

FACTS SHEET 1

Why register a domestic relationship in Victoria?

The *Relationships Act 2008* allows couples to apply to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages to register their domestic relationship in Victoria.

A domestic relationship that can be registered in Victoria is:

A relationship between two adult persons who are not married to each other but are a couple, where one or each provides personal and financial commitment and support of a domestic nature for the material benefit of the other (but not for fee or reward or on behalf of another person or organisation), irrespective of their genders and whether or not they are living under the same roof.

Both partners must be domiciled or ordinarily resident in Victoria and not in a relationship that is already registered in Victoria, in another domestic relationship or married.

The benefits of registering

The Relationships Register enables couples in domestic relationships who want the dignity of formal recognition of their relationship to register it, and to have the security of knowing that their decision to commit to a shared life with each other is respected in Victoria.

Current laws

Partners in domestic relationships are recognised in approximately 80 Victorian Acts. However, in order to access rights under those Acts, partners may still be required to prove that they are in a domestic relationship by presenting evidence about the nature of their relationship, such as the duration of their relationship, whether they own property together or whether a sexual relationship exists.

Conclusive proof of relationship

Registration will provide conclusive proof of a domestic relationship where such relationships are recognised under Victorian law. Partners in registered domestic relationships will not have to provide any further evidence to establish that their relationship exists. This will make it easier for couples to access their rights under Victorian law, for example, when discussing a partner's health information with a doctor in an emergency or when seeking compensation entitlements as a dependent partner.

A standard certificate of registration signed by the Registrar will provide evidence of a registered domestic relationship and no further evidence will be required to establish that their relationship exists.

Overcome eligibility requirements

For the purposes of some Acts, registration will also overcome other eligibility requirements that apply to unregistered domestic relationships, such as proving that a couple is living together or has been living together for a specified period of time.

Recognition under Commonwealth Law

Registration of a domestic relationship under the *Relationships Act 2008* will also be recognised for the purposes of Commonwealth legislation.

What if you do *not* register your domestic relationship?

Couples in domestic relationships who choose not to register their relationship will still need to prove that they are in a domestic relationship and meet additional eligibility requirements, where required, in order to access their rights and obligations under those Acts that recognise domestic relationships in Victoria.

Further information

For further information on how to register a domestic relationship in Victoria, please contact the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages:

- website: www.bdm.vic.gov.au
- general enquiries: 1300 369 367 (from within Australia)
- customer service centre: ground floor, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria (open 8.30am – 4.30pm: Monday-Friday except public holidays)
- postal address: PO Box 4332, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

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