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**Births Deaths and  
Marriages**

Level 2  
Chesser House  
91-97 Grenfell Street  
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1351  
Adelaide SA 5001  
DX 225

Tel 08 8204 9599  
Fax 08 8204 9605

[www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)

## Changing your name on marriage

### Reverting from a Married Surname to a Maiden Surname or Former Married Surname

#### Changing your name on marriage

The adoption by a woman of her husband's surname on marriage is a widely practised custom in Australia. However, there is no legal obligation to do so and some women continue to use their own surname after marriage.

When a woman who has married *in Australia* decides to take her husband's surname, there is no need to register the change of name. Production of the marriage certificate<sup>o</sup> and a statement by the woman that she is now known by her husband's surname is generally accepted as sufficient evidence.

Women who have married *overseas* will find that this is not adequate for some agencies - for example Passports Australia for a passport and some Registration and Licensing agencies (change of name on licence or car registration). In these cases the woman may be required by those agencies to produce a Change of Name certificate<sup>o</sup> and will therefore need to undertake a formal change of name process with the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office.

Less commonly, a man may decide to adopt his wife's surname on marriage. Similar arrangements apply in that case.

If both parties decide to adopt a hyphenated or composite name after marriage, both may need to do a formal change of name if they need to prove to authorities that they are both using the altered name. (In such cases, sometimes the groom changes his name before the wedding and then the bride adopts that new name, requiring only one party to do a Change of Name.)

## **Reverting from a Married Surname to a Maiden Surname or Former Married Surname**

A woman who has adopted her husband's name may wish to revert to the use of her maiden surname or to a surname she had from a former marriage if she is divorced or separated, or for other reasons. She does not have to be divorced or even separated to do this.

There is no general requirement for a declaration and registration of change of name. It ought to be sufficient for a woman to produce her birth and/or marriage certificate(s)<sup>◇</sup>, and to state that she is now using her maiden surname or a former married surname, as the case may be.

Ultimately, the Government agency or commercial organisation concerned has the right to determine what evidence it requires of a person's name or change of name in its particular circumstances. That may require you to provide evidence such as your birth certificate<sup>◇</sup> and marriage certificate<sup>◇</sup> to the Passports Office, or certified copies to businesses with whom you deal. You should not have to show evidence of divorce or death to support reverting to a previous name, as these are not required conditions.

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office is willing to discuss any problems that arise in reverting to a maiden surname or former married surname.



**V J Edyvean**  
**REGISTRAR**  
**BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES**

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<sup>◇</sup> Most agencies require official certificates issued by the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office.