

# Planning Your Ceremony



I have compiled the following guide to assist in planning your ceremony. The sections marked with a double asterisk \*\* are the only three parts that are legally required, the monitum, the vows, and the signing of the certificates. Everything else is completely flexible and up to you! Sections can be taken out, readings and rituals can be added in, and the order can be changed.

## **Processional**

Who will be standing at the front and who will be walking down the aisle? Who will remain standing and who will take a seat? What seats need to be reserved? Music is often selected for this piece of the ceremony.

## **Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country**

You may choose to organize for an elder to give a Welcome to Country. Alternatively, I am happy to start the ceremony with an Acknowledgement of Country.

## **Introduction**

This section can cover the following: introducing myself, welcoming your guests, acknowledging any special guests, introducing the bridal party, thanking any special people such as parents, etc.

## **Presentation of Bride/Groom (Giving Away)**

This section can be as traditional or modern as you like. The traditional approach would be “Who gives this bride to this groom?” question, with the lifting of the veil, and the father passing the bride’s hand to the groom. A more modern approach is asking both sets of parents if they will support the couple in their marriage. Some people skip it all together. It’s totally up to you!

## **Your Story**

This is where I tell your story; couples often choose to include how they met, any significant events in the relationship, and how you got engaged. It can be as long or short as you like. I would recommend the length be determined by what else you are having in your ceremony; if you are having a ritual and two readings, I would keep this section short, but if you only want one reading then there is time for more story-telling.

## **\*\*Celebrant Authority (Monitum) \*\***

“I am duly authorised by law to solemnise marriages according to law. Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of these witnesses, I am to remind you of the solemn and binding nature of the relationship into which you are now about to enter. Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.”

## **Commitment to Children**

If either or both of you have children, this wedding symbolizes not only the start of your life as a married couple but also as a family. This is an opportunity to make a verbal commitment, give a special gift, have a reading, or participate in a ritual. Let's discuss the possibilities!

## **The Asking**

We all know the movie-famous “I Do” moment. In Australia, the legal vows do not include the asking and the “I Do”; however, we can certainly throw it in there if you envision it in your fairytale wedding!

## **Pledge (Personalised Vows)**

This is the part where you get to make your promises to each other. I encourage my couples to write section themselves, although I'm always available to lend a hand.

## **\*\*Legal Vows\*\***

“I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, A.B. (*or* C.D.), take thee, C.D. (*or* A.B.), to be my lawful wedded wife (*or* husband, *or* spouse)”

## **Ring Ceremony**

The ring ceremony usually follows the exchanging of vows, if you are choosing to do so. The ring ceremony can be as elaborate or as short and to the point as you want.

## **Declaration of Marriage**

This is where I declare you as married and everyone cheers!

## **Kiss**

And the declaration is usually followed by the first kiss as a married couple.

## **\*\*Sign the Register\*\***

I explain to your guests that the two of you, your two witnesses, and myself will step aside to sign the marriage documents. This part usually takes 5-10 minutes. The venue or myself will provide a table next to where we are standing for us to sign the documents. Music is often selected for this piece of the ceremony.

## **Blessing and Congratulations**

We will come back in front of your guests, and I will mention any housekeeping items (like where everyone is heading for the reception or where to stand for a group photo). I then like to say a brief blessing and offer good wishes for your marriage. This can be something I write for you, or a reading can be selected for this purpose. Then I will ask your guests to join me in congratulating you both, the newlyweds!

## **Recessional**

This is where you leave the ceremony. Who will walk back up the aisle? Where do you want guests to greet you? Music is often selected for this piece of the ceremony.