

## THE AUSTRALIAN

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# Indian man paid more than \$30,000 for Aussie 'wife'

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Chetan Mohanlal Mashru. Picture: Jack Tran Source: News Limited

**An Indian man says he paid more than \$30,000 to enter an arranged marriage with an Australian woman he'd never met after his student visa expired.**

Pradeep Singh told the Brisbane Magistrates Court he paid Chetan Mohanlal Mashru \$5000 in cash to arrange the union and paid about \$29,000 over two years to his "wife", Josie Haig.

Indian-born former migration agent Mashru and marriage celebrant Divya Krishne Gowda, both 35, are facing a committal hearing charged with 17 counts each of arranging a marriage for a visa in 2011 and 2012.

Mashru is also charged with 23 counts of influencing a public official and 19 counts of delivering false information.

Mr Singh told the third day of the hearing that when his bid to extend his Australian student visa was rejected in 2010, a friend told him Mashru could help.

He said he paid his bride, Ms Haig, \$5000 upfront when he met her for the first time at Mashru's house.

"I paid some money in cash and some into her account," he said.

Mr Singh successfully applied for a partner visa in mid-2011. He told the court he paid Ms

Haig \$1000 per month for about two years after their marriage until immigration department investigators came knocking.

Several women have testified to being paid thousands of dollars to sign marriage documents at an Oxley property in Brisbane's southwest.

Witness Teneille Eliot said she later returned to the home in a bid to "get out of" the marriage.

"I was told that I'd have to wait some time before I can get a divorce," she told the court.

The hearing is expected to wrap up this afternoon before Magistrate John McGrath rules whether there is sufficient evidence to commit the accused pair to trial.

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