



2010

3301.0

# BIRTHS

AUSTRALIA

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUES 25 OCT 2011

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## INQUIRIES

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or Claire Wyatt on Canberra (02) 6252 6735.

# NOTES

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This publication brings together statistics for live births and fertility in Australia. Data refer to births registered during the calendar year shown, unless otherwise stated. State or territory relates to the state or territory of usual residence, unless otherwise stated.

Populations used in the calculation of fertility rates for 2006 and earlier years are the final estimated resident population by age and sex based on results of the *2006 Census of Population and Housing* (2006 Census) and earlier censuses. Fertility rates for 2007 to 2009 are calculated using revised 30 June estimated resident population for each year, while rates for 2010 are calculated using preliminary 30 June 2010 estimated resident population.

## CHANGES IN THIS ISSUE

Fertility rates for 2009 have been revised using revised 30 June 2009 estimated resident population.

A data cube containing birth and fertility statistics by remoteness area has been released and is available for download from the ABS website (see *Table 5: Births, Summary, Remoteness Areas, 2005 to 2010*).

## CHANGES IN FUTURE ISSUES

Future issues of this publication will release sub-state birth statistics under the new Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) (see *Appendix: ASGS and the availability of sub-state birth statistics*).

The content within this publication is currently being reviewed which may affect future issues.

## ROUNDING

Calculations as shown in the commentary sections of this publication are based on unrounded figures. Calculations using rounded figures may differ from those published.

It is recommended that when using information presented in this publication, the relevant statistics be rounded. All data are affected by errors in reporting and processing. Birth registration data are also affected by delays in registration.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The efforts of Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages to improve the data quality, coverage and timeliness of birth registration information, processes and systems are noted and valued by the ABS.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Where necessary, tables have had small values suppressed or randomised to protect confidentiality. As a result, sums of components may not add exactly to totals.

Brian Pink  
Australian Statistician

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## ABBREVIATIONS .....

<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>ACT</b>	Australian Capital Territory
<b>AIHW</b>	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
<b>ASFR</b>	age-specific fertility rate
<b>ASGC</b>	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
<b>ASGS</b>	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
<b>Aust.</b>	Australia
<b>cat. no.</b>	Catalogue number
<b>ERP</b>	estimated resident population
<b>LGA</b>	local government area
<b>no.</b>	number
<b>NMDS</b>	National Minimum Data Set
<b>NPDC</b>	National Perinatal Data Collection
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>NT</b>	Northern Territory
<b>Qld</b>	Queensland
<b>SA</b>	South Australia
<b>SACC</b>	Standard Australian Classification of Countries
<b>SD</b>	statistical division
<b>SLA</b>	statistical local area
<b>SSD</b>	statistical subdivision
<b>Tas.</b>	Tasmania
<b>TFR</b>	total fertility rate
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>Vic.</b>	Victoria
<b>WA</b>	Western Australia

## FERTILITY RATES

- In 2010, Australia's total fertility rate (TFR) was 1.89 babies per woman, a small decrease from 1.90 babies per woman in 2009.
- Fertility rates decreased slightly for all age groups under 35 years between 2009 and 2010.
- Fertility rates increased from 2009 for women aged 35–39 years and 40–44 years, and remained the same for women aged 45–49 years.
- Fertility rates were highest for women aged 30–34 years, recording 123 babies per 1,000 women.
- At the national level, the teenage fertility rate was 16 babies per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years in 2010.

## BIRTHS

- There were 297,900 births registered in Australia in 2010, approximately 2,200 (0.7%) more than the number registered in 2009 (295,700).
- The median age of all mothers for births registered in 2010 was 30.7 years, while the median age of fathers was 33.1 years.
- In 2010, 66% of births were to parents in a registered marriage.

## STATES AND TERRITORIES

- Total fertility rates (TFRs) for New South Wales, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory increased in 2010. The remaining states all recorded a slight decrease in TFR.
- In 2010, the Northern Territory recorded the highest TFR (2.11 babies per woman) and Victoria recorded the lowest (1.75 babies per woman).
- Fertility rates were highest for women aged 30–34 years in all states and territories in 2010, with the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory, where women aged 25–29 years recorded the highest fertility rate.
- The number of births in 2010 increased for most states and territories, with the exception of Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL  
AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER BIRTHS AND  
FERTILITY RATES

- There were 16,100 births registered in Australia during 2010 (5% of all births) where at least one parent reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander on the birth registration form.
- In 2010, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women remained the same as in 2009 at 2.57 babies per woman.



INTRODUCTION

During 2010, there were 297,900 births registered in Australia, born to 293,300 mothers. This was 2,200 births (0.7%) more than in 2009 (295,700 births) and the highest ever recorded in a calendar year, exceeding the previous record of 296,600 births registered in 2008. In 2010, most states and territories recorded increases in the number of births registered, except for Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

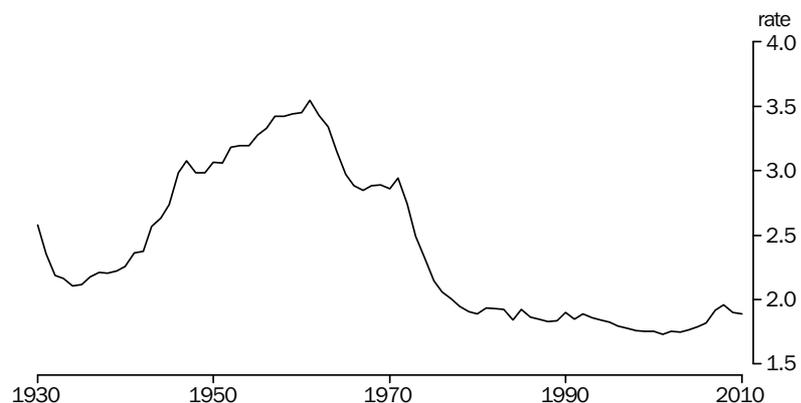
TRENDS IN NATIONAL FERTILITY RATES

The total fertility rate (TFR) represents the average number of babies that a woman could expect to bear during her reproductive lifetime, assuming current age-specific fertility rates were experienced. The TFR measures the average number of children per woman, including those who have no children, rather than the average number of children per mother. The TFR does not measure completed fertility (the average number of live births experienced by a cohort of women over their reproductive life).

In 2010, Australia's TFR was 1.89 babies per woman, down slightly from the 2009 TFR of 1.90 babies per woman. Trends in the TFR over the past 80 years are shown in graph 2.1.

After reaching a TFR of 3.1 during the early 1920s, Australian fertility rates were relatively low during the Great Depression of the 1930s, falling to 2.1 babies per woman in 1934. In 1961, at the height of the 'baby boom', the TFR peaked at 3.5 babies per woman. Fertility rates then fell sharply during the early 1960s as the oral contraceptive pill became available.

**2.1** TOTAL FERTILITY RATE(a), Australia—1930 to 2010



(a) Births per woman.

TRENDS IN NATIONAL FERTILITY RATES  
*continued*

Between 1966 and 1971, the TFR remained around 2.9 babies per woman. The reinterpretation of abortion law in New South Wales in late 1971 had a substantial impact on women's ability to control their fertility (Carmichael, 1998). Subsequently, a fall in births to young women contributed to a further decrease in the TFR and an increase in the median age of mothers (graph 2.6).

In 1976, the TFR fell to replacement level (2.1), and continued to fall as increasing numbers of women chose to delay or forego having children. The TFR then stabilised somewhat during the 1980s, before resuming a more gradual decline during the 1990s. The TFR reached a low of 1.73 babies per woman in 2001 before increasing to a thirty-year high of 1.96 babies per woman in 2008. The TFR has since declined to 1.90 babies per woman in 2009 and 1.89 babies per woman in 2010.

*Tempo effects*

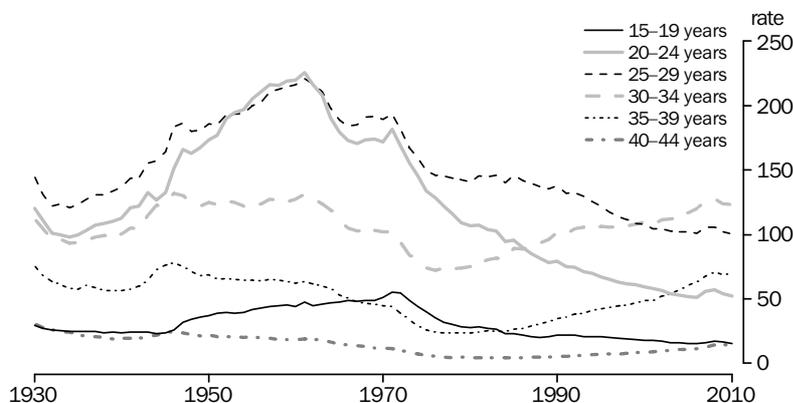
Care should be exercised in interpreting trends over time using the 'period' TFR as presented in this publication. While the TFR is widely used as a summary measure of a population's current and historical fertility trends, it does not reflect tempo changes in fertility. Tempo changes are the effect of successive cohorts of women who delay or forego having children only to catch up in subsequent years. Analysis of age-specific fertility rates and parity may assist in understanding tempo effects in fertility over time.

AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES

The slight decrease in Australia's TFR between 2009 and 2010 was the result of the decline in the age-specific fertility rates for all age groups under 35 years. Fertility rates for women aged 35–39 years and 40–45 years increased, while fertility rates for women aged 45–49 years remained the same as in 2009.

Over the past few decades, the decline in Australia's TFR has been associated with the tendency for women to have their babies at older ages. The median age of all women who registered a birth in 2000 was 29.8 years; by 2006 this had increased to 30.8 years and since 2007 has remained at 30.7 years, except for a small decline to 30.6 years in 2009.

**2.2** AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES(a), Selected age groups, Australia—1930 to 2010



(a) Births per 1,000 women.

AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY  
RATES *continued*

Until the late 1970s, the distribution of fertility rates across age groups was relatively stable, with each age group peaking and troughing together, although peaks were more pronounced for some age groups than others (graph 2.2). Women aged 25–29 years have had the highest fertility rates for most of the 20th century, followed by women aged 20–24 years. Over the past two to three decades, fertility rates amongst younger women have been declining.

The transition to an older age-specific fertility pattern is illustrated by the shift in peak fertility rates, from women aged 25–29 years in 1999 to women aged 30–34 years in 2000. Since then, women aged 30–34 years have continued to record the highest fertility rate of all age groups, with 123 babies per 1,000 women in 2010. Further, since 2003 the fertility rate for women aged 35–39 years has exceeded that of women aged 20–24 years.

REPLACEMENT FERTILITY

Since 1976, the total fertility rate for Australia has been below replacement level. That is, the average number of babies born to a woman throughout her reproductive life (measured by the TFR) has been insufficient to replace herself and her partner. The TFR required for replacement is currently considered to be around 2.1 babies per woman. However, as the level of fertility required to achieve replacement is dependent on the number of women who survive to reproductive ages, replacement fertility has declined with decreases in female mortality. Even if female mortality declined to zero for women until the end of their reproductive lives, the replacement level would still be 2.05 (1.05 male and 1.0 female babies) – higher than the 2010 TFR of 1.89 babies per woman.

COMPLETED FERTILITY

Completed fertility refers to the number of live births that a woman born in a particular year has had by the end of her reproductive life. One limitation of this measure of fertility is that it cannot be observed until a woman's reproductive life is complete. To overcome this limitation, a measure of completed fertility based on both observed and assumed age-specific fertility rates is used in table 2.3.

Completed fertility rates for women born in the early 1930s are the highest recorded in Australia (3.1 children). These women were the mothers of the 'baby boom' generation. Since then, completed fertility has declined, while the median age of mothers has increased. The 2006 to 2101 issue of *Population Projections, Australia* (cat. no. 3222.0, Series B) assumes completed fertility of women born in 2010 to be 1.8 births per woman.

For more information on completed fertility derived from the 2006 Census, see *Chapter 5: How many children do Australian women have?* in the 2006 issue of *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0).

COMPLETED FERTILITY  
*continued***2.3** COMPLETED FERTILITY(a)(b), Year of birth—Selected years

Year of birth	Average no. of children	Proportion based on projected births(c)	Median age
	no.	%	years
1925	2.8	—	27.6
1935	3.0	—	25.9
1945	2.5	—	25.5
1955	2.2	—	26.9
1965	2.1	0.2	28.7
1975	2.0	21.7	30.5
1985	1.9	82.3	31.1
1995	1.8	100.0	31.5
2005	1.8	100.0	31.6
2010	1.8	100.0	31.7

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

- (a) Based on age-specific fertility rates. Women who have not yet completed their reproductive years are assumed to experience fertility rates used in Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0) based on a total fertility rate of 1.8 babies per woman.
- (b) Fertility is assumed to be completed at age 50.
- (c) Proportion of the average number of children derived from assumed fertility rates.

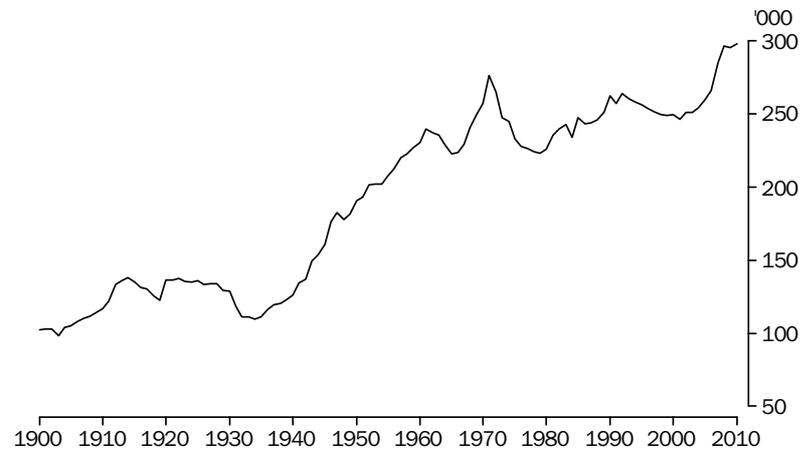
## BIRTHS

In 2010, there were 297,900 births registered in Australia, resulting from 293,300 confinements.

During the early 1900s, the number of births registered in Australia each year remained under 140,000, with a decline occurring in the early 1930s during the Great Depression. The number of births then increased rapidly, reaching a peak of 276,400 in 1971, falling sharply during the remainder of the 1970s, then increasing from the early 1980s to reach another peak in 1992 of 264,200 births. Following 1992, the annual number of birth registrations decreased, falling to 246,400 in 2001. The number of births then increased to a peak of 296,600 in 2008, before a slight decline in 2009 to 295,700 births. However, in 2010 the number of births increased again to 297,900 to record the highest number of births ever registered within a calendar year in Australia.

BIRTHS *continued*

**2.4** BIRTHS REGISTERED—1900 to 2010



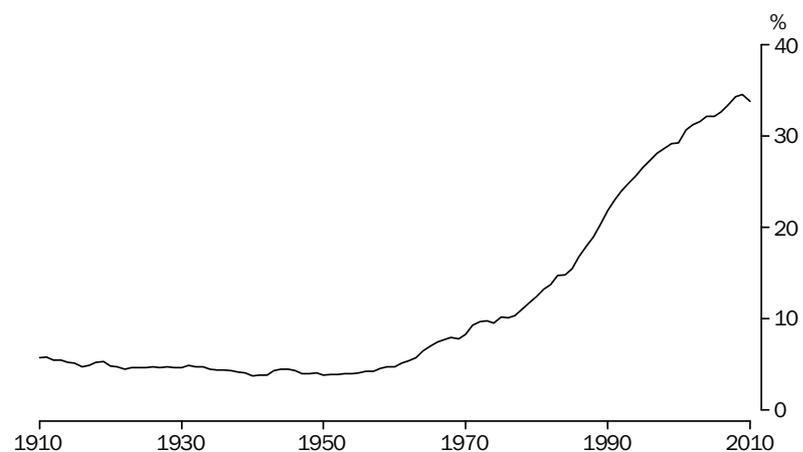
*Sex ratio*

Just over half (51%) of all births registered in 2010 were male babies, resulting in a sex ratio at birth of 105.2 male births per 100 female births. The sex ratio for all births registered in Australia generally fluctuates around 105.5 male births per 100 female births.

NUPTIAL AND EX-NUPTIAL BIRTHS

In 2010, 66% of births were nuptial births; that is, births to parents who were married at the time of the birth (marriage in this publication refers to a registered marriage unless otherwise indicated). Ex-nuptial births accounted for the remaining 34% of births, although many of these births may have been to mothers in de facto relationships. The proportion of ex-nuptial births has been increasing since the 1950s, and has risen strongly over the past three decades.

**2.5** EX-NUPTIAL BIRTHS, Proportion of all births, Australia—1910 to 2010



*Acknowledgement of paternity*

When a birth is ex-nuptial, there is a possibility that the father may not acknowledge the birth (that is, the father has not signed the birth registration statement). While the number of ex-nuptial births has increased greatly over the past twenty years, the proportion of births for which paternity was not acknowledged has decreased. In 1990, paternity was not acknowledged for around 23% of all ex-nuptial births, however, by 2010 this proportion had decreased to 9%. Births where paternity is not acknowledged have decreased from 5% of all births in 1990 to 3% in 2010.

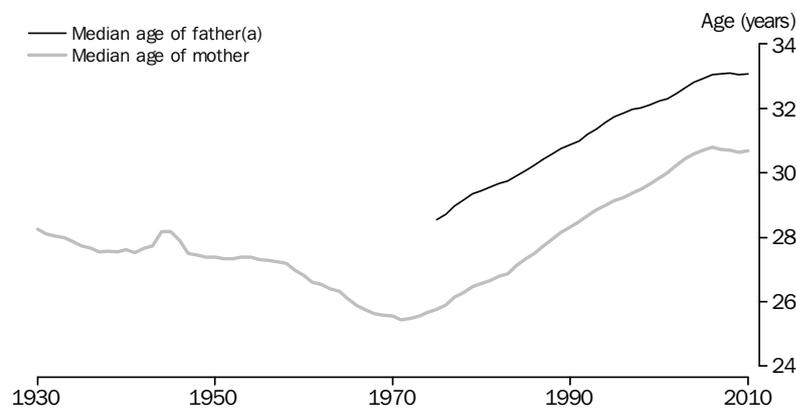
MEDIAN AGE OF PARENTS

The median age of mothers for all births registered in 2010 was 30.7 years. The median age of women who gave birth in a nuptial relationship was 31.7 years, more than four years older than those who gave birth in an ex-nuptial relationship (27.3 years). Of those who gave birth in an ex-nuptial relationship, the median age of women where paternity was not acknowledged (25.5 years) was lower than where paternity was acknowledged (27.4 years).

Until the 1930s, the median age of mothers giving birth was decreasing. During the 1930s, the median age stabilised, then rose briefly at the end of the Second World War, with an equally sharp decline immediately following the war. The median age of mothers fell substantially over the following three decades, reaching a low of 25.4 years in 1971. The reinterpretation of abortion law in New South Wales in 1971 was associated with a substantial fall in births to young women and an increase in the median age of mothers. From 1972, the median age of mothers consistently increased, reaching 30.8 years in 2006, the highest on record.

Data quality investigations during processing of 2007 birth registrations data indicated that age of parents, and therefore median age, may have been slightly overstated for some birth registrations in 2006 and previous years (see paragraph 50 of the Explanatory Notes for more information). Despite the uncertainty associated with information on age of mother, the increases in median age of mother apparent since the early 1970s appear to have halted. The median age of mothers has remained at 30.7 years since 2007 except for a small decline to 30.6 years in 2009, which was the lowest median age recorded since 2004.

**2.6** MEDIAN AGE OF PARENTS, Australia—1930 to 2010



(a) Median age of father is not available for 1974 and earlier years.

## MEDIAN AGE OF PARENTS

*continued*

The median age of fathers has also followed an upward trend since the 1970s. In 2010, the median age of fathers was 33.1 years. The median age of fathers excludes information from births where paternity is not acknowledged (9,300 births in 2010). Data quality investigations during 2007 processing indicated that age of parents, and therefore median age of fathers, may have been slightly overstated for some birth registrations in 2006 and previous years (see paragraph 50 of the Explanatory Notes for more information).

Between 1990 and 2010, the median age of fathers of nuptial births increased by almost three years, from 31.4 to 34.0 years, while the median age of fathers of ex-nuptial births who acknowledged the birth of their child also increased, from 27.3 years to 29.9 years.

## PREVIOUS CHILDREN OF THE MOTHER

Changes in ABS processing of data collected by state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages from 2007 have resulted in the availability of improved information on previous births to mothers.

Prior to 2007, ABS published information on previous births of the mother from the *current* relationship only, for all states and territories. From 2007, data on previous births for *all* relationships (both current and previous, if any) of the mother are collected for all states and territories, excluding Victoria and Queensland (see paragraphs 46 to 49 of the Explanatory Notes for more information). Data for 2010 are presented in table 2.22.

Of the states and territories that collect data on all children born to a mother, New South Wales and Western Australia both recorded the highest proportion (both 44%) of first births to the mother (that is, no previous children), followed by South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory (both 43%), and the Northern Territory (42%).

For mothers who registered a birth in 2010, the Australian Capital Territory recorded the highest proportion (35%) of mothers who had had one child previously, while the Northern Territory recorded the highest proportion (29%) of mothers with two or more previous children.

*Age of Mother*

In 2010, 44% of confinements were to women who recorded having no previous children on the birth registration form, excluding births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. The median age of these first-time mothers was 28.9 years, which is more than two years younger than the median age of second-time mothers (31.4 years).

Over one-third (35%) of mothers aged 45–49 years who registered a birth in 2010 recorded no previous children. This was a higher proportion of first births than mothers aged 35–39 years (28%) and 40–44 years (27%).

Age of Mother continued

**2.7** CONFINEMENTS, Previous children of the mother by age of mother—Australia(a)—2010

Age of Mother	PREVIOUS CHILDREN OF THE MOTHER						Total confinements(b)
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
15–19 years(c)	85.6	12.5	1.7	0.1	0.1	—	100.0
20–24 years	59.0	29.6	8.8	2.0	0.5	0.1	100.0
25–29 years	50.2	31.5	12.2	4.2	1.4	0.5	100.0
30–34 years	38.5	36.8	16.2	5.3	2.0	1.2	100.0
35–39 years	28.3	37.2	21.0	8.0	3.3	2.3	100.0
40–44 years	27.4	33.8	20.0	9.3	5.1	4.4	100.0
45–49 years(d)	34.8	26.2	13.5	8.6	7.9	9.0	100.0
<b>Total(e)</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Median age (years)	28.9	31.4	32.8	33.2	34.0	35.4	30.7

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

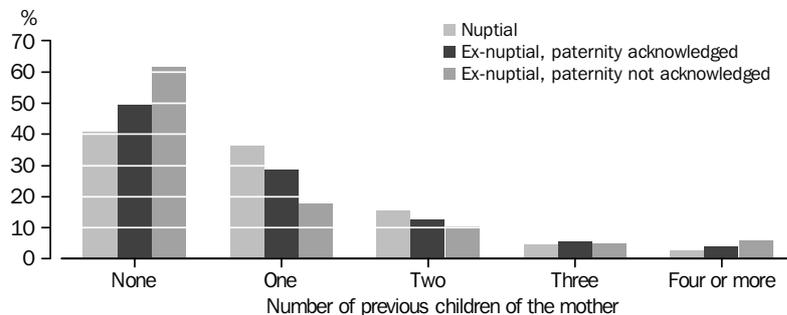
- (a) Includes all children of the mother. Excludes births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. See paragraph 47 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.
- (b) Includes births where previous children of the mother is not stated.
- (c) Includes births to mothers aged less than 15 years.
- (d) Includes births to mothers aged 50 years and over.
- (e) Includes births to mothers where age is not stated.

Nuptiality

In 2010 (excluding births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania), 41% of nuptial confinements, 49% of ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged confinements, and 62% of ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged confinements were to mothers with no previous children.

This pattern is reversed for mothers having their second or third child. In 2010, 36% of nuptial confinements, 29% of ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged confinements, and 18% of ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged confinements were to mothers with one previous child.

**2.8** CONFINEMENTS, Previous children of the mother(a), Nuptiality, Australia(b)—2010



- (a) Excludes confinements for which the number of previous children of the mother was not stated.
- (b) Includes all children of the mother. Excludes births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. See paragraph 47 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

## MULTIPLE BIRTHS

The number of confinements resulting in a multiple birth has increased consistently since the 1970s. In 2010, there were 4,500 confinements resulting in a multiple birth; of these, 65 were triplets and 4 were quads or higher order. This was 43% higher than the number recorded in 1990 (3,200 confinements), and 2% higher than the number recorded in 2009 (4,400 confinements).

**2.9** MULTIPLE BIRTHS, States and territories—2010

<i>State or territory of usual residence</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Twins</i>	<i>Triplets and higher order</i>	<i>Total multiple confinements</i>	<i>Total confinements</i>
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
New South Wales	93 048	1 398	26	1 424	94 472
Victoria	68 299	1 109	19	1 128	69 427
Queensland	62 462	988	14	1 002	63 464
South Australia	19 437	np	np	317	19 754
Western Australia	30 581	422	4	426	31 007
Tasmania	6 185	93	—	93	6 278
Northern Territory	3 787	55	—	55	3 842
Australian Capital Territory	4 985	np	np	82	5 067
<b>Australia (a)</b>	<b>288 801</b>	<b>4 458</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4 527</b>	<b>293 328</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

(a) Includes Other Territories.

## BIRTHS BY REMOTENESS AREA

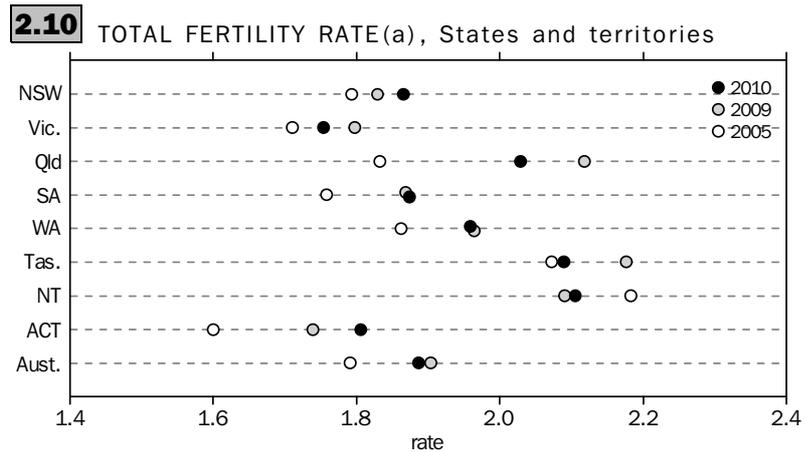
In 2010, 70% of births were registered to mothers who lived in major cities of Australia. A further 27% of births were to mothers in inner and outer regional areas, and 3% to mothers in remote and very remote areas. These proportions reflect the proportions of the Australian population living in these areas.

Major cities had the lowest total fertility rate (1.82 babies per woman, based on a three-year average ending in 2010), while remote and very remote areas had the highest (2.49 babies per woman). Furthermore, the median age of mother was highest in major cities (31.3 years), and lowest in remote and very remote areas (27.8 years). A data cube containing more detailed birth and fertility statistics by remoteness area has been released and is available for download from the ABS website (see *Table 5: Births, Summary, Remoteness Areas, 2005 to 2010*).

STATES AND TERRITORIES

*Total fertility rate*

Total fertility rates varied substantially between the states and territories in 2010, ranging from 1.75 babies per woman in Victoria to 2.11 babies per woman in the Northern Territory. In 2010, New South Wales, South Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory recorded an increase in TFR from 2009, with Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania recording decreases in TFR. All states and territories except the Northern Territory have recorded an overall increase in the TFR since 2005.



(a) Births per woman.

Queensland's TFR increased from 1.83 babies per woman in 2005 to 2.12 babies per woman in 2009 before decreasing to 2.03 babies per woman in 2010. Since 2007, Queensland's TFRs based on year of registration (as published in this publication) were higher than those based on year of occurrence of the birth, as shown in table 2.11 and graph 2.12. This indicates a possible overestimation of fertility rates in recent years due to registration of births that occurred in earlier years. Therefore, caution should be exercised when interpreting recent changes in Queensland's TFR (see paragraphs 29 and 30 of the Explanatory Notes and *Chapter 4: Effect of delayed birth registrations in Australia* in the 2009 issue of *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0) for more information).

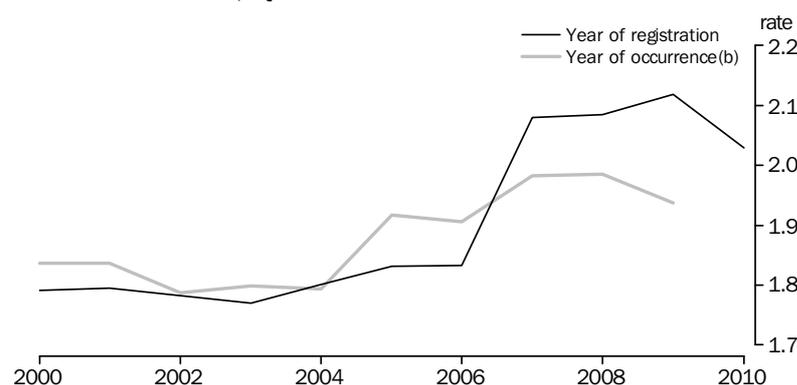
Total fertility rate  
continued

**2.11** TOTAL FERTILITY RATE(a), Year of registration and year of occurrence, Queensland—2000 to 2010

	Year of registration rate	Year of occurrence(b) rate
2000	1.791	1.837
2001	1.795	1.836
2002	1.782	1.787
2003	1.770	1.799
2004	1.801	1.793
2005	1.832	1.917
2006	1.833	1.906
2007	2.079	1.982
2008	2.084	1.985
2009	2.118	1.937
2010	2.029	na

na not available  
(a) Births per woman.  
(b) Registered in 2010 or earlier.

**2.12** TOTAL FERTILITY RATE(a), Year of registration and year of occurrence, Queensland—2000 to 2010



(a) Births per woman.  
(b) Registered in 2010 or earlier.

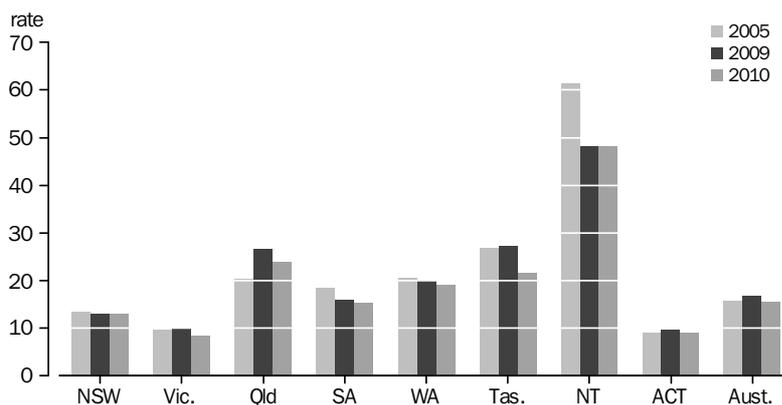
Age-specific fertility rates

In 2010, fertility rates were highest for women aged 30–34 years in all states and territories with the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory, where women aged 25–29 years recorded the highest fertility rate. Between 2009 and 2010, most states recorded decreases in fertility rates for women aged 30–34 years, while New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory all recorded small increases. Of all the age-specific fertility rates for the states and territories, the Northern Territory recorded the largest increase with women aged 25–29 years having 105 babies per 1,000 women (up from 96 babies per 1,000 women in 2009), while Queensland recorded the largest decrease with women aged 25–29 years having 111 babies per 1,000 women (down from 119 babies per 1,000 women in 2009).

*Teenage fertility rates*

At the national level, the teenage fertility rate in 2010 was 16 babies per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years, however, the rate differs amongst the states and territories. In 2010, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory recorded the lowest teenage fertility rates in Australia (both 9 babies per 1,000 women), while the Northern Territory recorded the highest (48 babies per 1,000 women).

**2.13** TEENAGE FERTILITY RATES(a), States and territories



(a) Births per 1,000 women.

The majority of births to teenage mothers in Australia in 2010 were to women aged 18 and 19 years (28% and 44% respectively), which is reflected in the fertility rates for women at these ages. In 2010, the fertility rates for women aged 18 and 19 years were 21 babies per 1,000 women and 33 babies per 1,000 women respectively. In comparison, only 4% of births to teenage mothers were to women aged 15 years or younger, resulting in a fertility rate of 3 babies per 1,000 women aged 15 years.

*Births*

The three most populous states accounted for over three-quarters (78%) of births registered in Australia in 2010: 95,900 in New South Wales (32%), 70,600 in Victoria (24%) and 64,500 in Queensland (22%). These proportions reflect the proportions of the Australian female population in reproductive ages living in these states.

Between 2009 and 2010, most states and territories recorded increases in registered births (table 2.14), except for Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

Caution should be exercised when comparing year-to-year changes in state and territory data as changes in Registry processing systems may impact on these data (see paragraphs 10 to 12 and 26 to 30 of the Explanatory Notes for more information).

*Births continued***2.14** BIRTHS REGISTERED, States and territories—2009 and 2010

			CHANGE	
	2009	2010	2009–2010	2009–2010
	no.	no.	no.	%
New South Wales	92 783	95 918	3 135	3.4
Victoria	70 920	70 568	–352	–0.5
Queensland	66 097	64 467	–1 630	–2.5
South Australia	19 734	20 076	342	1.7
Western Australia	30 878	31 424	546	1.8
Tasmania	6 626	6 385	–241	–3.6
Northern Territory	3 819	3 899	80	2.1
Australian Capital Territory	4 858	5 149	291	6.0
<b>Australia</b> (a)	<b>295 738</b>	<b>297 903</b>	<b>2 165</b>	<b>0.7</b>

(a) Includes Other Territories.

*Median age of parents at confinement*

Of the states and territories, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory recorded the oldest median ages of mother (31.6 years and 31.5 years respectively). The Northern Territory had the youngest mothers, with a median age of 28.5 years, followed by Tasmania (29.2 years). The median age of all mothers who registered a birth in Australia in 2010 was 30.7 years.

The Northern Territory and Tasmania also had the youngest fathers in 2010, with median ages of 31.5 and 31.7 years respectively. Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had the oldest fathers, both with a median age of 33.7 years. For Australia, the median age of all fathers in 2010 (where age is known) was 33.1 years.

*Nuptiality*

In 2010, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory both recorded the highest proportion of births to parents in a registered marriage (both 73%), followed by New South Wales (71%).

The highest proportions of ex-nuptial births were recorded in the Northern Territory (60%) and Tasmania (49%), however, the number of ex-nuptial births in Tasmania may be understated (see paragraphs 31 to 33 of the Explanatory Notes for more information). The Northern Territory also recorded the highest proportion of births where paternity was not acknowledged (16%), followed by Queensland (5%).

INTERVAL BETWEEN OCCURRENCE AND REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS

ABS birth statistics are sourced from birth registration systems administered by the state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages, based on data provided on a registration form completed by the parent(s) of the child. Registration of births is compulsory in Australia under relevant state and territory legislation. Amendments to the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*, which took effect from 1 July 2007, require the registration of, or application for, registration of the birth of a child, as a condition for applying for the Baby Bonus.

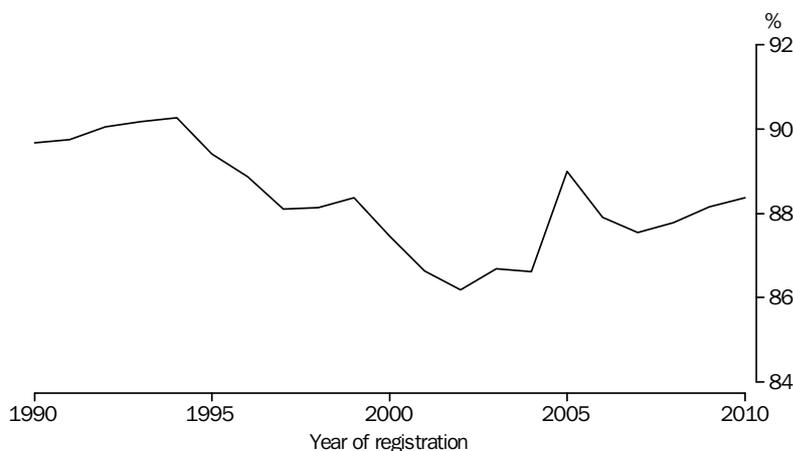
There is usually an interval between the occurrence and registration of a birth. As a result, some births occurring in one year are not registered until the following year or later. This can be caused by either a delay by the parent(s) in submitting a completed form to the registry, or a delay by the registry in processing the birth (for example, due to follow-up activity to obtain missing information on the form, or resource limitations). For more information, see paragraphs 10 to 12 and 27 to 28 of the Explanatory Notes.

The following analysis considers whether improvements in the timeliness of registration of births have occurred since 1 July 2007.

*Births registered in the year of occurrence*

Of the 297,900 births registered in 2010, 88% (263,200) occurred in 2010. The remaining 12% (34,700) occurred in 2009 or earlier years. Prior to 2005, the proportion of births registered in the year they occurred was generally declining. Of all births registered in 1990, 90% occurred in 1990 with the remainder occurring in earlier years. By 2002, this proportion had declined to 86%. In 2005, the proportion increased to 89%, largely as a result of changes to follow-up procedures introduced by the New South Wales Registry. The proportion of births registered in the year of occurrence has since reduced, due largely to processes undertaken by the Queensland Registry to follow-up and register previously unregistered births (see paragraphs 29 to 30 of the Explanatory Notes for more information).

**2.15** BIRTHS REGISTERED IN THE YEAR OF OCCURRENCE, Australia—1990 to 2010



*Average interval between occurrence and registration of births*

In order to analyse changes in the interval between the occurrence and registration of births, monthly intervals between the occurrence and registration of births were averaged over six month periods. The average interval between the occurrence and registration of births for each state and territory for the first and second halves of the years 2006 to 2010 is shown in table 2.16.

For Australia, the average intervals for each six-month period beginning 1 July 2007 were similar to earlier periods, indicating no improvement in the timeliness of registration of births.

Among the states and territories, average intervals varied widely for each six-month period since 1 July 2007, from 0.9 months for births registered in the Northern Territory for January to June 2008 and July to December 2010, to 5.0 months for births registered in Queensland for July to December 2008 and 2009. A comparison of average intervals over time shows some year-to-year volatility, however, there is no indication that average intervals since 1 July 2007 have decreased compared with earlier periods.

It should be noted however that changes in timeliness of registration of births occurring after 1 July 2007 may be masked by other factors such as changes in procedures for processing birth registrations by state and territory registries. Accordingly, it is unclear whether the amendments to the *A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*, referred to above, have improved the timeliness of the registration of births.

**2.16** BIRTHS, Average interval between occurrence and registration(a)—2006 to 2010

State or territory of registration	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	First half	Second half								
	months	months								
New South Wales	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.4	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.2
Victoria	2.1	1.6	2.1	2.6	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.3
Queensland	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.7	4.6	5.0	4.7	5.0	3.9	3.6
South Australia	2.0	2.2	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.0
Western Australia	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.2
Tasmania	2.0	1.9	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.7	2.1	2.1
Northern Territory(b)	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.1	0.9
Australian Capital Territory	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3
<b>Australia</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>

(a) In order to reduce the effect of very long delays in registration, intervals of more than 72 months (6 years) have been counted as an interval of 72 months.

(b) The Northern Territory has processes in place to reduce the delay in the registration of births. See paragraph 12 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

*Average interval between occurrence and registration of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births*

In general, average intervals for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births are significantly larger than intervals for all births. The average interval between the occurrence and registration of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births for each state and territory for the first and second halves of the years 2006 to 2010 is shown in table 2.17. As with all births, the average interval varies widely among the states and territories.

In contrast to total births, the average intervals for each six-month period beginning 1 January 2008 are higher than earlier periods in most cases, indicating no improvement in the timeliness of registration of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births. Rather it appears that Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births that have occurred in earlier periods and have not been registered were being registered in 2008 onwards leading to higher average intervals in several states and territories.

**2.17** AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BIRTHS, Average interval between occurrence and registration(a)—2006 to 2010

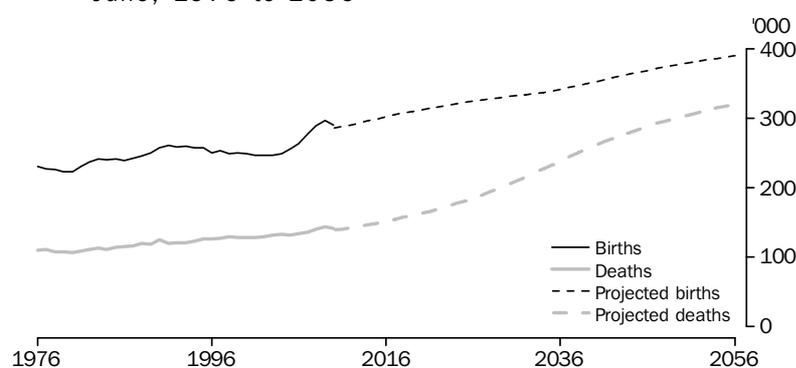
State or territory of registration	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	First half	Second half								
	months	months								
New South Wales	3.3	3.8	3.2	2.4	3.4	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.4	1.6
Victoria	6.2	4.7	6.2	6.6	4.9	6.3	9.4	9.9	6.8	9.5
Queensland	9.7	9.8	12.0	8.0	12.9	16.0	14.6	17.1	14.8	11.6
South Australia	8.4	9.4	9.4	5.5	7.9	9.1	8.8	9.7	8.9	11.5
Western Australia	10.8	10.0	9.8	9.9	10.9	10.8	11.2	11.5	11.0	10.4
Tasmania	2.4	2.5	6.3	4.7	4.0	6.7	1.9	2.8	2.9	2.3
Northern Territory(b)	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	2.3	2.3	1.7	1.3
Australian Capital Territory	2.8	2.6	3.9	3.3	5.8	2.5	7.1	6.4	5.9	4.3
<b>Australia</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>

(a) In order to reduce the effect of very long delays in registration, intervals of more than 72 months (6 years) have been counted as interval of 72 months.

(b) The Northern Territory has processes in place to reduce the delay in the registration of births. See paragraph 12 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

BIRTHS AS A COMPONENT  
OF POPULATION CHANGE

Births are an important component of population change. In 2010, there were roughly twice as many births as deaths. Although the number of births per woman is low, there are enough women currently in childbearing ages to retain a relatively high total number of births. Conversely, there are relatively few people at older ages, resulting in a relatively low number of deaths per year. As the population ages, the difference between numbers of births and deaths will decrease. Based on Series B of the most recent ABS population projections (*Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101*, cat. no. 3222.0), the number of births is projected to remain higher than the number of deaths throughout the projection period.

**2.18** ACTUAL AND PROJECTED BIRTHS AND DEATHS—Year ended 30 June, 1976 to 2056

Source: Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001)  
Australian Demographic Statistics, March Quarter 2011 (cat. no. 3101.0)  
Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101 (cat. no. 3222.0) (Series B)

**2.19** COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE(a), Australia—2005 to 2010

	Births(b)	Deaths(b)	Natural increase	Net overseas migration	Population at end of period	Population increase(c)	%
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	
2005	263.4	131.4	132.0	137.0	20 544.1	291.9	1.4
2006	268.5	134.5	134.0	182.2	20 873.7	329.6	1.6
2007	r285.3	r139.8	r145.5	r244.1	r21 263.3	r389.6	r1.9
2008	r294.1	r142.5	r151.6	r315.7	r21 730.6	r467.3	r2.2
2009	r295.3	r141.6	r153.7	r246.9	r22 131.2	r400.6	r1.8
2010	p289.5	p143.4	p146.0	p171.1	p22 448.3	p317.1	p1.4

p preliminary figure or series subject to revision

r revised

(a) Calendar year.

(b) For 2009 and earlier years, births and deaths in this table are based on year of occurrence, for population estimation purposes. For 2010, a combination of data based on year of occurrence (for the March and June quarters) and quarter of registration (for the September and December quarters) is used. Numbers of births in this table will therefore differ from data elsewhere in this publication.

(c) Population increase will not necessarily equal the sum of natural increase and net overseas migration due to intercensal discrepancy. See Glossary for more information.

Source: Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0)

## INTERNATIONAL FERTILITY RATES

According to the United Nations, the projected world average TFR for 2005–2010 is 2.5 babies per woman. This is a decline from the relatively constant 5 births per woman that existed until the 1960s, however, TFRs for individual countries vary considerably. There are many factors that can influence a country's fertility rate, such as differences in social and economic development and contraceptive prevalence. In general, less developed countries have higher fertility rates than more developed countries.

Australia's TFR, according to the United Nations, for 2005–2010 of 1.9 babies per woman is well below the world average (2.5), although it is above the average TFR for developed countries (1.7). According to United Nations projections, a number of European and developed Asian countries will have low fertility rates in 2005–2010. Hong Kong's projected TFR of 1.0 is one of the lowest in the world. Middle Eastern and African countries have the highest fertility rates, with Niger (7.2), Afghanistan (6.6) and Uganda (6.4) some of the highest.

Projected fertility rates for the United States of America and New Zealand (both 2.1) are higher than that for Australia, while the rate for Canada is lower (1.7).

**2.20** INTERNATIONAL TOTAL FERTILITY RATES (a)—1970–1975 to 2010–2015

	1970–1975	1975–1980	1980–1985	1985–1990	1990–1995	1995–2000	2000–2005	2005–2010	2010–2015
Afghanistan	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.9	8.0	8.0	7.4	6.6	6.0
Australia	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0
Canada	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.7
China	4.8	2.9	2.6	2.6	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.6
France	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0
Germany	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5
Greece	2.3	2.3	2.0	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.5
Hong Kong	3.3	2.3	1.7	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.1
India	5.3	4.9	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.5
Indonesia	5.3	4.7	4.1	3.4	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1
Italy	2.4	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Japan	2.1	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4
Korea, Republic of	4.3	2.9	2.2	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.4
Malaysia	4.6	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.6
New Zealand	2.8	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
Niger	7.5	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.4	7.2	6.9
Papua New Guinea	6.1	5.9	5.5	5.0	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.1	3.8
Singapore	2.8	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.4
Somalia	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.3
Spain	2.9	2.6	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
Sweden	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.9
Timor-Leste	5.5	4.3	5.4	5.2	5.7	7.0	7.0	6.5	5.9
Uganda	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.4	5.9
United Kingdom	2.0	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9
United States of America	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
Viet Nam	7.2	5.9	4.9	4.0	3.2	2.2	1.9	1.9	1.8
Yemen	7.7	8.6	9.2	8.9	8.2	7.0	6.1	5.5	4.9
<b>World</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>

(a) Births per woman.

Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Medium variant* <<http://esa.un.org/unpp>>.

**2.21** BIRTHS, Australia—Selected years

		1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009(a)	2010(b)
<b>FERTILITY</b>										
Age-specific fertility rates(c)										
15–19 years(d)	rate	22.1	20.4	17.7	15.7	15.3	16.0	17.2	16.7	15.5
20–24 years	rate	79.4	67.1	59.2	51.8	51.4	55.5	56.5	54.0	52.5
25–29 years	rate	137.9	121.7	107.9	102.0	101.0	105.6	104.9	102.4	100.2
30–34 years	rate	101.7	106.0	109.5	117.0	120.4	125.9	127.1	124.0	123.3
35–39 years	rate	34.7	42.3	48.7	60.3	63.4	67.8	70.6	68.7	69.7
40–44 years	rate	5.5	7.2	8.7	10.8	11.3	12.6	14.1	14.2	14.8
45–49 years(e)	rate	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Total fertility rate(f)	rate	1.902	1.822	1.756	1.791	1.817	1.920	1.956	1.903	1.886
Total fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers(f) (g)										
	rate	na	na	2.161	2.096	2.120	2.399	2.515	2.575	2.575
Crude birth rate(h)	rate	15.4	14.2	13.0	12.7	12.8	13.5	13.8	13.5	13.4
Net reproduction rate(i)	rate	0.908	0.875	0.844	0.858	0.870	0.921	0.939	0.909	0.906
<b>BIRTHS</b>										
<b>Total births(j)</b>	no.	<b>262 648</b>	<b>256 190</b>	<b>249 636</b>	<b>259 791</b>	<b>265 949</b>	<b>285 213</b>	<b>296 621</b>	<b>295 738</b>	<b>297 903</b>
Males	no.	135 194	131 432	128 190	133 428	136 692	146 456	152 287	152 019	152 739
Females	no.	127 454	124 758	121 446	126 363	129 257	138 757	144 334	143 719	145 164
Sex ratio	ratio	106.1	105.3	105.6	105.6	105.8	105.5	105.5	105.8	105.2
Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births(g)										
	no.	2 497	6 640	10 895	12 078	12 496	14 192	15 011	15 825	16 129
Age of mother(k)										
15–19 years(d)	no.	15 107	12 631	11 474	10 744	10 552	11 204	12 326	12 120	11 294
20–24 years	no.	53 169	47 247	37 604	36 482	37 151	40 907	42 678	42 067	41 690
25–29 years	no.	97 438	83 585	78 409	69 420	70 224	75 998	79 012	80 863	81 763
30–34 years	no.	70 600	77 437	78 663	89 158	89 883	93 072	94 124	93 027	94 093
35–39 years	no.	22 740	30 117	36 803	44 873	48 505	53 561	56 976	55 937	56 650
40–44 years	no.	3 396	4 797	6 342	8 376	8 679	9 642	10 771	10 905	11 563
45–49 years(e)	no.	104	164	262	358	438	506	512	565	592
Age of father(k)(l)										
15–19 years(m)	no.	3 498	3 338	3 765	3 558	3 469	3 910	4 391	4 337	4 108
20–24 years	no.	27 768	25 955	21 221	21 110	21 345	23 537	24 550	24 129	23 773
25–29 years	no.	76 915	63 485	58 852	51 616	52 456	56 589	59 254	60 324	60 358
30–34 years	no.	81 219	82 328	77 991	85 212	85 548	89 233	89 871	88 546	90 048
35–39 years	no.	40 570	46 558	52 077	56 814	60 659	66 157	69 784	68 721	69 620
40–44 years	no.	14 027	15 854	19 020	23 168	23 802	25 556	27 202	26 970	27 803
45–49 years	no.	3 706	5 069	5 577	6 718	7 010	8 109	8 566	8 877	8 828
50 years and over	no.	1 716	2 108	2 465	3 050	3 135	3 340	3 507	3 586	3 734
Nuptial births	no.	205 241	188 140	176 625	176 078	179 019	189 896	194 704	193 560	196 937
Ex-nuptial births	no.	57 407	68 050	73 011	83 713	86 930	95 053	101 767	102 011	100 807
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	no.	44 257	56 688	64 396	75 353	78 550	86 640	92 512	92 056	91 472
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	no.	13 150	11 362	8 615	8 360	8 380	8 413	9 255	9 955	9 335

na not available

(a) Fertility rates for 2009 have been calculated using revised 30 June 2009 estimated resident population.

(b) Fertility rates for 2010 have been calculated using preliminary 30 June 2010 estimated resident population.

(c) Births per 1,000 women.

(d) Includes births to mothers aged less than 15 years.

(e) Includes births to mothers aged 50 years and over.

(f) Births per woman.

(g) Due to changes over time in the completeness and coverage of responses by the parent(s) to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander question on the birth registration form, care should be taken when interpreting changes in the data, and as a result, fertility rates for earlier years are not available.

(h) Births per 1,000 estimated resident population.

(i) Daughters surviving to reproductive age per woman.

(j) Includes unknown nuptiality.

(k) Excludes births where age was not stated.

(l) Excludes ex-nuptial births where paternity was not acknowledged.

(m) Includes births to fathers aged less than 15 years.

**2.21** BIRTHS, Australia—Selected years *continued*

		1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009(a)	2010(b)
<b>CONFINEMENTS</b>										
All confinements(c)	no.	259 435	252 708	245 697	255 481	261 550	280 781	291 974	291 240	293 328
Nuptial confinements	no.	202 585	185 378	173 571	172 894	175 827	186 694	191 385	190 426	193 775
Ex-nuptial confinements	no.	56 850	67 330	72 126	82 587	85 723	93 825	100 440	100 647	99 395
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	no.	43 825	56 071	63 634	74 340	77 471	85 517	91 323	90 849	90 225
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	no.	13 025	11 259	8 492	8 247	8 252	8 308	9 117	9 798	9 170
Median age of mother(d)										
All confinements(c)	years	28.3	29.1	29.8	30.7	30.8	30.7	30.7	30.6	30.7
Confinements to first-time mothers(e)	years	27.5	27.6	28.6	29.3	29.3	28.9	28.8	28.8	28.9
Nuptial confinements	years	29.0	30.1	30.8	31.7	31.8	31.8	31.9	31.7	31.7
Ex-nuptial confinements	years	24.0	24.9	26.1	27.0	27.2	27.1	27.0	27.1	27.3
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	years	24.5	25.2	26.4	27.2	27.4	27.2	27.1	27.3	27.4
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	years	22.5	23.2	24.4	25.1	25.3	25.4	25.5	25.2	25.5
Median age of father(d)										
All fathers where the age is known	years	30.9	31.7	32.2	32.9	33.1	33.1	33.1	33.0	33.1
Nuptial confinements	years	31.4	32.5	33.1	33.7	33.9	34.0	34.1	34.0	34.0
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	years	27.3	27.8	28.9	29.8	30.0	29.9	29.8	29.9	29.9
Median duration of marriage(f)	years	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0

(a) Fertility rates for 2009 have been calculated using revised 30 June 2009 estimated resident population.

(b) Fertility rates for 2010 have been calculated using preliminary 30 June 2010 estimated resident population.

(c) Includes unknown nuptiality.

(d) Prior to 2007, median age of parents may be overstated. See paragraph 50 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(e) Contains a break in time series between 2006 and 2007. Excludes births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. See paragraphs 46 to 49 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(f) At time of birth.

**2.22** BIRTHS, States and territories—2010

		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas. (a)	NT	ACT	Aust. (b)
<b>FERTILITY</b>										
Age-specific fertility rates(c)										
15–19 years(d)	rate	12.9	8.5	24.0	15.3	19.1	21.5	48.1	8.9	15.5
20–24 years	rate	49.3	36.7	70.5	53.7	59.3	79.5	92.5	34.3	52.5
25–29 years	rate	97.3	88.5	111.1	108.2	108.9	128.2	104.8	87.3	100.2
30–34 years	rate	123.3	124.9	122.2	121.8	124.2	117.2	102.2	133.6	123.3
35–39 years	rate	73.4	74.6	63.3	61.8	65.4	58.1	59.7	80.0	69.7
40–44 years	rate	15.9	16.2	13.4	12.0	13.6	11.6	12.2	16.7	14.8
45–49 years(e)	rate	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.7
Total fertility rate(f)	rate	1.865	1.754	2.029	1.874	1.959	2.089	2.105	1.806	1.886
Total fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers(f) (g)										
	rate	2.195	2.066	3.167	2.724	2.844	1.695	2.360	1.945	2.575
Crude birth rate(h)	rate	13.3	12.7	14.3	12.2	13.7	12.6	17.0	14.4	13.4
Net reproduction rate(i)	rate	0.898	0.845	0.974	0.893	0.944	0.989	0.989	0.865	0.906
<b>BIRTHS</b>										
<b>Total births(j)</b>	no.	<b>95 918</b>	<b>70 568</b>	<b>64 467</b>	<b>20 076</b>	<b>31 424</b>	<b>6 385</b>	<b>3 899</b>	<b>5 149</b>	<b>297 903</b>
Males	no.	49 131	36 139	32 998	10 395	16 063	3 317	2 026	2 661	152 739
Females	no.	46 787	34 429	31 469	9 681	15 361	3 068	1 873	2 488	145 164
Sex ratio	ratio	105.0	105.0	104.9	107.4	104.6	108.1	108.2	107.0	105.2
Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births(g)										
	no.	4 415	973	5 291	943	2 341	453	1 558	151	16 129
Age of mother(k)										
15–19 years(d)	no.	3 014	1 512	3 660	806	1 449	357	388	105	11 294
20–24 years	no.	12 470	7 467	11 359	3 043	4 842	1 191	802	509	41 690
25–29 years	no.	25 927	18 477	18 165	5 929	8 926	1 852	1 099	1 386	81 763
30–34 years	no.	31 009	24 280	18 590	6 149	9 633	1 651	958	1 820	94 093
35–39 years	no.	19 365	15 401	10 450	3 409	5 409	966	544	1 104	56 650
40–44 years	no.	3 946	3 200	2 119	684	1 106	195	101	212	11 563
45–49 years(e)	no.	184	172	114	44	49	10	7	12	592
Age of father(k) (l)										
15–19 years(m)	no.	1 101	540	1 358	296	531	150	105	27	4 108
20–24 years	no.	6 672	3 988	7 017	1 728	2 903	725	447	289	23 773
25–29 years	no.	18 459	12 989	14 642	4 442	6 494	1 510	812	1 003	60 358
30–34 years	no.	29 622	23 005	17 855	6 056	9 312	1 694	835	1 666	90 048
35–39 years	no.	23 568	18 347	13 176	4 422	7 006	1 182	645	1 273	69 620
40–44 years	no.	9 492	7 329	5 088	1 705	2 878	486	272	551	27 803
45–49 years	no.	3 111	2 250	1 635	546	852	176	101	157	8 828
50 years and over	no.	1 332	894	701	246	367	82	42	70	3 734
Nuptial births	no.	67 808	51 230	37 143	12 720	19 640	3 084	1 538	3 762	196 937
Ex-nuptial births	no.	28 110	19 338	27 324	7 356	11 784	3 142	2 361	1 387	100 807
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	no.	25 551	18 125	24 336	6 725	10 736	2 987	1 733	1 274	91 472
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	no.	2 559	1 213	2 988	631	1 048	155	628	113	9 335

(a) For Tasmania, some characteristics of births are not collected for the birth notifications. See paragraphs 31 to 33 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

(c) Births per 1,000 women.

(d) Includes births to mothers aged less than 15 years.

(e) Includes births to mothers aged 50 years and over.

(f) Births per woman.

(g) Due to changes over time in the completeness and coverage of responses by the parent(s) to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander question on the birth registration form, care should be taken when interpreting changes in the data.

(h) Births per 1,000 estimated resident population.

(i) Daughters surviving to reproductive age per woman.

(j) Includes unknown nuptiality.

(k) Excludes births where age was not stated.

(l) Excludes ex-nuptial births where paternity was not acknowledged.

(m) Includes births to fathers aged less than 15 years.

**2.22** BIRTHS, States and territories—2010 *continued*

		NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas. (a)	NT	ACT	Aust. (b)
<b>CONFINEMENTS</b>										
All confinements(c)	no.	94 472	69 427	63 464	19 754	31 007	6 278	3 842	5 067	293 328
Nuptial confinements	no.	66 779	50 374	36 511	12 480	19 375	3 024	1 523	3 697	193 775
Ex-nuptial confinements	no.	27 693	19 053	26 953	7 274	11 632	3 096	2 319	1 370	99 395
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	no.	25 188	17 863	24 015	6 650	10 597	2 943	1 704	1 260	90 225
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	no.	2 505	1 190	2 938	624	1 035	153	615	110	9 170
Median age of mother										
All confinements(c)	years	31.0	31.6	29.7	30.2	30.2	29.2	28.5	31.5	30.7
Confinements to first-time mothers(d)	years	29.2	29.8	28.0	28.4	28.5	27.7	26.2	29.8	28.9
Nuptial confinements	years	31.8	32.1	31.3	31.4	31.6	31.3	31.2	32.1	31.7
Ex-nuptial confinements	years	27.6	29.2	26.3	26.9	26.7	26.3	26.0	29.1	27.3
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	years	27.7	29.3	26.4	27.0	26.9	26.4	26.7	29.3	27.4
Ex-nuptial paternity not acknowledged	years	26.5	27.6	24.8	25.8	23.8	23.8	24.0	25.8	25.5
Median age of father										
All fathers (where the age is known)	years	33.4	33.7	32.1	32.6	32.8	31.7	31.5	33.7	33.1
Nuptial confinements	years	34.2	34.2	33.6	33.7	33.9	33.5	33.6	34.2	34.0
Ex-nuptial paternity acknowledged	years	30.4	31.5	28.8	29.6	29.5	28.9	28.9	31.1	29.9
Median duration of marriage(e)	years	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.4	4.1	4.0
Previous children of the mother(f)										
0	no.	41 004	32 415	32 467	8 599	13 764	1 074	1 577	2 568	na
1	no.	31 011	23 977	19 462	6 663	10 349	1 992	1 113	2 087	na
2	no.	13 725	9 537	7 580	2 917	4 325	894	565	841	na
3	no.	4 675	2 895	2 308	956	1 474	387	289	283	na
4	no.	1 829	942	762	370	548	141	147	81	na
5 or more	no.	870	620	562	286	475	114	100	44	na
Average number of children of the mother(f)	no.	1.91	1.84	1.76	1.94	1.92	2.34	2.13	1.88	na

na not available

(e) At time of birth.

(a) For Tasmania, some characteristics of births are not collected for the birth notifications. See paragraphs 31 to 33 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(f) By state or territory of registration. Includes all children born to a mother, for all states and territories excluding Victoria and Queensland. For Victoria and Queensland, includes previous children of the current relationship only. Due to the high proportion (27%) of confinements in Tasmania for which no information on previous children was available, data for Tasmania should be interpreted with caution. See paragraphs 46 to 49 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

(c) Includes unknown nuptiality.

(d) By state or territory of registration. Australia excludes births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania. See paragraphs 46 to 49 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.

INTRODUCTION

A birth is registered as being an Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander birth where at least one parent reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal person, Torres Strait Islander, or both on the birth registration form. Fertility rates for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women refer to births to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers. Due to data quality concerns and the small number of Torres Strait Islander births, aggregated Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data are presented in this publication.

This chapter reports on the characteristics of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births and fertility rates in each state and territory, except for the Australian Capital Territory, due to small numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births. The number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births in the Australian Capital Territory are reported in table 3.1.

Some births of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not reported and recorded as such when they are registered. Data presented in this chapter may therefore underestimate the level of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births and fertility in Australia. Lags in registrations may also affect reliability of measures of fertility for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Caution should be exercised when interpreting data presented in this chapter, especially with regard to year-to-year changes (see paragraphs 34 to 44 of the Explanatory Notes for more information).

Further care should be taken when interpreting Queensland birth registration data for 2009, particularly for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as these data have been affected by the 'Retrospective Births Project' undertaken by the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages that year (see paragraph 38 of the Explanatory Notes for more information).

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BIRTHS

There were 16,100 births registered in Australia in 2010 where at least one parent reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on the birth registration form. This was 2% higher than in 2009 (15,800 births) and accounted for 5% of all births registered in 2010 (297,900).

Queensland and New South Wales, the states with the largest Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, recorded the highest number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births (5,300 and 4,400 births respectively), followed by Western Australia (2,300) and the Northern Territory (1,600).

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL  
AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER BIRTHS*continued***3.1** AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
BIRTHS(a), States and territories(b)—1991 to 2010

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.(c)
1991	50	508	9	593	33	190	1 257	58	2 698
1992	42	503	4	561	1 215	218	1 354	14	3 911
1993	1 278	493	31	519	1 535	264	1 359	43	5 523
1994	2 011	520	25	531	1 578	247	1 338	59	6 310
1995	2 345	542	29	554	1 492	267	1 354	52	6 640
1996	2 444	474	2 534	557	1 538	244	1 343	66	9 204
1997	2 813	457	3 038	591	1 474	310	1 259	53	9 999
1998	3 014	590	3 085	661	1 468	300	1 284	42	10 445
1999	3 052	521	2 974	640	1 558	339	1 419	75	10 580
2000	2 991	452	3 172	632	1 721	336	1 530	57	10 895
2001	3 112	522	3 337	612	1 597	468	1 688	67	11 405
2002	3 339	601	3 349	679	1 481	431	1 539	66	11 488
2003	3 254	722	3 408	578	1 687	376	1 630	85	11 740
2004	3 533	719	3 424	653	1 719	357	1 509	91	12 006
2005	3 139	802	3 657	718	1 763	415	1 485	98	12 078
2006	3 516	782	3 463	733	1 910	413	1 565	109	12 496
2007	3 720	1 025	4 486	808	2 121	308	1 595	129	14 192
2008	4 003	1 096	4 402	976	2 473	364	1 560	134	15 011
2009	4 128	1 129	5 205	889	2 416	397	1 523	135	15 825
2010	4 415	973	5 291	943	2 341	453	1 558	151	16 129

(a) Due to changes over time in the completeness and coverage of responses by the parent(s) to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander question on the birth registration forms, care should be taken when interpreting changes in the number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births.

(b) State or territory of usual residence.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

*Australian Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
mothers*

In 2010, 4% of all mothers who registered a birth in Australia reported and were recorded as being Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mothers. The proportion of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers ranged from 1% in Victoria to 37% in the Northern Territory. The number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers was highest in Queensland (4,100), followed by New South Wales (2,800), Western Australia (1,800) and the Northern Territory (1,400).

*Australian Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander  
mothers continued*

### 3.2 AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS, States and territories(a)—2010

State or territory of usual residence	Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Proportion of all mothers
	mothers(b) no.	%
New South Wales	2 801	2.9
Victoria	591	0.8
Queensland	4 098	6.4
South Australia	705	3.5
Western Australia	1 815	5.8
Tasmania	277	4.3
Northern Territory	1 439	36.9
<b>Australia (c)</b>	<b>11 809</b>	<b>4.0</b>

- (a) The Australian Capital Territory is not included separately due to small numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births. See paragraph 41 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.
- (b) Total confinements to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers.
- (c) Includes the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

#### TRENDS IN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FERTILITY RATES

##### *Total fertility rate*

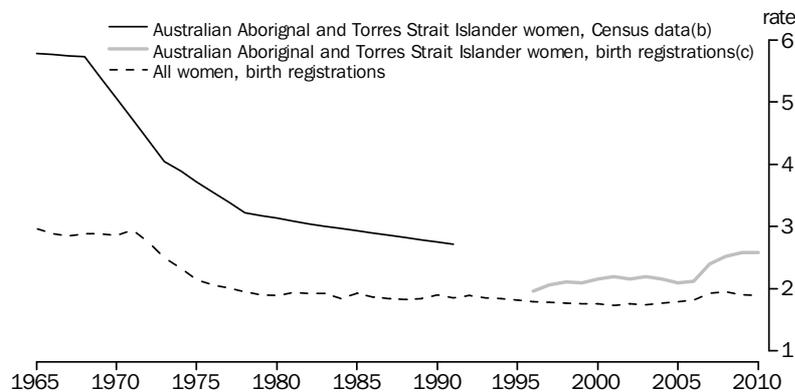
Total fertility rates (TFRs) for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and all women for the period 1965 to 2010 are presented in graph 3.3. Due to the poor quality of historical Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander birth registrations data, fertility rates for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women up to 1991 were derived using data collected in the Australian censuses (Gray, 1997). With improvements in coverage, birth registrations data have been used for 1996 onwards. Due to the uncertainty in numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births, as well as Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates used as denominators in the calculation of fertility rates, data should be interpreted with caution. For more information on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates, see *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0).

In the early 1960s, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was 5.8 babies per woman, compared with 3.2 babies for all women in Australia. Since then, fertility rates of both Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and all women have declined substantially, with the largest decreases recorded during the 1970s.

In 1996, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was 1.97 babies per woman, the lowest on record. Over the following decade, the TFR remained at around 2.1 to 2.2 babies per woman. In 2007, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women increased to 2.40 babies per woman and has continued to increase reaching 2.57 babies per woman in 2010 (compared with 1.89 for all women in Australia).

Total fertility rate  
continued

**3.3** TOTAL FERTILITY RATES(a), Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and all women—1965 to 2010

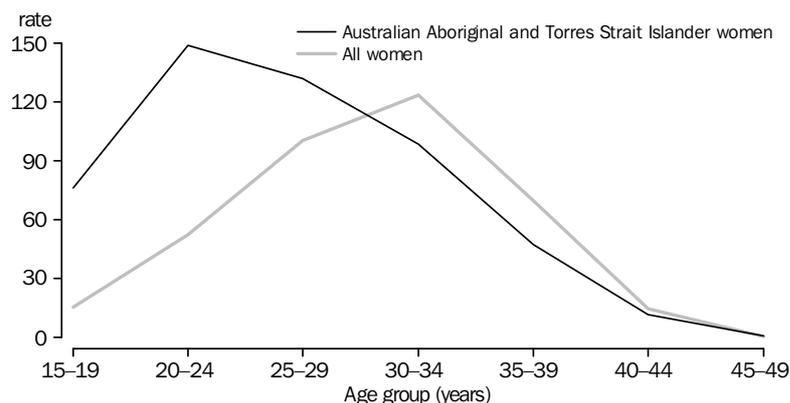


(a) Births per woman.  
 (b) Five-year TFRs (from 1961–66 to 1981–86) and ten-year TFR (1986–96) plotted against the middle year of the period.  
 (c) TFRs for 1996 to 2010 are calculated using Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates and projections based on the 2006 Census.  
 Source: Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001)  
 Gray (1997)  
 Births, Australia (cat. no. 3301.0)

Age-specific fertility rates

High fertility rates at younger ages contribute to the relatively high overall fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women compared with all women. Births to women aged under 30 years contributed to three-quarters (75%) of the total fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 2010, compared with less than half of the total fertility rate for all women (45%).

**3.4** AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES(a), Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and all women—2010



(a) Births per 1,000 women.

For Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the peak age group for births in 2010 was 20–24 years (149 babies per 1,000 women), followed by women aged 25–29 years (132 babies per 1,000 women). The fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 20–24 years was close to three times the fertility rate for all women in this age group (52 babies per 1,000 women). In contrast, the peak age group for all women in 2010 was 30–34 years (123 babies per 1,000 women).

*Teenage fertility rates*

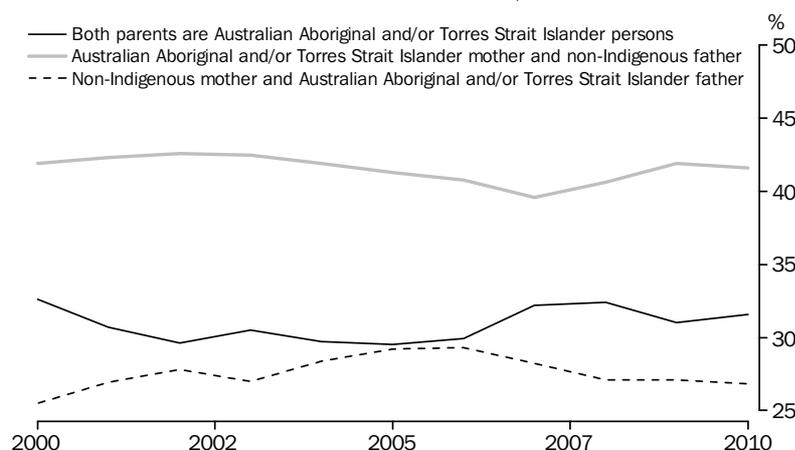
In 2010, births to teenage Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (2,400 births) accounted for 20% of all births to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (11,800 births). In comparison, births to all teenage women accounted for only 4% of all births. Overall, the teenage fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (76 babies per 1,000 women) was almost five times the teenage fertility rate for all women (16 babies per 1,000 women).

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS

*Indigenous status*

Around one-third (32%) of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births registered in 2010 were births for which both parents reported themselves as being Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons on the birth registration form. For 42% of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births only the mother reported herself as being an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (including births where paternity was not acknowledged and those where the father's Indigenous status was unknown). The remaining 27% of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births were to an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander father and a non-Indigenous mother (including births where the mother's Indigenous status was not stated).

**3.5** INDIGENOUS STATUS OF PARENTS, Australia—2000 to 2010



*Median age*

Overall, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have children at younger ages than all women. The median age of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who registered a birth in 2010 was 24.6 years, six years lower than the median age of all mothers (30.7 years). Of the states and territories, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers living in Western Australia had the lowest median age (24.2 years), followed closely by the Northern Territory (24.3 years).

Fathers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births in 2010 were also younger than all fathers (where the age of the father was known), with a median age of 27.7 years compared with 33.1 years for all fathers. Western Australia recorded the lowest median age of fathers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births (27.2 years), followed by Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory (all 27.4 years).

*Nuptiality*

In 2010, 84% of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births were ex-nuptial; that is, births to women who were not in a registered marriage at the time of birth, although many may have been in de facto relationships. Ex-nuptial births where the father did not sign the birth registration statement (that is, births where paternity was not acknowledged) accounted for 14% of all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births.

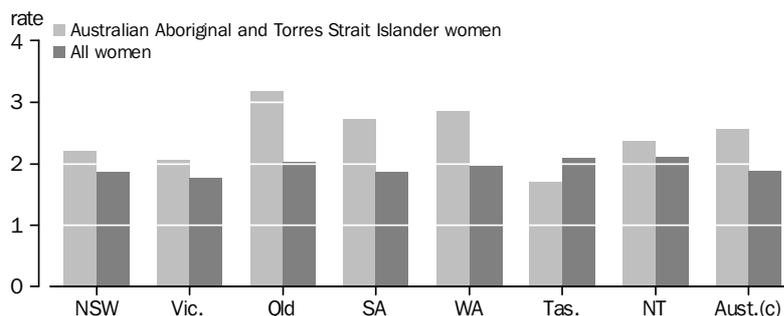
STATES AND TERRITORIES

*Total fertility rate*

Total fertility rates (TFRs) for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women vary among the states and territories. In 2010, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory recorded increases in the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from the previous year, whereas Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia recorded decreases. Of all the states and territories, Queensland recorded the highest TFR (3.17 babies per woman), followed by Western Australia (2.84 babies per woman).

In 2010, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women was higher than the TFR for all women in all states and territories with the exception of Tasmania.

**3.6** TOTAL FERTILITY RATES (a), Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and all women, States and territories (b)—2010



(a) Births per woman.  
 (b) The Australian Capital Territory is not included separately due to small numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births. See paragraph 41 of the Explanatory Notes for more information.  
 (c) Includes the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

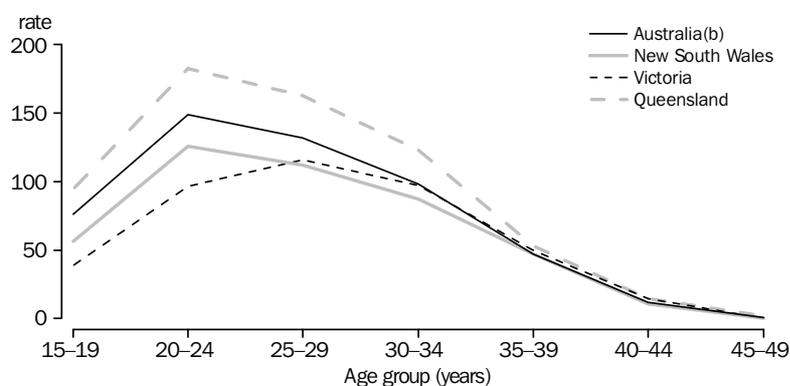
*Age-specific fertility rates*

In 2010, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 20–24 years recorded the highest fertility rate of all age groups in all states and territories, except in Victoria. The highest fertility rates recorded for this age group were in Queensland (183 babies per 1,000 women), followed by South Australia and Western Australia (both 163 babies per 1,000 women).

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 25–29 years recorded the highest fertility rate in Victoria (116 babies per 1,000 women), and the second highest fertility rate in all other states and territories.

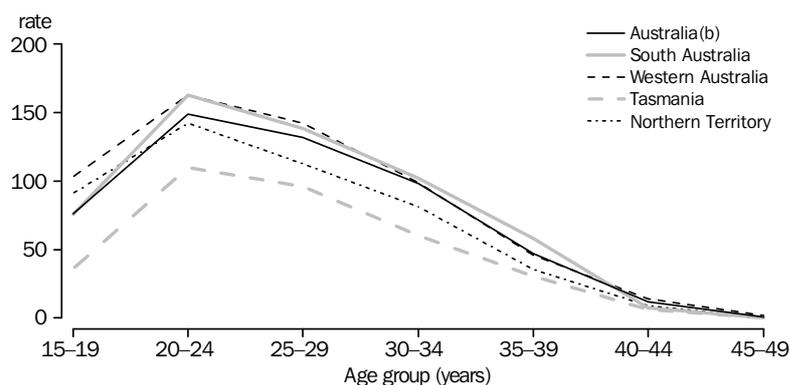
Age-specific fertility rates  
continued

**3.7** AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES(a), Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Selected states and territories—2010



(a) Births per 1,000 women.  
(b) Includes the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

**3.8** AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES(a), Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Selected states and territories—2010



(a) Births per 1,000 women.  
(b) Includes the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories.

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenage fertility rates

Of the 11,300 births registered to teenage women in Australia in 2010, 21% (2,400 births) were to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Of the 390 births registered to teenage women in the Northern Territory in 2010, 82% (320 births) were to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Of the states and territories, Western Australia recorded the highest teenage fertility rate for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (103 babies per 1,000 women), more than five times the rate of all teenage women in Western Australia (19 babies per 1,000 women). The second highest Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teenage fertility rate was recorded in Queensland (95 babies per 1,000 women), followed by the Northern Territory (91 babies per 1,000 women).

INTERNATIONAL  
INDIGENOUS FERTILITY

In 2010, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (2.57 babies per woman) was lower than that for New Zealand Maori women (2.83 babies per woman) (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). In 2008, the latest year for which American Indian fertility rates are available, the TFR for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (2.52 babies per women) was higher than that for American Indian women (1.84 babies per woman) (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

These differences are reflected in age-specific fertility rates for the different populations. Higher fertility rates were experienced by Maori women in most age groups.

**3.9** INDIGENOUS FERTILITY RATES, Selected countries

	AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN	NEW ZEALAND MAORI WOMEN	AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN	
	2008(a)	2010	2008	2010
Age-specific fertility rates(b)				
15–19 years(c)	58.4	69.6	75.2	76.3
20–24 years	115.6	155.9	147.2	148.7
25–29 years	94.4	148.8	131.6	131.8
30–34 years	63.8	111.4	93.4	98.2
35–39 years	28.8	61.9	44.5	47.2
40–44 years	6.4	17.2	11.0	11.8
45–49 years(d)	0.4	1.3	0.3	0.9
Total fertility rate(e)	1.844	2.833	2.515	2.575

(a) Final data for 2008.

(b) Births per 1,000 women.

(c) For American and New Zealand women, excludes births to mothers aged less than 15 years. For Australian women, includes births to mothers aged less than 15 years.

(d) Includes births to mothers aged 50 years and over.

(e) Births per woman. Includes births to women aged less than 15 years.

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centre for Health Statistics, <<http://www.cdc.gov>> for American Indian data. Statistics New Zealand <<http://www.stats.govt.nz>> for New Zealand Maori data.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES .....

### INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication contains statistics for births and fertility in Australia. Detailed information can be obtained from data cubes (in Microsoft Excel format) available for download from the ABS website (see paragraph 58).

**2** A glossary is provided detailing definitions of terminology used. A list of abbreviations is also available.

### SCOPE AND COVERAGE

**3** Statistics in this publication relate to the number of births registered during the calendar year shown, unless otherwise stated. Statistics relating to births by year of occurrence can be obtained from data cubes available for download from the ABS website (see paragraph 58).

#### *Scope of birth statistics*

**4** The ABS Birth Registrations collection includes all births that occurred and were registered in Australia, including births to mothers whose place of usual residence was overseas.

**5** The scope of the statistics include:

- all births that were live born and were not previously registered;
- births to temporary visitors to Australia (including visitors from Norfolk Island);
- births that occurred within Australian Territorial waters;
- births that occurred in Australian Antarctic Territories and other external territories (excluding Norfolk Island);
- births that occurred in transit (i.e. on ships or planes) if registered in the state or territory of 'next port of call';
- births to Australian nationals employed overseas at Australian legations and consular offices (i.e. children born overseas to Australian diplomats or their families); and
- births that occurred in earlier years that have not been previously registered (late registrations).

**6** The scope of the statistics exclude:

- still births/fetal deaths (these are accounted for in perinatal death statistics published in *Perinatal Deaths, Australia* (cat. no. 3304.0), and previously, *Causes of Death, Australia* (cat. no. 3303.0));
- adoptions, sex changes, legitimations and corrections;
- births to foreign diplomatic staff; and
- births occurring on Norfolk Island.

**7** The scope for each reference year of the Birth Registrations collection include:

- births registered in the reference year and received by ABS in the reference year;
- births registered in the reference year and received by ABS in the first quarter of the subsequent year; and
- births registered in the years prior to the reference year but not received by ABS until the reference year or the first quarter of the subsequent year, provided that these records have not been included in any statistics from earlier periods.

**8** Birth records received by ABS during the March quarter 2011 which were initially registered in 2010 (but not fully completed until 2011) were assigned to the 2010 reference year. Any registrations relating to 2010 which were received by ABS from April 2011 were assigned to the 2011 reference year.

*Scope of birth statistics  
continued*

- 9** Prior to 2007, the scope for the reference year of the Birth Registrations collection included:
- births registered in the reference year and received by ABS in the reference year;
  - births registered in the reference year and received by ABS in the first quarter of the subsequent year; and
  - births registered during the two years prior to the reference year but not received by ABS until the reference year.

*Coverage of birth statistics*

**10** Ideally, for compiling annual time series, the number of events (births) should be recorded as all those occurring within a given reference period such as a calendar year. Due to lags in registration of births and the provision of that information to the ABS from state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages, data in this publication are presented on a year of registration basis.

**11** In effect there are three dates attributable to each birth registration:

- the date of occurrence (of the birth);
- the date of registration or inclusion on the state/territory register; and
- the month and year in which the registered event is provided to the ABS.

**12** Data in this publication are presented according to date of registration, unless otherwise stated. The registration date differs between states and territories, and should be taken into account when analysing birth statistics:

- For births registered in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, the birth registration date is the date at which the record is entered into the registration processing system.
- For births registered in Queensland, the registration date is the date at which all data on the birth record are finalised. This may be before the birth is entered into the registration system.
- For births registered in South Australia, preliminary and final registration dates are allocated. Where a record requires further information a preliminary date is assigned. Once all data are finalised, a final registration date is assigned to the birth record which is provided to the ABS as the registration date.
- For births registered in Tasmania, a date is allocated when the birth record is entered into the registration system. The ABS receives an 'insertion' date which is the date when any information relating to the birth is entered into the registration system.
- For births registered in the Northern Territory, the registration date is the date at which the record is entered into the registration system. For birth records not received by the Registrar within 60 days of the birth, the Registrar will register the child as 'unnamed' and not finalised.

CLASSIFICATIONS

*Nuptiality*

**13** Nuptiality relates to the registered marital status of the parent(s) of the child at the time of birth. Confinements and births are classified as:

- nuptial where the father registered was married to the mother at the time of the child's birth, or where the husband died during the mother's pregnancy (confinements and births to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers considered to be tribally married to the father of the child are classified as nuptial); and
- ex-nuptial where the parents were not in a registered marriage at the time of the child's birth, irrespective of whether the parents were living together at the time of the birth.

**14** Ex-nuptial births and confinements are further classified as paternity acknowledged (where the father signed the birth registration form) or paternity not acknowledged (where the father did not sign the birth registration form).

*Australian Standard  
Geographical Classification*

**15** The Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) is a hierarchical classification system consisting of six interrelated classification structures. The ASGC provides a common framework of statistical geography and thereby enables the production of statistics which are comparable and can be spatially integrated. From July 2011, the ABS will be replacing the ASGC with the new Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) that will define more stable, consistent and meaningful areas. Future issues of this publication will release birth statistics under the ASGS (see *Appendix: ASGS and the availability of sub-state birth statistics* for more information)

**16** For further information, refer to *Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)* (cat. no. 1216.0) and *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011* (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

*Standard Australian  
Classification of Countries*

**17** The Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) (Second Edition) groups neighbouring countries into progressively broader geographical areas on the basis of their similarity in terms of social, cultural, economic and political characteristics.

**18** For further information, refer to *Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC), Second Edition* (cat. no. 1269.0).

DATA SOURCES

**19** Registration of births is the responsibility of state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages and is based on data provided on an information form completed by the parent(s) of the child. This form is the basis of data provided to the ABS by the Registrars for compilation into aggregate statistics in this publication. Most data items are collected in all states and territories and therefore statistics at the national level are available for most characteristics. Some states collect additional information.

**20** Hospitals and birth clinics notify state and territory registries of recent births on a regular basis. For births where a notification has been received by a registry, but has not been registered within the prescribed time period, a reminder letter is sent to the parent(s) of the child.

*State and territory data*

**21** As a result of an amendment made in 1992 to section 17(a) of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901–1973 (Cwlth)*, the Indian Ocean territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands have been included as part of geographic Australia, hence another category of the state and territory classification has been created. This category is known as 'Other Territories' and includes Christmas Island, the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay Territory.

**22** Prior to 1993, births to mothers usually resident in Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands were included with Off-Shore Areas and Migratory in Western Australia, while births to mothers usually resident in Jervis Bay Territory were included with the Australian Capital Territory. In 2010, there were 17 births to mothers usually resident in Jervis Bay Territory, Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

**23** Birth statistics for states and territories have been compiled and presented according to the state or territory of usual residence of the mother regardless of where in Australia the birth occurred and was registered, except where otherwise stated. In the following table, data are presented on a state or territory of registration basis. Births which took place outside Australia are excluded from the statistics. Births to mothers who were usual residents of Australia's Other Territories (Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Jervis Bay Territory) are registered in other Australian states.

## BIRTHS, State or territory of usual residence of mother and state or territory of registration—2010

State or territory of usual residence	STATE OR TERRITORY OF REGISTRATION								
	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
New South Wales	93 152	1 080	647	39	32	np	np	962	95 918
Victoria	105	70 309	39	73	23	5	3	11	70 568
Queensland	1 011	50	63 348	17	22	11	5	3	64 467
South Australia	33	30	16	19 943	20	—	34	—	20 076
Western Australia	61	41	47	np	31 221	np	38	—	31 424
Tasmania	11	11	np	np	5	6 352	np	—	6 385
Northern Territory	34	14	47	29	13	—	3 762	—	3 899
Australian Capital Territory	94	8	np	—	4	np	—	5 038	5 149
Other Territories	5	—	—	—	12	—	—	—	17
<b>Australia</b>	<b>94 506</b>	<b>71 543</b>	<b>64 152</b>	<b>20 116</b>	<b>31 352</b>	<b>6 372</b>	<b>3 848</b>	<b>6 014</b>	<b>297 903</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)      np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

State and territory data  
continued

**24** In 2010, there were 353 births registered in Australia to women who usually lived overseas. These have been included in this publication with state or territory of usual residence classified according to the state or territory in which the birth was registered.

## BIRTHS, Mother usually resident overseas—2004 to 2010

State or territory of registration	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
New South Wales	380	281	308	324	341	252	308
Victoria	20	23	21	17	20	23	13
Queensland	61	38	41	86	42	27	21
South Australia	9	—	—	3	3	np	—
Western Australia	18	8	13	21	18	13	np
Tasmania	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
Northern Territory	3	5	4	np	np	np	np
Australian Capital Territory	—	7	3	np	np	—	np
<b>Australia</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>353</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)  
np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Sub-state/territory fertility rates

**25** Age-specific and total fertility rates for sub-state/territory regions (for example, Statistical Divisions) presented in data cubes released with this publication are average rates for three years ending in the reference year. Rates for Australia and the states and territories in all other tables are based on single years of birth registration data.

## DATA QUALITY

Interval between occurrence and registration of births

**26** In compiling birth statistics, the ABS employs a variety of measures to improve the quality of the birth registrations collection. While every opportunity is taken to ensure that the highest quality of statistics are provided, the following are known issues associated with the statistics included in this publication.

**27** For the most part, statistics in this publication refer to births registered during the calendar year shown. There is usually an interval between the occurrence and registration of a birth (referred to as a registration 'lag') and as a result, some births occurring in one year are not registered until the following year or later. This can be caused by either a delay by the parent(s) in submitting a completed form to the registry, or a delay by the registry in processing the birth. Births which occur in November and December are also likely to be registered in the following year.

Interval between occurrence  
and registration of births  
continued

### BIRTHS REGISTERED IN 2010, Year of occurrence—Selected years

State or territory of registration	2004 and earlier	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New South Wales	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	10.2	89.3
Victoria	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	10.5	88.0
Queensland	2.2	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5	11.0	84.4
South Australia	1.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	6.5	91.6
Western Australia	1.2	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	7.4	90.0
Tasmania	2.6	—	0.1	—	0.1	3.0	94.2
Northern Territory	0.1	—	—	0.1	—	8.3	91.5
Australian Capital Territory	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	8.1	90.8
<b>Australia</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>88.4</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

**28** Of the 297,900 births registered in 2010, 88.4% occurred in 2010, while 9.7% occurred in 2009 and the remainder (2.0%) occurred in 2008 or earlier years.

Recent registration lags in  
Queensland

**29** As a result of recent changes in the timeliness of registration of births in Queensland, care should be taken when interpreting changes in Queensland births between 2005 and 2010. In Queensland, 11.0% of the 64,500 births registered in 2010 occurred in 2009. A further 4.6% occurred in 2008 or earlier years. This lag is less than in recent years, indicating potential improvements in the timeliness of registration of births in Queensland.

**30** The December quarter 2009 also saw the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages devoting significant time and resources to follow-up and finalise birth registrations where there was previously incomplete information. As part of the 'Retrospective Births Project', 1,780 births were registered, with approximately 40% registered as Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births (see paragraph 38 for more information). This project is now complete.

### BIRTHS REGISTERED IN QUEENSLAND, Year of registration by year of occurrence

Year of occurrence	YEAR OF REGISTRATION						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
2001 and earlier	2.9	2.3	1.7	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4
2002	1.2	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.2
2003	11.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.3
2004	84.7	10.7	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.3
2005	—	85.4	14.8	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.7
2006	—	—	81.3	16.2	1.1	1.3	0.7
2007	—	—	—	79.7	13.2	1.3	0.5
2008	—	—	—	—	81.3	12.8	0.5
2009	—	—	—	—	—	80.5	11.0
2010	—	—	—	—	—	—	84.4

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

*Tasmanian birth registrations*

**31** The *Tasmanian Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1999* requires hospitals, doctors, midwives or other responsible persons to provide the Tasmanian Registrar with a list of babies born containing basic information such as date of birth and sex of the baby. In the case of a live birth, the birth notification must be provided within 21 days of the birth. These notifications have been provided to the ABS since 2002 and are also used in producing quarterly population estimates.

**32** Under the Act, the birth of a child must also be registered by lodging a birth registration statement with the Registrar within 60 days after the date of birth of the child. Once the parent(s) submits the birth registration statement, the record is updated and the Registrar provides ABS with a complete registration record. Where a match between a birth notification and birth registration statement is identified, the record is quality assured to ensure completeness of the record.

**33** Prior to 2007, records for which a birth registration form was not received were coded as 'ex-nuptial, paternity not acknowledged'. As a result, the number of ex-nuptial births in Tasmania may be overstated for 2002 to 2006. From 2007, these records have been excluded from all nuptiality statistics. In 2010, there were 159 unmatched birth registration forms.

*Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births and fertility rates*

**34** The ABS Birth Registrations collection records a birth as being an Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander birth where at least one parent reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal person, Torres Strait Islander, or both on the birth registration form. Therefore, Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births may be attributed to either:

- Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mothers, including births where both the mother and father are Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons; or
- Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander fathers and non-Indigenous mothers.

**35** There are several data collection forms on which people are asked to state whether they are Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Due to a number of factors, the results are not always consistent. The likelihood that a person will report, or be recorded, as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person on a specific form is known as their propensity to identify. Propensity to identify can be thought of as the proportion of the total, unknown, number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are reported and were recorded as such on a specific form.

**36** Propensity to identify and be recorded as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is determined by a range of factors, including how the information is collected; who completes the form; the perceptions of how the information will be used; education programs about reporting as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and cultural aspects and feelings associated with reporting as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

**37** Data presented in this publication may therefore underestimate the level of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births and fertility in Australia. Lags in registrations may also affect reliability of measures of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility. Caution should be exercised when interpreting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data presented in this publication, especially with regard to year-to-year changes.

Australian Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander births  
and fertility rates continued

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BIRTHS  
REGISTERED IN 2010, Year of occurrence—Selected years

State or territory of registration	2004 and earlier	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
New South Wales	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	11.4	87.1
Victoria	5.6	1.1	1.2	1.1	2.1	18.5	70.6
Queensland	11.2	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.7	13.2	67.5
South Australia	10.5	1.0	1.3	0.9	0.7	9.6	76.0
Western Australia	9.2	1.1	2.4	1.6	1.7	12.4	71.6
Tasmania	3.1	—	0.2	—	—	3.1	93.6
Northern Territory	0.3	0.1	—	—	—	12.8	86.8
<b>Australia</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>76.8</b>

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

RECENT REGISTRATION LAGS IN QUEENSLAND

**38** As described in paragraph 30, the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages undertook a 'Retrospective Births Project' during 2009 resulting in the registration of births where there was previously incomplete information. A significant proportion of these births were registered as Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births, which has affected fertility data in Queensland for 2009 (see *Chapter 4: Effect of delayed birth registrations in Australia* in the 2009 issue of *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0) for more information). Caution should be exercised when interpreting year-to-year changes for Queensland data.

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BIRTHS  
REGISTERED IN QUEENSLAND, Year of registration by year of  
occurrence

Year of occurrence	YEAR OF REGISTRATION						
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
2001 and earlier	9.5	7.8	6.9	6.3	7.0	6.3	7.7
2002	3.7	2.1	2.0	1.8	3.7	1.0	0.8
2003	16.4	3.8	2.6	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.4
2004	70.3	15.9	3.1	1.6	4.0	2.3	1.3
2005	—	70.5	19.7	3.5	2.0	4.5	2.4
2006	—	—	65.7	18.0	3.4	5.9	2.3
2007	—	—	—	66.9	14.4	5.6	1.7
2008	—	—	—	—	63.3	16.0	1.7
2009	—	—	—	—	—	56.0	13.2
2010	—	—	—	—	—	—	67.5

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

*Australian Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander births  
and fertility rates continued*

REGISTRATION OF AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
BIRTHS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

**39** Since 2006, Indigenous status of the mother and father for births registered in New South Wales has not been consistent with other jurisdictions. Specifically, where one parent is an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, the other parent will be processed as either 'Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' or 'Not stated'. Further, where one parent is 'Non-Indigenous', the other parent will also be processed as 'Non-Indigenous' or 'Not stated'. The Indigenous status of the child, where the birth is registered in New South Wales, is derived from the Indigenous status of each of the parents. Indigenous status of births registered in New South Wales should therefore be interpreted with caution. The ABS has been advised that this matter is being investigated as part of other processing system developments underway.

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BIRTHS REGISTERED IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES, Indigenous status of parents—2010

<i>Indigenous status of mother</i>	INDIGENOUS STATUS OF FATHER			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander</i>	<i>Non-Indigenous</i>	<i>Not stated</i>	
NEW SOUTH WALES				
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	888	—	1 813	2 701
Non-Indigenous	—	—	—	—
Not stated	1 579	—	—	1 579
Total	2 467	—	1 813	4 280
REST OF AUSTRALIA				
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	4 205	2 861	2 042	9 108
Non-Indigenous	2 655	—	—	2 655
Not stated	86	—	—	86
Total	6 946	2 861	2 042	11 849

— nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

**40** ABS are currently investigating the recent volatility in the number of births of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In 2010, 161 births were to mothers who reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, however were born overseas. Of these births, 64% were to mothers born in South Pacific countries, such as New Zealand, Samoa and Papua New Guinea, and the majority of these (65 births) were to mothers who reported themselves as being Torres Strait Islander, or both Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on the birth registration form. This may indicate that these mothers are seeking to report their Pacific Islander ancestry (for which provision is not made in the Birth Registration Statement forms in Australia) rather than reporting to be Torres Strait Islanders. However, the 9 births to mothers born in Papua New Guinea in 2010 who reported being Torres Strait Islanders may be correctly recorded. Until this investigation is finalised, caution should be exercised when interpreting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data presented in this publication for 2007 onwards.

*Australian Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander births  
and fertility rates continued*

**41** Chapter 3 reports on the number and characteristics of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births and fertility rates in each state and territory, excluding the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data for the Australian Capital Territory and Other Territories are not analysed separately due to small numbers, but are included in totals for Australia.

**42** The populations used to calculate Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility rates in this publication are estimates and projections of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female population aged 15–49 years, based on results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. For more information, see *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0).

**43** Estimates of annual numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births in Australia are available from two collections:

- ABS Birth Registrations: this publication is based on the registration of births with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in each state and territory; and
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit perinatal statistics series: these data are primarily about babies born in hospitals and their mothers (see online *Appendix: Differences Between Collections* for more information).

**44** In addition to these collections, it is possible to derive indirect estimates and projections of numbers of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births, based on 2006 Census-based Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates:

- For 30 June 1991 to 30 June 2005, estimates of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population were derived from the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resident population as at 30 June 2006 using a reverse survival technique based on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life tables (see *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0)). Indirect estimates of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births can then be derived using the number of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0 at 30 June of each year.
- For 30 June 2007 to 30 June 2021, projections of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population were derived from the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resident population as at 30 June 2006 using assumptions on future levels of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility, mortality and migration. Numbers of projected Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births were derived by applying assumed fertility rates to the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female population aged 15–49 years at 30 June of each year (see *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0)).

*Edits and imputations*

**45** During edit processes for the Birth Registrations collection, some items are corrected where they conflict with other known information. Missing data for some data items are imputed when appropriate. In 2010, there were 340 birth registrations for which place of usual residence was imputed, and 13 registrations for which sex was not reported and was imputed.

Parity (previous children of mother)

**46** Parity refers to the number of (live) births that a woman has had. Birth order refers to whether a birth is the first, second, third or higher-order birth of the parent. In registering births, information is collected on the number of previous children born to a mother.

**47** Changes in ABS processing of birth registrations from 2007 have resulted in the availability of improved information on previous births to mothers. Prior to 2007, ABS published information on previous births of the mother from the *current* relationship only, for all states and territories. From 2007 onwards, data on previous births for *all* relationships (both current and previous, if any) of the mother are collected for all states and territories, excluding Victoria and Queensland. Due to the high proportion (27%) of confinements in Tasmania in 2010 for which no information on previous children of the mother was available, data for Tasmania should be interpreted with caution. As a result of these inconsistencies, Australian parity figures in this publication exclude data for Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.

**48** These data are collected as a result of the increasing demand for parity data for analysis and dissemination. For more information on the use of parity data and collection methods associated with these statistics, see Corr, P. and Kippen, R. 2006, *The Case for Parity and Birth-Order Statistics*, Australia and New Zealand Journal of Statistics, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 171–200.

**49** As a result of the above changes, data on previous births for 2007 onwards are not comparable with data for earlier years. However, the improved information indicates that the prevalence of first births (that is, mothers with no previous children) was overestimated prior to 2007, while numbers of mothers with two or more previous children were underestimated.

PREVIOUS CHILDREN OF THE MOTHER(a), Australia(b)—2004 to 2010

Year of registration (c)	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more	Total(d)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
2004	47.5	31.7	12.4	3.0	0.9	0.6	100.0
2005	47.2	32.1	12.1	3.4	1.0	0.6	100.0
2006	47.0	31.8	12.4	3.6	1.0	0.7	100.0
2007	42.5	32.6	14.8	5.1	1.9	1.2	100.0
2008	42.9	33.1	15.0	5.4	2.0	1.4	100.0
2009	44.0	33.3	14.5	5.1	2.0	1.2	100.0
2010	44.0	33.4	14.6	5.0	1.9	1.2	100.0

- (a) Previous children refers to the number of previous births of the mother, at the time of the birth registration in the reference year.
- (b) Excludes births registered in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.
- (c) Data for 2004 to 2006 are the number of previous births of the mother from the current relationship only. Data for 2007 onwards are previous births of the mother for all relationships.
- (d) Includes births where previous children of the mother is not stated.

Age of parent(s)

**50** During birth registration processing since 2007, discrepancies were identified between age of mother data as provided to the ABS by the Registrars and age of mother derived from date of birth of mother. In 2010, there were 7,892 records (3% of all confinements) for which the derived age of mother was found to be inconsistent with the reported age. For these records, the derived age of mother was used. The same process was applied to information on age of father, for which 7,638 records were affected. For years prior to 2007, median age may have been overstated.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

**51** The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* provides the authority for the ABS to collect statistical information, and requires that statistical output shall not be published or disseminated in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation. This requirement means that the ABS must take care and make assurances that any statistical information about individual respondents cannot be derived from published data.

**52** Where necessary, tables in this publication have had small values suppressed or randomised to protect confidentiality. As a result, sums of components may not add exactly to totals.

## ROUNDING

**53** Calculations as shown in the commentary sections of this publication are based on unrounded figures. Calculations using rounded figures may differ from those published. Where figures have been rounded in tables, discrepancies may occur between sums of component items and totals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**54** ABS publications draw extensively on information provided freely by individuals, business, governments and other organisations. The efforts of Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages to improve the data quality, coverage and timeliness of birth registration information, processes and systems are noted and valued by the ABS. Their continued cooperation is very much appreciated; without it, the wide range of statistics published by the ABS would not be available. Information received by the ABS is treated in strict confidence as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

## RELATED PRODUCTS

- 55** Other ABS products which may be of interest to users include:
- Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0)
  - Australian Historical Population Statistics* (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001)
  - Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0)
  - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)* (cat. no. 1216.0)
  - Causes of Death, Australia* (cat. no. 3303.0)
  - Deaths, Australia* (cat. no. 3302.0)
  - Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 3228.0.55.001)
  - Experimental Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Jun 2006* (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001)
  - Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 1991 to 2021* (cat. no. 3238.0)
  - Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians* (cat. no. 4708.0)
  - Perinatal Deaths, Australia* (cat. no. 3304.0)
  - Population Projections, Australia* (cat. no. 3222.0)
  - Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC)* (cat. no. 1269.0)
  - The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (cat. no. 4704.0)
- 56** Other publications which may be of interest to users include *Australia's Mothers and Babies, 2008*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Perinatal Statistics Unit, AIHW website <[www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)>. Please note there are differences between the ABS and AIHW birth collections; these are discussed in *Appendix: Differences Between Collections* included with this publication on the ABS website.
- 57** ABS products and publications are available free of charge from the ABS website <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>. Click on Statistics to gain access to the full range of ABS statistical or reference information.

ADDITIONAL STATISTICS  
AVAILABLE

**58** More detailed birth and fertility statistics can be obtained from data cubes (in Microsoft Excel format) available for download from the ABS website in *Births, Australia, 2010* (cat. no. 3301.0):

- Table 1: Births, Summary, States and territories—2000 to 2010
- Table 2: Births, Summary, Statistical Divisions—2005 to 2010
- Table 3: Births, Summary, Statistical Local Areas—2005 to 2010
- Table 4: Births, Summary, Local Government Areas—2005 to 2010
- Table 5: Births, Summary, Remoteness Areas—2005 to 2010
- Table 6: Births, Year and month of occurrence, States and territories—2000 to 2010
- Table 7: Births, Nuptiality and age of parents, Australia—2010
- Table 8: Births, Country of birth of parents, Australia—2010
- Table 9: Multiple births, States and territories—2000 to 2010
- Table 10: Births of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Summary, States and territories—2005 to 2010
- Table 11: Age-specific fertility rates and total fertility rate, Single year of age of mother, Australia—1975 to 2010

**59** As well as the statistics included in this and related publications, the ABS may have other relevant data available on request. Inquiries should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

**60** The ABS also issues a daily Release Advice on the website which details the products to be released in the week ahead.

## ASGS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF SUB-STATE BIRTH STATISTICS .....

### THE AUSTRALIAN STATISTICAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARD (ASGS)

From July 2011, the ABS will be replacing the nation's official statistical geography, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), with the new Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). The ASGS will define more stable, consistent and meaningful areas than the ASGC and will become the essential reference for understanding and interpreting the geographical context of ABS statistics. Current ASGC regions such as the Census Collection Districts (CDs), Statistical Local Areas (SLAs), and Statistical Divisions (SDs) will be replaced by the new Statistical Areas Levels 1 to 4 (SA1 - SA4). For more information about the ASGS, including boundary maps, labels and codes, see *Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2011* (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

### BIRTH STATISTICS UNDER THE ASGS

From 2011 onwards, the SA2 will be the base spatial unit used to prepare and disseminate sub-state birth statistics.

The first set of birth statistics under the ASGS will be prepared for 2011 data and released in October 2012 in *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0). This release will contain a time series of birth statistics for the new geography, as well as birth statistics based on the old geography. Sub-state birth statistics for 2012 onwards will only be prepared and released on the ASGS.

As LGA population estimates are regarded as a crucial ABS output, LGA birth statistics will continue to be prepared post 2011. The boundaries on which these statistics will be prepared on will be updated each year, in line with official gazetted boundaries.

SA2 birth statistics will be apportioned to SA1s, which can then be aggregated to form ABS structures such as Indigenous Regions and Remoteness Areas which make up part of the ASGS. Selected statistics based on these regions will be released on the website, or available on request.

The change in geographic classification means there will be an unavoidable break in time series. To assist users with this break in time series, the ABS plans to prepare historical birth statistics under the new geography. The length of this time series depends on the geographic level or the type of birth statistic. Time series will be released as part of the first releases of ASGS birth statistics in October 2012.

A set of correspondences (concordances) will also be available to assist users in converting data from one geography to another. For a list of correspondences that the ABS intends to release, please see the *Frequently Asked Questions* link from the Geography Portal.

The ABS has also released an *Information Paper: Population Estimates under Australia's New Statistical Geography, August 2011* (cat. no. 3219.0.55.001) on 26 August 2011. This includes more information about the future of population estimates, the length of historical time series and the methodology used to prepare population estimates under the ASGS.



## GLOSSARY

<b>12/16 month rule</b>	<p>A method for measuring an overseas traveller's duration of stay or absence which takes an approach to measure usual residence that <i>does not have to be continuous</i>, as opposed to the continuous approach used under a '12/12 month rule'. Under a '12/16 month rule', incoming overseas travellers (who <i>are not</i> currently counted in the population) must be resident in Australia for a total period of 12 months or more, during the 16 month follow-up period to then be included in the estimated resident population. Similarly, those travellers departing Australia (who <i>are</i> currently counted in the population) must be absent from Australia for a total of 12 months or more during the 16 month follow-up period to then be subtracted from the estimated resident population.</p> <p>The 12/16 month rule therefore takes account of those persons who may have left Australia briefly and returned, while still being resident for 12 months out of 16. Similarly, it takes account of Australians who live most of the time overseas but periodically return to Australia for short periods.</p>
<b>Age-specific fertility rates</b>	<p>Age-specific fertility rates (ASFR) are the number of live births (occurred or registered) during the calendar year, according to the age of the mother, per 1,000 of the female estimated resident population of the same age at 30 June. For calculating these rates, births to mothers under 15 years are included in the 15–19 years age group, and births to mothers aged 50 years and over are included in the 45–49 years age group. Pro rata adjustment is made for births for which the age of the mother is not given.</p>
<b>Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander birth</b>	<p>The birth of a live-born child where at least one parent reported themselves as being an Australian Aboriginal person, Torres Strait Islander, or both on the birth registration form.</p>
<b>Average annual growth rate</b>	<p>The average annual growth rate, <math>r</math>, is calculated as a percentage using the formula:</p> $\left[ \left( \frac{P_n}{P_0} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}} - 1 \right] \times 100$ <p>where <math>P_0</math> is the population at the start of the period, <math>P_n</math> is the population at the end of the period and <math>n</math> is the length of the period between <math>P_0</math> and <math>P_n</math> in years.</p>
<b>Baby boom</b>	<p>Baby boom refers to the generation born between the end of World War II and the mid-1960s. Baby boomers are usually taken to be those born in the years 1946 to 1965 inclusive.</p>
<b>Balance of state or territory</b>	<p>The aggregation of all Statistical Divisions (SDs) within a state or territory other than its Capital City SD. See Major Statistical Region in <i>Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)</i> (cat. no. 1216.0).</p>
<b>Birth</b>	<p>The delivery of a child, irrespective of the duration of pregnancy, who, after being born, breathes or shows any evidence of life such as a heartbeat.</p>
<b>Childbearing ages</b>	<p>See Reproductive lifetime.</p>
<b>Completed fertility</b>	<p>Completed fertility represents the average number of births a cohort of females have borne over their reproductive lifetimes.</p>
<b>Confinement</b>	<p>A pregnancy which results in at least one live birth.</p>
<b>Crude birth rate</b>	<p>The crude birth rate is the number of live births registered during the calendar year per 1,000 estimated resident population at 30 June of that year. For years prior to 1992, the crude birth rate was based on the mean estimated resident population for the calendar year.</p>

<b>Estimated resident population (ERP)</b>	The official measure of the population of Australia is based on the concept of residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality or citizenship, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months.
<b>Ex-nuptial birth</b>	An ex-nuptial birth is the birth of a child whose parents are not legally married to each other at the time of the child's birth.
<b>Intercensal discrepancy</b>	Intercensal discrepancy is the difference between two estimates at 30 June of a Census year population, the first based on the latest Census and the second arrived at by updating the 30 June estimate of the previous Census year with intercensal components of population change which take account of information available from the latest Census. It is caused by errors in the start and/or finish population estimates and/or in estimates of births, deaths or migration in the intervening period which cannot be attributed to a particular source. For further information, see <i>Population Estimates: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2009</i> (cat. no. 3228.0.55.001).
<b>Local Government Area (LGA)</b>	LGA is a spatial unit which represents the whole geographical area of responsibility of an incorporated Local Government Council, an Aboriginal or Island Council in Queensland, or a Community Government Council (CGC) in the Northern Territory. An LGA consists of one or more SLAs. LGAs aggregate directly to form the incorporated areas of states/territories. The creation and delimitation of LGAs are the responsibility of the state and territory Governments. The number of LGAs, their names and their boundaries vary over time. Further information concerning LGAs is contained in <i>Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC)</i> (cat. no. 1216.0).
<b>Marital status</b>	Two separate concepts of marital status are measured by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. These are registered marital status and social marital status.  Registered marital status refers to formally registered marriages and divorces. Registered marital status is a person's relationship status in terms of whether he or she has, or has had, a registered marriage with another person. Accordingly, people are classified as either 'never married', 'married', 'widowed' or 'divorced'. Statistics included in this publication are based on registered marital status.  Social marital status is the relationship status of an individual with reference to another person who is usually resident in the household. A marriage exists when two people live together as husband and wife, or partners, regardless of whether the marriage is formalised through registration. Individuals are, therefore, regarded as married if they are in a de facto marriage, or if they are living with the person to whom they are registered as married. Under social marital status, a person is classified as either 'married' or 'not married' with further disaggregation of 'married' to distinguish 'registered married' from 'de facto married'.
<b>Median age of mother at confinement</b>	The median age of mother at confinement measures the median age of females who gave birth in a particular year. This publication reports on median age of mother at confinement.
<b>Median value</b>	For any distribution the median value (age, duration, interval) is that value which divides the relevant population into two equal parts, half falling below the value, and half exceeding it. Where the value for a particular record has not been stated, that record is excluded from the calculation.
<b>Mortality</b>	Death.
<b>Multiple birth</b>	A multiple birth is a confinement which results in two or more children, at least one of which is live-born.
<b>Natural increase</b>	Excess of births over deaths.

<b>Net overseas migration (NOM)</b>	<p>Net overseas migration is the net gain or loss of population through immigration to Australia and emigration from Australia. It is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ based on an international traveller's duration of stay being in or out of Australia for 12 months or more; and</li> <li>■ the difference between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the number of incoming international travellers who stay in Australia for 12 months or more, who <i>are not</i> currently counted within the population, and are then added to the population (NOM arrivals); and</li> <li>■ the number of outgoing international travellers (Australian residents and long-term visitors to Australia) who leave Australia for 12 months or more, who <i>are</i> currently counted within the population, and are then subtracted from the population (NOM departures).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Under the current method for estimating final net overseas migration, this term is based on a traveller's <i>actual</i> duration of stay or absence using the '12/16 month rule'. Preliminary NOM estimates are modelled on patterns of traveller behaviours observed in final NOM estimates for the same period one year earlier.</p>
<b>Net reproduction rate</b>	<p>The net reproduction rate represents the average number of daughters that would be born to a group of females if they are subject to the fertility and mortality rates of a given year during their future life. It indicates the extent to which the population would reproduce itself. The net reproduction rate is obtained by multiplying the age-specific birth rates (for female births only) by the proportion of survivors at corresponding ages in a life table and adding the products.</p>
<b>Nuptial birth</b>	<p>A nuptial birth is the birth of a child born of parents who are legally married at the time of the child's birth.</p>
<b>Nuptiality</b>	<p>Nuptiality relates to the registered marital status of persons and the events such as marriages, divorces and widowhood. Confinements and births are identified as being nuptial where the father registered was married to the mother at the time of birth, or where the husband died during pregnancy. Confinements and children of Indigenous mothers considered to be tribally married are classified as nuptial. Other confinements, and the children resulting from them, are classified as ex-nuptial whether or not both parents were living together at the time of birth.</p>
<b>Other Territories</b>	<p>Following the 1992 amendments to the <i>Acts Interpretation Act</i> to include the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands as part of geographic Australia, another category at the state and territory level has been created, known as Other Territories. Other Territories include Jervis Bay Territory, previously included with the Australian Capital Territory, as well as Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.</p>
<b>Parity</b>	<p>Parity refers to the number of live births a woman has had previous to the most recent birth. Parity is also an attribute of any live birth, being the order of that birth (e.g. first birth, second birth, and so on) of a woman.</p>
<b>Paternity acknowledged birth</b>	<p>A paternity acknowledged birth refers to an ex-nuptial birth where paternity was acknowledged (on the birth registration form).</p>
<b>Paternity not acknowledged birth</b>	<p>A paternity not acknowledged birth refers to an ex-nuptial birth where paternity was not acknowledged (on the birth registration form).</p>
<b>Population growth</b>	<p>For Australia, population growth is the sum of natural increase and net overseas migration. For states and territories, population growth also includes net interstate migration. After the Census, intercensal population growth also includes an allowance for intercensal discrepancy.</p>
<b>Previous births</b>	<p>Previous births refer to children born alive (who may or may not be living) to a mother prior to the registration of the current birth in the processing period. In some states, legitimised and legally adopted children may also be included.</p>

<b>Previous births <i>continued</i></b>	<p>Due to variation in data collection and processing methods across states and territories, different definitions of the concept of previous births have been applied.</p> <p>Changes in ABS processing of data collected by state/territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages for 2007 have resulted in the availability of improved information on previous births to mothers. Prior to 2007, ABS published information on previous births of the mother from the <i>current</i> relationship only, for all states and territories. From 2007, data on previous births for <i>all</i> relationships (both current and previous, if any) of the mother are collected for all states and territories, excluding Victoria and Queensland.</p>
<b>Previous children</b>	See Previous births.
<b>Rate of population growth</b>	Population change over a period as a proportion (percentage) of the population at the beginning of the period.
<b>Remoteness Area</b>	<p>Within the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), the Remoteness classification comprises five categories, each of which identifies a (non-contiguous) region in Australia being a grouping of Collection Districts (CDs) sharing a particular degree of remoteness. The degrees of remoteness range from 'highly accessible' (i.e. major cities) to 'very remote'.</p> <p>The degree of remoteness of each CD was determined using the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). CDs have then been grouped into the appropriate category of Remoteness to form non-contiguous areas within each state.</p> <p>For more information, refer to <i>Statistical Geography Volume 1: Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2006</i> (cat. no. 1216.0) and <i>Information Paper: ABS Views on Remoteness, 2001</i> (cat. no. 1244.0).</p>
<b>Replacement fertility</b>	Replacement level fertility is the number of babies a female would need to have over her reproductive life span to replace herself and her partner. Given the current mortality of females up to age 49 years, replacement fertility is estimated at around 2.1 babies per female.
<b>Reproductive lifetime</b>	Women's childbearing years, usually assumed as the ages from 15 to 49 years for the purpose of analysis. In this publication, births to women less than 15 years are included in the 15 years age group and those 50 years and older are included in the 49 years age group.
<b>Sex ratio</b>	The sex ratio relates to the number of males per 100 females.
<b>State or territory of registration</b>	State or territory of registration refers to the state or territory in which the event was registered.
<b>State or territory of usual residence</b>	<p>State or territory of usual residence refers to the state or territory of usual residence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the population (estimated resident population);</li> <li>■ the mother (birth collection); and</li> <li>■ the deceased (death collection).</li> </ul>
<b>Statistical Division (SD)</b>	Statistical Divisions (SDs) consist of one or more Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs). The divisions are designed to be relatively homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable social and economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities. Further information concerning SDs is contained in <i>Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)</i> (cat. no. 1216.0).
<b>Statistical Local Area (SLA)</b>	Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) are, in most cases, identical with, or have been formed from a division of, whole Local Government Areas (LGAs). In other cases, they represent unincorporated areas. In aggregate, SLAs cover the whole of a state or territory without gaps or overlaps. In some cases, legal LGAs overlap statistical subdivision boundaries and therefore comprise two or three SLAs (Part A, Part B and, if necessary, Part C). Further information concerning SLAs is contained in <i>Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)</i> (cat. no. 1216.0).

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<b>Statistical Subdivision (SSD)</b>	In aggregate, Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They are defined as socially and economically homogeneous regions characterised by identifiable links between the inhabitants. In the non-urban areas, an SSD is characterised by identifiable links between the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities. Further information concerning SSDs is contained in <i>Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)</i> (cat. no. 1216.0).
<b>Teenage fertility rate</b>	The number of births during the calendar year to women aged 15–19 years, per 1,000 female estimated resident population aged 15–19 years at 30 June of the same year. Births to women aged under 15 years are included.
<b>Total fertility rate</b>	The sum of age-specific fertility rates (live births at each age of mother per 1,000 of the female population of that age) divided by 1,000. It represents the number of children a female would bear during her lifetime if she experienced current age-specific fertility rates at each age of her reproductive life.
<b>Usual residence</b>	Usual residence within Australia refers to that address at which the person has lived or intends to live for a total of six months or more in a given reference year.
<b>Year of occurrence</b>	Data presented on year of occurrence basis relate to the date the birth occurred.
<b>Year of registration</b>	Data presented on year of registration basis relate to the date the birth was registered.

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