

Jacqueline Hope Love Infinity Celebrant A6463

I have been a registered celebrant since 2004 and have performed approximately 12 weddings a year 106 weddings in total.

In 2004 my charges were \$500 per wedding; each wedding takes me approximately 10 hours of work.

As you are aware a charge of \$500 for a wedding and as I was working as a Clinical Midwife I was paying paying 30% tax so deduct \$150 for the taxman leaving \$350 out of which the costs below need to be taken into consideration.

SET UP AND ONGOING COSTS TO MAINTAIN THE PROFESSION OF A CIVIL CELEBRANT

- Office space, desk, computer, printer, ink, paper, lockable filing cabinet (to secure documents to prevent identity theft in case of a break in) Mobile phone/landline costs, electricity.
- Business Name
- Web page, stationary from Canprint, business cards, brochures, advertising costs, etc Internet costs maintaining domain name, web hosting, email access. Yellow Pages (\$1,000.00PA)
- PA system
- Accountant
- Car, petrol, road tax and associate costs of RAC membership
- Membership of professional bodies
- On- going professional development (Approximately \$200.00) Loss of a day's pay as need to take this as holiday)
- Membership of Business Associates to promote the role of Civil Celebrants
- New clothing/dry cleaning

WORK ENTAILED IN PREPARING AND CONDUCTING A WEDDING

- Initial interview establishing the clients wishes for their ceremony and signing of documentation. An hour minimum.
- Creating a ceremony researching poems etc, submitting, and resubmitting rewriting of the ceremony per clients instructions to final wording. Three hours.

- Travel to and from the rehearsal and wedding ceremony plus professional standard of being present on site 30 minutes before commencement of the ceremony 2.30hrs
- Rehearsal on site including travel time 2 hours
- Ceremony Day travel time and ceremony including compulsory 30 minutes prior to ceremony and allowing for 'late brides', 2hrs.

In 2009 I increased my fee to \$600.00 per wedding to try and address the balance between income and outgoings' and to reflect my experience in this field. Unfortunately this coincided with the governments disastrous decision to stop the 'cap' on new celebrant's being appointed in any given year. This has resulted in the ridiculous situation that we have now, new celebrants who have neither the experience or the sense to work out the costs of performing weddings undercutting to figures less than getting married in a registry office. These workers along with clergy who conduct weddings have a guaranteed salary, superannuation, holiday pay, sick pay, and possibly salary packaging benefits. Without any of the costs involved as stated or having to undergo ongoing professional development training paid for from their own pockets!.

How can we hope to compete with that! Brides now expect their celebrant to charge as little as \$300-\$400.00 as they 'ring around' celebrants trying to find the cheapest in town. Hardly conducive in promoting competent, experienced, caring, credible celebrants is it?

We now have 10,300 registered celebrants and rising each year to service a marrying public of less than one percent! Having created this disaster Civil Celebrants are now being asked to pay a minimum of \$250.00 PA with the potential to rise to \$600.00PA in order to pay the wages of government employees in the spurious argument of 'checking up' on celebrants to ensure they do not conduct 'illegal weddings' My understanding is that since 1995 ... 15 years there have only been 8 cases. Of these only 2 were declared invalid! 0.0005% of the estimated **4 million marriages**.20 stat. complaints in 2009 most in a recent year is less than 0.03 % of the marriage carried out by Civil Celebrants.

This fee MUST be rescinded and the 'cap' reinstated so that the marrying public can have professional, educated, experienced celebrant to carry put their weddings. And that the "Profession" of civil celebrant be viable financial options for the dedicated people who want to see this profession grow and become more credible.