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Part 2 : Divorce Statistics - Australia, 1952

The following tables relating to divorce, nullity of marriage and judicial separation have been prepared from statistics compiled by the Government Statistician of each State and returns received from Judicial Authorities in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. They relate, in the main, to the year 1952, but summarized figures for earlier years have been added for purposes of comparison.

The number of petitions for divorce, nullity of marriage and judicial separation was 8,701 in 1952, the highest since 1947; the peak year was 1946 when 9,915 petitions were lodged.

Table V : Number of Petitions for Divorce, etc. - States, 1952

State or Territory	Petitions for -						Total Petitions		
	Divorce		Nullity of Marriage		Judicial Separation				Total
	Husband Petitioner	Wife Petitioner	Husband Petitioner	Wife Petitioner	Husband Petitioner	Wife Petitioner	Husband Petitioner	Wife Petitioner	
New South Wales	1,777	2,448	13	30	1	29	1,791	2,507	4,298
Victoria	827	993	16	11	-	6	843	1,010	1,853
Queensland	300	408	5	1	-	-	305	409	714
South Australia	339	466	-	5	-	2	339	473	812
Western Australia	363	291	1	5	2	-	366	296	662
Tasmania	143	171	-	-	-	-	143	171	314
Northern Terr.	6	6	-	-	-	-	6	6	12
Aust. Cap. Terr.	19	17	-	-	-	-	19	17	36
Australia:	3,774	4,800	35	52	3	37	3,812	4,889	8,701
1951	3,727	4,668	19	31	4	34	3,750	4,753	8,503
1950	3,717	4,622	23	40	1	26	3,741	4,688	8,429
1949	3,882	4,458	28	37	1	29	3,911	4,524	8,435
1948	3,927	4,280	26	37	2	26	3,955	4,343	8,298

The number of decrees granted in Australia during 1952 was 7,106 or 3 per cent. lower than in 1951 and 19 per cent. lower than the peak year 1947 when 8,815 decrees were granted. The decline in decrees granted from the year 1947 in the various States was 30 per cent. in Victoria, 28 per cent. in Western Australia, 24 per cent. in Queensland, 17 per cent. in South Australia, and 12 per cent. in New South Wales. Decrees granted in Tasmania increased by 3 per cent.

Table VI : Divorces etc. : Number of Decrees Granted : States, 1952.

State or Territory	Divorce made Absolute		Nullity of Marriage		Judicial Separation		Total Decrees		
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Total
	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	Petitioner	
New South Wales	1,428	1,907	6	21	-	7	1,434	1,935	3,369
Victoria (a)	696	900	6	11	-	3	702	914	1,616
Queensland	298	407	5	1	-	-	303	408	711
South Australia	249	332	2	1	-	1	251	334	585
Western Australia	296	289	-	-	-	-	296	289	585
Tasmania	102	115	-	-	-	-	102	115	217
Northern Terr.	2	4	-	-	-	-	2	4	6
Aust. Cap. Terr.	12	5	-	-	-	-	12	5	17
Australia:	3,083	3,959	19	34	-	11	3,102	4,004	7,106
1951	3,276	3,993	21	30	1	6	3,298	4,029	7,327
1950	3,494	3,864	21	35	1	10	3,516	3,909	7,425
1949	3,128	3,448	16	30	-	8	3,144	3,486	6,630
1948	3,717	3,469	25	32	1	11	3,743	3,512	7,255

(a) Dissolutions granted - not made absolute for a period of not less than 3 months.

The following table shows decrees made absolute in 1952 classified according to the legal duration of marriage in conjunction with issue. It will be seen that in the case of 40 per cent. of divorces finalized in 1952 the marriages had been celebrated within the previous 10 years. Of the couples divorced in 1952, 34 per cent. had no issue, 30 per cent. had one child, 21 per cent. had two children, 8 per cent. had three children, and 7 per cent. had four or more children.

Table VII : Divorces : Duration of Marriage and Issue : Australia, 1952

Duration of Marriage	Number of Divorces where Issue to the Marriage was -							Total Divorces		Total Issue
	0	1	2	3	4	5 and over	Not Stated	Num-ber	Per cent.	
Under 5 years	387	170	15	2	1	-	-	575	8	210
5 - 9 "	990	850	336	74	12	3	-	2,265	32	1,807
10 - 14 "	577	581	447	154	46	22	-	1,827	26	2,238
15 - 19 "	197	264	289	196	58	42	-	1,006	14	1,774
20 - 29 "	174	206	309	168	104	78	-	1,039	15	2,221
30 years and over	56	59	63	45	38	65	-	326	5	893
Not Stated	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	2
Total Divorces	2,383	2,132	1,459	599	259	210	-	7,042	-	-
Per cent.	34	30	21	8	4	3	-	-	100	-
Total Issue	-	2,132	2,918	1,797	1,036	1,262	-	-	-	9,145
(Total Divorces)	2,463	2,329	1,420	574	247	233	3	7,269	-	-
(Per cent.)	34	32	20	8	3	3	-	-	100	-
(Total Issue)	-	2,329	2,840	1,782	988	1,373	-	-	-	9,252
(Total Divorces)	2,696	2,344	1,326	542	237	213	-	7,358	-	-
(Per cent.)	37	32	18	7	3	3	-	-	100	-
(Total Issue)	-	2,344	2,652	1,626	948	1,259	-	-	-	8,829
(Total Divorces)	2,576	1,955	1,144	493	216	189	3	6,576	-	-
(Per cent.)	39	30	17	8	3	3	-	-	100	-
(Total Issue)	-	1,955	2,288	1,479	864	1,140	-	-	-	7,726
(Total Divorces)	2,799	2,170	1,244	542	221	209	1	7,186	-	-
(Per cent.)	39	30	17	8	3	3	-	-	100	-
(Total Issue)	-	2,170	2,488	1,626	884	1,241	-	-	-	8,412

NOTE : Excludes Nullity of Marriage.

The following table shows the number of divorces granted in Australia, classified according to duration of marriage, and the proportion under each duration, for the years 1948 to 1952.

Table VIII : Divorces : Duration of Marriage : Australia 1948 to 1952

Year	Number of Divorces where Duration of Marriage was -							Total Divorces
	Under 5 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20-29 years	30 years and over	Not Stated	
1948	776	2,573	1,527	954	1,063	293	-	7,186
1949	608	2,461	1,421	813	1,014	257	2	6,576
1950	618	2,699	1,665	974	1,097	304	1	7,358
1951	636	2,508	1,698	1,007	1,102	317	1	7,269
1952	575	2,265	1,827	1,006	1,039	326	4	7,042
Proportion of Total (Per cent.)								
1948	11	36	21	13	15	4	-	100
1949	9	37	22	12	16	4	-	100
1950	8	37	23	13	15	4	-	100
1951	9	35	23	14	15	4	-	100
1952	8	32	26	14	15	5	-	100

NOTE : Excludes Nullity of Marriage.

The following table shows the number of divorced husbands and wives in each age group at the time of the divorce being made absolute. In 1952 the incidence was the highest in the 30-34 group which comprised 24 per cent. of the husbands and 22 per cent. of the wives. This incidence obtained during the period 1948 to 1952 for husbands, but in the years 1948 and 1949 for wives the highest incidence was in the 25-29 age group.

Table IX : Divorces : Age of Husband and Wife at the time of Divorce : Australia, 1952.

Age of Husband (years)	Age of Wife (Years)								Total Husbands
	Under 25	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-54	55 and over	Not Stated	
Under 25 Years	105	25	3	3	-	-	-	-	136
25 - 29 "	319	599	93	12	-	-	-	-	1,025
30 - 34 "	65	684	704	194	23	-	-	2	1,675
35 - 39 "	22	160	566	551	103	13	1	2	1,418
40 - 44 "	6	40	145	356	372	89	3	3	1,014
45 - 54 "	-	13	45	157	424	543	35	-	1,217
55 Years and over	-	3	8	17	44	219	219	1	511
Not Stated	1	2	-	2	2	1	-	38	46
Total Wives	518	1,526	1,564	1,292	968	870	258	46	7,042

(ii)

Ages of Wives at time of Divorce : Total Wives

Year	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
518	1,526	1,564	1,292	968	870
258	258	46	7,042	7,269	7,358
45	258	24	6,576	7,186	

(iii)

Ages of Husbands at time of Divorce : Total Husbands

Year	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948
136	1,025	1,675	1,418	1,014	1,217
157	1,085	1,513	1,449	1,195	1,306
152	1,123	1,546	1,509	1,182	1,314
126	969	1,407	1,399	1,020	1,152
157	1,142	1,534	1,484	1,142	1,211
					487
					29
					7,186

NOTE : Excludes Nullity of Marriage.

The grounds for divorce vary in each State, a notable instance being that insanity is not a ground for divorce in New South Wales.

Of the divorces made absolute in 1952 the main grounds were desertion and adultery. The percentages for desertion were 77 per cent. in Tasmania, 71 per cent. in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales (the latter includes desertion - non-compliance with decree for restitution of conjugal rights), 55 per cent. (including separation for over 5 years) in Western Australia and 43 per cent. (including separation for over 5 years) in South Australia, while for adultery the percentages were 40 per cent. in South Australia and Western Australia, 28 per cent. in Queensland, 26 per cent. in Victoria, 22 per cent. in New South Wales and 21 per cent. in Tasmania.

Table X : Grounds on which Divorce Absolute, Nullity of Marriage and Judicial Separation were Granted : States, 1952.

Grounds on which Granted	N.S.W.			VIC. *			Q'LD.			S.A.			W.A.		TAS.	N.T.	A.C.T.	AUSTRALIA		
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(a)	(b)	(c)
Adultery	744	-	1	379	-	1	195	-	-	230	-	-	230	-	46	4	6	1,834	-	2
Adultery and Desertion	-	-	-	28	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	33	-	-
Desertion	2,362	-	3	1,139	-	1	502	-	-	240	-	-	153	-	168	1	9	4,574	-	4
Bigamy	-	12	-	-	5	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	-
Cruelty	72	-	1	5	-	1	-	-	-	86	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	166	-	3
Cruelty and Drunkenness	86	-	2	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	111	-	2
Drunkenness	55	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	75	-	-
Impotency	-	14	-	-	12	-	2	3	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	31	-
Non-Consummation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	3	1	-
Separation for over 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	169	-	-	-	-	181	-	-
Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	21	-	-	-	-	25	-	-
Gaol for Crime	15	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	17	-	-
Insanity	-	-	-	9	-	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	18	-	-
Other	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	-
Total:	3,335	27	7	1,596	17	3	705	6	-	581	3	1	585	-	217	6	17	7,042	53	11

(a) Divorce Absolute. (b) Nullity of Marriage. (c) Judicial Separation. * Dissolutions of Marriage Granted.

Table XI : Grounds on which Divorce Absolute, Nullity of Marriage and Judicial Separation were Granted : Australia, Years 1948 to 1952.

Grounds on which Granted	1948.			1949.			1950.			1951.			1952.		
	Div-orce	Null-ity	Judic-ial Separ-ation	Div-orce	Null-ity	Judic-ial Separ-ation	Div-orce	Null-ity	Judic-ial Separ-ation	Div-orce	Null-ity	Judic-ial Separ-ation	Div-orce	Null-ity	Judic-ial Separ-ation
Adultery	2,191	-	7	1,720	-	3	1,792	-	3	1,784	-	3	1,834	-	2
Adultery and Desertion	35	-	-	44	-	2	25	-	-	16	-	-	33	-	-
Desertion	4,477	-	1	4,423	-	3	5,051	-	4	4,893	-	3	4,574	-	4
Bigamy	3	26	1	3	18	-	-	25	-	-	24	-	-	20	-
Cruelty	85	-	2	113	-	-	119	-	4	142	-	1	166	-	3
Cruelty and Drunkenness	78	-	-	55	-	-	85	-	-	91	-	-	111	-	2
Drunkenness	35	-	-	43	-	-	36	-	-	65	-	-	75	-	-
Impotency	1	29	-	-	25	-	1	27	-	1	21	-	2	31	-
Non-Consummation	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	5	-	3	1	-
Separation for over 5 yrs	207	-	-	119	-	-	173	-	-	201	-	-	181	-	-
Maintenance	19	-	-	13	-	-	25	-	-	24	-	-	25	-	-
Gaol for Crime	17	-	-	12	-	-	16	-	-	22	-	-	17	-	-
Insanity	33	-	-	27	-	-	29	-	-	25	-	-	18	-	-
Other	5	1	1	4	3	-	6	-	-	3	1	-	3	1	-
Total:	7,186	57	12	6,576	46	8	7,358	56	11	7,269	51	7	7,042	53	11