

# Daily Mercury

We're for you

Friday January 24 - Sunday January 26, 2025

\$3.00, freight extra

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## DEADLY YEAR ON OUR ROADS



## KNIFE ATTACK

MAGISTRATE'S  
POINTED WARNING **P7**

**P11**



SAYING I DO

## POP UP VOWS TO SAVE \$\$

A Whitsunday wedding celebrant is offering  
weddings under \$800 **STORY, PAGE 4**

# BMA RISK OF CORRUPTION

**Contractors sacked  
amidst investigation**

"This was going on for years. Everyone knew about BHP." These are the words of a former mine site supervisor who claims he was personally offered money under the table.

**FULL STORY, PAGE 5**



# Celebrant lifts lid on affordable weddings



You can say "I do" at the Grand View Hotel in Bowen for just \$750 with marriage celebrant Georgina Black.. Picture: Waymark Hotels

## Krystal Hender

When marriage celebrant Georgina Black moved to Bowen in 2023 she quickly noticed a gap in the market for budget-friendly weddings in the region, so she got to work filling it.

Now her \$750 pop up ceremonies provide a beautiful venue and a legal wedding, without the huge price tag.

Having spent the first part of her career in Brisbane, the owner and founder of Get Married in Bowen said what couples wanted in the Whitsundays was pretty different to the city. Rather than big expensive ceremonies with all the inclusions, they were after something a little more short and sweet.

On average in 2024, Australian couples spent between \$36,000 to \$51,000 on their wedding, but sometimes up-



Grand View Hotel provides a stunning venue for weddings.

wards of \$80,000 for those who wanted the sit-down experience for 100 guests or more.

Ms Black said around Bowen and the Whitsundays, ceremony locations could cost thousands of dollars.

While couples in Bowen could choose to get married in the courthouse, Ms Black said she wanted to provide an option that was a bit more personal.

"I have my personally written registry type ceremony which still allows for couples to write and read their own vows," she said of her pop up ceremonies.

"It's definitely more than the legal wording.

"It's short and sweet but still cute and heartfelt."

Up to six couples will get married at the pop up at Grand View Hotel in Bowen in their beautifully styled waterfall

**Couples will still feel like it's a full ceremony with all the love and feels**

**Georgina Black**  
Marriage celebrant

garden. There will be seating for up to twenty guests with couples able to customise their music, vows, and how they walked down the aisle.

Ms Black said the only difference couples might notice was the strict timing, with each couple having 45 minutes before the space was reset for the next ceremony.

"Couples will still feel like it's a full ceremony with all the love and feels," she said.

These ceremonies are for everyone said Ms Black, starting at just \$750 it is a far more budget-friendly option that doesn't take away any of the sentiment or memories.

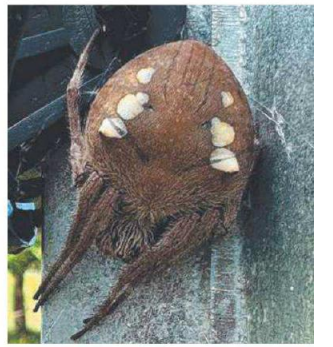
"In the current environment, I get that things are tight, budget wise," she said.

"So this is a perfect opportunity for people to still get married but do it more cost effective."

Once the ceremony was completed couples and their loved ones could choose how they celebrated, said Ms Black.

Maybe they would book a table at the local pub, or plan a barbecue in the park, or drinks and nibbles back at their own place, the ideas are endless.

**Once booking fees have been paid, Ms Black will organise a time to meet with the couple to create the perfect ceremony. To book visit [getmarriedinbowen.com.au](http://getmarriedinbowen.com.au).**



The garden orb-weaver.

## Sleeping spider humours internet

An image of what appears to be a large, hairy, snoozing spider has created quite a stir amid arachnid enthusiasts.

The photo was posted on a Facebook group dedicated to identifying Australian spiders by Cape Hillsborough resident Kim Smith, who was chasing an ID on her eight-legged neighbour.

Other members of the group were fast to give quirky answers based on the comical position in which the spider was photographed, including "old potato with legs".

"He actually looks like that potato you leave in the cupboard too long it starts sprouting," another wrote.

One person wrote "I believe that to be a Millennium Falcon" (referencing the iconic spaceship piloted by Star Wars' Han Solo) to which another responded with, "you win the internet for the day with that comment".

While another wrote, "So she has some Christmas weight on her. No judgment here".

Experts among the group however said the spider was a female garden orb-weaver, which were regarded as only mildly venomous to humans.

Garden orb-weavers are found right across Australia and according to experts they work by night and rest during the day, folded up in an effort to hide from larger predators – helped also by their brown colouring.

"I love the way that orb-weavers fold up," one woman said.

Each night they create a new web, which they then remove at dawn before starting the whole process again when the sun goes down.

"Watch him around dusk go out to build his web," one commenter suggested.

## Parents cop it with school messages

The average Aussie parent of two school-aged children (aged 5-14) will receive more than 2914 WhatsApp messages during a single school year. In addition to these constant notifications, parents of two kids spend the equivalent of three months annually managing more than 1244 tasks related to their children's schedules, extracurriculars and daily life admin, research by AI personal assistant app Goldee reveals.

This load is compounded by domestic duties and paid work.

## Travelling on hold as costs take a toll

Seventy-one per cent of Australians are postponing ticking off their travel bucket lists due to tightening budgets.

Almost one third (31 per cent) say it would take them one to two years to plan or save for such a trip, Insure&Go research reveals. Respondents aged 30-49 were most likely to hold back on ticking off their domestic and international travel bucket lists due to a lack of disposable income. Europe topped the go-to destinations for 67 per cent of respondents, followed by Asia (53 per cent).

## Poor old Aussies are feeling partied out

Australians are cutting back on social outings amid growing financial pressure.

Sixty per cent of Aussies were avoiding social gatherings to conserve funds or recharge over the festive season, according to Finder research. Almost half (47 per cent) say they cut back on social engagements to save money, while one in five (21 per cent) did so to save their "social battery".

The research found women (65 per cent) were slightly more likely than men (56 per cent) to have scaled back.

## Digital hardware is barely up to speed

Australia ranks 37th in the world for digital quality of life.

New Zealand (32nd) and the UK (9th) are both ahead of Australia, Surfshark's rankings of 121 countries shows.

Australia's internet quality is 59th in the world. Fixed internet speed (112Mbps) has improved by 26 per cent since 2023, while mobile speed (159Mbps) has dropped by 2 per cent.

The internet is relatively affordable in Australia compared to other countries.