



Association of Independent Funeral Professionals

# Newsletter

April/May 2020

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi everyone,

Well who could have predicted the state of the world as we currently see things with COVID-19 providing us with no end of challenges!

Uncharted waters... unprecedented times... call it what you will, we are all navigating a new way of living, working and being for the foreseeable future. If nothing else, hopefully we will all come out the other side stronger and more resilient from this experience.

On the AIFP front, we are still operating and thinking of ways we can connect with our members "virtually" and to continue to provide value. Sadly, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel our planned annual event, but we have a great venue in mind for next year. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for more information in the coming months.

Our fourth annual general meeting was held on 8 April 2020 and I'm pleased to report that we have a new board member who will bring their energy and ideas to the group to help us move forward and do wonderful work.

We are planning to step up the frequency of our online webinars so everyone can stay connected, involved and discuss issues relevant to our industry at this time. We will have two session types:

**Monthly COVID-19 Briefings**, the first of which will be held on Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 7pm.

We'll be hearing from Wendy Waack from Tag Financial who will give us the lowdown on all things COVID-19 from a financial perspective, including what government support our businesses may be eligible to apply for.

**Bi-monthly Ed Sessions**, which have proven to be a real hit with participants. A little further into the newsletter you'll find the Ed Sessions schedule for the next six months.

As always, we are looking for motivated individuals who want to work at a state level to help increase our member base, such as funeral directors, celebrants, death doulas, videographers, photographers, limousine companies, florists, musicians, vocalists, embalmers, candle-makers, coffin manufacturers and distributors, accountants, lawyers, financial planners, aged care placement specialists... (have I missed anyone?)

Anyone who contributes to the world of end of life, dying and death care is welcome to join our group! Everyone has an opportunity to contribute and participate and we would love to see more members from all states join us.

Even though the world has thrown a few curve balls our way this year, we are still moving forward, looking at how we can continue to grow and become closer as an association of individuals all contributing to this very special industry.

Please contact us if you feel that membership is something that might prove valuable to your individual business; it might be just the thing you need right now!

Carly, Chief cook and bottle washer

## 2020 AIFP BOARD MEMBERS

**At the April 2020 Board Meeting the following positions were reconfirmed:**

President – Carly Dalton

Vice President – Mike Smits

Secretary – Sarah Aird

**Role changes for continuing board members:**

Events Director – Jacqui Chaplin

Membership Director – Mario Anders

**And...**

## New to the Board

**Welcome Alison Saunders – Communications Director**

Alison was elected to the AIFP Board at the AGM last week, and confirmed as Communications Director at the following Board meeting. Whilst this is her first year as a member of the AIFP, she does like to dive into things boots and all, and is looking forward to facilitating the flow of communication, connection and education that makes the AIFP such a unique and wonderful community.



Alison considers herself a full-time celebrant as her ceremonies certainly get 100% of her passion, but the realities of mortgage payments and living costs have required Alison to continue working as a contract HR / Admin coordinator whilst she builds her business into a full time income. For the last five years she has primarily celebrated weddings but in January last year, she overcame her self-confessed fear of succumbing to tears in the face of grief to take on her first funeral service.

Alison walked away from this service with a sense of exhilaration and purpose. She knew she'd done something truly important. Through the process of bringing the ceremony together, utilising her writing and presentation skills, bringing her natural empathy to bear, connecting her life and work experiences, and pouring it all into the final telling of someone's story, Alison found what she describes as "the thing she's supposed be doing".

Her professional background is solidly grounded in all things customer / client. Having spent her formative years working with a not-for-profit organisation offering counselling and family support services, she moved into the corporate world just over 15 years ago.

This transition opened up a vastly different world – a world of projects, service targets, critical paths and teamwork. Moving from technology design and corporate strategy to team meetings and coaching sessions, Alison solidified her ability to connect with people in a real and meaningful way. Her underlying need to “add value” propelled her to great success and eventually pushed her to find something more meaningful to do with her skills.

As a celebrant (and a human being) Alison uses her capacity for deeply personal engagement, her warm style of communication and her naturally vibrant nature to create heartfelt, uplifting ceremonies. Her goal in business, as in life, is to add value to those around her in whatever way that might mean for them.

And whilst she is still learning about the roles, rules and requirements of the funeral industry, she relishes the chance to connect and learn from all of you, to create a groundswell of awareness about what’s possible, to see and promote the mindful, caring end-of-life services you have built.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

### Member Benefits

The AIFP, with its focus on inclusion of all those interested in working, training to be employed and currently employed in the death care and funeral and allied industries, is in a unique position when it comes to Member Benefits. Due to our diversity, offering across the board benefits such as professional indemnity and public liability insurance are not practical.

Therefore in addition to our current online events we are looking for member contributions to other members. It might be knowledge sharing, access to products or information or discounted services. We ask our members to step into a space of developing the independent funeral and death care industry for the greater good of all those people serviced by our membership.

#### What can you offer members to support the AIFP and grow your business?

Email AIFP President Carly Dalton at [president@aifp.org.au](mailto:president@aifp.org.au) with any thoughts or suggested offers. What would you like to have access to? What could you offer others?

### Membership Relationship Management System

#### It’s on its way!

Late last year the Board determined that it is time to introduce the use of a Membership Relationship Management System (MRMS). A selection assessment was undertaken and the Wild Apricot MRMS was selected from a range of other options.

The MRMS is currently being implemented and we are anticipating that it will be functional – at least in part – for the renewal of membership this year.

As we move forward, in addition to membership management for new and existing members, it will be the central point for:

- distribution of our newsletter
- emailing member-only information
- provision of resources as they are developed
- event registration.

Please watch out for any news coming to you via email as it may be asking you to confirm or update your information.

## Membership Categories and Insurance

There have been a number of questions about membership criteria of late. With the coming introduction of the MRMS we are segmenting our contacts and members to ensure that the right information makes it to the right people in the most efficient manner. To that end we have developed the following membership categories. These categories are purely administrative and **do not** change individual membership dues.

### Operational Members

Operational Members currently offer or provide services in the industry that involve the provision of funeral arrangements or any member that has **any interaction with deceased persons**. These members (or their employers) are required to be covered by professional indemnity and public liability insurance. Examples of people or roles that fall in this category include, but are not limited to: funeral directors, arrangers, funeral director assistants, deceased transport professionals, hearse drivers, embalmers, cemetery staff, palliative care workers and death or end-of-life doulas.

### Allied Professional Members

Allied Professional Members currently offer or provide associated and ancillary funeral services; their roles have NO direct interaction with deceased persons. These members are required to be covered by appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance for their business and services.

Examples of people or roles that fall in this category include, but are not limited to: celebrants, venue owner, accountants, insurance brokers, florists, aged care placement.

### Associate Members

Associate Members are interested in joining, or are currently studying or training for employment in, the funeral, death care or associated allied industries. Associate Members are NOT YET offering or providing services in the industry that (a) involve the provision of funeral services that have any interaction with deceased persons or (b) provide services or products related to the funeral and death care industry. These members are NOT required to be covered by professional indemnity and public liability insurance until they are employed in or offering services to the death care and funeral industry.

Once the transition is made to offering or providing services, Associate Members must upgrade to an Operational Membership or Allied Professional Membership by:

- advising the Association in writing of their change in status
- obtaining appropriate insurance
- furnishing information regarding the provider of their insurance.

## An Invitation to Contribute to the AIFP

*Did you know that volunteering is one of the sure-fire ways of ensuring better mind health?*

- Black Dog Institute 2019

### State Based Reps and Sub-Committee Opportunities

The AIFP is currently run by a small group of dedicated people seeking to create opportunities for independent funeral professionals to deliver the best outcomes for clients and families in the death care and funeral industry.

This is a call-out to all members and prospective members to be involved as:

- State Based Member Reps; and/or
- Sub-Committee Members (membership and annual industry event).

In the spirit of *many hands make light work* and *contributing what you can* your involvement in the AIFP can be designed to match the Association's needs and your skill sets, interests and availability.

If you are interested in exploring what's possible please contact **Carly Dalton**, President, to discuss what opportunities exist! [president@aifp.org.au](mailto:president@aifp.org.au) 0419 584 424

## Member Profile

### Meet Jennie Barnes

She's the owner of Last Expressions.

In 2004 Jennie Barnes's life changed forever. Her 20-year-old son Jackson was dying from terminal cancer. Whilst most people struggle to come to terms with this fate, Jackson displayed integrity beyond his years. In the last six months of his life he created a funeral that his loved ones would treasure. It was his way of giving them one last memory of him. At the time there was very little in the way of crafting a personalised funeral, especially in country South Australia. Tradition still ruled many aspects of a funeral. So he took to hand-making 100s of paper cranes for mourners to throw over his coffin. He also took full control of organising the music he wanted played and by whom, where he wanted to be buried and who to conduct the service.

Jackson taking on these tasks meant that when the time came for Jennie to farewell her precious son, she didn't have to make these decisions in a state of grief and doubt that her choices were what Jackson wanted.

Fifteen years ago, a funeral was a relatively traditional affair. In recent times more people are demanding their own unique requests be honoured and this led Jennie to finally be able to contribute to that growing surge of personal expression. Why can't the coffin have an orange lining with skulls and roses on it? Why can't the family or friends pour their love into building and decorating a plain pine casket? Why can't I have butterflies and fairies stuck all over a casket? And what about love notes under the lining?

From personal experience and discussion with people that were grieving the imminent loss of a loved one came Last Expressions. They have one simple casket design made from pine and ply. It can be delivered anywhere in Australia, to the public, as a flat pack. Jennie also offers timber tattooing – pyrography. She can burn a design of your choosing into the timber of the casket. Lachie, one of her other sons, is a world-renowned tattoo artist and is also available to help with timber tattooing. It's a family affair.

Leaving in your own style is what they want for everyone – express YOU for the last time. If you would like to speak with Jennie visit the [www.lastexpressions.com.au](http://www.lastexpressions.com.au) website.



## COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

### Contribute to the AIFP Newsletter

Members are invited to submit an article for our newsletter. Please email your ideas or article to Alison Saunders, Communications Director, [comms@aifp.org.au](mailto:comms@aifp.org.au) for consideration.

There are so many people doing such great things in death education and death care that we are sure there are many articles just waiting to be written and shared. They might be articles you publish through your work in the industry or articles that you would recommend as great reading... or it might be a review of books or podcasts that you think are worth sharing.

## EVENTS

### COVID-19 Conversations

#### Until we're through...

In these challenging and unprecedented times (we're hearing that a lot these days, aren't we?) we are offering monthly briefings on how COVID-19 is affecting our industry.

This event is complimentary for Members and just **\$15 for non-members**.

The first **COVID-19 Briefing** will be held online at **7pm on Wednesday 22 April 2020**.

**Members and Non-Members must [register to participate](#) in this event.**

Future **COVID-19 Briefings** will be held on an as-needs basis, at least once a month. Further dates will be advised as we move forward. Watch out on the AIFP Facebook page!

**[REGISTER FOR THE COVID-19 BRIEFING at 7pm on 22 APRIL HERE.](#)**

**[JOIN THE ASSOCIATION HERE.](#)**

### Ed Sessions

#### Next Up... 7pm, Wednesday 3 June 2020

Ed Sessions are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday in June, August and October (no session in December).

In the next Ed Session we'll be hearing about scattering ashes at sea, among other things.

If you're a current AIFP member and you would like to contribute your experience or expertise to these one of these sessions, perhaps talking about the why, what and how of what you do, please register your interest via email to Jacqui Chaplin, Events Director [events@aifp.org.au](mailto:events@aifp.org.au)

Sign up to attend the upcoming sessions:

**[3 JUNE 2020 ED SESSION BOOKING LINK](#)**

**[5 AUGUST 2020 ED SESSION BOOKING LINK](#)**

**[7 OCTOBER 2020 ED SESSION BOOKING LINK](#)**

Those registered will be sent the link to access the Zoom Meeting on the morning of the event.

## Online Networking | Members Only Event

### What's hot? What's not? Who's who? What are you doing?

The AIFP online networking conversations allow members the opportunity to gather online and talk all things end of life, death care and funerals...

They are held at 7pm on the first Wednesday in March, May, July, September and November. To receive the Zoom Meeting link please sign up to attend using the following links. If you register and are not a member you will not receive the link for the session.

**[6 MAY NETWORKING REGISTRATION](#)**

**[1 JULY NETWORKING REGISTRATION](#)**

**[2 SEPTEMBER NETWORKING REGISTRATION](#)**

**[4 NOVEMBER NETWORKING REGISTRATION](#)**

Those registered will be sent the link to access the Zoom Meeting on the morning of the event.

## Expo 2020 Postponed – ‘All Things Death and Dying Expo’ 2021

### All things being equal...

At the March 2020 AIFP Board Meeting a discussion was held regarding the potential impact of COVID-19. Based on a huge number of unknowns about how the virus will progress throughout the Australian winter the AIFP Board determined to postpone the Expo that was slated for October 2020 and have currently set March 2021 as the targeted date. More information to follow.

## UPDATES AND REMINDERS

### Annual Fees

Annual Fees are next due on 1 July 2020.

All memberships to the Association are individual memberships at a flat rate per person of \$150 per annum, payable each year by 1 July. Members joining outside of that time period will have their dues calculated pro rata.

## JOIN THE AIFP

**[www.aifp.org.au](http://www.aifp.org.au)**

**Go to our home page to find the appropriate Membership Application form.**

## CONTACT US

If you have any questions, suggestions, ideas or input please let us know via email.

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