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A guide to choosing a celebrant!

What is involved?

What does the Celebrant do?

First and foremost your celebrant must live up to and maintain the standards set by the Attorney Generals Department. This includes maintaining high moral conduct, sound ethics and complete professionalism.

To have a civil ceremony, you need a civil marriage celebrant. Your celebrant is without doubt one of the most important investments you will make to ensure you both remember lovingly and forever, the beautiful act of being married to each other

What do you provide?

Free initial consultation with no obligation

Provide information and guidance

Ensure that there is clarity in understanding of the Act and the wider issues facing couples.

Provide details of interpreter's and/or other services if applicable

My time in creating a personalised and memorable ceremony that reflects you as a couple.

Resources to help you design your own ceremony. My website includes information on your preparation, examples of ceremonies, readings and special rituals.

Witness your Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM)

Check and lodge legal documentation with Births Deaths and Marriages

Provide unlimited consultations, in person, by phone, or email

A rehearsal if required. Run through rehearsals are free at my office or if it is close by, otherwise if travel is involved, a fee of \$50 will be incurred

A decorated signing table, 2 chairs, signing pens, a roadie to look after and play your music, copy of your ceremony



Conducting your Ceremony

To ensure that your guests can hear the ceremony, I have all necessary equipment to ensure that your guests are able to hear the proceedings. My PA system can also be used for your wedding ceremony music, with music you provide.

As far as possible dress to suit your occasion

Maintain trust, integrity, dignity reliability and confidentiality

My ceremony Inclusions

A personally designed ceremony. We can add any readings, poems or symbolic gestures that you would like	✓
Use of modern portable wireless PA system for ceremony	✓
Use of signing chairs, table, decorative pen	✓
Unlimited meetings	✓ Unlimited meetings, email access, website access, communication costs
Rehearsal - if required	✓
Changes to ceremony	✓
Travel costs	✓ Unlimited within a reasonable distance.
All legal documents completed and lodged with the relevant authorities.	✓
Professionally printed marriage certificate for you to keep	✓
Printed copy of your ceremony	✓



How do I choose?

There are so many variables on how to choose the right celebrant for your day but the most important components are:-

- ✎ Feeling a connection - meet with them if time permits otherwise a phone chat or Skype meeting is a valuable way to get to know them too
- ✎ If you are a same sex couple, check if they are registered as a religious marriage celebrant with the Federal Attorney General? If they are, this means they have chosen not to conduct same sex marriage ceremonies
- ✎ Do they offer unlimited communication via email and/or text?
- ✎ Ensure you feel you are more than just a booking to them - EVERY celebrant is a professional but true passion is being chosen to be part of your day and knowing they feel the same way too
- ✎ Does their package meet your needs - these can vary but generally all are similar
- ✎ Choose a celebrant who only books 1 wedding per day - no couple deserves a celebrant who may run late OR is looking to rush off to another ceremony
- ✎ Is travel included in their quoted price?
- ✎ Is a rehearsal (of any kind) included? There are many ways a rehearsal can be achieved especially as it can be impossible to get everyone together at the same time
- ✎ Ensure they have a professional PA system - some may also include wireless microphones
- ✎ Do they belong to a professional celebrants association because this will mean they may be insured and have a copyright licence.
- ✎ Ask how they will write your ceremony, if they send scripts from which to choose paragraphs, they are NOT creating a personal ceremony but just copying & pasting (meaning no originality)
- ✎ Do they assist with your vows?
- ✎ Will they include and/or create components you would love included in your ceremony?

It can appear tough because every celebrant is different just like the couples they marry and therefore what you may see on their Facebook page or website is reflection of the couples desired day and celebrants should be able to adapt to each and every theme or venue too

And DON'T forget to lock them in because many other couples are also looking for a celebrant too



Why is one ceremony a day important?

Apart from the fact mentioned before that you don't deserve a celebrant who may have to rush off or be late, and therefore you are not their only priority:

- ☞ In 2016, civil celebrants performed 90458 of the 118401 marriages that took place in Australia.
- ☞ As of today there are 8417 civil celebrants registered in Australia to marry couples.
- ☞ If 100000 ceremonies are performed by civil celebrants in 2018, the average number of ceremonies available to EVERY registered celebrant is approximately 12 weddings per celebrant per year. That is why it can be so competitive amongst celebrants and why even the Federal Attorney-General who manages celebrants warns "many marriage celebrants perform few or no marriages each year."

How soon should I book a Celebrant?

As soon as possible!

Your Notice of Intended Marriage must be lodged with the celebrant one month prior to your wedding. It takes time to plan an effective wedding. Your ceremony is the most significant part of your wedding day -Book early – remember there are only 52 Saturdays at 3pm a year!

How does your price compare to a Registry Office?

To give you a comparison. the Queensland Registry Office fees are as follows (based on July 2018 and change each year):

Wedding ceremonies are conducted half-hourly in their ceremony rooms which seat up to 50 guests. No personalised decoration allowed. Ceremonies are also standard with minimal alteration

A registry ceremony costs:

\$344.00 (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9.30am–4.00pm)

\$588.00 (Friday, 5.30pm–8.00pm)

\$444.00 (Saturday, 9.30am–4.00pm)

\$588.00 (Saturday, 4.30pm–6.30pm)

includes your choice of commemorative marriage certificate package

Remember also, parking, logistics of getting people from there to reception etc, as opposed to one at a location of your choice with as many people as you want!



Why is the booking/lodgement fee non-refundable?

I know it seems harsh when a wedding isn't a cheap affair, but creating your perfect ceremony starts from the first communication from you. Legal documents must be obtained by me and drawn up very accurately, no mistakes are allowed. The information I have to get from you must be precise and I have to make sure all legal requirements are followed.

I also have to gather personal information from you so that I can create a personalised ceremony that will make you remember your special day forever with love & happiness. This takes a great deal of time as many attempts are made to create this, over many days/weeks.

In the time before your ceremony I am available to help with any questions you may have and will help in any way I can with any reasonable request.

In the end though, what would your wedding ceremony be without the Celebrant being present? A party with no formalities. 😊

I hope this helps you to understand that if you change your mind, or your circumstances change, where you don't want to go ahead, I have already expended a lot of time, money and effort in your request for a ceremony.

What paperwork do I need to complete?

A Notice of Intended Marriage - The Notice of Intended Marriage must be signed in front of the Celebrant at least one month prior to your intended wedding date

You must produce a birth certificate or extract or a valid passport plus additional photo ID such as a drivers licence. People who have been married previously must produce either a decree absolute or a death certificate.

Two witnesses are required at the wedding ceremony and both must be over the age of 18.

I wish you all the best with your celebrant selection process. My very best "FREE" advice is "don't be driven by cost" as this can prove exceptionally expensive!

Go for the celebrant you feel you have most rapport with and will work with you to create a memorable ceremony – for the right reasons!

Hopefully, I will put you at ease and confirm with you that you will have a wedding ceremony (or whatever other ceremony you require) which will remain in your heart and your guest's hearts forever



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A Marriage Celebrant plays a huge, and vital, part in your wedding day. They can play a massive part in setting the mood, and keeping things on track before you make your entrance.

The celebrant is often the unofficial organiser of your guests. They are the glue that holds your wedding ceremony together for you, because your mind is on other things.

With that being said, choosing the right Marriage Celebrant to compliment your wedding day is SO IMPORTANT. There are so many things to consider when booking a celebrant.

Do you get along with them? Are they serious or funny?

Do you have a similar sense of humour to you, as a couple?

Are they going to fill the brief you've given them, or do their own thing?

Celebrants typically charge between \$350 and \$1,000 for their services, and frustratingly we often hear couples wanting a "cheap" celebrant because "it's only an hour" that they need the Celebrant for. As we are about to reveal, there is so much more to a wedding ceremony than just the 30 minutes, or in some cases an hour, spent in front of your assembled family and friends.

Here are some of the things involved in getting you married that you've probably not thought about.

Marriage Celebrant Qualifications

Becoming a marriage celebrant takes time and money. Prior to becoming a celebrant, the Certificate IV in Celebrancy must be successfully completed and passed.

The course ranges in price between \$1000-\$2000.

Application Fee

Once the course has been completed and passed, celebrants must apply to the Commonwealth Attorney General to legally become a celebrant. The application fee is \$600.

You may only advertise your services as a marriage celebrant, accept Notice of intended marriage forms, and solemnise marriages once you are registered.

Annual Registration Fee

Once the celebrant's application is successful, a celebrant is then required to pay an annual registration charge of \$240.

Ongoing Training

There is an annual requirement for celebrants to complete five hours of professional development. This is necessary to maintain their qualifications.

The professional development can only be delivered through four approved training organisations and costs approximately \$170.



Meetings with the Bride & Groom

Typically, celebrants will meet with the couples they are marrying two or three times, for up to an hour each time.

This is to complete the necessary paperwork, choose readings and discuss the flow of the ceremony. Meetings also allow the celebrant to get to know the couple and develop a rapport. Knowing the couple well helps the big day run smoothly.

Travel Requirements

Your celebrant will travel to your wedding ceremony venue and this is often included in the price. Expect to pay more if you are asking your celebrant to travel regionally.

PA Equipment

A celebrant will normally supply audio equipment to amplify the vows, so they can be heard by all the guests. This same sound equipment may also be used to play music during the ceremony.

Good quality sound equipment is expensive. It needs to be maintained to avoid dropping out or crackling throughout the vows.

Preparation of a Personalised Wedding Ceremony

It takes time to collate the readings and the vows the couple have written to each other. A good celebrant will also write about the couple using knowledge, gained from the meetings they've had with the couple, and add that personalised touch for each ceremony that they perform. So basically, no two ceremonies are the same.

And let's be honest, why would you want the same ceremony as someone else? This is YOUR special day!

Marriage Certificates

At the end of the wedding ceremony, the celebrant will hand over a lovely marriage certificate. Often the couple will also receive a beautifully presented copy of the entire ceremony.

Sundry Expenses

This includes ink, paper, emails, phone calls, registration fees, advertising and public liability insurance.

Most importantly it covers the submission of the paperwork to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (so it's legal).

Time

On average, a celebrant will spend a total of 15-17 hours preparing for your wedding. This is inclusive of meetings, travel, rehearsal, ceremony etc.

Cheaper Options

There are cheaper options available such as the State Registry Office. The Registry Office does not have the same overheads as a private Marriage Celebrant, hence the lower cost. But at the Registry Office, couples can only get married Monday to Friday between 9am-4pm. There are restrictions on the number of guests who can attend (max 35), and it is not at all personalised.



Couples must travel into the CBD to the Office to complete the legal forms and then again on the wedding day. Each Registry Office Marriage Celebrant can perform up to 10 ceremonies per day.

The Registry Office provides a valuable service for couples wanting this type of legal ceremony, but it is also highly impersonal.

Celebrants work in conjunction with couples to ensure their wedding ceremony is legal, personal and memorable. We suggest that, before you make any decisions about your celebrant, you shortlist a top three and then hold an interview process for each one.

As you can see, there is so much that goes into being a celebrant. So please consider all of this when questioning how much a celebrant will cost to perform your wedding ceremony.

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