

### **Summary of Recommendations to address the lack of consistency and parity between the 3 Subdivisions of authorised celebrants in Division 1 of Part IV.**

**Recommendation 1:** That, the Australian Parliament uphold the professional model of civil celebrancy as a role where “*civil celebrants are authorised to perform a function on behalf of the state*<sup>1</sup>” to ensure the highest standards of professional service to the Australian public, as introduced with the passing of the Marriage Amendment Bill 2002 with the support of all major parties.

**Recommendation 2:** that Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants be divided into two subdivisions – Subdivision C, Commonwealth civil celebrants and Subdivision D, Commonwealth religious celebrants - to enable the initial training and professional development of the two groups to be addressed discretely.

**Recommendation 3:** that Sections 46 and 113 (7) be modernised to ensure all celebrants authorised under the Act (*whether offering religious or civil ceremonies*) give a definition of marriage according to civil law, state whether they are authorised under the Act to conduct valid marriage, and if an unauthorised religious celebrant, that the couple is already legally married according to civil law.

**Recommendation 4:** that Sections 45 be modernised to ensure all marrying couples give consent to their marriage in their marriage ceremony (whether religious or civil) in the presence of their two witnesses and the marriage celebrant.

**Recommendation 5:** that the legislation of all Subdivisions be reviewed to ensure that all authorised celebrants are required to

- complete a nationally accredited Vocational Education and Training unit<sup>16</sup> of competency in marriage law prior to authorisation
- complete an annual professional development activity in marriage law when legislative related to marriage changes, and
- pay an annual fee for their regulation.

**Recommendation 6:** that Section 39 be amended to ensure Subdivision C (Independent civil celebrants and independent religious celebrants) do not lose their authorisation for the first non-payment by the charge date of the annual registration, which is not a condition of authorisation of Subdivision A (Religious celebrants from recognised religions) and Subdivision B (State Registry Office Staff and court officers) of Division 1 of the Marriage Act.

**Recommendation 7:** that Section 115 Publication of lists of authorised celebrants be amended to ensure consistent terminology in relation to the different Subdivisions of Authorised Celebrants.

**Recommendation 8:** that incorporated professional civil celebrant associations as defined by the Act be granted the ability to regulate their own members as the case in other professions and as is delegated in principle to Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions.

1 – Report from the Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill:

<https://www.celebrations.org.au/celebrants/2516-senate-select-committee-on-same-sex-marriage>

**Recommendation 1:** That, the Australian Parliament uphold the professional model of civil celebrancy as a role where “*civil celebrants are authorised to perform a function on behalf of the state*”<sup>1</sup> to ensure the highest standards of professional service to the Australian public, as introduced with the passing of the Marriage Amendment Bill 2002 with the support of all major parties.

**Recommendation 2:** that Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants be divided into two subdivisions – Subdivision C, Commonwealth civil celebrants and Subdivision D, Commonwealth religious celebrants - to enable the initial training and professional development of the two groups to be addressed discretely.

### **Why is this an issue?**

The merging of two different types of Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants creates confusion for the public seeking **civil** marriage services and addressing their different training and regulation needs to the high standard required by the Act’s Code of Practice of Subdivision C marriage celebrants.

### **Rationale for Recommendations 1 and 2:**

1. Prior to the 2003 changes, the Attorney-General’s Department had different internal policies governing the appointment of Commonwealth Subdivision C marriage celebrants which included;
  - a. Celebrants with non-English languages (*were only able to conduct marriages in the specific languages*)
  - b. Celebrants with specific disabilities (*were only able to conduct marriages for the specific disability groups*)
  - c. Celebrants from small religious groups or sects (*for organisations not large enough to obtain “Recognised Religious” status, and only able conduct marriages for their religious group*) - See Appendix 1.
  - d. Celebrants appointed to provide civil marriage ceremonies based upon the same principles as Subdivision B State and Territory Officers as regards the legal components of the ceremony.
2. With the introduction of a professional model of celebrancy, Anti-Discrimination Legislation covered marriage celebrants in groups (2a) and (2b) above.

However an unintended consequence of the 2002 legislation was that the remaining two quite different groups (2c and 2b above) - independent religious celebrants and independent civil celebrants - were combined.

Therefore the initial qualifications and continuing professional development needs of these quite different groups are not addressed in educationally sound and effective manner.

3. The result has been
  - a. lower training qualifications for independent professional civil celebrants who conduct a range of unique personalised civil ceremonies, including marriage, than they need to participate effectively in the work force and
  - b. higher qualifications than necessary for independent religious celebrants whose ceremonies, including marriage, are set by their religious organisation in the same way as Recognised Religions’ marriage celebrants under the Act.
  - c. Separation of these two types of Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants would assist in a clearer separation of “church and state” functions as well as more effectively addressing

their training and regulation.

4. There are approximately 40 of these Commonwealth Subdivision C celebrants (See Appendix 1) who have been authorised for both religious and civil ceremonies making their primary allegiance to civil or religious law confusing for the marrying public.
5. The Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc. supported upholding “*the professional model of civil celebrancy as a role where civil celebrants are authorised to perform a function on behalf of the state to ensure the highest standards of professional service to the Australian public*” in its 2012 Submission on Cost Recovery and Increasing Professionalism.
6. CoCA Inc. and the International College of Celebrancy Associations (ICCA) both supported these recommendations in their submissions to 2017 Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill.
7. The Report from the recent Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill<sup>1</sup> supported changes to the Marriage Act to clearly separate the two groups of marriage celebrants currently regulated under Subdivision C to be separated as C - independent civil marriage celebrants and Subdivision D – independent religious marriage celebrants from minor religious organisations and Subdivision:

*2.77 The committee considers that civil celebrants are authorised to perform a function on behalf of the state and should be required to uphold Commonwealth law. That said, the committee heard evidence that some civil celebrants would feel compromised at having to solemnise a same-sex marriage if the law were changed and respects this position.*

*2.78 The committee proposes that consideration be given to affording a pathway for current civil celebrants to elect to transfer to a new Subdivision D (Religious Marriage Celebrants), allowing these celebrants the benefit of the protections afforded to ministers of religion and independent religious celebrants. This approach would provide a clear and easy to administer solution where all Subdivision D (Religious Celebrants) would be able to access protections for their religious views, while all remaining and future Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants would continue to provide non-discriminatory services.*

*2.79 The committee notes that, while some submitters and witnesses suggested that the Exposure Draft could include grandfathering clauses to protect civil celebrants with religious beliefs, the committee considers that such provisions would not be necessary with the creation of the suggested Subdivision D (Religious Marriage Celebrants).*

8. The effect of adopting Recommendation 2 would be to uphold the professional model of civil celebrancy as a role where “*civil celebrants are authorised to perform a function on behalf of the state<sup>1</sup>*” as this Subdivision’s needs for initial training, continuing education and support by professional celebrant associations would be able compromised by the narrow standards appropriate to religious celebrants whose ceremonies are determined by their religious organisations under the Act, and thus not subject to tailoring to meet individual couple’s needs as is required of Subdivision C marriage celebrants.

This would then assist in ensuring the highest standards of professional service by independent civil celebrants to the Australian public.

1 – Report from the Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill:

<https://www.celebrations.org.au/celebrants/2516-senate-select-committee-on-same-sex-marriage>

**Recommendation 3:** that Sections 46 and 113 (7) be modernised to ensure all celebrants authorised under the Act (*whether offering religious or civil ceremonies*) give a definition of marriage according to civil law, state whether they are authorised under the Act to conduct valid marriage, and if an unauthorised religious celebrant, that the couple is already legally married according to civil law.

**Why is this a concern?**

Child and forced marriage is a growing concern in Australia.

Religious celebrants under the Marriage Act, are able to conduct second religious marriage ceremonies without making it clear to the guests /congregation that the couple are already married. This implies religious law takes precedence over civil law in Australia.

Without the transparency required by this Section of the Act, one or both parties to the marriage and those present may not be aware that a valid marriage is being solemnized or may believe they are being validly married by an unauthorised religious celebrant purporting to marry the couple. The latter would mean the unauthorised religious celebrant would be guilty of an offence under Section 101 of the Act, and if either of the parties to the marriage knew the religious celebrant was unauthorised would be committing an offence under Section 103<sup>of</sup> the Act.

**Rationale:**

1. As a federal act governing our nation, most Australians would expect that
  - a. the same criteria to apply to all those seeking to be married, and
  - b. the same criteria to be covered in the marriage ceremony  
for all couples to be able to be legally married under the Act.
2. All marriage celebrants perform the same functions on behalf of the government whether the ceremony is religious or civil, long or short. These functions are to:
  - a. accept a Notice of Intended Marriage from the couple
  - b. assess whether the parties to the marriage are free to marry one another under Australian law
  - c. be satisfied as to the identities of the parties to the marriage
  - d. complete with the couple the required documentation prior to the ceremony
  - e. conduct a marriage ceremony after which the couple sign the relevant documents
  - f. complete the processing of the marriage documents and register the marriage with the relevant state or territory registry office.
3. The Marriage Act, whilst consistent in the grounds upon which a couple may be married, is inconsistent in the basic requirement of the marriage ceremony on the basis of religion between the requirements of Subdivision A, B and C celebrants and within Subdivision C.
4. It is an offence under Section 101 of the Marriage Act for any person (authorised celebrant or not) to purport to marry a couple, and Section 113 prohibits second marriages of couples already legally married to have a second marriage ceremony, unless this is a religious ceremony.

Therefore authorised **civil** marriage celebrants would be committing an offence under this Section for not making it clear to all present that the couple have been legally married.

Note: Couples married overseas, who then for family reasons wish to marry back in Australia, often request this service.

5. However, there is no requirement in the Marriage Act that Subdivision A celebrants of a Recognised Religion include a definition of marriage according to Australian law, nor to make it clear to the guests or congregation present that the couple are:
  - a. being validly married under Australia law, where the religious celebrant is authorised as a Subdivision A celebrant, or
  - b. already married under Australia law, where the religious celebrant is not authorised
  - c. nor is there a requirement that a definition according to civil law is give. This may be qualified by their religious faith.

Not all religious groups or organisations oppose same sex marriage.

6. Whilst it would be an offence for an authorised celebrant conducting civil marriage or a private person to conduct a second marriage ceremony without making it clear that the ceremony was not valid under law, it is **not** an offence under the Marriage Act- Section 113 for an unauthorised religious celebrant to conduct a second religious ceremony provided the couple are previously validly married and produced evidence of their marriage to that celebrant.
7. In France, the whole population understands that their state registry offices or local courts are the only to conduct legal marriages.

Because Australia has a complex system allowing both religious and civil celebrants of four different types to solemnize marriage, our population is not clear as to Australia's marriage requirements, nor if they are present at a legal marriage at a religious wedding ceremony.

Therefore the Australian Marriage Act needs to be also consistent as to its basic requirements of the marriage ceremony to ensure the parties to the marriage, their witnesses and their guests, and the Australian community as a whole, are clear as to the nature of the marriage ceremony being conducted in relation to civil law.

8. The Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc. recommends that all marriage celebrants (whether offering religious or civil ceremonies) and all marriage ceremonies contain the same basic elements of civil law in its 10 years goals.

#### **Proposed Change to the Marriage Act:**

An example of a modified Section 46 and Section 113 (where blue phrases are additions, red are deletions) could be:

#### **Section 46: Authorised celebrants make their status clear and explain nature of marriage relationship.**

- ~~(1)~~ *Subject to subsection (2), before a marriage is solemnized by or in the presence of an authorized celebrant, the authorized celebrant, ~~not being a minister of a religion of a recognized denomination,~~ shall say to the parties, in the presence of the witnesses and at some point before Section 45, the words:*

"I am duly authorised by law ~~to solemnise\*marriages~~ **to formalise this marriage** according to law.

"Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter.

“Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, entered into voluntarily on the understanding that this relationship is for life”

or words to that effect.

- (2) ~~Where, in the case of a person authorized under subsection 39(2) to solemnize marriages, the Minister is satisfied that the form of ceremony to be used by that person sufficiently states the nature and obligations of marriage, the Minister may, either by the instrument by which that person is so authorized or by a subsequent instrument, exempt that person from compliance with subsection (1) of this section~~

\* This word is no longer in common usage and can be misinterpreted.

### **Section 113<sup>15</sup>: Second marriage ceremonies**

(1) to (4) as is

(5) Nothing in this Act shall be taken to prevent 2 persons who are already legally married to each other from going through a religious ceremony of marriage with each other in Australia where those persons have:

(a) produced to the person by whom or in whose presence the ceremony is to be performed a certificate of their existing marriage; and

(b) furnished to that person **a statutory declaration**, ~~a statement in writing signed by them and witnessed by that person,~~ that:

- (i) they have previously gone through a form or ceremony of marriage with each other;
- (ii) they are the parties mentioned in the certificate of marriage produced with the statement; and
- (iii) they have no reason to believe that they are not legally married to each other or, if their marriage took place outside Australia, they have no reason to believe that it would not be recognised as valid in Australia,

**(c) and where the celebrant has declared to all present that the couple have signed declarations and provided evidence that they are already married according to civil law.**

(6) The provisions of sections 42, 44, 50 and 51 do not apply to or in relation to a religious ceremony of marriage in accordance with subsection (5) and the person by whom, or in whose presence, the ceremony is performed shall not:

(a) prepare or issue in respect of it any certificate of marriage under or referring to this Act; or

(b) issue any other document to the parties in respect of the ceremony unless the parties are described in the document as being already legally married to each other.

(7) A person who is not an authorised celebrant *does* not commit an offence against section 101 by reason only of his or her having performed a religious ceremony of marriage between parties who have complied with the requirements of subsection (5) of this section, **provided the unauthorised celebrant declares to all present that the couple have signed declarations and provided evidence that they are already married according to civil law.**

**Recommendation 4:** that Sections 45 be modernised to ensure all marrying couples give consent to their marriage in their marriage ceremony (whether religious or civil) in the presence of their two witnesses and the marriage celebrant.

### Why is this a concern?

There are forms of **religious** marriage and marriage ceremonies that are recognised as sufficient for the purpose by the religious body or organisation, that do not require consent of the couple in the marriage ceremony.

Attendance at a marriage ceremony, of itself, may not constitute consent to the marriage. Therefore invalid marriage may be the result. Celebrants providing civil ceremonies are required to ensure that both parties to the marriage give consent in the ceremony.

### Rationale:

1. In Western cultural traditions, marriage commenced and continues to be a *civil*, not religious, function. The Australian Marriage Act was based upon the British Marriage Act of 1836 that recognised civil marriages as a legal alternative to church marriages in England and Wales.
2. Those religions “Recognised” under the Marriage Act in 1961 were predominantly Christian.
3. Since 1961 the number smaller religious bodies (See Appendix 1) represented under Subdivision C by independent religious celebrants has grown to 512 and the number of Recognised Religions has grown to approximately 130 (See Appendix 2).
4. To my knowledge, there has been no audit in the last decade of the “*form and ceremony recognised as sufficient for the purpose by the religious body or organisation*”, especially for Subdivision A authorised celebrants to ensure that all ceremonies require the consent of both parties to the marriage, or to ensure both parties being present in the same room with their witnesses, as is required of both parties to the marriage civil ceremonies.

*“Section 45 (a) Where a marriage is solemnised by or in the presence of an authorised celebrant, being a minister of religion, it may be solemnised according to any form and ceremony recognised as sufficient for the purpose by the religious body or organisation of which he or she is a minister”.*

5. Without interfering in the religious form or religious marriage rite, it would be a simple step for the Marriage Act to require all religious ceremonies to precede their marriage service with minimal components required by Sections 45 and 46.
6. The Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc. recommends that all marriage celebrants (whether offering religious or civil ceremonies) and all marriage ceremonies contain the same basic elements of civil law in its 10 Year Goals. (See Appendix 3)

An example of a modified Section 45 (where blue phrases are additions, red are deletions) could be:

### Proposed Change to the Marriage Act:

#### Section 45: Form of ceremony

~~(1) Where a marriage is solemnized by or in the presence of an authorized celebrant, being a minister of religion, it may be solemnized according to any form and ceremony~~

~~recognized as sufficient for the purpose by the religious body or organization of which he or she is a minister.~~

- (3) ~~(2)~~ Where a marriage is solemnized by or in the presence of an authorized celebrant, ~~not being a minister of religion~~, it may be solemnized according to any form and ceremony recognized as sufficient for the purpose by the marriage celebrant and is sufficient if, in the presence of the authorized celebrant and the witnesses, the words:

~~I call upon the persons here present to witness that~~ “I, A.B. (or C.D.), take thee, C.D. (or A.B.), to be my ~~lawful wedded~~ wife (or husband ~~or spouse or partner in marriage~~);”<sup>#</sup>

\* Or words to that effect.

- (4) ~~(3)~~ Where a marriage has been solemnized by or in the presence of an authorized celebrant, a certificate of the marriage prepared and signed in accordance with section 50 is conclusive evidence that the marriage was solemnized in accordance with this section.

- (5) ~~(4)~~ Nothing in subsection (2) makes a certificate conclusive:

(a) where the fact that the marriage ceremony took place is in issue—as to that fact; or

(b) where the identity of a party to the marriage is in issue—as to the identity of that party.

<sup>#</sup> *Note: This 1836 version of the vows needs modernising. These vows were written in a time before identification documents were common. All celebrants are required to be satisfied as to the identities of the parties to the marriage and the information provided on the notice, by sighting official birth certificates or passports and other documents, thus there is no need for full names in the ceremony.*



**Recommendation 5:** that the legislation of all Subdivisions be reviewed to ensure that all authorised celebrants are required to

- complete a nationally accredited Vocational Education and Training unit <sup>16</sup> of competency in marriage law prior to authorisation
- complete an annual professional development activity in marriage law when legislative related to marriage changes, and
- pay an annual fee for their regulation.

### **Why is this a concern?**

Inconsistent standards in the understanding and application of civil law by authorised celebrants result from the fact that only one third of all marriage celebrants are required by law to have basic qualifications in marriage law, have professional development in marriage law when the law changes and the state/ territory regulators of two subdivisions of authorised celebrants do not have the financial or other resources to ensure consistent standards are maintained for those they regulate.

### **Rationale:**

1. The 2003 Marriage Amendment Bills and the 2014 Marriage Amendment Bills (which brought in an annual regulation fee for **only** Commonwealth celebrants) created further unfair differences between the three sub-divisions in their celebrants' authorisation, registration, administrative and regulation with the burden falling on those civil marriage celebrants that serviced the 75% of the public using independent civil celebrants.
2. Section 39 requires independent civil and religious celebrants (Subdivision C) to:
  - have training in marriage law before registration as a celebrant,
  - complete 5 hours of mandatory continuing education each year
  - abide by a Code of Practice
  - and pay an annual fee for their ongoing authorisation as a marriage celebrant (with the consequences of the failure to by the Charge Date an automatic de-registration).

These requirements to **not apply** to Subdivision A and B authorised celebrants.

3. The Commonwealth Marriage Register regulates these Subdivision C independent civil and religious celebrants.
4. To raise standards and reduce regulatory costs, the Attorney-Generals' Department was advised to support the higher Diploma in Celebrancy in 2015 qualification proposed by CoCA, but require 2 Core Units and the 3 Marriage Units as the basis for Subdivision C civil independent marriage celebrants authorisation. As support was not forthcoming, the Attorney-General's Department has been advised to introduce mandated assessment for the marriage units in the new Certificate IV in Celebrancy.
5. Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions and Subdivision B State Officers are regulated by the State or Territory Registrar of the Office of Births, Deaths & Marriages and are **not required** by the Act to meet the above requirements.
6. Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions are celebrants who are financially supported by their recognised religious organisation (with a stipend, accommodation, vehicle and other resources) and Subdivision B State Officers are employed as public servants with penalty rates and out-of-pocket expenses covered by their state or territory government.

Commonwealth marriage celebrants, in contrast, are independent professionals who need to cover all their own expenses, before being remunerated for their time providing marriage services.

7. With the average number of weddings per celebrant per annum dropping from 35 per celebrant per annum in 1999 to less than 11 in 2016, the average gross income of Commonwealth marriage celebrants has fallen to less than \$10,000 gross.
8. Contrary to popular assumptions, most civil Commonwealth marriage celebrants are:
  - a. concerned to provide professional marriage services with a fair remuneration for their time
  - b. uphold high ethical standards for their marriages and other civil ceremonies, and
  - c. uphold the Code of Practice part (3), which states

*“A marriage celebrant must recognise the social, cultural and legal significance of marriage and the marriage ceremony in the Australian community, and the importance of strong and respectful family relationships.”*

9. Having different standards for the authorisation and regulation of the different subdivision of celebrant is biased and unfair to those people performing duties of *“public trust under the Commonwealth<sup>2</sup>”* and the marrying public who use their services.
10. The de-registration of a marriage celebrant for their failure to pay a single fee to government without access to natural justice for circumstances beyond the personal control, when two-thirds of authorised celebrants are not required to pay such a fee, is draconian and a failure of natural justice.
11. Requiring Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions and Subdivision B State Officers to pay an annual fee for their regulation, as is required of Subdivision C Authorised Marriage Celebrants would give the State and Territory Registrars the funding to provide better regulation, professional development in marriage law and support to these celebrants.

Note: Alternatively as recommended by the Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc. a marriage licence fee paid by the marrying couple would be another mechanism of funding the regulation of all Division I authorised marriage celebrants.

Such a mechanism would be a fairer application of Cost Recovery Principles. For example such a fee could be administered in the form of a stamp purchased from Australia Post and affixed to the Marriage Certificate and Notice of Intended Marriage required to be sent for registration by the relevant State or Territory Births, Deaths and Marriages Office.

2- Section 116 of the Australian Constitution:

*“The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.”*

**Recommendation 6:** that Section 39 be amended to ensure Subdivision C (Independent civil celebrants and independent religious celebrants) do not lose their authorisation for the first non-payment by the charge date of the annual registration, which is not a condition of authorisation of Subdivision A (Religious celebrants from recognised religions) and Subdivision B (State Registry Office Staff and court officers) of Division 1 of the Marriage Act.

### Why is this a concern?

The de-registration of a marriage celebrant for their failure to pay a single fee to government, without access to natural justice for circumstances beyond the personal control, when two-thirds of authorised celebrants are not required to pay such a fee, is draconian, a failure of natural justice and has consequences hugely disproportionate to the “offence” committed.

### Rationale:

- 1) As noted in Recommendation 3, all marriage celebrants perform the same functions on behalf of the government (whether the ceremony is religious or civil, long or short) yet as noted in Recommendation 5, authorised celebrants in Subdivision A (Ministers of Recognised Religions) and Subdivision B (State Officers) are not required by the Act to pay an annual fee for their ongoing authorisation as a marriage celebrant.
- 2) Section 34 provides for natural justice by enabling Subdivision A and B authorised celebrants to appeal decisions for removal from their Subdivision to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).
- 3) Whilst Section 39J Review of decisions **appears to give** the same right of appeal to Subdivision C authorised celebrants for removal from Subdivision C, in practice this is impossible because Section 39FB of the Marriage Act gives the Registrar of Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants **no discretion** in relation to the failure to pay this fee by the charge date.
- 4) This is evidenced in the Attorney-General’s Department’s Marriage Celebrant Matters Newsletter—Autumn/Winter 2016 edition which includes this article:  
<https://www.ag.gov.au/FamiliesAndMarriage/Marriage/marriagecelebrants/Pages/Celebrant-resources.aspx>

#### ***A summary of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) decision in Thiel***

AAT confirms **mandatory deregistration for non-payment** of annual fee.

Mr Thiel applied to the AAT for review of a decision of the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants to deregister him as a marriage celebrant for non-payment of the celebrant registration charge by the charge payment day. Mr Thiel’s case involved particularly tragic family circumstances during the period when the 2014 annual registration charge was due.

The AAT considered section 39FB of the Marriage Act 1961 and held that the Registrar has no discretion to consider exceptional circumstances such as Mr Thiel’s when deregistering a celebrant for non-payment of the annual registration charge. Under section 39FB the Registrar must send a deregistration notice to a person who has failed to pay the charge by the charge payment day ‘unless’ the person’s liability to pay the charge may be affected by an application for exemption or any other circumstance. The AAT held that ‘any other circumstance’ must relate to circumstances that affect the person’s liability to pay the charge rather than the timing of the payment.

As Mr Thiel was registered on 1 July and had not been granted an exemption, he was liable to pay the charge. The fact that he did not do so by the end of the charge payment day meant that the Registrar was required to deregister him. Deputy President Dr Christopher Kendall in his written reasons wrote “the Registrar was obliged by the legislation to [issue] the deregistration notice... The Registrar had no choice but to do so. The legislation offers no discretion. **No event that might be reviewed by this Tribunal occurred.**”

This decision highlights how important it is to pay the annual registration charge before the charge payment day. To assist celebrants the department has set the time available for payment to 60 days and implemented a robust system of reminders. The department encourages celebrants to pay the charge early (ideally before the due date, which is 30 days before the final charge payment day) to avoid any issues with late payments.

A copy of the judgment in Thiel is available on the Australasian Legal Information Institute website at:  
<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/AATA/2015/872.html>.

- 5) To be forced to re-register costs
- a) the marriage celebrant time, effort and a minimum of \$600 to apply for re-registration and
  - b) the couples, which have booked the celebrant, time, money and distress in trying to find another independent celebrant to perform their marriage ceremony personalised to meet their needs and beliefs.
- Note:
- i) Once the authorised celebrant is de-registered there is no mechanism to force them to ensure their couples are appropriately transferred to another suitable celebrant.
  - ii) This is unfair as this does not happen to couples married by state/territory registered celebrants whose services are not as personalised as those supplied by Commonwealth marriage celebrants
  - iii) If the authorised celebrant is forced to retrain to meet current authorisation standards, which can be the case for celebrants appointed before July 2010, then there is an additional penalty is a the equivalent of minimum of 6 months full-time training and associated fees of \$1,000 to \$3000.
  - iv) There is an additional “punishment” in terms of the public reputation of the individual celebrant and also upon the Subdivision C Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants as a whole.
- 6) This “robust system of reminders” by the Marriage Law and Celebrant Section
- a) cannot address all circumstances beyond a celebrants control
  - b) impacts upon other marriage celebrants as the this system of reminders is funded from the revenue raised from all Subdivision C celebrants annual fees, and
  - c) assists celebrants who are not as organised or diligent as professional marriage celebrants are expected to be.

Note: One rationale for the introduction of the Annual Fee was to increase professionalism with the indirect purpose of regulating the over supply of Commonwealth marriage celebrant. Thus the Department assisting less organised or diligent by a “robust system of reminders” is counter-productive to that aim.

- 7) Given the cost to Department (and indirectly all Subdivision C celebrant) in dealing with cases referred to the AAT, a simpler and fairer system would be the imposition of
- a) a fine of the same value as re-registration (i.e. \$600)
  - b) plus the payment of the annual fee (i.e. \$240) that had not been paid by the charge date
  - c) both to be paid within a period of 60 days from the date of the Notice to pay the fine and the unpaid Annual Fee
  - d) for the first non-payment of an Annual Fee.

Note: Any subsequent non-payments would mean automatic de-registration.

- 8) Therefore Section 39FB could read:

**39FB Celebrant registration charge: consequence of non-payment**

- (1) If a person has not, by the end of the charge payment day, paid an amount of celebrant registration charge that the person is liable to pay, the Registrar of

Marriage Celebrants must, as soon as practicable after that day, send the person a notice in accordance with subsection (2), unless the Registrar considers that the notice should not be sent at that time because the person's liability to pay the charge may be affected by:

- (a) the outcome of an application for internal review of a decision to refuse to grant an exemption; or
- (b) the non-payment is this first time the marriage celebrant has failed to pay the celebrant registration charge, or
- (c) any other circumstance of which the Registrar is aware.

Note: Depending on the outcome of matters referred to in paragraph (a) or (c), it may turn out that the person is not liable to pay the charge.

(2) The notice referred to in subsection (1) must:

- (a) advise the person that, because the person has failed to pay celebrant registration charge

i) for the first time, the person will be required to pay a fine equivalent to the application for registration as a Subdivision C Authorised Celebrant plus the payment of the annual fee not been paid by the charge date within a period of 60 days from the date of the notice to pay the fine and the unpaid Annual Fee

ii) for the second or subsequent time, be deregistered as a marriage celebrant after the day specified in the notice (being a day that is at least 7 days after the day on which the notice is sent); and

- (b) comply with any other requirements prescribed by the regulations relating to the content of the notice, or how it is to be sent.

(3) practicable after that day, send the person a notice in accordance with subsection (2), unless the Registrar considers that the notice should not be sent at that time because the person's liability to pay the charge may be affected by:

- (a) the outcome of an application for internal review of a decision to refuse to grant an exemption; or
- (b) any other circumstance of which the Registrar is aware.

Note: Depending on the outcome of matters referred to in paragraph (a) or (b), it may turn out that the person is not liable to pay the charge.

(4) The notice referred to in subsection (1) must:

- (a) advise the person that, because the person has failed to pay celebrant registration charge, the person will be

i) be required to pay a fine and the annual fee within 60 days from the date specified on the Notice if (2)(a)(i) applies; or

ii) deregistered as a marriage celebrant if (2)(a)(ii) applies after the day specified in the notice (being a day that is at least 7 days after the day on which the notice is sent); and

- (b) comply with any other requirements prescribed by the regulations relating to the content of the notice, or how it is to be sent.

(5) The Registrar of Marriage Celebrants must deregister the person as a marriage celebrant by removing his or her details from the register of marriage celebrants as soon as practicable after the day specified under paragraph (2)(a)(ii).

Note: If the person wishes to become a marriage celebrant again, the person may reapply under section 39D.

**Recommendation 7:** that Section 115 Publication of lists of authorised celebrants be amended to ensure consistent terminology in relation to the different Subdivisions of Authorised Celebrants.

**Why is this a concern?**

Inconsistent terminology obscures the differences in parity between the different Subdivisions of Authorised Celebrants in Division 1 and makes education and training in relation to these different groups more difficult.

**Rationale:**

1. The Civil Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 proposes 115 Publication of lists of authorised celebrants to read

115 Publication of lists of authorised celebrants

1. The Minister shall cause to be published in such manner as the Minister considers appropriate:

- a. ministers of religion registered under Subdivision A of Division 1 of Part IV,
    - (aa) a list of the persons who, or positions that, are authorised to solemnise marriages under Subdivision B of Division 1 of Part IV; and
    - (ab) a list of the persons a list of the persons who are marriage celebrants; and
  - b. a list of the persons who or positions that are prescribed authorities in relation to marriages in Australia.
2. a. and (aa) above describe the relevant authorised celebrants by Subdivision. (ab) does not.
  3. For consistency all authorised celebrants needs to be identified by their subdivision to assist the reader.
  4. If Recommendations 1 and 2 are accepted then for consistency that Item 37 would read:

19 37 After paragraph 115(1)(a)

Insert:

- 20 (aa) a list of the persons who, or positions that, are authorised to
- 21 solemnise marriages under Subdivision B of Division 1 of
- 22 Part IV; and
- 23 (ab) a list of the persons who are authorised to solemnise marriages under
- 24 Subdivision C of Division 1 of Part IV and,
- (ac) a list of the persons who are authorised to solemnise marriages under
- Subdivision D of Division 1 of Part IV and,

**Recommendation 8:** that incorporated professional civil celebrant associations, as defined by the Act, be granted the ability to regulate their own members as the case in other professions and as is delegated, in principle, to Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions.

**Why is this a concern?**

Regulation of Subdivision C authorised celebrants currently costs the profession 2.1 million dollars for an average of less 25 complaints each year, which represents the cost of \$84,000 per complaint. Given 60% of these complaints are non-statutory ones, the cost to the profession per statutory complaint is more of the order of \$210,000 per complaint.

**Rationale for Recommendations 8:**

1. Currently Subdivision C marriage celebrants paid \$240 pa for their regulation under Cost Recovery Principles as defined by the Department of Finance. As there are currently 8691 marriage celebrants (@ 13 April 2017), this represents an annual revenue of \$2,085,840.
2. That is the regulation of Subdivision C authorised celebrants currently costs the profession 2.1 million dollars for an average of less 25 complaints each year (of which 15 or 60% on average are non-statutory complaints).

Department Statistics 2015

TABLE 8 - COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY COMPLAINT TYPE				
Description	2012	2013	2014	YTD 2015
Statutory	12	7	6	2
Non-Statutory	7	13	10	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>

<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/113-commonwealth-celebrants-program-statistics/338-coca-agd-meeting-150428-statistics>

Department Statistics 2016

COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY COMPLAINT TYPE				
Description	2016-17 YTD 6 Oct	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14
Statutory	1	4	9	6
Non-statutory	8	21	14	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>FINALISED</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>

<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/113-commonwealth-celebrants-program-statistics/481-coca-agd-meeting-161027-statistics>

3. This represents the cost of \$84,000 per complaint to the independent celebrancy profession, or even higher (of the order of \$210,000 per complaint) if one considers that 60% of these complaints are non-statutory and thus could be handled by the professional associations or Departments of Fair Trading (or their equivalent) in the states and territories.
4. 25 complaints pa over the 70- 75% of marriage conducted by independent marriage celebrants represents a complaint rate of **less 0.05 % of all marriage** solemnised by Subdivision C authorised celebrants.

5. In 2012 the Coalition of Celebrant Association (CoCA) Inc did a 15 year review of marriage and found that only 2 invalid marriages were able to be attributed to the conduct of the celebrant (one civil and one religious).

6. The 2002 Marriage Amendment Bill Explanatory Memorandum (Circulated by authority of the Attorney-General the Honourable Daryl Williams AM QC MP) considered:

a. the training authorisation standards and the continuing professional development requirements would be sufficient to ensure there was not an over-supply of marriage celebrants, and

b. that the additional funding provided the department would be adequate to administer the 2003 changes.

“The additional regulatory functions to be carried out by the Attorney-General’s Department will involve greater administrative costs. The additional cost is estimated at approximately \$320,000 per annum. There will be additional funding provided to the Attorney-General’s Department to meet these costs.”

“The Bill does not include provision for celebrants to pay an annual fee for authorisation. After careful consideration it was concluded that the cost to authorised celebrants and the resulting cost to marrying couples of such a fee as well as the administrative cost to collect the fee outweigh any advantages of a fee.”

7. The 2002 Marriage Amendment Bill Explanatory Memorandum did consider self-regulation as an option, but noted the difficulties in achieving that goal at that time.

“Given the time for which marriage celebrancy has been in operation, the self-regulation option is not considered feasible. It is something to be pursued as a medium term goal.”

8. The 2011 moves to bring in an annual fee on only Subdivision C marriage celebrants thwarted hopes of a single peak body. However, in the 15 years since the 2002 changes were enacted the role and functioning of incorporated civil marriage celebrant associations have dramatically improved, especially those involved in the establishment of the Coalition of Celebrant Associations as a peak celebrant body in 2008.

9. For this reason, The Coalition of Celebrant Associations argued in 2012 that argued that 2014 Marriage Amendment Bills, if passed would create further unfair differences between the three sub-divisions in their celebrants' authorisation, registration, administrative and regulation with the burden falling on those marriage celebrants that service the 75% of the public using independent civil celebrants.

10. In 2014 the Coalition of Celebrant Associations advised the Department that it needed to establish some basic criteria for the acknowledgement of professional celebrant associations on its website and in attendance at its stakeholders meetings. The criteria proposed was that the association

- a. was incorporated association of independent celebrants
- b. had a membership based of at least 50 marriage celebrants
- c. provided a range of professional support services to members such that its role was not restricted to simply a commercial marketing function.



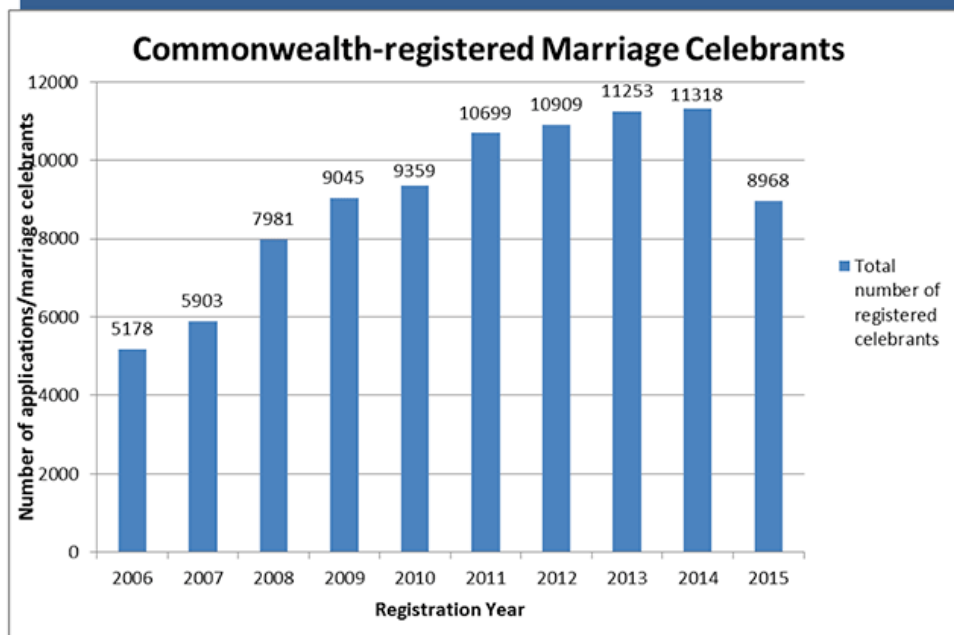
11. If the government thought that the charging of an annual fee would bring the number of independent civil marriage celebrants within the range of pre-2003 changes (e.g. 35 weddings per celebrant pa), then 2014 Marriage Amendment Bills have failed to do so.

The number of independent civil marriage celebrants required to service the relatively fixed market of Australian marriage is in the order of 2,300.

### Registration Statistics from April 2015 Stakeholders Meeting

#### REGISTRATIONS

TABLE 1 – REGISTRATIONS



<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/113-commonwealth-celebrants-progam-statistics/338-coca-agd-meeting-150428-statistics>

### Registration Statistics from April 2015 Stakeholders Meeting

COMMONWEALTH REGISTERED MARRIAGE CELEBRANTS AT 1 JULY EACH YEAR			
	1 July 2016	1 July 2015	1 July 2014
<b>Number of registered celebrants</b>	8,620	8,786	9,389

<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/113-commonwealth-celebrants-progam-statistics/481-coca-agd-meeting-161027-statistics>

Registration Numbers at 13 April 2017 = 8691 show post the July 2014 Amendments to charge Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants an annual fee, the number of these celebrants have stabilised at approx. 8,500 celebrants – still 3.5 times or 350% the number of Subdivision C Marriage Celebrants required.

12. The 2002 Marriage Amendment Bill Explanatory Memorandum expected the numbers to be regulated by high training entry criteria and continuing professional development in conjunction with the Conflict of Interest and Benefit to Business provisions (to exclude those with an interest in the wedding industry).

13. These outcomes have not been achieved due to

- a. the lack of independent review of the 2002 changes
- b. the staffing of the Marriage Law and Celebrant Section by public servants with no expertise in delivering marriage ceremonies, nor in the education and training of independent marriage celebrants
- c. the continuous staff changes within the Marriage Law and Celebrant Section, and
- d. the fact that over 90% of the Marriage Law and Celebrant Section budget is raised by the Cost Recovery Program, leaving minimal resources to examine the broader issues affecting subdivision C marriage celebrants in the context of the Marriage Act itself.
- e. the continuous staff changes within the Marriage Law and Celebrant Section

14. Whilst it is very unlikely that there will be a single professional body to cover all independent civil marriage celebrants as a medium term goal, given the highly competitive nature of the profession, an **alternate and more cost-effective way** of regulating Commonwealth civil celebrants is possible

The high cost of regulation could be reduced and professionalism increased by delegating the responsibility of regulation of independent marriage celebrants to recognised Professional Celebrant Associations with the over-sight by the Commonwealth Registrar of Marriage Celebrants in a similar way to the delegation of the regulation of Subdivision A Ministers of Recognised Religions to their faith organisations, with the over-sight of the State / Territory Registrars.

15. Eight Registrars oversight the registration and regulation of 22,880 Subdivision A and 293 Subdivision B authorised celebrants. That is approx. 23,000 or 2,875 per registrar.

#### **Extract from the ICCA Submission to the 2017 Select Senate Committee**

The Act was established in the middle of the last century based upon British legislation pioneered in 1836. Unlike France where all couples must attend a registry office to legally marry couples in the Australian community may choose from 4 types of marriage celebrants.

- Subdivision A - Religious celebrants from Recognised Religions (22,880\* - 72.1%)
- Subdivision B - Marriage Officers in State and Territory Registry Offices (293\* - 0.9%)
- Subdivision C - Independent Civil Marriage Celebrants (8040\* - 25.3%)
- Subdivision C - Independent Religious Marriage Celebrants (539\* - 1.7%)

**Total of all = 31,752**

16. Given the independent civil celebrants are required to have much higher and specific training in marriage law and civil celebrancy, with the delegation of these celebrants to Recognised Professional Celebrant Association to regulate their own professional civil celebrants, the resources of the Department required to oversight Subdivision C marriage celebrants would be greatly reduced, and the Department's focus could be much more balanced to issues of the Australian Marriage Act as it affects all Australians.

**Notes:**

A. Submissions by the Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc. include:

- a. 2012 CoCA Submission on Cost Recovery and Increasing Professionalism  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/content/70-2012-coca-submission-on-cost-recovery-and-increasing-professionalism>
- b. 2012 CoCA Response to AGD August 2012 Discussion Paper  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/content/71-2012-coca-response-to-agd-august-2012-discussion-paper>
- c. Senate Inquiry – Marriage Amendment Bills 2013  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/73-senate-inquiry-marriage-amendment-bills-2013/207-coca-position-re-marriage-amendment-bills>
- d. Marriage Celebrants Program Regulator Performance Framework  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/95-agd-services-provided-under-cost-recovery/485-marriage-celebrants-program-regulator-performance-framework>
- e. VET CoCA Recommendation and Rationale Summary  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/96-vet-second-consultation/335-vet-coca-recommendation-and-rationale-summary>
- f. 2017 CoCA Submission: Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same Sex Marriage) Bill  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/content/97-members-of-parliament-and-senators>
- g. Commonwealth Department of Finance – Cost Recovery Guidelines  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/content/10-submissions>

**Raised with the Department:**

- h. Changes to the Marriage Act 1961  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/484-changes-to-the-marriage-act-1961>
- i. Marriage Guidelines  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/483-marriage-guidelines>
- j. VET Training Report - October 2016  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/482-vet-training-report-october-2016>
- k. Workforce development agenda  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/387-workforce-development-agenda>
- l. Recommendations re Updating Regulations  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag>

[department/486-recommendations-re-updating-regulations](#)

- m. 2014 Marriage Forms CoCA Submission  
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/294-2014-marriage-forms-coca-submission>

B. Submissions by Civil Celebrations Network (CCN) Inc. include:

- C. Submission by the International College of Celebrancy Association: This submission can be read and or downloaded from:  
<http://www.ourlives.com.au/marriage-equality-submission.html>

D. **Rona Goold BSc(GenSc) DipEd CMC Resume**

Authorised as a Civil Marriage Celebrant in 1989, Rona has been active in the celebrancy profession since the late nineties. This was when the federal government commenced community consultations that resulted in the 2003 changes to the Marriage Act affecting the Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant Program.

**Rona's celebrancy roles:**

- a. 6+ years as a CCN Delegate to the national celebrant peak body - [The Coalition of Celebrant Associations \(CoCA\) Incorporated](#). (2010-present).  
- Rona is currently the CoCA Secretary, a second two-year term after being the CoCA Treasurer for the past two years.
- b. [Representative for the Celebrancy sector](#) on the VET Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council Direct Client Care Group (2006 -2008), (201-2015) and currently acting representative until VET appointments are announced.
- c. Founder and volunteer of the [Civil Celebrations Network \(CCN\) Inc.](#) a celebrant based community incorporated non-profit association. (2008 - present)
- d. Management Committee of the AFCC a national celebrant association (2001-2007)

**Previous work roles included:**

- e. Carer Support Worker Parramatta City Council Care Support Project
- f. Community worker PATH (Penrith association for parents of children with disabilities)
- g. Founding Director NSW Health Department state wide alcohol and other drug education centre (CEIDA)
- h. NSW Health Department Alcohol and Other Drug Training programs coordinator (NSW Division of Drug and Alcohol Services)
- i. Alcohol and Other Drug Counsellor
- j. High School Science Teacher

E. Xxx

- a. xxx

**See Appendix 1.**

Subdivision C Independent independent religions celebrants representing 512 smaller religious bodies  
(From ICCA Submission to Senate Select Committee January 2017)

# Denotes those also authorised for civil ceremonies

Moslem Alawy Society	Austral-Asian Chinese Church
Orthodox Catholic Church Of Christ The King #	Australia (Nur) The Light Foundation Inc.
Associated Peniel Ministries Australia Inc	Australia Light Foundation
Chinese Christian Church	Australian Bosna Hercegovina Islamic Society GHB
Christ Evangelical Center Of Australia	SydneyAustralian Celtic Anabaptist Church
Evangelical Lutheran Congregations Of The Reformation	Australian Christian Churches
Jesus Is Lord Church Australia Inc.	Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church
Korean Central Presbyterian Church	Australian Fellowship Of Evangelical Students
Korean Presbyterian Reformed Church	Australian Fellowship Of Faith Churches And Ministers International
New Life Christian Community Inc	Australian Islamic Social Association
Samoan Christian Worship Cent	Australian Sikh Association (ASA)
Southland Vineyard Chuch Inc.	Australian Turkish Social And Cultural Trust Inc
Sri Guru Singh Sabha #	Bankstown Muslim Association
Ancient Church Of The East	Beit Gan - Eden Messianic Community
Armenian Bible Church Of Sydney - Non Denominational	Bethany Baptist Church
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Of Australia	Bethany Christian Fellowship
Australian Burmese Christian Fellowship	Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church
Bethel Presbyterian Church	Bible Salvation Assembly
Civil And Religious Ceremonies #	Bible Salvation Fellowship, Niddrie
Cornerstone Community Inc	Bible Truth Fellowship, Toowoomba, Queensland
Eckankar Society Of Central Australia	Blackwood Family Church, Boyup Brook, Western Australia
Edwardstown Baptist Church	Bodhikusuma Buddhist & Meditation Centre - Theravada Tradition
El Shaddai Kwiana Christian Fellowship Inc. #	Brisbane Bible-Presbyterian Church Inc And Civil Ceremonies #
Evangelical Chinese Church, Melbourne	Brisbane Church Of Christ
Faith Community Church Incorporated	Brisbane Sikh Temple ( Gurdwara ) Inc
First Samoan Full Gospel Pentecostal Church	Buddhist Society Of WA
Guru Nanak Sikh Temple	Buddist Chanting At Civil Ceremonies
Hindu Vedic	Bundaberg Living Word Fellowship
Journey To Christ	C3 Central City
Kingdom Light Christian Centre Inc	Cabramatta Vineyard Church Inc.
Kingsway Fellowship International Inc	Caloundra Holiness Church
Macedonian Orthodox Community Of Australia	Calvary Chapel Church Secret Harbour
New Covenant Life Centre Inc.	Calvary Chapel Newcastle
Pagan And Civil Ceremonies #	Calvary Lighthouse Inc.
Riverview Church	Calvary Worship Centre, Noble Park
Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement	Canberra Korean Church Incorporated
Tokaikolo Christian Fellowship	Canberra Korean Presbyterian Church
Tokaikolo Christian Fellowship In Australia	Cardwell Baptist Church, Cardwell, Queensland
Vision Ministries	Carmel Bible-Presbyterian Church Inc
Associated Peniel Ministeries Australia Inc. Hope & Victory Christian Church	Central Baptist Church
Cornerstone Community Ltd	Central Church
Abundant Life Community Church And Civil Ceremonies #	Chester Reeve's Ministries
Acts Missions International – Brimbank	Chinese And Australian Baptist Church
Acts Missions International – Rochedale	Chinese Christian Church – Sydney
Acts Missions International Inc.	Chinese Christian Church And Civil Ceremonies #
Adelaide Abundant Life Centre	Chinese Christian Church Brisbane
Adelaide Christian Fellowship Hackham	Chinese Christian Church Of Victoria
Afghan Community Support Association Inc.	Chinese Christian Church Sydney
Agape Christian Church, Rooty Hill, New South Wales	Chinese Methodist Church Of Melbourne
Agios Ministries	Christ Community Church
Al Zahra Muslim Association	Christ Our Hope Ministries Sydney
All Nations Church & Prayer Ministry	Christian
Alrissalah Islamic Association Of Victoria	Christian Catholic Church
Amazing Grace Christian Church	Christian Gospel Centre
American Samoan Assembly Of God In Australia	Christian Romanian Pentecostal Church 'Philadelphia'
Anglican Catholic Church	Chung Tian Temple
Anglican Catholic Church - The Diocese Of Australia And New Zealand	Church Communities Australia Ltd
Anglican Independent Communion Australia	Church Of Christ
AROG And Civil Ceremonies #	Church Of Christ (Kingdom Of God)
Ashrafal Madaaris Inc	Church Of Holy Spirit
Assembly Of God Church Of Samoa In Australia Inc	Church Of Jesus Is A Good Shephard
Assyrian Christian Church	Church Of Life

Church Of Living Waters, Mandurah Inc.  
Church Of Spiritual Enlightenment  
Church Of The Harvest (Inc.) Ballajura, Western Australia  
Church Of The Living God  
Church Of The Nazarene - Mackay & Civil Ceremonies #  
City Faith International Ltd  
CityHarvest International  
Cityharvest International/ Cityharvest Church  
Cityview Church Inc.  
Civil Ceremonies & The Moslem Alawi Youth Movement #  
Civil Ceremonies And Belmore Road Church Of Christ #  
Civil Ceremonies And Ceremonies For Unification Church #  
Civil Ceremonies And Ceremonies Of Significance #  
Civil Ceremonies And Chinese Presbyterian Church Inc #  
Civil Ceremonies And City Edge Church - Melbourne Australia #  
Civil Ceremonies And Frontier International Christian Centre #  
Civil Ceremonies And Hindu Satsang Mandal Of Victoria #  
Civil Ceremonies And Path Of Hope #  
Civil Ceremonies And Shiv Shakti Cultural Group Inc. #  
Civil Ceremonies And Sikh Association Of WA #  
Civil Ceremonies And The Christian Community In Australia (Inc)#  
Civil Ceremonies And Tokaikolo Christian Fellowship #  
Clayton Community Church  
Coffs Harbour Bible Church  
Communion Of Evangelical Episcopal Churches Of Australia  
Compassions Fire Ministries International Inc  
Condell Park Bible Church  
Covenant Baptist Church Rossmoyne  
Covenant Bible-Presbyterian Church  
Creek Street Church  
Crossroads Christian Fellowship  
Crossroads Unichurch  
Darul Aman Mosque  
Darulfatwa - Islamic High Council Of Australia  
Dayspring Christian Fellowship - Castle Hill  
Deo Gloria Reformed Evangelical Church Of Australia Inc  
Devonport Community Church  
Eagle Heights Spiritual Centre And Civil Ceremonies #  
Eagle Lodge Spiritual Centre, Mackay, Queensland And Civil Ceremonies. #  
EagleDove Ministries Inc  
Eaglenet Ministry International  
Eagles' Wings Ministries Inc., Botany, New South Wales  
Eastern Shore Church Of Christ  
Echuca Community Church  
Eckankar Australia, Black Rock, Victoria  
ECKANKAR Religion Of The Light And Sound Of God  
Ecumenical Catholic Church Of Australia  
Elisha Care  
Emanuelu Christian Church  
Embrace Christian Fellowship  
Emmanuel Christian Fellowship  
Endeavour Christian Gathering  
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Debre Amin  
Abune Teklehaimanot Church Inc.  
Evangel Christian Fellowship  
Evangelical Chinese Church, Box Hill  
Evangelical Chinese Church, Sydney & Civil Ceremonies #  
Evangelical Formosan Church Of Sydney  
Every Home For Christ Inc  
Faith City Church  
Faith Presbyterian Church - Perth  
Family Worship Centre  
Fellowship Of Christ And Civil Ceremonies  
Finnish Pentecostal Church, Melbourne  
First Sikh Temple Of Australia - Woolgoolga  
Flaming Evangelical Ministries Australia Inc.  
Forster Christian Fellowship  
Foundation For The Preservation Of The Mahayana Tradition(Buddhist) And Civil Ceremonies #  
Free Church Of Tonga, Canterbury  
Free Church Of Tonga, Mascot Parish, Sydney.  
Free Presbyterian Church Of Scotland  
Free Wesleyan Church Of Tonga In Australia  
Free Wesleyan Church Of Tonga In Australia (Victoria) Incorporated  
Freedom Ministries  
Fruitful Vine Melbourne Church  
Full Life Christian Fellowship, Inc., South Strathfield, NSW  
Gateway International Church  
GBI Antiokhia  
Geelong Revival Centre  
Global Apostolic Network  
Glorious Gospel Church  
Glory Of God Church  
God'S Covenant Ministry  
Gold Coast Baptist Church  
Gospel Church Of Jesus Inc  
Gospel Faith Fellowship  
Gospel Power Ministries Australia Inc.  
Grace Baptist Church  
Grace Bible Church  
Grace Bible Church Inc.  
Grace Chinese Christian Church  
Grace Christian Church Inc.  
Grace Evangelical Church Newcastle Inc.  
Grace Heart Community Church & Civil Ceremonies #  
Grace Point Christian Church Australia  
Grassroots Gospel Promotion Interchurch Mission  
Greek Free (Evangelical) Church  
Greenwell Point Union Church  
Guildford Christian Assembly  
Haneul Sarang Church  
Harbour Lights Christian Centre  
Harvest Christian Fellowship, Canberra Inc.  
Harvest Church Central Coast  
Harvest Faith Fellowship  
Harvest House International Church  
Hemmant Spiritual Church  
Heritage Of Faith Christian Church  
Hervey Bay Bible Church  
High Street Christian Church  
Hindu Dharam Sabha Of Australian Inc  
Hindu Heritage Society (HHS) Incorporated And Civil Ceremonies#  
Hindu Samaj Australia Inc And Civil Ceremonies #  
Hindu Society Of Australia  
Hindu Society Of South Australia  
Hindu Vedic Sanatan Dharma  
His People Christian Church  
Hobart Salvation Centre  
Holland Park Church Of Christ  
Holy Ghost Church Of Christ  
Holy Spirit Autonomous Anglican Church, Balga, Western Australia  
Holy Trinity Limited  
Hope And Victory Christian Centre  
Hope And Victory Ministries - Miami QLD  
Hope Bible-Presbyterian Church  
Hope Christian Church, Melbourne  
Hope Christian Church, Melbourne City Centre  
Hope Sydney Christian Church  
Huonville Community Church  
Imam Ali (A) Islamic Centre  
Impact Ministries  
Independent Christian Church Inc  
Independent Evangelical Church  
Independent Greek Orthodox  
Independent Moslem Alawi Religion, Greenacre, New South Wales.  
Indian Cultural Society  
Indigenous Ministries  
Indonesian And Multicultural Church  
Indonesian Christian Family Church (GKKI)  
Indonesian Family Church Inc - Place Of Hope  
Ingham Independent Baptist Church  
Inner Life Church And Civil Ceremonies #  
Interfaith

International Buddhist Assoc Of Queensland  
International Buddhist Chan Shan Temple Of Australia Inc. And  
Civil Ceremonies #  
International Christian Ministerial Association – Oceania  
International Community Fellowship  
Islamic Association Of Australia Inc  
Islamic Charity Projects Association  
Islamic Charity Projects Association, Bankstown  
Islamic High Council Of Australia And Civil Ceremonies #  
Islamic Information And Resource Centre (IIRC)  
Islamic Instruction & Social Services Of Australia  
Islamic Trust Schools Of Victoria  
Jafari Community Supporting Social And Culture Of The Shea In WA  
Jerry Savelle Ministries  
Jesus Christ Saves Global Outreach  
Jesus Lord Of The Harvest Fellowship, Inc & Civil Ceremonies #  
Joy City Church  
Jubilee International Church  
Kelmscott Congregational Church  
Kerisiano Faafouina Church In Australia Inc  
Kingdom City Church  
Korean Presbyterian Church In Sydney  
Korean Pure Presbyterian Church Of Adelaide  
Kubatul Islam Mosque (Cocos Keeling Islands)  
Lemuria Spiritual Church  
Liberty International Christian Centre  
Life Church, Castle Hill Inc.  
Lifechurch Inc.  
Lifestyle Training Ministries  
Lighthouse Chapel International  
Lighthouse Christian Centre  
Living Church Of God  
Living Grace Christian Church Inc.  
Living Stone Evangelical Free Church Of Australia  
Living Stream Ministries Incorporated  
Living Waters Christian Community  
Living Way Christian Church  
Living Word Faith Ministries Inc, Eight Mile Plains  
Living Word Tabernade  
Lord'S Light Presbyterian Church  
Love Of Jesus Christian Ministries, Inc.  
Macarthur District Community Church  
Macedonian Orthodox Community Of Newcastle District -  
Church Of "St Mary"  
Macedonian Orthodox Community Of Sydney – Sydney  
Mahanaim Ministry  
Maitland Baptist Church NSW  
Mar-Yacoub Syrian Orthodox Church  
Maranatha Romanian Christian Church Mission Inc  
Matthew 24 Ministries  
Melbourne Bible Believers. Inc  
Melbourne Church Of Christ  
Messianic Ministries Incorporated  
Miracle Christian Center Inc  
Mission Kwa Sizabantu Australia Inc. Commonly Known  
As: Lobethal Christian Fellowship  
Missionheart  
Monash Christian Fellowship  
Moroccan United Arabic Community, Brunswick, Victoria.  
MosaiXchurch Inc.  
Moslem Alawi Youth Movement  
Mt George Christian Church  
Mukti- Gupteshwar Mandir Society  
Multicultural Christian Fellowship  
New Covenant Fellowship  
New Covenant Pentecostal Church  
New Earth Tribe Christian Fellowship  
New Frontiers Grace City Church  
New Life Christian Church Incorporated  
New Life Church - Holroyd.  
New Life Community Church  
New Life Evangelical Church  
New Life In Christ Fellowship In Australia  
Newcastle Full Gospel Church (The Korea Assemblies Of God)

Noble Park Christian Church  
North Coast Community Church  
North Shore Sikh Association  
Northern Rivers Sikh Association  
Northside Baptist Church Inc  
Northside Bible Church, Joondalup, Western Australia  
Norwood Dawn Christadelphian Ecclesia  
Oasis Of Love Christian Church  
Ocean Point Beleivers Church  
Old Calender Orthodox Church Of Greece Diocese For Australia Inc.  
Old Paths Bible Church  
Order Of The Mystic Rose, Incorporated  
Orthodox Catholic Church  
Orthodox Catholic Church Of Australia – Caboolture  
Our Community Spiritual Church  
Padthaway Vineyard Christian Fellowship  
Parklea Christian Fellowship  
Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Peniel Free Pentecostal Church (PFPC)  
Perth Bread Of Life Christian Church Inc.  
Perth Chinese Christian Church  
Picton Bible Church  
Plumpton Community Church  
Power In The Name - Church Incorporated  
Praise Evangelical Free Church Of Australia  
Presbyterian And Methodist Schools Association  
Ratana Established Church Of New Zealand  
Ravenswood Church Of Christ, Ravenswood  
Red Door Community Church And Civil Ceremonies #  
Redeemer Baptist Church  
Redlands Spiritual Centre  
Reflection Christian Ministry  
Reformed Evangelical Church Of Indonesia  
Reho Church Of The Nations – Perth  
Renewal Chinese Christian Church, Victoria  
Restoration Life In Christ Church  
Restoration Ministries  
Revival From Down Under Inc  
River Of Fire Ministries  
Rivers Of Life  
Rockhampton Church Of Christ (Non- Denominational)  
Romanian Apostolic Pentecostal Church, Noble Park, Victoria.  
Romanian Pentecostal Church & Romanian Apostolic Church  
Romanian Pentecostal Church - Bethel Inc.  
Romanian Penticostal Church  
Romanian Penticostal Church AND Romanian Baptist Church  
Ruach Ministries Ltd. (Northern Beaches) Beacon Hill, NSW  
Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Church  
Russian Orthodox Church Abroad  
Russian Orthodox And Chinese Moslem  
Samoan Independent Seventh Day Adventist Church  
Samoan Presbyterian Church, Minto, New South Wales  
Samoan Unity Christian Churches Of Australia  
Samoan Unity Christian Churches Of Australia  
Sanatan Religious And Cultural Association And Civil  
Ceremonies#  
Sanctuary House - Moruya  
Self Help Ministries And Civil Ceremonies #  
Set Free Ministries Australia Ltd  
Shalom Community Church  
Shambhalla Branch Of Universal Life Church  
Shark Bay Christian Fellowship  
Sheltering Tree International Church Inc.  
Shia Muslim  
Shirdi Sai Sansthan Melbourne  
Shiv Sati Ramayan Mandali  
Shophar Ministries  
Shree Sanatan Dharm Pratinidhi Sabha Of Australia  
Shree Sanatan Dharm Sabha Of NSW Inc.  
Sikh Mission Centre Sydney Inc And Civil Ceremonies #  
Sikh Society Of South Australia Inc  
Siloam Betesda Christian Church  
Slavic Evangelical Pentecostal Church  
Sonlife Church



South East Christians  
Southside Christian Fellowship  
Sovereign Grace Ministries, Australia  
Spiritual Christian Russian Molokan Church Of Ingle Farm  
Spiritual Churches Of Australia  
Sri Venkateswara Temple Association  
St Aphrem Syrian Orthodox Church, Melbourne  
St Barnabas Broadway Church  
St Martin'S Communities Of Faith (Christian) And God'S Squad  
Christian Motorcycle Club  
St Martins Community Church – Collingwood  
St Paul'S Evangelical Lutheran Church  
St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church  
Street Level Christian Community  
Sureway International Christian Ministries  
Sutherland Christian Fellowship  
Sutherland Spiritual Centre  
Sydney Central Presbyterian Church  
Sydney Community Church  
Sydney Life Church Mosmah Sydney  
Sydney Living Stone Church  
Sydney Mandarin Christian Church, Hurstville, NSW  
Sydney Shin Sung Presbyterian Church  
Sydney Woori Church  
Sydney Zen Centre  
Te Puna Waiora (The Living Waters Spring) Interdenominational  
Maori Church Australia Inc.  
Te Tapenekara Christian Fellowship  
Temple Of Light Spiritualist Church Of WA  
Temple Society Australia And Civil Ceremonies #  
Temple Society Of Australia  
The Agape Church Of Australia Inc  
The Albanian Sakie Islamic (Mosque) Society  
The Ancient Church Of The East  
The Baik Yang Presbyterian Church Inc  
The Brisbane Finnish Pentecostal Church  
The Christian Church In Melbourne  
The Christian Spiritual Fellowship  
The Church Of God  
The Church Of Pentecost Australia Inc.  
The Church Of The Good Shepherd, Mansfield  
The Council Of Australian Turks  
The Fathers House  
The First American Samoan Church  
The First Australian Samoan Church Inc  
The First Indonesian Pentecostal Church In Australia  
The Free Presbyterian Church Of South Australia  
The Full Gospel International Church  
The General Assembly Of Korean Presbyterian Church In Oceania  
The Islamic Association Of Ali Alayhe As-Salam And Civil  
Ceremonies #  
The Jewish Family Community Centre Inc  
The Life Centre Church Broadbeach  
The Mandaean Spiritual Council Of Australia & The International  
Mandaean Nasoraean Supreme Council  
The Miracle Centre Inc. And Grace & Glory  
Ministries International  
The Open Door Church  
The Range Christian Fellowship  
The Redeemed Christian Church Of God, WA  
The Russian Orthodox Church Of The Holy Trinity- Moscow  
Patriarchate (English Speaking)  
The Spiritualist Church Of Western Australia  
The United Arab Moslems Association, New South Wales  
The Vedic Training And Cultural Services Of Western Australia  
The White Eagle Lodge Of Australasia Limited, Maleny  
Timeline Ministries  
Trinity Church Tamworth  
True Spiritual Christian Molokan Church  
Truth And Liberation Concern  
Tuggerah Lakes Church Incorporated  
Tulsi Manas Satsang Sanstha And Civil Ceremonies #  
Twin Cities Pentecostal Church  
Union Churches  
United Vietnamese Buddhist Congregation Of South  
Eastern Melbourne,  
Springvale, Victoria.  
Unity School Of Christianity Melbourne Inc  
Vedic Pratinidhi Sabha & Arya Samaj Of Australia Inc. & Civil  
Ceremonies #  
Vedic Sanatan Society Of NSW  
Victory Christian Centre Inc  
Victory Life International  
Vietnamese Evangelical Church In Australia  
Vietnamese Evangelical Church In Australia – Melbourne  
Vietnamese Evangelical Church In Australia Perth  
Vishwa Shanti Ashram Of Australia Inc  
Vision Christian Ministries Vcm Woden  
Vision Church Tasmania  
Vision Fellowship  
Vision To All Nations International, Sunnybank, Queensland.  
Voice Of Grace Church Inc  
Voice Of Victory Church  
Waheguru Simran Society Inc. Sydney  
Warringah Church Of Christ (Non-Denominational) And Civil  
Ceremonies #  
Warrnambool Bible Faith Fellowship  
Watersprings Faith Church  
Williamstown Gospel Mission  
Witch, Pagan And Civil Ceremonies #  
Without Walls Inc (Prev Phil Howell Ministries)  
Word Of Faith Fellowship, Taree, New South Wales  
World Christianshship Ministries  
World Harvest Ministries Incorporated  
World Light Fellowship ( Australia) Inc And Civil Ceremonies #  
Worship And Ministry Centre, Yeppoon  
Worship Centre - Carina  
Worship Centre Christian Church – Samoa  
Yennora Sanatan Dharam Ramayan Mandali  
Young Life Australia  
Zion Fellowship Inc  
Zion Praise Harvest  
Zion Praise Harvest – Perth

## Appendix 2

### Division 1—Subdivision A—Ministers of recognised religions - Marriage (Recognised Denominations) Proclamation

References: [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au)

2007 Proclamation - [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au) 2013 Proclamation - [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au)

- Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship of Australia
- Ananda Marga
- Anglican Catholic Church in Australia, The
- Anglican Church of Australia,
- The Antiochian Orthodox Church
- Apostolic Church (Australia), The
- Apostolic Church of Queensland, The
- Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia, The
- Assemblies of God in Australia
- Associated Christian Ministries
- Associated Christian Spiritual Churches of Australia
- Associated Mission Churches of Australasia Incorporated
- Association of Vineyard Churches Australia, The
- Australian Christadelphian Ecclesia
- Australian Church of Antioch, The
- Australian Fellowship of Biblebelieving Churches
- Australian Fellowship of Mission Centres (Youth with a Mission)
- Australian Indigenous Ministries
- Australian Unitarian Druze
- Autocephalic Greek Orthodox Church of America and Australia
- Baha'i Faith
- Baptist Union of Australia, The
- Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Australia and Abroad
- Bethesda Ministries International Incorporated
- Brethren
- C3 Church Global
- Calvary Life Assemblies
- Chinese Methodist Church in Australia
- Christian and Missionary Alliance of Australia, The
- Christian Brethren
- Christian Church in Australia
- Christian Church, The
- Christian Israelite Church
- Christian Life Churches International
- Christian Outreach Centre
- Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
- Churches of Christ in Australia
- Church of God (Australia) Limited
- Church of Jesus Christ of LatterDay Saints
- Church of Scientology Incorporated, The
- Church of the Foursquare Gospel (Australia) Limited
- Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Australia
- Church of the Nazarene
- Church of Tonga in Australia, The
- Churches of Christ in Australia
- Community of Christ
- Congregational Christian Church in Samoa, The
- Congregational Federation of Australia
- Connexions Ltd
- Cook Islands Christian Church
- Coptic Orthodox Church of Australia
- CRC Churches International
- Crosslink Christian Network
- Dream Centre Christian Church Limited
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia, The
- Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils
- Federation of Reformed Christian Churches of the Pacific Australia Incorporated
- Fellowship of Congregational Churches
- Fellowship of Evangelical Churches in Australia
- Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
- Free Reformed Church of Australia
- Free Serbian Orthodox Church, Diocese for Australia and New Zealand
- Full Gospel Churches of Australia
- German Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Goshen Ministry International Outreach

- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia
- Hindu Council of Australia, The
- Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East
- Hungarian Reformed Church of Australia, The
- ~~Iglesia ni Cristo~~
- Independent Baptist Fellowship
- Independent Baptists of Australia
- Independent Church of Australia, The
- International Council of Spiritualists
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness
- Islam
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- ~~Jerwry~~
- Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Victoria, The
- Liberal Catholic Church, The
- Lutheran Church of Australia Incorporated, The
- Macedonian-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church
- Macedonian Orthodox Church, Diocese of Australia and New Zealand
- Ministers Fellowship International
- New Apostolic Church in Australia, The
- New Church in Australia, The
- New Life Churches of Australia
- ~~OzReach~~
- Pacific ~~LMS~~ Church Australia Incorporated
- Potters House Christian Fellowship of Australia, The
- Power of the Spirit Ltd
- Presbyterian Church of Australia, The
- Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
- Presbyterian Reformed Church
- Reach Out for Christ Limited
- Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia, The
- Religious Society of Friends, The
- Revival Centres International
- Revival Fellowship, The
- ~~Rhema~~ Family Churches Australia
- Roman Catholic Church
- Romanian Orthodox Church
- Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
- Salvation Army, The
- Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia and New Zealand, The
- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Sikh Council of Australia Incorporated, The
- Society of Saint Pius X Limited
- Southern Cross Association of Churches, The
- Strict and Particular Baptist Churches of Australia, The
- Ukrainian ~~Autocephalic~~ Orthodox Church in Diaspora, Diocese of Australia and New Zealand
- Unitarians
- United Aborigines Mission
- United Church of God — Australia
- United Pentecostal Church of Australia
- United Spiritualism of Australia
- Uniting Church in Australia, The
- Victorian Spiritualists' Union
- Victory Life Centre Incorporated
- Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion in Victoria, The
- Wesleyan Methodist Church, The
- Presbyterian Church, The
- Worldwide Church of God
- Worship Centre Christian Churches Worldwide (Australia) Ltd

**These five religions were recognised in 2013\*\***

- ~~Caodai~~ Overseas Missionary (Australia) Incorporated
- Korean Presbyterian Reformed Church Incorporated
- Peace Christian Ministries Limited
- ~~Sabian Mandaean~~ Religious Community, and
- Ukrainian Catholic Church in Australia.

## Appendix 3

### **The Coalition of Celebrants Associations (CoCA) Inc. – 10 years Goals**

<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/about-coca/31-about-the-company/236-2025-goals>

#### **The Marriage Act 1961**

- 1) The Marriage Act is reviewed and revised, on a periodic basis, to ensure the basic requirements for legal marriage are present in every wedding ceremony whether the ceremony is a religious or a civil one.
- 2) The Marriage Vows for all marriage couples to be in plain English and modernised from the 1836 version upon which they were based to ensure the parties to the marriage state clearly "— I, A (or B.), take you, B (or A ), to be my wife (or husband or spouse) or words to that effect.
- 3) The Marriage Act ensure that all marriage celebrants, whether registered or religious, are treated equally with respect to the regulation of their duties in performing the valid marriage component of the wedding ceremony, whether the ceremony uses the rites of a specific religious group or a Civil ceremony of the couples choice

#### **Celebrant Education and Continuing Professional Development**

- 1) Improved professional training and continued education for all independent registered celebrants as outlined in the Explanatory Memorandum for the 2002 changes to the Marriage Act 1961.
- 2) Professional celebrant associations covering independent Subdivision C celebrants having the ability to determine the Continued Education Programs for their own members as is the case for Subdivision A and C celebrants, and other professions.
- 3) Professional certification standards for Independent registered celebrants to be established and used as one of the criteria for appointment as a Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant, and available as continuing education as is the case in other professions.

#### **Cost Recovery for Marriage Celebrants**

- 1) Commonwealth marriage celebrant's annual fees for regulation to be used transparently, effectively, and efficiently and not greater than that able to be delivered by a non-government agency, and evidenced by the fees remaining the same annual level (CPI adjusted) or decreased.
- 2) The expertise of marriage celebrant practitioners to be effectively used to ensure that the Attorney-General's department marriage celebrant services are relevant and necessary for the delivery of marriage services to the Australia public by the registered and religious celebrant professionals.
- 3) The State and Territory Registry Offices to ensure that registration of all births, deaths and marriages continue to be their primary role, and the free data-entry services provided by marriage celebrants of Recognised Religions (Subdivision A) and Independent marriage celebrants (Subdivision C) are adequately and effectively supported in return by the Registries.

#### **Child & Forced Marriage**

- 1) Every marriage ceremony to include consent by the parties to the marriage in front of an authorised celebrant, whether the celebrant is religious or not.
- 2) Every marriage celebrant to make clear to the parties to the marriage, witnesses and all the guests that a marriage according to Marriage law is being conducted and that they are the celebrant authorised by law to witness and register the marriage.
- 3) Every marriage ceremony to include a definition of marriage according to law.
- 4) If the definition of marriage is changed to include same sex couples, that the new definition be, "marriage means the union of two adults to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life."
- 5) Improved education on marriage in Australia by coordination of the efforts all the relevant government departments and community agencies directly involved in delivering marriage services.

**Based upon CoCA Constitution Objects that are:**

**Constitution: (ii) Objects of the Association**

**1. To raise the standard of the quality of registered marriage and other ceremonies offered to the Australian community by celebrants, especially those appointed under the Marriage Act 1961.**

**2. To advise the Federal Government on:**

- a) the training, implementation, maintenance and review of the Marriage Act, Regulations and Marriage Celebrant Program, and other appropriate legislation
- b) the strategies for raising and reviewing standards of services offered by celebrants
- c) the needs and concerns of registered celebrants and others appointed under the Marriage Act 1961
- d) related issues that affect registered celebrants.

**(3) To facilitate, develop and review a national co-operative and co-ordinated approach to professional development of celebrants via the services offered by member celebrant associations.**

**(4) To facilitate, develop and review national guidelines for public information and education of services offered by celebrants to create consistency of information from member associations in their public interface with the Australian community.**