



Guidelines for Commonwealth-registered celebrants seeking an exemption from paying the celebrant registration charge

The *Marriage Act 1961* and the Marriage Regulations 2017 allow a Commonwealth-registered celebrant to seek an exemption from paying the celebrant registration charge which is payable each financial year.

Celebrants who have been granted an exemption from paying the celebrant registration application fee will automatically receive an exemption from paying the celebrant registration charge for that financial year. It is not necessary to apply to the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants to receive this exemption.

How to apply for an exemption

You can only apply for an exemption from the celebrant registration charge **once you have received your invoice** for the celebrant registration charge. Invoices are usually issued in July each year.

Under the legislation you have **21 days** from the date of the invoice to apply for an exemption. Exemption applications must be accompanied by a \$30 application fee and relevant supporting evidence. Late applications cannot be accepted.

The \$30 exemption application fee *must not* be paid against the celebrant registration charge invoice. You can pay via the self-service portal or contact us to request an invoice.

The Registrar may request further information from you to support your exemption application. If you do not provide the further information by the date requested your application will be taken to have been withdrawn.

Online Self-service Portal

It is recommended that all exemption applications are made via your online self-service portal. You can access your self-service portal by visiting marriage.ag.gov.au/portal. A Fact Sheet, 'Self-service portal', is available to assist you at www.ag.gov.au/marriagecelebrants (click on celebrant resources).

If you consider that you are eligible to apply for an exemption from the celebrant registration charge you should login to your self-service portal and select 'annual charge exemption'. When you apply you will need to have:

- your credit card ready for payment of the \$30 exemption application processing fee; and

- evidence ready to upload (in PDF format) to support your application. Evidence could include a doctor's certificate or proof of residential address.

Applications are not considered received unless they are accompanied by the \$30 exemption application processing fee. When applying for an exemption through the self-service portal your invoice for the \$30 fee will be generated automatically.

Other

Complete applications received more than 21 days from the date of the celebrant registration charge invoice are unable to be considered. Given this timeframe, we strongly recommend that applicants submit their exemption application through the self-service portal (marriage.ag.gov.au/portal).

If you cannot access a computer, postal applications can be made. Please call us immediately after receiving your invoice on 1800 550 343 so that we can arrange for you to pay your \$30 application fee. When posting applications please consider using an express post envelope to ensure your application is received within the 21 days.

Further information

If you require assistance with seeking an exemption from the celebrant registration charge please call 1800 550 343 from 10am to 1pm, and 2pm to 5pm EST each weekday or email us at: marriagecelebrantssection@ag.gov.au.

Exemption grounds

A – Remoteness

You must demonstrate that:

- (a) your principal residential address is in a remote or very remote area according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics; and
- (b) there are no more than two Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants (including you), that have their principal residential address in the same postcode.

To establish whether you live in a remote or very remote area, please visit www.doctorconnect.gov.au and use the locator tool (ASGS-RA (2011)) to enter your principal residential address. To establish how many Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants live in your postcode, please go to the [Register of Marriage Celebrants](#) on the Attorney-General's website and perform an advanced search based on your postcode.

B – Specified circumstances

You may be eligible for an exemption from payment, if you have one of the following specified circumstances in the Regulations:

- (a) you will not be a resident of Australia at any time during the financial year to which the application relates; or

(b) you will be unable to perform as a marriage celebrant for at least six months of the financial year to which the application relates because of:

- (i) serious illness; or
- (ii) caring responsibilities.

Long term absence from Australia

- This exemption may be granted to celebrants who will be absent from (or a non-resident of) Australia for the whole of the year in which the application is sought.

You will need to provide sufficient evidence to show that you will not be residing in Australia for the entirety of the financial year, for example, a letter from your employer about the relevant travel and duration or evidence of ticket bookings.

Serious illness

- This exemption may be granted to celebrants who have a serious illness that means they will be unable to perform as a marriage celebrant for at least six months of the financial year in which the exemption is sought.

Appropriate evidence should include a medical certificate or letter from your doctor confirming that you are suffering from a medical condition or have/will be having surgery and the limitations it imposes on your ability to perform as a marriage celebrant. Specific information about your particular medical condition is not necessary.

Caring responsibilities

- This exemption may be granted to celebrants who have caring responsibilities that mean they will be unable to perform as a marriage celebrant for at least six months or more in the financial year.

In the case of caring responsibilities, including maternity/paternity leave, appropriate evidence will include a medical certificate or letter from a health care professional providing general information about the level of care required. Specific information about a medical condition for the person who you will be caring for is not necessary.

Outcome of an exemption decision

Following consideration of your exemption application (and additional information if requested), the Registrar will notify you in writing (either by letter or email) of the outcome of your exemption application.

The Registrar has 21 days after receiving your application or additional information to make a decision and notify you of the outcome.

You will not be deregistered if you have a pending exemption decision.

If an exemption is granted

You will not be required to pay the celebrant registration charge for the relevant registration year. The exemption only remains valid for one registration year (1 July – 30 June). If you believe you are eligible to apply in following years, you will need to reapply for an exemption for that year.

You are still required to fulfil your ongoing professional development (OPD) obligations during the exempted period (unless you have separately sought and been granted an [exemption from OPD](#)). OPD requirements apply to each calendar year (January to December).

If an exemption is not granted

You will be notified in writing (either by letter or email) and advised to pay the celebrant registration charge by a specified date. Failure to pay the celebrant registration charge following a refusal of an exemption will result in deregistration.

If your exemption application is refused, **you may apply for an internal review of that decision.**

Applications for internal review must be made in writing (by email or letter) within **14 days** from the date you receive notice of the decision. An independent officer of the Attorney-General's Department who was not involved in the original decision will consider the decision not to grant you an exemption and decide whether to:

- confirm the original decision; or
- substitute a different decision for the original decision, with effect from the time when the original decision was made.

You may be asked to provide further information to support your internal review application.