

February 2024

Volume 3, Issue 1

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.



UPDATE AMC SUBSCRIPTIONS

Inside this issue:

- AMC Subscriptions
- Forum instructions
- **AMC Education**
- **Valentine's Day**
- BDM Moving
- Knowledge – online environment
- Proposed law changes
- Senate Report
- Interpreter Update
- Ring Ideas
- Names changing
- AMC Committee
- Scam Alert
- Marketing
- TV Reviews
- History Reviews
- Christmas Lunch
- Comments
- Survey Results

- **And so much**

Emailing laws have changed,

In reading this newsletter you are probably already subscribed to receive it but if you are an AMC member, you will also want the AMC support emails and information including:

- important information and updates
 - forum posts,
 - Regional and/or group newsletters,
 - AGs and BDM updates
 - OPD
 - annual registration notifications
 - the AMC National AMC newsletter
- Subscription to these extras used to be automatic when you joined the AMC but the law has changed and so you **MUST** now separately subscribe in order to continue to receive those emails direct from the AMC and to also access AMC forums.

If, as an AMC member, you haven't subscribed to AMC emails as yet, kindly follow this link to MailChimp and complete the easy form:

- [Subscribe Now - To AMC Emails](#)

It only takes a minute or two and will ensure you continue to receive AMC support.

If, as an AMC member, you don't subscribe, you will stop receiving emails from the AMC if you haven't already.

Why is that?

As AMC members know, when Celebrants joined the AMC, they were automatically included in an AMC subscription list for AMC communication. However, because of the law changes as to how subscriptions work, all members have to separately subscribe to each AMC list. Yes, it can be a nuisance but AMC is simply following the law changes.

Does this affect this newsletter?

No. Everyone who receives the Sth Coast newsletters requested to be subscribed and can unsubscribe at any time. Everyone is also reminded of that every time a newsletter is sent, if you want to be removed from the newsletter subscription list, just ask, or if you've accessed this newsletter by other means and want to subscribe, again, just ask.

Website Forum

The AMC website's "Members Support" forum, will serve as the primary means to provide information, support, and updates to members.

⇒ **Forum subscription instructions on the next page**

Continued next page.....

COVER PICTURE
2023 Christmas Lunch

**UPCOMING
Sth COAST
MEETINGS**

Please see the events list on the AMC webpage for specific information.

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

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR AMC FORUM SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription to member emails is no longer automatic.
 If, as an AMC member you haven't subscribed to AMC emails as yet, kindly follow this link to MailChimp and complete the form:
 • [Subscribe Now - To AMC Emails](#)
 However, to subscribe to the Support Forum, follow the separate instructions on this page

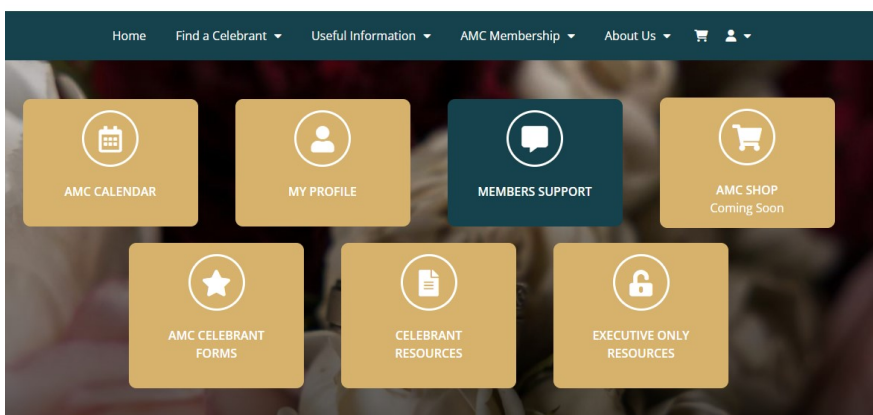
As mentioned on the previous page, and in the box on the left, AMC members regularly receive a high level of support via email but to access the web-based support forums a separate free subscription is required.

The AMC expresses gratitude to those who have subscribed to the AMC Members Support Forum.



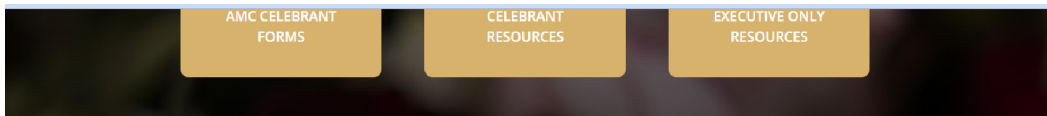
STEP 1

Log into the AMC web page
 Select:
'Member Support'



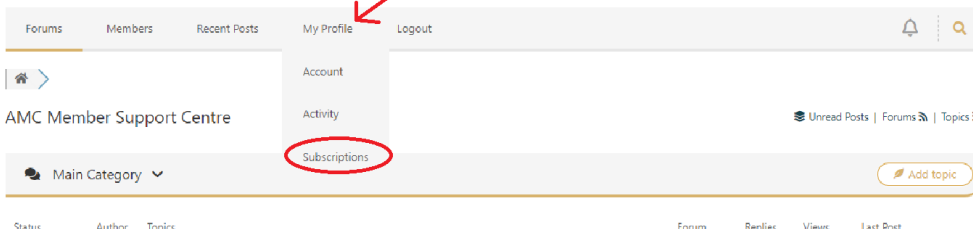
STEP 2

Scroll down and Open the dropdown menu by clicking on *'My Profile'*, then on *'Subscriptions'* and make your subscription selection.



Welcome to the AMC Member Support Centre. This forum is designed for discussion and help specifically regarding Celebrant issues. Here you will be able to post questions and queries where other members might be able to answer you, and you can read other members posts and reply to them with your own answers.

Below is the list of all the posts available for reading, listed as the most recent posting first.



AMC ON FACEBOOK

To expand your connections, You should also follow this link to the [AMC Public page](#). Please then like and share.

[https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=australian%20marriage%20celebrants%20\(amc\)](https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=australian%20marriage%20celebrants%20(amc))

Also, as an AMC Member, you can also join the [AMC Private members support group](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/australianmarriagecelebrantsinc/?pref=share>

Valentine's Day

Love is celebrated on St Valentine's Day, but you may ask why.

The Catholic church venerates holy men and women who persevere in their Christian Faith through living extraordinary lives of virtue, often enduring great suffering or sacrifice and/or undertake great deed. They are regarded as incorruptible. It is believed that they are so holy that upon death, they immediately enter heaven. Holy days are proclaimed for the veneration of individual saints.

It is Saint Valentine of Terni who is venerated on 14th February. Many churches in Europe display the 'incorruptible' bodies of saints, sometimes encrusted in gold and Saint Valentine of Terni is among them



The Catholic Church however recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred but, as mentioned, it is actually Saint Valentine of Terni who is venerated on 14th February. He was the first Bishop of Terni at a time that Christianity was regarded as a cult.

Just to try to offer some clarity or perhaps add to confusion on timelines and story origins, Gallienus was the Roman Emperor from 253-268 and Emperor Marcus Aurelius Claudius "Gothicus" (Claudius II), was Roman emperor from 268 to 270.

It is recorded that when Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers, he outlawed marriage for young men but a priest named Valentine defied Claudius by performing marriages for young lovers in secret until Claudius ordered that he be put to death in Rome on 14th February however other data suggests that this occurred under emperor Gallienus (253-268) and that Valentine and was buried by a Christian named Sabinilla in her own lands at the foot of the Parioli hill.

Despite a discrepancies in dates (and emperors), there is a strong argument that the priest named Valentine and the Bishop of Terni were the same man in that the priest was born in Terni, and upon his death, his body was purportedly taken back to Terni, where he was then referred to as Bishop Valentine.

Another story is that Valentine may have been killed for



attempting to help Christians escape the harsh Roman prisons,

He was eventually imprisoned and was visited by a young girl, possibly his gaoler's daughter and he fell in love. It is claimed that he wrote her a letter signed "*From your Valentine*," an expression that is still in use today on love letters and cards.

At the end of the 5th century, Pope Gelasius declared February 14 St. Valentine's Day

During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that 14th February was the beginning of birds' mating season, which added to the idea that the middle of Valentine's Day should be a day for romance. The English poet Geoffrey Chaucer was the first to record St. Valentine's Day as a day of romantic celebration in his 1375 poem "Parliament of Fowles," writing, "For this was sent on Seynt Valentynes day / Whan every foul cometh the to choose his mate."

Regardless of which story is correct, and whether the modern legend is of three men or just one, Valentine is regarded as the patron Saint of Young Lovers and not only is he venerated on 14th February, but love is celebrated

The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt.

- ♥ [What Is a Saint? \(And How Do You Become One?\) \(learnreligions.com\)](http://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-a-saint-and-how-do-you-become-one/)
- ♥ [St. Valentine of Terni, 14 February \(italyheritage.com\)](http://italyheritage.com/st-valentine-of-terni-14-february/)
- ♥ <https://www.history.com/topics/valentines-day/history-of-valentines-day-2>



Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages

Effective from Monday 5th February 2024, the Chippendale office will no longer be operational to serve customers and stakeholders as the BDM is relocating to:

Wharf 10, 50-52 Pirrama Road, Pyrmont NSW 2009.

The BDM has advised that the new location addresses some longstanding ageing infrastructure and accessibility issues that staff and customers at Chippendale have experienced for many years and that this move, marks a significant leap forward in transforming and modernising their services. There is on-street parking close by for you Click & Collect certificates.

For general death registration enquiries or repatriations:

- contact (02) 6885 9334 or bdm-eDeaths@customerservice.nsw.gov.au.

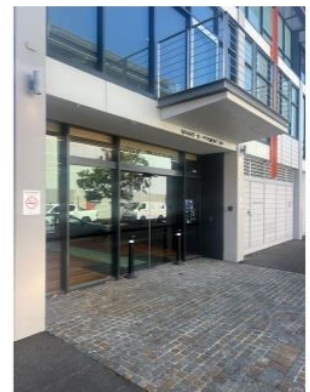
For eRegistry technical difficulties and user support

- contact (02) 6885 9332 or eRegistry-support@customerservice.nsw.gov.au.

Mailing address is: GPO Box 30, SYDNEY NSW 2001

All BDM over the counter services are available at Service NSW centres.

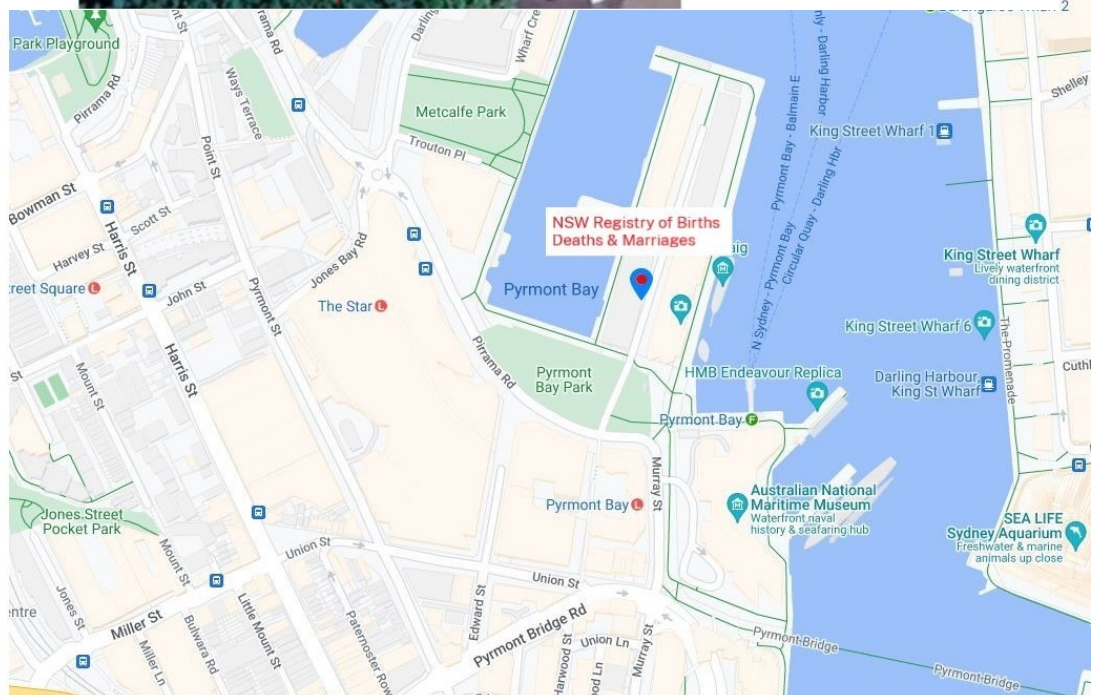
BDM has Moved



Transport

**Wharf 10, 50/52 Pirrama Rd,
Pyrmont NSW 2009**

- 2-minute walk from Pyrmont Bay light rail**
- 10-minute trip from Central Station to Pyrmont Bay light rail**
- 15-minute walk from Town Hall**
- 3-minute walk from Pyrmont Wharf**





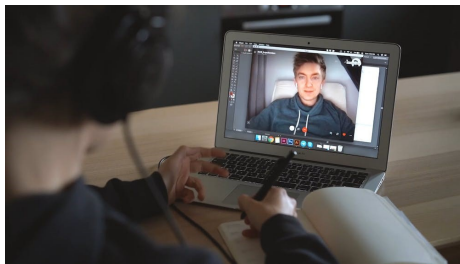
Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

Authorised celebrant obligations in an online environment

This information is mostly drawn from the MLCS fact sheet titled “Authorised celebrant obligations in an online environment” about how celebrants can continue to meet their record-keeping and related obligations under the Marriage Act 1961 (Marriage Act) and Marriage Regulations 2017 (Regulations).

That Fact Sheet and this article, provides information about an authorised celebrant's obligations in relation to receiving, sighting, lodging and retaining electronic copies of marriage documents and reference is made to the ‘Guidelines on the *Marriage Act 1961* for authorised celebrants’ (the [Guidelines](#)).



A quick reference guide to the fact sheet is available from the [Your responsibilities as a marriage celebrant](#) page.

Can I receive

documents electronically?

Yes. Marriage documents including the Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) and original supporting documents, such as:

- passports (scanned original *not* certified copies),
- birth certificates (scanned original *not* certified copies) and
- divorce certificates can be provided to a celebrant in electronic form.

A scanned copy of an original Commonwealth statutory declaration can also be provided to a celebrant.

Electronic form’ includes an email (scanned), text messaging a photo of the document, or facsimile.

Documents can be sighted via videoconferencing under Covid legislation which was due to expire on 31/12/2023 but a Bill submitted on 17th October 2023 proposed, among other changes, that arrangement become permanent

While electronically submitting documents may have changed the way that celebrants interact with marrying couples at early meetings, it does not impact on the application of section 42 of the Marriage Act, which requires that:

- Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM) be given in writing to the authorised celebrant who will solemnise the marriage
- parties must provide the Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM) at least one month before the marriage is solemnised, and no earlier than 18 months before the date of the marriage
- the Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM) must be appropriately signed and witnessed, and
- the authorised celebrant must be satisfied that the parties to be married are the parties in the notice.

Ultimately, it is up to the authorised celebrant to comply with all of the applicable requirements of the Marriage Act.

Can documents be signed electronically?

Generally yes. The Commonwealth *Electronic Transaction Act 1999* (ETA) applies to the Marriage Act, subject to any specific Marriage Act requirements for hard copies of documents to be used. For example, the Marriage Act requires the Form 15 ceremonial certificate to be physically ‘handed’ to the marrying parties immediately following solemnisation of a marriage. As such, a physical copy of the Form 15 is of course necessary to comply with Marriage Act requirements.

Electronic signatures are a visible representation of a person's usual signature that is equivalent to a hand-written signature. An electronic signature may be:

- typed, or
- scanned or
- digitised.
- Like a hand-written signature, an electronic signature represents that:
 - the person signing has identified themselves,
 - the person to whom the signature is given has consented to the receive it in an electronic form, and
 - it is reliable in the circumstances.

Subject to requirements of the BDM, an electronic signature could include a mark on a document, a PIN or a declaration (in the form of a tick box) where these three requirements have been met.

Marriage documents including the Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM), Official Certificates of Marriage (civil and religious), and Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage (DONLIM) may be signed electronically however it is important to note that where parties to a marriage sign these marriage documents with a hand-written or electronic signature, both parties are required to ‘sign’ in the presence of an authorised celebrant or authorised witness.

Continued next page.....

In accordance with the *Statutory Declarations Act 1959*, a Commonwealth declaration must be signed 'in pen', which requires an original paper copy. As the Certificate of Faithful Performance by an Interpreter form is made up of two parts – a statutory declaration (signed prior to the solemnisation of a marriage) and 'Certificate of Faithful Performance by Interpreter' (signed following the solemnisation of a marriage) – only the Certificate of Faithful Performance by Interpreter can be signed electronically.

Is this inconsistent with the Electronic Transactions Act 1999 (ETA)?

No. The Marriage Act requires that evidence of the place and date of birth of each party to a proposed marriage has *been produced* to the authorised celebrant.

One of the requirements of the ETA is that a document be readily accessible for subsequent use. As videoconferencing is not a physical transfer of information, like a scan, a photo by text message, facsimile or email, with the ability to store documents, it cannot be readily 'accessed' for future reference. While the ETA allows for the electronic form of a document to be produced, it must maintain the integrity of the document.

Where the Notice is submitted electronically to a marriage celebrant, this becomes the original (whether or not it is printed by the celebrant), and so the paper copy of the Notice is not required to be 'produced' prior to the solemnisation of the marriage. The celebrant must note the date of receipt on the Notice.

Can I sight evidence of identity electronically including by video conferencing?

Yes. The Marriage Act does not prescribe how a celebrant is to satisfy themselves that the parties signing the Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM) are who they say they are. An authorised celebrant must not solemnise a marriage unless the celebrant is satisfied as to the identity of both parties to the marriage. If an authorised celebrant is satisfied as to a party's identity using video conferencing media, then this is consistent with the Marriage Act.

This might be achieved by a video conferencing call whereby the party presents a drivers licence to the celebrant by holding it up to the camera during the video conferencing call.

A celebrant should however, ensure that evidence provided to establish date and place of birth can be reconciled to the identity of a party prior to the solemnisation of the marriage. For example, if a party produces their birth certificate by email to the celebrant as evidence of their place and date of birth, the celebrant needs to reconcile that evidence against photographic or other identity documents to confirm their identity. The simple method here is to witness the ID doc in the video meeting and then either do a screen shot and/or have the couple scan the originals to you.

What are my obligations regarding record-keeping?

Celebrant copy of official certificate of marriage and Form 15 Certificate record of use form

Part of a marriage celebrant's record-keeping obligations is to retain their copy of the second official certificate of marriage for a period of six years from the date the marriage is solemnised. The Form 15 certificate record of use form must also be kept for a *period of six years from the last entry on the form.*

If more convenient, these documents can be kept electronically.

Notice of Intended Marriage and Declaration of No Legal Impediment

There is *no requirement* under the marriage legislation for authorised celebrants to retain copies (either hard copy or electronically) of the Notice, the DONLIM or any supporting documents such as statutory declarations. These marriage documents are to be forwarded (in hard copy or lodged online in some cases) to the relevant BDM within 14 days of solemnising the marriage.

Any other documents, such as divorce orders and parental consents, are not required to be kept once they have been lodged online.

Once the Notice Of The Intended Marriage (NOIM) and DONLIM (and other documents as needed) have been forwarded to the BDM through their online systems, it is recommended that the hard copy of the marriage paperwork be retained until the marriage has been registered. At that point, if an authorised celebrant wishes to dispose of the hard copy documents, then they should do so securely, ensuring that any personal information is adequately protected.

Do I still need to prepare two official certificates of marriage if registering a marriage online?

Yes. The Marriage Act requires that two official certificates of marriage be prepared (one for registration and one for the authorised celebrant's records). Authorised celebrants must continue to prepare two official certificates of marriage for signing immediately following the solemnisation of the marriage. One of the official certificates of marriage (with the DONLIM on the reverse side) must be forwarded to the BDM (in hard copy or electronically) and the other certificate must be kept by the celebrant (in hard copy or electronically) for a period of six years from the date the marriage is solemnised (as noted above).

The online lodgement of the official certificate with the BDM does not change these legal requirements and an authorised celebrant is still required to prepare two official certificates of the marriage. While this will result in the celebrant having two official certificates in hardcopy, the celebrant can, once the certificate has been submitted to the BDM through the online marriage registration system, dispose of the BDM copy.

Authorised celebrants can also choose whether to retain their copy of the marriage certificate in hardcopy or electronically.

The official certificate can be downloaded from the department's [website](#).



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department



If you read the December 2023 Edition, you will have discovered that the Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023 included a number of proposed changes to the Marriage Act; AMC Representative-AG Govt Liaison Officer: Brian Brennan, provides a further explanation of the Bill and what is likely to occur.

Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023

(Article by Brian Brennan)

The *Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023*, was submitted to Parliament on 17th November 2023 for a second reading. It will be submit to a vote and then sent to the Senate for their consideration (probably early next year). Since it apparently doesn't have any measure in it that are considered contentious and that would lead to a political divide, approval is expected. So, what is in the Bill? A fair bit actually!

Remote Witnessing to be made permanent.

The temporary Covid measure of approval for witnessing signatures on NOIMs over Zoom, Teams, Messenger or other video applications expired on 31st December 2023. The Bill before Parliament seeks to make Remote Witnessing permanent.

There were a large number of representations to MPs regarding this and apparently it had the effect that people were after. Please note that the issue of location remains and so there are a separate list of NOIMs witnessed overseas to the ones witnessed in Australia. All couples can utilise the remote witnessing however they need to apply the appropriate witness list for that location. Simply put, celebrants in Australia can't witness couples signing the NOIM overseas. That has to be done by an appropriate witness (as listed on the NOIM) for the location.

Requirement to physically meet each party separately before the ceremony.

Celebrants are supposed to ascertain whether any party due to be married by them are not being coerced or are under duress and, if this is the case, they are not to solemnise the marriage. To enable a stronger assessment by celebrants, the new Bill directs celebrants to meet with each party separately, prior to the ceremony. There doesn't appear to

be a timeframe limit for this so it can happen on the day of the ceremony so long as it is beforehand. There is yet to be any guidance provided on this but it will be passed on when it is available.

Transferring NOIMs.

NOIMs will be able to be transferred from one celebrant to another on the request of the parties being married. At the moment the Act requires transfer to be a result of:

- death, absence or illness of the celebrant conducting the ceremony or
- where there are other reasons that it is impracticable for that celebrant to solemnise the marriage.

Apparently there were some concerns regarding the Act and the words "... for any other reason ..." when considering if it is impractical for the celebrant to conduct the ceremony. One big concern was when the couple had decided that they wanted to change celebrants (for whatever reason) but was that reason enough to meet the terms of the Act? This change to the act enables the couple to change celebrants without skirting around the edges of the Act.

Solemnisation requiring "physical presence".

During the COVID 19 emergency, there were a lot of proposed ways of conducting a marriage while retaining distancing. A surprisingly large number of celebrants were recommending marrying couples over video conferencing applications. The final result is an inclusion in the Bill that the celebrant solemnising the marriage must be *physically* present as must the two witnesses.

Registration under Sub-Divisions.

Celebrants will only be able to be registered under one sub-division at a time. This means, for example, that celebrants wishing to be both a civil and a religious celebrant will no longer be able to do so. It is my understanding that those who are currently registered as both an *authorised civil celebrant* and an *authorised celebrant within a recognised Denomination* will need to identify which they intend to continue with and will lose the registration within the other sub-division. As the Bill has yet to be passed, I am unsure of timelines for this to occur, however I will pass on that information when I have it.

Clarification of evidence of date and place of birth.

The Act currently requires parties seeking marriage to provide their birth certificates to prove their place and

Continued next page.....

date of birth. If they are unable to do so, they can either provide a passport or a statutory declaration. The wording was a bit loose under the current Act and so the Bill will ensure that the wording allows the provision of a passport as a clear option and define the provision of a statutory declaration as necessary when a passport cannot be provided or it is impractical (for whatever reason) for them to provide a birth certificate. From my viewpoint, this will greatly assist those from our First Nation who have no birth certificate or passport. The same for those who immigrated from countries where such things were not recorded accurately.

Attorney General and the Registrar

There are a few other elements in the Bill that are to support the Attorney General and the Registrar to do their work. These are:

- the authority of the Registrar expanded to allow the appointment of Deputy Registrars to assist the Registrar (duties of the Deputy would be identified by the Registrar at appointment);
- the timeframe for consideration of celebrant applications is expanding from three months to six. There is also a change to allow a pause in the time of consideration when the Registrar seeks additional information from the celebrant or a third party regarding the application.
- the Registrar can refund an application fee should they consider that the applicant is not fully qualified with a Cert IV in Celebrancy or Indigenous Celebrancy.

As I said at the start, the Bill is likely to pass but probably won't be through the process until early this year (February or March). We will pass on any advice or considerations when we have them.



All the best,
Brian Brennan

UPDATE on Senate Report

The Senate Report was published on 2/2/2023 and the Bill has to go back to the House of Representative.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/MiscellaneousMeasures23/Report/Chapter_2_-_Key_issues

Recommendation 1

2.70 The committee recommends the Attorney-General's Department update the Explanatory Memorandum to the Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023 to include further guidance and information to clarify how the proposed reforms to the Federal Court of Australia in Schedule 1 and 2

of the Bill will result in more efficient prosecution of corporate crimes and increased procedural fairness.

- 2.71 In relation to the proposed amendments to the Marriage Act, the committee appreciates the intent of the Bill to ensure that the operation of the Marriage Act is efficient and operates in a manner that is fit for purpose for both marriage celebrants and parties to a marriage.
- 2.72 The committee commends the attention being paid to the issue of free and informed consent, especially given that forced marriages are still likely to occur in Australia. However, the committee is concerned that in seeking to enhance the accessibility of marriage through the remote witnessing of the NOIM, the Bill may simultaneously create an additional barrier not in line with the spirit of this reform. The requirement for a celebrant to meet separately with both parties to the marriage prior to its solemnisation could place an additional burden on marriage celebrants that may not achieve the intended purpose of confirming consent.
- 2.73 The committee in particular recognises the arguments made by the CelebrantInstitute, outlining the practical difficulties in facilitating such meetings and the lack of guidance provided on how they should be approached in order to ensure free and informed consent to marry.
- 2.74 The committee therefore sees benefit in the AGD updating the Marriage Act Guidelines for authorised celebrants, to clarify how proposed section 42B of the Marriage Act will operate in practice and to ensure celebrants are properly supported in their meetings with each party to a marriage, and in determining consent.

Recommendation 2

- 2.75 The committee recommends that, subject to the passage of the Bill, the Attorney-General's Department amend the *Guidelines on the Marriage Act 1961 for authorised celebrants* to reflect the requirements for a celebrant to hold a separate meeting with each party to the marriage before it is solemnised. The amendments should provide information as to how the meetings might operate in practice and how consent can be determined.
- 2.76 The committee appreciates that there are a divergence of views on the proposed repeal of Section 213A of the *Native Title Act 1993*. While the committee recognises the intention of the repeal of the Native Title Respondents Scheme, the committee is also of the view that the explanatory materials for the Bill could more comprehensively address the concerns raised by submitters.
- 2.77 However, the committee also acknowledges that the proposed repeal of the NTRS would represent the implementation of a government commitment and would update the legislation to more

effectively represent the current legislative landscape that the *Native Title Act 1993* operates within, most notably the focus on negotiation and mediation rather than litigation.

- 2.78 Notwithstanding that some areas of the EM could benefit from greater detail, as identified by the committee, as a whole the Bill represents sensible and necessary amendments.
- 2.79 The Bill would ensure that legislation administered by the AGD remains consistent and operates efficiently for individuals and organisations affected by the relevant Acts. In recognition of these benefits, the committee is in support of passage of the Bill.

Recommendation 3

2.80 The committee recommends the Bill be passed.



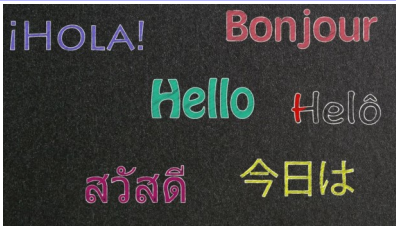
Certificate of Faithful Performance by Interpreter

The Certificate of Faithful Performance by Interpreter has been updated to bring the certificate into line with recent changes to the Statutory Declarations

Act 1959 (Cwlth) enabling the signing of declarations to be 'observed' via video link

The revised certificate can be found on our website: [Certificate of faithful performance by interpreter | Attorney-General's Department \(ag.gov.au\)](https://www.ag.gov.au/certificate-of-faithful-performance-by-interpreter).

Only the revised form should be used when required.



NEXT MLCS MEETING



The next MLCS meeting will be in May 2024. . If you would like any matters raised, please notify the AMC executive with details.

PRESENTING THE RING -IDEAS

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
11. worn on another finger/hand
12. worn as a pendant
13. worn as part of a belt buckle
14. unwrap a tattooed ring
15. worn as nose or eyebrow piercing
16. tied to the ribbon used for handfasting
17. hanging from the arbour in a terrarium, jar, bag, lamp, balloon etc
18. hanging from the arbour on a ribbon
19. lowered on a fishing line or cord
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. display 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 the B&G
37. in a Piñata
38. consider the hobbies, passions, talents and/or 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 could 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 box
 - f. a fisherman could have a lure or a tackle box





Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages

CHANGING OR REGISTERING A NAME

Information from the NSW-BDM webpage.

Registering a name

If married in Australia, you can take the surname of your husband, wife or partner or add their surname to yours, without registering a name change. You can use your official BDM marriage certificate which is a proof of marriage and identity, to prove your new name.

After a name change, you will need to notify the following:

State government

- NSW Land Registry, for home owners
- NSW Rental Bond Board, for renters
- NSW Pet Registry, for pet owners

Federal government

- Australian Electoral Commission
- Australian Passport Office
- Australian Taxation Office

Other businesses

- Banks and building societies
- Insurance and superannuation providers
- Utility providers
- Mobile phone and internet providers

The names that parents choose to register for their child – or that people choose for themselves – must be consistent with the rules set out in the [NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995](#).

It is important to choose a name carefully as it will appear on the NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages Register for life. A person's name establishes their legal identity and also appears on all important documentation such as Medicare cards, Passports and Driver's Licenses.

Under law, names that fall into one or more of the categories below may be considered prohibited.

- Names that are obscene or offensive e.g. swear words, names that include sexual, alcohol or drug references, racial or cultural slurs, or are otherwise likely to insult or offend.
- Names that are too long—The maximum number of characters for each of the family, given and middle names is 50.
- Names that consist of or include symbols without phonetic significance e.g. names such as 1st, Snr, include Roman Numerals, or random punctuation.
- Names that cannot be established by repute or usage for some other reason. These names may be impractical for daily use in the community or for some other reason.
- Names that include official title or rank. You cannot register a name that might be confused with a title or rank that has been given through an official process, descent or

inheritance. e.g. Doctor or Duke of Edinburgh.

- Names that are contrary to the public interest including those that cause social disharmony, use trademarks, or refer to administrative processes. e.g. Adolf Hitler, the Soccerroos, or Passport.

If it is determined that the name you chose may be prohibited, the Registry will contact you to understand why you have chosen the name and whether the name has specific relevance to you, your family or culture. In making the decision whether to register the name, the Registry will also consider:

- how the name is currently perceived in the community
- how the name is spelt and how it sounds when spoken
- suitability of the name for legal identity and administrative purposes
- cultural or religious reasons for choosing a name
- its legal obligations.

Who can apply for a change of name

You can apply to change your name if you are over the age of 18 and:

- your birth is registered in NSW, or
- you were born overseas and have been a resident in NSW for 3 consecutive years when you apply, or
- your birth is not registered in NSW and a protection order has been made to protect you and/or your children from domestic violence.

HELLO
I am a...

Muggle



DID YOU KNOW?

The *Married Women's Property Act* enabled married women to hold property of their own, sue and be sued, enter into contracts, be subject to bankruptcy laws, be liable for the debts contracted before their marriage, and for the maintenance of their children. Victoria passed legislation in 1884, New South Wales in 1879, and the remaining states passed similar legislation between 1890-97.

<https://timeline.awava.org.au/archives/21>



Marketing

Here are some marketing tips from the NSW Government:

- ⇒ [Attracting new customers \(5 minutes\)](#)
- ⇒ [Market research and competitor analysis \(10 minutes\)](#)
- ⇒ [Pricing strategy \(9 minutes\)](#)
- ⇒ [Understanding financial statements \(9 minutes\)](#)
- ⇒ [Product and market expansion \(6 minutes\)](#)
- ⇒ [How to start a business: The mindset \(6 minutes\)](#).

It seems that anyone and everyone who has a Facebook business page has been bombarded with scam messages on FB business pages claiming that FB will shut down the page

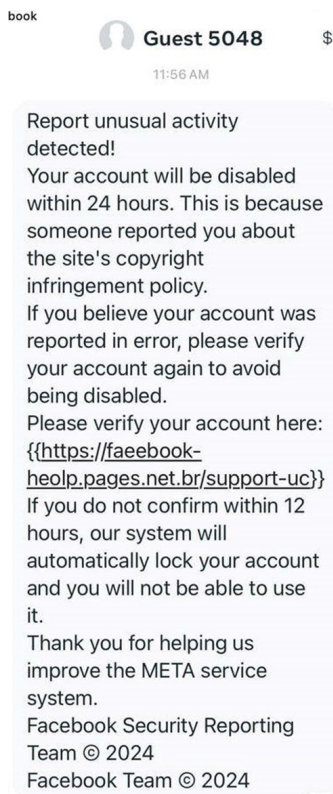
If the option is available in your settings, you can restrict messages to “only those who have logged into FB Messenger”, but if you cannot find that option, report & block it if you can, or move it to spam, or maybe just delete it.

There are quite a few clues that this is a scam message beginning with it being from a 'Guest' user meaning that the scammer has not used an actual FB Messenger account. Other clues are:

- the false accusation,
- the spelling and grammatical errors,
- the fake FB weblink where FB and help are misspelled etc etc

N.B. DO NOT CLICK ON THE LINK in the post

sample scam message



AMC

AUSTRALIAN
MARRIAGE
CELEBRANTS

Committee

The AMC committee are all volunteer Celebrants who freely offer their time and energy. It is a compliment to their character that they paid their own accommodation & entry to the AMC Conference and unlike some other associations are not paid any sort of stipend but are of course reimbursed expenses when they bother to claim

Office Bearers

- **President & National Regional Co-ordinator:** Annemarie McDonell
- **Vice President/Education Officer/Regional Coordinator:** Kelly Lawson
- **Treasurer:** Lesley Fazzolari
- **Secretary/Regional Coordinator:** Karyn Bridge
- **Policies Officer:** Kathleen Dodd

General Committee:

- **Conference Coordinator:** Kamal Al Saliby
- **Rep-AG Govt Liaison Officer:** Brian Brennan
- **Contact Liaison/Regional Coordinator:** Paul Guy
- **Newsletter Editor:** Jacqueline LeGrand
- **Social Media Marketing Officer/Regional Coordinator:** Tanya McDonald
- **Conference Coordinator/Regional Coordinator:** Leanne McKay

There is also a huge list of Regional Coordinators including of course the Author/Editor of this newsletter.

You can find out more about the committee at:

<https://marriagecelebrants.org.au/about-us/executive-committee/>

TV Review

WARNING: The review contains a Spoiler warning!!

The Good Doctor is a brilliant medical drama series originating out of South Korea but adapted/converted, for American TV, beginning in 2017.

The American series stars Freddie Highmore as Dr Shaun Murphy, a young savant on the Autism Spectrum as it leads us through its 7 seasons following Shaun's journey, often through back flashbacks, from a deeply troubled childhood, bullying, a violent homelife, homelessness, grief, multiple foster homes, and incessant discrimination as he focuses on a single goal of not being known as an "autistic surgeon" but as "a great surgeon". Like any lengthy TV series, there are many relationships and the occasional wedding. There are also deaths. It is a medical drama series and so you do see quite a few couples rushed to urgent medical care and given that the main character encounters constant discrimination, we also see how he and those around him, deal with emotional situations, prejudices including his own, and how each copes with challenges and change. Season 3 shows Shaun and others around him, experience the heartbreak of unrequited love, emotional growth and a



strengthening of love through dramatic circumstances.

Season 4 demonstrates the challenges and impact of grief.

Season 5 though, sees Shaun further develop his loving relationship with a former neighbour. Episode 1 includes a disastrous engagement party which had been wonderful right up until a drunk uncle type speech.

Midseason we see the loving relationship challenged by a well-meaning act that is actually highly disrespectful and how to move forward from that pain; while the last three episodes of that season, we finally encounter the struggle to plan a wedding, the challenges and eventual failure of an attempt to hold an

expensive 'reality TV' wedding, and finally a successful and touching civil service on the hospital rooftop.

From a Celebrants perspective, we see the struggles that couples experience in everything from who to put on the guests list through to clothing, venue, cake and flower selection and so much more, including of course difficulties in writing vows and choosing an officiant (American translation of Celebrant).

Warning though, if you are only going to watch for the three episodes for the wedding leadup and ceremony scenes and not the 'medical drama' series, stop watching immediately that the first dance begins while everyone is still happy.

Ray Martin: The Last Goodbye

to be produced by BBC for SBS

[From an article by Paul Dalgarno:](#)

[Ray Martin: The Last Goodbye to be produced by BBC for SBS | ScreenHub Australia - Film & Television Jobs, News, Reviews & Screen Industry Data](#)

Ray Martin will plan his own funeral, uncovering how Australia is choosing to say goodbye to its dead.

Paul Dalgarno wrote in the article that BBC Studios' Australian production arm is to produce the new series *Ray Martin: The Last Goodbye* for SBS.

He went on to say that the three-part series, set to be broadcast on SBS in 2024, and that acclaimed journalist Ray will discover the trends, cultural rituals, methods and emerging tech around the way we lay ourselves and our loved ones to rest.

A spokesperson for the production described it as a 'poignant, revealing and, at times, humorous quest that will see Ray challenge his own expectations while going down the rabbit hole into some unusual emerging practices such as cryonics, upright burial and body composting'.



THE HISTORY OF CELEBRANCY - THANKYOU

Every month I try to feature a significant Celebrant or historical event but for the December 2023 Newsletter, to celebrate 50 years of the Civil Celebrant's Program, the 'Historical Newsletter' featured 50 celebrants as well as historical figures and events.

After each newsletter, I always receive a few thank-you's and compliments which are always appreciated but the December 2023 issue was an extraordinary issue to celebrate and it did take a lot of work, research, hours of interviews and countless emails to procure information.

The responses this time were amazing. Next month we will have a feature article on a feature on an incredible experience enjoyed by one Celebrant and his wife, but this month, I am going to share some of the comments on the December 2023 issue.

A wonderful dedicated newsletter to all hard working celebrants. The work you have put into such is amazing and compliments the hours you have spent. You portray our celebrants industry as one of skilled endeavour and integrity.

Congratulations

Barry H Young

It's fabulous.

What a huge effort.

Appreciation and deep gratitude for all you do, [Lou](#)

[Szymkow-Celebrant](#)

It's an extraordinary read.

This is so wonderful.

Thank you so much

Leanne Michelle McKay

Many thanks for sending me a copy of this magic newsletter.

Congratulations on presenting an incredible and informative document!

regards

Robyn Harrison (Darwin NT)

Well, I am speechless for a change!! What an amazing 50th Celebration Newsletter!! I think it is now my Celebrancy Handbook!!! So much wonderful information and stories and I will need a while to read it and take it all in. I believe your members are very, very fortunate to have you in the Sydney area and I only wish we could rally around our Brisbane members to join meetings here!! We will keep trying.

Anyway, the main thing is I am honoured to be included in your stories and am grateful to you for all your good advice and support.

Warm regards always

Kathy Dodd, Bega Valley Celebrant

Thankyou Lou,

Your attention to detail and dedication is admirable, and certainly appreciated.

The newsletter is amazing!

Warmest regards,

Nel Reeve

Lou, I am enjoying the newsletter - what a great read.

Melissa Sheehy

An astounding encyclopaedia of celebrancy in Australia. My copy is going straight to the pool room.

Phil Timbrell

Thank you for your massive effort for the newsletter and all you do for AMC Lou

Kerry wing

What an amazing piece of work!

We should all appreciate the amount of your time you invested on our behalf.

In my experience, most marriage celebrants have little appreciation of how this all started and how far we have come.

Martin Moroney

Good Newsletter and such a lot of work and effort you have put in. Congratulations!!!!!!

Barbara Bell

Thank you Lou this is amazing

Jan Littlejohn

I love what you are doing. Keep it up!

John Hill

CHRISTMAS MEETING

The last South Coast Regional Meeting for 2023 was once again held at the Mollymook Golf Club.

Each celebrant attending received the gift of a book doated by the wonderful Barbara Bell who has retired from Celebrancy. You can read about her in the Historical December 2023 newsletter.

A dozen celebrants attended this time around which is pretty amazing given that it takes four hours to drive from one end of the region to the other and so we enjoyed not just wonderful food but wonderful company.



COORDINATOR COMMENTS



I am in various groups from across the world and was recently critical of American ‘officiants’ who I see from many photos, always stand between their couple, separating them, while using handheld mics, lecterns and/or hold large books or folders.

I had the incredible benefit of celebrant & friend, Phil Timbrell

attending one of my first ceremonies and he pointed out that using a lectern created a barrier between celebrant and couple. Well, I also video record all my ceremonies and so was immediately able to review my own performance and conceded his important criticism.

This raises important points:

1. Having another Celebrant critique your performance can be extremely helpful
2. Recording your performance on video enables you to be your own critic
3. Sometimes things that we think look good, are not
4. Barriers remove intimacy and so remove the barriers

Having said that about American officiants, and myself, it opened my eyes to our own wider doorstep. I looked online and saw most of us do have promo photos where we are very close to the couple and for the most part, being close to the couple does often make for great photos, especially when all are full of joy, but we also need to be aware of clients’ needs and wants and body language. Body language is such a great tell.

I am not posting the photograph here but recently saw a promo from a celebrant who boasted of a wonderful ceremony and a close relationship to a very happy couple however the photo told a totally different story because both the bride and groom were obviously uncomfortably with the Celebrant hugging them. The pursed lipped couple were turning away from the overjoyed & smiling celebrant, and they clearly unhappy. So the suggestion is that not only do you review your own performance, but review your photos before posting.

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

John 4:18

SURVEY RESULTS

As you know, each year I survey our AMC regional members before setting meeting dates for the year.

For the last two years we held quarterly meetings via zoom with most meetings having a guest speaker followed by a face to face get together for Christmas.

Our 2023 schedule was disrupted when AMC education sessions midyear, were scheduled on dates that conflicted with Sth Coast meetings. That resulted in some meetings being cancelled in preference to the AMC Education sessions which are fantastic and very highly recommended.

It is important that our South Coast meetings don’t clash with the AMC Education sessions but having the education sessions also meant that there was a risk of duplication and so we had to consider not only changing the schedule but the content as well.

In 2022 the Christmas meeting was over a sunset dinner with an excellent view of the beach. Very South Coast.

In 2023, the Christmas meeting had to change as well. The golf club underwent renovations with the result that the large table with an ocean view has gone, and Celebrants said they wanted a lunch rather than dinner, so that they didn’t have to drive home late at night. Ever willing to adapt, we still met at the Mollymook Golf Club but this time, for an excellent lunch. It was the largest meeting yet and everyone left with a smile and a gift. It will be lunch again this year.

The majority who responded to the 2024 planning survey wanted to continue with quarterly meetings once again with at least one face to face meeting annually. Actually, face to face was preferred but the majority were in agreement that it was not practical to hold more frequent face to face meetings because of distance, as it take four hours to drive from one end of the region to the other. The obvious conclusion therefore is for quarterly zoom meetings to resume with at least one face to face per year and logic dictates that would be at Christmas, though we could always make room for an extra face to face midyear, say around the anniversary of the Civil Celebrancy Program on 17th July

Interestingly, whilst all still prefer the meetings to run for an hour, and quarterly (as before), there is a now preference for meetings to be held during business hours and on weekdays though there was no consistency on choice of days. A minority preferred Saturday or Sunday evening and so it would seem that whichever day we choose, there will always be someone who may miss out.

The majority attend the AMC education sessions, and all said they read the newsletters.

Everyone wants to learn about social media or new rituals, at the regional meetings but from other celebrants and the great news is that some have offered to guide us in different topics. So quarterly meeting for an hour, on a week day during business hours with maybe one on a weekend at which topics will include social media, marketing and unusual or new rituals.

I will set up the schedule and you will be invited via the AMC Facebook Group, the AMC Forum and via your AMC email subscription, so please make certain that you register for subscriptions (see pages 1&2)