

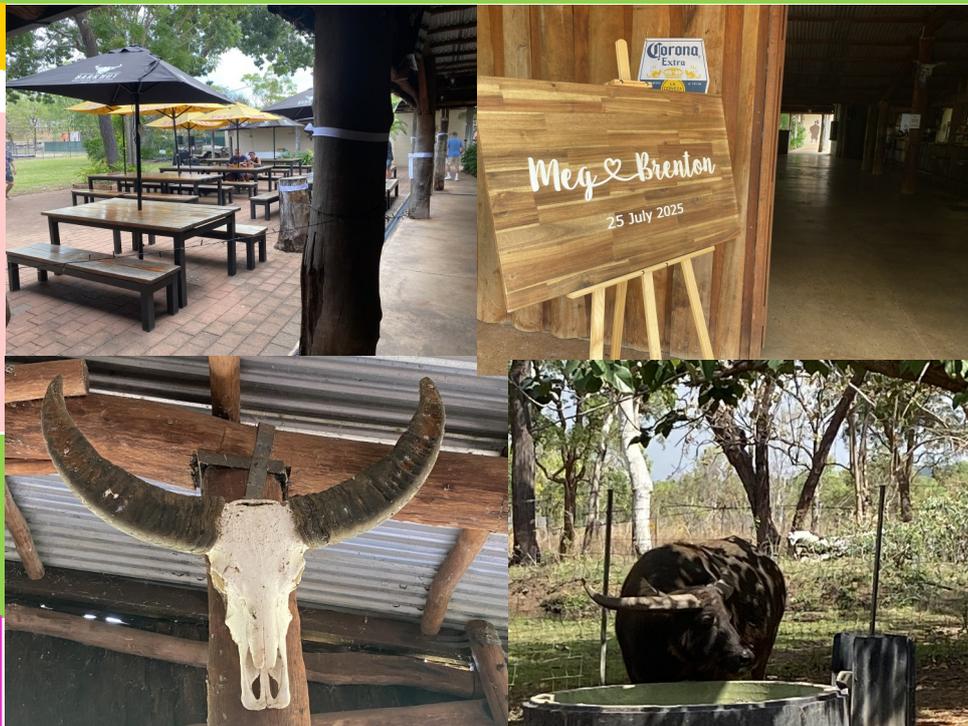
September 2025

Volume 4, Issue 8

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.

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

Make sure you read the information from the NSW BDM changes coming soon!



COVER PIC. The Bark Hut-a Northern Territory Wedding Venue –details inside

Inside this issue:

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- Coordinator Comments

• **And so much more**



Your 2025-2026 Celebrant registration charge of \$170 MUST be paid to the AG by 5th September 2025 to avoid deregistration.

Is Your Hero Image Doing Its Job?

Article by Phil Timbrell



What is a hero image?

When a prospective client first opens the landing page of a web site, the hero image is the first thing they see. The hero image should convey far more about what makes you different and what might appeal to a select audience than hundreds of words in a small font.

Why is this important?

When a potential client opens the landing page of your web site they will draw a conclusion in less than a second on whether to read further or to back out and look at another web site. So with a

Continued on next page.....

**UPCOMING
ZOOM
MEETINGS**

- ◇ Tuesday 9 September, 7pm AMC Victoria
- ◇ Sunday 14th September 2025, 4pm, Sth Coast NSW

This article is by Phil Timbrell, the Happy Day Celebrant, who specialises in delivering ceremonies in the Blue Mountains proudly wearing his Akubra hat. He is the AMC Nepean and Blue Mountains Regional Coordinator and is a regular and valued contributor to this newsletter



Continued from previous page..... **Is Your Hero Image Doing Its Job?**

poor hero image, or worst still, just a collection of words, you could lose a potential booking in less than a second.

Consistency.

A prospective client will perceive, from the hero image, either a match to their expectations for a celebrant or be turned off by what they see. One of the great rules of marketing is consistency in all messages. If you wish to look empathetic and send out a message that you are a caring and easy going, flexible celebrant, and then follow that with 3 pages of legalese attached to a contract that must be signed before you meet, then that sends a very mixed message and confuses the client. You have to choose to be something that the market wants, and then stick to it.

Perception.

In marketing, *"perception is reality"*. What this means is that in the client's mind, how your photo is interpreted, becomes reality in the client's mind. A poorly chosen hero image may not reflect who you really are. In addition, based on the concept of consistency, your hero image must reflect who you really are as once you meet the client, if you do not reflect your hero image, the client may be confused and may decide to "go in another direction".

What key things should the hero image contain?

At a quick glance, the client's attention should be grabbed – a photo is the best way to grab that attention. The photo should convey your market positioning, your brand identity and what you actually do. Further some brief text should also convey where you work, reinforce what you do, contain a call to action (CTA) and finally point of differentiation. This sound like a tall order but it is doable with enough imagination. Let me explain some of these in a little more detail.

Grab Attention.

Words alone will not grab a client's attention unless they are in bog bold bright letters and convey a significantly attention grabbing message. This is not easy to achieve so let's stick with a photo. The photo should have bright colours, be clearly in focus and not be so large that it takes time to download. A photo of around 200 to 500 kbytes is fine – remember the first time it is viewed, it will probably be on a mobile phone with a small screen so great

resolution is not critical. Be aware that if your photo is a jpg, then the size of the jpg file will be higher with more depth of colour, which is what you really want. Therefore it is necessary to make a compromise between fast download and quality of image.

Market positioning and brand identity.

For a person not qualified in marketing, this is a difficult concept to convey. By way of example, BMW in the car market is positioned as a quality European build with exceptionally reliable motor – their motor is their key differentiating factor. For Volvo it is safe design and build. For a celebrant, you may choose to be the celebrant of choice for large venue weddings, you may portray yourself as the fun loving celebrant who does crazy things at weddings, you may portray yourself as a low end cheap celebrant who just gets you married. Consider where the Registry Offices at each state are positioned. NSW has tried to move out of the bottom level by offering location weddings. Whatever you choose, your hero image must convey that very strongly. It will not appeal to all clients but it will hopefully resonate with a few.

What you actually do.

If you want to promote naming ceremonies, maybe you have chosen that as your niche, then the hero image must show that. A few well-chosen words will then reinforce that message. Do not crowd your hero image with too many words however some are essential. And remember consistency of message is key.

Call to Action.

If a client's attention has been grabbed and a button is handy that says – "Get quote" or "Contact Me" then you have made it easy to make contact with a potential client.

Point of differentiation.

What can you do or do you do that makes you different? This is probably one of the hardest questions for a celebrant starting out to answer. Without knowing who else is out there trying to take your business, and what they offer, it is hard to know what you can do that is different and appealing. If



Continued from previous page

**Is Your Hero Image
Being Its Job?**

you are a religious celebrant, this can be a point of differentiation. Whatever that point is, you need to push it through your hero image. Once again it will not appeal to all clients, but hopefully it will appeal to enough. As your experience grows, and you learn what features you bring to clients that they like and then push that. You can then update your hero image.

Your face.

Not all hero images have to show you face, but if you do then here are a few pointers.

- ◇ “We perceive faces in a much greater level of detail than we perceive other things,” Alan S. Cowen Yale University
- ◇ “It takes just one-tenth of a second for people to judge someone and make a first impression. “Willis, J.; Todorov, A. (2006). Psychological Science.

The eyes.

One of the strongest selling tools a vendor can use is an appeal to the emotions. If you watch free to air TV, you will see how Cadbury has turned advertising chocolate into an emotional appeal. It is also worth noting that the quickest way to judge another person’s emotional state when you first meet them is to look into their eyes. The eyes give us a first impression about a person’s emotions. It therefore stands to reason that your hero image should allow a prospective client to see your eyes and that your eyes should convey something that the prospective client finds appealing. I am not going to say what that appeal is because that is up to you as to how you want to market yourself. However the types of emotions that can be conveyed by the eyes include caring, empathy, aggression, love, surprise, fear, happiness, gratitude, carefree, risk approach, risk avoid mischievous and so the list goes on.

Audit your hero image.

Open your web site and ask yourself a serious question: *Who am I seeing?*

Be honest. Am I seeing the type of person who will appeal to the market you have chosen to serve? Selecting a market segment comes with experience and based on the consistency model, having a hero image that matches that markets expectations, is a difficult thing to achieve – but if you can achieve it than your clients will read on. And when they see things that are consistent with your image, that will reinforce their desire to use your services, and without the need to haggle on price. An inconsistent message will cause a prospective client to switch to someone else’s web page.

A great example.

May I suggest checking out the website of Kathryn Paul, a member of AMC.

www.kathrynpaulcelebrant.com

It states what she does, shows a logo that is appealing and suggests luxury, a carefully worded statement “Making small weddings feel significant & large weddings intimate” plus a photo. The photo shows the type of ceremony she conducts, where she operates and then has a call to action in the form of “Check Your Date”. Finally icons allows a quick navigation to the essential parts of her web page.



Robert Smith Retires after 50 years



While on the subject of heroes, we have to mention the incredible **Robert James Smith**,

also known as **'Bob from the Bush'**, who has finally retired from Celebrancy after 50 years. We have actually only met in person on one occasion, this of his 90th Birthday, but I am pleased and proud to call him, and his lovely wife Pamela, friends. He has performed very few ceremonies over the past two years and just wanted to reach 50 years.



The year 2025 offered a number of landmarks for Bob,

- ◊ 36 years since his retirement from the NSW Fire service
- ◊ 64 years as a Justice of the Peace

◊ 90th birthday in May

◊ 68th anniversary of marriage to the wonderful Pamela in June

He is/was the longest serving Celebrant in NSW, having been appointed as Celebrant the 273rd Celebrant, on 27th July 1975, registration number A00772.

When asked how many ceremonies he has performed, Bob said he stopped counting when he reached 1000, years ago.

So, from all of us

Congratulations and Thank You



“The Grange”

Tea Gardens, 2324

New South Wales

Email:- smithrj@bigpond.net.au

- Authorised Civil Marriage Celebrant & J.P.
- Authorised by the Commonwealth Government in 1975.
- Co-Founder, Patron for Life, Past President, Life Member & Fellow of, The Association of Civil Marriage Celebrants of N.S.W. and ACT Incorporated.
- Cofounder Past Chairman, Life Member of the National Council of Authorised Celebrants Australia.
- Certificate IV in Marriage Celebrancy.
- Certificate IV in Assessment Workplace Training.

Dear Attorney General,

After 50 wonderful years as an Authorised Marriage Celebrant Registered No. A00772, the time has come for me to officially retire. My retirement is to take effect on the 5th September 2025. It is not a decision I make lightly, as this role has been one of the greatest joys and privileges of my life.

Over the decades, I have had the honour of standing beside thousands of couples as they began their journey together in marriage. Each ceremony has been unique and special --- whether simple or grand, traditional or modern --- every wedding has carried the beauty of love, hope, and commitment. To have

been entrusted with such an important in so many people’s lives has truly been a gift.

This journey has brought me immense pleasure, not only in meeting couples from all walks of life, but also in forming lasting friendships, sharing in laughter, tears, and joy that each celebration brings. It my privilege to witness love in many forms, across generations, cultures, and communities.

As I step away from this role, I carry with me countless cherished memories and deep sense of gratitude. To all the couples who an allowed me to play a part in their most important day, thank you for your trust. To my colleagues and friends who have supported me along the way, your encouragement has meant more than words can say.

Though I am retiring from official duties, I will forever hold close the happiness this work has brought me. It has been a true blessing to spend a lifetime celebrating love.

I would appreciate it if your department would register my decision retire as a retirement rather than just resigning from duty, it would be appreciated if your office would acknowledge my retirement by forwarding me in writing the acceptance of my correspondence.

With heartfelt thanks and warmest wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Smith JP.
26th August 2025.

Dear Lou

I trust you enjoyed a wonderful trip in the NT. I write to thank you for sharing your recent newsletter which contained many topics of good information and important updates. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

I particularly thank you for the August update on the FCAA. The recent behaviour of the FCAA draws attention to the totally unacceptable conduct of the purported committee team representing the Funeral Celebrants Association of Australia. This situation continues to leave many questions unanswered and valid points of view shared by long standing members remain ignored, which is totally unacceptable.

I write to advise you Lou that I have maintained communication with several well respected Funeral Celebrants, Industry Mentors and Professional Trainers to work together to reach a combined response as to the unacceptable outcomes of decisions made outside the requirements under Constitution.

I have supported the FCAA in a professional capacity for many years and hold important views as to transparency to members in every manner to create confidence and due recognition for any professional association. I remain so very disappointed in being left to question recent decisions made without due process to loyal members and being ignored is insulting.

I look forward to others sharing their stance as to unprofessional circumstances created by the FCAA team now viewed online.

Sincerely, Pamela

Pamela Noal JP

Funeral Celebrant Consultant



Letters to the Editor

Wow Lou! What a great Newsletter, choc full of fabulous content once again! It will take me a while to read it in its entirety.

Mandi Gill

Hello Lou,

Thank you once again for your continuing newsletter.

Here I am sharing >>>

Today ,19th August there was a Nsw's Regional volunteer of the year award ceremony in castle hill RSL Club.

With God's divine blessings, I was awarded for Justice of Peace services to the community for 10 yrs.

Thank you dear Lord for your kindness n for everyone's blessed support 🙏

Sudesh Johar

Just started looking at the newsletter this morning. I agree with the people who appreciate you for the amount of work you put in. And it looks good!

Thanks mate.

Dally Messenger III

feedback

Have you enjoyed reading this newsletter?

Do you agree or disagree with an article or do you have another idea? We are a community of Celebrants who learn from each other.

So it is your turn to have your say and be published in this newsletter. The more we learn, from each other the more we discover how much there is to learn, and of course we advance.

What will you write about in this newsletter?.

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

By writing your ideas and processes down, you consolidate them; by sharing them with others, you expand and strengthen them. What is common sense and experience to you, may be foreign to another but if you share your thoughts, others can expand on your ideas, and in doing so, help you expand your own ideas further.

⇒ Send letters and articles to alifecelebrant@gmail.com

⇒ To add or remove a subscription, email lou@alifecelebrant.com.au

ENGAGEMENT RING: Where do I put my engagement ring during my marriage ceremony?

Wear the ring on your right hand or have someone hold it for you. If you want to wear your engagement ring for the reception, you can put it on after the ceremony. For Jewish weddings, it's fine to wear your engagement ring and then exchange stone-free wedding bands if you want to keep with tradition. Also remember: The band is usually worn closest to your heart on your left hand.

www.alifecelebrant.com.au

pic from <https://www.brides.com/photos/oval-cut-ring-with-baguette-side-stones>



Donate an Organ Save a Life.....



200 years ago, in August 1825, James Blundell, obstetrician and physiologist of Guy's Hospital, England performed the first recorded, successful human blood transfusion to a woman dying from postpartum haemorrhage in the Finsbury Square district of London. The case was recorded by Mr Waller.

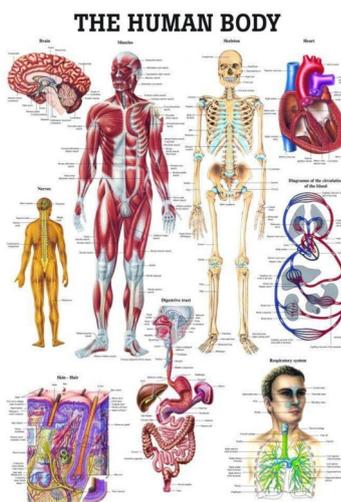
([https://www.resuscitationjournal.com/article/S0300-9572\(02\)00013-8/abstract](https://www.resuscitationjournal.com/article/S0300-9572(02)00013-8/abstract))

It was not until 1954 that the first transplant of a kidney was performed and now there are regular worldwide transplants of heart, kidneys, liver, lungs, pancreas, intestine, bones, tendons, thymus and uterus, corneae, skin, heart valves, nerves and veins.

The first hand transplant occurred on 23rd September 1998, and whilst face transplants now also occur. Although there have been multiple attempts, a human head has never been successfully transplanted.

| | Largest | Smallest |
|--------|---------|---------------------|
| artery | aorta | Capillaries |
| gland | Liver | pineal gland |
| Organ | skin | pineal gland |
| cell | ovum | Sperm |
| bone | Femur | Stapes (middle ear) |

| | |
|--------|--|
| 1.5 | Average metre length of child's small intestine |
| 2 | kidneys |
| 2 | Pumps in the heart |
| 3 | Average kilo weight of a newborn |
| 3 | Bones per arm, (humerus, radius, ulna) |
| 4 | Heart chambers |
| 6 | Middle ear bones |
| 7 | Neck vertebrae |
| 7 | Average metre length of an adult's small intestine |
| 7.4 | Ph of blood |
| 12 | Pairs of ribs |
| 14 | Facial bones |
| 20 | Milk teeth |
| 22 | Skull bones |
| 24 | Ribs (12 pairs) |
| 25 | Bones I chest |
| 32 | Teeth in an adult |
| 72 | Muscles in the arm |
| 120/80 | Normal Blood pressure |
| 206 | bones |
| 639 | muscles |



RICHARD "RICK" SLAYMAN, THE FIRST PERSON TO RECEIVE A PIG KIDNEY TRANSPLANT, LEFT THE HOSPITAL AFTER A FAST RECOVERY AND NO LONGER NEEDS DIALYSIS.

Richard "Rick" Slayman (12th Oct. 1961 – 11th May 2024) was an American, received a kidney transplant in 2018. When it began to fail in 2023, he resumed dialysis & developed congestive heart failure but he then made

medical history, as the first person to receive a was the first patient to receive a genetically modified pig kidney transplant, (genetically altered to reduce rejection risk) in a 4 hour surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital on 16th March 2024

After the groundbreaking surgery, he was discharged from the hospital on 3rd April 2024, after a swift and successful recovery. Doctors confirmed that the pig kidney started working almost immediately, allowing Mr Slayman to completely stop dialysis, which he had relied on due to kidney failure.

His progress was closely monitored, and doctors called his recovery one of the best they had seen in years however he sadly, he died on 11th May 11, 2024, at the age of 62. His family said Slayman wanted to undergo the procedure to give hope to those on transplant waiting lists, adding: "Rick accomplished that goal and his hope and optimism will endure forever."

- [Richard Slayman - Wikipedia](#)
- [Patient who had first ever pig kidney transplant dies two months after procedure | US News | Sky News](#)

Register to be an organ donor and help save lives

80% of Australians are willing to donate their organs but **only 41%** of NSW residents have actually **registered to be a donor**. In the past registering to be a donor was done when you renewed your driver licence. Now you can register online at the Australian Organ Donor Register. It **takes less than a minute** to register as an organ and tissue donor. And one donor can **save up to 7 lives**.

Join the register

CONSENT

In the medieval song "*Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnelle*" the knight gallantly agrees to marry a hag-like witch who has helped King Arthur by giving him the answer to his enemy's riddle, which is "*What does a woman want?*" The ballad-like story of the Arthurian legend, appears in *Eleven Romances of Sir Gawain* (an [online scholarly edition is here](#)).

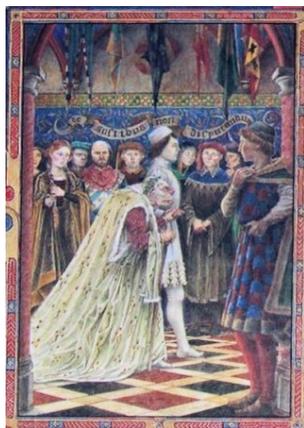
Here is a modern interpretation:

They say King Arthur once got lost in a dark forest during a hunt. There, alone and unarmed, he was stopped by a baron in black armour in a tree trunk, who offered him a deal to spare his life:

"I'll spare your life... if within a year, you bring me the answer to a single question.—What do women truly desire but if you fail to answer correctly, you forfeit your property and your life?"

Arthur searched for an answer, far and wide. He gathered thousands of answers; love, children, freedom, safety, beauty, but none felt complete.

As time ran out, Arthur began the return journey but encountered Lady Ragnell who was an outcast, feared for her monstrous appearance and described as an ugly witch. It was she though who offered the correct answer, but only on the condition that one of Arthur's knights would agree to marry her.



Without hesitation, Sir Gawain, Arthur's closest friend, accepted to save his friend's life and property.

Her answer was indeed correct and the furious, black knight, revealed that he was her cursed brother. He then vanished, defeated. The wedding happened. Gawain kept his promise.

When he kissed Lady Ragnell, she transformed

into a stunning woman, revealing that she and her brother had been bewitched by their wicked stepmother but still, the curse wasn't broken entirely. She could only remain beautiful half the time. She then asked:

"Would you rather I be beautiful by day... or by night?"

And Gawain replied: "*You choose.*"

That was the key. His respect, not his desire, finally broke the curse because there is no greater beauty than the freedom to choose... and real love?

It's not born from control or expectation, but blooms from respect.

Freedom of choice is the freedom of consent.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Marriage_of_Sir_Gawain

<https://www.middleenglishromance.org.uk/mer/73>



POST WAR WEDDING

After surviving World War II, despite having been captured by Nazi forces, and barely escaping bombings when allied forces entered Germany, people were freed but then housed in controlled camps. One couple met through a fence at a repatriation camp and on Sunday 25th August 1946, Stanislaw Szymkow and Maria Marmulewicz married in a church in Ettlingen, Germany.

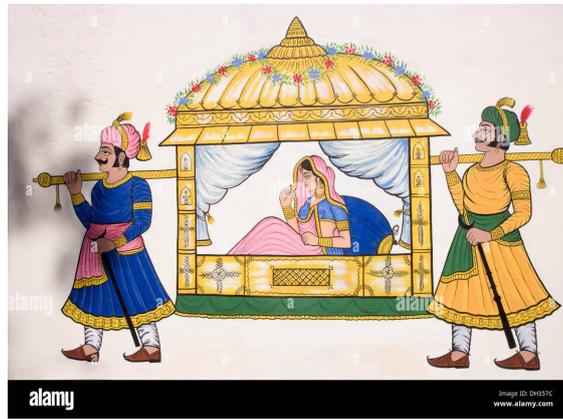
Their wedding reception was in a field near the church with the community of friends contributing food and music.

They eventually left a devastated Europe and were welcomed into Australia to make a new life.



20 MARRIAGE & RELATIONSHIP TIPS

- 1) Say "I love you" to each other, every day
- 2) Laugh together
- 3) Set time aside to be together every day
- 4) Support and encourage one another
- 5) Always Kiss goodnight and good morning
- 6) Stop, listen and learn from one another
- 7) Have thoughtful conversations and be thoughtful of each other
- 8) Have a cuddle every day
- 9) Set goals together and plan together
- 10) Be present for your partner
- 11) Always remember and encourage the love you held when you married, and smile
- 12) Take positive steps to keep your relationship at the forefront of all you do
- 13) Compliment each other at every opportunity
- 14) Always be kind and respectful, and never, ever malicious
- 15) Never talk over each other
- 16) Avoid other people's conflicts
- 17) Work through problems and issues
- 18) Be loyal and faithful to each other
- 19) Share household chores
- 20) Remember that Marriage is an all-of-life goal, not a competition or a day to day activity.



Carrying the Bride

A Chinese bride's family hires a "good luck" woman to take care for her. The Bride travels from her home to her groom's home in an elaborately decorated sedan chair. The bride also has attendants shield her with parasols and throw rice at the chair to grant fertility, health and prosperity.

The Three-Day Symbolization

There is a Chinese a post-wedding tradition that takes place three days after the couple marry. The newlywed couple visits the bride's family home where she is no longer considered to be a member of the family but welcomed as a guest. The couple are expected to bring many gifts for the family and the groom must present his parents-in-law with an entire roasted pig as a sign of goodwill.

After this visit, the bride's family sends gifts to the groom's side. The gifts are usually a bottle of liquor, vegetables and fruit, a green onion and a cake. They also include the head, tail, feet and half of the original roast pig to symbolize the 'beginning and the end'. Sometimes, they even send a baby chicken inside a lantern box, but we aren't exactly sure what this gift signifies!

Cutting a Heart into a White Sheet

In small French villages, children obstructed the bride's path down the aisle with white ribbons, which forced her to cross through them symbolising the bride overcoming any challenges that might be encountered in her marriage but in contemporary French ceremonies, a heart is instead cut from a white sheet and the couple walk through the cut sheet.



Blowing the Pū

Blowing the pū (a conch shell horn) has been a part of Hawaiian culture since ancient times. Hawaiian weddings also embrace this concept, with the Celebrant either sounding the horn at the start of the ceremony or after the newlyweds have shared their first kiss.



Shaving the Groom



Greeks love a wedding and have many traditions, one of which is taking the term "groomsman" literally. Before the groom changes into his ceremony attire, his Best Man, (koumparos), becomes his barber on his wedding day when he pulls out a razor and shaves the groom to demonstrate the trust between them.



Breaking a Bell

When Guatemalan newlyweds arrive at the reception, according to some websites, it's a tradition that the mother of the groom breaks a white ceramic bell filled with grains, such as rice and flour, to bring fertility and prosperity to the couple

[Wedding traditions from around the world, from colourful Brazilian entrances to full moon dances from trained camels | CN Traveller](https://www.cntraveller.com/story/wedding-traditions-from-around-the-world-from-colourful-Brazilian-entrances-to-full-moon-dances-from-trained-camels/)



Getting the most from your annual return is easier with the **Australian Tax Office's 2025 Tax Time Toolkit**. Updated resources give you tailored and timely advice on:

- ⇒ [home-based business expenses](#)
- ⇒ [motor vehicle expenses](#)
- ⇒ [travel expenses](#)
- ⇒ [digital product expenses](#)
- ⇒ [using business money and assets](#)
- ⇒ [pausing or permanently closing your business.](#)
- ⇒ [You will also find the AMC Education session on tax on the AMC website](#)

Get personalised support for your business In NSW

Clarity begins with one easy conversation. Fill out the form at the link below and free expert support for your business. Service NSW Business Bureau can help you with:

- ⇒ free independent business advice
- ⇒ government programs and resources
- ⇒ licences, permits and more

[**BOOK A CALL**](#)



ARE YOU A VICTIM OF CYBERCRIME?

ReportCyber
is the place to securely report cybercrimes



cyber.gov.au/report



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



Your report:

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



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



Australian Government
Australian Signals Directorate



ACSC
Australian Cyber Security Centre



Australian Cyber Security Hotline
1300 CYBER1 (1300 292 371)

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

Don't give up control of your screen

Some scammers claim they can improve your technology or fix an issue with a quick remote access session with your computer. It's a trick designed to let them in.

Never install new software at a stranger's request and never give anyone remote access to your screen.

Types of Computer Ports



KNOWLEDGE OPD

What do you need to do?

Step 1: Read the booklet that can be downloaded from the following link: <https://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/2025-compulsory-professional-development>.

Step 2: Answer the questions below. You will have 4 attempts to answer each question correctly

Step 3: After answering all the questions in the celebrant portal, click **Submit**. If you have started but wish to complete the activity at a later time, you may click **Save**. Please remember to click **Submit** to complete the activity.

Please note:

- You will not be able to click the submit button unless all questions have an answer selected.
- The activity will be submitted automatically only if you have answered all questions correctly, or you have exhausted all 4 attempts to answer each question correctly. Once submitted, you can no longer access the activity.
- When you have completed the activity, you will see a confirmation message on your screen. This is your opportunity to **Print** or **Download** the activity for your records (the Print and Download buttons are available at the bottom of the screen). Once this screen is closed, you will no longer be able to access this page, or to print or download your results.
- You will be able to see the status on the 'Current Year' page confirming you have 'completed' the activity. Please check the status to confirm the activity was successfully completed.
- When the activity is submitted and you see a confirmation message, the department will be notified that you have completed this activity.
- There is no pass or fail mark.

TIP

Download and read <https://www.ag.gov.au/families-and-marriage/publications/2025-compulsory-professional-development>.

If you press Ctrl + A, you will select all and can then copy and paste to a blank page on your computer. This will give you the entire test which you can then study offline

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

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

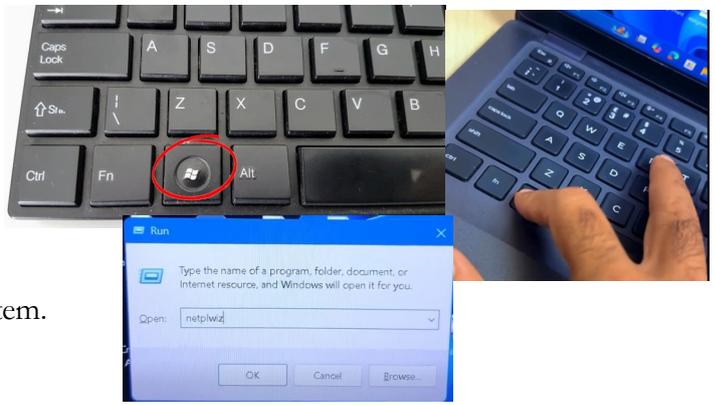
The minor and the other party to the marriage must each provide real consent at the time the marriage is solemnised.

COMPUTER SECURITY

You will find many tips on computer security online. Pressing the Windows key and almost any other button will give you access to your computer systems.

Typing Windows Key + R, that is the Windows key and the letter 'r', to bring up a function window. Then type **netplwiz**, to see who has access to your system.

Reel by Ilyas Byahatti | Tech & Info | PC tips



Protect Your Social Media Privacy

This is an extract from an article in [PC Magazine](#), written by PCMag's expert on security, privacy, and identity protection, putting antivirus tools, security suites, and all kinds of security software through their paces, [Neil J. Rubenking](#). The article is titled [12 Simple Things You Can Do to Be More Secure Online](#) but as we Celebrants use social media so much this extract is of particular value but the entire article is of course worth a study. [Neil J. Rubenking](#) writes:

There's a common saying: *if you're not paying for a service, you're not a customer; you're the product*. Social media sites make it easy for you to share your thoughts and pictures with friends, but it's easy to wind up sharing too much.



You can [download your Facebook data](#) to see just what the social media giant knows about you. It may be quite an eye-opener, especially if you're the kind of person who routinely clicks on quizzes that require access to your social

media account. Really, you don't need to know which Disney princess or dog breed you are.

Beware, too, of hackers posing as your social media friends. A [common scam](#) starts with a private message and ends with hackers taking over your account and using it to continue the scam. If you get an odd or unexpected private message from a friend, ask about it using email or some other type of communication. Your friend may have been scammed.

You can drastically reduce the amount of data going to Facebook by [disabling the sharing platform](#) entirely. Once you do, your friends can no longer leak your personal data. You can't lose data to apps, because you can't use apps. And you can't use your Facebook credentials to log into other websites (which was always a bad idea).

Of course, other social media sites need attention too. Google probably knows more about you than Facebook, so take steps to [manage your Google privacy](#), too. Make sure you've configured each social media site so that your posts aren't public (well, all except Twitter and other broadcast media services). Think twice before [revealing too much in a post](#), since your friends might share it with others. With care, you can retain your privacy without losing the entertainment and connections of social media.



The Icelandic government replaced all the red traffic lights with little hearts to help brighten the day of those in traffic who are frustrated at having to stop in their tracks.

[20 curious images of things you'll only see in Iceland](#)

Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) & Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)



The AG and most federal government departments have already introduced MFA/2FA and the NSW BDM is about to.

The first layer of protection between your account and someone else accessing it is your password. The second layer is two-factor authentication (2FA) or Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)..

Quite simply, when your password is entered, the webpage automatically sends a random code to your separately selected device, typically your phone, a security app, a fob, or an email account. You then have to enter that random code on the login screen to verify your identity.

It adds an extra blanket of security to your accounts. Whilst a hacker might somehow access one device or an account, in order to bypass 2FA/MFA, they would have to gain access to two of your devices which is far more difficult., hence, you can (and should) use 2FA/MFA for all of your online accounts.

[9 Cybersecurity Tips to Stay Protected in 2023](#)



NSW BDM Marriage celebrant webinar

The NSW BDM webinar, featuring updates and insights relevant to your role as a celebrant: was held 12pm - 12:40pm on **Wednesday 20 August 2025**

The Webinar Agenda was:

- multi-factor authentication and new password requirements for eRegistry
- Understand how NSW BDM register marriages
- How to apply for a Shortening Of Time
- Marriage trends & statistics

[The seminar recording is available online](#)



SHORTENING OF TIME VIA BDM

Applying for a shortening of time to the NSW BDM Registry has been simplified.

The celebrant or the couple can now email an SOT application to the NSW BDM at:

bdm-marriages-syd@customerservice.nsw.gov.au,

All of the following must be attached:

- a letter from the couple asking for a shortening of time including:
 - ◊ full names of both parties to the marriage,
 - ◊ the intended date of the ceremony and
 - ◊ the reason why the Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) was not lodged earlier or why the ceremony cannot be delayed.
- a signed and completed Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) lodged with an authorised celebrant.
- a written statement from the celebrant including their full name, phone number, email address, and registration number.
- evidence showing why the wedding needs to be held earlier (such as plane tickets, employment letters with commencement dates, receipts, letters from medical specialists).

Your request may be rejected or delayed if you don't supply sufficient evidence but the NSW BDM Registry aims to finalise requests within 2 business days.

[How to apply to the Registry for a *shortening of time*](#)

NEW BDM PASSWORD REQUIREMENTS

You will need to reset your passwords to comply with updated requirements:

- ⇒ Minimum of 15 characters in length
- ⇒ Must not contain your account name or parts of your full name
- ⇒ Must contain three (3) out of the following four (4) categories for complexity
 - ◊ at least one number (0-9)
 - ◊ at least one uppercase characters (A - Z)
 - ◊ at least one lowercase characters (a - z)
 - ◊ at least one special character e.g.

!@#%&*_+=`|\(){}|;:"'<>.,?/

- ⇒ [Click her for the Tutorial video on how to update your password.](#)

MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION FOR LOGIN

In addition to changing your password, the NSW BDM will soon be introducing Multifactor Authentication (MFA) when you log into the Lifelink as additional security. It is being phased, with birth and death data entries first and Celebrants last. In addition to you your username and password, you will use your chosen authenticator mobile application app on a separate device. NSW BDM recommends your downloading one of the supported authenticator apps below if you don't have one already:

- ⇒ Okta Verify
- ⇒ Google Authenticator
- ⇒ Microsoft Authenticator.



CORRECTION IN REGISTRATIONS

There is New BDM form for correcting entries and it simplifies not only the form, but the process because you now simply submit the form by email Email an attachment with the subject line "Marriage Celebrant Amendment [marriage registration number]" to

BDMAmendments@customerservice.nsw.gov.au

Marriage celebrants have 60 days from the date of registration to request a change.

The original certificate no longer has to be returned ot the NSW BDM before corrections are made BUT As a requirement of completing this form, you must declare on page 3 that you will/have destroyed any certificate with the incorrect information and have recorded the barcode of the certificate. If you do not have the certificate in your possession, and are unable to ensure it is destroyed, you are not eligible to complete this form and sign the declaration.

[Click here for the new *correct an entry - marriage celebrant*](#)



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.



This book of Buddhist meditation, published in 2006, was authored by the Venerable Wuling, Shi (Shi Wuling), who was born in 1946 in New York state and currently resides in Australia. As a student of Venerable Master Chin Kung, she became a nun in Dallas, Texas in 1997 and received full ordination in Taiwan. She follows the *Pure Land school of Mahayana Buddhism*. The book is distributed to aid meditations.

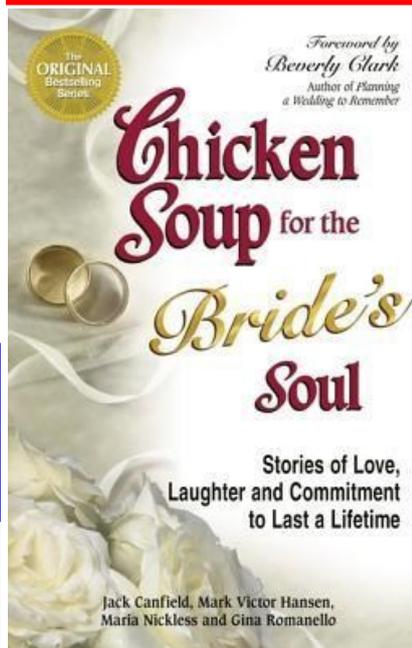
Described as “a treasure for meditation and a lovely reminder of simple ideas for complicated issues” and as “A very useful and handy book of easy to digest philosophy”. There are 365 pages of short sayings, so one page a day, to enable focus, thought and understanding. For us Celebrants it has a two fold benefit:

- 1) Very useful quotations for meaningful ceremonies
- 2) Personal focus and peaceful inner thought.

Hence it is a useful book to help write ceremonies as well as a valuable and simple personal read in meditations. You can purchase from various sources, or simply download it free

- [Path to Peace - | 9781599753546 | Amazon.com.au | Books](https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B000APR004)
- [Path to peace : Wuling, Shi : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](https://www.archive.org/details/path-to-peace-wuling-shi)

I am often asked “*what books do you have on your shelf*”, well this is another of them. The Editor :)



First published 1st January 2004, but with a number of reprints since, *Chicken Soup for the Bride's Soul* follows on from the 1990's best seller of the time, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, written by motivational speakers, Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen and is part of a large series of books. This particular book, has contributions not just from Jack Canfield, and Mark Victor Hansen, but

also from Maria Nickless and Gina Romanello with a forward by *Planning a Wedding to Remember*, author, Beverly Clark.

According to the publishers, the book “*encompasses everything from first proposal to anniversary memories, this inspirational celebration of marriage offers a selection of touching, poignant, humorous, and joyous essays, stories, and reflections for the bride and bride-to-be.*”

The description does not disappoint.

As a collection of personal stories from a variety of contributors, including stories from mothers about a wedding dress and grooms about their beautiful brides.

One reviewer described the stories as *heart warming and soothing, especially for a stressed-out bride or groom.*

This Celebrant found it an enjoyable read. A line or joke here and there may seem misogynistic or outdated but it is an American publication, so there are frequent references to altars and God, however romance is universal and timeless. People feel the same emotions and encounter the same experiences everywhere.

Overall the book is inspirational and aptly titled. There are descriptions of small excerpts from ceremonies such as a vow given by a groom to his stepdaughter, but the writing style and descriptions of personal events can offer inspiration when writing both wedding scripts or even eulogies and can be a refreshing pleasantry for the Celebrant reader who might learn a thing or two about comforting a stressed party during wedding preparation.

It is available in paperback, online and in audio, and so you could even listen to it on the way to or from a ceremony to set a mood or to debrief.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chicken_Soup_for_the_Soul_books
- <https://www.bridalsurvival.com.au/products/chicken-soup-for-the-bride-s-soul-by-jack-canfield-mark-victor-hansen-maria-nickless-gina-romanello>
- <https://cdn.bookee.app/files/pdf/book/en/chicken-soup-for-the-bride-s-soul.pdf>



Despite complaints about pricing, EasyWeddings has been around for about 25 years and is still used by many Celebrants, Venues and Vendors. They claim to have 5000 vendors listed, including 1000 venues and offer a range of resources and information to couples.

EasyWeddings, has now announced that their WedCRM has been rebranded as WedXM - a refreshed platform that they say, makes it even easier to connect with couples.

Starting **September 3**, all enquiries will be delivered through **WedXM instant messaging**. This means no more waiting on email - instead, you'll chat directly with couples in real time, building stronger connections from the start. And you'll still have the flexibility to email, text, or call couples if that's your preferred way of communicating.

Why Instant Messaging?

- 🗨 Respond faster to enquiries and win more bookings
- 👂 Build trust quickly with real-time, personal chats
- 📱 Manage all conversations in one place so nothing is missed

What you need to do before September 3

To make sure you're ready, confirm you can log in to WedXM using your account email and password (your current login method).

How to sign in from September 3

From launch, sign-in will be simpler, faster, and allow **multi-user access** so your whole team can manage enquiries.

You'll be able to log in using:

- **Account email address** (existing login, with one-time code)
- **Mobile phone number** (linked to your account)
- **Storefront email address** (to access just that storefront)
- **Storefront mobile number** (to access just that storefront)

Tip: Logging in with storefront details means you'll only see that storefront. Logging in at the account level gives you access to all storefronts



EasyWeddings suggests this to-do list for subscribers, before September 3:

- ☑ Make sure you can log in to WedXM.
- ☑ Review and update your profile, photos, and availability.
- ☑ Add any team members who need access to enquiries.

If you need support, they have offered this info:

- Learn more about WedXM or
- contact your Partnership Manager directly on **1800 155 122** if you have any questions.



RECOGNISED CHURCHES

All religions recognised in Australia are listed in the **Marriage (Recognised Denominations) Proclamation 2018 Act** which you will find here:



<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018L01607>

As you know, *Authorised Civil Marriage Celebrants* are all registered via the MLCS in the Federal AGs office whereas ministers of religious are registered via their church, within in the state in which they are located, but Minsters of Religion who are authorised to solemnise marriages, are then also listed on the AG website directory. Unlike Civil Celebrants, ministers of religion can only operate within the dictum of their own church and so in most instances can only conduct ceremonies at their designated location which is usually a church building or within a parish, without deviation. *Authorised Civil Marriage Celebrants*, have much greater freedom to conduct ceremonies at any location within Australian borders and can include just about any ritual, provided content does not contradict the Marriage Act and so

Look around your own area for opportunity because Civil Celebrants can be called upon by a church, to conduct weddings if their pastor is not an authorised marriage celebrant.

COORDINATOR COMMENTS



Compliance and diligence.

Two truly important factors in all that we do as Celebrants. Diligence, because we must be UpToDate, informed, aware and consistent in all we do as Celebrants because if we are not diligent, it is too easy to make mistakes that will impact on compliance and of course if we are not compliant, the consequences can be dire.

It is vital that we keep up with our OPD but more so, that we continually improve by expanding our minds and ideas, fields of study, as well as trends and influences. We can of course reject ideas that we don't agree with or make us uncomfortable but we cannot ignore or disregard the law. It was disappointing to discover that some Celebrants think that the certificate signed at the Ceremony is not legal proof of marriage or that the only official certificate of marriage is that issued by the BDM. There are three Official Certificates of Marriage signed at the ceremony and the couple get to keep one of those as proof that their marriage was solemnised. That certificate is uniquely numbered and the text on the back explains the legal status. It is not however proof of identify and the fourth certificate of marriage available from the BDM after registration is both proof of marriage and identity. Of the other two official marriage certificates signed at the ceremony include one to be kept by the Celebrnat and the other to be submitted to the BDM as part of the registration process.

Another misperception is that the couple are not married until the end of the ceremony, after the certificates are signed and after the Celebrant makes an announcement but as we professionals know, they are married immediately they exchange vows; the certificates are simply proof that has occurred and there is no legal requirement for an announcement. Also, even if the marriage was not registered, if all was compliant up to and including the exchange of vows, the couple are married regardless of whether the marriage is registered or not.

The final one that I will mention is that the couple don't have to say 'I Do', like they do in the American movies. As we professionals know, there is no requirement for this but we can have some fun with it because most couples do like to say it and so we can ask some silly or fun questions (with the couples' approval of course) and they can have a giggle mid ceremony—*"Do you agree to only say good things about each other on social media and like your partners' TikTok posts?"* or a *"Do you agree to stack the dishwasher" and put the toilet seat into its correct position"*. ★

Generally speaking, people don't like change and whilst most of us have become very comfortable with the online registration process in NSW with Lifelink, some may possibly be challenged by the new password requirements

and the new multifactor authentication process for login being introduced in stages but don't despair as any obstacles you encounter will be solvable. The NSW BDM has promised to assist Celebrants if problems are encountered and I'm certain that we will support each other as we navigate any changes. People like Dally Messenger III and Robert Smith and others have witnessed incredible changes over the many years and so I'm sure the rest of us can manage. ★

In case you are wondering why there is a Northern Territory wedding venue on the cover, it is because the editor (me) visited the venue recently while on a tour of the NT. The photos are simply to remind us that we can perform ceremonies anywhere within Australian borders. I've been on the south coast for over 4 years and still travel to some venues that are 2-3 or even 8 hours away, though most, gratefully, are closer to home with an increasing number only a few minutes away in and around beautiful Manyana when people may encounter my morning coffee companions pictured.



Find your path on a NSW Great Walk

Bright, cool winter days are an ideal time to discover unforgettable walks across NSW's most breathtaking landscapes.

From pristine coastline to ancient rainforest and alpine peaks you can take a single or multi-day walk with self-guided camping experiences, immersive guided walks and comfortable accommodation options.

[Plan your next walk](#)