



Marriages



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Frank stechmann marriage certificate

Abstract

Marriage statistics measure the number of marriages registered in New Zealand.

As the principal agency responsible for processing and publishing marriage statistics in New Zealand, Statistics New Zealand seeks to provide information that meets the legal, public policy and community requirements for up-to-date official statistics at the local, regional and national level.

Purpose

Marriage statistics measure the number of marriages registered in New Zealand .

Before 19 August 2013 a marriage involved the act, ceremony, or process by which the legal relationship of husband and wife was constituted.

From 19 August 2013 a marriage involves the act, ceremony, or process by which the legal relationship of two people, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, is constituted.

In New Zealand, marriage may be solemnised either by a celebrant or before a registrar of marriages. A licence must be obtained from a registrar before a marriage by a celebrant can be solemnised, and notice must be given by one of the parties to a registrar.

Population

Marriage Population

All registered marriages in New Zealand.

Marriages

Methodology

Under the provisions of the Marriage Act 1955, a couple wishing to marry in New Zealand must complete a Notice of Intended Marriage (BDM60) at least three days before the marriage.

The BDM60 (or marriage licence) includes a statutory declaration which must be made in the presence of a Registrar of Marriages. The marriage must take place within 3 months of the licence being issued. The details from the BDM60 are transferred to two copies of the form BDM45 (Copy of Particulars of Marriage). Both copies of the BDM45 are signed by the parties at the wedding. The BDM45 confirms the details and legal validity of the marriage. Within ten days of the ceremony the celebrant must send one copy back to the Registrar who prepared it, the other copy is given to the couple as a record of their marriage. The BDM45s are marked against the BDM60s then forwarded to Births, Deaths and Marriages (a division of the Department of Internal Affairs) in Wellington where the marriage is registered.

Marriage data are derived from information provided on the BDM60 and BDM45. Statistics New Zealand receives a monthly electronic file of marriage registrations from Births, Deaths and Marriages. Statistics NZ is responsible for processing and publishing marriage statistics derived from the marriage registrations. Marriage data are published annually and unless otherwise stated refer to marriages by date of registration not date of marriage.

If sex is not stated or is indeterminant, sex is imputed, however the original response is retained.

Subjects	People and communities
Keywords	Marriage, Marriage rate, Marital status, Vital statistics
Date	1921 -

Significant events impacting this study series

Important Dates Relating to Marriage Statistics

1844 Vital Statistics first published as part of "Statistics of New Zealand" (blue book).

- 1858 The Registration Act.
This act provided for compulsory registration of births, deaths and marriages.
- 1859 Compulsory registration of births, deaths and marriages introduced.
- 1909 Māori Land Act.
Provisions were made for the registration of Māori marriages in a separate register.
- 1910 Collection of Vital Statistics entrusted to the Government Statistician (formerly the responsibility of the Registrar General).
- 1914 Monthly Abstract of Statistics first published.
- 1921 Vital Statistics report first published. Previously vital statistics were published in the blue book.
- 1928 New Zealand Pocket Digest of Statistics first published.
- 1931 Re-enactment of Māori Land Act 1909.
This act made provision for the administration of Māori marriages either under the Marriage Act or under the Māori Land Act 1909. A separate register for Māori marriages was retained.
- 1933 Marriage Act Amendment.
This amendment made the minimum legal age of marriage 16 years. It also permitted women to act as officiating ministers for the purpose of solemnising marriages.
- 1939 Marriage Act Amendment.
Repealed the 1933 Marriage Act Amendment. Similar regulations with regard to the minimum legal age of marriage were introduced in this amendment.
- 1944 Marriage Emergency Regulations.
This act provided for the keeping of a special register of service marriages solemnised outside New Zealand between parties, one or both of whom were members of New Zealand's armed forces.
- 1946 Marriage Amendment Act.
This act replaced the 1944 marriage emergency regulations and in addition provided for the validity of service marriages.
- 1951 Māori Purposes Act.
This act stipulated that Māori marriages were to be solemnised and recorded in the same way as non-Māori marriages.
- 1952 Abolition of the Māori marriage register.
- 1955 Marriage Act.
This act set down the law regarding the solemnisation and registration of marriage.
- 1987 Last year of publication of annual volume on vital statistics. Some information incorporated into Demographic Trends. Official confirmation 4 July 1989.
- 1995 Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995.
- 1995 As part of government restructuring the public registries group of the Department of Justice was split up from 1 October. Internal Affairs was given responsibility for Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- 1996 Following the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand changed its standard statistical concept for deriving population estimates and projections from the de facto population to the resident population.
- 1998 Internal Affairs computerised the vitals collection system from 1 January. Data now provided electronically to Statistics New Zealand and supply of birth, death and marriage registration forms phased out. Data from 1 July processed by Statistics New Zealand using new LAN-based system.
- 2005 Civil Union Act 2004 came into force on 26 April 2005. First ceremonies were celebrated on 29 April 2005.
- 2005 Married couples are now able to transfer their marriage to a civil union without first dissolving the marriage. Opposite-sex couples can transfer their civil union to a marriage.
- 2013 The Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 redefined marriage as the union of two people, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The first same-sex marriages were celebrated on 19 August 2013.
- 2013 All couples (opposite-sex and same-sex) can now transfer their civil union to marriage without first dissolving the civil union.
- 2013 A review of the Marriage, civil union and divorce statistics is taking place and as a result of this some definitions may change.
- 2014 Marriage rates change, from using just marriages as a proportion of the population, to marriages and civil unions excluding transfers to and from civil unions (marriages + civil unions - transfers). Marriage rates will be revised from 2005 onwards.
- 2015 Changes to "Civil unions and marriages (provisional) – tables" release. This release was published for the last time on 5 November 2015. A new Infoshare series - "Quarterly Marriages and Civil Unions (provisional)" - can be found under the subject Population and group: Marriages, Civil Unions, and Divorces. The table will be updated quarterly with provisional data. Marriages and civil unions will be combined. The data in this table has been randomly rounded to three to protect confidentiality. Individual figures may not add up to totals, and values for the same data may vary in different tables.
- 2016 With the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2013, the number of civil unions has decreased significantly and interest has shifted from civil unions and marriages to same-sex and opposite-sex couples. As a result marriages and civil unions have been combined in most cases, with same-sex and opposite-sex breakdowns given where possible. New data series have been added to Infoshare under the subject category 'population' and group 'marriages, civil unions, and divorces.'

2016 All marriage, civil union, and divorce data has been randomly rounded to protect confidentiality. Individual figures may not add up to totals, and values for the same data may vary in different tables. Median ages have been recalculated using randomly rounded data. We are committed to ensuring confidentiality by not releasing information that could identify individuals. Random rounding is used to disguise small counts, but all cells in a table are randomly rounded. Counts that are already a multiple of three are left unchanged. Those not a multiple of three are rounded to one of the two nearest multiples. For example, a one will be rounded to either a zero or a three. Each value in the table is rounded independently. This means counts may not sum to totals, but ensures that published totals are within two of the original number.

Usage and limitations of the data

Examples of uses

Analysis of trends in age specific and general marriage rates.

Limitations of Data

Geographical breakdowns are based on residence of partner two not place of marriage. We do not compile statistics on place of marriage.

From 1998 to 2011 the information is coded by territorial authority, prior to this it was coded to area unit level and from 2011 it is coded to meshblock level.

Combined civil unions and marriages (same-sex and opposite-sex) are available by broad geographic areas including Auckland, Wellington, the rest of the North Island, Canterbury, and the rest of the South Island.

Auckland includes the Auckland council area.

Wellington includes:

- Porirua city
- Upper Hutt city
- Lower Hutt city
- Wellington city
- Kapiti Coast district
- Masterton district
- Carterton district
- South Wairarapa district.

Canterbury includes:

- Kaikoura district
- Hurunui district
- Waimakariri district
- Selwyn district
- Ashburton district
- Timaru district
- Mackenzie district
- Waimate district
- Christchurch city.

The relatively small number of civil unions and same-sex marriages prohibits a more detailed geographic breakdown.

Marriages and civil unions combined are available by territorial authority (city and district council) from Infoshare.

Main users of the data

Statistics New Zealand, International agencies

Frequency

- Quarterly

Related Materials

Other

- [New Zealand Family Court](#)
- [Marriages, civil unions, and divorces](#)

Variables

Marriage 1998-2012 (Published) - Marriage 1998 - 2012 (Published)

Name **Range**

Period

Date of Marriage

Groom's Age

Marital Status of Bridegroom

Name	Range
Groom's Birth Place	
Bride's Age	
Marital Status of Bride	
Bride's Birth Place	
Residence of Groom	

Historical Marriage (Published)

Name	Range
Occupation of Bridegroom	
Duration of Widowhood/Divorce Bridegroom	
Occupation of Bride	
Duration of Widowhood/Divorce Bride	
De facto Relationship	
Denomination	

Marriage from 2013 (Published)

Name	Range
Period	
Date of Marriage	
Age	
sex	
Marital Status	
Birth Place	
Type	
Residence of Partner 2	

Concepts

Marriage

Name	Description
Marriage (registered)	<p>Before 19 August 2013 a marriage involved the act, ceremony, or process by which the legal relationship of husband and wife was constituted.</p> <p>From 19 August 2013 a marriage involves the act, ceremony, or process by which the legal relationship of two people, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, is constituted.</p> <p>In New Zealand, marriage may be solemnised either by a celebrant or before a registrar of marriages. A licence must be obtained from a registrar before a marriage by a celebrant can be solemnised, and notice must be given by one of the parties to a registrar.</p>
Age-specific	A measure relating to an age group. Age-specific rates are commonly calculated for fertility, mortality, marriage, marriage dissolution and abortion.

De facto Relationship	Two people usually living in the same dwelling, but not in a registered marriage to each other, who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) share a mutual concern for each other; b) have a degree of economic, social, and emotional interdependence; and c) consider their relationship to be akin to marriage.
Marital Status	A person's status with respect to the marriage laws or customs of the country. <p>*Legal* marital status is a person's status with respect to registered marriage.</p> <p>*Social* marital status is a person's status with respect to consensual union (partnered or unpartnered).</p>
Marriage Rate (Crude)	Marriages and civil unions per 1,000 mean estimated population (transfers to and from marriage or civil union are excluded).
Marriage Rate (General)	Marriages and civil unions per 1,000 mean estimated population aged 16 years and over who are not-married or in a civil union (transfers to and from marriage or civil union are excluded).
Marriage Rate (Crude) before 2005	The number of marriages per 1,000 estimated mean population.
Marriage Rate (General) before 2005	The number of marriages per 1,000 estimated mean not-married population aged 16 years and over.
Median Age	Half the population is younger, and half older, than this age.
Occupation	A set of jobs which involve the performance of a common set of tasks.
First marriages	First marriages Marriages or civil unions where neither partner has been previously married or in a civil union.
Partner two	Partner two The person whose details are entered in the right hand column of the marriage or civil union license application form. For opposite-sex marriages this is usually the bridegroom.
Remarriage	Remarriage Marriages or civil unions where one or both partners have been previously married or in a civil union with a different partner. Remarriages do not include transfers to and from marriage or civil union. Transfers are included in total marriages and civil unions.

Relationship Type

Name	Description
Relationship Type	Relationship Type Opposite-sex couple, male couple or female couple

Civil Union

Name	Description
Civil Union (registered)	The act, ceremony or process by which the legal relationship of two people is constituted. A civil union may be entered into by couples of the same sex or by couples of different sexes. In New Zealand, a civil union may be solemnised either by a civil union celebrant or before a registrar of civil unions. A licence must be obtained from a registrar before a civil union can be solemnised, and notice must be given by one of the parties to a registrar.
Same-sex Partners	Two people of the same sex who are in a consensual union.