



23 April 2013

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs Committee  
P.O. Box 6100  
Parliament House Canberra ACT

**Re: Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Legal & Constitutional Affairs  
Inquiry into the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013  
And the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013**

As the Alliance of Celebrants Queensland Inc. (ACQ) we represent over 200 members in Queensland. We are members of the Coalition of Celebrants Association Inc. (CoCA) whose mission is to engage effectively with the Attorney-General, the Attorney-General's Department and to represent the marriage celebrant community on matters relating to the Marriage Celebrants Program.

We agree with the submission put forward by CoCA to the Senate and current sitting Senators, in particular, our Association would like to highlight the following:

1. For the Attorney General's Department to reintroduce the limiting of all new appointments of celebrants to halt the significant increase of celebrants of the past to be regionally based. Australia currently has over 10,500 Commonwealth appointed celebrants, 23,500 ministers of religion and 500 State employed Marriage celebrants for only 121,700 marriages that took place in Australia in 2011 (Attorney General's Department website). Of 70% of these, 121,700 weddings were conducted by Commonwealth appointed celebrants however, due to the increased number of celebrants, the average number of weddings officiated per celebrant is averaged at only seven (7) per year.
2. The Alliance of Celebrants Queensland Inc. supports the Amendment to the Australian Marriage Act 1961 Part IV Division 2 Sub-paragraph 42 to **add an Australian passport as evident of the date and place of birth of the party seeking to marry** as a passport is acceptable under the Guidelines 4.1.7 for persons born overseas to use as proof and evidence of their date and place of birth as well as proof of identity.
3. **Our Association does not support any cost recovery methods as presented in the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 or the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013** on the grounds that it is only targeting one sector of celebrants that being categorised as C. Commonwealth-registered marriage

celebrants (who are registered under Subdivision C of Division 1 of Part IV of the Act) and does not include celebrants in categories A. as ministers of religion or B. State and Territory Officers under the Guidelines on the Marriage Act 1961 for marriage celebrants.

However, if cost recovery measures are to be introduced our Association supports the alternative to these abovementioned Fees and Charges in the Bills as outlined in the CoCA submission as the peak advisory body to the Department in the following order:

- a) Increase the cost of the standard registered Marriage certificate to ALL marrying couples applying for this as issued currently by the registering authority in the States and Territories of Australia in which the marriage was solemnised & the funds raised distributed proportionately between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories *OR*;
  - b) The introduction of the marriage registration fee stamp sold to ALL marrying couples via Canprint and/or Australia Post that couples provide to their chosen celebrant prior to the marriage solemnisation for use on the Notice of Intended Marriage form (Form 13) with the funds raised distributed proportionately between the Commonwealth and the States/Territories *OR*;
  - c) The introduction of a payment to be made every five (5) years due and payable on the five (5) year review by all three (3) categories of celebrants to be charged no more than \$100 every five (5) years *OR*;
  - d) The introduction of a payment by all Commonwealth registered celebrants a fee of no more than \$250 due and payable on the five (5) year review to be phased in regionally across Australia.
4. Our Association opposes the proposed exemptions except on genuine grounds of ill health or residing overseas, not on postcodes.
  5. Require all Commonwealth marriage celebrants be a member of an Association in line with other professions for advice and support on the delivery of a ceremony.
  6. Encourage all marriage celebrants to contact their Association, their State or Territory Births, Deaths & Marriages then the Marriage Law and Celebrants Section for advice based upon the Guidelines on the Marriage Act 1961.

Regards

**Helen Murray**  
**President on behalf of**  
**Alliance of Celebrants Queensland Inc. (ACQ)**

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