



**THE HON ALEX HAWKE MP  
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND  
BORDER PROTECTION**

Ref No: MC17-013885

Cr Kim Le Cerf  
Her Worship Mayor of Darebin  
274 Gower Street  
PRESTON VIC 3072

Dear Mayor

I am writing in regard to a Herald Sun newspaper article dated 13 July 2017 which reported that the Darebin Council was considering a review of events commemorating Australia Day on January 26, in particular changing the date of the citizenship ceremony to coincide with possible alternative Australia Day celebrations.

I refer you to page 6 of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code (the Code) which states:

*"Citizenship ceremonies are non-commercial, apolitical, bipartisan and secular. They must not be used as forums for political, partisan or religious expression or for the distribution of material which could be perceived to be of a commercial, political or religious nature."*

Australian Citizenship ceremonies fulfil legal requirements prescribed by the *Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Act 2007* (the ACT) and the *Australian Citizenship Regulations 2007* (the Regulations). Citizenship ceremonies are conducted under the authority of the Australian Government Minister responsible for citizenship matters, which in this instance is the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, and myself.

I want to make the Government's position quite clear; you must not use your ability to preside over citizenship ceremonies, or determine the dates upon which they are held, to in any way de-legitimise Australia Day. Any action to do so would be a serious breach of the Code.

Additionally, if you were to continue to use a citizenship ceremony, or your ability to preside over one, as a promotional tool for an anti-national day event, I will consider this a serious breach of the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code, and will revoke authorisation from those persons in the City of Darebin who can currently receive the Pledge at citizenship ceremonies.

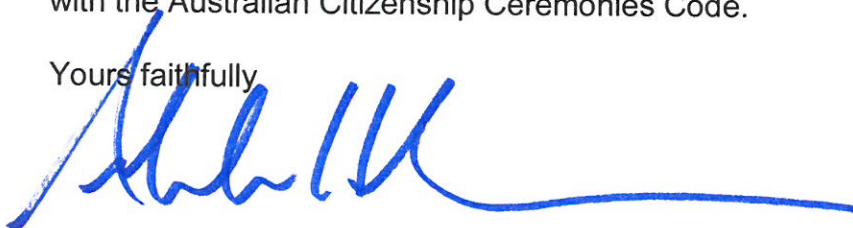
In particular, your public consideration of cancelling the Australia Day ceremony to hold a anti-Australia Day citizenship ceremony, in our opinion violates the code. If you continue to use your ability to preside over citizenship ceremonies as a promotional tool for an anti-Australia Day event, the government will consider further

action as appropriate. We would also consider ongoing politicization of citizenship by Darebin Council as a serious breach of the Code.

For the record, the Commonwealth Government's view is that our national day, Australia Day, 26 January, remains the most popular day for our newest citizens to attend citizenship ceremonies. Therefore, as long as Australia Day is celebrated on 26 January, this is a most appropriate date for a citizenship ceremony to take place.

I would be grateful if you would relay the Commonwealth Government's concerns to your Council and Councillors and our requirement that Council comply at all times with the Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex Hawke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

ALEX HAWKE

19 / 7 / 2017