

THE ELOPEMENT BIBLE

What is an elopement?



An elopement may have been something you had only heard of in films, up until recently. So let me briefly explain what an elopement is, and how it differs from other styles of weddings.

An elopement can be broadly spoken about in 2 ways, a traditional elopement, and a modern elopement. A traditional elopement is where you and your partner 'run away' together, get married in secret (you don't tell anyone), with zero friends and family present. A modern elopement is a bit more relaxed, usually includes up to 25 guests and is not done 'in secret'.

In contrast with a traditional wedding, they are therefore much smaller in scale, lower in cost (usually), require less effort to plan, and majority of the time, less 'traditional' in terms of what a wedding normally encompasses.

What do I mean by less traditional? Think about all the traditions you see at a wedding. Father walking you down the aisle, garter toss, bouquet toss, to name a few. You'll be hard pressed to find these at most elopements, however, there are no rules when it comes to elopements. If you want to do specific wedding traditions that mean something to you, you can!

Weddings are often structured around a venue and their timeline, meaning there are more rules, and less freedom. When it comes to planning your elopement, it's totally in your hands. Let's look at why eloping could be perfect for you.

WHY YOU SHOULD ELOPE IN 2022

10 Major Benefits of Eloping

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So what's in 'The Elopement Bible'?

Loads of information about eloping, obviously. This is not an anti-wedding publication by any means, however, it will draw comparisons to weddings often. For those who wish to have a traditional wedding, that's amazing, you have to do what's right for you. For those who wish to do things differently, this is for you. The info here is gathered from previous clients, and presented to help make your decision, and planning easier!

10 Benefits of Eloping



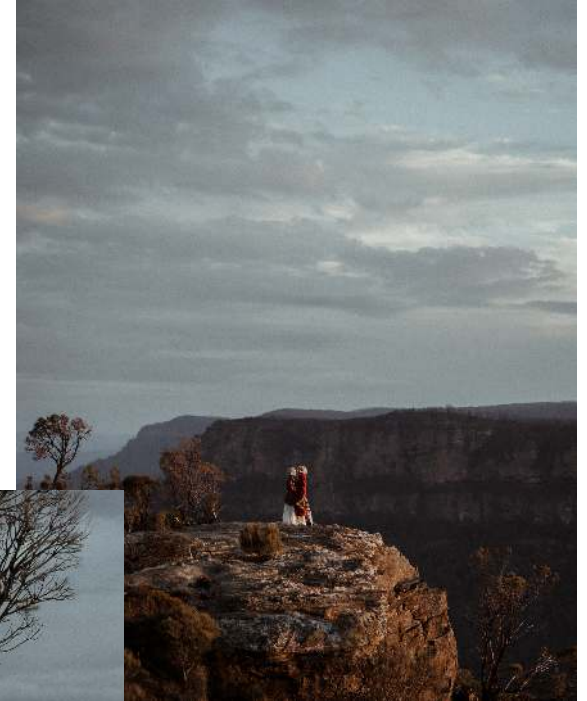
01 | Price

In Australia, the average wedding will cost you \$36,000. Let that sink in a second, it's a lot of bloody money. This is probably the first thought someone has once they get engaged. Now, you were probably wondering, so let me tell you...the average 2020 elopement in NSW was approximately \$8,000, a whopping \$28,000 cheaper, I'll leave it to your imagination what you could do with that money.

"In Australia, the average wedding will cost you \$36,000. Let that sink in..."

"If you prioritise epic experiences, you'll likely save over \$20,000 eloping"

Basically, what it comes down to, is what you prioritise. Do you prioritise having loads of guests, an expensive outfit, or would you rather spend that money on an epic experience, unlike any other? There is no right answer here, you will know in your own values, whether you prioritise authentic experiences over material things. If you do prioritise epic experiences, you are likely to save over \$20,000 alone...pretty amazing!



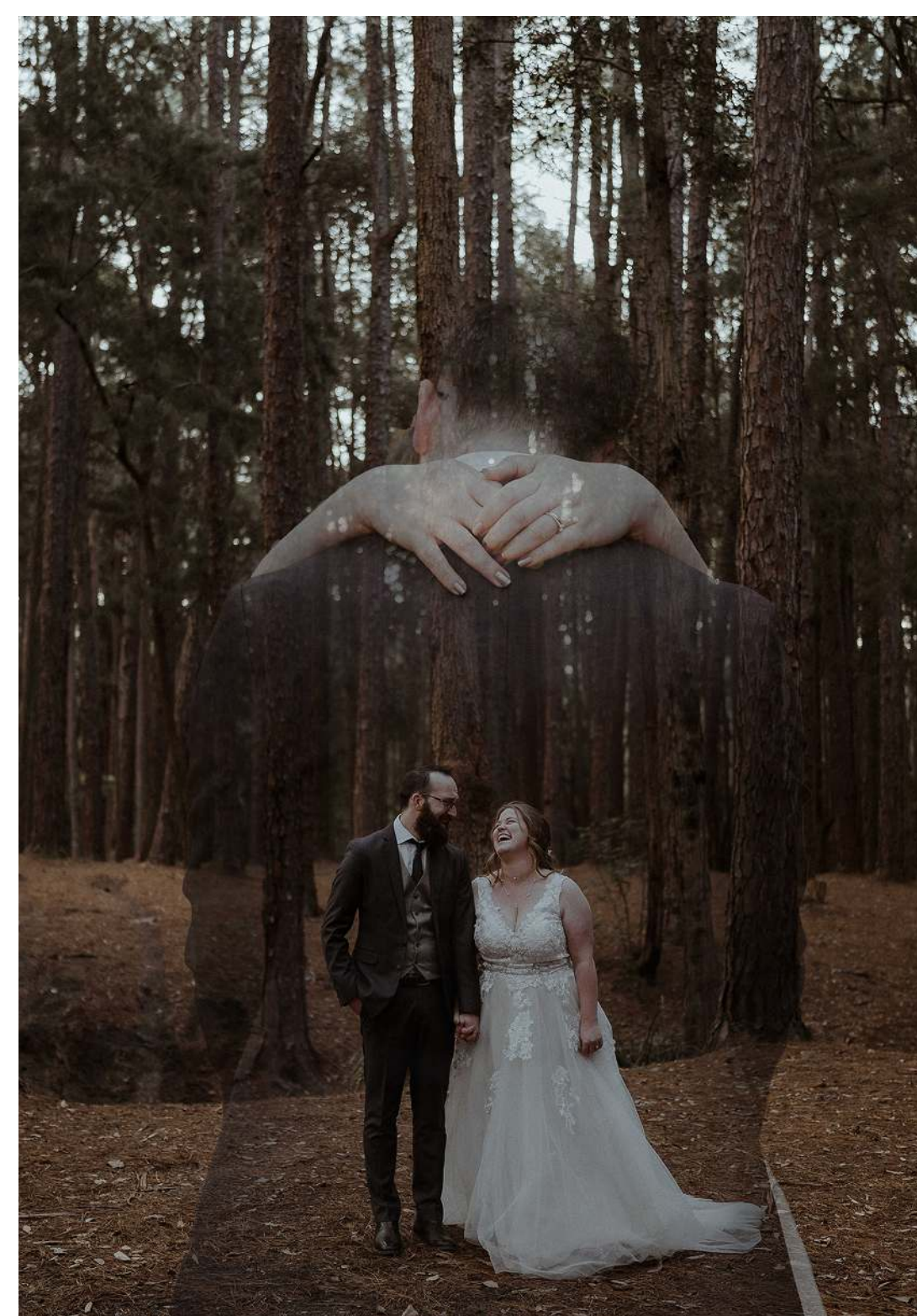
02 | Intimacy

Elopements are significantly more intimate. One of the most common concerns of my couples is 'being the centre of attention' or 'being on show' at a wedding. Elopements, by definition, create a scenario in which this never occurs. It's you, and your partner, maybe a couple of friends & family. The day is more about your connection, your relationship, so you'll celebrate this in a personal and intimate way.

"The day is more about your connection as a couple, so you'll celebrate this in a totally personal, intimate way"

"Some people choose to say their vows in private, away from everyone (photographer included)...you can do that, it's your day!"

How intimate can it be? Well that's totally up to you. Do you want to elope just the two of you? Would you like only your parents there, or maybe up to say 10 guests? Some people even choose to do their vows away from absolutely everyone (celebrant and photographer included), creating a truly unique, intimate and genuine moment. You just say the 2 legal bits to the celebrant when you come back, witnesses sign, and boom, you're married!



03 | Less Drama

We've all attended weddings before, and let's be honest...there is usually some kind of drama at most of them. It's usually a drunk guest or family member, or some kind of domestic. This doesn't always happen (not at my weddings thankfully), but it does happen, which is not something you want on the biggest day of your life.

"Drama between guests is not something you want on your wedding day, thankfully drama tends to skip elopements"

"Unless your partner kicks off, you're good to kick back and enjoy the best day of your life"

Generally speaking, less guests, less drama. Makes sense right? Well, elopements have so few guests that drama inevitably skips the event all together. Unless your partner, or your parents want to kick off, you're pretty good to just enjoy the day for what it is, the best day of your life.





04 | Less Stress

I hit up over 250 past brides and grooms, and asked what was the biggest regret about their wedding day, and the answers were pretty damn similar...they stressed too much, usually over stupid, small things. Stressing over things like alcohol budgets, seating charts and timelines...let's cut it all down. Elopements do away with most of that stress, things happen in a far more natural way, perfect, right?

***"Stressing over small things...let's cut that down!
Elopements do away with stress and allow your day to unfold in a more natural way"***

"Given the relative cost of planning an elopement, you can totally remove financial stress...fucking beautiful!"

Financial stress is a big one. Once the buzz and high wore off after your engagement, you probably began looking into planning a wedding and quickly realised...it's damn expensive! Even outside of a wedding, financial stress can place pressure on a relationship. Given the relative cost of planning an elopement, this definitely helps lower, or totally remove the financial stress, which let's state the obvious...is fucking beautiful!

05 | Easier to Plan

The average wedding requires somewhere between 10 and 20 vendors to pull off. The average elopement requires only a handful, usually about 3-5. This means, less planning, less organising, less coordinating between vendors, and of course, less financial planning in order to make the required payments.

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Kicking on from that, elopements are usually midweek, meaning availability is much easier to secure with vendors. Because of this, you can usually plan an elopement on 3-6 months, which in part eliminates the uncertainty about the future (political restrictions, financial abilities etc). One last kicker is that I usually tend to take the reins when photographing an elopement. I actually love the planning side, so I will help as much or as little as you want.



06 | Location, Location, Location

I want to say up front, that elopements don't have to be 'epic'. They don't have to be in spectacular, jaw dropping locations. They can be in your living room, backyard, or at the local cafe. In saying that, a lot of elopements are at some pretty epic spots. Unlike traditional weddings which are often limited to 'wedding venues', elopements really don't have any limitations. Any place you love and connect with, could be your elopement location!

"Elopements don't have to be epic, any place you love and connect with, could be your elopement location!"

"First, what kind of vibe do you want? What type of location is 'you'? Let this guide you to choosing the right location"

But how do you pick the perfect location, given the infinite number of ones to choose from? Well, first thing to do is sit down with your partner, and work out what 'vibe' you want. Do you want something epic and adventurous? Do you want something laid back and easy? Second thing to think is, what kind of location is 'you'? Are you a water couple? Do you live for mountain hikes? Let this guide you. If all else fails, your photographer can recommend so many amazing spots!



07 | Photography

When it comes to elopements, by definition they are usually more laid back and free flowing. That suits me personally really well, and means we should get along perfectly (super important). Because of this, there tends to be less anxiety and nerves on your behalf, which means the photos are far more natural and you have more fun with it. This makes the entire experience so much easier, and always leads to better photos.

"Because you aren't being pressed by a strict wedding day timeline, we can take our time, have fun and experiment"

"There's less anxiety and nerves for you, which means the photos are more natural and you have more fun with it."

We also have more time and less restrictions. Because you aren't being pressed by a strict timeline, we can take our time, have fun and experiment. We can explore a bit, find the perfect spot, and really not lean into it. I've spent hours shooting elopement portraits before, however they can be done quickly, it's totally up to you how long we spend. We'll crack a few beers, take our time, have some food...it even allows for some alone time for you to enjoy! We stop when you say so, even if the sun's gone down!



08 | Let it be an Adventure

Eloping can be an easy way to push the fun aspect of marriage. Don't get me wrong, weddings can be loads of fun (mine was), but if we look at what we discussed above, it is easy to see that weddings can often be more stressful, and timelines too strict to facilitate free-flowing fun in many cases. Elopements on the other hand are just that. Fun, fun fun! If you're still not sure why, just look at all these photos...fun!

"Elopements on the other hand are just that. Fun, fun fun! If you're still not sure why, just look at all these photos...fun!"

"Trek to an epic spot with your partner! Make a weekend of it, get in the 4WD, jump on a plane, travel to a remote area, camp the weekend away..."

So get out, pick a cool location somewhere, and trek there with your partner and do it! Make a weekend of it, get in the 4WD, jump on a plane, travel to a remote area, camp the weekend away and elope while you do it. How amazing would that be, particularly if that is the kind of thing that sums up your relationship? Elopements should be fun, whatever that means to you...so enjoy it!



09 | Experiences over Things

It comes as no surprise that this generation is shifting away from owning things, and towards 'experiencing things'. That is to say, they value doing epic stuff more than owning epic stuff. Weddings back in the day used to be all about how many guests you had, how expensive your dress was, and the venue you chose. Whilst they are no longer like this, there are a lot more 'things' at weddings, and a lot less at elopements (hence them being cheaper and easier to plan).

"Let me outline, there is nothing wrong with 'things'...weddings are so personal, so make sure yours aligns with your values"

"This generation is shifting away from owning things, and towards 'experiencing things'..."

Let me outline, there is nothing wrong with 'things', or wanting a \$20k dress...weddings are such a personal thing, so make sure they align with your values. But, if the thought of hiking up Kosciusko Mountain in the snow from sunrise to sunset to elope at the peak with just your lover sounds more exciting and fun to you than going to a traditional wedding venue in front of everyone you know, then I think you can safely say you value experiences and the journey over the 'things'.



10 | Genuine, Authentic & Honest

Everyone has a set of values they live by, right? This is what I mean when I say you need to ensure your plans align with yours. If you value 'things', 'perfection' and 'tradition', that's ok. That's who you are, maybe elopements aren't for you. There is no right or wrong, only what is right for you. Being genuine and honest about your values is crucial. This is the day you become a family, the day you pledge your lives together...don't start it off by being dishonest about who you both are.

"Being genuine and honest about your values is crucial...don't start off your married lives by being dishonest to yourselves"

"Marriage is about 2 people coming together, all things aside. The authenticity of eloping aligns with this value"

Another major area of interest for a lot of people considering eloping is authenticity. That is, being authentic to the ideals of marriage. Again, this ties in with your values, but for a lot of people, marriage is about 2 people coming together, all things aside. The authenticity of eloping aligns with this value. It's just you, no 'big show', no crowds, just your love.



5 Best Elopement Decisions



Keep it Small

1

"The best decision we made was to keep it small. We had originally planned a big wedding, but once the stress of planning started to mount, we decided to elope and keep it as neat and tidy as possible. We had both our parents there and that was it. Looking back on it, we wouldn't change a thing!"

Make a Weekend of it

2

"Originally we were going to just elope locally. Then once we realised we were going to honeymoon to Byron Bay, we thought, why not have the elopement in Byron anyway. Our parents and siblings (who were the only people originally invited) were more than happy to come. We made a weekend of it with them, and then we stayed an extra fortnight for our honeymoon...perfect!"

3

Invest in what is important to you

"One of the reasons we eloped was we didn't have the money to pay for a full wedding. However, we were very set on what we wanted to spend our cash on. Even though we only had 5 guests, we spent a few grand on florals because they were something I had always dreamed of. We set our priorities and spent on them."

Don't be afraid to be different

"I guess the main reason we didn't want a wedding was that it didn't feel 'right' for us? We are quite alternative people, quite non-traditional in a sense. So the thought of a white dress, black tux, wedding cake and such just seemed so wrong to us, it didn't align with who we are. We got married in our living room, in our pyjamas, during a Harry Potter Marathon, and celebrated with a cup of tea. It was perfect. It was so us, and that's what matters."



4



Leave it up to someone else!

"So when our photographer recommended it, we were a bit, hesitant I guess? The idea of letting someone else choose everything to do with our elopement was crazy. We reflected on it for the night, and realised it was totally about our values. We love being crazy, unique, different. We didn't care for being in control. We love random experiences. So we put it in his hands. He selected the ceremony site, we gave him a budget for styling and he organised this for us based on some info we gave him), and he organised the picnic afterwards. Honestly, our minds were blown. Not only did we have zero planning stress, our wedding day was a complete surprise, it was amazing. We couldn't have been more in love when we were married. If you're into being spontaneous and wild, do this!"

5

4 Biggest Elopement Regrets

WRONG PHOTOGRAPHER

53%

The next biggest regret was choosing the wrong photographer. Make sure the person you choose aligns with your values and you like them personally as well as professionally.

COMPROMISING

27%

People still found themselves compromising to please friends and family, and not having the elopement they genuinely wanted.

GETTING A FILM

65%

The number 1 regret from couples was not hiring a videographer to capture their elopement. The common reason was 'it's an elopement, it's not worth it'.

INSTAGRAMABLE?

39%

People regretted trying to 'copy' things off Instagram/Pinterest, rather than making their elopement true to themselves.



Elopement FAQs



1 What is an elopement?

An elopement is basically anything that has a more intimate nature to it, something that does not follow the structure or timeline of a standard wedding. It tends to have fewer guests, usually below 10, but can have up to 25.

2 How long do I need to plan one?

Elopements are far easier to plan than weddings. They require way less vendors, cost much less money, and generally do not require the booking of a venue. Whereas a wedding usually requires minimum 12-18 months, an elopement can be planned in as little as 3 months, but usually 6 months (local), up to 9 months (destination).

3 Does an elopement have to be an 'adventure'?

No. Your elopement can be simple, easy. You can drive right up to your location. You don't have to copy what you see on IG or Pinterest. If adventure is your thing then do it, but it's totally not essential.

4 Can I have guests?

Yes, you can. Generally speaking an elopement can be up to 25 guests, but is usually up to 10 more commonly. So invite your parents, your best friends, that's all good.



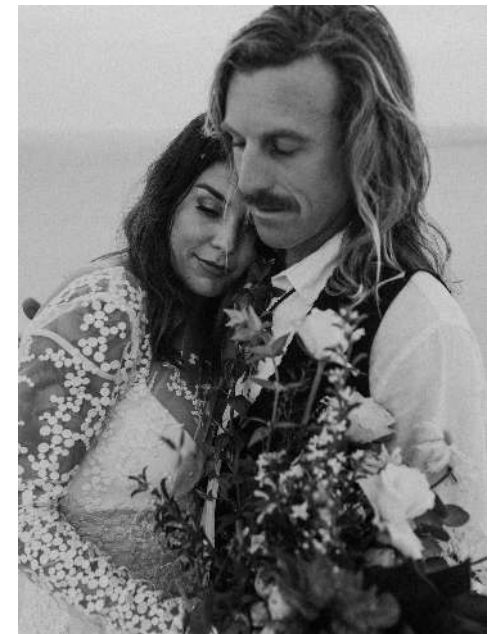
5 What about witnesses?

Witnesses are easy. You need 2, that's the legal bit (and your celebrant cannot be one). So I am usually a witness for my couples, so you need one more. Any guest you have can be one, your videographer can be one, or you can play 'witness roulette' which is where we cruise around the streets and find some lucky person to be your additional witness, it's fun, creates a cool story and makes for cool photos.

6 Can I make it special?

Absolutely. A lot of people assume eloping is just a means of saving money. But it's more. You can create the idealistic day for you, wherever that may be, and however it may look. The sky (and your budget) is your limit, and I am right here to help you plan it out.

How to start planning your elopement



So you've decided to elope (or contemplating it seriously)...but where do you start? First, get straight on your State legalities. In NSW this means:

1. Two witnesses over the age of 18.
2. You both must be over the age of 18 and legally able to marry (and not already married).
3. You must have lodged a 'Notice Of Intended Marriage' 30 days prior.
4. The person marrying you must be authorised by law to do so.

The next thing you want to do is think about your 'why'. Why do you want to elope, and do you want a traditional elopement (no guests) or a modern elopement? Understanding this will guide you in your planning process.

Now is the time to notify anyone you need to about the elopement. If you are doing a traditional elopement, you can skip this step since you're eloping in private, and in secret. But if (like many) you are inviting a small number of guests, now is the time to let them know they have made the cut. PRO TIP, be prepared for potential backlash here.

First of all, you will potentially have friends and family (parents in particular) that were excited to attend your 'wedding', but don't stress, they'll come around (and if they don't, well that's their problem). You will also potentially have people who didn't make the cut upset about that fact. Again, this will be an initial shock, they will get over it very quickly and be happy for you.

The time has come to find your vendors. I suggest you start with the celebrant. They're the only vendor you LEGALLY need to elope, and they lodge your 'Notice of Intended Marriage'. Make sure they vibe well with you personally. Could you have a drink with them post wedding? If yes, book it!



Now start looking for your photography & videography team. Thankfully with myself, I have a videographer, so these 2 steps become 1. But this team will be responsible for capturing the memories from the most important day of your lives...do not choose on price alone. Personality, beliefs and vibe are just as important as style and price!

The only thing to do now is to pick your location. You may have a really strong idea on where you want to do it, and that's great. If not, you can always speak to your vendors, in particular your photographer. They will be able to give you some pretty awesome recommendations based on what you have told them along the way.

Regardless of how much input you have, by choosing to elope, you are ensuring you will have an absolutely amazing, unique and honest time with your partner. I'm yet to shoot an elopement that wasn't pure perfection. So time to get excited, and hit me up, I will 100% be there for you the whole way.

TLDR:

- 1. Check legalities**
- 2. What's your 'why'?**
- 3. What's your 'vibe'?**
- 4. Notify people**
- 5. Find vendors**
- 6. Pick location**



"To me, an elopement is whatever you make it. In the simplest form it's a day to reflect on what your love means to you. The coming together of two wild hearts."



"It's being vulnerable with each other, and letting that person know that you simply can't be without them. It's genuine, honest and raw. There are no rules. It's whatever you want it to be."

Want help
planning your
elopement? Email
me and let's talk!

