

# AMC South Coast Celebrants Cheering for each other

To achieve success, we will continue to grow and do what we can to help each other grow.



COVER PICTURE: 2023 AMC Conference celebration 50 year of Celebrancy

An update from your AMC South Coast Coordinator, Lou Szymkow

All content is created for information only and is not legal advice, and not necessarily the views of the AMC. It is edited by Lou Szymkow and whilst all care is taken, the editor cannot guarantee the accuracy of information. The editor, guest contributors & guest speakers all volunteer their time for Celebrants.

July 2025—Volume 4, Issue 6



# years since AMC Incorporation



After  
began

Lionel Murphy strongly recommended that Celebrants form an association to advocate for the program and themselves but national communication was very limited by today's standards. There were no handheld mobile phone until the 1980s and no world wide web until the mid 1990's and so whilst initially a national association was created, *The Association of Civil Marriage Celebrants of Australia* (ACMCA). This eventually broke up into smaller local, regional, state or associations.

It was on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1974 that Kath Buttriss (born Kathleen Lyle Cameron) was appointed as a Civil Marriage Celebrant on 24th April 1974 and according to her later Eulogy delivered by Keith Lammond, Kath Buttriss was involved in the formation of a new Marriage Celebrant Association. By 1975 Kath Buttriss was hosting meetings of about 20 celebrants at the Greek Theatre in Darlinghurst in an unregistered group named the Civil Marriage Celebrants of NSW & ACT however in 1993 a group of celebrants registered that name excluding Kath. In 1979, so 46 years ago,



t h e  
Celebrancy  
program  
in 1973

Kath Buttriss formed what records suggest was named the *Association Combined Branch, Civil Marriage Celebrants A.C.T. & New South Wales*.



After waiting 10 years to be appointed, as a Marriage Celebrant Keith Lammond joined Kath's association in December 1994 and during his membership period, held positions of treasurer and newsletter editor, and in 2000, the same year that the Olympic Games were held in Sydney, Keith Lammond was elected as President of *'The Association of Civil Marriage Celebrants of Australia'* (ACMCA), a position he then held for 12 years.



During Keith's period as President, he is purported to have kept Kath Buttress abreast of what was happening in the celebrant world with daily phone calls right up to her passing in January 2008. He is also purported to have overseen:

- the first AMC web page-wewedu.com,
- AMC transferred to MYOB
- Introduction of Credit Card facilities for paying any fees or charges
- Upgrading the AMC newsletter and its distribution from paper based to

### Inside this issue:

- AMC 30th
- Our AMC Now
- Letters
- Robert Smith's 50th Anniversary
- Speak up for Marriage
- NSW BDM Update
- NSW BDM Q&A's
- AG Weblinks
- Marketing Tips
- OPD
- How does a windsock work
- Sologamy
- Pre-wedding Blackening
- Generations
- Reviews
- Marketing
- Coordinator Comments
- June Events
- And more

Continued next page.....

Continued from previous page



- email . The very first electronic AMC newsletter, or rather AAMC as it was then, titled "Issue #1", was emailed by Keith Lammond, President, on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007, from info@wewedu.com, and made reference to the progress of the webpage wewedu.com.
- Expanded membership and member benefits
  - Mentored & trained members
  - Facilitated the expansion of resources available to members
  - Held regular committee dinner meetings in Sydney, followed by members meeting, generating comraderie
  - Incorporated the association on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1995. *The NSW Incorporated Associations Register shows that the Australian Marriage Celebrants Incorporated, was incorporated under Incorporation Number, Y2220311.*
  - Keith was appointed as its first Public Officer and remained on the record as such for years to come.

In 2007, unwilling to include Funeral Celebrancy within its charter, the association provided \$2000 as a loan to enable the formation of the *Funeral Celebrants Association of Australia*. No record has been found as to why that name was chosen given that it was an earlier name of another association but the FCAA continues today, has long since repaid the loan, and is thriving with many AMC members still being members of both associations.

Some have long suggested that the two associations should merge but there are no current plans for that.

In 2008, in recognition of his dedication and wonderful work for the *Australian Marriage Celebrants Inc (AMC)* and the members, Keith Lammond was awarded Life Membership. It was in June of that year that the first iteration of the current AMC we address [www.marriagecelebrants.org.au](http://www.marriagecelebrants.org.au) was made live.

In 2009 Paul Meagher with assistance from Robyn



Foster, held the very first AMC Regional meeting in Kiama, inspiring other regions. It continues today. It was around that time that the AMC sold promotional



umbrellas.

In 2010 Ruth Van Gramberg gifted her manuscript of the book "The Practical Handbook for Celebrants to Welcome Celebrate and Farewell" to AMC. It comprised her own poetry, readings and ceremonies never published before. An AMC editing team was created consisting of Keith Lammond, Gail Nagel, Ann Dally and Marilyn Singer who all worked tirelessly on the manuscript in preparation for publication. AMC had it printed, & the first publication was in late 2010. Tony Gelme (who was an AMC committee



Continued next page.....

Date	name
1979	Association Combined Branch, Civil Marriage Celebrants A.C.T. & New South Wales began
20 <sup>th</sup> July 1995	Date of incorporation <i>Association Combined Branch, Civil Marriage Celebrants A.C.T. &amp; New South Wales Incorporated</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> December 1996	changed name to <i>Association of Combined Civil Marriage Celebrants ACT &amp; NSW</i>
25 <sup>th</sup> March 1997	changed name to <i>Association of Combined Civil Marriage Celebrants ACT &amp; NSW (ACCMC) Incorporated.</i>
22 June 2005	Changed name to: <i>Association of Authorised Marriage Celebrants Australia Incorporated</i>
29/8/2008	Keith registered the business name 'Marriage Celebrants Australia', for the <i>Association of Authorised Marriage Celebrants Australia Incorporated.</i>
26 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	Changed name to: <i>Australian Marriage Celebrants Incorporated (AMC)</i>

Continued from previous page

member) was also involved by assisting with Immigration and Fiancée Visa information.

In 2012, Ann Dally was elected as President of AMC, after Keith Lammond had convinced her to step up into the role from being his Vice President. Ann had previously served on the committee as Executive member for 3 years, Vice President to Keith Lammond for 8 years.

In 2012 Ann and a website team of three other AMC committee members including Vice President Gail Nagel, the Treasurer Chris Hale, and Marilyn Singer who was the Secretary, designed and implemented a new and very professional website with Gold Coast Design Studios. that went live in 2015.

In 2016 Ann Dally, was also awarded Life Membership and presented an AMC hand-engraved clock in recognition of her many years of service and dedication to Australian Marriage Celebrants Inc. That year Ann Dally, introduced a totally new look e-Newsletter and remained Editor until she resigned her Presidency in 2017. After nineteen years service Ann resigned from the AMC committee. For 5 years Ann had headed up an AMC Conference Committee and was instrumental in introducing well supported and successful conferences, the last one being a hugely successful National AMC Roadshow held in four states and supported by hundreds of members from all over Australia. At each conference Ann, as a qualified trainer, delivered OPD to members. Ann, still today, mentors new celebrants and continues to support many AMC members. In 2017 Chris Hale was elected President but was unwell. Anne Dally was again President in 2018 followed by Ian Raffan as President in 2019. In 2020 Paul Burgess was elected as President with is Vice President being Craig Moran.



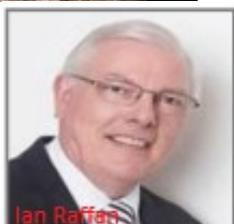
Chris Hale



When Paul stepped down, Craig Moran stepped up to take on the role of President.



Paul Burgess



Ian Raffan



Craig Moran



Annemarie McDonell, was subsequently elected as President. She expanded the Regional Meetings attending many personally, expanded social media and oversaw the development of monthly on-line education sessions and with the assistance of others, facilitated a conference in

celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Celebrancy program. In 2024, Annemarie McDonell, was granted Life membership. During her time as President a small group unsuccessfully attempted to take control of the AMC and its assets, and to remove her from office. The AMC webpage had also fallen into disrepair. It became clear that a new constitution, new policies & procedures, significantly improved legal compliance and a new webpage were all essential, along with a reinvigorated committee; and essentially, a Public Officer had to be appointed.

Joy Allen who had years earlier, helped establish the FCAA, provided invaluable input into the Constitution Committee while commencing work on new and legally compliant Policies & Procedures. Along the way, Lou Szymkow was nominated by Annemarie and unanimously appointed as the new Public Officer. After the sudden and unexpected resignation of Annemarie McDonell from the AMC Committee, the Public Officer chaired the belated 2024 AGM in March 2025, at which a new, fresh and enthusiastic full committee was elected with Joy Allen elected unopposed as President.

Since August 2024 and notably since March 2025 there have been incredible steps forward in the AMC. Apart from the new constitution, new policies and procedures have been created while AMC compliance was raised to a new level not seen since 2015, new insurances were introduced, accounting was improved, communication was improved with a revamped regular newsletter, the outdated, error ridden & overly expensive 2024 webpage was closed and a new modern web page was created and its development is ongoing. Advocacy for members was significantly elevated, an expensive & unnecessary storeroom was closed down, some bank fees were reclaimed, expenditure oversight was improved, residual funds were invested instead of drawing fees, official email addresses were created for the committee executive, and committee meetings became regular.

Financially, the AMC is the most responsible it has been for years.

After 46 years of operation, and 30 years since incorporation we move ahead in professionalism, optimism, enthusiasm and vigour building a better and



Special thanks to Ann Dally, Robyn Foster, Nick Erby, Marilyn Singer, Liz Taylor and others, for their contributions to this article

# OUR AMC NOW!



AMC Executives



Joy Allen  
PRESIDENT

Kamal Al Saliby  
VICE PRESIDENT

Carolyn Clarke  
SECRETARY

Brian Daniels  
TREASURER

AMC General Committee



Alexandra Bradley

Ash Reynolds

Heather Taylor

Jennifer Cahill



Jennifer Ryder

Jill Heaton

Shannon Davies

The Australian Marriage Celebrants (AMC), was founded about 46 years ago and incorporated 30 years ago but has undergone significant reform and improvement over the past 10 months. AMC is NOW arguably the best it has ever been! The Constitution, Finances, Education, Insurances, and compliances have all been significantly improved.

**AMC now, not only connects couples with registered marriage celebrants across Australia through a comprehensive directory of members, but connects Celebrants to each other, offering valuable resources, education, insurances, and a strong community network to enhance knowledge and professionalism.**

Being a member of the Australian Marriage Celebrants Inc (AMC) provides benefits and support for marriage celebrants across Australia.

Being a part of our professional marriage celebrant association provides you with value and networking opportunities. It's a way to enhance your professional development, stay connected with the industry, and access relevant information and guidance for your celebrant work and operating your business.

Our AMC is lead by an elected group of volunteer officials (pictured). Click [AMC Committee](#) to find out more.

Our committee oversees and manage the affairs of the AMC for the benefit of members.

If you need to reach one of our [AMC Committee](#) members, please feel free to use the email

or phone number found on the AMC webpage. All are readily available to assist you, so do not hesitate to get in touch if you require our support or information.

You can find resources, [tips](#), the Constitution, [events](#) and so much more on the new and very much improved webpage. Log in to get a discount on renewal.

You'll even find 'Juno', an AI to help you navigate the webpage.

We have [Regional Coordinators](#) across the nation who also volunteer their time to give you a local contact and local support.

### Membership Inclusions:

- Professional indemnity
- Public Liability Insurance
- CAL Copyright Protection
- Full profile page on the AMC website
- Website Business Promotion
- Celebrant Support Forums
- Social media pages to promote our members
- Free monthly online education sessions
- Access to regional coordinators

### Australia-wide

- Resources, guidelines, templates, and other materials
- Networking and Community
- Advocacy and Representation
- Professional Recognition
- Student Membership option



- [Regional Coordinators](#)
- [AMC Association Membership](#)
- [Member Dashboard](#)
- [AMC Constitution](#)
- [Objects & Code of Conduct](#)
- [AMC Forum Guidelines](#)



# Letters to the Editor



Hi Lou

I have just read your latest Newsletter which has to be one of your best. A remarkable volume of content infused with your unique artistic flair. Some wonderful highlights of fact, education, humour and vision. Well done Lou you are the gem of our Celebrancy Industry. Barry Young O A M.

Thanks lovely Lou

It arrived, just in time to enjoy it all over coffee. I truly appreciate you  
Leanne Michelle McKay

Good morning to you Lou on this beautiful sunny morning Lord of light sprinkling His warm Blessings on everyone!  
Thank you for showering your love by sending the new Newsletter just now!  
Topics are of a great help. Will go through them with full attention n focus.  
Wishing you a great day n every day!  
Keep warm  
Sudesh Johar,



Happy 50th Anniversary



## CONGRATULATIONS ROBERT SMITH

Robert Smith, featured in the June edition of this newsletter, celebrates 50 years as a Celebrant: on 27<sup>th</sup> July, having been appointed in 1975 as the 273rd Celebrant in Australia.

Bob holds the record as the longest serving Celebrant in NSW and still holds his Celebrant number 772 and holds an honorary membership in the AMC. He has bene a contributor to this newsletter and has bene featured on numerous occasions because of his extensive experience and knowledge..

We all wish him well.



The Hawaiian practice of Ho'oponopono is a traditional method of healing and forgiveness which involves taking responsibility for personal actions while seeking to resolve conflicts or imbalances within yourself and in relationships. It may be used as prayer in meditation through repetition or in an effort to end conflict, but may also be of value in dealing with grief. There are four simple phrases

**I'm sorry:**

This simple apology is an expression of repentance and taking responsibility for any wrongs, even if unintentional.

**Please forgive me:**

This request for forgiveness, acknowledges the impact of one's actions upon others.

**Thank you:**

This expression of gratitude is an opportunity to heal and make amends, while also acknowledging the other person or situation.

**I love you:**

This expression of love and compassion, both for oneself and the other person or situation, fosters a sense of unity and healing.

# SPEAK UP FOR MARRIAGE



**Marriage is a beautiful journey.**  
 It is not just the legally defined union of two people to the exclusion of all others voluntarily entered into for life, it is a promise of love for life, it is the union of two souls, the complete joining of two lives. It is the culmination of love and the realisation that together, life can be filled with joy, strength and a passion for life like no other that cannot be found elsewhere. It is not the filling of a void, but an act of faith in self and in one another. It is growth, joy and beauty.  
 Marriage existed long before religion and is fundamental to human society but we see it also in nature where certain species mate for life, inseparable and constant in companionship, devotion and mutual support.  
 As Marriage Celebrants, we are privileged to facilitate the ceremonial beginning of that journey of life and love and must always speak up in its support.

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

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

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

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

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

If not married, you may not be accepted as the *'next of kin'* in an emergency even if you have been together for years. Here are some hypothetical examples based on real events (*names changed*):

- ◇ John & Mary had postponed their marriage. John got sick but found that any member of the



extended family with whom there was no communication, and not Mary, was legally the next of kin able to make medical decisions about John's care while Mary could even be removed entirely from the situation.



- ◇ A couple were in defacto relationship for many years when John suddenly died without having specified Mary on insurances and so Mary had to go through a protracted & expensive legal battle to prove entitlement to the estate which included a home, superannuation and life insurances.
- ◇ John & Jane married young but they separated within a few months with no assets. It was a mistake that both wanted to put it all behind them. They both moved on but didn't bother filing for divorce and simply forgot about it. Years later, John fell in love with Mary and planning a future together, bought a house, but John suddenly died with no Will and so Jane, the first 'wife' long forgotten about, was still the legal spouse and entitled to claim his entire estate and even control his funeral, particularly as under 4AA of the Family Law Act 1975, John & Mary were not in a defacto relationship because he was still married to Jane..

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



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



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



# NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages

Without apparent announcement, the NSW BDM seems to have lost its own logo and now uses only the NSW Government logo on its webpage.

The NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages (NSW BDM) has regulated price changes coming into effect for some products and services on 1 July 2025.

## What is changing?

The following price changes apply to marriage certificates.

- Standard marriage certificates will increase from \$67 to \$68
- Priority marriage certificates will increase from \$99 to \$101
- Standard marriage certificate and commemorative certificate bundles will increase from \$97 to \$98
- **Significantly, the BDM website says that All prices include \$11 postage and handling**

## What is staying the same?

Standalone commemorative certificate pricing is unchanged

Couples requiring priority processing can continue to order their certificate [here](#) after their marriage has been registered via eRegistry while Celebrants can of course continue to order via Lifelink for only two months after the ceremony registration.

All updated pricing will be reflected on the NSW BDM website from 1 July 2025:

⇒ [nsw.gov.au/processing-times](https://nsw.gov.au/processing-times).

Marriage certificates		
The quickest way to receive your certificate is for your celebrant to register your marriage online. Marriage celebrants have up to 14 days to register your marriage.		
Standard marriage certificate - June 2025	Standard service \$67	Priority service \$99
Standard marriage certificate—July 2025	Standard service \$68	Priority service \$101
Certificate for newlyweds (celebrants have 14 days to lodge registration)	Up to 3 weeks	Not available
Online application	Up to 4 weeks	Up to 2 weeks
Postal application	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 5 weeks	Up to 2 weeks
Fee to send a copy of a certificate to a passport office	\$48	
Official marriage certificate and commemorative certificate package <i>(commemorative certificates sent separately from a standard certificate)</i> <i>Fees include \$11 postage and handling</i>	Standard service \$97	Priority service \$129
Online application	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Postal application	Up to 7 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Commemorative marriage certificate only <i>(commemorative certificates sent separately from a standard certificate)</i>	Standard service \$44	Priority service
Online application	Up to 6 weeks	Not available
Postal application	Up to 7 weeks	Not available
Via Service NSW	Up to 6 weeks	Not available

Change of name registration		
Certificate request	Standard service \$222	Priority service \$283
Online application	Up to 11 weeks	Up to 5 weeks
Postal application	Up to 12 weeks	Up to 7 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 12 weeks	Up to 7 weeks

Continued from previous page



# NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages

Birth certificates—June 2025		
<b>Standard birth certificate</b>	<b>Standard service \$67</b>	<b>Priority service \$99</b>
Online application	Up to 4 weeks	Up to 2 weeks
Postal application	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 5 weeks	Up to 2 weeks
<b>Fee to send a certificate to a passport office</b>	<b>\$48</b>	
<b>Official birth certificate and commemorative certificate* package</b>	<b>Standard service \$97</b>	<b>Priority service \$129</b>
Online application	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Postal application	Up to 7 weeks	Up to 6 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
<b>Commemorative birth certificate* only</b>	<b>Standard service \$44</b>	<b>Priority service</b>
Online application	Up to 6 weeks	Not available
Postal application	Up to 7 weeks	Not available
Via Service NSW	Up to 6 weeks	Not available

Single status certificates—June 2025—(see next page for more information)		
<b>Period of Search</b>	<b>Standard service</b>	<b>Priority service</b>
1-10 years	\$67	\$99
11-20 years	\$119	\$151
21-30 years	\$171	\$203
<b>Processing times</b>	<b>Standard service</b>	<b>Priority service</b>
Postal application	Up to 6 weeks	Up to 4 weeks
Via Service NSW	Up to 5 weeks	Up to 2 weeks
<b>Fee to send a copy of a certificate to a passport office</b>	<b>\$48</b>	

In the event of a natural disaster	
<b>Replacement certificates due to a natural disaster</b>	<b>Processing time*</b>
Postal application	7 days
Via Service NSW	3 days
N.B, the Registry may need to contact the party if additional information is required, so allow at least five business days for the Registry to make contact.	

## NSW BDM Marriage Celebrant Quick Reference Guide

[Click on this link for this quick reference guide which covers the frequently asked questions NSW BDM receives about eRegistry notifications, ordering certificates and correcting errors.](#)

- ⇒ **Website:** <https://www.nsw.gov.au/marriage-celebrants>
- ⇒ **Marriage registration queries, email:** [bdm-online-celebrants@customerservice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bdm-online-celebrants@customerservice.nsw.gov.au).
- ⇒ **eRegistry technical support:** [eRegistry-support@customerservice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:eRegistry-support@customerservice.nsw.gov.au).

Continued from previous page

**NSW BDM**

## NSW BDM Q&A's

These are questions raised during the BDM Webinar held in April 2025.

**Q: If the location of the wedding is at a couple's home, what should be entered in the location section?**

**NSW BDM:** Only enter the street address in the designated address fields. Leave the "Location" field blank.

Please do not enter terms like "*Home*" or "*Residence*" in the location field, as this information will appear on printed certificates and will need to be corrected.

By entering just the street address, the certificate will display the location correctly.

**Q: If I marry a couple in a public park, can I just enter a park name without an address in the location field?**

**NSW BDM:** When entering a park as the location, the address fields will be disabled. If the park is large or well-known (e.g. Centennial Park, Royal Botanic Gardens, or a National Park), you should include the specific section or area where the ceremony took place in the Location field. This helps ensure clarity and accuracy on the certificate. Example: Rose Garden, Royal Botanic Gardens.

**Q: Do religious ceremonies need to be registered with the Registry?**

**NSW BDM:** The Registry registers legal marriages conducted under the Marriage Act.

This includes both civil and religious ceremonies, provided they meet all legal requirements under the Act.

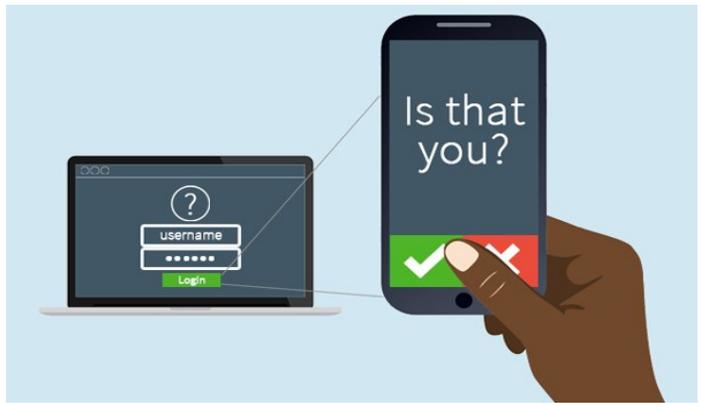
However, if the ceremony is a religious or church blessing only (i.e. not a legal marriage), it cannot be registered with the Registry.

**Q: Can I follow up on a certificate for a couple married by another celebrant?**

**NSW BDM:** No. Due to privacy, we cannot discuss certificate details with anyone who is not the applicant.

The Registry is committed to upholding privacy principles and will not share information about marriages conducted by other celebrants and certificates applied for by other celebrants.

Each celebrant can only access information related to ceremonies they have conducted.



### BDM Login changes

The NSW BDM will email Celebrants detailed instructions when you are required to make this change but in the BDM Newsletter issued 6/6/2025, it was revealed that like other government departments, including the Attorney General's MarCel Portal, the NSW BDM is about to introduce Multi-factor authentication (MFA) and password changes for eRegistry.

The NSW BDM says that it is changing how you log in to the eRegistry portal to ensure it protects you and the data the Registry holds.

This includes:

- Enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA) on your user account
- Updating your password to align with the Department of Customer Service's updated password requirements

### What is a single status certificate?

A single status certificate confirms you have not been married in NSW during a specified period. You may require a single status certificate if you intend to be married overseas or if you're returning to your country of residence to be married.

You can apply for single status certificate if you are:

- a NSW resident
- a previous NSW resident
- an authorised representative.

A single status certificate only covers the period in which you are a resident of NSW.

Before you apply for a single status certificate, check with the consulate, embassy or local representative of the country in which you wish to marry to understand their legal requirements.

You may be required to have your single status certificate authenticated by the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#).

⇒ For more information on authentication, see [Apostilles, authentications and Certificates of No Impediment to Marriage](#)



- [Notice of Intended Marriage](#) Marrying couples and approved marriage celebrants
- [Document outlining the obligations and consequences of marriage and stating the availability of marriage education and counselling](#) To be given to couples who have lodged a notice of intended marriage form with an approved marriage celebrant. *Translated versions of this document are available.*
- [Declaration of no legal impediment to marriage](#) Marrying couples and approved marriage celebrants  
*Under section 50(3) of the Marriage Act 1961, this form shall be printed on the reverse of 1 of the official certificates of marriage.*
- [Official certificate of marriage](#) Approved marriage celebrants  
*Under section 50(3) of the Marriage Act 1961, 1 of the official certificates of marriage shall be on the reverse side of the paper with the declaration of no legal impediment to marriage.*
- [Record of use of Form 15 Marriage Certificates](#) Approved marriage celebrants  
*Under Paragraph 73(5) of the Marriage Regulations 2017, an authorised marriage celebrant must keep a record for each Form 15 marriage certificate they use.*
- [Marriage Act 1961](#)
- [Marriage Regulations 2017](#) [Federal Register of Legislation - Marriage Act 1961](#)
- [Certificate of faithful performance by interpreter](#) Interpreter for a marriage ceremony
- [Guidelines for marriage celebrants.](#) These guidelines may help you understand your responsibilities.
- [Your responsibilities as a Commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant](#) Understand your responsibilities as a Commonwealth registered marriage celebrant.

- [Marriage forms](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Template for Certificate of Marriage for Civil Ceremonies](#)
- [Template for Certificate of Marriage for Religious Ceremonies](#)
- [Sample Certificate of Marriage for Civil Ceremonies](#)
- [Sample Certificate of Marriage for Religious Ceremonies](#)
- [Template for Certificate of Marriage for Civil Ceremonies](#)
- [Template for Certificate of Marriage for Religious Ceremonies](#)
- [Commonwealth Statutory declarations](#)
- [Marriage Celebrants Self Service Portal](#)

- [About statutory declarations](#)
- [Ways to make a Commonwealth statutory declaration](#)
- [Download a Commonwealth statutory declaration to be observed by an approved witness](#)
- [Create a digital Commonwealth statutory declaration using myGov](#)
- [Rules to get married in Australia](#)
- [Before you get married](#)
- [After you get married](#)
- [Get married overseas](#)
- [Combined Declaration of no legal impediment to marriage and Official certificate of marriage](#)

**MARKETING TIPS**

Common Statements	Better Phrase or questions
I don't know	Can I look that up for clarity and get back to you?
That's not my problem	That falls outside my area of responsibility but could I help you web search it?
Hurry up	I am sorry to mention that time is limited.
I can't do that date	I am so sorry but is there a possibility that you might be flexible on the date/time as I already have a booking that conflicts.
You're wrong	Could we please review the details because I have a different interpretation?
I don't understand you	Could you please clarify what you mean?
Leave me alone	I'm sorry, but I need to focus on this task right now?



# How does a windsock work?

By Phil Timbrell

Most of us conduct weddings outdoors, and with this comes the risk of adverse weather in the form of wind and rain.

For wind, a microphone cover commonly known as a microphone cover, pop filter, or windsock, is the standard accessory to have on hand however it is worth noting that there are 2 common types of windsocks which perform quite differently.

From the photograph shown there is a windsock for a lavalier or lapel mic made from open cell foam and a similar windsock for a larger hand held mic, also made from open cell foam. In the middle of the two images is the other type, what is called in the sound industry, a ‘wind muff’ or “dead cat” windsock – the derivation of its name is probably fairly obvious.

Most microphones used by a celebrant will be designed to focus on sound coming from a specific direction and operate when the speaker produced a positive sound pressure that pushes a diaphragm in the mic down, creating an electrical differential which is then amplified. The important thing here is that the pressure is positive and it pushes the diaphragm. Wind blowing across the top or side of the mic creates a partial vacuum (the Bernoulli effect) which creates a negative pressure which overrides the positive pressure from the speaker and also creates a very annoying low frequency rumble.

Both types of windsock interrupt the flow of wind causing its speed to drop as it passes the mic and thus reducing the ability of the wind to override the

Phil Timbrell, the Happy Day Celebrant in the Blue Mountains, who proudly wears his Akubra hat, retired from a position as a engineering manager and knows electronics. He is the AMC Nepean and Blue Mountains Regional Coordinator and is a regular and valued contributor to this newsletter



speaker’s voice. This then attenuates the low frequency rumble and allows the positive pressure from the speaker’s voice to dominate.

So which windsock should you use?

In normal wind conditions the open cell foam type provides sufficient protection, looks better in photographs and is cheaper to buy. In high wind condition the “dead cat” provides more effective wind reduction by creating a larger volume of low speed air around the mic, although it does not look as good in photographs.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the variability of the weather, it is preferable to have both a foam type and a dead cat in your accessory box, having the peace of mind to use the “dead cat” type if you find you are conducting a ceremony on a high wind day. Also note that having a PA system with a bass boost and bass cut facility (very few do but it is a must have in my opinion when buying a PA), then using bass cut will also reduce the annoying rumble that comes with a windy day. Also

note that having a treble boost and treble cut facility in your PA will greatly assist when positive feedback is an issue due to placement of PA relative to the microphone.

Foam Cover



Dead Cat



Lavalier cover



Microphone wind covers are available in a variety of colours and designs, varying in price from 50c to \$80 or more, from your local music store, or online from a variety of sources and manufacturers including sound specialists.



# SOLOGAMY—SELF MARRIAGE

According to the Marriage Act 1961, *marriage* means the union of **two people** to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life, but there are some around the world who seek to redefine marriage by advocating for polygamy or even sologamy.



Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, tells us that **Sologamy, autogamy, or monomarrriage**, is marriage by a person to themselves. Critics argue that the practice is ridiculous and narcissistic making a mockery of marriage, is not legally binding and that involvement in the practice in Australia could be in breach of the Marriage Act however supporters of the practice argue that it is separate to the Marriage Act and that it affirms one's value and so leads to a happier life. **So what is sologamy?**

**Robbie Fincham, in Melbourne, Authorised as a Marriage Celebrant in 2010, is an advocate of sologamy, also known as self-marriage, and generously offers her personal story.**



ritual that can mark a turning point in one's relationship with oneself. It certainly did for me.

The first recorded self-marriage was in 1993, when Linda Baker, from the U.S., married herself. Although still uncommon, since then, self-marriage has slowly gained traction globally.

Well known examples include actress Emma Watson, who describes herself as "*self-partnered*", Brittany Spears and British writer Sophie Tanner, who even wrote a novel based on her experience: "*Reader, I Married Me!*". Closer to home, Liana Cornell (*daughter of Delvene Delaney and John Cornell*) revealed last year that she decided to marry herself at age 30.

## *The Power of Self-Marriage*

*By Robbie Fincham, Authorised Marriage Celebrant, Melbourne*

Hello colleagues!

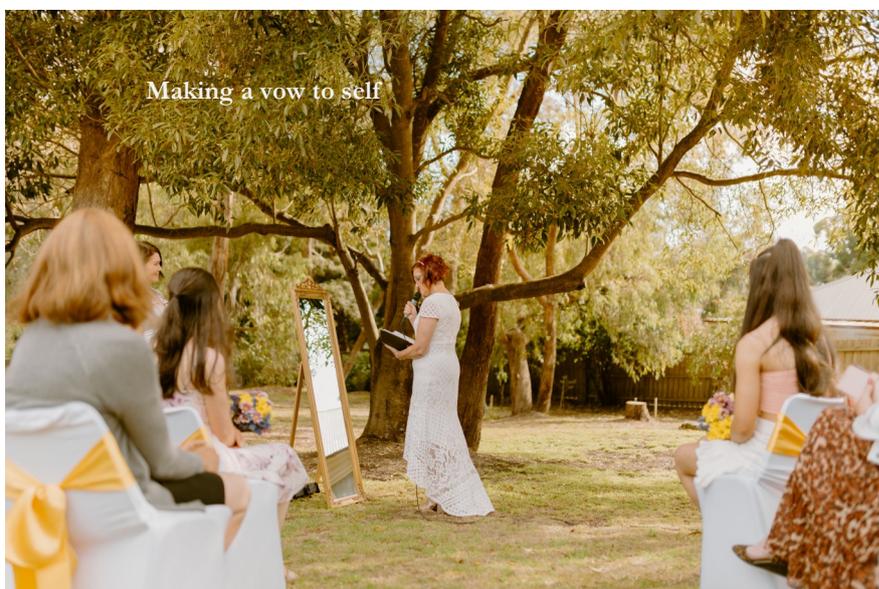
I'm Robbie Fincham, an Authorised Marriage Celebrant based in Melbourne, and registered since 2010. Over the years, I've helped hundreds of couples mark one of life's most significant milestones. Then in 2021, I did something quite unconventional, transformative and deeply personal.

I married myself.

Yes, you read that right. I stood beneath the gum trees in my garden and in front of a full length mirror made promises, not to another person, but to myself. I did it because I'd arrived at a place in my life where I realised that I was worthy of my own love, just as much as any couple I'd ever married. It was something I'd worked on for many years to get to.

### **What Is Self-Marriage?**

Also known as *sologamy*, self-marriage is a symbolic ceremony in which a person makes a heartfelt commitment to themselves to honour, respect and love themselves throughout the ups and downs of their life. It carries no legal status, but it is a powerful



Making a vow to self

### **My Self-Marriage Story**

My own ceremony took place in February 2021, on my 55th birthday, perfectly timed between two of Melbourne's now-legendary Covid lockdowns. After the end of a 20-year relationship in 2015, and several years of reflection and much personal growth, I had come to understand something quite profound: if I was ever going to be happy, I needed to learn how to love and care for myself. I realised it was time to

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

*Self-marriage is a very personal and empowering choice. As celebrants, we have a unique opportunity to support and lead these ceremonies with the same dignity and heart we bring to all our work.* **Robbie Fincham**



commit to my own happiness. Planning my self-marriage ceremony was a fun and empowering experience. I invited a handful of close family and a few dear friends to witness the occasion. I wore a simple white dress, created my own bouquet with flowers from a local wholesale florist, and had a local baker craft a beautiful wedding cake. I treated myself to a simple gold wedding ring, arranged grazing platters, and, of course, wrote my own ceremony and vows.



To the sound of my favourite song at the time, I walked down a petal-strewn path. My sister officiated, and I placed the ring on my own finger, vowing to be kind to myself, to forgive my mistakes, to celebrate my victories, and to hold space for my struggles. There were tears and hugs, cake and champagne, and so much laughter.

It was joyful, exciting and profoundly affirming. At that moment, I felt as though I had come home to myself. As someone who deeply values the power of ritual and words, it remains one of the most grounding and clarifying experiences of my life.

**Creating Marrying Me Ceremonies**

I founded [Marrying Me Ceremonies](#) after experiencing the transformative power of my own self-marriage. Inspired to share this meaningful ritual with others, I've since had the honour of officiating self-marriages for two inspiring young women in Melbourne, as well as several heartfelt zoom ceremonies, for individuals in Sweden and Singapore.

Each ceremony, no matter where or how it's held, is deeply personal. Whether shared with loved ones or witnessed in solitude, the heart of the ritual remains the same: a sincere and loving celebration of one's own journey.

**Who enters into a Self-Marriage?**

Self-marriage is a very personal and empowering choice made for many reasons, including:

- Healing after heartbreak or the end of a marriage
- Reclaiming a sense of self after years of putting others first
- Embracing the joy and celebration of a wedding, which is something some single people may feel they've missed out on
- Marking a journey of self-love and honouring personal growth

- Recognising and affirming identity during significant life transitions, including for LGBTQI+ individuals

Marrying yourself is not about giving up on love or rejecting relationships with others. Many people who self-marry go on to form beautiful relationships with others.

Self-marriage is not legally binding, but it is a legitimate one. It offers the same elements we celebrants already know to be powerful:

- ◊ intention,
- ◊ vows,
- ◊ ritual and
- ◊ celebration.



For many, it marks the start of something new.

In a world where traditional relationships are changing and the single population is growing, self-marriage provides an empowering alternative for people seeking personal affirmation.

As celebrants, we have a unique opportunity to support and lead these ceremonies with the same dignity and heart we bring to all our work.

Self-marriage is not for everyone. But for the right person, at the right time, it can be one of the most important and empowering events of their life.

For me, it was about celebrating the journey I'm on, about showing up for myself, with the same love, care and respect I offer others. I'm so glad I did.

If anything in my story resonates with you - whether you're curious about self-marriage, have clients who might be interested, or would like to collaborate in making this beautiful ritual more visible and accessible, I'd love to chat.

With love,  
 Robbie Fincham  
 Authorised Marriage Celebrant  
 Marrying Me Ceremonies  
 Melbourne | Registered Since 2010  
[www.marryingme.com.au](http://www.marryingme.com.au)  
[@marryingmeceremonies](https://www.instagram.com/marryingmeceremonies)  
[love@marryingme.com.au](mailto:love@marryingme.com.au)

# A PRE-WEDDING BLACKENING



When it comes to a Scottish wedding, you might be aware of tartans, kilts, Bagpipes, Hags, handfasting's, a Quaiche and maybe a highland fling or Ceilidh, but perhaps not as well known is the **Blackening** which is a traditional pre-wedding custom still performed in the days or weeks prior to marriages in rural areas of Scotland and Northern



Illes. A similar practice, called a "doing", may be found in Northern Ireland.



The “Hen and stag” (Bride & Groom) dos are known for sometimes getting out of hand but in these parts of the world, they can expect to be kidnapped, bound, stripped and covered in gunk in the pre-wedding tradition, of a Blackening.

The tradition originally began as a cleansing ritual among the farming communities of rural Scotland to prepare women for marriage by washing their feet after blackening them with soot from the chimney. Shapinsay in Orkney have a slightly different versions called a ‘whitening’ where the bride and groom are covered with flour, porridge and eggs.

It is the friends and family who seize the engaged couple and gunk them with anything from rotten eggs and fish



guts to manure and molasses or any variety of other, preferably adhesive, substances, before the couple is paraded publicly for the community

to see. Frequently, the couple are driven in the back of an open-backed truck, accompanied by the clattering and banging of pots and pans by the couple's "captors". There are no strict rules regarding the act of blackening itself, only that the couple must be rendered messy and uncomfortable, and that as many people as possible should witness the occasion.

Orkney Council says that it remains supportive of the tradition, describing it as *"all part and parcel of getting married in the county"* but with wedding groups celebrating in its largest town, Kirkwall, most weekends in summer, according to the BBC, Orkney Islands Council has had to issue a warning to stags and hens following public toilets being left in a disgusting mess after blackenings because of the extra work for cleaners as well as the inconvenience to residents and tourists who might need to use the toilets.

In a 2023 article, the BBC went on to tell of one couple, Ellie, originally from Lincolnshire, but who moved to Dingwall, and her partner Gavin Smith, who marked their nuptials in June 2023 by standing in an old bathtub in a field while their friends tipped manure, eggs and molasses over their heads. Ellie though had never heard of a blackening until she moved north in 2023 but the pair were lured in with an invite to Gavin's family home for his sister's birthday dinner, which turned out to be a surprise blackening.

Ellie told the BBC that:

*"They asked us to gather round for a birthday picture," "I thought it was a bit weird that we were in the middle of the group on Chloe's birthday and they told us to say 'happy birthday' after the count of three. "But after three, they all shouted 'happy blackening' and grabbed us both."*

The couple were separated and given clothes to change into before being bound with cable ties.

Then they were taken to a field belonging to one of

Continued from previous page.....

## A PRE-WEDDING BLACKENING

Gavin’s groomsmen and told to stand in a muddy bathtub spray-painted with the words ‘Gav + Ellie’. With just one drink each to take the edge off, a crowd of their friends started throwing food at them.

Ellie said:

*“We were covered in all sorts of things, I highly suspect blood since they’re farmers,” “But the worst part - amongst all the flour, eggs, food and manure - was the molasses. “It stinks. I still get whiffs of it and I can’t work out if it’s in my mind or not.”*

After the ordeal, the pair were hosed down and taken home dressed in bin bags, before being allowed to shower and were taken to the pub.

*“It was hilarious and I had a brilliant time,” she added.*

*“My skin was weirdly glowing for days afterwards so maybe there’s some kind of skin treatment in there. “It’s something I’ll never forget - embedded in my mind along with the smell of molasses.”*

Ashley Gormley, from Greenock, moved to Shapinsay in Orkney with her partner Craig and when the pair were engaged, the locals started mentioning the possibility of a whitening, and then, she said:

*“They grabbed me and gave me a hairnet and gown,”*

*“Then they dragged me to the beach and started throwing flour, porridge and eggs at me.*

*“Afterwards someone came with a trailer and we drove about the island hitting pans and making noise.*

*“Then we got to the school and they had put up a tent and called it AshleyFest.”*

She described it to the BBC as a total surprise but “great fun”, with people from across the island coming down to join in.

[Blackening \(Scottish wedding custom\) - Wikipedia](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0jk49j5nq1o)  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0jk49j5nq1o>  
<https://blog.historicenvironment.scot/2024/12/scottish-wedding-traditions/>

# Marketing

<b>A professor explained marketing to students</b>
You see a gorgeous person at a party, and you say, “I am rich, marry me”. <b>That is Direct marketing</b>
You attend a party and your friend goes up to the most attractive person to point you out, and says, “That person is very rich and you should marry”. <b>That is Advertising</b>
A very attractive person walks up to you to say “I know you are very rich, can you marry me”. <b>That is Brand recognition</b>
You say to a very attractive person, “I am very rich, marry me” but you are slapped. <b>That is Customer feedback.</b>
You say to a very attractive person, “I’m very rich, marry me” and you are then introduced to the spouse. <b>That’s a demand and supply gap.</b>
Before you can say “I’m very rich, marry me”, your own spouse arrives. <b>That is a restriction on entering a new market.</b>

## GENERATIONS

We hear the terms describing generations so often and so here is a reminder as to what they mean in the western world.

Absent for the list is the Stolen Generation which generally refers to indigenous children born from 1869 and 1969 who were forcibly removed from their families.

- <https://genhq.com/the-generations-hub/generational-faqs/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation>

born	Generation
2025-2029	Generation Beta (overlaps Alpha)
2010 –2025	Generation Alpha
1996 – 2015	Gen Z, Zoomers, iGen, or Centennials
1977 – 1995	Millennials or Gen Y
1965 – 1976	Generation X
1946 – 1964	Baby Boomers
1928 to 1945	Traditionalists or Silent Generation
1901-1927	Greatest Generation
1883-1900	Lost Generation





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

compartmentalising grief as a coping mechanism, enabling an ongoing life after a loved one's death. This carries its own grief path and challenges, which should not be ignored, especially by a Celebrant when asking for that death certificate to prove eligibility for marriage.

One of the significant aspects revealed but perhaps not fully explored is the impact of the death of a partner out of marriage. Upon marriage, the partner is, of course, immediately the next of kin, and in death, a connection remains; however, if not married, you are not legally or even socially regarded as the next of kin.

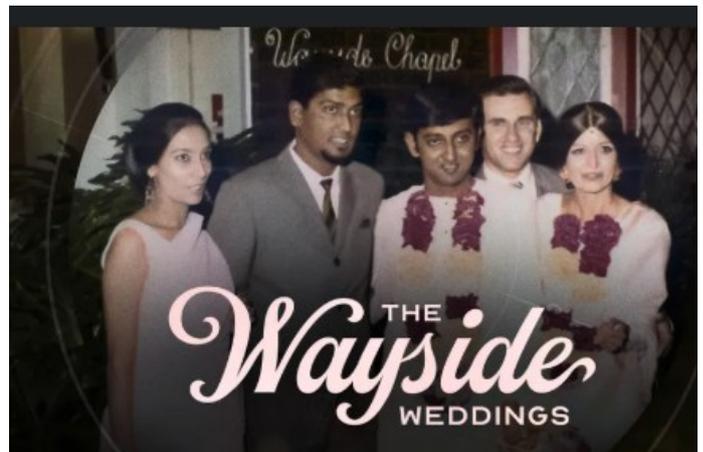
Overall, a program worth watching.  
<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/news-series/insight/insight-2025/insight-s2025-ep4/2412477507603>



**Navigating Widowed. Insight 2025, episode 4**  
 SBS tells us that *“more than 1.2 million Australians share the profound grief of losing their significant other. In this episode, guests share how widowhood defines them, and we hear from those who’ve found love after loss, including a man whose dying wife set up his online dating profile.”* That description however of this episode sells it short. Be prepared to personally experience the stages of grief by watching this powerful episode and look for a brief appearance of celebrant, Jackie Bailey who speaks on the impact of grief.

As Funeral Celebrants, we know that grief is unique to the individual and occasionally encounter the unexpected, such as spousal betrayal but as Marriage Celebrants, we encounter parties to a marriage who must prove they are free to marry after the death of a partner. This program may give an ‘Insight’ into the anguish and even trauma that party experiences in handing over that document. In the program, we see and empathise with the anguish and pain of grief; the immense loss and raw, lingering emptiness.

The program mentions marriage after widowhood, which has its own challenges and we gain an insight into the painful and guilt-filled journey of finding love again. The *‘grief case’* is an expression I’ve not heard before, but yet can be an accurate descriptor of



**Series 39 The Wayside Weddings**

**Compass** is an Australian weekly news-documentary program exploring faith, values, ethics, and religion from around the world and is usually compulsive viewing for all Celebrants It airs on **ABC TV** every Sunday at 6:30 pm, with a repeat broadcast on Wednesdays at 1:30 pm, and is available on demand via **ABC iView**.

You can also find the series on Youtube and other streaming services but you will be interrupted by advertisement not found on the incredible ABC.

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7HSPnTFVAuEYzC-irkyW9\\_Ke-gG5trD2](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7HSPnTFVAuEYzC-irkyW9_Ke-gG5trD2)  
 In the episode featuring **The Wayside Weddings**, Playwright Alana Valentine discovers the revolutionary church community in Kings Cross that offered her mother the chance of a second wedding when she was a divorcee in the 60s. the uniquely Australian Wayside Chapel sometimes referred to as the revolutionary church, defying social taboos around marriage. Same sex weddings were being performed at the Wayside Chapel in the 1970s.



# COORDINATOR COMMENTS



July is an amazing month. July marks 52 years of Civil Celebrancy in Australia, the world leader in that field, and while it is 46 years since Kath Buttriss started our association on its journey, this month marks 30 years since the AMC was incorporated on **20<sup>th</sup> July 1995** taking a huge and confident

leap toward permanency. When Lionel Murphy, started the Civil Celebrancy program on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1973, with the appointment of the very first Civil Celebrant, Lois D'Arcy, there was significant objection from the clergy and from many public servants. In the early years there was no training of celebrants and the Attorney General's department reported that there were serious issues with legal compliance and so the Certificate IV in Celebrancy was devised as was annual Obligatory Personal Development (OPD).

AMC members, such as Keith Lamond and Dally Messenger III were intrinsically involved in the development of Celebrancy training as was Robert Smith, who this month on 27<sup>th</sup> July, celebrates 50 years as a Celebrant. Dally and Robert were not always AMC members but proudly are now. Robert was also involved in the early stages of what we now know as Lifelink which was the very first online registration system for a registry of Birth Deaths and Marriages. When Dally Messenger III delivered a funeral in Melbourne on **2<sup>nd</sup> July 1975**, many celebrants objected but in 2007, AMC supported a separate association specifically for funeral Celebrants. Now most AMC members are also funeral celebrants and so maybe it is time to consider a possible FCAA merger. Others such as author, Barry H Young continue to educate Funeral Celebrants.



When marriage equality was approaching in 2017, not all celebrants were supportive but Robyn Foster and other Celebrants marched and rallied in support of equality in the Sydney Mardi Gras from 2015–2018, and now the AMC is strongly in support of equality.

The AMC today would not exist but for people such as Lionel Murphy, Dally Messenger III, Robert Smith, Keith Lamond, Ann Dally and the many more who have so generously guided and mentored so many.

Having said that, there is a very long list of people who have sat on AMC committees over the years and who have worked into late hours, many for years, some quietly in the background, to support members. Although the current AMC committee is mentioned

in this newsletter, there are so many incredible people who have not been mentioned here but also deserve recognition. They are the many people who have helped the Celebrancy program grow and have tirelessly worked to help improve the AMC, not just in the last few months but over the many years. They are too easily forgotten and though I have tried to mention a few in this and past newsletters with features such as Celebrant Profiles,, there are many, many more that should be acknowledged and so I suggest you do this to ensure that you and they, are not forgotten. Explore the history of the AMC, read the old newsletters from years gone by which you will find on the AMC webpage, and see who you recognise. Thanks each and every Celebrant you meet, for their dedication; but also, write your own story including:

- ◇ When & why you became a Celebrant?
- ◇ What contribution you have made in that role?
- ◇ Who were your greatest influences?
- ◇ What contribution have you specifically made to support or advance our AMC?
- ◇ What positions, and for what period were you a committee member?
- ◇ If on the AMC committee, who have you trained or mentored to succeed you?
- ◇ How have you contributed to making Celebrancy better?
- ◇ Who have you guided or mentored?.

**Remember always, that we can only do what we do, because of those who made the way for us.**





**Renew now**  


**[Click here to find out:](#)**  
**[What's On In The Next 30 Days - Shoalhaven - South Coast NSW](#)**

**NOTICE**

Whilst I have started on the August 2025 edition of this newsletter, I am going to be very busy for the next few weeks and there may not be an August edition , or it may be late.