



SOIL SCIENCE  
AUSTRALIA

# Guide to Assessment of Eligibility for CPSS Competency in Contaminated Site Assessment and Management

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CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL  
SOIL SCIENTIST

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Eligibility for CPSS Competency in Contaminated Site Assessment and Management</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. The Competency Standards</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Preparing an application</b>	
4.1 Overall form of application	4
4.2 Preliminary self-evaluation of competency	4
4.3 Personal identification and proof of identification	4
4.4 Qualifications	4
4.5 Curriculum vitae details	5
4.6 Evidence of competency	5
4.7 Details of referees	5
4.8 Application fees	5
4.9 Lodgement of a completed CPSS application	6
<b>5. Checklist of material to be submitted</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Assessment procedure</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. CPSS Contaminated Site Assessment Panel</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8. Review of decision</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9. Ongoing certification</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>10. Complaints and conduct review procedure</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	
Certification of copies of documents	9

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Soil Science Australia provides suitably qualified members accreditation as Certified Professional Soil Scientists (CPSS). Accreditation as a CPSS requires applicants to satisfy the Standards for Professionals in Soil Science, comply with the Society's Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct, and demonstrate on-going professional development (OPD). The application process is rigorous with further details available in the Guide to Accreditation. The Standards for Professionals in Soil Science summarises the expectations for CPSS and can be found on the CPSS web url [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au).

The Federal Executive oversees the governance and operations of Soil Science Australia whilst the CPSS Board oversees the management of the certification programme. The CPSS board consists of between four and six members with backgrounds representing academia, consulting, research and government sectors. Soil Science Australia operates with a not-for-profit objective.

This guide is for persons seeking recognition as a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) competent in Contaminated Site Assessment and Management (CSAM). Applicants should complete the CPSS Application form for Competency in Contaminated Site Assessment and Management available from the downloads page of [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au) and ensure the application contains all of the required detail before it is submitted (including submission of a printed application form). Incomplete applications will not be assessed.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY FOR CPSS COMPETENCY IN CONTAMINATED SITE ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT (CSAM)

CPSS Accreditation Board has developed specialised competencies, which are only available to CPSS Accredited Soil Scientists.

The specialised competency in CSAM was developed in response to the requirements detailed in the National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999, as amended in 2013 (referred to hereafter as the NEPM). In Schedule B9 of the NEPM, environmental consultants should be able to demonstrate the requirements shown in Table 1 below; the combination of CPSS and CSAM achieves these requirements.

Applicants must demonstrate that they meet the minimum competency requirements as outlined in the CPSS Recognised Competencies for CSAM by the use of narratives and supporting evidence.

**Table 1: NEPM Schedule B9 Requirements compared with CPSS and CSAM Requirements**

NEPM Requirement	CPSS + CSAM Requirements
Qualifications	Tertiary Studies + Soil Science
Competencies in relevant field	CPSS Professional Practice Values and Practice of Soil Science
Experience in Site Assessment	CSAM Practice – 3 units
Knowledge of legislation and guidelines	CSAM Core Knowledge K-1
Knowledge of impact assessment literature	CSAM Core Knowledge K-6
Commitment to on-going training & development	25 hours in Soil Science + 50 hours in contaminated sites
Accreditation with Professional Society	CPSS

## 3. THE COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Soil Science Australia publishes and maintains the CPSS Recognised Competencies for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management, which can be found at the url: [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au).

The CPSS Competencies for CSAM recognise a level of ability in contaminated site assessment which involves a combination of core scientific knowledge and technical skills. The CSAM Competency document contains two sections: 1) Core Knowledge, and 2) Practice of Contaminated Site Assessment and Management.

The first section, Core Knowledge for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management, contains one skill set listing six competencies. All applicants are expected to meet all the knowledge requirements in this section.

The second section, Practice of Contaminated Site Assessment and Management, contains three skill sets; Planning, Investigation, and Interpretation, each comprising between 6 and 8 competencies. Applicants are encouraged to provide evidence for every skill set in the Practice of for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management, and required to satisfy a minimum of 80% of individual competencies.

## 4. PREPARING AN APPLICATION

### 4.1 Overall form of application

Your soil science qualifications and competencies can be assessed by preparing and submitting an application, which must include:

- a) Proof of identity including a passport style photograph.\*
- b) Documentation of all your qualification/s including the degree or diploma testamur/s or certificate/s, and academic transcript/s listing the courses, subjects or units studied and the results you gained in each subject.\*
- c) A Curriculum Vitae (CV) including an outline of any soil science employment history. This may include employment or contaminated land experience undertaken before, during and since your formal qualification/s. A chronological listing with employer and task is preferred to major project listing.\*
- d) Evidence of competency addressing the Recognised Competencies for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management.
- e) Details of people that can provide a reference on your ability as a soil scientist competent with providing advice on contaminated sites.
- f) Evidence of your English-language competency.\*
- g) A printed and signed declaration that the application is your own work and that the information it contains is true and correct, and that you agree to comply with the Code of Ethics and the Rules of Conduct, must be posted to the CPSS Federal Office.

\* This piece of evidence may be omitted if you have already supplied it for a recent CPSS accreditation. (Contact the CPSS Office if you are not certain about this).

All documents (except the hardcopy certifications) must be submitted in A4 size electronically via the CPSS web site ([www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au)). Note that applications must be complete when lodged (not lodged in instalments). Further information and/or evidence may be required by the Board to support your application. Additional information may include, but is not restricted to, project reports and/or signed statements by supervisors.

The following pages explain these requirements more fully.

\* This part of the application may be omitted if you have supplied it already for a recent CPSS accreditation.

### 4.2 Preliminary self-evaluation of competency

Before starting to prepare the application, you should read carefully the competency requirements and you should apply for assessment on the basis that you can satisfy them.

### 4.3 Personal identification and proof of identification

(REF:Application page 2: Applicant Details, Proof of Identification and Applicant Declaration)

Identification must include full name, date of birth and a passport-style photograph of the applicant. Preferred personal identification format is a certified true copy of your passport bio-data page, Australian driver's licence or Official Identity Document. Where these are not available, a certified copy of your Birth Certificate and a certified passport-style photograph may be accepted.

### 4.4 Qualification details

(REF:Application page 3: Educational qualifications)

You must provide certified true copies of your original degree or diploma qualifications, together with the associated academic transcript/s showing courses, subjects or units studied and the results gained in each. If you have more than one qualification that you believe is relevant, please provide the above details for each one. Examples might be an undergraduate degree in a non-soil science (but soil science-related) field, plus a masters degree in soil science field/discipline; or an advanced diploma followed by a graduate diploma in soil science. If available, please provide extracts from university, college or other handbooks giving brief descriptions of the courses, subjects or units you have studied. Information on certification of copies of documents is appended.

Where qualifications are not in the English language you must provide copies of both the original language document and a certified English-language translation. The name and contact details of the translator must be provided on the English-language version.

If your current name is not the same as on the original documents you must provide evidence of your name change.

## 4.5 Curriculum vitae

(REF:Application page 3: Curriculum vitae and publications list)

You must provide a Curriculum Vitae (CV) covering your employment experience since completing your undergraduate studies to date. The CV may also include contaminated site experience gained prior to your current qualification or concurrently with it. For each soil science appointment you have held, please include:

- the name, location and contact details of the employing organisation
- the dates and duration of your employment in this appointment
- the title of the position you held
- your defined role and responsibilities.

Publications included in your CV should be set out in Harvard Style.

## 4.6 Evidence of competency

(REF:Application pages 3: Evidence of Competency)

You must address the CPSS Recognised Competencies for CSAM by providing documentation and supporting information demonstrating how you have satisfied each competency listed in the document Certified Professional Soil Scientist Recognised Competencies for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management. This can be a URL, reference or link to a document. Further instructions are in the application guide. Applicants need to satisfy all of the skill sets listed in this section.

## 4.7 Details of referees

(REF:Application pages 5: Referees)

All applications must provide details for four professional referees. Prior to submitting your application please contact your referees to ensure they consent to completing a referee report for you.

Referees are required to;

- provide an objective evaluation of your skills and competency as an environmental consultant in site contamination
- respond to the request for a referee report in a timely manner, and
- be working as a CPSS, an EPA-accredited auditor, or at equivalent professional expertise level.

The CPSS Federal Office will email a referee report request form to the persons you nominate. No more than one referees should be from your workplace and at least one referee should be CPSS accredited.

## 4.8 Application fees

The schedule of fees for CPSS applications is available on the CPSS website, [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au). Please note that the application fee for competency in CSAM must be paid prior to submitting the application and all applicants must be financial members of Soil Science Australia. No application will be assessed without payment, which can be arranged by email request to [membership@soilscienceaustralia.org](mailto:membership@soilscienceaustralia.org).

Please attach proof of payment by forwarding the receipt issued by the Society with your application.

Applications must be lodged in the calendar year the payment is made, otherwise payment may be forfeited.

If the application is successful you will be listed as competent in contaminated site assessment and management on the CPSS register of professionals. There is no pro rata payment of the accreditation fee. You will be expected to submit an OPD diary annually with 50 hours in contaminated land work and an additional 25 hours in general soil science OPD to maintain your competency.

The application fee is not refundable.

## 4.9 Lodgement of a completed CPSS application

(REF:Application page 6: Lodgement)

Two separate lodgements (one through website, the other as hard copy) are required with every application for competency in CSAM.

The electronic copy of the application form along with all supporting documentation should be submitted online via the CPSS application system available on the web site at [www.cpss.com.au](http://www.cpss.com.au). Please note that all files must be uploaded in PDF format.

A printed copy of pages 2 and 3 providing your personal details and proof of identity (photograph), certified academic statements and a signed declaration that the report submitted is entirely your own work and that all the information it contains is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, must be sent as a hard copy to the CPSS federal office: Soil Science Australia, PO Box 737 PROSPECT EAST, SA 5082.

## 5. CHECKLIST OF MATERIAL TO BE SUBMITTED

Please ensure that you have completed the application form and provided all documentary evidence required. The list below provides numbers in parentheses that refer to the relevant Section of this Guide.

- Completed application form including
  - signed declaration (4.1)
  - personal identification including a passport style photograph (4.3)
  - evidence of competencies (4.6)
  - contact details of your referees (4.7)
- Certified true copies of academic testamur/s or certificate/s (4.4)
- Certified true copies of academic transcripts, showing courses, subjects or units studied and results gained in each (4.4)
- Curriculum vitae (4.5)
- Proof of payment of the CPSS fees (4.8)

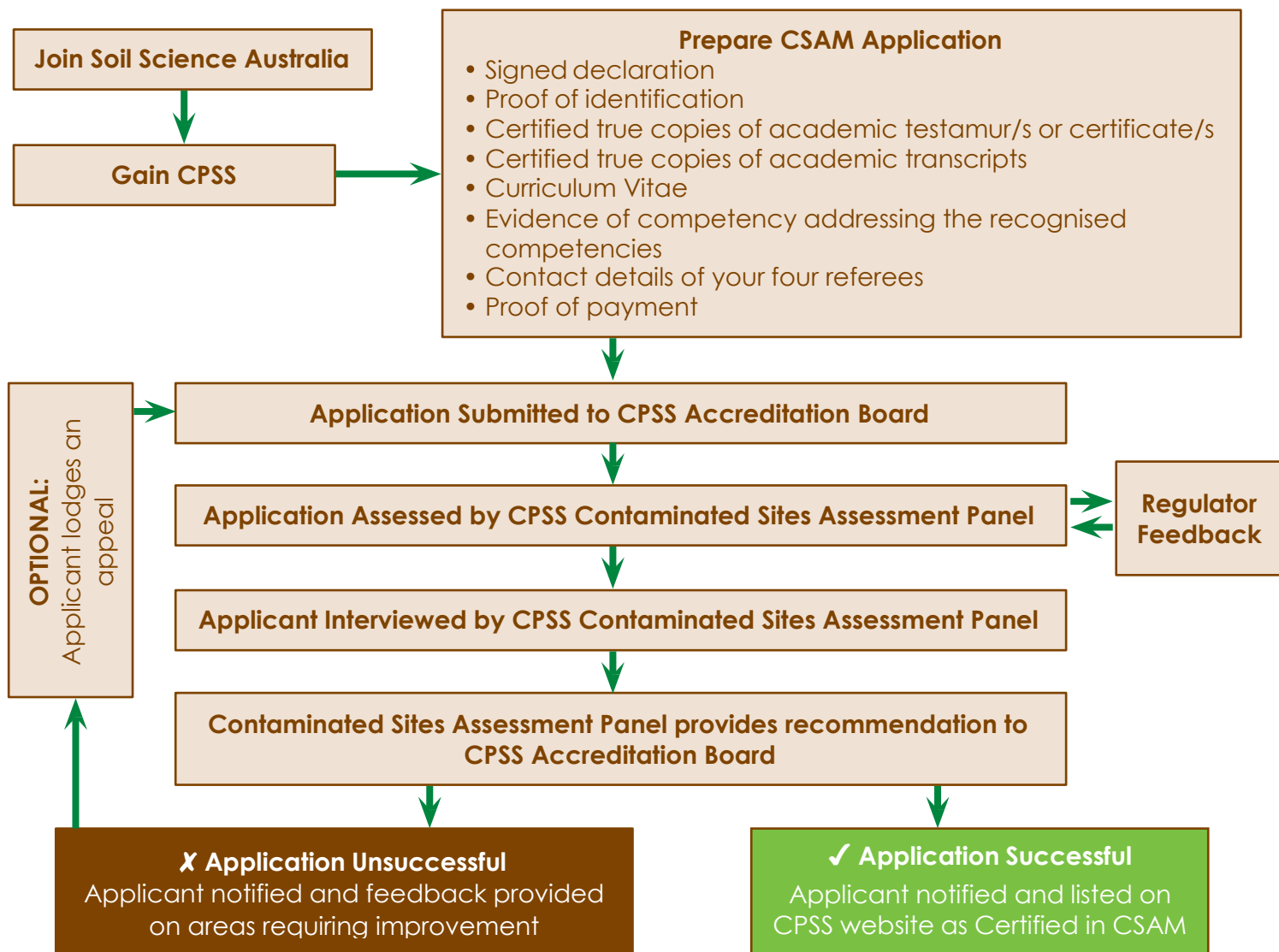
## 6. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

A summary of the assessment procedure is presented in Figure 1. On receipt of an application the CPSS Contaminated Site Assessment Panel will commence a review of the application and may ask a candidate to provide more information, if necessary. Soil Science Australia reserves the right to seek confirmation of particular information. It may, for example, seek confirmation from your university, college or other educational institution, that the details of your qualification/s are correct. Soil Science Australia will not approach your employers or other third parties without first seeking your permission.

Regulators in each state will be notified of practitioners applying for certification and may provide advice to the executive officer if they have any important information relating to a practitioner, which needs to be considered in the certification process. It is envisaged that such a response will only occur in the case of substantial or sustained shortcomings of which a regulator has experienced.

Upon review of the application the candidate will be requested to attend an interview with one or more assessors. Assessment will be made by the CPSS Contaminated Site Assessment Panel which will review the application and recommend to the CPSS Board whether the applicant has demonstrated competency and eligibility in contaminated site assessment and management. Recommendations from the Contaminated Site Assessment Panel will be considered by the CPSS Board.

You will be advised of the outcome that your application has been assessed as demonstrating, or not demonstrating, competency and eligibility for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management by the Soil Science Australia CPSS accreditation board. If your application is unsuccessful you will be provided with feedback on the areas where you have failed to demonstrate competency at the required level.



## 7. CPSS CONTAMINATED SITE ASSESSMENT PANEL

Assessors will be appointed by the CPSS Board of Soil Science Australia and assessment panels will be constituted from the available assessors. Assessment panels will comprise of three members and will change from time to time to achieve a mix of interests, expertise and geographical representation. The pool will include EPA-accredited auditors in site contamination and others who have obtained accreditation as a CPSS with specialised competency in CSAM.

## 8. REVIEW OF DECISION

If you believe you have been unfairly treated in the assessment of your application then you may appeal the decision. Your appeal should be addressed in writing to the Chair of the CPSS Board and submitted to the federal office of Soil Science Australia. All appeals will be considered in accordance with the Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated and are summarised below.

If you appeal the assessment decision you should understand that all necessary documentation from your file will be copied and forwarded to an Appeals Committee. Under Australian Privacy Legislation your permission is required for this to happen. Your signature on your letter appealing the assessment decision will be taken as denoting your consent for your file documents to be forwarded to the Appeals Committee.

The CPSS Appeals Committee will comprise the Federal President, the Chair of the CPSS Board, and an accredited CPSS selected by the President. The Appeals Committee will be constituted when an appeal is lodged with the CPSS Board and disbanded after the Appeal is heard. The CPSS Appeals Committee meeting must give due consideration to any written or oral representations submitted to the Board by that Member at or prior to the meeting and determine whether to confirm or to revoke the action of the CPSS Board.

The CPSS Administrator will, by notice in writing, inform the CPSS Member of the decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee. The decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee shall be final.



## **9. ONGOING CERTIFICATION**

CPSS are recognised by their professional body as professionals who continually expand their knowledge and skills throughout their career by seeking professional development opportunities. As such, scientists with CPSS-CSAM accreditation are required to demonstrate they undertake a minimum of 75 hours of on-going professional development annually over a 3-year period, and spread across the various competencies and skill sets. For scientists with CPSS-CSAM accreditation, a minimum of 50 hours of the annual, on-going professional development must be related to your competencies as a practitioner in the field of contaminated land.

## **10. COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT REVIEW PROCEDURE**

Soil Science Australia requires CPSS to conduct their activities according to the Society's Code of Ethics and Rules of Conduct. Instances where practitioners may have contravened the code or rules may be reported to the CPSS board, which will coordinate an investigation in accordance with the Rules of the Australian Society of Soil Science Incorporated and summarised below.

### **10.1 Notification**

Notification of a complaint should be made by providing a confidential written submission outlining the name of the CPSS and sufficient details of the complaint to enable a thorough investigation.

### **10.2 Initial review**

Where the CPSS Board is of the opinion that a Member has refused or neglected to comply with a provision of the CPSS accreditation program or has acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the CPSS accreditation program, the Board may revoke the accreditation or suspend the Member from such rights and privileges of CPSS accreditation as the Board may determine.

Where the Board approves action the Secretary of the Board shall, as soon as practicable, cause a notice in writing to be served on the Member setting out the action of the CPSS Board and the grounds on which it is based; and informing the Member that the Member may either attend and speak, or submit written representation at a CPSS Appeals Committee meeting relating to the action taken by the Board.

### **10.3 Further review**

The CPSS Appeals Committee will comprise the Federal President, the Chair of the CPSS Board and an accredited CPSS selected by the President.

The Appeals Committee will be constituted when an appeal is lodged with the CPSS Board and disbanded after the Appeal is heard. The CPSS Appeals Committee meeting must give due consideration to any written or oral representations submitted to the Board by that Member at or prior to the meeting and determine whether to confirm or to revoke the action of the CPSS Board.

### **10.4 Communication of outcome**

The Secretary to the CPSS Board will, by notice in writing, inform the Member of the decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee. The decision of the CPSS Appeals Committee shall be final. The CPSS Board will also provide notification of termination of CSAM accreditation of the practitioner to state Regulators.

The CPSS board will prepare an annual statement of the reviews conducted and the outcomes, for publication on the program's website. The annual summary will provide summary information only and will not include the names of individuals or organisations.

### **10.5 Reporting**

The CPSS board will maintain a confidential register of all notifications and their outcomes and will provide an annual report to Soil Science Australia Federal Executive.



## Appendix: Certification of copies of documents

Applicants should note the following points concerning certification of documents:

- 1) Certified copies of previously certified copies will not be accepted. You must provide a properly certified copy of the original document.
- 2) Proper certification will appear on each page to be certified and should show:
  - a) the signature of the person certifying the document.
  - b) the name of the person certifying the document. This should be clearly printed or evident in the official stamp.
  - c) the address of the person certifying the document.
  - d) the phone number and if possible the email address of the person certifying the document.
  - e) where possible an official stamp indicating the status of the person certifying the document, i.e. Justice of the Peace, Commissioner for Oaths, Notary Public, or indicating the name of the law firm.
- 3) The following classes of persons are authorised to certify copies of documents:
  - a) Certified Professional Soil Scientists.
  - b) Other persons:
    - Agent of the Australian Postal Corporation who is in charge of an office supplying postal services to the public;
    - Australian Consular Officer, or Australian Diplomatic Officer, (within the meaning of the Consular Fees Act 1955);
    - Bailiff;
    - Bank Officer with 5 or more continuous years of service;
    - Fellow of the National Tax Accounts Association;
    - Finance company officer with 5 or more years of continuous service;
    - Holder of a statutory office not specified in another item in this Part;
    - Judge, or Master, of a court;
    - Justice of the Peace;
    - Magistrate;
    - Member of the Association of Taxation and Management Accountants;
    - Member of the Australian Defence Force who is an officer, or a non-commissioned officer within the meaning of the Defence Forces Discipline Act 1982 with 5 or more years of continuous service, or a warrant officer within the meaning of this act;
    - Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants of the National Institute of Accountants;
    - Member of the Institute of Corporate Managers Secretaries and Administrators;
    - Member of the Parliament of the Commonwealth, or the Parliament of a State, or a Territory legislature, or a local government authority of a State or Territory;
    - Minister of Religion registered under Division 1 of Part IV of the Marriage Act 1961;
    - Notary public;
    - Permanent employee of a Commonwealth or of a Commonwealth Authority, or a State or Territory or of a State or Territory Authority, or a local government authority, with 5 or more years of continuous service who is not specified in another item in this Part;
    - Police Officer;
    - Permanent employee of the Australian Postal Corporation with 5 or more years of continuous service who is employed in an office supplying postal services to the public;
    - Person before whom a statutory declaration may be made under the law of the State or Territory, or of a Commonwealth, State or Territory Authority;
    - Sheriff or Sheriff's officer; or
    - Teacher employed on a full-time basis at a school or tertiary education institution.
  - c) Persons Authorised Overseas
    - An officer of an Australian Diplomatic Post;
    - A Notary Public authorised in the country of application;
    - A Commissioner for Oaths (Declarations) authorised in the country of application;
    - A Solicitor, Barrister or Judge authorised in Australia or in the country of application; or
    - A Justice of the Peace authorised in Australia or in the country of application.