

Dear Committee Members

I would like to add my support to the submission made by the Coalition of Celebrants Associations to the Senate Committee in reference to the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013.

As a Civil Celebrant, I believe the introduction of an annual registration process is not acceptable. Existing marriage celebrants were appointed for life, subject to complying with the Code of Conduct and 5 year reviews. The proposed annual registration requirements give no certainty to Celebrants or couples seeking their services in forward planning.

I have further concerns about the introduction of an annual fee for Celebrants. The requirement for a Civil Celebrant (the majority of whom perform a small number of ceremonies) to pay this fee when State registered celebrants and religious celebrants do not is clearly discrimination.

As a Civil Celebrant, my annual costs are significant in comparison to the income I receive for ceremonies. My annual costs include: ongoing professional development, maintaining an office and storage facilities, association fees, mandatory stationery costs, transport and of course the many incidentals such as postage etc.

Furthermore, it is unfair on the couples who choose to marry in a civil ceremony as ultimately they will have to pay for this fee.

Complaints or problems with the services provided by Civil Celebrants are minimal. Over regulation is not necessary and will not improve the experience of marrying couples.

I urge you to consider carefully the submission from CoCA and the concerns of celebrants.

Lisa Ambler
Civil Celebrant.