

Year.					Marriages.	Legitimate Births.	Proportion of Births to every Marriage solemnised in the Preceding Year
1900	...	...	...	...	5,860	18,640	3·41
1901	...	...	...	...	6,095	19,554	3·34
1902	...	...	...	...	6,394	19,734	3·23
1903	...	...	...	...	6,748	20,835	3·26
1904	...	...	...	...	6,983	21,737	3·22
1905	...	...	...	...	7,200	22,600	3·24
1906	...	...	...	...	7,592	23,120	3·21
1907	...	...	...	...	8,192	23,937	3·15
1908	...	...	...	...	...	24,835	3·03

If the average result be taken out for the ten years 1889–98, it will be found to represent 4·36 births to a marriage. Dealing similarly with the figures for 1899–1908 the result is an average of 3·26, so that regarded annually or decennially there is a decided fall to be observed.

New Zealand had in 1880 the highest birth-rate in Australasia (40·78) ; in 1900 the case was reversed ; but in 1908 the New Zealand rate was higher than that of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

The movement over ten years is calculated as under :—

Birth-rates per 1,000 of Population.

Country.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Queensland ...	27·31	30·21	28·53	27·89	24·62	27·13	25·92	26·31	26·98	26·99
New South Wales ...	27·34	27·43	27·78	27·20	25·41	26·81	26·79	27·12	27·22	26·86
Victoria ...	26·71	25·82	25·77	25·23	24·46	24·65	24·83	25·14	25·16	24·71
South Australia ...	25·51	25·78	25·39	24·85	23·43	24·70	23·82	23·54	23·82	24·59
Western Australia ...	30·64	31·46	30·34	30·27	30·26	30·33	30·29	30·01	29·40	29·25
Tasmania ...	25·98	28·25	28·60	29·23	28·62	29·60	29·33	29·82	29·50	30·90
New Zealand ...	25·12	25·60	26·34	25·89	26·61	26·94	27·22	27·08	27·30	27·45

Although New Zealand had in 1899 the lowest birth-rate in Australasia, the rate for 1908 was higher than the average for the Commonwealth, 26·35 per 1,000 of population.

Sexes of Children born.

The figures show that during each year since 1886 there has been a preponderance of births of male children. It would appear, however, that this excess of male births is not sufficient to compensate for the heavier mortality which occurs among that sex. Of the total population in 1871 there were 70·52 females to every 100 males, but in 1908 the proportion of the females to 100 males had risen to 88·24.

Year.	Number of Births of		Proportion of Births of Males to every 100 Females.
	Males.	Females.	
1888	9,641	9,261	104·1
1889	9,514	8,943	106·4
1890	9,293	8,985	103·4
1891	9,377	8,896	105·4
1892	9,101	8,775	103·7
1893	9,310	8,877	104·9
1894	9,472	9,056	104·6
1895	9,493	9,053	104·9
1896	9,511	9,101	104·5
1897	9,600	9,137	105·1
1898	9,615	9,340	102·9
1899	9,724	9,111	106·7
1900	10,107	9,439	107·1
1901	10,471	10,020	104·5
1902	10,653	10,002	106·5
1903	11,217	10,612	105·7
1904	11,762	11,004	106·9
1905	12,109	11,573	104·6
1906	12,397	11,855	104·6
1907	12,835	12,259	104·7
1908	13,369	12,571	106·3