



Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

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In this e-news: Changes to Oaths, Affirmations and Affidavits

Changes to Oaths, Affirmations and Affidavits

The Attorney General, Martin Pakula MP, has today issued a Media Release regarding changes to Oaths, Affirmations and Affidavits, reprinted below for your information.

The Andrews Labor Government is making it easier for Victorians to make oaths, affirmations and affidavits.

The Oaths and Affirmations Bill 2017 introduced today will consolidate, modernise and streamline legal processes to improve accessibility and equality before the law.

The reforms will ensure that some people, who are capable of giving evidence, are not confused or discouraged from doing so by the formal wording of an oath or affirmation.

The changes will enable a child or person with a cognitive impairment to use a simpler form of words, such as 'I promise to tell the truth', when making an oath or affirmation in court.

The list of people who can witness a statutory declaration will be expanded to include Commonwealth statutory declaration witnesses, such as certain Australia Post staff and agents, nurses, full-time teachers, and more Commonwealth and local government public servants.

Expanding the range of people who can witness a statutory declaration will make legal processes more accessible to people living in remote or regional areas, and help to reduce pressure on frontline police.

The Bill outlines the basic requirements for affidavits, including a list of people authorised to take an affidavit, promoting the fundamental integrity of the document, regardless of the court or tribunal in which it is being used.

A new offence will also be created for making a false statutory declaration, instead of relying on the general offence of perjury under the Crimes Act 1958. The maximum penalty for the new offence will be five years in jail.

RVAHJ e-news is produced as a member service by the Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices