



Ceremony Ideas

Wedding Ceremony Format

Some ideas for what to include in your wedding ceremony:

- ♥ Welcome to guests and your arrival
- ♥ Introduction
- ♥ Love Story
- ♥ Blessings & Support
- ♥ Monitum *
- ♥ Blessings, Prayers & Readings
- ♥ Unity Rituals
- ♥ The Asking
- ♥ Legal Vows *
- ♥ Personal Vows
- ♥ The Ring Exchange
- ♥ Declaration
- ♥ The Signing of the Certificates
- ♥ The Presentation / Recessional / Exit

All of these ceremonial elements are optional with the exception of the Monitum and Legal Vows – without these two elements, you are not legally married!

Read on to find out more about the options for your marriage ceremony.

Welcome to Guests and Your Arrival

When your wedding guests have all arrived and you are both ready to proceed, I will welcome guests and tell everyone that you have arrived, and the ceremony is about to start.

I will say my 'Housekeeping' – tell people to turn their phones off/silent, let them know if it's ok to take photos or not, introduce your photographer/musician etc. as relevant, fill guest seats, make any special announcements that you want me to and make sure everything and everyone is ready to go!

Your arrival and entrance to a ceremony is also known as the Processional and it is entirely up to you how this occurs. It may include:

- ♥ Groom/Bride/Partner waiting at the front
- ♥ Groom/Bride/Partner walking down the aisle one at a time with his/her/their attendants and/or parents or another special person proceeded by attendants such as bridesmaids, best man, groomsman, maid of honour etc.
- ♥ Couple arriving together with or without parents and attendants.

There is no right or wrong way to arrive at your wedding – it is your choice whether it is traditional, grand, modern, simple or entertaining.

Your processional can be accompanied by music, singing or dancing as you wish.

I am happy to control music for you if you do not have a musician.

Acknowledgement of Country

You may wish to include an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of your ceremony to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land that your ceremony is taking place on. I can read this or you can arrange for an alternative person such as an Aboriginal elder to perform a Welcome to Country.

Suggested wording for a celebrant is:

"Today we gather on Noongar Country. We stand in footsteps millenia old and to marry here is a great honour. On behalf of myself and <Names>, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Whadjuk Noongar people. We pay our respects to their continuing culture, the contribution they make to the life of this land and to their elders past and present."

I will identify the correct name of the traditional owners for the land that your ceremony takes place on. Whadjuk Noongar refers to the traditional owners of the Perth region.

I like to say this as part of my Housekeeping before the ceremony formally begins (with your entrance) but it is up to you when and if it is included.

Introduction

The introduction will set the scene for your wedding ceremony. I will welcome everyone to your wedding, introduce your Wedding Party if you have one and thank everyone for being there. I make special mentions of people who are watching via livestream, people who cannot be there, people who did special things to help etc.

I will ask you to tell me what to include.

Love Story

This is the fun, personal and memorable stuff that will make your ceremony a highlight of your day!

I will write the 'Love Story' based on the stories you tell me in your personal questionnaires. So please give me good stuff!

It will include:

- ♥ Your love story – how you met, how you got engaged, what you love most about each other, what drives you crazy and what you hope the future holds.
- ♥ Stories of love and life from memorable times with your family and friends
- ♥ Inspiration for a life full of love and laughter

I will get the words just right for your own unique and special ceremony. Those words can be simple, thoughtful, heartfelt, humorous, imaginative, embrace your passions and hobbies – I will make sure that it has you smiling and laughing. It will be as sweet & simple or as detailed as you want it to be.

Surprise or not? You decide!

You may like to have a surprise love story or you may like to read every word in advance. I will always send you a draft ceremony script minus your love story and personal vows so you can see how the ceremony flows and to check that I have included what you asked me to.

Then if you want, I will either send you the whole thing or keep it as a surprise. It's your choice.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire is available to complete via a Google Form online or you can complete in Word or print and handwrite it. I need you **both** to complete it please! Make sure you complete it no later than two months before your wedding day so I can write your personalised ceremony script.

You will receive copies of your completed questionnaires and your full ceremony script after your wedding – they make a great keepsake!

For Lowkey Loveday Ceremonies, I will send you a shorter questionnaire which you complete together. It will not be as detailed as an Epic Loveday but will still be personal and unique to you.

For Legal Loveday Ceremonies, we will discuss what you would like for your introduction, whether this will be presented by me or someone else.

Blessings & Support

This is when we can acknowledge your parents and/or family and the support they have given you as an individual and a couple. Weddings have evolved from the old tradition of 'giving away' a person and I prefer not to say that at all. I don't mind thanking a person who has escorted you and asking for your parents (or others) blessing if you want.

There is no right or wrong way to enter your wedding ceremony, acknowledge your family or ask for a blessing of your marriage. You choose.

If you do wish to include this, here are some ideas:

Non-Verbal Support of Families

Eliminating the words allows family members to physically show their support. A few options include:

- ♥ When they reach the end of the aisle, the father or parents of the bride/groom hug him/her and then hug her/his soon-to-be spouse. No words are said.
- ♥ If a couple walks down the aisle unaccompanied, they can walk first to their families, giving them each a flower and/or hug before meeting at the altar.

A Short Blessing for each person

This blessing lets each set of parents give their support for you and your chosen partner.

(Parents' names), do you support your son/daughter's decision to join together in marriage with (name), and do you promise to receive him/her as a member of your family from this day on?

Parents: We Do

Repeat for other person.

A blessing from everyone

Asking everyone present for their blessing, love and support is lovely:

Celebrant: "Marriage is in itself a blessing. But doubly blessed is the couple who comes into marriage surrounded by loving and supportive families and friends. Do you all promise to continue to give your unconditional love and support to <Names>?"

Guests Answer: "We do."

A Full Blessing and Support from your families

An example of a full blessing from your families:

Today as the bride <Name> entered this ceremony, we saw her lovingly escorted by her father <Name> with her mother <Name> proudly watching.

<Name> would like to thank you, <Names>, for your love and unwavering support throughout her life and for the way you have encouraged her relationship with <Name> and embraced him into your family.

Today we see the result of your achievement as loving, supportive parents. Your daughter has grown into a confident and independent young woman. On this special day, she wishes to respect all that you have shown her, taught her and given to her by asking that you support her choice to share her life in marriage with <Name>.

Do you promise to continue to provide love and support to <Names> throughout their marriage and to the family they will create together?

Bride's Mother and Father: We do

<Name> parents/mother/father <Name> is also here today to celebrate this marriage. <Name> would like to thank his parents for all you have provided to him and taught him. Your love and support for him means more than words can say. <Name> appreciates the happiness and strength you have brought to his life and hopes you will extend to <Name> and their children.

Do you <Names> promise to continue to provide love and support to <Names> in their marriage and to the family they will create together?

Groom's Mother and Father: We do

To you, the family and friends who are here today. <Names> invited you here not just to celebrate the special occasion of their wedding ceremony but to be a part of their lives together. Today and every day, they ask for your love and support.

Family and friends, do you promise for now and always to nurture this marriage by offering <Names> your love and support?

Guests: We do

Honouring the Love of Your Family

If you choose to make the wedding blessing more about the new family you are creating, these words could be used:

Celebrant: "Today, as we join (name) and (name) in marriage, we celebrate them as they begin a new family together. Yet we also know that this new branch of the family tree will be strengthened and enriched by the love, traditions, and knowledge of their family roots. Will you (parents' names) bless (couple's names) in their marriage? Will you celebrate them in their times of joy, and support them and their marriage when needed? "

Answer: "We will."

or

Celebrant: "This beautiful couple didn't get here all by themselves. They have been loved and cared for by you, their families, depending on you for support, knowledge, guidance, and love. Without you, this day would not be possible.

From this day forward, they will likely need your support in different ways, but they will still depend on you when needed. With this in mind, I ask (parent's names), as representatives of your family: will you take this (man/woman), (name), into your family and your hearts?"

Answer: "We will."

(Celebrant repeats the question to the other set of parents, who also answer "We will.")

Celebrant: "May the blessing of their marriage extend throughout your families for all the time you share."

Monitum

The Monitum is when a celebrant says words defined by legislation which are required by law to be spoken at your ceremony in order for you to be legally married in Australia.

The words are:

I am a marriage celebrant duly authorised 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 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.

These words must be said. Usually I say the first sentence as part of the Introduction when I introduce myself as your Marriage Celebrant. The remainder is said before your legal vows.

Readings, Prayers and other Blessings

You can find some resources in the Love Hub for readings, prayers and blessings to be said by me or someone else.

If you want to include any of these or have someone else speak at your ceremony, just let me know and we will figure out the perfect time for that to happen.

Unity Rituals

Unity rituals such as handfasting, ring warming and sand blending have become popular and can be such a meaningful moment in your ceremony.

See my guide to Unity Rituals in the Love Hub.

The Asking

This is the part where you say 'I do' or 'I will'! The Asking is not a legal requirement of marriage ceremonies as by this point, you will have already signed the document 'Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage'. However, the Asking does affirm your consent to be legally married so it is preferable to include it.

The Asking goes something like this (note that pronouns will be used accordingly):

Name, this woman whom you hold by the hand, is to be your wife/
partner for life.

Today she chooses you as the one she shares her love, her life and her
loyalty with.

Do you promise that you will be true and loyal, share her hopes and
dreams, be patient and kind, open and honest, keep being the
incredibly kind, funny and loving person she adores and choose to be
by her side for all the days of your life?

Name: I do

Name, this man whom you hold by the hand, is to be your husband. He
is choosing to share with you the most precious things he has to give: his
life and his love. He will look to you for support, loyalty, and
understanding. Do you promise that you will be open and honest,
patient and kind, loving and loyal and choose to be by his side for all
the days of your life?

Name: I do

Name, do you promise to stand by Name always, have faith in him and
encourage him, to listen to him and laugh with him, to hold him tight, to
communicate openly and honestly with him, to value your differences
as much as your common ground, and to be his friend, lover, partner
and equal for all the days of your lives?

Name: I do

Name, do you take this woman to be forever yours, promising to
overlook her bad habits, give her back scratches at the end of a rough
day, offer sympathy when her team loses, cook her favourite meals,
always buy the good chocolate, let her choose the movie once in while
and kill spiders for her for as long as you both shall live?

Name: I do

Yes you can get creative, there are no rules – embrace it and make it as fun and/or
romantic as you want! Want me to get creative and sneak in some fun stuff? Let me
know!

Vows – The Legal Stuff

Marriage vows are promises each partner in a couple makes to the other during a wedding ceremony. Your vows are a very important ceremonial element as it is a legal requirement of all marriage ceremonies that you say certain words to each other. You can get creative after you have said 'the legal's' but you are required to say your full legal name and your partner's full legal name, along with the words below for your marriage to be legal in Australia:

I **call upon/ask** the **people/persons** here present
to witness that I, <Full Name> take **thee/you** <Full Name>
to be my lawful wedded **husband/wife**.

The only variations you can make are the words in bold for which you choose one or the other. Following 'the legal's', you can get as creative and heartfelt as you wish with your wedding vows!

You do not have to say your legal vows into a microphone if you are uncomfortable with that. Only the Celebrant and your two witnesses must hear them.

You can say Personal Vows followed by Legal Vows, or exchange Legal Vows with your rings. I will give you a few options to choose from when I send you a draft ceremony.

What to include in your Personal Vows

Remember that Personal Vows are optional – you do not have to say them, especially if you are nervous of public speaking. You can tell me all the lovely things you feel about your partner and the promises you want to make and I will weave them into your ceremony. If you do decide to write and say Personal Vows, I am happy to help. Here are some prompts:

Tell your partner that you love them.

Tell them some or all of the reasons why you love them.

Tell them how they make you feel.

Tell them what you have enjoyed most about your life together so far (you can include any funny and/or romantic stories – the guests love those, but don't feel under any pressure to entertain people)

Tell them what your hopes and dreams are for the future.

Whatever you choose to say, if it is from your heart, it will be perfect.

You do not have to say your Personal Vows into a microphone. You can choose to say them only to your partner. If you wish, I will politely tell guests that this is going to take place and ask them to respect your privacy.

Some people choose to write their vows and seal them in an envelope for them to read privately later. It is entirely your choice.

See my Vows Ideas doc on the Love Hub for lots of inspiration and then use the Vow Template to write yours.

The Ring Exchange

Exchanging rings at your wedding is optional. You can both exchange rings or just one of you can give the other a ring.

You can say whatever words you wish as your exchange rings.

Here are some examples:

With this ring, I promise you my everlasting love.

I give you this ring as a symbol of my promise to love you, encourage you, support your dreams and share your happiness, now and always.

With this ring, I give you my love.
Please wear it always as a symbol of our unending love.
Let it remind you every day
of our shared dreams and our commitment
to cherishing the happiness of ourselves and our family.

Please wear this ring as a symbol of my love and devotion. Its circle is never ending, as my love is for you.

I ask you to receive this ring as a symbol of my love and as a constant reminder that I have chosen you above all others to be the one to share my life.

With this ring, I marry you. I give it to you with all that I am and all that I ever will be. Wear it and know that I love you.

With this ring, I give you my heart.
You will never walk or dance alone.
Because my hand will be in yours and my arms will be your home.

Who holds the rings before you exchange them – you decide! It can be anyone including best man, maid of honour, parents, kids and pets. Or we can hide them under two random chairs!

Declaration

Also known as the Pronouncement, the Declaration is when I get the great honour of pronouncing you as a married couple!

There are no legally required words for the Declaration, so you may choose whatever suits you as a couple. The Declaration is often followed by an invitation for you to share a kiss. This is also optional. If you are signing your certificates at your ceremony (see pages to follow) then we can save your kiss til the very end. It's up to you!

Here are some examples - I like to add personal touches from what I have got to know about you in your questionnaires in and in our chats:

Names, the past # years so far has taken you on quite a journey that neither of you expected when you first met, but it's a journey which has led you to the most wonderful destination that we all aspire to reach – love.

Love is the key to a happy life and wonderful marriage but there's more to it than a feeling.

A good marriage has respect, honesty, trust and loyalty.

A loving marriage has romance, passion, kindness and caring.

And the best marriage has two people who do and say all those special, unique and wonderful things that make them fall in love with each other over and over again.

Now with your hearts entrusted to each other, it is my honour and privilege to declare you to be husband and wife.

Congratulations - please share your first kiss as newlyweds!

May you grow together throughout the years, through the good times and the bad. May your life together be full of joy and may you always be grateful for the special gift of each other. We all wish you a long and happy life together.

And though that life together began quite some time ago, a whole new level of togetherness begins today. It gives me great pleasure, by virtue of the authority vested in me, to declare you to be <husband & wife / wife & wife / husband & husband>.

Congratulations!

Yours is the kind of love that people dream of and when they are lucky enough to find it, grab onto it, hold it tight, nurture it and be so grateful for it.

Never stop celebrating and appreciating this amazing love you have created. Make it bigger, better and brighter with every passing day. Keep showing each other that your world is a better place because you are together.

Do everything in love, now and forever. And here it is, the official start of forever as it is my honour and privilege to declare you to be husband and wife.

You know what to do and make it a good one!

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than kisses in fairy tales, verses on valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favourite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams.

Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all - one known only by those who love.

You have promised today to treasure your love for now and forever more. It is my honour and privilege to declare you to be husband & wife / married.

Congratulations, you may kiss the bride/groom!

The Signing of the Certificates

At the end of your ceremony, you are required to sign three documents to register your marriage – the Certificate of Marriage (Form 15) and two copies of the Official Marriage Certificate (one is sent to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, the other is retained by me for 6 years or more).

You can choose when to do this – it can be done with or without your guests present. As long as your witnesses are present, that's the only legal requirement. Skip to the next page if you want to sign without guests.

If you are happy to sign in front of your guests (this is my preference and I promise you that it only takes one song, sometimes a fraction longer!), I will advise your guests that the signing of the certificates is going to take place with wording such as:

<Names> and I plus their witnesses <Names> will now sign the marriage certificates. Please enjoy one of <Names> favourite songs during this time. We will return to you shortly.

Your witnesses can be a surprise – you don't have to tell them, you can surprise them on the day! They can also be a surprise to you – we can pull names out of a hat if you want! I do not need to see their ID.

What happens at signing:

- ♥ You will sit/stand at the signing table.
- ♥ You will each sign the three documents. Your witnesses will sign the three documents. I will sign the three documents.
- ♥ The Certificate of Marriage (Form 15) is the document that you get to take with you on the day.
- ♥ I will ask you to choose someone that you trust to look after this document for you for the rest of the day as it is irreplaceable.
- ♥ After the signing of the certificates has been completed, I will ask you to return to the front of the ceremony and ask the witnesses to stand or seat where they were.

After signing the certificates, I will get the guests' attention and will present you to them as a married couple, saying something like this (guest participation is optional!):

Family and friends, <Names> have said their vows, exchanged rings, signed their certificate and are ready to begin their married life together starting with an amazing time with you all tonight.

They both said I Do and I need you all to say We Do to this very important question:

Do you all promise to have the most epic celebration with the newlyweds tonight?!

Guests: We Do

Ok, let's get the confetti ready and give a huge cheer as I introduce you to Australia's newest newlyweds, Mr & Mrs Smith (or First Names)!

I will work with you to get the words for the end of your ceremony just right.

Pick an epic song for the end of your ceremony! (I recommend something upbeat)

Signing certificates after ceremony without guests

If you would prefer to sign the certificates without your guests present, then we can do that. Only your two witnesses are needed.

After the declaration, I will either:

- ♥ Invite guests to congratulate you then after congrats, let your guests know that they should now head to the Reception area and that you will join them for celebrations soon;
- ♥ Ask guests to hold congrats and make their way to the reception immediately; or
- ♥ You can make your exit from the ceremony then meet with me and your witnesses somewhere else to sign your certificates.

The Recessional (The end of your Ceremony)

You can decide how and when you leave your ceremony.

You can choose:

- ♥ You exit followed by Wedding Party (if relevant) – greet guests for congratulations at other location in venue;
- ♥ You welcome guests for congratulations immediately after either Declaration and/or Signing of Certificates at front of ceremony; or
- ♥ You exit followed by Wedding Party (if relevant) and immediately go for photos. Guest congratulations take place later at Reception or Cocktail Hour.

I would love to hang around for a hug and a photo with you both!



Your Ceremony - What happens

30-45 mins before Ceremony - **I arrive.**

Set up speaker and signing table.

Put on music if required. Check styling and set up if needed (happy to help in any way I can!)

Check on Bride/Groom

I chat with you individually or together and get **Declaration** signed if not done yet

Ready to get wed! I **welcome guests** to ceremony and do some 'housekeeping'

Fill seats

Turn off phones

Introduce photographer

Acknowledgement of Country (Optional)

Special Instructions

Your Big Moment!

Bride / Groom enter with or without Wedding Party separately or together (Choose an awesome entrance song or two)

Thank anyone who escorted you. Invite guests to be seated.

Formally introduce myself. **Welcome** you to your ceremony.
Tell you both you look amazing!

Introduce your **Wedding Party** - tell them why you choose them to be there and how much you love them (optional)

Thank your **parents/families**
I can ask for their blessing if you wish.

Your Love Story

The story so far, what you love most about each other, what your future holds, what love and marriage means to you. A little walk down memory lane along with a glimpse into your future with lots of love and laughter along the way.

The Asking

Time to say 'I Do'

Monitum

Legally required

Legal Vows

I call upon the people here present to witness that I take you to be my lawfully wedded

Ring Exchange

A symbol of your promises

Personal Vows

Optional....but always lovely & I'm here to help

Unity Ritual

Also optional. Suggestions - Handfasting, Unity Candle, Sand blending. All create a special moment with keepsakes.

Declaration

Final words and Congrats - you're married!

The Kiss

Make it a good one!

Signing Certificates

With any two witnesses 18+ (Choose some lovely music for this)

Pronouncement

Family and friends, they've said their vows, exchanged rings, given me their autographs - I am thrilled to introduce you to Australia's newest newlyweds!

Party Time

I say congrats, get a pic, give your cert to a trusted person then leave you to party!