



April 8th 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 since 1995.

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) who are not obliged to undergo annual training as are Civil Celebrants, even though many of these court appointed celebrants "moonlight" operating as Civil Celebrants. These 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 getting "shafted".

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 \$500-\$600 as a rationalisation in celebrant numbers is required (celebrant numbers having risen from 2,500 to 11,500 in recent years, which is just ridiculous).

As a celebrant, I urge the Committee to (i) look at wider celebrants (eg court appointed and religious) in terms of OPD and the annual fees, as opposed to merely penalising the Civil Celebrants; and (ii) set the annual fee at \$500.

Perhaps you could include some Celebrant representation on the committee?? I am up for it ☺

Regards,

Craig Moran.
Celebrant.