

**ACT**  
Government

Justice and Community Safety

# WRITTEN NOTICE SETTING OUT LEGAL EFFECT OF A CIVIL UNION

## THIS NOTICE

The Office of Regulatory Services (ORS) is responsible for the administration of the *Civil Unions Act 2012* (the Act). As soon as practicable after receiving notice under section 8(3) of the Act, the civil union celebrant must give each person this written notice setting out the legal effect of a civil union.

This notice is intended to provide general information on the nature and effect of a civil union only. It does not constitute legal advice. You should seek independent legal or other professional advice before acting or relying on any of the content.

Written and published by the ACT Office of Regulatory Services

## WHAT IS A CIVIL UNION

A civil union is a legally recognised relationship that may be entered into by two adults who are unable to marry under the Commonwealth *Marriage Act 1961*. The *Civil Unions Act 2012* recognises that a civil union is different to a marriage but is treated under territory law in the same way as a marriage.

## REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATES

A civil union certificate will not be available until the civil union celebrant lodges certain documents. Certificates will be available for a fee once the civil union is registered by the Registrar-General.

After the civil union ceremony the civil union celebrant must lodge with the Registrar-General the 'Notice of intention to enter into a civil union form'. This form must be lodged no later than two weeks after the day the civil union is entered into. Once this form is lodged the Registrar-General will register the civil union.

## TERMINATION OF CIVIL UNION

If at some stage after registration of the civil union, one of the partners considers termination of the civil union, they should obtain independent legal advice about their rights and responsibilities in relation to children and child support, property division and any other issues.

A civil union may only be terminated in accordance with the Act.

## OFFENCES

A person commits an offence under the Act if the civil union is declared before a person that is not a civil union celebrant, and one of the proposed partners knows they are not a civil union celebrant, however the other proposed partner has reasonable grounds to believe they are a civil union celebrant.

It is an offence in giving false and misleading information to a person exercising a function under a Territory Law or making false statements in statutory declarations.