

# Submission to the Attorney-General's Department

## *Ongoing Professional Development for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants and Guidelines on Conflict of Interest and Benefit to Business for Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants DISCUSSION PAPER – NOVEMBER 2016*

**SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5pm FRIDAY, 13 JANUARY 2017**

### Your details

<b>Name/organisation</b> <i>(if you are providing a submission on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of a contact person)</i>	Edward Taylor
<b>Contact details</b> <i>(one or all of the following: postal address, email address or phone number)</i>	

### Publication of submissions

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- Microsoft Word
- Rich Text Format (RTF)
- txt format.

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Would you prefer this submission to remain confidential? No

## Your submission

I have been a celebrant since 2004, and have enjoyed every moment of it.

My observations over that time:

I query the wisdom in the enormous number of celebrants that have been appointed in recent years since the supply already exceeds the demand.

Firstly, this is not a complaint. I don't object to other celebrants coming along; they impact very little on my activity; I still have a healthy number of bookings each year. But with so many celebrants already appointed, is it practical to bring more in?

Secondly. My contact with many of these celebrants reveal that many are getting very few bookings (some none in the three years since their appointment); some applied and were appointed so as to conduct the wedding of a family member and nothing much more; many are conducting only 3 or 4 weddings in a year, some want only 2 or 3 weddings a year so as not to interfere with their full time job.

I have no objections to their intentions, but it means that they are gaining very little experience in conducting wedding services.

Experience is one of the best teachers. These people are getting little or no experience and thus the quality of their wedding service remains very basic and somewhat poor.

The weddings that I conduct now are very different from when I started 12 years ago because of those years of experience. (Please, don't think me as bigheaded.)

Too many of these new celebrants are **lowering the standard** because of inexperience, and they have little or no awareness of the need to improve.

**OPD** courses could include the need for professionalism in this area.

Local reports indicate that many many celebrants require training in professional presentation, ie. public speaking, good personal appearance, interest and respect shown to others, etc. Reports advise that the content and presentation of many is dry, unappealing, and of little real value to the wedding in hand.

It appears that too many **'unskilled'** celebrants have been appointed that have passed the **'knowledge test'**, but have little or no experience in speaking in front of an audience. Other wedding service providers have advised me that all too many celebrants are absolutely boring, are uncomfortable within themselves and to others, and have little or no means of engaging their audience.

Can this be corrected by **OPD** ... or by some means at entry level.