

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

**April 12, 2013**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a relatively newly appointed Civil Celebrant, having been registered in March 2011. With some 2 years experience behind me, I now realise that this is an industry in some turmoil, with an exponential growth in celebrant numbers, and a very crowded market.

I have heard varying figures regarding income opportunities but it seems that, on average, celebrants only perform some 5 or 6 weddings a year. In my case, the average has been higher than that but still below 20 weddings a year.

I am quite clear that it is very difficult to 'make a living' as a celebrant with all manner of costs quickly whittling away what might be deemed as profit (advertising, insurance, equipment costs, professional association membership, travel costs, stationery, clothing maintenance etc.).

I've determined that I require at least 5 or 6 weddings annually to simply break even, and I'm sure most celebrants would have a similar story. In short, it's extremely difficult to treat this important role, as anything more than a part-time source of income.

With respect to the proposed annual fee, I would ask you to consider these points:

1. Amount of fee

We were advised that the new fee would be \$240 annually. That amount is, I believe, bearable for most celebrants but only just. A \$600 annual impost however, would be a major problem for virtually all celebrants and may force many highly experienced celebrants out of their business.

2. Too Many Celebrants / Disincentive

Although I have benefited from the more 'open' system of allowing people to become celebrants, I do believe some additional burden should be placed on those attempting to join what is already an overly populated industry. To that end, I would argue that the \$600 upper fee should be levied as a first year registration fee for new celebrants only, but then reduced to \$240 in second and subsequent years.

This additional financial barrier may make some of the persons interested in this role, think twice.

### 3. Time to Pay

I also believe that the annual fee for established celebrants should be payable within a 90 day period, not 7 days. Cashflow is a big issue for most celebrants, and as this fee would become payable in the winter months, where there are far fewer marriages performed, it would be doubly difficult to manage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,