

WEDDING OUTLINE: OPTIONS & ESSENTIALS

Most civil wedding ceremonies last for 15 – 30 minutes.

The wedding ceremony is a public declaration of your love for each other and the promise of commitment. The words chosen need to reflect your personalities, beliefs and values and be unique to you as a couple.

Introduction (Optional)

A welcome followed by the principles of beliefs surrounding marriage. Can also include acknowledgement of particular family members, friends or any special circumstances.

A Reading (Optional)

Your choice of verse or prose or lyrics from songs or whatever you find or write that expresses your feelings, beliefs and values.

Giving Away or Bringing Forth (Optional)

This is a traditional ritual symbolising the ‘giving’ into care of the bride/groom from one family to another. Children from a previous marriage may be included in this ritual. An alternative could be a bringing forth of the bride and groom to be married to each other – by parents, particular friends, or the entire gathering.

The Monitum (Essential)

The marriage celebrant is required to recite the monitum from the Marriage Act that reminds you of the legal and binding nature of the marriage and includes the legal definition:

I am duly authorised by the Commonwealth of Australia to conduct 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 the law in Australia, is the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.

The Asking (Optional)

A formal question in relation to your intentions: “Do you.....” “I do.”

Vows (Essential)

Your promises. They need to acknowledge your lifelong commitment but can also include anything you wish to promise each other. You can write them yourselves or choose from a list of examples or find from some other source however they must contain the following phrase:

I call upon the people here to witness that I.....take.....to be my wife/husband

WEDDING OUTLINE: OPTIONS & ESSENTIALS

Exchange of Rings or some other symbolic act (Optional)

The exchanging of rings is a time honoured symbolic act expressing the heartfelt bonding between two people. Other symbolic acts include: warming of the rings, hand-fasting, sharing of wine, jumping over brooms and other rituals derived from particular cultural traditions. You can choose to have as many rituals or symbolic acts as you like.

A Reading (Optional)

Your choice of another reading to conclude this part of the ceremony.

Declaration (Essential)

I formally declare that you are now married and invite you to kiss each other to seal the ceremony.

The Signing (Essential)

There are three pieces of documentation, which needs to be signed by bride, groom, two witnesses and the celebrant.

Presentation of the Certificate (Essential)

I formally present the certificate and invite guests to come forward and congratulate the couple. At this point I can introduce you with your new names, if there are to be any changes.

Other things to consider:

- You may want to consider incorporating culture specific rituals and symbols.
- You may want to consider how to include children from previous marriages if that is appropriate. (For example, in the hand-fasting ritual, children can hold the different coloured ribbons used to bind the hands of the wedding couple)
- I recommend at least one rehearsal, preferably at the venue, to check for timings and sound projection. It is also helpful to feel familiar with the ceremony and the surroundings.
- If it is an outside venue, I recommend a back-up venue be arranged in the event of bad weather.
- It is a legal requirement that all guests present at the wedding can adequately hear the ceremony. If needed I will provide a professional PA system (no extra cost).