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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.



IT'S JUST A WEDDING



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It is said that the shortest distance between two people is a good joke, but a wedding is no laughing matter and so how do you strike the balance between the sanctity of the ceremony and the desire to have fun. Phil Timbrell gives us his view on “Using Humour in a Wedding Ceremony”.

Article by Phil Timbrell

I will never forget being asked by a groom to come to his home to meet his bride to be, and to sign a NOIM and get moving on a ceremony. The error I made at that meeting was to mention that I like to inject some humour into the ceremony early on. I then received the death stare from the bride and was politely advised this was a wedding ceremony and not a comedy festival. Needless to say I lost that job. So the first lesson is not to assume that everyone wants humour, although I also feel in hindsight that we were not a good match in the first place and it may have



all got worse had I got past 1st base.

So assuming the couple is keen to have some humour in their ceremony, how do you go about writing and delivering it? Well the ceremony should reflect the couple’s beliefs and personalities to the assembled guests. If the couple make it clear none of the guests will be offended by certain language then that is fine, however, I make it a rule never to cross the line of using either swearing or to mention anything to do with the bedroom. In that case I would suggest they invite someone to speak in support of the marriage who can use whatever language he or she chooses. So I would write a ceremony that could be spoken to a 6 year old without causing any offence but which does bring a laugh to the adults present who might have a deeper understanding of what has been said.

Interview: the first step is to interview the couple with open questions asking about how they met, if there is anything about one that annoys the other, funny things that have happened during their courtship or even a common interest they might share or a major difference in interests. The secret is to simply let them talk. Take notes. And if they don’t talk? Well when you first meet the couple, check out who is the extrovert and who is the introvert;

Continued next page.....

COVER PICTURE
Dolphin Beach Reserve

**UPCOMING
Sth COAST
MEETINGS**

**Check the AMC Webpage for
meetings and Education
sessions**

this is a common mix and play to the extrovert without offending the introvert. Surprisingly the introvert will often then open up with some fresh material.

First draft: I normally put the amusing story in as an icebreaker early in the ceremony. If the couple have a quiet chuckle and the guests have a quiet chuckle with them, then the ceremony will be a relaxed and memorable one. Write as much as you can from the interview without trying to make it funny. Just get it down on paper. Then start reading it, looking for anything that might form the basis of a bit of humour. If something can be visualised then that will make it even funnier. Now it is recommended you never try to introduce old jokes – you are not telling jokes, you are delivering a humorous ceremony about the couple. So the couple might mention, as an example, that they had met at the bride's birthday party when John had tagged along with a friend who had been invited. This can be turned into: *"You see this couple first met 8 years ago at a birthday party; Jenny's birthday party. John here had not been invited – oh no he had just tagged along with a friend who I might mention (pause) had been invited"*. Adding details such as 8 years ago, makes it sound as though the celebrant was there watching through a keyhole. Using detail makes it real.

One technique that is often used is exaggeration, and I give an example from one of my weddings. The bride and groom thought it would be neat to draw the names of the witnesses out of a hat. So I agreed. This in itself is



humorous and helps break the ice at a wedding, however I decided to exaggerate the situation by saying the following: *"So who will be our witnesses today? Well, Jenny and John have decided the fairest way to decide is to draw 2 names from the old proverbial hat. I have a modest example of a*

suitable hat here (showing a weather beaten Akubra). And who will we get to draw the names from a hat? Well I have here another hat ... " (this is the line that got the laughs as the situation became ridiculous and I recall a little fellow about 9 or 10 canning himself laughing). That is the best compliment to me when you can make people of all ages laugh. No need for bad language or innuendo there.

The following is from a wedding I wrote in which the hen's night featured largely in the ceremony. *"And then Shannon and Amy followed their assortment of drinks with a McDonalds double cheeseburger, a pack of chicken nuggets and – (pause) because Amy was watching her health washed down with a Coke Zero"*. This unexpected ending, that she was watching her health after describing the junk food is a form of diversion where the guests were given an unexpected ending, yet logical ending, to a sentence.

Once you have tidied up the straight script from the interview and introduced just 1 or 2 amusing anecdotes or pieces of humour it is time to reach for the timing button and the divergence technique. Things that can sound



perfectly plain can be made to sound funny by allowing the audience to look ahead and assume a certain word or phrase will be used, then divert to another word or phrase. To achieve this you need to read the script word for word as though you are actually performing in front of the guests and looking for opportunities to pause, to divert the guests up the wrong path. The trick then is to use a more obvious word or phrase that catches them off guard. An example might be:

"and so this couple both decided to log on to the dating site, Tinder, but this of course was back in 2016 when Tinder was regarded as a most ... (pause and grimace).. respectable dating site (celebrant smirks to the guests as if to say I fooled you).

The guests will laugh from relief as Tinder had a different reputation back then.

Delivery: it is common for a comedian to warm up the crowd. This is not really possible at a wedding ceremony however you can do quite a bit to get them in the mood. Typically wandering amongst the guests before the ceremony, making a few light hearted comments helps to set the scene. **Also if the bride is late you can simply apologise to her that all the guests arrived too early.** She will laugh at that and the guests will follow. Any such quips help establish that you are there to deliver a ceremony that might contain some humour. And the best way to get a good laugh is to precede it with a small laugh.

One word of advice for delivery. It is most likely that the guests and the couple all know each other much better than they know you. So if you want to be humorous, be self-deprecating. It is a form of humour I use often. This means you are playing the part of the entertainer whilst not offending the couple or the guests and can be very effective. An example might be if the couple met on the dating site Hinge. You could look confused and say something like:

"with a name like Hinge I assumed that was for swingers".

Now whilst there is a touch of innuendo it paints the celebrant as being ignorant of modern dating apps whilst not offending any youngsters present.

There are many comic techniques beyond what I have mentioned here, many funny things can happen on the spur of the moment. If something unexpected happens, which will cause tension amongst the guests, such as the ring bearer dropping a ring, a quip such as: *"phew ... a good thing it was insured"* will relieve the tension and get a laugh. It is better to relieve tension than create tension. So it would be wrong to say *"Ooh, I hope that was insured"*. Of course if the ring was lost then quips have no place.

Finally read the guests. The couple will have already told you if they want humour or not but if your humour is not working just push on as though it wasn't meant to be funny and maybe drop some of the other similar humour as you go along. And you do that by doing what news readers do and that is to always, be reading ahead of what you are saying.

Good luck



KNOWLEDGE BASE

WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM & THE MARRIAGE ACT

What will occur if you are approached by someone who wishes to marry but is under witness protection and so their true identity is secret.

The first thing you might do is go to the Guidelines but you won't find anything there and so your next step might be to check the Marriage Act.

Here is what the Act says:

42A Commissioner of Australian Federal Police or approved authority may issue special notice

(1) If the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police or a person who is an approved authority for the purposes of the *Witness Protection Act 1994* gives to a Registrar a certificate under section 14 of that Act stating that the person has received the evidence referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c) of that section and the statutory declaration referred to in paragraph (d) of that section, the Registrar:

- (a) if he or she is to solemnise the marriage himself or herself—is to treat the certificate as satisfying the requirements of section 42; or
- (b) in any other case—is to give to the celebrant a notice stating that the celebrant should treat the requirements of section 42 of this Act as having been met.

(2) The names specified in the certificate are to be used in the marriage certificate.

Section 42 of the Marriage Act covers 'Notice to be given and declaration made'.

A copy of Section 14 of the *Witness Protection Act 1994* is in the next column..



WITNESS PROTECTION ACT 1994 - SECT 14 Special provision in case of marriage of participant

- If:
- (a) a participant who has been provided with a new identity under the NWPP wishes to marry; and
 - (b) the participant has given to the Commissioner or an approved authority evidence that satisfies the Commissioner or the approved authority:
 - (i) that the participant is of marriageable age; and
 - (ii) of the original identity of the participant; and
 - (c) if the participant has been married previously-- the participant has given to the Commissioner or an approved authority evidence that satisfies the Commissioner or the approved authority that the person's previous spouse has died or that the participant is divorced; and
 - (d) the participant has given to the Commissioner or an approved authority a statutory declaration to the effect that there is no legal impediment to the marriage and the Commissioner or the approved authority is not aware of any legal impediment to the marriage;

the Commissioner or the approved authority may give a certificate to a Registrar stating that the Commissioner or the authority has received the evidence referred to in paragraphs (b) and (c) and the statutory declaration referred to in paragraph (d).



“...ceremony and ritual is the glue that keeps community together. It is ceremonies at the milestone moments in their lives that gives them their identity. It is the means by which values are expressed, transmitted and reinforced. Ceremonies are the way humans have evolved to seriously communicate, to bond to each other as individuals, to bring families together and to establish communities.

Dally Messenger III



KNOWLEDGE BASE

QUESTION: How do I perform a marriage ceremony with a co-celebrant?

This is confusing for some but it shouldn't be as the Guidelines are clear and specific.

Any number of other people can be involved in the ceremony but it is You, as the Authorised Celebrant, who gives the monitum and then can step back allowing the ceremony to continue while you remain in proximity to watch and listen so as to ensure there are no breaches of the Marriage Act, and you step back in for the signing of the certificates.

The reference to Ministers Of Religion in the below context refers to a minister who is authorised to conduct a marriage ceremony. If the minister conducting the ceremony is not authorised, the Civil Celebrant treats the ceremony in the same manner as if the person was not a minister.

Guidelines 5.4 involvement of others in marriages solemnised by authorised celebrants who are not ministers of religion.

When a marriage is being solemnised by an authorised celebrant who is not a minister of religion, and the couple wants someone else to be centrally involved in the ceremony, the authorised celebrant should ensure that they have the following minimum role:

- consent to be present at the ceremony as the responsible authorised celebrant
- identify themselves to the assembled parties, witnesses and guests as the celebrant authorised to solemnise the marriage
- be responsible for ensuring that the marriage ceremony is carried out according to law
- say the words required by subsection 46(1) of the Marriage Act in the presence of the parties, the formal witnesses and the guests before the marriage is solemnised (see [Part 5.6](#) of the guidelines)
- be in close proximity to the ceremonial group or part of it, see and hear the vows required by subsection 45(2) and ensure that those vows comply with the requirements of the Marriage Act (see further [Part 5.7 of the guidelines](#))
- be available to intervene (and exercise the responsibility to intervene) if events demonstrate the need for it during the ceremony
- receive and sign the papers required by the Marriage Act, including receiving the NOIM, and sighting the supporting documents each party is required to produce and sign the marriage certificates (see [Part 6](#) of the guidelines), and
- register the marriage with the appropriate BDM as required under the Marriage Act (see [Part 7](#) of the guidelines).



It's time for Your Contribution

We are now into the third year of this newsletter and I have written most of the articles but now it is your turn. As celebrants we are all wordsmiths, and now I/we need articles for future newsletters. It can be about you, a ritual, a ceremony, trends, law changes, or perhaps a movie review, so anything that is for or about Celebrancy. To get you started, here are

10 tips on how to write a movie, TV program Or book review for the Sth Coast Celebrants Cheering For Each Other newsletter.

1. Choose wisely- is there something in the film, show or book that will help Celebrant
2. Get familiar with the subject by Watching the film or TV program or by reading the book.
3. Jot down some talking points.
4. As you start to write, Identify the medium (movie, TV show or book), name it and its authors or actors and if it is a series, identify the episode.
5. Have your audience (Celebrants) in mind and explain why it is useful (or not) for Celebrants. So focus on how it will be useful, You can digress to give a bit about the story plot, but always bring the focus back to its usefulness to a Celebrant.
6. Give the readers some idea of the plot but avoid spoilers as the idea is to get people interested to watch or read but also to and allow them to form their own views.
7. Express your opinion and explain your criticism.
8. Add some information about the actors, directors or genre.
9. Reread, rewrite, and edit. Take the time to recheck your grammar, spelling and article flow.
10. Your review can be under 100 to 300 words unless of course there is a special reason to add more e.g. a review on Four Weddings and a Funeral might include a critic or comment on each ceremony.

SPEAK UP FOR MARRIAGE



What are the legal advantages of marriage if a couple already share a life, children & home?

Many couples have will tell speak of how marriage has strengthened & enhanced their relationship and how wonderful it feels to be married. They experience confidence and security in knowing that the partnership is real, permanent and loving.

When my wife and I married over 45 years ago, I think we were both surprised at just how beautiful it was to step forward knowing that the joy we brought to each other would be there forever.

Some couples who have lived together for years without marriage have not realised that the legal rights for a couple in a defacto relationship are not the same as for a married couple despite legal recognition of a defacto relationship in section 4AA of the Family Law Act 1975.

A significant factor is that with a marriage, you are immediately the next-of-kin, and so given protection under the law with regards to property, assets, inheritance, insurances, medical care and so much more.

If not married, you may not be accepted as the 'next of kin' in an emergency even if you have been together for years.

Here are some hypothetical examples based on real events (names changed):

◇ John & Mary had postponed their marriage. John got sick but found that any member of the extended family with whom there was no communication, and not Mary, was legally the next of kin able to make medical decisions about John's care while Mary could even be removed entirely from the situation.



◇ A couple were in defacto relationship for many years when John suddenly died without having specified Mary on insurances and so Mary had to go through a protracted & expensive legal battle to prove entitlement to the estate which included a home, superannuation and life insurances.



◇ John & Jane married young but they separated within a few months with no assets. It was a mistake that both wanted to put it all behind them. They



both moved on but didn't bother filing for divorce and simply forgot about it. Years later, John fell in love with Mary and planning a future together, bought a house, but John suddenly died with no Will and so Jane, the first 'wife' long forgotten about, was still the legal spouse and entitled to claim his entire estate and even control his funeral, particularly as under 4AA of the Family Law Act 1975, John & Mary were not in a defacto relationship because he was still married to Jane..

◇ John's parents threw him out of the family home at 14 when he told his parents he was gay. John had no contact with his parents but later in life, found Brian and they were together for almost 20 years.



They never married though they built a house together making it their home. Their lives were totally intertwined but when John suddenly took ill, Brian, fearing the worst, phoned John's parents from the hospital and they rushed to John's side to take over as next of kin. They threw Brian out and at John's funeral, didn't even acknowledge him. As there was no will, John's parents took possession of all of John's assets, including his share of the home he and Brian had built and tried to evict Brian.



◇ John & Mary were together for years and had build a home with their children but on a family holiday there was a car accident. All were hospitalised and decisions had to be made about medical care. The teenage children were next of kin to both their parents but as they were unmarried, John & Mary were not next of kin to each other and so legally could not make medical decisions for each other.



Are you receiving regular AMC support emails 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 not yet done, as an AMC member, you should act now by following 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.



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

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

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

To subscribe the Member Support on the AMC webpage, AMC members should follow these simple steps

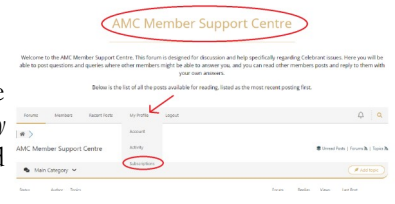
STEP 1

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.



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:** Karen Bridge
- **Secretary/Regional Coordinator:** (vacant)
- **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:** Leanne McKay
- **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/>

REGIONAL MEETINGS SIGN IN

Signing into Regional meeting has gone digital. When joining a Regional Meeting, please use one of these sign-ins.

- [non-AMC member sign](#)
- [AMC member subscription](#)



Having a single Marriage law that encompasses Civil Celebrants as well as Ministers of Religious, for the entire country seems to be somewhat unique to Australia.

Prior to 1961, marriage in Australia was regulated by state laws that varied. The Marriage Act of 1961 and subsequent Regulations largely simplified the process of solemnisation. There have been a few changes along the way but mostly but Civil Celebrants, can conduct ceremonies anywhere within Australia but you will read later in this article, how it seems the Americans have found a way to allow them to do so as well.

We are often asked questions by couples based on their own perceptions of marriage law and traditions in other countries and cultures. A Filipino might ask about Godparents, a European might think they need to go to a Registry as well as a Celebrant and an American might mention an Officiant who is a 'minister' who may or may not be associated with an actual church. Most couples will expect that they have to say 'I Do', when they don't.

Throughout Europe and the UK, ceremonies are conducted by Celebrants/Officiants who rarely have a legal authority as couples usually have to go to a Court, Town Hall or Registry for a second but brief ceremony at which the marriage is solemnised. Notice periods vary across the world from none at all a month or more and whilst we have a Notice of Intended marriage as well as a Marriage Certificate, some have only a Marriage Licence.

From an Australians' perspective, the United States of America has many contradictions in its approach to marriage.. The USA is a federal republic consisting of 50 states, a federal district (Washington, D.C., the capital city of the United States), five major territories, and various minor islands. With a population of around 340 million, it has doubled since the 1950s. The current largest state by population is California, with a population of 39,538,223 people, while the smallest is Wyoming, with a population of 576,851 people. Australia has a population of only 27million having tripled since the 1950s.

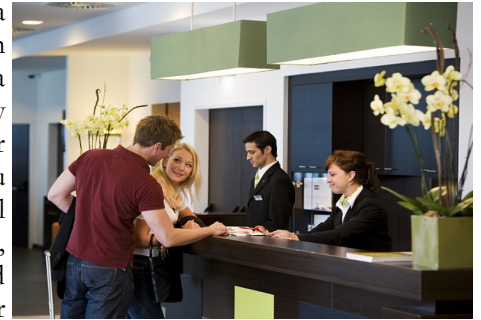
Each USA state has its own marriage laws.

Registering as Married at a Hotel Makes It So in North Carolina USA

There are two methods of receiving state recognition of a marriage in the USA:

- common-law marriage and
- obtaining a marriage license.

Common-law marriage is no longer permitted in most US states however various articles have reported that under the North Carolina's common law marriage rules, presenting yourself "*outwardly*" as husband and wife establishes a legal marriage at common law. Reports explain that simply walking into a hotel and registering as a married couple in North Carolina effectively confirms your union. So, if you check into a hotel in North Carolina, be very clear and honest about your relationship status.



Who can solemnise a Marriage in the USA?

As mentioned, each US state has its own marriage laws regarding who has the authority to 'officiate' the *solemnisation of a Marriage*". Although the wording and specifics of the laws vary from state to state, judges, retired judges, magistrates, justices of the peace, licensed celebrants and in some states, notaries but in all states ordained ministers have the authority to solemnise marriages, and so simply being an ordained minister gives you the authority to act as a wedding 'officiant' in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Washington DC, and US Territories. Beyond being an ordained minister, some States require ministers to register with a government office prior to performing a marriage. Whilst major recognised denominations may train their ministers, many US states allow online ordination and so for a fee of about \$US26, an untrained person, perhaps an atheist, may open a business as an 'officiant' after registering as an ordained minister which takes just minutes by simply registering online with no proof of ability needed. A Justice of the Peace (JP) in the USA is a public official who is authorized to perform various legal functions, including officiating at weddings. JPs are appointed at the state or local level and hold the authority to administer oaths, witness signatures on legal documents, and solemnize marriages.

Who can get married in the USA?

An individual may marry in the United States as of right, without parental consent or other authorization, on reaching 18 years of age in all states except:

- Nebraska, the general marriage age is 19,
 - Mississippi & Puerto Rico, the general marriage age is 21.
- In Alabama, the age of majority is 19, but the general marriage age is 18.

However, according to 'The 19th', an independent, nonprofit newsroom that reports on gender, politics and policy, child marriage was legal in all 50 US states until 2018. Since then, 10 states have passed bans, and advocates continue to push lawmakers to end the practice. The 19th

reports that according to a 2021 study found that nearly 300,000 minors (under 18), the vast majority of them girls, were legally married in the United States between 2000 and 2018.

According to advocacy group, Unchained:

- 10 US states have a minimum marrying age of 17;
- 23 US states have a minimum age of 16;
- 2 US states have a minimum age of 15; and
- 5 US states don't have a minimum age specified at all.



The states with the most child marriages per capita are Nevada, Idaho, Arkansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Wyoming, Utah, Alabama, West Virginia and Mississippi.

About 60,000 marriages in the USA since 2000 involved a child at an age or a marriage with a spousal age difference that would have otherwise been considered a sex crime according to Unchained data, citing state law. The author wrote to the US President asking for urgent change but received no response while the same issue was

raised in American Official FB Groups where there was some support but others objected on the grounds of removing state rights.

According to PEW, in Sudan, girls can marry at 10 and boys can marry at 15 or at puberty but that sometimes the marriage age depends on religious affiliation because in the Philippines, Muslim boys can marry at 15 and Muslim girls can marry at puberty. In Tanzania, Muslim and Hindu girls can marry at 12 as long as the marriage is not consummated until the girl reaches the age of 15.

Polygamy & Polyandry.

Muslim-majority countries and some countries with sizable Muslim minorities accept polygyny to varying extent. But

according to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, **Polygamy** became a significant social and political issue in the United States in 1852, when the Church of Jesus Christ of



Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) made it known that a form of the practice, called plural marriage, was part of its doctrine. Opposition to the practice by the United States government resulted in an intense legal conflict, and resulted in it being outlawed federally by the Edmunds Act in 1882. The LDS Church president Wilford Woodruff announced the church's official abandonment of the practice on 25th September 1890. However, breakaway Mormon fundamentalist groups living mostly in the western United States, Canada, and Mexico still practice plural marriage.

Online marriage

Whilst a person may become an ordained minister online, there is at least one USA business that undertakes Online marriage for around \$US500. They advertise that applying for a marriage license from anywhere in the world, takes just 30 minutes, the ceremony takes 10 minutes, and the marriage certificate is posted within 7 day. The online marriage business also allows any couple around the world to get legally married online, anytime day or night.

They assert that online marriage is 100% legal in the US through Utah and as a consequence, the marriages are recognised internationally. Eligibility for marriage is:

- consenting adult who is 18 or older,
- not currently married, and
- hasn't been divorced in the last 60 days.

Applicants must provide a valid government ID, have a webcam, and a stable internet connection.

Ceremonies are scheduled within 1-2 weeks, but for an extra fee can be undertaken within 24 hours, with a money back guarantee. Other extras, all for a fee, include USA immigration advice, interpreter, witnesses and an Apostille seal.

Americans Overseas

According to American Marriage Ministries, which is another marriage business registered as a religion, their 1.3million officiants can perform a marriage solemnisation anywhere in the world so long as the marriage license is filed for, completed, and returned to the relevant state, the marriage will be legal regardless of where and in what country it is performed.

Marriage Equality

In 1993, Norway permitted civil unions but it was the Netherlands that was the first country to legalise same-sex marriages in 2001. Norway replaced its Civil Union laws with marriage law in 2009

In 2006, South Africa became the only African country where same-sex marriage is legal; while in recent years, several countries on the African continent have passed laws that ban homosexuality .

In the USA thirty-six states and the District of Columbia had legalized same-sex marriage before the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that the US Constitution guarantees marriage equality throughout the country. Australia of course removed marriage discrimination in 2017.

In 2022, the first country in the formerly communist Eastern Europe to legalize same-sex marriage was Slovenia. Other countries in the Eastern block have been slow to act with Putin's Russia recently not only opposing same sex marriage, but outlawing homosexuality According to the Pew Research Centre, as of 2024, marriage between same-sex couples is legally performed and recognized in 35 countries. The most recent country to legalise same-sex marriage is Estonia while Greece was expected to pass same-sex marriage law in February 2024.

<https://similarworlds.com/home-office/hotels/4326257-Did-you-know-Registering-as-Married-at-a-Hotel>

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage_in_the_United_States
- <https://theamm.org/marriage-laws>
- <https://theamm.org/faq/23-can-i-officiate-weddings-in-another-country>

SPEAKER STANDS

We often discuss PAs and where to position them but what about PA stands and how to transport them.

Most PA stands are collapsible and so can break down to an easily transportable size however the weight will vary depending on the design, body type and materials used in manufacture.

The most common design is a height adjustable pole that is supported by three legs (tripod style) that are connected to each other for strength and so uniformly stretch out from the single centre pole body. These may be made from lightweight aluminium or a heavier steel composite. The vertical pole can be adjustable to a couple of metres in height and have a locking pin as well as a locking dial, for safety.

Most PA stands will have a standard 35mm top hat that is inserted into the base of the PA. Chaiyo and perhaps one other brand however have a speaker stand with a 15.9mm top hat designed for small light weight speakers and they use the same stand for larger speakers but with an adapter to upsize to the 35mm standard. The pole with an inbuilt speaker at its top should also be mentioned though they are mostly for indoor use as part of a complete sound system.



Other PA stand designs include a thin pole on a flat base. One design mimics a single pole microphone tripod stand while others also have a flat top shelf on which a small PA may rest. The timber frame stand also has a flat top but usually has holes for bolting a speaker though most PAs will not have corresponding holes and besides, the timber frame is

not collapsible and so not as easily transported as the tripod frame though can be made at home by any handyperson. Note that if resting your PA on the shelf, it is only gravity that holds the PA in place.



Obviously these would only be suitable for smaller sound systems as they would not provide sufficient stability for heavier systems.

A tip here is that a heavier PA body, and larger speaker size, usually means better sound quality. It's the old wood -v- plastic argument in that thin plastic does not have the same depth of sound quality achieved from a system that has a timber or sound insulated body.

One type not yet discussed is the lectern. You will encounter many with an inbuilt microphone but there are also designs that include a cavity for a PA. The advantages are that a control system can be built into the lectern as well housing the PA and that the front of the lectern can be decorated with logos or similar and so it can be promotional or decorative however the first consideration is of course would a lectern actually serve your purpose, as they can be obtrusive. The other obvious aspect is that the PA would be housed below ear level other than for people seated in the front row. This might work for a small funeral but not for a larger crowd as the sound could be lost.

Depending on the size of the crowd, you will generally want your PA at approximately ear-level for maximum benefit and have a gap of about a metre surrounding the PA so that there is no reverb or directional obstructions from surrounding objects.

In positioning a PA system you also want to ensure a line of sight from your wireless microphone or Bluetooth device to minimise interference. Elevation can be helpful here.

Depending on crowd and positioning, you may want an auxiliary speaker, also on a stand, to even out the sound. For large crowds the auxiliary speaker carries sound further but for smaller crowds it has the effect of ensuring the front row is not blasted out their seats while the back row can only just hear the music. For aesthetics, identical stands are best. The auxiliary can be connected wirelessly or by cable but if a cable is used, consideration has to be given to concealing the cable to prevent it from being a trip hazard. A cable trip can not only cause injury but can damage the system, breaking the cable or toppling the expensive PA.

Expanding on auxiliary speakers, if you have a smaller system, you should also have an auxiliary speaker or two on stands. A small system may be great for a crowd of 20 people but when you have 80+, the sound will be great for the front 20 people, but can be muffled or even lost, further back. Time and time again Celebrants with small systems will insist their sound is excellent but the

Celebrant usually stands at the front and so will hear what the front 20 people hear and not the muffled sound that the back 20 experience.



Most stands are height-adjustable and the metal tripods have a safety pin to prevent slippage but it can be a task to lift a heavy PA up onto the stand and to then adjust the height of both before inserting the safety pin into the body. An option is a windup stand which allow you to place the PA on top and to then simply wind up the stand to the required height. Windup stands are especially good for large crowds where extra height might be needed in open areas but of course you may need to be able to tilt the PA toward the crowd so that the sound is not projecting into the distance without those nearby being to hear the full sound. It should be mentioned that the wind-ups do tend to be considerable more expensive.

One stand that you will see at concerts and with street vendors is the feedback amplifier or acoustic stand, so called because it is designed so that musicians can place an amplifier close by and easily adjust dials, or place it so that it faces the musician who can hear what is being projected. Street vendors use them to allow sound to be projected a short distance. They fold up but often still take up more space than a collapsible tripod stand.

Price is always important. We always balance affordability with quality, but quality should always win out because, as a professional, you need something that is durable, safe, secure, functional and transportable. Metal tripod stands are usually the most versatile and durable, and depending on design, as mentioned, they collapse for ease of transport. Aluminium stands are lighter but steel is stronger and the extra weight provides more stability. The heavier the material, the greater the weight capacity & stability.

As a general rule, the greater the weight the more stable the stand but design and circumstances can have an impact. A flat PA stand base for example, will be stable only on a flat surface; and just because a stand can support a 17 kilo speaker doesn't mean it won't tip over if on an uneven footing, so make certain that your stand can not only hold the weight of your PA but will withstand a bump, wind or uneven ground.

Getting back to design and style, there are many commercial stand designs available but not all are suitable for events. There are single and multiple pole design with a flat or angled tops and others that are wooden box designs which could easily be made by any person handy with tools and timber, but resoundingly the most common choice is the metal tripod however almost all of the tripod speaker stands on the market, have an

adjustable height on the centre pole, but unlike camera tripods, the legs of the PA tripod cannot be individually lengthened which means that if the ground is not level, the tripod won't be straight and so could topple on a slope or on uneven ground. The only way to level such a tripod is to either dig down to level the uneven legs or place pads under the legs to raise them to an even level. A paver usually does the trick. I have made this point to one manufacturer and they have promised to consider the design but I've already modified a tripod for purpose making two legs adjustable in length (see next article).

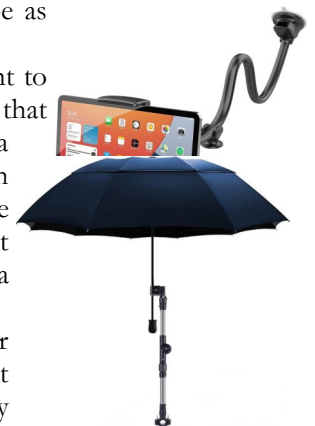
Any stand can present a trip hazard. One solution is the placing of barriers around the stand or painting safety stripes on the legs but the most aesthetically pleasing is perhaps the speaker stand skirt which can be made at home or purchased online for about \$18-\$36 on eBay. There are three types:

1. one that simply wraps around the legs of body of the stand like a skirt and is secured with clips or Velcro.
2. another that is like a fitted poncho and so is a cone shaped sheet with a central hole that drops over the stand before the speaker is placed.
3. The third which keeps its shape as it has its own frame

With the first two, it is important to Velcro the skirt to the legs so that the skirt does not become a flapping sail in a breeze but with all three, they need to be weighted or pegged to prevent them becoming airborne in a strong wind.

There are of course other accessories including those that bracket onto the PA stand, many of which are available online or from music stores, golf shops and bargain stores:

1. **iPad holder** allowing a connected iPad to be readily accessible for music selection
2. **Umbrella Holder** offering the PA some weather protection
3. **Shelf** for accessories such as an external CD player, laptop, amplifier controller or to support a booster battery
4. **Lighting Arms** to support DJ lights
5. **Pockets**, soft or solid to hold spare microphones, cables and accessories
6. **Cable hooks** to take up excess cables
7. **Cable tracks** to securely run and tidy any connected cable
8. **Drink holder** to secure your water bottle or coffee
9. **Fan** to help cool the PA



MODIFYING A TRIPOD TO STAND STRAIGHT ON UNEVEN SURFACES

The previous article outlined PA stand choices and mentioned the issue of PA leaning when on an uneven surface such as in a park.

My solution to the problem was to make two tripod legs extendable. To do that I have to scavenge parts from two other tripods.

1. I removed the centre poles (CP) and clamps from two other tripods (see figure 1)
2. I removed the stopper plugs from all three legs and cut the ends off the legs of the main tripod to shorten them.
3. Cutting the CPs to length, I slid the CPs with clamps, onto two of the tripod legs 2 & 3 (see diagram 2)
4. Using a CP off-cut, I sleeved that onto the third leg of the tripod.(diagram 2)
5. Using the tripod leg off-cuts, I inserted them into the ends of the CP sections that had sleeved onto the tripod legs, and plugged them to make the tripod feet (see diagram 2)
6. Laying the tripod onto a table, I marked off the point at which all three legs were equal at rest and using tech screws, secured the feet in place (diagram 2)
7. Extra tech screws, secured the CP sleeve of leg 1, the actually leg, to strengthen and stabilise it
8. Standing the tripod up, I checked balance and again adjusted leg length accordingly
9. Placing the tripod on its side, I marked off the maximum safe extension of the CP modified leg extenders
10. I removed the extenders and painted the bottom end of the leg white as a visible warning if legs were over extended and after the paint dried, reattached the extenders.

Job complete. The tripod can now be placed on uneven ground and legs 1 & 2 can be extended and secure as needed, ensuring the tripod is straight and steady. In the bottom two images, the concrete slopes down, away from the wall and the grass patch is about 160mm lower than the concrete., but yet the tripod stands straight and secure

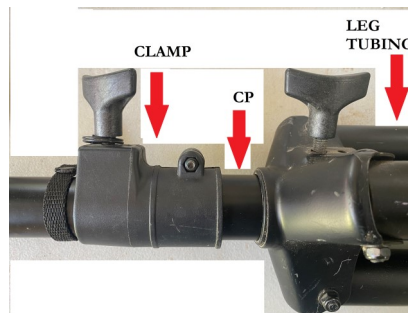


DIAGRAM 1



DIAGRAM 2

EXTENSION

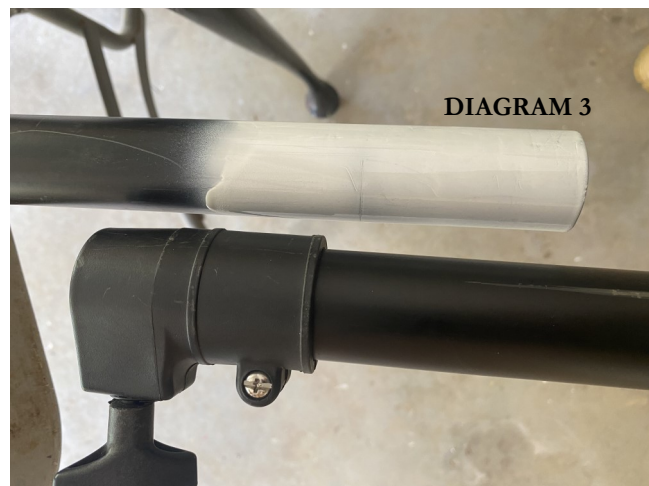


DIAGRAM 3



THE HISTORY OF CELEBRANCY

Every month a Celebrant is featured so that we can share in their experience and perhaps learn a different perspective showing that we are alike in many ways but different in others. Each has a unique experience and just by hearing their story, we may find ideas and values not previously considered or understood, or just have our own ideas reinforced. We can then find value in each other and in every person's story.

YOU have read about Robert Smith QFSM in previous editions. A lovely man who now lives with his beautiful wife Pamela, north of Newcastle. Next year, he will celebrate 50 years as a Celebrant. Along the way he trained and mentored a countless number of people and was always very active in community. In this month's history of Celebrancy, we look at how his being a Celebrant, lead to his being a part of an historic coronation of the King of Tonga.



Robert Smith, also known as 'Bob from the Bush' has performed many hundreds and perhaps thousands of marriage ceremonies but this article tells us of his experience when he was invited to the coronation of the King of Tonga.

Bob has always assisted fellow celebrants some of whom were in the Tongan community.

In appreciation of

his efforts, the Tongan Minister for Tourism invited Bob and his wife Pamela in 2008, to the coronation of the new Tongan King. An extraordinary invitation, gracefully accepted and so on Monday 28th July 2008 Pam and Robert were packed & ready with long ball gowns, gloves, hats, finest jewellery, dinner suits & tails, full dress uniform and dancing shoes.

They arrived very early at the Sydney international airport but the flight was delayed so instead of arriving in Tonga at a respectable hour as planned, they arrived at 1am. They didn't get to their hotel room until about 3am, unaware that it was middle of capital city and only about 30 m from the ocean, however, after such a long day, they decided to sleep on the concrete floor as it seemed softer than the bed.

There was not much sleep though, as breakfast was at 8 am, followed by the most magnificent educational display of traditional dancing, singing and live entertainment that could possibly be imagined and to top it off, they were seated just 10metres from the new King and alongside, the most polite person Robert says he had ever met, the deputy Prime Minister of Tonga who was also the Minister for Health.

After the morning program, which led into the afternoon, Pam and Robert were escorted by the Minister Of Tourism to the Palace where they took part in a royal feast. The tables were overfull with all kinds of food stacked high. After the feast, they were entertained by children with their seated dancing and witnessed the customary presentation of pigs to the King.

As the evening unfolded the minister, his wife and daughter, Pam and Robert enjoyed a Chinese dinner before having an early night.

The next day, Wednesday, they were taken in the Prime Minister's limousine to the first official event, a traditional "kava" celebration marked by offerings of pigs and the drinking of kava. Unfortunately though, the King had already arrived and so no one was allowed to enter after him. Disappointed at missing the ceremony, Pam and Bob drowned their sorrows with pancakes and ice cream and an exploration of the northern end of the island, travelling through a number of villages to see the common shanty huts with only one room that is also the kitchen, but also seeing the incredible homes of the many nobles. . Bob noticed that despite a seemingly low housing standard for most, people cared for each other and were extremely happy and very friendly. There were no beggars, nursing homes or retirement villages because families cared for each other with a generosity that meant that there was plenty of food for everyone.

Back to the hotel where he saw 10 flags representing each of the Royal families that were staying in the same hotel.

After a short rest before dinner it was off to a concert that included an opera as well as more dancing.

They retired to the hotel at 3am, but still up for breakfast at 8 am. Thursday morning included a stroll around the



markets and then while Pam finally caught some rest, Bob was off to the International -v- Tongan All Stars Rugby Union match which Tonga won. Bob then had a 3km walk in the rain, back to the hotel and dinner with some newfound friends that included nobles and ambassadors from all over the world. It was an unbelievable experience.

Finally Coronation Day arrived on Friday 1st August 2008. Bob and Pam were up early for breakfast but then a long wait for transport as car after car left the hotel.

Continued next page.....



They still managed to arrive at the church on time and met Gai Waterhouse and the Tongan Consular who complimented Pam on her outfit. Bob wore his full dress uniform, which consisted of a bright red jacket and black lapels displaying his my ranking entitlement and my miniature medals. Bob was surprised at how many officials saluted him and how many people wanted to have their photos taken with poor old Bob, the boy from the bush.

The coronation began and was the most magnificent western style pomp & ceremony one could ever imagine, complete with gold sceptre and white ermine fur cape. The dress of the officials was something out of history, 200 years ago, with Captain Cook era headdress, red jackets, white pantaloons, white stockings, and patent leather shoes with diamante buckles. Very spectacular indeed.

Back to the hotel to get ready for the Royal Ball and yet another feast to be held at the King's private residence.

At the end of the evening, the beautiful limousine had somehow turned into a clapped out, and rusted minivan. It was again a 3am retirement and breakfast was at by 7:30am. Bob didn't expect that they had the energy left to make it but next was an important day as it was a magnificent military parade. Dressed in a morning suit Bob said he had never worn his glad-rags so much in his entire life but it was a wonderful sight with so many people so formally dressed for such special occasions. Bob said that it had been some of the best military marching he had ever seen, and after the excellent military parade, there was of course yet another Royal feast, followed by traditional dancing.

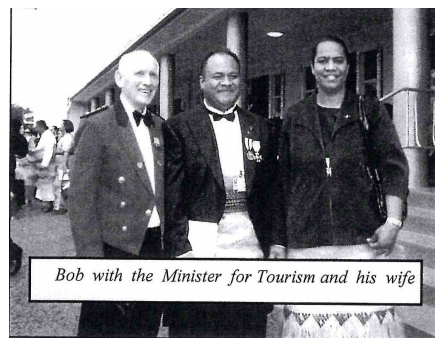
Bob excused himself for a little rest back at the hotel while Pam and friends continued on to the Royal feast That was followed by a delightful family sit down with the Secretary to the King but this time at his private home..

The next day, it was up early for the Coronation in a Church Service but Bob and Pamela were surprised and somewhat overwhelmed at the hotel by the arrival of a Tonga General, representing the King, who presented Bob & Pam with a medal and bestowed the tremendous honour of appointing them both as official Ambassadors for the Kingdom of Tonga.

Then, transported to the Centennial Chapel, Nuku'alofa, in the Prime Minister's limousine once more, they discovered that only persons in official vehicles were allowed to enter. They were then personally escorted to the very front row, between the retired Lord Chamberlain, and a Nobleman who became the secretary to the late King and who is now a member of Parliament.

The Anglican Archbishop of Polynesia, Jabez Bryce, had travelled from the United Kingdom to carry out the investiture of George Tupou V with the Tongan regalia including the ring, sceptre and sword. During the culmination of the ceremony, Archbishop Bryce placed the Tongan Crown on the monarch's head.

At the completion of that very beautiful Service which included a magnificent choir of angelic voices, Pam and Bob were invited to an enormous feast to celebrate the 100th birthday of the dear lady in an outer village. The food provided by the villagers was more than you could imagine. The tables were completely full with suckling pigs, lobsters, crabs, oysters, octopus, prawns, , fruit of every kind as well as chicken, stacked, not just on the table, but on shelving, placed on top of the table with food. A feast fit for a king. With all official functions and activities over, by Monday, 4 August, it was time to relax and so Bob and Pam postponed their flight so that they could spend more time travelling the islands and meeting more people.



Over an 11 day period, Bob and Pam said they had met and dined not just with Queens, Princess, Counts & Countesses, Nobles and Ambassadors but also with as many ordinary people such as

themselves. They learned that the high, flying people live an entirely different life but that the Tongan people are exceptional, as they are the finest race of people one could wish to meet with their arms open and hearts of solid, pure gold. Wherever you walked, there was a genuine greeting with a beautiful smile, making all feel extremely welcome. Bob and Pam were delighted to finally return home after such an amazing experience and Bob said *"I am so thankful I am just plain old Bob, the boy from the bush"*.

A unique life event, experienced because Bob is a Celebrant, but now also an Ambassador for the Kingdom of Tonga..

Footnote

After more than 150 years of monarchical power in Tonga, a spokesman for the king announced that he would withdraw from day-to-day involvement in state affairs and act on the advice of his prime minister. King George Tupou V presided over a transition to a majority popularly elected Parliament in 2010. Less than two years later, King George Tupou V died in March 2012 and was succeeded by his brother, Tupouto'a Lavaka Ata.

Scam Alert!

VOICE PHONE SCAMS

Imagine being in a ceremony when you get an urgent phone call or voicemail from your child begging for your help.

You have been warned about the SMS and Messenger scam where the victim receives a message saying something like:

"Mum, I have dropped my phone down the loo.

This is mt new phone number and I can only send texts until I pay the bill. Could you send \$100 credit to this number urgently"

That same scam has been updated using AI. The scammer uses an AI Voice app to send a similar message or to make a call but now they are using the AI to mimic a person's voice and so the victim hears a message that sounds just like the real thing. The scammers may use social media to identify the link and then use the AI to duplicate the child's voice.

The AI only needs a few phrases or simply words taken from a posted video and can then create an entirely new recording to the point that the victim could be fooled into thinking the message is genuine.

AI is already being used by criminals and fraudsters to fake photos and videos of celebrities and politicians but the scammers have searched for new ways to pick your pockets and drain your bank accounts.

One simple way to check identify is to use a secret code word or phrase. Each family member can then use that same code word/phrase in private calls to prove their identity and need

AI voice scams are coming. Here's what you need to know

How to spot an AI voice scam

You could be a target if you get contacted by a loved one who...

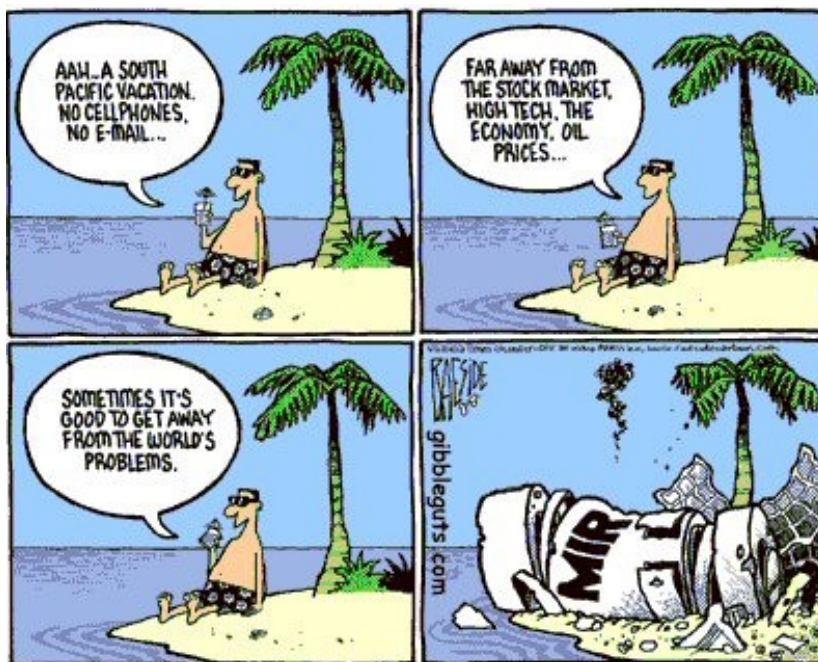
 calls from a number they don't normally use	 lacks emotion in their voice	 occasionally slips into an accent they don't normally use
 says they're in trouble and needs your help, but won't explain in detail	 doesn't greet or speak to you the way they do normally	 won't answer your questions and can't continue the conversation

CHOICE

Read more at choice.com.au

Read the Choice article here

[AI voice scams are coming. Here's what you need to know | CHOICE](http://choice.com.au)



Phone Risks

Anyone holding your unlocked device could access your valuable and private information & data including photos, emails, private messages, social media, banking, client details and other apps. Ensure your phone always auto-locks immediately or after a short period of inactivity and when accessing apps, use 2 factor ID.

Don't download links from messages or emails

If someone needs to use your device at a ceremony, allocate a temporary password or Change your password immediately afterwards.

**Is discount pricing a part of your marketing strategy?
Do you believe that discount attract customers and increase profitability?**

Marketing

According to entrepreneur, Nichita Herpuț (<https://optioffer.com/blog/advantages-of-discounts>) nearly 80% of customers agree that they usually feel motivated to make a first-time purchase with a business that is new to them if an offer or discount is being made. He argues that the advantages of discounts are:

- Increased sales
- Boosts brand awareness
- Boost s brand reputation
- Build customer loyalty
- Meet sales objectives
- Give a competitive edge

What he neglects to mention is that these points are industry specific in that it works for the food industry where a high turnover is essential because unsold food is spoilage and so goes to waste and as such is a huge cost. These points don't apply to Celebrants, because the Celebrant is the actually product, while the ceremony is simply the service offered. Put in context, increased sales, when heavily discounted, can mean increased loss. Some see pricing as their major attraction in advertising explaining *"If I charge anymore, I will lose business"* while others may perform the same function and charge twice the price, yet still secure business in the same area and so do half the work for the same income at twice the profit. If you have followed me on Facebook or in this newsletter, you will know that I have always said:

"If you make price the focus, so will your client".

You are in business and to be in business, you must make a profit for your business to be viable. No profit means no business.

The first step is to always calculate the cost of doing business. That is to make a spreadsheet of all the

expenses you incur to both procure and undertake business. One commonly overlooked expense is the car. Some will suggest that they already own a car and so don't incur an expense however that is completely wrong. Using you vehicle incurs expenses including fuel, insurance, maintenance and depreciation. It is a major cost and when that car wears out, you have to replace it as it is an essential tool of trade. If you don't factor in the cost, how will you afford a replacement?

Once you know how much it costs you to deliver a service, you then can determine what profit you require to remain viable. Anything else is discounting, or perhaps more accurately described as subsidising your client or perhaps clearer still, it is paying your client to do business with you. Discounting is an expense.

Consider what happened when you discount \$10.

You have spent/lost that \$10 and you need to make another \$10 to recover it but then yet another \$10 to recover the profit that you should have made and so you have effectively lost \$30 which eats into the income from your next booking.

According to Stephen King of Growth Force, Discounts will do more to destroy your profits and your cash flow than anything else you do. He wrote that the profit margin you lose through discounting will still have to be made up with future opportunities, so you'll have to sell more to get back the revenue lost. He gives the example that if you have a 30% profit margin, and you give a 10% discount, you have to sell 50% more business to make the same profits. His article even has a calculation sheet to measure the impact of offering a discount will have on your business.

He also offers a generalised chart below which can be found with more detail, at the following link:

<https://www.growthforce.com/blog/how-giving-discounts-can-destroy-your-business-profits>

The Impact of Discounts

If you decrease your prices, how much must unit sales increase to maintain the same gross profit dollars?

Price Decrease	-5%	-10%	-15%	-20%
Current margin, before a price decrease	-5%	-10%	-15%	-20%
30% gross margin	+20%	+50%	+100%	+200%
35% gross margin	+17%	+40%	+75%	+133%
40% gross margin	+14%	+33%	+60%	+100%
45% gross margin	+13%	+29%	+50%	+80%
50% gross margin	+11%	+25%	+43%	+67%



Rated G, the promo for this 2004 documentary series highlights that at no other time are cultural traditions celebrated with such a passion as at a wedding. Though filmed 20 years ago, it is very current as Australians are choosing to marry outside their ethnic background and customs. Streaming on SBS, it is an exploration and insight into the paths of 16 culturally diverse couples as they cope with love, life and family however only the first 7 episodes and so the stories of 14 couples, seem to currently available. While a wedding is a milestone for the bride & groom, it also provides a context in which their families and communities can share in celebrations.

Whilst there is very limited footage of actual wedding ceremonies, we do see the background preparation and influences beyond the level a Celebrant would commonly encounter and so this can enhance an understanding of various rituals, as well as the challenges couples may face. The more we understand cultural diversity, rituals and customs, the better we can design ceremonies.



Episode 1

Ket and Chan must find a way to accommodate three different ceremonies for themselves and their Laotian parents on their big day.

soon-to-be married

Elizabeth and David do not want to make the same mistakes they made in their previous marriages.



Episode 2

Sara and Motty, both Jewish, are not allowed to see each other before their wedding and must party separately.

Tarik prepares for his marriage and upcoming

move with Sandra, who works in Germany.



Episode 3

Rebecca and George (Greek) who lives with his aging mother, are two food lovers who want to lose weight before their wedding, and love a very close to family.

In contrast, Jeremy explains his mother is unhappy about his union with Kirsten. No one in her family has been married before, so they are very excited about her wedding, describing it as "the wedding of the year"



Episode 4

Dragon-boating enthusiasts Kenny and Trish have come a long way from their first date at a food court to their big day.

Lisa, the daughter of

concerned Filipino and Maltese parents, is getting married to Rich, a Welsh backpacker.



Episode 5

Son to Indian parents, Sanjay proposes to Keda with traditional gold bangles instead of a ring.

Tom, a mechanic, finds his soon-to-be wife Jacqueline in a

service station.



Episode 6

Riaz is planning a surprise dance performance for his wedding with Samar.

Sailing enthusiasts Steve and Irene find their perfect match in each other on a dating website.



Episode 7

Debbie, a Lebanese Orthodox, is getting married to Robert, a Catholic man who is four years younger.

Soon-to-be bride Lena wants everything to be perfect for her wedding with Robert.



Each episode runs for about 24 minutes and so an easy watch as it is very well presented and edited. SBS does have a lot of adds and the streaming service often freezes.

THE HISTORY ROMANCE



February not only has Valentine's Day but as this is a leap year, there is the 29th February when custom has it that women may propose marriage to men.



According to ancient Irish history, in the 5th century Ireland, a Nun, now known as St. Brigid of Kildare, was incensed at women having to wait far too long for men to propose marriage, bitterly complained to the Irish patron saint, St. Patrick.

In those days, it was considered shameful for a woman to not marry.

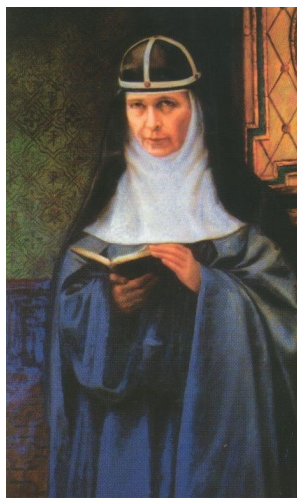
St Patrick is said that have eventually agreed to allow females the right to propose

on only one day every seven years but she argued that was far too long a wait so St Patrick relented decreed that it would be every four years and February 29 was chosen.

Following their agreement, legend has it that she dropped straight to her knee and instantly proposed to him. St Patrick declined her offer but gave her a kiss on the cheek and a silk gown to soften the blow.

Following that, any man who rejected a proposal was said to have paid compensation for the rejection by offering a kiss, silk gown, or silk gloves.

The tradition was then taken to Scotland by Irish monks and in 1288, the Scots passed a law that allowed a woman to propose marriage in a leap year, with the law also stating that any man who declined the proposal on this day would have to pay a fine. That law was allegedly passed by an unmarried



Queen Margaret (although she may only have been five years old at the time) and she put in place a rule that all those women proposing must wear a red petticoat while doing so.

The fine to be paid if a man declined could still range from a kiss to payment for a silk dress or a pair of gloves.



In some upper-class European societies, the

custom of denial involved buying 12 pairs of gloves for the woman you were rejecting. To hide her shame at not having a ring to wear, of course!

In some places, February 29 has been renamed Bachelors' Day or "Ladies' Privilege."



WHO WAS SAINT BRIGID

St. Brigid Day is the 1st February. also known as Imbolc, marks the beginning of spring in Ireland.

In ancient Irish mythology, Brigid was a fire goddess. Her canonization is celebrated with a perpetual flame at her shrine in County Kildare.

She is the patron saint of babies, blacksmiths, boatmen, cattle farmers, children whose parents are not married, children whose mothers are mistreated by the children's fathers, Clan Douglas, dairymaids, dairy workers, fugitives, Ireland, Leinster, mariners, midwives, milkmaids, nuns, poets, the poor, poultry farmers, poultry raisers, printing presses, sailors, scholars, traveller's, and watermen.



<https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/st-brigids-day-traditions>



The Attorney-General's Portfolio

Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023



House of Representatives

Introduced and read a first time	15/11/2023
Second reading moved	15/11/2023
Second reading debate	28/11/2023
Referred to Federation Chamber	28/11/2023
Second reading debate	07/02/2024
Reported from Federation Chamber	07/02/2024
Second reading agreed to	07/02/2024
Third reading agreed to	07/02/2024

Senate

Introduced and read a first time	08/02/2024
Second reading moved	08/02/2024

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Second reading moved	08/02/2024

As you will have read in previous newsletters, the Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023 is an omnibus bill that seeks to amend 10 Commonwealth Acts with respect to the criminal jurisdiction of the Federal Court, the empanelment of jury panels for Federal Court proceedings, the operation of the *Commonwealth Marriage Celebrants Program*, and other amendments.

Perhaps the most significant amendments would make permanent, the ability to remotely witness NOIMs which is much desired by Celebrants in regional areas such as the Sth Coast but there is also the provision that Celebrants would be required to



meet parties to a marriage separately, to ensure consent is genuine.

The Bill was Referred to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee (30/11/2023). The deadline for submissions was **28 December**

2023 and the reporting date was **1 February 2024**; you will find the report at this link [Committee report \(01/02/2024\)](#).

More information at these links:

- [ParlInfo - Attorney-General's Portfolio Miscellaneous Measures Bill 2023 \(aph.gov.au\)](#)
- [Information about the bill](#)
- [Submissions](#)
- [Additional Documents](#)
- [Legal and Constitutional Affairs](#)
- [Report](#)

The Bill was on the list for debate in the Senate on 29/02/2024 [Notice Paper - Thursday \(aph.gov.au\)](#) but at the time of publishing this newsletter, the result had not been published.

According to the [They Vote For You](#) website, on Wednesday, 7th February 2024, in the House of Representatives, the count was 88 vote 'Yes' and 52 vote 'No' down party lines with the LNP all voting to the negative while the ALP, Greens and most independents voted to the affirmative



COORDINATOR COMMENTS



When I chat with Celebrants we often discuss the number of bookings and sometimes how that reflects in business viability.

Overall, it is a rollercoaster. There may be three bookings in a day but then none for the weeks to follow.

The reasons for a decision to book a certain celebrant are as varied as there are individuals but there is one common denominator that has always existed and that is simply 'confidence', not yours but your clients. A booking will not occur until the customer is confident that you will deliver what they desire but what must be remembered is that the customer is an expert in their desires but very naive in respect to what you deliver not only the actual ceremony, but all else that you do as a celebrant.

Every decision is actually an emotional one, and not just because it's a wedding but because no one makes a purchase unless they are confident.

You will always have four types of inquiries:

1. The Procrastinator who lacks confidence and motivation. Help them find it .
2. The Researcher will **confidently ask** about price, rituals, locations, duration etc. in the belief that they know what they are looking for but all they are still seeking is **confidence** in their choice of Celebrant.
3. The Ready to book exudes confidence. They are accustomed to making confident decisions and are often impatient and so may possibly be non-communicative and so can be frustrating.

I've always lived by the motto that 'persistence succeeds'. By that I mean that you must have focus and determination along with which comes planning, innovation, professionalism, character, skill, knowledge and more. You as a Professional Celebrant must be confident and honest in your ability to deliver what you promise and all of your marketing and actions must be geared toward your clients, past, present and potential, in having confidence in you.

The latest surveys suggest that wedding bookings will reduce this year and so it is up to us collectively to turn that around by ensuring that people have confidence in the future and to join in marriage.

Promote professionalism, promote joy in marriage, highlight the advantages of ceremony and of marriage, not just in your ceremonies but consistently in advertising and all that you do.



I love poetry. It comes from the heart and is a reflection of the soul.

A poem or reading is often selected to enhance a ceremony and over the years, I built up a collection that was then collated into categories to make it easier to track down the special one for the occasion. To give clients ready access, I eventually put the collection onto my website where it was discovered by Celebrants from all over the world. A Celebrancy Group in the UK even gave me an award or two for the extensive collection which includes a few of my own poems but absolutely nothing fabricated by an AI

You are welcome to contribute a category or poem, or to explore the collection. Just give credit to the source and to the author.

- ♥ [Wedding Poems & Readings](#)
- ♥ [Funeral Poems & Readings](#)
- ♥ [Naming & Baby Blessing Poetry & Readings](#)
- ♥ [Poems by Lou Szymkow](#)

Considerable effort is made to ensure authors are correctly attributed and if the author cannot be found, it is either removed, or listed as 'author unknown' but the search will continue.. In the past 7 years only two corrections have had to be made. One was where an author contributed her name to as poem, and the other was a name correction and so a pretty good record given there are around 1000 poems.

Note that I do not list any poems fabricated by an A.I. simply because they are not original works but rather are a computed compilation of extracts from real authors. I support real authors and I'm sure you do as well.

You will also find poems and readings on the AMC website and a poetry corner for your contributions may soon appear there.

