

# CUSTOMER INFORMATION BULLETIN



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## DOLA SHIFT TO MIDLAND Update on Proposed Office of Titles Services

1. The Office of Titles, as part of DOLA, is to shift to Midland in late 1993.
2. There will be a DOLA "Shopfront" in the Central Business District, Perth.
3. The "Shopfront" office will continue to operate for as long as there is a demand for its services.

In November 1989, Cabinet decided that Department of Land Administration (DOLA) was to be relocated in Midland. This decision was made after considering many factors and gives effect to the Government's commitment to decentralisation. Other factors included:

- The desire of DOLA to bring together its various divisions in one, purpose-built building. DOLA is now spread over 9 separate locations.
- When DOLA sought and obtained significant Government funding for the Register 2000 project, it indicated that this new technology would make it possible for DOLA to be relocated outside the Central Business District.

### EFFECT ON OFFICE OF TITLES

To those who use the facilities of the Office of Titles the shift may seem inappropriate. The Office is centrally situated to the major settling houses and financial institutions. It is conveniently central to other departments also used by clients of this Office.

The Office, being conscious of its clients' concerns, has for several years, held regular liaison meetings with the Settlement Agents Association, Law Society Conveyancing Committee, Surveyors and more recently with representatives of the major Banks and Financial Institutions.

Concerns expressed by these groups have been addressed and where necessary new legislation will be put forward to overcome difficulties with effecting services required.

The Office of Titles at first envisaged that the full services now available would still be available in the Shopfront. However, the facilities and staffing required for this concept meant that a virtual second Office of Titles would be in place. Costs and staffing constraints means that while full searching will be possible, registration will have to be conducted at Midland.

### REGISTRATION - THE SOLUTION

One of the principles of registration is priority of lodgment - hence a time clock. Within 10 to 15 minutes of time clocking the Data Entry staff have entered details on the computer and the title is flagged. As a result, all searchers have rapid warning of a dealing lodged in the Office. This total function would have to be duplicated in Perth and Midland unless "Priority Notice" legislation is enacted.

#### What then is a "Priority Notice" and what is its effect?

The Land Titles Bill, still subject to public comment, proposes the concept of a priority notice, which has been successfully used in Tasmania. When a person or corporation gives the Registrar notice in the prescribed form, of the intention to register a dealing on a certificate of title, that certificate is held to the priority of that dealing for a specified period of days. The dealing takes priority over any other dealing lodged in that period.

At the end of that period the priority lapses and registration of subsequent dealings can proceed. The Bill indicated a period of 30 days as the maximum period for which priority could be reserved. With the acceptance of such legislation it can be seen that the current system of settlement can in fact be tightened to become much more secure. The present rush to the time clock, after check search and after settlement, can be removed.

It is also proposed that the documents themselves can be deposited in security bags in a collection area in the Shopfront and transported to Midland for time clocking and processing by Titles staff.

#### How then is payment of Registration fees to be effected?

As part of the Customer Accounting System development, Stage 2 is to be expanded to include registration fees. The amount payable will automatically be debited to the appropriate CAS account and processed in the usual way by monthly statement.

Clients not wishing to avail themselves of the "Priority Notice" and depositing in the Shopfront Collection system will be required to lodge their documentation in Midland. However, it is planned to implement the Priority Notice system well before relocation to ensure client familiarity and acceptance before the move.

**What about re-issue of documents and titles after registration?**

The issuing facility will be available in the Shopfront. Clients can instruct that the documents issue through any of the Office of Titles outlets be they Midland, Perth or Bunbury. Issue by post is also available.

**How are documents subject to requisition to be processed?**

The Stopped Document section will be in Midland. Consideration is being given to providing photocopies of requisitioned documents. At this stage, clients wishing to sight documents, subject to requisitions, will be required to attend Midland. Requests to amend documents can be faxed.

**SEARCHING**

Searching should not be greatly affected.

All indices will still be available in the Shopfront. A dedicated land line will be directly linked to the Midland based computer. A high speed printer will be in the Shopfront so that all requests for searches can be serviced in Perth as at present. The faxed back or post back requests will be serviced from Midland.

Searches are produced in black and white copies. Documents containing sketches referring to colours are held in secondary storage at present. A courier service is planned to accommodate requests to view the original when required. It is proposed to instal a courier service between Midland and Perth to cater for all necessary requirements.

Conveyancers preparing documents including sketches are now encouraged to use hachuring rather than colours to identify specific areas.

Surveyors who are extensive searchers of surveys may find it more appropriate to conduct searching in Midland, although self serve for graphics will be available at the Shopfront. Searches of original strata/plans/diagrams will require a visit to Midland.

**What about searching dealings in progress?**

The existing procedure can be continued by use of the courier service. Discussions are now being held on the possibilities of issuing photocopies of documents to satisfy progress enquiries.

It may be that a proposed Certificate as to the future state of the Register, after completion of the registration process, may satisfy the majority of these requests. The proposed Certificate is being developed in a bid to overcome the reluctance to use the "Follower" system for settlements. Discussion has been held with the Banking and Financial Institution Group.

Deeds Office searching will be in Midland. Where the number of the Memorial is known copies will be available in Perth.

**REGISTRATION/SURVEY ADVICE**

The Advice Officers will be located in Midland. As usual they will be available for consultation by phone or personal approach. An appointment would be advisable. Copies of documents (if any) under discussion can be faxed to Midland.

Enquirers will be advised to consult the Practice Manual and other Office of Titles information, or their own senior staff before making the trip to Midland.

**GENERAL**

Consultation with user groups will continue as DOLA refines its systems to accommodate client needs relative to the shift to Midland.

  
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