

Greentree Ceremonies

Philip Greentree CMC, OMIEAust, MACS, MAMC, MFCAA

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**The Laird of
Glencrannog**



The Druid

Ref: ceremony_2013.0003

10 April, 2013

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

I am writing in relation to the changes being made to the Civil Celebrants program and the legislation contained in the two Marriage Amendment Bills 2013. I have been a Celebrant for almost 10-years.

These bills appear to have not been "thought through" properly.

The bills seem to ignore non-civil celebrants, eg, court appointed celebrants (court registrars etc) and religious celebrants **neither** of whom are obliged to undergo annual training as are Civil Celebrants. The court appointed celebrants also are **not** obliged to pay the new annual celebrants fee and are not subject to performance reviews as Civil Celebrants are. This is a serious issue that needs attention. We (Civil Celebrants) will be paying the fees – but, to be blunt, getting "shafted" by carrying the cost load.

There is also no indication in the bill as to what benefits will be provided to celebrants & marrying couples as a result of this legislation.

With respect to the proposed new "annual fee" – we (celebrants) have been advised by the A-G's dept that the fee would be \$240 – but the proposed legislation indicates \$600?? Personally though, I do believe that the fee should be in the order of \$600-\$1000 as a rationalisation in celebrant numbers is demonstrably required with celebrant numbers having risen from 2,500 to 11,500 in the space of a few short years, which is just ridiculous.

In fact, the national average is 6.1 marriages per celebrant annually. Given the number of better "celebrants" who perform more than that average it is easy to understand that many celebrants perform no weddings and maintain their status for no other reason than being able to say "I am a marriage celebrant". The cost load this must impose on the Marriage Celebrant's Section in maintaining the Register of Celebrants must be significant.

Equally, these celebrants are not only highly inexperienced but can never hope to

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become experienced, there are simply too many of them. For their clients, when they succeed in attracting them, the results can be worse than disappointing.

As a celebrant, I urge the Committee to:

(i) look at wider celebrants (eg court appointed and religious) in terms of Ongoing Professional Development and the annual fees, as opposed to merely penalising the Civil Celebrants; and

(ii) set the annual fee at not less than \$600.

I remain respectfully yours

PHILIP GREENTREE CMC., CEng., OMIEAust., MACS., ABIA., MAMC..