



NEW ISSUE

# **ADOPTIONS AUSTRALIA 1979-80**

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**ADOPTIONS  
AUSTRALIA  
1979-80**

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS  
in association with WELSTAT

CATALOGUE NO. 4406.0

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## PREFACE

The statistics in this publication are the product of a National Working Party on Welfare Statistics (WELSTAT) which is a joint State and Commonwealth project concerned with the standardisation and improvement of social welfare statistics. The project is managed by committees consisting of representatives from each State and Territory welfare department and the Commonwealth Department of Social Security and the ABS. The project is serviced by the WELSTAT Secretariat which operates full time and is located in the central office of the Department of Social Security. The ABS provides assistance to the Secretariat through the outposting of an officer.

This is the first national publication of adoption statistics based on standardised definitions and classifications of data.

The ABS already publishes statistics of persons under guardianship and children in substitute care based on standards developed by WELSTAT.

Participants in the adoptions collection were:

New South Wales—Department of Youth and Community Services  
Victoria—Department of Community Welfare Services  
Queensland—Department of Children's Services  
Queensland—Department of Welfare Services  
South Australia—Department for Community Welfare  
Western Australia—Department for Community Welfare  
Tasmania—Department of Social Welfare  
Northern Territory—Department of Community Development  
Australian Capital Territory—Department of the Capital Territory  
Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Department of Social Security

The data was collected and compiled by the State and Territory welfare authorities, then edited and aggregated by members of the WELSTAT Secretariat and finally arranged for publication by the ABS.

Work on standardisation of welfare statistics is continuing. Statistical standards are at present being developed in the areas of 'Child Abuse' and 'Emergency and Supplementary Assistance' for future compilation and publication of statistics. The WELSTAT Project has also developed statistical standards for 'Persons in Juvenile Corrective Institutions and Children in Prison'.

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Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616  
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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Scope and coverage

The statistics relate to all persons adopted in a State or Territory of Australia during the year ended 30 June 1980. Only persons in respect of whom final adoption orders were made, are counted. They are counted irrespective of whether the adoption was arranged through an adoption organisation or not. Adopted persons born overseas are counted if an adoption order was made in Australia. Persons are counted in the State or Territory in which the adoption order was made, irrespective of where the person or his adoptive parents were living prior to the adoption, or where the adoption organisation is located.

2. Although the State and Territory welfare departments were able to provide a full count of the adoptions arranged by themselves or any approved adoption agency, some States experienced difficulty in obtaining the full range of information required for the tables. The main gaps in data are:

- (a) detailed data on non-relative adoptions in New South Wales;
- (b) age of persons adopted by non-relatives in the Australian Capital Territory.

3. An adult may be adopted and any such persons are included in the tables.

4. The different State and Territory legislative and administrative practices are summarised in Technical note 2. Note that N.S.W. uses a slightly different definition of parent adoption and relative adoption. In practice this had little impact on the interpretation of data in the tables, since the actual discrepancies are small in number.

### Collection method

5. Data were collected by each State or Territory welfare department from its own records relating to adoptions.

6. Editing of the data was undertaken by the WELSTAT Secretariat consisting of officers from the Department of Social Security and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

### Definitions

7. An *adoption* is the establishment, by means of an adoption order, of a child or adult as if they had been the son/daughter of a particular person or persons and establishes that person or those persons as the parents of the child or adult.

8. An *adopted person* is a child or adult who, as the result of an adoption order, has been established as if he/she were the son/daughter of a particular person or persons.

9. An *adoptive parent* is a person who has become the parent of a child or adult as the result of an adoption order.

10. An *adoption organisation* is the enterprise with the prime responsibility, for arranging the placement of a person with prospective adoptive parents or, if the person is already living with the prospective parents, for supervising that placement as an adoption placement.

11. A *parent* is a natural (i.e. biological) parent or spouse of a natural parent, adoptive parent through a previous adoption order or spouse of an adoptive parent.

12. An *other relative* is a grandparent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle of the child whether the relationship is that of whole blood or half blood or by marriage.

Technical note 1 contains more detailed definitions of the various classifications used for statistics of adoptions.

### Related publications

13. For further information on the operations of the welfare departments refer to the annual reports published by the various departments. The statistics contained in these reports may differ from those contained in this publication because of the use of definitions, aggregations, reference dates, etc. which differ from the standards used for the statistics in this publication.

14. Other publications which may be of interest include:

*Persons Under Guardianship and Children in Substitute Care, Australia, June 1980* (4405.0)

*Statistics of Adoptions—New South Wales* (4401.1)

*Adoption Statistics—Victoria*. Office of Research and Social Policy, Department of Community Welfare Services.

15. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

### Symbols and other usages

- nil or rounded to zero
- ... not applicable

16. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

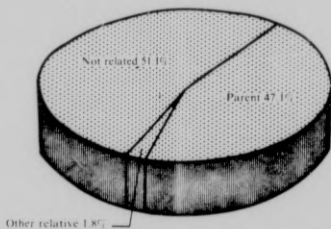
## All adoptions

In the year ended 30 June 1980, 3,337 persons were adopted in Australia (table 1). This number represented a continuation of the downward trend since 1971-72 in numbers of persons being adopted. This trend has come about primarily because of the steady reduction in non-relative adoptions. (Over 50 per cent since 1975).

Whether an adoption is arranged through an adoption organisation depends largely on the legal and administrative procedures operating in each State or Territory (See Technical note 2). Overall, nearly three quarters of adoptions in 1979-80 were arranged through an adoption organisation (Table 2). Almost all of the remaining quarter represent relative adoptions in New South Wales and Victoria, where respectively 330 out of 334 and all 524 relative adoptions were arranged without the direct involvement of an adoption organisation. In other States or Territories, the welfare department is directly involved with nearly all adoptions.

Diagram 1 examines the relationship between the adopted person and the adoptive parent. From the diagram it can be seen that for just under half of all adoptions in 1979-80 (48.9 per cent) the adopted person was related to the adoptive parents.

DIAGRAM 1. ADOPTED PERSONS: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENT TO ADOPTED PERSON, AUSTRALIA, 1979-80



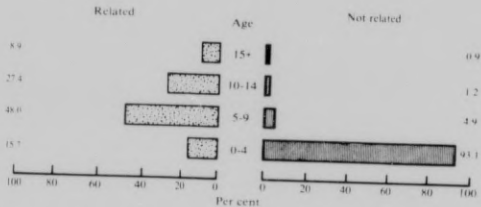
While non-relative adoptions accounted for 51.1 per cent of all adoptions at the national level in 1979-80 there was considerable variation in the percentage between States or Territories—from 37.6 per cent in the Australian Capital Territory to 62.7 per cent in Queensland (Table 3).

### Relative Adoptions

In 1979-80, 1,624 persons were adopted in Australia by relatives. Diagram 2 compares their age distribution with that of persons adopted by non-relatives. Persons adopted by relatives tended to be children of school age with nearly half (47.7 per cent) aged from 5 to 9 years and a further quarter (27.2 per cent) aged from 10 to 14 years.

Relative adoptions are usually made by the spouse of a natural parent, for example, where a step-father adopts the child of his wife. In 1979-80, 96.3 per cent of relative adoptions were made by a natural parent applying for an adoption order together with a spouse or by the spouse applying alone (Table 5).

DIAGRAM 2. ADOPTED PERSONS: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENT TO ADOPTED PERSON BY AGE(a) OF ADOPTED PERSON, AUSTRALIA, 1979-80



(a) At date of placement with adoptive parents where not related and at time of adoption order where related

### Non-relative adoptions

NOTE: Data on non-relative adoptions is limited by the unavailability of detailed data from New South Wales. The following analysis excludes the 519 non-relative adoptions which occurred in N.S.W. in 1979-80.

Over three quarters (77.0 per cent) of persons adopted by non-relatives in 1979-80 were under 1 year of age (Table 8).

Of the 1,181 persons adopted by non-relatives in 1979-80, 1,094, or 92.6 per cent, were born in Australia (Table 8). Of these most (91.7 per cent) were born ex-nuptially and almost two-thirds (62.1 per cent) were born to mothers aged under 20 years (Table 9).

TABLE 1. ADOPTED PERSONS: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON  
BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER, 1968-69 TO 1979-80

| Year ending<br>30 June | N.S.W. | Vic.  | Qld   | S.A.   | W.A. | Tas. | N.T. | A.C.T. | Aust.    |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|------|--------|----------|
| 1969                   | 1,715  | 1,789 | 1,448 | 797    | 540  | 348  | 36   | 100    | 6,773    |
| 1970                   | 2,346  | 2,031 | 1,500 | 834    | 703  | 243  | 61   | 102    | 7,820    |
| 1971                   | 3,275  | 2,057 | 1,562 | 879    | 301  | 289  | 68   | 122    | 8,553    |
| 1972                   | 4,539  | 1,768 | 1,774 | 776    | 457  | 303  | 54   | 127    | 9,798    |
| 1973                   | 3,315  | 1,765 | 1,678 | 649    | 717  | 268  | 29   | 121    | 8,542    |
| 1974                   | 1,936  | 1,557 | 1,458 | 558    | 783  | 268  | 25   | 120    | 6,705    |
| 1975—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 364    | 415   | 510   | 204    | 127  | 67   | n.a. | 89     | n.a.     |
| Non-relative           | 1,435  | 753   | 884   | 347    | 401  | 176  | n.a. | 34     | n.a.     |
| Total                  | 1,799  | 1,168 | 1,394 | 551    | 528  | 243  | 33   | 123    | 5,839    |
| 1976—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 364    | 394   | 537   | 221    | 202  | 48   | n.a. | 21     | n.a.     |
| Non-relative           | 1,085  | 638   | 575   | 328    | 329  | 163  | n.a. | 66     | n.a.     |
| Total                  | 1,449  | 1,032 | 1,112 | 549    | 531  | 211  | 19   | 87     | 4,990    |
| 1977—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 681    | 421   | 564   | 261    | 242  | 70   | n.a. | 31     | n.a.     |
| Non-relative           | 1,089  | 487   | 450   | 397    | 255  | 115  | n.a. | 51     | n.a.     |
| Total                  | 1,770  | 908   | 1,014 | 658    | 497  | 185  | 74   | 82     | 5,188    |
| 1978—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 306    | 462   | 299   | 186    | 203  | 64   | n.a. | 34     | n.a.     |
| Non-relative           | 762    | 489   | 361   | 320    | 214  | 100  | n.a. | 21     | n.a.     |
| Total                  | 1,068  | 951   | 660   | 506    | 417  | 164  | 46   | 55     | 3,867    |
| 1979—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 362    | 544   | 229   | 198    | 196  | 69   | n.a. | 41     | n.a.     |
| Non-relative           | 658    | 412   | 334   | 207    | 184  | 104  | n.a. | 15     | n.a.     |
| Total                  | 1,020  | 956   | 563   | (a)415 | 380  | 173  | 40   | 56     | (a)3,603 |
| 1980—                  |        |       |       |        |      |      |      |        |          |
| Relative               | 334    | 524   | 168   | 275    | 201  | 58   | 11   | 53     | 1,624    |
| Non-relative           | 519    | 390   | 282   | 187    | 186  | 90   | 14   | 32     | 1,700    |
| Total                  | 853    | 914   | 450   | (b)475 | 387  | 148  | 25   | 85     | (b)3,327 |

(a) Includes 10 adoptions arranged by solicitors directly with the South Australian Adoptions Court for which the relationship of the person is not known. (b) Includes 13 adoptions arranged by solicitors directly with the South Australian Adoptions Court for which the relationship of the person is not known.



TABLE 2. ADOPTED PERSONS : RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON  
BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER AND TYPE OF ADOPTION ORGANISATION, 1979-80

| State                         | Type of adoption organisation            |                                |                             | Total    |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                               | State or Territory<br>welfare department | Non-government<br>organisation | No adoption<br>organisation |          |
|                               |                                          | —number—                       |                             |          |
| New South Wales—              |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 4                                        | —                              | —                           | 334      |
| Non-relative                  | 356                                      | 163                            | 330                         | 519      |
| Total                         | 360                                      | 163                            | 330                         | 853      |
| Victoria—                     |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | —                                        | —                              | 524                         | 524      |
| Non-relative                  | 130                                      | 256                            | 4                           | 390      |
| Total                         | 130                                      | 256                            | 528                         | 914      |
| Queensland—                   |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 168                                      | —                              | —                           | 168      |
| Non-relative                  | 282                                      | —                              | —                           | 282      |
| Total                         | 450                                      | —                              | —                           | 450      |
| South Australia—              |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 257                                      | —                              | 18                          | 275      |
| Non-relative                  | 178                                      | 8                              | 1                           | 187      |
| Total                         | 435                                      | 8                              | 19                          | (a)475   |
| Western Australia—            |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 144                                      | 57                             | —                           | 201      |
| Non-relative                  | 163                                      | 23                             | —                           | 186      |
| Total                         | 307                                      | 80                             | —                           | 387      |
| Tasmania—                     |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 48                                       | —                              | 10                          | 58       |
| Non-relative                  | 69                                       | 21                             | —                           | 90       |
| Total                         | 117                                      | 21                             | 10                          | 148      |
| Northern Territory—           |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 11                                       | —                              | —                           | 11       |
| Non-relative                  | 14                                       | —                              | —                           | 14       |
| Total                         | 25                                       | —                              | —                           | 25       |
| Australian Capital Territory— |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative                      | 53                                       | —                              | —                           | 53       |
| Non-relative                  | 32                                       | —                              | —                           | 32       |
| Total                         | 85                                       | —                              | —                           | 85       |
| Australia—                    |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Relative—                     |                                          |                                |                             |          |
| Parents                       | 653                                      | 57                             | 854                         | 1,564    |
| Other relatives               | 32                                       | —                              | 28                          | 60       |
| Total                         | 685                                      | 57                             | 882                         | 1,624    |
| Non-relative                  | 1,224                                    | 471                            | 5                           | 1,700    |
| Total                         | 1,909                                    | 528                            | 887                         | (a)3,337 |
|                               |                                          | —per cent—                     |                             |          |
| Total                         | 57.0                                     | 16.0                           | 26.6                        | (a)100.0 |

(a) Includes 13 adoptions arranged by solicitors directly with the South Australian Adoptions Court for which the relationship of the person is not known.

TABLE 3. ADOPTED PERSONS: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON  
BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER, 1979-80

| State                        | Adopted by   |              |                 |              |              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                              | Relative     | Non-relative | Total           | Relative     | Non-relative | Total        |
|                              | — number —   |              |                 | — per cent — |              |              |
| New South Wales              | 334          | 519          | 853             | 39.2         | 60.8         | 100.0        |
| Victoria                     | 524          | 390          | 914             | 57.3         | 42.7         | 100.0        |
| Queensland                   | 168          | 282          | 450             | 37.3         | 62.7         | 100.0        |
| South Australia              | 275          | 187          | (a)475          | 59.5         | 40.5         | 100.0        |
| Western Australia            | 201          | 186          | 387             | 51.9         | 48.1         | 100.0        |
| Tasmania                     | 58           | 90           | 148             | 39.2         | 60.8         | 100.0        |
| Northern Territory           | 11           | 14           | 25              | 44.0         | 56.0         | 100.0        |
| Australian Capital Territory | 53           | 32           | 85              | 62.4         | 37.6         | 100.0        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>1,624</b> | <b>1,700</b> | <b>(a)3,337</b> | <b>48.9</b>  | <b>51.1</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) Includes 13 adoptions arranged by solicitors directly with the South Australia Adoptions Court for which the relationship of the person is not known. These are not included in the calculation of percentages.

TABLE 4. ADOPTED PERSONS: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON, 1979-80

|              | Adopted by      |                 |                       |              |              |              |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|              | Relative        | Non-relative    | Total                 | Relative     | Non-relative | Total        |
|              | — number —      |                 |                       | — per cent — |              |              |
| Males        | 785             | 891             | 1,676                 | 48.5         | 53.2         | 50.9         |
| Females      | (b)35           | 783             | 1,618                 | 51.5         | 46.8         | 49.1         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>(a)1,624</b> | <b>(b)1,700</b> | <b>(a)(b)(c)3,337</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) Includes 4 adoptions where sex of person is not known. (b) Includes 28 adoptions where sex of adopted person is not known. (c) Includes 13 adoptions arranged by solicitors directly with the South Australian Adoptions Court for which sex and the relationship of the person is not known.

TABLE 5. PERSONS ADOPTED BY RELATIVES: RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON  
BY AGE OF ADOPTED PERSON(a), 1979-80

| Adopted by      | Age of adopted person(a) |        |       |       |             |           | Total       |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|                 | 0-4                      | 5-9    | 10-14 | 15-17 | 18 and over | Not known |             |
|                 | MALES                    |        |       |       |             |           |             |
| Parents         | 117                      | 346    | 224   | 41    | 20          | 2         | 750         |
| Other relatives | 10                       | 10     | 12    | 2     | 1           | —         | 35          |
| Total           | 127                      | 356    | 236   | 43    | 21          | 2         | 785         |
| FEMALES         |                          |        |       |       |             |           |             |
| Parents         | 121                      | 407    | 196   | 57    | 21          | 8         | 810         |
| Other relatives | 5                        | 9      | 9     | —     | 1           | 1         | 25          |
| Total           | 126                      | 416    | 205   | 57    | 22          | 9         | 835         |
| PERSONS         |                          |        |       |       |             |           |             |
| Parents         | 238                      | (b)755 | 420   | 98    | 41          | (c)12     | (b)(c)1,564 |
| Other relatives | 15                       | 19     | 21    | 2     | 2           | 1         | 60          |
| Total           | 253                      | (b)774 | 441   | 100   | 43          | (c)13     | (b)(c)1,624 |

(a) At date of adoption order. (b) Includes 2 adoptions in Tasmania where sex of adopted person is not known. (c) Includes 2 adoptions in South Australia where sex of adopted person is not known.

TABLE 6. PERSONS ADOPTED BY RELATIVES: AGE OF ADOPTED PERSON(a)  
BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER, 1979-80

| State                        | 0-4        | 5-9           | 10-14      | 15-17      | 18<br>and over | Not<br>known | Total              |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| MALES                        |            |               |            |            |                |              |                    |
| New South Wales              | 15         | 80            | 62         | 8          | 2              | —            | 167                |
| Victoria                     | 50         | 117           | 67         | 16         | 5              | —            | 255                |
| Queensland                   | 7          | 37            | 19         | 6          | 6              | —            | 75                 |
| South Australia              | 26         | 49            | 39         | 5          | 7              | 2            | 128                |
| Western Australia            | 22         | 41            | 33         | 8          | —              | —            | 104                |
| Tasmania                     | 4          | 12            | 8          | —          | 1              | —            | 25                 |
| Northern Territory           | —          | 2             | 1          | —          | —              | —            | 3                  |
| Australian Capital Territory | 2          | 19            | 7          | —          | —              | —            | 28                 |
| <i>Australia</i>             | <i>126</i> | <i>357</i>    | <i>236</i> | <i>43</i>  | <i>21</i>      | <i>2</i>     | <i>785</i>         |
| FEMALES                      |            |               |            |            |                |              |                    |
| New South Wales              | 13         | 85            | 50         | 15         | 4              | —            | 167                |
| Victoria                     | 46         | 140           | 56         | 24         | 3              | —            | 269                |
| Queensland                   | 7          | 51            | 26         | 5          | 4              | —            | 93                 |
| South Australia              | 30         | 57            | 31         | 9          | 9              | 9            | 145                |
| Western Australia            | 24         | 46            | 24         | 2          | 1              | —            | 97                 |
| Tasmania                     | 4          | 16            | 8          | 2          | 1              | —            | 31                 |
| Northern Territory           | —          | 3             | 5          | —          | —              | —            | 8                  |
| Australian Capital Territory | 2          | 18            | 5          | —          | —              | —            | 25                 |
| <i>Australia</i>             | <i>126</i> | <i>416</i>    | <i>205</i> | <i>57</i>  | <i>22</i>      | <i>9</i>     | <i>835</i>         |
| PERSONS                      |            |               |            |            |                |              |                    |
| New South Wales              | 28         | 165           | 112        | 23         | 6              | —            | 334                |
| Victoria                     | 96         | 257           | 123        | 40         | 8              | —            | 524                |
| Queensland                   | 14         | 88            | 45         | 11         | 10             | —            | 168                |
| South Australia              | 56         | 106           | 70         | 14         | 16             | (b)13        | (b)275             |
| Western Australia            | 46         | 87            | 57         | 10         | 1              | —            | 201                |
| Tasmania                     | 8          | (c)30         | 16         | 2          | 2              | —            | (c)58              |
| Northern Territory           | —          | 5             | 6          | —          | —              | —            | 11                 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 4          | 37            | 12         | —          | —              | —            | 53                 |
| <i>Australia</i>             | <i>252</i> | <i>(c)775</i> | <i>441</i> | <i>100</i> | <i>43</i>      | <i>(b)13</i> | <i>(b)(c)1,624</i> |

(a) At date of adoption order. (b) Includes 2 adoptions in South Australia where sex of adopted person is not known. (c) Includes 2 adoptions in Tasmania where sex of adopted person is not known.

TABLE 7. PERSONS ADOPTED BY RELATIVES : RELATIONSHIP OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ADOPTED PERSON  
BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER AND AGE OF ADOPTED PERSON(a), 1979-80

| Relationship of<br>adoptive parents  | Age of adopted person(a) |      |       |       |             | Not<br>known | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------------|--------------|-------|
|                                      | 0-4                      | 5-9  | 10-14 | 15-17 | 18 and over |              |       |
|                                      | — number —               |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| <i>New South Wales—</i>              |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 25                       | 157  | 105   | 23    | 4           | —            | 314   |
| Other relative                       | 3                        | 8    | 7     | —     | 2           | —            | 20    |
| Total                                | 28                       | 165  | 112   | 23    | 6           | —            | 334   |
| <i>Victoria—</i>                     |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 93                       | 252  | 121   | 40    | 8           | —            | 514   |
| Other relative                       | 3                        | 5    | 2     | —     | —           | —            | 10    |
| Total                                | 96                       | 257  | 123   | 40    | 8           | —            | 524   |
| <i>Queensland—</i>                   |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 13                       | 88   | 43    | 11    | 10          | —            | 165   |
| Other relative                       | 1                        | —    | 2     | —     | —           | —            | 3     |
| Total                                | 14                       | 88   | 45    | 11    | 10          | —            | 168   |
| <i>South Australia—</i>              |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 54                       | 105  | 68    | 13    | 16          | 12           | 268   |
| Other relative                       | 2                        | 1    | 2     | 1     | —           | 1            | 7     |
| Total                                | 56                       | 106  | 70    | 14    | 16          | 13           | 275   |
| <i>Western Australia—</i>            |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 43                       | 84   | 57    | 9     | 1           | —            | 194   |
| Other relative                       | 3                        | 3    | —     | 1     | —           | —            | 7     |
| Total                                | 46                       | 87   | 57    | 10    | 1           | —            | 201   |
| <i>Tasmania—</i>                     |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 6                        | 30   | 14    | 2     | 2           | —            | 54    |
| Other relative                       | 2                        | —    | 2     | —     | —           | —            | 4     |
| Total                                | 8                        | 30   | 16    | 2     | 2           | —            | 58    |
| <i>Northern Territory—</i>           |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | —                        | 5    | 2     | —     | —           | —            | 7     |
| Other relative                       | —                        | —    | 4     | —     | —           | —            | 4     |
| Total                                | —                        | 5    | 6     | —     | —           | —            | 11    |
| <i>Australian Capital Territory—</i> |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 4                        | 34   | 10    | —     | —           | —            | 48    |
| Other relative                       | —                        | 3    | 2     | —     | —           | —            | 5     |
| Total                                | 4                        | 37   | 12    | —     | —           | —            | 53    |
| <i>Australia—</i>                    |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 238                      | 755  | 420   | 98    | 41          | 12           | 1,564 |
| Other relative                       | 14                       | 20   | 21    | 2     | 2           | 1            | 60    |
| Total                                | 252                      | 775  | 441   | 100   | 43          | 13           | 1,624 |
|                                      | — per cent —             |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| <i>Australia—</i>                    |                          |      |       |       |             |              |       |
| Parent                               | 15.2                     | 48.3 | 26.9  | 6.3   | 2.6         | 0.8          | 100.0 |
| Other relative                       | 25.0                     | 31.7 | 35.0  | 3.3   | 3.3         | 1.6          | 100.0 |
| Total                                | 15.6                     | 47.7 | 27.2  | 6.2   | 2.6         | 0.8          | 100.0 |

(a) At date of adoption order.

TABLE 8. PERSONS ADOPTED BY NON-RELATIVES(a) : AGE(b) AND BIRTHPLACE OF ADOPTED PERSON, 1979-80

| Age of adopted person(b)       | Born in Australia | Born outside Australia | Total           | Per cent     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Under 2 months                 | 638               | 10                     | 648             | 54.9         |
| Over 2 months but under 1 year | 249               | 12                     | 261             | 22.1         |
| 1-4 years                      | 107               | 16                     | 123             | 10.4         |
| 5-9 years                      | 37                | 17                     | 54              | 4.6          |
| 10-14 years                    | 12                | 1                      | 13              | 1.1          |
| 15-17 years                    | 3                 | —                      | 3               | 0.3          |
| 18 years and older             | 7                 | —                      | 7               | 0.6          |
| Age not known                  | 41                | 10                     | (c)72           | 6.1          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>1,094</b>      | <b>66</b>              | <b>(c)1,161</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

(a) Excludes 519 non-relative adoptions in New South Wales. (b) At date of placement. (c) Includes 21 adoptions in South Australia where birthplace and age is not known.

TABLE 9. AUSTRALIAN-BORN PERSONS ADOPTED BY NON-RELATIVES(a): NUPTIALITY OF BIRTH OF ADOPTED PERSON AND AGE OF NATURAL MOTHER(b), 1979-80

| Nuptiality of<br>birth of<br>adopted person | Age of mother(b) (years) |              |       |       |       |                |              | Total    |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|--------------|----------|
|                                             | Under 15<br>(c)          | 15-19<br>(c) | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35<br>and over | Not<br>known |          |
| —number—                                    |                          |              |       |       |       |                |              |          |
| Nuptial—                                    |                          |              |       |       |       |                |              |          |
| Males                                       | —                        | 13           | 18    | 10    | 1     | 2              | 6            | 50       |
| Females                                     | —                        | 7            | 14    | 9     | 2     | 3              | 5            | 40       |
| Persons                                     | —                        | 20           | 32    | 19    | 3     | 5              | 11           | 90       |
| Ex-nuptial—                                 |                          |              |       |       |       |                |              |          |
| Males                                       | 15                       | 336          | 119   | 21    | 10    | 11             | 22           | 534      |
| Females                                     | 23                       | 284          | 107   | 26    | 3     | 10             | 16           | 469      |
| Persons                                     | 38                       | 620          | 226   | 47    | 13    | 21             | 38           | 1,003    |
| Total—                                      |                          |              |       |       |       |                |              |          |
| Males                                       | 15                       | 349          | 137   | 31    | 11    | 13             | 28           | 584      |
| Females                                     | 23                       | 291          | 121   | 35    | 5     | 13             | 21           | 509      |
| Persons                                     | 38                       | (d)641       | 258   | 66    | 16    | 26             | 49           | (d)1,094 |
| —per cent—                                  |                          |              |       |       |       |                |              |          |
| Nuptial                                     | —                        | 22.2         | 35.6  | 21.1  | 3.3   | 5.6            | 12.2         | 100.0    |
| Ex-nuptial                                  | 3.8                      | 61.8         | 22.5  | 4.7   | 1.3   | 2.1            | 3.8          | 100.0    |
| Total                                       | 3.5                      | 58.6         | 23.6  | 6.0   | 1.5   | 2.4            | 4.5          | 100.0    |

(a) Excludes Australian-born persons adopted by non-relatives in N.S.W. (b) At birth of adopted person. (c) Age groupings for Western Australia are 'under 16' and '16-19'. (d) Includes one adoption where nuptiality of birth of adopted person is not known.

TABLE 10. AUSTRALIAN-BORN PERSONS ADOPTED BY NON-RELATIVES(a): NUPTIALITY OF BIRTH OF ADOPTED PERSON BY STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER AND AGE OF NATURAL MOTHER, 1979-80

| Nuptiality of birth of adopted person | Age of mother(b) (years) |           |       |       |       |             | Not known | Total    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------------|-----------|----------|
|                                       | Under 15 (c)             | 15-19 (c) | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35 and over |           |          |
| <i>Victoria—</i>                      |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | 11        | 13    | 5     | 2     | 2           | 8         | 41       |
| Ex-nuptial                            | 5                        | 198       | 78    | 15    | 6     | 12          | 17        | 331      |
| Total                                 | 5                        | 209       | 91    | 20    | 8     | 14          | 25        | 372      |
| <i>Queensland—</i>                    |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | 5         | 5     | 5     | —     | 1           | —         | 16       |
| Ex-nuptial                            | 4                        | 160       | 74    | 11    | 4     | 6           | —         | 259      |
| Total                                 | 4                        | (d)166    | 79    | 16    | 4     | 7           | —         | (d)276   |
| <i>South Australia—</i>               |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | 2         | 2     | 1     | —     | —           | —         | 5        |
| Ex-nuptial                            | 16                       | 106       | 6     | 5     | 1     | —           | —         | 134      |
| Total                                 | 16                       | 108       | 8     | 6     | 1     | —           | —         | 139      |
| <i>Western Australia—</i>             |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | 2         | 6     | 7     | 1     | —           | —         | 16       |
| Ex-nuptial                            | 13                       | 93        | 43    | 11    | —     | 1           | —         | 161      |
| Total                                 | 13                       | 95        | 49    | 18    | 1     | 1           | —         | 177      |
| <i>Tasmania—</i>                      |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | —         | 5     | 1     | —     | 2           | 1         | 9        |
| Ex-nuptial                            | —                        | 39        | 14    | 1     | 1     | 1           | 20        | 76       |
| Total                                 | —                        | 39        | 19    | 2     | 1     | 3           | 21        | 85       |
| <i>Northern Territory—</i>            |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | —         | 1     | —     | —     | —           | —         | 1        |
| Ex-nuptial                            | —                        | 7         | 4     | —     | 1     | 1           | —         | 13       |
| Total                                 | —                        | 7         | 5     | —     | 1     | 1           | —         | 14       |
| <i>Australian Capital Territory—</i>  |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | —         | —     | —     | —     | —           | 2         | 2        |
| Ex-nuptial                            | —                        | 17        | 7     | 4     | —     | —           | 1         | 29       |
| Total                                 | —                        | 17        | 7     | 4     | —     | —           | 3         | 31       |
| <i>Australia—</i>                     |                          |           |       |       |       |             |           |          |
| Nuptial                               | —                        | 20        | 32    | 19    | 3     | 5           | 11        | 90       |
| Ex-nuptial                            | 38                       | 620       | 226   | 47    | 13    | 21          | 38        | 1,003    |
| Total                                 | 38                       | (d)641    | 258   | 66    | 16    | 26          | 49        | (d)1,094 |

(a) Excludes Australian-born persons adopted by non-relatives in N.S.W. (b) At birth of adopted person. (c) Age groupings for Western Australia are 'under 16' and '16-19'. (d) Includes one adoption where the nuptiality of birth of adopted person is not known.

TABLE 11. AUSTRALIAN-BORN PERSONS ADOPTED BY NON-RELATIVES(a): STATE OR TERRITORY OF ADOPTION ORDER AND AGE OF NATURAL MOTHER(b), 1979-80

| State                                | Age of mother(b) (years) |              |       |       |       |                | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|
|                                      | Under 15<br>(c)          | 15-19<br>(c) | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35<br>and over |       |
| <i>Victoria—</i>                     |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | 1                        | 116          | 53    | 10    | 6     | 8              | 210   |
| Female                               | 4                        | 93           | 38    | 10    | 2     | 6              | 162   |
| Total                                | 5                        | 209          | 91    | 20    | 8     | 14             | 372   |
| <i>Queensland—</i>                   |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | 2                        | 93           | 42    | 8     | 2     | 5              | 152   |
| Female                               | 2                        | 73           | 37    | 8     | 2     | 2              | 124   |
| Total                                | 4                        | 166          | 79    | 16    | 4     | 7              | 276   |
| <i>South Australia—</i>              |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | 6                        | 54           | 4     | —     | 1     | —              | 65    |
| Female                               | 10                       | 54           | 4     | 6     | —     | —              | 74    |
| Total                                | 16                       | 108          | 8     | 6     | 1     | —              | 139   |
| <i>Western Australia—</i>            |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | 6                        | 56           | 23    | 12    | 1     | —              | 98    |
| Female                               | 7                        | 39           | 26    | 6     | —     | 1              | 79    |
| Total                                | 13                       | 95           | 49    | 18    | 1     | 1              | 177   |
| <i>Tasmania—</i>                     |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | —                        | 21           | 12    | —     | —     | —              | 45    |
| Female                               | —                        | 18           | 7     | 2     | 1     | 3              | 40    |
| Total                                | —                        | 39           | 19    | 2     | 1     | 3              | 85    |
| <i>Northern Territory—</i>           |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | —                        | 1            | 2     | —     | 1     | —              | 4     |
| Female                               | —                        | 6            | 3     | —     | —     | 1              | 10    |
| Total                                | —                        | 7            | 5     | —     | 1     | 1              | 14    |
| <i>Australian Capital Territory—</i> |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | —                        | 9            | 1     | 1     | —     | —              | 11    |
| Female                               | —                        | 8            | 6     | 3     | —     | —              | 20    |
| Total                                | —                        | 17           | 7     | 4     | —     | —              | 31    |
| <i>Australia—</i>                    |                          |              |       |       |       |                |       |
| Male                                 | 15                       | 350          | 137   | 31    | 11    | 13             | 585   |
| Female                               | 23                       | 291          | 121   | 35    | 5     | 13             | 509   |
| Total                                | 38                       | 641          | 258   | 66    | 16    | 26             | 1,094 |

(a) Excludes Australian-born persons adopted by non-relatives in N.S.W. (b) At birth of adopted person. (c) Age groupings for Western Australia are 'under 16' and '16-19'.

## TECHNICAL NOTE 1

### Standards for statistics of adoptions.

The definitions and classifications set out below are extracted from Standardisation of Social Welfare Statistics (WELSTAT): Standards for Adoption Statistics. Copies of the full set of standards may be obtained from the WELSTAT Secretariat, Department of Social Security, P.O. Box 1, Woden A.C.T. 2606.

### Definitions

**Child** A person who is under 18 years of age. Note that in State adoption legislation 'child' may be defined to include a person aged 18 or more for whom an adoption order is sought or has been made.

**Adult** A person who is aged 18 years or more.

**Adoption Order** A court or administrative order, made under legislation controlling the adoption of children, whereby a child or adult becomes the child of a person or persons, and that person or those persons become the parents of the child or adult, as if the child or adult had been born to the person or persons in lawful marriage. Excludes *legitimation* orders made under the Commonwealth *Marriage Act 1961*.

**Adoption** The legal effect of an adoption order, i.e. the establishment of a child or adult as the child of a person or persons, and the establishment of that person or those persons as the parents of the child or adult, as if the child or adult had been born to the person or persons in lawful marriage.

**Adopted Person** A child or adult who has become the child of a person or persons as the result of an adoption order.

**Adoptive Parent** A person who has become the parent of a child or adult as the result of an adoption order.

**Adoption Organisation** A person's adoption organisation at a particular point of time is the enterprise with the prime responsibility, at that point of time, for arranging the placement of the person with prospective adoptive parents or, if the person is already living with prospective adoptive parents, for supervising that placement as an adoption placement. The following points should be noted.

- A person may have more than one adoption organisation between surrender for adoption and adoption.
- Most, if not all, persons adopted by parents and other relatives will not have had an adoption organisation.
- The State or Territory welfare department should not be considered the adoption organisation merely because it has to approve all adoption placements, or because it makes the application to the court for the adoption order or grants the adoption order.

- Responsibility for arranging, or supervising, the placement of a person in foster care does not of itself qualify an organisation as the person's adoption organisation, whether or not the person was later adopted by the foster parents.

**Relative** Parent or other relative, as defined below.

**Parent** Natural (i.e. biological) parent, spouse of a natural parent, adoptive parent or spouse of adoptive parent. Excludes foster parents, unless they fit the definition otherwise.

**Other Relative** Grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle, whether the relationship is of the whole blood or half-blood or by marriage, and notwithstanding that the relationship is traced through, or to, a person whose parents were not married to each other at the time of his birth or subsequently or depends upon the adoption of any person.

**Non-relative** A person who is not a parent or other relative, as defined above.

### Age of adopted person

There are several possible points of time in the adoption process at which the age of an adopted person can be measured. The standards used are given below.

- For statistics of persons adopted by relatives, age is at the date of the adoption order.
- For statistics of persons adopted by non-relatives, age is at the date of placement with the adoptive parents, that is, the date on which the adopted person began to live with the persons who ultimately adopted him. Where the adopted person had more than one distinct period of residence with his adoptive parents, the date of placement is the date on which the last such period began.

### Nuptiality of adopted person

**Nuptial** An adopted person is classified as nuptial if the person's natural parents were legally married to each other at the time of the person's birth. Includes cases where the adopted person's natural father was legally married to the person's natural mother but died before the person's birth. Also includes all cases where the adopted person had been previously adopted.

**Ex-nuptial** An adopted person is classified as ex-nuptial if the person's natural parents were not legally married to each other at the time of the person's birth. Excludes cases where the adopted person's natural father was legally married to the person's natural mother but died before the person's birth. Also excludes all cases where the adopted person had been previously adopted.



## TECHNICAL NOTE 2

**Summary of State or Territory legislative and administrative practices with respect to adoptions.***New South Wales*

The Adoption of Children Act, defines a child as a person under the age of 21 years, or a person who has attained that age and in respect of whom an adoption order is sought or has been made. The Court may not make an order for the adoption of a child unless the Director of Youth and Community Services has made a report concerning the proposed adoption. Application to the Court for an adoption order must be made on behalf of the applicant(s) by the Director of Youth and Community Services or the principal officer of a private adoption agency, except in the case of an application for adoption by two persons, one of whom is a natural parent or relative of the child (grandparent, uncle, or aunt). In such a case, the application may be made on behalf of the applicants by a solicitor, provided that, in the case involving a relative, the consent of the natural parent(s) has been given.

Charitable organisations desiring to conduct negotiations and make arrangements with a view to the adoption of children may apply to the director of Youth and Community Services for approval as private adoption agencies. At 30 June 1979 and 30 June 1980 there were three approved private adoption agencies.

The consent of a child's parent(s) or guardian(s) is required to an adoption, except in certain circumstances when it may be dispensed with by the Court. Consent may be in the form of a consent to an adoption by a natural parent or relative of the child; in other cases, the consent is a general consent to the adoption of the child by any person(s) in accordance with the law of New South Wales. If 12 years of age or over, the child's consent is necessary, unless the Court dispenses with it owing to special circumstances.

Upon the making of an adoption order, all rights and liabilities between the child and his natural parents terminate. The adopted child has, as his surname, the surname of his adoptive parent(s) and becomes a child of the adopter(s) as if he had been born to the adopter(s) in lawful wedlock.

For these statistics, *parent* includes only natural parents and adoptive parents as a result of a previous adoption order. If the spouse of one of these parents is applying for an adoption order alone, he/she is considered a 'non-relative'. 'Relative of the adopted person' only includes grandparent, uncle or aunt; brothers and sisters are considered to be 'non-relatives'.

*Victoria*

Adoption in Victoria is determined by the *Adoption of Children Act 1964*. The Court having jurisdiction under the Act to make Adoption Orders is either the Supreme or County Court, with most adoption applications being heard in the County Court.

Arrangements for the adoption of children may only be made by the Department of Community Welfare Services or by Private Adoption Agencies approved under the Act by the Minister for Community Welfare Services. The only exception to this is the arrangement for the adoption of children by a natural parent and his/her new spouse, by grandparents or by aunts or uncles. These arrangements may be made between the parties concerned; however, the Court cannot make an Order for adoption without a report from the Department of Community Welfare Services.

*Queensland*

The *Adoption of Children Act 1964-1979* empowers the Director, Department of Children's Services, as the sole authority to arrange adoptions and make Adoption Orders in Queensland. Any private arrangement, even among relatives, is prohibited and thus constitutes an offence.

The Act also clearly states that for the purposes of adoption the welfare and interests of the child concerned shall be regarded as the paramount consideration. It is essential therefore, that when the child is made available for adoption, the best possible placement should be secured for that child. The Department of Children's Services has a strong obligation to all parties concerned with the adoption process, including the single mother or parents signing the adoption consent.

With the making of an adoption order, the rights and responsibilities of the biological parents are terminated.

*South Australia*

The legislative base for the Community Welfare Department's adoption program is the *Adoption of Children Act, 1966-78*.

A central Adoptions Unit provides all administrative support for three classes of adoption; *Placement Adoption* wherein children placed via the Adoption of Children Act under the guardianship of the Director-General for adoption are placed with approved applicants, *Particular Child Adoption* or adoption with relatives, typically children to the marriage and Adoption of Overseas children.

A small number of adoptions in South Australia are undertaken via solicitors and in these cases there is no mechanism for compulsory notification of completed adoptions to the Department. There are no operating adoption agencies for Australian-born children other than the Department for Community Welfare in South Australia.

*Western Australia*

In Western Australia the Department for Community Welfare is the only licensed adoption agency and it is an offence against the *Adoption of Children Act, 1896-1980* for anyone to place a child with a view to adoption without the written consent of the Director.

Under the Adoption of Children Act the Director of the Department becomes the guardian of all children for whom a consent to adoption has been signed until such time as an adoption order is made unless the consent is lawfully revoked within thirty days of being signed.

However, there are provisions for a Family Court Judge to make other provisions for guardianship of the child and for the Director to execute an Instrument in writing to renounce the guardianship.

The Director has the right to approve all homes before the placement of a child for adoption and may, in respect of a child for whom he is guardian under the Adoption of Children Act, and without affecting the status of the child, extend to that child such benefits as he may have extended to him if the child were a Ward within the meaning of the *Child Welfare Act, 1947-1977*.

#### *Tasmania*

Under the provisions of the Adoption of Children Act 1968, All adoptions, with the exception of certain ones where children are adopted by relatives (for whom solicitors may act) are arranged and processed by the Department, or by the Catholic Private Adoption Agency. All applicants require the approval of the Director of Social Welfare before an unrelated child may be placed with them for adoption purposes.

Anyone who attempts to either obtain or place an unrelated child for adoption by private arrangement may be subject to prosecution under the Act.

The Department's responsibilities involve the investigation and assessment of applicants wishing to adopt, the interviewing and counselling of single mothers and other parents who may wish to consider offering their children for adoption, the selection and matching of approved applicants with available children and the preparation and presentation to courts of applications for orders of adoption. In addition, the Department also investigates applications for couples wishing to adopt children who are relatives and prepares reports for the court.

The Department makes special efforts to arrange suitable adoptive placements for children with *special needs*. These may include children with some existing or potential risk to health or normal development, children of mixed race and older children, including some wards of the State.

#### *Northern Territory*

Adoptions in the Northern Territory are regulated by the Adoption of the Children Act 1979. The Director of Child Welfare, of the Community Welfare Division, the Department of Community Development, is responsible for the arrangement of all adoptions in the Northern Territory.

#### *Australian Capital Territory*

Adoption of children in the ACT is legitimated by the Adoption of Children Ordinance 1965 as amended. At present the Welfare Branch in the Department of the Capital Territory is the only adoption agency in the Territory although the legislation provides for the establishment of other agencies.