



10th April,2013

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
P>O> Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Response to Marriage Amendment Bills 2013 Senate Inquiry

Dear Sir or Madam,

I have before me a copy of COCA- Coalition of Celebrant Associations- Campaign and I support this campaign totally; "when a fence is serving a purpose, don't pull it down." A marriage celebrant always asks themselves when will they cut even with costs.

What I am opposed to is any additional burdening costs for the marriage celebrant, who has personally outlayed a considerable cost for initial training, books, equipment, materials and ongoing professional development.

What you should have done in the past, present and for the future established a quota system for incoming celebrants. I think it is bad policy not to have done this in the first place.( Established Celebrants to be replaced after death or retirement etc.). It has caused an over supply of celebrants. It has made it hard for a professional and competent celebrant to compete for busines. I have just heard from a celebrant who has advertised for work in the yellow pages for the past 5 years now says she is quitting. She said the half a dozen clients she gets, barely pays for the advertisement each year. This is a genuine case. How is anyone expected to make a livelihood in this instance.I am looking forward to delivering my first wedding service in five years, next Saturday.

It just appears to me that the government has shown they need the revenue to create more government jobs ( i.e. an employment increase of 7 to 12). Please don't add further costs for the celebrant especially a celebrant that hasn't been fortunate enough to get more than a wedding a year. You might think you are weeding out the incompetent but in fact you are weeding out the established celebrants. Why should celebrants have to pay the government for a registration fee and be more out of pocket, just to help create jobs that are not necessary. This is a typical Labour party ploy. The service the celebrants have received to date are adequate. They have access to information and help when needed.

Should you go ahead with this registration fee, of \$600.00 for joining. and \$260.00 for established celebrants(it is my wish you don't) and collect thousands of dollars from celebrants, the government should give something back to the celebrants for instance; an Insurance Indemnity Policy, against error or misfortune. This should already be an established criteria.

For your consideration:

- (1) Setting up a quota system for marriage celebrants .
- 2) Abolish the government proposal for all Celebrants fees

It is hoped you will consider my suggestions

Yours faithfully,  
Heather Blackstock MC