

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Output 1.1

Question No. 17

Senator Ludwig asked the following question at the hearing on 24 May 2007:

- a) How many civil celebrants are currently registered in Australia?
 - (i) Provide a breakdown per state;
 - (ii) Provide a breakdown into gender.
- b) How many religious celebrants are currently registered in Australia?
 - (i) Provide a breakdown per state;
 - (ii) Provide a breakdown into gender.
- c) How many other celebrants are currently registered in Australia?
 - (i) Provide a breakdown per state;
 - (ii) Provide a breakdown into gender.
- d) What is the total number of all those authorised to perform legal marriages in Australia?
- e) How many individual Celebrants are appointed as both Civil Marriage Celebrants and Non-aligned Religious Celebrants?
 - (i) Why are they appointed as both?
- f) How many civil celebrants are currently on the waiting list to be registered?
- g) How many registration applications has the Attorney-General's Department finalised per month, since the beginning of the 2006-07 financial year?
- h) How many registration applications has the Attorney-General's Department received per month, since the beginning of the 2006-07 financial year?

The answer to the honourable senator's questions is as follows:

- a) The Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants Program draws no distinction between 'civil marriage celebrants' and those conducting religious marriage ceremonies. All applicants must satisfy the same statutory criteria (see questions 12 and 19 for more details about these requirements). The number listed on the Register of Marriage Celebrants as available to perform civil ceremonies is 3,270.

(i) Breakdown by State:

State	No. of marriage celebrants	State	No. of marriage celebrants
NSW	1017	SA	223
Vic	724	Tas	84
Qld	756	NT	36
WA	374	ACT	55
		Cocos Is	1
TOTAL			3270

(ii) Breakdown by gender: 2,336 Females; 934 Males.

- b) Marriage celebrants performing religious marriage ceremonies may be registered by either the Commonwealth or the States and Territories, depending on whether or not they belong to a recognised denomination under section 26 of the *Marriage Act 1961*. The number of marriage celebrants performing religious ceremonies registered by the Commonwealth is 1,451.

(i) Breakdown by State:

State	No. of Commonwealth appointed religious marriage celebrants	State	No. of Commonwealth appointed religious marriage celebrants
NSW	477	SA	99
Vic	272	Tas	26
Qld	371	NT	9
WA	169	ACT	22
Residing in Islands			6
TOTAL			1451

(ii) Breakdown by gender: Female 178; 1,273 Male

- c) A total of 22,447 other marriage celebrants are currently registered in Australia (including ministers of religion of Recognised Denominations and authorised officers of States and Territories).

(i). Breakdown by State:

State	No. of other marriage celebrants	State	No. of other marriage celebrants
NSW	7591	SA	1885
Vic	5773	Tas	599
Qld	3978	NT	194
WA	2002	ACT	423
Norfolk Island			2
TOTAL			22447

(ii) It is not possible to provide a breakdown by gender because officers of States and Territories are authorised according to the position they hold not as individuals.

d) The total number of all those authorised to perform legal marriages in Australia is 27,168.

e) The total number of individual active marriage celebrants registered to perform both civil marriage ceremonies and non-aligned religious marriage ceremonies is 30.

(i) As noted above in the answer to (a), all marriage celebrants registered by the Commonwealth under the Marriage Celebrants Program must comply with the same statutory provisions. There is no distinction in the application process. The Register of Marriage Celebrants lists whether a marriage celebrant is available to conduct religious or non-religious (civil) marriage ceremonies. The *Marriage Act 1961* contains separate provisions for religions and non-religious marriage ceremonies. The number listed on the Register of Marriage Celebrants as available to perform both religious and non-religious marriage ceremonies is 30. These people have been able to satisfy the Department that they understand the legal provisions related to religious and non-religious marriage ceremonies.

f) As of 5 June 2007, there were 1,235 marriage celebrants currently on the waiting list to be registered.

g) The Department finalised a total of 874 registration applications from 1 July 2006 to 31 May 2007. This number includes those applications on which no further action was taken because they were incomplete, those applicants assessed as suitable and put on the waiting list, those not approved and those registered.

(i) Breakdown by month:

Month	No.	Month	No.
July 06	30	Jan 07	65
Aug 06	56	Feb 07	97
Sep 06	49	Mar 07	73
Oct 06	209	Apr 07	70
Nov 06	47	May 07	154
Dec 06	24		
TOTAL			874

h) The Department received a total of 929 applications for registration as a marriage celebrant from 1 July 2006 to 31 May 2007.

(i) Breakdown by month:

Month	No.	Month	No.
July 06	72	Jan 07	68
Aug 06	115	Feb 07	82
Sep 06	65	Mar 07	84
Oct 06	77	Apr 07	101
Nov 06	75	May 07	150
Dec 06	40		
TOTAL			929