are responsible for their own WWVP registration. Registration can be started by completing the registration form on-line: www.ors.act.gov.au. Completion of registration requires the registration form to be signed and then mailed or presented at a Canberra Connect shopfront, with three forms of proof of identity. Once the application has been processed, the registration card will be mailed to the volunteer. Volunteers must be able to present registration card at all times while they are engaged in activities for the Association or centre.

WWVP Act requirements for NSW centres: Little Athletics ACT centres include centres in Queanbeyan and elsewhere in NSW. If volunteers from NSW centres are undertaking duties for Little Athletics ACT, they will be required to meet the requirements listed above for volunteers at the Association level. Volunteers from NSW centres assisting at Little Athletics ACT carnivals (other than as carnival managers and referees) will not require WWVP registration because they are only engaged in that activity for less than 3 days in any 4 week period and for less than 7 days in any 12 month period. However, NSW centres are subject to the requirements of the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW), which imposes similar requirements on volunteers to be registered under the NSW system. Therefore, NSW centres should adopt a similar approach to the approach described above.