



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

**Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge)
Bill 2014, Marriage Amendment (Celebrant
Administration and Fees) Bill 2014**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Wednesday, 26 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 26 March 2014	Source House
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Questioner	Responder
Speaker Frydenberg, Josh, MP	Question No.

Mr FRYDENBERG (Kooyong—Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) (10:48): Congratulations, Mr Deputy Speaker Jones on your election to high office. Together, these two bills, the Marriage Amendment (Celebrant Administration and Fees) Bill 2014 and the Marriage (Celebrant Registration Charge) Bill 2014, implement cost-recovery measures and improve the operation and efficiency of the marriage celebrant program. In terms of cost-recovery, as was noted in the explanatory memoranda to the bills, aspiring marriage celebrants will be required to pay a registration application fee unless an exemption from the application fee has been granted. From 1 July 2014, the application fee will be \$600 and will cover the costs of processing and assessment of the application. Registered marriage celebrants will be required to pay an annual celebrant registration charge. From 1 July 2014, the charge will be \$240 and will cover the cost of, among other things, providing a dedicated phone service and online portal for celebrants.

Aspiring marriage celebrants and registered marriage celebrants may apply for an exemption from the registration application fee, annual registration charge or annual ongoing professional development obligations. From 1 July 2014 the fee for seeking an exemption will be \$30 and that will cover the cost of processing an assessment of the exemption. These fees and charges will be indexed annually for CPI and regularly reviewed to ensure they are recovering only the cost of administering the program.

In terms of improving the operation and efficiency, as was noted in the explanatory memoranda to the bills, aspiring marriage celebrants will now have the option to apply and pay for registration online. Performance reviews of marriage celebrants will be conducted on a more selective and targeted basis. The registrar will no longer be required to conduct performance reviews on every marriage celebrant every five years.

Australian passports will now be able to be used as evidence of the date and place of birth of a party to a marriage. These will be in addition to birth certificates, statutory declarations and passports issued by governments of other countries. The majority of forms currently prescribed in the marriage regulations will become forms approved by the minister. These changes to the Marriage Celebrants Program follow extensive consultation with marriage celebrants, and the government considers them the fairest and most practical way to implement cost-recovery measures and improve the operation and efficiency of the program. I commend the bills to the House.

Question agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Ordered that this bill be reported to the House without amendment.

Federation Chamber adjourned at 10:53