

The Rest

Relationship Statistics

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MARRIAGE AND REMARRIAGE IN AUSTRALIA – 2

- There were 111,000 marriages registered in Australia in 2004. This is a significant increase from 103,100 recorded in 2001 as set out Vol. 1 of the REST (April 2003).
- The crude marriage (per 1,000 of the population) in 2004 was 5.5 This is up from recent years, but still far below the figure of 7.0 recorded in 1984.
- There is a significant difference in crude marriage rates between the states and territories. Queensland had the highest rate at 6.3 while the lowest was the Northern Territory at 3.9.
- By way of international comparison, Vietnam had the highest crude marriage rate among a selection of countries with a rate of 12.1 per 1,000 population. South Africa had the lowest at 3.5. The crude marriage rate in the United States was much higher than Australia at 7.8.
- Cohabitation prior to marriage is becoming increasingly common. Of those marrying in 2004, 76% said that they cohabited prior to the marriage – up from 69% in 1999 and only 16% in 1975. The Northern Territory had the highest rate of cohabitation prior to marriage at 85% - perhaps correlating with the lower marriage rate.
- Cohabitation prior to marriage was highest among migrants from English-speaking countries (UK, New Zealand, Ireland). As many as 94% of brides born in Ireland reported having cohabited prior to marriage.
- Age at first marriage has been increasing steadily and has not yet levelled off. The median age of first marriage in 2004 was 29 years for men and 28 for women. This compares to 25 and 23 respectively in 1984. The median age for all marriages (including those previously divorced or widowed) in 2004 was 32 for men and 29 for women.
- Commencing in 1999, the proportion of marriages performed by civil celebrants has been greater than the proportion celebrated by ministers of religion. In 2004, 59% of all marriages were performed by civil celebrants. This compares to 40% back in 1984. The proportion of civil ceremonies was greatest in the Northern Territory at 75% and lowest in South Australia at 55%.
- Two-thirds of the 111,000 marriages registered in 2004 were first marriages. One partner had previously been married in 18% of marriages and in a further 15% of marriages both partners had been previously married.
- The average interval between previous and current marriage was 3.8 years for grooms and 4.4 years for bridegrooms. The widowed took longer on average to re-marry (4.4 years for men and 6.7 years for women) than did previously divorced grooms and bridegrooms (3.7 and 4.2 years respectively).
- Of those re-marrying, 30% had children aged under 16 from earlier marriages.

SOURCES:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005). Marriages, Australia. ABS Catalogue No.3306.0.55.001. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2005). Marriages and Divorces, Australia, 2003. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.