

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

This newsletter, for NSW Sth Coast celebrants 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.

Cover Photo by Lou Szymkow
Jess & Garry's Wedding at Bendalong



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.



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The AMC Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 18th March 2025 at the Concord Oval Zurich Centre, Loftus Street, Concord NSW was a huge success.

Members travelled to the venue from far and wide, and another 30 joined via zoom. It was an exciting and vibrant meeting beginning with the announcement that it was perhaps the most important AMC AGM in ten years. The culmination of months of review, reform and revitalisation enabled a fresh start and a fresh committee.

The dedication of the past President, Annemarie McDonell was acknowledged with enthusiasm and her President's report was met with applause as were other reports outlining the incredible progress that has been made in the just 7 months since the work began on the new Constitution along with solutions devised and enacted to correct, update and push the AMC into the future. Huge strides.

There was an energy and excitement with important questions being asked and answered and steps to reform being outlined. The momentum carried forward into the election of a new committee with members enthusiastically stepping up and forward so that not only was every

position on the committee filled with a diverse selection of members, but there were others who immediately offered to serve on sub-committees.

The new President, Joy Allen, elected unopposed, said *"there is still much work to be done but communication is to be improved, and with the support of members, a strategic plan, improved financial control, legal compliance, and a budget will ensure a future for our AMC"*.

Vice-President, Kamal Al Saliby graciously accepted her reappointment..

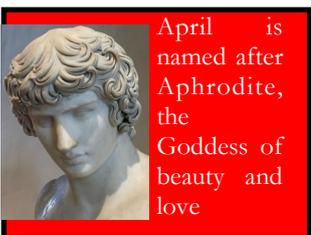
Treasurer Brian Daniels revealed that a budget was already in the works and he introduced a motion, adding signatories to accounts to add better security and consistency to funds management.

When nominees were called from the floor for Secretary, the Chair joked the observation that a number of people were suddenly sitting on their hands but the wonderful Carolyn Clarke offered to resume her role which was met with applause and unanimous expressions of thanks and appreciation.

The Public Officer outlined how full legal compliance is successfully being achieved.

The AMC web designer Ash Reynolds revealed improvements being made to the rebuilt AMC website and some exciting plans for the direction of promoting AMC Australia wide and beyond and how the new webpage SEO was already showing a significant increase in traffic.

An incredible amount of business was conducted in just over an 1 hour and ended with cheers, applause and lots of hugs.



April is named after Aphrodite, the Goddess of beauty and love

HUGE ISSUE NEXT MONTH
Everything from choosing PA's, microphones, stands, caring for, transporting & placing equipment and ceremony preparation as well as self care.



Prior to the AGM, Training sessions began for volunteers wanting to know more about the AMC committee and how to take part. It was an exciting step toward ensuring ongoing action, compliance, and to creating a stronger and more supportive AMC with greater member involvement in decision making, strategies and plans for the future of our AMC. Training will continue and that among other steps, will continue to progress AMC into the future. **Exciting times ahead!**



AMC ON FACEBOOK

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

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

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

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

Education Session

April 29th 7pm
Ailsa Kemp
from Creativelyjane

The invaluable AMC Educations sessions delivered via Zoom are a great membership benefit and details can be found on the [EVENTS](#) section of the AMC Website and member Facebook page. The next session is:

Tues, 29 April 2025
at 7:00pm

[Education Session - Instagram with Creativelyjane](#)

What we see

 Joy Allen President	 Kamal Al Saliby Vice President	 Carolyn Clarke Secretary	 Brian Daniels Treasurer
 Alexandra Bradley NSW	 Ash Reynolds NSW	 Heather Taylor NSW	 Jennifer Cahill NSW
 Jennifer Ryder VIC	 Jill Heaton NSW	 Shannon Davies VIC	

Joining AMC is easy and currently discounted pro-rata until June

Poetry

We

(For the marriage of childhood friends) – By Lou Szymkow, 04/09/2018

We played, we laughed
 We grew, we smiled,
 We felt each other's pains and enjoyed each other's gains
 We were children and then we were teens
 We lived our lives and all the in-betweens
 We fell in love along the way and now cannot imagine it
 being any other way
 We now take each others' hands and hearts and today
 exchange rings, so we'll never be apart

"quotations"



Everyone has a friend during each stage of life. Some are fortunate to have the same friend in all stages of life (from unknown)

A true friend is someone who understands your past, believes in your future and accepts you just as you are. (from unknown)

The one you choose to marry is all of that but more, As this is the person before you, who treasures your past: the good and the not-so-good, because that has made you the person you are today; believes in your future together and can see no other, and cherishes you just as you are. – by Lou Szymkow

Strive for the impossible and achieve the extraordinary. (from various sources)

“When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

— Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

“When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.”

— Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

“A life with love will have some thorns, but a life without love will have no roses.”— Author unknown

“Love is like standing in wet cement, the longer you stay the harder to leave and you can never leave without leaving your marks behind.” by Author unknown

Two Are Better Than One

Ecclesiastes 4 – New International Version (NIV)

There was a man all alone;
 he had neither son nor brother.
 There was no end to his toil,
 yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
 “For whom am I toiling,” he asked,
 “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?”
 This too is meaningless—
 a miserable business!

Two are better than one,
 because they have a good return for their labour:
 If either of them falls down,
 one can help the other up.
 But pity anyone who falls
 and has no one to help them up.
 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep
 warm.
 But how can one keep warm alone?
 Though one may be overpowered,
 two can defend themselves.
 A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

In Gratitude

Pravin Gupta, ©copyright 2017

(NB: the author is pleased to share provided he is acknowledged)

A land – where Mother Nature
 Has laid out her heart for you,
 And calls you out, to share her wealth,
 And harks, to bring the best in you.
 Where eyes do smile, and hearts do care,
 Where every man is treated fair,
 Where people of lands – far and near
 Are welcomed, and given a fair share.
 Your colour of skin, or your native land,
 Or the God – to whom you bow your head,
 It matters none, if with love in heart,
 With those in need, you share your bread.
 And raise your hand – not to smite,
 But for someone to help – along the road,
 And share the joys of life with all,
 So help me ever, in this land O Lord!
 With pride and love, in my heart I say,
 For this land I share, with all of ya,
 To the angels above, I call out loud,
 Thank the Lord, for Australia!

***“Success is
 going from
 failure to failure
 without losing
 enthusiasm.”***

- Winston Churchill



Letters to the Editor



Love this day when the newsletter arrives

Leanne McKay

Awesome newsletter as usual. I love the section on weddings from the past. Great poem about grief too. You are very clever.

I really hope marriage and funeral celebrants keep complaining to the government about the lack of service at BDM. I haven't forgotten about writing to the Minister. I will get you a draft asap and you can tell me what you think. I hope your readers don't get tired of seeing my name!

I had some exciting news today. I've just been invited by the South Eastern Area Local Health District to be on the steering committee for the BEACON Project (**Building End of life Awareness, Compassion & Outreach Networks**) which will be commencing soon. I told them I'd love to be on the committee as long as I am not asked to be Secretary! I met with the coordinator last year but wasn't sure how long it would take to get off the ground. I'm really looking forward to seeing what I can contribute.

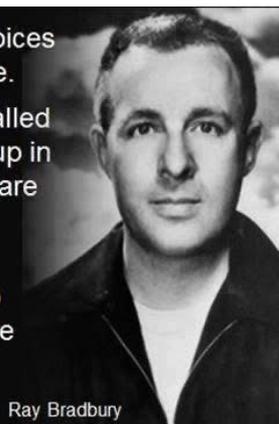
Sharon Swinbourne

Thank you Sharon Swinbourne for your informative article in the latest AMC South Coast newsletter. Really appreciated, most informative and fact based.
Phil Timbrell

Many people hear voices when no-one is there.

Some of them are called "mad" and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day.

Others are called "writers" and they do pretty much the same thing.



Ray Bradbury



Information from the NSW BDM is often included in this newsletter, but Civil Celebrants are Authorised to perform ceremonies anywhere within Australian borders, and some on the south coast are very close to Victoria and so it is important that we know have information on the Vic BDM.

The Vic BDM has updated its email address updated to reflect Births, Deaths and Marriages being part of the Department of Government Services and so the new address is for all service partner enquiries, including:

- when setting up your account or updating your contact details
- Logging into your account
- Difficulty submitting a registration or application.

If you need to contact Vic BDM, you can email bdmregistrations@dgs.vic.gov.au

If required, they will forward to the relevant team within the Vic BDM.

They continue to update their website with more guidance on common queries from customers and service partners and so for more information, visit their contact us page and check out their service partners section for further advice.

The Department of Government Services' purpose is to improve how Victorians and business engage with government, and to accelerate digital transformation and corporate services reform across the Victorian Public Service.

Any emails sent to the old email address (bdmregistrations@justice.vic.gov.au) will be forwarded to the updated one.

Their other email addresses, including bdmcommunications@justice.vic.gov.au, will transition to new @dgs.vic.gov.au addresses at a later date.

Here are some more links for more information

- ◇ [Certificate turnaround times](#)
- ◇ [Proof of identity](#)
- ◇ [Get a birth certificate](#)



H HISTORY

WEDDING DRESSES THROUGH THE YEARS



Wedding dress from 1891. Until the late 1960s wedding dresses reflected the styles of the day; since then they have often been based on Victorian styles.

<https://daily.jstor.org/a-natural-history-of-the-wedding-dress/>

Bridal Guide offers this quick and easy guide to breakdown the various wedding gown silhouettes, and which body types are ideal for each style.

<https://www.bridalguide.com/blogs/fashion-beauty/wedding-dress-silhouettes>



Qing-dynasty styled traditional Chinese wedding dress & phoenix crown headpiece still used in Taiwan.
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_dress



en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_dress
1880



1890

Wedding Dress - Silk - Ecrú Lace - Craftmanship - Victorian Wedding Dress

<https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/1658605014/1890-wedding-dress-silk-ecru>



1864

A French wedding dress, (via [Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute](https://www.metmuseum.org))



Marriage Celebrant Matters Newsletters

These links will take you to the current and past MLCS Newsletters:

- ◇ [Newsletter – Marriage Celebrant Matters: Autumn 2025 Edition \[PDF 1.39 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Marriage Celebrant Matters: 50th Anniversary Edition \[PDF 1.43 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Autumn 2023 edition \[PDF 551.83 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Autumn 2023 edition \[DOCX 4.29 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Spring/Summer 2019/20 edition \[PDF 188.93 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Spring/Summer 2019/20 edition \[DOCX 202.75 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Autumn 2019 edition \[PDF 436.35 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Winter 2018 edition \[PDF 225.09 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Winter 2018 edition \[DOCX 52.55 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Spring/Summer 2017/18 edition \[PDF 1.26 MB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Spring/Summer 2017/18 edition \[DOCX 52.88 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2017 edition \[PDF 418.45 KB\]](#)
- ◇ [Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2017 edition \[DOCX 42.33 KB\]](#)

To review your responsibilities as a Commonwealth registered marriage celebrant, go to: [Your responsibilities as a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant](#). You can also download forms and resources for your work as an authorised marriage celebrant. Access fact sheets, forms and celebrant newsletters at [Download resources](#)

New Guidelines

The Guidelines on the Marriage Act 1961 for authorised celebrants has been a long-valued resource for authorised celebrants, and includes a comprehensive outline of legal requirements set out in the Marriage Act and Marriage Regulations 2017 and best practice. Given that law and policies evolve over time, we are pleased to announce that an overhaul of the Guidelines is close to completion. MLCS has been working with the Celebrant Associations and Networks to prepare new draft Guidelines that will soon be open for a three-month consultation. Expect an email with further information, a link to the draft, and instructions on how to provide feedback.

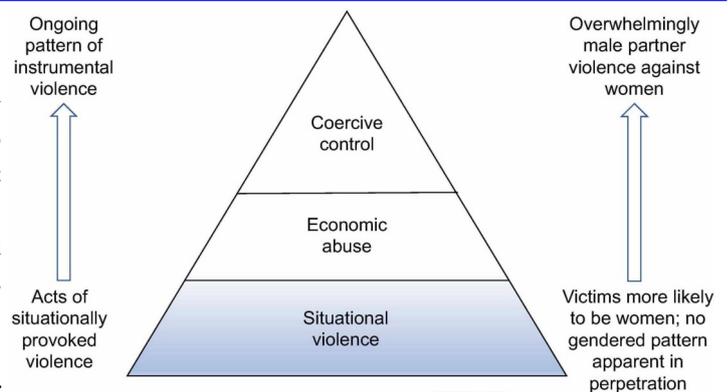
MLCS Survey Coming Soon

MLCS is planning to conduct a survey of all Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrants to help identify and plan for ongoing improvements to the Marriage Celebrants Program. The last survey was carried out several years ago and updated information will help us understand the sometimes-dizzying pace of the industry, and the trends celebrants are observing. Dry statistics are useful in some ways, but nothing can substitute for your well-informed observations and experience of the reality of marriage celebrancy. MLCS' intention is for the survey to be an annual event, providing an important regular opportunity for you to offer comment and ideas about what is working well in the Program, and what could be done better or differently. MLCS is strongly encourage you to tell them how celebrancy is changing, and how this affects you and your vital work supporting marriage in Australia. MLCS looks forward to hearing from you

COERCIVE CONTROL

The MLCS has included this important article in its Autumn Marriage Celebrants Matters Newsletter.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments released the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence (National Principles) in September 2023. The National Principles set out a shared understanding of the common features and impacts of coercive control, as well as guiding considerations to inform responses to the issue. Coercive control is when someone uses patterns of abusive behaviour against another person. It can involve physical and non-physical abuse and, over time, creates fear and takes away the person's freedom and independence. This dynamic almost always underpins family and domestic violence. Marriage celebrants may encounter relationships where someone is perpetrating family and domestic violence against their partner, or situations in which consent to marriage was obtained through coercion. The National Principles, and related supporting resources, can help you better identify coercive control and respond appropriately. These supporting resources include videos and factsheets, an Easy Read version and language translations. You can access them by visiting the Attorney-General's Department's website at www.ag.gov.au/coercive-control



Contextual factors





Australian Bureau of Statistics

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/marriages-and-divorces-Australia/latest-release>
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/marriages-and-divorces-Australia/latest-release#data-downloads>

Marriages

There were 118,439 marriages registered in Australia in 2023, down from the record high of 127,161 marriages registered in 2022 but well above COVID-19 pandemic related lows in 2020 and 2021.

The crude marriage rate (the number of marriages divided by the population aged 16 and over) was 5.5 marriages per 1,000 people 16 years and over in 2023, comparable to the 5.6 recorded in 2019 before the pandemic.

The median age at marriage has increased to 32.9 years for males (from 32.5 years in 2022) and 31.2 years for females (from 30.9 years in 2022).

There were 4,558 marriages registered for couples of the same or non-binary gender, comparable to the 4,593 registered in 2022. Marriage between people of the same sex or gender was legislated from December 2017.

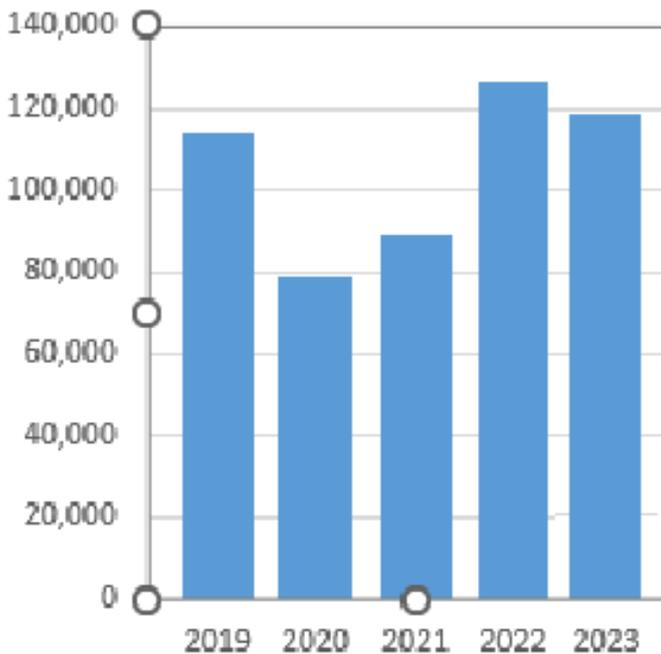


MARRIAGES BY STATE	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NSW	39,597	27,609	27,314	44,953	39,018
Victoria	28,632	16,628	18,740	33,231	29,816
Queensland	22,150	15,917	21,627	25,014	23,826
South Australia	7,122	5,429	6,778	7,268	7,782
Western Australia	11,659	9,561	10,305	11,237	13,120
Tasmania	2,388	2,016	2,328	2,821	2,506
Northern Territory	806	549	796	819	794
ACT	1,461	1,278	1,279	1,818	1,562

KNOW YOUR MARKET

Regular readers of this newsletter will recall the frequent assertion that to succeed, you must target your market. These statistics will help you see the largest market group but evaluate your own booking and find who is reacting to your marketing. What age and group are booking you?

If most of your clients are under 25, or over 40, and your percentage of booking exceeds the national average for that group, you have identified your niche and target market, or conversely, the gap in your marketing.



Key statistics

- 118,439 marriages were registered in 2023, which is 6.9% fewer than the record high of 127,161 in 2022.
- The most popular marriage date was 11/11/2023, with 1,799 marriages on that day.
- The number of divorces granted in 2023 fell 1.1% to 48,700.

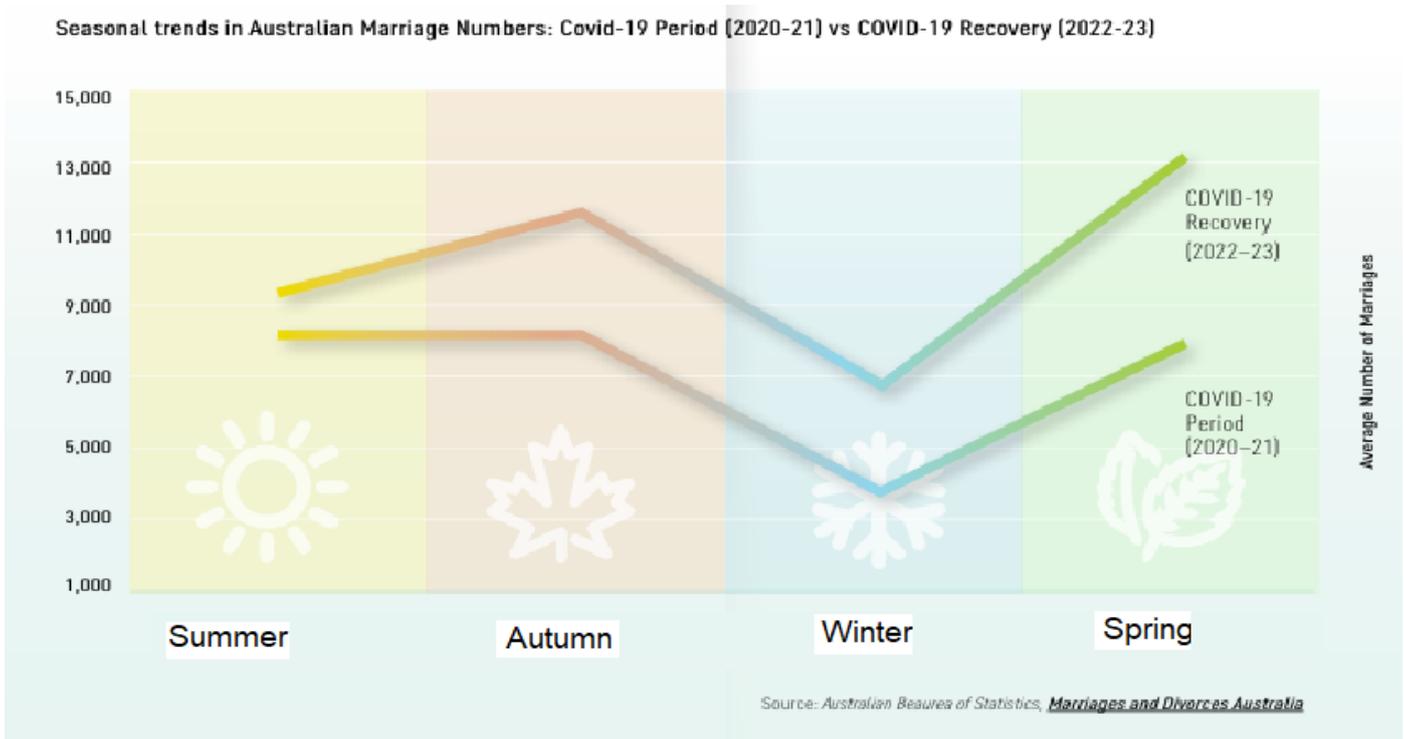




Australian Bureau of Statistics

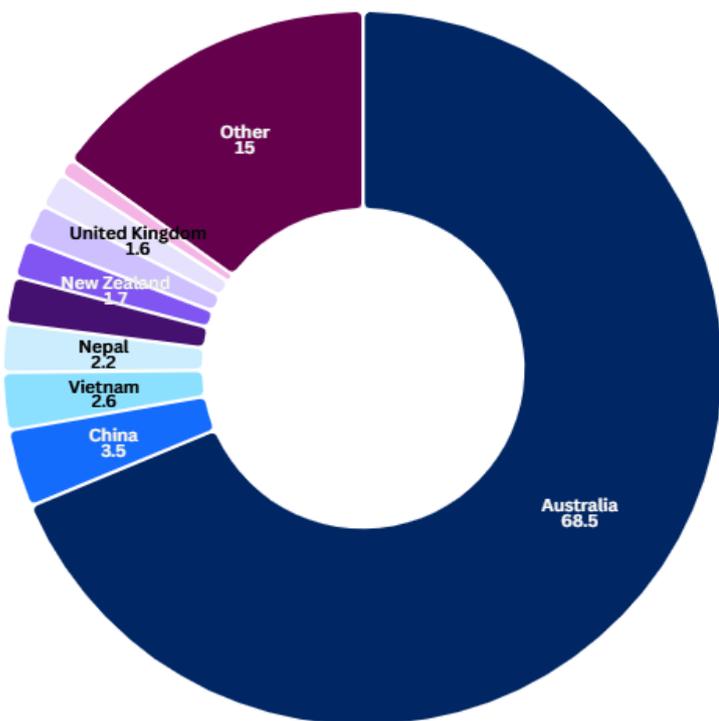
The latest statistics courtesy of the MLCS & ABS

In this next graph, from the Celebrant Matters Newsletter issued by MLCS, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has reported that the most popular date to marry in Australia in 2023 was 11th November 2023 with 1,799 marriages. Other popular dates were 23 September 2023 (1,699 marriages) and 18 November 2023 (1,682 marriages). The first line charts the number of marriages by season during COVID-19, from 2020 to 2021. The second line in this chart, show the number of marriages by season during the COVID-19 recovery period, from 2022 to 2023.



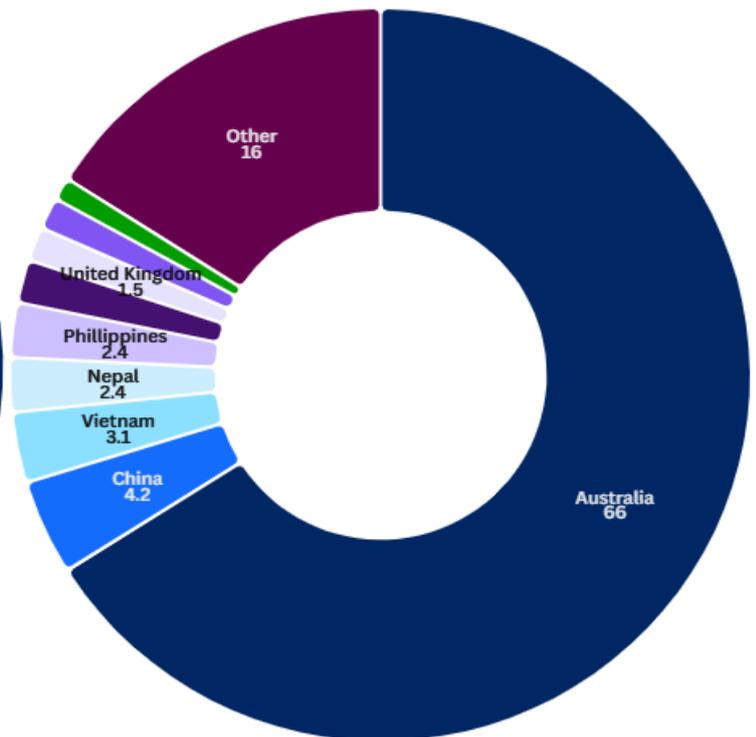
Groom Country of Birth, Sept - Nov 2024

Displayed as %

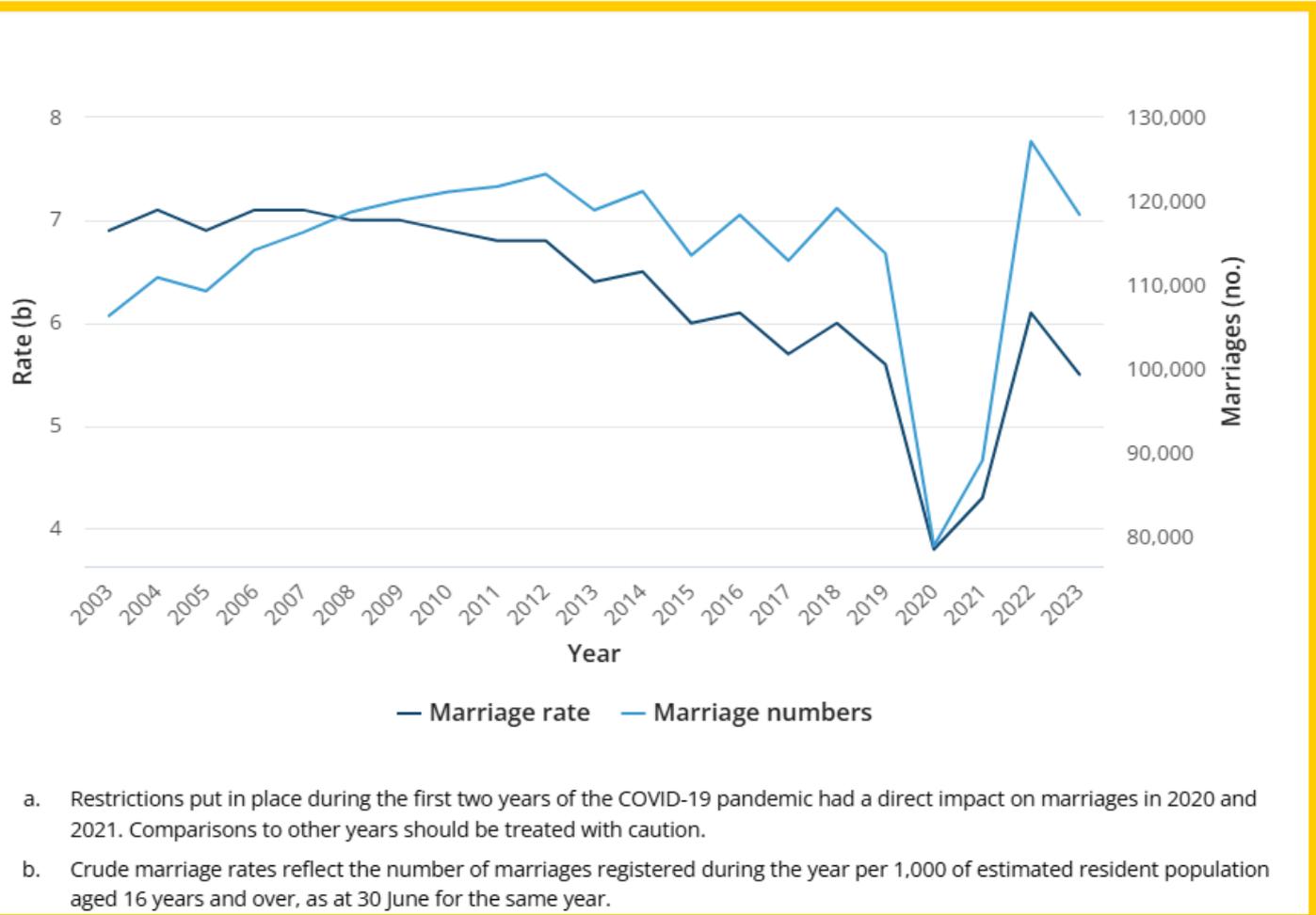


Bride Country of Birth, Sept - Nov 2024

Displayed as %



- Australia
- China
- Vietnam
- Nepal
- Phillippines
- India
- United Kingdom
- New Zealand
- Indonesia
- Other



[This data comes from Marriages and Divorces, Australia, 2023.](#)

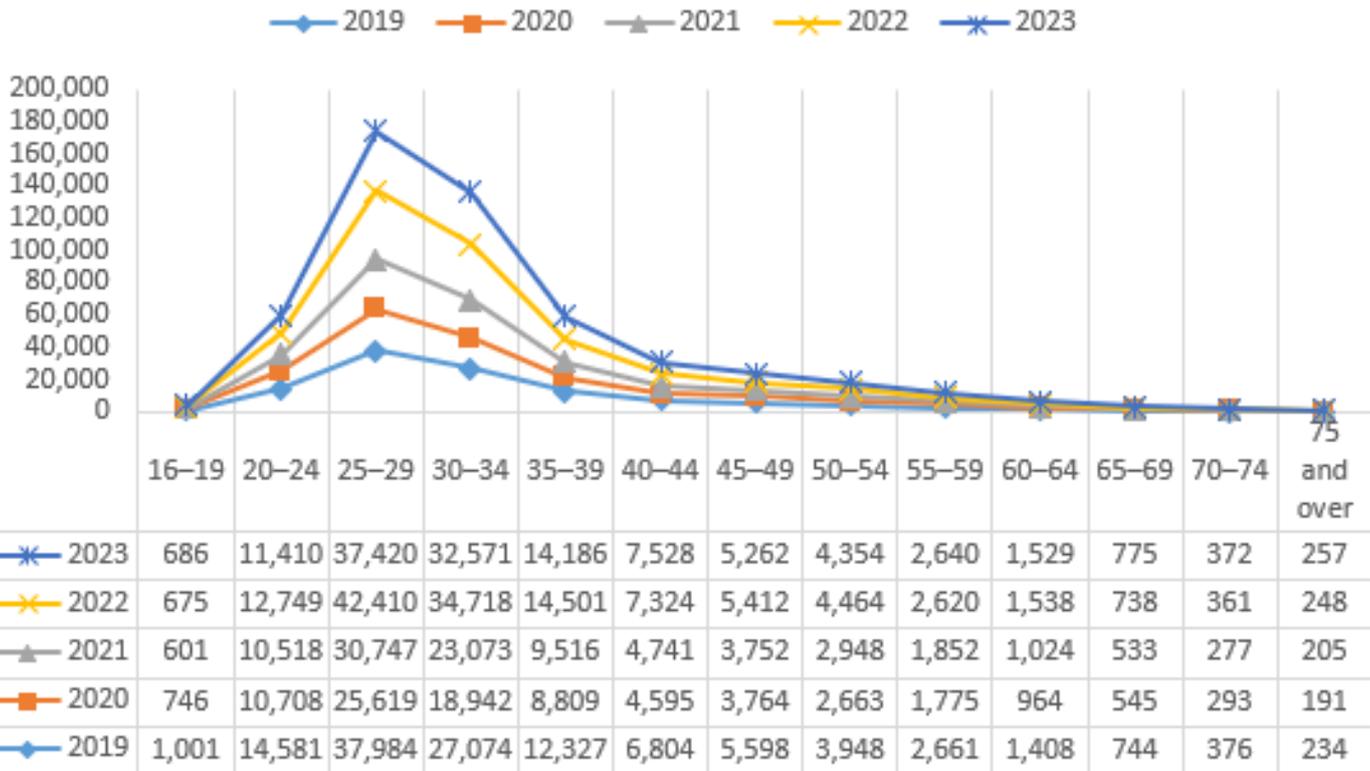
For more information, visit the [Marriages and Divorces, Australia methodology](#) to understand more about how this data was collected. You will find this and more at the [Australian Bureau of Statistics website](#); and if you have an enquiry about these statistics or to get assistance, just go to [ABS Contact us](#)

[The ABS privacy policy](#) outlines how ABS handles any personal information that you have provided to ABS.

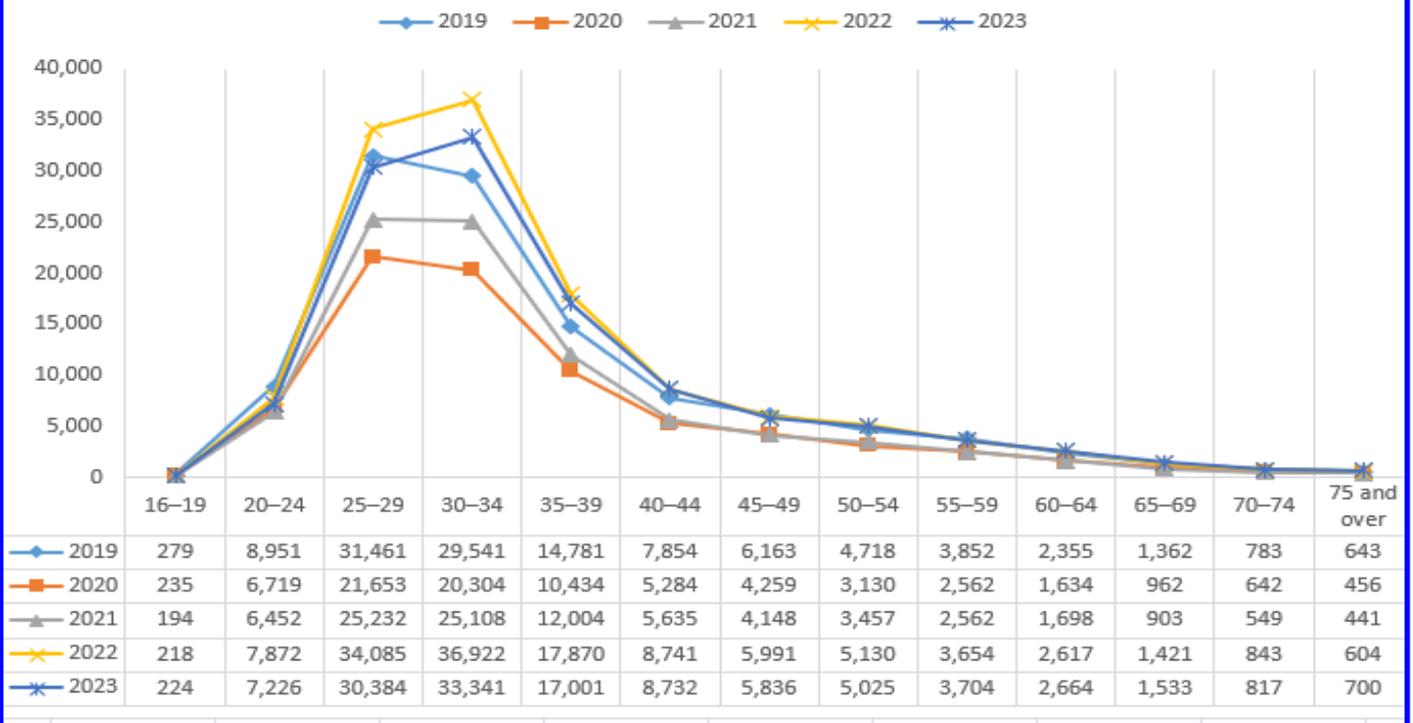
All information is of course © [Commonwealth of Australia](#) but most can be downloaded free from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics website](#)



FEMALE MARRIAGES REGISTERED BY AGE



MALE MARRIAGES REGISTERED BY AGE



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Marriages including same and non-binary gender					
Male marriages of the same gender	2,260	1,116	1,075	1,767	1,735
Female marriages of the same gender	3,245	1,785	1,770	2,667	2,619
Marriages including a person of non-binary gender	na	na	na	159	204
Total marriages including the same or non-binary gender	5,505	2,901	2,845	4,593	4,558
As a proportion of all marriages %	4.8	3.7	3.2	3.6	3.8

The writer's interpretations of these statistics is that that more women marry at about 26 years of age , while men marry mostly at around 32 and most are born in Australia. The majority are on the east coast of Australia. Marriage of couples who were of the same sex constituted or non-binary were, at 5,505 only 4.9% of marriages in 2019 but that dropped in 2020 and 2021 but has climbed back up to 4,558, or 3.8% in 2023.

YOUR COFFIN CHOICE

Coffins & Urns from Ghana and in the United Kingdom

<https://www.businessinsider.com/12-bizarre-caskets-and-coffins-from-around-the-world-2015-6/#soccer-fans-can-have-their-ashes-kept-in-a-soccer-shaped-urn-created-by-viennas-municipal-funeral-services-3>
<https://www.crazycoffins.co.uk/>



Some of the coffin makers at Kane Kwai Carpentry



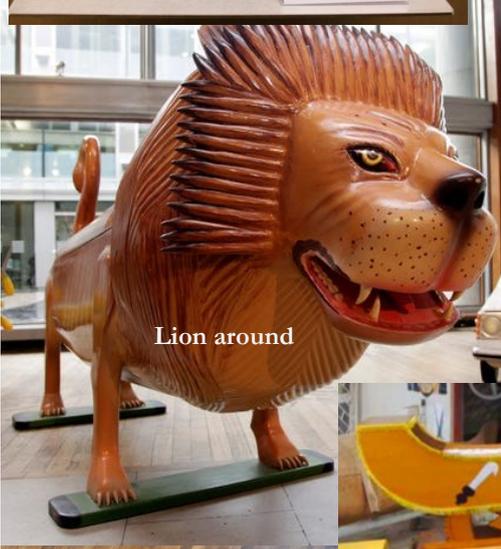
Kane Kwei Carpentry Workshop
Teebie, Greater Accra Region, Ghana



An urn for the soccer fan



For the traveller



Lion around



The British choice



Strumming



The Matthew Stanford Robison Memorial



The **Matthew Stanford Robison Memorial** is located in Salt Lake City Cemetery, Utah, USA. and became a Utah tourist attraction appearing on several travel websites as a place to visit.

When faced with a tragedy, some may recess into grief and others will do what they can to alleviate the suffering of others.

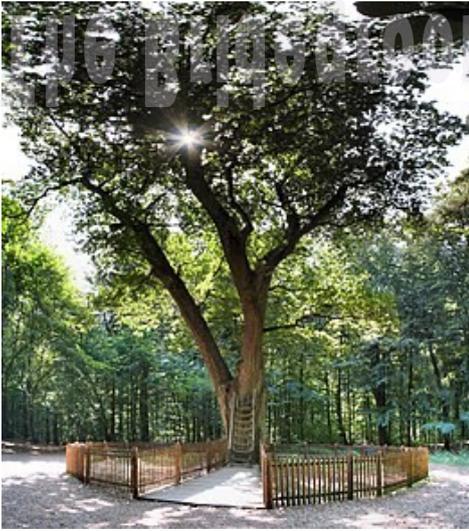
Matthew Stanford Robison was born blind and partially paralysed, on 23rd September 1988. His parents, Ernest and Anneke Robison, started a Nonprofit organization called [Ability Found](#) in 1993 to help people with disabilities, buy medical equipment.

When their son **Matthew Stanford Robison** died, on 21st February 1999, at age 10, they decided to make their son's gravesite a place of joy and inspiration and so in 2000 Ernest Robison designed the statue depicting Matthew rising up out of his wheelchair and reaching skyward free from his earthly afflictions in the afterlife. [Ability Found](#) sells replicas of the boy's memorial.

[Matthew Stanford Robison Memorial - Wikipedia](#)



The Bridegroom's Oak



Known as *Die Bräutigamseiche* (the Bridegroom's Oak), there is an ancient tree deep in northern Germany's Dodauer Forest, 100km north-east of Hamburg, outside the German town of Eutin, in [Schleswig-Holstein](#), that has been matching

singles and is credited with more than 100 marriages.

The **Bridegroom's Oak** is a registered natural monument, and a hole high in the trunk, reached by a ladder, functions as a public letter box for people seeking love partners, and it even has a postal address.

Today, people from all over the planet write letters addressed to the tree, hoping that for the price of a postage stamp, they may find a partner.

On arrival, a postman makes his way through the woods and then climbs a 3 metre wooden ladder to deliver envelopes addressed to the 500-year-old oak tree.

The Postman for 20 years, starting in 1984, 72-year-old Karl-Heinz Martens is quoted as saying *"There's something so magical and romantic about it. On the internet, facts and questions match people, but at the tree, it's a beautiful coincidence – like fate."*

The tree has a trunk circumference of 5 metres (16 ft), a spread of 30 metres (98 ft), and a height of 25 metres (82 ft) and is surrounded by a wooden fence except for a path leading to the ladder. The hole is approximately 3 metres (9.8 ft) off the ground and 30 cm (1 ft) wide. Since the mid-1990s, the crown has been roped to prevent its collapsing. In 2014 a fungal infection (*Laetiporus sulphureus*) was detected in the trunk and branches and they were shortened to reduce wear and the cabling was renewed.

There is a legend that the tree was planted as a gesture of thanks by the son of a Celtic chieftain after he had been tied to a tree in the forest and was released by a Christian girl. However, this legend is believed by historians to have been invented by Christian missionaries to reinterpret pagan worship of oak trees. A service is still held at the tree on Whit Monday.

Another legend suggests that if a girl walks around the tree three times under a full moon, thinking of her beloved and without speaking or laughing; she will be married within the year.

The name of the tree derives from an incident in the late 19th century. The daughter of the head forester, Ohrt, and the son of a Leipzig chocolate maker, Schütte-Felsche, were in love but her father disapproved of the relationship, so they secretly exchanged letters by leaving them in the hole in the tree's trunk. When Herr Ohrt gave in and granted his permission, they were married under the tree on 2 June 1891.

The history of the oak and word of mouth led to people writing to the tree in the hope of finding a love partner. In 1927 a ladder was set up and later the postal service began to deliver letters to the tree. Letters are deposited six days a week, in the middle of the day. They are from both men and women; a retired postman, Karl-Heinz Martens, said in 2006 that he used to deliver four or five a day, from all over the world and as it is a public letter box; anyone can open, read, take or answer the letters.

One man from North Rhine-Westphalia on a spa holiday in Schleswig-Holstein found a letter from a

woman who lived 20 kilometres from him and wound up marrying her.

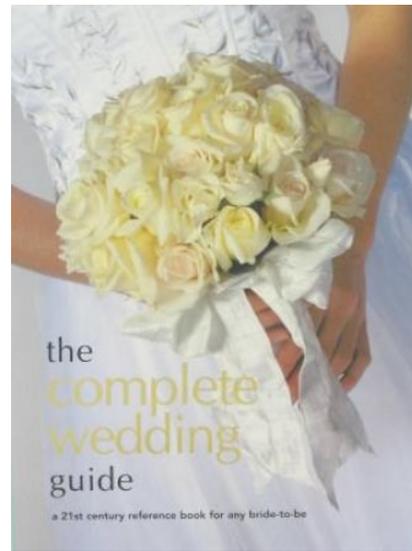
Karl-Heinz Martens said that he knew of two 25-year marriages brought about by the tree, and that he, himself had met his wife in the 1990s when she wrote directly to him at the tree after seeing him on a television programme about the oak.

On 25 April 2009 the oak itself was symbolically married to the Himmelgeist Chestnut [de], a horse-chestnut in Düsseldorf, the second tree in Germany to have a postal address. The "marriage" lasted for six years until the chestnut died in 2015 and was reduced to a trunk that was made into a sculpture.

- <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20180213-in-germany-the-worlds-most-romantic-postbox>

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridegroom%27s_Oak





The complete wedding guide

ISBN 9781845094218

Published: 01 / 01 / 2006

Released: 01 / 08 / 2007

The publishers describe this book as a 21st century reference book for any bride-to-be but readers should note that it was first published in 2002 and republished in

2006 in the UK (but printed in Dubai) and so has a distinct British influence. In some respects, that is great as the English love ceremony and tradition but the downside is that because there is a strong consideration of 'British tradition', and it is very light on some aspects while others are not necessarily relevant to Australians unless a familiarity with the Anglican Church and England's unique marriage laws is required. The publication predates marriage equality, and Australia is far more progressive in many ways when it comes to marriage and whilst some things stay the same, there has been significant change in society, culture and fashion since publication. Having made those points, the book is an interesting read, offering a range of ideas and detail. It is boasted that 'The Complete Wedding Guide' brings together two top bridal consultants, Sarah Mason and Ailsa Petchley, *"to give you all the advice you need in one fun-packed volume, written especially for the modern bride"* and is *"every modern woman's ultimate wedding investment"*.



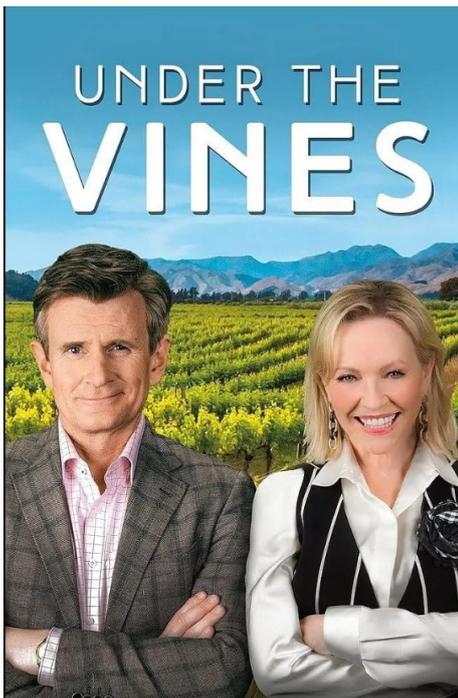
The book includes sections on budgets, dresses, shoes, the perfect flowers, hair and beauty, catering and goes on to include inspiring ideas with specially commissioned photographs by Lucinda Symons.

There are also checklists and simple guides.

From a Celebrant's view, knowledge of traditions and their origins is always helpful because who has never been asked to advise on matters unrelated to the legalities included in the Ceremony.

For those who also work as reception MC's, the tips on speeches and their order, and an overview of a typical schedule and the do's & don'ts, and the tips sections, are usefully informative.

It is a good read and can assist with communication and guidance that you as a Celebrant or as an MC, can offer to your couples.



The third season is now available on ABC iView and episode 6 presents a few gems for Celebrants, though the earlier seasons and episodes build to this episode.

Rebecca Gibney and Charles Edwards star as two city slickers who inherit a failing vineyard in rural New

Zealand, the only problems are that neither of them has ever done a hard day's work- and they despise one another.

Under The Vines, is a light hearted and entertaining romantic comedy NZ style containing brilliant performances from an array of excellent actors and how could it not succeed with the incredible Rebecca Gibney. Yes, it is predictable, but delightfully so.

Throughout the series, we see various romances and quite some tension especially between the two leads, but it in the last episode of series 3, that we see the co-lead character, Daisy, (*Rebecca Gibney*) finally get to the altar.

However, before she gets there, we encounter a naming ceremony complete with 'heart parents', a sacrificial goat, and later, an unexpected renewal of vows and so from a Celebrant's perspective, is worth have a look even if it just for ceremony ideas.

https://www.imdb.com/video/vi1540606233/?ref_=vp_tsp_tr



Melbourne fraudster sentenced for swindling \$35,000 via cyber scam

- [Melbourne fraudster sentenced for swindling \\$35,000 via cyber scam | Australian Federal Police](#)

A Melbourne man charged as part of an international police takedown of a cybercrime platform has been ordered to pay \$34,990 compensation for fraud-related offences.

The man, 21, was sentenced today (7 March, 2025) in Melbourne Magistrates' Court after pleading guilty on Monday (3 March, 2025) to seven charges.

In addition to the compensation order, the man was sentenced to an 18-month community corrections order to perform 200 hours of community service. He was also sentenced to three months' imprisonment to be served as a good behaviour order in the community under a Recognisance Release Order.

The man was a user of LabHost, a now defunct cybercrime platform allegedly marketed as a 'one-stop-shop' for phishing, which was brought down in April, 2024.

Phishing is a technique that criminals use to trick victims into providing personal information such as their banking logins, credit card details and passwords, often through fraudulent text and email links to seemingly legitimate websites.

The LabHost platform enabled cybercriminals to fraudulently replicate more than 170 websites of reputable banks, government entities and other major organisations, to trick unsuspecting victims into believing they were legitimate.

They would then send texts and emails to potential victims with a prompt to log in to their accounts

via the fraudulent website and unwittingly provide sensitive personal information.

As part of the international takedown, an Australian-based operation coordinated by the AFP-led Joint Policing Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (JPC3) resulted in more than 200 investigators from the AFP and state and territory police execute 22 search warrants across five states.

Investigators took down 207 criminal servers and charged two men with cybercrime offences, including the Melbourne man.

The Melbourne man had fraudulently obtained the personal information of 11 victims, including birth dates, addresses and phone numbers, via a phishing scam. He then used the information from two victims to steal \$34,990.

Following his arrest, investigators found a conversation on an encrypted messaging platform with images of multiple victims' personal information, including Medicare cards, passports, taxation notices and credit card details.

The man pleaded guilty to:

- One count of possessing identification information, contrary to section 192C of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- One count of using identification information to commit indictable offence, contrary to section 192B of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- One count of dishonestly obtain or deal with personal financial information belonging to another without their consent, contrary to section 480.4 of the *Criminal Code* (Cth);
- One count of attempting to obtain a financial advantage by deception, contrary to sections 82 and 321M of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic);
- One count of obtaining a financial advantage by deception, contrary to section 82 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic); and
- One count of refusing to comply with a 3LA order, contrary to section 3LA(6) of the *Criminal Code* (Cth).

AFP Detective Acting Inspector Kris Wilson said the takedown of LabHost was a reminder of the impact a united, global law enforcement front could achieve.

"The AFP has proven experience in working side-by-side with our international and domestic law enforcement partners to take the fight to any type of criminal, or cybercriminal, who targets Australians," Det a/Insp Wilson said.

"Cybercriminals will use any tools and tricks to exploit people for their own profit – in this case, it is mimicking trusted websites to swindle a significant sum of money.

From previous page...



“We urge Australians to be wary of phishing scams and ‘think before they click’ – take your time when reading text messages and emails, look out for strange letters or symbols in hyperlinks and avoid any deal that seems too good to be true.”

The JPC3 brings together Australian law enforcement and key industry and international partners to fight cybercrime and prevent harm and financial loss to the Australian community.

If you believe you are a victim of a phishing scam, or see any discrepancies in your bank account, please contact your bank and report the matter to [Report Cyber](#).

The JPC3 is committed to equipping all Australians with the knowledge and resources to protect themselves against cybercrime.

Watch the JPC3 [cybercrime prevention videos](#) and protect yourself from being a victim of cybercrime.

If there is an immediate threat to life or risk of harm, call 000.

If you are a victim of cybercrime, report it to police using [Report Cyber](#).

*The court ordered compensation is paid to the Victorian State Government victims of crime fund. Victims in relation to this matter can apply to be compensated for their loss from this victim of crimes fund.

Type of scam	How to report
If you're the victim of identity theft or cybercrime	For help call ID Support NSW on 1800.001.040 or complete an online form .
If the scam originates in NSW and you know the name of the business or trader	Make an online complaint to NSW Fair Trading or call 13 32 20
If you are not sure about where the scammers are from	Report the scam to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)
For overseas or interstate scams	Report the scam to the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC)

- [How to report a scam or cybercrime](#)
- [What to do if you've been scammed](#)
- [Identity theft and credit reporting](#)
- [How to spot a scam](#)
- [Example of an email scam](#)
- [Example of an SMS scam](#)
- [Free online safety presentations](#)
- [Links](#)
- [How to stay cyber safe](#)
- [How to protect your identity – MoneySmart](#)
- [Scams and cybercrime – NSW Fair Trading](#)
- [Stay safe online translated information – eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Safeguard your identity – NSW Government](#)
- [Support services for individuals – ID Support NSW](#)
- [Service NSW cyber incident](#)
- [Report fraud](#)

SCAM ALERT

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FAKE FUNERAL LIVE STREAMS

Scammers are creating fake funeral live streams and fundraising pages. Scammers contact friends and family with a fake live stream link leading to a malicious website that steals your personal information and often requests payment and/or credit card details.

- Funeral directors will never request payment to attend a funeral, either in-person or to watch via a live stream.
- Funeral directors will never send you a social media friend request, private messages or request your personal details.
- Contact the funeral home directly for live streaming details.
- Contact family or friends directly before donating to a fundraising page. If in doubt, don't donate.

If you believe you have been the victim of scam contact your local Police or report at <https://www.cyber.gov.au/report-and-recover> or Police Assistance Line 131 444.

COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

PHONE 📞

BE AWARE OF YOUR SPEAKING VOLUME.

Some people just don't know how loud they are, especially when their attention is focused on the person on the other line.

DON'T ANSWER YOUR PHONE WHEN MEETING WITH OTHERS.

If you answer a call, you're basically telling the person you're meeting that someone else is more deserving of your time than they are.

DON'T PLACE YOUR PHONE ON THE TABLE WHEN MEETING OTHERS.

Otherwise, it looks like you're ready to drop them and connect with someone else.

LET THE OTHER PERSON KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE THEM ON SPEAKERPHONE.

If you must put someone on speakerphone, make sure you immediately let them know who else is in the room with you.



As Celebrants, we tend to be very good communicators but there can be lapses when it comes to using mobile phones largely because of their convenience and pocket size resulting in them being with us at all times.

We almost always ask guests to turn off their mobile phones before a ceremony but there is an implied and necessary mobile phone etiquette at all times. Perhaps most importantly, others don't need or want to hear your phone conversations and putting a call on speaker, could be a breach of privacy, and of course answering your phone at the wrong time such as a quiet time with a partner or during a theatre performance could have dire results. So let's look at some tips:

- Keep your phone out of sight unless it is needed, especially during meetings or social gatherings. It lets those you are with, know that you are with them.
- Immediately introduce yourself when answering or making a call and ensure your name is the last word spoken. e.g. *"I'm calling about your ceremony, my name is Barry"*, the other party will half hear the first part but is more likely to hear and remember your name if used last.
- Always speak clearly and to the microphone
- Only use speakerphone when necessary.
- Actively listen, and take notes if needed.
- Remain cheerful (smiling when on the phone gives a positive tone to your voice)
- Ask before putting someone on hold
- Be honest if you don't know the answer to a

question and say *"I'll check that and get back to you"*.

- Be mindful of your volume and only use the speaker when necessary (use an earpiece or headset for privacy)
- **Be respectful** to those around you by refraining from using your phone in social and professional situations, such as when:
 - ◊ interacting with a cashier,
 - ◊ in a group
 - ◊ in theatres, libraries,
 - ◊ on a bus, train
 - ◊ in a restaurant/cafe.
 - ◊ meetings
- **Verbal cues**, such as *"Can you please put your phone away?"* or *"I'm trying to talk to you"* are a clear indication of a breach of etiquette.
- Establish phone-free zones in your home such as dining areas, bedrooms, and social areas such as the TV room to promote quality time with family and improve social interaction, communication sleep.
- Unless used as an alarm clock, charge your phone away from your bedroom or simply turn it off.
- If an important call comes through while in a social situation, excuse yourself from the group and go to a private area to take the call.
- Set personal boundaries around phone use, such as not responding to work-related messages outside of work hours, to help maintain work-life balance.
- Don't make or answer calls after 9pm unless it is an emergency
- Articulate your words in a steady, calm tone to minimize misunderstandings and reduce the need for repeated explanations .

COORDINATOR COMMENTS



What an exciting time!

The years ahead look good for us celebrants or at least that is the message I am getting from readers of this newsletter. It was such a pleasure meeting so many of them at the AMC AGM, and what an incredible privilege it was to chair that most important meeting. I saw old friends and associates, enjoyed a few hugs and smiles, and finally met many others in person for the first time. So much business was achieved in one meeting and there was so much positive energy. All I can say is thank you to all those who gave so much to progress our AMC so very quickly and a personal thank you to all those who so strongly supported the efforts to revitalise the AMC. Whilst my name cropped up it was not just me pushing for reform and revitalisation and undoubtedly you will read about them and the new amazing committee in the official AMC Newsletters and publications.

I am looking forward to hearing more about the planned awards program, the AMC Strategic Plan, more advocacy, and about progress in promoting members as Celebrants not just across Australia but across the seas. As I said, exciting!

We also cannot forget those who laid the groundwork or kept the doors open for all the years. There has been a great deal of wonderful work in the past and that is to be built upon during this time of reform.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General's office has been busy as well. We should soon receive new Guidelines, a survey of needs and direction.

So much is happening around us and there is so much to look forward to. I might even find the time to write some more poetry or to get on with that short story that has been buzzing in my head for years.

I sincerely wish every single Celebrant incredible success.

You Got This!!



I was reminded recently of **diversity**.

As a Trekkie I have always been inspired by the Gene Roddenberry quote and philosophy of "*Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations*" (IDIC) which in the movies and TV series, is said to represent a

Vulcan belief that beauty, growth, and progress, all result from the union of the unlike and so an ideal is based upon learning to delight in our essential differences, as well as learning to recognize our similarities. In an original series episode titled "Savage Curtain", Spock (a Vulcan) said to Captain Kirk, "*The combination of a number of things to make existence worthwhile.*"



In other words, we all benefit from diversity and life would be pretty boring without the progress stimulated by a diversity of ideas, cultures, languages, values, characters, like & dislikes, skills & education, environments, intellectual capacity and behaviours. We must value and appreciate.

Firstly I was reminded when preparing a training program, discovering in my research that the most efficient and successful committees are known to have a diversity of members and hence ideas.

Then in communication with various Celebrants, I was reminded of neuro-diversity resulting in different approaches and reactions to challenges, and thirdly, I recognised the diversity in the backgrounds, values, knowledge and character of the couple's and families we each encounter on a daily basis.

On social media we are bombarded with exaggerated reactions and we could be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that we as a society have lost the age of reason, where differing opinions or even appropriate and valid criticism is now interpreted as an offensive personal attack rather than a simple and logical disagreement of views that could be resolved with a common purpose in seeking improvement rather than a reactive '*dummy spit*'.

In a series of ceremonies I have experienced some of the challenges of diversity. We each have expectations that evolve from our upbringing, experiences and education. A couple who have lived without want, have certain expectations in their ceremonies from decorations to dress, conduct, and ceremony content which on the surface may appear quiet different to those who have faced socio-economic challenges all of their lives but those differing expectations are usually superficial because in the end, everyone seeks love, empathy and community. We are each the products of our unique environments and the sum of our experiences, but are all seeking love & happiness which should always be celebrated.