

# 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>	Sheryll Prowse
<b>Contact details</b> <i>(one or all of the following: postal address, email address or phone number)</i>	

### Publication of submissions

In meeting the Australian Government's commitment to enhancing the accessibility of published material, the Attorney-General's Department will only publish submissions to this website that have been submitted electronically. The following formats are preferred:

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

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Would you prefer this submission to remain confidential? No

## Your submission

I welcome the opportunity to express my concern about the Marriage Celebrant's Program. I have been a Marriage Celebrant for over 20 years and have officiated at over 800 weddings. I was proud to hold this position and carried out my duties with enthusiasm & professionalism. Now I am seriously considering whether it is worthwhile continuing- yet it was something I loved & enjoyed- due to the way in which the Celebrants Program is now conducted. To say the least it needs to be seriously overhauled & upgraded . It should be returned to the Professional standard it once had.

Unfortunately with the Celebrancy program now open to almost anyone the number of celebrants has saturated the market and the standard has been considerably lower.

I will state my observations in point form :

- Too many celebrants. The number appointed per region should be reflected in the population of that area. When studying statistics- if 500 weddings are performed in a country area ( approx half are performed by celebrants & 30-40 celebrants are available in the area- it is only logical that each celebrant can only perform a small number). Then some of the newer celebrants are prepared to undercut costs. I have been to Celebrant Assn meetings & a number of celebrants have never performed a wedding. I fee genuinely sorry for them. They started their career with such enthusiasm & their desire to be a successful celebrant can never be realised.
- It is impossible to pay for registration, Professional Development, Advertising, equipment etc on the limited number of weddings now available due to the high volume of celebrants and receive some monetary reward for your effort.
- It also means that newer celebrants do not receive the experience needed.
- I found each wedding I performed, provided me with a vast array of experience- every wedding ( 800 plus) has been different, engaging, rewarding and part of a learning curve which has given me a great deal of knowledge- something the OPD has not.
- Providers of Professional Dev have a captive market and it is really only seen as a money making activity.
- Standard of Prof Dev (except for compulsory activities- which are beneficial) is very poor- especially for experienced celebrants.

- Registration & OPD dates should be the same.

In conclusion I see the only solution to the problems at the moment is to drastically reduce the number of celebrants and do not appoint any more until a workable number is reached.