

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

**Program 1.3**

**Question No. 75**

**Senator Wright asked the following question at the hearing on 18 October 2011:**

Attorney General's Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) states "In 1973 The Marriage Celebrants Program (the Program) was established to provide marrying couples who did not want to have a religious ceremony with a dignified and meaningful alternative to a registry wedding".

Did the original Marriage Celebrants' program, established in 1973, regulate the number of marriage celebrants on a needs basis per head of population as well as regulating the fees charged by marriage celebrants - on the premise that civil marriage celebrants were delivering a government service to the community as appointees of the government?

**The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:**

The appointment of marriage celebrants on a needs basis per head of population did not come into effect until 1997.

It should be noted that marriage celebrants are private citizens who have been registered by the Government in accordance with the *Marriage Act 1961* to perform the particular role of solemnizing marriages rather than representatives delivering government services.