



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

COST RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Marriage Celebrants Regulation

1 July 2017–30 June 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the CRIS

This Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) provides information about how the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) implements cost recovery for the regulation of marriage celebrants. It also reports financial and non-financial performance information for the regulation of marriage celebrants and contains financial forecasts for 2017–18 and three forward years. AGD will maintain the CRIS until the activity or cost recovery for the activity ceases.

1.2 Description of the activity

Background

AGD registers and regulates marriage celebrants under Part IV, Division I, Subdivision C of the *Marriage Act 1961* (the Marriage Act). This activity is known as the Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants Programme (the programme). Currently, about 75 per cent¹ of Australian marriage ceremonies are civil ceremonies, conducted by marriage celebrants registered under the programme, or state officers. At the time of writing, there are approximately 8700 marriage celebrants registered under Subdivision C of the Marriage Act.

The purpose of the programme is to apply appropriate scrutiny to aspiring marriage celebrants, to support the availability of services across Australia (including in remote areas), and to regulate marriage celebrant performance to ensure professional, knowledgeable and legally correct services are delivered to marrying couples. To deliver this, the programme is divided into two outputs:

- (1) registration of marriage celebrants, and
- (2) ongoing regulation of marriage celebrants.

In managing the programme, AGD, on behalf of the Australian Government, sets out to improve the professional standards of marriage celebrants and ensure compliance with the legislative framework. It is important for marriage celebrants to provide high quality services that comply with their legislative obligations (such as identity checking and ensuring consent of both parties to the marriage has been freely given) and do not result in invalid marriages (which could have serious consequences in terms of inheritance issues, property rights and proof of identity).

Purpose of cost recovery

Cost recovery for the programme enables the government to ensure that the costs of regulating marriage celebrants are borne by those who are the subject of regulation and not the general public. AGD is committed to continually evaluating the efficiency, productivity and responsiveness of the programme.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Marriages and Divorces, Australia, 2015*, viewed September 2017, www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3310.0.

Key outputs of the activity include:

- assessing applications for registration as a marriage celebrant. This includes: assessing answers to legal questions and scenario tests; referee reports; undertaking a criminal history check; and processing applications from applicants who seek an exemption from the registration application fee
- ongoing regulatory services provided to celebrants as a group. This includes: monitoring performance; investigating complaints; administering fees; providing information via phone, email and website; engaging with stakeholders; and assessing applications from marriage celebrants who seek an exemption from the annual celebrant registration charge or from fulfilling their ongoing professional development (OPD) obligations.

Further details of the activity can be found in section 3.1 of this Statement.

Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for the cost recovered activities are marriage celebrants and aspiring marriage celebrants. Other secondary stakeholders include:

- marrying couples who have an interest in accessing professional and legally accurate information and services from marriage celebrants
- registered training organisations who deliver the required training for aspiring celebrants and ongoing professional development for registered celebrants, and
- other government agencies such as:
 - state and territory registries of births, deaths and marriages, who are responsible for administering the registration of marriages
 - the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and
 - the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

In addition to Subdivision C celebrants (marriage celebrants), the Marriage Act also empowers other authorised celebrants to solemnise marriages. Other authorised celebrants are ministers of religion who solemnise marriages for religious organisations that have been proclaimed as recognised denominations for the purposes of the Marriage Act (Subdivision A celebrants) and officers who solemnise marriages for their state or territory (generally in registry offices and courts) (Subdivision B celebrants). Cost recovery does not apply to these two categories of authorised celebrants as they are regulated by the state and territory registries of births, deaths and marriages. The Commonwealth does not incur cost in relation to regulation of these other authorised celebrants except through administering the relevant parts of the Marriage Act, which is a core responsibility of AGD.

2. POLICY AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO COST RECOVERY

2.1 Government policy approval to cost recover the activity

Cost recovery for marriage celebrants' regulation was announced as part of the 2011–12 Budget². Full cost recovery through charging of an application registration fee, an annual celebrant registration charge and fees for exemption applications were implemented by the Australian Government on 1 July 2014.

² Australian Government Budget 2011–12, viewed September 2017, www.budget.gov.au/2011-12/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-03.htm

2.2 Statutory authority to charge

The cost recovery charges are authorised by section 6 of the *Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Act 2014* (the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Act) and section 39FA of the *Marriage Act 1961* (Marriage Act).

The Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Act empowers the Minister to, by legislative instrument, determine the amount of celebrant registration charge payable in a financial year. As ongoing regulation is a service provided to the general population of celebrants, and not to a particular person, the charge for the ongoing regulation of celebrants was required to be established under separate legislation. This charge is characterised as a cost recovery levy, rather than a fee. The annual registration charge is set by the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Determination 2014, and is \$240. It has remained \$240 since 1 July 2014.

The *Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Act 2014* amended the Marriage Act to create a liability to pay the celebrant registration charge; made provision for a separate registration application fee; and provides for exemptions from fees, charges and OPD obligations and fees for applying for those exemptions. The registration application fee, and fees for applications for exemption from fees and OPD obligations, relate to services provided to an individual. Therefore, they are not characterised as a levy, and do not require separate legislation to implement.

The Marriage Regulations 1963 empowers the Minister, by legislative instrument, to determine the registration application fee, and fees for applying for exemptions from the application fee, annual registration charge and OPD obligations. These are set in the Marriage (Celebrant Fees) Determination 2014. The registration application fee is \$600 and the fee to apply for an exemption from a fee, charge or OPD obligations is \$30. These fees have also remained the same since 1 July 2014.

The legislation and legislative instruments are available on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments at www.legislation.gov.au. Information about the current fees and charges is also available on the AGD website, www.ag.gov.au/marriage.

3. COST RECOVERY MODEL

3.1 Outputs and business processes of the activity

The programme is divided into two outputs: registration of marriage celebrants; and ongoing regulation of marriage celebrants. These outputs are essential to achieving the policy outcomes of the programme that:

- marriage celebrants comply with their obligations under the Marriage Act and Marriage Regulations
- marriage celebrants conduct themselves professionally and legally when solemnising marriages, and
- marriage celebrant services are available across Australia, including in remote areas.

Registration of celebrants

To deliver this output, AGD performs the following processes:

- assessing application information including identifying documents, qualifications, possible conflicts of interest and an understanding of relationship support services
- undertaking a criminal record check through the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission
- testing applicants' legal knowledge through multiple choice questions, completing a mock Notice of Intended Marriage based on a scenario, and a sample ceremony
- conducting an interview, where appropriate
- discussion with referees, where appropriate
- registering successful applicants
- notifying unsuccessful applicants with reasons for the decision
- assessing applications for exemption from the registration application fee
- requesting more information from the applicant to assess their application for exemption from the registration application fee, where appropriate, and
- notifying applicants of the outcome of their application for exemption from the registration application fee.

Ongoing regulation of celebrants

This output involves managing registered marriage celebrants.

As part of delivering this output, AGD performs the following processes:

- monitoring celebrants' performance, including through targeted performance reviews and compliance with professional development obligations
- producing and maintaining relevant educational material for celebrants
- providing access to an online celebrant portal to allow celebrants to securely manage their information, pay the annual registration charge, view their professional development history and engage with AGD
- handling enquiries by telephone and email
- participating in OPD development, approval and management
- investigating complaints about celebrants
- responding to Administrative Appeals Tribunal applications
- ongoing review of the programme and related legislative framework (ie Part IV, Division 1, Subdivision C of the Marriage Act)
- engaging with stakeholders, including celebrant representatives, celebrants, and state and territory registries of births, deaths and marriages, and other government agencies
- administering the fees and charges, including deregistration of celebrants who do not pay the annual celebrant registration charge

- assessing applications for exemption from paying the celebrant registration charge and applications for exemption from meeting OPD obligations
- requesting additional information from the celebrant to assess their application for an exemption from the celebrant registration charge or OPD obligations, where appropriate, and
- notifying applicants of the outcome of their application for an exemption from the celebrant registration charge or meeting OPD obligations.

3.2 Costs of the activity

The main driver of cost for the activity is employee costs to assess applications for registration as a marriage celebrant, to perform the ongoing regulatory functions of the programme, and to respond to marriage celebrant enquiries. In addition to celebrant enquiries, the department receives enquiries about marriage law more generally. Employee costs account for about 90% of the overall cost of the activity. Other significant costs of the programme relate to maintenance and upgrade of IT systems to improve the efficient operation of the programme.

It continues to be assumed that numbers of applications for registration as a marriage celebrant will be slightly lower than pre cost recovery years but will remain reasonably steady across the forward years. Following changes to the law for marriage equality in Australia, it is possible that there will be an increase in the number of new applications to become a registered celebrant as more people seek to perform these marriages. If this occurs, registration estimates may be revised.

The number of applications for registration received in the year after the introduction of cost recovery dropped to 448 applications in 2014–15 but then increased to 605 applications in 2015–16 and 745 applications in 2016–17. There was a significant spike in the number of applications received in the last quarter of 2016–17. This is because some registered training organisations had misunderstood that the phasing out of the now superseded qualification required for registration as a marriage celebrant meant that aspiring celebrants had to apply by 30 June 2017. However, this is incorrect and the department will continue to accept both qualifications for registration as a marriage celebrant – the previous Certificate IV in Celebrancy (CHC42608) and the revised Certificate IV in Celebrancy (CHC41015). It is estimated that applications for registration in 2017–18 will be largely consistent with 2016–17, estimated at 640 applications. This estimate allows for a slight drop from the number of applications received in 2016–17, taking into account the significant variation in application numbers over the last three cost-recovered years.

The programme experienced a large reduction in the number of celebrants following the implementation of cost recovery in 2014–15. There was another significant but smaller reduction in 2015–16. It is assumed that the reduction in the number of celebrants each financial year, combined with the new registrations, will result in the total celebrant numbers remaining steady in forward years. This takes into account that deregistration of celebrants for not paying their annual charge within the specified timeframes have stabilised in the previous three cost-recovered years, after high initial numbers were deregistered in the first year of introducing the charge. In 2015–16, 208 existing celebrants did not pay the annual charge. In 2016–17, 176 did not pay the charge and in 2017–18, 188 existing celebrants did not pay the charge. Significant numbers of celebrants also resign at the beginning of the financial year prior to the charge payment day. Between 1 July 2016

and 5 September 2016, 184 celebrants resigned; and between 1 July 2017 and 15 September 2017, 136 celebrants resigned.

The budgeted number of full-time equivalent staff (FTE) for 2017–18 for administration of the cost-recovered programme is 13.93, slightly lower than for 2016–17 (14.51). The following workforce assumptions have been made regarding FTE:

- the number of FTE devoted to marriage celebrant regulation excludes FTE involved in marriage law policy as these positions are not cost recovered (for further explanation see below after ‘Cost estimates for current budget year 2017–18’ table)
- the budgeted FTE for 2017–18 excludes 0.25 FTE absorbed by AGD to cover additional cost of processing exemption applications that are not cost-recovered. More information on exemptions is provided later in this section, and
- salaries are based on the Attorney-General’s Department’s Enterprise Agreement 2016.

Although efficiencies were found in some business processes during 2016–17, other processes required slightly more staff than was previously anticipated. For instance, there was a higher than expected volume of new applications which resulted in a small increase in the estimated staff cost for this process.

During 2016–17 AGD has responded to 19,910 emails, phone calls and letters; a reduction from 24,700 in 2015–16. Increased awareness about cost recovery requirements as well as continued provision of improved information resources to celebrants via the website and newsletter, are likely to continue to contribute towards the decrease in the actual number of enquiries received when compared to the previous year. However, it is expected that a high volume of enquiries will continue, especially following changes to the law for marriage equality in Australia, and AGD has planned for a workforce that can accommodate the volume and complexity of correspondence, while slightly reducing current staff levels.

Consistent with the Australian Government’s 2011 National Digital Economy Strategy, AGD continues to encourage marriage celebrants to use a self-service portal to manage their registration online, including applications for exemptions, advising of changes to details, reviewing OPD history, and payments of fees and charges.

In 2016–17 AGD developed a compulsory OPD activity on two items: a checklist for solemnisation of marriages; and, offences under the Marriage Act. AGD also developed guidance on the use of an expired passport to determine date and place of birth and also identification of an individual, as well as a fact sheet about the complaints that the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants can deal with and the complaints handling process. AGD considers that in combination, these steps have contributed to the reduction in enquiries this year.

The expected workforce required to administer the payment of fees remains consistent with previous years. The previous years’ improvements to the invoicing process were continued in 2016–17. Some modification to the invoice generation process in 2016–17 resulted in all invoices being sent to celebrants more efficiently than in the previous year, reducing the time required for 8710 invoices to be distributed from 14 hours to four hours. However, as with previous years, errors in payments, including celebrants paying incorrect amounts and incorrect referencing when making electronic funds transfers continued. This was the case even though a new information sheet was distributed to celebrants which outlined each payment method in a step-by-step process.

AGD continues to work towards streamlining the management of enquiries received, through ongoing training of staff and the continued development of standardised responses, where appropriate, and online resources such as information sheets.

The Australian Government aims to ensure that marriage celebrant services remain available in remote areas and that marriage celebrants are not disadvantaged where they are unable to perform duties as a marriage celebrant for a significant proportion of the year. Exemptions from the registration application fee can be granted on the basis of remoteness. Exemptions from the annual charge can also be granted on the basis of remoteness or under specified circumstances, including not being a resident of Australia at any time during the financial year or due to serious illness or caring responsibilities which prevents the marriage celebrant from being able to perform marriages for at least six months of the financial year. Exemptions from meeting OPD requirements are available to celebrants who are unable to complete OPD because of exceptional circumstances.

In 2016–17, AGD received 60 applications for exemption from the annual charge and two applications for exemption from the registration fee. This is consistent with the number of exemption applications received in the previous year when 58 applications for exemption from the annual charge and zero applications for exemption from the registration fee were received.

AGD has taken into account that it has received 52 annual charge exemption applications in 2017–18. AGD estimates it will receive 70 applications for exemption from the annual charge in future years. This estimate is based on the past financial years including the first year of cost recovery. This estimate may be revised in future years after further experience is yielded.

In 2016–17, 44 applications for exemption from OPD were received. This is a slight decrease from 2015–16 when 48 applications were received. AGD estimates receiving 50 applications in forward years. In 2016–17, a small number of celebrants who may otherwise have been exempt from the requirement (but did not apply for an exemption) were issued with disciplinary measures for failing to complete their required OPD. AGD anticipates this process will continue to prompt celebrants who believe they should be exempt to apply through the proper process and within the required timeframes in order to avoid receiving a disciplinary measure. Further detail about the disciplinary measures is available in AGD's Marriage Celebrants Programme Regulator Performance Framework 2016–17 Self-assessment Report published on the AGD website. AGD continues to promote the OPD requirement, and exemption arrangements, through fact sheets, the celebrant newsletter and through celebrant associations.

The total cost of processing exemption applications is not recovered through the \$30 application fee. To ensure that the general marriage celebrant population is not subsidising the cost of these applications, the government absorbs approximately 90 percent of costs of processing exemption applications that are not recovered through the exemption fees. The remaining 10 percent is recovered through the exemption application fees.

Using feedback received throughout stakeholder consultation as described in section 5 of this statement (below), AGD continues to refine and develop efficient and effective policies and processes to provide services to, and regulate, marriage celebrants. Other efficiencies include continuing to work with OPD providers to streamline reporting requirements, working with state and territory registries of births, deaths and marriages to identify common errors and issues with celebrants lodging paperwork; a review of forms to improve

layout and content; reviewing the Marriage Regulations to promote regulatory efficiencies and clearer language; reviews of policies on ongoing professional development and conflict of interest and benefit to business; and improving the process and appropriately managing complaints and performance reviews.

Further analysis of AGD’s performance in managing the programme for 2016–17 is included in the Marriage Celebrants Programme Regulator Performance Framework 2016–17 Self-assessment Report published on the AGD website.

AGD has determined the fees and charges for the Marriage Celebrants Programme by reference to the costs in delivering the programme’s outputs (see section 3.1, above). A detailed examination was made of the business processes required to be completed in order to deliver the outputs. This included analysis of the time involved and the most appropriate level employee to undertake the processes to achieve maximum efficiency.

Cost estimates over four future years:

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Direct costs	1,678	1,687	1,653	1,621	6,639
Indirect costs	616	619	606	593	2,434
Depreciated Capital costs	230	364	334	185	1,113
TOTAL	2,524	2,670	2,593	2,399	10,186

In this table:

- **Direct costs** are those incurred in the direct day-to-day running of the marriage celebrants’ regulation and information activities. These include staff salary and superannuation costs, as well as supplier costs (eg office equipment and training). Other direct costs include costs of administering the telephone service, criminal history checks for applicants and programme-related external legal advice.
- **Indirect costs** are overhead costs, including corporate services, office space, IT systems and utility costs.
- **Capital costs** reflect depreciation charges for IT assets and are not included in direct or indirect costs.

Cost estimates for current budget year 2017-18

	Direct costs '000	Indirect costs '000	Depreciated capital costs '000
Output 1: Registration of marriage celebrants	269	101	23
Business Process 1.1: Processing applications to become registered as a marriage celebrant and applications for exemption from registration fee	269	101	23
Output 2: Ongoing regulation of marriage celebrants	1,409	515	207
Business Process 2.1: Managing Celebrant Training, Performance Management, Complaints and OPD exemptions	793	293	104
Business Process 2.2: Managing Enquiries, Fee Administration, Stakeholder Engagement and Annual Charge exemptions	616	222	103
TOTAL	1,678	616	230

Some staff responsible for delivering outputs of the programme are also responsible for undertaking work on general marriage law policy funded by government. The activity based costing model used by AGD to calculate the measurement of staff effort required to meet the outputs of the programme ensures there is no cross subsidisation of effort between programme related services and government funded policy activities. There are 2.65 FTE working on non-programme related marriage law policy in 2017–18. The funding for these positions is not cost recovered. However, while outside the cost recovery framework, the result of this work directly benefits Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants. The work is part of AGD’s broader role to administer the Marriage Act and includes much of the review that had been undertaken of the Marriage Regulations 1963 due to sunset in April 2018 and which will be replaced by the new Marriage Regulations 2017; undertaking improvements to refine the forms to ensure they are functional and easy to use; refinements to OPD following consultation with marriage celebrants and their representatives; and the release of the new conflict of interest and benefit to business policy taking a proportionate response to regulation and to ensure greater consistency with the existing legislative framework.

AGD engages the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) to perform criminal history checks on applicants for registration as a marriage celebrant. The cost of this activity is set each year by ACIC and is incorporated into the direct costs of the assessment of applications for registration as a marriage celebrant.

3.3 Design of cost recovery charges

Registration application fee

The registration application fee reflects the cost of departmental staff assessing applications for registration as a marriage celebrant. The fee is payable at the time an application for registration as a marriage celebrant is submitted and covers only the costs that relate to the processing of an application. The application fee applies irrespective of whether the application is successful.

A flat registration fee is appropriate as all applications are processed and assessed according to the criteria set out in the Marriage Regulations. These assessment requirements apply equally to each application.

The registration application fee provides for the assessment of an application, the costs associated with maintaining a secure and accessible IT system to support online applications, revising any explanatory documents as required, and registering or rejecting an application. At the introduction of cost recovery for the programme in 2014–15, this fee was \$600. The fee remains unchanged.

Celebrant registration charge

The celebrant registration charge provides for regulation and information related activities. This charge has been \$240 since it was introduced on 1 July 2014. The charge and pro-rata amounts listed below remain unchanged in 2017–18. The celebrant registration charge is pro-rataed as follows:

- registered between 1 July and 30 September - \$240
- registered between 1 October and 31 December - \$180
- registered between 1 January and 31 March - \$120, and
- registered between 1 April and 30 June - \$60.

This acknowledges that AGD incurs costs in relation to newly registered celebrants within a financial year and that celebrants registered later in a financial year will not receive a full year of service.

Exemption application fees

The exemption application fee of \$30 only partially covers the cost of processing a request for exemption from the registration application fee, the annual celebrant registration charge or the OPD requirements. All exemption applications will require payment of a minimal, non-refundable, processing fee which cannot be waived. The business processes undertaken by AGD to process these requests are set out at section 3.1, above. AGD absorbs approximately 90 percent of the costs of processing exemption applications.

Charge rates and revenue estimates for current budget year 2017-18

Charge title	Type	Rate	Est. Volume	Est. total revenue ('000)	Output	Business process
Registration Application	Fee	\$600	640	384	Registration of celebrants	Assessing applications for registration as a marriage celebrant
Celebrant Registration	Levy	\$240	8,181	1,963	Ongoing regulation of celebrants	Managing Celebrant Training, Performance Management and Complaints, Managing Enquiries, Fee Administration, Stakeholder Engagement
		\$180	160	29		
		\$120	160	19		
		\$60	160	10		
Application for Exemption from Registration Fee	Fee	\$30	2	0	Ongoing regulation of celebrants	Assessing whether applicant is in a remote area and eligible for exemption
Application for Exemption from Annual Charge	Fee	\$30	70	2	Ongoing regulation of celebrants	Processing and assessing applications for exemption from the celebrant registration charge
Application for Exemption from obligation to do OPD	Fee	\$30	50	2	Ongoing regulation of celebrants	Processing and assessing applications for exemption from fulfilling ongoing professional development obligations for the year
TOTAL				2,409		

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

Three full years of cost recovery have now been implemented and the programme is currently operating in line with forecasts. No major implementation issues have occurred. On this basis the assessment of the operation of the programme is a low risk.

5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

AGD continued to consult with marriage celebrant associations about the regulation of the programme and cost recovery through bi-annual meetings. At the meeting held in October 2017, AGD advised the programme is currently tracking in line with forecasts with no significant under or over recovery expected for 2017–18. AGD also confirmed that the annual registration charge and exemption application fees for 2017–18 remained the same as the previous two years at \$240 and \$30 respectively. AGD continues to welcome feedback from celebrants and their representatives about the operation of cost recovery and the regulation of the programme. Stakeholders will also be notified when the CRIS is published on the department’s website.

AGD anticipates that the database enhancements and changes to OPD policy from 2018 and beyond will result in further efficiencies in the administration of the programme. This may result in changes to the fees and charges from 2018–19.

6. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES

	A	B	C	D	E
	Forecast 2017–18 (‘000)	YTD 2017–18 (‘000)	2018–19 (‘000)	2019–20 (‘000)	2020–21 (‘000)
Expenses = X	2,524	1,572	2,670	2,593	2,399
Revenue = Y	2,409	2,362	2,427	2,447	2,466
Government Revenue (see note below) Y.1	33	30	33	32	31
Balance = Y + Y.1 – X	-82	82	-210	-114	98
Cumulative balance	307	389	97	-17	81
Explain material ^a variance					
Explain balance management strategy	Assumptions and forecasts will be checked and updated to reflect changes in the activity. Any actual sustained over, or under, recovery will be managed as required.				

^a As defined by AASB1031 and Division 12 – Materiality and Disclosure of the Finance Minister’s Orders.

Note (Y.1): AGD covers the additional cost of processing applications for exemption not recovered through the exemption fees. In addition, AGD covers the cost of exemptions granted for remoteness.

Note YTD column B: Expenses and revenue are as at 31 January 2018. While most of the programme’s revenue has already been received through the celebrant registration charge, expenses are still continuing, resulting in the appearance of an over recovery.

7A. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Cost recovery for this activity commenced on 1 July 2014. This is the second year of historical data available.

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	N/A	N/A
Expenses = X	2,312	2,340	2,470		
Revenue = Y	2,447	2,450	2,522		
Government Revenue (see note above) Y.1	36	25	31		
Balance = Y + Y.1 – X	171	135	83		
Cumulative balance	171	306	389		
Explain material ^a variance					
Explain impact on balance management strategy	Although 2016–17 shows a surplus cumulative balance, the forecast (Table 6) is that in 2017–18, 2018–19 and 2019–20 the cumulative balance will reduce bringing the programme into balance.				

^a As defined by AASB1031 and Division 12 – Materiality and Disclosure of the Finance Minister’s Orders.

7B. NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

As discussed above at section 1.2, the outputs of the activity are:

- assessment of applications for registration as a marriage celebrant, and
- ongoing regulatory and information services provided to celebrants as a group.

In compliance with the Regulator Performance Framework, AGD publishes a self-assessment report about its non-financial performance in 2016-17. This is the second year the report has been published, and provides further detailed assessment of regulator performance.

Statistics reported below are as at 30 June 2017.

Applications for registration

In 2016–17, AGD received 745 applications and registered 709 marriage celebrants. The average time for finalisation of an application was two months, with processing times consistent with the legislated timeframe of within three months.

Over the course of 2016–17, AGD has identified and implemented various efficiencies to reduce the assessment time of an application. In 2017–18, AGD will continue to review the application assessment process to identify further efficiencies.

Ongoing regulation of marriage celebrants

During 2016–17, the ‘Marcel’ database was upgraded to a new up-to-date platform (‘CRM 2015’). The upgrade ensures future ongoing system support. Further database enhancements are envisaged to be made during 2017–18 which will improve efficiency.

In 2016–17, AGD resolved 30 complaints in relation to marriage celebrants. In the first half of 2017, 8578 celebrants were reviewed for compliance with ongoing professional development (OPD) in 2016. Ninety five per cent of celebrants were assessed as being compliant. The Registrar issued 304 disciplinary measures to celebrants in 2016-17 in response to non-compliance with OPD in 2016, and four disciplinary measures resulting from substantiated complaints resolved during the year.

In 2016–17, following consultation with OPD training providers, celebrant associations, and registries of births, deaths and marriages about an appropriate compulsory activity topic, AGD developed the compulsory OPD activity for 2017. AGD prepared the text for the compulsory activity and reviewed the training material developed by OPD training providers. In addition, AGD checked the outlines of 197 elective OPD activities to ensure relevancy for marriage celebrants. Of those, AGD reviewed 34 activities that contained marriage law content for accuracy.

In 2016–17, AGD processed 9327 annual charge payments and responded to 19,910 enquiries.

Over the course of 2016–17, AGD organised face-to-face meetings with stakeholders and published newsletters and provided email updates for celebrants. Thirteen additional languages translations of the ‘Happily Ever Before and After’ brochure were published on the website in May 2017 bringing the total number of available translations to 27 assisting celebrants to convey the importance of marriage to marrying couples from diverse communities.

8. KEY DATES AND EVENTS

11 October 2017	Update stakeholders on CRIS
-----------------	-----------------------------

9. CRIS APPROVAL AND CHANGE REGISTER

Date of CRIS change	CRIS change	Approver	Basis for change
17/06/2014	Certification of the CRIS	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department	New cost recovered activity
26/06/2014	Agreement to the CRIS	Attorney-General	New cost recovered activity
23/06/2015	Update financial estimates and amend description of business processes to reflect new Department of Finance CRIS template.	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department	Update CRIS template and revalidate costing model
03/09/2015	Update with end of year financial results	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department	Continuous disclosure
27/10/2016	Forward estimates and update end of year financial and non-financial results	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department	Continuous disclosure
3/4/2018	New forward estimates and update end of year financial and non-financial results	Secretary, Attorney-General's Department	Continuous disclosure