



Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

RVAHJ e-news

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In this e-news:

- **Press Release from the Attorney General, Rob Hulls - Justice of the Peace review**
- **Forthcoming Document Witnessing Training – Parkville and Edithvale**

Press Release from the Attorney General, Rob Hulls – Justice of the Peace review

*Justices of the Peace office strengthened by reforms
From the Attorney General*

Monday, 22 February 2010

Justices of the Peace will be retained and their role strengthened by reforms including a formalised code of conduct, a revised complaints process and a formalised training process, Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Rob Hulls said today.

Mr Hulls said a Brumby Labor Government review of JPs found strong support for retaining the office and title of Justice of the Peace but with important changes.

“The role and responsibilities of Justices of the Peace in Victoria have changed considerably over the last 200 years,” he said.

“Following an extensive public consultation process, the review recommended the introduction of term limits for Justices of the Peace, formalised training, a formalised code of conduct, revised complaints process and appointments based on regional demand.

“This review also found that more can be done to support current and future Justices of the Peace in carrying out their role, and to ensure people appointed as JPs uphold the rights and obligations of the office.”

Victoria’s 4,800 Justices of the Peace have the power to witness and certify certain legal documents, including statutory declarations and affidavits. They are volunteers currently appointed for life by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney-General.

“About 540 written submissions were received – 97 per cent from Justices of the Peace – in response to our consultation paper, on top of consultation with 100 key stakeholders, including Justices of the Peace groups and police,” Mr Hulls said.

“The feedback showed strong support for the introduction of five-year term limits with the option of an extension to replace life-time appointments, ensuring that Justices of the Peace remain active in their roles.”

Mr Hulls said a revised code of conduct would be developed and a new complaints process set up for members of the public concerned about a Justice of the Peace’s conduct.

The appointment process for Justices of the Peace would also be changed, including a targeted recruitment process for the regions, and changes to ensure prospective appointees demonstrated knowledge of the role.

Mr Hulls said the review recommended more administrative support for Justices of the Peace, including formalised training and ongoing professional development.

"These changes will ensure Justices of the Peace continue to deliver an important service valued by Victorians seeking to have documents witnessed or certified," Mr Hulls said.

Forthcoming Document Witnessing Training – RMH, Parkville & Mornington Peninsula

Honorary Justices are invited to attend our Document Witnessing Training Course which will be held at the **Royal Melbourne Hospital on 27 March 2010** and the **Aspendale/Edithvale RSL, Kinross Street, Edithvale on 8 May 2010**. Both of these sessions will commence at 9.00 am sharp and conclude at approximately 3.00 pm. (Registration from 8.45 am).

For recently-appointed justices, the course will help you gain confidence in the document witnessing duties you will be undertaking. In light of recent changes to legislation, this is an opportunity for justices of longer standing to refresh their knowledge.

For RVAHJ members, attendance is free.

To book for either of these sessions, contact the office by phone: (03) 9525 7099, by fax: (03) 9525 7765 or by email: admin@rvahj.org.au.

Time is running out to book a place at our training course at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Parkville on 27 March 2010. Contact the office now!

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