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All content is created for information only and is not legal advice, and not necessarily the views of the AMC. It is edited by Lou Szymkow and whilst all care is taken, the editor cannot guarantee the accuracy of information. The editor, guest contributors & guest speakers all volunteer their time for Celebrants.



An update from your AMC South Coast Coordinator, Lou Szymkow

To achieve success, we will continue to grow and do what we can to help each other grow.



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Change does not come without struggle. The [Marriage Amendment \(Definition and Religious Freedoms\) Bill 2017](#), was introduced by Western Australian, Liberal Party Senator [Dean Smith](#). The bill amended the definition of "marriage" in the Act, omitting the words "man and a woman" and replacing it with the gender-neutral "2 people". On the 17th November the bill received the YES vote in the House of Representatives, and so this month marks 5 years since those historic events.

On 7th December 2017 the Senate also voted YES and the historic reform came into law on Saturday 9 December 2017.

You will find a very personal story of one couple on page 2, who even after equality was enacted, still faced hurdles; and for this month's history article, you will also find a Celebrant/activist's personal account on the pages that follow



Cover Photo

Backyard and lounge room weddings. On the left is a couple who were featured in a Western Weekender newspaper article on Covid weddings. The floor is covered with petals from a neighbours' garden & the other is a Northmead couple showered with rose petals in their own garden.

Whilst it is still in the community and we as Celebrants are particularly vulnerable, COVID Safety plans are now optional for businesses, venues and events. From 21st September 2022, anyone can attend a wedding, funeral or place of worship and you don't need to be fully vaccinated or show proof of your vaccination status. Density limits no longer apply to weddings, funerals and memorials. There are no restrictions on singing and dancing. Standing while drinking is allowed. Until 14 October 2022, you had to continue to self-isolate if you tested positive for COVID-19. but after that date, it is no longer mandatory in NSW despite infections, hospitalisations and deaths continuing.

NSW Health strongly recommends people who are sick or have tested positive to COVID-19 stay home until their symptoms have gone. Some restrictions will still apply for high-risk settings such as healthcare and aged care facilities. Keep checking nsw.gov.au/covid for updated COVID-19 information.

- [What must I do if I test positive?](#)
- [How should I manage my symptoms?](#)
- [Monitor your symptoms](#)
- [Who is at higher risk of severe illness?](#)
- [When can I leave self-isolation?](#)
- [How soon should I get vaccinated?](#)
- [When do I need to test again for COVID-19?](#)
- [What if I am pregnant and have COVID-19?](#)
- [How do I manage a baby or child with COVID-19?](#)
- [What support is available while I am in self-isolation?](#)
- [Translated resources](#)
- [Video: How to manage COVID-19 at home](#)



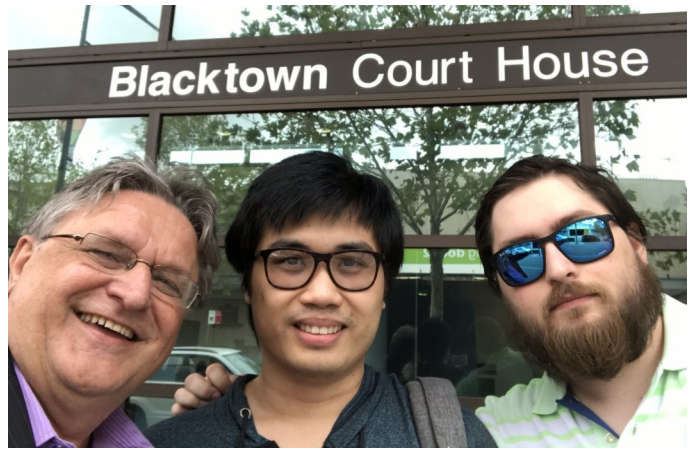
Michael flew into Australia to marry his sweetheart, an Australian citizen.

They had met in a gaming forum some time ago and developed an immediate relationship online before arranging to meet while travelling, only to discover that the magic in their relationship was even more electric when together in person, than they had thought possible. They fell in love but as they lived on opposite sides of the world could only occasionally be together, though enjoyed their daily video links when not physically together.

After a time, Michael simply could not stand being apart any longer and so took his only two weeks of annual leave that were left, to fly to Australia to propose to his love, expecting that they could marry immediately as can be done throughout the USA.

Ched, of course said yes, and immediately searched for a Celebrant. They were shocked to discover they might have to wait a month after lodging a Notice of Intent to Marry (NOIM) but as Michael's travel plans could not be changed and air fares were non-refundable, they satisfied the criteria under the Marriage Act for a Shortening of Time (SOT). They prepared all the necessary paperwork and even made extra photocopies just in case. Some copies were incomplete, but in the rush, they chose not to discard anything.

Armed with all the necessary paperwork, Ched & Michael set off to the NSW BDM to apply for an SOT but were told that the Prescribed Authority, the only person who could authorise the SOT, was unavailable, having left early while they were waiting in the queue. Annoyed but persistent as time was running out, they returned the next day and after a long wait in yet another queue, were told that the travel criteria for a SOT could only be applied to servicemen travelling for duty, which of course is incorrect as that is not stated in the Marriage Act, however the SOT was denied. Still persistent, they went to a nearby court to see the Prescribed Authority there. The officer at the door initially would not allow entry into the building, explaining that court sittings were nearing close for the day but satisfied that they were to see the PA, he let them through and oddly followed them to the counter.



The officer took a seat behind the counter within earshot.

The couple presented their paperwork and were met with an obstructive attitude from the PA while, the officer from the door, sat sniggering in the background. The PA asked to see their entire file and examined every single document including the yet to be discarded photocopies alongside the originals and then declared that their SOT could not be approved because there was a poor photocopy in the file, despite the fact that there were complete photocopies as well as the full original document, also in the file.

Ched phoned me tearfully. I contacted Blacktown court and explained the circumstances. We met at the Blacktown court and within minutes secured the SOT without an issue.

I suggested they might wish to lodge a complaint, but a still distressed Ched declined explaining that as a young gay man, he had faced discrimination all of his life and simply didn't wish to continue the trauma.

The couple were married a few days later and though they had planned to settle in Australia once Michael had settled affairs in the USA, they instead decided to move to the USA.





Celebrants tend to be a caring lot, writing about and for others, but not usually about ourselves. Robyn Foster was one of the founding members of the Funeral Celebrants Association of Australia (FCAA) in 2007 and is its current President. She was appointed as a Marriage Celebrant on 2/09/2008. She was a cofounder of the very first AMC Regional Group which was Illawarra in 2009 and held that position for a number of years. Recognising the inherent injustice & failings in marriage law at the time, she joined the fight for Marriage Equality despite opposition from some sectors. She was invited to write an article from her personal perspective as a Celebrant, activist and float organiser so that we could see the journey that one person took as a Celebrant striving for equality for the benefit of others.

An article by Robyn Foster.

The Marriage Equality (MEq) journey was going on far longer than most realise, but I am so glad that the YES Bill went through in 2017 – everything was done and dusted before we had to live through the dreadful fires of 2019/20 and the COVID pandemic which followed. The right people were in Parliament in large enough numbers, on the day that mattered, to vote emphatically **YES**.

I have been slow getting this to Lou mainly because I was asked to write about me and my journey with Marriage Equality.

From about August 2015 I became involved with the campaign that was underway in the Illawarra. I attended a forum in Nowra and from that was asked to be a speaker at several others. This led to radio, television, Foxtel and other media wanting my perspective on it all. I think this was mostly because I was 68 years of age and not from the LGBTIQI community but was a 'senior female' trying to make others think seriously about supporting any two people wishing to marry because they loved, respected, and trusted each other and so were committed to their partners.

The words 'same-sex' have always annoyed me, after all, no one ever says "I am marrying a heterosexual couple". I refuse to say that I am marrying a same-sex couple.

Having the word 'sex' in the discussion about Marriage Equality, led many people to only concentrate on sexuality and I have had many conversations with people who would say "oh I don't understand what their sex is about – or how they have sex"; or that "sex should be between a man and a woman", and from those speaking strongly about their faith -- "marriage is about family and having children".

Well my responses, and I admit that I enjoyed shocking them, were:

- "well, I don't understand, or know, what your sex with your wife (or husband) is either – or how you do it"; or

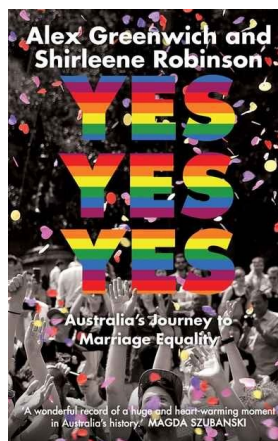
- "just because a man and a woman live together as husband and wife, doesn't mean they have sex – they might be happily married but as mates, not red-hot lovers";
- "if marriage is about family and having children – why does your church marry older people who are too old to procreate".

I didn't get any abuse, just responses about not having anyone put it quite that way before!

But let's go back a bit further.

Way back before 2004, when a Bill was presented to Parliament to change the words in the Marriage Act 1961 to "Marriage the union of a man and a woman" (and this went through in Howard's time as Prime Minister) there had already been many activists campaigning for equality for the LGBTIQI community, and for Marriage Equality. The 2004 decision as mentioned, was supported strongly by both major parties and continued to be so by successive Prime Ministers. This was to be a difficult journey for the years leading to the end of 2017.

Behind all of this many people were working for change, and I had another privilege in 2018 of attending a launch of a book written by Alex Greenwich and Shirleene Robinson called "YES YES YES Australia's Journey to Marriage Equality".



On the cover are supporting words from Magda Szubanski: "A wonderful record of a huge and heart-warming moment in Australia's history", and I add that this is a **MUST** read for all to get to know how difficult the journey was.

As for me, I came late to the Marriage Equality journey. As a Civil Celebrant I had witnessed several situations at both funeral and wedding ceremonies for which I had been engaged but in 2014 I also got to know two women who had married in

Canada. They had distressing delays for one of them, an American, trying to migrate here to join her Australian wife. The American lady had to migrate as a single person because her marriage was not recognised in Australia and when diagnosed with breast cancer, the Australian Government wouldn't allow her to migrate until she was in remission. The delays caused much distress and heartache for the couple. This, in particular, pushed my sense of disgust that their marriage was not recognised.



In 2015, I heard of Shelley Argent and her work as a Mum and the National Spokesperson for [Pflag](#).



I was motivated to do something, but "What could I possibly do?". I stared at my computer trying think of something and finally, late in 2015 I sought approval, with the help of three other Celebrants from Canberra & Batemans Bay, to enter a Marriage Celebrants' float into the Sydney Mardi Gras 2016. We created a banner and t-shirts in my garage reading "Celebrants for Marriage Equality: working together to make a change". I saw this as a way for my Celebrant colleagues to support the campaign. We had 24 marchers in the first year, we entered again in 2017. by 2018, with a total of 84 marchers, and we of course gladly changed the banner wording to "Celebrants Celebrating".



Another of my colleagues told me about a Marriage Equality Forum to be held in Nowra and that is where I met [Dawn Hawkins](#) – the non-sleeping, always running/driving somewhere person who rallied so many of us to action. She became known as Dawn Gilmore during these last few years knowing that the **Gilmore Electorate had to be won over** and it was with an eventual resounding result of Yes, Yes, Yes – mostly thanks to her extraordinary effort which is recognised in the book I have mentioned.

Through Dawn, I spoke at other forums, and talked to anyone who started a conversation with "but they ..."; and in my usual way of not backing off, I asked many people (or embarrassed them) to stop thinking about people in bed, but rather people in love.



Dawn Hawkins, & others at one of many events

People in my local community have commended me for the work I have done for MEq, but to put my effort into perspective: if you think of me occupying a tiny corner of a

street on the South Coast of New South Wales vs the whole of Australia and the many, many, organisers of many years who drove themselves to the ground for the result that we heard with the bells ringing in the Senate, late in the day on 7 December 2017 – that was my truly very, very small part in this amazing, annoying, frustrating, sometimes funny, sometimes sad journey.

As a result of those Senate bells ringing, I witnessed the signatures on a Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) of two lovely men two days later, on Saturday 9th December 2017 and solemnized their marriage in April 2018; and my own daughter (and my now daughter-in-law) were married on 22 September 2018 after 21 years together.



At the Sydney Mardi Gras – February 2017 before the YES vote was proclaimed. The Celebrant float with my Daughter (left) and now Daughter-in-law (right of picture)

Already, many people have forgotten the dates of November and December 2017, but I will not! I cried as I watched as the bells were being rung in the Senate on 7th December 2017, not for me, but for the thousands of people who had their lives and their futures put in front of everyone for discussion over so many years.



There is still a long way to go with some families coming to grips with all of this but I have two grandchildren, now aged 10 and 12, and I know that by the time they are adults, they will be wondering what was all the hype about!!



It is so beautiful to be able to say "Marriage is the union of two people ..."

Break out the champagne!! (and I did in the main street of Port Kembla outside another supporter's shop with one of our signs from the Mardi Gras float.

TRADITIONS?

Most couples exchange rings but there are many ways that can be done

1. Have a ring bearer or bearers
2. Tied to a cushion and displayed
3. In a ring box on the signing table
4. attached to the bouquet
5. in Someone's pocket
6. presented by parents/grandparents
7. pinned to grooms' coat
8. worn as earrings
9. worn as a hair ornament
10. worn as a brooch or pendant
11. worn on another finger/hand
12. worn as part of a belt buckle
13. unwrap a tattooed ring
14. worn as nose or eyebrow piercing
15. tied to the ribbon used for handfasting
16. hanging from the arbour in a terrarium, jar, bag, lamp, balloon etc
17. Burst a balloon
18. hanging from the arbour on a ribbon
19. lowered on a fishing line
20. set at the base of a memorial candle
21. ring warming (not really COVIDSafe)
22. furry (horse, dogs, cat, rabbit, goat etc.) ring bearer
23. flown in by an eagle, owl or other trained bird (but be careful as can be unreliable)
24. wheeled up in a snake, lizard, or spider's glass terrarium
25. ring bearer chosen by a luck dip
26. taped under a guests' seat
27. tied to the Ceremonial booklet
28. attached to the microphones
29. inside champagne flutes
30. presented on a cupcake as the first meal together
31. displayed as part of a painting, portraits, or photo from which they can be plucked
32. courier delivery
33. Drone delivery
34. Delivered by a knight or a stockman on a stallion
35. Parachuted i.e. small parachute suspended above and dropped at the appropriate time
36. attached to an arrow fired at a target alongside or between the B&G (keep a safe distance)
37. in a Piñata
38. Us a magic trick box to make the rings suddenly appear
39. consider the hobbies, passions, talents and professions of the couple or family members and use something in keeping with that e.g.
 - a. a mechanic could use a toolbox,
 - b. a clerk could have the rings on a pen in a pocket,
 - c. a hairdresser have them styled into her hair
 - d. a medical professional could use a specimen bottle or a stethoscope
 - e. a carpenter could fashion a special wooden box
 - f. a fisherman could have a lure or a tackle box

Movies to Watch



Released in the USA in October 2006, four adult siblings gather at their dying mother's house in North Carolina for a quick, last goodbye but instead, they find themselves stuck together for *two weeks* while dealing with life, love, sibling rivalry, relationships, external life & work pressures, and of course grief.

This movie is an education in what losing a loved one feels like. It is of course sad, losing a loved one always is, but there are moments of humour, joy and an exploration of emotions and memories as they are reminded of the importance of family, interdependence, and what their mother means to each, as they individually and collectively deal with their lives and their grief.

We travel with them through the various stages of grief from denial through to acceptance, and of course, there is anger along the way. Many families don't survive that journey and the loss of a matriarch and you won't necessarily find any tips for a ceremony, but you will follow one family's journey and see the dynamics at work; understanding these can in itself be very helpful when we as Celebrants, blindly step into a family interview.

This film is worth seeing. It is a real and loving tribute to a family going through a phase of life that we as Celebrants see, and as individuals, will experience. The incredible Sallie Fields is faultless in her performance but all the actors did a fantastic job.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0448166/?ref=ext_shr_lnk



Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages



Amanda Ianna joined the NSW Attorney Generals Department in July 2014 as the Registrar of the NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages and continued in that role when the department was moved to the NSW Department of Customer Service in June 2019.

Change Manager and now the Acting Registrar at the NSW

Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages, Amit Padhiar, wrote to NSW Celebrants on 5th October 2022 to advise that Amanda Ianna, was transferring to Revenue NSW to take up the executive position in that department.

Amanda Ianna, had a longstanding and outstanding record of achievement at BDM, including:

- the design and launch of the first people-centric digital civil registration system in the world,
- the digitisation of 94% of services delivered by BDM.
- led the redesign and transformation of a 30-year-old organisational structure and its business processes,
- championed customer service through a range of local, state and federal programs and initiatives
- being front and centre for innovation with the creation of forward-thinking products and service such as the Digital Birth Certificate and Australian Death Notification System
- has been recognised by the United Nations for her work in reducing the under-registration of Indigenous births in NSW
- played a key international role as part of the Commonwealth Government's Twinning program to support Australia's neighbouring islands develop robust civil registration and digital identity processes.

Amit said that whilst Amanda's move was an incredible loss to the Registry, the legacy she leaves puts the Registry in a powerful position to continue to innovate and provide world class services to our customers and stakeholders.

With Amanda's departure, Amit Padhiar, will continue in her role as Acting Registrar, while the Department of Customer Service conducts a recruitment process for the role of Registrar with the view to filling the position by the end of the calendar year.

Lodging Docs

When registering marriages online, you can either attach scans of the documents at the time of lodgement, or if you are unable to attach documents successfully, you can email docs as an attachment to: online.celebrant@customerservice.nsw.gov.au.



Amit, pictured winning the Justice Service Award for Strong Commitment to the Community for the Online Birth Registrations Program

Amit Padhiar, is an accomplished transformation expert who has achieved business growth and service excellence for organisations in the Not for Profit and Public Sector. According to his LinkedIn profile, Amit is a visionary leader who is committed to supporting organisations and people in successfully creating and delivering their core strategy.

Amit is an expert communicator and relationship builder who has a diverse skill set which is has applied to a range of roles in management and creative directing.

In his role at NSW Department of Customer Service Amit has been leading the redesign of the organisational structure and culture of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages to bring services into a space of innovation, commercialisation and digitisation to increase the accessibility of services for the people of NSW .

In his short time at the Department of Customer Service Amit has already been awarded two Awards of Excellence for his work. An example of his work includes the development and launch of a new online birth registration system across 122 hospitals across NSW which has reduced processing times of new births by 79%. This program was adopted by the United Nations as global best practice in birth registrations and community engagement. During his time in Barnardos Australia, Amit was committed to seeing guided practice implemented across the sector. He knows the critical role guidance can play in improving outcomes for children in care and is dedicated to ensuring it becomes common practice.

Amit used his welfare, change and project management expertise and marketing experience to support other non for profits elevate them selves and implement better practice models across their services with the aim to bring better outcomes for children in care. This was an initiative Amit implemented in his role at the Barnardos and continues to do this level of Business development within the sector.

Amit is also a pioneering conceptual photographer that is able to utilise his expertise in communications, business development, change management marketing and branding to meet the needs of his customers briefs with a creative touch.

BDM Support Contacts

- **certificates ordered by couple:** Phone Service NSW on 13 77 88
- **certificates ordered for the couple via Lifelink:** online.celebrant@customerservice.nsw.gov.au ; Ph. 02 6885 9332
- **Registration corrections** [Correct an entry | NSW Government](https://www.nsw.gov.au/online-celebrant); online.celebrant@customerservice.nsw.gov.au ; Ph. 02 6885 9334
- **Registry support** eregistry-support@customerservice.nsw.gov.au Ph. 02 6885 9332



I have been seeing ads for a well-known company promoting 'targeted email advertising' but to me, that reads "pay us to spam".

That caused me to look closer at some of the spam emails I get every day but which are usually blocked by firewalls and so are usually unseen unless I specifically check the spam or auto-deletion folders. I did this time and noticed some key factors:



1. they often arrive in groups of three indicating that they were sent at the same time, by the same organisation which has disguised the sender, to make it appear that they came from different sources.
2. the wording was similar or even identical, which again indicates the same source/author
3. Some were in different languages indicating that the marketing company did not filter for relevance but had probably charged their client for a million emails knowing that 99% will have no relevance to the receiver indicating a double scam (receiver and client).
4. many come from marketing companies promoting their ability to "put you on the first page" which is bizarre because why would anyone use a spammer to market hence the emails get automatically blocked as would their client's emails.
5. they now send two or three 'follow-ups', claiming they are waiting on a response
6. as every spam mail uses a different email address, the spam filter has to locate keywords rather than just the email address.

Recently scammers have been spoofing photographers' email addresses to target Celebrants & others in the ceremony space. That will of course harm the presumably innocent photographers' businesses.

Scammers have even spoofed Celebrant's email addresses when sending to that celebrant and so the email appears as being sent to self or from the Celebrant's non-existent tech, accounts or web departments, with the request that the receiver 'update login details' to give the scammer open slather. You are left to wonder if the photographers fell for that scam enabling the use of their email addresses.

The newest one is emailing a scam warning with a sample attached for the gullible

Such scams are of course not limited to emails. You may have received one of those 'Registry Australia Pty Ltd' letters in the snail mail reminding you to renew your business name via 'Registry Australia Pty Ltd' though of course that company is not connected to ASIC but instead relies on gullible people not reading or understanding the fine print that "Registry Australia

Pty Ltd is a private business registration service provider and independent of ASIC", which translates to it being a private company trying to scam you of a fee for doing something that you can do yourself for a much lower government fee (\$99 for 3 years) on the ASIC page without an agents' fee of \$99 per year or \$189 for 3 years. There are many other tax and ASIC registered agents that use business names suggesting they are the official business names' registry or they use ASIC in their web advertising but are an 'agent' and not the actual ASIC registry. Remember that all registrations go via ASIC and you DO NOT require an agent.

The best known scam used to attack Celebrants and vendors is the 'overpayment scam', where a booking is made by an uncle, friend or assistant who, acting with urgency, 'accidentally' overpays and the Celebrant or vendor is instructed to not refund but to instead pay the excess to other listed vendors and accommodation providers that, which may appear legitimate, but have all been setup overnight by the scammer and which disappear as soon as payment is extracted, and before the victim realises that the original payment was in itself a deception (*doctored deposit slips, fake cheques, cancelled payments*). That scam doesn't usually work in Australia with celebrants as the NOIM & ID requirements provide identity details but one Celebrant was hit with fake IDs and several vendors have been fleeced over the years.

I even had a personal call last week from an educated man claiming to be calling on behalf of my bank. He had the audacity to complain that I was being rude for refusing to cooperate with his scam call. A websearch of his phone number revealed numerous complaints.

According to the ACCC, the loss to scammers in August 2022, was \$44, 867, 502 divided among 21, 249 reports. Scammers are getting increasingly sophisticated in their attempts to get your money or personal details. Be alert and protect yourself from being scammed by following some tips.

[Scams target everyone](#) [Protect yourself](#)
[How to spot a fake](#) [Follow up scams](#)
[More information](#)

Some more useful links below:

- [How to renew a business name](#)
- [Download the full user guide \(including screenshots\) as a PDF \(1.58 MB\)](#)
- https://connectonline.asic.gov.au/RegistrySearch/faces/landing/bn/SearchBnRegisters.jspx?_adf.ctrl-state=qlpwj9ajc_4
- [How to register a business name for the first time if the holder is an individual](#)
- [How to register a business name if the holder is an individual](#)
- [How to register a business name if the holder is a company](#)
- [How to register a business name if the holder is a joint venture](#)
- [How to register a business name if the holder is a partnership](#)
- [How to register a business name if the holder is a trust](#)
- [Beware of business scams impersonating the ACCC | Scamwatch](#)
- [Types of scams | Scamwatch](#)



Communities & Justice

The NSW Department of Communities & Justice, has issued a new edition of the **NSW JP Handbook**.

If you are a JP, or would like to know more about the role of a NSW Justice of the Peace, you can [Download the free PDF](#) version of the **NSW JP Handbook**. It sets out the guidelines issued by the Minister under section 8(2) of the *Justices of the Peace Act 2002*. If you are a Justice of the Peace and prefer a professionally printed version, you can log into your [JP Online](#) account to order your own hard copy.

The JP Handbook helps JP's comply with the legal requirements of the functions of a JP.

The new edition is updated to incorporate the latest rulings and clarifications to commonly asked questions and scenarios, and has been revised to better support JPs with thorough guidance and additional.

JPs have three primary functions:

1. witness a statutory declaration;
2. witness an affidavit; and
3. certify a copy of an original document.

A JP is also an authorised witness under the Marriage Act, able to witness signatures of persons on a Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM).

A JP, can perform these functions only after having taken the oath of office. It is an offence, punishable by imprisonment, to exercise certain JP functions when not authorised to do so. It is not mentioned in the handbook, but the role of a Justice of the Peace has changed over the years. A JP could in years past, sit on a court bench alongside a magistrate and if there was no coroner with a certain distance, could be called upon to act as the coroner. Since 2002, the role has been restricted to the duties as set out in the *of the Peace Act 2002* and outlined in the **NSW JP Handbook** however there may soon be changes in role of a Justice of the Peace as there is currently a proposal that the accused who has no legal representative in court may in the future, not be permitted to personally question a victim in the witness box and will instead have a JP undertake that role on the accused's behalf.



How to Certifying a copy of an original document.

As an Authorised marriage Celebrant, you may on occasions be asked to certify a copy of a document., whilst this role is commonly attributed to a Justice of the Peace, different organisations may accept a certification from other persons and will usually provide a list of acceptable certifiers which may include a Marriage Celebrant. You should only of course, offer to certify a document copy if you understand the legal requirements and obligations.

The **NSW JP Handbook** includes guidance for JPs on how to certify a document and the same steps might be considered if a Marriage Celebrant is asked to perform such a task.

1. Check that the organisation to which the document will be submitted, will accept an Authorised Marriage Celebrant as the Certifier.
2. Have the original document and copy in front of you, side by side. Certification cannot be done online but must be in person though the original may be electronic.
3. Check that the copy is a true and accurate copy without alteration or omission and so no changes, and no words or symbols cut off by a photocopier.
4. If satisfied, add your certification in writing (or by stamp) using the words: [I certify this to be a true and accurate copy of the document reported to me to be the original document](#)
5. Date and Sign the certification
6. Add your details to the certification (name and title)

According to the **NSW JP Handbook**, use of the correct wording (*or substantially the same wording*) is required by law, and also helps to clarify that you are not certifying the document is authentic. This may be important if someone who relied on your certification sought to have a court impose such a duty of care on you.

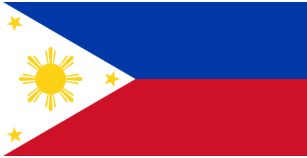
Your certification must be printed on the copy either using a stamp or handwritten in ink. A certification that has been added with a label or sticker is not sufficient.



KNOWLEDGE BASE

We need knowledge at our fingertips to ensure we can confidently respond to challenges. I will endeavour to provide information in each newsletter to expand our personal knowledge base.

PHILIPPINES, DIVORCE & CENOMAR



According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Migration Australia, at the end of June 2020, there were 310,050 Filipino-born people living in Australia, 68.7% more than the number (183,770) at 30 June 2010.

This is the fifth largest migrant community in Australia, equivalent to 4.1 per cent of Australia's overseas-born population and 1.2 per cent of Australia's total population.

For Australia's Filipino-born migrants:

- The median age of 40.1 years was 2.3 years above that of the general population.
- Females outnumbered males—60.9 per cent compared with 39.1 per cent.

Hence there is a high probability that you will be asked to conduct a marriage ceremony where at least one party is Filipino and as with all couples, both parties to the marriage must provide evidence of eligibility for marriage. Though change seems imminent, according to a recent announcement, the Philippines and the Vatican are currently the only two sovereign states in the world that still prohibit divorce. In the Philippines, a married couple cannot divorce by law, regardless of where they live, throughout the entire world. Article 15 of the New Civil Code states that laws pertaining to familial rights and responsibilities, or to the standing, form and legal capability of persons, are compulsory upon inhabitants of the Philippines even though residing overseas. Therefore, Filipinos are still under the rule of their land even if they are in another country.

Annulment, declaring that marriage had never taken place, is the only current solution to divorce for Filipino citizens residing in the Philippines. A marriage may be terminated by annulment if the marriage does not meet all of the legal requirements, but options are limited.

A decree of nullity is an order from the court stating that there is no legal marriage between the parties, even though a marriage ceremony may have taken place. An annulment granted by a church is not the same as a court issued annulment, and does not demonstrate that a person is free to marry.

However, marrying someone of another race or country, or a Filipino who obtains citizenship in another country, may allow a divorce if the overseas spouse secures a valid divorce in their own home country. In the Family Code of the Philippines, paragraph 2 of Article 26 explains that legal marriages between a Filipino national and a non-native are genuinely recognized. A divorce must be accurately attained overseas by the non-native spouse, before a new marriage will be allowed under Filipino law..

In order for a Filipino to remarry, he or she must have been in a marriage that is recognized by Filipino law, involve a marriage between a Filipino and a non-



native, and the non-native must have obtained a legally binding divorce while overseas. In order for the divorce to be legally binding, it must be filed in court and accepted there. If this process is followed, both parties are then free to enter into a new marriage. If the non-native has been approved a divorce, this does not mean that the Filipino has the right to enter into another marriage. There must be an acknowledgment of the divorce of a non-native from the Filipino courts for remarriage to be possible. After the Filipino courts have acknowledged the dissolution of marriage, only then can a Filipino citizen remarry.

Once that is achieved a **Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)** may be issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). A **Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)** which is also known as *No Record of Marriage* or *Certificate of Singleness* is a certification issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) stating that a person has not contracted any marriage.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) serves as the central statistical authority of the Philippine government on primary data collection and is mandated by law to keep and preserve the birth, marriage and death certificates of a Filipino citizen. These certificates are the basis for establishing the legal status of each and every Filipino. In legal definitions for interpersonal status in the Philippines:

- a **single person** is someone who has never been married.
- A person who was previously married and was divorced or widowed is usually considered an "unmarried" person.
- If a marriage is annulled, however, or it is found to have been void ab initio (i.e. not valid in law to start with), and assuming the person was not married previously, that individual is single, rather than unmarried.

(Continued next page)

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When requesting a Cenomar, the interested party shall provide the following information to facilitate verification and issuance of certification.

Cenomar (Certificate of No Marriage)

- Complete name of the person
- Complete name of the father
- Complete maiden name of the mother
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Complete name and address of the requesting party
- Number of copies needed
- Purpose of the certification

On 17 August 2021, the Philippine government announced that a bill proposing the legalization of divorce in the Philippines had been approved by the Committee on Population and Family Relations of the House of Representatives. According to the announcement, the Philippines and the Vatican are currently the only two sovereign states in the world that still prohibit divorce.,

According to the announcement, the Philippines and the Vatican are currently the only two sovereign states in the world that still prohibit divorce. The announcement also explained that the approved bill includes the following grounds that may be invoked for filing for divorce:

- Separation of the spouses for at least five years at the time the petition for divorce is filed.
- Gender reassignment surgery or transitions from one sex to another by one of the spouses.
- Irreconcilable marital differences.
- Domestic or marital abuse.

A divorce decree obtained abroad by one of the spouses.

So put simply, a Filipino residing in Australia may divorce in Australia under Australian law and be eligible for remarriage anywhere in the world, except for the Philippines, until an application is made to a Filipino court to recognise the Australian divorce, whereupon a **Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)** may be issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

<https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2021-09-06/philippines-house-of-representatives-bill-on-divorce-approved-in-committee-referred-to-house-plenary-for-debate/>
<https://psa.gov.ph/civilregistration/requesting-civil-registry-document/cenomar>

[Acknowledgment of Divorce in the Philippines - HG.org](https://www.hg.org/acknowledgment-of-divorce-in-the-philippines)



Have you been attending the AMC Education sessions? If not, you are missing out on some excellent sessions.

Kelly Lawson and **Annemarie McDonnell** do a fantastic job for us all, in procuring speakers and presenters for monthly Education Sessions.

All the activities in AMC Education are focused on offering peer-to-peer support wherever possible. If a service provider is engaged, it is because they come to us free of charge and offer their own time for your benefit in education and training.

Since inception, online education guest speakers have sparked interest and attendance is growing at every session! There will be an exciting line-up for 2023.

The most recent session was held on 11/10/2022, and the presenter was **Jill Heaton**, (pictured) the CEO of The Unleashed Collective a National Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that specialises in Celebrancy but also delivers Business, Leadership and Management, HR and Entrepreneurship courses.

It was a lot of fun as she guided Celebrants into creating a Halloween wedding script which was so good that I have invited Jill to present to the South Coast in **May 2023** when the subject will be:

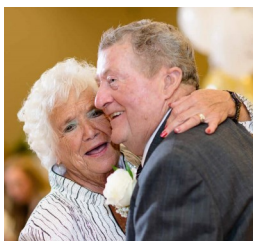
Celebrant to MC.

**



To see what other great education sessions and meetings are coming up, log into your AMC Membership section

<https://marriagecelebrants.org.au/member/>



A Celebrant invited the bride’s grandparents to stand, to congratulate them on 65 years of marriage, Everyone of course applauded such an incredible achievement. The Celebrant asked to what they attribute their success in marriage. Without hesitation the reason they offered was that they holiday for a month every year. That’s wonderful, said the Celebrant, nodding toward the B&G to note the example, “*You spend a month every year working on your marriage*”. Yes they confirmed, “*he holidays in Italy and she holiday in Spain.*”





Annual General Meeting

7-9pm, Tuesday 8th November 2022

AGENDA

- **6.50pm - Sign in to ZOOM**
 - i. 7:00pm meeting start & attendance record
 - ii. Confirmation of previous AGM Minutes
 - iii. Treasurer's Report
 - iv. President's Report
 - v. Regional Coordinator's Report
 - vi. 50 Years of Celebrancy celebrations in 2023
 - vii. Any other business
 - viii. Election of Office Bearers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee
 - ix. 9pm meeting close

You will have received a notice on 11th October 2022 that the AMC is gearing up for our Annual General Meeting to be held on **Tuesday 8th November 2022 at 7.00pm**

For those of you who can attend the AGM, we are confident you will enjoy the evening but you should have registered your intentions to attend by emailing admin@marriagecelebrants.org.au by close of business on **Monday 31st October 2022**.

In accordance with our AMC Constitution, where a ballot for the election of Office Bearers and Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee is to be conducted (at every second AGM), all current Executive Committee positions will be declared open and a new Executive Committee will be elected during the AGM.

- Each Member of the Executive Committee will hold office until the conclusion of the AGM. Current Members are eligible for re-election.

The Constitution provides that the Executive Committee is to consist of:

- (a) The Four (4) Office Bearers of the Association, and
- (b) Up to Eight (8) Ordinary Members.

The Office Bearers of the Association are to be:

- (a) President
- (b) Vice President
- (c) Treasurer
- (d) Secretary
- (e) Public Officer (NOT an elected position but appointed by the incoming committee).

- A Member of the Executive Committee may hold up to two (2) Office Bearer positions other than both the President and Vice President positions simultaneously.
- Anyone who is an Executive Member of another Celebrant's Association is not eligible to be an Executive Member of the AMC

- to be eligible for election, nominees must commit to attending at least two (2) Executive Committee meetings each year.
- If insufficient nominations are received to fill the vacancies on the Executive Committee, the candidates nominated are taken to be elected and further nominations may be received at the AGM.
- If insufficient nominations are received, any vacant positions remaining on the Executive Committee are taken to be casual vacancies.
- If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated are taken to be elected.
- If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot is to be held.
- Nominations of the candidates for election of Office-Bearers of the Association or as Ordinary Members of the Executive Committee must be made in writing on the appropriate form or electronically by a Member of the Association and indicate whether or not the nominator has contacted the nominee for their consent to be nominated.
- Nominations must be delivered to the Secretary of the Association at least twenty-one (21) days before the date fixed for the holding of the AGM at which the election is to take place.
- Nominations closed at **5.00pm on Monday 17th October 2022**.
- Members will be notified in advance of the AGM with the list of nominees for the various positions, and any positions that will require a ballot.



November- A month to Remember



ALL SAINTS DAY & ALL SOULS DAY

What is All Saints' Day?

All Saints' Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1. The day is dedicated to the saints of the Church. It should not be confused with All Souls' Day.

What is All Souls Day?

All Souls Day has been celebrated since the middle ages by Catholics and it also practiced by Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox Churches and some other denominations of Christianity though many protestant denominations do not recognize the holiday and disagree with the theology behind it.

It should not be confused with 'All Saints' Day' which is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1 and is dedicated to the saints of the Church.

'All Souls Day', is observed on November 2, and is a holy day of obligation set aside for honouring the dead and dedicated to those who have died but not yet reached heaven.

The observance is so great in some parts of the world that in countries such as Poland, it is a public holiday on which huge numbers of people attend religious services and even festivals, at cemeteries across the country.

In Australia, religious services are held at churches and some cemeteries on or close to All Souls Days.

It should not to be confused with the annual Christmas Inter-Faith Remembrance Service held in early December, usually at a Cathedral, to commemorate the deceased, or confused with any secular service held in November in privately owned chapels.

The AFCC is for the 2nd year, citing 20/11 as National Celebrant's Day. Many like the idea but suggest **19th July** as more appropriate date. Last year a UK association called for a Celebrant's week in Nov but don't seem to be repeating the call this year.



On 11th November 1918, the guns of the Western Front fell silent after four years of continuous warfare. German leaders signed an Armistice, bringing to an end the First World War.

As a mark of respect to those who died and who suffered, Australians are encouraged to pause at 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, to observe one minute's silence and remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

WW1 saw the mobilisation of over 70 million people and left between 9 and 13 million dead, perhaps as many as one-third of them with no known grave.

On the second anniversary of the armistice in 1920 the remains of an unknown soldier from the battlefields of the Western Front, were interred with full military honours in Westminster Abbey in London and at the Arc de Triumph in Paris. Other allied nations adopted the tradition. After the end of the Second World War, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day.

In Australia on the 75th anniversary of the armistice in 1993 Remembrance Day ceremonies again became the focus of national attention when the remains of an unknown Australian soldier, exhumed from a First World War military cemetery in France, were ceremonially entombed in the Memorial's Hall of Memory. Remembrance Day ceremonies were conducted simultaneously in towns and cities all over the country, culminating at the moment of burial at 11 am and coinciding with the traditional two minutes' silence. This ceremony, which touched a chord across the Australian nation, re-established Remembrance Day as a significant day of commemoration.

Four years later, in 1997, Governor-General Sir William Deane issued a proclamation formally declaring 11 November to be Remembrance Day, urging all Australians to observe one minute's silence at 11 am on 11 November each year to remember those who died or suffered for Australia's cause in all wars and armed conflicts.

Religious, and sometimes secular services, are held to coincide, especially at war memorials



OCTOBER 2022 GUEST SPEAKERS



We were very fortunate in having two excellent speakers for our October Zoom meeting. How incredibly generous of those speakers to give up their valuable time for your benefit. Immediate feedback from attendees was very positive as it was from those who could not attend; and so a great success despite the fact that many invitees were absent. We had 15 apologies, each of whom had very significant, and for some, unexpected, reasons for their absence. The survey result was delighting in enthusiasm with responses starting within seconds of emailing. All responses described both meeting and presenters as 'exceptional.'. The meeting was not recorded and so if not there, sadly you missed out on the excellent interaction. There are just a few pointers below. Though the meeting finished on schedule, a few minutes extra were allowed this time, post meeting, to allow for networking. Our next meeting in December will be **Face to Face at Mollmook** while our next **zoom session will be in February 2023** however newsletters will continue and I'll look for an article to help with gender neutral language. **Check Diary Dates!**

NORA DEVAI

COAST WEDDING & FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHER

nora devai



www.devaiphotography.com.au
nora@devaiphotography.com.au
 Ph: 0418 640 067
www.southcoastweddingfair.com



Nora very generously shared her skill & vast experience, as she guided us on how to work with the photographer to achieve the best results for the couple and the Celebrant to boost client satisfaction and Celebrant image.

She talked about outdoor lighting challenges where there are shade and sun variations under trees but that shooting into the sun can be very good and is not to be avoided. She suggested the best lighting is early morning and late afternoon.

Nora also pointed out that where possible, the Celebrant should encourage guests to fill empty seats

rather than have guests stand at the back and that all guests should be seated as soon as possible after the couple arrive down the aisle.

Nora pointed out that if the celebrant holds a mic for the couple, the celebrant *should not hide* as it looks strange with the mic appearing out of nowhere and so be in it or out of it. The same applies *during* the first kiss in that the celebrant should be either in or out of the shot but not moving.

Nora recommended that couples should be encouraged to exit down the aisle for clearer shots.

JORDAN WEAVER

EVENT PLANNER

Jordan, is an event planner, stylist and coordinator who is there to take the stress, confusion and overwhelm out of planning a wedding day.

Jordan, who is typically booked 12 to 15 months before a wedding, explained that in her 1st meeting with a couple, she asks what they do & don't want, from style to Celebrant preferences and will then send invites to 3 celebrants she knows to be reliable and punctual, to contact the couple, leaving the couple of course to choose. She told me that she enjoyed the meeting and presenting.



Jordan Weaver

Creative Director

m: 0427 712 690

e: jordan@jordanweaverevents.com.au

w: jordanweaverevents.com.au

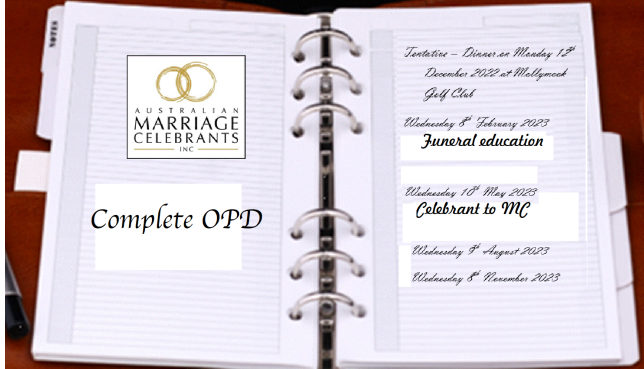
a: PO Box 37 Wahroonga NSW 2076

At the ceremony, working closely with the couple, she typically spends time at the back with the wedding party, leaving the celebrant to remain at the front, and she loves celebrants who introduce a personal touch to a ceremony.

Diary Dates

FINALLY A FACE TO FACE MEETING

Christmas Network Dinner
 6:30pm networking; 7pm dinner
 Monday 12th December 2022
 Mollymook Golf Club



In 2023, the Zoom 7pm meetings will be held on the second Wednesday, of the third month, beginning February 2023.

February has an incredible guests speaker (details in this newsletter) and members of the Funeral Celebrants Association of Australia (FCAA) will be invited to join us.

Wednesday 8th February 2023 – Mark Simpson
 Wednesday 10th May 2023 - Celebrant to MC & Wedding Insurance

Thursday 19th July 2023 -50th Anniversary
 Wednesday 9th August 2023-writing workshop
 Wednesday 8th November 2023– speaker pending



Tentative Friday 8th December 2023 for Dinner at the Mollymook Golf Club

Marketing

Be seen! Sounds a bit obvious but we can all easily fall into the habit of NOT being seen. Not advertising, not updating webpages, not adding to social media, not encouraging reviews, avoiding expos, and so simply not being seen. One of my advertising methods is simple magnetic signs. I occasionally drive different cars but the magnetic signs are easily transferable. The template for my signs is pictured but the final sign also has a QR code and people are able to scan the code to go to my webpage and contact details though I've had customers who have simply photographed the sign in a carpark and then call me later. It is fun seeing the faces when people read the sign and then look up and see the same face behind the wheel :)

What are you doing to be seen?

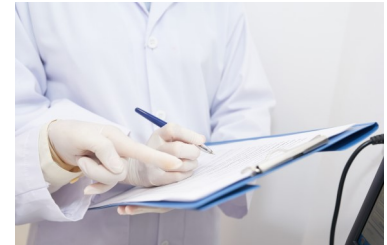


MAGNETIC SIGNS

Car signs are useful at venues and on the road and in carparks, telling clients you exist. Magnetic signs are versatile but need care. The warmer months are just around the corner and that is when sign and care become crucial. Though even in cold or rainy months, care is still required.

- Weather can damage the sign and leaving it for too long can damage the car paintwork as mud and grime can surround the sign and if it is too hot, the glue can seep into your paintwork
- When you wash your car, wash the sign.
- Use a sun resistant vinyl protector to keep them like new
- Polish the car regularly
- Dry and clean the door and back of the sign before you apply the sign to your car panel.
- Don't let the signs bake in the sun as it can dry them out and the glue can melt onto paintwork..

FEBRUARY 2023 GUEST SPEAKER—Mark Simpson



Mark Simpson Principal Educator
 B.Med.Sc(Hon.Clin.Pharm)B.Med.Ed.BN (Psych.Int.Care)
 (m) 0431 396 417
mark@medicaleducators.com.au
www.medicaleducators.com.au

Prior to the meeting you will be surveyed on topics of greatest interest including;

- The Aust Funeral Industry its functions & disfunctions, regulations/lack of regulations
- The new ACCC Aust. Funeral Industry report – what were the serious concern re: deceptive behaviours.
- The extremes of the funeral industry...from multi-nationals through to shop fronts (only)
- Deceased preparation – what is done/can be done, why, why not
- Coroner’s investigations when, why, why not, autopsy, non-interventional autopsy
- Voluntary euthanasia

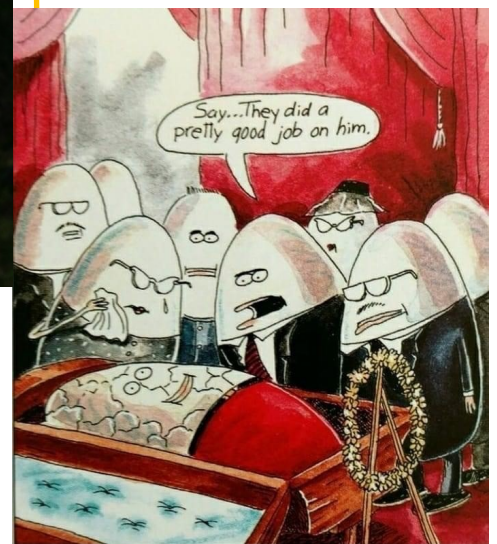
This is an excellent opportunity for new and experienced funeral celebrants to gain a detailed insight into the funeral industry.

Mark Simpson Principal Educator is a retired lecturer in medicine, who has close personal & professional ties to the funeral industry (incl training as an embalmer) but has no allegiance to any funeral company/organisation. He has been involved in public education for 30yrs & 15yrs ago joined with Jan Field (embalmer/mentor, FD & funeral home locum, to form the **Australasian Funeral Industry Training Services (AFITS)**, a national training, education & support service.

He and Jan, are very happy to take your questions personally or during the presentation.

(ABN) 74 850 690 713
 (reg.education provider)

Mark has written presentations/articles for the BIE (UK), AIE, ASE (US), AFDA (Aust), NFDA (US), Dodge mag, The Mazwell Group, UK Funeral Director/Funeral Service Times



If you would like to engage in one of the courses at AFITS, here are some links:

- [Funeral Industry Courses - Medical Educators](#)
- [Funeral Industry CPD & Educational Seminars - Medical Educators](#)

Email: support@medicaleducators.com.au
Phone: 0431396417

At Humpty’s funeral

COORDINATOR COMMENTS



For Celebrants, the need for constant diligence and study is unquestioned. If we do not learn, we cannot grow and improve. Laws and procedures change and so we have to keep up to date.

If one of us fails, it reflects badly on all of us. Education can come in a variety of

forms, including but not limited to mentorships, self-assessment, reading, interactions with the successful, accessing AMC Resources, attending conferences, and of course attending regional and national meetings.

Convenient ways of learning & interacting are of course keeping in touch with other celebrants by:

- phone, email, and coffee meets,
- reading newsletters such as this,
- taking an active part in regional meetings and
- accessing the AMC education programs.

Celebrancy online forums are also valuable but they can produce mixed results as we do see a variety of questions raised in Celebrancy Forums, ranging from the commonly asked question about which PA system to buy through to what poem or reading to use in specific circumstances but we also get some questions surrounding basic legal aspects such as what constitutes the lodgement of a NOIM or who can be a witness. If we see the same or similar question frequently from one individual, others will usually rally around and offer to mentor that Celebrant as it is in the nature of Celebrants to help others.

While many celebrants prefer that the question be asked and correctly answered so that our profession is enhanced, and the uncertain Celebrant supported to a level of competence and quality, there are others who express shock & horror or even offence by anyone having a lack of specific knowledge or experience perhaps because if a Celebrant fails and a marriage is declared invalid, it reflects badly on our profession overall.

I am also reminded of an instance where an unsure Celebrant asked a basic legal question to which a highly experienced Celebrant of many years standing, declared the person to be an incompetent suggesting they should resign and expressed despair at the

current level of training before then proceeding to offer an incorrect answer to the question. It turned out that the experienced Celebrant had made an error a few years earlier (we are all human) and when the error went by unnoticed, repeated the error time and time again until the experienced Celebrant thought the action to be correct when in fact it wasn't. Hence it is always recommended and indeed very important, that if lacking in confidence, read the Guidelines, Fact Sheets, Act and/or Regulations, and ask the questions, but when answering a question for another, quote the relevant source to demonstrate and ensure accuracy. In other words. don't guess the answer, give the correct answer.

With all that in mind, let's look back to 1st September 2008, which was only a year after the first qualification titled, *Certificate IV in Marriage* was introduced on 9th September 2007. A report was published on the review of 1,967 Celebrants, under Section HOH (1) of the Marriage Act, and of the 1,967 reviews, with 835 reviews yet to be finalised, only 753 of the 1,967 celebrants were at the time identified as being fully compliant in their obligations. That result highlighted the clear need for better and on-going training such and that is why training standards were created and why we have annual OPD.

I do believe that that the online OPD needs improving but it is a work in progress. Hopefully next year will be better.

We now have over 9000 civil celebrants, but it is my understanding that since the introduction of training programs, and particularly annual OPD, the compliance standards are much higher.

The obvious solution is for us to keep standards high, for us to keep informed, and to all work together for constant improvement.. My suggestions are:

- ✓ Keep a link to the Guidelines, Regulations, and Act on your device for ready access.
- ✓ Download Fact Sheets and keep them readily available.
- ✓ Make it a routine to read a section of the Guidelines on a regular basis
- ✓ Read the questions on Forums and research the answers even if you believe you know the answer
- ✓ If you don't know an answer to a question, research it and then write the answer down for future reference
- ✓ Attend meetings to learn and to exchange ideas
- ✓ Keep in contact with other Celebrants to debrief and exchange ideas

