

**Subject 9.2 Mayor Minute: Proposed changes to the Australian
Citizenship Ceremonies Code (11170165)**

To my fellow Councillors

Mayoral Minute

Summary

The purpose of this Mayoral Minute is to seek Council endorsement for a submission to the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs in regards to the proposed changes to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code.

Background

I received a letter from the Hon. David Coleman MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs seeking responses to the proposed changes to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code – refer to **Attachment 1**.

My comments to each proposed key change are as follows:

- *Local Government Councils will be required to hold a citizenship ceremony on Australia Day (26 January) and Australian Citizenship Day (17 September).*

Response: Councils should have the right to determine for themselves whether a citizenship ceremony on Australia Day is appropriate. In doing so, Councils will need to consider among other factors, the interests of those in attendance at Australia Day celebrations and costs (typically) associated with employing extra staff on a public holiday.

- *Federal members of parliament, if attending a ceremony, should read the Minister's message at citizenship ceremonies.*

Response: Clarification needs to be sought and provided on whether the Federal Member of Parliament must be a member of the sitting Government or the local Federal Member of Parliament.

- *There will be a recommended standard of dress for ceremonies, which will be set by Councils. The attire of attendees at citizenship ceremonies should reflect the significance of the occasion. Conferees may wear national or cultural dress if they wish.*

Response: Council currently requests the recipients to attend in smart casual attire and this point is duly noted and agreed.

- *Ceremonies must be scheduled to avoid parliamentary sitting days.*

Response: Sitting dates for both State and Federal are currently considered prior to citizenship ceremonies being set by Council and as such this requirement is of no consequence.

Recommendation

That Council endorse the following response to be forwarded to the Hon. David Coleman MP, Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs seeking responses to the proposed changes to the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code:

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Approved for Council's consideration: _____

Date of Meeting: 5 February 2019

Attachments

1. Letter received by the Hon. David Coleman MP, Minister for Immigration, citizenship and Multicultural Affairs.



**THE HON DAVID COLEMAN MP
MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND
MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS**

Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code

Dear Mayor,

We as a nation truly value our Australian citizenship. Whether you are Australian by birth or choose to settle here, Australian citizenship is at the heart of who we are and what we believe as a nation.

Every Australia Day, Australians in huge numbers celebrate our success as a nation at the many events organised by Local Government Councils across the country. These celebrations often include citizenship ceremonies, with more than 73,000 people choosing this special day to take the formal pledge of commitment to Australia in the past five years. Australia Day is by far the most popular day of the year for people to attend a citizenship ceremony.

For some time now the Australian Government has been reviewing the *Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code*. As a result of this review, I am proposing changes to the Code, to ensure it reflects the expectations of the Australian community and provides clear guidance to Councils on hosting citizenship ceremonies.

Key changes are outlined below.

- Local Government Councils will be required to hold a citizenship ceremony on Australia Day (26 January) and Australian Citizenship Day (17 September).
- Federal members of Parliament, if attending a ceremony, should read the Minister's message at citizenship ceremonies.
- There will be a recommended standard of dress for ceremonies, which will be set by Councils. The attire of attendees at citizenship ceremonies should reflect the significance of the occasion. Conferees may wear national or cultural dress if they wish.
- Ceremonies must be scheduled to avoid parliamentary sitting days.

In recognition of the vital role of local government in the delivery of citizenship ceremonies, I am seeking your feedback on the revised Code. Please send all feedback to natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au by **28 February 2019**.

I am pleased that a vast majority of Councils already hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day, as they are always great events. Eligible migrants across the country

should be afforded the opportunity to become an Australian citizen on our national day.

Thank you for the job done by your Council in supporting citizenship ceremonies and I look forward to receiving your responses to the proposed changes to the Code.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Coleman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Coleman

14/01/2019