

A letter to all JPs from Access Canberra

The following letter was distributed by Access Canberra to all ACT Justices of the Peace on (or around) 8 February 2018. It has been reproduced here as a convenience for JPs.
(Note: the correspondence has been reformatted for ease of reading.)

Dear Justice of the Peace

I am writing to advise about matters of relevance to you as an ACT Justice of the Peace.

Your role as a JP is highly appreciated in the community and a number of important services in the ACT, nationally and internationally, often depend on your services. In order to enable even more streamlined access to JP services and assist you with your work, this letter is advising of some changes to the current website as well as some other updates relevant to your work as a JP.

Relocation of the web page

Access Canberra has, since its establishment in late 2014, been responsible for regulating the JP sector in the ACT. In line with this change of responsibilities, and in order to make public access to JP-related information simpler, the current JP website will be moved from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate website to the Access Canberra website. The work on the new system is being finalised and the new site is expected to 'go live' from 15 February 2018.

The key changes you will notice are an improved search facility to enable the public to find a JP, an easy-to-manage change of personal details as well as an updated look-and-feel of the website.

The Access Canberra JP site will also provide links to additional information about JP practice in general and show at what stage in an application process a new JP application is at any given time (for example, a training stage, Ministerial approval or a swearing-in stage). The new website can be found at www.act.gov.au/jpregister.

Communication with JPs – need to update your email address

Access Canberra is committed to, and is continually developing, its electronic communication capabilities in all areas of its operations. Emails and smart forms are Access Canberra's preferred way of communicating with its customers and the broadest public. A growing number of services is provided to the public via electronic means. Therefore, it is now essential that all JPs provide their current active email addresses to Access Canberra. This will enable your simpler and more streamlined communication with both Access Canberra and the Justices of the Peace Association.

What do I need to do now?

- (a) If you had already registered your email address on the JP website (you would have received this correspondence through your email):

You will receive a welcome email with a link. This link will take you to a page where you can request a password. You will then receive a new email with a link. This link will allow you to enter the new password. Once you have entered your password, you will be logged in and presented with your profile information. You will have all the standard options to update your contact details, or your JP details.

(b) If you have not registered your email address (you would have received this correspondence in a hard copy/letter):

Please contact Access Canberra on (02) 6207 6444 at your earliest convenience to advise us of your email address. The staff will explain to you the process from there. All future contacts with Access Canberra will be through your email address.

If there are special reasons for you to not have an email address, please call the above number to discuss.

Your obligations under the Act and Regulations

I would also like to remind you of the obligations you as a JP have, as part of your service to the community and as a JP in the ACT.

In performing their role, Justices of the Peace should:

- be available at reasonable times
- be professional, courteous and impartial
- not provide legal advice
- avoid conflicts of interest
- not receive payment or reward for service
- keep contact details up to date
- adhere to the appropriate legislation and correct procedures, and
- maintain confidentiality.

Importantly, as a JP, you must keep your details accurate in the public register as well as advise Access Canberra of any other changes that may affect your role as a JP. This includes your name and contact details such as your email address, postal address, and at least one current phone number (mobile or landline).

Your obligations also include advising Access Canberra of any changes to your details that are not publicly released (for example your current private and business addresses and private telephone numbers) or any other relevant details or events that may disqualify you from holding a JP office.

I also wish to remind you that the Minister may end a person's appointment as a Justice of the Peace if satisfied that the person has failed to observe these guiding principles.

The Guideline is available at:

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/di/2016-53/current/pdf/2016-53.pdf>

Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration

In consultation with those responsible for compliance as well as the Directorate with policy responsibility, the agreed view is that a JP does not require a registration simply because they are a JP. That said, as with all members of the public, there may be occasions where a JP should hold a WWVP registration in the delivery of services to vulnerable people.

In establishing the need for a registration, the WWVP Act contemplates the frequency of engagement with vulnerable people as well as whether the contact is incidental.

A WWVP registration is required where

- contact with vulnerable people would be reasonably expected as part of the activity and is not incidental to the activity, and
- contact with vulnerable people occurs more than 3 days in any 4-week period or 7 days in any 12-month period.

Please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 6207 6444, or email jp@act.gov.au or via the website should you have any comments or queries regarding this letter.

With kind regards

Vesna Cvjeticanin

Senior Manager
Access Canberra

8 February 2018