

MORETON BAY *Celebrancy*

Guide to the Notice of Intended Marriage

Even though marriage equality was introduced in 2017, the marriage forms didn't catch up until 2021. They're still not perfect but they're a lot more inclusive than they were.

I've put together a bit of a guide because even though the forms come with instructions, when couples fill them out by themselves there is still a bit of confusion. My notes will help if you find yourselves having to complete it and have it witnessed prior to lodging it with your celebrant.

The Notice of Intended Marriage is a snapshot of what your life looked like at the time you lodged it. If names, addresses, occupations etc change between then and your ceremony that's fine. We make amendments.

SECTION 1: DETAILS OF THE PARTIES (to the marriage)

1. Description of the parties

The first thing you will notice is that the parties to the marriage (you guys) are now referred to as Person 1 and Person 2, instead of Bride and Groom. Question 1 asks you to tick a box with what you would like to be called. This ties in with question 4 (gender) which is now optional. Basically this box gives you the choice to be known by traditional gender roles like "bride and groom" or simply be called "Partner".

This doesn't mean that two blokes have to be called "partners" you can both be grooms. You may want to call yourselves partners regardless of same or mixed gender marriages and same sex couples have all three choices too.

2 & 3. Your Name

“Family name” is the last name you are using now. The name that is on your current photo ID. It may not be the name on your birth certificate. It needs to be your current legal name.

For example: I got divorced nearly 20 years ago and never changed my name back to my maiden name. All my ID except my birth certificate says “Sally-Ann Thomas”.

If I wanted to use my birth certificate as proof of my date and place of birth, I would also need my marriage or divorce certificate to complete the chain of identity, even though my driver’s license says “Thomas”.

If I used my passport I wouldn’t need to, because it shows the relevant birth information, and calls me “Sally-Ann Thomas”. I had to prove the connection when the passport was issued.

If you want to be called anything other than the name on the ID you choose, then I’m sorry, but you will have to apply for a legal name change prior to the ceremony. If you’ve been called Buddy your entire life, but the documents say Jonathan, that’s the name we have to use on the paperwork and in the formal, legal parts of the ceremony unless you change it prior.

4. Gender

This is now an optional question. Male, Female or non-binary. Unfortunately, if you identify differently to your ID documentation I can’t let you tick (for male/female); just don’t tick the box.

Again, sorry. I don’t check your “bits” and would love to let you put whatever you want but if it contradicts the official documents I can’t.

5. Occupation

This sounds easy, but Qld Births, Deaths and Marriages use a drop-down box from which I must choose. They have (what I believe) is too many options so we need to be specific. If you’re a teacher, I need to know whether it’s primary, secondary or tertiary. If you’re a factory worker, it’s going to want to know what industry. Cleaners need to tell me domestic, commercial or in a particular industry.. I know, right?

6. Usual place of residence

Where you are living when you lodge the notice, together or apart, all good.

7. Conjugal Status

“Never Validly Married” replaces what used to be Batchelor and Spinster – what unmarried people were called for centuries. If your divorce isn’t final there’s also a box for that. You don’t have to be divorced to plan your next adventure in matrimony but you can’t actually get married until it’s final.

If you’re divorced, your celebrant needs to see the divorce papers, if you’re widowed they need the death certificate of your previous spouse.

8. and 9. Birthplace and Date of Birth

This will be on your ID (passport or birth certificate). I always like to say I was born in Ferntree Gully, but I wasn’t actually, the town the hospital was in in my place of birth – always a source of disappointment. We need town, state and country please.

10. Are the parties related?

This is a fun one. It’s absolutely fine for cousins to marry but not adopted siblings with no blood relationship.... even if they never lived in the same house at the same time. There’s a list if you need it.

SECTION 2: DETAILS OF THE PARTIES’ PARENTS

Again, in the interests of diversity and equality the section doesn’t talk about mothers and fathers but Parents 1 and 2.

This is where I find the most mistakes when people have filled this out themselves so listen up.

11 & 13. Parents full current name

This is the name they are called now, regardless of how many names they’ve been called in the past. Not the name they were born with, not the name they had when you were born, the name that they go by today.

It asks for FULL names. I know some people don’t have a middle name and I know some people have three or four. Many times I’ve gone back to a couple and asked them to confirm that all four of their parents don’t have middle names. Always 2 or 3 of them do have middle names but the couple didn’t think to include them.

If you’re not sure how mum spells her middle name, ask her.

12 & 14. Parents full birth names

This is the name they were born with. Names change; not just through marriage.

Some kids are adopted as children and change their name to their new parent's name (that could still be their current name) but maybe not their birth name. If you don't know it, that's OK but if you do it's good to include it.

Some people born overseas change their last name, or the spelling of it, to make it seem more Aussie. This happened a LOT in the past so it's quite possible that dad's name now isn't the one he arrived here with.

15 & 16. Country of Birth

We don't need town or state/province... just the country.

So why do you need to fill all this in?

You will notice that all of these questions allow you to answer "unknown" but really, it's best to only write that if you really, really don't know. For two reasons.

I am a huge family tree nut – mine goes back to 1580 at the moment. If parent's names weren't included on marriage documents I'd have probably got stuck around 1870. I would never have known that I had a great, great, great grandmother who was born in a French prisoner of war camp during the Napoleonic wars, or that another one was a Welsh Traveller. Spare a thought for your own great, great grandchildren and include as much detail as you can, eh?

I also know that some people have cut toxic family members out of their lives. They don't want to taint their new family relationship with the mention of a parent long estranged. I get it. Here's my tip.

If a parent's name is on your birth certificate I can't sign off on "unknown" because it's there in black and white in front of me. If you don't want mum or dad's name on your marriage documents use your passport for confirmation of date and place of birth.

SECTION 3: GETTING IT WITNESSED (In Australia)

If you're not going to be able to catch up in person with your celebrant (or via zoom if they let us keep doing it after December 2023) then you can have your signatures witnessed by a

- JP
- Lawyer
- Doctor or
- Police Officer

All they are doing is watching you sign the document and signing to say they've watched you sign. They shouldn't need to see any ID but many will ask anyway. Even if they check ALL your documents, your celebrant still needs to see the originals.

NO ONE but your celebrant fills in any of the questions AFTER the signature boxes.

(Overseas) You have a few options, the easiest of which is a Notary Public. You can also have it witnessed at an Australian Embassy or Consulate if there is one in your town.

It's interesting that if an Australian celebrant just happens to be in your part of the world, they DON'T have the authority to witness your notice overseas. I think that needs to be fixed.

If you have any more questions I can help via my website
<https://www.moretonbaycelebrancy.com.au>

via DM
<https://www.facebook.com/unique.sallybrations>
<https://www.instagram.com/moretonbaycelebrancy>

Email
moretonbaycelebrancy@gmail.com

Text or Call
+61 425 719 784