

# THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

No. 78 of 1979

## AN ACT

To abolish the dependent domicile of married women and otherwise to reform the law relating to domicile

[Assented to 13 July 1979]

**B**E it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory of Australia, with the assent as provided by the *Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978* of the Commonwealth, as follows:

1. This Act may be cited as the Domicile Act 1979.

Citation

2. This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Administrator by notice published in the Gazette.

Commence-  
ment

3. In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears -

Interpret-  
ation

"Commonwealth of Australia" means the territory comprising the States and the Australian Capital Territory, the Jervis Bay Territory and the Northern Territory of Australia;

"country" includes any state, province or other territory -

(a) that is one of 2 or more territories that together form a country; and

(b) domicile in which can be material for any purpose of the laws of the Territory;

"union" means any country that is a union or federation or other aggregation of 2 or more countries and includes the Commonwealth of Australia.

4.(1) The domicile of a person at a time before the commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had not been enacted.

Operation of  
Act

(2) The domicile of a person at a time after the commencement of this Act shall be determined as if this Act had always been in force.

Domicile

(3) Nothing in this Act affects the jurisdiction of any court in any proceedings commenced before the commencement of this Act.

(4) This Act has effect to the exclusion of the application of the laws of any other country relating to any matter dealt with by this Act.

Married  
women

5. The rule of law whereby a married woman has at all times the domicile of her husband is abolished.

Domicile  
of  
origin

6. The rule of law whereby the domicile of origin revives upon the abandonment of a domicile of choice without the acquisition of a new domicile of choice is abolished and the domicile a person has at any time continues until he acquires a different domicile.

Capacity  
for  
independent  
domicile

7.(1) A person is capable of having an independent domicile if -

(a) he has attained the age of 18 years; or

(b) he is or has at any time been married,

and not otherwise.

(2) Sub-section (1) does not apply to a person who, under the rules of law relating to domicile, is incapable of acquiring a domicile by reason of mental incapacity.

Domicile  
of  
certain  
children

8.(1) In this section -

(a) "child" means a person under the age of 18 years who is not, and has not at any time been, married; and

(b) references to the parents of a child include references to parents who are not married to each other.

(2) Where, at any time, a child has his principal home with one of his parents but his parents are living separately and apart or the child does not have another living parent, the domicile of the child at that time is the domicile that that parent has at that time and thereafter the child has the domicile that that parent has from time to time or, if that parent has died, the domicile that that parent had at the time of death.

Domicile

- (3) Where a child is adopted, his domicile -
- (a) if, upon his adoption, he has 2 parents - is, at the time of the adoption and thereafter, the domicile he would have if he were a child born in wedlock to those parents; and
  - (b) if, upon his adoption, he has one parent only - is, at the time of the adoption, the domicile of that parent and thereafter is the domicile that that parent has from time to time or, if that parent had died, the domicile that that parent had at the time of death.

(4) A child ceases to have, by virtue of sub-section (2), the domicile or last domicile of one of his parents if -

- (a) he commences to have his principal home with his other parent; or
- (b) his parents resume or commence living together.

(5) Where a child has a domicile by virtue of sub-section (2) or (3) immediately before he ceases to be a child, he retains that domicile until he acquires a domicile of choice.

(6) Where the adoption of a child is rescinded, the domicile of the child shall thereafter be determined in accordance with any provisions with respect to that domicile that are included in the order rescinding the adoption and, so far as no such provision is applicable, as if the adoption had not taken place.

9. The intention that a person must have in order to acquire a domicile of choice in a country is the intention to make his home indefinitely in that country.

Domicile of choice

10. A person who is, in accordance with the rules of the common law as modified by this Act, domiciled in a union but is not, apart from this section, domiciled in any particular one of the countries that together form the union is domiciled in that one of those countries with which he has for the time being the closest connection.

Domicile in a union

11. The acquisition of a domicile of choice in place of a domicile of origin may be established by evidence that would be sufficient to establish the domicile of choice if the previous domicile had also been a domicile of choice.

Evidence of acquisition of domicile of choice