

25th April 2013

Committee Secretary Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

PO Box 6100 Parliament House

Canberra

ACT 2600

[legcon.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:legcon.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senators,

Please accept this submission relating to the Inquiry into the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013.

I was appointed as a Civil Marriage Celebrant In December 2003, and understood that this was a lifetime appointment providing that I comply with annual Ongoing Professional Development and that my 5 yearly review is satisfactory. Over the past 9 years I have invested considerable money, time and effort to establish myself as a Civil Marriage Celebrant.

As such, I accept bookings from the marrying public up to 18 months in advance. I along with many other celebrants are regarded by some families as 'their' family celebrant, whereby they have become comfortable with us and wish to use our services for all of their family life events, much like a family priest of the past, it takes time, effort and experience to establish such a rapport with clients. A family celebrant is often regarded as a part of the extended family and looked upon with respect. I feel that by removing the lifetime appointment, the Australian public will not be able to confidently book their chosen celebrant well in advance due to the uncertainty of re- registration beyond 12 months: I want the couples who book me to be their celebrant to be confident that I will still be registered as a celebrant when their marriage is to take place. And b; the 'family' celebrant will become a thing of the past.

A lifetime appointment instils confidence with the Australian public and within the celebrant.

While, I am not opposed to cost-recovery via the imposition of an annual fee, I do note that State and Territory Officers and Ministers that perform marriages are not required to pay an annual fee. I find this discriminatory and would expect *all* celebrants to pay the same fee.

In conclusion;

I fully support the recommendations of CoCA's comprehensive Submission on Cost Recovery and Increasing Professionalism. Those recommendations are aimed at a cost-effective and professionally enhancing system for the appointment and ongoing management of the Commonwealth Marriage Celebrant Program.

I strongly oppose the removal of lifetime appointments.

I oppose the introduction of a "Celebrant Registration Fee" unless this applies to all marriage celebrants (not just Commonwealth Registered Celebrants).

I thank you for taking the time to read my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Wilmot JP

Civil Marriage Celebrant

Skye, Victoria