



**eNews – December 17, 2021**  
**Communication to STEP members in Alberta**

**RE: Alberta Law Reform Institute Consultation**

On behalf of the Chair of STEP Calgary, Kenneth Keung, and the Chair of STEP Edmonton, Salvatore Amelio, please follow the link below to access a communication from the Alberta Law Reform Institute (ALRI) regarding their recommendations for reform of Alberta's *Dower Act*.

The *Dower Act* protects a spouse if the couple's home is owned by the other spouse. It applies to a "homestead" which is a parcel of land where the owner lives or has lived.

The *Dower Act* became law in Alberta over one hundred years ago. The last substantial reforms were in 1948. The Alberta Law Reform Institute's (ALRI) research and consultation shows that the *Dower Act* functions largely as intended, but it is outdated and has not kept up with social or legal realities.

ALRI is reviewing several issues including the exclusion of Adult Interdependent Partners (common-law partners) as well as outdated and unclear language. Two ALRI reports: *Dower Act: Consent to Disposition*; and *Dower Act: Life Estate* can be accessed through the link.

The ALRI invites feedback from STEP members on the proposed policy options addressed in the reports. A link to the brief 10-15 minute consultation is included in their communication.

<https://step.ca/downloads/memberservices/DowerAct.pdf>

Kenneth Keung, TEP  
Chair, STEP Calgary

Salvatore Amelio, TEP  
Chair, STEP Edmonton

**About STEP:** The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners is the leading international organization for trust and estates professionals. Headquartered in London, England, it has more than 22,000 members worldwide in 100 over countries.

**STEP Canada**, founded in 1998, has over 3,000 members with branches in the following cities and regions: Atlantic, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and chapters in Okanagan Valley, Saskatchewan, and Southwestern Ontario. STEP is a multi-disciplinary organization with the most experienced and senior practitioners in the field, including: lawyers, accountants, financial planners, insurance advisors and trust professionals. They provide domestic and international advice on trust and estates, including planning, administration and related taxes.

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