

**SUBMISSION TO THE
SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL
AFFAIRS**

**Inquiry into the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant
Administration and Fees) Bill 2013 and the Marriage
(Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013**

From: Meg Boswell

Date: 6th May 2013

7 May 2013

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and the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2013**

Dear Senators,

My name is Meg Boswell. I am a marriage celebrant with more than 18 years experience. I support many of the proposed amendments in the above Bill, however I have serious concerns about one amendment.

Section 39FB – Celebrant registration charge: consequence of non-payment.

De-registering a celebrant who has not obtained an exemption and has not paid an account (something we are all capable of occasionally overlooking, particularly at a time of stress or illness) without at least a warning and an opportunity to remedy the matter, is **unreasonable, unconscionable and completely lacks procedural fairness. The celebrant must be given an opportunity to pay the fee and save their registration.** In the interests of fairness, the following is the minimum procedure I recommend:

If the annual fee is unpaid after 60 days and the celebrant has not been granted an exemption:

- 1. The celebrant be sent a letter by REGISTERED POST which requires a signature, advising him/her that deregistration will occur if the account is not paid within the NEXT 60 days.**
- 2. Where Australia Post is unable to obtain a signature, departmental staff to check if the celebrant is active. Where active, contact to be made by telephone or email to ascertain if the postal address is correct. The letter to then be re-sent. Where the celebrant is not active, departmental staff to carry out sufficient enquiries to ascertain whether the celebrant has passed away.**
- 3. Where no signature is obtained, deregistration to occur only after departmental staff have made every effort to contact the celebrant and allow a period of grace, as in point (1), in which to pay the fee.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Meg Boswell

Registered Celebrant A3259