



**Emma Cole**

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**CITY OF VINCENT**

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The Hon David Coleman MP  
Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs  
Email: [natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:natoceremonies@homeaffairs.gov.au)

Dear Minister Coleman,

**Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Australian Government's review of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code ('the Code').

On behalf of the City of Vincent, I provide the following comment in relation to the proposed changes.

Our experience of holding citizenship ceremonies in the City of Vincent is highly positive, inclusive and respectful. We place an emphasis on the importance of celebrating our multiculturalism and striving for reconciliation, which is always well received and appreciated by conferees and attendees.

From our perspective, the proposed changes appear to be solutions looking for problems that simply do not exist. They also add a layer of inflexibility and burden to local governments in seeking to work within their own community's needs and values and in managing other council business.

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

The City of Vincent does not support the proposed change to the Code to require local governments to hold citizenship ceremonies on 26 January and 17 September. It is important for local governments to be able to retain flexibility on setting ceremony dates. Considerations for local governments include other Council and business commitments, management of numbers of conferees. Importantly, local governments should also retain the ability to be responsive to their own community's values and wishes on matters such as reconciliation.



The City currently holds three to four citizenship ceremonies per year and has found that there is not a clear preference for attendance on 26 January. The table below shows the number of citizenship conferees per ceremony from January 2017 to present:

	26 January	April/May	July	September/October
2017	55	79	-	51
2018	45	43	40	38
2019	58			

There is not a high awareness of Citizenship Day in our community and given this is not a public holiday, it will not always be possible to accommodate this date. For example, 17 September 2019 falls on a Tuesday on which we have a Council Meeting scheduled. This would be a significant disruption to Council business.

Therefore, the City of Vincent believes that the responsibility for scheduling Citizenship Ceremonies should remain with Local Governments.

**2. Federal Members of Parliament, if attending a ceremony, should read the Minister's message at citizenship ceremonies.**

It is respected that it is a matter for the Federal Government to determine their representation at citizenship ceremonies. For the purposes of retaining a flexible approach, it would be preferable for a Federal Member of Parliament to be given first option to provide this representation where they are attending and wish to do so, but that this not be mandatory.

**3. 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.**

The City of Vincent believes that the emphasis should be on celebrating our diversity and multiculturalism. Setting dress standards is unnecessary and is not a reflection of a modern and inclusive Australia. If the Dress Code is included in the revised Code, it should stipulate that national or cultural dress is welcomed.

**4. Ceremonies must be scheduled to avoid Parliamentary sitting days.**

As a small, inner city Council in Perth, Western Australia we are geographically distant from Canberra and do not always have Federal Parliamentary representation at our citizenship ceremonies. Parliamentary sitting dates can change at short notice. It would be more practical to instead require Local Governments to consider the availability of Members of Parliament when scheduling ceremony dates.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Cole  
City of Vincent Mayor