



DIVORCES AUSTRALIA 1979

CATALOGUE NO. 3307.0

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS Canberra

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**DIVORCES
AUSTRALIA
1979**

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

The *Family Law Act 1975* came into operation throughout Australia on 5 January 1976, repealing the Matrimonial Causes legislation which had been operative since 1961. Under Family Law legislation the irrevocable breakdown of the marriage is the only ground on which a dissolution of marriage is granted. This ground is established by the husband and wife having lived apart for 12 months or more and there being no reasonable likelihood of reconciliation. Applications for nullity of marriage under Family Law legislation must be on the ground that the marriage is void because of failure to meet a legal requirement such as that neither party be already lawfully married to another person. There is no provision for judicial separation under Family Law legislation.

2. Successful applicants for a decree of dissolution of marriage under Family Law legislation are initially granted a decree nisi. This becomes absolute after one month unless it is rescinded, appealed against, or the Court has not declared its satisfaction as to proper arrangements having been made for the welfare of children involved.

3. At the time of the introduction of the Family Law Act there were applications pending for dissolution or nullity of marriage which had been previously filed under the Matrimonial Causes legislation. Family Law legislation provided that these cases could be continued under the superseded legislation or transferred and heard under Family Law legislation. The publication *Divorces 1976* (3307.0) differentiated between those cases in which a dissolution of marriage was granted under Matrimonial Causes legislation and those cases in which a dissolution of marriage was granted under Family Law legislation. Such differentiation is not made for subsequent years.

Statistics

4. The statistics shown in this publication relate to calendar years and are compiled by the ABS from a Statistical Report made out in respect of each application which resulted in a decree absolute or nullity of marriage being granted. Such reports are forwarded to the ABS on finalisation of proceedings. A reproduction of the Statistical Report appears in Appendix A.

5. In the interpretation of data it is important to bear in mind that the availability of judges and the complexity of the cases brought before them can affect the number of decrees made absolute or granted in any one year. A rise in numbers in one year may be due wholly or in part to the clearing of a backlog of cases

from an earlier period. In addition, of course, legislative changes and the expectation of new legislation, rules and practices, may affect the numbers of applications.

State where application heard

6. The State breakup shown in certain tables in this publication is based on the location of the Family Courts determining the cases. The rates for some States or Territories are affected by persons from State boundary areas applying to the nearest Family Court rather than the court in their State of residence.

Definitions

7. *Divorces*. The term divorce as used in this publication includes decrees of dissolution of marriage granted or made absolute, nullities of marriage and, where application was made before 5 January 1976, judicial separations granted.

8. *Dissolution*. This term is used in this publication to identify decrees of dissolution of marriage granted or made absolute only. It excludes nullities and judicial separations.

9. *Divorce rates*. In this publication several types of rates are shown. In all cases the rates are expressed per 1,000 of the appropriate population.

The *crude divorce rate* is the number of divorces per 1,000 of the mean population. (In the interpretation of this rate it must be kept in mind that a large varying proportion of the population used in the denominator is unmarried or below the minimum age of marriage.)

The *age-specific dissolution rate* (per 1,000 population) relates the number of dissolutions by age at decree made absolute to the population in specific age groups. Males under 18 and females under 16 are excluded from the population.

The *age-specific dissolution rate* (per 1,000 married population) relates the number of dissolutions to the married population in specific age groups. Those classified as *permanently separated* are included in the married population.

10. *Children are children of the marriage* under 18 years at time of application as defined by the Family Law Act 1975. These include adopted and ex-nuptial children and children from any former marriage. Children over 18 years of age at the time of application for dissolution or who are married, are not subject to custody and guardianship orders and are excluded from the statistics.

11. *Duration of marriage* is the interval between the date of marriage and the date the decree was made absolute. In Tables 11 and 12, the concept of *Duration of Cohabitation* has been used, i.e. the interval between the date of marriage and the date of final separation. Date of final separation is the date given on the application for divorce from which time onwards the husband and wife are taken to have lived apart for at least 12 months. However, if the parties resumed cohabitation on one occasion, but again separated within a period of 3 months and remained living apart up to the date of filing the application, the periods of living separately, may be aggregated as if they were one continuous period.

Additional statistics available

12. In some cases, the ABS can also make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, data tape, computer printout, clerically-extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. A list of tables produced annually is attached in Appendix B.

State statistics

13. In this publication detailed statistics are provided for Australia but summary figures are given for States. More detailed State statistics are available in publications issued by the ABS State offices.

Related publications

14. Other ABS publications which may be of interest are:

Marriages, Australia, 1978 (3306.0)

Australian Demographic Statistics Quarterly (3101.0)

15. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0) which is available free of charge from any office of the ABS.

Symbols and other usages

n.a. not available

— nil or rounded to zero

r revised since previous issue

— break in continuity of series (where drawn across a column between consecutive figures)

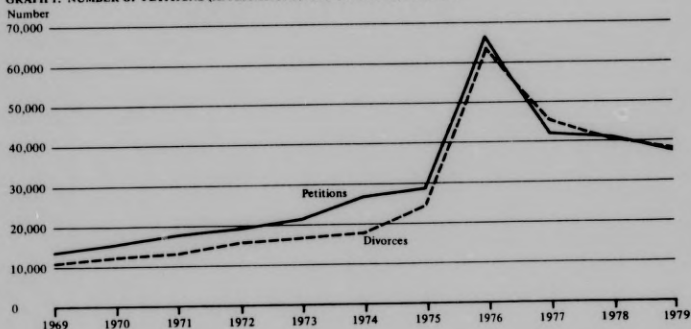
16. Where figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In 1979, 37,873 divorces were granted. This is a decrease of 2,760 (6.8 per cent) on the number granted in 1978. However, the number of divorces in 1979 was still 56 per cent higher than the number granted in 1975 (24,307), the last year of operation of the Matrimonial Causes Act.

In 1976, the first year of operation of the Family Law Act, the number of divorces increased to 63,267. High numbers were expected to follow the legislative changes, not only because they reduced costs, simplified procedures and removed the need to establish cause, but also because some people may have held over their applications in 1974 and 1975 in anticipation of the new legislation. Between 1974 and 1975, the number of petitions lodged increased by only 6 per cent, compared with increases of 12 per cent for 1972 to 1973 and 26 per cent from 1973 to 1974.

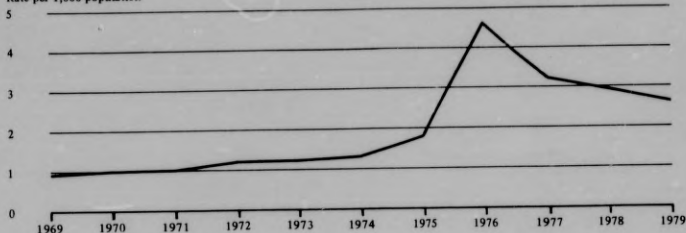
GRAPH 1. NUMBER OF PETITIONS (APPLICATIONS) AND DIVORCES, 1969-1979



Petitions (called applications under the Family Law Act), and also divorces granted, declined substantially in 1977. The trend of decline continued in 1978 and 1979, but it is clear from the graphs 'Number of divorces' and 'Crude divorce rates' that a return to the levels of 1975 and earlier years has not occurred.

GRAPH 2. CRUDE DIVORCE RATES, 1969-1979

Rate per 1,000 population



The crude divorce rate rose from a level of below 2.0 per 1,000 population before 1976 to reach a peak of 4.6 per 1,000 population in 1976 and then declined to 2.6 in 1979.

Marital status at marriage

The decline in dissolutions (divorces excluding nullities) between 1978 and 1979 occurred almost entirely among those for whom the marriage was the first. In 1978, there were 37,128 husbands (91.4 per cent of all dissolutions) and 36,825 wives (90.7 per cent) in this category. In 1979, the numbers dropped to 34,241 husbands (90.5 per cent) and 34,100 wives (90.1 per cent).

In 1979, 8.2 per cent of husbands and 7.9 per cent of wives had been previously divorced, both proportions being higher than those for 1978.

Duration of marriage

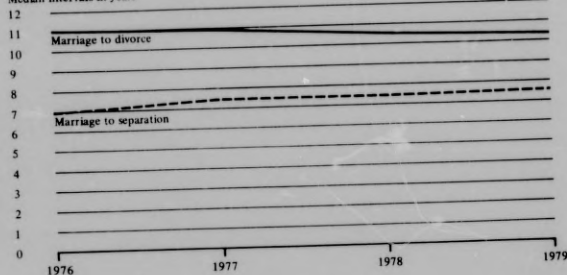
The proportion of dissolutions involving marriages of short durations continued to increase. In 1979, 20.1 per cent of dissolutions were of marriages of under 5 years' duration. The corresponding figures for recent years were - 1978: 19.3 per cent, 1977: 17.3 per cent, and 1976: 15.5 per cent. Before 1976, under the Matrimonial Causes Act, the proportion of marriages of this duration was around 10 per cent.

The median duration of dissolved marriages was 10.5 years in 1978 and 10.3 years in 1979. The median duration has declined gradually from about 11.8 years in the early 1970s.

Since 1976, under the Family Law Act, information has been collected on the date of final separation, which is the date from which the husband and wife are taken to have lived apart. The median interval between marriage and final separation (i.e. duration of cohabitation) was 7.5 years in 1979. While the median interval between marriage and divorce (dissolution) has declined since 1976, the median duration of cohabitation has increased. The difference between the two medians has therefore narrowed, from 4.1 years in 1976 to 2.8 years in 1979. This is shown in the following graph.

GRAPH 3. DURATION OF MARRIAGE 1976-1979

Median intervals in years



Children of the marriage

There has been a slight increase in the proportion of dissolutions involving marriages with no children. In the four years 1972 to 1975 before the Family Law Act, 32.4 per cent of divorces related to marriages without children. In the four years 1976 to 1979 since the operation of the Family Law Act, this proportion increased to 37.3 per cent. Part of this increase reflects a general decline in the number of large size families and may not necessarily reflect a change in the tendency to divorce in this group.

In 1979, in 38.7 per cent of all dissolutions there were no children of the marriage, in 21.6 per cent one child, in 25.1 per cent two children, and in 10.2 per cent three children. The average number of children, excluding marriages without children, has remained at two for the last three years. The total number of children involved has fallen in correspondence with the fall in dissolutions from 51,599 in 1978 to 46,130 in 1979, a fall of 10.6 per cent.

Of marriages with children in 1979, 51.6 per cent had the youngest child aged less than 7 and 34.2 per cent had a child aged less than 5.

Age at dissolution

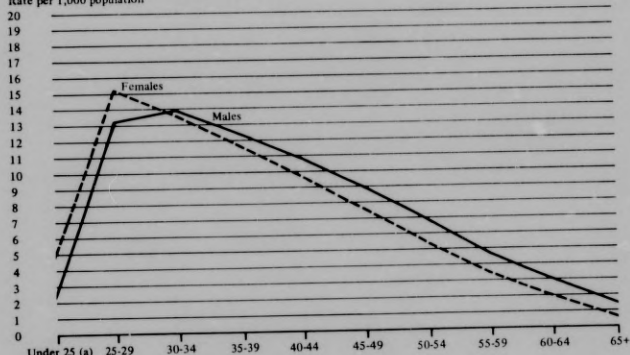
In 1979, 5.2 per thousand males aged 18 and over, and 5.3 per thousand females aged 16 and over were granted dissolutions. The rates were highest amongst males aged 30-34 (13.9 per thousand) and females aged 25-29 (15.2 per thousand).

The dissolution rates fell between 1978 and 1979 at all ages, except for women aged 65 and over. The falls were especially large for those under 25 (16.7 per cent for males and 12.3 per cent for females).

The median ages at the time of divorce were 35.6 years for males and 32.8 years for females in respect of 1979 dissolutions. Median ages have declined gradually in recent years but remained virtually the same in 1979 as in 1978.

The following graph shows the age-specific dissolution rates for 1979.

GRAPH 4. AGE-SPECIFIC DISSOLUTION RATES
Rate per 1,000 population



(a) The population denominators exclude males under 18 and females under 16.

Another measure, which relates dissolutions in each age group to the married population of that age group, is preferred for some purposes. However, such rates have been calculated only for census years, when reliable population data by marital status is available.

Age at marriage

In 1979, there were 3,307 dissolutions (8.7 per cent of all dissolutions) in which both husband and wife were under 20 at the time of marriage, compared with 3,768 (9.3 per cent) in 1978. There were an additional 11,209 dissolutions (29.7 per cent) in which only the wife was below 20 at the time of marriage, and 668 dissolutions (1.8 per cent) in which only the husband married below age 20. These proportions are high compared with the proportion of young marriages involving persons under 20 years of age in recent years. In the four years 1975 to 1978, in only 4.5 per cent of all marriages were both partners under age 20, in 20.8 per cent only the bride was under 20 and in 1.1 per cent only the bridegroom was under 20. It appears that marriages with both or one partner very young at marriage are more exposed to the risk of divorce.

GRAPH 5. DISTRIBUTION OF DIVORCES BY AGE AT MARRIAGE

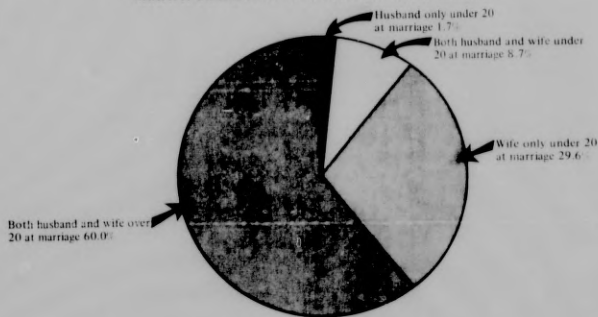


TABLE 1. DIVORCES, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1946 TO 1979

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T. (a)	Australia
TOTAL DIVORCES (b)									
Annual averages—									
1946-50	3,210	1,802	869	647	709	206	6	20	7,469
1951-55	3,241	1,741	733	619	567	218	14	26	7,159
1956-60	3,212	1,508	723	547	555	197	16	30	6,788
1961-65	3,222	1,752	935	786	551	261	34	70	7,611
1966-70	4,960	2,312	1,203	971	788	325	39	130	10,738
1971-75	7,572	4,041	1,876	1,498	1,548	490	76	304	17,405
Annual totals—									
1974	7,139	4,465	1,844	1,566	1,761	536	64	369	17,744
1975	10,737	5,683	2,689	1,819	2,241	591	87	460	24,307
1976—									
Matrimonial Causes	5,148	3,712	2,961	1,407	1,774	331	35	375	15,743
Family Law	17,009	12,921	6,658	4,741	3,044	1,430	388	1,333	47,524
Total	22,157	16,633	9,619	6,148	4,818	1,761	423	1,708	63,267
1977	15,785	10,859	7,302	4,422	3,975	1,134	345	1,353	45,175
1978	13,806	10,830	6,110	3,806	3,387	1,132	291	1,271	40,633
1979	12,615	9,471	5,817	3,797	3,397	1,167	263	1,346	37,873
DISSOLUTIONS (b)									
Annual totals—									
1974	7,117	4,450	1,833	1,561	1,761	535	64	367	17,688
1975	10,723	5,663	2,684	1,812	2,240	591	87	457	24,257
1976—									
Matrimonial Causes	5,142	3,706	2,957	1,402	1,774	329	35	375	15,720
Family Law	17,005	12,919	6,654	4,740	3,044	1,429	388	1,331	47,510
Total	22,147	16,625	9,611	6,142	4,818	1,758	423	1,706	63,230
1977	15,781	10,851	7,293	4,419	3,975	1,134	345	1,352	45,150
1978	13,797	10,821	6,106	3,805	3,387	1,131	291	1,270	40,608
1979	12,606	9,471	5,811	3,794	3,397	1,167	262	1,346	37,854
NULLITIES (b)									
Annual totals—									
1974	19	14	4	4	—	1	—	1	43
1975	14	16	3	4	1	—	—	1	39
1976—									
Matrimonial Causes	6	6	4	5	—	2	—	—	23
Family Law	4	2	4	1	—	1	—	2	14
Total	10	8	8	6	—	3	—	2	37
1977	4	8	9	3	—	—	—	1	25
1978	9	9	4	1	—	1	—	1	25
1979	9	—	6	3	—	—	1	—	19

(a) Many divorces registered in the A.C.T. involve applicants normally resident in areas around the A.C.T. See footnote (b) of Table 2. (b) Under legislation operating prior to the introduction of Family Law, dissolutions plus nullities do not necessarily add to the total, which includes judicial separations.

TABLE 2. CRUDE DIVORCE RATES (a) PER 1,000 POPULATION, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1946 TO 1979

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T. (b)	Australia
Average annual rates—									
1946-50	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.4	0.8	0.5	1.0	1.0
1951-55	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.8
1956-60	0.9	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7
1961-65	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.7
1966-70	1.1	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	1.2	0.9
1971-75	1.6	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.2	0.8	1.8	1.3
Annual rates—									
1974	1.5	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.6	1.3	0.6	2.1	1.3
1975	2.2	1.5	1.3	1.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	2.4	1.8
1976	4.5	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.1	4.3	4.2	8.4	4.6
1977	3.2	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.3	2.8	3.2	6.5	3.2
1978	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.6	5.9	2.9
1979	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.3	6.1	2.6

(a) This table includes nullities and, for the period prior to the introduction of Family Law Act, judicial separations. (b) Many divorces registered in the A.C.T. involve applicants normally resident in areas surrounding the A.C.T. In 1979 only 722 (54%) of A.C.T. divorces granted were to applicants normally resident in the A.C.T. The A.C.T. rate is therefore not a statistically accurate reflection of the extent of divorce among A.C.T. residents.

TABLE 3. AGE-SPECIFIC DISSOLUTION RATES PER 1,000 POPULATION, 1974 TO 1979

	Age group (years) (a)								65 and over	Total
	Under 25 (b)	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	
HUSBAND										
1974	0.8	6.3	7.6	6.5	5.4	4.9	3.6	2.6	1.6	0.6
1975	1.2	8.8	10.3	9.2	7.3	6.2	4.7	3.3	2.2	1.0
1976	4.2	22.7	24.2	20.9	18.6	16.2	13.0	9.6	6.3	2.7
1977	3.3	16.0	16.6	15.1	13.1	11.4	9.0	6.4	4.2	1.9
1978	3.0	14.4	14.7	13.4	11.7	9.9	7.6	5.2	3.5	1.5
1979	2.5	13.3	13.9	12.3	10.8	8.9	6.8	4.7	3.1	1.4
WIFE										
1974	1.9	8.1	7.4	6.1	5.1	4.2	2.9	1.8	0.9	0.3
1975	2.7	11.0	10.1	8.5	6.6	5.5	3.8	2.4	1.3	0.4
1976	8.2	26.5	24.0	19.9	17.3	14.0	10.6	6.8	3.8	1.4
1977	6.2	18.1	16.7	14.1	12.4	9.9	7.0	4.4	2.6	0.4
1978	5.7	16.3	14.5	12.7	10.3	8.5	5.9	3.7	2.1	0.5
1979	5.0	15.2	13.5	11.6	9.7	7.6	5.3	3.4	1.9	0.6

(a) Age of parties at time of divorce. (b) For the purpose of calculating rates for this table, males under 18 and females under 16 have been excluded from the population used.

TABLE 4. AGE-SPECIFIC DISSOLUTION RATES PER 1,000 MARRIED POPULATION, 1947 TO 1976

	Age group (years)								65 and over	Total
Census year	Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	
MALES										
1947	2.7	7.6	9.4	7.9	6.3	4.4	2.9	2.0	0.7	5.0
1954	1.9	4.4	4.8	4.3	3.6	3.0	2.3	1.8	0.6	3.1
1961	1.3	3.6	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.8	2.3	1.6	1.1	0.6
1966	2.5	6.7	7.6	6.9	6.6	5.3	4.6	3.4	2.5	1.1
1971	2.4	7.1	7.1	5.8	5.4	4.7	3.7	2.8	1.8	0.7
1976	18.3	31.9	29.0	24.1	21.4	18.7	15.2	11.2	7.6	3.7
FEMALES										
1947	4.6	9.0	8.6	6.9	5.0	3.3	2.1	1.2	0.5	5.0
1954	3.0	5.0	4.4	4.1	3.4	2.4	1.6	1.1	0.4	3.1
1961	2.3	4.5	4.2	3.4	3.1	2.5	1.7	1.2	0.9	0.4
1966	3.9	7.7	7.3	6.1	5.7	4.7	3.4	2.6	1.7	0.8
1971	3.8	8.0	6.4	5.3	4.9	4.2	3.1	2.1	1.2	0.5
1976	11.5	31.9	27.1	22.3	19.4	16.2	12.8	8.9	5.7	2.9

TABLE 5. DISSOLUTIONS: AGES OF PARTIES AT MARRIAGE, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, 1974 TO 1979

1974 TO 1979										
Age group (years)									Total number (a)	Median age
Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50 and over			
HUSBAND										
1974	10.7	54.2	21.2	7.1	3.1	1.5	0.9	0.9	17,688	23.4
1975	11.6	54.9	20.3	6.3	3.0	1.6	1.1	1.1	24,257	23.3
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1976	11.3	53.8	20.4	6.7	3.2	1.9	1.1	1.4	63,230	23.4
1977	11.7	53.6	20.7	6.7	3.1	1.7	1.0	1.4	45,150	23.3
1978	11.2	54.0	20.4	6.6	3.3	1.7	1.1	1.5	40,608	23.3
1979	10.5	54.5	20.4	6.7	3.2	1.8	1.2	1.6	37,854	23.4
WIFE										
1974	38.1	45.4	9.1	3.2	1.8	1.1	0.5	0.6	17,688	20.9
1975	39.4	44.1	9.1	3.3	1.6	1.1	0.7	0.7	24,257	20.8
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1976	39.0	43.3	9.3	3.4	1.9	1.2	0.8	0.9	63,230	21.0
1977	40.7	42.0	9.4	3.4	1.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	45,150	20.7
1978	39.6	42.8	9.1	3.6	1.9	1.1	0.7	0.9	40,608	20.8
1979	38.4	43.5	9.5	3.6	1.9	1.2	0.8	0.9	37,854	20.8

(a) Includes persons with age at marriage not stated.

TABLE 6. DISSOLUTIONS: AGES OF PARTIES AT MARRIAGE, 1979

Age of husband (years)	Age of wife (years)												Total
	Under 16	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 and over	Not stated	
Under 20	97	3,210	619	30	8	2	—	—	—	—	—	9	3,975
20-24	95	9,137	10,383	832	120	25	6	3	—	—	—	21	20,622
25-29	25	1,573	4,146	1,507	335	83	17	5	—	—	—	16	7,707
30-34	3	271	919	702	414	146	57	20	2	1	—	8	2,543
35-39	—	65	269	331	256	190	80	22	5	1	2	4	1,225
40-44	—	22	81	121	126	122	115	58	15	2	1	2	665
45-49	—	8	28	44	65	80	108	70	32	6	3	2	446
50-54	—	5	12	17	24	29	44	65	43	14	6	2	261
55-59	—	1	2	5	6	19	24	39	31	29	13	1	170
60 and over	—	4	1	4	3	3	10	19	40	28	76	1	189
Not stated	1	19	15	6	2	2	1	—	1	1	1	2	51
Total	221	14,315	16,475	3,599	1,359	781	462	381	169	82	182	68	37,854

TABLE 7. DISSOLUTIONS: AGES OF PARTIES AT DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, 1974 TO 1979

	Age group (years)								Total number (a)	Median age	
	Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59			
	60 and over										
HUSBAND											
1974	3.7	20.5	20.1	15.2	12.1	11.5	7.8	4.6	4.2	17,688	36.6
1975	4.1	21.1	20.4	15.9	11.5	10.4	7.5	4.2	4.5	24,257	36.2
1976	5.6	21.4	19.1	14.3	11.3	10.4	8.0	4.8	4.9	63,230	36.2
1977	6.1	20.7	19.7	14.7	11.3	10.1	7.8	4.7	4.8	45,150	36.1
1978	6.5	20.8	20.4	14.8	11.5	9.5	7.4	4.4	4.5	40,608	35.7
1979	5.9	20.7	21.3	15.3	11.7	9.1	7.2	4.4	4.3	37,854	35.6
WIFE											
1974	11.2	25.1	18.4	13.5	10.7	9.2	6.1	3.1	2.5	17,688	33.4
1975	11.7	25.6	18.7	13.9	9.9	8.6	5.9	3.1	2.6	24,257	33.1
1976	13.8	24.3	17.8	12.8	9.8	8.4	6.3	3.5	3.0	63,230	33.1
1977	14.8	23.0	18.7	13.0	10.1	8.1	5.8	3.3	2.9	45,150	33.0
1978	15.4	23.2	19.2	13.3	9.6	7.6	5.5	3.2	2.7	40,608	32.7
1979	14.8	23.4	19.7	13.5	10.0	7.3	5.3	3.2	2.6	37,854	32.6

(a) Includes persons with age at marriage not stated.

TABLE 8. DISSOLUTIONS: AGES OF PARTIES AT DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE, 1979

TABLE I. DISSOLUTIONS: AGES OF PARTIES AT DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE, 1977													
Age of husband (years)	Age of wife (years)										60 and over	Not stated	Total
	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59				
Under 25	126	1,861	227	16	8	1	—	—	—	—	—	4	2,243
25-29	33	2,972	4,334	422	49	10	5	1	—	—	—	8	7,834
30-34	5	459	3,536	3,645	360	49	11	—	1	—	—	10	8,076
35-39	3	83	552	2,578	2,186	296	54	13	2	1	6	5,774	
40-44	1	25	138	578	1,810	1,569	231	47	12	5	7	4,423	
45-49	—	5	45	147	459	1,302	1,168	230	47	18	10	3,431	
50-54	—	6	13	43	158	400	925	903	220	39	5	2,712	
55-59	—	1	8	27	66	102	260	556	525	125	9	1,679	
60-64	—	2	2	6	17	25	80	177	282	259	5	855	
65 and over	—	1	1	4	6	11	25	70	120	536	2	776	
Not stated	3	7	9	5	8	4	4	2	2	5	2	51	
Total	171	5,422	8,865	7,471	5,127	3,769	2,763	1,999	1,211	988	68	37,854	

TABLE 9. DISSOLUTIONS: MARITAL STATUS OF PARTIES AT MARRIAGE, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, 1974 TO 1979

	Husband				Wife			
	Never married	Widowed	Divorced	Total Number (a)	Never married	Widowed	Divorced	Total Number (a)
1974	92.8	1.3	6.0	17,688	91.5	1.8	6.6	17,688
1975	92.7	1.5	5.7	24,257	91.9	1.7	6.4	24,257
1976	91.9	1.6	6.4	63,230	91.2	2.0	6.8	63,230
1977	92.1	1.4	6.4	45,150	91.3	1.9	6.8	45,150
1978	91.4	1.5	7.0	40,608	90.7	1.9	7.4	40,608
1979	90.5	1.4	8.2	37,854	90.1	2.0	7.9	37,854

(a) Includes not stated marital status.

TABLE 10. DISSOLUTIONS: MARITAL STATUS OF PARTIES AT MARRIAGE AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE, 1979

Duration of marriage (years)	Husband				Wife			
	Never married	Widowed	Divorced	Total	Never married	Widowed	Divorced	Total
Under 5	6,251	182	1,188	7,621	6,340	246	1,035	7,621
5-9	9,692	172	890	10,754	9,659	224	871	10,754
10-14	6,409	76	444	6,929	6,365	103	461	6,929
15-19	4,385	42	219	4,646	4,297	71	278	4,646
20-24	3,297	21	184	3,502	3,288	54	160	3,502
25-29	2,094	16	96	2,206	2,062	33	111	2,206
30 and over	2,113	17	66	2,196	2,089	29	78	2,196
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	34,241	526	3,007	37,854	34,100	760	2,994	37,854
Median duration	10.8	7.2	6.7	10.3	10.7	7.9	7.2	10.3

TABLE 11. DISSOLUTIONS : DURATION OF MARRIAGE, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, 1974 TO 1979

	Duration of marriage (years)							Total number (a)	Median duration (years)
	Under 5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30 and over		
	ACCORDING TO INTERVAL BETWEEN DATE OF MARRIAGE AND DATE DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE								
1974	9.5	31.7	20.2	13.5	11.0	8.1	6.1	17,688	11.8
1975	9.9	32.4	20.1	13.8	10.2	7.5	6.1	24,257	11.6
1976	15.5	30.2	18.1	12.5	9.8	7.5	6.4	63,230	11.0
1977	17.3	28.7	18.6	12.5	9.7	7.1	6.2	45,150	10.9
1978	19.3	28.6	18.5	12.2	9.2	6.4	5.8	40,608	10.5
1979	20.1	28.4	18.3	12.3	9.3	5.8	5.8	37,854	10.3
	ACCORDING TO INTERVAL BETWEEN DATE OF MARRIAGE AND DATE OF FINAL SEPARATION (b)								
1976	39.6	22.5	13.6	10.6	7.7	4.0	2.1	47,510	6.9
1977	36.9	24.2	14.9	10.7	7.4	3.9	2.1	45,150	7.4
1978	36.4	24.6	15.1	10.6	7.2	4.0	2.1	40,608	7.5
1979	36.2	24.5	15.0	11.0	7.2	3.9	2.2	37,854	7.5

(a) Includes not stated duration of marriage. (b) These percentages relate only to cases heard under Family Law.

TABLE 12. DISSOLUTIONS : AGES OF PARTIES AT SEPARATION AND INTERVAL BETWEEN DATE OF MARRIAGE AND DATE OF SEPARATION, 1974-9

Interval (years)	Age group (years)										60 and over	Not stated	Total
	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59				
HUSBAND													
Under 1	121	943	558	271	171	84	87	66	46	61	10	2,418	
1	67	1,477	780	308	157	87	73	38	29	38	5	3,059	
2	10	1,292	1,031	309	134	63	56	35	23	32	4	2,989	
3	2	915	1,197	290	107	86	42	32	24	32	6	2,733	
4	—	439	1,318	428	149	66	48	38	13	19	2	2,520	
5	—	192	1,236	459	152	69	48	24	15	20	5	2,220	
6	—	55	1,077	580	134	71	47	36	12	24	2	2,048	
7	—	10	800	664	185	74	44	19	15	15	2	1,828	
8	—	1	513	791	188	63	40	27	14	16	1	1,654	
9	—	1	246	840	250	78	38	24	19	17	2	1,515	
10-14	—	—	146	2,292	2,165	595	234	132	53	55	5	5,677	
15-19	—	—	1	97	1,558	1,622	561	197	73	56	2	4,164	
20-24	—	—	—	—	44	972	1,126	393	115	78	2	2,708	
25-29	—	—	—	—	—	25	507	667	213	280	2	1,492	
30 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	252	285	—	—	829	
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Total	200	5,325	8,903	7,329	5,394	3,955	2,963	1,980	959	795	51	37,854	
WIFE													
Under 1	583	903	351	196	121	87	56	46	23	35	17	2,418	
1	542	1,620	452	167	99	67	35	32	15	24	6	3,059	
2	238	1,847	515	171	76	42	36	29	14	18	3	2,989	
3	67	1,651	656	142	69	47	42	27	12	18	2	2,733	
4	5	1,207	890	213	79	44	36	22	11	9	4	2,520	
5	—	798	1,019	209	85	41	23	22	14	7	3	2,220	
6	—	416	1,148	262	102	44	24	29	13	7	3	2,048	
7	—	149	1,163	335	97	29	21	19	6	6	3	1,828	
8	—	43	954	461	110	30	21	16	8	9	2	1,515	
9	—	3	694	622	94	37	28	19	9	31	5	5,677	
10-14	—	—	804	3,299	1,034	265	130	65	44	31	5	4,164	
15-19	—	—	3	604	2,270	882	241	91	37	26	10	2,708	
20-24	—	—	—	2	361	1,424	668	165	56	26	6	2,492	
25-29	—	—	—	—	2	150	767	458	92	21	2	1,492	
30 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	81	321	255	172	—	829	
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Total	1,435	8,637	8,649	6,683	4,599	3,189	2,289	1,361	609	415	68	37,854	

TABLE 13. DISSOLUTIONS : DURATION OF MARRIAGE AND AGES OF PARTIES AT MARRIAGE, 1979

TABLE 15. DISSOLUTIONS BY DURATION OF MARRIAGE AND AGE GROUP													
Duration of marriage (years)	Age group (years)										60 and over	Not stated	Total
	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59				
	HUSBAND												
1	26	148	100	58	46	18	22	19	16	23	5	481	
2	169	902	441	217	121	76	80	40	33	35	5	2,119	
3	256	1,293	471	152	105	50	36	26	18	24	2	2,433	
4	278	1,453	466	152	76	58	32	28	21	22	2	2,588	
5	325	1,361	440	138	60	34	33	23	9	15	3	2,441	
6	286	1,258	420	144	68	37	29	13	12	12	2	2,281	
7	260	1,192	394	141	60	47	30	16	8	14	2	2,164	
8	227	1,180	357	111	62	29	27	21	11	8	2	2,035	
9	189	1,077	324	96	49	32	32	15	11	6	2	1,833	
10-14	852	3,920	1,261	394	221	132	63	35	23	18	10	6,929	
15-19	494	2,598	909	359	153	63	35	15	5	10	5	4,646	
20-24	276	1,884	898	262	97	52	17	8	3	2	3	3,502	
25-29	164	1,166	619	164	59	23	7	2	—	—	2	2,206	
30 and over	173	1,190	607	155	48	14	3	—	—	—	6	2,196	
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Total	3,975	20,622	7,707	2,543	1,225	665	446	261	170	189	51	37,854	
WIFE													
1	106	154	73	49	26	17	16	14	8	15	3	481	
2	651	773	284	134	98	78	38	27	10	19	7	2,119	
3	991	931	249	102	52	32	35	12	12	11	6	2,433	
4	1,047	1,072	213	106	51	30	25	17	8	17	2	2,588	
5	1,000	1,037	214	71	28	38	17	19	5	11	1	2,441	
6	944	935	204	79	46	29	19	11	5	6	3	2,281	
7	874	917	193	73	32	24	24	14	8	2	3	2,164	
8	806	899	171	64	30	25	27	4	1	7	1	2,035	
9	705	809	152	63	37	28	20	11	3	2	3	1,833	
10-14	2,764	3,159	541	175	120	77	40	22	12	9	10	6,929	
15-19	1,952	1,989	347	179	86	46	19	12	8	3	5	4,646	
20-24	1,313	1,599	359	117	58	23	14	5	2	—	12	3,502	
25-29	717	1,077	285	81	23	14	5	1	—	—	3	2,206	
30 and over	666	1,124	314	66	14	1	2	—	—	—	9	2,196	
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Total	14,536	16,475	3,599	1,359	701	462	301	169	82	102	68	37,854	

TABLE 14. DISSOLUTIONS: DURATION OF MARRIAGE AND AGES OF PARTIES AT DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE, 1979

Duration of marriage (years)	Age group (years)								60 and over	Not stated	Total
	Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59			
HUSBAND											
1	126	123	69	50	21	21	19	20	27	5	481
2	669	673	299	152	96	76	65	37	47	5	2,119
3	718	1,040	317	136	85	48	30	24	33	2	2,433
4	430	1,391	404	138	66	58	33	26	40	2	2,588
5	227	1,387	494	146	66	38	33	22	25	3	2,441
6	67	1,203	622	192	77	38	36	19	25	2	2,281
7	5	938	792	197	91	52	38	22	27	2	2,164
8	1	611	959	238	84	54	27	28	31	2	2,035
9	—	297	1,036	272	84	50	33	29	30	2	1,833
10-14	—	170	2,968	2,425	717	269	174	102	94	10	6,929
15-19	—	1	116	1,762	1,800	522	248	101	91	5	4,646
20-24	—	—	—	66	1,197	1,457	511	155	113	3	3,502
25-29	—	—	—	—	39	733	953	328	151	2	2,206
30 and over	—	—	—	—	—	15	512	766	897	6	2,196
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	2,243	7,834	8,076	5,774	4,423	3,431	2,712	1,679	1,631	51	37,854
WIFE											
1	216	102	50	31	21	15	14	11	18	3	481
2	1,155	442	193	98	93	54	37	15	25	7	2,119
3	1,417	617	180	77	45	28	32	11	20	6	2,433
4	1,260	894	194	94	49	31	23	18	23	2	2,588
5	826	1,174	244	74	29	39	19	17	18	1	2,441
6	478	1,269	299	100	52	33	20	16	11	3	2,281
7	190	1,332	395	113	45	25	27	16	18	3	2,164
8	48	1,195	539	118	51	29	24	19	11	1	2,035
9	3	865	673	137	56	39	22	19	16	3	1,833
10-14	—	973	3,971	1,332	290	145	87	63	58	10	6,929
15-19	—	2	733	2,473	935	252	124	67	55	5	4,646
20-24	—	—	—	479	1,843	812	211	83	62	12	3,502
25-29	—	—	—	1	259	1,120	594	160	69	3	2,206
30 and over	—	—	—	—	1	141	765	696	584	9	2,196
Not stated	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	5,593	8,865	7,471	5,127	3,769	2,763	1,999	1,211	988	68	37,854

TABLE 15. DISSOLUTIONS: RELATIVE BIRTHPLACES OF PARTIES, 1979

NOTE. The following table excludes 24,145 dissolutions (64 per cent of all dissolutions) where both husband and wife were born in Australia.

Country of birth	Involving husbands born overseas as shown, and—			Total husbands born overseas	Involving wives born overseas as shown and—			Total wives born overseas
	Wife born in same country	Wife born in Australia	Wife born in another country (a)		Husband born in same country	Husband born in Australia	Husband born in another country (a)	
New Zealand	310	279	82	671	310	191	140	641
Europe—								
Austria	28	71	42	141	28	19	41	88
Germany	169	329	126	624	169	179	186	534
Greece	187	80	33	300	187	20	40	247
Hungary	62	55	50	167	62	22	36	120
Italy	204	254	91	549	204	53	32	289
Malta	45	103	22	170	45	50	25	120
Netherlands	155	286	104	545	155	183	90	428
Poland	84	44	68	196	84	17	38	139
U.K. and Ireland	1,833	2,142	739	4,714	1,833	1,648	711	4,192
Yugoslavia	243	106	83	432	243	31	48	322
Other Europe	202	235	173	610	202	90	180	472
Total Europe	3,212	3,705	1,531	8,448	3,212	2,312	1,427	6,951
Asia—								
China	25	16	22	63	25	17	21	63
Cyprus	18	11	9	38	18	3	6	27
India	34	59	42	135	34	39	36	109
Indonesia	9	28	15	52	9	30	14	53
Lebanon	37	16	11	64	37	4	2	43
Malaysia	17	40	12	69	17	24	21	62
Philippines	18	3	6	27	18	14	15	47
Sri Lanka	27	18	10	55	27	9	7	43
Other Asia	77	75	53	205	77	63	88	228
Total Asia	262	266	180	708	262	203	210	675
Africa—								
South Africa	23	27	20	70	23	25	24	72
United Arab Republic	45	46	39	130	45	17	26	88
Other Africa	41	47	20	108	41	24	36	101
Total Africa	109	120	79	308	109	66	86	261
America—								
Canada	12	48	14	74	12	41	9	62
U.S.A.	54	89	38	181	54	52	30	136
Other America	67	25	23	115	67	19	19	105
Total America	133	162	75	370	133	112	58	303
Pacific Islands	24	62	24	110	24	62	39	125
Not stated	29	52	8	89	29	59	19	107
Total	4,879	4,546	1,979	10,704	4,879	3,805	1,979	9,863

(a) A table providing relative birthplaces of persons born in different countries is available on request.

TABLE 16. DISSOLUTIONS : NUMBER OF CHILDREN, PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION, 1974 TO 1979 (a)

Number of children										Average number of children (b)	Average number of children (c)
0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more	Total dissolutions	Total children			
31.7	23.4	25.1	12.4	4.9	1.7	0.9	17,688	25,505	1.4	2.1	
32.4	22.5	24.9	12.5	5.2	1.6	0.9	24,257	34,992	1.4	2.1	
37.3	23.3	22.8	10.7	4.0	1.2	0.6	63,230	73,645	1.2	1.9	
36.3	23.2	24.4	10.8	3.7	1.1	0.5	45,150	57,878	1.3	2.0	
36.9	22.5	24.7	10.7	3.8	1.1	0.4	40,608	51,599	1.3	2.0	
38.7	21.6	25.1	10.2	3.3	0.8	0.3	37,854	46,130	1.2	2.0	

See explanatory note 10. (b) All dissolutions. (c) Dissolutions involving one or more children.

TABLE 17. DISSOLUTIONS : NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE, 1979(a)

Number of children										Average number of children (b)	Average number of children (c)
0	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more	Total dissolutions	Total children			
384	66	21	6	1	1	2	481	148	0.3	1.5	
1,539	405	118	38	16	3	—	2,119	834	0.4	1.4	
1,584	650	147	40	7	5	—	2,433	1,117	0.5	1.3	
1,590	668	269	44	12	3	2	2,588	1,413	0.5	1.4	
1,251	732	387	55	10	5	1	2,441	1,742	0.7	1.5	
966	647	553	94	15	7	4	2,281	2,152	0.9	1.6	
754	629	617	137	17	8	2	2,164	2,394	1.1	1.7	
565	519	732	189	25	4	1	2,035	2,676	1.3	1.8	
422	434	740	190	32	5	1	1,833	2,661	1.5	1.9	
929	1,076	3,038	1,400	388	71	27	6,929	13,434	1.9	2.2	
431	532	1,667	1,224	574	153	65	4,646	11,014	2.4	2.6	
965	1,052	932	374	123	35	21	3,502	4,843	1.4	1.9	
1,324	565	213	74	20	6	4	2,206	1,355	0.6	1.5	
1,937	197	45	11	3	3	—	2,196	347	0.2	1.3	
14,641	8,167	9,488	3,876	1,243	309	130	37,854	46,130	1.2	2.0	

For a definition of children, see explanatory note 10. (b) All dissolutions with or without children. (c) Dissolutions involving one or more children.

TABLE 18. PETITIONS (APPLICATIONS) FILED FOR DIVORCE, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 1946 TO 1979(a)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Australia
Annual averages—									
46-50	4,026	2,012	(b)878	782	783	277	11	26	8,795
51-55	4,194	1,802	(b)735	844	638	298	25	36	8,572
56-60	3,958	1,706	871	786	642	278	23	45	8,310
61-65	4,393	2,318	1,134	996	660	306	49	100	9,956
66-70	5,683	2,988	1,524	1,261	991	403	58	181	13,089
71-75	9,347	5,381	2,795	2,005	1,981	626	126	444	22,704
Annual totals—									
74	10,809	6,571	3,502	2,272	2,232	753	140	576	26,855
75	11,890	6,349	4,042	1,930	2,703	731	127	611	28,383
76 (c)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	66,092
77	14,161	9,724	6,909	4,205	3,950	1,063	325	1,291	41,628
78	14,343	10,009	6,406	3,932	3,485	1,097	283	1,363	40,918
79	12,487	9,313	5,630	3,988	3,096	1,304	241	1,334	37,393

The term 'petition' was used in the old legislation, the term 'application' in the (new) Family Law Legislation. (b) Petitions heard. (c) A reliable distribution of petitions according to the State present cannot be made for 1976.

FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA — STATISTICAL REPORT

1. This report relates only to proceedings for dissolution or nullity of marriage.
 2. A report is to be made out in respect of each application (Form 4 or Form 5) lodged at or transferred to the Court. (See back for further explanations)

If transferred from another Court, show here —

Court Date transferred /19..

Old reference number

Registry		Year		Number				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF HUSBAND (N.S.W. 1, Vic. 2, Qld 3, S.A. 4, W.A. 5, Tas. 6, N.T. 7, A.C.T. 8, Overseas 9, Not stated 0) 11

PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF WIFE (N.S.W. 1, Vic. 2, Qld 3, S.A. 4, W.A. 5, Tas. 6, N.T. 7, A.C.T. 8, Overseas 9, Not stated 0) 12

Day	Month	Year			
			13	14	15

DATE APPLICATION FILED

DETAILS OF APPLICATION

APPLICATION FOR (Dissolution 1, Nullity 2) 19

SEX OF APPLICANT (Male 1, Female 2) 20

PLACE OF MARRIAGE 21 22
State or Territory (Australia) or country (abroad)

DATE OF MARRIAGE 23 24
Month

MARITAL STATUS OF HUSBAND AT TIME OF MARRIAGE (Bachelor 1, Widowed 2, Divorced 3, Married 4) 25 26
Year

MARITAL STATUS OF WIFE AT TIME OF MARRIAGE (Spinster 1, Widowed 2, Divorced 3, Married 4) 27 28

PLACE OF BIRTH OF HUSBAND 29 30
State or Territory (Australia) or country (abroad)

DATE OF BIRTH OF HUSBAND 31 32
Month

PLACE OF BIRTH OF WIFE 33 34
State or Territory (Australia) or country (abroad)

DATE OF BIRTH OF WIFE 35 36
Month

DATE OF FINAL SEPARATION 37 38
Month

NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF THE MARRIAGE (AGED UNDER 18 AT TIME OF APPLICATION) (Give details of birth dates below) 39 40
Year

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION (Granted 1, Withdrawn, Inapp. transferred out 2, Dismissed without decree nil 3, Decree nil withdrawn 4) 41 42
Day

DATE DECREE MADE ABSOLUTE 43 44
Month

IF NULLITY — GROUND ON WHICH GRANTED (Bigamy 1, Prohibited relationship 2, Invalid marriage 3, Consent by duress or fraud 4, Mistaken identity 5, Mental incapacity 6, Nonage 7) 45 46
Number

DETAILS OF THE CHILDREN

DATES OF BIRTH OF CHILDREN OF THE MARRIAGE (In order, eldest first)
 (If more than 6, give additional dates here)

	Month	Year
ELDEST : (57-60)		
SECOND : (61-64)		
THIRD : (65-69)		
FOURTH : (69-72)		
FIFTH : (73-76)		
SIXTH : (77-80)		

APPENDIX B

LIST OF DIVORCE TABLES PRODUCED ANNUALLY

With the exception of 1 and 13 the tables relate to dissolutions only.

Table number	Description
1.	State by Registry by Application type and sex of applicant
2.	Month of outcome by State
3.	Ages of husband and wife at marriage
4.	Ages of husband and wife at date of divorce
5.	Birthplace of husband by birthplace of wife
6.	Duration of marriage by marital status of husband wife
7.	Age of husband at marriage by duration of marriage
8.	Age of wife at marriage by duration of marriage
9.	Age of husband at date of divorce by duration of marriage
10.	Age of wife at date of divorce by duration of marriage
11.	Duration of marriage by number of children under 18
12.	Month and year of application by month of outcome
13.	Application type by sex of applicant
14.	Sex of applicant by State of usual residence by State or registration
15.	Marital status of husband by marital status of wife (at time of marriage)
16.	Age of youngest child by number of children under 18
17.	Age of husband and wife at final separation
*18.	Age of husband and wife at final separation by duration of cohabitation
*19.	Age of wife at final separation by duration of cohabitation

*NOTE: For the purpose of these tables, duration of cohabitation is the interval between date of marriage and date of final separation.