



7<sup>th</sup> April 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I became a War Widow 28 years ago Aged 42, I had 3 children to raise, educate etc. When I had succeed in that role, I fulfilled a lifelong dream of training to become an Authorised Marriage Celebrant. I completed the Certificate of Attainment, Marriage in 2006. Because the capping system was in place and I would have to wait 2 years before receiving Authorisation, I decided to continue on and complete the Cert IV in Marriage Celebrancy and Small Business Management and was Authorised in 2008. I complied with the Code of Practice, established an Office wherein my clients would have complete privacy entering the office through a separate entrance to the main house. Fitted out the office with phone/fax, computer (which I also had to learn to use) and a lockable filing cabinet. Register my Business Name and set up advertising in the form of a web page Total cost? Approximately \$6,000+.

I didn't mind the expense, as I believed that my appointment was a **LIFE APPOINTMENT**, and not renewable every 12 months for a fee, that undoubtedly will increase each and every year. When there were discussions afoot concerning the preferred training and that Cert.IV in Celebrancy was mooted, I attained that and also the Certificate of Attainment, Funerals. As is evident I am not opposed to furthering my knowledge or training in Celebrancy. The few weddings I do each year (as there are over 100 Authorised celebrants in the area) helps me to have a few little luxuries that I would not be able to enjoy if I had to survive only on a War Widow's compensation allowance. If it were to come to pass that with the online survey, it was deemed, that, I did not meet the required number of weddings that could possibly be considered viable for my Authorisation to be continued. Where would that leave people like myself, senior citizens, who were compassionate about their role in the community and who had the skills and knowledge as well as reliability and stability to fulfil that role.

When speaking to the local Federal Member for Blair on the planned changes to the MCLS last year, he agreed the **Commonwealth Authorised Celebrants were being discriminated against**. As State Appointees and Religious Appointees did not have the expenses or required to complete OPD in the same way that Commonwealth Appointees had to endure.

OPD costs in the vicinity of \$200 p.a I agree that OPD is necessary **BUT**, it should be necessary for **ALL** celebrants. **Registration** should be paid out of the **personal pockets** of **ALL** celebrants, whether State, Religious or Commonwealth appointees. **All** celebrants should belong to a recognised celebrant organisation.

The appointment for Celebrants should be for **LIFE** unless the celebrant concerned does not pay a renewal of their registration, or complete OPD.

Registration for a Registered Nurse, a person who deals in life or death situation is for life with an annual renewal fee of \$130. Why then is it considerably so much higher for and Authorised Marriage Celebrant.

Yours Sincerely,

L.P. van Dyken-Schabe