

**RE: DOCUMENTS NOTARISED IN AUSTRALIA FOR PRODUCTION IN THE USA**

I am a practising Notary in the City of MELBOURNE, in the State of VICTORIA, in the Commonwealth of AUSTRALIA. Notaries in Victoria, Australia are senior Solicitors who, having been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Victoria, have later been admitted as a Public Notary in the same court.

There are approximately 20,000 practising Solicitors in the State of Victoria. Of these, approximately 130 are Notaries. In order to practise as a Notary, the Solicitor must hold a current Practising Certificate ("PC") issued by the Victorian Legal Services Board (VLSB). Access to the Register of current legal practitioners is via the VLSB website at <https://lsbc.vic.gov.au/>

Upon admission to the Supreme Court of Victoria as a Notary, he/she is required to provide a specimen signature and Official Notarial Seal to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ("DFAT").

After notarisation of a particular document, verification that the Notarial signature and Official Seal is sometimes required by people or authorities overseas who are relying on the notarised document. The type of verification that DFAT applies depends on whether or not the receiving country is a party to the *Hague Apostille Convention*. The USA is a party to this Convention - therefore some notarised documents may require an Apostille. An example of an Apostille stamp/certificate is attached. - **the affixation of DFAT's Apostille to a notarised document is confirmation of the authenticity of the Notary's signature and seal.**

**NOTE:**

1. An Apostille is obtained from DFAT's Australian Passports Office, not from the office of the Notary. Moreover, an Apostille is not a separate document to the notarised document – rather, an Apostille is **affixed** to a notarised document. Therefore, if a notarised document is sent overseas and once received an Apostille is said to be required, **the notarised document will have to be returned to Australia so that the Apostille can be affixed to it.** Therefore, where applicable, it is important that clients are advised by overseas authorities that an Apostille is required so as not to waste time and money.
2. There are 3 ways to obtain an Apostille where it is required for a particular notarised document: by **appointment**; by **mail**; and by paying an administration fee to the **OFFICE OF JOHN PEARCE & NOTARY PUBLIC** in order to obtain a fast-track Apostille.
3. **However, given the COVID-19 pandemic, the primary way at the moment to obtain an Apostille is BY MAIL.**
4. A Notary practising in Victoria, Australia does not have a "Registration Number". Rather, the affixation of the Apostille is confirmation of the authenticity of the Notary's signature and seal.