

# Newsletter

Website Version of our Issue 1 Newsletter Dec 2005

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The **C**elebrants **A**ustralia **N**ewsletter

Issue No 1. Dec 2005

## Hooray – We're up and running!

Welcome to our first edition of *The CAN*! After 12 months finding our feet, now we have found our voice! Three cheers!

It's our paper and our news! So if you have something to say – put it in *The CAN*. We plan to publish quarterly – A *CAN* for all seasons!

A big 'thank you' to all members who have contributed to our first issue. Read on – and take possession!

## Our new banner unfurled



Kim Walsh and Anna Schembri

launch our new

Celebrants Australia banner at the

Williamstown Wedding Expo.

Newly registered Civil Marriage Celebrants Kim and Anna lost no time getting down to work after receiving their registrations from the AG in September. They are pictured here at their first Wedding Expo in Williamstown Town Hall where they used our new banner for the first time. They say it created a focal point for their stand, where they

spoke to many brides and mothers about coming weddings, and handed out a lot of their cards and literature. (See Anna's further comments on the Expo in The CAN Soapbox on page 8).

We have to thank Glyn Ellis for organizing the design and production of our new banner. He managed to arrange it for us for only \$100. Our banner is now your property -- the property of Celebrants Australia -- and is available for you to use, free of charge, whenever you need it.

Celebrants Australia Inc. has come a long way in its first twelve months. I sincerely wish to thank Australian Institute of Education and Training (AIET) and in particular Allan Barnes and Phil Quinn for initiating the formation of this association for Celebrants.

We also thank Allan, Connie and Phil for the use of their wonderful facilities and their commitment to the Association.

Since the commencement of Celebrants Australia many sub committees have commenced, such as, Professional Development, Marketing, Newsletter, Membership and fundraising, thank you to all members.

It has been interesting and exciting watching the association unfold, such as the membership deciding that executive meetings would handle the day to day running of the association and general meetings for the social, education and further development of members. This I believe is the key to a successful professional association, many break down and lose members due to the lack of social contact and ongoing training. Participation in both executive and general meetings has been extraordinary.

It has been a privilege to have been the first Chair, but due to other family and more recently work commitments, including weddings, I have not had the time to devote to the association and it is with regret that I resign from the executive.

I sincerely thank Celebrants Australia Inc executive members, Irene Wrochna, Allan Barnes, Liz Agius-Wiles, Bess Kyriakidis and Spencer Flint, as well as Lyndon Shea, Rob Wort, Judy Brooks and Colleen Underwood. Following Irene's resignation during the year we then welcomed Christine Haddrick on to the Committee.

A very special thank you to Irene, Bess and Spencer who have been of a great assistance to me over the past twelve months, Thank you.

Thank you Spencer for providing such an excellent venue for our second AGM and our first official Christmas function.

**Sheila Freeman**

**Chairperson,**

**Celebrants Australia Inc.** [!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb\_img.jpg\)](#)

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## **OUR COMMITTEE FOR 2005**

*Chairperson* – Sheila Freeman

*Vice Chairperson* – Irene Wrochna

-- Followed by Spencer Flint

*Secretary* – Liz Agius-Wiles

*Treasurer* – Allan Barnes

### **Committee Members:**

Lyndon Shea,

Rob Wort

Judy Brooks

Colleen Underwood

Bess Kyriakidis

Christine Haddrick.

### **Sub Committees:**

**Ongoing Professional Development** (Inc. Code of Conduct)

Lyndon Shea and Rob Wort;

**Marketing:** Liz Agius-Wiles, and Bess Kyriakidis;

**Membership:** Judy Brooks and Colleen Underwood.

***The CAN Editorial Committee:*** Liz Agius-Wiles, Christine Haddrick  
And Rob Wort.

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## Building Works Progressing Well



Well. It wasn't too long ago that our renovation was looking like this – not much happening ... however, after starting the actual renovation almost 12 months to the day that we submitted the application to the Council, things are starting to progress

In fact, the builder informs me that he is on track to complete the building works by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Now the optimist that I am is joyous about this, but deep down .... we'll see .... It is at lockup, air conditioners will go in next week, plaster after that, and then it's the finishing off bits.

All this means is that for the first Celebrants Australia meeting next year, we will be housed in plush new surroundings!!

It also means that we can start to offer a wider range of courses, including the Certificate IV in Marriage Celebrancy. This course looks at performing funerals, naming days, recommitment of vows, etc. If you are interested in studying this next year please let us know and we can send you the dates, details, etc.

The new renovations also provide us with the option of branching out and offering our rooms for hire.

One of the other things that we are currently looking at is advertising ourselves as Wedding Planners. More on this to come!! 2006 promises to be an exciting year, so we look forward to continuing to have you on board as members of Celebrants Australia!!

*Allan Barnes*

**Director A.I.E.T.**

**Treasurer, Celebrants Australia.** [^](#)

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**Meet the members:**

### **Spencer Flint**

Former airline pilot, Classical Pianist, now Restaurateur, SPENCER FLINT is interviewed by Christine Haddrick.

**Hi Spence. Do you like to be called Spence?**

Lots of people call me that. It's OK

**Would you like to tell us something about your roots?**

I was brought up in Hobart, my Dad was involved in home building and real estate. I had an older brother and a younger brother.

**Middle child eh?** Yes, don't see much of them, we're really close !!!

**What was the catalyst for leaving the nest?**

I experienced a 'moment of truth'. When I was 19. I was confronted by someone worse off than me so I left home to start a drug rehabilitation program. I did that for 4 years. There were some difficult times but I remember the beautiful wedding day of a bloke who had really been in a bad way a few years before. The transformation was very rewarding.

**Have you had a wedding ceremony yourself?**

Yes, Jenay and I have been married for 23 years and we have 2 boys, Jonathan 15 and David 19. At the time of our marriage Jenay had just graduated from the Wellington National School of Ballet, she was born in the USA!

**What about sport. Are you actively involved at all?**

I swim regularly---mostly at Essendon Public Baths. I like boats and sailing too but mostly swimming. I usually do 120 laps in 48 mins.

**That sounds good. Is it good?** (Spencer smiles)

**What would you enjoy most – a night at the opera after a flash dinner, or a casual evening with friends in a bar promoting unknown youth bands?**

I have to say the former. I am trained in classical piano. I made two recordings in 1977 and have written several compositions, including sacred music which is still used. I still play piano, pipe organ and concert harp for enjoyment. But then, on the other hand, I would be interested in youth bands as well.

**Does anything in society worry you ?**

Breakdown in the family unit – it destroys the very fabric of society.  
(cont. next page)

**What about sustainable energy? Have you got a compost bin for instance?** I have 5 alpaca's that make compost!

**What makes you feel really positive about our country?**

Opportunities and lifestyle – freedom.

**Has there been a memorable achievement in your life at all?** Oh yes. ..my first flight in command of an Ansett jet, after 16 years. My son, David, was with me and we flew for the Royal Children's Hospital fundraising appeal.

David was a patient at the hospital, I will never forget it!

**What have you initiated?**

My flying career -- from cloud seeding to mercy flights to aerial photography to Ansett Captain -- until I retired in 2001. My involvement in welfare organizations and now Olive Hill Estate where you will be having your CA Christmas function. We transformed 80



**SUNBURY VICTORIA**

acres of marginal farming land into lush olive groves, restaurant, entertainment facility and gift shop. And then I decided to respond to suggestions that I should be a Celebrant.

**And what do you enjoy most about being a celebrant?**

I find funerals challenging and I can really get involved but I love being part of a bride and groom's happiness on their wedding day.

**So Spencer, are you winding down or winding up....or just coasting along?** At 51, I am winding up. I'm a late starter.

**On that note I think we will wind up, which, of course, means wind down. Thank you for sharing a little of who you are with the readers of the CAN, we look forward to our evening in the olive groves.**



VISIT OLIVE HILL ESTATE in SUNBURY

**Book an olive grove tour – Say hello to the Alpacas**

**Dine at the Olive Branch Café Restaurant**

Learn how olive oil is processed

Browse around the Olive Basket Gift Shop

Ask Spencer if he'll play his harp for you!

OLIVE HILL ESTATE, Shepherds Lane, Sunbury. Melway 383 C12

# the C.A.N. Soapbox

**Anna Schembri talks about her 'Expo Experiences'.**

Kim and I had the pleasure of experiencing the benefits (and the bother) of participating in the Williamstown Wedding Expo and the Moonee Ponds Expo.recently.

Expos are run to sell wedding products and services. Kim and I were there to sell ourselves! It was quite daunting at first, but we gained some priceless experience.

We actually learned how to speak to couples and answer questions relating to their ceremony. I was very hesitant to talk about fees, but I soon learned to overcome this – thanks to Kim!

We gathered information from the general questions we were asked, and even though we are yet to perform a wedding, we confidently acted like old hands! We discovered that confidence is what it's all about. What we lack in experience we can overcome with our new-found skills, knowledge and confidence!

You can never know how many people will attend an Expo. It all depends on the advertising, the weather on the day and of course, the organizers. You have no control over the number of people who actually attend on the day. It is a personal choice that couples make. We were surprised how many brides attended without the groom – not all males go for that type of thing!

It can be quite expensive to set up a stall – it cost \$440 for us to have a table at the Williamstown Expo – the table was inclusive in the base price and we had to pay extra for electricity and the tablecloth! Kim and I split the cost by going in together so it cost us \$220 each. (Moonee Ponds cost us \$200 each). All you need is a table with your certificates, business cards, your 'portfolio' or samples of Ceremonies, and maybe some flowers and candles. The couples come to you if they don't yet have a celebrant to perform their wedding. Expect to meet couples who plan to marry a year or so down the track.

The biggest and unexpected highlight of both Expos was the response we received from the other exhibitors and stall-holders. We managed to network with quite a few of them and exchanged business cards. I think that is what the industry is all about. We managed to get enquiries from people who got our names from the photographers, etc.

..and the bottom line = We have had enquiries from SIX couples wanting us to perform their ceremony – So the expense and time well is worth it! ^

## **The Waiting Game** by STAN NEWMAN

The training is done, the application has been accepted by the Attorney-General's Department without amendment, but at number 192 on the list I face a long wait to be authorized.

What do I do? Do I advertise for the ceremonies I can perform or do I just wait until I am authorized to perform weddings? Here I am ready to go and nowhere to go! I bite the bullet and advertise, after all if I can gain experience doing other ceremonies, this must help my presentation technique.

The day the paper comes out I get my first inquiry, it's for a wedding. Don't they read the advertisement, I clearly list the ceremonies I can perform. A couple of days later another call, another wedding, but this time I am prepared with phone numbers and refer them on to one of our group. Over the next month there are more wedding inquiries which I refer on but no ceremonies for me. I realize now that many people read Celebrant and automatically think Wedding.

Averaging a call a week, some for ceremonies I can perform, with no bookings is frustrating. I begin to wonder whether it is my 'phone technique or they are all just fishing for prices. Some days I am positive and others I question my decision to advertise.

In the meantime I continue adding to my library of information for each type of ceremony, cross checking to avoid duplication and arranging the files in logical sequence.

The meeting space is ready; the framed certificates are on the wall, the set up looks neat and professional. Please someone, come and make use of it!

All the time I remind myself that I am not out to make a living as a celebrant, so don't stress at the lack of activity.

Then it happens! On the way home from work, the call I have been waiting for. They want to make an appointment to for a Naming Ceremony.

But calamity strikes; they want it on Sunday November 27<sup>th</sup>.- my wife Elaine celebrates a significant, if unwelcome birthday, ending in O on that day.

The mind races, do I accept or not? I take my life in my hands and say yes, hoping for a positive reaction when I get home. An appointment is made for Brooke and Charlie to meet me on Sunday afternoon at 3pm.

After the usual " I'm home" small talk, I break the news. The reaction is a big hug and congratulations! (I should have known)

I have a slight suspicion this ceremony is going to cost me a very expensive night out!

Sunday afternoon and all is ready; the interview form, the folder with information for planning the ceremony and me dressed for the occasion. At 2.50 a final check, then at 3pm I wait for their car to pull into the drive. At 3.30 I decide that it's a no-show. Disappointed, I pack everything away hoping for a better outcome next time.

If there is a moral to this true story, it is probably, to be prepared and to remain positive. You will eventually get that important first appointment, but remember a booking isn't a booking until the deposit is paid!

p.s. I am still up for the expensive night out! [!\[\]\(8b57f0e15e7dda24cf9977561475f640\_img.jpg\)](#)

### ***Namings are not Christenings*** By Christine Haddrick

I just love facilitating Baby Naming Ceremonies.

Being a Maternal & Child Health Nurse I suppose I have a fair understanding of this stage of life and feel very comfortable with young parents..

Mind you I have only done three Baby Namings and each one was on the first birthday.

I spent hours planning the ceremonies and each one was unique to the particular family. I had one or two initial interviews to get a feel for their values, beliefs or desires and to my continuing amazement, each ceremony, while being completely different from each other, suited each family perfectly.

Sometimes I think there is a mightier power than I influencing my thinking.

I have kept a log of do's & don'ts so that I can continue to improve the delivery of these rituals and I used to think that once I have designed 20 – 30 ceremonies I would be able to pull one out and save hours of work.

Somehow I feel now that that would be cheating my clients. Each family is unique and part of my love of doing these ceremonies is in

the planning. It is a pity it takes so long, but I am sure I will eventually become more streamlined and maybe mix 'n'match a bit.

But what exactly is a Baby Naming ceremony? Why and how is it done? Who chooses to do it? I believe the families are not really sure themselves. Many want something like a Christening, some families have never even thought of a ritual to celebrate their child.

These ceremonies are so beautiful and so meaningful I want to spread the word and teach people the meaning.

MY main thrust is –

“Namings are not Christenings, they do not replace Christenings or purport to be like them.

A baby Naming ceremony is an intimate, individual ceremony to acknowledge with gratitude the birth or existence of a child. The ceremony is an opportunity for the formal expression of sentiments felt by parents which are woven into a simple ritual.

They can be done at any stage of a child's development – at birth, the first birthday, the end of primary school, beginning of adolescence (maybe we had better not call these last Baby Namings!!

I love the idea that we take the opportunity to express love, gratitude and encouragement to children in a formal setting, even if there is a Christening, because they are different and say different things. A Christening is more a recognition of God and a welcome into a religious group.

I would like Celebrants generally to promote namings, or “Recognition Ceremonies” so that more children feel supported and know they are loved and respected, the certificate is something to look back on with pride.



**Ode to the Association by Liz Agius-Wiles © December, 2005**

We are celebrants – and we can fly!

..With feet embedded in the fertile earth, planted firmly on the bedrock of our race

We have our place.

To celebrate the cycles of our lives

Facilitating changes, marking time; Blessing journeys, unions, starts anew

With conscience true.. in all we do.

In Celebrants Australia we forge our chain

To link ourselves together, gaining strength; Deriving succour from our combined force

As we go forth.

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