

Submission to the Attorney-General's Department

Ongoing Professional Development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants and Guidelines on Conflict of Interest and Benefit to Business for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants DISCUSSION PAPER – NOVEMBER 2016

SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5pm FRIDAY, 13 JANUARY 2017

Your details

Name/organisation <i>(if you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of a contact person)</i>	Suzanne Midolo
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- Microsoft Word
- Rich Text Format (RTF)
- txt format.

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Would you prefer this submission to remain confidential? No

Your submission

The department does not propose to return to a system where activities from a broad range of providers would be approved by the department

This statement is later negated by suggesting that you look at and approve TAFE, university and association courses

OPD:

Having been both a classroom participant and an OPD trainer I think the **biggest positive** to come out of OPD sessions is the networking. I have seen people team up and form a support group after OPD sessions. Also the discussion as to how each celebrant works, handles situations and the learning process E.g. some knew a certain point and others didn't, so then they discuss why and how.

The compulsory unit often handles a legal aspect, which the majority of celebrants have not and probably will not experience E.g. underage marriage. While at the same time bringing to the forefront Forced marriage was good as it then encouraged participants to use AG site to access the information available. So to continue the legal aspect is a good thing.

I think that newly appointed celebrants **should not do OPD** in the year they are registered
Because:

- They will have had more training than most celebrants in the OPD session.

Also cost wise E.g. within one year they have paid out

- Course 2,000-3.000
- Application- 600
- Registration: 240
- Then if required to do OPD another 200
- As well as set up costs

Calendar versus financial year:

I have difficulty understanding what the problem is, we are dealing with adults, who should be able to keep track of what occurs in their lives and when. They have accepted the responsibility of solemnising a valid marriage; surely they can cope with this difference.

In every day life we do not have our household, car or medical insurance etc. all come in at the same time.

Currently I keep track of

- OPD=calendar
- Registration= July
- Association membership/ insurance = January

The close monitoring of OPD

Issue 1

A decrease in hours would not necessarily decrease the costs to celebrants as RTO's have to recoup costs, venue hire etc. although if made three hours it would cut out the cost of a meal

My suggestion here is to run OPD

- 3 hour duration
- The total 3 hours set by the AG- maybe look at 2 hours legal and one hour on a topic which is obvious needs some attention E.g. certain part of the NOIM or Declaration
- That celebrants registered in the current year do not have to do OPD- they have done Cert IV

Issue 2

Surely if a celebrant retires before the end of the financial year they could be exempt from doing their OPD the year they retire

If a celebrant leaves it until really **late to apply for an OPD exemption** then this is the responsibility of the celebrant not the department. If you get a speeding fine and do not pay it there are no allowances made, as it is your responsibility.

Issue 3

additional types of activities that could be considered to count towards OPD

This sounds fine but I feel the 'types of activities' would have to be closely monitored as it could easily get out of control. There would need to be guidelines put in place to make sure that the activity met certain standards.(covered in 3.1)

BDM holding training courses - This would be good if they are only holding a session about what they want re:

- Correctly filling in their forms
- How to use their on line system
- Setting up a dedicated line for celebrants

Funerals or name-giving ceremonies, to also count towards a celebrant's OPD obligation.

These types of courses are currently available either as face-to-face or online through RTO's

So may be a way to accredit them.

3.1

as university courses, (which ones would relate to marriage?) peer review and mentoring (this is appropriate for new celebrants) or work-based learning, (for celebrants this is on-the-job) participating in conferences, workshops and other communities of practice as appropriate OPD activities. (These three could be provided via-conferences)

Self - monitoring (Issue 5 as well)

Will only work to a certain degree it leaves itself open to deception I feel it is important that the AG just as in other occupations **records all OPD**

E.g. If a technology teacher then your association will offer a variety of in-services over the year, you choose which you wish to attend, your department pays for you to attend, your attendance is recorded 3 ways

1. With the association
2. With **your employer**
3. Self recorded for future reference

Self compliance will mean a lot of time wasted trying to check on and waiting for celebrants to get back to you.

3.2

if Registrar to keep list of activities would be more time consuming and eat up more of the registration dollar

ii) The department could allow categories of OPD providers, such as any RTO, (any RTO- notice the number of private ones who close their doors- E.g. Adelaide RTO who left over a hundred celebrant students without any qualification ...better to stick with educational institutes?)

This could definitely result in- it may not be possible for the department to provide substantial input on content, as it currently does.

Conflict of Interest

While preferring Option 2 I must say I find it hard to take this seriously as when in OPD a participant told the class about how she runs a pop up wedding business and that the AG had approved her doing so!!!! There are times when a celebrant should be able to provide an extra service and be paid for it. E.g. preparing candles for clients or extra certificates for the bridal party etc. I really do not see these things as affecting your legal obligations.