

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



From
Dale Cole

Dear Sir or Madam
Please find below my petition
Re...amendments to the Marriage Bills.

I have so many concerns about the changes to the above. I feel some of the changes will be destructive to the whole concept and practice of Civil Marriage Celebrancy. I have been registered since 2012 and have performed 3 weddings, the next in the pipeline is February 2014 at this stage.

The colleagues in my association (ACMC) tell me the average Celebrant is doing 10 or so ceremonies per year these days. I take my position and the essence of Civil Celebrancy very seriously. Making money from ceremonies is secondary for me but of course not for most Celebrants.

The cost, in my case, far outweighs the income. The introduction of another fee that may increase each year adds a hardship to that role. I believe this fee will create higher costs being passed on to the public and impact on some Celebrants quality of service.

The fact that only Commonwealth Celebrants will be charged is discriminatory.

This fee will make Civil Ceremonies more costly compared to other ceremonies such as religious ceremonies, and will create a pressure on marrying couples for example, to perhaps choose the cheaper option even though not their real desire. This stifles the whole philosophy and reason for the introduction of Civil Celebrancy, to give people the option to have a ceremony their way, any where, any time.

If a fee is to be charged, a more equitable system...eg.. fee per marriage ceremony, applied to every Celebrant would be a fairer system. This could be calculated by each celebrant in a submission, such as a yearly return document?

I can appreciate the huge work load in reviewing Civil Celebrants and the absolute need to maintain and improve the practice. Celebrants take their work so seriously it seems an unnecessary overburden to the administering body, in an already stretched system, to do reviews yearly, except for complaints/code of practice issues. The impact to clients also of an error in a proposed yearly review process from either side would be huge. This potentially could leave a client without a celebrant /celebrant of their choice, and bring the whole of Civil Celebrancy into disrepute.

You have my sincerest thanks in reading my letter, as I aim to support and further Celebrants welfare, reputation and the philosophy and good practice of Civil Celebrancy .

Dale