

October 2024

Volume 3, Issue 9

All content is created for information only and is not legal advice, and not necessarily the views of the AMC.

It is compiled & 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.



A Revitalised AMC

Fantastic Progress. A new executive committee for 2024-2025 will be elected at the AGM and the new Constitution will soon be ready ASAP.

Following the resignation of some Executive Members earlier this year, an impressive new interim AMC Executive Committee, headed by AMC President, Annemarie McDonell, was formed to enthusiastically drive the AMC forward and the benefits are already showing—just look at the new look of the AMC webpage! Members of the current revitalised Committee are listed as follow:

- AMC President & Public Officer: Annemarie McDonell
- MLCS & COCA Representative: Annemarie McDonell
- Vice President: Kamal Saliby
- Treasurer: (currently vacant)
- AMC Secretary: Leanne McKay
- National Regional Coordinator: Leanne McKay
- Conference & Events Coordinator: Kamal Saliby
- Education: Jill Heaton.
- Social Media Marketing: Glenn Millanta.
- Website Administrator: Ashley Reynolds.
- Media Liaison Officer: Ashley Reynolds
- General Committee Members: Marcus Kroek, Carolyn Clarke, Shannon Davies, & Lou Szymkow

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) had to be postponed to ensure all procedures are correctly followed.

Notice will be given of the new date which must be before the end of the year.

Nominations will be called when appropriate and all members are encouraged to consider volunteering.

Volunteering is a selfless act but the personal benefits are immense and it benefit all members of the AMC.

According to the volunteering advocate organisation, ‘Simpli’, volunteering allows individuals to step out of their comfort zones, challenge themselves, and develop a sense of purpose and fulfillment while helping individuals to build confidence and self-esteem as they see the positive impact they are making in the lives of others. It can be a transformative experience that broadens perspectives, enhances empathy, and increases gratitude for one’s own blessings. Volunteering allows us to make a difference in our profession, in the lives of others and in our association and profession.

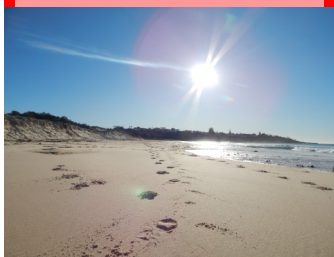
Even if in a remote area, attending meetings and connecting with others has become easier with audio video links.

The AMC, as you know, runs monthly education sessions for members but there are resources and other training opportunities. Leadership training is in the works to upskill and encourage more members to take an active part and to understand the constitution We grow stronger, personally and as an association, when we work together.

The revitalised website has gone live and is the best looking we have ever had. More to come. EXCITING!!

Inside this issue:

- Revitalised AMC
- AMC news
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- Halloween
- Marketing
- Marketing & Contact
- TV Review
- Book Review
- Diary Dates
- Coordinator comments



COVER PHOTOS

South coast sights

Photos by Lou Szymkow



HOME ABOUT FOR CELEBRANTS FOR COUPLES TIPS CONTACT



AMC EDUCATION SESSIONS

There are two Education sessions this month.

Don't miss them!

The new interim AMC executive team is excited to be working hard revitalising the AMC and website and that includes the AMC shop. The committee would love to hear your suggestions on what products you would like to see available, through the AMC and what products you would like to purchase from the shop so that it can be restocked. Email stock suggestions and requests to

AMCsecretarycorrespondence@gmail.com



[Join the Members Facebook Forum, check your emails and keep in touch with your Regional Coordinators to find out more about the excellent monthly education sessions](#)

A NEW CONSTITUTION IS ON ITS WAY

Some time ago significant deficiencies and unnecessary complexities were identified in the 2015 AMC Constitution and although there was work done, a new constitution was not actually ratified. That is being corrected. A new sub-committee has already made substantial progress in simplifying the Constitution while ensuring full compliance with the NSW Incorporations Act. A report will be made next week to the AMC Committee. Once a draft is finalised, it will be distributed for comment and subject to appropriate approvals, should may be ratified before the end of the year.

Another great leap forward!

WEP PAGE NEWS

The AMC Committee tried to revitalise the AMC webpage but expectations were not met.

Significant improvements are NOW underway thanks to the dedication of members and our **new Website Administrator, Ashley Reynolds** who is doing a fantastic job.

There is still a lot to be done before we have full functionality but it is already looking GREAT at last!!!

Such a vast improvement.

Being rebuild from scratch, for superior design, over the coming weeks you will notice further changes and improvements as full functionality is established.

Another great leap forward!



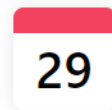
Education Session
October 15th 7pm
Greg Taylor
from CAL Copyright Agency

Tues, 15 Oct at 19:00

Copyright - CAL Copyright Agency

Created by Jill Heaton

Going Invite Edit ...



Tuesday 29 October 2024 at 19:00

OPD Study Group

Online event

OPD Education Session
October 29th 7pm



Click these to get more information

KNOWLEDGE BASE

An all too common misunderstanding the of the Marriage Certificate signed and issued at the ceremony, is that the certificate is *"just the pretty one"* and has no legal standing beyond its being signed at the ceremony.

The Marriage Certificate signed at the ceremony is the Form 15, which is sometimes referred to as the ceremonial certificate, **is a legal document.**

As is printed on the back, it is an official proof of marriage.

You will note of course that all Form 15's have for some years been uniquely numbered. That is to prevent fraudulent use.

As the Form 15 is legal proof of marriage, it must have exactly the same information as appears on the other official certificates signed at the ceremony and taken directly from the proof of identity documents.

⇒ **All marriage documents must all have to be the exact same names.**

If a person undergoes a name change between the signing of the NOIM and the solemnisation of marriage, once proof of the name change has been received by the celebrant, the NOIM is corrected and initialled.

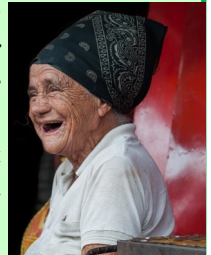
It is of course a breach of the Code of Practice and an offence under the Marriage Act to deliberately list the names incorrectly and could result in disciplinary action including possible deregistration. Note that John Alem Smith and John Smith are potentially two different people and so correct names **MUST** be sued e.g. if John Alem Smith married and his name on the official certificate of marriage (form 15) appeared as John Smith or any other name, that is in error and a prosecutable offence. See Marriage Act, section 42

A Celebrant had just completed a Ceremony and though exhausted, was chatting with guests when an elderly lady with a walking stick shuffled up to him and after a short conversation the Celebrant asked: *"I hope you don't mind me asking but would you tell me how old you are?"*

The elderly woman answered proudly *"not at all, I'm 94"*

"94, that's fantastic!!!!!" exclaimed the Celebrant *"You are incredibly alert for such a great age, I'm exhausted after this ceremony and so I'm not sure I'd want to live to be 94"*.

The elderly woman looked at him with a knowing smile and said *"you would if you were 93"*



Hearing from readers is wonderful, because it lets me know that my efforts to keep you informed are valued and appreciated. It's as good as seeing a positive review from a client and always a pleasure reading,

Contributions of your articles and Celebrant Snapshots are equally appreciated and so please keep it up.

feedback

Have you enjoyed reading this newsletter? Have you agreed or disagreed with an article, or perhaps you have another idea?

It's Your Turn!

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.



Letters to the Editor



Great informative newsletter as always and good information on forced marriages.
Annemarie McDonell
AMC President

People should seriously stop expecting normal from me... We all know by now that its not going to happen!



Wonderful (newsletter) once again.
Leanne McKay

Legals Only Ceremony



Every so often, Celebrants are asked to perform a 'Legals Only' ceremony. Typically couples who might ask for such a ceremony might fit one of these descriptions:

- 1) an older couple who have been married once or twice or more, before; and don't want a lavish ceremony, or
- 2) The couple are heading overseas for a celebration ceremony but want their marriage registered in Australia, or
- 3) A couple already have a registered partnership and want to convert that to a legal marriage., or
- 4) A terminally ill party may request a bedside ceremony
- 5) A couple new to a locality with no local connections
- 6) The couple who think it will be cheaper

Marriage in Australia has some significant advantages, especially if at least one party is an Australian citizen is planning to continue to reside in Australia subject to the Visa conditions of the other party. The marriage process and registration is relatively simple and there is subsequently no need to go through a legal name change via a state registry before applying for a Passport in a married name. A proof of marriage ceremony is of course provided during the ceremony but obtaining a proof of identity marriage certificate is as simple as an application to the relevant state marriage registry after registration .

The marriage of a terminally ill party or of a person of very advanced age MUST always be handled delicately and with great caution because the Celebrant MUST confirm lucidity, cognitive ability and ongoing real consent.

The requirements for a legals only ceremony are simple.

- i) Lodgement of the Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) including proof of identity as well as date & place of birth and of course proof of eligibility for marriage e.g. reason for termination of any previous marriage
- ii) Signing of Declaration of No Impediment to Marriage (DONLIM)
- iii) Separate interviews to confirm consent
- iv) Ceremony to include:
 - v) Two witnesses
 - vi) Monitum
 - vii) Full names stated at least once
 - viii) Exchange of vows
 - ix) Signing of Marriage Certificates.
 - x) Registration of the marriage with the relevant state BDM

The shortest ceremony that the writer has performed was about 2 minutes but another couple insisted on that record being beaten which is possible as long as all legal requirements are met.

A sample script follows but note that the reference to rings is optional as they are not a legal requirement.

The word spouse can be replaced with husband, or wife, or partner in marriage.

The vows must be spoken by the couple but they may choose to recite the words without prompting however a 'repeat after me' is usually the easiest option.

All the necessary legal documents must of course be signed as mentioned above and the signing of certificates can take place during the ceremony or immediately afterwards provided the couple, witnesses and Celebrant are all still present together.

The fictitious Wedding of Johnny & Jeany

WELCOME

Celebrant: Welcome all, let's begin the Marriage ceremony of Jeany & Johnny,
My name is <Celebrant name>,
I am the registered marriage celebrant authorised to solemnise this marriage according to law.

Jeany Smith & Johnny Jones;

before you are joined in marriage in my presence, and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter.

Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

(pause)

VOWS & RINGS <rings optional>

Celebrant: Johnny, please place the ring onto Jeany's ring finger and repeat after me:

<rings are not a legal requirement>

I call upon everyone here to witness that I, Johnny Jones, take you, Jeany Smith to be my Lawful wedded spouse.

Johnny: repeats

Celebrant: Jeany, please place the other ring onto Johnny's ring finger and repeat after me:

<rings are not a legal requirement>

I call upon everyone here to witness that I, Jeany Smith take you, Johnny Jones to be my Lawful wedded spouse.

Jeany (repeats)

ANNOUNCEMENT (OPTIONAL)

Celebrant: With vows & rings exchanged, and Certificates signed, to conclude this marriage ceremony, I have immense pleasure in intruding the newly married couple

SIGNING

Celebrant: Jeany & Johnny sign

I now invite our newly married couple and <witness 1> and <witness 2>, to sign the marriage certificates.

Making Smaller Weddings Easier

Phil Timbrell, the man with the Akubra hat, is a successful Marriage Celebrant who lives and works exclusively in the Blue Mountains NSW. He has developed a reputation as a unique, personable, witty and very professional Celebrant offering very enjoyable ceremonies in a unique nature filled environment. Phil is the AMC Sydney West / Blue Mountains NSW Regional Coordinator and a regular contributor to this newsletter. A retired engineer, he enjoys solving problems and designing & creating devices to help him in his Celebrancy. In this article, he tells us about one of those creations frequently used in his many, smaller weddings.

Phil Timbrell writes:

Couples who choose to marry in the Blue Mountains, often like to hike to one of the many unique and beautiful sites that the mountains has to offer, affording incredible views but for the Celebrant, also requiring the transportation of equipment down a bush lined and rocky track, that might include stairs and other obstacles. Equipment used at venues is simply not practical and cannot be easily carried and so I have always used a hand made stand-up signing table on a tripod for my bush weddings (see article in July 2023 newsletter).

Though most bush wedding has very small numbers, when couples have more than 25 guests, a microphone may be required due to the numbers, and while all might enjoy the natural sounds of the mountains, they might also request music played for the processional.

That would involved lugging both the signing table and a PA system being lugged into the bush, and often down many steps. More was needed and well, I decided to integrate a PA system with the signing table so that there was only one load of hardware to cart to the wedding site.

Using a small class D amplifier from Jaycar, which fits inside a Parker pen holder, it takes up little space and its appearance is then consistent with the aesthetics.

It fits nicely.

That is connected to a switch station so that I can switch between mic and music easily.

As the electronics take up so little room, there is still enough space on top for the AMC signing folder keeping certificates secure and ready.

Music is provided by an Arduino micro SD mp3 player set inside a small plastic box that sits nicely on top of the speaker box.

Power is provided by a 12volt lithium polymer battery which is hidden from view.

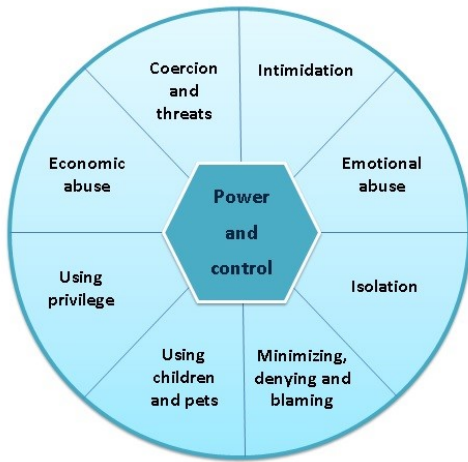
Though designed for smaller weddings, I write this article because for the first time at a wedding in an open reserve with 75 guests, I was able to again use this compact system with a great result.

Everyone could hear and a number of technically minded guests were even keen to chat about it.

I am not offering to make and sell these but will provide any assistance to anyone wanting to try.



Consent & Coercive Control



As Celebrants, we are not couple's counsellors but as we are obliged to determine real consent before marrying a couple, which can at times be very difficult. We may encounter a couple where

one party dominates the conversation and makes all of the decisions. That could be because, out of love and confidence, one party aspires to ensure every happiness for the other and is excited and supportive of choices but on other occasions, there could be an aspect of coercive control. Happiness and generosity generate joy but coercive control, does the opposite.

Understanding coercive control can help us in identifying the difference and in so doing, recognise when there is an absence of real consent. Let's look at the law and some possible scenarios that may be encountered by Celebrants.

From 1 July 2024, coercive control is a criminal offence in NSW when a person uses abusive behaviours towards a current or former intimate partner with the intention to coerce or control them.

The criminal offence captures repeated patterns of physical or non-physical abuse used to hurt, scare, intimidate, threaten or control someone. The law only applies to abusive behaviour that happens after 1 July 2024.

Find out more

- [NSW Government actions on criminalising coercive control.](#)
- [Crimes Legislation Amendment \(Coercive Control\) Act 2022.](#)

Scenario 1:

A male who spent all his free time on his motorbike, moved into his girlfriend's home where they enjoyed an active sex life. At every opportunity, the male was absent from the household, returning in the evenings. After some time, the female gave him the ultimatum that she would withhold sex and have him move out if they did not have a lavish wedding. She demanded that he purchase an engagement ring she had already chosen for him to 'surprise' her with, and told him his proposal needed to be unusual but soon as she was already choosing a wedding date, venue and gown, and with the enthusiastic support of her close friends, would make all decision on all aspects the ceremony. At a meeting to sign and lodge the NOIM, the



female with her bridesmaids not only signed the NOIM immediately but set about excitedly discussing and planning the entire lavish event. The male however was late to the meeting, appeared disinterested, made no contribution to planning, feigned illness, failed to make eye contact, refused to sign the NOIM without legal advice and his only contribution was when he declared loudly and aggressively that he would include the words "I don't believe in marriage" in his wedding vows. It was quite clear that he had been coerced into agreeing to marriage but didn't want to be married, hence there was no real consent.

Scenario 2:

She owned her own home and was a single parent. He had few assets and struggled to pay rent but his financial difficulties were lessened when he moved into her home and began making changes to the premises to accommodate his hobbies and interests. He however insisted that she do all the domestic chores and that anything less was a failure on her part. She had aspirations of a romantic wedding ceremony but he insisted that was an unnecessary expense and so it would instead be held in 'their' back yard with only witnesses present. She compromised and decided that her talented children would sing to begin the ceremony and his child would read a poem, however he insisted that such choices were nonsensical, that her children were not sufficiently talented, her 'ideas' were indicative of her weak decision making ability and that she should leave all major decisions to him. Further, upon marriage, she would take his name and add him to the title deeds. They both insisted that they wanted to marry, and both insisted that it was consensual however it was apparent that her choices were very much dominated by him

Scenario 3

An elderly, wealthy widow with no family, lived in an aged care facility and was showing symptoms of dementia. A male, several years her junior, also a resident at the facility began spending time with her and within weeks announced that she had accepted his proposal of marriage. Before contacting a celebrant, he secured a letter from the visiting doctor that the female retained sufficient cognitive ability to understand marriage and the ceremony, and the male presented that to the celebrant. However the Celebrant spoke to staff at the centre and was advised that the woman frequently failed to recognise people and that staff had noticed that the male had been isolating the woman from her friends. Becoming aware of the staff concerns, the doctors approval letter was then rescinded.



Understanding coercive control

The bulk of the following information is taken directly from the Attorney's General Fact Sheet on Coercive Control with additions from other sources.

.....from previous page

Coercive control is when someone uses patterns of abusive behaviour against another person. Over time, this creates fear and takes away the person's freedom and independence. This dynamic almost always underpins family and domestic violence.

Coercive control can involve physical and non-physical abuse. Non-physical abuse is sometimes thought of as less serious, but this is not the case. All abuse can cause lasting damage that builds up and gets worse over time.

The negative impacts of coercive control can be physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, social and financial, or a combination of these.

Many people who experience coercive control feel trapped and afraid. Their self-esteem and confidence may have been slowly worn down by the repeated abuse, making it difficult to leave a relationship or get help.

Coercive control can happen in intimate partner relationships, even after they've ended. It can also happen in family relationships.

Coercive control can be used against anyone, but is mostly used by men against women.

Coercive control is deliberate

Coercive control isn't an accident. The abuser uses these behaviours to isolate, manipulate, threaten and scare the other person to control them. Every time a person uses abusive behaviours, they're making a choice to do so, and are responsible for their abuse and its consequences.

Recognising the signs

The signs of coercive control can be hard to spot. People who use coercive control to get what they want can be good at hiding it from others, and their abuse can be subtle and targeted. Some of the signs of coercive control include:

- Controlling who a person sees, what they wear and where they go.
- Monitoring or tracking everything a person does.
- Controlling everyday needs, such as finances, medication, food or exercise.
- Regularly criticising a person, or manipulating or blaming them so they doubt themselves and their experiences.
- Forcing someone to have sex or do sexual things.
- Stopping a person from following their religion or cultural practices.
- Threatening a person, their children, family or friends.
- Manipulating co-parenting arrangements or child support payments after relationship separation.
- These are just some examples of behaviours that can be used as part of a person's pattern of abuse.
- People experiencing coercive control may feel like they're walking on eggshells, or that it's difficult to disagree or say no.

They may not know they are being abused. This may be because:

- They may not realise that non-physical abuse is also family and domestic violence.
- They may think the abusive behaviour is a normal part of a relationship, especially if friends and family don't say or do anything to stop it.

- The person who uses coercive control may trick a person into doubting their own experiences, or blame them for the abuse.
- The abuse does not always stop, and can even become worse, after a relationship ends.

What can I do?

If you think you might be experiencing coercive control, contacting a confidential support service for advice is a good first step.

However when it come to couple about to marry, the first step a Celebrant must take is to interview parties to a marriage, separately and in person, in a safe environment. If you're concerned that someone you know might be experiencing coercive control, or something doesn't seem quite right, you can help by choosing a safe place to talk to the person alone and letting them know you're worried about them.

Be willing to listen and take their fears seriously. Rather than telling them what to do, let them know there are organisations that can help.

For more information about coercive control and the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence, go to

- ◇ ag.gov.au/coercivecontrol
- ◇ [Understanding coercive control \[PDF 909.6 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Understanding coercive control \[DOCX 1.38 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Coercive Control](#)
- ◇ [The National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Viol...](#)
- ◇ [Easy Read - National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence \[PDF 7.26 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Easy Read - National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence - Text only \[DOCX 13.38 MB\]](#)

Family & domestic violence support:

- ◇ 1800respect.org.au or phone 1800RESPECT—1800 737 732 (available 24/7)
- ◇ [Anti-Slavery Australia](#) (9am-5pm EST/EDT Monday to Friday): +61 2 9514 8115
- ◇ www.mybluesky.org.au: Forced marriage prevention service
- ◇ [Women's Crisis Line](#): 1800 811 811
- ◇ [Mensline](#): 1300 789 978
- ◇ [Lifeline](#) (24-hour Crisis Line): 131 114
- ◇ [1800 Respect national helpline](#): 1800 737 732
- ◇ [Women's Crisis Line](#): 1800 811 811
- ◇ [Men's Referral Service](#): 1300 766 491
- ◇ [Lifeline](#) (24 hour crisis line): 131 114
- ◇ [Relationships Australia](#): 1300 364 277
- ◇ [NSW Domestic Violence Line](#): 1800 656 463
- ◇ [Qld DV Connect Womensline](#): 1800 811 811
- ◇ [Vic Safe Steps crisis response line](#): 1800 015 188
- ◇ [ACT 24/7 Crisis Line](#): (02) 6280 0900
- ◇ [Tas Family Violence Counselling and Support Service](#): 1800 608 122
- ◇ [SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line](#): 1800 800 098
- ◇ [WA Women's Domestic Violence 24h Helpline](#): 1800 007 339
- ◇ [NT Domestic violence helpline](#): 1800 737 732



Wedding Customs

Understanding History is Important

Wedding traditions from around the world have evolved through perhaps hundreds or even thousands of years of history with cultural, superstitions, and/or religious influences and nuances. Some have a very specific purpose such as initiated good luck or conversely to keep away evil spirits and bad luck.

Thorough research is essential because without it, an innocent action could prove disrespectful to the culture in which it has its origins. A fundamental step is consulting the couple and their families about culture, heritage, and customs to gain a greater insight remembering always that customs may vary from town to town just as language and accents vary.

A simple example is the posture held during prayer in different countries and cultures within the same religious body e.g. in most western countries Catholics will kneel and place their palms together at about chest height but in some countries the palms are together at face height or above the head, or hands are held out from the body with palms upturned and open at shoulder height. The differences may be considered subtle to some but very important to others.

Another example is the 7 steps practiced in Hindu marriage ceremonies. In some circles the 7 steps are a simple custom but in more devout sectors, the steps are a deeply meaningful and devoutly religious ritual that should only be performed when guided by the equivalent of a priest reciting very holy scriptures or prayers in the process. So a nonpracticing Hindu would not be offended by their use in custom but a devout Hindi may be deeply offended by appropriation of a holy ritual.

The same goes for readings. Corinthians 13 is perhaps the most commonly used biblical reading for wedding around the world but to a devout Catholic, reading from the Holy Bible is prayer and so inappropriate for use by an atheist.

There are some other perhaps lessor known traditions such as the Celtic tradition, highlighted in a rhyme:

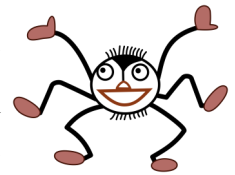
**Monday for wealth,
 Tuesday for health,
 Wednesday the best day of all,
 Thursday for losses,
 Friday for crosses, and
 Saturday no luck at all.**

Other tradition or superstitions from around the world include:

- Throwing grains such as rice over the couple is to promote fertility but Czechs throw Peas rather than rice. Confetti largely replaced grains but is hard to clean up and so grains have made a comeback but it has to be either cooked rice or a grain that birds can safely eat to reduce cleanup.



- In Denmark, brides and grooms traditionally cross-dressed to confuse evil spirits.
- Egyptian women pinch the bride for good luck on her wedding day.
- English believe a spider found in a wedding dress means good luck.
- Finnish brides, accompanied by an older married man to promote longevity of marriage, go door-to-door to collect gifts in a pillowcase.



- In Greek culture, to sweeten the union, the Bride tucks a sugar cube into your glove.
- In Holland, a pine tree is planted outside the newlyweds' home as a symbol of fertility and luck.



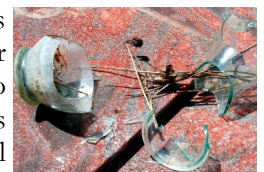
- According to Hindu tradition, rain on your wedding day is considered good luck while in western culture, the rain represents a fresh and new beginning.



- Irish ring bells to ward off evil spirit. And brides often carry bells in their bouquet.



- In Italy, many newlyweds smash a vase or glass at their wedding, and according to tradition, the number of pieces the glassware breaks into will symbolize how many years the couple will be happily married.



.....from previous page



Wedding Customs

- In Kenya, as the newly married Bride and Groom leave the village, the father of the Bride spits on his daughter's head and chest, so as not to jinx their good fortune!
- Middle Eastern brides paint henna on their hands and feet to protect themselves from the evil eye.
- Moroccan women take a milk bath to purify themselves before their wedding ceremony.
- In South Africa, the parents of both bride and groom traditionally carried fire from their own hearths to light a new fire in the newlyweds' hearth.
- A Swedish bride puts a silver coin from her father and a gold coin from her mother in each shoe to ensure that she will never do without. Learn more about
- In the USA's Southern folklore you should bury a bottle of bourbon upside down at the wedding site one month before to prevent rain and then you dig it up after the ceremony to enjoy.



OLDER OR BROADER TRADITIONS

- Referred to as '*Tapping the Shoe*' the Bride's father would hand over one of her shoes to the Groom, who then tapped her on the head with it to symbolise his role as her new master.
- Ancient Romans studied pig entrails to determine the luckiest time to marry.
- Horseshoes are thought to bring good luck.. Many brides wear horseshoe-shaped jewellery or include a horseshoe as part of their bridal bouquet.
- The groom carries the bride across the threshold to protect her from evil spirits.
- If the younger of two sisters marries first, the older sister must dance barefoot at the younger sister's wedding if she is to find a husband.
- In Hindu religious ceremonies, the couple circle a fire seven times, sealing their bond while in Eastern European Orthodox religious ceremonies, the bride and groom circle the altar three times. In both instances these are the couple's first steps together as husband and wife.
- The exchange of garland in Indian wedding ceremonies is called varmala or jaimala and represents a proposal by the bride by her offering a garland, and the acceptance by the groom, by his offering while in Hawaiian weddings, the bride and groom, and families, all exchange leis, which represent the love and respect held for the other. Both traditions symbolise family unity.

UNIT RITUALS -Hand Tree

- Using stamp pads or coloured paint, each family member, stamps their hand print onto a tree shape on canvas or paper
- Message of hope and promises could be written on cut outs or real leaves and pasted to the tree
- can sign their names with an inspirational message.
- Photos on leaf cut-outs can be attached for each current and lost loved ones.
- As an alternative, a sculpture could be created with clay or metal shapes with names or engraved messages.



- Unity Bowl

In this tradition, sometimes accredited to early Europeans in Australia, each guest is given a stone to hold during the ceremony.

To symbolise their presence and support of the couple, now and in the future, at the end of the Ceremony, guests place their stone in a bowl that the couple will keep and display.

Different colours can be assigned to friends and family.





Halloween Wedding

Often erroneously considered to be uniquely

American, Halloween is celebrated on 31st October and is best known for its spooky and festive atmosphere, with people, especially children, dressing up in costumes and engaging in activities like trick-or-treating and Halloween parties.

Ireland is the birthplace of Halloween with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which marked the end of the harvest season and the coming of winter.



According to **Dr Kelly Fitzgerald**, Head of University College Dublin's School of Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore, it was as firelight cast flickering shadows over the countryside, that imaginations took flight and it was believed that the boundaries

between worlds blurred enabling the spirits to walk among the living, ready to carry them off to the Underworld.

Dr Fitzgerald went on to say that the wily Celts fought back against that darkness with masks to hide their faces from the undead, bonfires to banish the gloom and lanterns carved from turnips to ward off malevolent forces.

Halloween was also a celebration when plentiful harvests were marked by feasting and games. People donned costumes and went from house to house entertaining their neighbours. They bobbed for apples and left out offerings of food to welcome the spirits of their ancestors.

Two thousand years later, carried to new lands by Irish emigrants and adopted by their descendants to honour their culture and perhaps just for fun, many of these customs live on, especially in the USA and to a much lesser extend in Australia. For Halloween, pumpkins are carved into lanterns and people, mostly children dress up for Trick or Treating.



Whilst many in Australia object to Halloween, especially a sit mid Spring with lots of colour around us, there is still a growing following and the occasional gothic wedding theme.

Decorations are a major part of a Halloween-themed wedding, creating a

spooky tablescape and environment.

The obvious starting point is of course the couple choosing a Gothic venue followed by Halloween-inspired wedding invitations with dramatic fonts, themed illustrations and gothic borders. Tarot cards could even be used at this point or as aisle or table numbers coupled with dark florals.

Every part of the venue and event could be decorated for a Halloween wedding including the heavy use of dark reds, purples, golds and varying shades of white and of course orange and black.

Skeletons could be used to decorate the entrance, signs or



seating. You could even have a wedding guest full skeleton.

Whilst almost all of the ideas will be of the wedding party's choosing, the Celebrant could contribute dressing as a witch/warlock, vampire or in a skeleton suit and using a gothic font on all vow cards, Ceremony script, and even on the

wedding certificate.

A prolific use of pumpkins would commonly be expected and so Jack-o lanterns could be used to mark the aisle and/or used as table centre pieces or vases. The entire area or just tables could be decorated with fake cobwebs, spider rings, and mini pumpkin favours. Coffins could be used to present the wedding rings or vows cards and of course the rings could even be gothic or perhaps skulls.

A Halloween script could incorporate something like this which is similar to a script from [Offbeat Wedding](#)

Celebrant: *According to Celtic tradition, the veil between this world and the next is thinnest on Halloween night which makes it the perfect time to join two souls in matrimony lasting not only through this life but into the next.*

Family and friends have come together to celebrate the marriage of [Party 1] and [Party 2].

(guests bowl at the moon)

[Party 1], do you take [Party 2] in marriage from this day until the end of days?

[Party 1]: *I do.*

Celebrant: *[Party 2], do you take [Party 1] in marriage from this day until the end of days?*

[Party 2]: *I do.*

(exchange of vows)

Celebrant: *Beauty and youth fade away, money comes and goes, but your love is irreplaceable. Love is eternal. [Party 2] and [Party 1], keep that in mind as you make these eternal vows.*

Please present the rings which represent your eternal bind.

[Best man hands rings to [Party 1]. Each hold the rings.]

[Party 1], place the ring on [Party 2] and repeat after me.

“As this ring encircles your finger from this day forward, year in and year out, so will my love forever encircle you. Wear this ring as a symbol of this love.”

Party 1: *repeats*

Celebrant: *[Party 2], please place the ring on [Party 1] and repeat after me.*

“As this ring encircles your finger from this day forward, year in and year out, so will my love forever encircle you. Wear this ring as a symbol of this love.”

Party 2: *repeats*

Marketing

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- 2) [WWSUP6862_YTBUMPER_BagABargain_ChickenBreast 1920x1080 6sec \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWSUP6862_YTBUMPER_BagABargain_ChickenBreast_1920x1080_6sec)
- 3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8y8MLH6F48&list=PLsDp4QpCqUQj9VeRK32AO4Z31fHRLbx11&index=3>
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- 5) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv518x_uwbE&list=PLsDp4QpCqUQj9VeRK32AO4Z31fHRLbx11&index=6
- 6) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv518x_uwbE&list=PLsDp4QpCqUQj9VeRK32AO4Z31fHRLbx11&index=6
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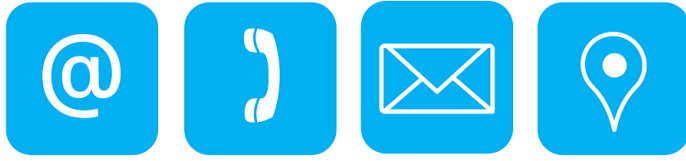
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You must expect great things of yourself before you can do them.

Michael Jordan



Contact Marketing



We are going to look at marketing at every contact.

It is a common misperception that people choose a Celebrant specifically and simply because of what can be seen, because of price, image, style, history, celebrant's knowledge, reviews or a recommendation. Whilst these are of course important influences, some greater than others, the ultimate decision is based on emotion. The reviews or a recommendations push you forward but they only bring you to prominence, not to conclusion. Even when a couple say, we chose you because of your hair colour, your tattoos, or your hat, each of these simply add to how it makes them 'feel'.

The ultimate decision, the final choice, is entirely based on how

You be you.
CONFIDENCE is in you.

you make them 'feel' and in order to happily purchase they have to feel 'confident'. Once a choice is made, the other aspects are sometimes referred to simply to justify or reinforce the decision. When someone seeks a Celebrant based on price, it is because they are not confident that there is a benefit in paying a higher fee. They form the view that all celebrants are the same and deliver the same service when in fact all celebrants are as individual as a flower where the differences may be subtle but still significant. If satisfied that they are getting value rather than just the lowest price, the stress dissipates to be replaced by confidence.

Think back to when you made the biggest purchase of your life, which is usually a house purchase that amounts to 3-10 years of your annual income and will ultimately cost you 10 times that over time in interest and fees. You will have inspected the house, researched the suburb and lots more but ultimately the one governing factor was how you felt when you first saw and experienced the house. Studies have shown that procuring a mortgage is extraordinarily stressful but think back to that contract signing, the moment before can be stressful creating doubts and fears but then there is a decisive moment of confidence as you reach forward to sign and as soon as your pen leaves the paper, there is a smile on your face because you now own a home. It is a wonderful feeling of joy and confidence. You have a confident plan for your future.

The same emotions came to be when choosing a Celebrant.

Marriage is a life changing step and of course people want their ceremony to be the perfect. They need to feel confident. They want to be in control.

They certainly don't want to be embarrassed by their lack of knowledge of the processes and laws despite the fact that this may be the very first time for them.

A path to confidence is entirely subjective and continues and should be broadened at every contact and so can be stimulated by the range mentioned earlier including items that the couple identify with or aspire to such as hair colour, a smile, a joke, a photo, the Celebrants' shared level of confidence and more..

That means of course that every single contact you have with a

client is a part of your marketing but your marketing cannot be so overt as to erode confidence. In simple terms, be yourself, but be professional.

Let's look at the points of contact.

1. Research
2. Email, message or call
3. NOIM Lodgement
4. Planning
5. Consent of Individual parties
6. DONLIM
7. Rehearsal
8. Ceremony
9. Post ceremony

RESEARCH

The first contact you don't know about but have prepared for. It is when they research you, your webpage, social media and reviews. That creates the first connection.

Make sure your advertising is addressing your target market and is not just a boring personal photo shoot ... oh and smile in every wedding photo. Practice your smile and make it worth their while.

EMAIL, MESSAGE OR CALL

The next contact is the email, message or phone call in which your response needs to be measured to their needs. If they text, text back, if they email, email back, but always work toward s a personal contact in which you will ask questions.

The dilemma is that if you overload the caller with information, they might rethink their choices but if you don't give detailed and accurate information, they might later be disgruntled with a "you didn't tell me that" accusation, and so you measure responses to fit the need.

This leads us into an important aspect of ongoing marketing during contact. If you ask the questions, the couple feel informed because they feel in control that they are being listened to because the questions you ask are actually either on their mind or have not yet been thought of because of their inexperience.

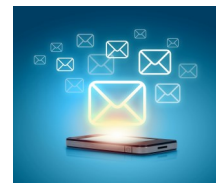
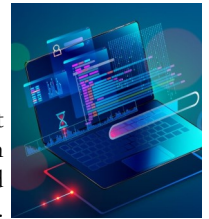
However, if they have to ask all the question it is an indication that you are not providing the information they want.

An example. Telemarketers may make hundreds of calls a day and when the people they call are surveyed, the responses are interesting. If the caller does all the talking, giving all the necessary information, the recipient will respond in surveys that the caller was uninformative but when the caller asked all the questions, the response was "the caller was knowledgeable, informative and helpful". When recordings of the calls were reviewed, it was found that recipients did not listen to an overload of information but when the caller asked important questions, the recipients felt valued and developed confidence. The common rule of a successful marketer is "turn every statement into a question".

Make a list of the questions you will ask.

Share you examples to get feedback.

Review your questions with each ceremony to ensure



Scam Alert!



Around this time each year, scammers seem to attack celebrants.

My theory is that it is because the culprits have left gaol but that is just a guess.

The scams are currently on the rise in the USA and so for the past few years have overflowed to Australia however we are less likely to fall for the scams because of the necessity for couples to give 1-18 months' notice and for them to produce proof of identity, although on some rare occasions, stolen IDs are used. There has even been a claim that AI's are being used so that a AI generated face appears in the video while the altered voice is live.

Aware of the difficulty to scam Aussie Celebrants, scammers looked to overcome the obstacles by instead asking for Ceremonies that don't require proof of ID such as birthdays, anniversaries, memorials, and commitment ceremonies, alternatively, instead of going to the Celebrant, they will try to scam other vendors such as a venue or more often, photographers.

In case you don't know, the most common scam is the 'Overpayment' scam. The tactic is to overpay from a fake bank account, using PayPal, a forged check, cheque or a dodgy credit card and then ask the Celebrant or other victim, to pay other vendors. The other 'vendors' though are also fake having been created by the scammer for the specific scam. As soon as the fake vendor is paid, the money is withdrawn and the accounts are closed.

If the original scam payment was made from a credit card, the scammer reverses the payment and if paid by cheque, the cheque, the money is gone before the bank determines that the cheque was a forgery.

Scammers usually use the following tactics:

- Claim to be a 'local' even though they might not be in Australia
- Claim to be to be elderly, deaf or hospitalised and so unable to meet via video link
- Assert they are about to undergo surgery and so there is an urgency for action
- can only communicate via email, because of impairment and/or hospitalisation
- will offer fake street addresses and venue names that are non-existent



- writes that the event is a 'surprise' for a son, daughter, or nephew and so this is another reason communication can only be via email with one scam address and not by video or phone call.
- claims to be a personal assistant and so intermediary to a wealthy other party
- works on a container ship or oil rig and so can only meet on the day of the planned event.



If your are able to procure any ID, email or IP addresses, bank account details of any kind

(scammer or venue etc) or any other personal details, forward immediately to scamwatch and/or police and report the scam on Celebrant groups to alert others.

Two years ago Celebrants in the in the UK and USA received video calls, followed by fake IDs and sadly some Celebrants were scammed of many \$thousands! In that same year, two photographers in Australia were also scammed.

To combat the scams, report any incidences to scamwatch by forwarding the unaltered emails to: report@submit.spam.acma.gov.au

Some Celebrants have reacted by enrolling the scammer into every persistent, obscure and/or oddball subscription they could find and so the scammer received hundreds of emails from religious sites such as 'a prayer a day', porn & gambling sites, and any & all politically radical sites that can be found. It would be tome consuming to set up but it would also result in the scam email address being disrupted by being bombarded with spam.

The next most common scam is the 'I can fix your website'. They may look legitimate but the scammers intent is just to procure the login details to your webpage and social media so that the scammer can use it to launch other scams under your name. You will see the same message time and time again, but with different email addresses.

And finally, the immigration scams. These are not as common as they once were but crime gangs, mostly in Eastern Europe enslave young women and post their images on foreign bride sites. Males in affluent countries such as Australia agree to marry them. The celebrant is contacted for a NOIM lodgement but the wedding may never take place and so the Celebrant can avoid being duped by not issuing a IMMI letter until full payment for the ceremony is made.

.....from previous page

Contact Marketing

you have asked the right questions that help you gather all the information you need.

Obviously the first question has to be *“what is your name?”* and you use that name throughout the conversation.

The second and very important question is *“what date?”* to ensure that you are available.

And the third is *where or what venue?*

Why do you need that information at this early stage?

You have to know the venue so as to ensure you can actually get there. I've had callers want me to travel great distances which I am happy to do but they have to understand that it adds cost. If they are not prepared to pay the extra, they are wasting their time and yours. I'll travel to Perth but only if they will pay for four days, accommodation, airfares, car hire and any and all expenses.

The rest of the questions are to procure the information you need to prepare legal docs and to prepare the ceremony.

Bear in mind that each meeting is an expense, for them and for you. There may be travel, time and other expenses involved. Make sure you charge for that.

NOIM LODGEMENT & PLANNING

For the NOIM, instead of immediately stating what documents are required, ask if they have them?

e.g.

STATEMENT: Show me the documents you have to prove date/place of birth and identity.

QUESTION: What documents do you have to prove your date/place of birth and identity?

The first sample is a demand that may cause concern whereas the second sample is a question that will stimulate discussion.

This way you are guiding and not just directing and so empowering the 'control' with the couple

NOIM Lodgement and planning are often the same meeting.

When it comes to planning, have a template or reference guide at the ready and fill in the gaps.

Offer options but be guided by each answer to a question.

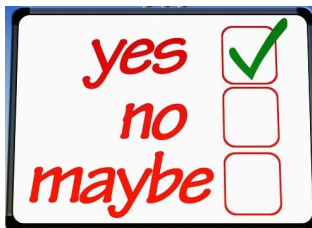
Make a list of your question and consider emailing the question to the couple

The NOIM Lodgement is the perfect time to start planning the ceremony and so prepare while keeping an open mind. Create a template but keep it variable, explain along the way what must occur and what can be added or removed. Your contribution will determine if the couple stay with you, promote you to others, or resume searching.

CONSENT FOR INDIVIDUAL PARTIES

This is usually a quick meeting as you will usually already know if there is consent just through past contact however don't take anything for granted.

It is obviously best if this meeting, which must be in person, takes place at a time other than the wedding day to avoid any financial or emotional pressures but that is not always practical, especially if there is a considerable distance and travel time involved as is often the case on the south coast and so the Consent Meeting can be at any time before the ceremony. Importantly, the meeting needs to take place in a 'safe space' and it is recommended that those words be used e.g. *“This is a safe space and you can speak freely”*.



Sample questions:

- ◇ Do you feel safe?
- ◇ Are you over 18?
- ◇ Do you know that getting married is entirely your choice?
- ◇ What are you looking forward to about marriage?
- ◇ Do you really want to get married?
- ◇ Do you really want to marry him/her?
- ◇ When would you like to do that?
- ◇ Do you feel pressured by anyone to go ahead?
- ◇ Is anyone telling you that you have to get married?
- ◇ If you could delay or cancel the marriage, would you?

DONLIM

This again is usually a quick meeting as you will usually already know if there is eligibility just through past contact however don't take anything for granted.

The DONLIM meeting needs to be as close as possible to the wedding ceremony and for me, many choose to have to DONLIM signed on the day of the ceremony and ask:

- i. Are you over 18?
- ii. Are you married to anyone else?
- iii. Are you sober?
- iv. Do you want to marry him/her today?
- v. Please sign here?



REHEARSAL

If there is a rehearsal, it is a great time for the DONLIM and the Consent meetings.

CEREMONY

During the Ceremony, if you interact with the guests as well as the couple, everyone will feel included and when they talk about the ceremony later, they will mention how they felt about being included.

The ceremony is also an opportunity to reaffirm consent by asking both parties: *“Have you come here today to marry?”*

POST CEREMONY

If it is practical, it is great marketing to hand deliver the Marriage Certificate.

Instead of asking for reviews, tell the couple how much you enjoyed the ceremony and give them links to lodge reviews so that they can easily access sites at a click and by sending the couple any photos you took of the ceremony.

Then diary the anniversary and send them a message each year.





As Celebrants, we can learn about people, customs, social issues, and gaining the confidence of others in very short term contact. We may learn by observing how medical workers, even those with training but no experience, deal with crises, time & stress management, and condensing a life story into a 40 minute session. You can find this award winning American Medical Drama series on iView. Created by [Michael Crichton](#), ER was first launched in Australia in February 1995 and ran an astounding 15 seasons, and remains the most awarded with 370 nominations and 157 award wins. It launched or furthered careers of [George Clooney](#), [Noah Wyle](#), [Maura Tierney](#), [Anthony Edwards](#), [Parminder Nagra](#), Chris Pine, and many more. It is a fun game of pick the actors who will star in other series or major movies later in their careers.

ER, is often frenetic as it chronicles life and death in a Chicago hospital emergency room going from the exciting to the mundane, and the joyous to the heart-rending. An emotional rollercoaster depicts the stressful environment of a busy ER while showing glimpses into the impact upon patients, family, loved ones and of course the staff. Procedures and actions are so detailed that it is often referred to as the best and most accurate medical drama ever aired and you might even feel you are an intern yourself. When filming in Africa, [Noah Wyle](#), was able to set up an intravenous drip in an emergency because of his experience portraying Dr John Carter.

The show doesn't just deal with medial emergencies but with many social issues and the failings of the medical system. Parallels can also be drawn between

different types of addictions, illnesses, reactions to stress, relationships of all kinds, conflict and resolutions, prejudices, and the impact these have on lives and survivors. Every season we see new and inexperienced practitioners stumble through while presenting themselves as professionals who are mentored to maturity. A little like new Celebrants fresh out of training, you only get one chance to get it right... or make it seem that it is right.

In series 8, we see the gradual decline in the health of Dr Mark Greene, ([Anthony Edwards](#) of *Top Gun* fame), and see how a man who deals with saving lives but also encountering death on a daily basis, faces the death of his parents and then his own mortality, and in final days, chooses to spend it in Hawaii with his daughter Rachel ([Hallee Hirsh](#)), teaching her to drive and surf while honestly revealing his own life story. When he suffers a seizure, Dr Elizabeth Corday ([Alex Kingston](#), who will be recognised by *Dr Who*) his wife, is called to his side. A letter he writes to coworkers makes a fine eulogy. Helpful to Funeral Celebrants because we see family impact.

In Series 13, episode 18, *Photographs and Memories*, we again see the beauty that can be found in mortality as a photographer who is a terminal patient offers a new perspective on life as she highlights the beauty of moments when people face mortality and so you not only see the type of photo that might appear at funerals but why they might be chosen. There are of course many deaths in an emergency medical program and so a number of funerals throughout the series but there are also weddings. We don't always see the entire ceremony but we see the prelude and aftermath and there is always a drama either behind each, or impacting on it and so we see how being calm and in control, enables progress in adversity.

In series 13, episode 21, "I Don't" we see what was supposed to be a departmental dinner organized by Dr Kovac ([Goran Visnjic](#)), the eager groom, becomes a secretly planned surprise wedding in what we might describe here as a 'Legals Only' cross cultural ceremony that has the challenge of informed real consent.. Abby Lochhart ([Maura Tierney](#)) is the centre of the romantic the surprise of a lifetime. The reception includes a few who drink too much and express their love for a coworker, some surprisingly so, and when two disgruntled lovers express their displeasure the reception includes the disasters an MC might encounter and have to control..

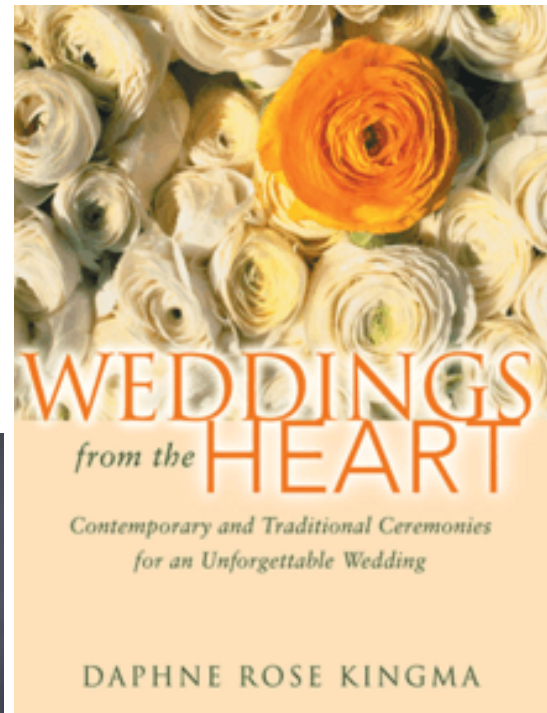
In season 14, a Hospital Chaplin is introduced, and in episode 10, '300 Patients' there is an inspirational scene where she conducts a 'Blessing Ceremony' in which the ER staff are asked to sit in a darkened room as words are spoken and the names of patients and staff are projected onto a wall.

You don't see the entire ceremony as it is interrupted, you guessed it, by an emergency, but the little you do see, the few words you do hear, are worth a view, and you soon after see more of the ceremony toward the end of the episode.

The entire series is worth a binge for those who love a medical series but it is 15 seasons, so that might take a while.

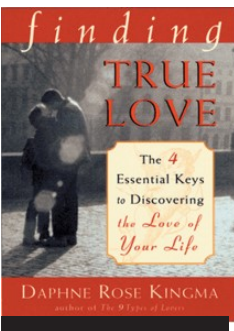
As Celebrants we encounter different cultures and backgrounds, we see the traumas before and after a death from a variety of causes (fast, slow & ongoing, sudden, tragic and from suicide), a number of funerals and though I have only mentioned one, there are a few weddings.

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108757/?ref_=tstep_ov

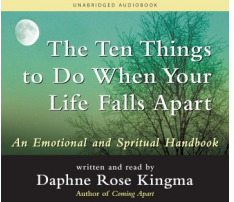


Weddings from the Heart is a book by American, Daphne Rose Kingma is not a Celebrant or Officiant, but is a couple’s therapist of more than 30 years. The NY Times say the book is an unforgettable statement about marriage.

Daphne Rose Kingma is a psychotherapist, lecturer, and workshop leader. described as a relationship expert and touted as the “love doctor”, was a frequent guest on USA television programs including Oprah, Sally Jessy Raphael, and Leeza. She is the author of a dozen books including *365 Days of Loves* and the bestsellers *Finding True Love*, and *Coming Apart* and others.



In *Weddings from the Heart*, published 1991 & 1995, she endeavours to help couples understand the meaning behind the wedding ceremony and to assist the reader in creating an exquisite ceremony.



The cover of *Weddings from the Heart* suggests the content to be a guide to creating contemporary and traditional ceremonies for an unforgettable wedding while a chapter opens with “Marriage is the joining of two lives, the mystical, physical, and emotional union of two human beings...”

The author expresses that a wedding is not about impressing people with a menu or venue but that it is about honouring the couple’s love through a crafted ceremony that reflects the unique and special bond within their relationship. Having said that, the music selection is unrealistic in that no one I know is going to hire an entire world class orchestra to play classical music for a warm up and entry. She does though remind the reader that the essence of the ceremony is the relationship and offers sections on:

- ◇ different types of ceremonies you can use
- ◇ examples of (personal) vows
- ◇ Worksheets to personalized wedding day

The book is of obvious USA origin so ignore the bits on marriage law and marriage licenses, and you will find much of the heavy religious content to be outdated, particularly prayers and readings.. Some other parts may also be considered outdated but looking back helps us to look forward with confidence and just because an idea is 30 years old, doesn't necessarily mean it cannot be useful.

Despite the emphasis on Ceremony on the cover, the book also goes into various aspects including prewedding activities that are American centric. It also covers, choosing venues, the wedding, music, guests, lighting, Celebrant (officiant) and more. Some ceremony topics include:

- Creating the Community
- Convocation (calling an assembly)
- Rehearsal or Not
- The Vows (the emotional & spiritual binding)
- Guests reaffirming vows
- Ring exchange & blessings
- Traditional Customs from Around the World
- Ceremonial Flourishes

The book contains some beautiful concepts with inspirational wording and the brief descriptions of additional customs and flourishes are interesting however the book mostly has religious context, some outdated readings, with just one single page devoted to a civil ceremonies. There are planning worksheets though It is a light read with a few spelling errors, for couples and Celebrants alike, maybe newer Celebrants or the more experienced seeking a refresher but it is not high on this editor’s reading list as you have to read the entire book to find the useful good bits.

- <https://daphnerosekingma.com/books/>
- https://www.everand.com/book/462531165/Weddings-from-the-Heart-Contemporary-and-Traditional-Ceremonies-for-an-Unforgettable-Wedding?utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=google_search&utm_campaign=Everand_Google_DSA_NB_Desktop_RoW&utm_adgroup=Book&utm_term=&utm_matchtype=&utm_device=c&utm_network=s&utm_source=5&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIIn7Oj7MzNiAMVV6RmAh0qswZnEAAYAAAEgI_Qc_D_BwE



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 couples 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 just some dates & events to consider but you can find so much more on at [Event guide - Shoalhaven - South Coast NSW](#) or <https://www.internationaldays.org/>

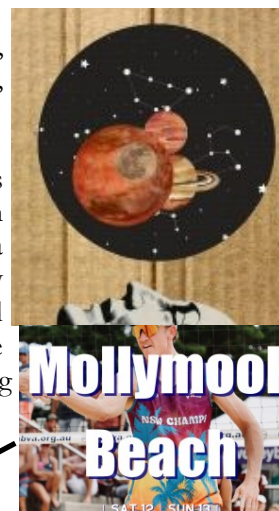
1st October 2024 International Day of Older Persons!



11-13 OCTOBER 2024

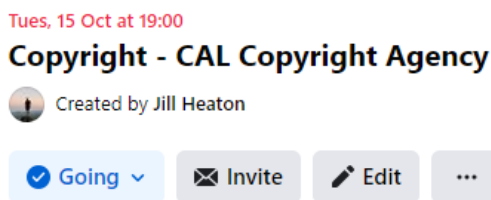
11 October 2024 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm,
Stargazing Experience, Sutton Street, Vincentia
info@yilahealingtrail.au, 0419 609 991
Escape ArtFest, promotes and encourages visual and performing Artists of the Southern Shoalhaven - Milton, Ulladulla and surrounding villages, from Manyana & Bendalong to Bawley Point. The main festival dates will be Friday 11th - Sunday 13th October, along with fringe events either side. And if you attend the art display at Milton, you might even bump into the editor admiring works by art student Jennifer who has two painting included.

<https://www.escapeartfest.com/milton-gallery-walk>
www.ourgallerymilton.com.au



12 October 2024 8am-6pm, Beach Volleyball NSW State Tour, Mollmook Beach
francisco.brignone@volleyballnsw.com.au, 0477785403

15 October 2024



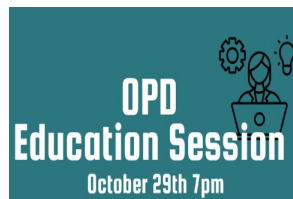
19 October 2024 Shoalhaven Orchid Society October Show
17 Birriley St, Bomaderry NSW 2541, Australia
20 October 2024 Wandandian Expo – Woodchop, Car Show & community stalls
D2683 Princes Hwy, Wandandian NSW, Australia

25-27 October 2024 Berry Writers' Festival
26 October 2024 Time: 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm couples explore A Taste of Cupitt's Weddings,
Tickets: \$119 per person



Tuesday 29 October 2024 at 19:00
OPD Study Group
Online event

7-8 pm AMC Education session focusing on OPD



31 October 2024 Halloween (see article on page 10)



A quick look back

12 Oct 1958	The 16 th Attorney General Sir Garfield Barwick QC was appointed and during his term introduced the Marriage Act 1961
13 Oct 2009	The first AMC Regional Meeting was held in the Illawarra, attended Robyn Foster, Martin Maroney, Terry Baxter, Linda and others
16 Oct 2008	Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) was formed
21 Oct 1986	Death of Lionel Murphy, (aged 64), he was the creator of the Civil Celebrants Program

COORDINATOR COMMENTS



We often take it for granted but health, both physical and mental, is essential to our work. We only get one chance at a ceremony and cannot succeed if we are in poor health. If not physically fit, we could tire easily during the ceremony and if not mentally fit, we could lose concentration and ramble in another direction.

I recently had to turn away ceremonies because I had a period of poor physical health that included coughing and wheezing. I realised it was not possible to interview a couple or family without stopping repeatedly for a coughing spasm, and worse still, it was definitely not possible to perform a ceremony in that state. I was constantly lacking in energy and exhausted by the simplest of tasks and so knew I could not do justice to a ceremony in this state and so handed them on to others.

The same applies to mental health. We have to be in a positive state of mind, fully alert of surroundings, to perform a ceremony. Anything less is robbing a family or couple of their wonderful event.

This caused me to consider of how the path to both physical and mental health is so similar. One impacts on the other. You simply look after yourself, consume well, exercise, and get plenty of sleep. That may sound simplistic but yet it is sound and works.

You look after yourself by ensuring that you take positive steps to good health and avoid actions and influences that would push you in another direction.

We must always seek improvement, while avoiding harm to ourselves and to others.

The expression *'garbage in, garbage out'* applies to both mental and physical health. We all know that if you eat rubbish foods, physical health suffers and that when physical health suffers, so does your mental health and energy.. The same applies when we consume garbage such as gossip, lies, conspiracy theories, stupidity, bad advice, and other nonsense, It impacts on your thoughts, on your thought processes and impacts upon your mental and physical health.

To be successful, surround yourself with successful people. To be energetic, do a energetic things.

As children, we were encouraged to eat certain foods and encountered various flavours and now as adults we

enjoy those same flavours and aromas because they take us back to the wonderful pleasures of childhood. If we were taught to eat healthy, we continued to do so.

When we were children we had to learn the alphabet and multiplications tables by repetition. We learned by rote, saying the same numbers or letters over and over again until the order was embedded in memory.

I was sitting with a family I knew well and knew to be kind, generous and helpful. They were nice people but isolated by distance and mobility. With limited social interaction, they often had a radio or TV on for company. The sounds were comforting to them however when the music stopped, a talk-back shock jock followed. The shock jock spouted all sorts of hate to incite reaction including racist, bigoted garbage, with anger, and fervour. Around the table, no one seemed to be aware of what was being said in the background, but then one person at the table suddenly mimicked the radio making a spiteful comment about a culture or religion, however the person was completely unaware that they were directly repeating the words that had just been broadcast from the radio. That was followed by yet another contributing and repeating more spiteful words from the radio. Astonished at how these kind people were speaking so very unkindly about others they didn't even know but with whom they had cultural commonality, I asked if they were aware of what had just happened and that they were actually repeating the shock jock, word for word. They all vehemently denied being influenced, insisting their words were their own.

It was like the frog in the blender, they had come to feel more and more comfortable with the nonsense they heard and were oblivious to the fact that the radio spouted garbage was being amplified in their own minds through its repetition despite it being in contradiction to their long held beliefs. They were learning hate and anger by rote. These kind people were kind no more. Their kind souls had been diminished and worse still, they were each showing signs of depression and diminished cognitive thought.

In future visits, instead of sitting at the table, we sat elsewhere, away from the radio and out in the fresh air where we were able to enjoy the beauty of our surroundings. The conversations and attitudes were gradually far more positive. Filled with pleasant and positive thoughts, in peaceful surroundings, the group returned to being thoughtful and kind. They were themselves again. Their souls had been restored. It was as simple as stepping away from the garbage and stopping unhealthy consumption.

As Celebrants, we are often isolated and in that isolation, can be more susceptible to outside influences, one way or the other, by what we consume, physically, mentally and spiritually. We just need to be certain that the consumption is positive and beneficial.

We have to certain that what we consume is good for our minds, our bodies, our relationships, our community, our clients and importantly, our souls.

Only when you look after yourself can you then look after others.

