

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

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SOCIAL STATISTICS : AUSTRALIA

NO. 59 : DIVORCE

MARCH QUARTER 1967

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

This bulletin contains statistics of dissolutions of marriage (commonly known as divorce), nullities of marriage and judicial separations for the March quarter 1967 and some comparative figures for previous periods. For further details in respect of past periods, see previous issues in this series and the annual bulletin "Demography". Details for 1966 were shown in "Social Statistics No. 55 - Divorce 1966", issued on 21 August 1967.

2. The Commonwealth Matrimonial Causes Act 1959 came into operation on 1 February 1961. This Act provided a uniform law throughout Australia with respect to divorce and other matrimonial causes, and superseded the matrimonial causes laws of the States and Territories except in so far as the transitional provisions of the Act kept them in force for the purpose of completing pending proceedings. Therefore, statistics of petitions filed since February 1961 are on a uniform basis for all States and Territories, but statistics of decrees of dissolution, nullity and judicial separation granted after that date include some decrees made on petitions under the superseded laws and are to that extent not uniformly based. By 1967 the number of such decrees had become insignificant.

3. Under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1959-1966 a court may grant decrees of dissolution of marriage (commonly known as divorce), judicial separation, nullity of marriage, restitution of conjugal rights and jactitation of marriage (i.e. that a person should refrain from making false claim that a marriage has taken place between him and another person). Orders may be made for the custody and welfare of children, maintenance, the settlement of property and damages for adultery.

4. The statistics in this bulletin refer only to petitions filed, and final decrees granted, for dissolution, nullity and judicial separation. Statistics of petitions filed relate only to the original petition in a suit, i.e. a cross-petition contained in an answer by the respondent is not counted as a separate petition.

## I. PETITIONS FILED

TABLE 1. - PETITIONS FILED FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE (a)

Period	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
Year - 1962	4,093	2,148	1,083	910	651	276	39	48	9,248
1963	4,339	2,163	1,061	1,005	623	271	50	90	9,602
1964	4,484	2,357	1,121	1,034	653	322	53	124	10,148
1965	4,679	2,501	1,266	1,107	736	328	61	161	10,839
1966	4,892	2,621	1,173	1,133	787	357	46	123	11,132
Quarter ended -									
March 1966	1,125	514	304	287	165	81	14	28	2,518
June 1966	1,146	699	267	302	179	102	14	37	2,746
September 1966	1,331	729	324	295	220	93	8	35	3,035
December 1966	1,290	679	278	249	223	81	10	23	2,833
March 1967	1,351	551	305	279	191	67	3	39	2,786

(a) This table excludes petitions filed for nullity of marriage, judicial separation and any petitions for two or more alternative types of relief.

TABLE 2. - PETITIONS FILED FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE,  
NULLITY OF MARRIAGE AND JUDICIAL SEPARATION : AUSTRALIA

Petition for -	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Quarter ended -				
						March 1966	June 1966	Sept. 1966	Dec. 1966	March 1967
Dissolution of marriage -										
Husband petitioner	4,072	4,000	4,215	4,413	4,510	1,008	1,109	1,251	1,142	1,112
Wife petitioner	5,176	5,602	5,933	6,426	6,622	1,510	1,637	1,784	1,691	1,674
<u>Total</u>	9,248	9,602	10,148	10,839	11,132	2,518	2,746	3,035	2,833	2,786
Nullity of marriage -										
Husband petitioner	15	11	14	16	25	3	12	5	5	6
Wife petitioner	35	28	30	35	30	7	7	9	7	9
<u>Total</u>	50	39	44	51	55	10	19	14	12	15
Dissolution or nullity -										
Husband petitioner	6	5	5	15	9	3	1	3	2	2
Wife petitioner	5	10	12	10	12	2	3	1	6	1
<u>Total</u>	11	15	17	25	21	5	4	4	8	3
Judicial separation -										
Husband petitioner	2	3	..	1	1	..	..	..	1	..
Wife petitioner	18	26	34	20	24	4	9	8	3	7
<u>Total</u>	20	29	34	21	25	4	9	8	4	7
Dissolution or judicial separation -										
Husband petitioner	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wife petitioner	..	..	1	..	3	..	1	1	1	1
<u>Total</u>	..	1	1	..	3	..	1	1	1	1
Total petitions -										
By husband - Number	4,095	4,020	4,234	4,445	4,545	1,014	1,122	1,259	1,150	1,120
Per cent	44	42	41	41	40	40	40	41	40	40
By wife - Number	5,234	5,666	6,010	6,491	6,691	1,523	1,657	1,803	1,708	1,692
Per cent	56	58	59	59	60	60	60	59	60	60
<u>TOTAL</u>	9,329	9,686	10,244	10,936	11,236	2,537	2,779	3,062	2,858	2,812

**TABLE 3. - PETITIONS FILED FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE,  
NULLITY OF MARRIAGE AND JUDICIAL SEPARATION : MARCH QUARTER 1967**

Petition for -	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
Dissolution of marriage -									
Husband petitioner	493	250	131	100	86	32	3	17	1,112
Wife petitioner	858	301	174	179	105	35	..	22	1,674
<u>Total</u>	1,351	551	305	279	191	67	3	39	2,786
Nullity of marriage -									
Husband petitioner	2	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	6
Wife petitioner	4	3	..	..	1	..	..	1	9
<u>Total</u>	6	5	1	1	1	..	..	1	15
Dissolution or nullity -									
Husband petitioner	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Wife petitioner	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
<u>Total</u>	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Judicial separation -									
Husband petitioner	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wife petitioner	2	..	2	2	..	..	..	1	7
<u>Total</u>	2	..	2	2	..	..	..	1	7
Dissolution or judicial separation -									
Husband petitioner	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wife petitioner	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
<u>Total</u>	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
Total petitions -									
By husband - Number	496	253	132	101	86	32	3	17	1,120
Per cent	36	45	43	36	45	48	(a)	(a)	40
By wife - Number	864	305	176	182	106	35	..	24	1,692
Per cent	64	55	57	64	55	52	(a)	(a)	60
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,360	558	308	283	192	67	3	41	2,812

(a) Percentage not calculated.

## II. DECREES GRANTED

**TABLE 4. - DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE GRANTED (a)**

Period	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
Year - 1962	3,113	1,615	920	685	582	248	38	44	7,245
1963	3,293	1,616	910	765	553	260	38	41	7,476
1964	3,024	2,130	981	887	542	229	31	93	7,917
1965	3,440	2,089	1,052	852	604	279	41	134	8,491
1966	4,515	2,131	1,031	1,069	637	317	58	101	9,859
Quarter ended -									
March 1966	1,014	508	286	307	199	60	17	29	2,420
June 1966	676	440	170	223	110	68	5	15	1,707
September 1966	1,030	621	294	287	160	76	20	37	2,525
December 1966	1,795	562	281	252	168	113	16	20	3,207
March 1967	1,667	480	298	296	223	66	7	37	3,074

(a) Decrees absolute; excludes nullities of marriage and judicial separations granted.

TABLE 5. - DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE, NULLITIES OF MARRIAGE  
AND JUDICIAL SEPARATIONS GRANTED (a) : AUSTRALIA

Decree for -	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	Quarter ended -				
						March 1966	June 1966	Sept. 1966	Dec. 1966	March 1967
Dissolution of marriage -										
Husband petitioner	3,308	3,257	3,377	3,523	4,010	986	714	1,053	1,257	1,215
Wife petitioner	3,935	4,216	4,536	4,966	5,841	1,431	992	1,471	1,947	1,857
Granted on petitions of both	2	3	4	2	8	3	1	1	3	2
<u>Total</u>	7,245	7,476	7,917	8,491	9,859	2,420	1,707	2,525	3,207	3,074
Nullity of marriage -										
Husband petitioner	12	7	11	10	18	5	2	4	7	4
Wife petitioner	28	25	33	25	32	3	9	5	15	8
<u>Total</u>	40	32	44	35	50	8	11	9	22	12
Judicial separation -										
Husband petitioner	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wife petitioner	3	7	6	8	12	1	4	3	4	1
<u>Total</u>	5	7	6	8	12	1	4	3	4	1
Total Decrees -										
For husband - Number	3,322	3,264	3,388	3,533	4,028	991	716	1,057	1,264	1,219
Per cent	46	43	43	41	41	41	42	42	39	40
For wife - Number	3,966	4,248	4,575	4,999	5,885	1,435	1,005	1,479	1,966	1,866
Per cent	54	57	57	59	59	59	58	58	61	60
Granted on petitions of both	2	3	4	2	8	3	1	1	3	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	7,290	7,515	7,967	8,534	9,921	2,429	1,722	2,537	3,233	3,087

(a) Decrees absolute.

TABLE 6. - DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE, NULLITIES OF MARRIAGE AND JUDICIAL  
SEPARATIONS GRANTED (a) : MARCH QUARTER 1967

Decree for -	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
Dissolution of marriage -									
Husband petitioner	625	201	140	105	105	17	4	18	1,215
Wife petitioner	1,042	277	158	191	118	49	3	19	1,857
Granted on petitions of both	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
<u>Total</u>	1,667	480	298	296	223	66	7	37	3,074
Nullity of marriage -									
Husband petitioner	..	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	4
Wife petitioner	3	2	2	1	..	..	..	..	8
<u>Total</u>	3	4	2	3	..	..	..	..	12
Judicial separation -									
Husband petitioner	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Wife petitioner	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
<u>Total</u>	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
Total Decrees -									
For husband - Number	625	203	140	107	105	17	4	18	1,219
Per cent	37	42	47	36	47	26	(b)	(b)	40
For wife - Number	1,045	279	160	193	118	49	3	19	1,866
Per cent	63	58	53	64	53	74	(b)	(b)	60
Granted on petitions of both	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	1,670	484	300	300	223	66	7	37	3,087

(a) Decrees absolute. (b) Percentage not calculated.

TABLE 7. - GROUNDS ON WHICH DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE, NULLITIES OF MARRIAGE  
AND JUDICIAL SEPARATIONS WERE GRANTED (a) : MARCH QUARTER 1967

Grounds	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	N.T.	A.C.T.	Aust.
DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE									
Single grounds -									
Desertion	765	215	142	106	78	27	2	13	1,348
Adultery	342	152	57	84	77	11	3	14	740
Separation	287	102	76	55	57	18	..	2	597
Cruelty	119	3	10	41	3	1	..	4	181
Drunkenness	33	1	5	5	..	1	..	..	45
Refusal to consummate	4	..	2	1	1	..	..	..	8
Frequent convictions	..	1	..	1	3	..	..	..	5
Imprisonment	3	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Other single grounds	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3
Dual grounds -									
Desertion and adultery	23	..	1	1	1	1	..	1	28
Desertion and separation	19	..	1	1	1	..	1	..	23
Desertion and cruelty	15	1	..	..	..	1	..	1	18
Desertion and drunkenness	10	1	1	..	..	3	..	..	15
Adultery and cruelty	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Adultery and other	2	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	5
Cruelty and drunkenness	32	2	3	1	1	..	1	2	42
Separation and drunkenness	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Separation and cruelty	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
Three grounds or more	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
<u>Total</u>	1,667	480	298	296	223	66	7	37	3,074
NULLITY OF MARRIAGE									
Bigamy	..	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	3
Incapacity to consummate	3	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	5
Pregnancy	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	2
Invalid marriage	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	2
<u>Total</u>	3	4	2	3	..	..	..	..	12
JUDICIAL SEPARATION									
Adultery	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
<u>Total</u>	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	1

(a) Decrees absolute.

TABLE 8. - DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE GRANTED (a) : DURATION OF MARRIAGE  
AND AGES OF PARTIES AT TIME OF DISSOLUTION, AUSTRALIA,  
MARCH QUARTER 1967

Duration of marriage (years)	Age at time of dissolution											Total marriages dissolved
	Under 20	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 & over	Not stated	
HUSBAND												
Under 5	..	27	53	28	14	6	5	4	2	1	..	140
5-9	..	28	288	252	101	55	25	21	12	10	..	792
10-14	..	..	19	234	218	93	47	26	12	13	..	662
15-19	..	..	..	16	163	213	91	34	21	18	..	556
20-24	..	..	..	..	12	157	173	67	24	22	..	455
25-29	..	..	..	..	..	2	77	121	45	24	..	269
30 and over	..	..	..	..	..	..	6	49	69	76	..	200
<u>Total marriages dissolved</u> (No. %)	..	55	360	530	508	526	424	322	185	164	..	3,074
	..	2	12	17	17	17	14	10	6	5	..	100
WIFE												
Under 5	2	68	42	12	5	1	5	4	1	..	..	140
5-9	..	149	385	130	45	38	16	16	8	5	..	792
10-14	..	..	115	293	130	43	45	25	5	6	..	662
15-19	..	..	..	70	260	140	45	27	6	8	..	556
20-24	..	..	..	..	57	232	121	28	15	2	..	455
25-29	..	..	..	..	..	23	132	88	21	4	1	269
30 and over	..	..	..	..	..	..	20	73	54	53	..	200
<u>Total marriages dissolved</u> (No. %)	2	217	542	505	497	477	384	261	110	78	1	3,074
	..	7	18	16	16	16	12	8	4	3	..	100

(a) Decrees absolute; excludes nullities of marriage and judicial separations granted.

TABLE 9. - DISSOLUTIONS OF MARRIAGE GRANTED (a) : DURATION OF MARRIAGE AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF MARRIAGE (b), AUSTRALIA, MARCH QUARTER 1967

Duration of marriage (years)	Dissolutions of marriage with -							Total marriages dissolved		Total number of children (b)
	No children	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children	5 children	6 or more children	Number	Per cent	
Under 5	92	37	9	2	..	..	..	140	5	61
5 - 9	322	285	136	39	7	2	1	792	26	718
10 - 14	165	153	190	96	46	8	4	662	21	1,069
15 - 19	102	106	179	96	54	8	11	556	18	1,081
20 - 24	79	93	140	93	28	18	4	455	15	878
25 - 29	102	73	57	22	12	3	..	269	9	316
30 and over	147	31	13	5	3	1	..	200	6	89
<u>Total marriages dissolved</u> ( No. )	1,009	778	724	353	150	40	20	3,074	..	..
( % )	33	25	24	11	5	1	1	..	100	..
<u>Total number of children (b)</u>	..	778	1,448	1,059	600	200	127	..	..	4,212

(a) Decrees absolute; excludes nullities of marriage and judicial separations granted.

(b) Living children under 21 at the time of petition. The term "children" used in the Commonwealth legislation refers to living "children of the marriage" under 21 years.

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CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

14 JUNE 1968

NOTE. Inquiries concerning these statistics may be made in Canberra by telephoning 49 6155 Extension 1 or, in each State capital, by telephoning the office of the Bureau of Census and Statistics.