

# Trevar Alan Chilver

*celebrant*



**Wedding Services Guide**

## **Congratulations!**

Finding someone you want to share your life with is something worth celebrating. Finding a celebrant who can help you shape the celebration you want is no walk in the park either. Lucky you found me!

Marriage celebrations can be loud and extravagant, or simple and intimate: however you choose to celebrate, Trevar Alan Chilver will be there to make sure you get the ceremony to fit your celebration.

A wedding, however, is more than just a celebration of a great event in your lives. It is a ceremony that changes your legal status, and to do that, it has to meet the requirements of Australia's Marriage Act. Some components of the ceremonies you've been to are prescribed by that Act, and others are customs we enjoy. Together, they mark the decision you've made to spend your life with the person you've chosen, and allow your community to celebrate with you.

This booklet is a starting point to help you make the decisions that will create the celebration you want. In it, we cover:

- The Celebrant
- Preparing for Marriage
- Getting Ready for Your Wedding
- Planning your Ceremony
- Script Samples
- Fee Structure
- Service Quality

Your wedding might not be the beginning of your relationship, but it does mark the new phase of life that your relationship creates. Make sure you celebrate it in your own way.

## About Trevar

Trevar is an **Authorised Celebrant** with the skills and experience to solemnise baby namings, legal marriages, civil unions, memorial services and other rites of passage throughout Australia.

He is a father of three teenagers who are deeply suspicious of his mental health, and partner to one wicked **drag queen**. Born and raised in Sydney's west, he has lived in Canberra for over 20 years, and is gradually relocating to South Gippsland, Victoria to finally be liberated from urbanity.



Trevar has worked in **education, theatre** and the **community sector** most of his adult life. Currently, he balances casual work in all three, working as a relief teacher, a residential care worker, and a festival director at various times throughout the year.

He has written feature length and short **plays** for the stage, and reviews theatre frequently. His plays have been performed in Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane, Hollywood and London.

He volunteers at the **Edinburgh Festival Fringe** biennially, sings with **Canberra Gay and Lesbian Qwire** biannually, and reviews theatre for **Australian Stage Online** and his own blog, **Foyer Talk**, as often as possible.

Trevar is a proud bisexual member of the LGBTIQ+ community, deeply committed to supporting queer couples take advantage of their hard-won **equality**, and keen to support the polyamorous to celebrate their commitment.

All this, as well as his **Scottish-Australian** heritage, gives him a strong sense of ceremony, just the right amount of irreverence and a fabulous sense of humour that will strike the right balance between solemnity and joy on your special day.

*And yes, he's always happy to wear the **kilt!***

## Preparing for Marriage

Marriage is not all fancy clothes and champagne. Hollywood's endless stream of romantic comedies reflect the fluctuations of relationships, and that's before we even get the rings on our fingers.

Many think that relationship counselling is for relationships in crisis. But like a vaccine, talking about our relationships openly and honestly when they're going well builds its strength, adds value and can prevent us arriving at a crisis.

There are a range of services available to help you be more open and honest with your partner. Listed below are a small number who could help point you in the right direction.

### **ACT Health**

Provides information  
on counselling services  
in the ACT

Search online for "Find A Counsellor in Canberra"  
or call 13 22 81

### **AIDS Action Council of the ACT**

Provides counselling and  
other services for the  
LGBTIQ+ community

[aidsaction.org.au](http://aidsaction.org.au)  
02 6257 2855

### **Domestic Violence Crisis Service**

24 hour crisis and  
intervention service

[dvcs.org.au](http://dvcs.org.au)  
1800 656 463

## Getting Ready for Your Wedding

Before we even get close to the wedding day, there are some things that need to be put in order. These requirements ensure that your marriage will be recognised by law.

### **Notice of Intention to Marry**

Every couple intending to marry must submit a Notice of Intention to Marry (NOIM) form to their celebrant one month prior to the wedding.

### **Identity documents**

Your celebrant must see proof that you are eligible to get married. This means confirming your date of birth, and making sure you are not already married. You will need to bring these original documents to a meeting with your celebrant when you submit your NOIM:

- Proof of age in one of these forms:
  - passport
  - birth certificate plus photo identification
  - birth extract plus photo identification
- Proof of the annulment of any previous marriages, using:
  - divorce papers
  - death certificate for previous spouse
  - annulment

If your proof of age or annulment documents are in a language other than English, a translation must be provided by an accredited translator.

### **Witnesses**

Although technically not required until the day, witnesses' names must be included on the certificates prepared for your wedding, so it is best to select and prepare your witnesses early.

### **Declaration of No Legal Impediment**

Before the ceremony, but as close as possible to it (usually at the rehearsal), parties to the marriage must sign a declaration stating that there is no legal reason why they can't be married.

## Planning Your Ceremony

About the same time we get your paperwork in order, we can start talking about how you want your ceremony to go.

### Mandatory inclusions

There are three rituals that must be included in your ceremony:

- **The Monitum** is a statement that defines marriage, and establishes the celebrant's authority to officiate on behalf of the Australian Government
- **Mandatory Vows** are provided in the Marriage Act: the words must be spoken by the parties to the marriage, but may be repeated after the celebrant or read rather than spoken from memory (parties may also speak personal vows in addition to the mandatory vows)
- **Signing the Register** involves each party, the witnesses and the celebrant signing three documents.

There is a little scope to adjust the wording for the Monitum and vows:

<b>Monitum as legislated</b>	<b>Monitum in plain English</b>
I am duly authorised by law 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 now 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.	I am legally registered 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 permanent nature of the relationship you are now formalising. Marriage, according to law in Australia, is the union of two people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.
<b>Mandatory Vows as legislated</b>	<b>Mandatory Vows in plain English</b>
I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, [full name], take thee, [full name], to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.	I ask the people here present to witness that I, [full name] take you [full name] to be my lawful wedded wife/husband/spouse.

## Planning Your Ceremony

Your ceremony doesn't need to include any more than the three mandatory rituals discussed on the previous page. In fact, if that's all you want, you can skip to the page about fee structure and save some money. But you can opt for anything between that and a grand ceremony including every ritual under the sun if you really want to.

### Traditional customs

The following list suggests some of the more common features of traditional weddings in Australia:

- **Processional:** traditionally, brides walk down the aisle towards their grooms, who wait for them: you could both walk down the aisle, or even make your entrance from a helicopter!
- **Giving away the bride:** traditionally, brides are “given away” by their fathers; you may opt to both be given away, and it could be by anyone; your celebrant could simply use the word bring instead of give; or, you could not be given away at all: there are other ways for parents and families to express their blessing
- **Asking:** in this tradition, the celebrant asks “do you take this woman/man to be your wife/husband?": this tradition overlaps with the mandatory vows, but you may like to keep it for old time's sake
- **Personal vows:** the conventional “love, honour and obey” vows aren't often used intact anymore, and in their place many couples are choosing to write their own vows
- **Exchanging of rings:** one of the more enduring traditions in which couples put rings on each other's ring finger: you can do this, omit the ritual, or come up with a new one
- **Pronouncement:** when the legal portion of the ceremony is complete, it is customary for the celebrant to pronounce the couple's new status; this can be done in any way the couple chooses
- **Kiss:** in times past, the celebrant would follow the pronouncement by giving the groom permission to kiss the bride; to remove the misogyny from the phrasing, modern celebrants frequently have some fun with the way they say this.

## Planning Your Ceremony

### New customs for same sex weddings

There's nothing that could be called a tradition yet, but some customs for same sex weddings are starting to emerge, including:

- **Wedding party:** although not exclusive to same sex weddings, many same sex couples are including people of any gender in their wedding party; you may opt not to have one at all, but it is great to be supported by your nearest and dearest on your day
- **Processional:** many same sex couples walk down the aisle together; another option is to have two aisles and approach the celebrant from either side; or you could have three and approach from either side and exit down the middle
- **Giving away the brides or grooms:** although this tradition has some negative connotations when used in the conventional manner, it is a different story when a family shows their support for a same sex couple by bringing them to the celebrant to be married; and if your biological family isn't that supportive, do what we've always done and turn to your queer family for support!
- **Pronouncement:** there are a few new options for the celebrant to declare your new status, such as "I now pronounce you husband and husband", "I now pronounce you wives together" or "I now pronounce you partners for life", all of which are quite popular
- **Taking a spouse's surname:** many heterosexual brides still follow the convention of replacing her surname with her husband's, but in the case of same sex weddings the most prominent convention is for both parties to retain their original surname; another option is to use an inverse double surname (eg. when a Smith marries a Nguyen, Smith takes the surname Nguyen-Smith, and Nguyen takes the surname Smith-Nguyen). If you wish to take your partner's surname in place of your own, your marriage certificate will be sufficient evidence of the change. Your new names may be pronounced at the completion of the ceremony.

## Planning Your Ceremony

### Other customs and rituals to consider

There are a range of broader customs and rituals from other cultures that are being used in modern Australian weddings. You may like to consider these:

- **Welcome to country:** many couples, especially those getting married outdoors, are choosing to honour the first Australians by beginning their ceremony with a welcome to country; in the ACT, contact the United Ngunnawal Elders Council to book an elder for this; your celebrant may instead perform an acknowledgement of country in the welcome
- **Smoking ceremony:** performed by Aboriginal groups to cleanse a space and ward off bad spirits; contact the United Ngunnawal Elders Council to find a group to perform this
- **Pinning the tartan:** the mothers of Scottish grooms may pin a rosette or lay a sash of their clan tartan to/over the bride's right shoulder to welcome her to the clan; this tradition can readily be adapted for cultures without tartans and for same sex weddings
- **Hand Fasting:** this is an ancient Celtic ritual that symbolises the unification of the couple by wrapping a rope around their forearms
- **Tasting the four elements:** this is a Nigerian ritual that involves the couple tasting the four elements that come with marriage (sour, bitter, hot and sweet)
- **Unity candle:** in this ritual, mothers of the couple light two candles at the beginning of the ceremony, and after the vows are complete, the couple each take their candle to light a third, and blow out their own
- **Releasing doves:** a ritual that symbolises the freedom and peace of living in relationship.

*Please note that, due to animal welfare and environmental concerns, Trevar Alan Chilver does not participate in the release of butterflies or helium-filled balloons.*

## Fee Structure

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### **Booking Fee:**

Applicable to all weddings; due upon lodgement of your Notice of Intention to Marry (NOIM)

*This fee is not refundable in the event of cancellation. If you choose to postpone your ceremony more than two weeks beforehand, 50% of your booking fee can be applied to another date. If the celebrant needs to cancel, the fee will be refunded in full.*

**\$150**

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### **Wedding Options:**

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#### **Legals Only**

A basic wedding including only what is required for you to be legally married

#### **Includes:**

- Confirmation of eligibility requirements
- Preparation, completion and submission of all paperwork
- Performance of ceremony
- Commonwealth Marriage Certificate
- Celebrant's travel (up to 30km from central Canberra)

*Not available on weekends; limit of 8 guests*

**\$200**

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#### **Cheap and Cheerful**

A simple wedding ceremony following a set script

#### **Includes all the above, plus:**

- Selection of scripts and minor modifications
- Ceremony planning support
- Performance rights for commercial music
- Signing table and chairs (if required)
- Dry cleaning for celebrant's outfit

**\$350**

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#### **Bespoke Ceremony**

A wedding ceremony prepared and delivered specifically to your specifications

#### **Includes all the above, plus:**

- Bespoke scripting of ceremony in consultation with the couple (up to three drafts)
- Support to select relevant poems or readings
- Support to write personal vows (up to three drafts)
- One rehearsal on location

**\$500**

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## Fee Structure

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### Other Costs:

#### **Public Holiday Surcharge**

*Charged for ceremonies on any ACT public holiday*

**\$150**

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#### **PA System hire**

*Necessary for outdoor venues with over 40 guests or indoor venues with over 80 guests*

**\$200**

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#### **Additional Rehearsals**

**\$50**

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#### **Additional Drafts of Script or Vows**

**\$50**

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#### **Letters**

*For legal matters such as visas or shortening of time*

**\$50**

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#### **Ceremony Overtime**

*Charged per 30 minutes over the first hour, measured from scheduled start time*

*This charge will be applied after the ceremony in the event that the commencement of the ceremony is delayed.*

**\$60**

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#### **Travel Expenses**

*Travel expenses will be charged where the venue is more than 30km from the centre of Canberra; in these cases, every kilometre past the first 60 will be charged at \$1*

*Where necessary, parking expenses will be passed on at cost*

*If the wedding requires an overnight stay or travel over 400km from the centre of Canberra, all travel and accommodation expenses will be passed on at cost*

**\$POA**

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#### **Bespoke poem, vows or reading written for you**

*Price to be negotiated with celebrant*

**\$POA**

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#### **External bookings**

*Any external bookings made by the celebrant will attract a 20% finder's fee, but your celebrant will collaborate with any external bookings you make yourself at no charge*

*eg.: welcome to country, smoking ceremony or hot air balloon services; candles or doves*

**\$POA**

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## Fee Structure

### Payment options

Payment is accepted by

- Direct transfer (allow two days for transfer)
- All major credit cards (surcharges apply)
- Cash.

### Fee policies

Following the initial meeting and submission of the NOIM, an invoice will be provided showing the paid booking fee and the outstanding fees.

All fees must clear at least seven days before the ceremony, or the ceremony will not proceed. If paying by direct transfer, allow another two days for funds to clear.

If further charges are incurred on the day of the ceremony (for instance if the ceremony begins late and therefore exceeds the hour included), another invoice will be issued with 30 days to complete payment.

## Service Quality

If you feel your celebrant is not meeting your needs at any point in the process of preparing for or celebrating your wedding, your first priority should be to communicate your concerns to your celebrant.

### Celebrants' Code of Practice

Australian Celebrants should always adhere to the code of practice published by the Attorney-General's Department. A copy of the code should be provided to you at your initial meeting.

If you feel your celebrant is not adhering to the code, get in touch. If your concerns are not addressed, it is your right to take your complaint to the Attorney-General's Department.

### Feedback

About a month after your ceremony, your celebrant will send you a link to a quick survey. Completing this can provide valuable feedback, which is great for improving the service provided.