

## Is your couple ticking the boxes for a **REGISTRY CEREMONY?**



As a VCANZ member committed to ongoing professional development, you can choose to officiate registry ceremonies on behalf of the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). VCANZ members, who are an 'approved registry celebrant', must follow set criteria regarding the delivery of a registry ceremony.

✓ If you **CAN** tick all the bullet points below, it is a registry ceremony – go ahead.

✗ If you **CAN'T** – please make an informed decision.

### The criteria of a registry ceremony:

- ✓ A registry ceremony is a simple, civil, legal ceremony with a fixed standard script and set vows.
- ✓ It should be held during business hours and excludes weekends and public holidays.
- ✓ Only the couple can communicate with the registry celebrant regarding their ceremony date, time and venue, not other family members or friends.
- ✓ It can be officiated at the celebrant's home/office, at the couple's home or at another agreed location in the community. The venue must be within 10 - 15 mins of the celebrant's home or work address.
- ✓ Maximum of 20 guests including the celebrant and two witnesses. You (as the celebrant) or a venue you choose, may wish to impose a lower limit of the number of guests who can be accommodated.
- ✓ 30 minutes is allowed for both the ceremony and the administration – it is likely to take less time than that.
- ✓ You do not need to meet or have extended communication with the couple prior to the ceremony.
- ✓ The couple need to pay the \$90 fee to the celebrant in advance or in cash on the day.
- ✓ The couple need to provide proof of identity with photo IDs (passport, drivers licence or other certified documentation).
- ✓ The couple need to provide two witnesses. It is not the celebrant's job to provide witnesses.
- ✓ The ceremony is usually delivered in spoken English. Should a couple require NZSL or prefer the Māori version, they will need to discuss this with the celebrant when booking the ceremony. The couple are then required to provide an interpreter if the celebrant, couple or witnesses do not understand NZSL, Māori or English. The Interpreter should sign the Declaration to translate a marriage or civil union ceremony.
- ✓ You cannot charge any additional fees eg. for travel. This is outside the mandate of the legislation and in the provision of this service.
- ✓ Registry ceremonies cannot be booked in advance of the three-month validity period. If couples wish to do this, they need to book a personalised ceremony.

### It is **NOT** a registry ceremony when:

- ✗ There are photographers, videographers, music and installations which are typical features of a personalised wedding ceremony. This was not permitted at the courthouse.
- ✗ There are more than 20 guests and it's held at a wedding venue – this could be a couple seeking a cheap option. It's your choice whether you officiate, BUT realise that this is outside the boundaries of a registry ceremony.
- ✗ It's scheduled to be held on a weekend or public holiday or more than three months in advance of the licence being issued.
- ✗ The celebrant must travel a significant distance. If you choose to do this, and it is your choice, you cannot charge a travel fee.

### Other considerations

A celebrant cannot upsell a registry ceremony i.e. add services and charges, but you can convert the ceremony to a personalised ceremony if appropriate. An example is if the ceremony is outside the limits described above, or has all the characteristics of a personalised ceremony as described.

#### NOTIFYING BDM OF CHANGES

**BDM** needs to be informed if a change is made, to ensure accurate recording of 'type of ceremony'. When returning the BDM45 to [bdmregister@dia.govt.nz](mailto:bdmregister@dia.govt.nz) please include in the email a request to the team to *Amend the Denomination field in Lifedata from 'Registry style' to 'Personalised.'* (NB: the term 'registry style' is a specific field set up early in the process by BDM and does not reflect the terminology we use in practice of 'Registry Ceremony').

#### CANCELLATION

Where the couple cancels within 24 hours of their booked time for a registry ceremony, the celebrant may keep the \$90 fee, as that time slot is not likely to be taken up by another booking. This is at the discretion of the celebrant and is a matter to be resolved directly between the celebrant and the couple.

### Resources/templates

To support you to communicate clearly with couples about 'registry ceremonies,' changes and requirements, we have provided two templates:

**Template 1:** A straightforward explanation of changes.

**Template 2:** An information form for couples seeking to book with you in your home/garden.

For these templates and further resources including a full guide, enter your log in details at [celebrantsaotearoa.co.nz/member-home](http://celebrantsaotearoa.co.nz/member-home) and see the 'Registry Ceremony' section under FAQs.

#### PLEASE REMEMBER:

Be clear about the limits. You don't have to agree to officiating the ceremony. You can also indicate your availability or that you are unavailable for a period of time via the [BDM celebrant self-service website](#)