

June 2024

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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.



FUNERAL CHALLENGES

Many Marriage Celebrants are also Funeral Celebrants, and so this month we include a few articles covering the field. Many Funeral Celebrants have no desire to be involved in the wedding industry and so exclusively perform funerals, and visa-versa. The writer's view is that we have three common ceremonies in Australia:

1. Weddings where the love is between the couple
2. Naming Ceremonies where the love is within the family and
3. Funerals where the love is shared by all.

It takes a special Celebrant to be able to conduct funerals with compassion, empathy, honour and a gentle proficiency. Not all Marriage Celebrants are able to withstand the emotional turmoil of being surrounded by grief. I know of one Celebrant who burst into tears at a funeral and was unable to continue, at another funeral a grief stricken widow tried to leap into the grave, and of course we probably all have seen the 'Mother & Son' episode where oranges rolled into the grave. (see TV review). We of course all hope and diligently work to ensure that every funeral runs smoothly and exactly to plan but sometimes there are unexpected complications and it is the professionalism



of the Celebrant, usually in conjunction with a Funeral director, that we are able to continue and largely conceal the complications.

One Celebrant recently told the story of how she was on her way to a funeral when the Funeral Directory called to say that he had arrived early and discovered the grave had not been prepared. Cemetery management blamed it on an administrative error that meant that the cemetery staff had not been advised of the funeral. The cemetery staff jumped into action and hurriedly began preparing the grave site but they had to map it, mark it and only then start digging and so the chapel service was 'slowly' conducted, to give the grounds staff more time. The march from the chapel to the gravesite was delayed by 15 minutes while the cemetery ground's staff finished their work. In the end, the funeral was

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COVER PICTURE
Funeral monuments

**UPCOMING
Sth COAST
MEETINGS**

**7pm, Wednesday 12th June 2024
4pm, Sunday 15th September 2024
(Lunch) Sunday 8th December 2024**

conducted with the dignity.

I had an occasion when a large chapel was booked for 3pm to 5pm. The viewing began on time at 3:15pm. The service itself began at 3:40pm and was to run until about 4:40pm but the cemetery management not only failed to provide a concierge after 4:00pm, failed to tell anyone. Come 4pm, with the service only partway through, the concierge simply packed up, waved to the Funeral Director and left, asking them to lock up when finished.

A panicked employee of the FD rushed in to the chapel sound booth to try to operate the controls without instructions of any kind, knowing that music and a video were yet to be played.



I could see his distressed glances as I announced the next step but he found the right buttons and we got it done without interruption so that the family were unaware of what had transpired.

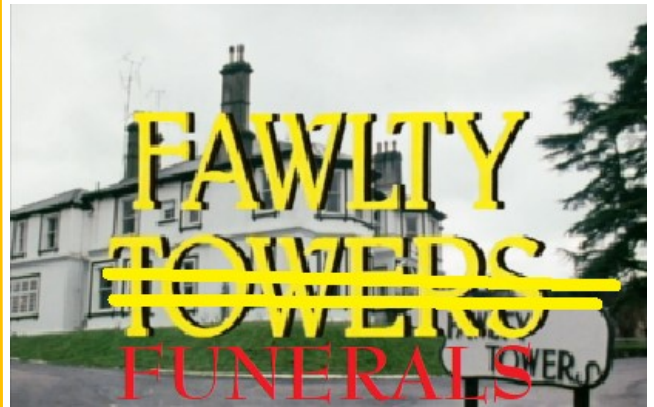
On another occasion, a Funeral Director had given firm instructions, that the family didn't need to be interviewed as they wanted a very basic service with "no music, no eulogy and no religion" but offered the family contact phone number so that introductions could be made. I met the family and discovered that they had in fact a very strong desire for a very religious service but as the family priest had not returned phone calls at all, the offended and grieving family had decided they didn't want that priest or his church involved but still wanted what was essentially a prayer service. As for the eulogy, they admitted they didn't know what the word meant as English was not their first language and they of course wanted a eulogy, the content of which was extracted over a two hour interview. The only thing that the funeral directory had correct was the absence of music as cultural as music was considered the be festive and so inappropriate for a funeral. At the grave site, although there was no rain falling at the time, there had been heavy rain for several days and the grounds were covered in about 200mm of water with the grave itself was near collapse. We stood on



pallets to keep our feet dry and the ceremony had to commence with the lowering of the coffin while mourners stood back in case their weight caused the wet ground to slip. The family however did receive the funeral they

had wanted.

You may remember Funeral Celebrant, Barry Young, as the author of "The Funeral Celebrant's Handbook", and "Saying Farewell to those we Love". His books are an excellent read and reference. Barry is a source of inspiration and, having a long career as a Funeral Celebrant, he has quite a few stories but being the professional that he is, he is often hesitant to say a great deal except where it might assist other Celebrants or their family clients, however there is one story he is willing to share and he



refers to the occasion as *Faulty Funerals*.

His article follows on this page.

Article by Barry H Young

Remember "Faulty Towers" made famous by John Cleese but what about a faulty funeral. I was conducting a funeral for a young man who had tragically passed.

The funeral director warned me I was dealing with a very dysfunctional family.

On arriving I found the front of the house boarded up with instructions to enter from the back lane. So I drove around to the back and descended stairs like being on Mt Everest.

Knocking on the back door I was greeted by an assortment of people and an unfriendly dog. I was not invited inside but we sat on broken down chairs in the freezing cold. For over an hour coping with phone calls and arguments etc I endeavoured to gather information to enable me to write a meaningful service.

The family fought amongst themselves and when an ex-wife of the father of the deceased arrived it got even worse. Came the day of the service. I arrived at the Chapel to be told by the funeral director of the arguments that had taken place over the viewing of the deceased. He was ashen faced. The chapel was packed and all was going well until I introduced the three scheduled speakers. Other speakers came forward not in the agenda in all 9 speakers including the ex-wife and mother of the deceased who used the platform to harangue family members. But there's more! After the tributes a young man rushed into the chapel and handed the funeral director a DVD. The funeral director valiantly tried to operate the DVD machine which took 10 minutes to get started – then for a further 10 minutes we watched a 3 year old ride around on a tricycle – then another DVD appeared about cows in a field. People were confused as to what was this all about. After an hour and a quarter people were starting to leave the chapel. We then adjourned to a graveside in pouring rain at least 300 metres from the chapel. "No Marque in place". The sound system was sounding its displeasure. There a member of the family produced a C/D with three songs to be played - one heavy metal. The long established funeral director said to me it was the worst service he had been involved with and as for me - I thought of Faulty Towers and am still waiting to be

It's Your Turn!

I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious.

Albert Einstein

We are a community of Celebrants and learn from each other. The more we learn, the more we discover how much

there is to learn, and we learn from each other. You may read this newsletter and learn from its contributors but what is your contribution, what can you share, what have you in offer?

What will you write about in this newsletter.

You are unique. Your ideas, experiences, interpretations and creations are your own. Tell us about them.

By writing your ideas and processes down, you consolidate them; by sharing them with others, you expand and strengthen them. What is common sense and experience to you, may be foreign to another but if you share your thoughts, others can expand on your ideas, and in doing so, help you grow your ideas further. Others may be inspired by what you have to say. Some may even object but that is a good thing because if we cannot be challenged, we cannot learn or justify our beliefs. So don't be afraid to be challenged.

You can write about your self, a ritual, a cultural practise, your marketing ideas, an interpretation of marriage law, how you manage you accounts, what diary you use, how you get the best out of your PA, how you secured your first booking, what you do to keep UpToDate, a funny thing that happened at a ceremony or in a client interaction, or just tell us about a ceremony you have performed.

The contribution of articles from you, a Celebrant, or even a celebrant client, can offer a new insight, clarity, confirmation or even an expansion of ideas.

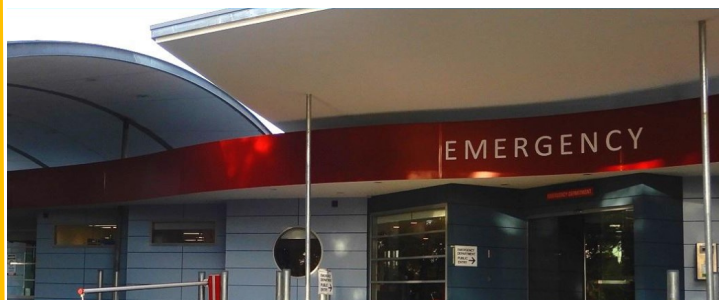
I am asking you to write an article. It can be on any subject that interests, influences, informs or inspires celebrants. It can be about OPD, the direction of marriage, ceremony (any ceremony) trends, or it can be about you—what motivates you, what inspires you, why you became a Celebrant and what success and failures you have had or see ahead.

Submit your article to the editor and every effort will be made to publish it.



Provisos are that no one can be defamed, it has to be factual (true), or identified as fiction, and has to be your own work (*not AI or plagiarism*).

Your article will be checked before publication and it is highly unlikely to be rejected but, know that it will be valued. If you want help to write it, contact the editor.



BEDSIDE WEDDING



Article by Celebrant Karen Ambrose

Some years ago I was contacted by a middle-aged local man to start the marriage process for himself and his Thai bride who was not yet in the country. Alf arranged a time to come to my home office along with his ID documents but he did not show as he ended up in hospital as he told me later on.

Another meeting time was arranged and the same thing happened following a phone call to let me know he was not a well man and would be going to the hospital once again.

Finally, we got to meet and lodge the paperwork while he waited for his bride to arrive in the country. He brought her to my office once she arrived so I could check her documents and satisfy myself the marriage would go ahead with more than the compulsory one month's notice.

The ceremony was to be held at the man's sister's place for a family gathering on the coming Saturday until I received a call from Alf's mother to ask if I could do the ceremony at the Wollongong Hospital 5 days early, as Alf had taken ill and needed the ceremony to go ahead earlier.

Naturally I obliged and printed up new documents and travelled up to Wollongong to conduct an urgent bedside ceremony. Eight family members were gathered around Alf's bed while the bride was getting changed in the ensuite. I conducted a short legal ceremony while the family members "warmed the rings" in their hands before they were placed on the fingers of Alf and his bride.

As I left, I felt very honoured to have been able to help a family in a time of such suffering and pain as it was clear Alf was very unwell. Later I received a phone call from his mother to inform me Alf had passed away that same day, just 11 hours after the marriage ceremony. She asked me to preside over the committal at the crematorium following a church service for Alf's farewell which I accepted with much humility.

I saw Alf's mother some weeks later and she was still grieving her loss as 3 of her 5 adult children were no long with her.....Alf being the latest to pass on.

As celebrants, we are privileged to experience the happiest and the saddest times in our client's lives and to be able to guide and support them to the best of our ability. I trust I did just that for Alf and his family.

National Anthem, The Royal Anthem & The Vice-Regal salute

As Celebrants we may attend functions, funerals or even weddings where the National Anthem may be played or even sung and so it is important to know the second verse and correct protocol.

The following article is a direct copy from:



[Australian National Anthem | P M & C \(pmc.gov.au\)](http://www.pmc.gov.au)

Australian National Anthem

From 1 January 2021, the second line of the Australian National Anthem was changed from 'For we are young and free' to 'For we are one and free'.

Australians all let us rejoice,
For we are one and free;
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;
Our home is girt by sea;
Our land abounds in nature's gifts
Of beauty rich and rare;
In history's page, let every stage
Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross
We'll toil with hearts and hands;
To make this Commonwealth of ours
Renowned of all the lands;
For those who've come across the seas
We've boundless plains to share;
With courage let us all combine
To Advance Australia Fair.
In joyful strains then let us sing,
Advance Australia Fair.

History

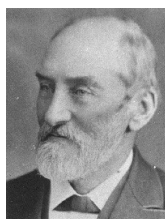
The original composition of 'Advance Australia Fair' was written by school teacher, Peter Dodds McCormick in 1878 and was four verses long.

In 1973 the Australia Council for the Arts held the *Australian National Anthem Quest* competition to find the lyrics and music for a new Australian National Anthem.

The competition received more than 1400 entries for lyrics and 1200 entries for music, but the judges decided the entries did not meet the high standards of Australia's traditional songs 'Advance Australia Fair', 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'Song of Australia'.

As a result, the Australia Council for the Arts recommended the final choice for the Anthem should be made from these three songs.

The Bureau of Statistics then ran a national poll of 60 000 people, which found 'Advance Australia Fair' was



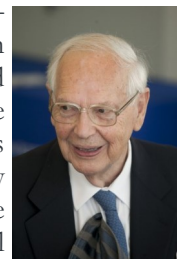
favoured by 51.4 per cent of people, followed by 'Waltzing Matilda' (19.6 per cent).

In 1974 'Advance Australia Fair' was adopted as the Australian National Anthem, but in 1976 'God Save The Queen' was reinstated.

In 1977 the Australian Electoral Office conducted another poll, which again found 'Advance Australia Fair' was the preferred anthem (43.6 per cent), followed by 'Waltzing Matilda' (28.45 per cent).

In 1981 the National Australia Day Council recommended the Australian National Anthem consist of verses one and two of 'Advance Australia Fair' with some modification.

On 19 April 1984 the then Governor-General, the Rt Hon Sir Ninian M Stephen KG AK GCMG GCVO KBE, proclaimed the Australian National Anthem the tune of 'Advance Australia Fair' and the verses drafted by the National Australia Day Council. At the same time, 'God Save The Queen' was first proclaimed as the Royal Anthem.



From 1 January 2021, the words of the second line of the Australian National Anthem were amended from 'For we are young and free' to 'For we are one and free', by Proclamation made by the Governor General, General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), on the Government's advice.

The Royal Anthem

'God Save The King' was proclaimed as the Royal Anthem on 27 October 2022.

At official and ceremonial occasions, the Royal Anthem is used when His Majesty The King or a member of the Royal Family is present.

When The King is in Australia, the Royal Anthem is played at the beginning of an official engagement and the Australian National Anthem is played at the end. On some occasions it may be appropriate to play both anthems at the beginning of the engagement.

There are no restrictions on singing or using the Royal Anthem at a community event irrespective of any member of the Royal Family being present.

When the Royal Anthem is played at a ceremony or public event it is customary to stand.

The Vice-Regal salute

The Vice-Regal salute was proclaimed in 1984. It is the first four bars and last four bars of the Australian National Anthem and is used in the presence of the Governor-General.

It is customary to stand when the Vice-Regal salute is played at a ceremony or public event.



His Excellency General the Honourable David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd), was born in Wollongong, NSW on 26 August 1953, & sworn in as the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 July 2019.

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Australian National Anthem protocols

The Australian National Anthem is an important national symbol of Australia and should be treated with respect and dignity. All Australians are encouraged to sing the Australian National Anthem (the Anthem) and these protocols are to assist you when singing or performing the Anthem at a ceremony or public event.

1. Traditionally, only the first verse of the Anthem is used but both verses can be used.
2. When the Anthem is played at a ceremony or public event, it is customary to stand.
3. The event organiser can choose when the Anthem is played during an event.
4. The tune or tempo of the Anthem should not be modified and alternative words should not be used.
5. Any musical instrument may be incorporated into a performance of the Anthem.
6. The Anthem should be performed in English.
7. Individuals or organisations can perform "Advance Australia Fair" in a language other than English, but this should not be represented as a version of the Anthem. As a result, protocols do not apply to its use. For example, it is not necessary to stand when the song is played.
8. If "Advance Australia Fair" is performed in a language other than English, along with the Anthem, the Anthem should be played first.
9. When the Anthem is played at the same event as the anthem of another nation, you should play the anthem of the visiting nation first.

Use of the Australian National Anthem

The Commonwealth holds the copyright of the words of the Australian National Anthem as it is proclaimed. The Commonwealth also holds the copyright to particular arrangements of music of the Anthem, which are available for download on the [PM&C website](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

Non-commercial use of the Australian National Anthem Permission is not required to use, perform, record or reproduce the Australian National Anthem for non-commercial purposes, as the music and the words are in the public domain.

Commercial use of the Australian National Anthem

You must obtain permission to use the Australian National Anthem for commercial purposes, including when:

- using the Australian National Anthem in full or in part
- reproducing the tune, without the words
- reproducing the words, without the accompanying music.

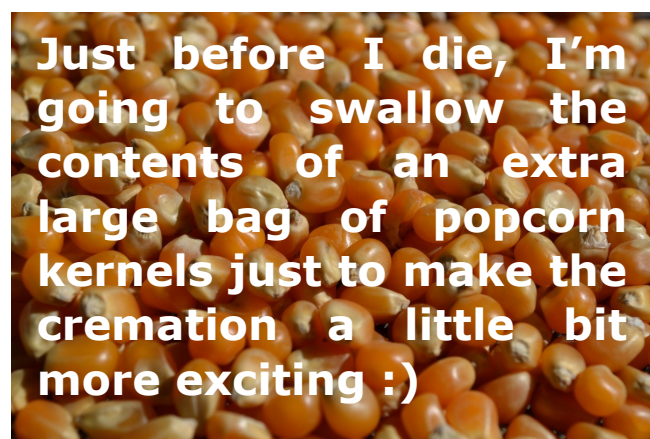
Permission is granted at the discretion of PM&C and may be subject to certain conditions, including:

- the tune or the words of the Australian National Anthem may not be modified, parodied or demeaned

- alternative words cannot be substituted for the words of the Australian National Anthem.

Proposals to use the Australian National Anthem for commercial purposes should be submitted to:

Parliamentary and Government Branch
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
 PO Box 6500
 Canberra ACT 2600



Marketing



A Professor Explained Marketing To Students:

1. You see gorgeous girl in party, you go to her & say I am rich marry me- "That's Direct Marketing."
2. You attend a party & your friend goes to a girl & points at you telling her. He is very rich, marry him-"That Advertising".
3. Girl walks to you & says, you are rich, Can you marry me - "That's Brand Recognition".
4. You say I'm very rich marry me & she slaps you. "That's Customer Feedback".
5. You say I'm very rich marry me & she introduces you to her husband.- "That's Demand & Supply Gap".
6. Before you say I'm rich, marry me, & your wife arrives - "That's Restriction From Entering New Market".



Loss and grief is a normal part of life but how we experience and survive, grief & loss depends on a range of factors, including our personality, history & upbringing, cultural heritage, spiritual beliefs,

personal circumstances and our own social support network. As Celebrants we contribute to healing through ceremony, action, words and compassion, however we may, through compassion and empathy, and in so doing, find grief can have an overwhelming personal impact. To protect ourselves, knowing that grief will occur, create a plan to safeguard your own well being and that of your clients.

Grief is what we feel and experience when we suffer a loss and it can be completely overwhelming and even painful in so many ways, but it can also be delayed, occurring sometime well after the loss.

We commonly of course associate grief with the loss of a loved one which of course can be extraordinarily traumatic however the same or similar symptoms can arise at any traumatic loss or series of losses, and can be compounded by each repeated trauma.

The loss of a partner through death can be compounded by the loss of self-confidence in continuing to manage life alone, the sudden loneliness, the fear of the future and the realisation that each occurrence itself can be a further trauma.

Upon the death of a patriarch, matriarch, parent or child, there may be the trauma of the loss of family unity that was maintained only by the common thread of the parent/parenting. Other common events that may have similar symptoms of varying degrees are:

- The loss of a partner, children and/or home through divorce or separation, or even through marriage
- the loss of one's own confidence after an accident, injury or assault.
- Loss of a job or career
- loss of a loved pet
- Loss of mobility and/or independence

The trauma of each and every loss may manifest in both physical and emotional symptoms.

WHAT HELPS?

Let yourself grieve – it's important to express your feelings, rather than bottle them up. Share your feelings with a trusted associate, family member, friend or health professional. Alternatively, express your emotions in another way, such as through physical activity, listening to or playing music, writing a journal, praying or meditating, painting/drawing or engaging in cultural ceremonies or rituals to say goodbye.

- **Take care of yourself**– grief can be physically and emotionally draining. Remember to take care of yourself by eating healthily, doing regular exercise and getting enough sleep. When you feel ready, try to get back into your normal routine. Avoid alcohol and drugs, as they can numb your feelings and make it

harder to heal but drinking plenty of water and exercising helps.

- **Take your time**– when you lose someone or something important, it takes time to get back into life. There isn't a set time limit on grief, so try not to put pressure on yourself or others to “move on” or “get over it”. Avoid making any big decisions until you are able to think more clearly.
- **Let others help**– it can be hard to accept help from family and friends. Sometimes they don't know how to support you during this difficult time. Explain how you're feeling and what others can do to help. It may be emotional support or helping with more practical things, like cooking, running errands or looking after children.
- **Do things you enjoy**– it's important to take “time out” from your grief to enjoy life and have fun. Even when you're feeling down, try to regularly connect with family and friends and get involved in activities that you enjoy. This will help you to stay healthy and assist in the healing process.

Where to get Help in coping with Grief

As Celebrants, debriefing after a funeral, with another celebrant can be extremely helpful.

You can also ask for help from your own GP, the local Community Health Centres, Hospitals, Churches & Ministers of Religion, and a variety of Welfare Agencies.

Here are some links to help you find a service that suits the individual.

Agency index

- [AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT.](#)
- [COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.](#)
- [ENOUGH IS ENOUGH ROAD TRAUMA SUPPORT SERVICES..](#)
- [HEADSPACE.](#)
- [HSNET.](#)
- [HOMICIDE VICTIMS' SUPPORT GROUP \(AUST\) INC.](#)
- [KIDS HELPLINE.](#)
- [LIFELINE.](#)
- [MENS LINE AUSTRALIA..](#)
- [NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LOSS AND GRIEF.](#)
- [NSW VICTIMS SUPPORT AGENCY – 1800.633.063.](#)
- [PETS & PEOPLE.](#)
- [RED NOSE. 5](#)
- [RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA.](#)
- [SANDS – miscarriage, stillbirth & newborn death support.](#)
- [SANE.](#)
- [SERVICE FINDER.](#)
- [SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP \(SBSG\).](#)
- [TRAUMA & GRIEF NETWORK SUPPORT.](#)
- [VICTIMS OF CRIME – Counselling.](#)
- [VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE LEAGUE \(VOCAL\)](#)

UNDERSTANDING DEATH

Educational videos that can help in the understanding of death.

- [Dying for Beginners | Dr Kathryn Mannix \(youtube.com\)](#)
- [What Happens As We Die? | Kathryn Mannix | TED \(youtube.com\)](#)
- <https://youtu.be/Q1VQzxXW5FI?si=njw-eXV9Uew3p51p>

OPD-EDUCATION

GUARDIANSHIP AND POWERS OF ATTORNEY



Sometimes people with impaired or limited decision-making capacity have a guardian appointed.

There is no national uniform guardianship and administration legislation, as the formal appointment of guardians in Australia is governed by State and Territory laws. While arrangements between the States and Territories vary, the main principles are the same.



Generally, guardians are appointed through the orders of tribunals or courts appointing a guardian or person to manage personal matters or the financial affairs of a person. Guardianship and administration orders are the formal orders authorising a person or organisation to make decisions for a person, or act for and sometimes give consent (on specified matters only) on another person's behalf. The guardian helps to protect the rights and interests of the person, usually known as the protected person.

There is always a presumption that people have the capacity to make their own decisions.

If someone has a guardian, the guardian's decision-making will be contained (or limited) to what is in the guardianship order.

Often guardians can decide on the protected person's living arrangements, education and work arrangements, consent to medical or other treatments, take legal action and make various health and welfare related decisions.

Guardians are not permitted to vote in an election, make a will, adopt a child or give consent to a marriage on behalf of the protected person.

Individuals may be appointed as guardians by the relevant court or tribunal in their location. Often that person is a family member, friend or unpaid carer, and will need to be of at least 18 years of age. Where such an individual is not available, an independent statutory office-holder is likely to be appointed. For example, in the Australian Capital Territory this function is undertaken by the Public Trustee and Guardian.

A marriage is void if the consent of either of the parties is not real consent because:

- it was obtained by duress or fraud,
- or
- the party is mistaken as to the identity of the other party or as to the nature of the ceremony performed, or
- the party did not understand the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony.

KEY MESSAGES

- ◇ The parties must consent at the time of the marriage. Prior consent is not a substitute for real consent at the time of the marriage.
- ◇ A third party cannot provide real consent on behalf of a party to the marriage, even if that third party has power of attorney or is a guardian to the relevant party to the marriage.
- ◇ If you are concerned about whether a person's consent is real consent, you should speak to the person in the absence of any other party. You may also speak to third parties but should first seek permission from the person involved.
- ◇ **'Real consent' cannot be given by a third party**
- ◇ An authorised celebrant must not rely on a power of attorney or the consent of a party's guardian as substitute for the real consent of a party to a marriage. That is, real consent is not something that can be given by a third party on behalf of the party to the marriage
- ◇ Note that while a third party such as a guardian cannot consent to marry on someone's behalf, they may raise issues of capacity in relation to that person
- ◇ Authorised celebrants should consider whether there is any sign that a party cannot manage their own affairs, for example, being subject to a guardianship order
- ◇ **A party to an intended marriage should be advised to seek independent legal advice if they have questions about the operation of guardianship orders or powers of attorney, having regard to their particular circumstances.**
- ◇ Authorised celebrants must ensure that **both parties freely and genuinely consent to the marriage at all times during the ceremony.**
- ◇ **An authorised celebrant who believes the consent of one or both parties is not real consent should refuse to solemnise the marriage, even if the marriage ceremony has commenced.**
- ◇ You should thoroughly document any conversations you have about consent. This will provide a record of your decision-making process, should you be called upon to give evidence in court as to the consent of the parties.

KNOWLEDGE –OPD



A person must provide real consent at the time of the marriage

It is important to remember that a person must consent at the time the marriage is solemnised. An authorised celebrant might have been satisfied that a party was capable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony before the ceremony was due to be solemnised, but might form a different view as a result of the party's conduct during the marriage ceremony itself. In such a case the authorised celebrant should not proceed to solemnise the marriage until satisfied that the party is capable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony. In other words, prior consent is not a substitute for real consent at the time of the marriage.



If at any point an authorised celebrant is unsure of the genuine consent of either party, they should not proceed with solemnising the marriage.

Consent issues that arise on the day of the marriage ceremony can include duress or a party to the marriage being intoxicated, under the influence of drugs, experiencing mental health issues or otherwise appearing to be in an altered mental state to an extent that this could impair their ability to consent to the marriage.

If alcohol or drugs are involved, the party should be displaying a reasonable level of comprehension or understanding of the nature and effect of marriage. A person who has had an alcoholic drink prior to the ceremony but is not inebriated is most likely to be able to be in a position to consent to the marriage. However, a person who is intoxicated is unlikely to be in a position to form the necessary understanding of the nature and effect of marriage.



It is an authorised celebrant's responsibility to refuse to proceed with the solemnisation of the marriage if the parties are so affected by drugs or alcohol that the marriage would be void due to a lack of consent. Ultimately, this is something that can only be determined on the day and requires the individual judgement of the celebrant. The authorised celebrant may wish to offer to conduct a commitment ceremony, with the legal marriage being performed at a later date. The celebrant should take the best efforts to extract themselves from the situation as safely as possible. It may be a good idea to explain issues of consent, and your responsibilities, with the couple prior to the day of the ceremony, especially if you think it might become an issue.



MENTAL CAPACITY

The Commonwealth *Marriage Act 1961* includes provisions whereby a marriage may be void if the consent of a party was not real, if a party was not of marriageable age or if a party lacks the cognitive/mental ability to understand the ceremony/marriage. If a Celebrant conducts a marriage where there was not real consent, the penalty for the Celebrant can be up to 6 months imprisonment.

As Celebrants, we are not experts in mental capacity and we start from the acceptance of capacity, that is, we never presume incapacity, however we must look for warning signs and triggers. Unless there is a valid trigger to justify a further assessment of a person's capacity, authorised marriage celebrants should generally treat everyone as if they are capable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony and so every adult is presumed to have capacity to make decisions.

Marriage of course, changes a person's legal status making the parties to marriage next of kin to each other and as such, it negates previous Wills. As such, it is, apart from one of love & romance that we hope exists, is a financial decision altering the financial status of both parties to the marriage. We know that 'consent' is not simply capitulation but rather is an active intent and that persons entering into marriage must have the mental capacity to make the decision to marry. Further, that consent to marry can be revoked at any time prior to the exchanger of vows.

The Law Council of Australia has published a response to Elder Abuse, titled *Assessing Mental Capacity A Guide* The Law Council Of Australia which includes commentary on the impact of marriage, divorce and death on wills and estate, the NSW Law Society tells us in its publication "A Practical Guide For Solicitors" that:

"There is no single legal definition of mental capacity in New South Wales.

The NSW Law Society says that the legal definition of mental capacity depends in each case on the type of decision which is being made or the type of transaction involved. This means there are a variety of legal tests of mental capacity. Some are contained in legislation such as the Guardianship Act 1987 (NSW) and others have been developed in common law, such as the test for testamentary capacity.

"A Practical Guide For Solicitors" adds :

The different legal tests for mental capacity mean that a client may have the mental capacity to make some decisions, such as deciding whether to make small purchases like groceries, but

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KNOWLEDGE –continued

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may lack the mental capacity to make other decisions such as deciding whether to enter into more complicated financial arrangements”, and of course we can include marriage to that.

A finding of incapacity in one area does not automatically mean that mental capacity is lacking in another area; for example, the Supreme Court of NSW has found that a person who is incapable of managing their financial affairs may still be mentally capable of making a will.

A person may not be capable on managing their affairs but have the mental capacity to make an enduring power of attorney.

A person may not have the mental capacity to make a contract but have capacity to make a will.

Similar, if not greater, mental capacity is needed to make a power of attorney compared to that required for a will.

The fundamental issue is whether the client is able to understand the general nature of what they are doing. If a client has ongoing difficulty in demonstrating this level of understanding then this may indicate a lack of mental capacity which warrants further exploration.

That further exploration may be by the Celebrant, the client’s solicitors perhaps even by the client’s solicitor but even then it is the Celebrant who must make the final decision based on the best information that can be procured.

One Celebrant reported an instance of when she attended the interview of a couple at an Aged Care facility and found:

- Party A did all the talking
- Party B, who was of advanced years, had been diagnosed with dementia and life expectancy was short
- Party B, did not seem completely lucid or have a full understanding of what was taking place
- Party B was wealthy while Party A was a temporary carer who had not known Part B until recently hired
- Party A said that no relatives would be attending the ceremony and that the witnesses would be two staff members know to Party A.
- The nurses on the premises expressed their concerns that whilst Party B could decide between two choices on the food menu, Party B struggled with more complex decisions such as clothing choices.

Party A provided a document from the resident doctor stating that Party B had been assessed as capable of making decisions

Concluding that further exploration of capacity was warranted, the Celebrant expressed doubts to the doctor about Party B’s capacity, and the doctor said that when Party A asked for the assessment, it was not revealed that Party A was to be a party to the marriage. The doctor immediately reviewed the assessment to conclude that Party B, was not capable and so the wedding was cancelled though a commitment ceremony might have been offered in its place, however the matter was referred to Federal Police.

The UK (National Society of Medicine), recommends to its Medical Practitioner members that before they write a

report as to capacity, that they follow these steps:

- 1) Get a letter from the solicitor detailing legal tests
- 2) Set aside enough time
- 3) Assess (in the standard way) whether the patient has dementia
- 4) Check that the patient understands each of the Banks v Goodfellow points (box 1)
- 5) Record the patient's answers verbatim
- 6) Check facts, such as the extent of the estate, with the solicitor
- 7) Ask about and review previous wills
- 8) Ask why potential beneficiaries are included or excluded
- 9) If in doubt about capacity, seek second opinion from an old age psychiatrist or other experienced professional

What that checklist tells us is that assessment of capacity or incapacity, even by medical practitioners, is not necessarily a simple process and of course, it should not be.

The MLCS, offers this guide to Assessing whether a person’s consent is real consent

1. Speak to the party in the absence of any other party

If an authorised celebrant forms a view that a person’s consent may not be real consent, they should discuss the matter with the party

concerned **in the absence of the other party** to ensure that the consent is real consent. This is particularly important if the celebrant is concerned that a party may be experiencing duress or is mentally incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony.

Meeting with the party separately does not mean you need to meet with them alone. Such meetings should always be conducted in a culturally appropriate way, with regard to the safety of the party and their wishes (including with regard to an appropriate support person).

The discussion with the party should, however, occur in the absence of (involved) third parties such as parents.

A mistake as to the nature of the ceremony performed may arise, for example, where a person thought the ceremony was a betrothal ceremony and not a marriage ceremony.

In cases where there is doubt about whether a party is capable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony, a general understanding will be sufficient. A high level of understanding is not required. The authorised celebrant should ask questions of the person about whom they have concerns in order to gauge the level of their understanding of the marriage ceremony and what it involves. For example, why they want to marry the other person, what marriage is or where they will be living after the marriage.



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KNOWLEDGE –continued

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2. Speak to third parties

In addition to speaking to the party concerned, an authorised celebrant can speak to third parties to assess if consent is real. For example, in cases of incapacity, an authorised celebrant might be assisted by speaking with family members, medical experts who know the party, guardians if relevant, or carers or staff at the nursing home where a person is living if they are elderly or have a disability. When speaking to third parties, it is important to respect the privacy of the person involved. You should seek permission from the person to approach certain people, tell them who you would like to speak to and why, and let them know what you are going to say.

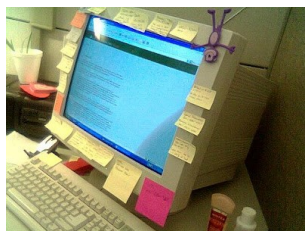
3. Keep detailed records

An authorised celebrant should thoroughly document any conversations they have to assess a person's consent to marry. This means if any questions arise at a later date the celebrant has a record of their decision-making process. This is important because celebrants may be called upon to give evidence in court as to the consent of the parties.

4. Ask yourself the following questions

The following questions, while not definitive, may assist an authorised celebrant to identify situations where consent issues may arise:

- ◇ Is one party silent or otherwise not communicating?
- ◇ Is one party speaking nonsensically or constantly interrupting?
- ◇ Has the couple been accompanied by extended family or friends who do some or much of the talking in response to the celebrant's questions?
- ◇ Is one party displaying emotions that are excessive or inappropriate in the circumstances?
- ◇ Has one party expressed feelings of shame or dishonour on the family if expectations are not met?
- ◇ Does one party answer all of the questions for the other party as well as for themselves?
- ◇ Does one party have noticeable problems with memory?
- ◇ Is there any sign that a party cannot manage their own affairs, for example, **being in full care in a nursing home or being subject to a guardianship order**?
- ◇ Does one of the parties seem vague or unclear about the purpose of the meeting with the celebrant, or are they unable to give any information about themselves and why they want to be married?
- ◇ Does the party understand English? If not, the celebrant should insist that an interpreter is used or, if an interpreter is not available, pass the function of performing the marriage on to a celebrant who speaks that language.



To assist you further in understanding cognitive ability, a training program is available at :

- <https://www.decisionmakingcapacity.dcj.nsw.gov.au/elearning/pa/ge357945.aspx>

There you will find the reminder that making decisions is empowering and shapes who we are. We all have differing skill in making decisions and have learned how to make decisions over time and by experience. Sometimes we make decisions on our own and at other times we involve others for advice or support. But, not everyone gets the chance to make their own decisions, particularly people with a disability, who are sometimes presumed not to be capable of making their own decisions. Such assumptions are a breach of their human rights.

Under NSW law, every adult has the ability to make their own decisions. We can't assume that a person lacks decision-making ability based on appearance, age, disability, behaviour, language skills or any other condition or characteristic.

Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)* put a spotlight on the human right of persons with disabilities to make their own decisions.

In that training, we also learn that 'Mental capacity' refers to the decision-making ability of a person but differs to 'legal capacity'. A person's legal capacity is the key to being able to participate fully in society and exercise civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It gives a person legal protection of their rights and recognises them as having the power to engage in transactions and create, modify or end legal transactions.



There are a number of excellent resources available to assist a celebrant to assess whether a person is able to understand the nature and effect of the marriage, such as:

- The Law Society of New South Wales' 'When a client's mental capacity is in doubt: A practical guide for solicitor'
 - <https://www.lawsociety.com.au/sites/default/files/2018-03/Clients%20mental%20capacity.pdf>
- The New South Wales Department of Justice <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/resources/capacity-toolkit.html>
- [Home \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.nsw.gov.au)
- https://www.alrc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/elder_abuse_131_final_report_31_may_2017.pdf
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1925203/>
- https://www.decisionmakingcapacity.dcj.nsw.gov.au/elearning/in dex.aspx?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR11tOLqOQjOm_Wb6mdES3e0gn8Wjb4WQmEuFFms4e3TNLL2pAitblQgFwY_a_e_m_A_f_6_q_c_c_-Zk1BZbaY_cWMWrvlgYTqt4R_njrUZhpflapNhhikEuu48WM34alXDs7cdhg2ZRdWexxHuMz3lEwNOvRTk
- <https://www.decisionmakingcapacity.dcj.nsw.gov.au/elearning/pa/ge357945.aspx>

KNOWLEDGE -OPD



OPD TIP—MISPERCEPTIONS

WE all experience it. We look into the fridge and cannot find the butter, but it is right at eye level staring us in the face. The same can occur when reading a question. If you expect to see certain word, or even NOT see certain words, your perception will align.

Make certain that before you start your OPD, you are rested and alert. If you get tired, just save and take a break before resuming. Misperception (not recognising what is in front of you) is a human condition.

Read each question carefully and don't rush.

Did you notice I just typed question instead of question?

I have had repeated messages asking for assistance when a Celebrant has been confused by a double negative or is required to select an 'incorrect' answer to a question.

Question 61 in the OPD is another of the questions that some are misreading. They are simply not seeing the word 'NOT' in the question.

Make certain that you read the question closely and note that some questions include three statements that are consistent with the Act and one that is not.

Question 61 asks for a title for a document that, under the Act, should **NOT** be used. Many are NOT seeing the word 'NOT' and so here is the question:

Q61: Which of the following is NOT an appropriate title for a document commemorating a commitment ceremony?

Option 'a' is obviously an appropriate title for a document commemorating a commitment ceremony as are two others but there is only one option that can NOT be used for a document commemorating a commitment ceremony.

- a. Celebration of Commitment.
- b. Certificate of Promise.
- c. Commitment Certificate.
- d. Celebration of Marriage.



Telstra's 3G mobile network is scheduled to switch off on June 30, with the thousands of Australians yet to upgrade their phones likely to lose services.

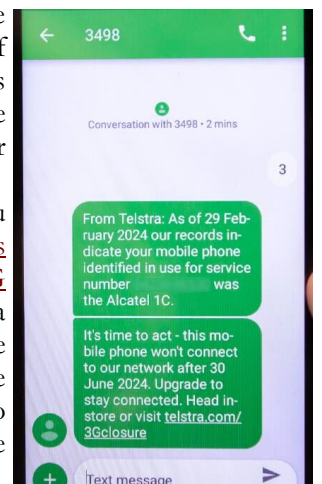
However, Telstra says that approximately 113,000 consumer mobile phones still use 3G and consumers were yet to upgrade ahead of the switch. Telstra says:

"3G accounts for just one per cent of our total network traffic, however we want to make sure everyone is prepared and has an easy way to check the compatibility of their device."

"If the 3G shutdown impacts you, you will likely have already heard from us," Telstra posted on its website.

If you're a Telstra customer, or if you have a device that uses Telstra's mobile network, you can find out if your mobile phone is impacted by texting the numeral '3' to the number 3498.

The response will give you the all clear if your phone is already 4G or 5G compatible, but if it's only a 3G phone the text message will offer additional advice on what you will need to do in order to have mobile service after June 30.



Telstra said it was also worth noting some older 4G and 5G phones still use 3G to call Triple Zero and that:

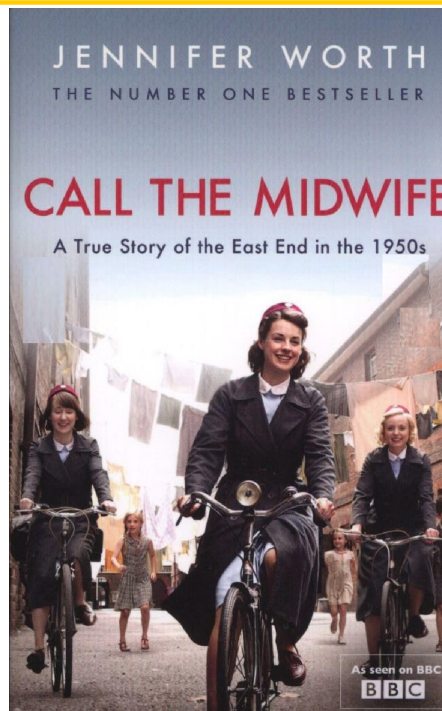
When we close 3G, these phones won't be able to call 000 - our SMS checker will advise of this scenario and the need to upgrade your device.

"We are considering all actions to ensure all our customers can call Triple Zero in an emergency after the closure."

"Furthermore, if you or a loved one has a medical alert device, we encourage you to check with the manufacturer that it is 4G VoLTE compatible."

For any questions or to clarify concerns, contact Telstra here.

1G	2G	3G	4G	5G
1981	1992	2001	2010	2020
2 Kbps	64 Kbps	2 Mbps	100 Mbps	10 Gbps



Call The Midwife is a hugely popular and remarkable British TV series based on the memoirs of midwife, Jennifer Worth, now running for some 15 years.

The series & story begins by following her as a 22-year-old in 1957 when she leaves her comfortable home to become a midwife in London's East End where she is surprised to find that she will be living in a convent, Nonnatus House, where she works alongside fellow nurses and the medically-trained Nuns. Jenny has her eyes opened to the harsh living conditions of the slums, but also discovers the incredibly warm hearts and bravery of the mothers enduring hardship. Even after Jenny leaves Nonnatus, she continues to chronicle the lives of the midwives who have become her family

The series has run for some 14 years and continues. It is set in the background of the contemporary cultural, social and political events, tenderly and realistically, dealing with the impact on all in the community.

There have of course been a few weddings along the way but in series 12, episode 8, we are not disappointed. The beautiful and forthright Nurse Trixie finally marries (*followers of the series will understand that aside*) to a man who is her equal however you will have to watch a few more episodes to get the full grasp of the development of the relationship.

Trixie's approaching nuptials cause stress levels to escalate and we see aspects of the stresses experienced in preparing a 'traditional' ceremony as ideas clash with contemporary values. It is worth a watch as a Celebrant but so is the entire series gives an insight into social history.

The Australian story of Maggie Beare, an elderly woman suffering from dementia (or so she says), and her faithful, yet long suffering son, Arthur. Despite all of Maggie's manipulative ways, he is her carer, even if they don't always get along. The incredibly talented [Ruth Cracknell](#) and [Garry McDonald](#) star in this hilarious, original ABC series and episode 12 is appropriately titled 'The Funeral' is a must see for any Funeral Celebrant with a sense of humour.

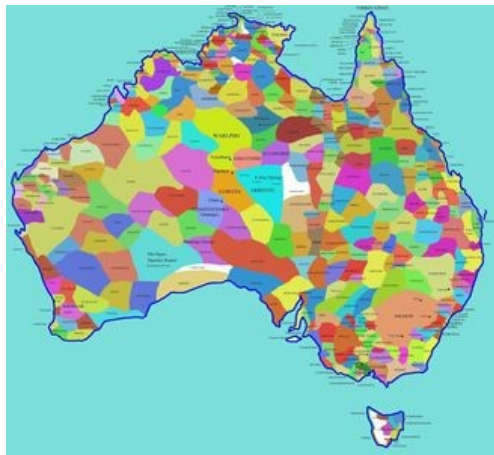
Even Uncle Andrew's funeral isn't enough to affect Maggie's good humour. After a little mix-up with the cars and an unscheduled shopping stop along the way, the procession finally reaches the cemetery and that's when the fun really starts, as not even a funeral can keep peace within the family. After Maggie buys a bag of oranges and drops them accidentally into the open grave. The series, is also known to be of great entertainment to dementia sufferers who in their stronger moments, can directly relate to comedic events and so it may even assist celebrants in interviews.

What movie or TV show have you seen, or what book have you read that has in some way given you inspiration as a Celebrant? Tell us about it and your article will appear on this page.

Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country



Welcome to Country and an *Acknowledgement of Country* recognise the unique position of Aboriginal/Indigenous people in Australian culture and history, and show respect for Aboriginal people. Both protocols precede an activity but it is important to note that only an Elder from the locality can offer a 'Welcome to Country' but others may offer an *Acknowledgement of Country*. There is no legal requirement for this but it is respectful to offer an acknowledgment.



This picture map may help you in identifying the 'country', or follow this link [:aboriginal map of Australia](http://aboriginalmapofaustralia.com) More information can be obtained from Aboriginal Land Councils

You may wish to write your own version but there are samples below, some with slight variations, beginning with a poem by Jonathan Hill, an indigenous poet living in New South Wales.

Acknowledgement of Country' by Jonathan Hill

Today we stand in footsteps millennia old.
 May we acknowledge the traditional owners
 whose cultures and customs have nurtured,
 and continue to nurture, this land,
 since men and women
 awoke from the great dream.
 We honour the presence of these ancestors
 who reside in the imagination of this land
 and whose irrepressible spirituality
 flows through all creation.

Source: Welcome to Country & Acknowledgement of Country - Creative Spirits, retrieved from [:https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country](https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/welcome-to-country-acknowledgement-of-country)

Samples As A Guide:

1. Before we begin proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today (Include the name of the People and their Nation here). I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future and pay my respects to all Aboriginal People here today, wherever you may come from.
2. I would like to acknowledge the _____ people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present of the nation, and I extend that respect to other indigenous people who are present.
3. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to the Elders past and present.
4. I would like to acknowledge that we meet on Aboriginal

land, the land of the _____
 people of the _____
 nation. I like to pay respect
 to their Elders past and present.

Blue Mountains & south-eastern New South Wales, including Camden, Goulburn and the Southern Highlands:

1. I would like to acknowledge that the Gundangara people who were the original custodians of the land on which we meet today. We pay our respects to elders past and present, and acknowledge the aboriginal people for their custodianship of this land...or
2. Before we begin proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Gundangara, I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future and pay my respects to all Aboriginal People here today, wherever you may come from.

Nepean and Blacktown areas including Narangyngy

1. I would like to acknowledge that the Darug people who were the original custodians of the land on which we meet today. We pay our respects to elders past and present, and acknowledge the aboriginal people for their custodianship of this land... or
2. Before we begin proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Darug people. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future and pay my respects to all Aboriginal People here today, wherever you may come from.

Shoalhaven & South Coast

1. I would like to acknowledge that the Djuwin (Yuin) people who were the original custodians of the land on which we meet today, We pay our respects to elders past and present, and acknowledge the Aboriginal people for their custodianship of this land... or
2. Before we begin proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, the Djuwin (Yuin) people. I would like to pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future and pay my respects to all Aboriginal People here today, wherever you may come from.
3. I begin by acknowledging that we meet today on the unceded lands of the, Djuwin (Yuin) people who have a deep spiritual connection with their country, and I acknowledge others across whose lands we have travelled to be here today. I pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future for their wisdom and knowledge, and I offer my respect to all Aboriginal People here today, from wherever you have travelled.
4. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we meet today on the unceded lands of the, Djuwin (Yuin) people and acknowledge others across whose lands we have travelled. I pay my respects to the Elders past, present and future for their wisdom and knowledge, and I offer my respect to all Aboriginal People here today, wherever you may come from.



Cambodian/Khmer Wedding Traditions



Cambodia is located on the southeastern part of the Indochina Peninsula and the majority of Cambodians, around 93% are both Khmer and



practice Buddhism. Weddings have strong Chinese and some Indian influences but may now have a strong western influence.

According to reports by two Chinese envoys, [Kang Tai](#) and Zhu Ying, the state of Funan was established by an Indian named Kaundinya. Legend has it that in the first century CE/AD, Kaundinya was given instruction in a dream to take a magic bow from a temple and defeat a Naga princess named Soma (*Chinese: Liuye, "Willow Leaf"*), the daughter of the king of the Naga. She later married Kaundinya and their lineage became the royal dynasty of [Funan](#). Kaundinya later built a capital named [Vyadhapura](#) and the kingdom also came to be known as *Kambojadesa*.

The modern wedding is a symbolic reenactment of the legendary wedding of [Preah Thong and his bride Neang Neak, \(Queen Soma\)](#) are thought to have founded the pre-Angkorian state of [Funan](#) and much of Khmer wedding customs can be traced back to that marriage, including the custom of the groom carrying the bride's scarf to symbolise that he is from afar and is marrying into her family.

You can expect to see hundreds of guests in attendance and Weddings were originally held over a seven-day period which was reduced to 3 and now may be only 1½ days, or given the strong western influence of the past 100-200 years, particularly in urban areas, be reduced to just one day.

If a couple seek a Civil Ceremony in Australia, it is likely that they may expect, or may ask for culturally relevant aspects or may use terms that have a specific meaning unique to their culture or family traditions.

Arranged marriages, sometimes with the help of a matchmaker, are common in the Cambodian culture. Parents may choose a spouse for their child and make the arrangements including wedding date before the child being informed. If this occurs, the Celebrant must proceed with caution to ensure that there is active consent and that it is not a forced marriage. When a bride or groom chooses their own partner, they're still expected to secure parental approval before finalising their decision.

During a period of courtship, but sometimes immediately after marriage, the groom provides 'bride service' where he stays with his future father-in-law for a period of time to serve him in whatever capacity required.

You have probably heard of tea ceremonies, in the *Sien*

Doan Taa the couple honours their ancestors by offering tea to their ancestor's spirits as a way of inviting them to take part in the celebrations and honour them.

Hai Goan Gomlom (Dowry procession)

This is the groom's procession. The groom and his family travel to the bride's family home, bearing gifts. The families greet one another. The greater the gifts, the greater the perception of respect. It is during this ceremony that the bride and groom may eventually exchange their wedding rings.



Gaat Sah (hair cutting)

The **Gaat Sah** or haircutting ceremony is a traditional hair-cutting rite in all Cambodian weddings. Though the bridegroom's hair is no longer cut completely as it once was, a snippet of hair is cut by the Family matriarch, of both the bride and the groom and this is then also performed by others, to symbolise the couple saying goodbye to their past and starting a new life, a new beginning, as husband and wife with each person cutting, offering a blessings and their well-wishes.



Soat Mun (monks' blessings)

During the ceremony, the monks sprinkle flowered water on the couple while chanting blessings for them. Guests are expected to observe in silence and bow their heads when necessary. If a monk isn't available, a priest or grandparent can officiate.

Bang Chbat Madaiy (Umbrella Ceremony)

To honour their parents, the couple holds an umbrella over their parents in an act of parental veneration. Holding the umbrella over the heads of parents symbolizes the couple protecting their parents as the parents did for their children. The couple also thanks their parents for all the work they put into raising them and may shower them with fruits and sweets. There is usually an appointed presenter who facilitates the ceremony and shares Cambodian parables or stories.



Sompeas Ptem (band fastening/Red String)

The couple kneel and hold a gold sword, a symbol of loyalty and protection, with their hands are clasped together. Family members take turns tying red string, possibly soaked in holy water, around



From previous page.....

the bride and groom's wrists. The red strings represent everlasting love and the joining together of two people to become one. Traditionally, the string should stay on their wrists for at least three days or until it naturally falls off.

Monetary gift may be presented to signify a bond to the newlyweds and their families.

At the end of this ceremony, attendees wish the new couple health, happiness and prosperity while dipping palm flowers into holy water and throwing that over the couple; guests may also throw white palm seeds at the couple.

Bongvul Phopul

During the *bongvul phopul*, married couples sit in a circle around the couple and pass blessings onto them as the couples seek counsel from them, before and after getting married. Three candles are passed clockwise around the circle, seven times to transfer experience, well-being and happiness.

The Celebrant will usually recite a Buddhist prayer at some point. The ceremony is followed by a reception with guests where they can enjoy an orchestral concert.

Vows & Rings

A distinguishing feature of a Buddhist wedding is that vows don't have to be spoken aloud. The couple may choose to read them silently. The choice to do so, allows the Buddhist couples to decide what's best for them and to align with whatever will best lead them as a couple toward enlightenment.

This of course though is not consistent with the Marriage Act where the minimal legal vows must be spoken to each other however, the practice can of course be adopted for personal vows.

There are three elements that are generally included in Buddhist wedding ceremonies.

- 1) Buddhist Prayer & Meditation: a prayer to the Buddha or meditation.
- 2) Individual Vows: individual proclamations
- 3) Joint Vows: the ceremony, the officiant will read a number of promises, to which the couple will respond, in unison, "we do."

Following the joint vows, there is the exchange of rings as the culmination of the wedding ceremony and then the pronouncement that the couple is now wed.

Traditional Cambodian Wedding Attire

The colourful wedding attire is a wonderful feature of a Cambodian wedding. Some couples change up to seven times throughout the duration of their wedding and may have an outfit for each ceremony, and garments are often made from expensive silk with gold threading.

The bride's traditionally wears a *kompot bottom* or skirt and a top, but each outfit may be significantly different and may include jewellery, intricate beading and of course, vibrant colours.

Cambodian men will usually wear Khmer pants with a top.

Music

At the reception, '*phleng kar*'. "Som Bon", "Bondait

Kantong" or "Bok Leak" will be played and there might be Khmer folk dancing however, according to Wikipedia, a large proportion of the traditional music which used to accompany the celebration has fallen out of use or been completely lost because of the shortening of the ceremony period to a single day.

In ages past, the traditional Khmer wedding ensemble known as *vung phleng kar* or *vung phleng Khmer* was played only by old male musicians.

The *vung phleng kar*, can be found in virtually every village, town and city in Cambodia and even in Khmer communities across the world

Musica is always played live at weddings and the original instrumentation included:

- a leaf (*sleuk*),
- a double-reed pipe (*prey prebaub*, used as a tuning standard),
- a musical bow or ksaedieu,
- a three-stringed fiddle or tro khmer,
- a long-necked lute or chapei and
- a vocalist.^[12]

The *Preah Thaong* melody played during Khmer wedding ceremonies is considered sacred.

The *phleng kar* is used in all Khmer weddings, mostly Buddhists, but the texts have also been adapted by Khmer Christians for the celebration of the sacrament of marriage in Christian churches.

Guests and main participants of the ceremony do not sing or dance, nor do they exercise an influence on the repertoire performed, however, with the influence of western culture, modern bands and DJs have become popular.

- <https://www.theknot.com/content/traditional-cambodian-wedding>
- <https://cambodiatravel.com/wedding-ceremony-in-cambodia/>
- [Vyadhapura - Wikipedia](#)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_century
- [Buddhist Wedding Vows Template: Wording & Info \(theknot.com\)](#)





OPENING OF A FUNERAL SERVICE

This is a sample opening of a funeral service for a young person, authored by Barry H Young.

We are here today because the loved son of ----
--- and-----, sister and brother has
sadly left us. I speak of <deceased>

Our grief and sorrow is all the more painful by the passing of such a young man. You see when the elderly depart we recognize the natural change. It feels normal – the end of a lifetime and life span encompassing all that was to be given and achieved. But the passing of such a young person shocks us particularly as <deceased> had so much to give – mountains to climb, rivers to cross and challenges to be faced and conquered.

And we grieve today with thoughts of <deceased> foremost in our minds. His passing has brought sorrow to his lovely family and you his many friends, particularly as the ties of love and friendship were so strong. But while we think of <deceased>'s passing with sadness and regret, we should recall his life with respect, love, joy and happiness. You see nothing can ever change the happiness and closeness you shared with <deceased>. Nothing can affect the joy of life <deceased> knew. Nothing can become between your love for him and his love for you. The past that you shared with <deceased> can never alter. It is forever sacred and secure.

And as we grieve today and it is essential to realise just what grief is.

Grief is love and it is because we feel such pain, because the inner ache is so great that the grief and heartache we feel bears witness to the depths of our love. You see grief is a great indicator of love - it simple cannot and does not exist except where there has been love

I believe it is essential that we make our lost loved one part of our future life?

A way in which we can do this is to accept the fact that <deceased> has left us - but let him be part of our lives - giving him a continuing stake in our lives. So that he is not just part of the past in our memories or of the present - but are very much part of our lives - so that <deceased> continues to live and to achieve through what ever we have taken from his life and added to our own for the benefit of others.

And by making our lost one part of our lives we can feel forever a wonderful closeness to him.

Be grateful that <deceased> was part of your lives and let his influence, his character, his warmth and his memory live on.

You can find hundreds of poems and reading at these links.

- [Funeral Poems & Readings – A Life Celebrant – Lou](#)
- [Wedding Poems & Readings – A Life Celebrant – Lou](#)

However there was an important prayer that was missing but has now been included.

Barry H Young tells us that several years ago he conducted a funeral service for a highly ranked police officer. It was a large gathering with a police member Guard of Honour etc. The N.S.W. Police Chief attended and prior to Barry commencing the service he handed Barry an item to be included in the service - it was the "Police Prayer." Barry of course included it at the appropriate place and says that in his dealings with the funeral industry the prayer has never been mentioned so he forwarded it so that it might be passed on to you, our fellow celebrants.

Thank you Barry H Young

The Police Prayer

Author unknown

God, we know it is from you that we have learned
what goodness and justice are.

You have given members of the New South Wales
Police Service the task of maintaining law and order
in the community.

We seek the strength to meet the many challenges
encountered in this endeavour.

Give us the courage and the resolution to do our duty
at all times, and such a respect and love for justice,
that neither promise nor threat, will ever make us
depart from it.

Enable us, by your presence, to be protector of the
endangered, friend to all, and role model to the
children and youth of the community, when called
upon to be adviser, may we be inspired with your
wisdom and truth.

Grant us the skill and wisdom we need to triumph
over wrong, in our role of protecting the community.

Guide us when to enforce, and when to relax the
letter of the law. Help us to be perfect examples of
the honesty, the goodness, and the justice which is
our duty to maintain, and grant that our actions will
inspire in our community, confidence in its police
officers.

We make our prayer through you, the one true life
affirming God.

Amen

PS: There are different versions of this prayer including one displayed at the National Police Museum.



The South Coast of NSW is a paradise. Is it any wonder that people want to marry and live here! There are always wonderful things happening on the south coast and some couple like to link their events to festivals or perhaps avoid particular dates to ensure transport and accommodation is a breeze and as Celebrants, we can make suggestion to couples and clients. Here are some dates & events to consider but you can find a list at <https://www.shoalhaven.com/event-guide/>

31 May – 3 June **Shoalhaven Gourmet Getaway**, Shoalhaven. The Shoalhaven Food Network has curated an itinerary designed to inspire visitors to eat and drink their way around the NSW South Coast region. The [Shoalhaven Gourmet Getaway](#)

Friday 17 May 2024 to Wednesday 05 June 2024

Celebrating First Nations Artists living on Yuin Country— <https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/south-coast/merimbula-and-sapphire-coast/bega/events/celebrating-first-nations-artists-living-yuin-country>
Bega: <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/?api=1&destination=-36.673466,149.841795>

Saturday 25 May 2024 to Sunday 02 June 2024 [Sculpture for Clyde](#). A ten-day free event



held on the Batemans Bay Foreshore highlighting original Sculptures from Australia and overseas. The event includes an outdoor sculpture exhibition, indoor sculpture exhibition and a student sculpture exhibition, with regional high schools partaking in this part of the event.



Saturday 04 May 2024 to Saturday 07 September 2024 (MONTHLY event) Jervis Bay Maritime Museum Winter Markets, Dent Street, Huskisson

<https://www.visitnsw.com/destinations/south-coast/jervis-bay-and-shoalhaven/huskisson/events/jervis-bay-maritime-museum-winter-markets>

8 June 2024 9:00 am - 8:00 pm, **Viking Festival Sussex Inlet**, Jacobs Drive, Sussex Inlet



See next month's newsletter for an article Viking Weddings.

Wednesday 12th June 2024- 7pm, AMC South Coast regional Zoom meeting covering OPD

22nd June 2024 Huskisson Beer & BBQ Festival, 12:00 pm - 8:00 pm, 75 Owen Street, Huskisson

26th June 2024 **AMC Education session— "Incorporating Aboriginal Culture into Your Ceremonies"**

Members Register Here



Sunday 26 May 2024 to **Friday 27 June 2025** (Monthly event) **Moruya Jockey Club** Thoroughbred Racing, at the Moruya Jockey Club will include some great racing action as well as on-site facilities inclusive bookies, a bar, hot food, a coffee van and a TAB in operation. Marquees are available on the day, please contact the club should you wish to book a marquee.

30th June 2024 **Last day of AMC membership renewal discount**
Telstra switches off 3G network

COORDINATOR COMMENTS



A recent survey asserted that people have lost confidence and interest in Facebook and other social media but yet as Celebrants all social media is still a valuable means of advertising because potential clients see our photos and comments and this imprints a perception of our abilities, appearance, capabilities and

indicates tone of our ceremonies. Memories are images. An aroma, a sound, a photo, all stimulate thoughts and memories and we are suddenly transported to an image in our minds of a wonderful moment in life just as we may be reminded of a tragedy and so it is so very important that we consider our online image at all times to ensure the right memories and thoughts are generated.

People will make their choices of Celebrant for all sorts of personal reasons. All choices though are emotional. When a decision is made, it is because it makes the person 'feel good' about their choice.

Phil Timbrell told me that he gets bookings because he wears an Akubra in many photos, I have had bookings recently because people liked my greying hair and smile. Karen Ambrose also has spoken of a booking because of the colour of her hair.

Years ago I read a study that judgements of a person is based of a perception of on appearance made within 5 seconds and that every thing after that is related back to that opinion. To explain that concept to jobseekers in a past field of work, I would explain that if someone approaches an interview panel looking confident and presentable, the immediate impression is that the person is a professional and so will be a good candidate and then if they fail a question in the interview, they will be forgiven however when someone enters obviously lacking in confidence and trips, spilling a coffee on a member of the interview panel, they are doomed because even if they perform very well in the interview, the perception will be that even a fool can get things right now and again..

Now let's relate that back to social media.

There have been quite a few recent tragedies that were prominent in all media but when it comes to social media, people are able to make comment and many expressed opinions as if they were fact even going so far

as to make unfounded and very cruel accusations.

The one vital rule to keep in front of mind when acting on social media is that you do not know who will read your post or comment.

Hence, you create posts that will enhance your image and make comments that are consistent with that image. Always be careful, consistent and considerate in your casual comments.

Before you post, think twice. Look at your post as if you are a potential customer and see what they see.

One method that many Celebrants use is to have multiple profiles. They can link to one another or be completely separate. You can for instance, have a private profile with only family and closest of friends, and a separate public profile open to the world.

Having a free google maps page is certainly beneficial however Microsoft's Bing has not been so useful mainly because Bing has no category for 'celebrant'. In the USA you have to be a Minister of Religion to be an 'officiant' and the designers of Microsoft Bing seems to have difficulty grasping that the world is NOT solely the USA .

When you do get a great review though, it is worth copying that review onto your own social media page or webpage with a photo of the couple just to show it is real.

What happens though if you get a review that is less than optimal or make some mistake in a post. The first step is to correct or remove any error and apologise privately because public apologies can just bring more attention to the error..

The bad review is a tough one because in most directories, you can approve or remove a review but not on google. Google's policy & procedures clearly states that only valid reviews are accepted and that fake reviews will be removed BUT time and time again there are complaints from business owners that google has refused to remove fake reviews. If that happens you could complain to the ACCC or just move on and get better reviews from genuine people to overshadow the rare fake review and know that customers will see through the fake review.

Persistence succeeds.

It was said recently that *"Traditional funerals are now about 30% of funerals, and shrinking annually"*. I interpret that as meaning that there are more direct cremations than ever and either a later service or no service at all. That leaves me to ponder:

- If there is no ceremony, it may mean that the deceased is not honoured, or remembered, or grieved for, in any significant way.
- grief is an important emotional response but with no service, there is no real outlet
- without a grave or memorial to visit, there is no special place to remember a connection or to reconnect with fondness
- without a ceremony, there is no opportunity for 'closure' i.e. recognition of a death and change
- without a life-end ceremony, the importance of life itself is diminished

As Celebrants we have a responsibility to remind all of the importance of ceremony.

Remember to take care of yourself. Sometimes you get so busy taking care of others that

you forget that you are important too.

