

Burnett
Bridal
Guide 2023



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A key factor: Money

YOUR wedding is the official mark of your committed relationship together. You are probably already saving up to buy a house or go on future holidays, so it is important to keep perspective when budgeting.

MoneySmart offers a number of tips to stay on budget:

- The more you pay up-front, the less likely it is that you'll get into debt.
- Talk to your partner and both sets of parents early.
- Decide what you can comfortably afford to spend and stick to it.
- Do your research and shop around for a better deal - always negotiate.
- Check if you can DIY or get a friend to help with flowers, photography or catering.



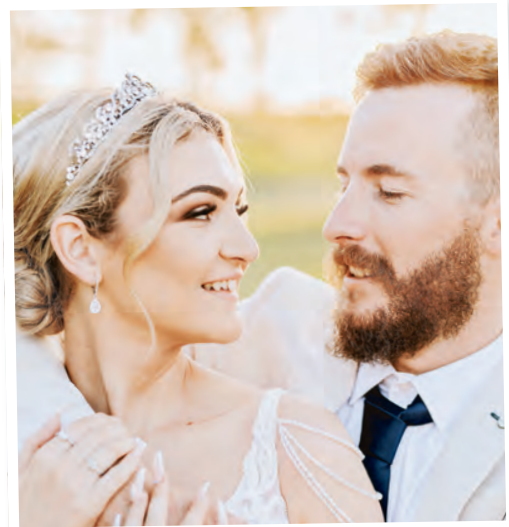
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Welcome

CONGRATULATIONS on finding the love of your life and getting engaged... now, you have a wedding to plan! Welcome to such a precious, crazy, sleepless and lovely season of your life: your engagement. Inside this 2023 Burnett Bridal Guide you'll find our tips and ideas from the region's different wedding professionals and all the latest trends. You'll read all about the love stories of Burnett couples as they share all the dreamy details from their wedding day.

Definitely feeling like I'm still in the honeymoon stage myself 18 months into married life, I've collated my best tips from my own wedding and asked other brides and grooms for their wedding wisdom. So take a deep breath, glean some ideas within these pages and most importantly have some fun.

- JESSICA LARKIN



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Engagement party

PLANNING an engagement party is exciting and can be seen as a practice run for planning your wedding, especially if you're new to event planning.

It's a great chance to celebrate love with your friends and family before the big day.

The first thing to consider is your guest list.

If you consider your guest list first you can then start thinking about the size of the space you need and then from there, booking a date.

The next thing to think about is choosing a date.

You want to choose a date that is far away enough that people can plan for it and is most convenient.

Don't set it too close to your wedding either.

Choose the venue- you might want to think about the size of your event, cost, and theme for this one.

Some venue ideas might be a restaurant, bar, or even someone's backyard.

Think about themes as they can add a bit of fun and make it a more memorable event.

Think about the menu if you're going to have food.

Consider dietary requirements as well.

Send the invitations at least four to six weeks ahead of your chosen date.

Plan some fun activities to keep your guests entertained as well.

You might want to also develop something of a



Picture: Always and Forever
Wedding Photography and Videography

schedule for your party too, or you might just want to go with the flow - but if you do, have some games or icebreakers up your sleeves if things start to die down.

Make sure that key moments such as speeches, toasts, and cake-cutting are celebrated.

But don't forget to have fun, this is the most important part for you and your guests, have fun.

Counting down the days...

12 months before

- Break the news to your guests
- Book your venue, celebrant, and wedding planner
- Choose your 'guests of honour' (bridesmaids, groomsmen)

9 months before

- Finalise your wedding's theme
- Shop for your dress and suit + those of your guests of honour
- Book hair and makeup, catering, decoration, and accommodation (if needed)

6 months before

- Make your honeymoon plans, book time off work
- Book photographers, entertainment, flowers
- Try on and buy rings

3 months before

- Plan the day with your wedding celebrant, write vows, and lodge notice of intended marriage
- Post wedding invitations
- Organise pre-wedding events (buck's party, hen's night, bridal shower)

1 month before

- Book hair - and make-up trial
- Finalise seating plan
- Write speeches, rehearse ceremony

1 week before

- Make your last preparations
- Make sure everything is booked and/or ready to go
- Don't stress, and have fun!

Where will you have it?

YOUR wedding atmosphere starts with your chosen venues.

Think about the environment of the venue, and what it'll be like depending on the season, especially if it's outside.

Consider which region you would like to have your wedding - whether it is the bride or groom's hometown or a destination wedding.

The Burnett has an array of stunning, unique backdrops for a wedding, from rustic barns, to the grand Bunya Mountains or Mount Walsh to old churches, wineries or farms.

Whatever you choose, make sure it is what you envisioned and is the right fit for you and your partner - make a list of venue priorities with your partner.

Ceremony:

A TRADITIONAL church ceremony or garden wedding? Perhaps you envisioned a big tent or being outside with a hilltop view or an iconic background.

A community or council hall, farming shed or a backyard could even be a strong option done right.

Sometimes a simple venue could be a blank canvas to create the dream setting for your wedding.

Traditionally the bride's parents will sit in the first row on the left side of the aisle, while the groom's family sits on the right side.

Reception:

YOUR reception is where you have your first meal and first dance together as a married couple. It is a chance to slow down and talk to your guests and really enjoy the party.

Does your venue serve alcohol and have a liquor licence? Do they have in-house catering or will you need to outsource this? Is there enough room to have a sit-down meal and a dance floor?

Couples can choose from purpose-built buildings for



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

receptions and functions, a community hall or even hold the reception outside.

The venue will determine the freedom a couple has with decorations - remember many require a huge effort from the bridal party and family the night before and after to ensure everything is set-up and packed down smoothly.

What to consider for your wedding venue:

- Is the venue size appropriate for your guest list?
- Is the venue available for your desired dates and budget friendly?
- Could you hold both your ceremony and reception at the one venue?
- Are tables and chairs and other essentials provided? If not, these little things could stack up the overall cost.
- Is it easy access to the venue and sufficient parking?
- Is the distance between your ceremony and reception venues viable, minimal and easy for guests to navigate?
- Are there nice settings for your bridal party photos at either the ceremony or reception venues?



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Marrying my childhood sweetheart

ON 10 October 2022, Ebony married her childhood sweetheart Josh.

Mr and Mrs O'Brien held their wedding ceremony and reception at Toowoomba's Gabbinbar Homestead.

Her favourite moment was when Josh got his first glimpse of her up the aisle and then their two-year-old son, who was their page boy, rushed down the aisle.

"Once he saw Josh he ran to him, which was a bit sweet," Ebony said.

Ebony and Josh met when they were students at Nanango State High School, aged 13 and 14.

"We've been together for 10 years," she said.

Josh popped the question at Rainbow Beach, setting up the camera on the back of his ute to capture the sweet moment.

The Nanango couple's wedding day took on a 'bohemian aesthetic' and modern bo-ho feel.

Ebony's dress was a White Lily Couture fitted flair two-piece.

"It had an over-draped skirt I could detach at the reception, it was sort of like two dresses in one without changing it completely," she said.

Her bridesmaids sported glittery rust-copper one-shoulder cross-back dresses while the groom had a copper tie to match and stood out in a full suit.

The groomsmen were dapper in sand-coloured trousers, copper suspenders and bowties.

Toowoomba-based designers and florists 'Poppies for Willows' took care of the design and flowers.

The wedding flowers featured white roses as the centrepiece as a special touch, in honour of Ebony's nan, who passed away last year.

Ebony used Burnett make-up artist Lauren K Beauty for her bridal make-up.

"I went full glam!," she said.

"Lauren does my make-up quite often so we experimented ... I went with dark-eyes, because my eyes pop when I've got dark around them," she said.

Kingaroy-based cake artist 'Karmilla's Cakes' made the couple's wedding cake, a two-tiered, semi-naked caramel mud topped with fresh flowers.

The O'Briens also had Burnett marriage celebrant John Carey and used Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography to capture their day.

When it comes to wedding budgets, Ebony suggests investing in quality photos.

"Spend the money on videographers and photographers – there's lots of things you get photos of that I didn't know happened," she said.

Personalised Celebrations, a Burnett business



Pictures: Always & Forever wedding photography & film



specialising in personalised gifts, helped add a unique touch to the O'Brien's day personalising the bride's and bridesmaids' robes and the couple's vow cards.

"My main tips for planning my wedding is allow time, don't rush," Ebony said.

"If there is a specific vendor you are chasing, book them asap as they will most likely be booked up or getting booked.

"Look locally then outsource if needed. And definitely set a budget! It's very easy to go over."

Ebony's budget tip: Get lots of quotes once you find an item you like rather than jumping on the first thing you see.

Choosing your celebrant

EVERYONE is an important person at your wedding, but our marriage celebrant is the person who will ensure the legalities of your wedding ceremony and do much more.

Weddings can be held on any day of the week, as long as you meet the minimum timeframe of giving one month's notice to an authorised celebrant.

Choosing a celebrant is more than finding someone who can competently prepare the paperwork! Each celebrant has their own style, life experience and skills and they will have a huge hand in shaping how your ceremony will feel and flow.

Find someone you genuinely connect with and trust early in your planning, and take advantage of their "no obligation" meet-and-greet to help you, and them, decide how you can work together.

In Australia, couples can choose either a civil or a religious celebrant to solemnise their marriage. Celebrants can be found online, on social media, or through searching the register maintained by the Commonwealth Department of the Attorney-General to locate all authorised celebrants for a location, and the form of their marriage licence. Ask your celebrant also if they are able to travel.

Celebrants manage their own business and will provide you with their fees, booking arrangements, refund policy, how to contact them, how often to meet, information needed to complete the legal paperwork as well as design the ceremony content that aligns with your preferences. Your celebrant helps to get your wedding day off to a cracking start!

Remember...

- There must be two witnesses over the age of 18 at your wedding ceremony for it to be legal.
- Your 'Notice of Intended Marriage' application must be lodged one to 18 months before your wedding - your celebrant can help you organise this.



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One ring to rule them all, and jewellery

Jewellery

FOR the wedding, try to keep it simple as less is often more.

Go for a few key pieces that compliment your dress and overall look.

You don't want the jewellery to wear you.

Consider the neckline of your dress, especially for necklaces.

If the neckline is lower you might want to consider your necklace more than if you go with a higher neckline.

Remember to be personal as this day is a celebration of people coming together, so choose pieces that represent you.

Don't forget to get a second opinion - asking friends and family their thoughts can make you feel more confident in your decisions, or change them.

Practice wearing it, so if there are any issues with your jewellery you know about them before the big day.

The Ring

NO matter the price tag or cut, your engagement ring will always be your most precious jewellery item, along with your wedding ring.

It can be daunting to pick out the best ring for your fiancée which is why some couples look at rings together before or after the proposal, while for some the ring is a genuine surprise at the proposal.

It is important to know your partner's ring size prior to buying the ring.

Traditionally rings will have a diamond centrepiece and can have more on the shoulder of the ring.

Rings range from a solitaire, cluster, pave, halo,



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

bezel, tension, cathedral and burnish settings.

When it comes to wedding bands, often the jeweller will have a ring that will go with your engagement band as a set.

A classic ring is the plain yellow or white gold wedding bands, whereas platinum and rose gold have become increasingly popular.

Rose gold is said to represent love compared to white gold representing friendship and yellow gold which means fidelity.

Some people have been opting for titanium tungsten rings in recent years.

These types of rings can be good if you or your partner aren't keen on flashy jewellery or want something hardy that is sure to last.

Many brides choose to not wear their engagement ring during the ceremony, while others wear it on their right hand and switch it to their left after the ceremony.

Guest list

YOUR wedding day should be with your closest family and friends.

Discuss with your partner and each of your parents which family members, friends and family friends will receive an invite.

When you are pulling together your guest list, consider if you will allow guests to bring a 'plus one'.

Check with your venue what their capacity is and consider your own budget to determine the size of your guest list.

You may want to have a bigger group at your wedding ceremony followed by a smaller, more intimate reception.



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

Once you have a date set you want to ensure those loved ones can attend your wedding.

Get your 'save the dates' out as soon as possible, if you have a short engagement perhaps skip the save the dates and send out your wedding invitations.

Can't forget florals

FLOWERS can really set the mood for a wedding, especially if they're seasonal.

One of the first things to consider is budget - flowers aren't cheap, especially if you are importing them.

Considering just the wedding bouquet though, this will be the most photographed and most seen flower arrangement of the wedding, so it might be nice to splurge on this one.

The season is also important when thinking about flowers - if you're having a winter wedding, it'll be harder to get a summer flower like dahlias from Australia.

If you're having an autumn wedding, it might be nice to get some autumn colours in there like reds or oranges, but think about what you want the flowers to say about you and your wedding.

At the moment, dahlias are on trend, so are roses but they always are, with David Austin-type roses being more popular of late.

Something to think about is colour, are the colours of your flowers going to fit the theme of your wedding?

Some people choose their flowers because of their shape or colour, but others choose them for more personal reasons.

Couple may choose flowers their grandmother grew, or include a thistle as a nod to Scottish heritage for example.

If you're going to import flowers, something to keep in mind is that they'll likely be at least a week old and covered in chemicals for biosecurity at the border.

But it's your wedding, you're in charge and you can do anything you want, including with the flowers.



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Best day of our lives

TAMIKA and Lachlin Smith tied the knot on 31 March 2023.

They met through Lachlin's dad, who was Tamika's boss at work, and the rest is history.

Tamika said that while it's a bit of a cliché; their wedding really was the best day of their life.

All of the 110 guests were smiling and laughing, with no one having a bad word to say.

They held the wedding at Bracknell Lodge in Wyreema and couldn't say enough good things about the place.

The bridal party stayed the night before the wedding so they could really soak up the event.

One of the great things about their venue was that they could just stay there, for the wedding, reception and accommodation.

They also held their wedding at about 2pm, which allowed the bridal party to mingle with their guests between the ceremony and getting photos taken.

A clever money-saving tip Tamika shared was buying clothes and other wedding accessories online and then personalising them yourself.

Tamika bought the girls' jewellery, robes and slippers and then personalised them herself with iron-on transfers.

She did much the same with the groomsmen's accessories - bow ties, belts, suspenders, and cuff links.

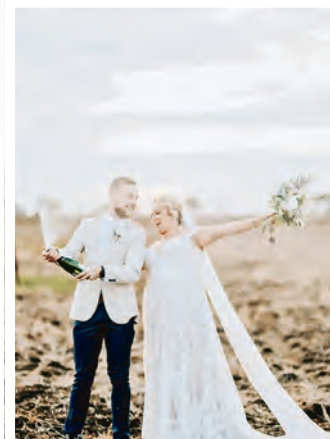
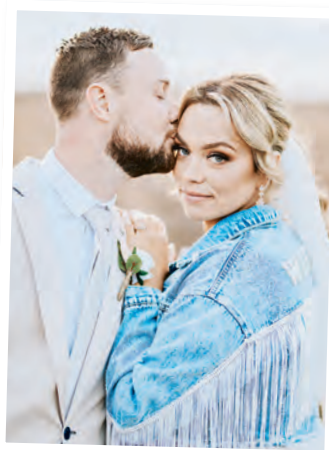
Some advice Tamika gave to future brides is to not feel as though you have to do something just because it's a wedding - just do what you want and what is best for the pair of you.

Tamika wouldn't change anything about their beautiful and amazing day.

"The best part was marrying my best friend and then celebrating that love with all of our friends and family," Tamika said.



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography



She was thankful to all their guests, their bridal party that acted as their own little hype team, and their amazing vendors.

Venue: Bracknell Lodge, Wyreema

Celebrant: Heartfelt Ceremonies with Simone

Dress: Luv Bridal and Formal

Alterations: Rendezvous Designs, Kingaroy

Hair: Hairdo4u

Makeup: Claire Hamilton Makeup Artist Toowoomba

Groomsmen outfit: Connor

Flower Girls: Arabella and Rose

Caterer: Cary's Catering, Toowoomba

Platters: Leisa's Platters, Bracknell Lodge

Cake: Sweet Philosophy Cakes Toowoomba

Flowers: The Styled Bouquet by Michelle Baerken

Music: Ethan Bielefeld Music, Toowoomba

DJ: Premier DJs

Photobooth: In The Booth

Photography: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

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Capturing the special moments

POSSIBLY the most treasured wedding keepsake you'll have from the big day that will turn into a family heirloom will be your wedding photos.

Since the pandemic, videography of the wedding day has become more special and popular as it was a way for friends and family, who could not attend due to limited guest numbers and travel restrictions, to feel part of your day. Some couples opt to live-stream the ceremony on social media.

Photographers say it is very important their clients are very relaxed around them.

The most important thing is to have fun and a good laugh during your session with your photographer and videographer.

They are looking for relaxed, natural shots that show the first moments as a married couple.

The timeline of the day often works around the photographer - consider the time between the ceremony, the 'golden photo hour', sunset and the reception time.

You and your partner need to determine if your photographer and videographer will stay on for the reception to capture the speeches, the wedding cake cut and that first dance. Consider what style of photos you want - documenting the moment, posed-portrait shots or artistic shots.

Pinterest is a good place to start, going through photography portfolios and identifying shots you like.

Look for a photographer that fits this desired style and show these examples to them as a guide - wedding photographers are very experienced, but it is still good to communicate what you want.

Do an engagement shoot with them, if you can, to make sure they are the right choice for you.

Decide on a social media plan with your partner and photographer. Will guests be allowed to share photos of you at all or before you do so on social media? Do you have a #HashtagPhrase for your wedding they can use?



Picture: Treasure Pics



Picture: Sister Sister Wedding and Elopement Photography



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Say yes to the dress

ARE you ready to say yes to your dream wedding dress?

Picking out the perfect wedding dress has been a childhood dream for many and will no doubt be an exciting and cherished part of your wedding planning journey.

Helen Chaseling, who owns Rendezvous Designs, says it should be an enjoyable process, guided by the bride.

"If you bring too many people, with too many opinions - that can be hard. It should be a fun and enjoyable process."

Make sure you book an appointment and try dresses on in the store.

"You might admire something in a book, but until you put it on yourself you don't know how you feel in a dress."

Something simple like the length of the bodice of the dress may be flattering for one bride and sit too low on another.

"Simple things like that and where the skirt starts makes a huge difference," Helen says.

A new trend coming through is incorporating a bridal cape into a bride's outfit.

Consider:

- What sorts of brands, fabrics, colours and styles do you like?
- Be open to dresses outside your 'vision'
- Choose a cut that flatters the bride's shape
- Is the dress suitable for the wedding venue?
- Will you go white, ivory, coloured or a dress with an underlay of colour
- Shopping for your wedding dress six months before the wedding to give yourself enough time to breathe, allowing for plenty of time for orders to come in and alterations.



Picture: Always and Forever Photography



Picture: Sister Sister Photography

- If you'd like alterations or additions to make the dress 'extra special' - these could include straps, capped sleeves, lace motifs or bodices, keyhole backs or decorative cuts or a trim.



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To veil or not to veil?

ALTHOUGH some brides are opting to not wear a veil these days, a veil often completes the 'bridal look'.

It becomes an awesome accessory for photos as seasoned wedding photographers can create amazing shots with a veil.

There are different types, sizes, shapes and edgings with plain or lacey or embellished veils.

The setting of the wedding will often dictate which type of veil is appropriate or whether a veil is desired at all.

Short veils like the 'birdcage' or 'blusher' can add a unique, vintage look, whereas your longer veils, 'cathedral' or 'chapel' are that true 'bridal look'.

Mid-length veils, like a 'waltz', 'elbow' or 'fingertip' veil, are the best of both worlds and eliminates that fear of tripping on your veil.

Also keep in mind your envisioned hairstyle, budget and wedding dress (especially if it has a statement back) when making your choice.

Couples will need to decide if they want to have the



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

traditional unveiling part of their ceremony or not.

A veil can be taken off for the reception or kept on as you party into the night - just be sure to factor in your veil length so you have freedom to move throughout the evening.

Dress your bridesmaids

CONSIDER your different bridesmaids' complexions, body shapes and sizes when choosing a dress.

Make sure they are all comfortable in what they are wearing.

The length and style of the bridesmaid dress should suit the wedding's theme and venue - perhaps a full-length gown for a formal venue or a cocktail-length for an outdoor wedding?

Greta Gerwig's 2023 'Barbie' film might inspire an increase in pink bridesmaid dresses and wedding decorations, although a light or dusty pink has always

been a crowd favourite.

On trend at the moment is moving away from the tradition of identical bridesmaid dresses.

Some brides may pick a colour and let their bridesmaids decide on a style that would flatter each individual the most.

You may go bold and choose a mix-match of bridesmaid dresses, whether they are all bold hues or are guided by the same colour palette.

For something unique, you could choose a mix of floral patterns for an outdoor wedding or garden party.

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Maid of Honour's Emergency Kit



As part of the bridal party, you need to be prepared for every possible scenario to ensure the bride and groom get through the day. Here's a list of things for your bridal emergency kit:

- Blister Band-aids
- Panadol
- Water
- Muesli Bars Or Snacks
- Safety Pins
- Needle And Thread
- White Ribbon
- Stain Remover Pen
- Nail Polish Remover
- Spare Flat Shoes
- Bobby Pins
- Hair Spray
- Hair Ties
- Makeup Wipes
- Concealer
- Lipstick/Make-Up For Touch-Ups Before Reception
- Tissues

Photo: Always & Forever Photography

A special moment with mum

BECK had quite a special, quiet moment with her mum as she got dressed for her wedding.

Beck and Warner Paumalolo had a tropical-themed wedding on 4 March 2023. The pair met through mutual friends on the Sunny Coast eight years ago, and Warner popped the question in a dreamy, sunset beach proposal at Airlie Beach - complete with wine, cheese, coconut shells, flowers and a 'marry me' sign.

Their 2023 wedding was held among the Sunshine Coast hinterland rainforest at Hideaway Weddings at Beerwah - they wanted a venue with a tropical setting as a nod to Warner's Tongan heritage.

"My highlight was after the ceremony was finished and we went off-site for photos, you can take it all in," Beck says.

"We took our bridal party with us - we had a special moment between us and with our closest friends."

Beck's mother is Helen Chaseling who owns Kingaroy-based wedding dress shop 'Rendezvous Designs'.

"It was a bit special for her as I was the first of her kids to get married," Beck says.

Naturally, Helen was very helpful in picking out the bridal and bridesmaid dresses and making sure they all fit before and on the wedding day.

"She just handled everything like a pro, making sure everything was fitting properly, the dress bodice was sitting straight and flat - she was in fitting mode, making sure everything was right," Beck says.

Beck's V-neck dress was a very light mushroom colour with a layer of soft tulle, a bit of sparkle and a final layer of lace on top. The bridesmaids wore dusty pink one-shouldered dresses with pleats.

Home for Mr and Mrs Paumalolo is now Townsville, but Beck grew up in Kingaroy and opted to choose many Burnett vendors.

Their wedding favours were chocolates from CoCouture Chocolates and the dresses were, of course, from Rendezvous Designs.

In another personal touch, the couple chose Treasure Pics to do their photography and videography - the videographer is the bride's brother.

The bouquets were a team effort from Extra Touch Floral and Naomi from Personalised Celebrations who also did gift boxes and personalised hangers and robes for the bridesmaids.

The bride's advice to other couples is to not stress over the finer details.

"Let some things be, sometimes you can't stop things from going wrong - sit back, relax, if something goes wrong, don't worry about it.

"Just enjoy yourself."



Picture: Treasure Pics



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Good-lookin' grooms

WHETHER your style is more James Bond or cowboy, as the groom you'll want to look fine on your wedding day.

Relish in the power of a well-fitted suit so you can feel comfortable, confident and excited about marrying the love of your life.

Make sure your groomsmen are looking dashing by your side - decide whether their outfits match or complement yours to make you stand out as the groom. Perhaps the groom could be the only one with a jacket or going solo with his tie?

For a traditional and timeless look, try a black tie suit paired with a bow tie and white collared shirt.

Suits, especially tuxedos, can become expensive so grooms may choose to hire an outfit rather than buy one. (If you are hiring suits, check all the parts are there, and everything fits!)

Remember, a tailored suit will fit you properly and there will be more formal occasions to wear it again.

Make sure the suit pants are not likely to split and the jacket allows you and your mates the freedom to move. Remember not everyone has the same body shape and type.

You may choose to mix ties and bow ties, wear cufflinks, or match pocket flowers with the bridesmaid's outfits.

Always make sure there are dress socks to go with suits that match the outfits (or are a bit silly to suit the groom's personality!)

Navy blue, black, charcoal grey and brown are popular suit colours. However, why not opt for earthy tones or a bold pop of colour for your outfit.

To look the part, you may consider adding in classy sunglasses for the boys or to wear an akubra for an outdoor wedding

TIP: You will very rarely need to button up your suit jacket, which will make for more natural photographs.



Picture: sister Sister Wedding Photography and Videography

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Picture: Always & Forever Wedding Photography & Film

The dream bridal party

YOUR bridal party are your closest mates, brothers and sisters who you want by your side on your special day.

They will be the 'superheroes' behind the scenes making sure you're relaxed, have your perfect day and are ready to fix any situation that arises.

Picking your Party

Typically the Maid/Matron of Honour and Best Man take on the role as official witnesses for the wedding licence. Beyond that, couples can choose any number of bridesmaids and groomsmen.

Your bridal party will be your right-hand women and men during your wedding journey so choose someone trustworthy. Some couples may break traditions with a 'Man of Honour' or a 'Best Woman'.

It is wise to delegate all possible issues on the day to someone trusted so you can relax and enjoy the day - sometimes this is easier to be a parent or friend, rather than the bridal party.

It may be nice to have dinner the night before or breakfast the morning of the wedding with your respective bridal parties.

Be your best bridesmaid and groomsman

The day is all about the bride and groom and you have been entrusted to ensure it is their 'perfect day'.

Your job for the day is 'service', so be there for the happy couple and try and anticipate problems before they happen.

It will be a long day, so pack a snack bag and bottles of water for the photo session between the ceremony and reception.

If the bride and groom are off getting photos taken, be on the outskirts ready to assist wherever needed. You may need to stop a dress accidentally falling into water, help a bride climb over rocks or spray veils into the air to capture the light for that 'perfect photo' photographers LOVE enthusiastic and helpful



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

bridal party attendees.

Ensure the bride plans a time to pee - this is so often left off the busy daily schedule and can be difficult depending on her dress.

Above all, try to be the peace among all the competing demands for the bride and groom.

Let your conversations calm them down and help them skilfully negotiate their stresses, without adding to them. Google some negotiation and pastoral care tips and tricks.

If a bride or groom is blowing off steam about a relative, remember they are invited to the wedding because they are valued. Speak to their emotions, rather than the situation, and be the person that mends bridges.



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Hens and Bucks parties

USUALLY, the best man and maid-of-honour or wider bridal party are the ones tasked with organising the hens or bucks parties - but you have to make sure you respect the bride and groom's wishes for the occasion.

Be realistic with your time frames - you want to give the invited guests enough time to get themselves organised for it and you don't want to do it too close to the wedding. Often these celebrations are best not to be held closer than a few weeks before the main event because your brides and grooms will be stressed.

Another consideration to make is budget - if you can realistically afford to go to Las Vegas and steal Mike Tyson's tiger then why not? But otherwise, you can have just as good a celebration of your bestie's future in your own backyard.

When considering the invite list, again, the first thought should be the bride and groom's wishes. If they say Uncle Jack isn't invited - he's not invited. You can of course make suggestions, but that's it when it comes to the guests.

When thinking about what activities to do - you should, again, first consider the bride or groom, but then think about the rest of the party and what they would



Picture: Always and Forever
Wedding Photography and Videography

enjoy or what their limits are. If you take the celebration to a golf course and you're the only one who plays, you've made a mistake.

While videos of grooms being 'kidnapped' for their bucks are hilarious, they're hard to organise and can be a genuine pain for the groom, so if the plan is to surprise you should consider if that's what the bride or groom would like and if it's realistically achievable.

Whatever party you choose to or not to throw, remember who the party is for.

Gifting your bridal party

YOUR wedding is a big job that some may find to be very stressful, but it's important to remember the roles that other people will be playing on your big day. The bridal party don't always have much work to do, but if things start to go sideways, you'll want the bridal party to be able to deal with it so that you can focus on enjoying your big day. This can be a bit of responsibility for the bridal party and some couples choose to show their appreciation to their bridal party by gifting them a memento or souvenir

of the occasion. Often wedding favours will go out to all the guests in attendance and depending on the size of your guestlist, you might choose how flash you want to make the favours. Some classic wedding favours might be customised stubby holders, bottle openers, candles, or even luggage tags! But for your bridal party who are choosing to participate in the ceremony, you might want to go for something a little fancier. Most people won't get to be a best man, maid-of-honour, groomsman, or bridesmaid more than a couple of times if they are lucky. So rewarding and honouring them and their commitment is something they're sure to remember.

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Including the whole family

DON'T forget about the parents of the bride and groom - ensure your mum and dad have their rightful part in the day.

Invite your parents to be part of breakfast the morning of your wedding, your getting ready time with your bridal party or consider a cherished first-look reveal with your dad.

Be sure to give them a reserved 'seat of honour' at your ceremony, along with your grandparents, in the front row.

Traditionally, the father of the bride will escort his daughter down the aisle and 'hand her over' to her groom. However, mums or other close family members could take on this important role.

Ushers are key to helping a ceremony run smoothly - often siblings or cousins are happy to help out.

A lovely touch could be to include the special young people in the couple's lives in the bridal party - sons, daughters, siblings or cousins.

Flower girls and junior bridesmaids may start the bridal procession by scattering rose petals or even blowing bubbles!



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

A ring bearer (or sometimes called 'ring security') has the job of carrying the rings on a cushion, while an older boy in the role of the page boy traditionally helps with the train of the bride's dress.

Couples may also include their 'fur babies' in the celebrations - whether their dog or even horse goes down the aisle or is later included in the photo shoot.



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A surprise wedding

ENGAGEMENT party guests got a surprise when they were ushered into the Kingaroy church auditorium.

Groom-to-be Shaun Swales was standing on the church stage, dressed up in his suit, with a big grin.

His bridal party, the groomsmen wearing purple shirts and green ties and his 'best women' in elegant purple tops to match, were equally pleased.

Soon enough his wife-to-be Rachelle made her grand entrance down the aisle and the wedding of Mr and Mrs Swales took place.

"I didn't expect myself to be crying so much down the aisle - it was a memory that I'm going to cherish," Rachelle said.

"Having everyone there ... finishing the ceremony and getting to see everybody surprised and happy for us was special."

Their love story started when the pair first met and got chatting in aisle seven at Kingaroy Woolworths.

In April 2022, the couple went for a walk at Mooloolaba beach when Rachelle noticed Shaun's friend 'in the tree' ready to capture the moment Shaun proposed.

"It was sweet, adorable and the ring was amazing."

On 8 October 2022, their friends and family thought they were attending an engagement party.

They enjoyed a pot-luck lunch and even an engagement cake (from Woolies of course) before the wedding surprise was revealed.

"It came down to the fact that we were people that liked surprises," Rachelle said.

"It was cheaper ... we didn't like the total cost of the engagement party and wedding as we had lots of people that we wanted there, making it a whole-day-event made sense.

"It was a more casual feel - we didn't really want a big bang."

Mr and Mrs Swales' wedding had a whimsical and 'slightly country' vibe, featuring feathers and dream catchers in the decorations - they opted to DIY the decorations.

Rachelle's younger sister led the bridal procession, throwing feathers rather than flower petals down the aisle.

Her bridesmaids followed in their forest-green gowns of varied designs with bouquets of feathers and a single fake flower, while the 'bridesmen' wore green shirts to match.

"Something I don't regret is having fake flowers - now I can have them forever," she said.

The bride's wedding dress was princess-style in white



Rachelle and Shaun had a surprise wedding.

Pictures: S.G. Photography



Mr and Mrs Swales' mixed bridal party, featuring forest green and purple hues.

ivory, with a white-silk hoop added to the skirt so the dress wasn't see-through.

"It had a lacy effect with glitter and little gemstones, which was really pretty."

To save money, the girls did each other's make-up for the wedding.

After the wedding ceremony Mr and Mrs Swales took the time to get a photo with each of their guests, which they say was quite 'special'.

Their friend Samuel Graley from S.G. Photography took their photos, and a family friend did videography.

As you can never have too much cake, Mr and Mrs Swales then cut their wedding cake made by Kingaroy Baker's Haven, along with wedding speeches and their first dance.

The bride and groom opted to take their formal bridal party photos later in that sunset 'golden hour' at Kingaroy's Mt Wooroolin.

When it comes to planning a wedding, Rachelle encourages couples to ensure they have lots of support and helping hands.

Bride's Tip: Don't overspend, in the end it comes down to both of you and your day and you're going to need that money in the future.

Decorations and stationery

Stationery:

DIY save the dates and invites are a nice personal touch, but consider how much time it will take - it could be a fun couple of afternoons making them with your bride tribe!

The stationary designs can vary greatly - try and reflect the couple's personality, the wedding's theme and maybe include one of your engagement photos.

'Save the Dates' share the basic details so guests can put the date in their diaries and book accommodation if they need to travel. This is sent out as soon as possible.

The formal invitation follows around three months before the wedding day.

Traditionally invitations start with a phrase such as 'You are invited to share their joy as' or 'The honour of your presence is requested'.

This is then followed by the names of the hosts - the couple's parents' names - and then the names of the soon-to-be-married couple.

The invitation should also include the date, ceremony and reception start time and locations, dress code, a separate RSVP card and gift registry details.

Gift registry

Many people will be keen to bless you and will be asking for wedding gift ideas, so it may be helpful to include a gift registry with your invitations. Mention whether you will have a wishing well on the day. There are many different online platforms to set up your gift registry, making it easy to avoid double-ups and add to during your engagement period.

At the reception:

Don't forget you will need a way to communicate with your guests where their seat is at the reception. There are many clever ways to do this, so have a good look for inspiration.



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Film

If you have set-seating arrangements put together name place-settings at the tables.

This could be combined with the wedding favours.

The favours are a nice way to thank your guests for celebrating with you and are usually personalised. What these unique keepsakes are ultimately comes down to the couple - chocolates, hard-boiled lollies with the couple's initials, succulents, hand-sanitiser are just a few or stubby holders are just a few of the ideas that come to mind.



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Beauty timeline

2-3 DAYS BEFORE...

WAXING OR HAIR REMOVAL:

If you decide to wax before your big day book it in two or three days prior for ultimate results.

The most important parts to remember are your brows, upper lip, underarms, legs and bikini area (especially if you are planning a honeymoon that involves swimming).

If you are new to waxing, find a beautician that you trust and try it out at least a month prior to the big day.

After waxing apply a soothing lotion, recommended by your beauty therapist, to make sure that the area is left soft and subtle without angry red dots.

Of course, if waxing is out of your comfort zone there are plenty of other options for painless hair removal like shaving or hair removal cream.

TANNING:

If you don't usually fake tan it may seem daunting to try it out for the first time before your wedding.

To avoid a 'fake tan disaster' book an appointment with a professional and avoid the DIY bottle tan job.

You want to go for a natural, glowy and even look that complements your entire look and makes it look like you have just stepped off the beach.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with embracing your natural skin tone for the big day.

Maybe you only want to even out your tone a little instead of going full tan - consult with a professional to get the best look.

1-2 DAYS BEFORE...

NAILS:

A Couple of days before your wedding is the perfect time to book in your mani/pedi to make sure you are ready for the big day. It's important to get a style of nail you feel comfortable with.

If you don't usually get long acrylic nails, go for a more natural look for your wedding day or do a nail trial a few months prior to see what you like.

The most classic wedding nail colours to match the dress are nudes, light pink, white and silver.

Nail artists are full of ideas when it comes to creative nails so consider incorporating some nail art to complete the look. Try a simple diamante accent nail or a sheer glitter polish to elevate your nail look.

Invest in gel polish so you can stress less knowing that your nail colour won't chip before the big day.

It's important not to neglect the bridesmaids - book in with your bridal party for a 'pre wedding' relaxation and get your nails done together.



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

ON THE DAY...

MAKE UP:

When it comes to wedding planning it's easy to get swept up in the many details that you forget about the finishing touches that complete the bridal look.

Brides usually opt for a 'classic, simple' look for their wedding day - with dewy skin, a soft neutral eye shadow and nude lip colour.

The wedding dress will be your stand out feature of your look, so make sure that the makeup is complementary and not overpowering.

The most important part of your wedding day makeup is your skin and making sure that the makeup reflects just as beautifully in the photos as in real life.

Consult with your make-up artist on your skin type.

If you have oily skin keep blotting paper and finishing powder nearby.

For dryer skin it is a good idea to work with illuminating cream products for a fresh and dewy look.

Remember that make-up often needs to be a little heavier to last through the entire day.

Don't shy away from the blush, a rosy cheek gives that fresh look and needs to be bright to really pop in photos. For an interesting makeup look try working with the colours in your bouquet to complete the look.

The best advice a bridal makeup artist shared was to use a long-lasting lipstick.

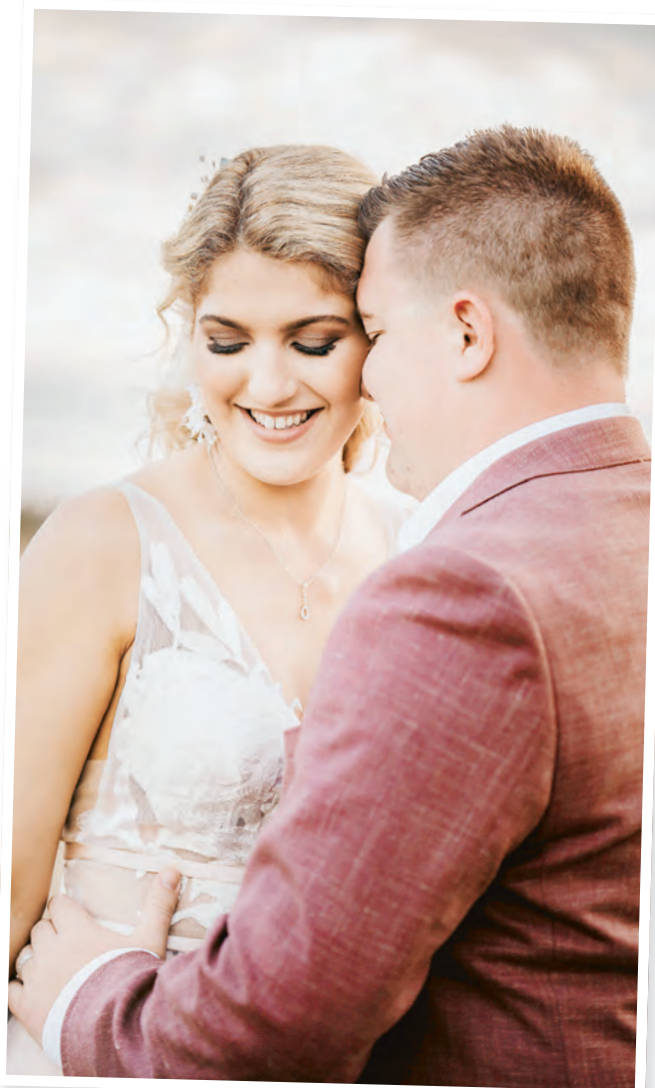
This way you don't need to worry about reapplying and it won't transfer to your partner when you share your first kiss as a married couple!

For an elevated eye look consider individual fake lashes for a more natural look as opposed to a thick strip lash.

Be sure to schedule a trial with a make-up artist and don't be afraid to ask for what you want. At the end of the day it's your wedding day and you need to feel comfortable and confident.

HAIR:

Creating the perfect hairstyle needs to factor in the veil, the neckline of the dress and any jewellery you choose to wear.



Picture: Always And Forever Photography

Having an outdoor wedding? Consider an 'up-do' to avoid the wind messing up your locks.

On your wedding day bobby pins and hairspray will be your best friend, so keep them close!

Something to consider a few months before the wedding is the length of your hair and whether it will work with your hairstyle.

For a glamorous look consider a statement hairpiece or incorporate some flowers from your wedding bouquet into your hair-do.


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Preparing a bridal banquet

FOOD, glorious food - definitely something the guests will talk about.

This can, of course, make the organising of food one of the tougher parts of the organisation process.

The first thing to consider is dietary requirements. Make sure you know about any dietary requirements of your guests well in advance so everyone can enjoy the meal together.

The next thing is what time of day is your wedding, and what meal do you want to enjoy?

Are you having dinner, lunch, afternoon tea or even breakfast!

Now don't forget to think about what type of meal you'll be providing.

If you're feeding a lot of people or trying to keep prices down, a buffet may be good for you.

Grazing platters might be the choice if your guests have intolerances they'd rather not be obvious about. Guests can simply take the foods they'd like and no one



Picture: Kingsley Grove Estate

will be any the wiser. A grazing platter can also be a great opportunity for decorating and cute arrangements.

A sit-down meal is a wedding classic that has very much made its way back into fashion. A bit more on the pricey side, the meals are often served by waitstaff which can bring up the price. If you want quality over quantity the sit-down meal should be your first choice.

The question of cake

DELICIOUS cake brings another sensational layer to a day of making memories.

Since wedding cake trends often change each year, couples are encouraged to do their research and get some ideas for their 'cake vision' prior to meeting with their wedding baker.

A truly traditional wedding cake is made of fruitcake and covered with marzipan and icing - a tradition dating back to the Middle Ages - but if cake is not your thing, why not break away from tradition?

Cheesecakes, doughnuts, cupcake towers or walls or

even brownie towers are becoming more popular than ever.

If you want to keep it classic, though, cutting the cake together as husband and wife is a charming tradition captured in every wedding album. The cake cutting represents the first activity done as a couple.

Another sweet tradition is when the bride and groom feed each other a small bite of cake, symbolising a commitment to provide for one another and a show of love and affection.



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

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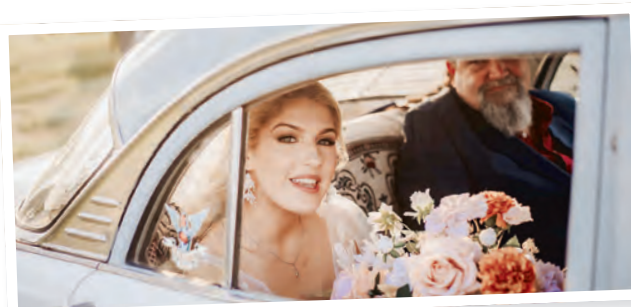
If you're going to be nervous on your wedding day, chances are you're going to be nervous on the drive to the ceremony as it can be one of the most nerve-wracking parts of your wedding day.

Whoever you're travelling with, you want them to be someone you're close to and preferably someone who can keep you calm. The journey to the ceremony can be a special time to bond with your loved ones, especially the one who is 'giving you away'. It can be a great chance to share some last-minute advice and enjoy some quiet time before you say 'I do'.

When thinking about your wedding transport you need to think of three key components; comfort, style and reliability. Reliability is the most important, if the car breaks down or the horse-and-buggy loses a wheel - you're in strife, so choose a means of transport that you can count on making it to the venue.

Comfort is the second-most important consideration. If you're already feeling butterflies in your stomach, you might not want a bouncy horse-and-buggy, or to be crammed into a limo with all your bridal party.

Style is the least important of considerations, but it's still worth thinking about.



Pictures: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

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Dancing the night away

KIRSTY and Dylan Nightingale were married on 19 November 2022.

Neither of them are big drinkers, but one New Year's Eve they were both out for the night when they happened to meet each other.

They kept in contact and wound up getting engaged.

Neither of them were super-fussed about the wedding because they were focusing on buying property, but that changed quickly after they did a mock wedding shoot.

When Dylan saw his future wife in a beautiful wedding dress for the photo shoot; the couple decided to focus on organising their wedding.

The couple went from several years engaged to planning the wedding in several months.

The wedding was held in a chic, done-up barn at Hillview Cottages just north of Kingaroy.

Kirsty's favourite part of the wedding was definitely the reception.

Being a dancer, Kirsty put on some big choreographed performances.

The father and daughter dance went into some rap and hip-hop.

Dylan had a lovely dance with his mum.

There was, of course, the bride and groom's dance, but perhaps the most memorable was the choreographed number that the whole bridal party took part in.

Kirsty said she wouldn't change a thing about her wedding.

If she was to give advice to future brides, it would be to go with your gut feeling and use a vision board for planning.

Kirsty and Dylan mostly used South Burnett vendors where they could.

Photographer: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Film

Wedding and bridesmaids dresses: Burnett Bridal and Formal Events



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography



Makeup: Makeup by Madison Kilgour

Hair: Emily-Jo Ricketts

Venue for ceremony and reception: Hillview Cottages

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Your first dance

BEFORE the guests bust a move on the dance floor, weddings traditionally hold the newlyweds' first dance.

Before anyone else can get out on to the dance floor and strut their stuff, weddings traditionally hold the newlyweds' first dance, as well as a father-daughter dance, and a mother-son dance.

Dancing isn't for everyone, but others love it, so what is most important is that it's what you and your partner are comfortable with and want.

You can perhaps consider a traditional bridal waltz or some ballroom dancing, you can jive to a tune, perhaps have a little 'sway' if you or your partner aren't too keen on dancing, or you can go the complete other way and come up with your own dance routine that's modern or funny.

Again, it comes down to what you both want.

Typically the father-daughter dance happens right after the couple's first dance, with the mother-son dance following afterwards.

These dances can be as short or extended as you like.

Depending on the guests, some crowds might be shy about hitting the dancefloor right after the ceremony of the top three.

A way you can avoid this awkwardness is by using your bridal party to your advantage.

You can bring them out to dance with each other or instruct them to dance with people from the crowd.

Most people don't want to be the first on the dancefloor, and many prefer to blend into a crowded dance floor, so if you can get some bodies on there early with your bridal party you're already ahead of the game.

TRADITIONS:

At 17th Century dance balls, it was customary for the hosts or guests of honour to take the evening's first dance.

This tradition made its way into weddings as the first dance between a newlywed couple as a celebration of their love and union.

Originally, the father-and-daughter dance would come before the newlyweds' dance as an extension of 'giving away' the daughter.



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

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A reception for you

YOUR wedding reception is a great opportunity to celebrate love with a great, big party.

Decorations:

Don't forget you'll need a way to communicate with your guests where their seat is at the reception - look around for inspiration as there are many clever seating charts.

If you have set-seating arrangements, put together name place settings at the tables - this could be combined with the wedding favours.

Wedding favours are a nice way to thank guests for celebrating with you.

Whether the favour is chocolates, tea, pens, succulents or stubby holders - what these unique keepsakes are, ultimately comes down to the couple's style.

Speeches:

A great MC who is known to both of you will add a nice, personal touch to your reception.

It's great if they're funny, but know when they need to move the wedding along.

Wedding speeches are a chance to thank those involved and honour the newlyweds and normally occur towards the end of the meal, either before or after the dessert - the order is ultimately up to you.

The traditional speech order is often the father of the bride, groom, bride, maid of honour and best man, followed by other speeches.

This might sound like obvious advice, but encourage them to write their speeches down.

Some people have the gift of the gab and can 'wing it' just fine, but most people aren't very practised at public speaking, so writing down a speech will ensure that at least something is said.

Writing it down is also good for time management.

Ideally, a speech will only go for a few minutes,



Picture: always and forever wedding photography and videography

because there are often at least four.

By writing it down, you can both also keep a memento of a speech if it was particularly good.

Games:

The Wedding Shoe Game is a classic reception ice-breaker, and puts the spotlight on which of the newlyweds knows their beloved best!

Table games as part of the centrepiece might be a great way for guests to start conversations at the reception - think decks of cards and activity packs to keep the little ones entertained.

Trivia or crossword quizzes about the newlywed's love story or wedding traditions might be a hit - have your MC read out the answers and see which table knows the bridal couple's love story.

Just try not to be too vain about it.

Set up a photo booth, a date night jar, marriage advice cards or a wedding guest book for guests to do during the reception.

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Music, perfect music

CHOOSING the perfect music for your wedding day is a task that can be exciting and overwhelming at the same time.

On one hand, it's great to have so many options out there, but on the other, it can be difficult to know which songs and artists will best suit your wedding ceremony and reception.

After all, you want your wedding day to be memorable for all the right reasons, so it's important to get your wedding music right.

Here are some tips to consider when choosing wedding music:

- Decide on the tone and style of your wedding: Before you start researching music, consider the vibe and style of your wedding.
- Are you going for a traditional ceremony, a romantic and dreamy vibe, or something upbeat and fun?
- Knowing what kind of atmosphere you want to create at your wedding will help you choose the right songs that complement your vision.
- Start early: One of the most important things to keep in mind when selecting your wedding music is to start early.
- You don't want to be rushed and have to settle for a top 100 wedding songs playlist.
- You want to have plenty of time to decide on the right songs for your big day.
- Consider the timing of your wedding music: From the procession to the recessional and everything in between, timing is everything when it comes to music.
- It's essential to consider the guests' arrival, ceremony, cocktail hour, dinner reception, and dancing.
- Planning the perfect flow of music at each stage of the wedding is crucial to the flow of your overall wedding.
- Choose music that speaks to you: Your wedding day is about you and your partner, so choose music that speaks to both of you.
- If you both want to remember this day for the rest of your lives, you want to be sure that the music makes both of you feel connected, happy, and emotional.
- Hire a professional DJ or musician: By hiring a professional DJ or musician, you can make the process of selecting and playing music much easier.
- They can offer suggestions, guide you through the process, and ensure that the music is played seamlessly throughout the day, rather than just the best man with an AUX cord.
- Consider your guests: While your wedding day is all about you, your guests' tastes are also important

when selecting music.

- You want to choose songs that will appeal to everyone's taste and keep the dance floor packed.
- Choosing the perfect wedding music is about creating a perfect atmosphere that reflects your personality and style and ensuring that your guests have fun while celebrating your big day.
- Make sure you plan ahead, collaborate with your partner, and hire a professional to get the perfect music selection for your wedding day.



Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Videography

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A bride in a white dress and a groom in a dark suit are dancing together. The background is filled with colorful lights and confetti, creating a festive atmosphere.

Wedding gems of wisdom

WHEN it comes to planning your wedding, it's sometimes best to learn from former brides and grooms. Here's a list of gems we've collected to keep in mind while you pull together the details of your special day:

- Choose a naturally beautiful venue - that way, you can keep your decorations simple, effective and budget-friendly.
- Don't be afraid to send out several emails to different vendors, asking questions and collecting quotes to find your best fit.
- Make a budget, but also work out what's really important to you and your partner. Do you value quality photos or live music? Don't skimp on the things that are really important to you.
- Consider doing some DIY decorations and place-settings.
- Make sure you buy enough of every item you need for your wedding, plus extra of everything!
- Have a schedule and allow extra time for everything.
- Try and make your day as chilled as possible, so you can slow down and enjoy it.
- Give your bridal party early guidance, well ahead of the wedding. Communicate what you'd like for your hen's or buck's party and who you'd like to be present - then leave the planning to them! Then that's one less thing for you to plan, but it still ensures every special person in your life is included in those celebrations.
- Factor in your dress size when choosing your vehicle to get to and from the wedding.
- Check if your wedding venue has phone reception; otherwise ensure all of your wedding music playlist is fully downloaded and ready to go.
- Include a song as part of your ceremony that means something to both of you - this gives you a brief moment to slow down, take in and enjoy your ceremony.
- One or two days before your wedding, gather your bridal party together with your registered celebrant or minister to go through the ceremony. This ensures everyone knows where to stand and helps them be much more relaxed on the day - any little ones in your bridal party may need a few practice rounds!
- Spend the night before the wedding with your bridal party - make sure it's nice and close to your wedding venue so there's limited travel and stress on your wedding day.
- Make sure your 'getting ready' accommodation has plenty of room and natural light for your hair stylist and make-up artist to work their magic.
- Stay the night and possibly the next day locally after



Pictures: Always and Forever Photography

you get married before heading off on your honeymoon.

- Don't forget to consider what your wet weather plan is at your venue. A rainy day can make for some incredible photos if the couple are willing. Perhaps consider purchasing some nice, clear umbrellas for your bridal party for an effective, uniform-look if your wedding or photo shoot is mostly outside.

Favours for your guests

WEDDING favours are your chance to say thanks to your guests for being part of your special day. Add in the wedding couple's names or initials and the wedding date on the packaging, a small tag or engraved on the gift itself for a nice, personal touch.

Here's our list of wedding favour ideas to suit all personalities:

- Chocolate, lollies, sugar-coated almonds - put the bride and groom's initials on the packaging for a sweet touch!
- Hard-boiled lollies with the couple's initials
- Tea leaves - a test-tube or small container of tea leaves done up with a ribbon and tag with the wedding details
- Small succulents - gardening couples may want to give their guests the gift of life
- Wedding pens - get pens personalised with your special wedding details
- Named coasters or glasses - personalise coasters or glasses with your guests' names and let this wedding favour also be your reception place setting
- Instant camera photos - leave an instant camera on

the tables or near a photo booth with plenty of film to allow your guests to take home a snap from the wedding (you could encourage your guests to take 2 photos -1 for your scrapbook and another to take home!)

- Personalised shot glasses, bottle-openers or stubby coolers
- 'Wedding Revival Kit' filled with everything you need to overcome that hang-over from the reception



Picture: Treasure Pics

A note on accommodation

- When you pick your wedding venues it's important to scout out what accommodation options are nearby.
- For your guests: Consider where your out of town guests will be staying - include some options on your wedding invitations to suit different budgets.
- For your bridal party: The bridal party will need somewhere to stay the night before the wedding and get ready that morning near the wedding venue.

Factor in if there is enough space for make-up artists and hairdressers to work their magic on the bride and bridesmaids.

- For the new bride and groom: As for the newlyweds, you might like to book a nearby hotel room or cosy cabin for your wedding night so you can enjoy each other's company with some peace and quiet. Try and have an easy morning after such a big day and don't forget to factor in breakfast options.



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Big love for local

LULU & Kate Event Hire co-owner Toni was lucky to have her business partner and sister Kirsty as a bridesmaid at her wedding in 2022. Toni shares a snippet of her love story and special day:

"Nick proposed to me on a sunset cruise in Santorini, Greece, in 2019.

After a long engagement, we finally decided to tie the knot in November 2022.

The South Burnett is a very special place for both of us having grown up here, and now planning our future together here.

We found our perfect ceremony location at the Stag Lodge (AirBnb), just east of Nanango - the views were breathtaking!

We were both excited to get married, but also didn't want to spend a fortune.

Most of our wedding was a DIY effort; my sister made our cake, we made most of the decorations and wedding signage ourselves, and Nick built the arbour and chairs for the ceremony.

I even bought a second-hand wedding dress on Facebook Market place for \$400.

We held the reception in Nanango at Nick's parent's home in a marquee that we purchased.

We ended up with so many wedding items that my sister and I started our own hire business - Lulu and Kate Event Hire.

Another reason we wanted to get married in the South Burnett was because of our love for so many local vendors.

We chose our wedding date based entirely on Always and Forever Photography's availability - enough said.

I convinced my hairdresser, Alana Butler (Be Beautiful Be You), to take time from her maternity leave to do my hair- she is amazing.



Toni and Nick's picture-perfect wedding.

Pictures: Always and Forever Photography



Owners of Lulu & Kate at Toni's wedding - Toni (aka 'Lulu') is the bride and Kirsty (aka 'Kate') is the bridesmaid on her direct right.

We were lucky enough to have Simone Kucyk as our celebrant (Heartfelt Ceremonies with Simone).

Some other local vendors included Manambar Meets for catering; Lulu and Kate Handmade Jewellery; House of Jane for dress and suit alterations; and Olive Wedding and Event Hire for furniture.

Our day was incredible, and we would recommend a South Burnett wedding in a heartbeat!

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Honeymoon hints

A WHIRLWIND of last-minute preparations and a huge wedding day is a guaranteed call for a chance to unwind as newlyweds.

A honeymoon getaway should be filled with a chance for fun, quality time, to relax, and of course, romance!

Remember to organise a way to leave your reception - even if a friend brings your car to your wedding venue (be wary of possible 'Just Married' decorations).

Don't forget to have at least an overnight bag packed for your wedding night.

Do you envision a bush retreat or a beach escape with your new husband or wife?

Planning a winter wedding? ... picture a cabin with a fireplace.

Getting married in the spring? ... try ocean views.

Research locations, honeymoon packages and reviews to find the best deal for you - consider a travel agent and start planning early.

If travelling overseas - don't forget to pack your passport!

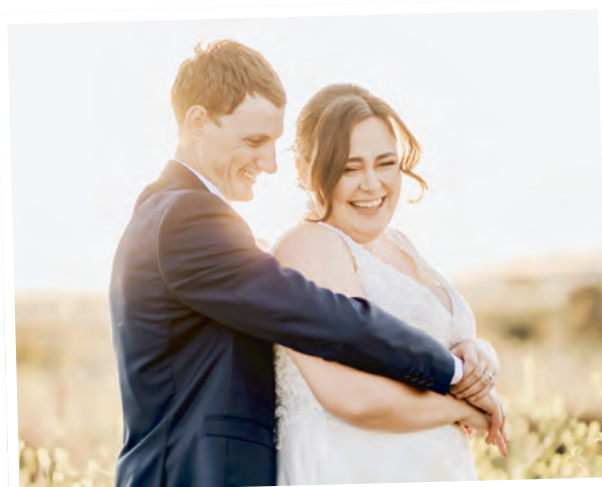
Your honeymoon is a once-in-a-lifetime experience so it is OK to splurge, soak it all up and enjoy the break ... but decide on a realistic budget and watch for hidden costs.

Don't be afraid to mention when you book your honeymoon adventure that you are newlyweds as they may provide a generous gesture.

TIP: Take into account the distance between your wedding venue and honeymoon spot.

Stay a night or two near your wedding location, relax and recover from the wedding day - trust us, you'll be exhausted!

Then, travel at your leisure to your honeymoon destination.



Pictures: Always and Forever Photography and Videography

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Treasured keepsakes

BE sure to collect small items from your special day and put in a keepsake box to share with generations to come.

Whether it is your save the dates, invitations or order of ceremony, you'll surely hold these special items close to your heart.

Consider getting personalised silk dressing gowns for the bride and her bridesmaids - something that can be used in the years to come!

Allocate a wedding favour for yourself and consider drying your floral bouquet as a lasting memory of your day.

There's so many clever ways to reuse your wedding items so do your research - a shadow box could feature your keepsakes, or look up how to press petals from your bridal bouquet onto your phone case!

A classic keepsake is a photo album of memories from your day - set aside some time after your wedding to sit down and create one.

Keep your wedding dress and veil packed away - part of this may be used by your daughter as her 'something borrowed' in the years to come.

Think ahead whether your wedding signs or



These dressing gowns designed by Personalised Celebrations' were perfect gifts for the bridesmaids. Picture: Treasure Pics

decorations could have a 'second life' hanging in your home - picture your 'Mr & Mrs' sign hanging in your hallway next to your framed wedding photo.

Renewing your vows

RENEWING your vows is a special way to show your commitment to your spouse.

Couples who chose to have a smaller wedding or elopement due to the Covid-19 restrictions on weddings may choose to have a vow renewal ceremony in front of a bigger group of family and friends.

A vow renewal is a celebratory ceremony for a

married couple to reaffirm their commitment to each other.

It is purely ceremonial so there's lots of freedom to create a meaningful celebration.

There are no legal documents involved and no requirement to obtain a marriage licence or use a registered church minister or official.

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Lovers keep it local

THE big day for Aleesha and Blake Hodges combined products and services from the region's best businesses with lovingly hand-crafted DIY projects for a wedding that was truly the sum of its parts.

Aleesha and Blake got married on 10 September 2022 at the beautiful Hillview Cottages just north of Kingaroy; from the very start, the pair knew exactly what they wanted to make their day truly special.

"We visited Hillview Cottages as a potential venue (...). As soon as we arrived, we had that feeling of 'this is the one'," Aleesha said of the location.

With the stunning, rolling hills of the Burnett as their backdrop, the couple decided on a simple but eye-catching theme.

"The theme for our wedding was Rustic Elegance. After seeing the venue, we wanted to incorporate the rustic feel of Hillview and add a little touch of elegance to it," Aleesha explained.

"We decided on wood, fairy lights and a touch of gold to bring our vision to life (...).

"We used wooden lanterns made by my dad and brother with fairy lights in the middle which lit up each table, the barn dance floor and bridal table backdrop were [lit by] hanging fairy lights, and we used handmade wooden tables and an old wooden bar - it felt magical.

"I would say 80 per cent of decorations were sourced or made by ourselves. We found it so much easier to DIY projects and it saved us so much money!"

Besides the local venue and decorations, the couple also sourced the majority of their clothes, makeup and even food from the Burnett region.

"I got my dress from Rendezvous Designs: Wedding, Formal, Evening Gowns and Alterations in Kingaroy," Aleesha recalled.

"The boys' suits were from Coppards in Kingaroy



Blake and Aleesha kept their wedding theme simple but elegant - and their guests loved it.

Picture: Always and Forever Wedding Photography and Film

and our beautiful cake was made by my aunt Rebecca Pope.

"Hair was done by Hair by Emily-Jo and makeup done by Makeup by Madison Kilgour. Our wonderful celebrant was Simone from Heartfelt Ceremonies.

"The Bait Layers cooked for us - a camp oven dinner [of] roast meat and vegies.

"All these people made our day so special," Aleesha said of the wedding, which combined 'simplicity and elegance'.

"Guests said it was an amazing afternoon and night all over and that truly was one of the most special things about the day," she added.

The happy bride's advice for other couples looking to keep it local is to shop around and find the offering that truly catches your eyes and heart.

"Don't settle for something you like, settle for something you love," Aleesha said.

"We were able to do everything that we wanted and I wouldn't have changed it - it was perfect in every single way (...) because it was how we wanted it done."

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Changing to your married name?

As a couple you will need to decide if you will take your spouse's surname.

Your registered celebrant or minister will give you a ceremonial marriage certificate, which is not official. You will need to apply for and buy an official marriage certificate through the Queensland Government as proof of the change of name through marriage. (More details here: bit.ly/3MjckjO)

As marriage is a legal agreement, you will then need to review or update your legal and financial documents.

There are many places you'll need to update to your married name so have your marriage certificate handy over the coming months.

Your name-change checklist:

- Driver's licence
- Passport
- Bank
- Work and super details
- Insurance
- Medicare
- Health care
- Doctors
- Electoral roll
- Real estate
- Utilities providers and local council
- Accountants and financial advisors
- Schools and education
- Will details



Picture: Always and Forever Photography

Reviews and thank-yous

YOUR wedding day was likely a huge effort on behalf of a huge team of people, from family members to friends and your trusty wedding vendors.

After you've settled into life at home as a married couple following your honeymoon, send out thank-you cards to your wedding attendees - perhaps wait until you receive your snapshots back from your photographer for a personalised note of thanks!

Your dream wedding day would not have been possible without the wedding experts who were part of your day, so be sure to leave them a review and a photo or two to help future bridal couples know just how wonderful your photographer, florist, celebrant, venue, caterer, musicians, cake, make-up artist or hair stylist was.



Picture: Sister Sister Photography

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A: 297 Birt Rd, Kingaroy

www.hillviewcottages.com.au

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www.thebunyas.com.au

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