

FREE REFORMED CHURCHES OF AUSTRALIA

NOMINATING AUTHORITIES - *MARRIAGE ACT 1961*

9 March 2006

Synod 2006
C/- FRC West Kelmscott

Esteemed brothers

Deputies' Report

Synod 2003 made the following decision with respect to Nominating Authorities (Article 101):

1. To thank the deputies that they have completed their mandate and their report has been received.
2. To discharge the present Authorities noting that unlike a Synod the Nominating Authority is a permanent entity.
3. To appoint new deputies officially designated as the *Nominating Authorities* to discharge duties under the Marriage Act 1961.

Background

On 22 September 1999, the Governor-General declared the Free Reformed Churches of Australia to be a "recognised denomination" for the purposes of the *Marriage Act 1961*.

This designation allows all FRCA ministers, by virtue of that fact, to become registered as marriage celebrants.

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, which administers the *Marriage Act 1961*, requires the churches to appoint a person as nominating authority to sign the nomination forms on behalf of the church and to take responsibility for the administration of the process. To that end, deputies are required to be appointed by each Synod.

Execution of Mandate

Deputies have been able to execute their mandate over the past 3 years.

In summary, the following has been carried out:

- New ministers have been nominated by deputies to the relevant State Registrar, and these ministers have become registered as marriage celebrants.

- The relevant State Registrars have been advised of ministers who have left the FRCA.
- Various ministers previously registered under their own name have been nominated to come under the FRCA as “recognised denomination”.
- Information disseminated by the Commonwealth A-G has been forwarded to all ministers within the FRCA.

Over the last few years, the requirements for marriage registration and celebration have become more stringent. The Government’s aim has been to “raise the professional standards in celebrancy services”. Prospective applicants are now required to undergo an interview process in order to ensure that they are competent. Also, numbered marriage certificates have been introduced in order to enhance security over these official documents.

Deputies consider that it is administratively convenient that the FRCA remain a “recognised denomination” and that 2 deputies be appointed for the task of nominating ministers and circulating information.

Recommendation

Deputies recommend that Synod 2006 resolve:

1. To appoint new deputies officially designated as *Nominating Authorities* to discharge duties under the Marriage Act 1961.

Respectfully submitted

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