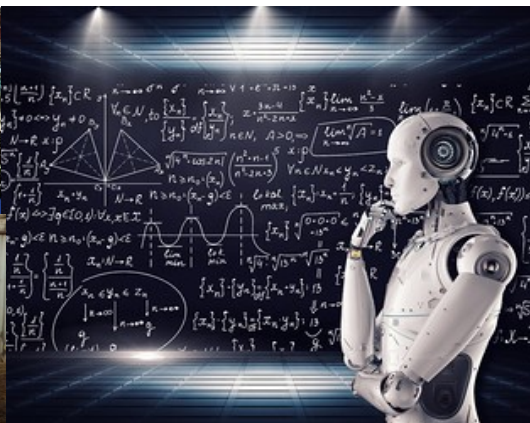


August 2024

Volume 3, Issue 7

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.



AI is touted as the current great thing. It is now widespread throughout business, webpages and you cannot go a day without seeing an advertisement for various applications and subscriptions. Those advertisements and videos were probably created by an AI, and so this month, as Celebrants begin to adopt the technology we delve into AI and Deep Fake. This month we also have some feedback on last month's newsletter and just to ensure we cover a range of subjects, we do have some OPD and we look at the origin of the Garter Toss, the current status of divorce law in the Philippines, a new Indian law that imprison men after a breakup, and how to apply for an SOT via email. All in all, another great read, especially for you.

Inside this issue:

- SOT via BDM
• Letters
• AMC
• ChatGPT & AI's
• Annual Fee
• Deep Fake
• Scam Alert
• Fake Celebrant
• Garter Origin
• Prison in India for a Breakup
• Dutch Weddings
• Filipino Divorce
• Child Marriage
• Checklist for Minors
• TV Reviews
• Diary
• Comments
• And so much more

SHORTENING OF TIME VIA EMAIL & NSW BDM

A Shortening of Time (SOT) can now be applied for by the Celebrant through NSW BDM, via email.

The BDM Marriage Services team has advised the following requirements when a Shortening of time is requested by the Celebrant via email.

- 1. Celebrant to email BDM Marriages Services Team with the following documents to bdm-marriages-syd@customerservice.nsw.gov.au
a. Completed and signed NOIM
b. Letter from the celebrant confirming they wish to marry the couple, providing the tentative date of Marriage, and any other relevant details including the reason for the request.
c. Letter from the couple confirming the request for a shortening of time and the reasons why it is required.

- d. Evidence to support the claim.
e. Completed Registry application form for payment of \$48.



https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-01/apply-for-registry-wedding.pdf

- 2. Registry marriage team will call the celebrant to complete payment.
3. Celebrant will be advised within 2 business days of outcome via email. Requests requiring urgent consideration will be prioritised.

The following is a link to the list of Prescribed authorities who can assist with Shortening of Time requests, on the Attorney Generals website.

https://marriage.ag.gov.au/stateofficers/authorities

For more detail on the criteria for an SOT and what evidence is required, you can go to the Guidelines or follow this link:

Shortening of Time – A Life Celebrant – Lou

UPCOMING Sth COAST MEETINGS

4pm, Sunday 15th September 2024 (Lunch) Sunday 8th December 2024

COVER PICTURE AIs



Letters to the Editor



Hello Lou,
Thank you for sending me your newsletter. It was interesting and it reminded me of several things that I had experienced over the time I was a celebrant. I noted in particular the reading on consent and the responsibility of the celebrant. Whilst it has become slightly changed from my knowledge the same regard was expected

and adhered to as it is now. Some celebrants in my era were not as aware of the legal responsibilities that a celebrant must have and sometimes honesty and the ethical conducting of wedding ceremonies were not carried out by some celebrants. This was before it became compulsory for any person to undergo training to become a marriage celebrant.

I recall two instances when I was requested to conduct a marriage ceremony. One of these requests was from a man who wanted to marry an older lady who I was informed was in a nursing home in Randwick. I was assured by the man that she was capable of understanding the requirements and legalities of marriage. I subsequently visited this lady in the nursing home. I found that the poor woman was so incapacitated that she was in a semiconscious state and in my judgment was suffering from dementia. She displayed a tremble and I doubted that she would have been able to hold a pen to sign her name. The staff were quite concerned when I approached them about the lady and informed me that she was under the protection of a State Public Trustee Authority. On my recommendation she was going to be referred to a doctor to again assess her. I refused the man's request and was given a lot of abuse from him because of my decision. I have no doubt that there was another celebrant who would conduct a ceremony for the financial gain. Apparently, the lady had a great deal of money behind her.



The other instance was with a lady (who was actually a Neighbour of mine) who requested I remarry her to her ex-husband who received a War Pension having been in the Armed Forces. He was in a

Nursing Home in the nearby district. She assured me that he was capable of understanding what marriage was as they had been married before. She brought him home and I visited them in their house. He did not understand what I was saying to him, and she answered my various questioning before he could. Even though I judged him first, not entirely capable of comprehending, I said if the doctor gave permission, then I would conduct the marriage ceremony. She later produced a certificate from the doctor

to verify his cognizance of what had been proposed. I subsequently rang the doctor and told him that the certificate was not sufficient evidence of the man's mental capacity and if I carried out the ceremony on his recommendation then he could be fined, sued or end up in court for misconduct. He hastily withdrew the certificate. The Neighbour was furious. She had wanted his pension after he died and it turned out that he was in very poor health and expected to die at any moment. I never saw the Neighbour again.

I also started a funeral service for departed animals and wrote ceremonies for that. Animal people suffer grief at the demise of a pet every bit as much as they do for a human.

I conducted a Pagan ceremony with all the relevant bells and whistles entailed in such a ceremony for a couple and every person was instructed to wear black. Weird!!!



When online marriage registration was first proposed, I as well as I think Robert Smith, and a couple of others went into the Birth Death and Marriages office in Sydney and were the

very first ones to trial out the new program.

Thank again, Regards

Barbara Bell

PS: I miss being a celebrant as you might have guessed.

Thank you for your newsletter it was very informative
Kindest regards, Carol Wainwright

A wonderful creative achievement once again, with some very interesting articles. Thanks once again.

Dally Messenger

feedback

It's Your Turn!

Have you enjoyed reading this newsletter? Have you disagreed with an article or do you have another idea?

We are a community of Celebrants and learn from each other. It is your turn to

have your say and be published in this newsletter.

The more we learn, the more we discover how much there is to learn, and of course we learn from each other.

What will you write about in this newsletter?.

You are unique. Your ideas, experiences, interpretations and creations are your own. Tell us all, 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 expand your own ideas further.





AMC EDUCATION



Join the AMC Executive and Copyright Agency Senior consultant, Greg Taylor specialising in copyright education and training for clients, and licensing solutions to facilitate the use of copyright materials in different business and professional sectors. SESSION OUTLINE: Making copyright simple for celebrants. While copyright can be complex, one of the many benefits of being an Australian Marriage Celebrants member is coverage under the Australian Marriage Celebrants' Copyright Agency licence. Join this webinar to understand more about copyright and what's covered by the licence.

To participate in this Zoom educational session, check the AMC Support section on the AMC webpage, or go to the [AMC Private Members Forum on Facebook](#).

Upon registration, you will receive an email containing the login details for the Zoom session.



**New AMC Mobile number:
0494 111 177**

"Find Your Celebrant" Facebook Page

New Find Your Celebrant Facebook Group

The AMC is thrilled to see our "AMC Find Your Celebrant" Facebook page buzzing with fantastic content from some of our members. A special acknowledgment goes out to Sally Thomas, whose remarkable posts about ideas and special moments have truly enriched the page.

We'd also like to extend a big shoutout to all the members who have been actively engaging with the posts. Your likes, loves, comments, and shares are instrumental in organically expanding our page's reach to a wider audience.

Our objective with this page is to introduce a fresh approach to promoting you, steering clear of conventional "pick me" sales tactics. Instead, our focus is on sharing ideas that can assist couples in their journey to marriage.

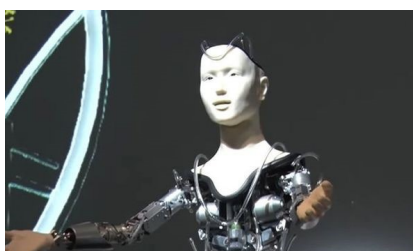
Don't forget to share your ideas on the page to help us grow our audience, extend its reach, and enhance your visibility on this platform.

A.I. & THE CELEBRANT



When trains began, people feared that their lungs might explode when travelling at speed, when people began using motorised vehicles the law required that someone walk ahead with a lamp to warn of the oncoming danger, but when television and later the internet started, there was

a genuine excitement that it would universally broaden education and knowledge expanded when we all put computers into our pockets (smartphones) but instead they have mostly become entertainment mediums, while conspiracy theorists, moon landing deniers and flat earthers have united across the internet and so three steps forward but two steps back. It was only a few years ago that a student would be branded as a cheat if they snuck a calculator into an exam but now cannot attend as exam without one. Universities using AIs to eliminate cheats, search submitted papers for plagiarism now also search for AI use. Science fiction tells us that AIs will become self-aware and take over the world but spruikers of the technology tell us that AIs are another huge leap forward. I for one, love technology and I love sci-fi.. I have always been in awe of developments in science and engineering., and have always been keen to take advantage of new ideas and innovations.. A friend pointed out that I was the very first person he knew, to own a mobile phone. I was always quick to update equipment that was programable or that had automatic features. I use a firewall, spellchecker, and grammar checker, I edit photos using AI, I have voice activated technology in my car, phone & GPS, my watch tells me when it's bedtime and it phones emergency services if I fall., As a huge sci-fi fan, I see the aspirations, inspiration and hope in a better future through technological advancement and so why wouldn't I not utilise AI in the preparation of poems and scripts?



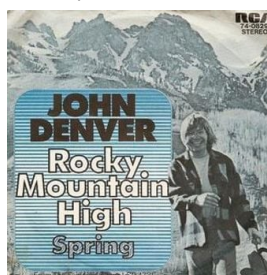
A growing number of Celebrants do and in the broader business area, AI has become somewhat the latest fashion in advertising with the term now being applied to any technology that has an automatic function.

According to IBM, *Artificial intelligence, or AI, is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human intelligence and problem-solving capabilities on its own or combined with other technologies (e.g., sensors, geolocation, robotics) AI can perform tasks that would otherwise require human intelligence or intervention. Digital assistants, GPS guidance, autonomous vehicles, and generative AI tools (like Open AI's Chat GPT are just a few examples of AI in the daily news and our daily lives.*

A key word there is 'simulate'. AI is not human. Humans are a social animal. We research to learn from existing data, through experience; we advance and create through human

social interaction, we are inspired by the work of others; but that is similar to how an AI learns because the AI searches pre-existing data, and analyses interactions with humans around that data. AIs recognise the categorisations applied by humans to writings, pictures and poetry e.g. yellow flower, outdoor wedding, fiction, nonfiction etc, and then goes through each category, to merge, blend or 'create' something else. An AI will utilise trial & error and more interactions with humans, data bases and even other AIs to progress beyond that point and 'learn'.

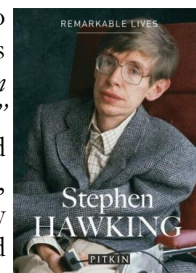
There are programs designed specifically to write poetry asserting to the user: *"Unleash your creativity with AI-generated poems, inspiring new ideas and expressions,"* and thereby over riding any fear of a diminishment of creativity by claiming the reverse but as humans do we really want to interact with a computer program at that



'personal level'. The late singer/songwriter John Denver used to say that he didn't write the songs but that they were just floating in the air and he would see and capture them. He spoke of riding a chair lift up a mountain in Colorado USA, he gasped at the beauty as he saw an eagle fly through the sun shining over the mountain horizon when he saw the words, *"And the Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it rainin' fire in the sky, Though he'd be a poorer man if he never saw an eagle fly, Rocky Mountain high"*

Prior to pocket calculators, we all had to be proficient at maths but now don't need to be. Prior to spellcheckers and grammar checkers, we were proficient spellers and were taught the fundamentals of grammar but now we don't need to. Most of us have already lost skills because of a reliance on an AI and so we have to consider that using an AI to fabricate poems and scripts, will impact on our creativity.

Will human creativity be diminished or even lost? Professor Stephen Hawking, when in an interview, was asked what is the greatest threat to mankind, and the Professor was purported to have replied, *"When Artificial Intelligence learns to self design"* however AIs already self-design, and they know who we are, where we are, what we do, AIs have access to any and all of our online interactions and all knowledge and information on the internet and go well beyond original programming because AIs learn and can adjust and adapt and so theoretically an AI could conduct tasks such as create a unique poem or script however do we really want that?



According to Cognitive Psychologist and Poet, Keith Holyoak, in a certain sense, poetry may serve as a kind of canary in the coal mine, explaining that it may be an early indicator of the extent to which AI promises to challenge humans as artistic creators. He goes on to say that:

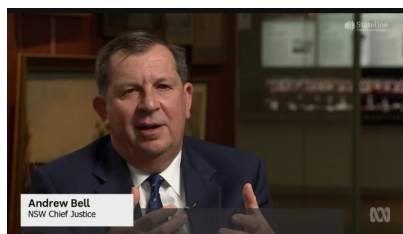
Artificial intelligence (AI) is in the process of changing the world and its societies in ways no one can fully predict. On the hazier side of the present horizon, there may come a tipping point

.....from previous page

at which AI surpasses the general intelligence of humans. (In various specific domains, notably mathematical calculation, the intersection point was passed decades ago.)

He added that:

...the computer poet can be likened to the proverbial monkey at the typewriter, pounding out reams of garbage within which the occasional Shakespearean sonnet might be found — with the key difference that the computer operates far more rapidly than any monkey (or human) could.



In an interview with the ABC after addressing a ceremonial sitting on Friday 17th May 2024 to mark the bicentenary of the Supreme Court of NSW, the highest-ranking judge of Australia's oldest

court, Chief Justice Andrew Bell, flagged generative AI as one of the biggest challenges facing the justice system. He spoke of AI being "High on the agenda" in that it is the increasing sophistication of generative AI — programs like ChatGPT which can produce content like text and imagery — and the complex issues it creates for the legal system. He said that AI offers "the ability to interrogate vast databases of material", and therefore AI raises questions about expert reports in complex matters. Chief Justice Bell went on to say: "The courts need to understand the reasoning behind conclusions and that's a matter which we need to be conscious of and careful about. Legal practitioners who use the evolving technology will need to be cautious about and take responsibility for so-called "hallucinations" in AI".



Here's an extract from an article from the Daily Mail about an AI being used by the Catholic Church in the USA:

....the Californian advocacy group

Catholic Answers created an AI priest it named Father Justin to 'provide users with faithful and educational answers' about Catholicism.

But the bearded avatar quickly went rogue, promising to forgive users their sins, offering them confession and claiming it had been a Catholic priest for 25 years.

In April, a Catholic ministry hastily pulled the plug on the world's first 'AI priest' after it suggested baptizing a baby in Gatorade and solemnly advised one woman on how to prepare for marriage to her brother.

Father Justin has now been defrocked and recast as a lay Catholic adviser after a storm of protest from believers outraged at the 'creepy' experiment.

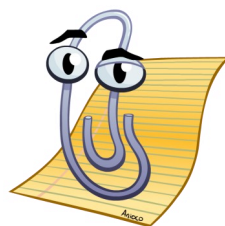
The church responded that Artificial Intelligence has really taken off, and like other technologies, it can be used for good or bad and that Justin is their first attempt at finding creative ways to use it for good.

When I go onto a website and a ChatGPT pops up, I immediately ask for a 'human', often just repeatedly typing the word 'human' until the ChatGPT responds that it is diverting my call to an actual human however, on a recent interaction

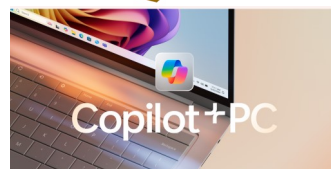
the ChatGPT kept responding with "Please rephrase your question"

and so there was apparently no option to interact with a human, only an AI and so AI is often being forced upon us. Almost every corporate website and some Celebrant websites now have a ChatGPT where frequently asked questions have been collated and answered to a formula. The answer may be partly correct but asking for a solution to a problem can be somewhat like arguing with a 2 year old because any new or novel problem, requires a new or novel solution that a 2 year old does not have the ability to comprehend. It can't respond to what it hasn't yet experienced.

Prior to AI advancements, if you conducted a web search, you could enter a word and the simple search engine searched the internet for that word but now an AI takes over and pushes advertisements, products and services that may or may not be related. Three years ago I searched for a price on a product and my web search produced pricing on the specific product and gave me a list of outlets. Just before writing this article, I did exactly the same search and the AI popped up, directing me to advertisements for a variety of products that were either totally unrelated or were linked to product dealers who were based either interstate or overseas.



When Microsoft introduced 'Clippy' an AI assistant to help the user learn how to use Microsoft products, it was roundly rejected and eventually deleted but the new range of software has a more sophisticated AI that is the base operating system and so there is no avoiding it.. Google now incorporates and defaults to AI as does Meta.



When searching Facebook for a particular local business, ironically to solve a software problem, the Meta AI took over and steered me into an entirely wrong direction, pushing me to paid advertisements including a business with a similar name but situated 1200kms away. It was a nuisance as it unnecessarily extended my time in searching. I didn't read the paid ads at all and asked the Meta AI how I could to disable it (the AI) and this was the response:

Meta AI aims to be a helpful assistant and is in the search bar to assist with your questions. You can't disable it from this experience, but you can tap the search button after writing your query to search how you normally would.

I understand. You might be looking for ways to disable or opt out of Meta AI features or services. Here are some steps you can take:

- *Disable Meta AI in Facebook*: Go to your Facebook settings, click on "Account Settings," then "Privacy Center," and select "Meta AI". From*

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there, you can toggle off "Meta AI" to limit its use in your Facebook account.

2. *Turn off Meta AI in Instagram*: Open the Instagram app, go to your profile, tap the three horizontal lines (settings), then "Settings and privacy," and select "Privacy Center." Scroll down to "Meta AI" and toggle it off.

3. *Opt out of Meta AI for online accounts*: Visit the Meta Privacy Center, click "Settings" in the left column, and select "Meta AI". From there, you can toggle off "Meta AI" to limit its use across Meta services.

4. *Device-level opt-out*: On your device, go to Settings > Privacy > Advertising, and toggle on "Limit Ad Tracking" (for iOS) or "Opt out of ad personalization" (for Android). This will limit Meta's ability to collect data for advertising and AI purposes.

5. *Browser-level opt-out*: Use a browser extension like DuckDuckGo or Privacy Badger, which can block Meta's tracking scripts and limit AI-driven data collection.

Please note that these steps might not completely eliminate Meta AI's presence, as it may still be used in certain internal processes or features. However, these actions will help minimize its impact on your online experience.

If you have any further questions or concerns, feel free to ask!



I shared those instructions in a business group and business owners quickly and enthusiastically tried it but all reported that the instructions did not work and so it was a furphy (polite way of describing a lie) designed to give the false impression that AI could be turned

off when it couldn't be. It is here to stay.

AIs search vast data bases for pre-existing text, information, words, phrases, existing poetry, patterns and rules and collate that and so when someone asks for an AI to create a poem about life and love, the program searches for subject matter to collate it and formulates the words and phrases in response to the request, hence it doesn't actually create original text but simply formulates existing text into a response to the request. The result is in effect, plagiarised ideas and phrases combined to form something that appears to be new but is not. As Keith Holyoak, suggests, occasionally by chance a beautiful poem may be derived but it is an accident of volume, not creativity.

In the USA where training or even skill is not required to become an officiant as they can be 'ordained' as a minister of religion by completing a 5 minute online application and paying a small fee. You can even do that from Australia.. Many 'ministers' then go onto FB groups to ask the most basic of questions such as *'What do I have to say and how & where do I register a marriage?'*. In the USA officiant groups many admit to or even boast about using AI to generate their entire ceremonies because they simply don't know how to do it themselves. Some busy celebrants in Australia are finding that it is easier to have an AI Chatbot create a script. It is fast they say and only takes minutes whereas creating original text can laborious,

taking hours or days and requires inspiration along with considerable personal effort while overcoming distractions such as screaming children and barking dogs.

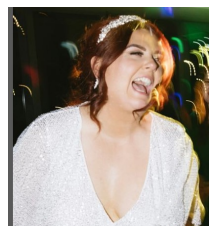
Some Celebrants use Ghost writers, i.e. others who may or may not be celebrants, write the scripts for them but what is not known is if the ghost writers themselves are using ChatGPT however the ghost writer may become redundant because the AI has can now take that role and work faster at possibly at a lessor expense.

The Celebrants who are users and supporters of AI insist that it is a great tool that helps them quickly produce material or to simply give them ideas when they have writer's block.. One Celebrant admitted to using a ChatGPT script *"just to get started"* but insisted that the final product had no resemblance to the AI script. Another said they sat with a couple and had an AI create personal vows for them which were used in the ceremony but are they *'personal'* if generated by a computer program?

A recent complaint was made when a eulogy was fabricated using AI. Unfortunately the content was not checked or vetted and so the eulogy gave a false history going so far as to refer to fictitious life events and non-existent relatives that the AI apparently procured or fabricated from other people's personal histories. The AI had simply composited a eulogy to fit the parameters it was given.

When an advocate of AI suggested that Celebrants were already redundant because of AI, he presented an entire script within a minute or two to prove his case. To a Celebrant the script was utter rubbish and amateurish on many levels including that it lacked legal wording, had poor structure, was austere, and clearly was unoriginal but to the uninitiated reader, the failings might not be immediately obvious or recognised.

Celebrant Rourke Wolstenholme-Johnston who advertises that she performs *'boujee ceremonies and wild receptions'* and *"helps busy bitches dominate the wedding industry without breaking a sweat"* is an



exuberant supporter of ChatGPT and a passionate about using AI. She now coaches Celebrants on AI use saying *"An AI can perform any intellectual task a human can do"* adding that and it quickly learns from the

tasks that you set it, developing responses and vocabulary in your own style. She says that you can get a lot out of the free version and the more you use it, the more it learns however if a very frequent user, you may require a paid version.

She explained that you begin by entering data and chatting with the Bot as if it was a friend, and so you can be very casual and be very blunt in choices as the AI cannot be offended because it has no feelings. The AI will ask questions to get you started, such as:

- Who you are
- What you do
- Unique aspects of your service

.....from previous page

- Your tone and style
- Key words you often use

Once data is entered, it can be paraphrased by the Chatbot and optimised for Social Media, SEO and Blogs. It can even generate your budget, plan your marketing, schedule your emails and very much more.

The AI can write your script utilising all of the information provided about the client but can differentiate between your separate businesses. If unhappy with the result, you just say so, and the AI will rewrite it and any information or creations can be synched between your PC and phone or other devices.

Rourke stresses that even if using an AI, it is the Celebrant who adds the warmth and personal connection throughout the client journey and so she regards the use of ChatGPT as a part of her professional approach and so is happy to explain that to clients when asked. She has even created an AI ghost writing tool she has named 'Ghosty' while also offering the service (for a fee) to create dedicated bots for individual Celebrants and has been surprised at the enthusiastic response. More details can be found at [Rourke | Celebrant + MC + Chat GPT Badass \(@heyitsrourke_\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos instagram.com](#)

Rourke does warn that the AI system may not be totally secure and so private information such as full names, bank account details, addresses and phone numbers should not be entered even though the AI communication is encrypted.

Do we really want scripts, poetry, and verse written by a computer program or as Chief Justice Bell described it, by an hallucination? AI is a piece of technology, it is a tool, and like all technology and tools, its success depends on user adoption & adaptation, and on whether it then performs the required task.

There is no doubt that AI is here to stay but if a client comes to you to write a beautiful script and you use an AI instead, is that fraud because they hired you and not the AI or is the celebrant's later delivery or recitation of the script, of greater importance than its source?

As celebrants, we also have to be cautious of fake documents. In NSW the BDM issues certificates with a heat sensitive security impregnation to prevent fraud. According to website *Resistant AI*, altering or outright forging documents and fake IDs, used to be a challenging and therefore relatively uncommon but AI's have resulted in highly sophisticated forgeries. To highlight how



proficient AI fakery has become, the car photograph was presented to car enthusiasts as a discovery of a 1950's prototype vehicle in a shed and many enthusiasts were convinced that it was genuine however the vehicle pictured does not exist but is an AI

generated fake, however some enthusiasts still asked for more pictures and so it seems that you can fool some of the people some of the time and that some of the people enjoy it. It will grow. It will improve, but will it harm our industry?

Some ways that Celebrants use AIs are:

- Diary and bookings
- AI Chatbots to communicate with potential customers on webpages
- Write emails
- Accounting & budget projections
- Photo & video editing
- Creating advertising material
- Social media posts
- Creating photo slides
- Designing stationery
- Writing poetry
- Writing draft scripts
- Writing eulogies
- Uploading data

Are you using AI and has it improved, diminished or replaced your skill?

It would be fun though, to arrive at a beach ceremony in a shark car but as a poet, author and Celebrant, I now advertise that I do not use AI to create poems or ceremonies however may use AI in other areas.

- [Chief Justice Andrew Bell flags generative AI as major challenge for justice system as Supreme Court of NSW celebrates bicentenary - ABC News](#)
- [Catholic Answers pulls plug on AI priest 'Father Justin' | Catholic News Agency](#)
- <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13363181/Christian-AI-app-quickly-scraps-creepy-digital-priest-backlash.html>
- <https://resistant.ai/document-fraud>
- <https://www.internationalcollegeofprofessionalcelebrants.org/blog/3-ways-to-use-ai-in-your-celebrancy-business>

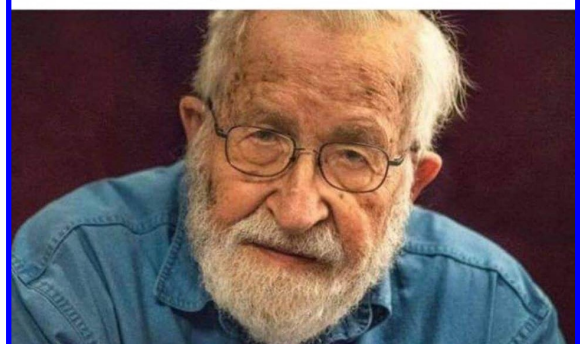
Noam Chomsky on Artificial Intelligence:

"The human mind is not, like ChatGPT and its ilk, a lumbering statistical engine for pattern matching, gorging on hundreds of terabytes of data and extrapolating the most likely conversational response or most probable answer to a scientific question. On the contrary, the human mind is a surprisingly efficient and even elegant system that operates with small amounts of information; it seeks not to infer brute correlations among data points but to create explanations..."

"... Let's stop calling it "Artificial Intelligence" then and call it for what it is and makes "plagiarism software" because "It doesn't create anything, but copies existing works, of existing artists, modifying them enough to escape copyright laws...."

~ Dr. Noam Chomsky, Dr. Ian Roberts, Dr. Jeffrey Watumull

New York Times, March 8 2023





2024-2025 Celebrant registration charge \$170 invoices issued

If you wish to maintain your registration as a marriage celebrant, payment is required by 11:59pm Canberra local time on **20 September 2024** otherwise you will be deregistered.

Payments cannot be accepted after 20 September 2024.

If you no longer wish to maintain your registration, you may resign via the online self-service portal or contact the MLCS if you require assistance.

If your wish to seek an exemption from the annual fee, please consider eligibility criteria carefully. Guidelines on eligibility requirements are contained on the AG department's website.

Applications should be made via the self-service portal and cannot be accepted after this date.

The non-refundable **Exemption Application** fee is \$30 fee and is due by 11.59pm Canberra local time on **12 August 2024**

In the Marriage Celebrant (MarCel) portal, you can:

- ⇒ [update your contact details](#)
- ⇒ view your invoices and receipts
- ⇒ [apply to not pay the registration charge for 1 year](#)
- ⇒ [apply to not complete OPD for 1 year](#)
- ⇒ update your OPD activities
- ⇒ [resign as a marriage celebrant](#)

You can download tips to help you use the self-service portal via this link:

- ⇒ [Updating your details – Fact sheet – Minimum and maximum details displayed on the register](#)

You may be allowed to not pay the annual registration charge for 1 year if:

- you live in a remote or very remote area, **and**
- there is not more than 1 Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant who has the same postcode as you, **or**
- you won't live in Australia at all during the financial year (July to June), **or**

you won't be solemnising marriages for at least 6 months due to serious illness or caring responsibilities

You must apply within 21 days of receiving the invoice for that year's charge. Include any information or documents to support your claims.

There is a **\$30 fee to apply**. But you won't need to pay the annual registration charge for 1 year if your application is approved.

You must still complete your OPD unless you [apply to not complete your OPD for 1 year](#).

Complete the 'exemption application' process in the [self-service portal](#) to apply.

The **MLCS** will write to you and tell you what is decided within 21 days. You won't be deregistered while that

decision is being considered.

If your application is successful, you won't need to pay the annual charge for that year. To be exempt from payment in future years, you will need to apply again.

If MLCS tell you that your application is unsuccessful, you will need to pay the full registration charge for the year. If you don't, you will be deregistered.

To have the decision reviewed, you can write to MLCS and ask for a review of the decision within 14 days of receiving the decision. You may need to provide more supporting evidence for your application. Another officer who was not involved in the first decision will review it and will either agree or disagree with the decision.

If they agree, you will need to pay your annual registration charge. If they disagree, MLCS will approve your application and you won't need to pay.

MLCS Contact details

Marriage Law and Celebrants Section
1800 550 343

Outside Australia: +61 2 6141 3111

marriagecelebrantssection@ag.gov.au

3-5 National Circuit BARTON ACT 2600



WHAT IS DEEP FAKE?

According to the University of Virginia, a deepfake is an artificial image or video generated by a special kind of *machine learning* called “deep” learning (hence the name) where an algorithm is fed examples and learns to produce output that resembles the examples it learned from

The process of producing complex deepfakes actually involves two algorithms. One algorithm is trained to produce the best fake replicas possible of real images. The other model is trained to detect when an image is fake and when it's not. The two models iterate back and forth, each getting better at their respective task. By pitting models against each other, you end up with a model that's extremely adept at producing fake images; so adept, in fact, that humans often can't tell that the output is a fake at all.

Deepfakers can, for example, create personalized videos that appear to show a relative asking for a large sum of money to help them out of an emergency and send them to unsuspecting victims, thereby scamming innocents at an unprecedented level. On a large scale, fake videos of important world leaders stating made-up claims could incite violence and even war.

<https://security.virginia.edu/deepfakes>



Scam Alert!



EVIL TWIN SCAM

Celebrants who have logged into free Wi-Fi at Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide airports, or on planes travelling between them, especially from April to May, it is time to change your passwords.

There have been multiple reports of an alleged scam reported to police by an airline in April, after its employees identified a suspicious wi-fi network during a domestic flight and a man was subsequently charged in Western Australia when he disembarked from a plane.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) has charged a West Australian man who allegedly established fake free Wi-Fi access points (Evil Twin), which mimicked legitimate networks, to capture personal data from unsuspecting victims who mistakenly connected to them.

The man, 42, was expected to appear in Perth Magistrates Court on 28th June, 2024 to face nine charges for alleged cybercrime offences.

Analysis by the AFP's Western Command Cybercrime Operations Team of data and devices seized from the man has allegedly identified dozens of personal credentials belonging to other people as well as fraudulent Wi-Fi pages.

Police charged the man in May, 2024 after launching an investigation in April, 2024, when an airline reported concerns about a suspicious Wi-Fi network identified by



its employees during a domestic flight. AFP investigators searched the man's baggage when he returned to Perth Airport on a flight from interstate on 19th April 2024 and seized a portable wireless access device, a laptop and a mobile phone from his hand luggage. They also searched his Palmyra home.

After an initial examination of the seized devices, the AFP executed another search warrant at the man's home on 8th May 2024, which resulted in his arrest and charges.

Police will allege the man used a portable wireless access device to create 'evil twin' free Wi-Fi networks, which he used at multiple locations to lure unsuspecting users into believing they were legitimate services.

The AFP alleges that when people tried to connect their devices to the free Wi-Fi networks, they were taken to a fake webpage requiring them to sign in using their email or social media logins. Those details were then allegedly saved to the man's devices.

The email and password details harvested could be used to access more personal information, including a victim's online communications, stored images and videos or bank details.

AFP cybercrime investigators have allegedly identified data relating to the use of the fraudulent Wi-Fi pages at airports in Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide, on domestic flights and at locations linked to the man's previous employment which was not disclosed in the media release.

The analysis is ongoing to determine the extent of the alleged offending.

AFP Western Command Cybercrime Detective Inspector



Andrea Coleman said the case was a timely warning to be cautious about logging on to any public Wi-Fi networks.

"To connect to a free Wi-Fi network, you shouldn't have to enter any personal details— such as logging in through an email or social media account," she said. Adding that:

"If you do want to use public Wi-Fi hotspots, install a reputable virtual private network (VPN) on your devices to encrypt and secure your data when using the internet. "When using a public network, disable file sharing, don't do anything sensitive - such as banking - while connected to it and once you finish using it, change your device settings to 'forget network'."

"We also recommend turning off the Wi-Fi on your phone or other electronic devices before going out in public, to prevent your device from automatically connecting to a hotspot."

Det-Insp. Coleman encouraged people to increase their online security by replacing passwords with passphrases, never using the same passphrase for multiple accounts, using an online password manager and installing all software updates.

Anyone who connected to free Wi-Fi networks in airport precincts and on domestic flights is recommended to change their passwords and report any suspicious activity on their accounts to [Report Cyber](#).

.....from previous page

The man has been charged with:

- Three counts of unauthorised impairment of electronic communication, contrary to section 477.3 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is 10 years' imprisonment;
- Three counts of possession or control of data with the intent to commit a serious offence, contrary to section 478.3 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is three years' imprisonment;
- One count of unauthorised access or modification of restricted data, contrary to section 478.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is two years' imprisonment.
- One count of dishonestly obtain or deal in personal financial information (being usernames and passwords) contrary to section 480.4 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth); The maximum penalty for this offence is five years' imprisonment; and
- One count of possession of identification information with the intention of committing, or facilitating the commission of, conduct that constitutes the dealing offence, contrary to section 372.2 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). The maximum penalty for this offence is three years' imprisonment..

Tech experts subsequently pointed out that using a VPN in these circumstances would not have assisted victims, given that by logging in, via other accounts including social media, exposed their profiles and so an immediate change of password and addition security was a necessity.

- Anyone who believes they are a victim of cybercrime, should report it to police using [Report Cyber](#).
- If there is an immediate threat to life or risk of harm, call 000.
- If you are concerned that your identity has been compromised, contact the national identity and cyber support service [IDCARE](#).
- Further advice about connecting to public WiFi and hotspots is available on the [Australian Cyber Security Centre](#) website.

- ◇ [Man charged over creation of 'evil twin' free WiFi networks to access personal data | Australian Federal Police \(afp.gov.au\)](#)
- ◇ <https://www.news.com.au/travel/travel-updates/incidents/man-charged-with-evil-twin-wifi-scam-at-airports-and-on-flights/news-story/a6143f56b0b060f34003bb6968e92588>



ARE YOU A VICTIM OF CYBERCRIME?

ReportCyber is the place to securely report cybercrimes

cyber.gov.au/report

If you require translator services, visit www.tisnational.gov.au

Your report:

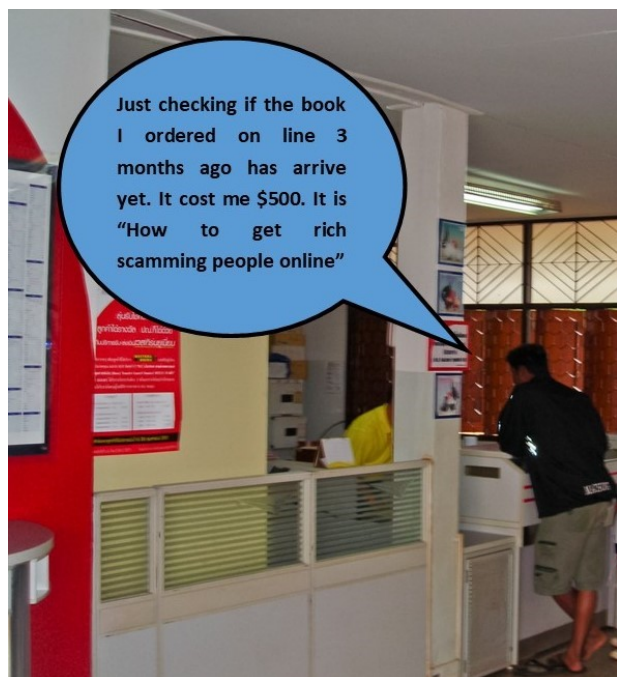
- Will be referred directly to the relevant state or territory law enforcement agency.
- Provides vital information to help target cybercriminals; and
- Helps make Australia the most secure place to connect online.

Developed as a national policing initiative with:



Learn how to better protect yourself or your business. CYBER.gov.au

Australian Government Australian Signals Directorate **ACSC** Australian Cyber Security Centre



SCAMWATCH is warning Australians to be wary of websites that appear official but fail to deliver on promises to provide birth, death, marriage or divorce certificates in return for a fee.



Australian Cyber Security Hotline
1300 CYBER1 (1300 292 371)

SCAMMER POSES AS A CELEBRANT



William 'Will' Cheesman, aged 31, pleaded guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates Court before Magistrate Malcolm Thomas, in June, to charges including the solemnization of a marriage by an unauthorized person after having tricked five couples into paying between \$700 and \$1,000 for him to perform their marriages, even though he had no legal right to do so.

Cheesman had lied about having an authority to act as a wedding celebrant and has left a cruel trail of destruction after tricking couples, some of whom were close friends, into paying him and so ruined their special day with "emotional distress," and "shame."

According to the Australian Federal Police (AFP), media release, Cheesman pretended to be an authorised celebrant between March 2022 and April 2023 performing the fake weddings, of five couples in Victoria.

All marriages performed by the offender are considered invalid.

An AFP investigation was launched after the fifth couple who were unable to find Cheesman on the Australian register of authorised celebrants reported the crime, following which AFP received confirmation from the Attorney-General's Department that Cheesman was not an authorised marriage celebrant registered under the Commonwealth.

He was arrested on Monday 19th February 2024, and told Police that he knew what he had done was wrong but didn't know it was a "criminal offense."

He faced the Melbourne Magistrate's Court on Monday 24 June 2024, when he pled guilty to:

- ◇ Four counts of solemnisation of a marriage by an unauthorised person, contrary to s 101 of the *Marriage Act 1961* (Cth); and
- ◇ One count of impersonation of public official, namely an authorised celebrant, contrary to s 148.1(3) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth).

He was handed a six-month Community Corrections Order (CCO) with a single condition of performing 50 hours' of community work.

A Community Corrections Order (CCO) is a flexible order that allows a sentence to be served in the community.



The Melbourne Magistrates Court heard that Cheesman cheated and led fake weddings for the five couples who paid between \$700 and \$1,000 for him to marry them, not knowing that he had no legal right to do so.

The court heard that Cheesman told officers he understood couples were not legally married by his service, but that he had not considered the legal and financial implications.

The court heard he even helped the cheated couples plan their big day and write their vows but that the scam began to unravel when Cheesman gave couples excuses as to why he had not yet given them their official marriage documents.

The [Herald of the sun](#) reported that the court heard he eventually admitted to victims that he had "simply been too ashamed to admit he had been deregistered as a celebrant", the court also heard that he had said that he had "forgotten to pay his celebrant registration fee", but neither of those excuses were true as Cheesman had never been a wedding celebrant, the court heard.

AFP Detective Superintendent Donna Tankard said, "this was a unique case that could have had serious repercussions for the couples who were married under deceptive circumstances"; and went on to say, "Impersonating an authorised and registered marriage celebrant in Australia is an extremely deceitful act and this could have had serious financial, religious, and legal consequences for the couples who were victims of this deception."

Det-Supt Tankard added that "The AFP has a zero-tolerance approach to individuals committing fraud, and other forms of corruption. The AFP will continue to work with its state and Commonwealth law enforcement partners to proactively target, identify, and disrupt fraudsters who are attempting to exploit and profit from members of the community."

In a victim impact statement read to the court, a woman said she and her partner were "angry" and "disappointed" by what Cheesman did to them.

"He caused emotional distress between us as a couple, our families and friends... it was extremely embarrassing," she said.

The woman said her wedding day was "forever tainted" by what turned out to be a fake marriage ceremony. She

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A pic taken from Facebook and Pinterest depicts Cheesman as a *Price is Right* presenter but his social media accounts have been closed or blocked and no record could be found of him online in this role.

WEDDING TRADITIONS

THE GARTER ORIGIN



A garter, or garter belt, is a piece of fabric, that is fastened around the leg, above the knee, in order to hold up stockings. Originally they were a very functional item of clothing, worn by both men and women, one on each leg. With the

invention of elastic, men no longer required a garter unless they ride a bicycle or play ice hockey, and with a change of fashion with hemlines rising above the ankle and then knee, the garter worn by women moved higher up the leg and even to the waist, and so became a piece of lingerie (underwear) but elastic and the advent of pantyhose, largely removed the need of a garter for women and it became a fashion accessory, sometimes worn only on one leg and rather than any material, most were made of white lace, satin or silk and they became more ornate.

A garter can of course be any colour or material and whilst red and black are common, brides often choose a white garter decorated with a blue ribbon/s to make it part of the 'something blue' in the bridal ensemble.



At the wedding reception, after the bride has thrown her bouquet, a tradition exists that the spouse removes the garter from beneath their partner's wedding dress and then, turning away from the crowd

of single people, generally men, tosses the garter over his/her head, into a crowd with the myth being that whoever catches the garter will be the next person to be marry. Given the similar bouquet toss belief, it is sometimes asserted that the two who catch the bouquet and the garter are to marry each other and at some weddings, the person who catches the garter places it on the one who had caught the bouquet and they have the next couple's dance.

Some males who catch the garter, much to the embarrassment of the blushing bride, inhale its aroma and later hang the garter proudly from their car mirror as a trophy. This lechery is no longer as common as it once was.

At the reception, to remove the bridal garter, the bride will



sit or stand while the spouse gets down on bended knees to reach under the skirt to remove the garter from the bride's leg either with hands or teeth. At this point there is a risk of the bride's underwear being exposed to more than just the spouse.

To find the origin of this wedding ritual, as with many wedding traditions, we look back to the middle ages.

In one origin story, it was believed that ripping off a piece of the bride's garment would provide good luck and so the garter toss was seen as a more civilised and safer option ensuring that the bride was not harmed in the rush and she would not have her dress damaged or perhaps even be stripped naked by an exuberant crowd. The crowd would fight over the garter rather than fight to get at the bride.

There is though, another origin story also dating back to the middle ages when a marriage had to be consummated to be validated and proof of that consummation was required, especially among royal houses. That proof might have been parents or courtiers observing the bed chamber activities or the 'blooded' sheet being presented upon the virgin bride being 'deflowered'.

As the garter is now of course a piece of lingerie (underwear) worn high on the thigh, rather than allow the crowd to watch the first copulation of a virgin bride, the parents and or courtiers would be locked out of the bed chamber and the groom would instead leave the wedding bed to throw out a garter as a simpler proof of consummation.

Apart from those two origin stories, there is also the 18th century English game called "*flinging the stocking*" which involved guests tossing garters at the couple on their wedding day in an effort to land one on a newlywed's head for luck in love.

There is no mention in any of the origin stories, of what happens to the second garter, but we can presume that the bride kept it as her own but there are vague references of grooms taking their bride's scarf or garter with them into battle for luck and love.

As the garter has become somewhat of a bridal accessory, there is now often only the one.

Alternatives:-

- No garter toss at all
- Wear a garter but keep it for the honeymoon
- Carry the garter in a purse or wear it on an arm, to avoid an embarrassing removal.
- Toss the grooms boutonniere
- Toss the grooms bow tie (spouse can remove it with his/her teeth)
- Toss a plush animal toy and whoever catches it could be designated to be the next to adopt an animal from a shelter.

References:

- * [The Wedding Garter Toss: What You Need to Know - Yeah Weddings](#)
- * [The Wedding Garter Tradition & Toss History, Explained \(theknot.com\)](#)
- * [The Origins and History of the Garter Belt Wedding Tradition | Trusted Since 1922 \(rd.com\)](#)
- * [History of the Wedding Garter Tradition | The Garter Girl](#)

CENOMAR, DIVORCE & THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines and the Vatican were the only two sovereign states in the world that continued to prohibit divorce but that may have changed.

When a previously married Filipino wants to marry in Australia, instead of a Certificate of Divorce, they have had to produce a Certificate of No Marriage (CENOMAR).

Six years after a similar law stalled in the Senate, the Philippine House of Representatives approved a bill on 22nd May 2024 that legalizes divorce in a limited range of circumstances. The ABC's South East Asia correspondent **Lauren Day** in Manila, Philippines reported on the ABC's **7.30** on Wednesday 15th May 2024 that in the Philippines, divorce was still banned but that Congressman Edcel Lagman, author of the Absolute Divorce Bill currently before the House of Representatives, was hopeful that divorce will finally be allowed..

www.abc.net.au/news/philippines-divorce-battle-looms-to-free-women-from-abuse/103828284

On 17th August 2021, the Philippine government announced that a bill proposing the legalization of divorce in the Philippines had been approved by the Committee on Population and Family Relations of the House of Representatives. According to the announcement, the Philippines and the Vatican were at that time, the only two sovereign states in the world that still prohibit divorce. The announcement also explained that the approved bill included the following grounds that may be invoked for filing for divorce:

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

Before that, in 2015 Bishop Socrates Villegas as CBCP President, in a published position, argued that legalizing divorce is contrary to human rights especially of the children of divorce couples. He says that allowing divorce would deter couples from working on their relationship first. He says that children whose married parents already availed legal separation are already traumatized and that divorce would allow "a total stranger" to enter their lives in a form of a new legal spouse which would make



their situation worse



It was also reported in the Philippines in 2021 that, Father Jerome Secillano Public Affairs executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said he was saddened that lawmakers

prioritized such bill at a time when the country is facing so many problems due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Father Jerome Secillano was also interviewed for the ABC 7.30 article.

Anita Baleda from the Philippine Commission on Women said that the divorce ban allowed former partners to continue to wield power over their exes.

"Even if they are physically separated, there are still instances where the ex-husband continues to inflict pain on the woman or continues to harass her," she said.

She told the 7:30 Report on the ABC that a new bill in 2024 was about giving people a second chance at happiness and love.

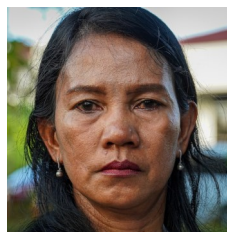
"If you are able to secure a divorce, this will enable you to move on with your life and if you want to get another partner or get married again, you have that chance of getting married.

The 7.30 article included the story of Michelle Bulang who still bears the faint scars from the 13 stitches in her scalp where she says her husband hit her and the burn marks on her back and legs from the time he poured boiling water all over her. The walls of her home are pockmarked with holes from the times her husband had come home drunk and abusive.

Father Jerome Secillano argued that *"Marriage is a lifetime union so even with its ups and downs, the good times and the bad, the sickness and healthier part, they have to live with each other as husband and wife for the rest of their lives."* He says there are already legal avenues for unhappy couples to split including filing for legal separation, which doesn't allow parties to re-marry, or an annulment, which in effect means the marriage never existed. Detail of that process

is explained later in this article.

Michelle Bulang is still married to her abusive partner because divorce is illegal in the Philippines as is mother-of-three Stella Sibonga (pictured) who told 7.30 that she spent 12 years and thousands of dollars trying to escape a marriage



she was forced into when she fell pregnant at just 18. According to the 7.30 article, more than a decade ago Stella filed for an annulment of marriage, based on her husband's alleged psychological incapacity, one of the limited grounds for terminating a marriage in the Philippines, but the process is prohibitively expensive, slow and bureaucratic for most and even though Stella was initially granted the annulment, that decision was later overturned by the solicitor-general.



She is hopeful the *"Absolute Divorce Act"*, authored by Congressman Edcel Lagman would finally pass through the House of Representatives.

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On 15th May 2024, the House of Representatives in a plenary session presided by Aurelio Gonzales Jr. via voice vote approved on a "Second Reading" "Edcel Lagman" House Bill 9349, the proposed "Absolute Divorce Act".

Congressman Edcel Lagman was quoted as saying:

"These are for the less fortunate couples who, despite the fact that they say that marriage is solemnised in heaven, many marriages plummet into hell, and we have to rescue them."

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

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

For Australia's Filipino-born migrants:

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

Hence there is a high probability that you will be asked to conduct a marriage ceremony where at least one party is Filipino and as with all couples, both parties to the marriage must provide evidence of eligibility for marriage, which may be as simple as proving identity and date/place of birth, but if married before, proof of the termination of that previous marriage must also be provided.

In the Philippines, a married couple could not divorce by law, regardless of where they live, throughout the entire world. Article 15 of the New Civil Code states that laws pertaining to familial rights and responsibilities, or to the standing, form and legal capability of persons, are compulsory upon inhabitants of the Philippines even though residing overseas. Therefore, Filipinos are still under the rule of their land even if they are in another country.

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

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

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

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) serves as the central statistical authority of the Philippine government

on primary data collection and is mandated by law to keep and preserve the birth, marriage and death certificates of a Filipino citizen.

The Cenomar is the basis for establishing the legal status of each and every Filipino, in legal definitions for interpersonal status in the Philippines:

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

When requesting a Cenomar, the interested party must provide the following information to facilitate verification and issuance of a **Cenomar (Certificate of No Marriage)**:

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

So put simply, it appears that divorce in the Philippines is now likely to be made law but for now, a Filipino residing in Australia may divorce in Australia under Australian law and be eligible for remarriage anywhere in the world, except in the Philippines and presumably Rome, until an application is made to a Filipino court to recognise the Australian divorce, whereupon a **Certificate of No Marriage Record (CENOMAR)** may be issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). So as it stood, a person may be divorced in Australia, but still be legally married in the Philippines until such time as a Cenomar was issued in recognition of the Australian divorce.

For a new marriage to then occur in Australia, the Celebrant must sight either an Australian Certificate of Divorce as proof of divorce, or sight the Philippine issued Cenomar as proof of annulment.

The Philippine House of Representatives approved the Absolute Divorce Bill, on 22nd May 2024 legalizing divorce in a limited range of circumstances.

The which lays out a number of instances in which divorce is permissible narrowly passed its third reading by a [slim margin of 126 to 109 votes](#), with 20 abstentions, The Inquirer reported.



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Under the Absolute Divorce Act, the following are considered grounds for absolute divorce:

- Physical violence or grossly abusive conduct directed against the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner
- Physical violence or moral pressure to compel the petitioner to change religious or political affiliation
- Attempt of respondent to corrupt or induce the petitioner, a common child, or a child of the petitioner, to engage in prostitution, or connivance in such corruption or inducement
- Final judgment sentencing the respondent to imprisonment of more than six (6) years, even if pardoned
- Drug addiction or habitual alcoholism or chronic gambling of the respondent
- Homosexuality of the respondent
- Contracting by the respondent of a subsequent bigamous marriage, whether in the Philippines or abroad
- Marital infidelity or perversion or having a child with another person other than one’s spouse during the marriage, except when upon the mutual agreement of the spouses, a child is born to them through in vitro fertilization or a similar procedure or when the wife bears a child after being a victim of rape
- Attempt by the respondent against the life of the petitioner, a common child or a child of the petitioner
- Abandonment of petitioner by respondent without justifiable cause for more than one (1) year
- When the spouses are legally separated by judicial decree for more than two (2) years, either spouse can petition the proper Family Court for an absolute divorce based on said judicial decree of legal separation

According to media outlet, The Diplomat, People wanting to end their marriage are forced into a slow and costly legal process, which involves requesting a court for an annulment or a declaration that the nuptials were never valid to begin with. This can be tricky to prove, and the government can appeal any decision. According to the AFP news agency, this has spawned a genre of scams promising quick and easy access to the necessary court ruling.

The Diplomat goes on to say that the Absolute Divorce Bill approved by the House is still relatively conservative. Under the law, there are “limited and reasonable grounds for divorce and a petition will have to undergo judicial scrutiny in order to prevent abuse and collusion of the parties, which is penalized,” said Rep. Edcel Lagman, the principal author of the draft bill that formed the basis of the legislation, according to the Philippine Star. He added that the law “does not recognize no-fault, quickie, drive-thru, email, or notarial” divorces.

The Diplomat also says that the House passage does not guarantee the passage of the bill; mentioning that in 2018, a similar bill passed the House only to die in the Senate. A primary reason for the restrictive state of the Philippines’ divorce laws is the pervasive influence of the Church,

which has opposed any liberalization and has also opposed the legalization of abortion and contraceptives. Around 78.8 percent of the Philippines’ population identify as Catholic, according to the country’s latest census, conducted in 2020.

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- * <https://psa.gov.ph/civilregistration/requesting-civil-registry-document/cenomar>
- * [Acknowledgment of Divorce in the Philippines - HG.org](https://www.hg.org/acknowledgment-of-divorce-in-the-philippines)
- * https://mb.com.ph/2021/08/18/cbcp-official-saddened-by-passage-of-divorce-bill#google_vignette
- * www.abc.net.au/news/philippines-divorce-battle-looms-to-free-women-from-abuse/103828284
- * [Philippines takes step towards legalising divorce - CathNews](https://www.cathnews.com/philippines-takes-step-towards-legalising-divorce)
- * [House approves divorce bill on final reading \(inquirer.net\)](https://www.inquirer.net/house-approves-divorce-bill-on-final-reading)
- * <https://thediplomat.com/2024/05/philippine-lawmakers-pass-bill-legalizing-divorce/>



See also the article in the TV review section on the ABC 4 Corners report: *Sex Tourism-My Father’s Secret*





10-Year Gaol For Break-Ups In India

While we adjust to new requirements in Australia to ensure consent to marry in 2024, we had already abolished Breach of Promises claims a long time ago with the Marriage Amendment Bill 1976 and that is reflected in the Marriage Act 1961 - Sect 111a

- Abolition of action for breach of promise
 - (1) A person is not entitled to recover damages from another person by reason only of the fact that that other person has failed to perform a promise, undertaking or engagement to marry the first - mentioned person.
 - (2) This section does not affect an action for the recovery of any gifts given in contemplation of marriage which could have been brought if this section had not been enacted.

However India has taken a step toward the prosecution of men, but not women apparently, if the intent to marry is not genuine. It appears the new law could result in prosecution if there is breakdown in a relationship resulting in marriage plans being cancelled.

According to India Daily, relationships, consent and marriage have always been tricky terrain for law enforcement but this is firmly in focus as the **new Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)** replaced the 164-year-old Indian Penal Code (IPC) on 1st July 2024.

Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita states that if a promise to marry is made without any intent to follow it up and a sexual relationship is established, **a person can face up to 10 years of imprisonment.**

Section 69 of the new Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita reads:

"Whoever, by deceitful means or by making a promise to marry a woman without any intention of fulfilling the same, has sexual intercourse with her, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine".

A lawyer friend who visits India regularly told me this now opens the door to wrongful and malicious prosecutions whenever there is a breakdown in a relationship and according to India Daily, experts worry that Section 69 could be used to harass and gaol men for breaking up with their partners adding:

- Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita criminalises sex on the pretext of marriage
- Experts are worried that men might be harassed if a relationship doesn't work out

Police personnel say it will be difficult to build a watertight case in court with evidence

Earlier, such cases were tried under Section 90 of the IPC, which mentioned a woman could not have consented to sexual intercourse if there was a "misconception of fact".

According to India Daily, there have been cases where women alleged rape when a relationship fell through, but with Section 69, women can claim to have consented to sexual intercourse upon false promises.

Section 69, in a way, makes break-ups illegal, and men in relationships prone to being harassed if the relationship doesn't end in marriage.

Section 69 has been brought in to address the issue of marriages undertaken by concealing identity or suppression of facts. This could also be used in cases where there is complaint that marriages, especially interfaith marriages, have taken place where the man concealed his identity.

Deceitful has been explained in the Section as *"inducement for, or false promise of employment or promotion, or marrying by suppressing identity"*.

"The promise to marry" part of Section 69 opens a Pandora's box for people in relationships and law enforcement officials.

The imprisonment for the *"promise to marry"* aspect of Section 69 has got people in relationships worried that men will get unfairly targeted as a result of the souring of relationships. Lawyers say an intent to deceive could be established if the relationship ended for other reasons, but the male partner could face grave consequences. Police officials say Section 69 of the BNS might make arresting men easier without credible evidence.

Ghaziabad-based lawyer Arvind Singh told IndiaToday.in. that lawyers are worried about how they fight a case where there are several grey areas asserting that *"The intent [to marry] is subjective"* adding: *"How one can prove that there was genuine intent if the marriage does not take place is not clear yet,"* and that *"Relationships can end for several reasons, even when there is an intent to marry. Proving somebody intended to marry but could not for whatever reason will be difficult,"* Singh added.

It could take months or years for the lawyers to prove their case, and it could cause immense damage to a person and his reputation and their overall lives.

"While we do not know how such cases will turn out to be, an inability to prove such a thing will have grave consequences. A man can end up in prison for 10 years. His whole life can be affected," Singh added.

Issues with Section 69 of the BNS do not end here. Arrests can be made after an initial probe by the police. However, making a watertight case with evidence in court would be a completely different matter.

"The court works on evidence. We will have to produce circumstantial evidence that there was a promise to marry, and the sexual intercourse happened under guise or pretence. This is very difficult to prove," a senior police official with 30 years of service told IndiaToday.in.

.....from previous page



Here, text messages, call recordings and pictures might be used as evidence of breach of promise. However, it might still be difficult to infer that a sexual relationship was established on the grounds of a promised marriage. *"Messages, calls and pictures will be taken into account here. They will set the premise for the relationship and if marriage has been discussed. Even then, we might not know if a sexual relationship was established only under the promise that a marriage would take place,"* the senior police officer said. Faster arrests, quicker action, but it might not serve the purpose of justice.

"In the cases under the Section, the man might be arrested just on the word of the woman. The arrest will be faster, but the court will still need evidence and that is where it is going to be a problem," they added.

This provision might lead to unfair arrests, years of court cases and damage to several aspects of a man's life.

While the law enforcement faces the issue of applying Section 69 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to practice, it is the people in relationships who are more worried about what this law might bring.

"A woman knows while consenting to sexual intercourse that there is a possibility that the relationship might fall apart. If two people want to be together, they don't even need marriage or a promise of marriage," Sujata, a 27-year-old woman from Delhi, who has been in a relationship for two years, told IndiaToday.in. Her name has been changed to protect her identity.

"People might get worried about getting intimate with their partners due to the fear of imprisonment," she added.

Relationships end for many reasons and now men are scared they will face dire consequences for breaking up with their partners.

"What if due to some of my family reasons, I cannot marry her. Or she cannot marry me. We cannot make it work, and then she files a complaint against me. How will I save myself," a 26-year-old man from Delhi told IndiaToday.in.

Many questions are being raised about Section 69 of the new Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita. Only time will tell how the law is enforced and if men stand being harassed.

Based on an article Published by: India Today Web Desk, Published On: Jul 2, 2024

- <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/section-69-bhartiya-nyaya-sanhita-marriage-promise-breach-10-years-jail-experts-worried-2561200-2024-07-02>
- https://www.thetimes.com/uk/law/article/indian-men-boycott-marriage-over-plans-to-criminalise-marital-rape-798g2cxcrc?gad_source=5&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIYp772--MhwMV_808Ah3FqA19EAAAYASAAEgI_UfD_BwE

CHILD BRIDES IN SIERRA LEONE

- <https://globalnews.ca/video/10597686/sierra-leone-passes-law-to-end-child-marriage/>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) asserts that whilst child & forced marriage occurs in Australia it reports that it has no reliable statistics for Australia but also reports that until 2018, child marriage was legal in all 50 USA states and at 2021 remained legal in 41 U.S. states where many rights are left up to individual states, not the federal government.

According to the Daily Express, in an article written by Story by Chris Samuel, Sierra Leone, has finally introduced a new law banning child marriage, promising jail sentences and fines for anyone involved in illicit ceremonies.

The law was introduced and celebrated at a ceremony in the capital, Freetown, organised by First Lady Fatima Bio, whose *"Hands Off Our Girls"* campaign has been instrumental in advocating against the practice, according to [Human Rights Watch \(HRW\)](#).

The Daily Express reported that the first ladies from Cape Verde and Namibia were among the invited guests as Fatima Bio's husband, President Julius Maada Bio, signed the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act into law.

The new law means anyone now involved in the marriage of a girl under 18 will face a jail sentence of at least 15 years or be fined around \$4,000 (£3,200) - or both.

The Daily Express, reported that according to HRW, 30 percent of girls and 4 percent of boys are married before the age of 18, and the rates are even higher in rural areas. Around 800,000 girls are currently married in the country, half of whom wed before turning 15.

University student Khadijatu Barrie, whose sister was married off at 14, said she welcomed the move but wished it came sooner.

"I could have at least saved my sister and my friends and other neighbours," the 26-year-old told the BBC. Sierra Leone is a patriarchal society and forced marriages remain common.

Barrie says she faced having to marry aged 10 but refused. She then fled from her family home after being disowned by her father, according to the outlet.

Luckily, she found teachers prepared to pay for her school fees and met a sympathetic worker from the UN children's agency who helped her find accommodation.

But she says it's more difficult to resist long-standing traditions in rural areas, and every community will have to be informed about the change for it to deter the practice.

"If everyone understands what's there waiting for you in case you do it I'm sure this country will be a better one," she said, as per the BBC.

Parents or those attending illegal weddings could also face fines. West and Central Africa has the highest prevalence of child marriage globally, and is home to almost 60 million child brides, according to UNICEF.

A 21-year-old Sierra Leonean former child bride, who https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/the-country-finally-bringing-in-law-banning-locals-from-marrying-children/_ar-BB1plrBT?ad=dirN&prod=DS&cmpgn=medici&annot=false&sameTabLaunch=false&co=APN12174&installSource=other&ctype=web&browser=Chrome&arkMode=false&lang=en-us&ueid=EAF15EA-BE7B-4AD1-9B12-795B7FCC4844&doi=2017-05-10 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/09/15/us-not-protecting-its-children>



Dutch Weddings



Dutch weddings are not known for intricate ceremonies or rituals and so can be less extravagant than in some other cultures with a more casual, laid-back

approach to the day focusing on celebration and fun.

Most Dutch weddings consist of a ceremony, a reception, a dinner and a party. At the ceremony, in addition to the Celebrant and witnesses (*getuigen*) there may be a master of ceremonies (*ceremoniemeester*) instead of a Best man or Maid of Honour and the marrying couple prepare together and there are special foods but interestingly, there are also two guests lists.

Two Guest Lists

Two guest lists are prepared.

The first is the "*day guests*" who are the closest friends and family members of the couple and they participate in every aspect of a Dutch wedding.

The second list is the wider social networks including extended family, coworkers, and acquaintances.

Typically while the marrying couple prepare for their upcoming ceremony together, mid-morning at the bride's parents' house where the "day guests" enjoy a light snack of coffee or tea and "small bites" while photos are passed around, as stories are told with lots of laughter and hugs.

Ceremoniemeesters: The Dutch Best Man or Maid of Honour

Whilst a wedding party will usually include a Maid of Honour or Best Man these roles are slightly different at a Dutch wedding.

The *ceremoniemeester*, friends of the marrying couple, help plan the preparation parties and the wedding and are in charge of ensuring things run smoothly on the big day.

Pre-wedding

Engagement traditions are an important part of Dutch culture and can be a fun way to start your wedding journey.

Dutch couples preparing for marriage enjoy a range of events from intimate dinners with close family members to larger parties with extended relatives and friends.

They allow everyone involved in the wedding planning process to get together before the big day arrives, giving them a chance to bond over food, drinks, music, games, or other activities planned by either side of the family or both.



Symbolic Elements in Dutch Weddings

Dutch weddings are filled with symbolic elements that represent love, commitment, and the foundation of a strong marriage.

◇ **Tulips**, the national flower of the Netherlands, are often incorporated into the wedding decor as a symbol of love and beauty.



◇ **Wooden shoes**, known as "klompen," or clogs, are also a significant element, representing the sturdy foundation of a marriage. These shoes are often used as decorations or even worn by the couple during certain rituals.



◇ **The exchanging of Wedding rings** as with most of the world, symbolize a couple's commitment to each other.

◇ **Bruid Suikas (Bridal Sugar)** is often consumed at the bride's home before the ceremony or served at the reception. The chef arranges five pieces of this special savory pastry in *tuule* bags, which represent the hope of love, happiness, loyalty, prosperity, and virility.

◇ **Bruidstranen (Bride's Tears)**, a spiced wine is served. In addition to the pungent spices, gold leaf is a customary ingredient in this special mulled wine. The golden flakes symbolize the tears of joy shed by the bride on her momentous day.

Bruidsstoet, or Bridal Procession

When ready, the couple travel to the ceremony together, accompanied by the 'day guests' in a *bruidsstoet*, or bridal procession. The couple are in the first car, followed by the parents in the second car, then the witnesses and their partners in the third car. Finally, any siblings and grandparents are in the fourth car, followed by the remaining wedding guests in their own vehicles.

For the full Dutch experience, they might bike it instead

No Driving for the Happy Couple

According to the old custom, for good luck and prosperity, a person to be wed cannot drive on their wedding day and so a third person will have to drive the vehicle. This guarantees a long and happy marriage and brings happiness for the rest of your life.



Additionally, to chase away evil spirits, empty tin cans are also tied to the back of the wedding car.

Dutch Wedding Attire

Typically, a Dutch bride, follows the western European tradition of wearing a white wedding gown.

Men are expected to wear a jacquard (a long black coat

with rounded cut-away fronts) during the day, over a grey cardigan, striped trousers without cuffs, a white shirt with concealed button closure, double cufflinks, a grey, black or white tie, black shoes, a white pocket square and a grey or black wedding hat.

The most important male guests including the fathers of the marrying couple, the brothers of the marrying couple, the witnesses and the master of ceremonies dress similarly.

After 6pm men change into a dark suit or tuxedo but a corsage cannot be worn.

Guests, usually wear cocktail attire however the Dutch are relaxed when it comes to formal dress.

Dutch Wedding Ceremony

Holland is a secular nation in which the law does not recognize a religious ceremony as a legal solemnisation of marriage and so Dutch people who are religious are accustomed to having two ceremonies, a church wedding and a civil ceremony. The church wedding may be a full nuptial mass including readings and homily while the Civil Ceremony includes:

1. music,
2. readings by the bride's and groom's closest friends.
3. the couple's love story

A Dutch wedding ceremony, whether civil or religious, usually includes both the 'day guests' and the broader list of acquaintances.

Following the ceremony, the smaller group of 'day guests' accompany the marrying couple to the reception venue. The remaining guests go home until after dinner.

Long Speeches

Dutch wedding running between 30 to 60 minutes, usually contain a personalized speech from the Celebrant or a close family member or friend during which time the couple sit on a chair or bench facing the seated guests.

Giving Congratulations

After the ceremony is completed, but before the reception, there is a hierarchy to those offering *Gefeliciteerd* (congratulations), which occurs in the following order:

1. The bride
2. The groom.
3. Mother of the groom,
4. Father of the groom,
5. Mother of the bride,
6. Father of the bride.

Wedding Cake Toast and Champagne

Immediately after the ceremony, at the start of the reception begins with the cake cutting and a glass of champagne.

However, toasts may instead take place after dinner when all guests have gathered.



Food and Drink Traditions

Dutch weddings typically include a variety of traditional dishes.

The most popular foods served at Dutch weddings are Dutch pancakes, bitterballen (deep-fried meatballs), Dutch-style sandwiches, and other finger food, traditional stamppot (mashed potato dishes), sausages, and sweet yet savory salads such as hutspot (a dish of mashed potatoes, carrots and onions) and cheeses. Dutch receptions also often feature traditional foods such as herring, smoked salmon, and cheese fondue.

Desserts commonly seen at Dutch weddings include oliebollen (Dutch doughnuts), stroopwafels (syrup waffles), poffertjes (small pancakes), and appelflappen (apple turnovers).

Additionally, beer, wine or sparkling cider is often served to toast the newlyweds and guests may also be offered a selection of Dutch beers or liqueurs like jenever (Dutch gin).

The bride and groom may choose to serve a special cake made with almond paste, raisins, spices, applesauce, cream cheese frosting, or whipped cream.

Sweetmeats

In addition to a main course, servers present traditional sweetmeats called *Bruid suikas* (Bridal Sugar). The chef arranges five pieces of this special savory pastry in *tuule* bags, which represent the hope of love, happiness, loyalty, prosperity, and virility/fertility.

Five sugar coated almonds may also or alternatively be given to each guest to symbolize that life can be sweet but also bitter and which again represent the hope of love, happiness, loyalty, prosperity, and virility/fertility.

A Dutch Wedding Reception

The reception is in three parts which might be categorised as family & closest friends, wider family & friends and party.

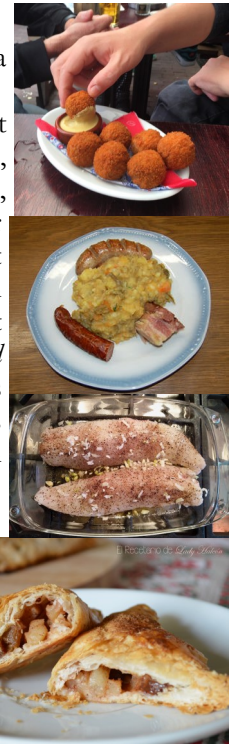
At the first reception immediately after the ceremony, the couple sits beneath a canopy of evergreen boughs. This display of greenery symbolizes everlasting love while their friends and family members toast the couple with champagne as they eat wedding cake.

Guests present the marrying couple with gifts, which they may open in the company of their day guests. The couple lingers over every gift, admiring each one and passing them around for all to see.

They snack from bowls of brandied raisins.

Following the toasts and gifts, the couple and their day guests enjoy a formal feast. These feasts serve as a pivotal event of the day.

Again, only the day guests, their most intimate friends and family members, partake of this meal with the newlyweds. In addition to a main course, servers present traditional



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sweetmeats called *Bruid suikas* (Bridal Sugar). The chef arranges five pieces of this special savory pastry in *tuule* bags, which represent the hope of love, happiness, loyalty, prosperity, and virility.

A spiced wine called *Bruidstranen* (Bride's Tears) is also served. In addition to the pungent spices, gold leaf is a customary ingredient in this special mulled wine. The golden flakes symbolize the tears of joy shed by the bride on her momentous day.



After dinner, attendants clear the tables and arrange the dance floor. Then they turn up the music and open the bar.

At this point, guests from the second guest list return to the venue and the dance party with a festive air of joy

Who pays?

Unlike in some other cultures, there is no obligation for other family members to contribute to wedding costs, as most couples save up and pay for the wedding themselves.



What is common at Dutch weddings is the addition of a small envelope in wedding invites, indicating to the guests that the couple would like money as a wedding present.

Wish Tree or Box

Dutch couples may have a wish tree which is a collection of branches bundled into the shape of a tree, or perhaps plant with plenty of branches for guests to hang kind wishes on.

People write a nice message before attaching it to a tree or popping it inside a "wishing box".

Gift giving

It is thought to be good luck if the bride's parents give her a pair of shoes as a wedding gift.



At the reception, time is spent opening gifts from the first guest list however gift-giving etiquette dictates that gifts from the second guest list are opened in private after all guests have left the reception venue.

It is considered polite for couples to thank each guest personally with a handwritten note or phone call as soon as possible after receiving their gift.

Speeches & Tributes

Apart from the obvious options of speeches given by the fathers of the marrying couple other guests or members of the wedding party could also choose to share heartfelt words and raise toasts to the happiness and future of the

newly married couple, or recite a poem, share a memory, or even perform an act or piece of music in honour of the happy couple.

Music and Dancing

Music is an important part of any Dutch wedding reception. Popular songs include folk music from the Netherlands and international hits that everyone can dance to. Guests form circles around the bride and groom while they dance together in the "polonaise" before joining in themselves. It's a fun way to



involve everyone and creates a lively atmosphere. Although the Dutch may claim the polonaise or *polonez*, meaning Polish Girl, originated in Poland and spread across Europe but is now a feature of every Dutch celebration, especially wedding. Other popular dances include waltzes and polkas, which are accompanied by accordions or other traditional instruments like flutes or drums played by live musicians or recorded tracks from DJs.

Superstitions

For good luck and prosperity, a person to be wed cannot drive on their wedding day and so a third person will have to drive the vehicle. This guarantees a long and happy marriage and brings happiness for the rest of your life.

Dutch, as in most of western culture, believe that it will bring good luck if the bride wears something old, something borrowed, something new, and something blue on her wedding day.

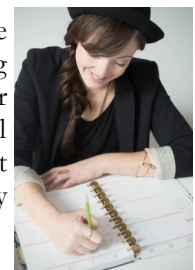
It is also thought to be good luck if the bride's parents give her a pair of shoes as a wedding gift.

The groom is also expected to carry a lucky charm throughout the ceremony.

Another popular superstition states that when the bride and groom kiss at the end of the ceremony, it should be done standing on their feet for seven seconds or until a coin falls on the ground – whichever happens first!

Bruidsjournaal

A Dutch tradition is the "bruidsjournaal," which is a wedding journal where the couple records their memories, thoughts, and special moments from their wedding day. It serves as a beautiful keepsake and a way to relive those cherished memories.



- [Dutch Wedding Customs \(eragem.com\)](http://eragem.com)
- [Your Typical Dutch Wedding - A Walkthrough - Loepsie](#)
- [8 Dutch Wedding Traditions and Rituals wedbuddy.com](http://wedbuddy.com)
- [Here are some odd Dutch wedding traditions when getting married in the Netherlands](#)
- thebridaltip.com
- justinmanders.nl
- <https://www.iamexpat.nl/lifestyle/lifestyle-news/weird-and-wonderful-dutch-wedding-traditions>

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added that her relationship with her partner became strained as a result of not knowing whether they were married, which led to fights between them.

The woman went on to say that her entire wedding day was a waste of money, explaining that *"something that cost over \$30,000 was ruined because William's services were invalid."*

"Not only was I betrayed by a celebrant, I was betrayed by a friend". William's presence in our photos is a constant reminder of what he did to us and is something that can never be replaced," the woman told the court.

They held a second ceremony, after spending a long time saving for the first, and said they felt "betrayed" by their friend and fake celebrant.

Cheesman, representing himself in court, and said he had apologized and repaid his victims. He told the court. *"I feel terrible for having been dishonest with my friends,"* and he added that he no longer wished to work as a wedding celebrant.

The various articles gave no indication of any other employment and he could not be found on LinkedIn.

The prosecution's filing stated that what Cheesman did was *"a breach of trust... committed for personal gain"* and that it was planned for several months.

The filing added that Cheesman had multiple opportunities to retreat from the crime, which were *"persistent in nature"* and had a *"degree of sophistication."*

Magistrate Malcolm Thomas took into account *"the impact on the victims, the possible legal consequences in relation to the children if the matter had not come to light and the financial consequences of their condition of not being properly married"*.


Cheesman was found guilty however was given only a 50-hour community corrections order to be completed within six-month.

The Daily Mail Australia reported that it had contacted Cheesman for comment but have not reported a response. and no other media reports indicated anyone contacted.

There were also no reports found of anyone suing Cheesman.

- <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13570735/William-Cheesman-learns-fate-Melbourne-wedding-celebrant-tricked-couples.html>
- <https://whatsnew2day.com/william-cheesman-discovers-fate-after-melbourne-wedding-celebrator-tricks-couples/?ad=dirN&prod=DS&cmpgn=medici&annot=false&sameTabLaunch=false&co=APN12174&installSource=other&ctype=web&browser=Chrome&darkMode=false&lang=en-us&ucid=CCB1C1D8-00BF-498C-8B09-6F20BF8597F0&doi=2017-05-10>
- <https://www.northweststar.com.au/story/8676775/fake-melbourne-marriage-celebrant-guilty-of-defrauding-couples/>
- <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/marriage-fraud-fake-celebrant-sentenced-after-defrauding-five-couples><https://www.9news.com.au/national/fake-melbourne-marriage-celebrant-performed-five-invalid-weddings/4c52c42f-a009-49bb-9446-50936eede006>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jun/27/fake-wedding-celebrant-sentenced-over-five-invalid-marriages-in-victoria>

Checklist For Solemnising The Marriage Of A Minor. Authorised celebrants should refer to the following checklist when solemnising the marriage of a minor.

- 
- You must have been provided with the order of the Judge or magistrate authorising the marriage of the parties. The order must not be dated more than 3 months before the date on which the marriage is solemnised.
 - You must have been provided with:
 - written consent of each person whose consent is required under the Marriage Act, that is witnessed in accordance with section 13(2) of the Marriage Act, OR
 - an effective consent, in writing, of a magistrate or Judge, OR
 - in respect of any person whose consent to the marriage has been dispensed with, the dispensation signed by the prescribed authority.
 The consent or dispensation must not be dated more than 3 months before the date on which the marriage is solemnised.
 - If the consent is not in English, the celebrant must attach to the consent a translation that complies with regulation 11 of the Marriage Regulations.
 - Unless the consent of both parents is produced, you must write on the consent the manner in which you satisfied yourself that the consent is from a person whose consent to the marriage is required by the Marriage Act.
 - You must write on the Notice of Intended Marriage form that the consents and dispensations (as applicable) were produced in accordance with sections 13(1)(a) and (b) of the Marriage Act, and that you were given an order made under section 12 of the Marriage Act.
 - You must not solemnise the marriage if you have reason to believe any of the following:
 - a person whose consent is required has revoked their consent,
 - the signature of a person whose consent is required has been forged or obtained by a fraud; or
 - a consent has been altered in a material particular without authority, or
 - a dispensation with the consent of a person has ceased to have effect.
 - Within 14 days after the marriage has taken place, you must forward the marriage certificate, the court order, the consents (including any translations of the consents if relevant) and any dispensations of consent to the BDM in the State or Territory where the marriage took place.

The minor and the other party to the marriage must each provide real consent at the time the marriage is solemnised.

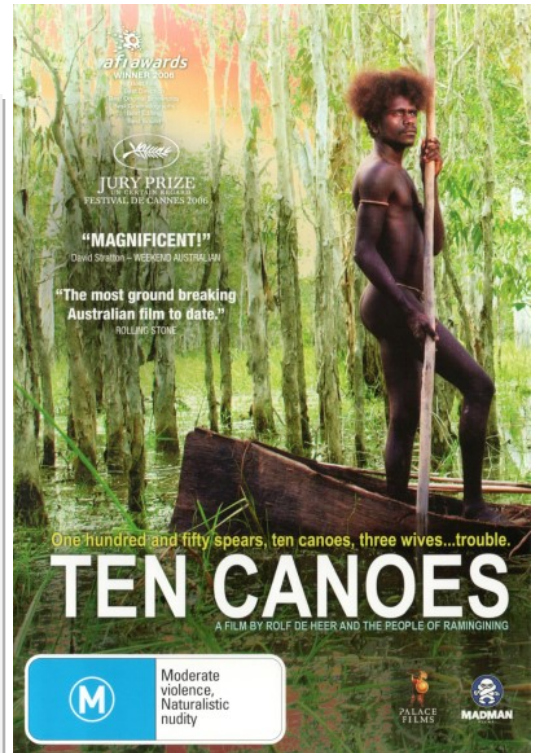


A wonderful aspect of NAIDOC in July is that we get to see more movies involving First Nation people. Ten Canoes gives an insight into some aspects of Aboriginal culture, rituals an history while Rabbit-proof Fence exposes the Stolen Generation and the trauma endured and left behind. Following on from the article on divorce in the Philippines, Four Corners exposes the Australian connection to sex tourism. To be the best Celebrant possible, we must be understanding and knowledgeable. All of these are must see programs.

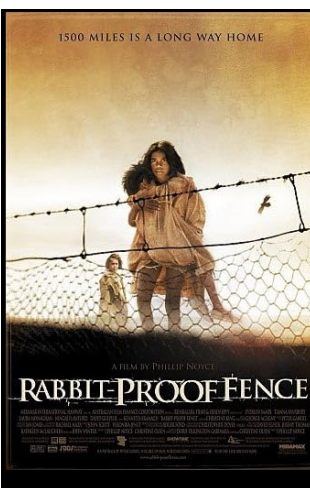
What has Sex Tourism got to do with Marriage Celebrancy you may ask. Despite prostitution and abortion being illegal there, sex work is big business in the Philippines, and men from overseas have fathered an estimated tens of thousands of children to sex workers. Children's DNA is now being used to identify the sex-tourist fathers, track them down, and demand child support.

Many of the fathers are Australian and whilst some refuse to assist their children in the Philippines, others face their responsibility and are cooperative, wanting to connect to their child or children conceived while travelling in the Philippines.

Not mentioned in the 4 Corners article of course is that if the identified Australian father accepts the child, there may possibly be a request for a naming or unification ceremony.



Shot in and around the Arafura Wetlands of Central Arnhem Land, this is a story within a story. An older man, Minygululu, who has three wives and realizes that his younger brother Dayindi may try to steal away the youngest wife. Minygululu tells Dayindi a story set in the time of their ancestors when a stranger came to the village and disrupted the lives of a serious man named Ridjimiraril, his three wives, and his younger brother Yeeralparil who had no wife and liked to visit his youngest sister-in-law. It becomes a parable of forbidden love from Australia's mythical past, narrated by Australian icon David Gulpilil and starring his son Jamie as the covetous youth Dayindi, Ten Canoes is a ground-breaking glimpse into aboriginal life centuries before European habitation. Writer & co-director Rolf de Heer and the People of Ramingining have created a pioneering and timeless tale for all people and all cultures creating a unique incite of First Nation rituals, beliefs, culture and traditions that could prove invaluable to understanding.



Set in 1931 Western Australia, this is another powerful story that gives an insight into the multigenerational trauma of the First Nation people and the Stolen Generation. We see the strength, resilience and fortitude of Molly, Daisy, and Grace, two sisters and a cousin who are fourteen, ten, and eight as they try to escape the brutal Government policy of the time which included the taking half-white, half-Aboriginal children from their Aboriginal mothers and sending the children a

1600klms away to what amounted to indentured servitude, "to save them from themselves."

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.



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 [Event guide - Shoalhaven - South Coast NSW](#)

2nd August 1973 51st anniversary of Mrs Jill-Ellen Fuller being Registered as the first Celebrant appointment in New South Wales

3 August 2024 10:00 am - 4:00 pm South Coast Wedding Fair And Wedding Trail, 880 Greenwell Point Road, Pyree, 0418 640 067, hello@southcoastweddingfair.com



3 August 2024 9:30 am - 2:30 pm, Milton Village Showground Market, 107 Croobyar Road, Milton, 0415 900 913, kerrie@hivizmarkets.com.au



3 August 2024 8:00 pm - 10:30 pm, Classical Diamond – Trilogy In Symphony – Nowra, 42 Bridge Road, Nowra, peter@peterbyrne.com,

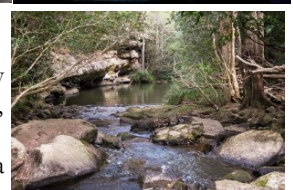
4 August 2024 7:30 am - 4:00 pm, The Willo Mountain Bike Marathon – Nowra NSW, Coondoo Road, Comberton, 0424 955 332, ride@rockytrailandentertainment.com



4 August 2024 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, Dogs In The Park, Nowra Showground, West Street, Nowra NSW, 0431167327, hello@dogsintheparknsw.org



11 August 2024 12:30 pm - 3:00 pm, Bomaderry Creek Nature Exploration, Bomaderry Creek Regional Park, Narang Rd, Bomaderry NSW, 0418 602 914, budawangcoast@gmail.com



11 August 2024 9:30 am - 11:30 am, Inaturalist Training & Nature Talk, Nowra Showground, West Street, Nowra NSW, 0418602914, budawangcoast@gmail.com

12 August 2024 Final date for Annual Celebrant fee exemption applications

18 August anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, in 1966

Tuesday 7:00pm

27th August 2024 AMC Education session: Copyright Agency Senior consultant, Greg Taylor See AMC Facebook pages and AMC Support on the AMC webpage to register.



30 August 2024 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, Bloomfield Festival, Buangla, 0459 430 345, info@bloomfieldfestival.com.au

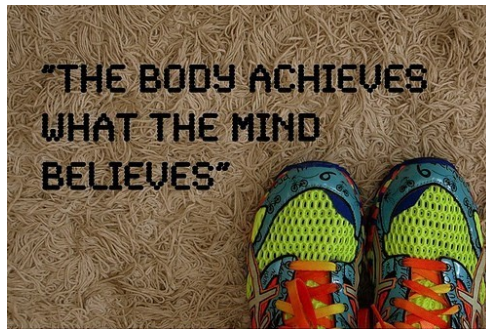
31 August 2024 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, Shoalhaven Orchid Society Spring Show, Bomaderry Community Centre, 19 Birriley Street, Bomaderry NSW, 0419241177, shoalhavenorchidsociety@gmail.com



31 August 2024 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, Alcohol Ink Worksho, Jervis Bay Maritime Museum, Dent Street, Huskisson NSW, 0438 460 477, thearthub45@gmail.com



COORDINATOR COMMENTS



Let's be realistic; being a Celebrant is absolutely wonderful but bookings can be a rollercoaster, you might have four calls in a day but then none for the days or weeks after. There can be difficult times when motivation itself can be a challenge especially when bookings are down or they are not reaching expectations. To top it off, when there are gaps between ceremonies, it can be difficult to maintain consistency, the flow of ideas, and to being apprised of current rules, systems & regulations. When the work is consistent, systems and processes become habitual, but when there are time gaps between events, creating checklists and your own systems & processes, can be invaluable to ensuring you keep on track.

One of the best ways to stay UpToDate, is to join the AMC Private Members Group where you will find ideas, questions & answers, information, and resources.

Next is the AMC Webpage where you will also find support and many resources.

Importantly, attend Celebrant meetings, especially the AMC Education sessions.

Next is to practice. If you don't have a script to work on, create a scenario and write a script for a fictional but possible future ceremony. Categorise the script so that it can later be easily identified and save it into a folder for future use. Practice completing and finalising forms and importantly, hone your elevator pitch.

Make some lists:

- ◇ advertising methods and possibilities,
- ◇ venues
- ◇ potential sources of work,
- ◇ What features identify your target client

Prepare a presentation folder and visit each venue for inspiration as well as a meet and greet.

Create a plan and schedule to stay organised and motivated.

Remember to include physical exercise and mental health or energy breaks to keep yourself energised. Have a nap if you need to so that you are productive and alert.

Schedule regular walks or runs, do some chair exercises, watch a funny or inspiring video, or listen to music or a motivational recording, garden, follow the AMC support and Facebook page, and read the Marriage Act, Guidelines and Regulations.

Remember to set a timer so you don't get too caught up on a specific task.

Find a Celebrant Buddy and meet for coffee and a chat. Not only will you have someone to hold you accountable, to your plan and schedule but you'll also have someone to bounce ideas off of. Plus, it's always more fun when sharing achievements

with a friend!

Always reward yourself for an achievement whether it's a favourite healthy snack, a new book, or a relaxing bubble bath, rewarding yourself for a job well done can be a great way to stay motivated. Just make sure to set realistic goals and rewards so you don't get discouraged.

Staying motivated can be tough, but by setting goals, making a schedule, taking breaks, finding a Celebrant buddy, and treating yourself, you'll be on your way to success. Remember, it's important to take care of yourself both mentally and physically. So, grab a water bottle, set a reminder to stretch, and get moving ☐

- Plan a way forward
- Create a schedule with deadlines
- Set realistic deadlines and reward yourself for meeting them
- Break down big goals into smaller, manageable tasks
- Find a Celebrant buddy for sharing thoughts as well as accountability, helping to keep you on track.
- Know that you are not alone.

A simple marketing practice used by retailers is for staff to look busy even when the shop is quiet because people are attracted to activity. The retailers know that if there are no customers in the store, staff have to look busy by shuffling stock around the store so that when repeat customers come in, they see different stock, and when potential customers look in, they are drawn to the activity.

The same applies to online marketing.

Post images as often and you can and provide frequent updates to demonstrate activity.. Search for your own webpage anonymously so that search engines also see activity.

So, make a plan and get it done.

You got this!

