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Dear Colleague Funeral Celebrant

Celebrant Fees for Funerals

It has been reported back to me by celebrant colleagues that some funeral celebrants, especially in the Sydney area, have been informed that they cannot charge their own fees, but must accept "the status quo" i.e. the set fees effectively fixed by funeral directors for conducting funerals.

I was one of those who supported Dally Messenger when he was accused by the ACCC (the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission) of fixing prices for funeral celebrants. I was also commissioned by the court order to instruct Mr Messenger on the operation of the (then) *Trade Practices Act* so that he clearly understood the law regarding his obligations. Dally was also directed to inform every celebrant he knew that they must not agree on fees, or accept any fee set by others.

I have taken it upon myself to inform you, my celebrant colleagues, that you place yourself in legal danger only if you collude on setting fees, or cooperate with those who have colluded on fees. There is some suspicion that certain Funeral Directors may be doing just this.

For your own legal safety it is imperative that you set your own fee, your own hourly rate, or your own formula for charging clients, independently of everyone else. A copy of the Trade Practices Act was placed on the International College of Celebrancy website on my instructions (<http://www.collegeofcelebrancy.edu.au/html/policies.html>) Though the legislation has been amended since, Australian Consumer Protection Law still prohibits collusion on price fixing. I have asked Dally to post the current version of this obligation on his web site too.

I wish you all the best in your celebrant practice,

Yours sincerely

Moira E Rayner
Funeral Celebrant