



## Fellowship of Independent Celebrants Ltd

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### FUNERAL DIRECTORS AND CREMATORIA SERVICES MARKET INVESTIGATION: RESPONSES TO THE CMA'S WORKING PAPERS PUBLISHED ON 30 JANUARY 2020

The Fellowship of Independent Celebrants Limited ("FOIC") welcomes the opportunity to respond to the CMA's working papers published on 30 January 2020 (the "Working Papers").

FOIC support greater customer transparency in relation to costs and disbursements of Funeral Directors, with funeral directors providing in a set format on their websites a full disaggregated breakdown of the various costs of certain funeral offerings at a local level; and the estimated costs of the disbursements associated with funeral services resulting in providing customers a better understanding of the likely overall costs associated with funeral services, enabling comparisons to be made.

Bereaved families now have a greater choice in how funeral services are managed and conducted. FOIC train celebrants to a high standard and their services are recognised and appreciated nationwide. To establish a set fee for the celebrant (FD disbursement) would not be acceptable. The funeral director should continue to have the ability to recommend celebrants to bereaved families. The family should be made aware of the celebrant fee, together with all funeral costs. Transparency is key in relation to all funeral costs.

FOIC consider the suggestion that a funeral director would restrict or prevent customers from engaging their chosen type of celebrant to be extremely troubling. FOIC believe that part of the funeral director's role is to assist customers in making arrangements for their loved ones by providing choice, and by presenting relevant options to enable bereaved families to make an informed decision.

The reputation of a given celebrant (whether religious or secular) could be affected by previous feedback from families (both positive and negative), as well as how well known they are to local individuals, including both with funeral director staff and with

the families themselves. When a family wants to use a specific (or specific type of) celebrant do CMA accommodate their preferences? If not, why not?

Insofar as reasonably possible (e.g. depending upon availability of the celebrant), Funeral Directors would always accommodate a customer's preference to use a specific (or specific type of) celebrant. ]

FOIC believe that all bereaved families should always be given the information they feel they need to make an informed choice about a celebrant.

In conclusion: FOIC support CMA in bringing about full transparency of funeral costs. FOIC does not support CMA in considering a 'fixed pricing' policy with regard to funeral directors and celebrant officiant fees.

David Abel

Director Fellowship of Independent Celebrants Ltd