

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

25th April 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Inquiry into the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013

As an Authorized Civil Celebrant based in North Queensland I write in relation to the abovementioned and I thank you for this opportunity.

I believe that a registration fee is just one small matter in all of this and that we will probably go on to have to accept should it be introduced on 1 July 2013. To charge the fee annually certainly implies that our appointment is good for just one year. If this is indeed the case, then there is no point in any Celebrant accepting a Notice of Intended Marriage (Form 13) more than 12 months in advance of a marrying couples' intended wedding date. The uncertainty surrounding one's appointment must surely be felt to be like always being on probation. When I was appointed I felt very proud and believed that my appointment was for life unless I chose to resign or I was found to be negligent in the performance of my duties and obligations as a Civil Celebrant. I felt proud and at the same time humbled that I had been entrusted to uphold the institution of marriage as recognised by law in Australia. Marriage is recognised as one of the most important and joyous events in the lives of the couple to be wedded. It seems that with this burning desire to over govern this profession, we are detracting from the true value of the morals and the stability that marriage represents.

I would imagine that every Celebrant in Australia recognises that the large number of appointed Celebrants has decreased their incomes, some more than others, perhaps dependent on location and nearby population. Either way, regardless of how many weddings a Celebrant may officiate in the course of any given year, the necessary outlays to maintain a high standard within the profession, I believe is fairly much the same. Like any business, no two years will yield the same volume of business and so I say it would be most unfair to rule that a Celebrant must perform a certain number of ceremonies in order to keep their appointment. I agree that it is vital to comply with appropriate OPD and network where possible with colleagues, and by whatever other means, to maintain a high professional standard. In North Queensland I am privileged to have access to a number of very experienced and well respected Celebrants whom I can contact should I need to.

I agree with introducing the acceptance and presentation of a current Australian Passport documenting date and place of birth for our marrying couples as an adequate form of I.D. as presumably full birth certificates were submitted to the Australian Passport Office at the time of application of such Passport.

I value my appointment as a Civil Celebrant and so it concerns me greatly that with the proposed introduction of a Celebrant having to perform a designated number of ceremonies within the course of 12 months, that we will see Celebrants undercutting one another in order to meet such criteria.

The begging question then is, will this undermine the credibility of our profession to the marrying public and will standards be sacrificed?? Every day, somewhere near us, someone faces uncertainty about their future and mostly we all have to deal with such challenges.

As a Civil Celebrant I look forward to keeping my appointment for a long time to come.

Yours faithfully

Civil Celebrant