

A PERSONALLY COMPOSED WEDDING CEREMONY

There are 2 paragraphs from the Marriage Act, which must legally be included in your ceremony and they are as follows:

Celebrant: “I am duly authorised by law to solemnize 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 a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.”

The Couple: “I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, (name) take you (name) to be my lawful wedded wife/husband.

These words that the couple say to each other can be incorporated into their vows, as long as we all know as witnesses that you are marrying each other voluntarily and with the intention that the marriage will last for life.

The Ceremony can be your own creation (as long as the above is spoken) or if you prefer I will design the ceremony for you based on the information you have supplied.

The following is a possible format to get us started. For each step there are many samples for you to choose from.

- 1. Entry of the Bride** – Determine order of Bride and attendants, Consider which music is to be played.
- 2. Welcoming by the Celebrant** – Your Celebrant welcomes family, relatives, friends, you as a couple and guests.
- 3. Introduction** - Celebrant speaks about your commitment to each other, your history and what marriage means to you and acknowledges the love and support of your families and any children.
- 4. Introduction of Celebrant** - Legal paragraph as above.
- 5. Giving Away** - An opportunity for parents to be involved by pledging their love and acceptance of the marriage.
- 6. Reading** - This is a good point for a family member or friend to do a reading relevant to the occasion.
- 7. Vows** - Firstly I will ask each of you whether you will take the other to be your wife/husband. Then you may read your individual vows to each other. Generally, they begin with the legal paragraph above, followed by the vows you have written to each other. Alternatively, I can read your vows aloud and have them repeated by each of you respectively.
- 8. Exchange of Rings** - It is not essential to exchange rings but most couples choose to do so accompanied by a few chosen words by the Celebrant and the couple.
- 9. Another Reading** - This is a good place to have another reading.
- 10. Symbolic Ritual (optional)** - These may include the lighting of candles, sharing wine, sand or hand fasting ceremonies.
- 11. Declaration of Marriage** - Now I will declare that you are husband and wife, preceded, if requested, by an acknowledgment of any particular contributors to your celebrations.
- 12. Signing the Register** - Legal documentation will now be signed witnessed by two people over the age of 18 years. (This is an official signing)
- 13. Introduction of you as a couple** - This is where you are introduced as husband and wife and I invite all to come forward and congratulate the bride and groom.
- 14. Recessional** - Bride and Groom mingle with guests prior to departure.

*Readings - Ceremonial reading is much slower than broadcasting or lecturing, and will lose force if it is rushed. Readers should be a part of the rehearsal, and should practice their readings in full at that time.

*The Personal Story - I highly recommend adding this element as it makes a wedding that little more personal. I will ask some or all of the following questions to ensure that your ceremony reflects both of your personalities, and builds your relationship story. Some of the words/comments you use during this time can be used if you write your own vows.

Example Questions:

How did you first meet?

When did you first fall in love?

When did you decide you wanted to be with one another forever?

What does your family mean to you?

What were the good things that helped you decide?

Were there any difficulties?

What do you (groom) like/love about her?

What do you (bride) like/love about him?

Why did you decide to have a ceremony?

What are your hopes for the future?

What special reason did you have for deciding on the place for the ceremony?

What do your friends mean to you?