

Paperwork, paperwork, paperwork

Yes, whilst getting married is fun and fabulous, and so much of the focus is around the actual day and the celebration, there's also some legal paperwork that needs to be completed in order for your marriage to be valid according to The Marriage Act 1961. So here's a run down of the various forms that we are required to complete, along with any other documents that you will need to provide.

Legal Forms

Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM)

The first document that must be completed is called the *Notice of Intended Marriage* or NOIM as we often refer to it in the business. This document must be completed and lodged with your celebrant by at least one calendar month, and no more than 18 months, prior to your marriage date. We can complete this document together, in person, or if that's not practical, you can download the NOIM from the client login section of my website, or I can send it to you via email. You can fill it in and get it witnessed by the approved witnesses and return it to me via email.

Declaration of No Legal Impediment to Marriage

This is the second legal document that you are required to sign prior to your marriage ceremony. This document is a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration and states that you have provided your celebrant with all the correct information and documents and have been honest and truthful in the supply of that information. This document must be provided, completed and witnessed by the celebrant performing your marriage ceremony. At this point, all identification and required documents must also have been sighted by your celebrant.

Certificate of Marriage

On the day of your marriage, your celebrant will provide you with two copies of of this document, along with a decorative marriage certificate. These documents will be signed by the two of you, your two witnesses and your celebrant. It's important to check that details on these are correct before signing.

The celebrant will retain one copy of the Certificates of Marriage and will forward the second copy to Births, Deaths and Marriage, along with the NOIM and Declaration when they register your marriage. The decorative certificate is then presented to the couple on the day. Whilst this is a decorative certificate, it is still a legally registered document and therefore can not be reissued if this document is lost or damaged, so it's important to look after it.

Documents to be provided by you

Evidence of Date and Place of Birth

The following must be provided by you to prove your date and place of birth. If possible, it's best to sight these when completing the NOIM, however if this is not practical, then they must be sighted at some point prior to the marriage being conducted. The following documents are acceptable evidence of a party's date and place of birth:

- an official (original) certificate of birth, or an official extract of an entry in an official register showing the date and place of birth of the party; plus photographic ID such as a driver's licence, proof of age card etc; or
- a passport issued by the Australian government or a government of an overseas country showing the date and place of birth of the party; or
- a statutory declaration from the party or the party's parent stating:
"it is impracticable (this does not mean not practical or convenient; it means practically impossible) to obtain an official birth certificate or extract, and the reasons why, and to the best of the declarant's knowledge and belief and as accurately as the declarant has been able to ascertain, when and where the party was born."

Evidence that you are no longer married to anyone else

In Australia, it is illegal to get married, if you are still married to somebody else. Therefore parties who have been previously married must provide their celebrant with evidence of how their last marriage ended. That evidence includes, but is not limited to, a certificate of divorce, decree absolute or overseas issued equivalent, or a death certificate.

After you're married. . . .

Once your marriage is officially lodged and registered with Births, Deaths and Marriages in the state where you were married, you can apply for your official marriage certificate. This is the only document that proves that you are legally married.

All celebrants have a different approach when it comes to applying for this certificate. Some leave it to the couple to apply for, some are happy to apply for it on the couple's behalf, but the cost is in addition to their original fee. Others, like myself, include the cost of this certificate (currently \$60) in my original celebrant fee and therefore look after applying and paying for the certificate on behalf of the couple. The marriage certificate will then arrive via registered post, usually within 5-10 business days after your marriage has been registered.