

Ceremonies And All That Jazz



By Sharon L Norris
Accredited, Registered Civil Marriage Celebrant
And Certified Practicing Celebrant



Outdoor Ceremonies & The Sun

Many ceremonies are held outdoors in Australia, made possible by an endless abundance of beautiful, natural venues, combined with our traditionally dry, warm climate.

What many people don't think much about though in planning their outdoor ceremony is the effects of our dry, warm climate on themselves or their guests.

When planning where to marry outdoors, give some consideration to logistics:

- Does the venue have natural shade (i.e. trees, shadows from buildings etc) or will shade need to be brought in?
- Will the couple or guests face into the sunlight during the ceremony and be hot and uncomfortable as a result?

- Does the photographer (if there is one for your event) have specific requirements for shade or sunlight in your outdoor venue to get the best photos?
- How long is your ceremony intended to be—meaning, how long will you and your guests be out in the sun?

These things may not seem like much now, but closer to the day of your event you may find that our beautiful sun could cause a range of problems for you and your event. Plan now to avoid problems!



Neil and Kara chose an outdoor venue with natural shade for their wedding.

Valentine's Day Proves Popular Once Again

Valentine's Day 2010 is shaping up to be a popular wedding date in South East Queensland because it falls on a weekend.

This doesn't happen too often, so couples naturally wish to take advantage of this special day occurring on a weekend.

If you know anyone wanting to marry on Valentine's Day 2010, they need to lodge their Notice of Intended Marriage form with their celebrant by no later than **13th January.**

I offer a 10% discount for clients who book me via this newsletter(see back page).

Special points of interest:

- Something new in dramatic ring presentations
- Which months are the most popular and least popular for weddings?
- What's a Naming Ceremony?
- Can you possibly have "fun" at a funeral?
- Are you changing names after your wedding? Some things you should know...

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In my Naming Ceremonies, the parents and advocates sign a specially designed Naming Register at the end of the ceremony. This is presented to the family as a keepsake of the day, together with their certificates.

Naming Ceremonies Seriously Misunderstood

I recently visited a couple to talk to them about a **Naming Ceremony** for their child. The father of the baby had no idea what a naming was and was very hostile to the idea at first.

Namings are non-religious alternatives to baptisms/christenings by religious faiths. They can, if desired, include religious elements (prayers, water blessings, and candle-lighting), however, these are incorporated in a way that is not overtly religious (for those being pressured for a religious ceremony by relatives/friends).

Ranging in duration from 10-15 minutes, namings remind us all that it is important to have a name, to publicly proclaim that name, and to welcome the child into their family and community. Special advocates are appointed—often called Godparents, Guardians, or Mentors—to guide and inspire the child through their life.

But Namings are not just for babies. They can be conducted at any age and some adults who change names like to celebrate with a Naming Ceremony.



Parks and Beaches provide very beautiful, natural outdoor venues for ceremonies. But you must book locations in advance to avoid disappointment.

Park & Beach Bookings

If you are thinking about having your ceremony in a park or on a beach in Queensland, you need to book your location with the Local Authority. Why?

Firstly, they reserve the space for you and this ensures no one else can use that spot at your date/time. Secondly, book-

ings help Councils know when and where people will be gathered for an event and can ensure the area is tidy and presentable for your special occasion.

See the **“Free Stuff”** section of my website at www.sharonlnorris.com.au for online links to Park and Beach Bookings.

Something New In Ring Presentations

There is something new and exciting in the creature release field for weddings, commitments and other ceremonies-for-joining. Forget butterflies! Forget doves! A new business has started up providing a unique way to present the rings to couples in their ceremonies in south-east Queensland.

At the appropriate time, a Wedgetail Eagle flies forward and lands on the outstretched arm of someone in the ceremony party (who is wearing a protective sleeve) to deliver the rings in a bag.

Bearing in mind that the Wedgetail Eagle is a bird of prey, this ritual is beautiful, it's unusual, and up close it reminds you of the amazing power and grace of our native fauna.

This is a very new wedding industry initiative and no doubt will take off once it becomes more widely promoted.

Want to know more about this truly mind-blowing ritual? Contact my ceremony hotline on 0401 153 100.



A Wedgetail Eagle can now present your rings to you!

Non-Traditional Funerals

Many people now are looking for alternatives to the traditional sombre funerals, preferring to look for creative, beautiful ways in which to celebrate the lives of their deceased loved ones.

Colourful pictorial tributes and rituals involving flowers/candles/water/sand are popular, as is the use of modern music and even live singing performances.

Farewell ceremonies can also take place in various unconventional locations such as some parks and beaches, but special per-

mission needs to be obtained from the Local Authority and specific conditions must be observed. In such instances, the deceased is brought in by the funeral director for the ceremony and later taken away for burial/cremation at a cemetery or crematorium.

To have a non-traditional funeral for your loved one, you first need to find a funeral company with a “can do” attitude. I have worked with several such companies and can refer you to them if ever needed.



An example of a funeral ceremony being held in a park. This is called a “run out” in the funeral industry.

Wedding Statistics – Queensland

According to the latest statistics (2008) from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#), 26,803 marriages were registered in Queensland in 2008—an increase of 3.9% from the number of marriages registered in 2007. The median ages for brides and grooms were 29.5 years and 32 years respectively.

These figures show that the popularity of civil marriage ceremonies continues to grow. In 2008, some 71% of registered marriages in Queensland were by civil celebrants. This equates to some 19,000 weddings!

Source: ABS <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1318.3Feature%20Article14Oct%202009>

October was officially the most popular wedding month of the year in 2008, just edging out September by a couple of hundred ceremonies. January was the least popular month for weddings in QLD in 2008.

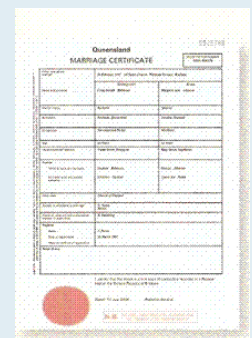
Changing Names After Marriage

Two of the questions commonly asked of celebrants are “[how do I go about changing my name after I get married?](#)” and “[why can’t I use the certificate I get at my wedding to change my name?](#)”

Once the marriage has been registered couples can apply for a Registered Marriage Certificate from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages QLD. This costs \$34 currently, but rises each year. It can take up to 8 weeks to get this, but once obtained, it can be taken to various organisations and presented as evidence

of identity and marriage as it contains detailed information from the marriage papers. This is why the certificate that couples receive at their wedding cannot be used to change names—it only has their names, no other information about their identities.

This is quite a complex area—particularly where grooms may want to change their names. Detailed information on this issue is located on the “weddings” page of my website at www.sharonlnorris.com.au.



This is an example of an official Registered Marriage Certificate issued by the Queensland Government.

"Ceremonies And All That Jazz" is a promotional publication that is written and published by: Sharon L Norris GDipCivCer, GDipComm, BA(Hum), CMC, CPC Accredited, Registered Civil Marriage Celebrant And Certified Practicing Celebrant

Sharon is a Member of the following professional groups:

- * Civil Celebrants Graduate Association (Monash)
- * Professional Celebrants Association Inc
- * Humanist Celebrant Network

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Sharon L Norris is a Brisbane-based accredited, registered celebrant who specialises in providing Weddings, Namings, Renewal of Vows, Commitment Ceremonies and Funerals in Brisbane, Logan, Ipswich, Redlands and at Mount Tamborine.

Registered to conduct weddings since September 2004, she has been professionally trained by Australia's only tertiary education celebrancy training facility, Monash University (VIC), one of just two such facilities in the world.

Sharon is also one of just 15 Certified Practicing Celebrants currently in Australia, obtaining certification in November 2008 from the Professional Celebrants Association Inc in recognition of her commitment to her professional development as a celebrant.

Sharon is a veteran of 250 weddings, and over 100 other types of ceremonies since she became a celebrant in 2003.

Q&A: Your Questions Answered

Q. My parents want me to have a very traditional wedding in a church but that's just not me. How can I explain to them that civil weddings are not "bad"?

Teresa, Waterford West

A. Teresa, sometimes parents need a gentle reminder that they had "their turn" decades ago, at a time when they didn't have a lot of choice about how they got married. Until the Civil Marriage Celebrant Program was started by the late Federal politician, Lionel Murphy in 1973, people could only marry in church or at the registry office.

You need to be firm but kind when discussing your wedding plans with those who seek to put pressure on you (overtly or inadvertently). It might also be worth suggesting to parents that they should try renewing their own vows in a civil ceremony in the location of their choice—this gives them an opportunity to plan their own special ceremony.

Q. Is a Naming Ceremony legal?

Kathleen, Graceville

A. No, it is not a legal ceremony and there is no central register recording these services.

*Do you know someone who needs a celebrant for their ceremony?
Why not send them this newsletter?*

*If they make a booking with me and quote "All That Jazz" they will receive a 10% discount on my fee. This is a saving of up to \$45!
(Not in conjunction with any other available discount)*



**Do you have questions about ceremonies that you need answers for?
Send them in!**

