



Diane Knevitt  
Civil Marriage Celebrant



To;  
The Committee Secretary  
Commonwealth Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Canberra ACT 2600

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

Thank you for accepting my submission to the proposed changes to the governance of the Marriage Celebrant Program via the above Bills.

I was registered as a Marriage in 2005 after a Yeronga Brisbane Tafe course (CHCMCEL401A Plan, Conduct and Review a Marriage Ceremony). I haven't done a lot of ceremonies but the ceremonies I have done are beautifully conducted and I invested in an expensive sound system so that all guests can hear. It has cost me a lot for stationary and sundries apart from the sound system – I really haven't made a profit yet but I love what I do and I provide a wonderful start to married life for many people. I do ceremonies for friends and family that just cover the costs. I live on the Gold Coast and there is an abundance of celebrants – too many – and the cost of advertising is beyond my means. I am continuously studying my profession and this is a constant expense for books and stationary. I know it has been said that an annual fee will mean a reduction in the number of practicing celebrants but I fear we will lose a lot of good ones as well.



I do NOT support the payment of indexed annual fees. We are Commonwealth Public Officers and provide valuable legal marriage solemnization services to the community on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia. Imagine the uproar if all public servants had to pay an annual fee to fund their departments!

I do support introducing a fee for new Celebrants though not so high that it doesn't take into account the set up expenses which run into the thousands if you are to do the job properly.

COCA's suggestion to charge fees by getting couples to purchase a stamp from Australia Post seems a much fairer way of cost recovery. If all of the 121,000 marrying couples were required to get a marriage license after they have filled in the Notice of Intended Marriage with the celebrant for an amount of 40 to 50 dollars it would raise \$6 million at least for the MCLS without taking it from struggling celebrants.

I know you may say that some celebrants are not struggling but I know a few who do a lot of ceremonies but they also spend a lot of money on advertising and promotion. This annual fee is unfair to all of us!

Thank you for the opportunity to have my say about this. I hope the Senators are taking into account that we are voters!

Yours sincerely,

Diane Knevitt  
CMC