

The Rest

Relationship Statistics

Vol. 53 - November 2005

DIVORCE – 2

- There were 52,747 divorces granted in 2004. This is the third consecutive decline in the number of divorces since the record high of 55,330 granted in 2001 (see REST Vol. 2).
- The largest number of divorces was in New South Wales with 15,007 followed by Queensland with 13,279 and Victoria with 12,544. The ABS does not publish comparisons of divorce rates between states due to divorces often being granted by courts of one state or territory to residents of another state or territory (eg. to residents of NSW by the ACT Family Court).
- The percentage of marriages involving children under 18 stood at 49.8% in 2004 – down significantly from 60.9% in 1984. The total number of children under 18 involved in divorces granted in 2004 was 49,260.
- There are various ways to measure divorce:
 - The first is the crude divorce rate which stood at 2.6 per 1,000 of the population in 2004. This has decreased slightly in the last 20 years. In 1984, the crude divorce rate was 2.8 per 1,000 of the population.
 - Another way is to measure the number of divorces per 1,000 married males or females. This figure was 13.1 in 2001.
 - A popular but often misconstrued way to measure divorce is likelihood to divorce. Following this method, if a newly-born group of babies were exposed to the 1997-99 rates of marriage, widowhood, divorce, remarriage and mortality, 32% of their marriages would end in divorce – up from 28% if 1985-87 rates were applied.
- The median age of divorce has continued to rise reflecting an increase in the age of first marriage and an increase in the interval between marriage and divorce. The median age of divorce was 43 years for males and 40.3 years for females in 2004. In 1984, it was 36.7 and 34.1 years for males and females respectively.
- The age group with the greatest incidence of divorce for men was 35-39 in 2004 with a rate of 12.6 divorces per 1,000 of the population in that age group. This was followed by the 40-44 age group at 12.3 and the 45-49 age group at 11.6. For women, the age group with the highest incidence of divorce was also 35-39 (13 per 1,000 females in that age group) followed by the 30-34 age group (12.5) and the 40-44 age group (12.2).
- The median duration from marriage to separation was 8.7 years in 2004 and the median duration from marriage to divorce was 12.3 years. These figures have increased from 7.7 years (marriage to separation) and 10.6 years (marriage to divorce) in 1984.
- More females (41%) lodged divorce applications than males (31%). 28% of divorces (38% in the ACT) were the result of joint applications – up from less than 0.4% in 1984.

SOURCES:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005). Divorces, Australia. ABS Catalogue No.3307.0.55.001. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.