



Marriage Celebrants Programme

April 2017

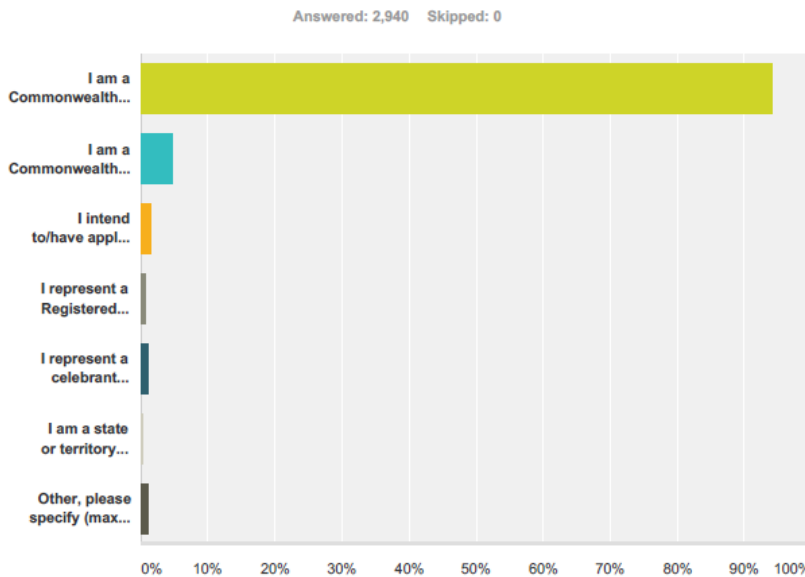
Survey results – Ongoing professional development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants

A discussion paper and survey on ongoing professional development (OPD) requirements and the Guidelines on conflict of interest and benefit to business for Commonwealth registered marriage celebrants was released on 25 November 2016. The survey closed on 13 January 2017. The following are the results of the survey relating to OPD only. The Attorney-General's Department (the department) is currently reviewing the results and will finalise its position on the future of OPD in due course. This will be published on the department's website.

The department thanks all celebrants, their representatives, registered training organisations, and other interested stakeholders for taking the time to complete the survey and to provide their submissions in this consultation about OPD for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants.

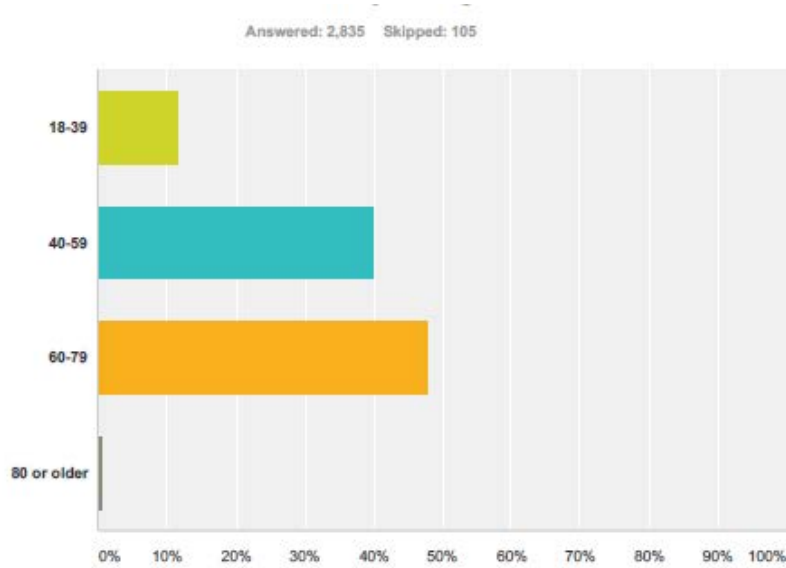
Survey questions and comments provided by respondents.

Question 1: Please select all the statements that apply to you.



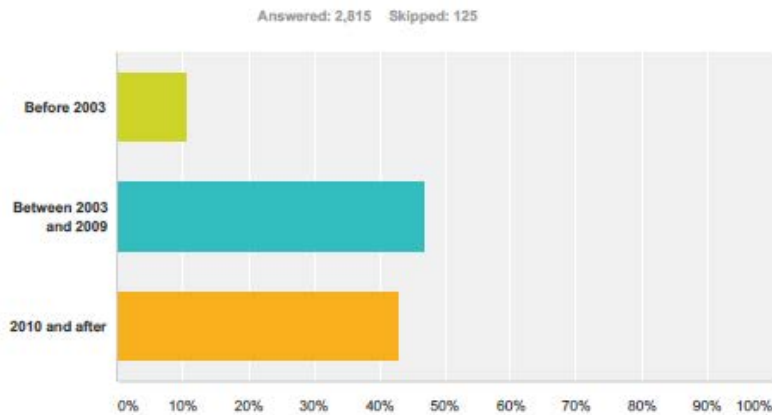
Answer Choices	Responses
I am a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant and conduct civil marriage ceremonies	94.25% 2,771
I am a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant and conduct religious marriage ceremonies	4.83% 142
I intend to/have applied to become a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant	1.63% 48
I represent a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	0.78% 23
I represent a celebrant association	1.33% 39
I am a state or territory officer in a Births, Deaths and Marriages registry	0.51% 15
Other, please specify (max 200 characters).	1.16% 34
Total Respondents: 2,940	

Question 2: What is your age?



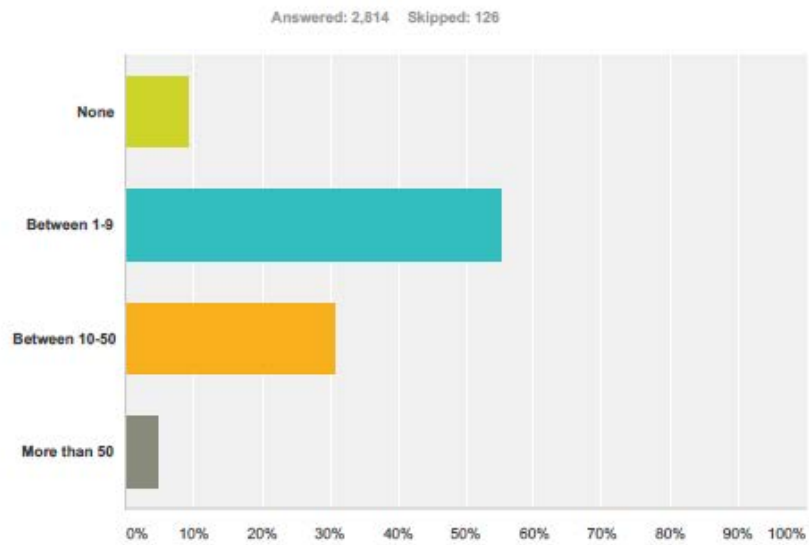
Answer Choices	Responses
18-39	11.78% 334
40-59	39.89% 1,131
60-79	47.72% 1,353
80 or older	0.60% 17
Total	2,835

Question 3: What year did you first become registered as a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant?



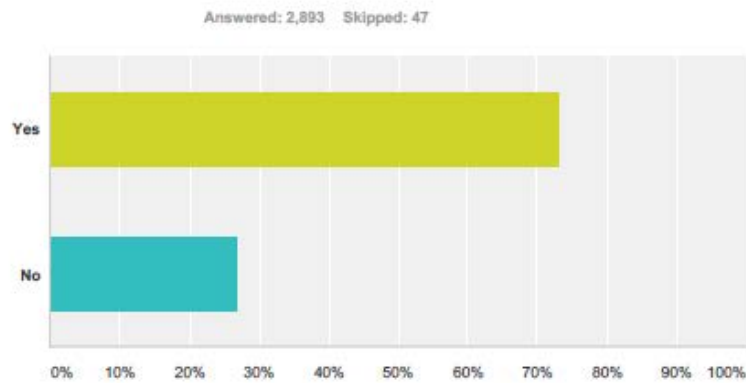
Answer Choices	Responses
Before 2003	10.48% 295
Between 2003 and 2009	46.71% 1,315
2010 and after	42.81% 1,205
Total	2,815

Question 4: In the past twelve months approximately how many marriage ceremonies did you perform?



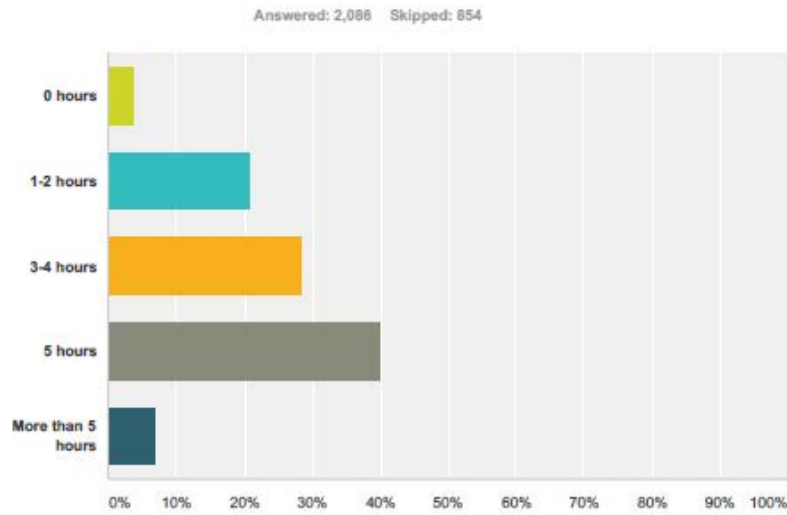
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
None	9.13%	257
Between 1-9	55.33%	1,557
Between 10-50	30.77%	866
More than 50	4.76%	134
Total		2,814

Question 5: Would you like to provide feedback about ongoing professional development? If you select No the survey will skip to Part B: Conflict of Interest/Benefit to Business.



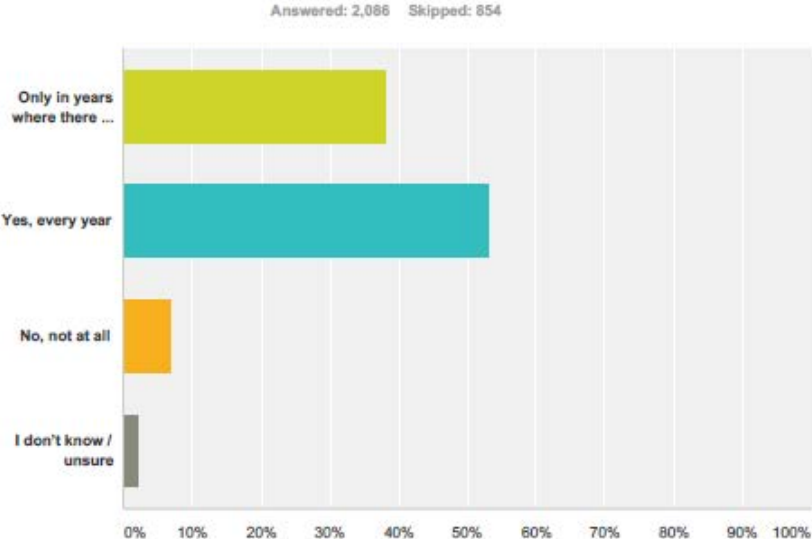
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	73.00%	2,112
No	27.00%	781
Total		2,893

Question 6: How many hours of OPD (per year) do you think are necessary to ensure that marriage celebrants provide professional and legally accurate marriage services?



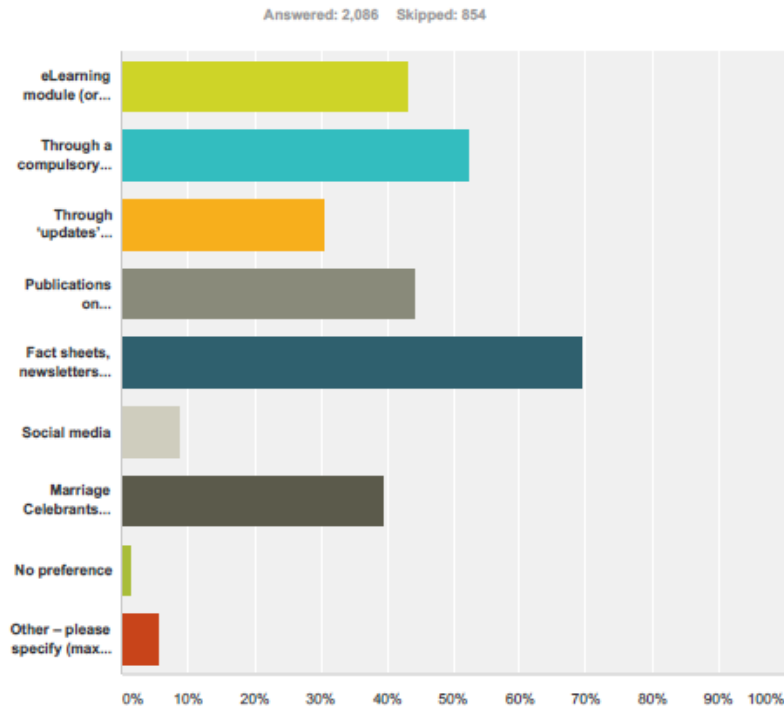
Answer Choices	Responses	
0 hours	3.84%	80
1-2 hours	20.90%	436
3-4 hours	28.48%	594
5 hours	39.98%	834
More than 5 hours	6.81%	142
Total		2,086

Question 7: Should marriage celebrants be required to do a compulsory activity in years where there are no significant changes to the relevant legislation or guidelines?



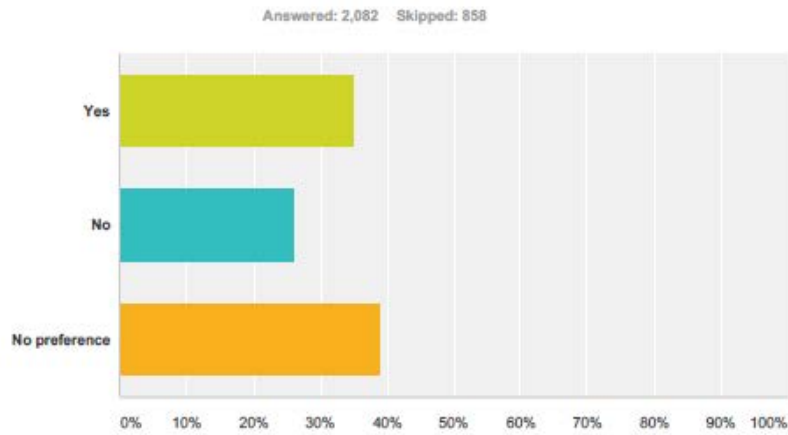
Answer Choices	Responses	
Only in years where there is a significant change to legislation	38.06%	794
Yes, every year	53.12%	1,108
No, not at all	6.81%	142
I don't know / unsure	2.01%	42
Total		2,086

Question 8: In your view, what are the best ways to ensure that marriage celebrants are advised of changes to legislation? Select all that apply.



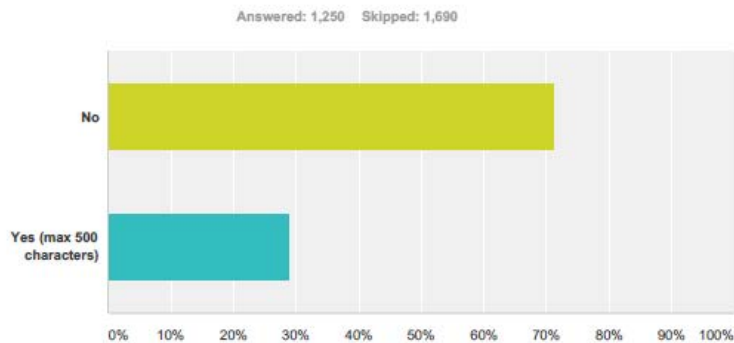
Answer Choices	Responses	
eLearning module (or similar online based training)	42.91%	895
Through a compulsory activity by approved training providers	52.21%	1,089
Through 'updates' delivered by training providers at the start of any relevant training session	30.49%	636
Publications on Attorney-General's Department website	44.06%	919
Fact sheets, newsletters circulated directly to celebrants	69.37%	1,447
Social media	8.72%	182
Marriage Celebrants self-service portal	39.45%	823
No preference	1.20%	25
Other - please specify (max 200 characters).	5.37%	112
Total Respondents: 2,086		

Question 9: Should the OPD year be changed from a calendar year to a registration (financial) year?



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	34.87%	726
No	26.08%	543
No preference	39.05%	813
Total		2,082

Question 10: Do you have any comments in relation to the time (calendar or financial year) of the OPD year?



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
No	71.20%	890
Yes (max 500 characters)	28.80%	360
Total		1,250

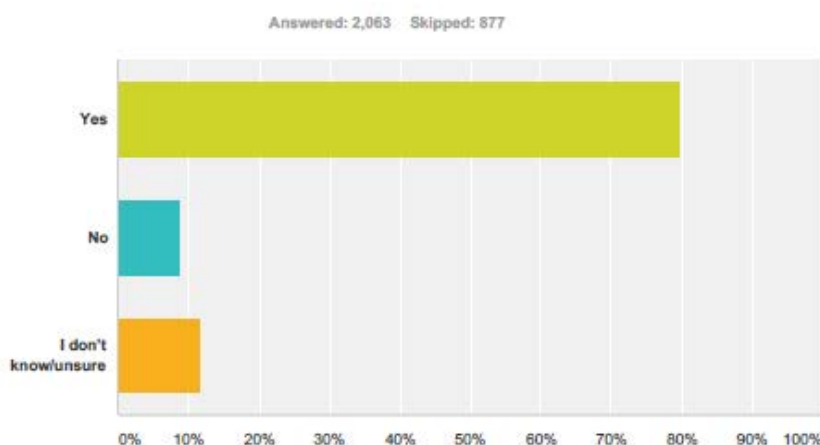
360 respondents provided additional comments about the timing of the OPD year. Key themes included:

- changing the OPD calendar year to the financial year would ease confusion and reduce administrative burden
- it would be more convenient for celebrants to complete their annual celebrant obligations in the same time period
- other professions have similar professional development obligations which are scheduled to coincide with one another and the financial year
- marriage celebrants are professionals and should have the capacity to maintain and manage two distinct deadlines for their OPD and annual registration charge obligations

Ongoing professional development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants – results of survey

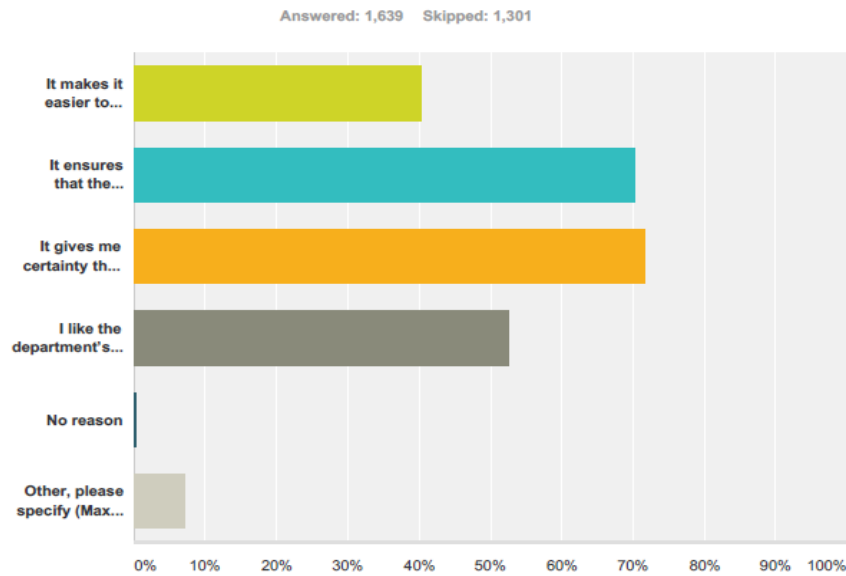
- moving the OPD year to the financial year in order to ease “confusion” for celebrants is a bad reason to change the department’s policy and reflects poorly on the ability of celebrants to be organised and manage multiple deadlines and obligations
- the calendar year structure for OPD is beneficial because it aligns with the educational year; on the current timing of the OPD year, celebrants complete their learning obligations over the same time period as other learning institutions, such as schools and universities
- the current OPD timing allows for expenses such as annual charge and OPD to be spread over the year.
- changes to OPD would be confusing for celebrants
- indifference for either course of action regarding the timing of the OPD year but keen to see a decision finalised by the department, and
- OPD obligation should be over a two or three year period rather than annual to ease the administrative burden on celebrants and the department.

Question 11: Should the department continue to maintain an approved list of OPD activities?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	79.50%	1,640
No	8.82%	182
I don't know/unsure	11.68%	241
Total		2,063

Question 12: Why do you think the department should maintain an approved list (of OPD activities)? Select all that apply.



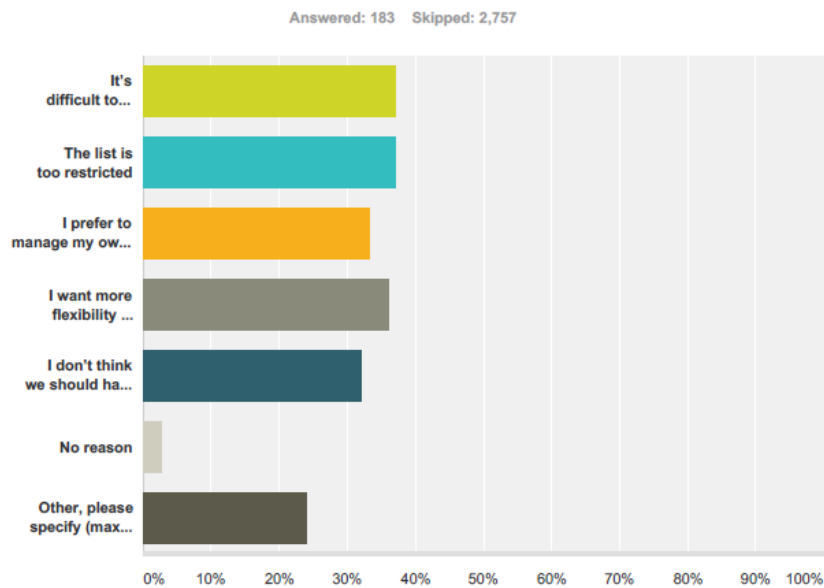
Answer Choices	Responses
It makes it easier to organise OPD	40.39% 662
It ensures that the activities are high quality	70.29% 1,152
It gives me certainty that the OPD will count towards my obligation	71.69% 1,175
I like the department's ability to closely monitor whether celebrants are doing their OPD	52.65% 863
No reason	0.49% 8
Other, please specify (Max 200 characters)	7.26% 119
Total Respondents: 1,639	

Respondents could select more than one answer to question 12.

119 respondents listed 'Other' as their reason for indicating that the department should maintain an approved list of activities. Key themes included:

- to maintain consistent, high quality training for all celebrants as the priority
- maintain professional standards for marriage celebrants, and increase accountability for celebrants
- the department needs to maintain a central role in the regulation of OPD by maintaining an approved list to ensure a high standard is required of celebrants, and
- the department should be able to control, monitor and design the content of the compulsory activity and they can be aligned with legislative changes.

Question 13: Why do you think the department should not maintain an approved list (of OPD activities)? Select all that apply.



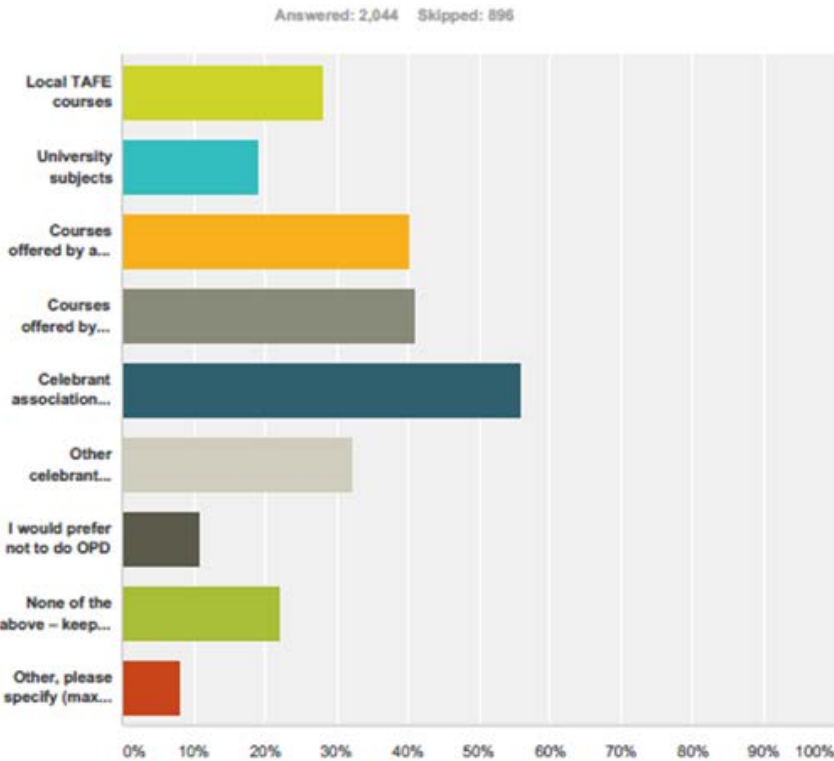
Answer Choices	Responses
It's difficult to find courses relevant to me on the list	37.16% 68
The list is too restricted	37.16% 68
I prefer to manage my own OPD without a list and provide records to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants on request.	33.33% 61
I want more flexibility to do local training	36.07% 66
I don't think we should have OPD	32.24% 59
No reason	2.73% 5
Other, please specify (max 200 characters)	24.04% 44
Total Respondents: 183	

Respondents could select more than one answer to question 13.

44 respondents listed 'Other' as their reason for indicating that the department should not maintain an approved list of activities. Key themes included:

- specific training with specialised organisations should be offered eg, social media and marketing training, public speaking training with professional organisations
- elective (non-compulsory) OPD should be optional. Choices are often irrelevant and of low quality, and
- benefit is often gained from association membership or networking with other celebrants.

Question 14: If the department were to prepare guidelines on the kinds of activities that would be suitable for OPD (instead of an approved list), which of the following types of activities do you think should be included as counting towards OPD? You may select more than one.



Answer Choices	Responses
Local TAFE courses	27.89% 570
University subjects	19.03% 389
Courses offered by any Registered Training Organisation (RTO)	40.02% 818
Courses offered by RTO's with the Certificate IV in Celebrancy in scope	40.85% 835
Celebrant association conferences and workshops	55.92% 1,143
Other celebrant association networking events	32.09% 656
I would prefer not to do OPD	10.71% 219
None of the above – keep the approved list	21.97% 449
Other, please specify (max 200 characters)	7.97% 163
Total Respondents: 2,044	

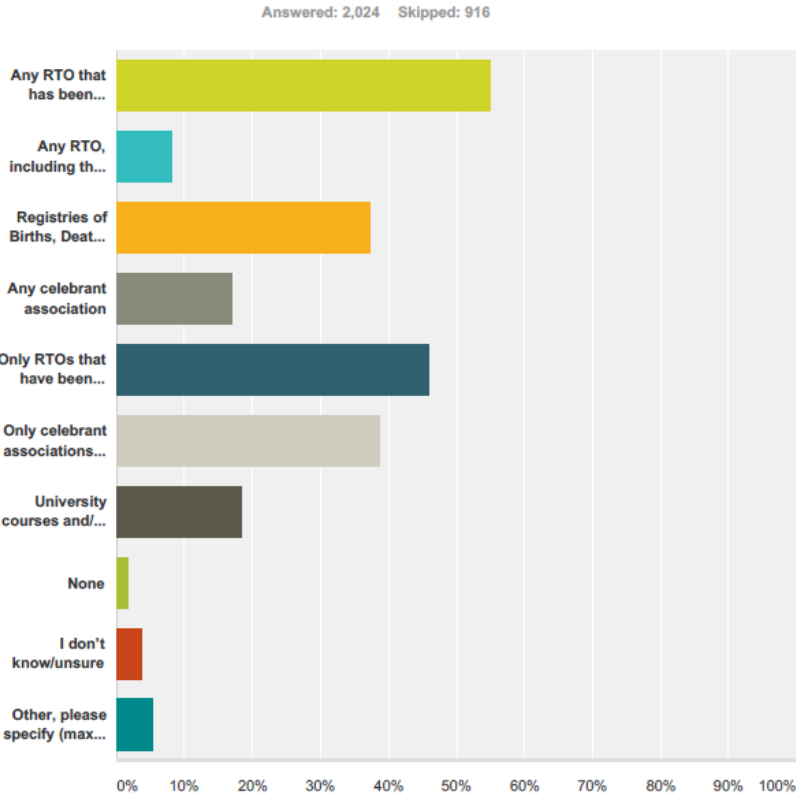
Respondents could select more than one answer to question 14.

163 respondents listed 'Other' to indicate the kinds of activities that should be covered by the department's guidelines. Key themes included:

- existing OPD requirements are suitable but can be improved to ensure professional standards amongst celebrants
- a high standard of training is needed to be maintained for OPD delivery

- only RTOs approved to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy qualification should be approved to deliver OPD to ensure tighter quality control and ensure a high standard of teaching and professionalism in delivery
- OPD should be focused on the legislative requirements for marriage celebrants rather than additional, “peripheral” learning; delivering relevant OPD content focused on the legislative requirements for celebrants, avoiding content not necessary for conducting marriage ceremonies
- expanding OPD to include additional providers and formats could complicate and confuse the system for celebrants and create additional work for the department, creating additional compliance issues and potentially increase the annual registration charge
- online learning modules provided by the department or the BDMs could assist to standardise and simplify the OPD content whilst increasing the accessibility and affordability of OPD for celebrants, and
- OPD content should be relevant to the role of marriage celebrants given the expense and time commitment required to complete OPD each year.

Question 15: There are currently four OPD providers who have been approved by the department to deliver OPD. All are Registered Training Organisations (RTO) that are also approved to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy. Which of the following organisations would you like to deliver, or develop, OPD? Select all that apply.



Answer Choices	Responses
Any RTO that has been approved to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy.	55.09% 1,115
Any RTO, including those who have not been approved to deliver the Certificate IV in Celebrancy	8.05% 163
Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages	37.35% 756
Any celebrant association	17.05% 345
Only RTOs that have been approved by the department to deliver OPD	45.95% 930
Only celebrant associations that have been approved by the department to deliver OPD	38.93% 788
University courses and/or TAFE courses	18.33% 371
None	1.93% 39
I don't know/unsure	3.80% 77
Other, please specify (max 200 characters)	5.48% 111
Total Respondents: 2,024	

Respondents could select more than one answer to question 15.

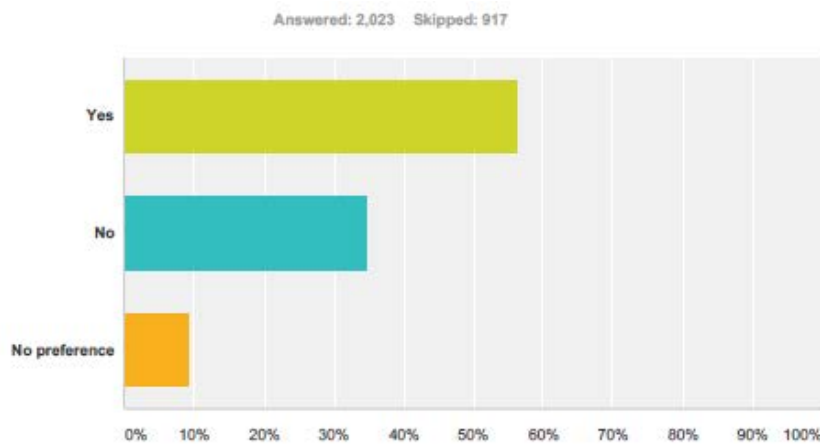
111 respondents listed 'Other' as their response to indicate the organisations they would like to see deliver or develop OPD activities. Key themes included:

- there needs to be consistent, affordable, relevant and engaging activity content
- maintain the current structure for OPD delivery

Ongoing professional development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants – results of survey

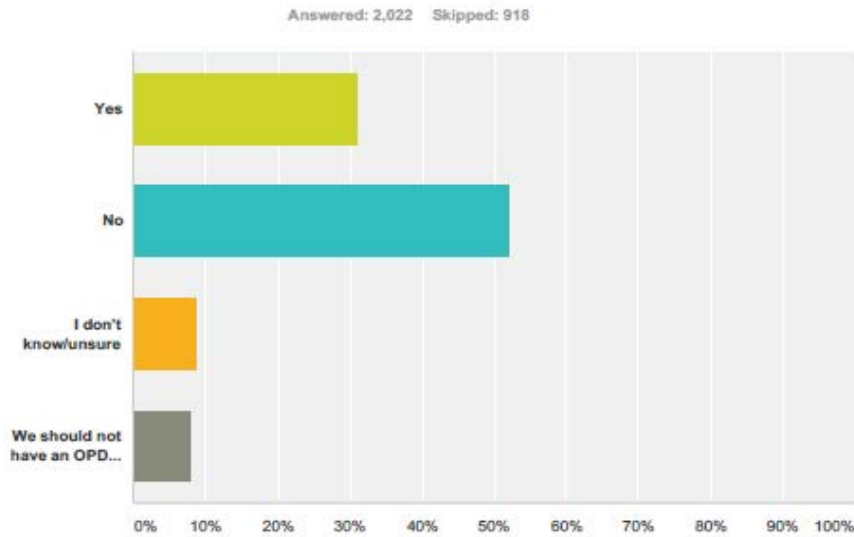
- tighten the requirements for providers of OPD to ensure professional standards
- the department could offer standardised online learning modules for OPD, providing guidance on changes to the legislation relevant to celebrants
- align OPD content with the Certificate IV in Celebrancy
- experienced and knowledgeable celebrants should be involved in OPD delivery and development
- increase the involvement of associations in OPD delivery, and
- do not allow associations to deliver and develop OPD activities as there are concerns about quality of content and delivery.

Question 16: If a newly registered marriage celebrant has recently completed their Certificate IV in Celebrancy (for example, within the last 12 months) should they be exempt from OPD in their first year of registration, (regardless of the time of year they are registered)?



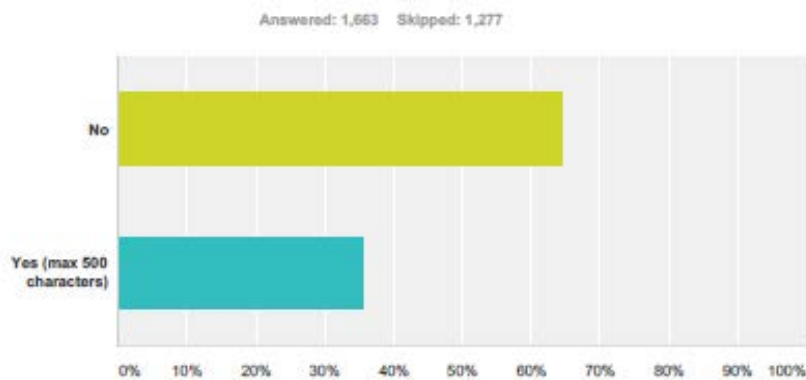
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	56.25% 1,138
No	34.65% 701
No preference	9.10% 184
Total	2,023

Question 17: Should celebrants be responsible for maintaining their own records of OPD compliance (subject to audit by the Registrar)?



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	31.11% 629
No	52.08% 1,053
I don't know/unsure	8.85% 179
We should not have an OPD obligation	7.96% 161
Total	2,022

Question 18: Do you have any comments you would like to make in regards to celebrants maintaining their own records of OPD compliance (subject to audit by the Registrar)?

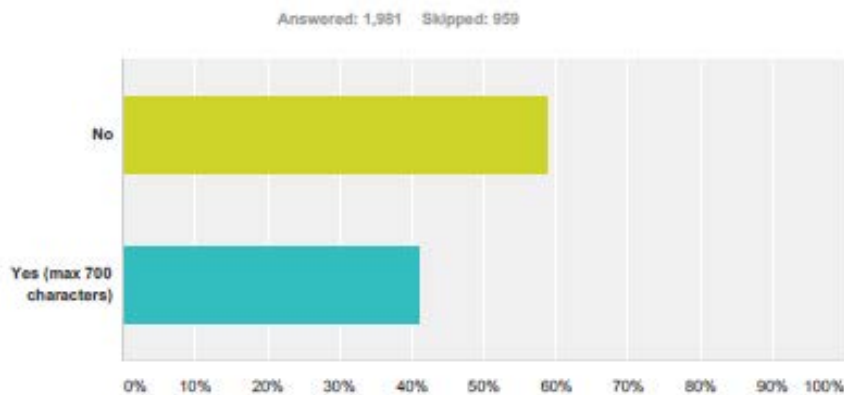


Answer Choices	Responses
No	64.46% 1,072
Yes (max 500 characters)	35.54% 591
Total	1,663

591 respondents provided comments about celebrants maintaining their own OPD records. Key themes included:

- introducing self-reporting of OPD compliance may increase professional standards of celebrants; if celebrants maintain their own records, they would be standardised with other professions where self-reporting of learning and development is required
- requiring celebrants to maintain their own OPD records may confuse celebrants and complicate the OPD process
- the current structure is reliable with the department maintaining OPD records for celebrants
- self-reporting could leave the OPD process open to abuse by non-compliant celebrants and could harm the quality of service delivered by celebrants
- if celebrants are to be required to self-report their OPD compliance, to facilitate reporting, an OPD reporting feature should be created in the self-service portal or a web template for celebrants to complete and submit online, and
- query whether an audit process run by the department would be cost effective and an audit process could cause an increase to the annual registration charge.

Question 19: Do you have any other comments or suggestions in relation to OPD?



Answer Choices	Responses
No	58.91% 1,167
Yes (max 700 characters)	41.09% 814
Total	1,981

814 respondents provided their general comments on OPD. Key themes included:

- OPD should be used to address and inform celebrants of any legislative changes
- introduce a compulsory refresher every two years for all celebrants rather than repeat content annually
- the number of OPD hours required annually should be determined by the legislative changes; if there are no changes to legislation, one hour OPD or where significant changes are made, require three hours of OPD
- the compulsory aspect of OPD could be completed online to simplify requirements for celebrants and should include assessable content; and could potentially be timed so that it is implemented as a part of the annual registration charge process

- OPD is an opportunity for celebrants to network and meet celebrants in their local area; appreciate the opportunity OPD presents as a forum for celebrants
- elective OPD is not engaging, and unnecessary
- elective OPD is informative and offers a range of options
- there is inconsistency between trainers and training organisations delivering OPD
- quality control must continue
- online OPD is more time consuming and requires an assessment task, where the face to face session simply requires celebrant attendance – there is inequity for celebrants who choose online delivery because they cannot get to a city or regional centre to do face to face OPD
- the department could engage more frequently with celebrants online such as an online forum or Facebook to provide assistance and guidance to celebrants in real time
- customise OPD activities and requirements for the different experience levels of celebrants; more experienced celebrants should not be required to complete OPD as frequently as less experienced celebrants
- celebrants who conduct a certain number of ceremonies should not be required to undertake OPD, and
- celebrants should not be required to complete OPD in their first 12 months of registration.

In addition to the online survey, 46 separate submissions about OPD were received. The following themes were identified in the submissions (some repeat comments received in the online survey).

Number of hours of OPD annually and calendar vs financial year

- OPD should be five hours annually
- OPD should be completed every financial year
- OPD should be completed every calendar year

Training providers

- there should be access to a wider range of training and educational institutions for OPD
- registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages should be approved by the department to provide OPD
- trainers of OPD should not have to be celebrants
- expand the list of approved RTO OPD providers

Compulsory activity

- the department should continue to develop the compulsory activity
- a one hour legal refresher activity even when there aren't any significant changes to the legislation
- the department could deliver the compulsory activity online
- currently compulsory topics focus on unusual situations rather than common ones which would be preferable
- the split between compulsory and electives should be retained
- increase the compulsory activity to three hours
- OPD should include revision of the legal basics every year
- reduce the compulsory activity to one hour

Elective activities

- when there is no compulsory activity, only three hours of elective OPD should be required
- approved subjects that cover other types of celebrancy
- approved subjects that only relate to marriage

- more topics on conducting marriage ceremonies with focus on ceremonies
- association conferences and workshops
- BDMs to deliver activities eg information sessions

Other comments

- there should be an annual online test to determine whether celebrants are required to do OPD in any given year
- no change to current requirements and arrangements for OPD
- include assessment for all OPD activities irrespective of delivery mode
- OPD should be biannual instead of annual
- first year celebrants should not be required to do OPD
- allow for OPD undertaken in other professional roles to count for elective OPD (provided the development was completed in the same year as the OPD year and that it is also relevant to marriage celebrancy)
- all OPD should be available online via the celebrant portal or other online means
- there are not enough face to face activity options in regional and remote areas; celebrants who want to benefit from OPD (both subject matter and networking opportunity) are forced to travel longer distances
- to keep a high standard among celebrants, OPD should only focus on marriage celebrancy
- there should be an annual refresher courses for all celebrants irrespective of number of weddings
- there should be an annual refresher courses for celebrants who do not do many weddings
- units of competency from the Certificate IV in Celebrancy should count as OPD
- approved OPD providers provide and report on OPD compliance within a specified set of departmental guidelines with the department's prior approval of the activities
- activities should include other topics not just those related to marriage celebrancy
- all OPD providers and individual celebrants should report their own compliance directly through the portal
- the department to email celebrants and associations information updates, changes to legislation and other information, and
- associations should be delegated the responsibility of providing OPD together with approved OPD providers including seminars, workshops, conferences and online activities.