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CRUDE BIRTH RATES AND FERTILITY RATES: AUSTRALIA, 1880-82 TO 1960-62

Period	Average annual rates			Index nos. (Base: 1880-82 = 100)		
	Crude birth rate(a)	Fertility rates		Crude birth rate(a)	Fertility rates	
		Births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years	Nuptial births per 1,000 married women aged 15-44 years		Births per 1,000 women aged 15-44 years	Nuptial births per 1,000 married women aged 15-44 years
1880-82	35.3	170	321	100	100	100
1890-92	34.5	159	332	98	94	103
1900-02	27.2	117	235	77	69	73
1910-12	27.2	117	236	77	69	74
1920-22	25.0	107	197	71	63	61
1932-34	16.7	71	131	47	42	41
1946-48	23.6	104	160	67	61	50
1953-55	22.7	109	149	64	64	46
1960-62	22.5	112	154	64	66	48

(a) Number of births per 1,000 of mean population.

The table above shows how increasing proportions both of women of child-bearing age and of married women of child-bearing age inflate the crude birth rate. Thus, while the nuptial birth rate for married women increased by only 22 per cent over the period 1932-34 to 1946-48, the crude birth rate rose by 41 per cent owing principally to the greatly increased number of marriages during that period.

Age-specific birth rates

So long as customary ages at marriage do not change drastically the main demographic factor affecting the number of births is the age composition of the potential mothers in the population. Within the child-bearing group the fertility of women of different ages varies considerably and a clearer view of the fertility of the population can be obtained from an examination of what are known as its age-specific birth rates, that is the number of births to women of specified ages per thousand women of those particular ages.

Age-specific birth rates are more commonly expressed in age groups than in single ages. In the following table such rates are shown in five-year age groups for Australia for the period 1941 to 1965. A graph showing the age-specific birth rates for each year during the period 1941 to 1965 appears on the following page.

AGE-SPECIFIC BIRTH RATES:(a) AUSTRALIA, 1941 TO 1965

Age group (years)	1941	1946	1951	1956	1961	1963	1964	1965
15-19	24.30	26.30	38.33	43.09	47.37	46.04	46.74	47.35
20-24	121.26	151.86	177.86	210.10	225.21	207.03	189.92	179.10
25-29	145.07	184.59	185.23	203.15	220.16	210.86	197.88	187.90
30-34	103.24	133.62	122.31	123.58	131.31	123.21	118.44	109.10
35-39	58.11	76.66	65.92	64.22	63.22	59.81	58.39	53.16
40-44	19.30	24.47	20.51	19.72	19.16	18.41	16.50	14.85
45-49	1.67	2.06	1.61	1.57	1.42	1.11	1.16	1.12

(a) Number of births per 1,000 women in each age group. Rates for dates subsequent to 1961 are based on the age distribution at the census of 30 June 1961 (adjusted only for 'not stated' ages) and on subsequent births, recorded ages at death and recorded ages of migrants.

Gross and net reproduction rates for females

A single measure of reproduction, known as the gross reproduction rate, is obtained by adding together the specific fertility rates for each age in the child-bearing group. This measure indicates the number of female children who would be born on an average to women living right through the child-bearing period, if the conditions on which the rate is based continue. The rate is unaffected by the age composition of the potential mothers, and consequently it shows more clearly