# State of the Nation

Statistical Indicators of Australia's Well-being

Lucy Sullivan ■ Barry Maley ■ Michael Warby

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THE CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT STUDIES

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# TAKING CHILDREN SERIOUSLY

In 1994 the Centre embarked on a program of research entitled Taking Children Seriously, directed by CIS Senior Fellow Barry Maley. At the heart of this program is the present and future well-being of children. This publication arises from work carried out under the program.


**Major supporters of the *Taking Children Seriously* program include:**

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# Introduction

Australia today is very different from the Australia of 100 years ago, or 50 years ago, or even 25 years ago. Yet it is not easy, even for professional social scientists, to grasp the magnitude and direction of changes in a wide range of social, cultural and economic affairs. We know of no single publication that gives a relatively brief, non-technical, soundly-based, and accessible panorama of major changes and the present state of key aspects of our society and economy. *State of the Nation* is intended to serve that purpose for social scientists, policy makers, editorialists, teachers, journalists, business and labour leaders, politicians, the general reader, and the taxpayer.

At no previous time in our history has it been possible for such a large proportion of the population to communicate with each other or to have cheap and ready access to a wealth of information. The possibilities for informed discussion of the many matters affecting the well-being of the country have never been greater. It is therefore surprising how often the quality of public discussion and debate falters through ignorance of well-established trends or misunderstanding of crucial social and economic facts. This is partly due to the difficulty of gathering the information and putting it together in a revealing way. This book has been written with that need in mind.

At the heart of the pages which follow is an array of 'social indicators', presented mainly in graphs and other figures with an accompanying commentary, which illustrate and analyse the nature and degree of change in most of our major social institutions. In many cases, the striking character of the changes, and their relationships to each other, cry out for explanation. So, where it has seemed appropriate to do so, some hypotheses are offered to suggest why trends in two or more areas might be connected. But, in the main, attempts at detailed explanation are eschewed because that is not the main purpose of this book, which is rather to inform the reader, to suggest the possibility of relationships, and to provoke thought about a wide range of issues and developments.

This book also represents a useful resource and reference compendium of permanent value to readers with differing interests in social trends of many kinds. In many respects the book is unique and, in several areas, uniquely comprehensive. Of special value is the bringing together, for the first time in a single volume, of sets of social statistics that reach back over the century. These statistics are based upon the data collated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics since Federation. They are brought together here to give a continuous picture of the evolution of changes in behaviour by Australians, and their consequences for some other aspects of society, especially for crime. For example, changes in reproductive and marital behaviour, such as earlier or later marriage, declining fertility and changing age structure of the

population, have major implications for schooling, the welfare system, taxation, and the genesis of crime. Statistics in these areas can be seen, therefore, as suggesting connections between changes in the areas of behaviour concerned. Such an approach lays a foundation for analysing the causes of social change that future statistics produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and others will further illuminate and build upon. Accordingly, the basis laid in this publication will undoubtedly support any future work of a similar kind that might be undertaken by the Centre for Independent Studies.

Social change is powerfully influenced by economic change, and vice versa. Although a relatively small proportion of *State of the Nation* is devoted to economic statistics, our intention has been to avoid technical discussion and to concentrate on those primary economic indicators which are most illuminating of major trends in the Australian economy over the last 20 years or so.

A section of the book is devoted to a 'snapshot' view of popular culture and the arts. The Bureau of Statistics has recently established a unit to cover these areas but it has not been possible to document trends over long periods. But, as affluence and leisure have increased, and as the reach of the visual and electronic media in particular has extended and deepened, popular culture and entertainment figure prominently in our daily lives and therefore justify inclusion in this volume.

The material collected here in easily digested form has arisen from the Centre's work in areas more intensively studied for other publications, and from the Centre's interest in the present state and future directions of our leading social, cultural and economic institutions. Understanding the present depends a great deal upon knowledge of the immediate and more distant past, and we cannot think rationally about the future unless we have a keen appreciation of the forces that have made us what we are today. This book, it is hoped, will make a respectable contribution to the wider and deeper appreciation of our present, some of its predicaments, and their roots in the past. The reader who does no more than scan the statistics and trends illustrated in this book will be better equipped to think more critically and productively about Australian society and to ponder issues of public policy.

***Barry Maley***
*Director,*
***Taking Children Seriously*** *research program.*

## About the Authors

**Lucy Sullivan** is a Research Fellow at the CIS. She has published widely in academic journals, including the *British Journal of Sociology* and the *Journal of Medicine and Law*. For the CIS, she was a co-author of *Home Repairs: Building Stronger Families to Resist Social Decay* (1996). Her *Rising Crime in Australia* (CIS,1997) explores the links between increased crime and other social changes.

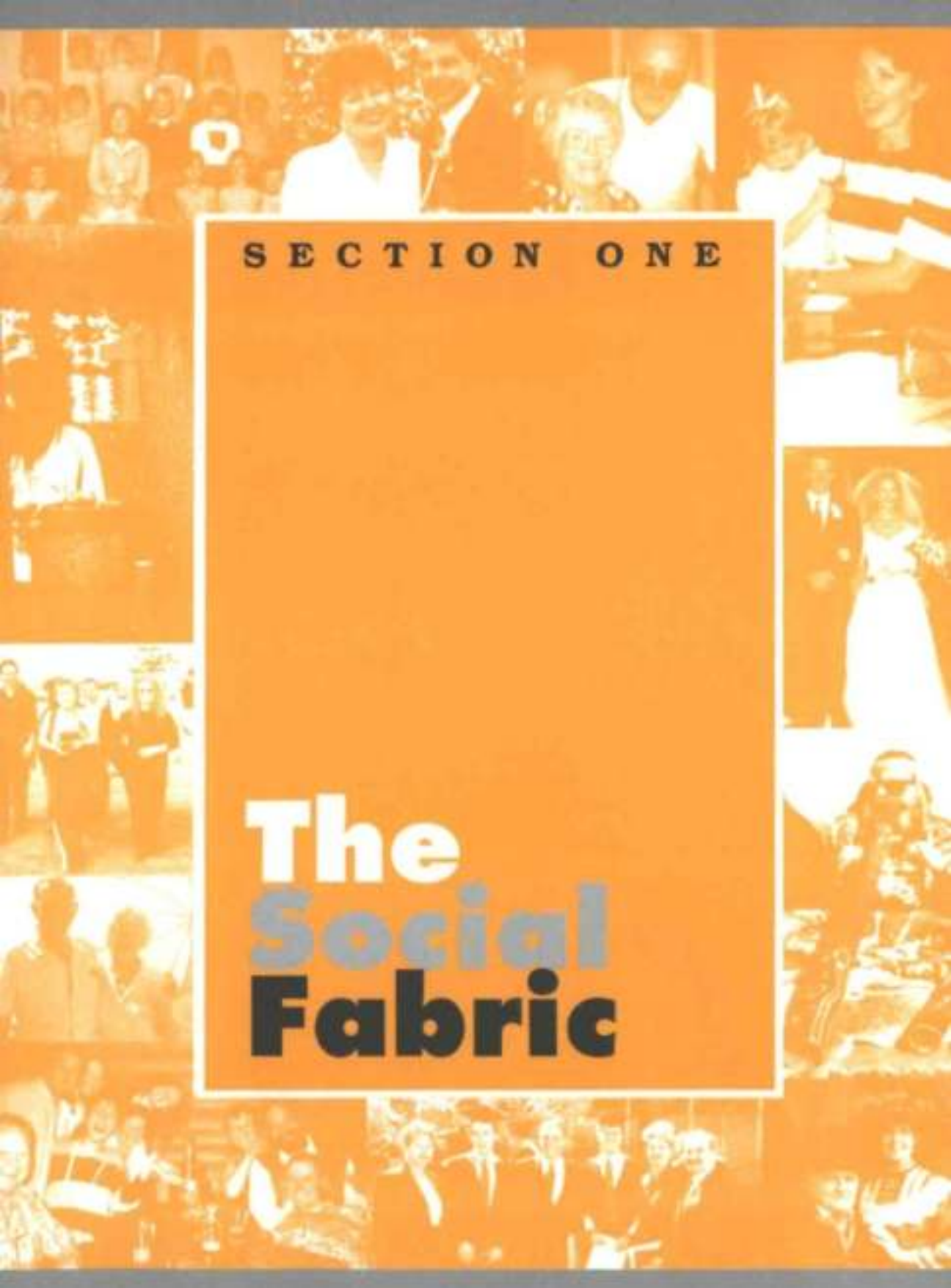
**Barry Maley** is Senior Fellow at the CIS and Director of the *Taking Children Seriously* research program. Prior to joining the CIS in 1989 he was Senior Lecturer in Behavioural Science at the University of New South Wales. His most recent CIS publication is *Wedlock and Well-being* (1996).

**Michael Warby** is Public Affairs Manager for the Tasman Institute. Prior to this he worked in the Parliamentary Research Service in the Parliamentary Library in Canberra. He has contributed to a wide variety of newspapers and periodicals and written or co-authored monographs for the Parliamentary Library and the Tasman Institute.

## Acknowledgments

Much of the material in *State of the Nation*, especially in Section One, has been collated from the *Year Books* published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Unless otherwise specified, this is the source of material in that section. Material in Section Two comes from a variety of sources which are acknowledged separately. Most of the graphs in Section Three are from R.A. Foster's *Australian Economic Statistics 1949-50 to 1994-95*, published by the Reserve Bank of Australia in 1996, while others were created by Michael Warby. We are grateful to all those who have assisted in providing the information contained in this volume.

Many people have had a hand in producing *State of the Nation*. As people are often curious about the division of labour in joint-authored publications, the major contributor to Section One is Lucy Sullivan, to Section Two, Barry Maley, and to Section Three, Michael Warby. At various stages in the production process editing was done by Barry Maley, Rafe Champion and Andrew Norton. Daryl-Anne Le Roux and Ben Sullivan made major contributions to the production of the many tables and figures.



SECTION ONE

# The Social Fabric

SECTION ONE

# THE SOCIAL FABRIC

This section presents a century of statistics on social trends in Australia on a population basis. The data are drawn almost exclusively from the statistical record of Australian demography and enterprise begun in the late nineteenth century with T.A. Coghlan's *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia* (which included New Zealand) and continued since Federation in the *Year Books* of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), published in most years from 1901 to the present.

The choice of indicators has been substantially determined by the possibility of reporting long-term trends for the whole of Australia. Only when this criterion has meant that a factor of prime current concern would have to be omitted entirely is a shorter series, or one representing a single State rather than the whole of Australia, provided. Where missing decades occur in the charts, or the series terminates early, this is because the data concerned disappeared from the *Year Books* at these junctures. The length or duration of the data series, as we survey a century of Australian national life, is of the essence of their fascination, and of their instructive value as we ask the question, 'How are we faring socially today?'

# People and Culture

## Population Increase

Throughout the century, Australia has sought to increase its population. Australia was a 'small' country at mid-century, but in the last fifty years the population has grown to exceed that of many European nations, over a period when the populations of many Western nations have remained steady or declined.

In Figure 1.1, it can be seen that the Australian population increased by a factor of five between 1894 and 1993. The growth rate was comparatively low and steady from 1894 to 1943, when expansion by natural increase was the favoured policy and promotion of immigration, from Great Britain, was moderate and intermittent. In the immediate post-World War II period strategies for population increase shifted to immigration, and population increase assumed a steeper gradient, which was sustained for the succeeding five decades.

The birthrate figures for the same period exhibit an overall downward trend. Marked dips occur in the recession of the first decade of the century and the Great Depression of the 1930s (indicating an adjustment of population to economic adversity), with recoveries thereafter despite the general decline. The constant gradient of population increase masks a decrease in the contribution of natural increase, with an increase in that of immigration, from the period of the 1970s to the 1990s.

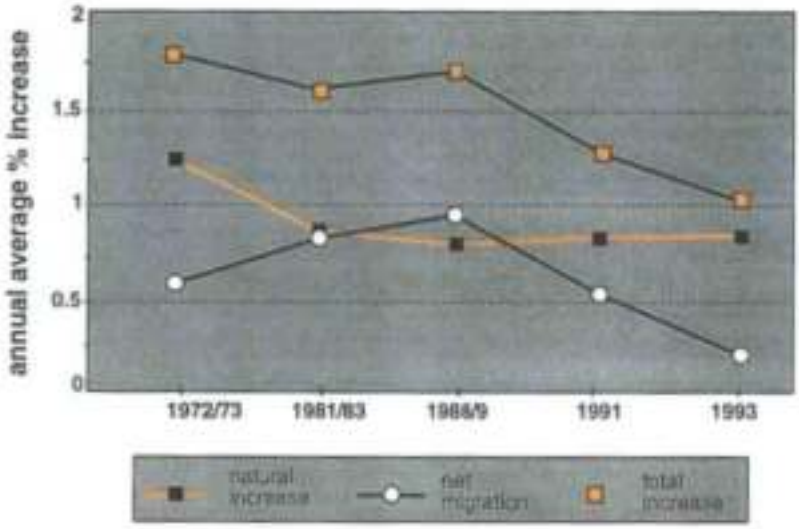
**1.1 Australian Population 1894 -1993**


Source: Year Books

Figure 1.2 shows the percentage increases in population from 1972/3 to 1993 by natural increase and by immigration. The twelve months of 1988/9 had the highest rate of immigration this century.

**1.2 Population Increase 1972 - 93**

natural increase, net migration, total




Source: Year Books

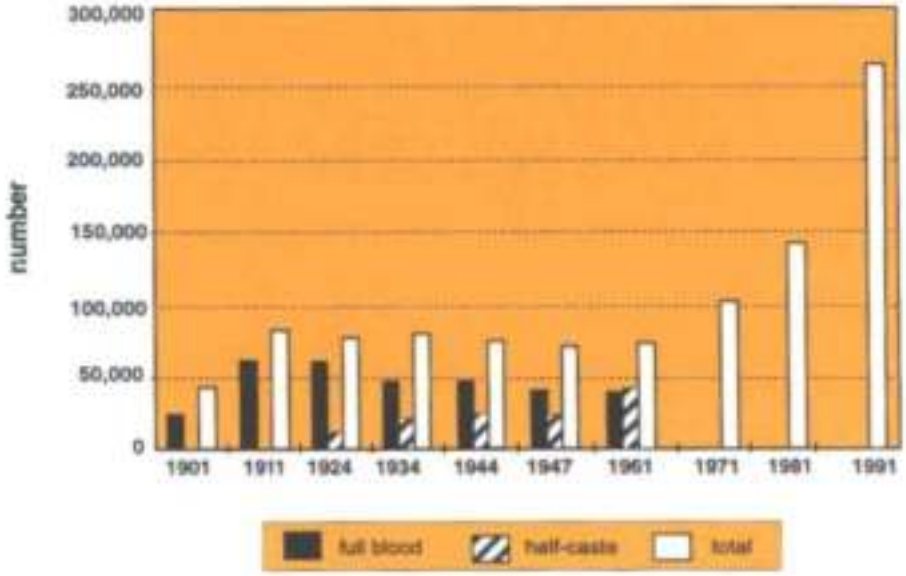
**Aboriginal Population**

Figure 1.3 presents the *Year Book* record of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population since Federation as a percentage of the total Australian population. There is considerable uncertainty about the figures throughout. The early figures vary between enumerated and estimated sources, resulting in large fluctuations, and there are sometimes references to unrecorded numbers 'outside the influence of Europeans'. After 1961, the distinction between 'full-blood' and 'half-caste' Aboriginals ceases, and from 1971 the numbers include unregulated numbers of persons who are less than half Aboriginal (that is, primarily of non-indigenous race), depending on self-nomination.

Thus the fall in Aboriginal population in the first half of the century, and its rise in the second, should be construed as representing, first, increasing racial intermarriage, and then the elimination of this influence on record-keeping, rather than as a decline in reproduction and/or survival, followed by regeneration.

**1.3 Aboriginal and TSI Population 1901-1991**

full-blood, half-caste, total - numbers

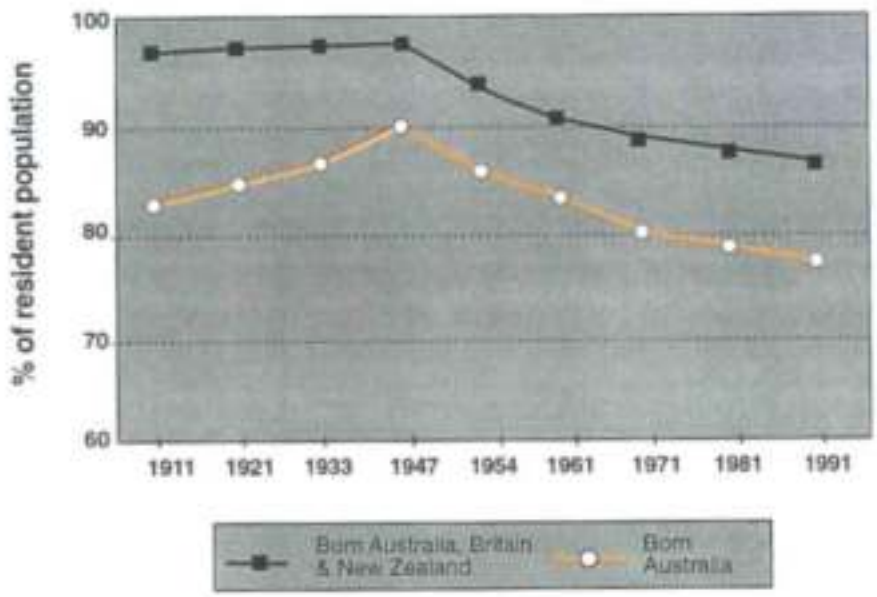



Source: Year Books

**Multiculturalism**

Figure 1.4 addresses the cultural origins of the Australian population. The percentage of the population born in Australia rose from over 80% in 1911 to a peak of 90% in the middle of the century and has since declined to approach three quarters in 1991. Figure 1.4 also shows the percentage of Australians born in Australia, Britain or New Zealand, that is, in English-speaking countries with an initially shared cultural and political heritage. There has been a decline from a mid-century peak of 98% to 86% in 1991. It appears from these figures that Australia is still largely a monocultural society.

**1.4 Australian Birthplace and British Birthplace**
1911 - 1991




Source: Year Books

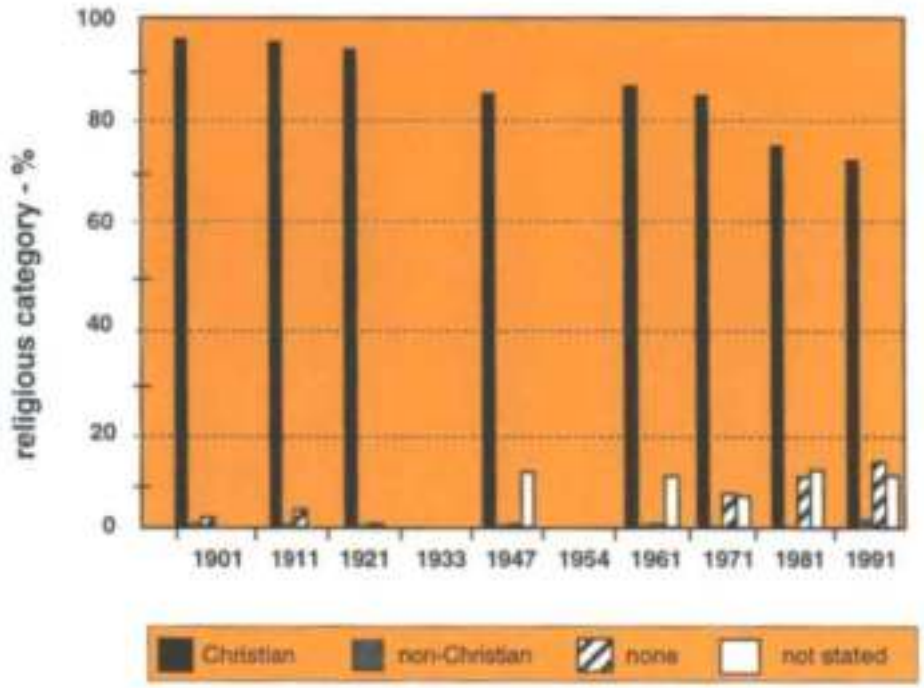
**Religion**

Figure 1.5 shows self-reported religious affiliation in the censuses from 1901 to 1991. Approximately three quarters of Australians today regard themselves as Christians. This represents a considerable fall (from 96%) at the turn of the century, but is still a large majority.

Non-Christian religions represented 1.4% of the population in 1901, fell to less than 1% by 1971, and rose again to reach 2.6% in 1991 – still a very small percentage of the total population. Most of the decline in Christian affiliation has been taken up by 'no religion' and non-declaration of religion (13% and 10% respectively in 1991).

**1.5 Religion 1901- 1991**

Christian, Non-Christian, none, not stated



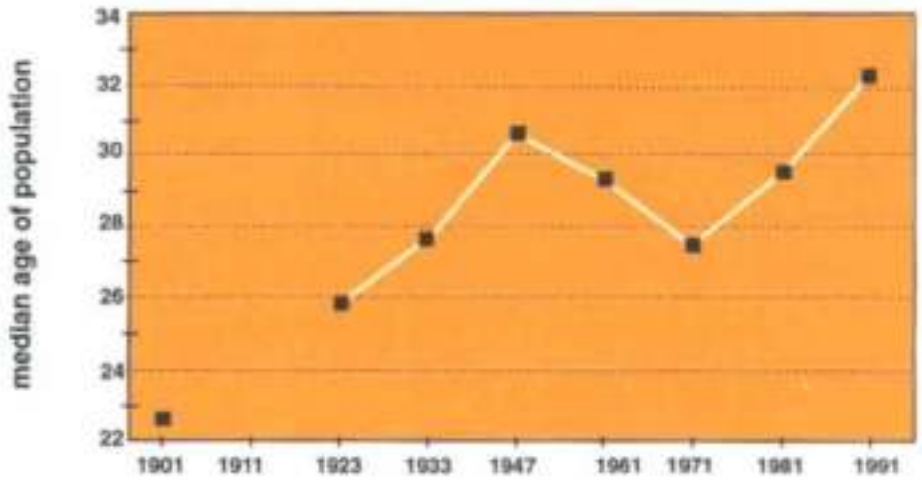

Source: Year Books

**Age**

Figure 1.6 shows the median age of the Australian population from 1901 to 1991. Median age is slightly different from mean or average age, and is the central age in the array of ages of the population, half the population being younger and half older. In 1901, the median age of Australians was 22.5; thus close to half of the Australian population were minors, the age of majority being then 21. By 1921, the median age had risen to nearly 26, and in 1947 it was just over 30. The lowered birth rate during the Great Depression and the loss of young lives in World War II accelerated this rise, which nevertheless was fairly constant across the half century. The celebrated post-war baby boom is reflected in a fall in median age to 29.4 in 1961 and 27.5 (the 1930s level) in 1971. Thereafter, the median age climbs again to pass 32 in 1991, the highest point in the century, reflecting both a fall in the birth rate and a marked rise in life expectancy over the period.

**1.6 Median Age 1901 - 1991**

Australian population



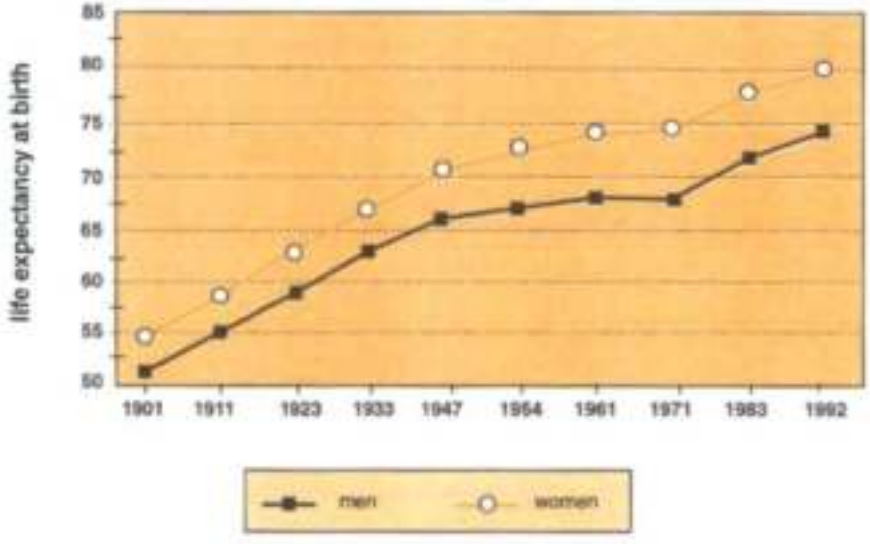

Source: Year Books

**Life Expectancy**

Figure 1.7 shows the dramatic rise in life expectancy in the century from the 1890s to the 1990s. In 1895, the average life expectancy for men was 51.1 years, and for women, 54.7; in 1992, the equivalent figures were 74.5 and 80.4. This is among the highest in the world.

**1.7 Life Expectancy 1901 - 1992**

men and women



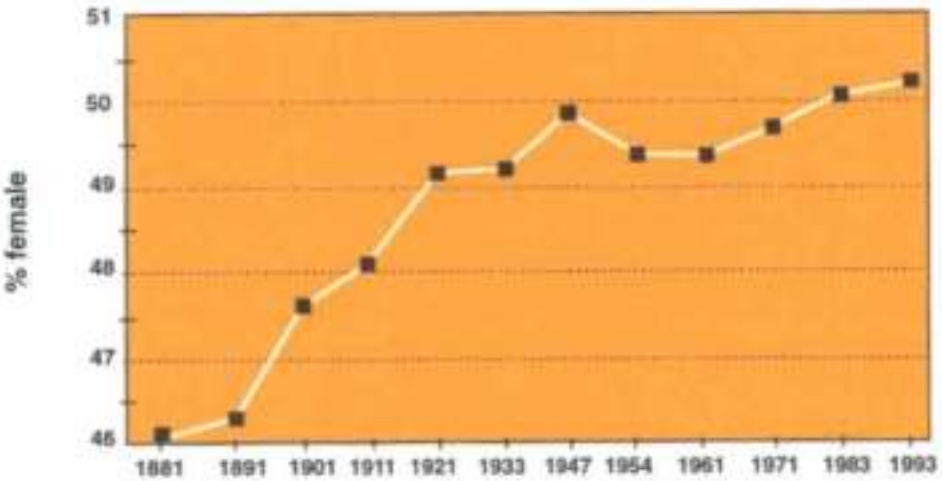

Source: Year Books

**Sex**

Figure 1.8 shows the percentage of the Australian population which was female from 1881 to 1993. For most of the period, males have outnumbered females. In 1881, 46% of the population was female and 54% male, making a disparity of 8%. The percentage of females reached between 49% and 50% in the 1920s and remained at that level for six decades, with females finally just outnumbering males in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s.

**1.8 Sex Distribution 1881 - 1993**

% female




Source: Year Books

# Reproduction and Its Institutions

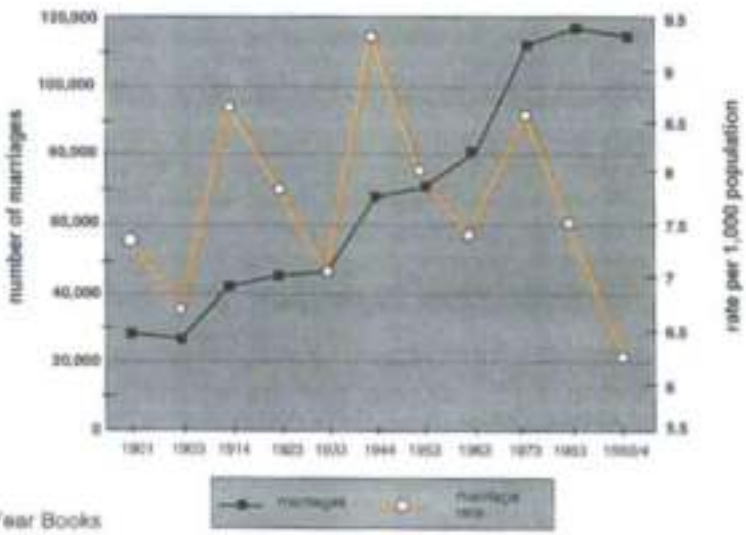
## Marriage

In all societies, marriage is the principal social regulator of reproduction. It exists both as a rite and as a social status, but above all as a species of sanction. It stabilises both sexual congress and parenting. It represents a web of ritual, sexuality, and biological and social reproduction, as well as an economic enterprise which forms a basic cell of the economics of the whole society. Marriage provides the social and economic security for the raising of infants to maturity and the fulfilling of their material needs.

Figure 1.9 shows the annual number of marriages in Australia at approximately decade intervals from 1901 to 1992/4, and the marriage rate (per 1,000 population) over the same period. The steady rise in the number of marriages masks large fluctuations in the marriage rate, largely in response to economic conditions. The figure for 1903 is included to indicate a self-regulating effect in the adjustment of population to economic adversity. That year marked the end of the most severe drought on record and this is reflected in a fall in both the marriage rate and in the actual number of marriages, which was followed by a fall in the number of births, and birthrate, in the following year, 1904. Similar declines occurred in the Great Depression and in the recession of 1963. Since the 1970s a combination of legal, social and economic factors have contributed to a major fall in the marriage rate. The fall and then the rise in the age of marriage across the century (see Figure 1.11) is also reflected in these figures.

### 1.9 Marriages 1901-1994

marriages and marriage rate

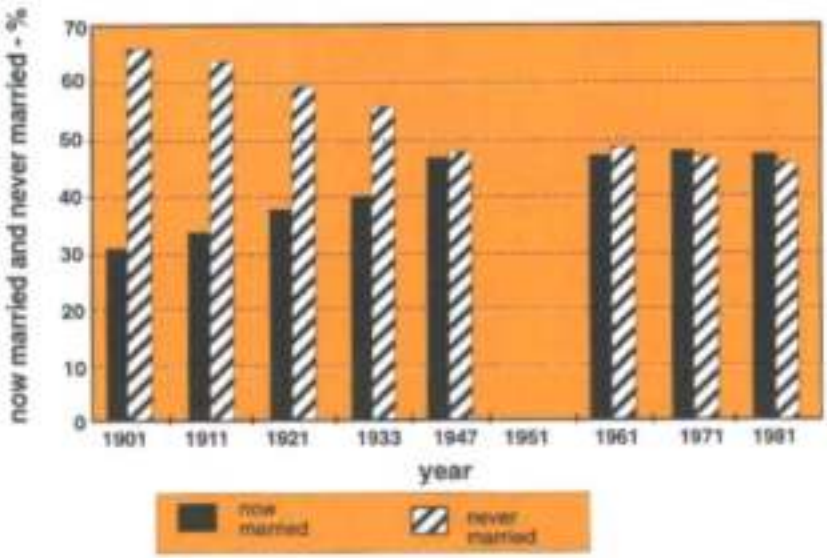



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.10 shows the percentage of the total population who were currently married and who had never been married at each decade point from 1901 to 1981. At the beginning of the century, many more Australians were never married than married, but by 1947 the percentages were approximately equal and this condition continued through to the 1980s.

**1.10 Marital Status 1901 - 1981**

% now married and % never married



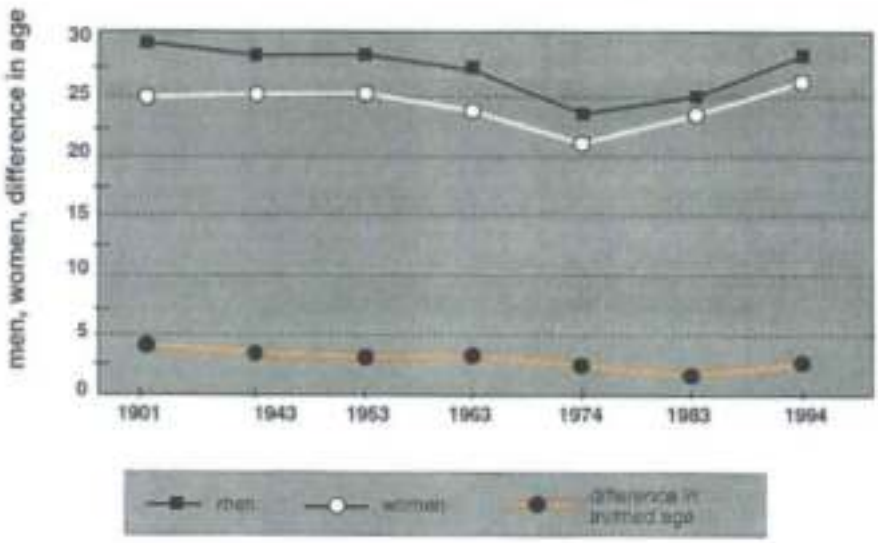

Source: Year Books

Figure 1.11 shows the average or median (according to availability) age at marriage of men and women in 1901 and from 1943 to 1994. This is for all marriages, not first marriages. The figure would be pushed upwards by high rates of divorce, or widowhood followed by remarriage, in any period. The average difference in age between men and women marriage partners (brides and grooms) is also shown. The average/median age of marriage for men was 29 in 1903 and remained so in 1943 and 1953. Thereafter it fell to reach a century's low of 23 in 1974, then rose to reach 29 again in 1994. The picture for women is similar. The average age at marriage in 1903 was 25, and it remained at this level in 1943 and 1953, fell to its lowest point of 21 in 1974, then rose to exceed its turn of the century level, reaching 26 in 1994.

The rise in the age of marriage of recent decades is sometimes regarded as a noteworthy trend but it can be seen from the time series that this only seems significant if we limit our perspective to the age at marriage in the 1960s and 1970s.

**1.11 Average/Median Age at Marriage**

men, women and difference in age




Source: Year Books

**Births**

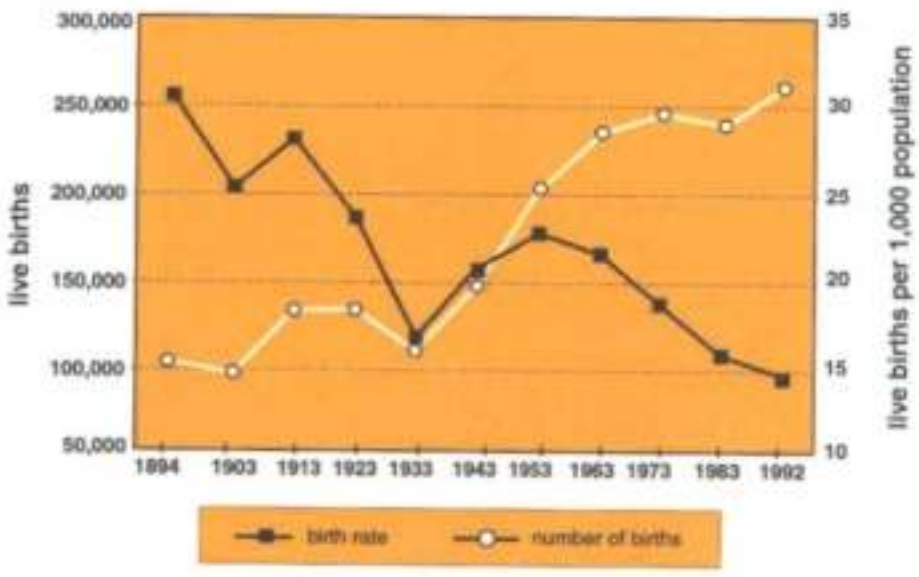
Figure 1.12 shows the number of births and the crude birth rate (live births per 1,000 population) at decade intervals from 1894 to 1992. With a rising population throughout the period, the number of births will rise even if the birth rate remains steady. Hence the rate is a more useful indicator of reproductive change.

Between 1894 and 1992 the birth rate halved from 30.5 to 14.9 births per 1,000 population. Over the century there has been a general fall in the birth rate, and there are three periods when there were falls in the absolute number of births. These mark the economic recessions in the first decade of the century, in the 1930s, and in the 1980s. These downturns appear even more strongly in the birth rate figures. A straight line drawn from 1894 to 1992 shows the data points varying quite close to it on either side (if we ignore the major responses to economic recessions in 1903 and 1933) suggesting a generally consistent decline over the century.

The arrival of safe and easy birth control in the 1960s and of abortion in the 1970s appears to have had little impact on the overall pattern.

**1.12 Birth Rate 1894-1992**

number and rate

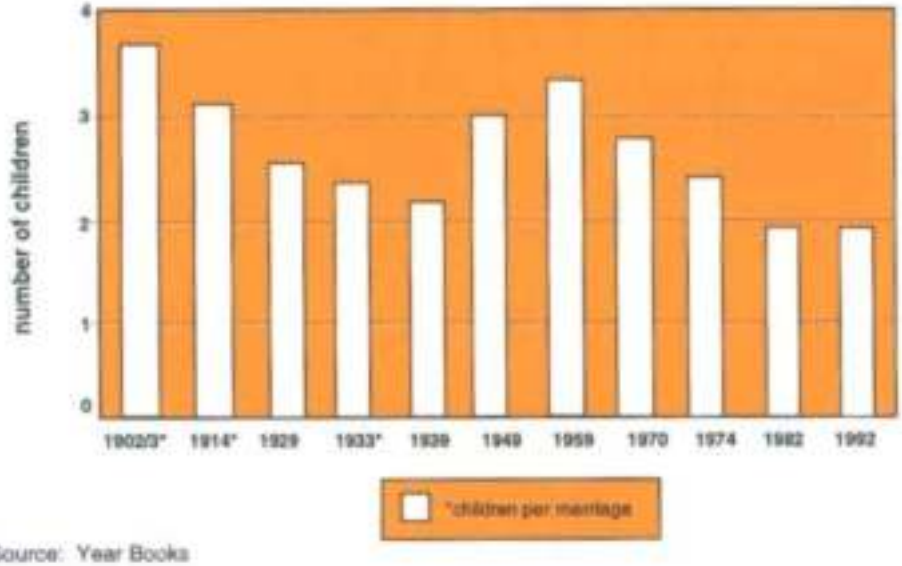



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.13 shows the fertility of marriages in terms of the expected number of children per marriage (in the years 1902/3, 1914 and 1933) and average fertility per woman in her lifetime (for the years 1929 to 1992). The figures indicate a decline in fertility from the beginning of the century, a revival with the post-war baby boom lasting into the 1960s, then another decline. Zero Population Growth arrived between 1974 and 1982.

**1.13 Fertility of Women 1902 - 1992**

average children in lifetime




Source: Year Books

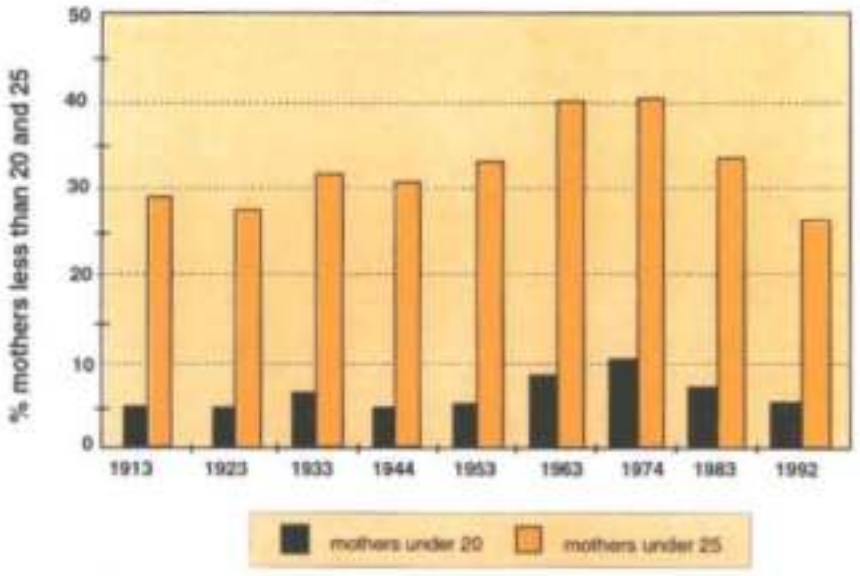
**Maternal Age**

Figure 1.14 shows the percentage of births to teenage mothers and to women aged less than 25 from 1913 to 1992. We have seen that the average age of marriage for women fell from 25 in the first half of the century, to a low of 21 in the mid 1970s, thereafter rising again to early-century levels. The ages of mothers giving birth show a similar, but not identical, pattern.

Teenage births were about 5% of all births from 1913 to 1953 (with the exception of a high rate of 6.9% in 1933). The rate rose considerably in the 1960s and 1970s, passing 10% in 1974, but fell again to about 5% in the 1990s. Births to mothers aged less than 25 show a similar pattern, rising markedly in the early 1960s and falling markedly by the 1990s to below levels early in the century. Thus what appears to be a postponement of parenthood, if the 1960s are taken as the norm, in fact represents a return to normality from the extremes of that decade.

**1.14 Young Mothers 1913 - 92**

% mothers aged less than 20 and 25



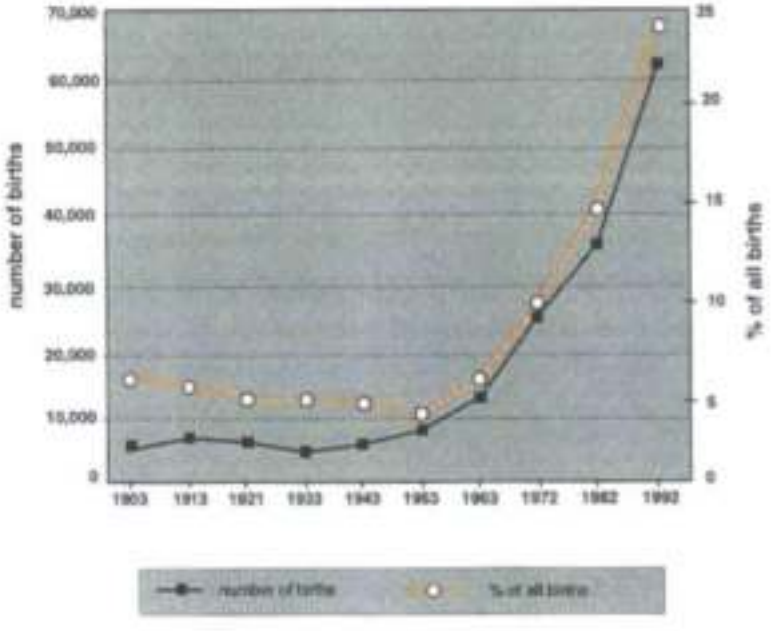

Source: Year Books

**Ex-nuptial Births**

An increase in the percentage of births at very young ages is likely to mean an increase in the percentage of ex-nuptial births. Figure 1.15 shows ex-nuptial births in Australia as a percentage of all births, at decade intervals, from 1903 to 1992. From 1903 to 1953 the ex-nuptial birth rate fell from 6% of all births to 4%. In 1963, the percentage of ex-nuptial births had risen to approach the level at the beginning of the century. Thereafter the percentage rose exponentially, reaching 10% in 1972, 15% in 1982, and 24% in 1992. Although ex-nuptial birth rose with diminishing age at motherhood in the 1960s and 70s, it has not fallen as age at motherhood has risen again.

**1.15 Ex-nuptial Births 1903 - 92**

numbers and per cent



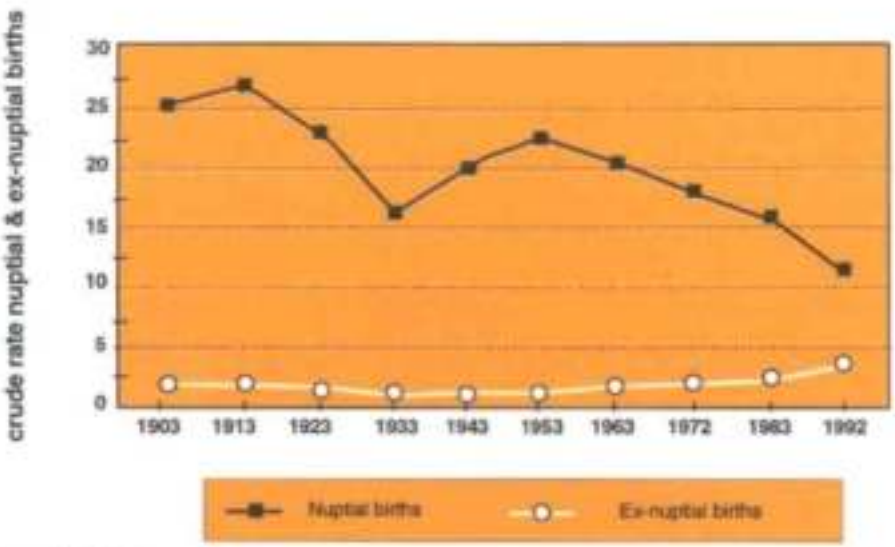

Source: Year Books

Figure 1.16 shows nuptial and ex-nuptial birth rates from 1903 to 1992, with the two rates converging in the latter half of the century. In 1903, the ex-nuptial birth rate was one-seventeenth of the nuptial birth rate, in 1992 it was one third. This means that in 1992 one-quarter of newborn babies were going to homes in which either there was no father, or there was not a formal commitment, via marriage, to stability of parenting.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report, *Australia's Mothers and Babies* (1992), places married mothers and mothers living in a de facto relationship in the same category. This results in a figure of 11.2% of births occurring to women without partners who had never married, and 1.2% to widowed, divorced or separated women. This is about half the 24% of ex-nuptial births reported by the *Year Books* for the early 1990s. If this classification of birth status is considered more comparable with that of illegitimacy prior to 1975, the rise in ex-nuptial births is considerably reduced. It is, nevertheless, twice the percentage for 1963 and three times that for 1953.

## 1.16 Nuptial and Ex-nuptial Births 1903 - 1992

birth rate per 1,000 population




Source: Year Books

**Divorce**

Figure 1.17 shows the divorce rate per half million population using decade averages from the 1880s to the 1920s, and thereafter annual rates at decade intervals. The divorce rate quadrupled in the last decade of the nineteenth century, then entered a period of stability followed by a steepening increase from the 1920s to the 1950s, a decline to the 1960s, a sharp rise from 1963 to 1973, and a massive rise to 1983, levelling off in the 1990s. The rate was about 11.5 per half million in the 1880s and 1,400 per half million in the 1990s.

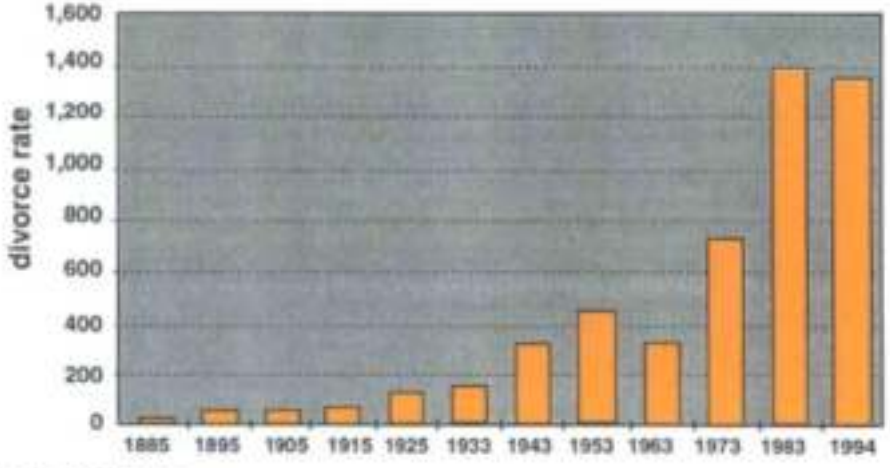
The pattern of these figures, with their three major fits and starts, cannot be understood without reference to changes in the divorce law which mark the initiation of changes of divorce rate. The author of an early *Year Book* commented that:

> The rapid increase in divorce during the period 1891-1900 occurred largely in New South Wales and Victoria where legislation passed respectively in 1899 and 1889 made the separation of the marriage tie comparatively easy.

The Federal *Matrimonial Causes Act 1959-66*, which came into operation in 1961, replacing separate State and Territory legislation, again made divorce easier by the introduction of a new grounds without fault – separation for five years. Following this major change, the divorce figures for 1973 show a doubling from 1963. The *Family Law Act 1975*, which came into operation on 5 January 1976, eased restrictions yet again, replacing the 14 grounds of the *Matrimonial Causes Act* with a single ground – 'irretrievable breakdown of marriage', defined as one year's separation.

**1.17 Divorce Rate 1885-1994**

number per 500,000 population

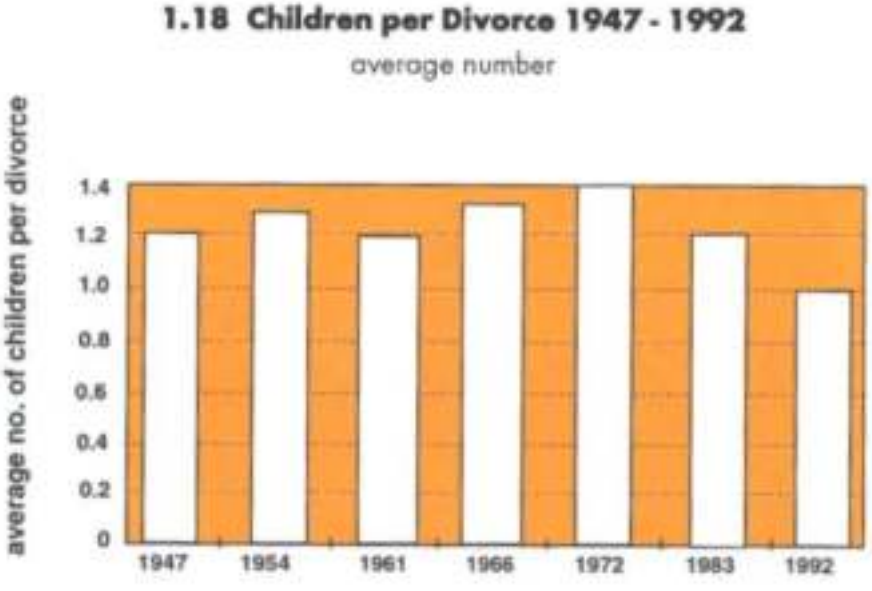



Source: Year Books

The number of divorces rose massively from 16,000 in 1973 to 63,000 in 1976. Obviously this rise could not be the result of the new encouragement afforded to divorce by the *Family Law Act*, as the one-year wait it required had not yet elapsed. Rather, it represents pending divorces from the previous four years, no longer required to wait out a five-year term of separation. If we divide the excess by five, we obtain a figure of 25,400, or 907 per half million, which slots into a fairly steady upward trend in the two decades following the initial introduction of 'no fault' divorce in 1961, which has settled at a new, raised level in the 1990s.

Figure 1.18 shows the average number of children per divorce from 1947 to 1992. Until the 1970s the average number of children rose and fell with the divorce rate, suggesting that the rise took in families with more rather than fewer children; but in the 1980s and 1990s this relationship disappears. While the divorce rate rose considerably in 1983, the average number of children fell, and with the divorce rate fairly steady to the early 1990s, it fell again. This latter pattern is consistent with a diminished duration of marriage in these decades, and a marked rise in mother's age at birth of first child across the same period from 23.7 in 1971 to 28.3 in 1994.

**1.18 Children per Divorce 1947 - 1992**




Source: Year Books

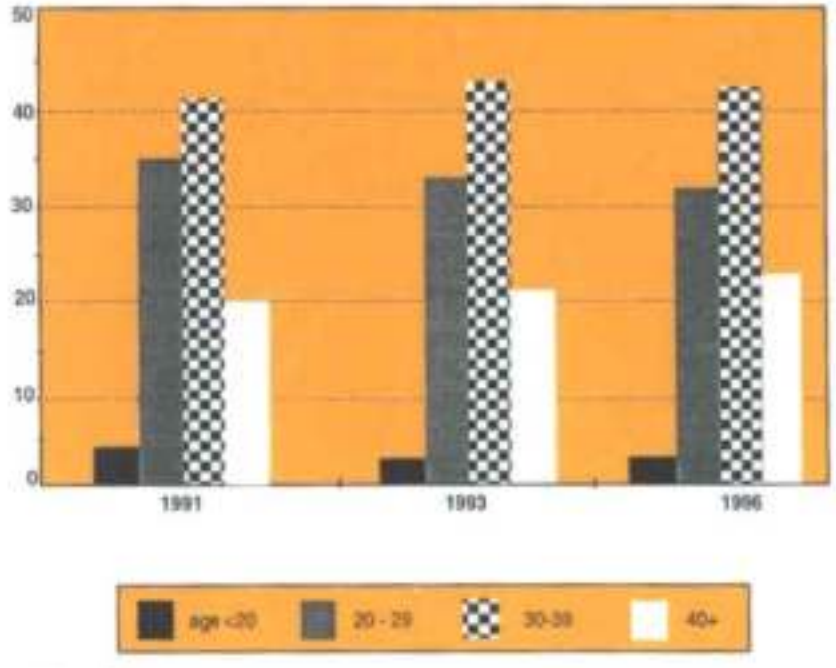
**Sole Parents**

In 1992, over 80% of births to mothers aged less than 15 were ex-nuptial, as were close to 60% of births to 15-19 year olds. At the same time as the age at marriage has risen, so has the proportion of teenage births which are ex-nuptial. Such mothers have been described as 'married to the state': that is, the state, or the taxpayer, through the Sole Parents' Pension, provides financially for the raising of these children, in place of their fathers. A similar situation has developed with the rise of no fault divorce, with the raising of children by their mothers financed as much by the Sole Parents' Pension as by the children's fathers.

Figure 1.19 shows the percentages of Sole Parent Pensions (the successor of the Supporting Parent Benefit) going to different age groups in 1991,1993 and 1996. Although the image of the Sole Parent pensioner that rouses most public resentment is that of the teenage unmarried mother, it can be seen that only a small proportion of this money can possibly go in this direction – less than 5% of sole parents are in this age group.

**1.19 Sole Parent Pensions**

age under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40+ - %




Source: Year Books

# Physical and Mental Well-being: Health and Mortality

## Death Rates by Age and Sex

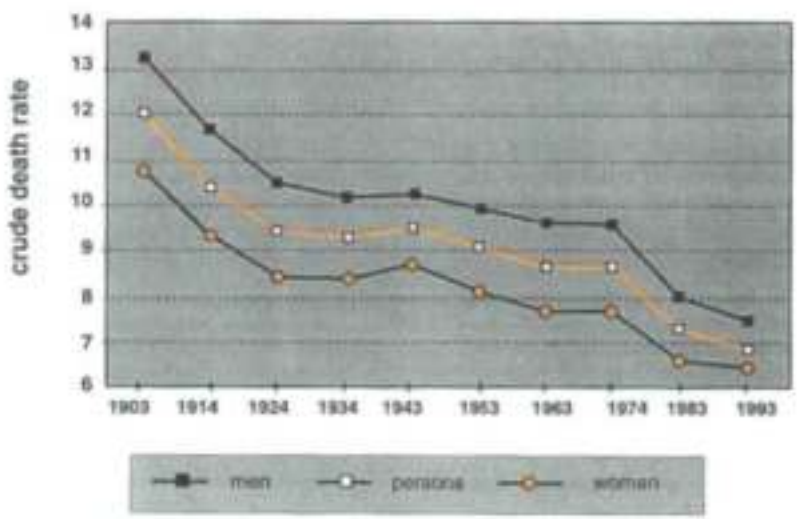
Longevity of the population is one of the most telling markers of its well-being. It is usually measured in terms of life expectancy (which we have seen in Figure 1.7) and death rates. Both are estimates pitched between what is happening now and what this is likely to mean for the future. Although they cannot, in fact, predict the future, as trends they are able to show how longevity has improved (or declined).

Figure 1.20 shows the death rate in Australia (per 1,000 population), at decade intervals from 1903 to 1993 for males and females. A higher death rate means more people dying at younger ages and a fall in the death rate generally indicates greater longevity. (It could however mask an increase in people dying young, while those that survive increase their life span.) The figure shows a fall in the death rate of both men and women from approximately 13.5 and 11 per 1,000 population, respectively, in 1903 to 7.5 and 6.5 in 1993.

The death rate can be expected to be affected by the age distribution. The higher proportion of children in the early years of the century should lower the death rate, and the higher population of old people today should raise it, so the improvement is even more impressive than these figures indicate.

**1.20 Death Rates 1903 - 1993**

annual deaths per 1,000 population

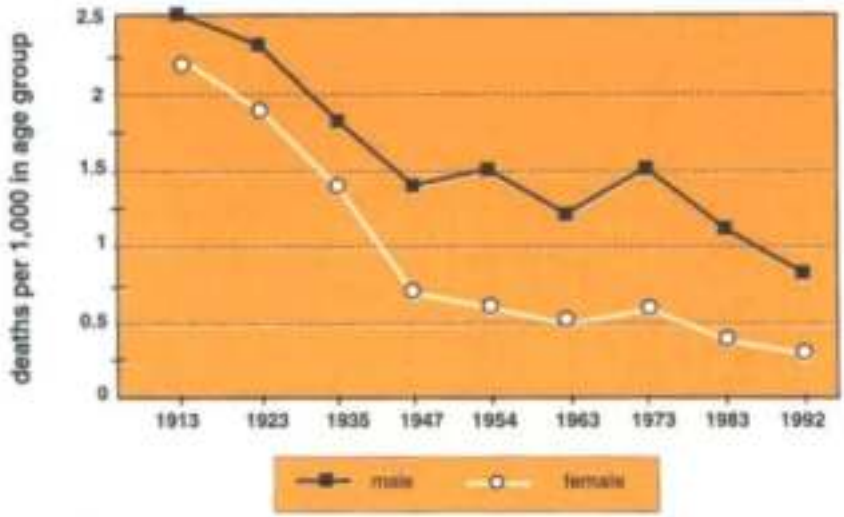



Source: Year Books

The figures for all age groups combined do not reveal some important tendencies in particular age groups. Figure 1.21 shows the death rates for males and females in the age group 15-19, a pattern which is replicated in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29. It seems that the fall in death rates of young men and women during the first half of the century has scarcely been maintained in the second, with little reflection of the steep fall of the last two decades which appears in the overall figures. The male and female death rates drew sharply apart in the late forties, and have shown only modest signs of rapprochement. This pattern contrasts with death rates in boys and girls younger than 15, which have drawn closer, to become almost identical. This contrast suggests that in some way we have been failing our young males since the middle of the century, as their mortality figures cease to make the same rate of improvement which has occurred for females, and which was a feature of the earlier period. This failure appears to occur as males emerge from the care of the family with the onset of adolescence.

**1.21 Age 15 - 19 Death Rates 1913 - 1992**

males & females



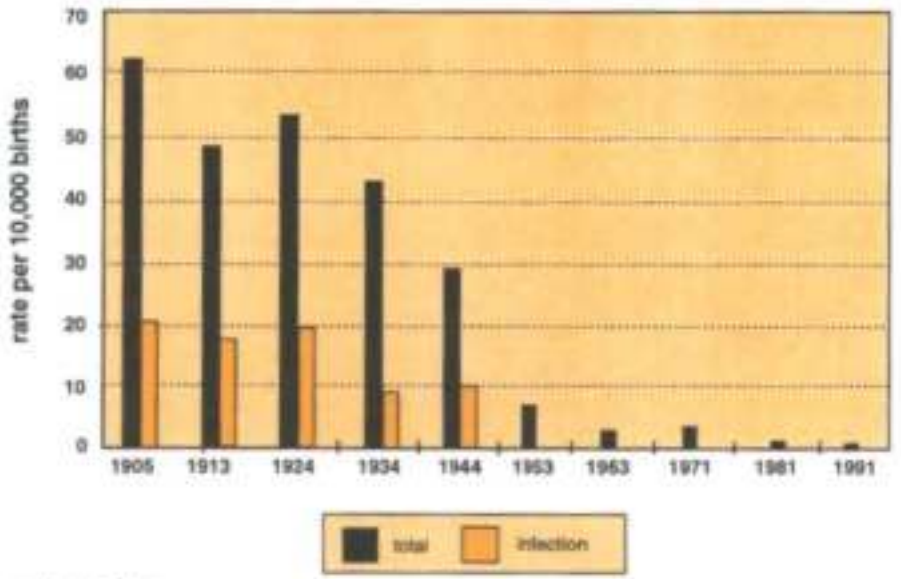

Source: Year Books

### Death in Childbirth

Maternal death in childbirth is an indication both of quality of medical care and of general levels of health of the mature population of women. Figure 1.22 shows total maternal deaths per 10,000 births from 1905 to 1991, and also a major cause of maternal death in the first half of the century, infection. The maternal death rate in 1905 was 60 per 10,000 births, or 0.6%. By 1991 it had fallen to 0.4 per 10,000, or 0.004%. Sometimes no maternal death occurs in one of the states in a whole year. Infection (puerperal septicaemia), contracted in hospital, was a major cause of death in childbirth until the 1940s. Since then, antibiotics have made this a virtually non-existent cause of maternal death.

**1.22 Death in Childbirth 1905 - 1991**

due to infection and total



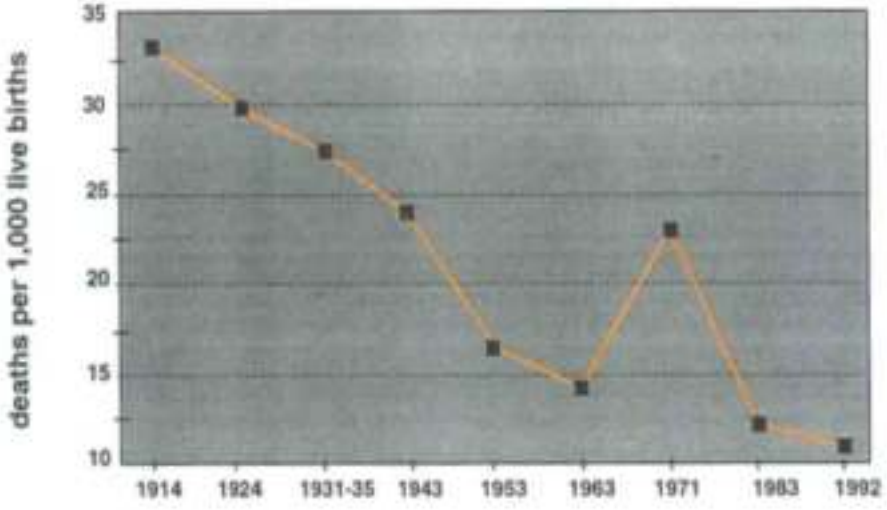

Source: Year Books

**Infant Health**

Perinatal mortality, deaths per 1,000 live births occurring around the time of birth and in the first 28 days of the baby's life, is considered to be one of the more telling indicators of population health. It is a gauge both of the health and well-being of women in their reproductive years and of their access to good medical services. Figure 1.23 shows perinatal mortality in Australia at roughly decade intervals from 1914 to 1992. Perinatal mortality includes both live births and still births above a given gestational age and/or birthweight. In 1914, there were 33 deaths per 1,000 live births; in 1992 this had fallen to just above 10. The decline is steady, apart from a steeper than average fall between 1943 and 1953, and a large rise in 1971, returning almost to the 1940s level.

**1.23 Perinatal Mortality 1914 - 1992**

deaths before one month of age

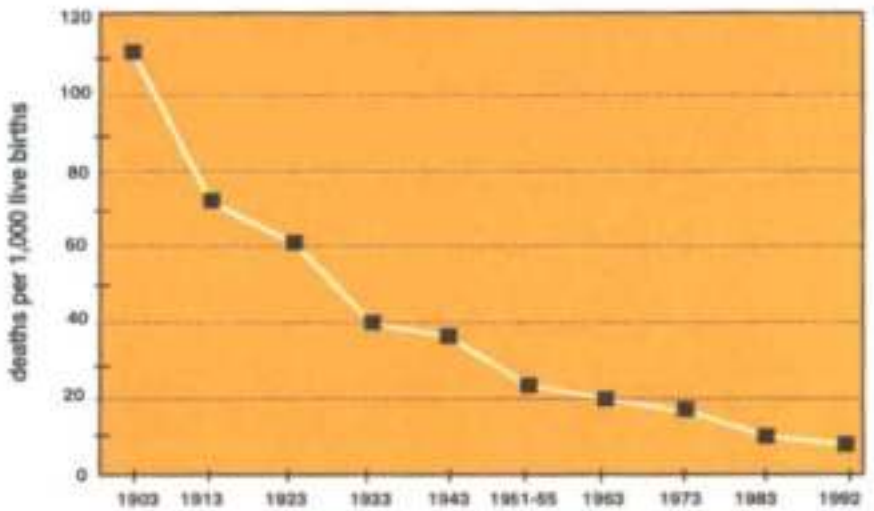



Source: Year Books

While perinatal mortality says much about the health of parturient women, infant mortality (deaths of liveborn infants under one year of age, per 1,000 live births) is indicative of the adequacy of the care babies receive, and of general levels of health in the community, particularly as regards infectious diseases, to which infants are particularly, and more fatally, prone. Infant mortality is higher than for any of the other years of childhood and young maturity. The infant mortality rate (Figure 1.24) was very high by modern standards at the turn of the century – over 10% of infants died before they reached their first birthdays. This had fallen to 4% by 1933, to 2% by 1963, and to 0.7% by 1992, with no reversals. The depression decade of the 1930s made no impression on either perinatal or infant mortality.

## 1.24 Infant Mortality 1903 - 1992

deaths under one year of age



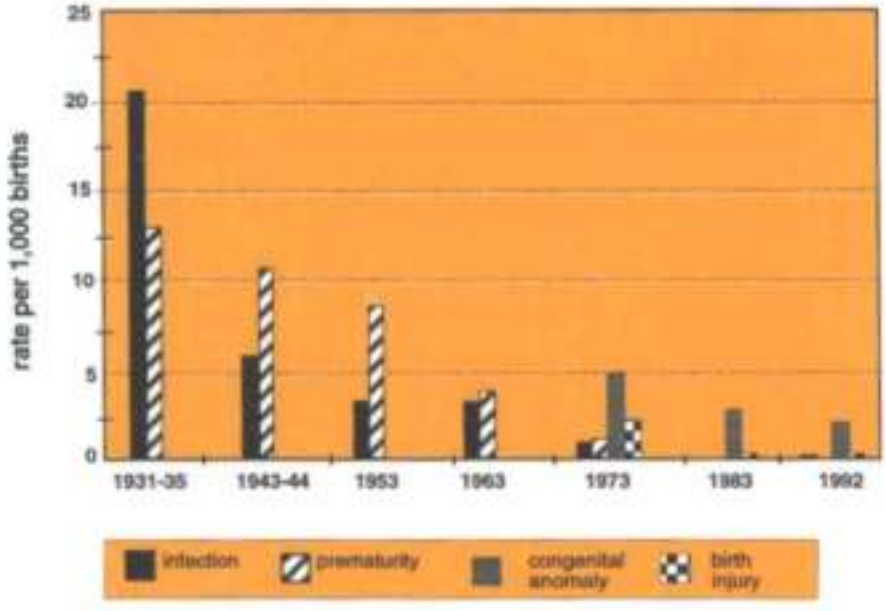

Source: Year Books

Figure 1.25 shows a selection (as available) of causes of infant death from the 1930s to the 1990s. In 1931-35 there were high rates of infant deaths from infection and prematurity, 21 and 13 per 1,000 births respectively. By 1992, deaths due to infections had fallen to a mere 0.1 per 1,000 – the result of the great triumph of western medicine (especially antibiotics) and public health over infectious diseases which occurred throughout this period. Death due to prematurity had fallen to 0.9 per 1,000 births in 1973.

A recent trend in one of the major causes of death of infants, by external causes (not shown), is a matter of concern. 'External causes' consists of accident, poisoning and violence; the rate of deaths attributed to external causes among infants under one year of age increased between 1983 and 1993 from 11 deaths per 100,000 to 16 deaths per 100,000. During that time the rates for the other major causes of death in infants (infections, cancer, heart and lung disease) remained stable or declined. The increased rate of death by external causes in infants contrasts with a reduction of 50% in the rate of death by external causes in the 1-14 age group. This highlights our increasing concern with child abuse, both as violence and neglect. The increase is large, almost 50% in a decade, and this rise must be considered due to social rather than medical factors.

**1.25 Causes of Infant Death 1931 - 1992**

infection,prematurity, defect and birth injury

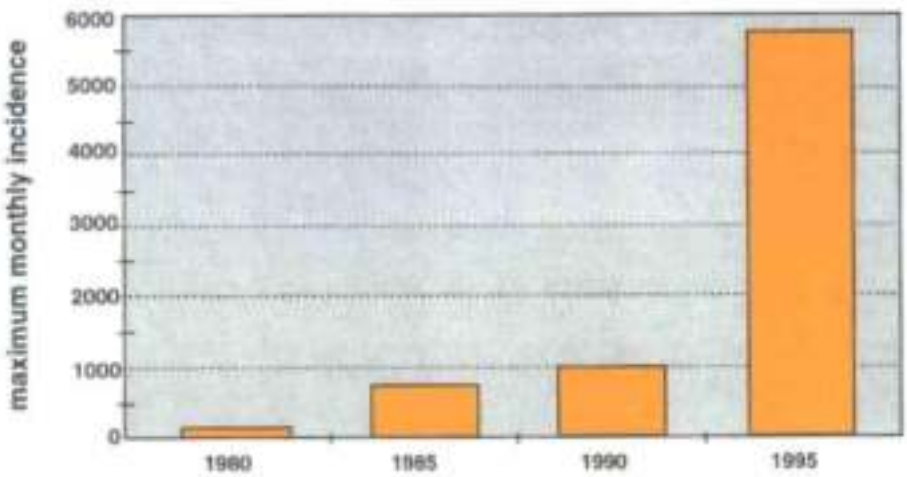



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.26 shows the impact on the incidence of whooping cough of the reduction in rates of inoculation of children, as a result of concern by parents, since the early 1980s. It can be seen that the return of this disease, once this method of control is even partially withdrawn, has been rapid and striking. Once a disease has re-established itself, infection rates can increase very rapidly and this is seen in the dramatic, almost six-fold, increase by mid-decade in the 1990s. This graph represents infection, not deaths, and occurence in the whole population, not just infants.

**1.26 Whooping Cough 1980 - 1995**

(pertussis)




Source: Communicable Diseases Intelligence

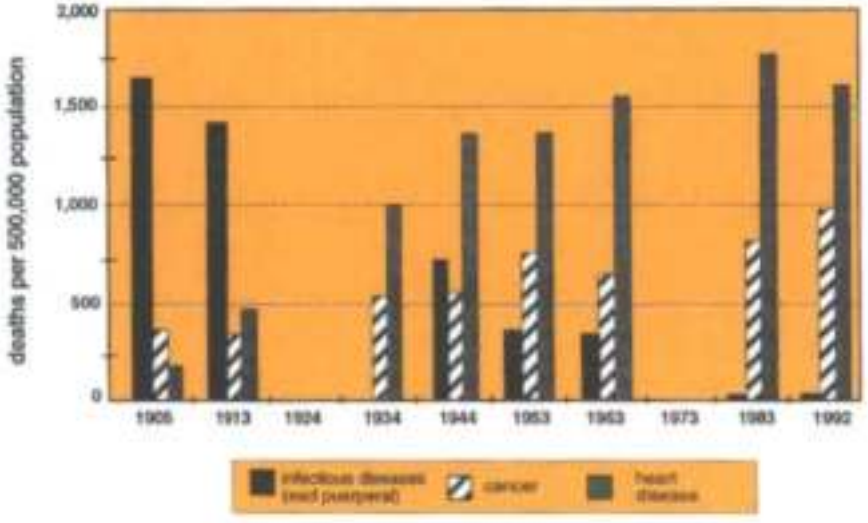
**Changing Patterns of Mortality**

Figure 1.27 shows death rates (deaths per half million population) from infectious and parasitic (such as malaria and Ross River fever) diseases, other than puerperal fever, from 1905 to 1992 at roughly decade intervals, across the period of increasing life expectancy which we have already witnessed (Figure 1.7). As deaths due to infectious disease declined in the course of the century, deaths due to cancer and heart disease rose to be the major causes of death in Australia, and death rates for these causes also are shown more or less across the century.

In 1905, there were about 1,600 deaths per half million people from infectious diseases, and about 500 from cancer and heart disease combined. In 1992, the relative frequencies are reversed, with over 2,500 deaths from cancer and heart disease combined, and about 25 of infectious diseases. In 1905 a larger proportion of deaths were occurring in the older mature (40-64) and youngest (less than 5) age groups, whereas in 1992 the large majority occurred at age 65 and over. It therefore appears that in the course of the century we have moved from a large number of lives being cut short by infectious diseases, to the majority of the population dying of what must be considered diseases of old age – heart disease and cancer. If viewed in this context, the current public health concern with increases in cancer and heart disease rates may be misplaced or to some extent misfocused.

**1.27 Causes of Death 1905 - 1992**

infection, cancer, heart disease



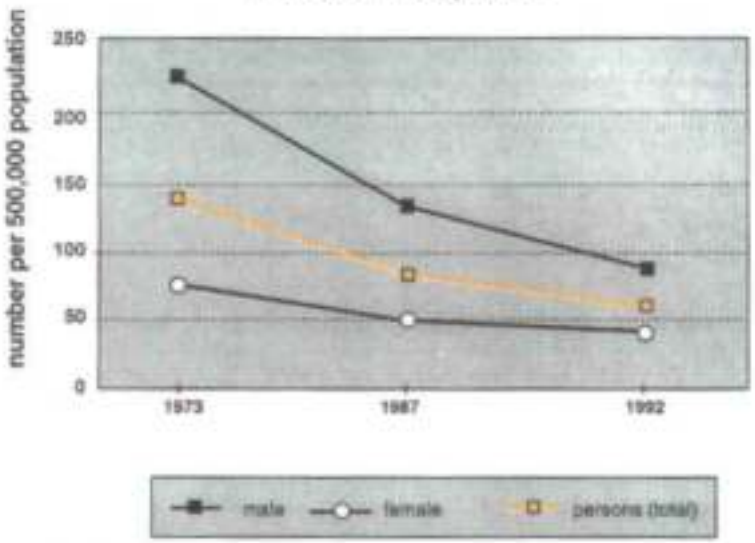

Source: Year Books

### Violent Deaths (External Causes)

Figure 1.28 shows death rates due to motor vehicle accident in the last three decades. As figures are not available for previous decades, we cannot tell whether this factor accounts for the rise in young male deaths in the 1970s (Figure1.21). The decline in motor vehicle deaths, despite a rise in ownership and usage, is a triumph of interventionary regulation, especially the introduction of seat belts and random-breath testing for driving under the influence of alcohol. The sex factor, with higher male death rates, is pronounced, although it is not sufficient to account for the differences we have observed in the death rates of young males and females which emerged in the second half of the century. The 1990s rate is about two thirds that of other deaths by external causes (excluding suicide).

**1.28 Motor Vehicle Deaths 1973 - 1992**

males, females, persons

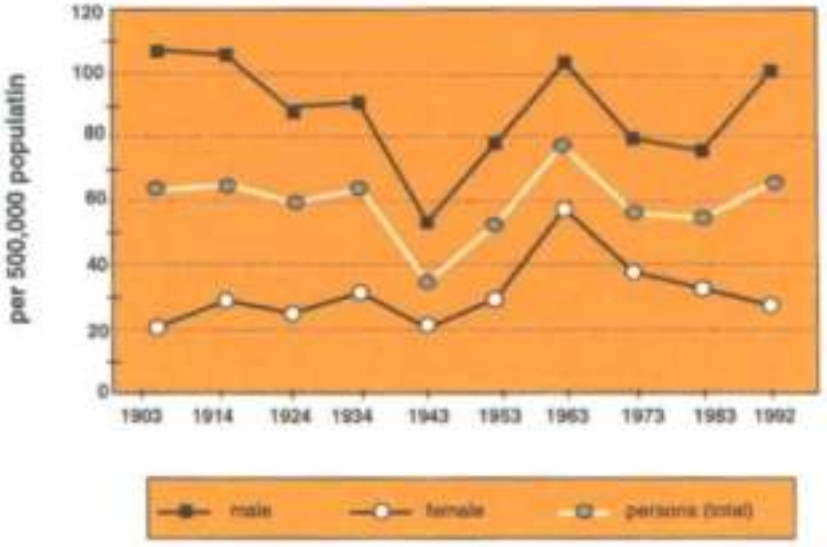



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.29 shows population suicide rates and for males and females from 1903 to 1992. These have not shown the decrease evident in deaths that are responsive to medical and regulatory intervention and are, if anything, worse at the end of the century than at the beginning. The rates for males have been higher than the rates for females throughout the century despite the decrease in the male rates to mid-century, with a marked decline in 1943 which may be attributed to the occupation of male energies in World War II. The large rise in the 1960s can be linked to the ready availability of barbiturates, which was corrected within the decade. From mid-century the rates for males and females have shown similar trajectories until recently when the rate for males turned sharply upwards. Male rates are almost as high as at the beginning of the century, and female rates higher, despite the increased medical ability to reclaim lives.

**1.29 Suicide Rates 1903 - 1992**

male, female and total




Source: Year Books

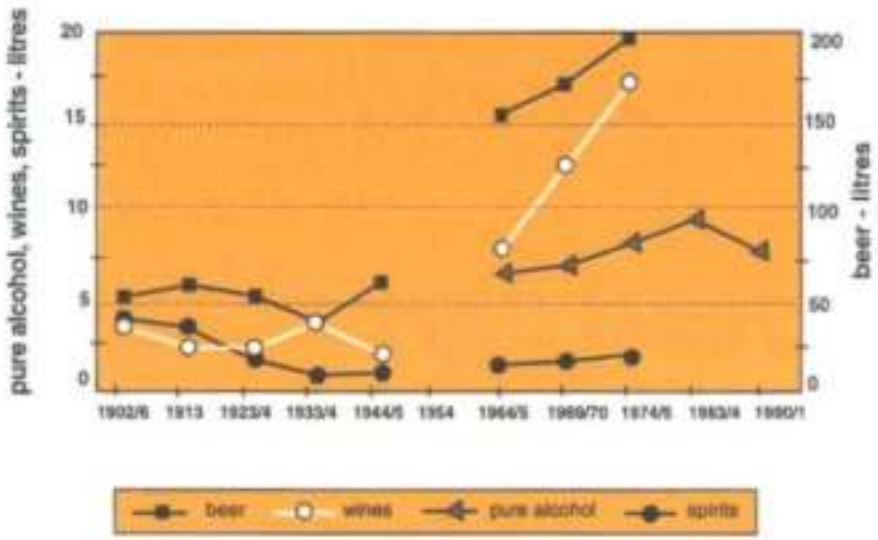
**Drugs**

Two drugs, used for personal and social rather than medical reasons, are legal in Australia, but are regarded with sufficient circumspection to be subject to age-use controls. These are alcohol and tobacco. In the early years of the century, alcohol-use was the target of considerable efforts in public education and of legal restrictions. In the latter years of the century, tobacco has replaced it as the prime target of public health education and legal restrictions.

Figure 1.30 presents a variety of figures of alcohol use across the century. Despite the recent interest in tobacco, there are no comparable figures for its use, apart from a short series from 1964 to 1974, showing no change in population intake.

**1.30 Alcohol 1902 - 1991**

consumption per person aged over 15

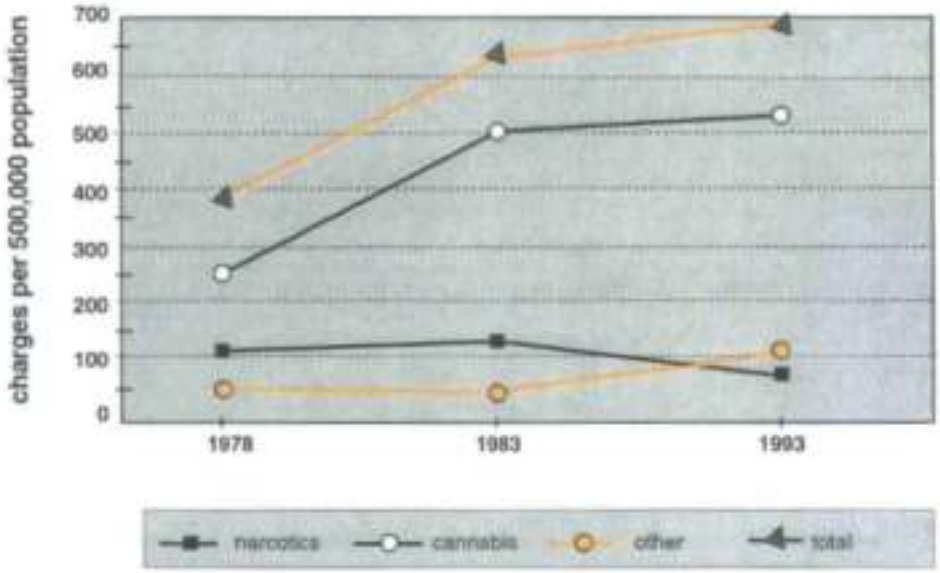



Source: Year Books

Given the current concern with illicit drugs, and the money devoted to research and the Drug Offensive, the absence of consistently maintained statistics is remarkable. Figure 1.31, using NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data for 1978, 1983 and 1993, gives an indication of comparative usage of the various types of illicit drugs. The rates of charges in relation to cannabis, narcotics (e.g. heroin) and all other illicit drugs are shown separately. It can be seen that cannabis charges rose considerably in the half-decade from 1978 to 1983 but only slowly in the decade to 1993. Charges for narcotics actually fell between 1983 and 1993, while charges for all other drugs, which had remained steady, more than doubled. Charges for cannabis far outnumbered those for all other drugs from 1983.

**1.31 Drug Charges - NSW 1978 - 1993**

narcotics, cannabis, other and total




Source: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Annual Reports

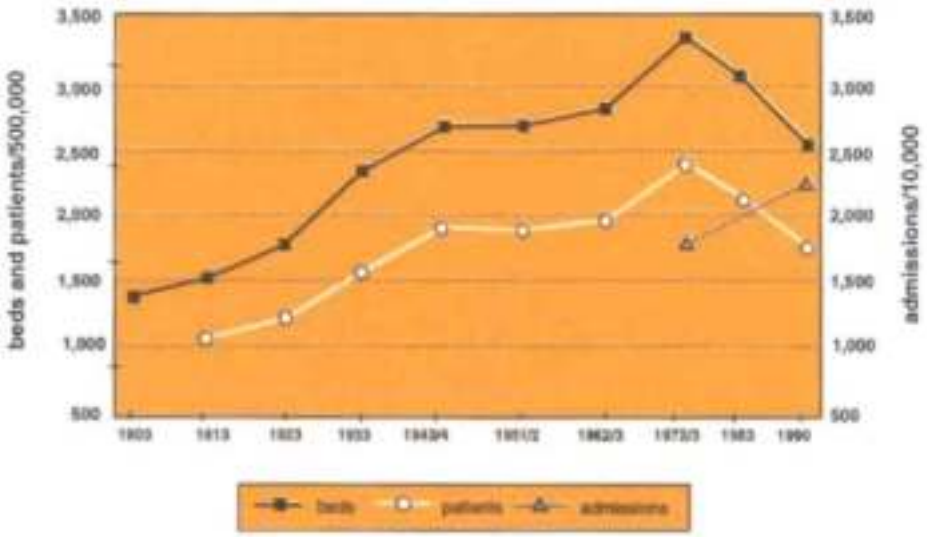
### Institutional Health Care

Public criticism of the efforts of the State in health care is largely associated with the functioning of its major health care institutions, the hospitals. Figure 1.32 shows the supply of hospital beds and the beds occupied by patients from the turn of the century to the 1990s. There are four phases in the series: first a period of steady expansion up to the 1940s, then a period of stability followed by another phase of expansion, then finally a decline.

During the 1970s the capital and running costs of hospitals increased dramatically (far beyond the CPI) and this pressure forced the levelling off and ultimately the reduction in the supply of beds while population growth continued. To cope with a reduced ratio of beds to population hospitals have a higher throughput of patients, as can be seen in higher numbers of admissions despite fewer beds being available.

**1.32 Public Hospitals 1903 - 1984**

beds and patients




Source: Year Books; Annual Reports from the Commonwealth Department of Health; *A Report on Hospitals in Australia*, AGPS 1974; *Hospital Utilisation and Costs Study*, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1993.

# Earning a Living

## Employment

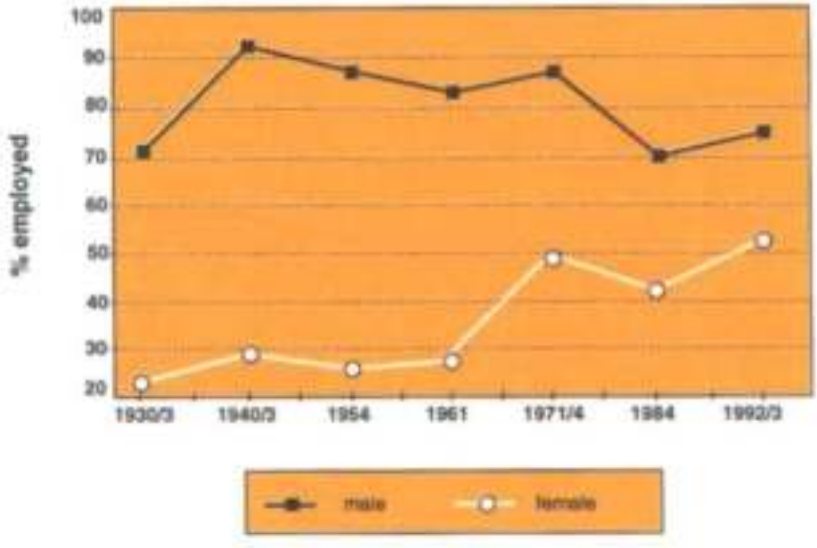
Figure 1.33 shows the percentage of the population of males and females aged 15 and over in paid employment at roughly decade intervals from the early 1930s to the early 1990s (including both full-time and part-time employment). Until the 1960s, the majority of children left school and sought work at 14 or 15, whereas today the majority remain in education until 17 or 18. This will affect the employment figures, as will the percentage of the population aged 15-19 and over 65.

The percentage of employed males aged 15 and over has fluctuated between 70% and 92% since the 1930s, being at its lowest in the recessions of the 1930s and the early 1980s. In the decades renowned for 'full' employment it was between 80% and 90%.

Female employment has also fluctuated, with a marked change between the early 1960s and the early 1970s when it permanently more or less doubled. From 1930/33 to 1961 it fluctuated between 20% and 30%; since the 1970s, it has fluctuated between 40% and 52%. Before the war, most women employees were employed full-time, and they were predominantly young women working before marriage. Today,

**1.33 Employment 1930 - 1993**

males and females aged 15+




Source: Year Books

the major part of women's employment is part-time, and the majority of employed women are older women, working after marriage and children.

The combined figures reveal a fluctuation between 55% and 68% (little more than 10% variation) of the population aged 15 and over in paid employment from the 1940s onwards, with no great difference in fluctuations between the earlier and later periods. Lower rates of employment (in the 50-60% range) occurred in the 1950s and 1960s under conditions of very low unemployment, whereas in the latter period only the extremely high unemployment rates of the early 1980s recession produced a 50% figure.

Figure 1.34 shows unemployment figures from 1907 to 1993. These figures do not represent all the people who are not in paid employment, being based on the number of people who are registered as unemployed according to the criteria at the time. The figures fall into four periods of relative stability: a moderate level of unemployment, of 5% to 7%, between 1907 and 1923; very high unemployment, 25%, in 1933; very low rates of unemployment, between 1% and 3%, from 1943 to 1973; and a return to moderate levels of unemployment, 7% to 10%, somewhat above those at the beginning of the century, in 1983 and 1993, a pattern which has not yet changed. These comments should be read in conjunction with the more detailed figures in Section 3.

**1.34 Unemployment 1907 - 1993**

males and females

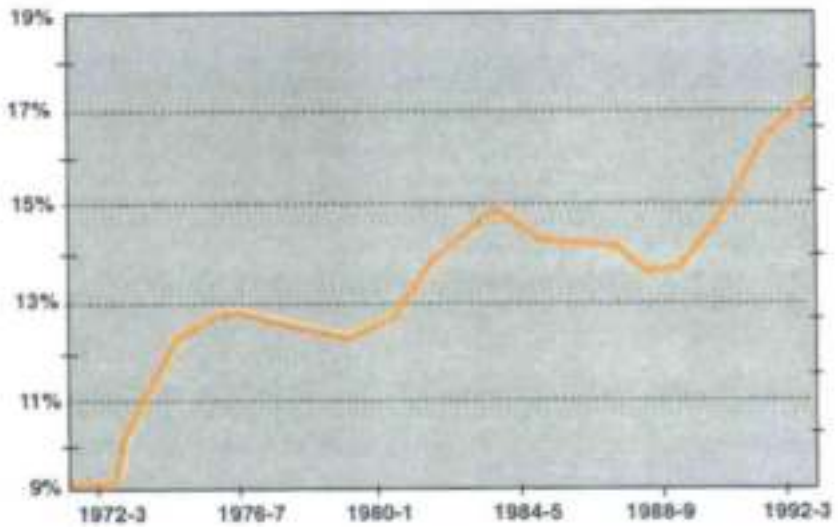

Source: Year Books

**Personal Benefits and Welfare**

Figure 1.35 shows that in the two decades from 1972, personal benefits and welfare have doubled as a proportion of average household disposable income, from 9% to almost 18%.

**1.35 Personal Benefit Payments**

as a per cent of household disposable income



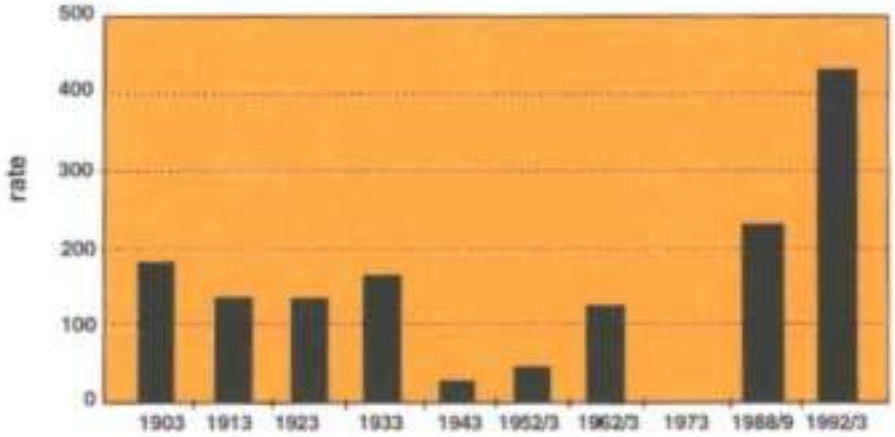

Source: *Business Council Bulletin* May 1995

## Bankruptcy

Figure 1.36 shows bankruptcy rates in Australia from 1903 to 1992/3. Bankruptcies occurred at rates of approximately 130 to 180 per half million population from 1903 to 1933 (taking in the period of the Great Depression), then fell to very low levels, below 50 per half million, in 1943 and 1952/3, rising again in 1962/3 to approach the earlier levels. By 1988/9, they had risen to 225 per half million, and four years later almost doubled to 424 per half million, almost three times the levels of the first half of the century.

**1.36 Bankruptcies 1901 - 1991**

rate per 500,000 population




Source: Year Books

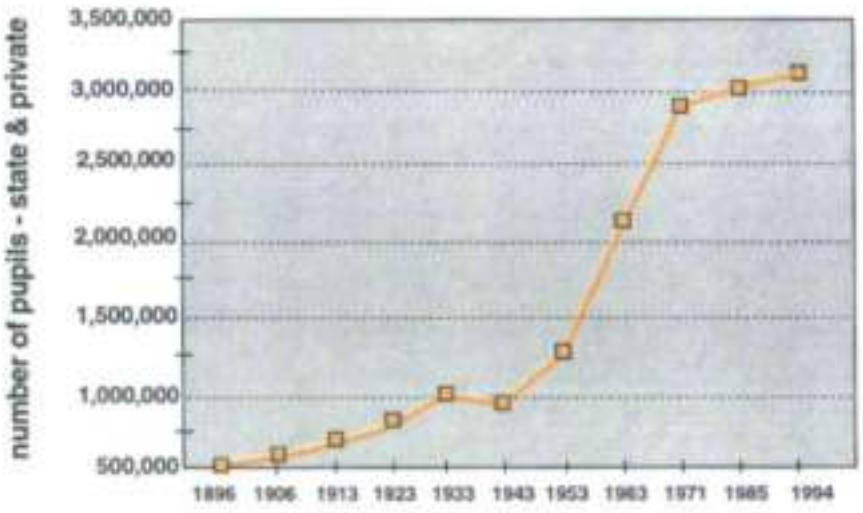
# Education

School education was a States' affair until the Commonwealth began to exert pressure via funding in the on-going expansion of the Commonwealth role in social matters, a development which began to escalate in the 1970s. This process has been most apparent in pre- and post-school education.

## School Education

Universal free primary education (originally reaching into the early teenage years) was established in the Australian states in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Figure 1.37 shows the number of pupils in all Australian schools (primary and secondary, state and private) from 1896 to 1994. The very steep increase in pupil numbers from 1943 to 1973 is the result of a steep rise in the proportion of children in the population coinciding with an extension of compulsory education. Under the new system, primary schooling ended before the teenage years, while secondary education was extended to the mid-teens and became compulsory. The levelling in pupil numbers in the last two decades parallels the school-age population, with the upturn in the last decade due primarily to increased retention in the final years of secondary school.

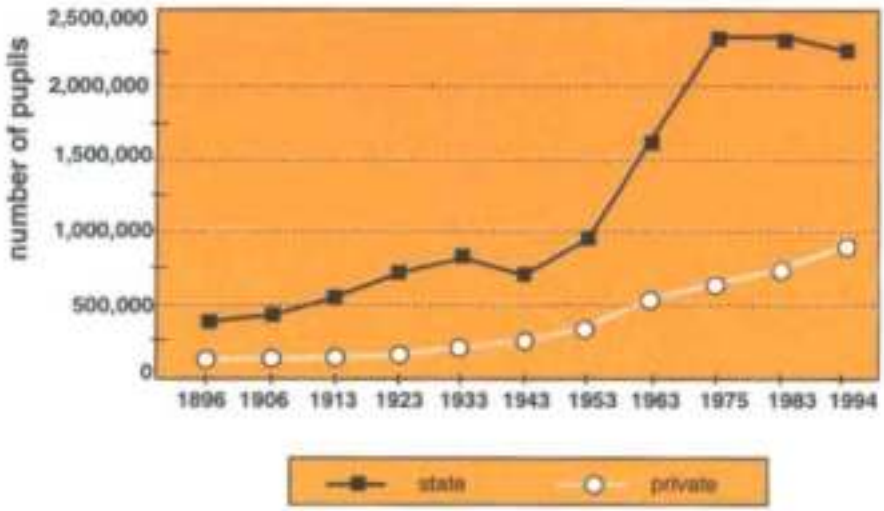
### 1.37 Total School Pupils 1896 - 1994




Source: Year Books

Figure 1.38 shows the number of pupils in state and private schools. Private schools have shown a slow rise in pupil numbers, steepening with the baby boom decades of the 1950s and 1960s, and persisting in the decades of stagnation. State schools took up most of the rise due to the baby boom, plus the early phase of increased retention (1950s to the 1970s). Since the mid-1970s pupil numbers in state schools have fallen despite a second stage of increased retention in the 1990s.

**1.38 State and Private School Pupils 1896 - 1994**

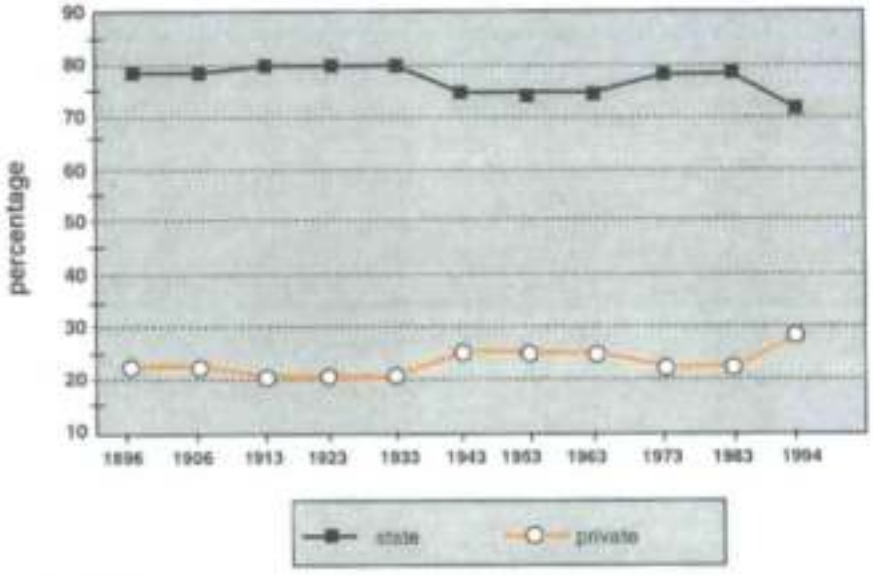



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.39 shows the percentage of pupils in state and private schools across the century. Despite the apparent drawing apart of numbers of state and private school pupils as the century unrolled, the percentage of pupils in private schools remained between 20% and 25% for almost the whole period, until it finally rose to 29% in the 1990s.

**1.39 State and Private School Pupils 1896 - 1994**

% in state & private schools



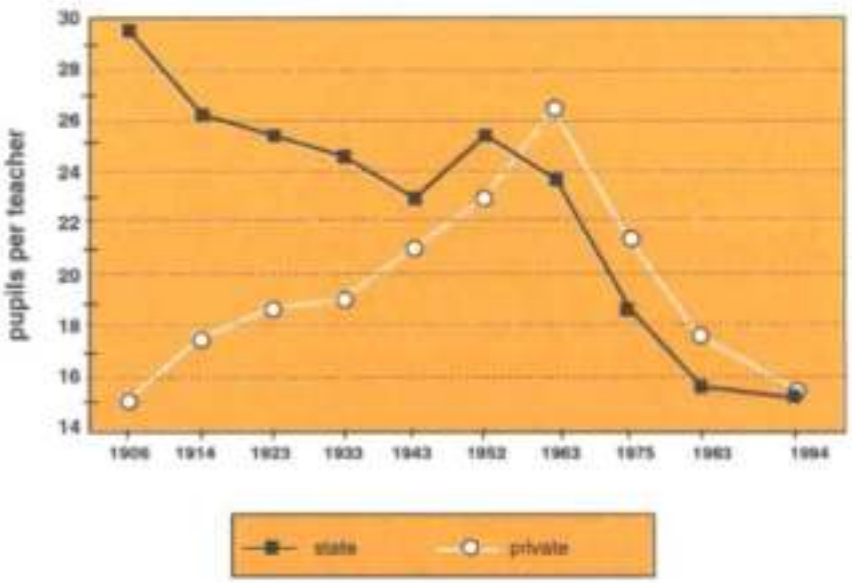

Source: Year Books

Figure 1.40 shows the number of pupils per teacher in the state and private schools from 1906 to 1994.

The progress of teacher:pupil ratios has been very different for private as compared with state schools. In 1906, state schools typically had twice as many pupils per teacher as private schools (30 compared with 15). While state schools' teacher:pupil ratios fell markedly in the first half of the century, private schools' teacher:pupil ratios rose equally markedly. By 1943 the two ratios were almost equal (23 pupils per teacher for state schools, 21 for private schools). By 1963, state schools had fewer pupils per staff member than did private schools, and they maintained their advantage as ratios fell in both sectors, until the two converged at 15 pupils per teacher in 1994. Thus the movement to private education in the 1990s cannot be attributed to advantages in teacher:pupil ratios in private schools.

**1.40 Pupils per Teacher 1906 - 1994**

state and private




Source: Year Books

### Educational Outcomes

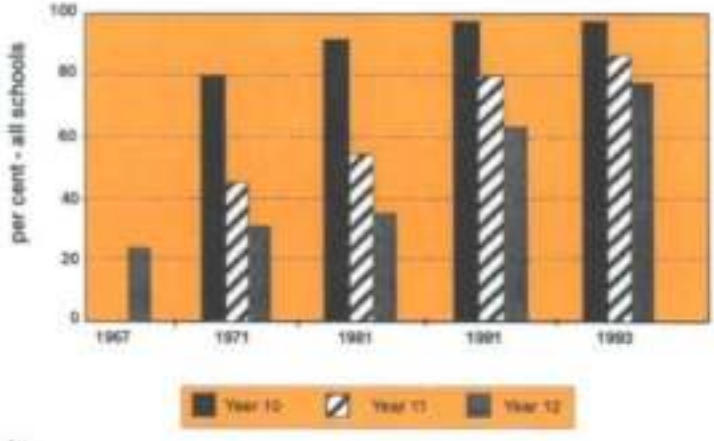
Pupil attainment, or the outcomes of education, is not treated in the *Year Books*, and is virtually undocumented in official reports of the last decade. Although the 1989 *National Report on Schooling in Australia* of the Australian Education Council has entries under this heading for most states, with the exceptions of New South Wales and Queensland they merely report what will be undertaken in the way of assessment, or development projects on assessment, with no actual data on attainment. In New South Wales and Queensland, this information relates only to primary schooling. New South Wales briefly reported on its basic skills testing program, showing the percentages of pupils scoring at the various levels of performance. Cultural knowledge, of the type which literacy and numeracy are merely tools to serve, was not tested. Queensland reported the implementation of a variety of assessment procedures but the only outcomes reported were 'the need to strengthen students' spelling and proof-reading skills' (i.e. basic literacy), and that 'the highest mean scores were obtained for *collecting data* and the lowest for *generating knowledge*' (which seems to suggest that the children were able to copy but not to think). By 1991, even this had disappeared.

### Retention Rates

Figure 1.41 shows retention rates to Years 10, 11 and 12 in Australian schools between the years 1971 and 1993, and also the retention rate to Year 12 in 1967. Retention to Year 10 has shown least increase, because it was already close to ceiling at the beginning of the period. Eighty-one percent of pupils stayed at school to Year 10 (approximately one year beyond the compulsory school age) in 1971, and this had risen to 98% in 1993 – making schooling to Year 10 virtually universal.

**1.41 Retention Rates 1967 - 1993**

Year 10, Year 11, Year 12



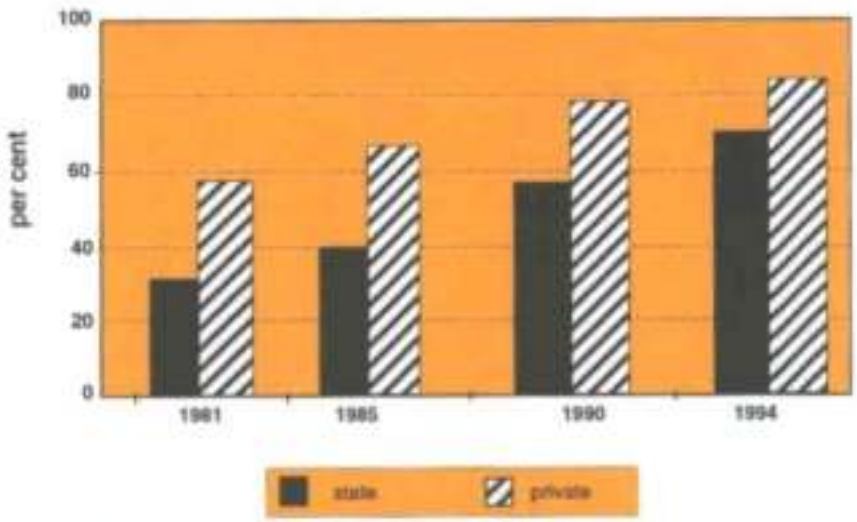

Source: Year Books

Retention to Year 12, by comparison, was low in 1967 (only 24%) and was still only 35% in 1981. Retention to Year 12 had almost doubled from its 1981 level by 1991 (64%) and had more than doubled a mere two years later, reaching 77%. Thus retention to Year 12 was almost as high in 1993 as retention to Year 10 in 1971.

Figure 1.42 shows Year 12 retention rates for state and private schools from 1981 to 1994, including the period of massive growth in Year 12 retention rates. In 1981, the retention rate in private schools was 57%, double that for state schools (28%). By 1994, the private school Year 12 retention rate had risen to 83% (up 26 percentage points) while that for state schools had risen to 71% (up 43 percentage points). Retention rates were influenced by high youth unemployment and the payment of Austudy benefits to low income families on behalf of children remaining in school.

## 1.42 Year 12 Retention Rates 1981 - 1994

state and private




Source: Year Books

### Out-of-home Childcare

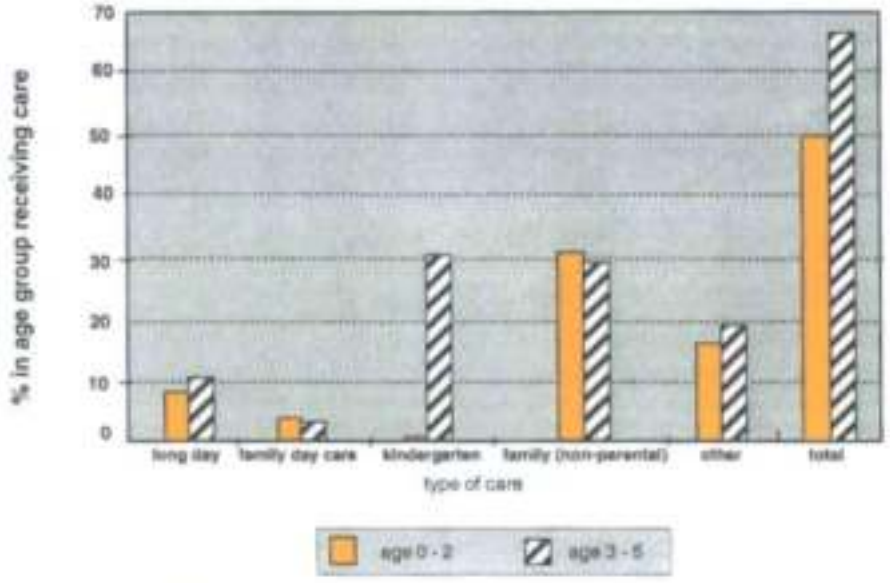
'Childcare' nowdays is a term usually applied to the arrangements made for children whose mothers are in the paid workforce. As such the rapid growth of childcare in recent years has paralleled the rising workforce participation of mothers. In 1994, about 60 per cent of couple families with dependent children had both parents in the workforce. Current childcare trends are therefore to be distinguished from the kindergarten movement which began in the early years of this century. Kindergartens were a community welfare initiative to provide free training on middle-class lines for the children of the poor in order to improve their social well-being and competence, especially for the pre-school years between the ages of three and five.

Contemporary childcare has grown massively with the assistance of extensive federal and state government subsidies, with the explicit intention of making it easier for mothers to join the workforce. Commonwealth government childcare expenditure alone has grown from $375 million in 1991-92 to an estimated $1166 million for 1997-98 (Commonwealth Budget Statements), and it is estimated that current overall expenditure on childcare is about $2.4 billion.

Figure 1.43 shows types of childcare by age of child in 1993.

**1.43 Childcare 1993**

non-parental care of preschoolers

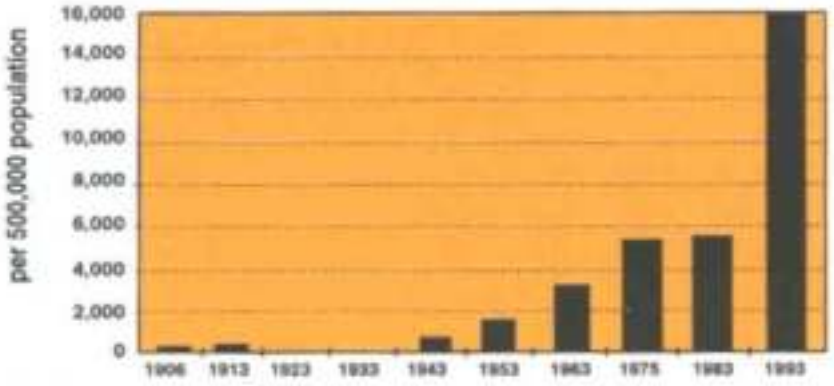



Source: National Childcare Survey

**University Education**

Figure 1.44 shows the number of students in universities in Australia per half million population from 1906 to 1993 (with the 1920s and 1930s missing). From 324 in the first decade of the century, the rate had risen to 1,600 at mid-century; it doubled and then more than tripled to pass 5,000 in the early 1970s. After steadying to the 1980s, the rate tripled again to pass 15,000 in the early 1990s as the Colleges of Advanced Education achieved university status.

## 1.44 University Education Rate 1906 - 1993

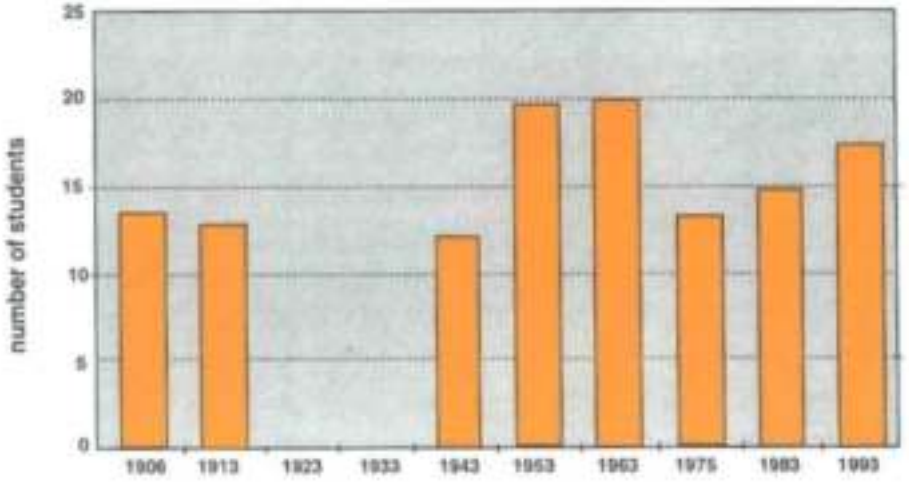



Source: Year Books

Figure 1.45 shows student:academic staff ratios over the same period. In 1906 there were 13.7 students per academic staff member and this had not greatly changed in 1943. With increasing student numbers in the 1950s and 1960s, lecturing staff did not keep pace, and the ratio rose to 20:1. In the period to the 1970s, there was a large injection of new academic staff, bringing ratios back to roughly first half of the century levels, and this persisted to the early 1980s, but with the larger rise in student numbers in the late 1980s and early 1990s, academic staff numbers again did not keep pace, and ratios rose again towards those of the 1950s and 1960s, with 17.6 students per lecturer in 1993.

**1.45 Students per Lecturer 1906 - 1993**

universities




Source: Year Books

# Crime and Punishment

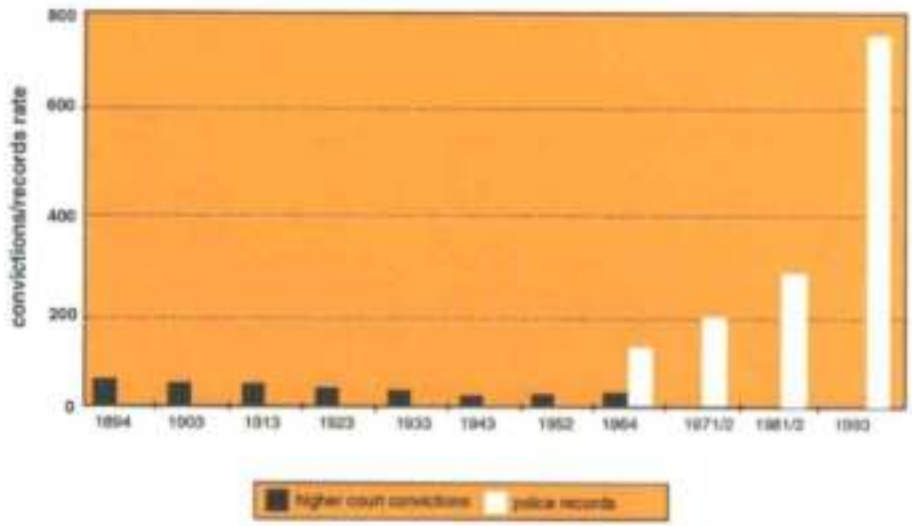
## Criminal Offences

The *Year Books*, up until the 1960s, presented crime data as charges and convictions. In 1966, crimes recorded by police were added to the statistics, and within a decade the record of charges and convictions ceased. Therefore, in order to create meaningful series of crime rates for the century, it was necessary to convert crimes recorded by police into estimates of conviction rates, based on ratios derived from the period in which both statistics were reported. Details of this procedure are provided in the CIS publication, *Rising Crime in Australia* (1997). In the figures from Figure 1.47, data up till the 1960s represent actual conviction rates, while those from the 1970s to the 1990s are *estimated* conviction rates, derived from statistics of crimes recorded by police. The changes in rates are so dramatic that it is virtually impossible that trends are misrepresented to any substantial degree.

It must be emphasised that the post-1960s *trends* are not affected by the conversion, as the set of unconverted figures for violent crime of Figure 1.46 show, when compared with the converted data from Figure 1.48.

**1.46 Violent Crime 1894 - 1993**

rate per 500,000 population




Source: Year Books

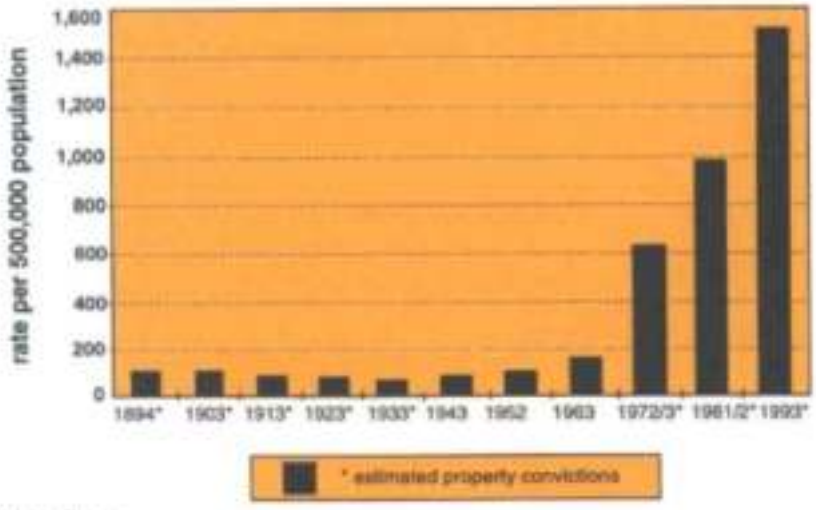
**Crimes against Property**

Figure 1.47 shows conviction rates in the higher courts for crimes against property over a century, taken at decade intervals from 1894 to 1993. The significance should be viewed not so much in terms of absolute rates (which are only about a tenth of crimes reported for most of the second half of the century) as in terms of the dramatic trend of increase in the last three decades, beginning in the1970s. Crime against property, primarily the various forms of theft, in the 1990s is possibly 15 times higher (an increase of 1,500%) compared with its lowest level this century in the 1930s (the height of the Great Depression!) and the 1940s (the middle of the Second World War). Each of the last three decades has seen rate *rises* of two to three times what was the *total* property crime rate in the years 1894 to 1963.

Motor vehicle theft in 1973 represented 27.1% of property crime, and in 1993, 22.3%. Thus it cannot be held individually accountable for the rise in property crime over these decades. The rise in motor vehicle theft was rather less than that for all property crime.

**1.47 Crimes Against Property 1894 - 1993**

convictions in higher courts




Source: Year Books

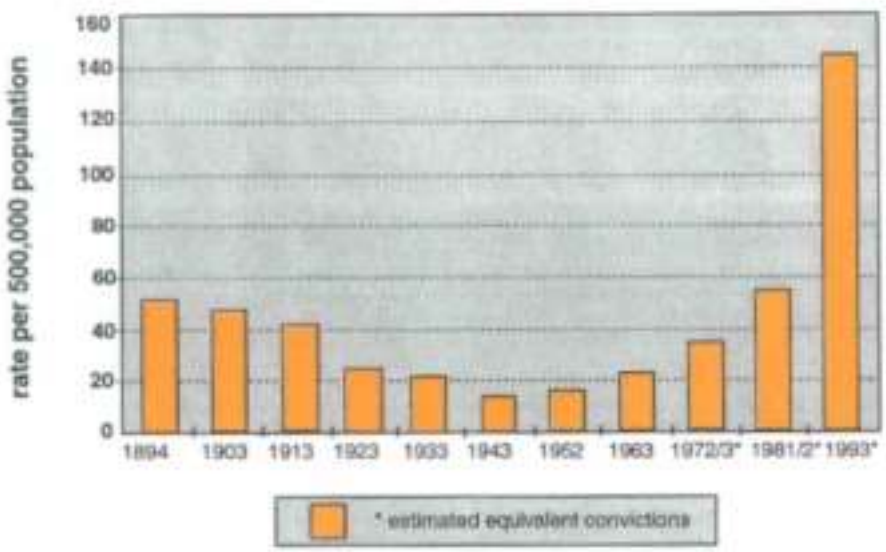
**All Violent Crimes**

Figure 1.48 shows conviction, and estimated conviction, rates in the higher courts for violent crimes (against the person) over a century, taken at decade intervals from 1894 to 1993. These figures report the combined conviction rates for homicide (including murder and attempted murder), rape, assault and abduction (but excluding sexual assault because of uncontrolled changes in its definition in recent years). In contrast with crimes against property, it can be seen that the massive escalation of crimes of violence occurred only in the last decade, from 1981/2 to 1993, attesting to the accuracy of public perceptions of the growth in, and people's growing fear of, personal violence. Crimes of violence decreased steadily during the first half of the century, reaching their lowest point in 1943, the middle of the Second World War, partly explainable as due to the removal of large numbers of young men from civilian life. But they remained lower in the 1950s and 1960s than in any decade of the century prior to the 1930s, and only finally rose above the 1894 level in 1981/2. Looking only at the police record period, violent crime increased by 700% between 1963 and 1993, and more than doubled between 1981/2 and 1993.

The incidence of crimes of violence is, nevertheless, much lower than that of crimes against property. It was about half at the beginning of the century, and was about one tenth in the early 1990s. It appears that respect for property has fallen far more than has respect for people.

**1.48 Violent Crime 1894 - 1993**

convictions in higher courts




Source: Year Books

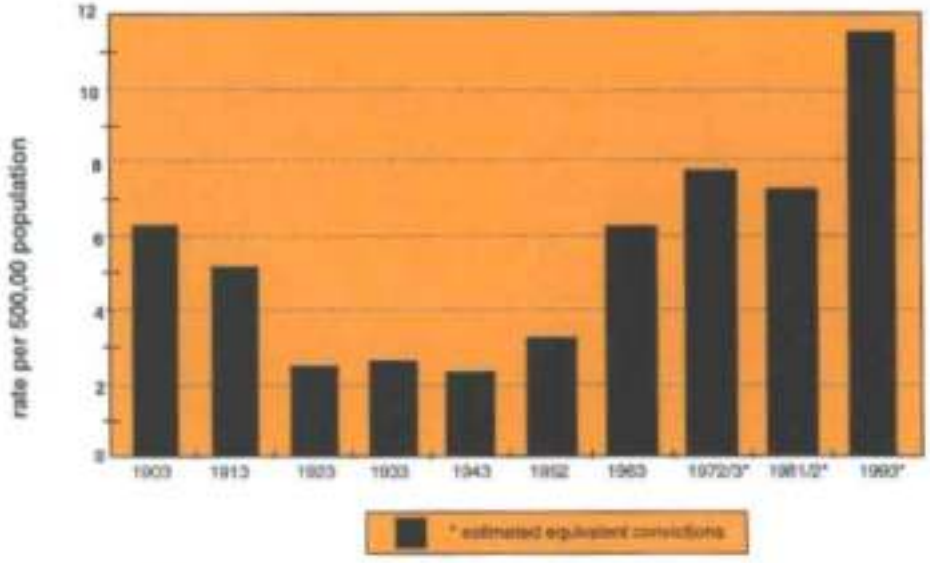
**Homicide**

Figure 1.49 shows homicide conviction rates from 1903 to 1993. Homicide includes murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, and causing death by driving. It can be seen that the homicide rate fell by half to the middle years of the century, reaching an all-time low in the Second World War, again due probably to the occupation of large numbers of young men elsewhere. By 1963 it had returned to turn of the century levels, then rose by a quarter in the following decade, fell slightly in the early eighties, but showed another large rise in the nineties.

It might be assumed that death caused by driving made a significant contribution to this increase, in contrast with the situation before the sixties when there were low levels of car ownership. Against this explanation, in 1993, crimes recorded by police show this category of homicide at about a sixth of murder and attempted murder, so the major part of the rise in the nineties cannot be attributed to this somewhat less culpable origin.

**1.49 Homicide 1903 -1993**

convictions in higher courts



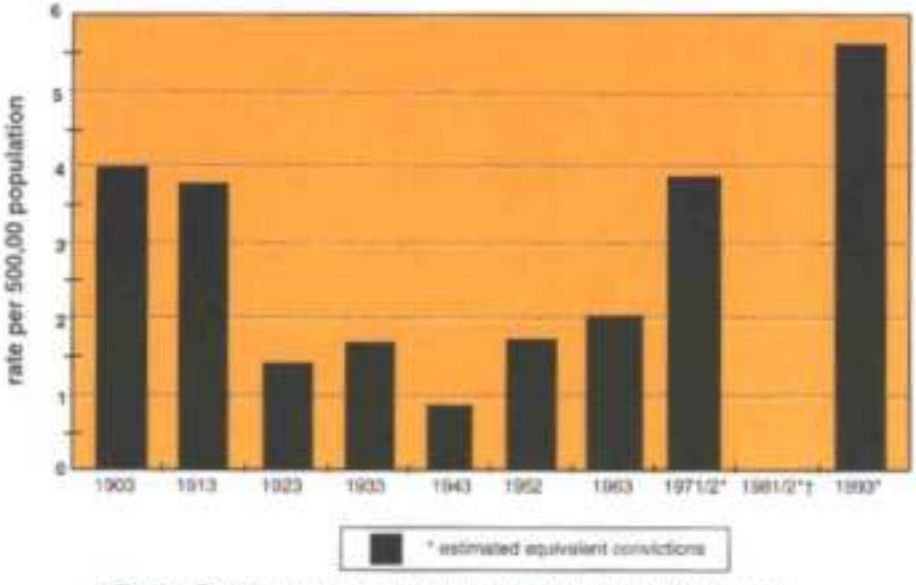

Source: Year Books

**Murder**

Figure 1.50 shows murder plus attempted murder conviction rates from 1903 to 1993. The graph shows murder rates as comparatively high in the first two decades of the century, with a more than halving in the middle decades and a rise again in 1963, although still only to half the level at the beginning of the century. However this figure almost doubled to approach the 1903 level in 1971/2. Murder was not distinguished from homicide in the figures for 1981/2, but the 1993 figure, which is more than a third higher than the rate at the turn of the century, suggests a continuing rise from the middle of the century, escalating in the last three decades.

**1.50 Murder and Attempted Murder 1903 -1993**

convictions in higher courts



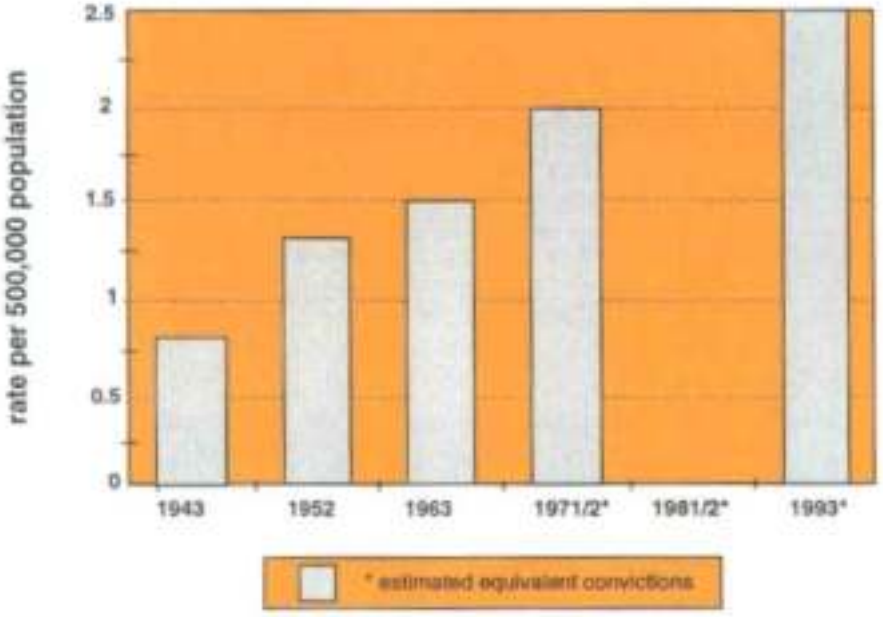

† The Year Book does not distinguish between homicide and murder for this period.

Source: Year Books

Only a limited set of statistics for murder separated from attempted murder is available and is presented in Figure 1.51. Although the rise is not quite so extreme, the murder rate in 1993 is nevertheless nearly double that in 1952.

**1.51 Murder 1943 -1993**

convictions in higher courts




Source: Year Books

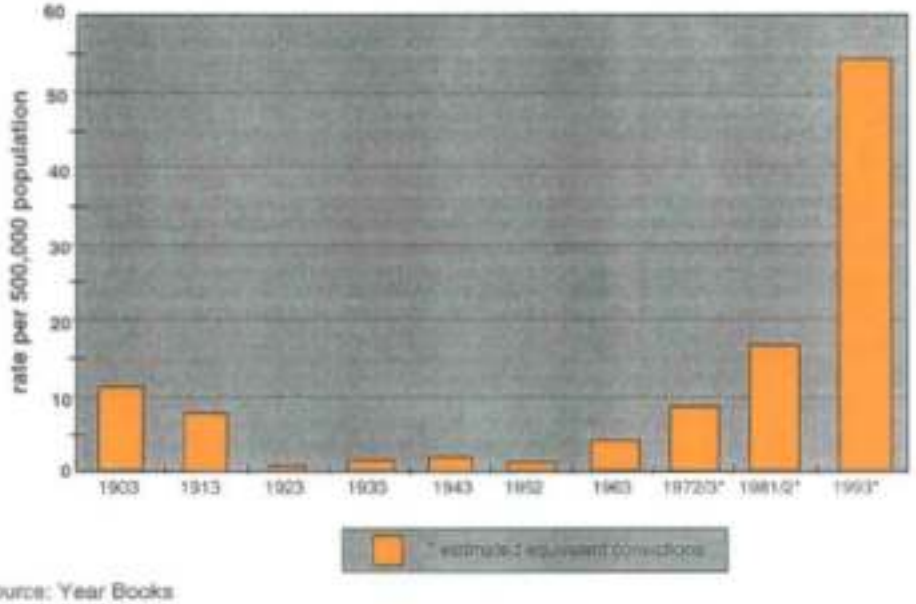
**Rape**

Rape (including attempted rape) rates, also, show the now familiar U-shaped curve, with a fall in the middle decades of the century (Figure 1.52). Rape fell precipitously to extraordinarily low levels in the 1920s (with only nine convictions for rape and attempted rape in the whole of Australia in 1923), and remained almost non-existent to the 1950s. There is no justification for arguing that this low rate reflects merely shame and denial of this crime, as the rate of convictions at the turn of the century was almost as high as in the early 1980s, and sexual misdemeanour of all sorts had been at the forefront of controversy in the latter years of the supposedly prudish nineteenth century. The slight rise in 1943, in the opposite direction from other crimes, can again be attributed to wartime conditions.

The new sexual permissiveness may have contributed to the rise in rape in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, to levels similar to those at the beginning of the century. The massive rise in rape between 1982 and 1993 requires further explanation.

**1.52 Rape 1903 - 1993**

convictions in higher courts



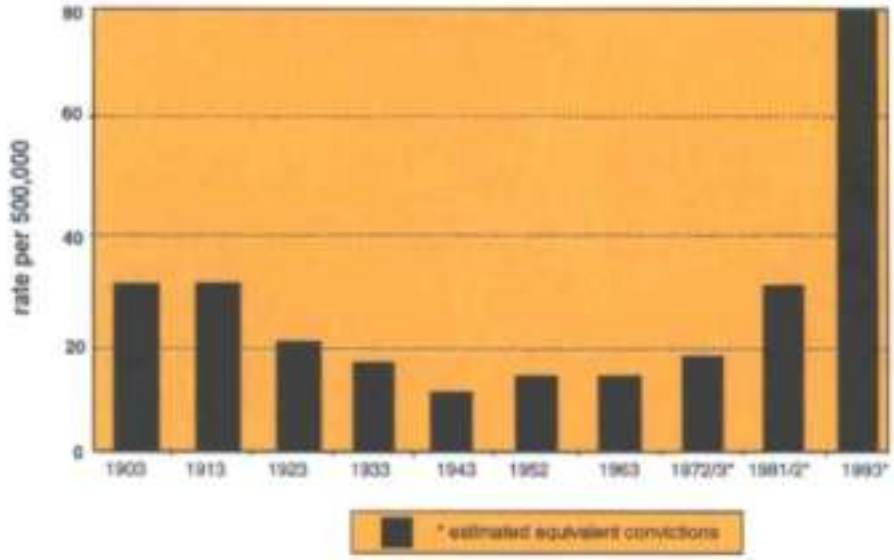

Source: Year Books

**Assault**

The assault rate has been slightly higher than the rape rate throughout the century, and shows the general pattern of a fairly continuous fall to the 1940s, and thereafter first a slow and then a rapid rise (Figure 1.53). (By contrast rape showed a precipitous fall in the 1920s, remaining at extremely low levels until the upward climb began in the 1970s.) If the unusually low wartime level is excluded, the results could be interpreted as showing a continuous fall through to the 1960s. Assault shows a less dramatic fall than any other crime, and the rate in 1963 was only approximately half that in the first two decades of the century. By 1982, this level was reached again and this was followed by a two-to-three-fold rise between 1982 and 1993.

**1.53 Assault 1903 -1993**

convictions in higher courts




Source: Year Books

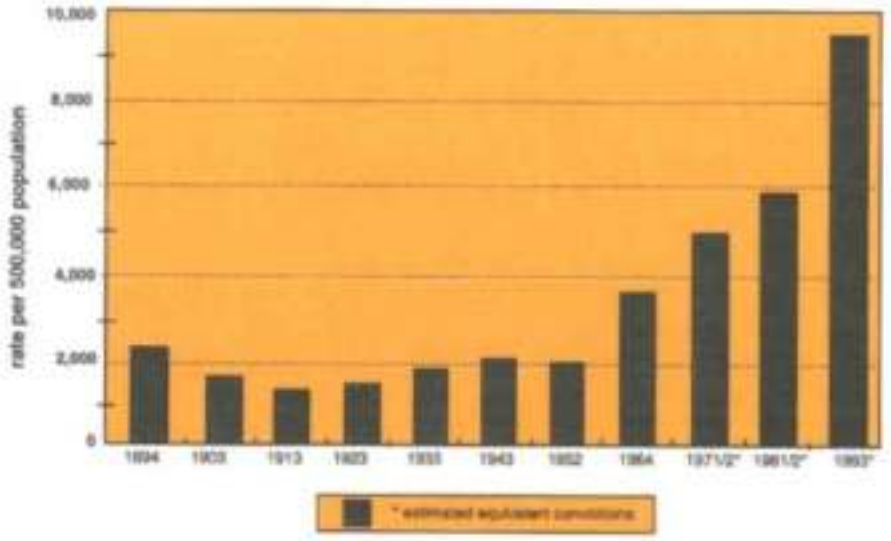
### Total Serious Crime

Because of some uncertainty as to the degree of capture of crime statistics currently recorded by police, compared with convictions in the higher courts prior to 1970, it is salutary to look at the 'total serious crime' figures for the century as represented by the combined higher courts and Magistrates Courts convictions and equivalent figures from police records. Serious crime is defined as *offences against the person, property, currency, forgery and blackmail.* Drug offences (trafficking) only rose to levels worthy of a separate category in the last three decades, and so are omitted in order not to create uncertainty about rises in more traditional crimes; it is nevertheless a serious crime to which our society is now subject. Examples of non-serious crimes from earlier decades which are omitted are drunkenness and vagrancy, and from the present period, traffic infringements.

Figure 1.54 shows the rate of serious crime per half million population, based on convictions and estimated convictions, from 1894 to 1993. It can be seen that this fell fairly steadily from 1894 to 1913, followed by a slow rise to reach the 1894 level again by 1943. This was followed by a dramatic increase through 1963 to 1982, and a further increase to 1993, reaching a rate more than four times that at the beginning of the century.

**1.54 Serious Crime 1894 -1993**

convictions in higher and magistrates courts




Source: Year Books

# Explaining Rising Crime

The large increases in crime rates in the last three decades demand explanation, and it is reasonable to look for explanations in other major social and economic changes which have accompanied these increases and which may plausibly be thought to influence the genesis of criminal behaviour and failure to control it. If crime rates are considered as an outcome measure, they can be tested statistically against possibly influential social factors, such as changes in the culture of socialisation and reproduction. The causal link which is envisaged here is primarily the capacity of parents to enculturate, that is, to socialise and educate their children. This might be expected to be related to both the abilities of the parents and the time they allot to this task, as well as the beliefs and practices they transmit, on which we do not have data. A number of social trends which we have already documented are relevant here – the age of parents will reflect their maturity, and hence their own acquisition of the culture at the point at which they are required to transmit it; their economic well-being, in terms of employment, may be a factor; and the amount of parental availability, of both sexes, will be affected by divorce and ex-nuptial birth rates, and of maternal availability by female employment rates. The crime rate can reasonably be expected to be affected by the age and sex distribution in the population, as both property and violent crimes are committed predominantly by teenage and young adult males; and there is an apparent logic in expecting unemployment rates to affect crime directly.

***Correlation*** is a statistical test which measures whether variations (rises and falls) in one set of events (or factor) are matched in a regular fashion by variations in another set of events (or factor). If a match occurs, this means that changes in the one set of events may be causing the changes in the other. It is also possible, however, that a third factor, rising or falling, is causing the rises and falls in both the measured factors. So while finding a good correlation between two measures allows that they may be causally related, it does not definitely establish that one causes the other. Nevertheless, it does indicate that they are related to one another in some web of causality.

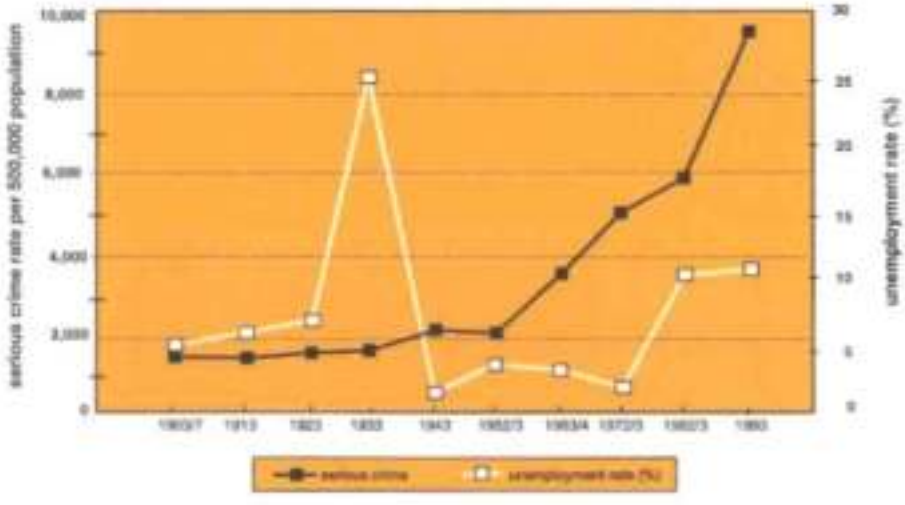
A positive correlation means that both factors rise or fall together, while a negative correlation means that as one factor rises the other falls, but this does not affect the causal relationship. A low or absent correlation means that they are unlikely to be causally related to any major degree. Anything less than .3 or -.3 is considered a low correlation, while .8 or -.8 is very high.

***Significance***, in the statistical sense, means that a sufficiently strong relationship between two measures or events has been found for statisticians to agree that it is very unlikely to have occurred by chance, so that causality can be inferred. Significance at the .05 level is regarded as a safe indication of a real relationship, at the .01 level as very safe, and .001 even better. This is expressed as significant at the .05 level or $p<.05$, et cetera.

Calculations of correlations relating trends in these factors and crime trends are reported in detail in *Rising Crime in Australia* (CIS,1997), and are briefly summarised here.

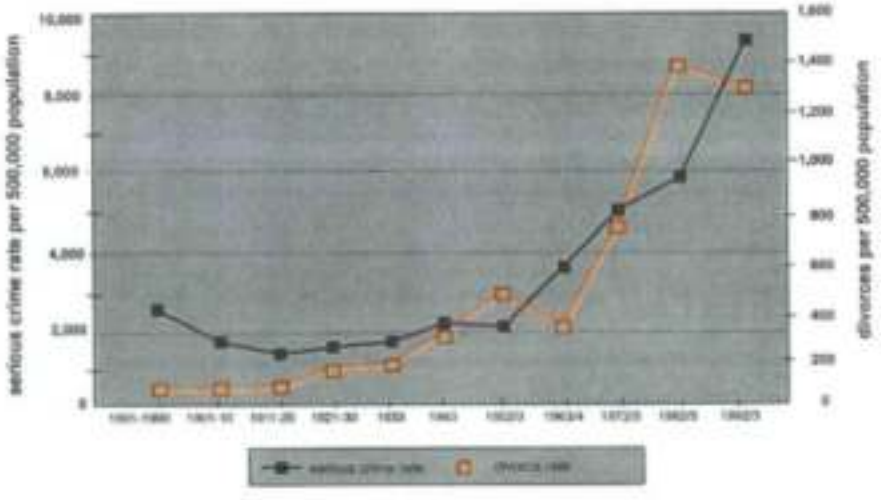
Figures 1.55, 1.56 and 1.57 show the comparative trends in some of these social factors and in overall crime rates, and illustrate the meaning of significant and non-significant correlation. Figure 1.55 shows trends in serious crime and in unemployment across the century. It can be seen that there are marked differences in the onset of rise and fall in serious crime and of unemployment, and consequently their correlation is non-significant. By contrast, the patterns of rise and fall for serious crime and divorce (Figure 1.56) and serious crime and ex-nuptial birth (Figure 1.57) are largely similar, and their correlations are significant. Because they change in a similar manner, it is possible that there is a causal relationship between them.

## 1.55 Unemployment and Serious Crime 1903-1993



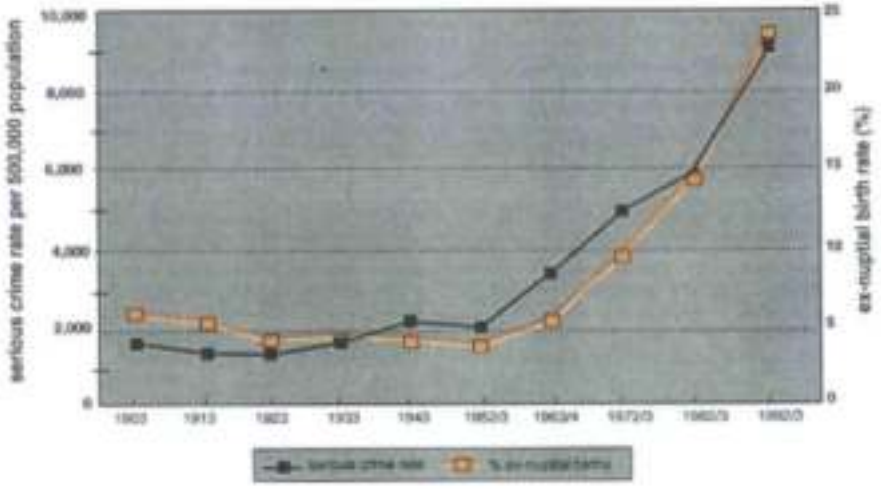

Source: Year Books

## 1.56 Divorce and Serious Crime 1894 -1993




Source: Year Books

## 1.57 Ex-nuptial Birth and Serious Crime 1903 -1993




Source: Year Books

Correlations between violent and serious crimes and changes in age and sex distributions across the century were found not to be significant. Any influence of these factors was overridden by others which were more important. Correlations between violent and serious crimes and unemployment across the century were also found to be non-significant, despite what might be thought to be a logical connection. Indeed, reference to Figure 1.55 reveals that when unemployment was at its highest for the century, in the period of the Great Depression of the 1930s, crime rates remained at their lowest. These three commonly mooted factors therefore do not control crime rates in Australia in any major way.

By contrast, a whole series of indicators of the culture of reproduction show significant correlations with crime rates, synchronous, and also time-lapsed, when the children exposed to these changes of culture have become young adults. The correlation between divorce and serious crime rates in the decades 1894 to 1993 is a startling 0.9 ($p<.001$). The correlation of divorce with violent crime is significant at the .05 level. If the effect of divorce on children as they mature is a factor, we would expect higher correlations with crime rates one and two decades later. The correlation between divorce rate and serious crime rate a decade later rises to 0.96, and that with violent crime rises to 0.86, both significant at the .001 level. At two decades time lapse, associations between divorce and both serious and violent crime are still both highly significant.

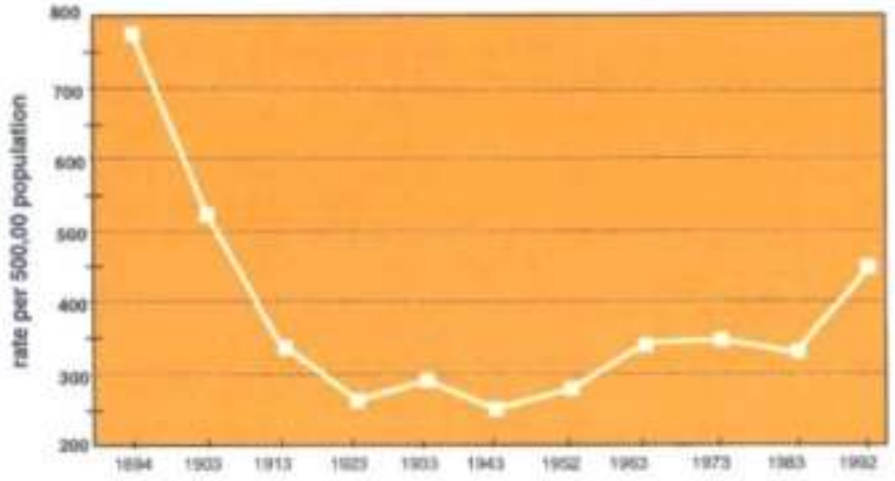
An increasing presence of mothers in the workforce is likely to mean less energy to devote to the guidance and education of children and less supervision of older children in out-of-school hours. One might therefore expect to find a relationship between the percentage of females in the workforce and crime rates. The correlation between percentage of female employment and serious crime rates in the decades 1933 to 1993 is 0.9, significant at the .01 level. That with violent crime is just short of significance, but the correlations of female employment with homicide, murder and rape are significant. The correlation with all violent crime becomes significant two decades later, suggesting a more severe impact on younger children. By contrast, the correlations of serious and violent crime with male employment over the same period are negative, -0.43 and -0.48 respectively. These correlations are not high enough to be significant, but nevertheless suggest that the higher male employment is, the *lower* is serious crime, while the higher female employment is, the *higher* is serious crime.

Ex-nuptial birth (Figure 1.15) combines two possibly adverse effects on parenting – ex-nuptial births are frequently births to young mothers, and they imply the absence in most cases of the biological father, and parenting overload for the mother. The percentage of ex-nuptial births correlates significantly with both serious and violent crime at both one and two decades time lapse, and more strongly than does young maternal age alone. But it also correlates significantly with contemporary crime. This is probably a sign that the same types of poor socialisation which produce crime in males produce ex-nuptial birth in females. Ex-nuptial birth may be, like crime, an outcome of poor socialisation, as well as a cause.

**Prisoners**

Because of changes in sentencing policy, the numbers of prisoners in gaol are generally considered to reflect theories of crime prevention as much as crime rates. Figure 1.58 shows the imprisonment rate in Australia (the number of prisoners at mid-year per half million population) from 1894 to 1993. It shows the familiar U-shaped curve of our crime rates, with the difference that the highest rate of imprisonment for the century occurs at the beginning of the time span (when crime rates were considerably lower than today). After levelling out between 1913 and 1952 at a third of the starting figure, there is a slow rise (with a slight decline between 1973 and 1983). By 1992 the level had reached a little over half that at the beginning of the century.

## 1.58 Prison Population 1894 - 1992



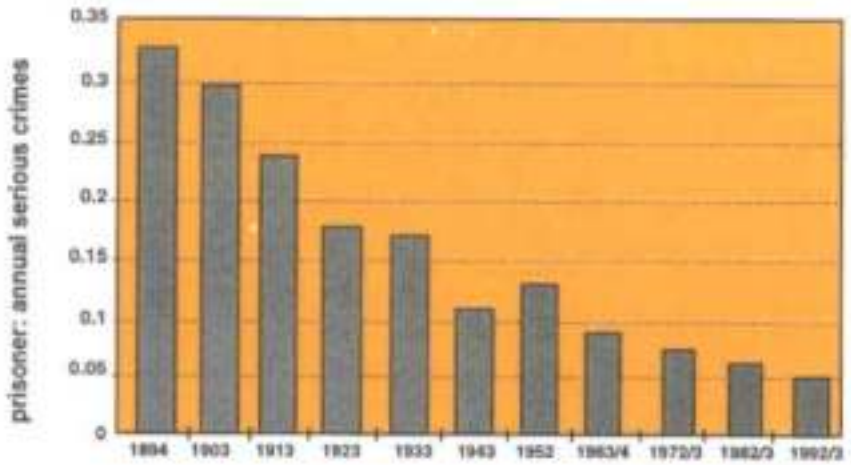

Source: Year Books

Clearly, rates of imprisonment have not kept pace with increases in the crime rate. This is best exemplified by looking at ratios of prisoners to crime numbers. Figure 1.59 shows the ratios of prisoners to serious crime convictions from 1894 to 1993. The ratio fell from 1894 to 1943. This means that fewer convictions were being punished by imprisonment and/or prison sentences were shorter, over the period. This may have resulted from a higher percentage of convictions being for less serious crimes in this period. From 1963/4, the ratio fell away again, despite the fact that this is the period of marked rise of violent and property crime convictions in the higher courts, that is, of more serious crime. *Imposition of imprisonment was seven times lower in 1992/3 than in 1894.*

Because crime conviction rates for the last two decades have had to be estimated, it is impossible to tell whether the fall in imprisonment rates represents greater leniency in judges or increased inability of police to catch culprits and obtain convictions. Nevertheless, the relationship of crime rates to imprisonment would seem contrary to the frequently expressed view that punishment via imprisonment is not effective in reducing crime. Falling rates of imprisonment have been accompanied by rising rates of crime.

**1.59 Imprisonment for Serious Crime 1894 - 1992/3**

prisoner:conviction ratios

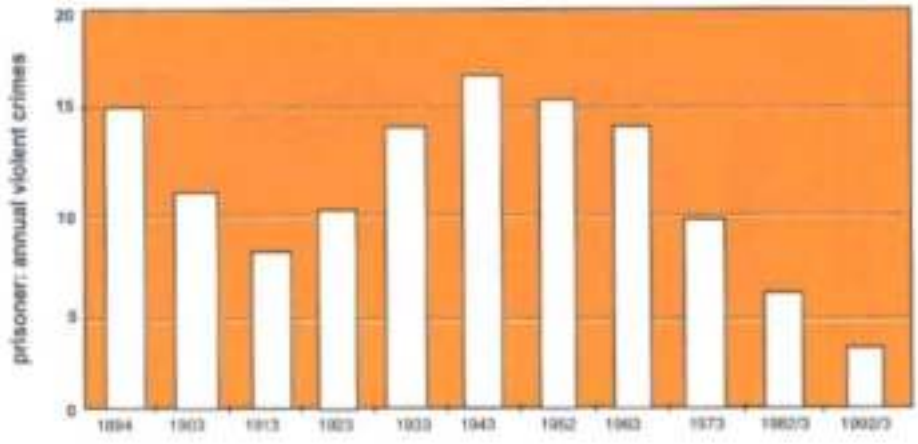



Source: Year Books

Imprisonment for violent crime is probably of greater concern to the public than imprisonment for crimes against property. The ratio of prisoners to violent crimes could only be calculated using all prisoners regardless of offence (because a breakdown by offence is not given in the *Year Books*). Figure 1.60 shows the long-term trend of this indicator. There was a fall from a ratio of 14 in 1894 to about 7 in 1913, then a rise above 15 in the mid-century followed by a decline to about 3 in 1992/3. This represents a fall from about ten person years of imprisonment per violent crime committed in 1903 to an average of about three years in 1992/3, suggesting a lesser occurrence of the longer sentences generally felt to be necessary for violent crimes (*not* the average length of sentence per violent crime, since imprisonment for non-violent crime had to be included in the ratio). As with total serious crimes, we cannot be sure how much of this change is due to leniency in sentencing and how much to lower conviction rates, but it is unlikely to be entirely the latter. The effect, as regards failure of deterrence and of protection of the public, is likely to be much the same in either case.

## 1.60 Imprisonment for Violent Crime 1894 - 1993

prisoner:conviction ratios




Source: Year Books

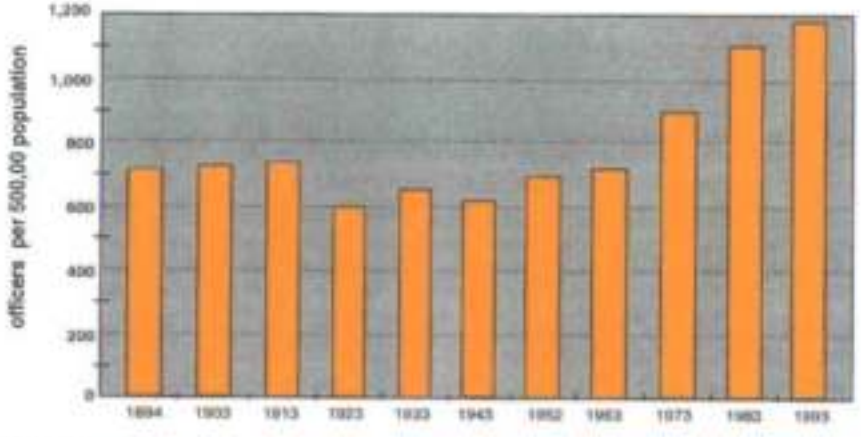
## Police

The innovation explicit in Robert Peel's police force in Britain in the nineteenth century was prevention of crime by surveillance before the event, rather than detection and punishment afterwards. The ubiquity of police stations and police officers on the beat was an essential part of this strategy. An obvious requirement for successful prevention via surveillance is an adequate proportion of police, not only to terrain and population, but also to the potential and actual incidence of crime for the place and period.

The *Year Books* provide figures of the number of police officers in Australia, and of the ratio of police to population in terms of persons in the population per police officer. If crime rates are stable, this is an appropriate means of monitoring how well the police force is being maintained, but if crime rates increase markedly, so will police duties in terms of detection and the processes of conviction, leaving less time for preventive surveillance. What is an adequate police force in conditions of low crime rates will become quite inadequate in conditions of escalating crime.

Figure 1.61 transforms the *Year Book* figures of police numbers from 1903 to 1993 into our selected format of rate per half million population. Bearing in mind our knowledge of the fall in crime rates in the first half of the century, followed by a rise in the second, one can see that, as logic would demand, there is generally a fall in the ratio of police to population in the first part of the century, followed by a rise in

**1.61 Police:Population Ratios 1894 - 1993**



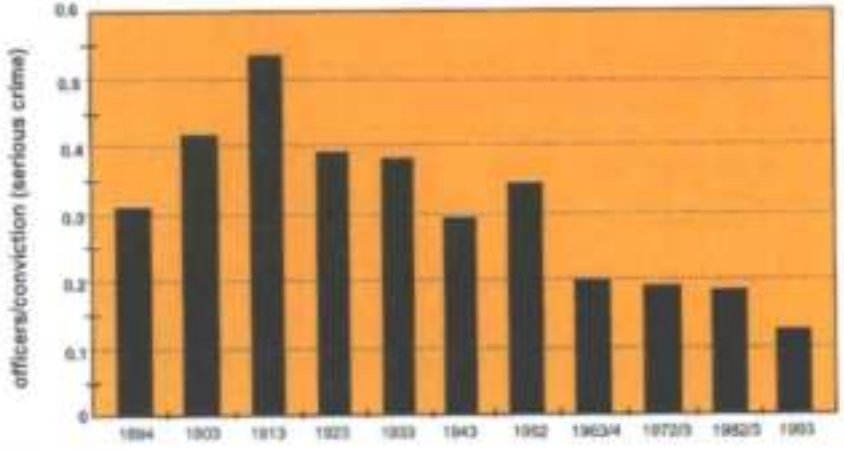

Source: Year Books

the second half, which escalates from 1963 in apparent keeping with the escalation in serious crime rates in the same period. The number of police officers per 500,000 population has doubled between its lowest point in 1923 and 1993 (597 to 1,183).

Nevertheless, these figures do not show whether the rise in officer numbers is appropriate to the rise in the crime rate, in terms of leaving adequate time for prevention. Time spent on each crime committed, in terms of follow-up, means time withdrawn from surveillance duties. In particular, we can assume that each crime conviction represents a large amount of officer worktime. In Figures 1.62 and 1.63, officer numbers are presented as ratios, not to population, but to total serious crime

**1.62 Police:Crime Ratios 1894 -1993**

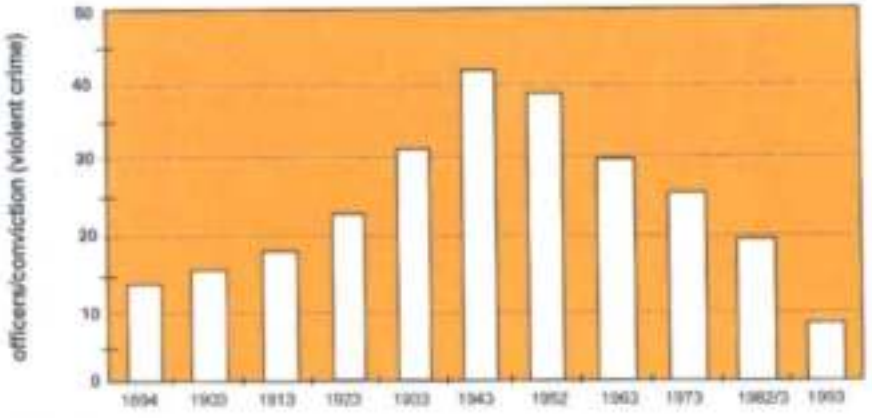
officers/conviction for serious crime




Source:Year Books

**1.63 Police:Crime Ratios 1894 -1993**

officers/conviction for violent crime




Source: Year Books

convictions and to convictions for violent crime. These figures demonstrate that the rise in ratio of officers to population has completely failed to compensate for the rise in crime rates of recent decades.

There is a rise in police:serious crime ratios from 1894 to 1913, coinciding with (and perhaps partially achieving) the fall in all serious crime over that period, followed by a fall to turn of the century levels by 1943, in parallel with the concurrent rise in serious crime rate. Thereafter the ratio rises again in 1952, co-incident with a slight fall in the serious crime rate, but then drops steeply, and again drops in the decade to 1993. Similarly, the ratio of officers to violent crimes rose as violent crime rates fell to mid-century, then fell in the period of increasing violent crime, with the ratio finally falling below that at the turn of the century in the last decade, in face of the sudden rise of violent crime.

The correlation between the ratio of officers:serious crime and serious crime rate is both high and negative (-0.83, $p<.001$) – the lower the number of officers per serious crime, the higher the serious crime rate. As police numbers become increasingly inadequate to handle the job which confronts them, crime rates rise.

## Overview

A common pattern in the social indicators here presented, which were created mostly in the nineteenth century as significant for the social welfare of citizens, has been of a slow but steady development in a given direction in the first half of the century, and of a marked change either of direction or gradient, often with rapid acceleration, not far into the second half of the century, with mostly no sign of interruption of this changed development as the last decade of the century is reached.

Thus the population rose steadily until close to mid-century; then escalated upwards. The percentage of Australians of British cultural origin rose very slowly; then fell comparatively rapidly. The percentage of Australians aged less than 15 fell steadily; then rose, then fell, both at a faster rate than before. The percentage of Christians fell slowly; then more rapidly.

The marriage rate, though fluctuating, showed an upward trajectory; then plummeted. The percentage married rose steadily; then flattened. The percentage divorced rose slowly but steadily; then faster and finally escalated. The percentage marrying at young ages rose steadily; then escalated upwards and suddenly plummeted. The birthrate fluctuated wildly but with a marked downward trajectory; then settled into a steeper fall without fluctuation. Fertility rates fell; then rose and fell and levelled. The percentage of births to young fathers and mothers rose very slowly; then shot up and, finally, plummeted. The percentage of ex-nuptial births fell slowly; then rose rapidly and finally escalated.

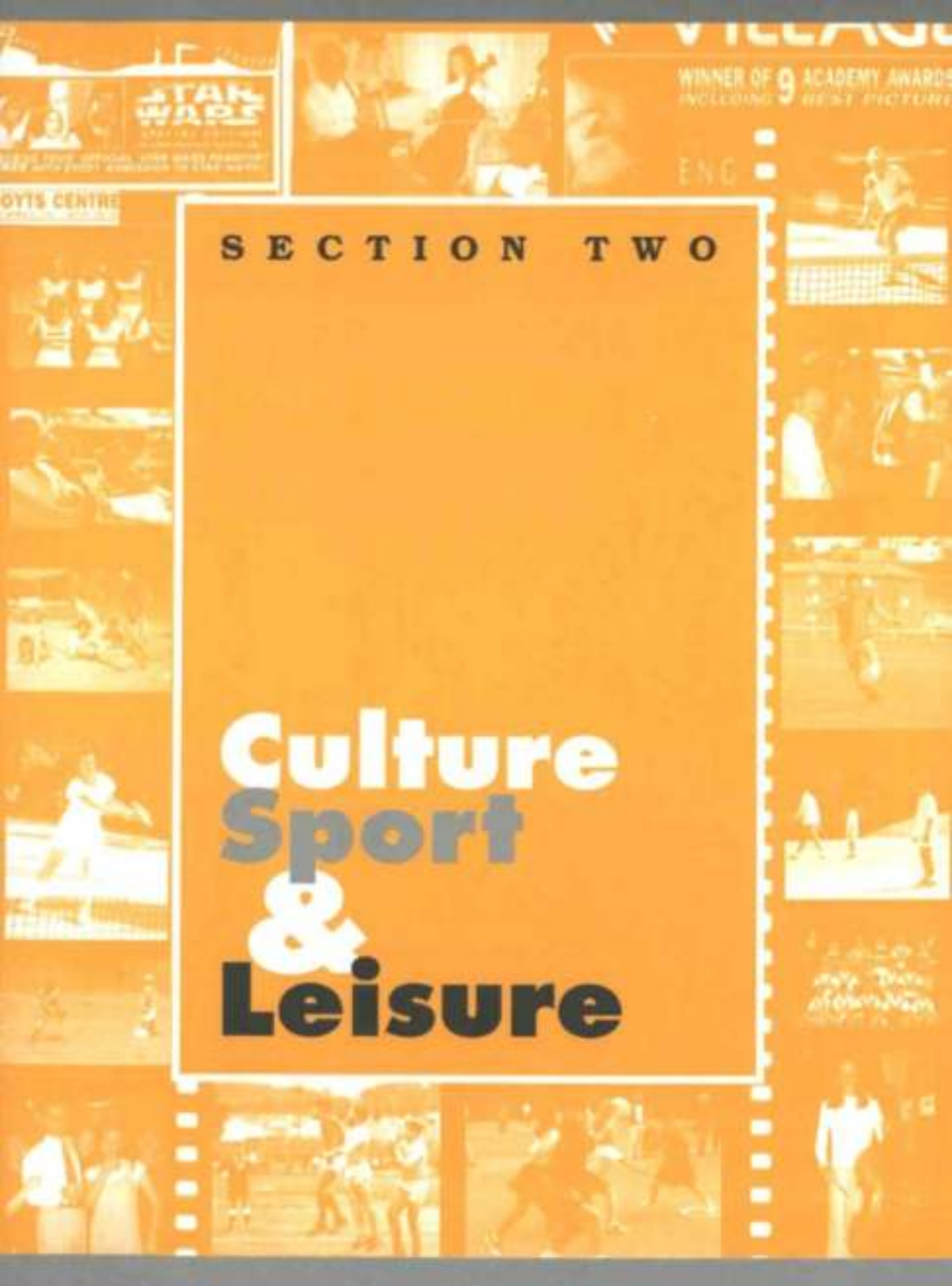
The dependent population, young plus old, fell steadily; then, with fluctuations, rose to beyond its original level. Deaths by suicide fell slowly (with some fluctuations); then rose sharply, fell and rose again. The percentage of the population at school rose slowly and steadily; then escalated upwards and finally levelled. The pupil:teacher ratio fell slowly; then plummeted and finally levelled. The percentage of university students rose slowly; then rapidly, as did academic staff numbers.

We may differ, on ethical, ideological, sociological or economic grounds, as to whether various of these changes of direction are good, bad or indifferent. One may view rising divorce and ex-nuptial births as indicators of liberation from social and sexual oppression; another, as signs of a loss of ethical standards; another, as causes of cost to the taxpayer; and another, simply as indices of the development of post-industrialism. There is possibly less disagreement as to whether increases in property and violent crime are good or bad developments for society. If we generally agree that increasing crime rates are not beneficial, then the correlations between the changes of direction in these social factors and rising crime suggest that we should look to the policies, practices and beliefs, where we can identify them, which precipitated, encouraged and supported these precipitating factors of change.

If crime and health are our best outcome measures, then the failure indicated in the former is matched by extraordinary success in the latter. The story of health over the last century is one of almost unbroken success. Life expectancy for both men and women has risen almost continuously across the century, maintaining its slope upwards even in the latter decades of escalating crime. There have been persistent downwards trends in death rates at all ages, except the oldest group of 65 and over. Perinatal and infant mortality have fallen steadily (apart from a brief period in the 1970s for the former) and maternal death has reduced to the almost non-existent.

Infection has disappeared as a major cause of death, to be replaced by the natural causes of old age – heart disease and cancer. Death from external causes such as violence, poisoning and motor vehicle accident have continued to fall through the decades of increasing crime, no doubt due partly to the increasing ability of the medical profession to bring people back from the jaws of death. Major falls in all these areas, the causes of death within medical control, occurred after mid-century. Only suicide, which is largely outside medical control, has not shown this pattern of sustained decline.

Infectious diseases have increased only where medical solutions have been discarded. For example, where the medical solution of inoculation has been rejected, we have a resurgence of whooping cough. Medicine has continued to be successful because it has, on the whole, remained faithful to the scientific methods developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, methods which require recognition of biological inflexibilities and adherence to practices which regulate the action of natural forces. Perhaps there is a lesson in this for our understanding of social practices also.




SECTION TWO

# Culture Sport & Leisure

SECTION TWO

# CULTURE, SPORT AND LEISURE

## Leisure at Home

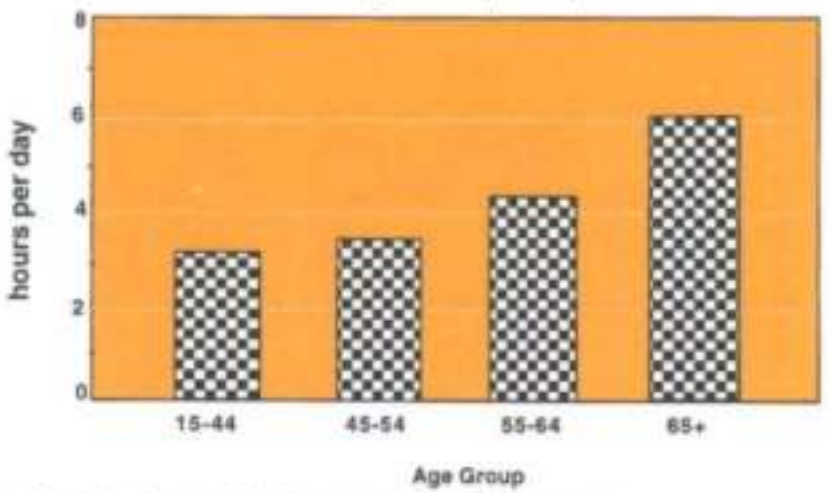
One indicator of relative prosperity and quality of life is the amount of leisure, or time free of work and attendance to the necessities of life, available to people. In general, the amount of leisure time available has increased significantly in the last generation or two.

In 1992 the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted a time use survey with time allocated to ten categories: paid work, domestic, child care, purchasing, personal (including sleeping), education, community, social, active leisure and passive leisure.

For a special report on home leisure, various activities were selected from three of the major categories. These consisted of the passive leisure activities (such as reading and watching TV), home-based active leisure activities (hobbies, games and the like) and some home-based social activities such as having visitors. This study found that 95% of people aged over 15 participated in some form of home leisure activity on an average day. The participants averaged nearly four hours per day on home leisure activities, with those above the age of 44 reporting more leisure time than did those in the 15-44 age group, as shown in Figure 2.1.

**2.1 Home Leisure 1992**

average hours per day




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

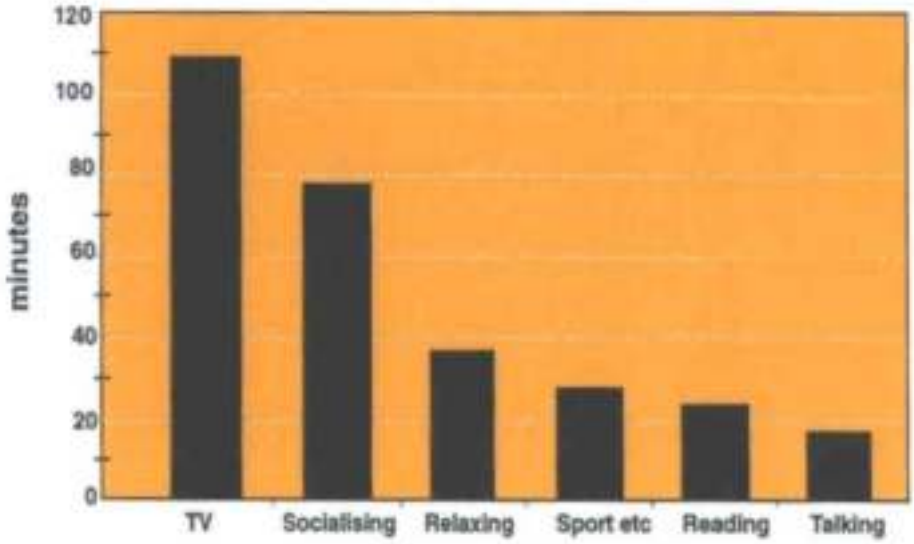
**Main Leisure Activities**

The figures on main leisure activities shown in Figure 2.2 are based on three of the ten categories, namely social life and entertainment, active leisure and passive leisure. This is a wider range of activities than those described as home leisure and so the two figures are not directly comparable. Not surprisingly, TV watching dominates the leisure time of most Australians, taking up two hours per day for males and an hour and a half for females. After TV viewing came socialising, followed by relaxing, thinking, etc., then sport or other outdoor activities, reading, and talking, including use of the telephone.

It should be noted that these are average figures. Those who participate in specific activities such as computer games spend some hours per day on that activity but these people represent such a small proportion of the sample that computer games is near the bottom of the list on average time spent.

**2.2 Main Leisure/Cultural Activities 1992**

average time spent per day



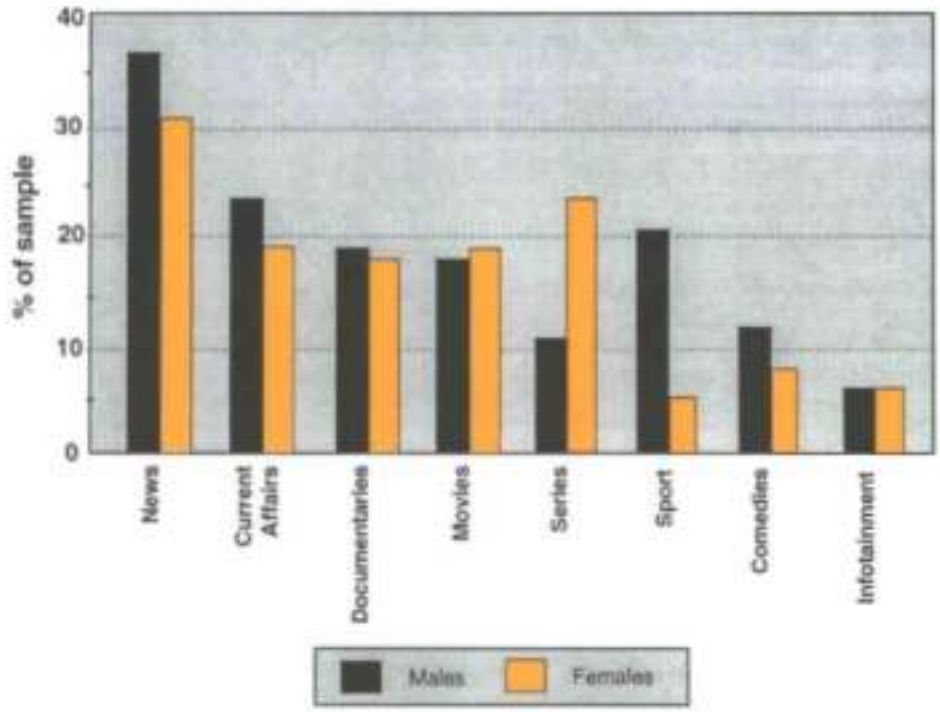

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural Trends in Australia No. 1: A Statistical Overview*, 1995

### Television

As already noted, television watching absorbs the major part of the leisure time of Australians and the penetration of television sets into Australian homes is virtually total. The (then) Australian Broadcasting Tribunal commissioned research in 1992 which revealed that no less than 99% of Australian homes had a TV set and 60% had more than one.

The survey asked which categories of programs were viewed 'with full attention'. As can be seen in Figure 2.3, news had the highest rating, followed by current affairs, documentaries, movies and serials.

## 2.3 TV Watching with Full Attention




Source: Australian Broadcasting Authority, *Living with Television*

**Viewing Patterns**

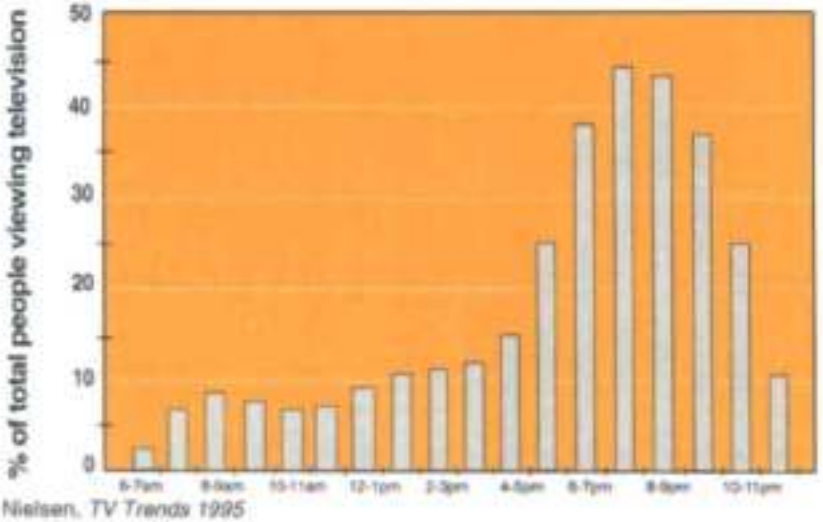
The Nielsen organisation maintains a continuing coverage of TV viewing behaviour throughout Australia with 'people meters' installed in a sample of 3,600 households. This is claimed to be representative of the 6 million households and 18 million people in Australia. It is also claimed to be more accurate than the diary-based method of estimating viewing time used by the ABS to collect the figures reported above. This is reflected in a larger average viewing time per day (over 3 hours compared with less than 2 hours reported by the ABS). The statistics which follow are derived from the Nielsen sampling.

- Daily average viewing time was unchanged from 1991 to 1994 in all age groups reported.

| 1994 | Daily | Weekly (approx.) |
|---|---|---|
| All People | 3hrs 12mins | 22 hrs |
| Children 5-12 | 2hrs 39mins | 19hrs |
| Teens 13-17 | 2hr 43mins | 19hrs |
| People 16-24 | 2hr 33mins | 18hrs |
| People 25-54 | 3hr 08mins | 22hrs |
| People 55+ | 4hr 22mins | 30hrs |

- On average, about a third of people are viewing television between the hours of 6:00 pm and 12:00 midnight throughout the year.
- The most popular viewing hours are 7:00 to 8:00 pm, when the total average viewing is about 43% of people (Figure 2.4).
- Sunday is the most popular day for TV viewing.

**2.4 TV Viewing throughout the Day**

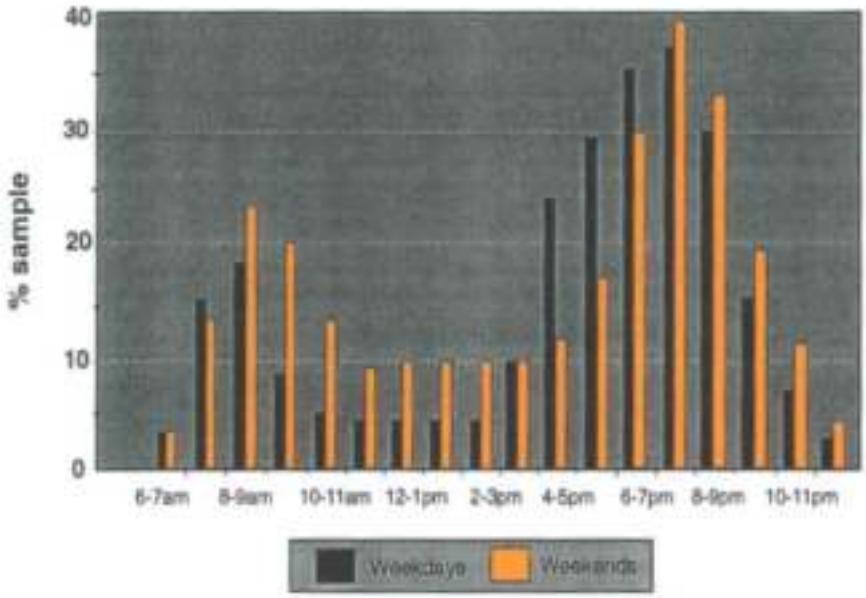



Source: Nielsen, *TV Trends 1995*

***Children's Viewing***

- Children spend about 19 hours a week in front of TV.
- The peak viewing period for viewing by children aged 5-12 is between 7:00 and 8:00 pm for both weekdays and weekends (Figure 2.5)

## 2.5 Children's Viewing 1994




Source: Nielsen, *TV Trends 1995*

An AGB McNair poll (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 17/4/95) indicated that:

- Four out of every ten adult viewers, or another member of the household, had to actively restrict the viewing habits of children.
- Some 72% of viewers believed that there was excessive violence on TV.

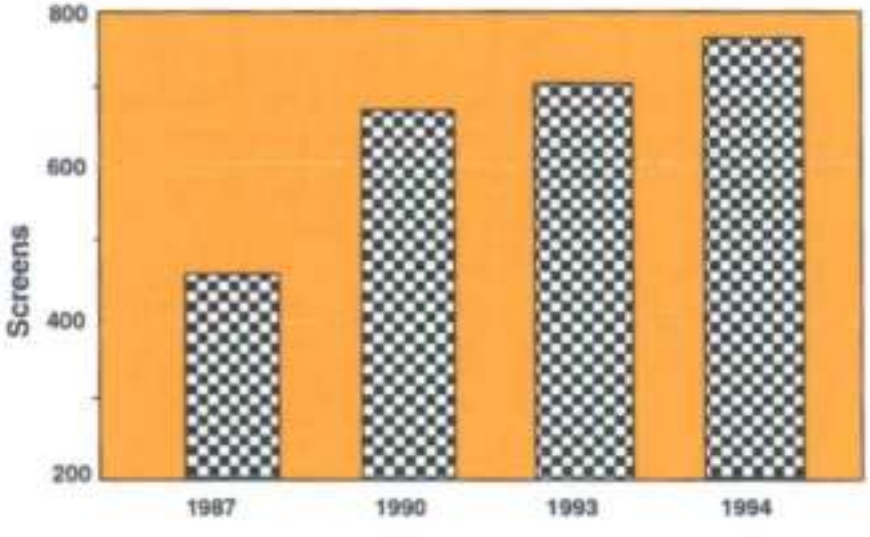
# Film and Cinema

Despite predictions that the cinema would not recover from the challenge of TV, the film industry has more than held its own in competition with TV in recent years. This is reflected in the number of screens available and, more significantly, in attendance. The following statistics have been provided by the Motion Picture Distribution Association of Australia.

### Cinema Screens (Figure 2.6)

There has been a trend in recent years towards multi-screen cinema complexes. Consequently, the increase in the number of screens has not been matched by an increase in the number of separate buildings housing the screens.

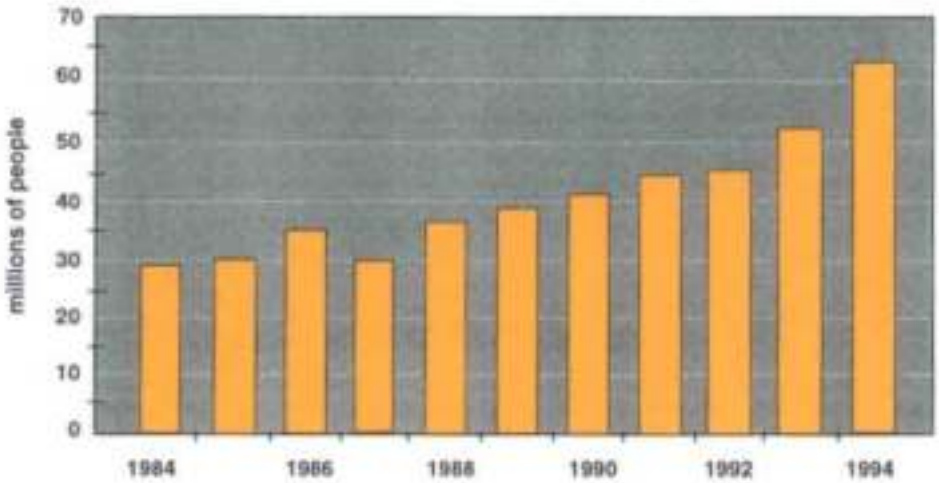
**2.6 Number of Cinema Screens 1987 - 1994**



**Cinema Attendances**

Figure 2.7 shows that cinema attendances have increased every year from 1984 to 1994, more than doubling over that period.

**2.7 Cinema Attendances 1984 -1994**



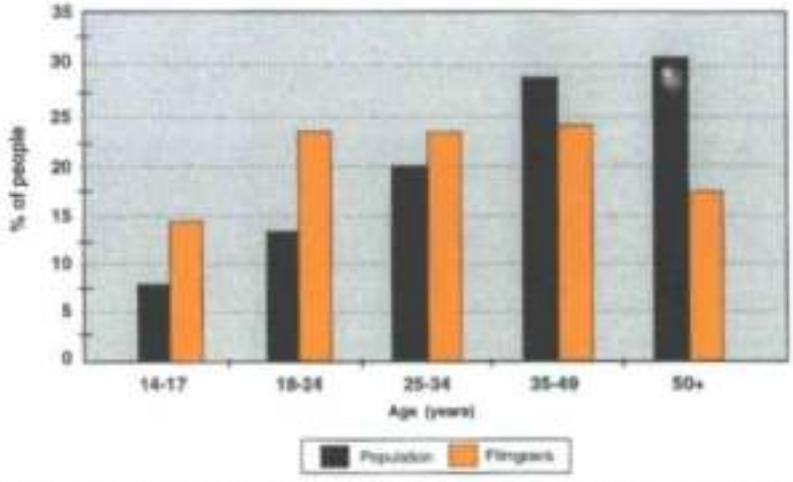

1995 research findings:

- 7 in 10 people claimed to have been to the movies in the last 12 months.
- Over half claimed to have been to the movies in the last 3 months.
- Over a third claimed to have been to the movies in the last 4 weeks.
- Cinema-going has increased in all age groups, especially among those aged between 25 and 34 years.
- More people are going more frequently.

### Ages of Audiences

The younger age-groups are over-represented in cinema audiences, as Figure 2.8 shows, but in recent years the proportion of older age-groups (35+) attending cinemas has increased.

**2.8 Age of Film Audiences 1994**



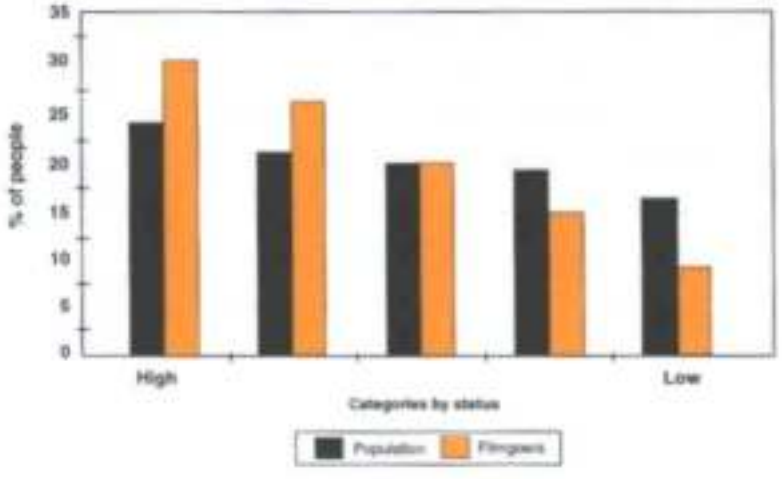

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural Trends in Australia No. 1: A Statistical Overview* 1995

### Social Status of Audiences

People with higher status (on education and employment indicators) tend to be over-represented in cinema audiences, as shown by Figure 2.9.

**2.9 Socio-economic Status of Audiences 1994**

based on education, work and income



# The Social and Cultural Effects of Television and Film

There can hardly be any question that both television and films have given immense pleasure, entertainment, and instruction to hundreds of millions, and modern life without them would be greatly impoverished in many ways. Yet there are many who deplore their effects in supplanting established forms of social interaction, and in supposedly lowering aesthetic and critical standards in drama and the arts; as there are many, also, who blame films and television for the deadening of humane sentiment and standards of decency through excessive violence, the celebration of sexual licence, distraction from educational effort, and the implicit dismissal of a variety of moral norms.

There is no general agreement about the criteria of measurement that should be adopted in assessing the balance for good or ill, or how such measures, if agreed, can be reliably applied. Psycho-social tests of various kinds have in fact been used to show connections between film and television watching and the frequency of, for example, aggression in children, with some results indicating that there is a positive relationship. Others argue that television, in particular, is implicated in inducing individual passivity, reduced social interactivity, and the withdrawal of energies from a variety of civic engagements to the privacy of the living room and the TV screen.

## Children and Television

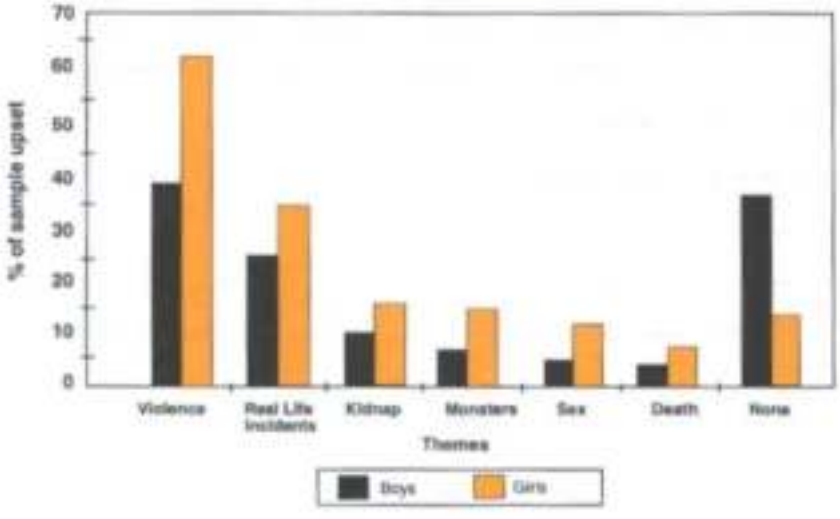
Concern is frequently expressed about the effects of televison watching on children, and whether it contributes to increased violence and moral laxity, or whether it disturbs them emotionally. Beyond the strong intuition of most people that so powerful a medium, and the ***legitimating*** impact of its cultural authority, must have consequences in shaping the attitudes of the young, these are difficult questions to answer scientifically and conclusively, and beyond the scope of this book. However, studies by the Australian Broadcasting Authority of children's viewing behaviour and reactions give us some insights.

- Some 62% of the children surveyed claimed to watch television every day, and 27% said they watched most days but not every day.
- Parental and adult rules about watching television were reported by 89% of children.
- Over half the children surveyed indicated that, on occasion, they had stopped watching a program because something upset them (66% of girls and 44% of boys).
- The type of violence shown largely influenced the way children reacted. Half claimed they liked to watch programs that are action-packed with fights, guns and car chases; but 62% said they did not like programs that showed children being hurt or 'whacked', and a majority did not like to see programs where animals were hurt or killed.

There were significant differences between boys and girls about what sort of television incidents were spontaneously mentioned as upsetting:

**2.10 Upsetting Themes on TV**

spontaneous comments




Source: Australian Broadcasting Authority, *'Cool or Gross': Children's Attitudes to Violence, Kissing and Swearing on Television*

Unlike television, charges of reducing social interaction have not been laid against movies for the obvious reason that the cinema itself is an arena of human contact, albeit of a relatively impersonal and passive kind. The charge against movies has been a condemnation of the violent and amoral content of the movies themselves.

Whatever might be the varying judgements about the social and moral consequences of television and film, there is no doubting their power to inform, entertain and influence those who watch them. They are cultural and social forces of the first order, and their excellence or otherwise will continue to play a major part in shaping national attitudes.

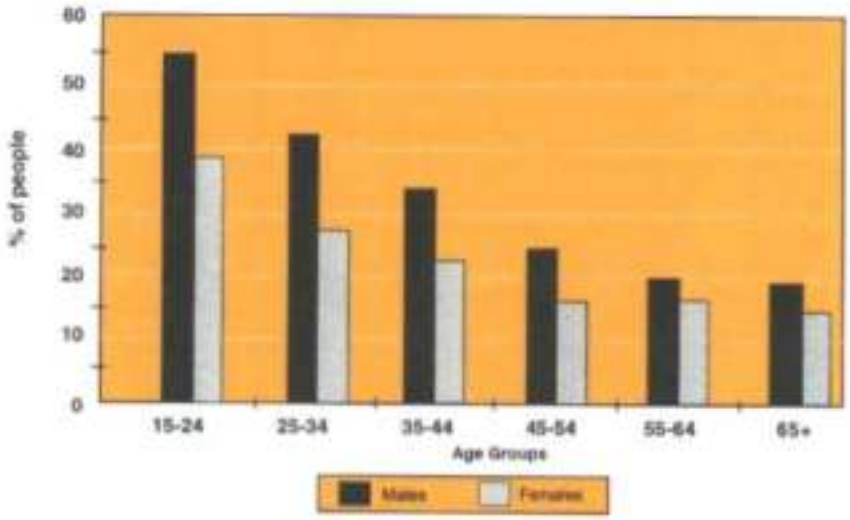
# Sport

The importance of sport in the Australian way of life and as an element of national well-being needs no emphasis. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted a series of surveys in 1993-4 to estimate how many people were involved in formal sports, that is, in organised competitions.

The surveys found that 35% of men and 23% of women played sport in 1993. As might be expected, the proportion of the population engaged in sport declines with age, although there is hardly any change in the rate of participation from the 45-54 age group to the 65+ age group.

**2.11 Participation in Sport 1993 - 94**

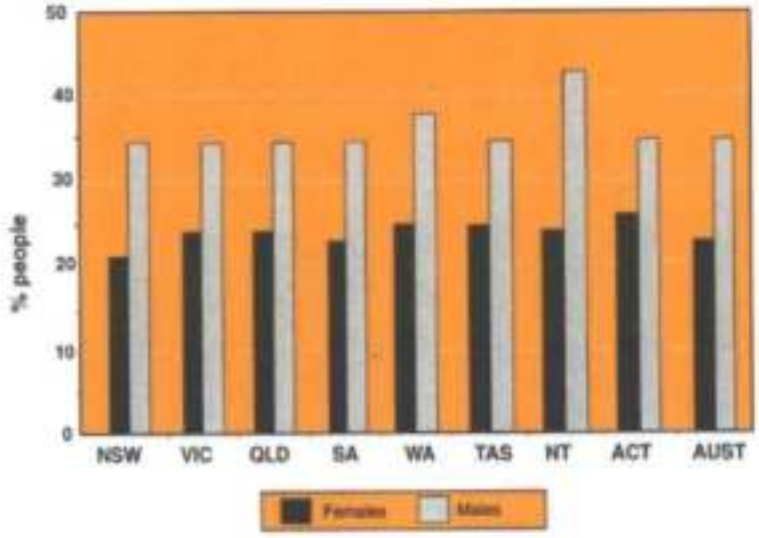
proportion who played formal sport




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

The pattern of sporting participation is very similar across the states. The male participation rate is high in the Northern Territory and the somewhat lower participation rate of females in NSW drags down the national average for females to a level below all the other states except South Australia.

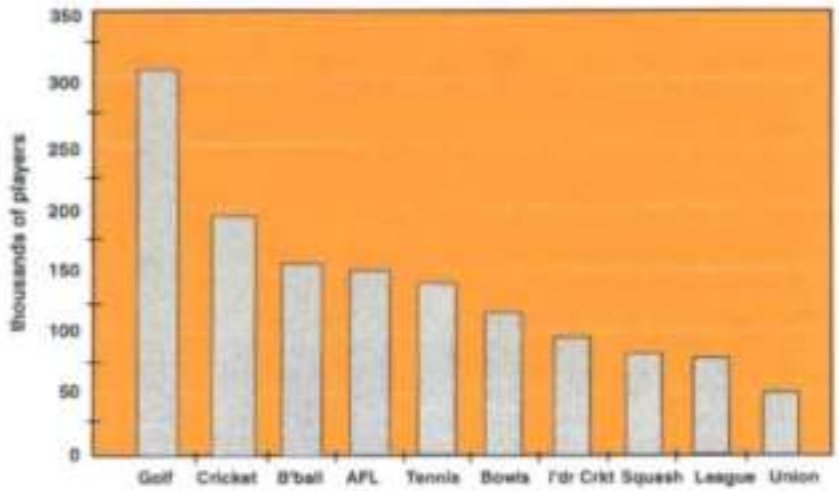
**2.12 Sports Participation by State 1993 - 94**




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

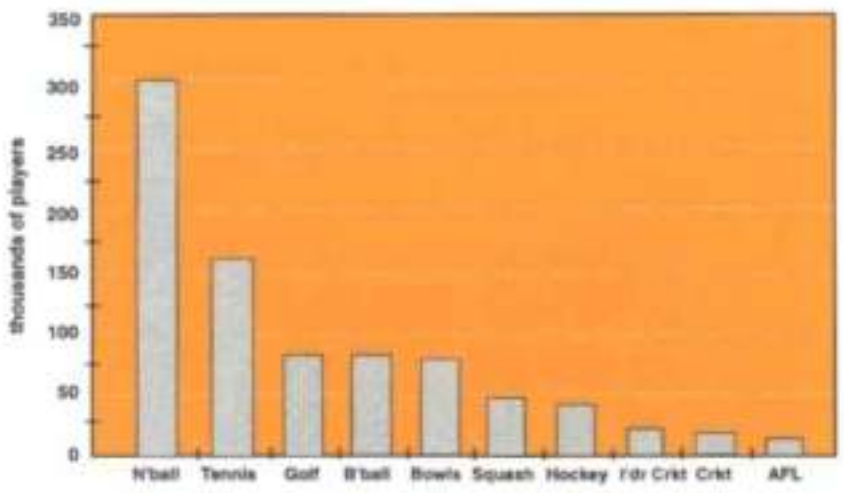
Figures 2.13 and 2.14 show the most popular sports for males and females. Golf has over 380,000 players, followed by netball and tennis, each near 300,000. A relatively recent surge of interest in basketball is reflected in figure for men's basketball which has overtaken tennis and drawn level with AFL football.

## 2.13 Men Playing Sport 1993 - 1994




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

## 2.14 Women Playing Sport 1993 - 1994




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

# Attendance at Selected Recreational and Cultural Venues and Activities

Some commentators claim that the image of Australian culture being dominated by playing and watching sport is no longer accurate. They point to the increasing popularity of educational, artistic and cultural venues such as art galleries and museums. Interest in these matters is reflected in the establishment of the National Culture and Recreation Unit in the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This unit conducted a national survey in 1995 with the results appearing in *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues*.

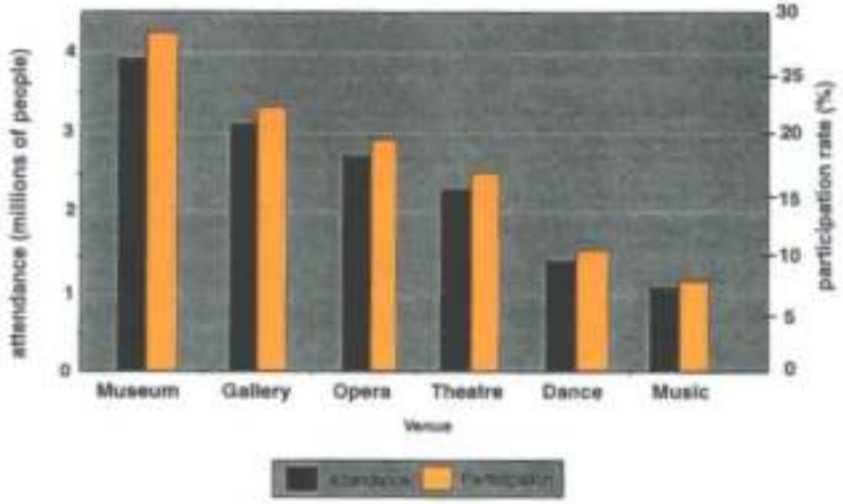
The main features of the report are:

- During the 12 months to the end of March 1995 a total of 11.7 million people or almost 83% of the population aged 15 years or more had been to at least one of the venues and activities surveyed.
- Cinema had the highest attendance with 8.7 million people (62% of the population).
- Females had a higher participation rate than did males.
- People with a university degree had the highest participation rate of those who were no longer at school.

Figures 2.15 and 2.16 indicate the rates of attendance at various activities. Note that absolute numbers are much higher in Figure 2.16. Table 2.1 provides further information on attendance at music and performing arts events by people in different age groups.

**2.15 Attendance at Cultural Venues 1994 - 1995**

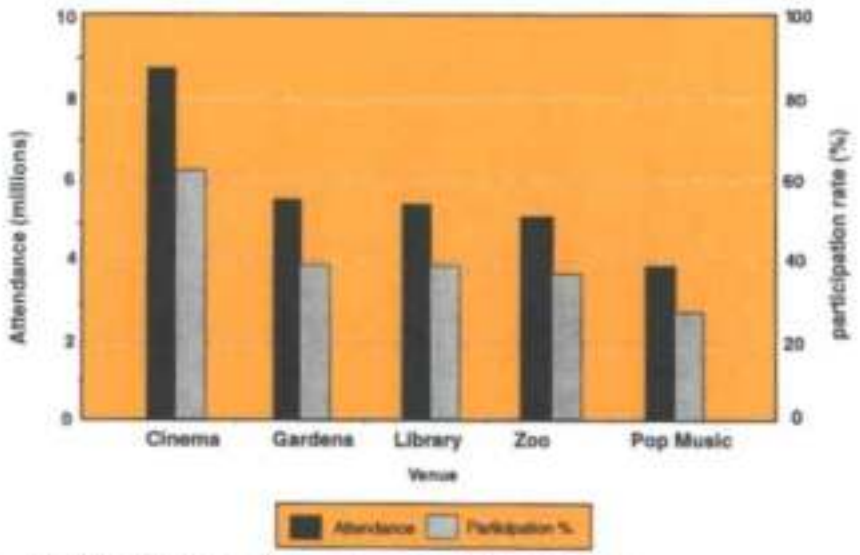
people and participation




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

**2.16 Attendance at Cultural Venues 1994 - 1995**

people and participation




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian Social Trends 1995*

**Music and the Performing Arts**

As noted in the previous section, popular music concerts attract more people than any other type of performance. In 1994/5 some 26% of the population aged 15 and over (3.8 million) attended a popular music concert at least once in the year.

## Table 2.1
## Proportion of People Attending Selected Types of Performances 1994 - 1995

| Age Group (yrs) | Pop Music % | Musical Theatre % | Theatre % | Dance % | Classical Music % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15-24 | 43 | 19 | 20 | 11 | 6 |
| 25-44 | 30 | 18 | 17 | 11 | 7 |
| 45-64 | 20 | 24 | 17 | 10 | 10 |
| 65+ | 8 | 15 | 9 | 6 | 7 |
| Total | 26 | 19 | 16 | 10 | 8 |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues*

SECTION THREE

# Economic Indicators

## SECTION THREE

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The ultimate test of a nation's economic performance is the individual well-being of its people and the wealth (broadly defined) of its citizens and households. With the rise of the state as an agent of redistribution of wealth, and as the provider of an increasing range of services and goods, the spending and taxing activities of government have increasingly influenced economic performance and individual lives. As the role of the state has grown, so has the issue of the division of control between government and taxpayers. When the state takes control of more of the income that people earn, their capacity to pursue their own interests in their own way is diminished. This has important implications for individual well-being and the maintenance of a thriving and creative civic culture.

We here provide some selected indicators of the scope of government action and national economic performance under three headings: Government Expenditure; Inflation, Taxation and Earnings; and Labour Market and Employment.

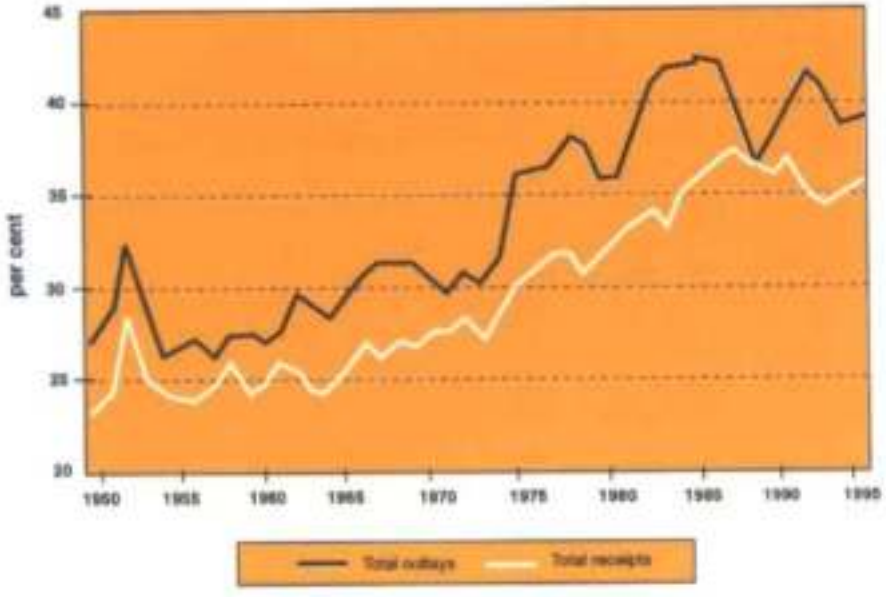
## Government Expenditure

The figures in this section show how an increased rate of state spending has outstripped the rate of growth of the economy and also the rate of increase in revenue. The results are an increasing share of Gross Domestic Product (see definition below) devoted to government activity, and also a major, and relatively recent, increase in public debt.

In the absence of effective institutional constraints on government activity, a belief that the government can deliver good social outcomes if sufficient resources are allocated is naturally going to lead to increasing government activity (as there is always more 'good' to be done). The desire for the benefits of government largesse outstrips the willingness to pay for it, hence the tendency for outlays to increase faster than revenues.

### 3.1 Public Sector Outlays and Receipts 1950 - 1995

per cent to GDP




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)**

The measure, at market or quasi-market prices, of total production of goods and services in a given time period not taking into account wearing down of capital assets and not including goods and services used up in the production process.

### Public Sector Outlays and Receipts

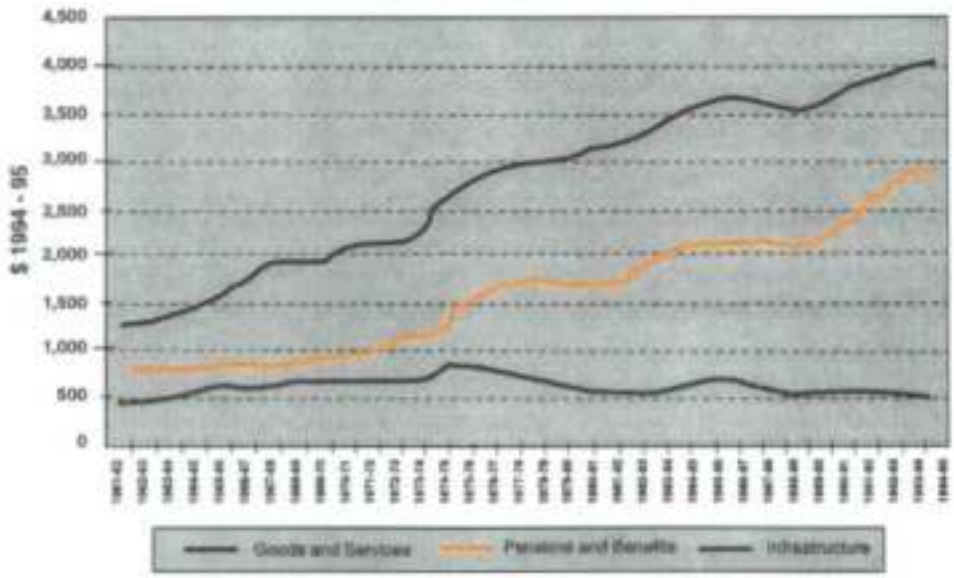
The upward trends for outlays and receipts in Figure 3.1 reflect the fact that government revenue and expenditure have grown faster than the economy and have consequently increased as a proportion of GDP. The same tendency is shown in Figure 3.4. Outlays have generally exceeded receipts, with the difference being made up by borrowing either at home or abroad (see Figure 3.3).

### Growth in Real Government Expenditure per Head

Figure 3.2 further illustrates the trend shown in Figure 3.1, with government use of resources growing faster than the economy and the population, after adjusting for inflation. Investment in infrastructure per head has remained relatively static in contrast with the increased expenditure on goods and services (mostly services), pensions and benefits.

**3.2 Growth in Real Government 1961 - 1995**

Expenditure per Head




Source: M. Warby

**Net Foreign Liabilities**

Figure 3.3 shows the trend for borrowing by government (official liabilities) and the private sector (non-official liabilities). The break in the line at 1980 reflects a move from assessment of liabilities at book value to assessment at market value.

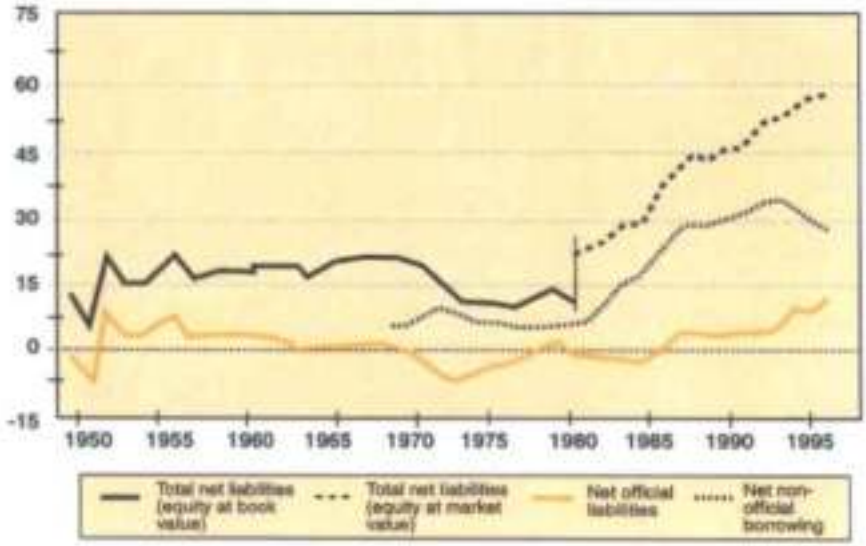
Since 1788, Australia has been a consistent net importer of investment capital, largely financed by borrowings or sale of assets. Since the early 1980s, Australia's use of imported capital has grown faster than the economy, thus increasing the ratio of foreign liabilities to GDP. Since 1991, the government contribution to the total net liabilities has increased while the private sector component has declined.

If borrowed capital is used for wealth-producing assets, then a rise in debt is not, in itself, a major problem. For this reason, concerns about foreign ownership are best tackled by encouraging higher rates of saving (to generate more investment capital from domestic sources).

Public sector borrowings are more of a policy issue than are private sector borrowings because the former are obligations imposed on taxpayers regardless of their desires. In addition, public sector borrowings are not subject to the discipline of possible bankruptcy which applies to the private sector.

**3.3 Net Foreign Liabilities 1950 - 1995**

per cent to GDP




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

### Comparative Growth of Real GDP, Outlays and Taxes Per Head

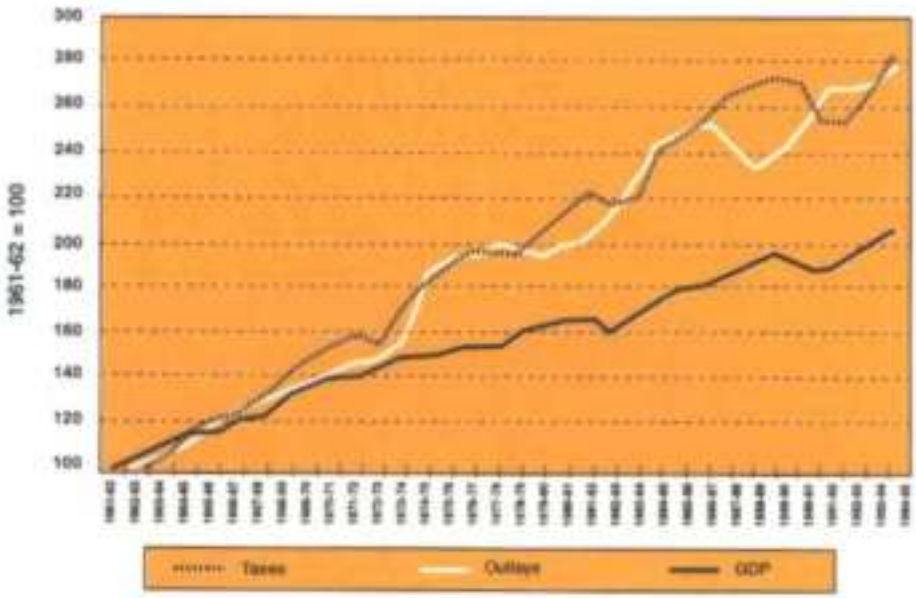
Figure 3.4 summarises some of the information in the previous figures and shows government expenditure (and tax revenue) almost tripling per person while the size of the economy (GDP) has only doubled per person, after allowing for inflation.

Whatever benefits arise from public expenditure, there is a tendency for the margin of benefit to diminish as the level of taxation and expenditure rises. The social cost of taxation rises as taxes rise due to:

- Increasing compliance costs for taxpayers and enterprises.
- Increasing administrative costs for government.
- Reduced incentives for effort and enterprise.
- Lowered economic activity as increased costs and lowered income make potential transactions uneconomic.

Accordingly, the benefits of each extra unit of expenditure tend to fall as expenditure rises. A recent study by the International Monetary Fund suggests that the benefit of further expenditure can fail to match its cost once government expenditure rises above between 20% to 30% of GDP. Figure 3.1 shows that Australian government expenditure was well above 40% of GDP during the 1980s and has been above 30% since the mid 1960s.

**3.4 Comparative Growth of Real GDP, Outlays and Taxes per Head 1961 - 1995**




Source: M. Warby

# Inflation, Taxation and Earnings

The figures in this section show why the combination of inflation and taxation policy has created problems for savings and wealth creation in recent decades.

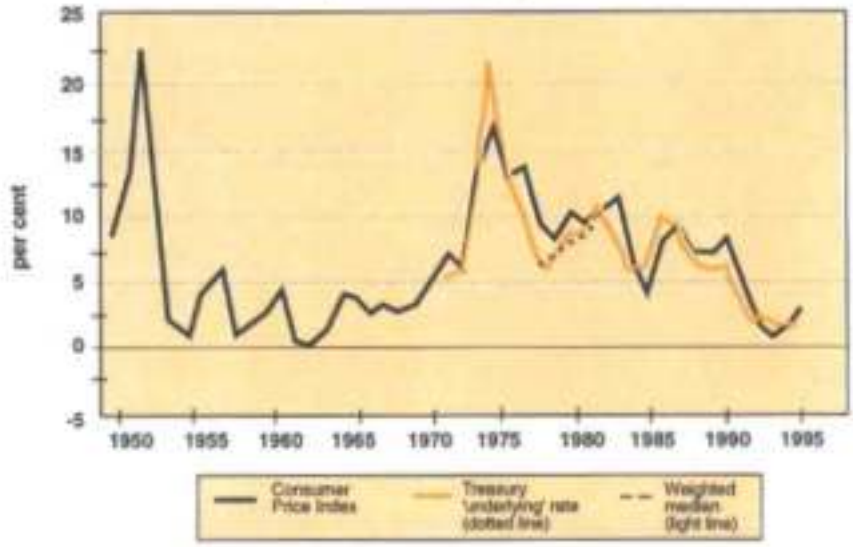
Inflation may be defined as a general rise in the price of goods and services; or as a situation where money is relatively plentiful in relation to the supply of goods and services so that their prices are driven upwards. Inflation is thus a 'monetary' phenomenon, where the amount of currency in circulation is 'excessive' and loans are readily available. It is a 'tax' on the holding of money, which loses value relative to goods and services.

Figure 3.5 shows the history of inflation in Australia as measured by percentage changes in consumer prices since 1950. The sudden rise in 1951 reflects the huge increase in wool prices during the Korean War, the sudden increase in wealth as a result and the rise in prices as demand for goods suddenly increased. Inflation then subsided after this shock until the 1970s when high rates of inflation became entrenched for the next 20 years before being brought under control in recent years.

Under a progressive taxation system (such as we have in Australia) and inflationary conditions, nominal (money) incomes rise to match increasing prices, but the taxpayer moves into a higher tax bracket. Inflation can then be a kind of tax magnifier, and thus, although nominal incomes may be higher, actual purchasing power may be reduced even if money incomes keep pace with inflation.

**3.5 Consumer Prices 1950 - 1995**

per cent change




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

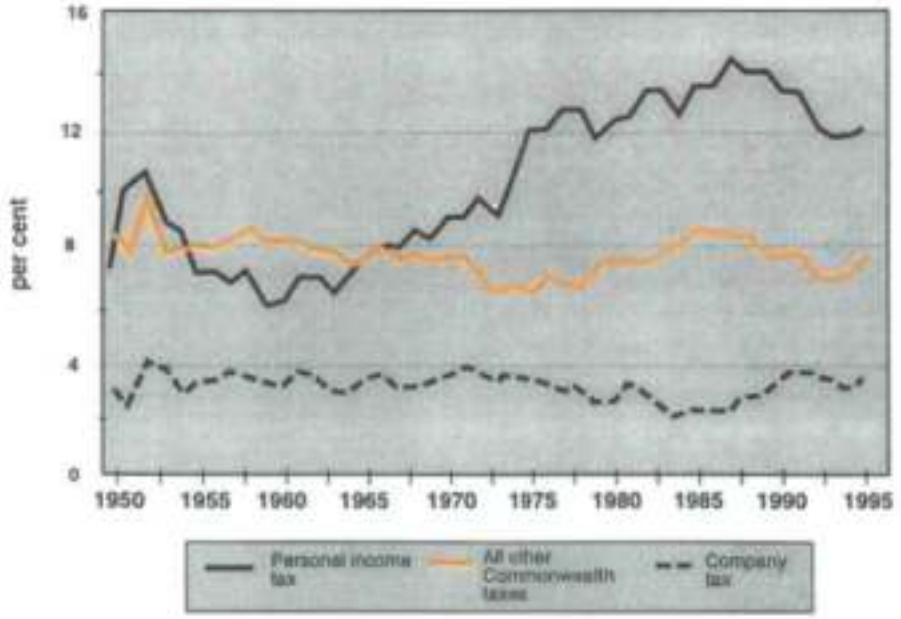
Inflation is therefore one of the reasons for the growth of personal income tax as a percentage of GDP shown in Figure 3.6. More generally, inflation has a variety of malign effects upon the economy such as:

- Distorting investment towards assets such as real estate, jewellery and antiques that remain 'stores of value'.
- Attacking the value of savings.
- Making borrowing more rational than saving.
- Tending to impoverish those on fixed incomes.

Growth in revenue in excess of economic growth (see above) has been largely financed through growth in personal income tax. Figure 3.6 shows that personal income tax has doubled in proportion to GDP since 1960, even after the fall from 1987, which is partly a reflection of recession.

**3.6 Commonwealth Taxation 1950 - 1995**

per cent to GDP

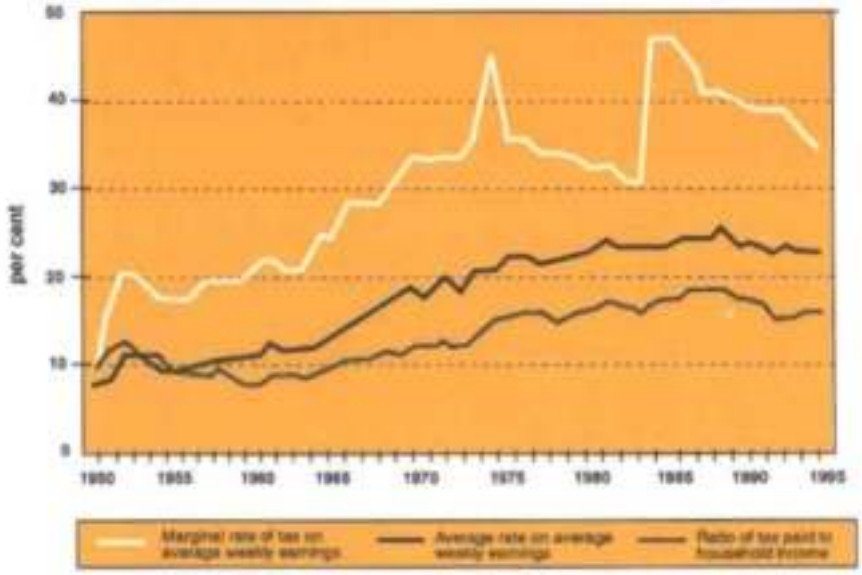



Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**Rates of Personal Income Tax**

The two lower lines in Figure 3.7 show that personal income tax rose faster than household income and average weekly earnings until the late 1980s. The periodic cuts in marginal taxes (shown by the upper line) have still left rates on average earnings at very high levels by pre-1965 standards. As long as government spending continues to rise faster than the economy or personal incomes there will be pressure for increased taxation (or borrowing).

## 3.7 Rates of Personal Income Tax 1950 - 1995




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

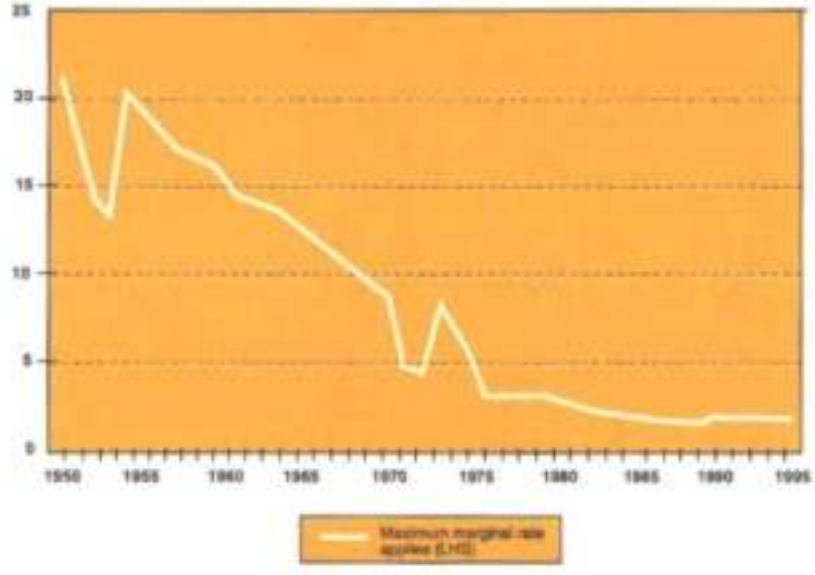
### Threshold for Top Marginal Tax Rate

Figure 3.8 shows that in 1950 it was necessary to earn twenty times average weekly earnings to attract the top marginal tax rate. By 1995 the top marginal tax rate came into effect at less than twice the average weekly earnings wage.

Because this trend reduces the proportion of earnings in the wage earner's hands, it also reduces the incentive for additional work or effort at relatively low levels of earnings. Additionally, it increases the attractiveness of tax minimisation schemes and so diverts resources from wealth creation and productive employment to tax minimisation.

**3.8 Threshold for Top Marginal Tax Rate 1950 - 1995**

ratio to average male wages




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**Wage Rates**

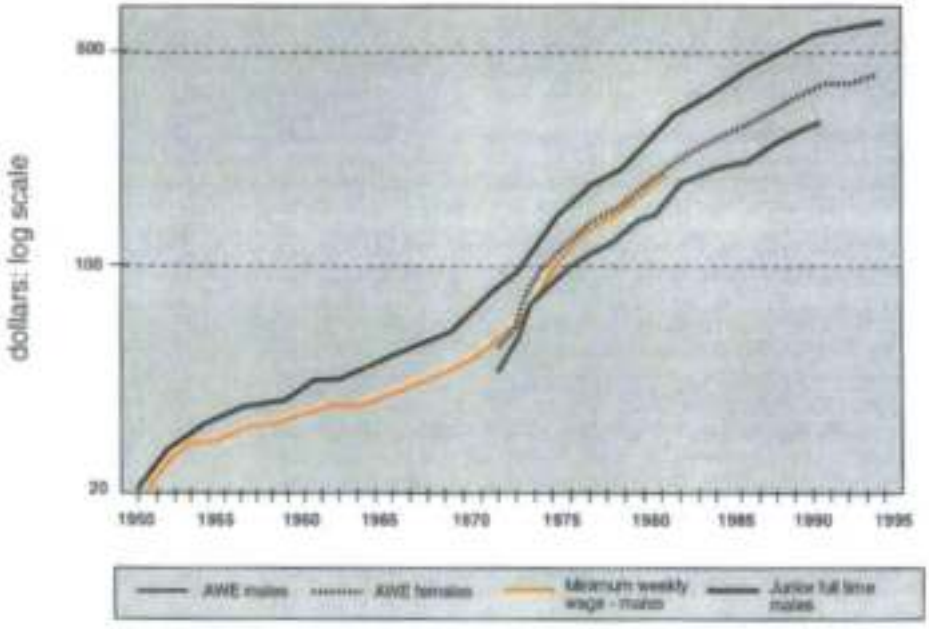
Figure 3.9 shows that average money wages have risen steadily since 1950. Although this partly reflects a real increase in national wealth, it also reflects the merely nominal increase in wage rates that followed inflation (see the comments on Figure 3.5).

Average female earnings are still not as high as male average earnings because:

- Males are more likely to be in full-time work.
- Males are more likely to be in jobs with higher risk premiums.
- Males have, on average, higher educational qualifications (though this is changing).
- Males have, on average, longer experience in the workforce (this is also changing).

**3.9 Wage Rates**

dollars: log scale



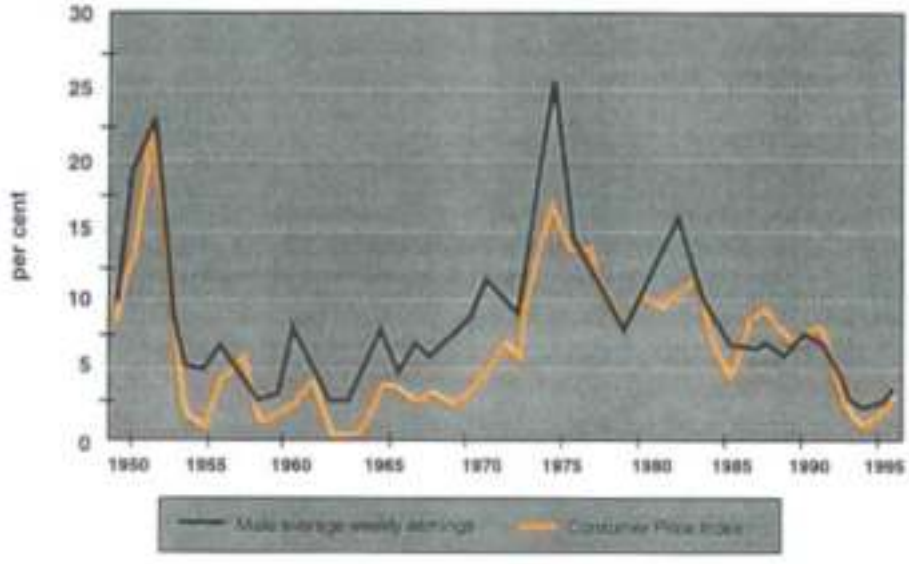

Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

### Average Weekly Earnings and Consumer Price Index

As show in Figure 3.10 from 1955 to 1975 average earnings increased faster than inflation, leading to rising real average incomes. The two have tended to move in line since 1975, with some periods of declining real wages in the late 1980s, a period which also saw high employment growth.

**3.10 Average Weekly Earnings and Consumer Price Index 1950 - 1995**

per cent change




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

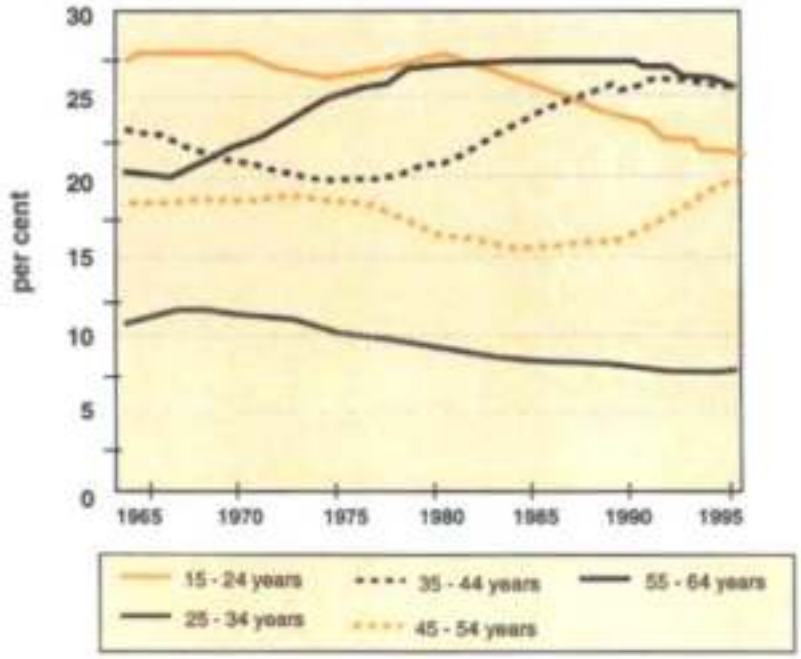
# Labour Market and Employment

### Labour Force by Age

The labour force consists of employed people plus those actively looking for work. Figure 3.11 shows that young adults are less represented in the labour force due to increased participation in education since the 1970s (as described in Section 1 of this book). The figure also shows an effect of early retirement in the 55-64 age group, and shifts in other age groups largely driven by an increase in labour force participation by women.

**3.11 Labour Force by Age 1965 - 1995**

per cent of total




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**Participation Rates by Sex**

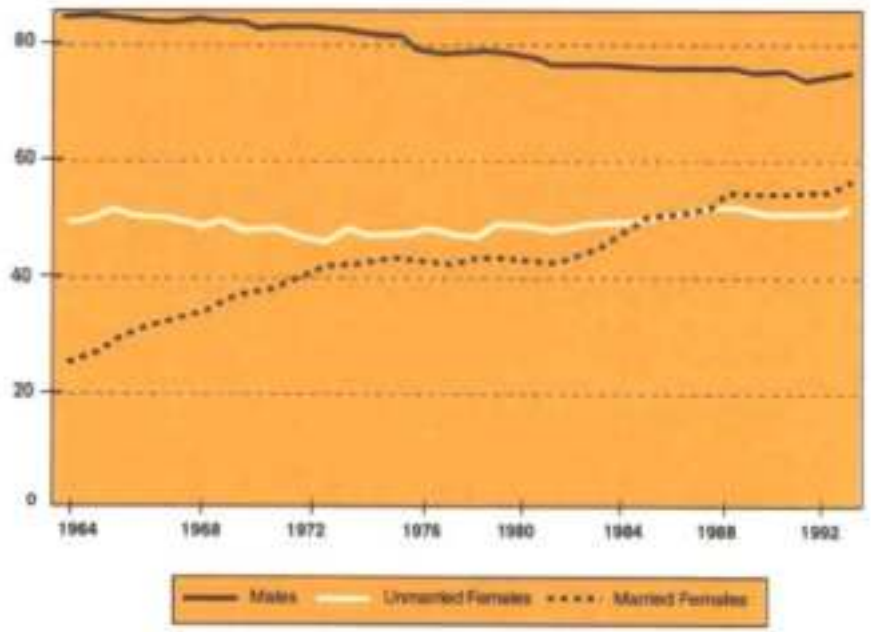
The labour force participation rate is the percentage of the population 15 or over who are in the labour force, that is, employed or looking for work. Among the reasons for absence from the labour force are:

- Retirement.
- Engagement in child raising, housekeeping or education.
- Ceasing to look for work.

The most significant line in Figure 3.12 is that which shows that married women have more than doubled their participation rate since 1964 (25% to 55%). During that time the participation rate of men has declined from 84% to 73%.

**3.12 Participation Rate by Sex 1964 - 1995**

per cent

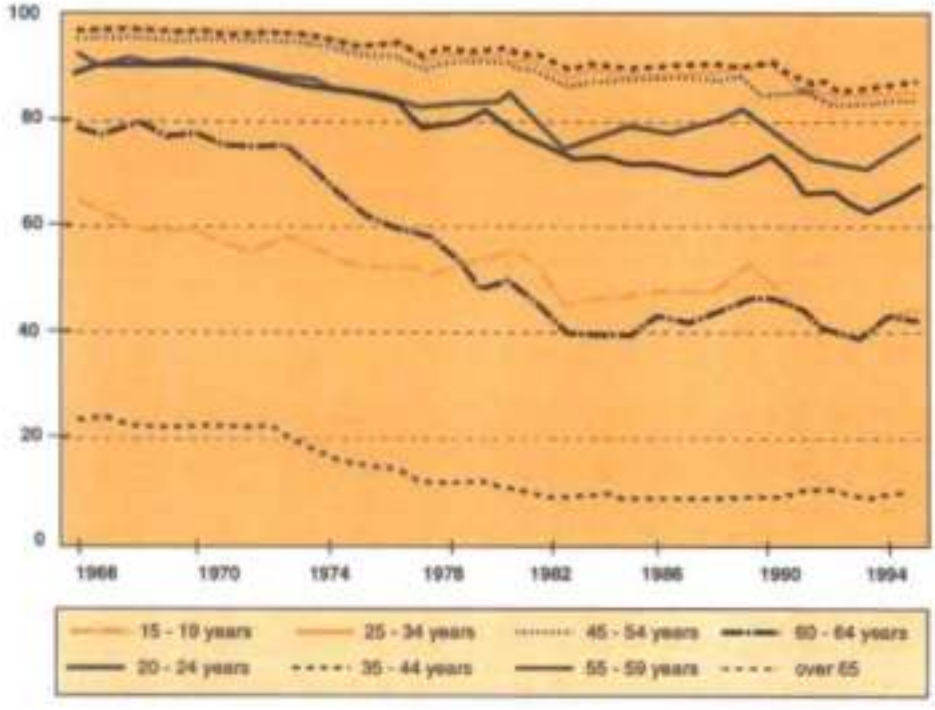



Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**Employment to Population Ratios by Age: Males**

Falling teenage full-time employment and increased early retirement are noticeable (in Figure 3.13) from the significant decline in 15-19 and 55+ participation rates. However, there has been a general decline in the male employment to population ratio, reflecting rising unemployment.

## 3.13 Employment to Population Ratios by Age: Males 1966 - 1995

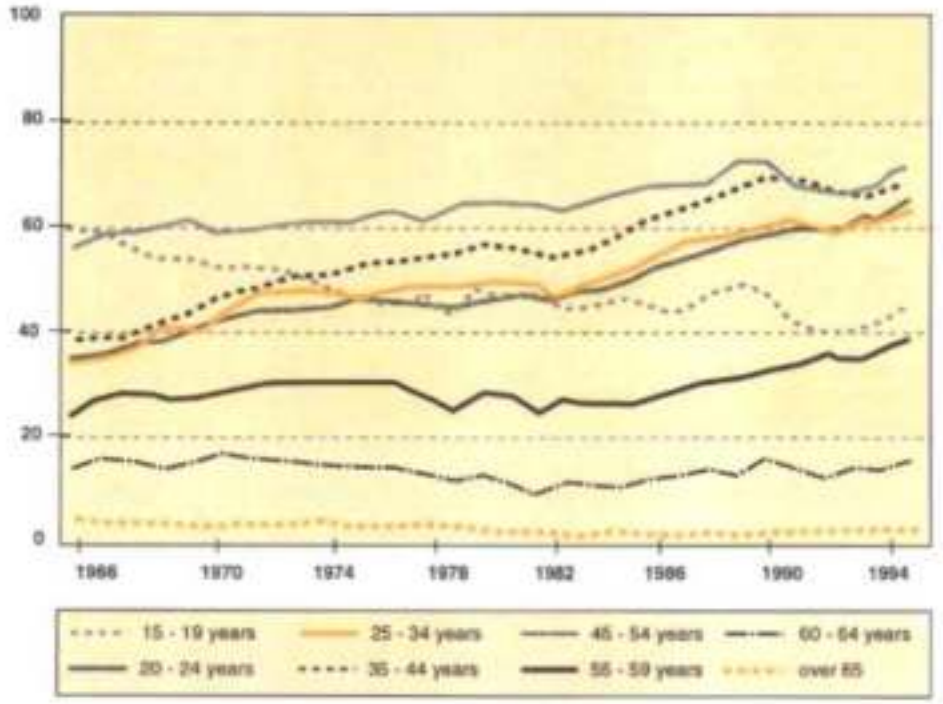



Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**Employment to Population Ratios by Age: Females**

The general increase in female participation has lead to rising female employment, as seen in Figure 3.14. However, declining teenage employment is once again clear. Employment rates have not increased as much as participation; leading to rising female unemployment as well (though not as high as for males).

**3.14 Employment to Population Ratios by Age: Females 1966 - 1995**



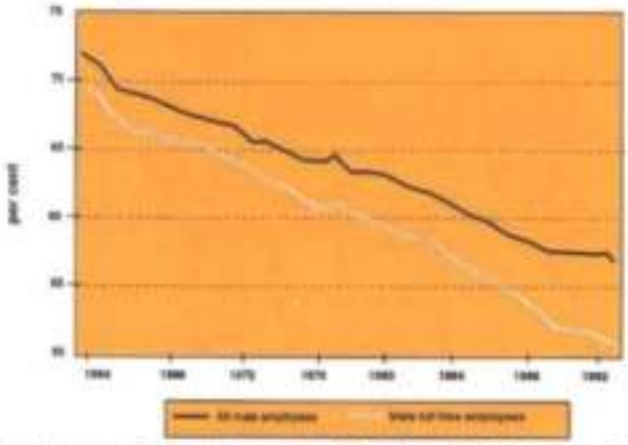

Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

### Shares of Employment

The rising importance of female employment has meant an increasing female share of total employment, as shown in Figures 3.15 and 3.16. This has been particularly noticeable in the rise of part-time employment. The growing importance of service industries has fostered increased use of part-time employment, which has risen much faster than full-time employment. The increased use of casual labour, as a way of escaping some of the regulatory restrictions in the labour market and to allow more flexible use of labour, has also encouraged part-time employment.

**3.15 Shares of Employment: Male 1964 - 1995**

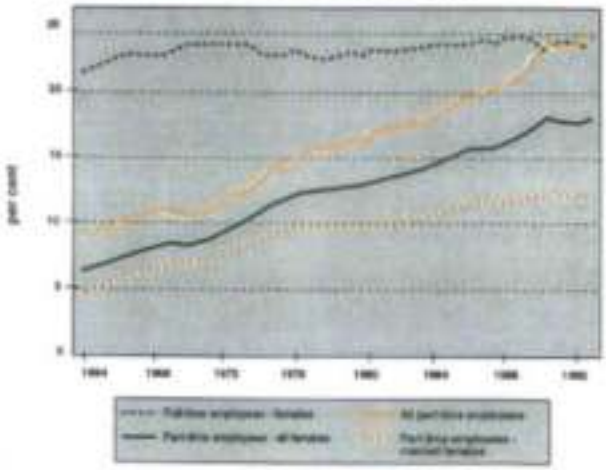
per cent of total employment



Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

**3. 16 Shares of Employment: All Part-time and Female 1964 - 1995**

per cent of total employment



Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

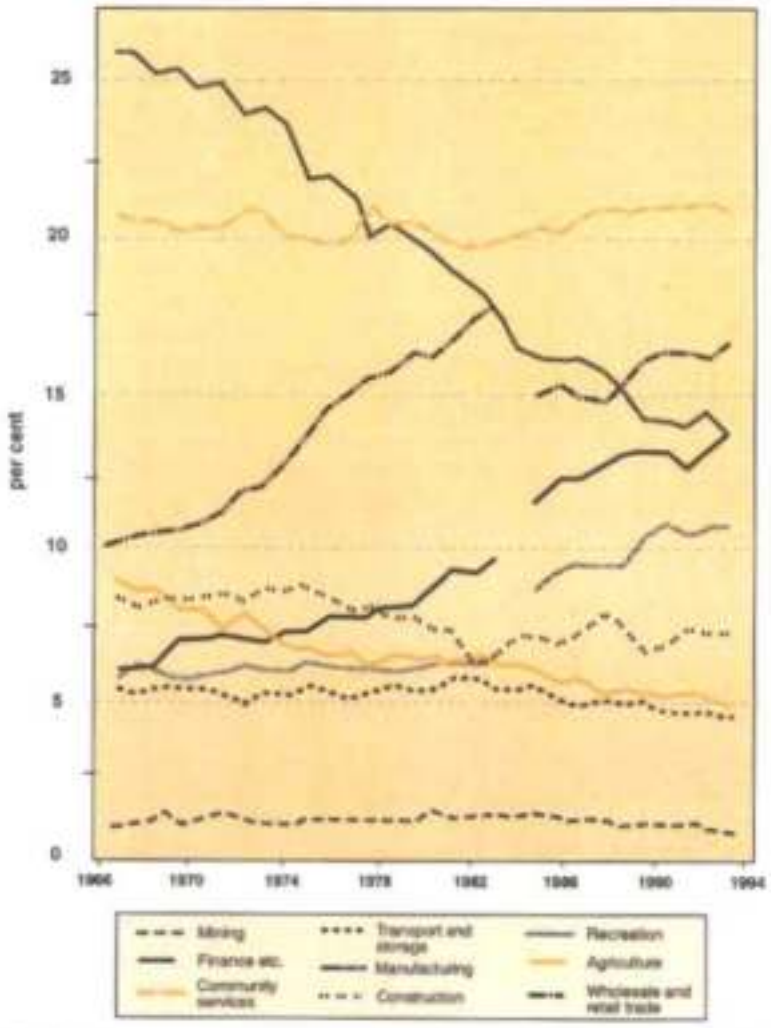
### Employment by Industry

The decreasing importance of manufacturing employment in the latter part of this century parallels the fall in agricultural employment during the industrial revolution. As increased use of capital (through automation, etc.) leads to greater manufacturing productivity per worker and therefore a smaller manufacturing workforce, the service industries have grown in importance as employers – particularly finance, recreation and community services.

Some of the lines in Figure 3.17 are broken due to changes of definition in 1985.

**3.17 Employment by Industry 1966 - 1995**

per cent of total employment




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

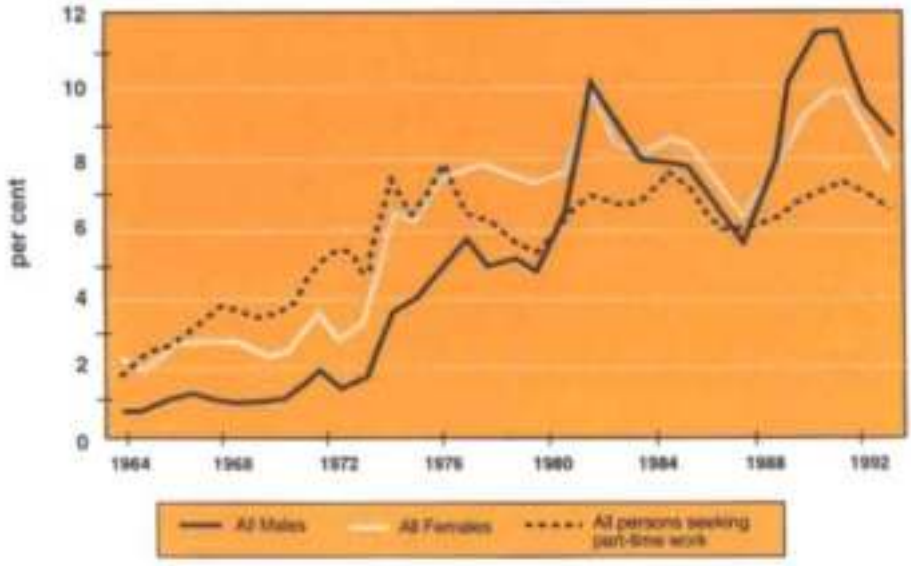
**Unemployment Rates by Sex**

Figure 3.18 illustrates the poor functioning of the Australian labour market since the early 1970s. The demand for labour has failed to keep pace with supply, leading to rising unemployment. Several contributing factors can be identified:

- Wage levels that, in the case of unskilled workers in particular, are above the level where the supply of labour matches demand for labour.
- The high level of non-wage costs which add to the cost of labour. These include worker's compensation and other insurances, superannuation contributions, special allowances, etc.
- Limited scope for flexibility in negotiating wages and conditions.
- Increased risk in hiring staff due to such regulatory burdens as unfair dismissal proceedings and employer liability for employee actions.
- Costs of compliance with regulatory demands such as affirmative action programmes and reporting.
- Mismatches between skills possessed and skills required. Changing industry structure means that incentives to invest in new skills are particularly important. Australian labour market structures, with narrowly defined award categories and limited 'skill premiums' impose rigidities which inhibit such investment.

**3.18 Unemployment Rates by Sex 1964 - 1995**

per cent of labour force




Source: R.A. Foster, *Australian Economic Statistics, 1949-50 to 1994-95*, Reserve Bank of Australia

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## Statistical Indicators of Australia's Well-being

Lucy Sullivan Barry Maley Michael Warby

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It tells the bad news – rising crime, increased family breakdown, more unemployment, higher taxes – but also points to the successes of increased life expectancy, improving health and rising average incomes.

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**Dr Lucy Sullivan** is a Research Fellow at the CIS.
**Barry Maley** is Senior Fellow at the CIS and Director of the *Taking Children Seriously* program.
**Michael Warby** is Public Affairs Manager at the Tasman Institute.

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