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Version No. 022
Charities Act 1978
Act No. 9227/1978

Version incorporating amendments as at 30 November 2005

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Version No. 022
Charities Act 1978

Act No. 9227/1978

Version incorporating amendments as at 30 November 2005

An Act to amend the Law relating to Charities and for other
purposes.

**BE it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty by and
with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and
the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in this present
Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as
follows (that is to say):**

1. Short title and commencement

- (1) This Act may be cited as the **Charities Act 1978**.
- (2) The several provisions of this Act shall come into operation on a day or the respective days to be fixed by proclamation or successive proclamations of the Governor in Council published in the Government Gazette.

1A. Definitions

In this Act—

"eligible property" means property given for charitable purposes where the total value of the corpus of the property—

- (a) is less than \$500 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater; or

S. 1A
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 2,
substituted by
No. 11/2005
s. 4.

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s. 1A

- (b) does not exceed \$50 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater and the property is given for specific charitable purposes which fail;

"the court" means the Supreme Court.

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Part I—The Application of the Cy Près Doctrine to Charities

s. 2

**PART I—THE APPLICATION OF THE CY PRÈS DOCTRINE
TO CHARITIES**

2. Occasions for applying property cy près

- (1) Subject to sub-section (2), the circumstances in which the original purposes of a charitable gift can be altered to allow the property given or part of it to be applied cy près shall be as follows—
- (a) where the original purposes, in whole or in part—
 - (i) have been as far as may be fulfilled; or
 - (ii) cannot be carried out, or not according to the directions given and to the spirit of the gift; or
 - (b) where the original purposes provide a use for part only of the property available by virtue of the gift; or
 - (c) where the property available by virtue of the gift and other property applicable for similar purposes can be more effectively used in conjunction, and to that end can suitably, regard being had to the spirit of the gift, be made applicable to common purposes; or
 - (d) where the original purposes were laid down by reference to an area which then was but has since ceased to be a unit for some other purpose, or by reference to a class of persons or to an area which has for any reason since ceased to be suitable, regard being had to the spirit of the gift, or to be practical in administering the gift; or
 - (e) where the original purposes, in whole or in part, have, since they were laid down—

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- (i) been adequately provided for by other means; or
- (ii) ceased, as being useless or harmful to the community or for other reasons, to be in law charitable; or
- (iii) ceased in any other way to provide a suitable and effective method of using the property available by virtue of the gift, regard being had to the spirit of the gift.

(2) Sub-section (1) shall not affect the conditions which must be satisfied in order that property given for charitable purposes may be applied cy près, except in so far as those conditions require a failure of the original purposes.

S. 2(3)
amended by
No. 66/1998
s. 15(1).

(3) References in this section to the original purposes of a gift shall be construed, where the application of the property given has been altered or regulated by a scheme, by or under an Act or otherwise, as referring to the purposes for which the property is for the time being applicable.

(4) It is hereby declared that a trust for charitable purposes places a trustee under a duty, where the case permits and requires the property or some part of it to be applied cy près, to secure its effective use for charity by taking steps to enable it to be so applied.

S. 2(5)
inserted by
No. 66/1998
s. 15(2).

(5) This section applies to an alteration or regulation by or under an Act of the original purposes of a gift made before, on or after the commencement of section 15(1) of the **Health Services (Further Amendment) Act 1998**.

3. Application cy près of gifts of donors unknown or disclaiming

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- (1) Property given for specific charitable purposes which fail shall be applicable cy près as if given with a general charitable intention, where it has been given—
 - (a) by a donor who, after such advertisements and inquiries as are reasonable, cannot be identified or cannot be found; or
 - (b) by a donor who has executed a written disclaimer of his right to have the property returned.
 - (2) For the purposes of this section property shall be conclusively presumed (without any advertisement or inquiry) to have been given by donors who cannot be identified, in so far as it consists—
 - (a) of the proceeds of cash collections made by means of collecting boxes or by other means not adapted for distinguishing one gift from another; or
 - (b) of the proceeds of any lottery, competition, entertainment, sale or similar money-raising activity, after allowing for property given to provide prizes or articles for sale or otherwise to enable the activity to be undertaken.
 - (3) The court may by order direct that property not falling within sub-section (2) shall for the purposes of this section be treated (without any advertisement or inquiry) as having been given by donors who cannot be identified, where it appears to the court either—
 - (a) that it would be unreasonable, having regard to the amounts likely to be returned to the donors, to incur expense with a view to returning the property; or
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- (b) that it would be unreasonable, having regard to the nature, circumstances and amount of the gifts, and to the lapse of time since the gifts were made, for the donors to expect the property to be returned.
- (4) Where property is applied cy près by virtue of this section, the donor shall be deemed to have parted with all his interest at the time when the gift was made; but where property is so applied as having been given by donors who cannot be identified or cannot be found, and is not so applied by virtue of sub-section (2) or (3)—
 - (a) the scheme shall specify the total amount of that property; and
 - (b) the donor of any part of that amount shall be entitled, if he makes a claim not later than twelve months after the date on which the scheme is made, to recover from the charity for which the property is applied a sum equal to that part, less any expenses properly incurred by the charity trustees after that date in connexion with claims relating to his gift; and
 - (c) the scheme may include directions as to the provision to be made for meeting any such claim.
- (5) For the purposes of this section, charitable purposes shall be deemed to "fail" where any difficulty in applying property to those purposes makes that property or the part not applicable cy près available to be returned to the donors.
- (6) In this section, except in so far as the context otherwise requires, references to a donor include persons claiming through or under the original donor, and references to property given include the property for the time being representing the

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property originally given or property derived from it.

- (7) This section shall apply to property given for charitable purposes, notwithstanding that it was so given before the commencement of this Act.

4. Power of Attorney-General to sanction schemes

- (1) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes where—
- S. 4(1)
amended by
Nos 16/1986
s. 31(a),
11/2005
s. 5(1)(c).
- (a) the total value of the corpus of the property is less than \$500 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater; or
- S. 4(1)(a)
substituted by
No. 16/1986
s. 31(b),
amended by
No. 11/2005
s. 5(1)(a).
- (b) the total value of the corpus of the property does not exceed \$50 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater, and the property is given for specific charitable purposes which fail—
- S. 4(1)(b)
substituted by
No. 16/1986
s. 31(b),
amended by
No. 11/2005
s. 5(1)(b).
- may (in lieu of making application to the court) in writing and upon payment of the relevant prescribed fee (if any) apply to the Attorney-General for directions for the application of such property cy près.
- (2) Upon receiving any application the Attorney-General may make such investigations and inquiries as he thinks fit and may require the trustees to furnish such information, opinions or advice as he thinks fit.
- (3) Where the Attorney-General is satisfied either—
- (a) that—
- S. 4(3)(a)
substituted by
No. 16/1986
s. 31(c).
- (i) the property was given for charitable

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purposes and may pursuant to section 2 or 3 be applied cy près; and

S. 4(3)(a)(ii)
amended by
No. 11/2005
s. 5(2)(a).

- (ii) the total value of the corpus of the property is less than \$500 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater; or

(b) that—

S. 4(3)(b)(ii)
substituted by
No. 16/1986
s. 31(d),
amended by
No. 11/2005
s. 5(2)(b).

- (i) such property was given for specific charitable purposes which fail; and
- (ii) the total value of the corpus of the property does not exceed \$50 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater; and

- (iii) unless the Attorney-General considers it would be unreasonable to require the applicant to incur expense with a view to identifying or locating the person or persons who would be entitled to the property but for the operation of this section, the consent of the person or persons so entitled has been obtained—

he may in his absolute discretion and subject to such provisions and conditions (if any) as he thinks fit—

- (c) sanction any scheme proposed by the trustees for the application cy près of such property; and

- (d) authorize the sale transfer conversion or vesting of any such property by the trustees notwithstanding that the trustees have no such power pursuant to the trust instrument.

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- (4) The Attorney-General shall not by virtue of this section—
- (a) have any greater powers than are exercisable by the court in charity proceedings; or
 - (b) have power to try or determine—
 - (i) the title at law or in equity to any property as between a charity or trustee for a charity and a person holding or claiming the property or an interest in it adversely to the charity;
 - (ii) any question as to the existence or extent of any charge or trust;
 - (iii) any dispute as to whether the trustees are trustees of a charitable trust; or
 - (iv) any dispute as to whether the property may be applied cy près pursuant to section 2 or 3.
- (5) In any case where the Attorney-General in accordance with sub-section (2) sanctions any scheme or gives any authority the trustees shall not thereafter be subject to any liability for breach of trust arising solely from their application of property cy près in accordance with such scheme or authority.

4A. Governor in Council may increase monetary limits

Subject to section 4B, the Governor in Council, by Order published in the Government Gazette, may increase the monetary limits set out in section 4 or 5.

S. 4A
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 6.

4B. Tabling before Parliament and disallowance

- (1) The Attorney-General must cause a copy of an Order made under section 4A to be laid before

S. 4B
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 6.

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s. 4B

each House of the Parliament within 10 sitting days after the Order is published in the Government Gazette.

- (2) An Order made under section 4A may be disallowed by resolution of a House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days after the Order is tabled under sub-section (1).
- (3) If an Order made under section 4A is not disallowed under sub-section (2), the Order takes effect on the later of—
 - (a) the date specified in the Order; or
 - (b) the date which is the day after the expiry of the period for disallowance under sub-section (2).
- (4) If an Order made under section 4A is disallowed under sub-section (2), the Clerk of the Parliaments must cause notice of the disallowance to be published in the Government Gazette.

5. Power of Attorney-General to give opinions etc.

S. 5(1)
amended by
Nos 16/1986
s. 31(e),
11/2005
s. 5(3).

- (1) The trustees of property given for charitable purposes, the total value of which is the corpus of which is less than \$500 000 or an amount fixed under section 4A, whichever is the greater may, in writing and upon payment of the prescribed fee (if any), apply to the Attorney-General for the opinion or advice of the Attorney-General on any matter affecting the performance of the duties of the trustees as such.
- (2) Upon receiving any application the Attorney-General may make such investigations and inquiries as he thinks fit and may require the trustees to furnish such information, opinions or advice as he thinks fit.

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- (3) A trustee acting in accordance with the opinion or advice of the Attorney-General given under this section with respect to the charity shall be deemed as regards his responsibility for so acting, to have acted in accordance with his trust, unless, when he does so, either—
- (a) he knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that the opinion or advice was given in ignorance of material facts; or
 - (b) the decision of the court has been obtained on the matter or proceedings are pending to obtain a decision.

6. Payment by trustees to charitable institutions

- (1) Subject to any express provision to the contrary in the trust instrument, the receipt in writing of the treasurer or other proper officer for the time being of any charitable institution association or other body shall be a sufficient discharge for any payment of money or transfer of property thereto pursuant to a trust instrument and trustees making any such payment or transfer shall not be concerned to inquire as to the application of any money paid or property transferred.
- (2) The provisions of sub-section (1) shall not apply to any trust instrument executed before the commencement of this section.

7. Regulations

- (1) The Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—
- (a) prescribing forms for applications made under this Act;

S. 7
amended by
No. 11/2005
s. 7(IIA
s. 39B(1)).

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S. 7(b)
amended by
No. 16/1986
s. 31(f).

(b) prescribing fees for applications made under this Act;

(c) generally, all such matters and things as are authorized or permitted to be prescribed or are necessary or expedient to be prescribed for carrying this Act into effect.

S. 7(2)
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 7.

(2) Regulations made under this Act—

(a) may be of general or limited application;

(b) may differ according to differences in time, place or circumstances;

(c) in the case of regulations prescribing fees under sub-section (1)(b), may provide for fees calculated on a sliding scale.

S. 7A
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 8.

7A. Transitional provision—Charities (Amendment) Act 2005

The amendments to sections 4 and 5 made by the **Charities (Amendment) Act 2005** apply in respect of any application under either of those sections on or after the commencement section 5 of that Act.

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Part IA—Approval for Investment in Common Funds

s. 7B

PART IA—APPROVAL FOR INVESTMENT IN COMMON FUNDS

Pt 1A
(Heading and
ss 7B–7I)
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

7B. Powers of trustees under this Part

S. 7B
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

- (1) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies may—
 - (a) establish one or more investment common funds for the collective investment of that property held by or in the custody of the trustees;
 - (b) invest that property held by or in the custody of the trustees in one or more investment common funds.
- (2) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies, from time to time without liability for breach of trust, may bring into or withdraw from any investment common fund the whole or any part of that property, despite any direction to the contrary (whether express or implied) contained in the trust instrument.
- (3) Subject to sub-section (4), the trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies must periodically distribute the income of each investment common fund among the trusts participating in the common fund, having regard to the extent of the participation by each trust in the common fund during the relevant accounting period.

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s. 7B

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- (4) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies, if they consider it expedient to do so, may, from time to time—
- (a) add some portion of the income of the common fund to the capital of the common fund; or
 - (b) use some part of the income to establish or augment a fund or funds as a provision against capital depreciation or reduction of income.
- (5) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies may, out of the annual income of a trust in an investment common fund, periodically deduct an amount not exceeding 5% of that annual income as commission for the administration of that trust.
- (6) The commission deducted in accordance with sub-section (5) is to be received and accepted by the trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies as full payment to them for the costs of administration of the trust in an investment common fund.
- (7) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies must not make any other charges on a trust in an investment common fund in addition to the commission received under sub-section (6), except in accordance with the trust instrument.

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Part IA—Approval for Investment in Common Funds

s. 7C

7C. Powers under this Part subject to provisions and conditions of Order or approval

S. 7C
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

The powers under section 7B of trustees of any property given for charitable purposes in respect of which this Part applies must be exercised in accordance with the Order of the court or the Attorney-General's approval given under this Part, including any provisions or conditions to which that Order or approval is subject, as the case requires.

7D. Application to court

S. 7D
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

- (1) The trustees of any property given for charitable purposes may apply to the court for an Order that this Part applies to those trustees in respect of that property.
- (2) An application under sub-section (1) must specify the property or individual trusts or class of property or trusts to which this Part is to apply.
- (3) On an application under this section, the court, if satisfied that it is appropriate in the circumstances for this Part to apply to those trustees in respect of that property, may make an Order that this Part applies, subject to any provisions or conditions in that Order that the court considers appropriate.

7E. Powers of court do not derogate from other powers

S. 7E
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

The powers of the court under this Part are in addition to, and not in derogation of, any powers exercisable by the court in charity proceedings.

7F. Application to Attorney-General in respect of eligible property

S. 7F
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

- (1) In lieu of making application to the court (under this Part or otherwise), the trustees of any eligible property may apply to the Attorney-General for

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approval that this Part applies to those trustees in respect of that property.

(2) An application under this section must—

- (a) be in writing; and
- (b) specify the eligible property or class of eligible property to which this Part is to apply; and
- (c) be accompanied by the relevant prescribed fee.

S. 7G
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

7G. Attorney-General may make investigations

On receiving an application under section 7F, the Attorney-General—

- (a) may make such investigations and inquiries as the Attorney-General thinks fit; and
- (b) may require the trustees to furnish such information, opinions or advice as the Attorney-General thinks fit.

S. 7H
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.

7H. Attorney-General may approve application of Part

- (1) The Attorney-General, in his or her absolute discretion, may approve an application made under section 7F if the Attorney-General is satisfied that it is appropriate in the circumstances for this Part to apply to those trustees in respect of the eligible property.
- (2) An approval under this section—
 - (a) may be subject to any provisions and conditions that the Attorney-General thinks fit; and
 - (b) may authorise the investment of the eligible property in common funds by the trustees, despite the trustees having no such power pursuant to the relevant trust instrument.

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s. 7I

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- (3) The Attorney-General does not, by virtue of this Part, have any greater powers than are exercisable by the court in charity proceedings.
 - (4) In any case where the Attorney-General approves the application of this Part in respect of trustees of eligible property, the trustees are not subject to any liability for breach of trust arising solely from their investment of that eligible property in common funds, in accordance with this Part.

7I. Part continues to apply if corpus exceeds initial limits

**S. 7I
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 9.**

If the Attorney-General, under section 7H, has approved the application of this Part to trustees in respect of property given for charitable purposes which is eligible property at the time of that approval, this Part continues to apply despite the total value of the corpus of that property subsequently exceeding the relevant amount specified in the definition of "eligible property".

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Part II—Supervision of Charities

s. 8

Pt 2 (Heading
and ss 8–17)
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.
S. 8
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

PART II—SUPERVISION OF CHARITIES

8. Definitions

In this Part unless inconsistent with the context or subject-matter—

"charitable estate" means an estate of a deceased person where, when the administration of the estate is complete—

- (a) a charity will be entitled to participate in the distribution of the assets of the estate; or
- (b) the whole or any part of the estate is to be used for the establishment of a charity;

"charity" means any institution which is established for purposes which according to the law of Victoria are charitable;

"document" has the same meaning as in the **Evidence Act 1958**;

"executor" includes an administrator of the estate of a deceased person;

"institution" means any trust or other undertaking whether corporate or unincorporate.

S. 9
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

9. Method of conducting inquiry

(1) The Attorney-General may—

- (a) of his own motion; or
- (b) upon the application of another person—

appoint an inspector to inquire (in the manner specified in the inspector's terms of appointment) into the administration or management of any charity or charitable estate or the value, condition,

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Part II—Supervision of Charities

s. 9A

management or application of the property or income belonging to that charity or charitable estate or to which that charity or charitable estate is or will become entitled.

- (2) Where an application is made under paragraph (b) of sub-section (1) the applicant shall—
- (a) furnish such information in connexion with the application as the Attorney-General requires to enable him to determine whether there are reasonable grounds for making the inquiry; and
 - (b) where the Attorney-General so requires give security of such amount and in such manner as he determines for payment of the expenses of and incidental to the inquiry.

9A. Attorney-General may require information

S. 9A
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 10.

- (1) The Attorney-General may require the trustees of a charity to give him or her any information that the Attorney-General considers necessary to determine whether an inquiry under this Part should be conducted.
- (2) The Attorney-General must make the requirement in a written notice that—
 - (a) identifies the information; and
 - (b) specifies—
 - (i) by when the requirement must be complied with, being a period of not less than one month; and
 - (ii) in what form the information is to be given to the Attorney-General.

9B. Offence to fail to comply with requirement

A person must comply with any requirement

S. 9B
inserted by
No. 11/2005
s. 10.

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s. 9B

made by the Attorney-General under section 9A, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

Penalty: 60 penalty units.

S. 10
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

10. Powers of inspector

- (1) The inspector, for the purposes of conducting an inquiry under section 9, shall have and may exercise in respect of the summoning and examining of persons and the production of documents the same powers as are by the **Evidence Act 1958** conferred on a board appointed by the Governor in Council and the provisions of sections 14 to 16 of the **Evidence Act 1958** with such adaptations as are necessary shall apply accordingly.
- (2) Where any documents are produced under sub-section (1) the inspector may take possession of those documents for the period he considers necessary for the purposes of the inquiry.
- (3) A person examined under sub-section (1) shall not be excused from answering a question put to him by the inspector on the ground that the answer might tend to incriminate him but, where that person claims before answering that question, that the answer might tend to incriminate him, neither the question nor the answer is admissible in evidence against him in criminal proceedings other than proceedings under this section or in relation to a charge of perjury in respect of the answer.
- (4) An inspector may permit a document which is in his possession to be inspected at all reasonable

S. 10(3)
amended by
No. 74/2000
s. 3(Sch. 1
item 17).

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s. 11

times by any person who would be entitled to inspect that document if it were not in his possession.

11. Record of examination

S. 11
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

- (1) An inspector may cause an examination made by him under section 10 to be recorded in writing or by means of shorthand, a stenotype machine or recording apparatus.
- (2) Where an examination has been recorded other than in writing the inspector shall cause the record of that examination to be transcribed into writing.
- (3) The inspector shall cause the record of the examination to be read to or by the person examined and he may request that person to sign that record.
- (4) Where a person does not comply with a request to sign under sub-section (3) the inspector may certify that the record of the examination is correct.
- (5) The record of an examination which has been either signed by the person examined or certified by the inspector to be correct may, subject to this section, be used in evidence in any legal proceedings against that person.
- (6) A copy of the record signed by a person shall be furnished without charge to that person upon request made by him in writing.
- (7) Any part of a record of an examination made under this section that relates to a question the answer to which a person has claimed might tend to incriminate him shall not be used as evidence in criminal proceedings other than in proceedings under section 10 or in relation to a charge of perjury in respect of that answer.

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- (8) Nothing in this section affects or limits the admissibility of other written or oral evidence.
- (9) Where a report is made under section 12 a record of an examination made under this section relating to that report shall be furnished with the report.

S. 12
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

12. Report

- (1) Where an inspector has completed an inquiry he shall prepare a report which shall be forwarded to the Attorney-General.
- (2) An inspector may at any time during the progress of the investigation and shall if so directed by the Attorney-General make an interim report to the Attorney-General.
- (3) An inspector may when making a report under this section, give to the Attorney-General any documents which he has taken possession of under sub-section (2) of section 10 and the Attorney-General—
 - (a) may retain the documents for such period as he considers to be necessary to enable a decision to be made as to whether or not any legal proceedings ought to be instituted in relation to the charity or charitable estate;
 - (b) may retain the documents for such further period as he considers to be necessary to enable any such proceedings to be instituted and prosecuted;
 - (c) may permit other persons to inspect the documents while they are in his possession;
 - (d) may permit the use of the documents for the purposes of any legal proceedings;

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- (e) shall permit a person who would be entitled to inspect any one or more of the documents if they were not in the possession of the Attorney-General to inspect at all reasonable times such of the documents as that person would be so entitled to inspect.
- (4) The Attorney-General may where he thinks fit forward any report made under this section—
 - (a) to the charity or to the executor of any charitable estate to which the report relates; and
 - (b) to any other person having an interest in the outcome of the inquiry where that person has requested that the report be forwarded to him.

13. Court may order removal of trustee or executor

S. 13
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

In addition to any other powers which the court has with respect to charities or charitable estates the court may where an inspector has reported that a trustee of a charity or the executor of a charitable estate should be removed from his position as trustee or executor order the removal of the trustee or executor.

14. Power to delegate

S. 14
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

- (1) An inspector may by instrument in writing delegate all or any of his powers or functions under this Part other than—
 - (a) the power to administer oaths; or
 - (b) the power to examine on oath.
- (2) The inspector may by instrument in writing vary or revoke a delegation made by him.
- (3) A power or function delegated by an inspector shall be exercised or performed in accordance with the instrument of delegation.

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- (4) The delegation of a power or function by the inspector does not prevent the exercise of that power or the performance of that function by the inspector.
- (5) A delegate shall, on the request of a trustee of a charity or the executor of a charitable estate, the affairs of which are being inquired into under this Part, produce the instrument of delegation for inspection.
- (6) Where two or more inspectors have been appointed, whether by the same instrument or by different instruments, to investigate the affairs of a charity or charitable estate, each of those inspectors may exercise his powers or perform his functions under this Part independently of the other inspector or inspectors.

S. 15
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

15. Costs

- (1) Where an inquiry has been carried out under this Part the Attorney-General may determine the costs of conducting that inquiry (including any expenses incurred and payable by the Attorney-General in any proceedings brought by him) and may—
 - (a) apply to the court for an order that those costs or any part of them be paid by any trustee of the charity or any executor of the charitable estate which was the subject of the inquiry;
 - (b) direct that the costs or any part of them should be paid from the funds of the charity or charitable estate which was the subject of the inquiry; or
 - (c) direct that, in the case of a person who has given security for costs under section 9(2)(b), the costs or any part of them be paid by that person.

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- (2) Where an application has been made under sub-section (1)(a) the court may—
- (a) make an order in the terms sought by the Attorney-General; or
 - (b) where it considers it just and equitable to do so vary the order as it sees fit.

16. Offence

S. 16
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

- (1) A person who—
- (a) conceals, destroys, mutilates or alters any of the documents which have been or may be required to be produced under this Part; or
 - (b) sends, causes to be sent or conspires with another person to send out of the State any of those documents—

shall be guilty of an offence.

- (2) An offence against sub-section (1) is an indictable offence the penalty in respect of which is a term of imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.
- (3) Notwithstanding that an offence against sub-section (1) is an indictable offence, the Magistrates' Court may hear and determine proceedings for an offence against sub-section (1) if the court is satisfied that it is proper to do so and where the court convicts a person of an offence against sub-section (1) that person shall be liable to a penalty of a term of imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years.
- (4) In a prosecution for an offence under sub-section (1) it is a defence if the person charged with the offence proves that he did not act with intent to defeat the purposes of this Part or to delay or obstruct the carrying out of an inquiry under this Part.

S. 16(3)
amended by
No. 57/1989
s. 3(Sch.
item 21).

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S. 17
inserted by
No. 9710 s. 3.

S. 17(1)
amended by
No. 9902
s. 2(1)(Sch.
item 10).

17. Exemption from Part

- (1) The Attorney-General may only appoint an inspector to inquire into—

- (a) a registered benevolent society;
- (b) an incorporated institution; or
- (c) a scheduled hospital—

within the meaning of the **Hospitals and Charities Act 1958** where he has first obtained the consent of the Minister of Health.

S. 17(2)
amended by
No. 9902
s. 2(1)(Sch.
item 11).

- (2) Notwithstanding sub-section (1) where the Attorney-General has under section 9 appointed an inspector to inquire into the affairs of a charity (other than a body which is of a type specified in sub-section (1)) the inspector may summon or examine pursuant to section 10 any person who is involved in the management of or employed by a body which is of a type specified in sub-section (1) or require any person who is involved in the management of or employed by a body which is of a type specified in sub-section (1) to produce documents, and for the purposes of summoning or examining that person or requiring those documents to be produced the inspector shall have and may exercise all the powers conferred on him by this Part.

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ENDNOTES

1. General Information

The **Charities Act 1978** was assented to on 19 December 1978 and came into operation as follows:

Sections 2, 3 on 9 May 1979: Government Gazette 9 May 1979 page 1352;
rest of Act on 1 September 1979: Government Gazette 15 August 1979
page 2547.

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Endnotes

2. Table of Amendments

This Version incorporates amendments made to the **Charities Act 1978** by Acts and subordinate instruments.

Charities (Amendment) Act 1981, No. 9710

Assent Date: 5.1.82
Commencement Date: 5.1.82
Current State: All of Act in operation

Statute Law Revision Act 1983, No. 9902

Assent Date: 15.6.83
Commencement Date: 15.6.83: subject to s. 2(2)
Current State: All of Act in operation

Courts Amendment Act 1989, No. 16/1986

Assent Date: 22.4.86
Commencement Date: Ss 1–11, 13–27, 29–34 on 1.7.86: Government Gazette 25.6.86 p. 2180; s. 28 on 1.9.86: Government Gazette 27.8.86 p. 3201; s. 12 on 1.1.88: Government Gazette 7.10.87 p. 2701
Current State: All of Act in operation

Magistrates' Court (Consequential Amendments) Act 1989, No. 57/1989

Assent Date: 14.6.89
Commencement Date: S. 4(1)(a)–(e)(2) on 1.9.89: Government Gazette 30.8.89 p. 2210; rest of Act on 1.9.90: Government Gazette 25.7.90 p. 2217
Current State: All of Act in operation

Health Services (Further Amendment) Act 1998, No. 66/1998

Assent Date: 4.11.98
Commencement Date: S. 15 on 4.11.98: s. 2(1)
Current State: This information relates only to the provision/s amending the **Charities Act 1978**

Statute Law Revision Act 2000, No. 74/2000

Assent Date: 21.11.00
Commencement Date: S. 3(Sch. 1 item 17) on 22.11.00: s. 2(1)
Current State: This information relates only to the provision/s amending the **Charities Act 1978**

Charities (Amendment) Act 2005, No. 11/2005

Assent Date: 10.5.05
Commencement Date: 30.11.05: s. 2(2)
Current State: All of Act in operation

3. Explanatory Details

No entries at date of publication.