

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

25th April 2013

Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and The Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above Amendments.

I do support the proposal to introduce an Annual Celebrant Registration Charge for all 'for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants', from 1 July 2013. I support these changes because I firmly believe in the principles of 'user pays' and 'market forces'; and hopefully the proposed improvement in services to Commonwealth registered Celebrants.

There has been much discussion regarding the "excessive number of celebrants currently registered". While the introduction of a registration fee may reduce numbers, I do not support the argument (proffered by some) that the introduction of a registration fee will improve the professionalism, performance and quality of the service provided by currently registered Commonwealth celebrants. As a former educator, CEO and quality assurance consultant, with many years of experience, I have found the most effective way to improve performance and professionalism is through education and training.

I have written several times to successive Attorneys' General, urging the 'decision makers' to set a minimum standard of training for ALL Commonwealth registered celebrants. This would require all current Commonwealth registered Celebrants to attain the level of Certificate IV (the current minimum level for incoming celebrants) within an approved time frame eg 3 years. Subsequent changes to the minimum standard, for example to a Diploma level, would have the same requirement. Most 'professions' apply a minimum standard of training/education eg teachers, nurses etc, with the requirement to update as minimum qualifications change. This is professionalism.

Additionally I support:

- *The proposal to introduce an application fee for new celebrants.*
- *The proposal to repeal Clause 1 Section 39E as I do not support the principal of 'artificial capping'.*
- *The proposal contained in Clause 2 Subsections 39H(1) and (2) of the introduction of performance reviews when necessary rather than at a prescribed period.*
- *The proposal for the inclusion of an Australian Passport as an acceptable proof of date and place of birth.*

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond,

Yours sincerely,