



POLLY CHAN
BAILDON

AUTHORISED MARRIAGE CELEBRANT

MARRIED
BY *Polly*

Say "I Do"



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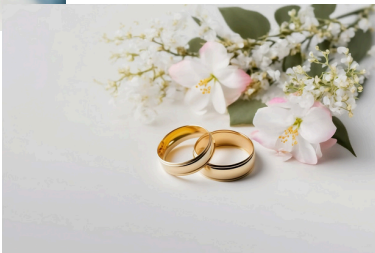
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INDEX

1. Introduction	3
2. About the celebrant	3
3. What is my role as a marriage celebrant	4
4. Paperwork	4
5. Purpose of wedding Ceremony	5
6. Ceremony Options	6
7. Structure of the ceremony	7
8. About your story	11
9. Elements for the Ceremony	12
10. Suggested Poems and Readings	13
11. Suggested music and songs	15
12. Suggested Rituals	16
13. Sample of Scripting	18
14. Code of practice	22
15. Marriage Education Services	25
16. Making a complaint	25
17. Contact us	26



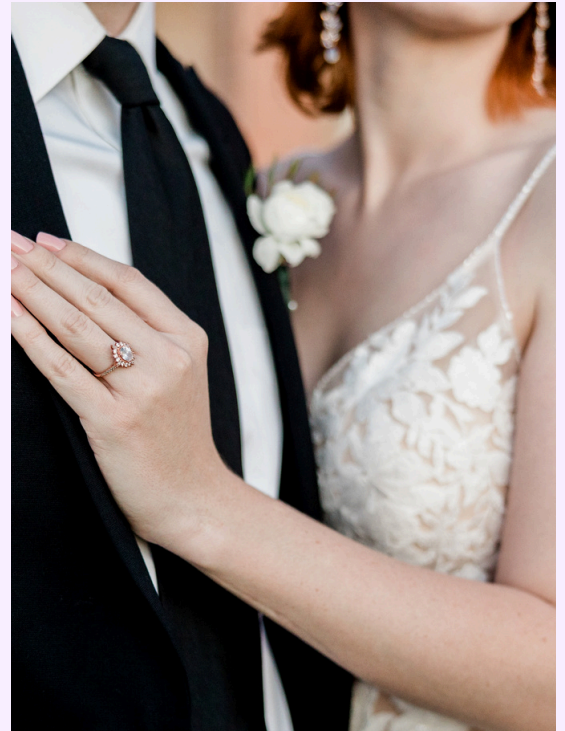
Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement !

As you begin planning this beautiful celebration of your love, I think its important to involve a wedding celebrant dedicated to turning your vision into a ceremony, that feels authentic and profoundly yours.

Your ceremony is the heart of your wedding: it honors your past, celebrates your present, and launches your shared future. Together, we'll craft a narrative that captures your values, cultural heritage, and personality, ensuring it's not just an event, but a cherished reflection of your love.

Ensuring it's not just an event, but a cherished reflection of your love.



ABOUT ME



With over 30 years experience as a radio presenter and Master of Ceremonies, I bring storytelling expertise and emotional resonance to every wedding. Being bilingual (English/Cantonese) and with my bicultural background, I love to weave traditions - from a Chinese tea ceremony, bilingual vows, or ancestral tributes into your day with grace and meaning.

Beyond this, I love collaborating with couples to design modern rituals that reflect their unique journey.

What is my role as a marriage celebrant

As a celebrant, the legality of your marriage begins and ends with me. It's my job to make sure your marriage is signed, sealed and delivered, legally speaking. From the Notice of Intended Marriage to making it legally official with the final registration.

Also, I will help you tailor the ceremony to what your heart desires, with everything from vows, to poems, songs, and rituals.

We can talk through your wish-list and include everything you would like.

Paperwork



It's my job to guide you and let you know what is required and when.

Firstly, we will look at the Notice of Intended Marriage, or the NOIM. This needs to be lodged to your celebrant at least 1 month before your ceremony, and no more than 18 months before (check the date with me if you're unsure).

I will talk you through the NOIM to get the ball rolling, including the documentation you are required to provide (for example, Passport, or birth certificate with drivers license, and proof of former marriage dissolution e.g divorce, nullity or death certificate).

Purpose of the ceremony

A wedding ceremony is far more than a legal formality
or a prelude to a celebration
It is the emotional and symbolic heart of a couple's
journey into marriage.
Rooted in tradition, culture, and personal meaning.



Commitment

a wedding ceremony is a couple's intentional, heartfelt promise to honor and cherish one another. By exchanging vows in the presence of loved ones, they publicly affirm their dedication, creating a sacred moment that marks the start of their shared life.

Cultural

Ceremonies often weave in cultural or religious traditions that honor a couple's heritage. Chinese tea ceremony pays respect to ancestors and unites families, while Western rituals like ring exchanges symbolise eternal love. These acts bridge generations, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging.

Connection

Every couple has a unique narrative. A well-crafted ceremony celebrates their journey, including how they met, overcame challenges, and chose each other. Your story not only personalises the day but also creates a legacy for future generations to cherish.

Celebration

Weddings unite families and friends, transforming individual love into a collective experience. The ceremony invites guests to witness and support the couple's commitment, strengthening bonds and creating shared memories.

Ceremony Options

When it comes to civil wedding services, anything can happen. There is a wealth of traditions to choose from, it's just about choosing what suits you. When we start planning your ceremony together, we can look at the rituals in greater detail, but here is an example of rituals that you may like to include:



- A community vow of support, from family and friends attending your wedding.
- A ritual to recognise the parents of both the bride and groom, in a manner of an acknowledgement, a vow, a blessing or a gift.
- A sand, candle or pebble ceremony (or similar) to represent anything from the bonds between families, to the beginning of the new journey being embarked upon.
- A blessing or warming of the rings, which can involve some or all of the wedding guests passing the rings around to instill them with their blessings.
- A handfasting ceremony, where the hands of the bride and the groom are bound together loosely with cord, ribbon or prayer beads, and words are spoken to symbolise the unity.
- Releasing doves or butterflies at the ceremony to represent the start of a new life.
- A ceremony involving any children of the bride or groom from previous relationships, which may take the form of a vow, a gift or an acknowledgement.
- Showering the bride and groom with bubbles or flower petals, to represent the showering of good wishes for their marriage... and to look great for photos! The vows and the spoken words. There are actually only three things that must be done at a civil ceremony.

Structure of the Ceremony



Typical Wedding Outline

Here is a standard outline for a typical wedding ceremony.

Only the “Monitum” and “Legal Vows” are essential for a legal marriage and other parts are regularly added, subtracted or modified as required.

1. Housekeeping

A good pre-ceremony opportunity to remind guests about mobile phones, amenities, emergency exits, any directions from you about photos and social media and any other important information about the day’s schedule.

2. Processional

This is where the bridesmaids and bride enter the ceremony, usually accompanied by music. This is followed by a brief welcome to guests, introduction of the celebrant and an outline of the day’s events.

3. Welcoming

The Celebrant welcomes family and friends and introduces her/himself.

4. Giving Away

This is where one or both parents of the bride and / or groom can release their ceremonial custody of their children to each other



5. Introduction

Your celebrant will speak a little bit about your commitment to one another, what marriage means to you and some anecdotal accounts of how you met

6. Reading

Couples often use short readings of poetry, literature, songs or prayers to enhance their ceremony. It is a fantastic way to include family and friends (who aren't in the bridal party) in the ceremony.

7. Monitum

This is a legal requirement, the celebrant **MUST** read the government issued monitum.



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.



8. The Asking

One of the most traditional elements of a wedding ceremony, this is the “I do” bit!

9. Legal Vows

These are the words you
MUST say in the presence
of your witnesses to
solemnise your marriage



"I call upon the persons here present to witness that I, A.B. (or C.D.) take thee C.D. (or A.B.), to be my lawful wedded (wife / husband / spouse / partner)."



10. Personal Vows

Often couples will choose to write their own vowels that more concisely represent their relationship. They are spoken before or after the "Legal Vows".

11. Ring Exchange

The exchanging of wedding rings is a classic tradition of western culture

12. The Pronouncing

This is the part where you will hear the words "I now pronounce you husband and wife (or partners in life), you may kiss the bride". This is an important moment within the ceremony – one which seems to be a genuine crowd pleaser!

13. Signing of the Register

The paperwork must be completed by the married couple, plus their two chosen witnesses and the celebrant to finalise the marriage. This is a terrific moment to provide some music for your guests, as it often takes 5-10 minutes to finalise everything and take photos



13. Ritual Section

Some couples may choose to add certain rituals at this point in the ceremony

14. Conclusion

The conclusion is just a short set of messages that will help bring everyone's focus back to the task at hand. Any housekeeping or instructions about photos or post ceremony activities should take place here.

15. Summing up or Blessing

A final blessing for the couple, as well as wish you the very best for the future

16. Presentation

Traditionally, a couple will be announced before they leave the venue - "May I present to you Mr and Mrs..." Essentially, the presentation is what prepares people for your departure and signals the end of the ceremony.

17. Recessional

Often some music is played as the newlyweds exit the arena as they are showered with petals, rice, or other harmless and biodegradable confetti. Your celebrant will often give instructions to your guests as to what happens next – photos, lawn games, nibbles, drinks etc – until the reception begins.

About your story



Every couple has a unique narrative. A well-crafted ceremony celebrates your journey. This storytelling not only personalises the day but also creates a legacy for future generations to cherish.

1. How did you meet? (Any fun or memorable details?)
2. What was your first impression of each other?
3. When did you realise you were in love?
4. How did the proposal happen? (Who proposed, and how?)
5. What's a favorite memory you've shared as a couple?
6. What do you admire most about each other?
7. How have you grown together as a couple?
8. What challenges have you overcome, and how did they strengthen your relationship?
9. What does marriage mean to you?
10. What are your hopes for your future together?

Elements for the Ceremony

- Is there any theme for the ceremony?
- What kind of music would you like?
- Do you want a religious, spiritual, or secular ceremony?
- Are there any cultural or family traditions you'd like to include?



- Will you write your own vows, or use traditional ones?
- Do you want a unity ceremony (sand, candle, handfasting, etc.)? If so, what symbolism is meaningful to you?
- Who will be participating in the ceremony (readings, musicians, family members)?

- Do you want the ceremony to be formal, casual, romantic, humorous, or a mix?
- Are there any quotes, poems, or readings you'd like included?
- Do you have a theme or specific aesthetic for the wedding?
- Are there any inside jokes or special moments you'd like referenced?
- Will there be a processional order? Who is walking down the aisle and in what sequence?
- Are there any special acknowledgments (deceased loved ones, family members, etc.)?
- Do you want audience participation (e.g., a ring warming, group blessing)?



Suggested Poems And Readings

Here is a short list of some well-loved, tried and tested material to give you some ideas and guidance should you require it.



"She Walks in Beauty," Lord Byron

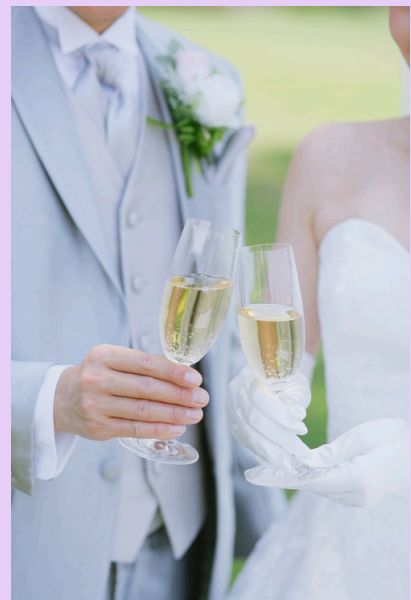
"She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

"A Wedding Toast," James Bertolino

"May your love be firm,
And may your dream of a life together
be a river between two shores
by day bathed in sunlight, and by night
illuminated from within. May the heron
carry news of you to the heavens, and the salmon bring
the sea's blue grace. May your twin thoughts spiral upward
like leafy vines, like fiddle strings in the wind,
and be as noble as the Douglas fir.
May you never find yourselves back to back
without love pulling you around
into each other's arms."



Suggested Music

The best musical choices are the ones that mean something to you as a couple and will illicit emotion from your guests.

Classical

Canon in D (Johann Pachelbel)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (Felix Mendelssohn)
Bridal March (Richard Wagner)
The Prince of Denmark's March (Jeremiah Clarke)
Air on a G String (Johann Sebastian Bach)
Salut d'Amour (Edward Elgar)
Triumphal March from Aida (Giuseppe Verdi)
The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (George Handel)
Also Sprach Zarathustra (Richard Strauss)
The Blue Danube Waltz (Johan Strauss)



Modern

Lover (Taylor Swift)
L.O.V.E (Michael Buble)
I'm With You (Vance Joy)
Everything (Michael Buble)
Say You Won't Let Go (James Arthur)
At Last (Etta James)
Can't Help Falling in Love (Hayley Reinhart)
Beautiful Crazy (Luke Combs)
A Thousand Years (Christina Perri)
All of Me (John Legend)
If I Ain't Got You (Alicia Keys)

Jazz

It Had to be You (Harry Connick Jnr)
Unforgettable (Nat King and Natalie Cole)
The Way You Look Tonight (Frank Sinatra)
Beyond the Sea (Bobby Darrin)
What a Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)
My Baby Just Cares For Me (Nina Simone)
Dream a Little Dream of Me (Ella Fitzgerald)
Come Away With Me (Norah Jones)
Once Upon a Dream (Laika)
Make it Last (Nicole Henry)



Suggested Rituals

There are a number of options to add to your ceremony that we can discuss in more detail over the coming weeks

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

This popular ritual is often included in Christian, Catholic and other religious wedding ceremonies, so it might be a good one to include if you're having a secular ceremony, but would like to add a familiar element for religious family members, which can often make them feel more included. The ritual finds the couple (or sometimes their parents) lighting a common candle (sometimes called a Unity candle) from two individual candles, symbolising their union.



SAND CEREMONY

The sand-pouring ritual finds the couple pouring sand from two individual containers into a single vase or vessel to symbolise their union. Some couples take the sand from beaches near where they grew up or beaches that are particularly special to them, while others use colourful sand to create a decorative item they can then display in their home. Some couples ask members of their family to get involved by adding more containers of sand, symbolising the joining of two families. This is a great option for couples who have children, too! See more on doing a sand-pouring ritual [here!](#)

HAND FASTING

The married couple's hands are tied together in an ancient ceremonial ritual which dates back to Pagan traditions of the ancient Celts. The wrapping of the cords signify unity and bond which the couple are now committing to.



CHINESE TEA CEREMONY

The Chinese Wedding Tea Ceremony is an integral part of traditional Chinese weddings. It involves the formal introduction of the bride and groom and the expression of respect to the elderly. During the ceremony, the couple serves tea to their parents, in-laws, and other family members, symbolizing respect and gratitude. The elders, in turn, show their acceptance of the marriage and may offer blessings and advice for a harmonious union.



Sample of Scripting options

A few choice words to consider for different scenarios

The Welcome:

Some family members have travelled from overseas to attend

What an absolute joy it is to welcome each and every one of you here today as we gather to celebrate the love and union of [Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name].

Today is made even more special by the presence of family and friends who have traveled near and far—some from right around the corner, and others who have journeyed across oceans to be here. To those who have come from overseas, your love and dedication mean the world to [Bride & Groom]. The miles you've traveled are a testament to the bonds of family and friendship that surround this couple, and we are so grateful you're here to share in this beautiful moment.

The ceremony is a small gathering of fewer than 20 guests.

What a beautiful and intimate moment this is. Here we are, surrounded by the people who mean the most to [Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name]—their closest family and dearest friends. With fewer than 20 of us here today, this isn't just a ceremony; it's a gathering of hearts, a celebration of love witnessed by those who truly know and cherish them.

Some of you have traveled far to be here, and your presence is a gift. Others have been by their side through every chapter of their story. No matter the distance or the years, what matters today is the love that fills this room—the kind of love that makes a marriage strong, joyful, and everlasting.

Words About Marriage where the couple:

Wish to acknowledge the joining of two cultures

Today is more than a wedding—it's a celebration of love, unity, and the beautiful coming together of two cultures, two families, and two stories that will now intertwine as one.

[Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name] carry with them the traditions, values, and richness of their heritages—[mention cultures]. And today, we don't just witness a marriage; we witness the blending of histories, the honoring of roots, and the creation of something entirely new and extraordinary.



Are both marring for the second time and both have children from their previous marriage.

[Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name], today you choose each other not as your first love, but as your lasting love. You come to this moment with open hearts, life's lessons guiding you, and a profound appreciation for the gift of a second chance.

And this union isn't just about the two of you—it's also about the families you bring together. [To the children:] [Child's Name] and [Child's Name], today isn't just about gaining a stepparent; it's about expanding your circle of love, support, and people who will always cheer you on. Your parents' love for you is the foundation that makes this new beginning possible.

A Giving Away:

The bride does not wish to be given away but would like both parents to affirm their blessings on the marriage.

[Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name], you stand here today as equals, each choosing the other with full hearts. And while [Bride] has chosen not to be 'given away' in the traditional sense, she and [Groom] both wish to honor the love and support of their families—especially the parents who have shaped their lives.

So, [Bride's Parents' Names], as you stand beside your daughter today, we invite you to affirm your blessings on this marriage. Do you offer your love and support as [Bride] and [Groom] begin this new chapter together?"



The couple has asked for a community vow of support instead of a giving away.

"Family and friends, today is not just a celebration of [Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name]'s love—it's a celebration of the community that surrounds them. They've chosen to begin this marriage not with one person 'giving away' another, but by inviting all of you, their closest circle, to stand with them in love and support.

Marriage thrives not just on the promises two people make to each other, but on the strength of the community that uplifts them. So today, we ask you: Will you, their family and friends, promise to encourage this couple, to celebrate their joys, to offer kindness in challenges, and to remind them of the love that brought them here today? If so, please join me in saying, 'We will.'"

(Guests respond: "We will!")

The Asking: with a blend of solemnity and humour

"[Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name], before you pledge yourselves to each other, let's acknowledge that you're not entering this marriage alone. You're bringing all of us along for the ride - the good, the bad, and the inevitable family debates about whose cooking is better."

"So let me ask you properly: [Bride's Name], do you take [Groom's Name] to be your partner in life, your teammate in parenting, and your forever plus-one to all those family gatherings? Do you promise to love him even when he [insert humorous but endearing flaw, like 'leaves socks by the bed' or 'tries to assemble furniture without reading the instructions']?"

"[Bride responds: I do]"

"And [Groom's Name], do you take [Bride's Name] to be your wife, your partner in crime, and your personal reminder that yes, you probably should call your mother more often? Do you promise to love her even when she [insert humorous but endearing flaw, like 'steals all the blankets' or 'has strong opinions about how to load the dishwasher']?"

"[Groom responds: I do]"



Personalised vows: (additional to the minimum(legal) vows)

"(Bride's name), I offer myself to you as a partner in life and in return I marry you with my eyes wide open. I have seen the best of you and the worst of you and I choose both. I come to this marriage with my full heart, mind, body and soul. This is not the end of a search but rather the beginning of a new adventure."

A Ring Exchange: Both parties will wear a ring

"These rings we celebrate today are far more than precious metal - they are sacred circles with no beginning and no end, just like the love [Partner 1's Name] and [Partner 2's Name] promise to each other."

"In many traditions, the wedding ring is worn on the fourth finger because ancient cultures believed it contained the 'vena amoris' - the vein that runs directly to the heart. While modern anatomy tells us all fingers share the same circulation [smile], the romantic in me prefers the original story."

The groom will not be receiving a ring so the bride will accept the ring placed on her finger

"[Groom's Name], as you place this ring on [Bride's Name]'s finger, you make visible the invisible bond between your hearts. May this circle of precious metal remind her every day of the precious promises you make today."

[Groom places ring on Bride's finger while saying]:

"With this ring, I give you my heart and my lifelong promise. May it remind you of my love whenever you see its shine."

Presentation:

Example 1:

"Family and friends, what greater gift can two people share than the gift of love? It is with warmth in our hearts that we shall forever remember the immense commitment you have made to each other today. May it forever bring you joy, happiness and contentment. Ladies and gentlemen it is my distinct pleasure in asking you to welcome Mr and Mrs (their surname)



Example 2:

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is my absolute joy to present to you for the very first time..."

(Pauses for dramatic effect, smiling at the couple)

"A love story written in promises and sealed with a ring—may I introduce [Bride's Name] and [Groom's Name], now husband and wife!"

(Turns to the couple with a playful wink)

"Groom, though your finger may be bare, your heart is clearly full. And Bride, that ring now carries a lifetime of his love—so no pressure!"

(To guests, raising a hand in celebration)

"Let your cheers be the first to surround them as they begin this new chapter together!"

Code of Practice



The Code of Practice for Marriage Celebrants is contained in Schedule 2 of the Marriage Regulations 2017.

1. APPLICATION OF THIS CODE OF PRACTICE

This Code of Practice applies to marriage celebrants.

Note 1: A marriage celebrant is a person registered under Subdivision C of Division 1 of Part IV of the Marriage Act 1961: see subsection 5(1) of that Act.

Note 2: Under paragraph 39I(1)(b) of that Act, if the Registrar of Marriage Celebrants is satisfied that a marriage celebrant has not complied with an obligation under section 39G of that Act, including this Code of Practice, the Registrar may take disciplinary measures against the marriage celebrant.

2. HIGH STANDARD OF SERVICE

A marriage celebrant must maintain a high standard of service in his or her professional conduct and practice. This includes (without limitation) ensuring the following: (a) appropriate personal presentation for marriage ceremonies; (b) punctuality for marriage ceremonies; (c) accuracy in preparation of documents and in the conduct of marriage ceremonies.

3. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANCE OF MARRIAGE

A marriage celebrant must recognise the social, cultural and legal significance of marriage and the marriage ceremony in the Australian community, and the importance of strong and respectful family relationships.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH THE ACT AND OTHER LAWS

A marriage celebrant must:

- (a) comply with the requirements of the Marriage Act 1961 and the Marriage Regulations 2017 which apply to the marriage celebrant; and
- (b) observe the laws of the Commonwealth and of any State or Territory in which the marriage celebrant solemnises marriages; and
- (c) avoid unlawful discrimination in the provision of marriage celebrancy services.



5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

A marriage celebrant must respect the importance of the marriage ceremony to the parties and the other persons organising the ceremony. This includes (without limitation) the following:

- (a) giving the parties information and guidance to enable them to choose or compose a marriage ceremony, including information to assist the parties to decide whether a marriage ceremony rehearsal is needed or appropriate;
- (b) respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the parties, including by:
 - (i) arranging for appropriate facilities to interview parties; and
 - (ii) dealing appropriately with personal documents and personal information; and
 - (iii) maintaining appropriate facilities for the secure storage of records; and
 - (iv) ensuring the return of all personal documents belonging to the parties as soon as practicable (unless it is necessary to keep the documents for the ceremony);
- (c) giving the parties information about how to notify the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department of any concerns or complaints they may have regarding the marriage services provided by the marriage celebrant.



6. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS SERVICES

A marriage celebrant must:

- (a) maintain an up-to-date knowledge about appropriate family relationships services in the community; and
- (b) inform the parties to the marriage about the range of information and services available to them to enhance, and sustain them throughout, their relationship.



Marriage Education Services

Should you and your partner require assistance with any aspect of your marriage, family life, or cohabitation, there are a gamut of excellent services available to you:

Bark

www.bark.com

Better Hep

www.betterhelp.com

Relationships Australia NSW

www.relationshipsnse.org.au

Making a Complaint

In the unlikely event that you have a complaint about any aspect of my celebrant services, feel free to call or email me directly. If you are unhappy with my reply or fail to reach adequate closure on the matter, you can make a complaint directly to the Attorney General's Office

<https://ag.gov.au>



Connect and Explore

I'd love to discuss how we can create a ceremony that feels truly you—whether through blended languages, family traditions, or entirely new rituals.

Let's connect to explore your vision.



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