



Elements of the Ceremony

It is your ceremony and you can design it any way you like, provided that you include those elements required by law. Listed below is a description of the elements usually included in a traditional ceremony.

Welcome/Introduction

This is where we set the scene for your ceremony. Generally I will use the information you provide during our first meeting to prepare an introductory statement. I will always provide you with a copy for your approval before including it in the ceremony.

Reading/Music

This is a great way to express your feelings for each other to your guests. It is also a way to involve special people in the ceremony. You can choose virtually anything you like, including; poems, prayers, bible readings, famous quotes or music. You just need to observe necessary copyright regulations. The reading or music can be performed before or after the introduction or at the close to the ceremony prior to your introduction as husband and wife. It is really up to you.

Monitum or Celebrant Authorisation (required by law)

A marriage celebrant is required by law to establish his or her authority to perform the ceremony and to caution the bride and groom as to the solemn and binding nature of marriage. The standard words used are as follows:

“As a civil celebrant I am duly authorized by law to solemnize marriages according to law. Before you are joined in marriage in my presence and in the presence of your family and friends I am bound 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 a man and woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.”

Giving Away

In western culture it is traditional for the bride's father to give her in marriage to her husband. There are now many alternative options that can be used to symbolize the step you are taking from single to married life.

These may include:

- The bride being given away by both parents
- The bride being given away by her children or other family members
- The bride and groom being given away by their families

The Asking

This is a tradition rather than a legal requirement, and should not be confused with your vows. The wording of the asking allows you to indicate that you are entering into the marriage as an act of free will. The question can be phrased to express your reasons for this decision and will usually compliment the wording of your vows. The question is answered with a simple "I Will" or "I do".

The Vows (legal requirement)

According to law the vows must be a statement of intent which contains the words husband, wife or spouse at least once and incorporate the name of the bride and groom. Although there is a required minimum wording the vows can be as long as you like. It is not necessary for the bride and groom to have the same vows.

Symbol of Unity

The traditional symbol of unity is the exchange of rings. This can be performed as a separate element of the ceremony or it can form part of your vows. Alternative symbols of unity include: the lighting of a unity candle, the exchange of garlands or flowers or the exchange of personal gifts.

Declaration of Marriage

This is as simple as it sounds. It is an official declaration of your marriage. "I now declare you husband and wife."

Kiss

Again this is entirely optional. Traditionally the groom is invited to kiss his bride. The modern version is simply “you may kiss”. This is the point where many couples get ahead of the celebrant.

Signing of the Register (legal requirement)

Signing of the register and the marriage certificates is a legal requirement. Generally it is done at a small table in view of the guests and is a favourite photo opportunity. You might like to consider music or entertainment for your guests during this time.