



Community Bulletin

INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORIES

Number: D28/25**Date:** 19 November 2025**Relevant:** Indian Ocean Territories residents**Topic:** Updates to IOT Legislation

The Australian Government has made several minor updates to the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) legislation to ensure local laws remain relevant, inclusive and aligned with national standards.

Following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, references to “the Queen” or “Her Majesty” in legislation have been updated to ‘the Sovereign’. These changes have been made through the IOT Legislation Amendment Ordinances (the Ordinances) to support longevity and continued relevance of local laws.

To better reflect the diversity of the IOT communities, the Australian Government has also amended provisions relating to oaths. References to ‘God’ in legislative text will now include wording that allows a person to name a god recognised by their faith. This supports people to continue to make a Christian oath if that is their choice, while also enabling people of other religious faiths to do so in a way that reflects their beliefs.

Additional amendments have also been made to support the effective administration of services in the territories:

- Local government classifications: Christmas Island is now classified as Class 3 local government, and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as Class 4. These classifications enable current and future regulation amendments by the Western Australian Government to flow through to the IOT Shire Councils.
- Technical updates: Minor revisions remove outdated or exclusionary language in the Administration Ordinance 1968 (CI) and Administration Ordinance 1975 (CKI), remove the requirement for Ordinances to be individually numbered and repeal obsolete Ordinances.

The Department consulted with the Administrator of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, along with relevant Australian and Western Australian government agencies, through the development of these amendments.

These changes, which came into effect today (on 19 November 2025), reflect the Government’s ongoing commitment to maintaining inclusive, modern and effective legislation for the Indian Ocean Territories.

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