

SNAPSHOT

25 Years of Change: Australia in 1983 compared to 2008

It was 1983, Generation Y's weren't born, the Xers were unlabelled, music came on vinyl and Time's Person of the Year was Ronald Reagan. With the latest Census results out, social researcher and demographer Mark McCrindle crunches the numbers:

	1983	2008
National population:	15 million	21.2 million
While the population has increased 40% in 25 years to increase by another 40% will now take 40 years.		
National median age:	29	37
Since the 2001 census the number of people aged Under 15 has increased by 100,000 but the number of people aged over 65 has increased by 500,000.		
Largest age group:	12 year old	37 year old
The most common Australian is the 36 year old. Interestingly there are 9000 more women than men at this age.		
Median age at 1 st marriage:	F 23 M 26	F 28 M 30
There are fewer Australians married as a percentage of population than ever before however Australian couples are still in favour of marriage - they are just delaying it. Of all couples, 85% are married and of couples with dependent children, 90% are married.		
Median age of mother at birth of 1 st child:	26	31
An Australian mother has had on average 2 children. However an Australian woman aged over 60 has had on average 3 children.		
Percentage of mothers aged under 30 when having 1 st baby:	90%	30%
Women are starting families later than ever, having fewer children than ever and returning to work after childbirth sooner than ever.		
Total fertility rate:	2.1	1.8
By the mid 1980's Australia has slipped below replacement rate (2 children per woman) and now migration not natural increase keeps Australia growing.		
Average weekly earnings:	\$324	\$1000
We are earning 3 times the salary of 25 years ago but houses cost on average 8 times that of 1983.		
Unemployment rate:	7%	4%
This figure is more varied than it looks: in 1983 unemployment was rising fast and within 2 years it had broken 10% while in 2008 it is falling.		
Median House price:	\$60,000	\$500,000
Sydney was the housing leader by a long way in 1983 where the average house cost \$80,000 compared to Melbourne's \$50,000.		
Weeks of work to buy average house:	220	460
In real terms housing has more than doubled in its purchase cost.		
Average new mortgage:	\$29,000	\$318,000
As housing has increased so have mortgages. However today home buyers borrow a far higher percentage of the value of their home than in 1983.		