

Chapter 1

Demographics

Population characteristics

Population size

As at 30 March 2008, Australia's estimated resident female population was 10,700,779, representing 50.3 per cent of the total population.¹

At the 2006 Census count, there were 455,031 Indigenous Australians, comprising 224,079 men and 230,952 women.²

Sex ratio

At 30 June 2007, the sex ratio for the total population of Australia was 98.8 males per 100 females. Table 1.1 shows that the sex ratio varies across regions. There are fewer men than women in all States and Territories except in Western Australia and the Northern Territory where there are 102.1 and 107.9 men respectively to every 100 women.

Table 1.1: Australian population sex ratio by region, 2007

Region	Sex ratio
New South Wales	98.1
Victoria	97.9
Queensland	99.7
South Australia	97.6
Western Australia	102.1
Tasmania	97.3
Northern Territory	107.9
Australian Capital Territory	98.1
Australia	98.8

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2007, Catalogue No. 3201.0, ABS, Canberra, Table 5.

Population growth

In the 12 months to 30 June 2007, Australia's population grew by 1.5 per cent, the highest rate of growth since 1988. The female population grew by 1.5 per cent and the male population grew by 1.6 per cent. The highest rate of population growth continued to occur in Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.³

Population age

As at 30 June 2007, the median age (the age at which half of the population is younger and half older) of Australia's population was

36.8 years. Australia's female population is older than the male population, with a median age of 37.6 years for women compared to 36.1 years for men.⁴

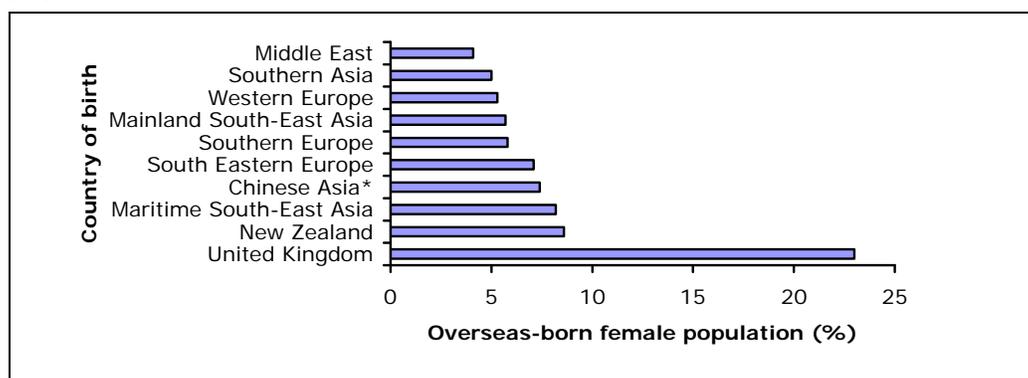
The higher median age of women compared to men is attributed to the higher proportion of women than men aged 65 years and over in the population. Women and men in this age group represent 7.2 per cent and 5.9 per cent of the total population respectively.⁵

Country of birth

According to 2006 Census data, 23.9 per cent of Australia's female population was overseas-born.⁶

Figure 1.1 shows the top 10 countries of birth for the female overseas-born population. The largest migration flow of women has been from the United Kingdom, with women from that country accounting for nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) of all overseas-born Australian women.

Figure 1.1: Top ten countries of birth of the overseas-born female population, Australia, 2006



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, 2006 Census of Population and Housing Australia, Census Tables, Country of birth of person (minor groups) by sex – Australia, Catalogue No. 2068.0, ABS, Canberra.

* Includes Mongolia

Family households

During the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, 7,596,185 households were counted. Of those, 67.4 per cent comprised family households, a decrease from 68.8 per cent in 2001.⁷

Family types

The total number of families counted in 2006 was 5,219,168, an increase of 12 per cent (from 4,655,919) since 1996. From 1996 to 2006, couple families with children decreased from 50 per cent to 45 per cent of all families. Over the same period, couple families without children increased from 34 per cent to 37 per cent.

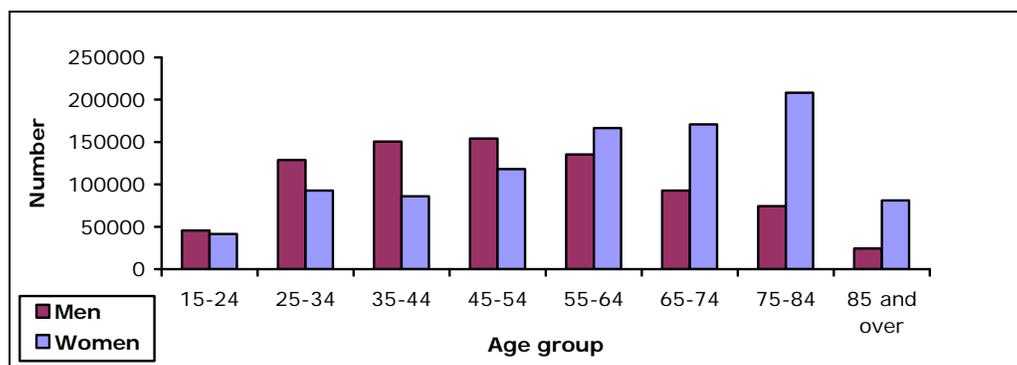
Between 1996 and 2006, one-parent families increased from 14.5 per cent to 15.8 per cent of all families.⁸

Of the 823,254 one-parent families in Australia in 2006, 683,862 (83.1 per cent) were headed by women.

Lone person households

From 1996 to 2006, lone person households increased from 22 per cent to 23 per cent of all households.⁹ Women comprised 54.5 per cent of all lone persons, but the gender imbalance is dependent upon age. Figure 1.2 shows that up to the age of 54 years, there are more men than women living alone. After age 55, the gender imbalance is reversed, especially after age 65, where there are 2.4 women living alone to every one man living alone.

Figure 1.2: Lone person households by age group and gender, 2006



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, 2006 Census of Population and Housing Australia, Census Tables, Relationship in Household by Age by Sex - Australia, Catalogue No. 2068.0, ABS, Canberra.

Marriages

Number of marriages

In 2007, there were 116,322 registered marriages, representing an increase of 2,100 (1.8 per cent) from 2006. This is the highest number of marriages registered in one year since 1990.¹⁰

Crude marriage rate

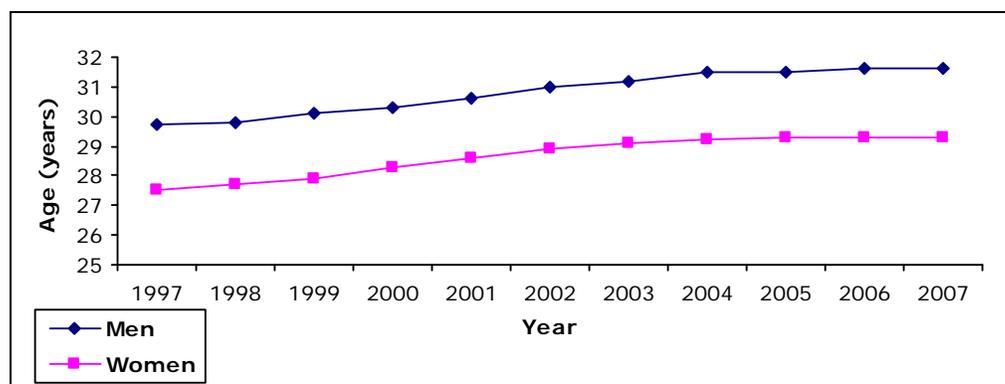
The crude marriage rate (number of marriages per 1,000 people) increased to 5.5 in 2004 from a record low of 5.3 in 2001 and then fell slightly to 5.4 in 2005. It rose to 5.5 again in 2006 and remained steady at that level in 2007.¹¹

Age at marriage

The trend towards older age at marriage has continued in 2007, however, the median age at marriage stabilised in 2005 for women and in 2006 for men. The median age at marriage for women in 2007 was 29.3 years, rising from 27.5 years in 1997. For men, the

median age at marriage was 31.6 years in 2007, rising from 29.7 years in 1997 (See Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Median age at marriage by gender, 1997-2007



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008, Catalogue No. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra, Table 11.2.

Previous marital status at marriage

The previous marital status of people married has remained relatively stable over the past 20 years. In 2007, 77.7 per cent of people married had not been married previously. For men, this applied to 76.8 per cent of all marriages. A further 1.7 per cent of men had been widowed and 21.5 per cent had been divorced prior to marriage. For women, 78.5 per cent had not been previously married. A further 1.8 per cent had been widowed prior to marriage and 19.6 per cent had been divorced prior to marriage.¹²

Cohabitation prior to marriage

The marriage data for 2007 reflect a continuation of the trend for more Australian couples to cohabit prior to marriage. In 1975 only 16 per cent of couples cohabited prior to marriage, increasing to 27 per cent in 1983¹³ and to 67 per cent in 1998.¹⁴ In 2007, 76.8 per cent of the 116,322 couples who registered a marriage in 2007 indicated that they had lived together prior to marriage.¹⁵

De facto relationships

Between 1996 and 2006, the census count of people aged 15 years and over in *de facto* relationships rose by 62.7 per cent from 763,660 to 1,242,793. In 2006, *de facto* partners represented 14.8 per cent of all people living as socially married – that is, all those either in a registered marriage or a *de facto* relationship, (up from 10 per cent in 1996).¹⁶

In 2006, the median age of men in *de facto* relationships was 35.3 years while the median age of women was 33.3 years. In 1996, the comparative medians were 34.4 years and 32.0 years respectively.¹⁷

Births

Number of births

There were 285,200 births registered in Australia in 2007. This was the highest number of births ever registered in Australia.¹⁸

Fertility rate

Australia's total fertility rate (TFR) in 2007 was 1.93 babies per women, the highest since 1981 (1.94 babies per woman).¹⁹

Fertility rates increased for all age groups of women between 2006 and 2007. Women aged between 30 and 34 years continued to record the highest fertility of all age groups in 2007, with 126.6 babies per 1,000 women. This was the highest rate recorded for women in this age group since 1962. The fertility rates in 2007 for women aged 35 to 39 years (68.1 babies per 1,000 women) and for women aged 20 to 24 years (55.8 babies per 1,000 women) were the highest rates for women in those age groups since 1950 and 1990 respectively.²⁰

Teenage fertility was 16.0 babies per 1,000 women in 2007, which was slightly higher than in 2006 (15.3 babies per 1,000 women).²¹

Indigenous births and fertility

In 2007, there were 14,200 births registered in Australia (5 per cent of all births) where at least one parent identified themselves as being of Indigenous origin on the birth registration statement.²²

Between 2006 and 2007, the TFR for Indigenous women increased from 2.1 babies per woman to 2.4 babies per woman. Women under the age of 30 years accounted for 70 per cent of the total fertility rate for Indigenous women, compared to 46 per cent of the total fertility rate for all Australian women.²³

Completed fertility and childlessness

The 2006 Census provides information on completed fertility, which is the average number of children ever born to women. Completed fertility has declined over the last 25 years. In 1981, women aged 40 to 44 years had an average of 2.8 children per woman. Women of the same age in 2006 had an average of 2.0 children per woman.²⁴

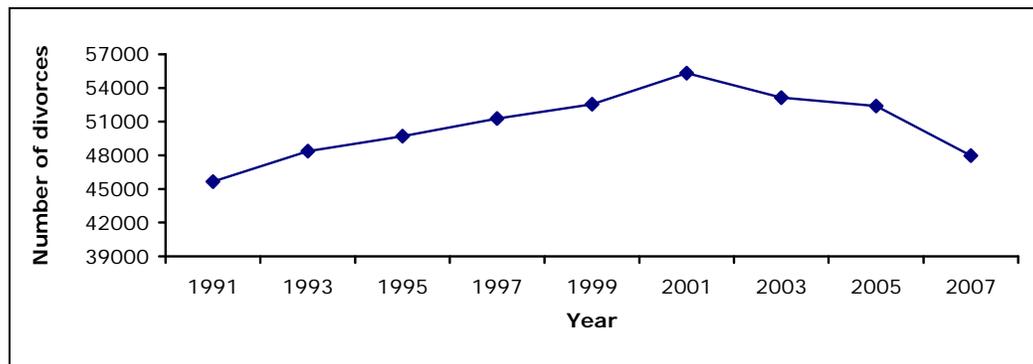
The proportion of women aged 40 to 44 years with no children has increased over time, from 9 per cent in 1981 to 16 per cent in 2006.²⁵

Divorce

Number of divorces

The number of divorces granted in Australia has been decreasing each year since reaching a peak in 2001 (See Figure 1.4). The trend continued in 2007 with 47,963 divorces granted, down from 51,375 in 2006.²⁶

Figure 1.4: Divorces granted Australia, 1991-2007

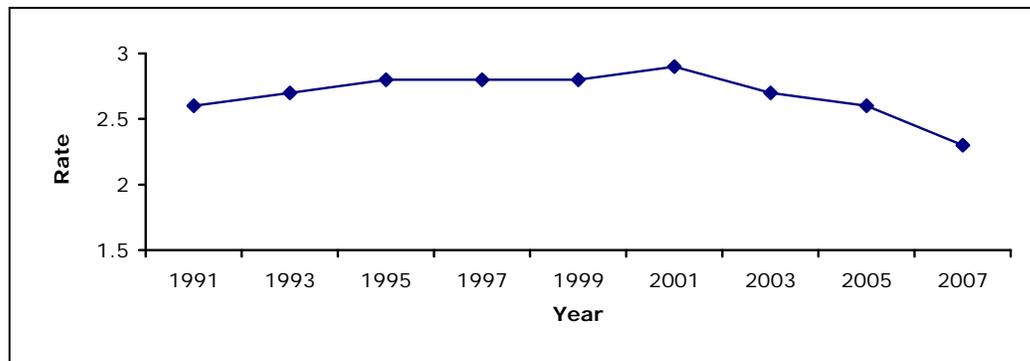


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008, Catalogue No. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra, Table 12.1 & Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Divorces, Australia, 2007, Catalogue No. 3307.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra.

Crude divorce rate

The crude divorce rate is the number of divorces granted during a calendar year per 1,000 estimated resident population at 30 June. As shown by Figure 1.5, the crude divorce rate has declined steadily since 2001. In 2007, the crude divorce rate was 2.3, declining from 2.5 in 2006.²⁷

Figure 1.5: Crude divorce rate, Australia, 1991-2007



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008, Catalogue No. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra, Table 12.5 & Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Divorces, Australia, 2007, Catalogue No. 3307.0.55.001, ABS, Canberra.

Age at divorce

The median age for men granted divorce in 2007 was 44.2 years, compared with 41.3 years for women. The median age at divorce has been increasing steadily for both men and women over the past

20 years. This trend continued in 2007, with the median ages increasing by 0.3 years for men and 0.2 years for women.²⁸

Divorces involving children

Over the last 20 years, the proportion of divorces involving children under the age of 18 years has been decreasing although this decline has slowed in recent years. The proportion of divorces involving children was 49.3 per cent in 2007, down from 50.1 per cent in 2006. The total number of children affected by divorce also decreased from 48,396 in 2006 to 44,371 in 2007.²⁹

Length of marriage for divorcing couples

In 2006 and 2007, the median length of marriage to separation was 8.9 years, up from 8.8 years in 2005. The median length of marriage to divorce was 12.5 years in 2006 and 2007, slightly lower than 12.6 in 2005. However, over the last 20 years, there has been a steady increase in the median length of marriage to both separation and divorce.³⁰

Deaths

Number of deaths

There were 137,900 deaths registered in Australia in 2007, 3.1 per cent more than the number registered in 2006 (133,700). Male deaths (70,600) outnumbered female deaths (67,300), resulting in a sex ratio of 104.9 male deaths for every 100 female deaths.³¹

There were 2,400 deaths registered in Australia in 2007 where the deceased person was identified as being of Indigenous origin.³²

Standardised death rate

The standardised death rate in 2007 (six deaths per 1,000 standard population) was the same as in 2005 and 2006 and is the lowest on record. The standardised death rate was lower for women (4.9) than for men (7.2). The highest standardised death rate for women in 2007 was in the Northern Territory (6.9), followed by Tasmania (6.0). The lowest standardised death rate for women in 2007 was recorded in the Australian Capital Territory (4.7).³³

Age at death

The median age at death in 2007 was 77.5 years for men and 83.5 years for women, an increase of 6.1 years and 5.3 years over the median age at death for men and women respectively since 1987.³⁴

Life expectancy

A boy born in 2005–2007 can expect to live 79.0 years while a girl can expect to live 83.7 years.³⁵

Indigenous life expectancy at birth for 1996–2001 is estimated to be 59.4 years for men and 64.8 years for women.³⁶

Australia's male life expectancy at birth ranks fifth in the world, below Iceland, Hong Kong, Japan and Switzerland. Australia's female life expectancy at birth is ranked sixth, below Japan, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Spain and France.³⁷

Infant deaths

In 2007 there were 1,200 infant deaths (deaths of children less than one year of age) registered in Australia. This was a decrease of 60 infant deaths (or 4.7 per cent) over the number registered in 2005.³⁸ Over the past 20 years, male infant deaths have outnumbered female infant deaths and in 2007, there were 660 male infant deaths and 550 female infant deaths.

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- ³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008*, Catalogue No. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra, 2008, Table 1.8.
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- ⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census Tables: Country of Birth of Person (minor groups) by sex – Australia*. Excludes country of birth 'Not stated' and 'Inadequately described'.
- ⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2006 Census QuickStats: Australia*.
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- ³² *Ibid*.
- ³³ *Ibid*.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Deaths, Australia, 2006*, ABS Catalogue No. 3302.0, ABS, Canberra, 2007.

³⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Deaths, Australia, 2007*, Catalogue No. 3302.0, ABS, Canberra, 2008..

³⁸ Ibid