

Wedding Ceremony

Anand Karaj (Punjabi: ਅਨੰਦ ਕਾਰਜ, anand kāraj) is the name given to the Sikh wedding ceremony, literally translated as “Blissful Event or Occasion”. Sikhs regard marriage as a sacred bond of mutual dependence between a man and a woman. A true partnership in marriage is made between those who are united in spirit as well as in mind and body. Marriage is regarded as a strong bond between the bride and groom and the relatives of both families – it is accepted as a joining of the two families into one as well. Based on a concept depicted in Laava, the Sikh marriage is not merely a physical and legal contract but is a fusion of the souls; a holy union between two souls, where physically they appear as two individual bodies but in fact are united as one. The couple must feel and think alike and both must be completely identified with the other, i.e. they need to become “Ek Jot Doe Murti” meaning “one spirit in two bodies”.

Marriage in Australia can take place between a man and a woman, who are each at least eighteen years of age. Under certain circumstances a person may marry if they are under 18 years of age but he/she have to make a request to court and obtain permission. The marriage can be celebrated at any location in Australia but must be in the presence of a Registered Marriage Celebrant and at least two witnesses who are eighteen years of age or over.

There should be sufficient documentation provided to the celebrant for proof of birth and for divorce or death of previous spouse.

Appropriate wording should be spoken by the Celebrant and the couple according to the Marriage Act. A divorced person is not allowed to re-marry, unless his or her divorce from the previous marriage has been finalised. To do so would be bigamy. The second marriage would be void and penalties may be incurred. Your wedding day is one of the most important days of your life. Choosing the right marriage celebrant will make sure your day is a memorable one. You should ensure your proposed celebrant is authorised as a marriage celebrant under the Marriage Act 1961 by checking the Register of Marriage Celebrants or the List of Authorised Marriage Celebrants.

You should make an appointment to meet a celebrant if you are uncertain. It is also advisable to confirm your wedding arrangements in plenty of time before the day of marriage.

Marriage celebrants are encouraged to offer a choice of ceremonies where this is appropriate. You should feel comfortable with your celebrant and feel confident that he/she suits your needs and will complement your special day.

Guidelines for hosting a Sikh Wedding Ceremony

1. **Only** a Sikh wedding ceremony – **ANAND KARAJ** or ceremony of Bliss is performed at the Gurudwara sahib.
2. The current protocol and arrangements must be followed at all times. Please inform your guests of this if they are visiting the Gurudwara for the first time. For **non sikh friends and visitors** coming for the first time a note to request that they dress smart but **modesty/conservatively** and bring a scarf or large handkerchief (to cover the head) helps!
3. No clapping is allowed in the Gurudwara.
4. Food and drinks are not allowed in the Darbar (the prayer hall)
5. **Ardass (a short prayer) by the Granthi followed by Milni** (the welcoming of the groom's family and friends) can take place on the premises however not in the Darbar Hall.
6. Only vegetarian food is served at the Gurudwara. Serving of Light refreshment and snacks after Milni can be organised around the dining area. Wedding organisers must ensure that the langar hall and kitchen areas are cleaned up after use.
7. Please adhere closely to the pre-arranged times for the ceremony to be completed as planned.
8. **A PAMPHLET DESCRIBING THE ANAND KAARAJ (in English)** is available for your reference and distribution to your guests. Please read this carefully to fully understand the ceremony. A meeting can be arranged with the granthi prior to the wedding day if you have any question.
9. The **ANAND KARRAJ** ceremony as described is customarily performed by the granthi and the resident raagi jatha at the Gurudwara sahib.
10. The **SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI** must be respected at all times. Please abide by the rule and the regulations of the sabha at all time.
11. You are also required to **LEGALLY REGISTER** the marriage in your current state, Birth, Deaths and Marriages registration office.
12. The **marriage celebrant** can be organised by you to do this at the Gurudwara or at another locations that suits you.
13. Please inform the secretary as to number of guests expected so that the required amount of deg parshad can be prepared.

ALL RELIGIONS ARE RESPECTED.

Your cooperation in abiding by the above guidelines is appreciated.

For further information, please contact your local Gurudwara supervisor or committee members.