



**stats sa**

Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa, ISibalo House, Koch Street, Salvokop, Pretoria, 0002  
www.statssa.gov.za, info@statssa.gov.za, Tel +27 12 310 8911

## **STATISTICAL RELEASE**

### **P0307**

# Marriages and Divorces

2024

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**Scope:** This release is based on information on marriages registered and divorces granted in South Africa covering January to December 2024 calendar year.

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Tshwaro Gae  
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IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS



**PREFACE**

This statistical release presents information on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions that were registered in 2024 in the South African national marriage registration system maintained by the national Department of Home Affairs (DHA). It highlights trends in the number of marriages and unions as well as demographic and other dynamics amongst married partners.

The release also reports on divorces that were granted in 2024 by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ). It focuses on trends in divorces, demographic and occupational characteristics of the plaintiffs, age at the time of divorce, duration of marriage at the time of divorce and divorces involving couples with children less than 18 years. The information on marriages and divorces is important for understanding the formation and dissolution of marriage relationships and its implications on the household structure and composition.

At the time of publication not all divorces that were concluded in 2024 reached Stats SA. The divorce figures are likely to be revised in the next statistical release to accommodate records for divorce forms received late.



**Risenga Maluleke**  
**Statistician-General**

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background

There are three main sources of marriage and divorce statistics in South Africa; namely, those compiled from population censuses; household-based sample surveys and administrative data (i.e. those compiled from civil registration systems and administrative records). The data from these sources provides information on different aspects of marriages and divorces in the country. Census and survey data are by nature subjective because they are based on self-reporting and provide cross-sectional data on individuals' marital status (never married, married, divorced, widowed, living together like husband and wife/ partners, etc.). Marriages and divorces in this report cover different types of marriages and associated divorces that took place at different periods in people's lives but registered/granted in 2024. The mid-year population estimates are used to calculate crude rates in the report (P0302: Mid-year population estimates, 2025).

Unlike in census and survey data, registered marriages and divorces data are based on the continuous recording of these events as they take place. Not all marriages are registered in South Africa, as some are not recognised by the law of the country. The three types of marriages recognised by the law include civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions; Muslim marriages are recognised as part of customary marriages. This data should be part of the analysis in the near future. The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) is responsible for managing registered marriages and unions under the following legislations:

- Civil marriages are administered through the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961) as amended, and its associated regulations.
- Customary marriages are governed by the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) which came into effect on 15 November 2000.
- The Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006) which came into operation on 30 November 2006, governs civil unions (relationships between same-sex couples that are legally recognised by state authorities). The act accommodates persons who cannot or wish not to enter into a marriage under the Marriage Act, 1961.

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) publishes data on marriages for South African citizens and permanent residents that are collected through the civil registration systems of the DHA. Before 2008, the data in the annual release of *Marriages and divorces* (statistical release P0307) covered only civil marriages. However in 2008, Stats SA started publishing available data on customary marriages and civil unions. The registration of customary marriages and civil unions began in 2003 and 2007, respectively.

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) and Office of the Chief Justice (OCJ) are responsible for handling matters relating to the dissolution of registered marriages (civil and customary) and civil unions. This responsibility of the department is mandated through:

- The Divorce Act, 1979 (Act No.70 of 1979), as amended; and
- The Jurisdiction of Regional Courts Amendment Act, 2008 (Act No. 31 of 2008), which came into effect on 9 August 2010.

Data on divorces are obtained from various regional and high courts that deal with divorce matters. The data are based on successful divorce cases that have been issued with a decree of divorce. Divorce cases came from marriages that were registered in different years as well as divorce cases that were filed in different years but whose divorce decrees were granted in 2024. It should be noted that although both the data on the marriages and divorces are collected the same year, the data sets are not linked to each other.

### 1.2. Objective of this statistical release

The marriages and divorces statistical release are published annually by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), based on the marriages data collected by DHA while information for divorces came from the DoJ&CD and OCJ through divorce courts, Divorce statistics are based on the number of divorce forms that had reached Stats SA in 2024. The objective of the statistical release is to provide information on marriages and unions registered; and divorces granted in South Africa in 2024. The release also outlines trends spanning for 10-year period (2015–2024) and differentials for marriages and divorces occurred in 2024.

### **1.3. Scope and coverage of this statistical release**

This release is based on administrative data on civil marriages, customary marriages and civil unions from DHA and divorces data from all magistrates and high courts that deals with divorce matters in South Africa. The focus is on marriages that occurred in various years but registered at the DHA in 2024 and divorce from cases that are granted by the courts in 2024. The divorce statistics is collected using standard structured questionnaire (Divorce Forms) prepared by Stats SA. In 2024, Stats SA received and processed 24 202 divorce forms. Marriages registered and divorces granted during the period 2015 to 2024 are also provided to show trends. This release excludes Muslim marriages which are also collected by the DHA and future report will include such as it is now recognised by the South African Law. Undocumented cases of abandonment or divorces that had been granted by religious or traditional authorities are not reported in the release.

## **2. Data and methods**

In this section, focus is placed on data sources, methods used in data processing and analysis. Procedures followed in assessment of the quality of data are also covered.

### **2.1 Data source**

This statistical release is based on administrative records from registered marriages at DHA and divorces from courts through Stats SA divorce Form 07–04 that is completed when the divorce matter is finalised. The DHA uses Form DHA– 30 when registering marriages, Form DHA–31 is used by Foreign Nationals who are marrying South African citizen. Marriage involving minors need Form DHA–32 from the DHA, signed by parents or legal guardians. When Forms are completed, the marriage details will be recorded in the National Population Register.

It would be of interest to distinguish between first-time couples and those who had married before (i.e. divorcees, widows and widowers) and the type of marriage relationship in which they were in on the customary marriages and civil unions data. However, the information is not available on the data collected by DHA.

### **2.2 Data processing and analysis**

The processing of electronic data on marriages is completed at Stats SA. The stages of divorce data processing start with sorting the divorce Forms by the year the divorce is granted, province, court and the month of the divorce. The divorce Form is then captured into the Divorce Capturing System before the analysis can be done.

### **2.3 Assessment of the quality of data and limitations**

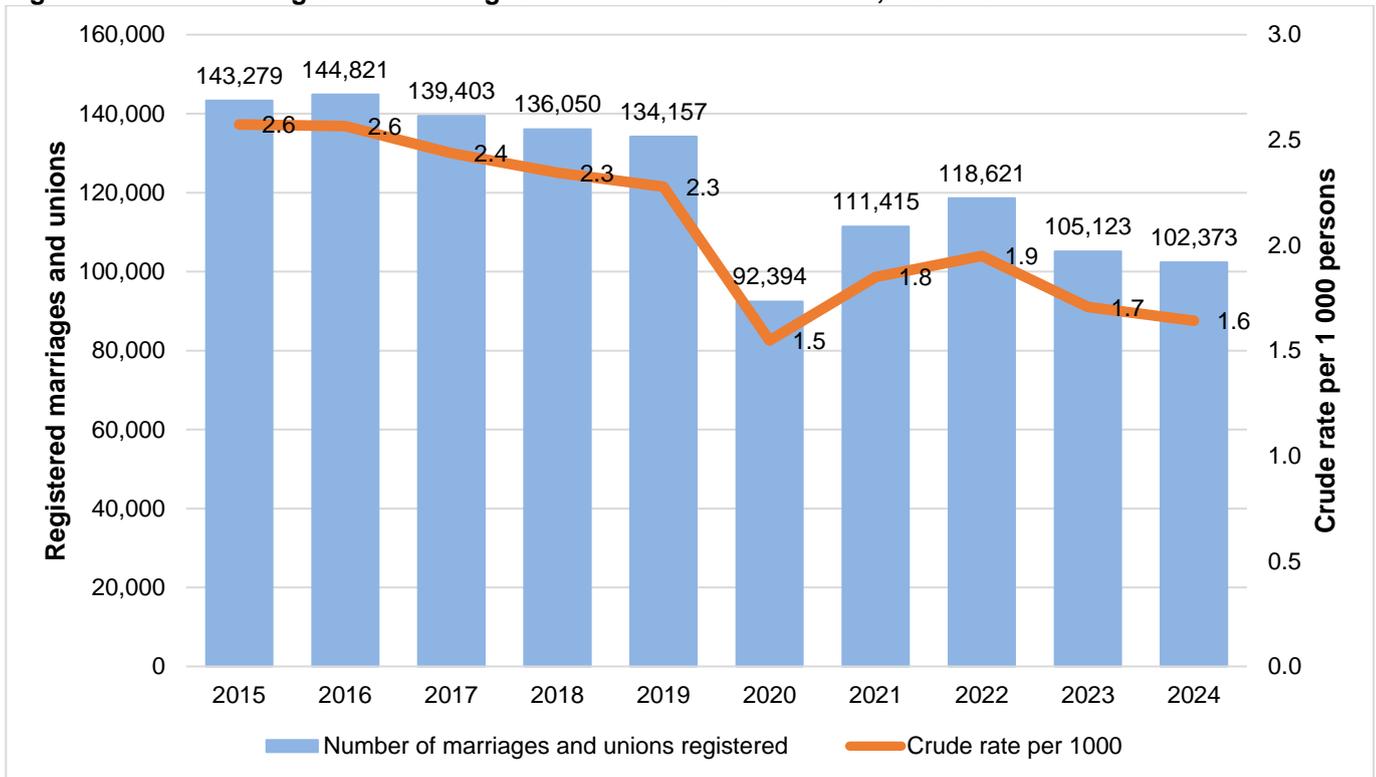
The importance of producing quality marriages and divorces statistics derived from civil registration system is that the information report on the time the event occurred and is the only source of these vital events available at national and provincial levels. Due to the few variables collected on married couples and divorcees, background information on couples and divorcees is limited. Therefore, the release focuses on presenting the demographic characteristics of married and divorced persons.

### 3. Registered marriages and unions

Figure 1 below shows that 102 373 marriages and unions were registered in 2024, a decrease of 40 906 (28,5%) from those registered in 2015. The 2024 figure of 102 373 marriages and unions show a decrease of 2,6% from the 105 123 records registered in 2023. The drop in the number of registered marriages in 2020 was significant due to Covid-19 pandemic that caused many couples to postpone weddings due to venue closures, gathering restrictions and health risks, although some opted for smaller ceremonies.

The crude marriage rate reflects the number of marriages and unions registered during the year per 1 000 people of the estimated resident population in South Africa. The crude marriage rate was 1,6 per thousand population in 2024, which fell by 1,0 per thousand population from the one in 2015. Between 2015 and 2019 the average crude rate was 2,4 per thousand population, it declined to 1,7 per thousand population in the post Covid 19 period (2021-2024).

**Figure 1: Number of registered marriages and unions in South Africa, 2015–2024**



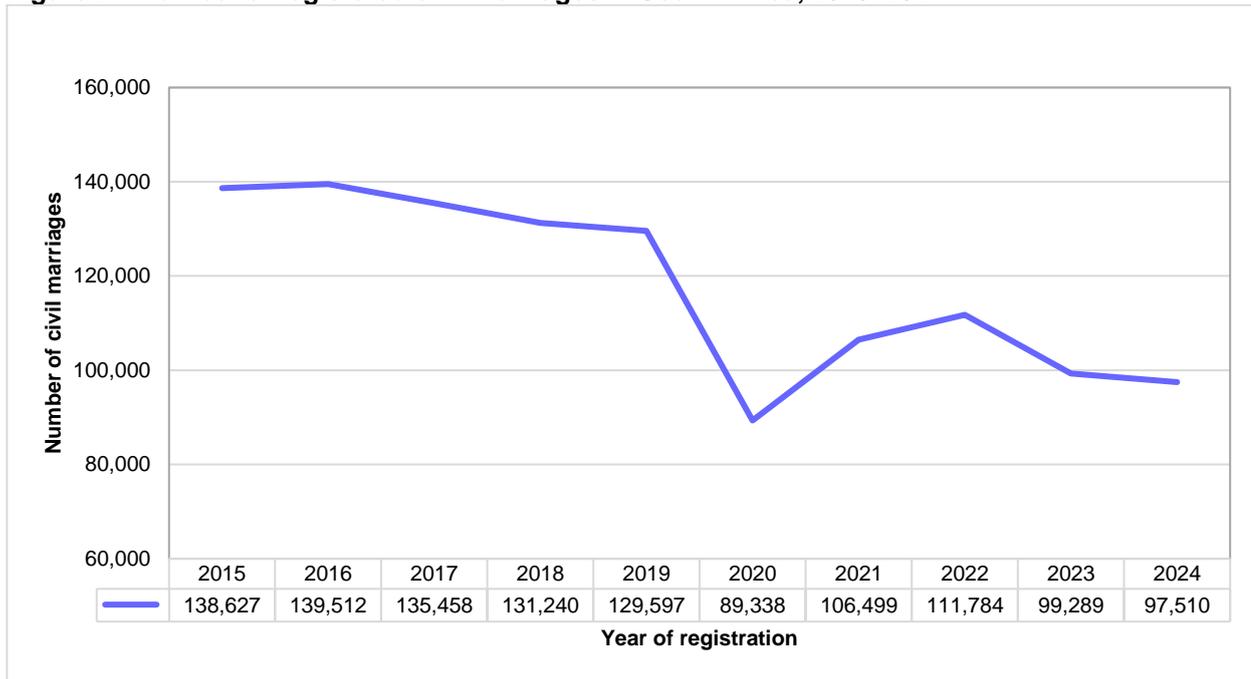
### 4. Types of marriages

#### 4.1. Civil marriages

##### 4.1.1. Trends in the registration of civil marriages (2015–2024)

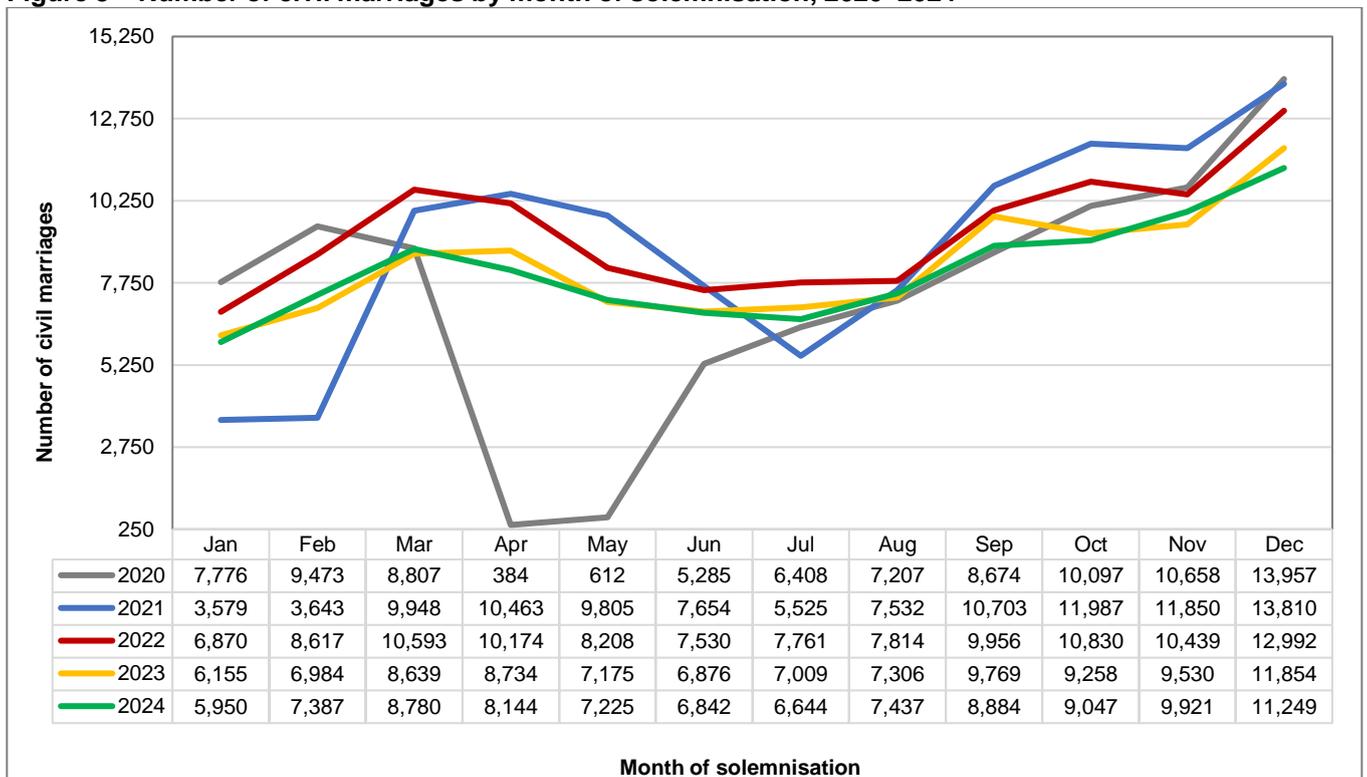
Information provided on Figure 2 on page 4, shows that 97 510 civil marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were registered at the DHA in 2024. The 2024 figure of 97 510 civil marriages shows a decrease of 1 779 (1,8%) from the 99 289 marriages registered in 2023. The figure further shows that the number of registered marriages consistently declined in the 10-year period (2015 to 2024) except for a slight increase of 0,6% between 2015 and 2016 and an increase of 5,0% between 2021 and 2022. During the period between 2015 and 2024, the highest number of marriages was recorded in 2016 (139 512) and the lowest number was recorded in 2020 (89 338).

**Figure 2 – Number of registered civil marriages in South Africa, 2015–2024**



The number of registered civil marriages by month of solemnisation between 2015 and 2024 are presented in Figure 3 below. It shows that seasonal variation in the registration of civil marriages shows that generally, warmer months (beginning from September and peaking in December) are the most popular months for solemnising civil marriages in South Africa. In 2024, the highest number of marriages [11 249 (11,5%)] took place in December and the lowest number of marriages, [5 950 (6,1%)] occurred in January. The national lockdown regulations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on marriage solemnisation between 2020 and 2021, hence the slightly different pattern for the two years.

**Figure 3 – Number of civil marriages by month of solemnisation, 2020–2024**



#### 4.1.2. Solemnisation of civil marriages

The Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961) requires that only licensed marriage officers solemnise civil marriages and issue a marriage certificate. Civil marriages are generally solemnised by civil marriage officers at DHA offices and by religious marriage officers at chapels or religious buildings. After a solemnisation ceremony, the marriage officer issues the couple with an abridged hand-written marriage certificate, at no cost, and submits the marriage register to the DHA office for registration and for the recording of the marriage particulars in the National Population Register (NPR).

Table 1 below shows the distribution of civil marriages registered in 2024 according to the way in which the marriage was solemnised. Under 'way of solemnisation', the terms: (i) 'DHA' is used for marriages solemnised by civil marriage officers and (ii) 'Religious' for marriages solemnised by priests/religious persons who are marriage officers. It is observed that more than half, 54 444 (55,8%) of the 97 510 marriages were solemnised by DHA marriage officers and 31 529 (32,3%) by 'Religious' rites. The type of solemnisation rite was not specified in 11 537 (11,8%) marriages. Table 1 further shows that 627 (0,6%) marriages of South African citizens and permanent residents were solemnised outside the borders of South Africa but subsequently registered in South Africa.

The table also provides information on provincial variations in marriage registrations. The province of registration is not necessarily the province of usual residence of the couple since couples could marry at any place of their choice. The results indicate that, in 2024, the highest number of marriages was registered in Gauteng [23 509 (24,1%)] followed by Western Cape [22 382 (23,0%)], the lowest being in Mpumalanga [3 080 (3,2%)]. Looking at ways of marriage solemnisation within each province, Limpopo had the highest proportion of marriages, 84,3% (5 121) solemnised by civil marriage officers. Western Cape recorded the highest proportion, 52,3% (11 707) of marriages solemnised by religious marriage officers. Wide differences of 'unspecified' way of solemnisation by province were noted. For example, 46,7% (1 439) of marriage in Mpumalanga had 'unspecified' method of solemnisation compared with 0,5% (21) in North West.

**Table 1 – Number and percentage distribution of civil marriages by province of marriage registration and way of solemnisation, 2024**

Province of registration	Grand Total	Way of solemnisation			%			
		DHA	Religious	Unspecified	Total	DHA	Religious	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>54 444</b>	<b>31 529</b>	<b>11 537</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>55,8</b>	<b>32,3</b>	<b>11,8</b>
Western Cape	22 382	9 613	11 707	1 062	100	42,9	52,3	4,7
Eastern Cape	8 481	4 663	2 498	1 320	100	55,0	29,5	15,6
Northern Cape	7 843	3 970	3 114	759	100	50,6	39,7	9,7
Free State	4 102	2 784	1 201	117	100	67,9	29,3	2,9
KwaZulu-Natal	16 991	11 446	2 546	2 999	100	67,4	15,0	17,7
North West	4 418	2 265	2 132	21	100	51,3	48,3	0,5
Gauteng	23 509	13 225	7 019	3 265	100	56,3	29,9	13,9
Mpumalanga	3 080	731	910	1 439	100	23,7	29,5	46,7
Limpopo	6 077	5 121	401	555	100	84,3	6,6	9,1
Outside RSA	627	626	1	-	100	99,8	0,2	0,0

### 4.1.3. Marital status and age differences at the time of civil marriage

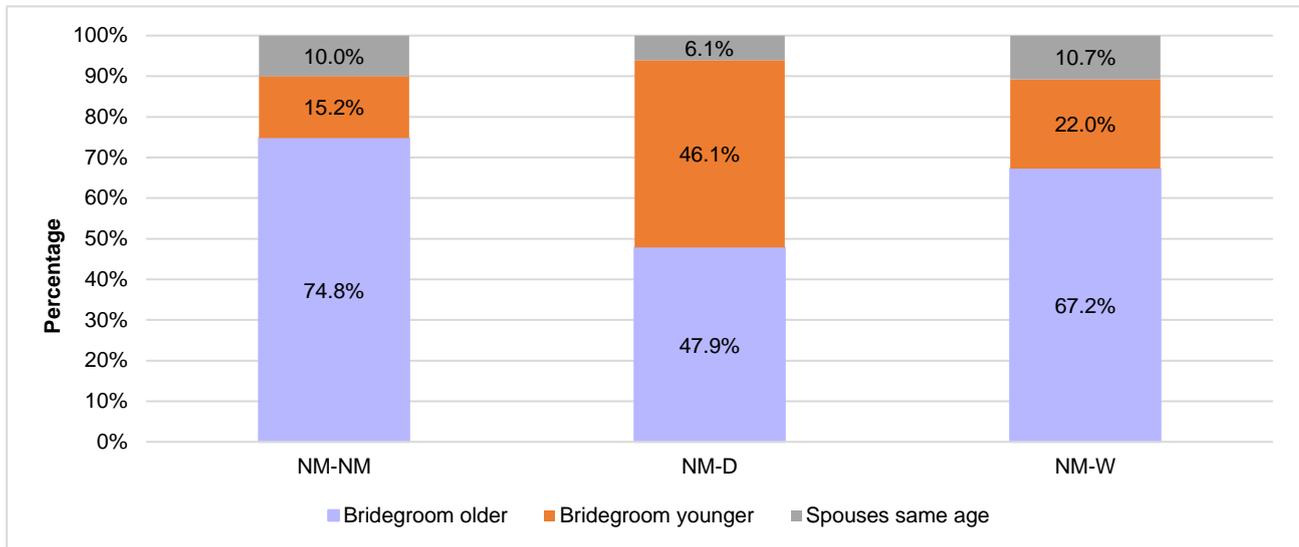
**Table 2 – Number of civil marriages by province of registration and marital status of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2024**

Province of registration	Bridegrooms/ Men					Brides/ Women				
	Never married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified	Total
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>77 463</b>	<b>4 187</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>15 402</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>82 431</b>	<b>2 859</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>11 965</b>	<b>97 510</b>
Western Cape	17 285	1 094	25	3 978	22 382	18 272	864	12	3 234	22 382
Eastern Cape	6 554	431	31	1 465	8 481	7 147	277	12	1 045	8 481
Northern Cape	6 510	364	80	889	7 843	7 003	161	25	654	7 843
Free State	3 178	202	14	708	4 102	3 386	145	20	551	4 102
KwaZulu-Natal	13 837	689	98	2 367	16 991	14 857	346	64	1 724	16 991
North West	3 543	209	8	658	4 418	3 760	155	5	498	4 418
Gauteng	18 461	857	101	4 090	23 509	19 355	679	82	3 393	23 509
Mpumalanga	2 461	123	16	480	3 080	2 604	90	9	377	3 080
Limpopo	5 122	199	73	683	6 077	5 553	92	12	420	6 077
Outside RSA	512	19	12	84	627	494	50	14	69	627

Table 2 above shows the number of civil marriages for bridegrooms and brides by marital status at the time of marriage in 2024 and province of registration. The table indicates that the majority of marriages in 2024 for both bridegrooms and brides were first-time marriages in all provinces. For bridegrooms, there were 77 463 (79,4%) never married men, 4 187 (4,3%) divorcees and 458 (0,5%) widowers. For the brides, there were 82 431 (84,5%) never married women whilst 2 859 (2,9%) were divorcees and 255 (0,3%) were widows. The marital status of 15 402 (15,8%) bridegrooms and 11 965 (12,3%) brides were unspecified. The profile of those that were remarrying showed that remarriages were more prevalent in divorcees compared to the widowed, 4 187 (4,3%) bridegroom divorcees compared to 458 (0,5%) widowers and 2 859 (2,9%) bride divorcees compared to 255 (0,3%) widows. Looking at marital status in each province, a high proportion of marriages between bridegrooms and brides marrying for the first time was observed in Limpopo, 5 122 (84,3%) and 5 553 (91,4%) respectively. There were more never married men (512) than never married women (494) who registered marriages outside borders of South Africa.

Figures 4a to 4c on pages 7 and 8 present percentage distribution of status of bridegrooms at the time of marriage in 2024.

**Figure 4a – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (never married men), 2024**

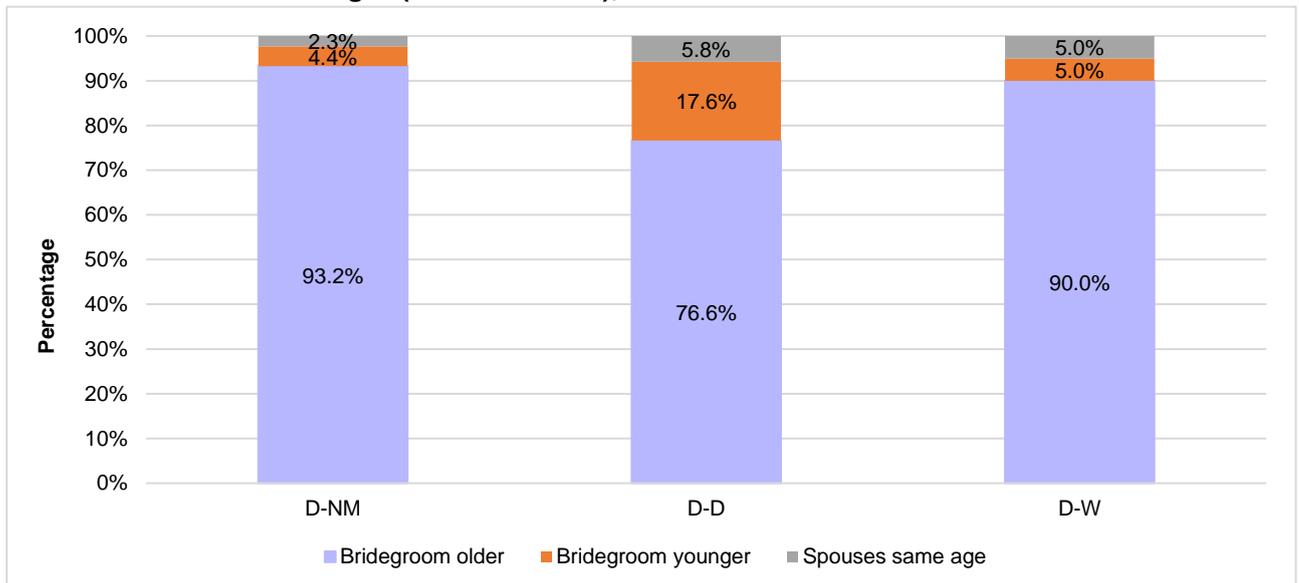


\*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

NM – NM = Never married men to Never married women    NM – D = Never married men to Divorcee women    NM – W = Never married men to Widow women

Figure 4a above shows that 74,8% of the never married men were older than the never married women. On the re-marrriages, for almost 48% of older never married bridegrooms got married to younger divorced women, while 46,1% bridegrooms younger married older divorcee brides. Older never married bridegrooms who married widowed brides account for 67,2%, whereas 22,0% of never married younger bridegrooms married widowed brides. Never married men who married brides with same age were higher for widowed women (10,7%).

**Figure 4b – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriages (male divorcees), 2024**

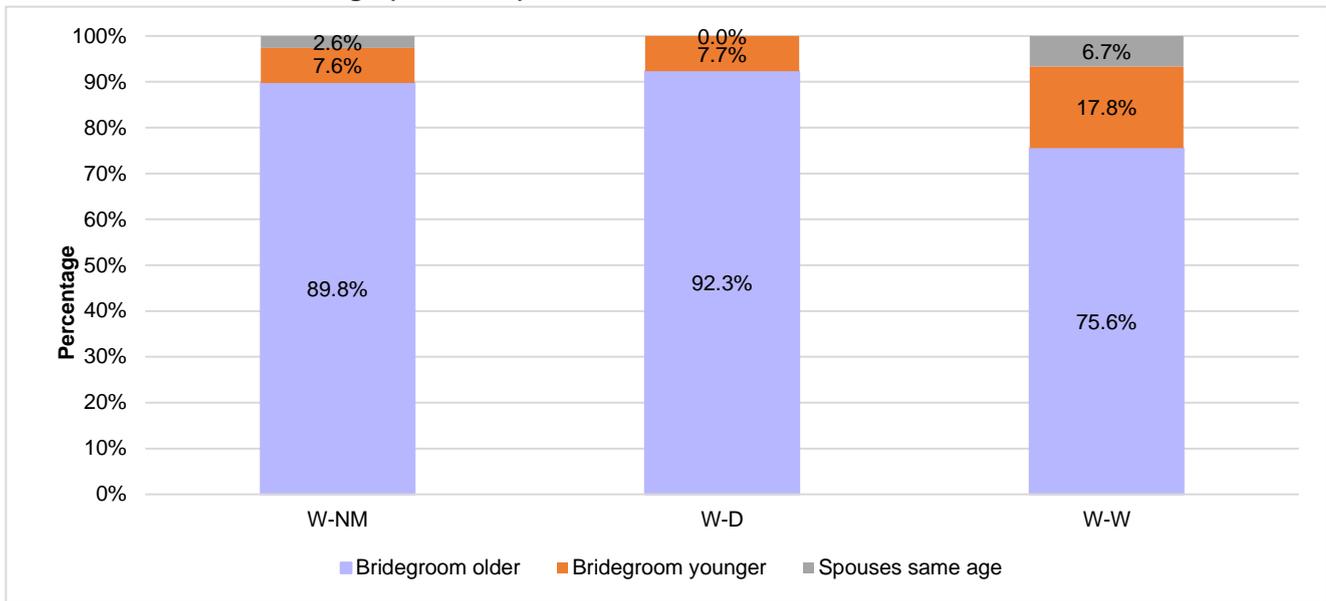


\*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

D – NM = Divorcee men to Never married women    D – D = Divorcee men to Divorcee women    D – W = Divorcee men to Widow women

Figure 4b shows that divorcee men generally prefer to marry younger women irrespective of the marital status of the women. About 93,2% of divorcee men who were married to never married women were older, followed by 90,0% of divorcee men re-marrying widowed women and 76,6% of divorcee men married divorcee women. Divorcee bridegrooms who married older divorcee brides were 17,6%.

**Figure 4c – Percentage distribution of civil marriages by age differences between spouses and marital status at the time of marriage (widowers), 2024**



\*Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding up

W – NM = Widower to Never married women    W – D = Widower to Divorcee    W – W = Widower to Widow

It is observed from Figure 4c above that majority of older widowed men married younger divorcee women, 92,3%. The proportion of widowers who married older widows is 17,8% and widowers who married widows of their same age was 6,7%.

**Figure 5 – Number of civil marriages for never married men and never married women by age group, 2024**

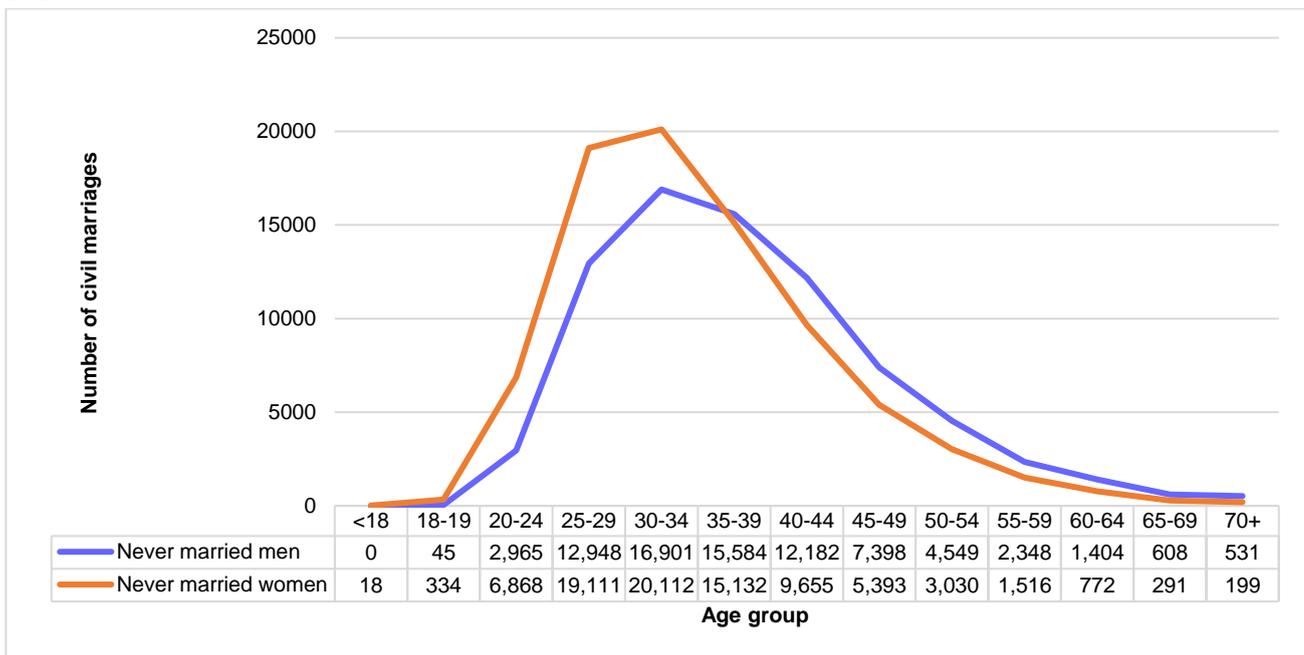


Figure 5 above indicates that the highest number of never married men and women were aged 30–34 years, 16 901 (21,8%) and 20 112 (24,4%) respectively. Figure 5 further also shows that there were more never married brides compared to never married bridegrooms at younger ages (less than 35 years) and vice versa at older ages (35 years and older). The number of never married brides were higher at ages below 35 years, the number of never married bridegrooms were higher from the ages above 40 years.

**Table 3 – Number of civil marriages by age differences between spouses at the time of marriage and marital status of husband, 2024**

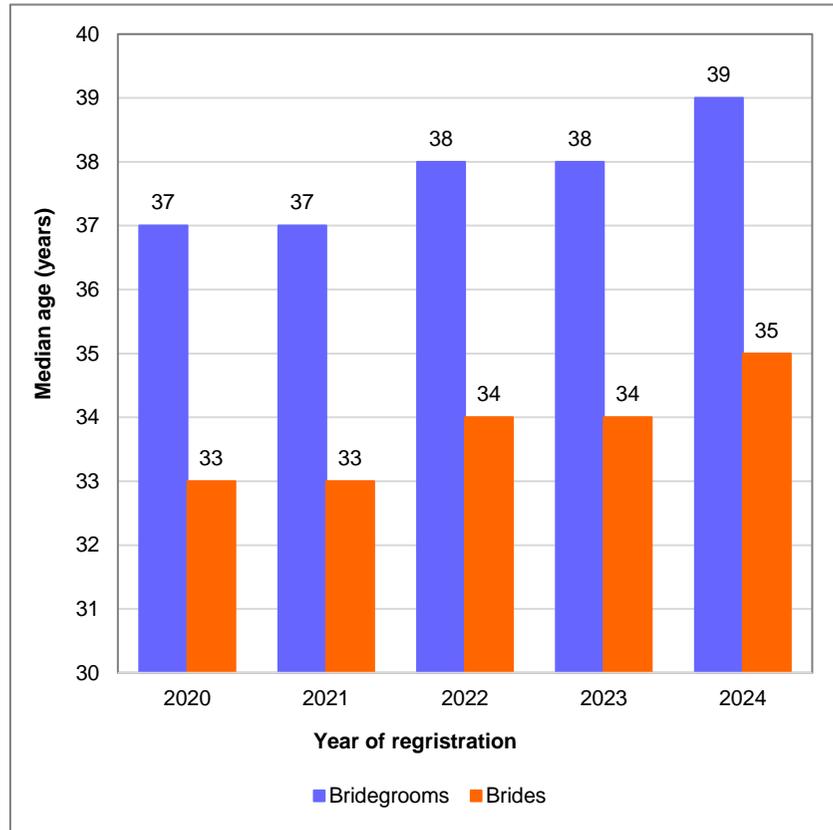
Husband Marital Status	Wife Marital Status	Grand Total	Age differences		
			Bridegroom Older	Bridegroom Younger	Same Age
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>73 104</b>	<b>15 814</b>	<b>8 592</b>
Never Married	<b>Total</b>	<b>77 463</b>	<b>56 679</b>	<b>13 175</b>	<b>7 609</b>
	Never Married	72 720	54 389	11 086	7 245
	Divorcee	890	426	410	54
	Widow	177	119	39	19
	Unspecified	3 676	1 745	1 640	291
Divorcee	<b>Total</b>	<b>4 187</b>	<b>3 627</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>169</b>
	Never Married	2 184	2 036	97	51
	Divorcee	817	626	144	47
	Widow	20	18	1	1
	Unspecified	1 166	947	149	70
Widower	<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>13</b>
	Never Married	381	342	29	10
	Divorcee	13	12	1	-
	Widow	45	34	8	3
	Unspecified	19	17	2	-
Unspecified	<b>Total</b>	<b>15 402</b>	<b>12 393</b>	<b>2 208</b>	<b>801</b>
	Never Married	7 146	6 330	555	261
	Divorcee	1 139	739	320	80
	Widow	13	12	-	1
	Unspecified	7 104	5 312	1 333	459

Table 3 above suggests that men tend to marry younger women, as 73 104 (75,0%) of the 97 510 bridegrooms were older than their brides. However, 15 814 (16,2%) bridegrooms were younger than their brides and 8 592 (8,8%) were the same age as their brides. This observed age pattern is the same irrespective of the marital status of the bridegroom at the time of marriage. However, the magnitude differs by the marital status of the spouses at the time of marriage.

#### 4.1.4. Age at the time of civil marriage

Population scientists are interested in the age at first marriage or union because of its theoretical link to exposure to the possibility of pregnancy, childbearing and ultimately to fertility (Bongaarts, 1978). This link tends to be weakened in populations where pre-marital fertility is widespread. Nevertheless, age at first marriage or union continues to be a good proxy for measuring not only fertility but other health and socio-economic indicators relating particularly to the role and status of women in society. The importance of this indicator is, to some extent, underscored in South Africa through the marriage legislations that put restrictions on marriages involving children under 18 years. These children require the consent of a parent, a guardian or a commissioner of child welfare before entering into a marriage. In addition to the above consent, boys younger than 18 years and girls younger than 15 years of age require the consent of the Minister of Home Affairs before they can get married.

**Figure 6a – Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of civil marriage, 2020–2024**



**Figure 6b – Median age of never married men and never married women at the time of civil marriage, 2020–2024**

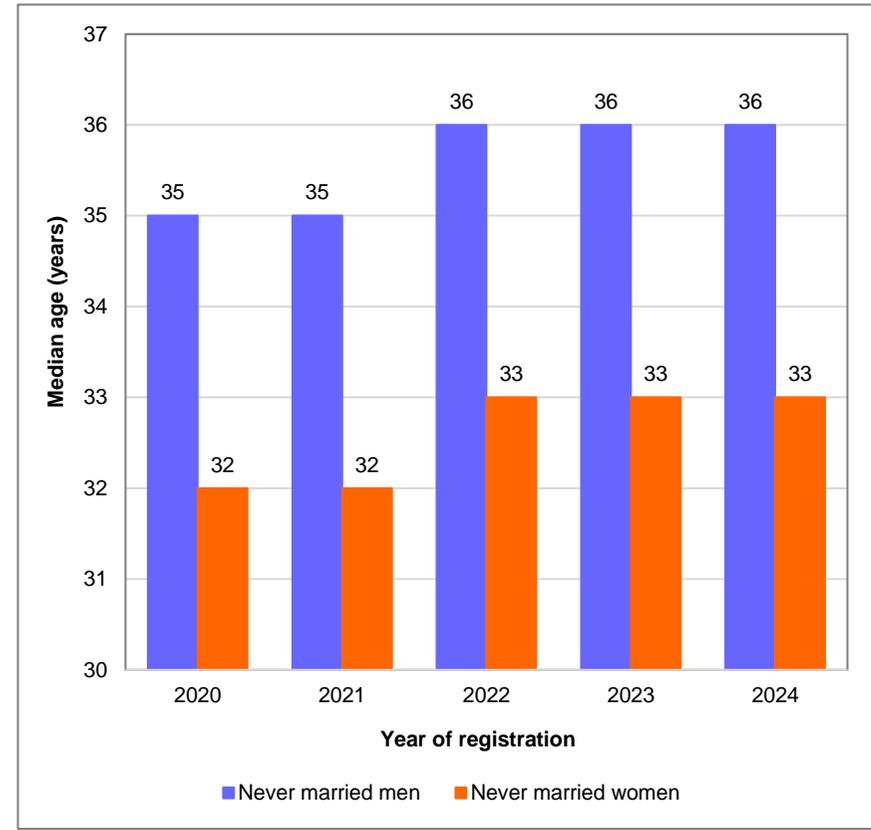
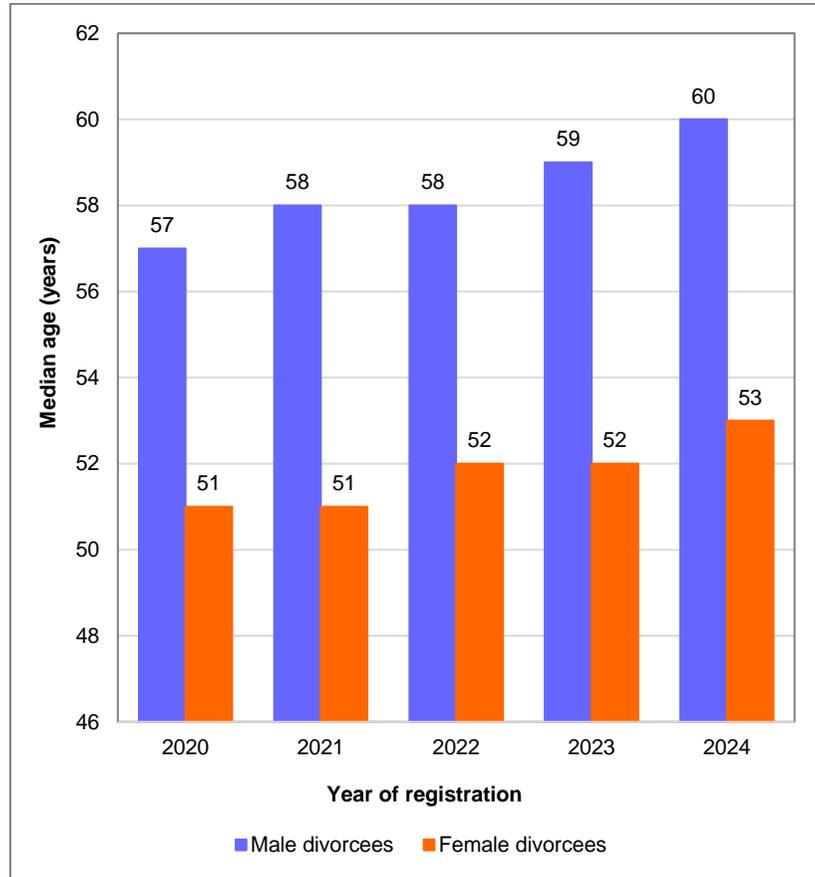


Figure 6a above shows that the median age of bridegrooms is consistently higher than the median age of brides. The median ages of bridegrooms and brides remained the same from 2020 to 2021 with 37 years and 33 years for bridegrooms and brides respectively. The median ages of bridegrooms and brides in 2024 was 39 years and 35 years respectively. The median age of couples marrying for the first time is shown on Figure 6b. The median ages of never married men increased from 35 years in 2020 to 36 years in 2024 whilst that of never married women increased from 32 years to 33 years during the same period.

**Figure 6c – Median age of male and female divorcees at the time of civil marriage, 2020–2024**



**Figure 6d – Median age of widowers and widows at the time of civil marriage, 2020–2024**

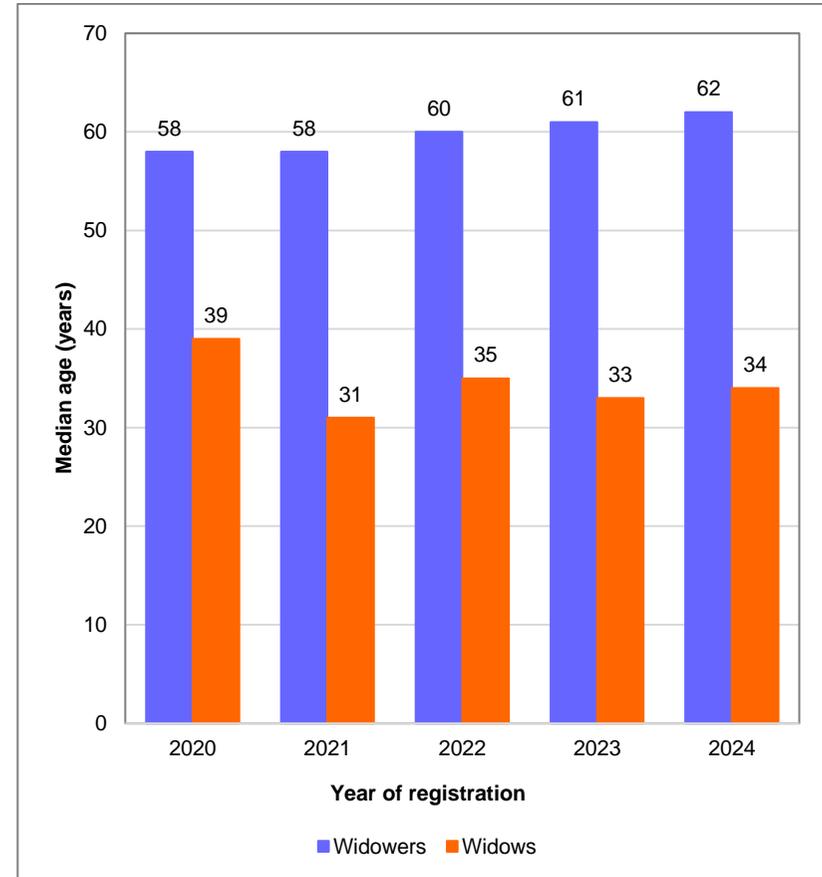


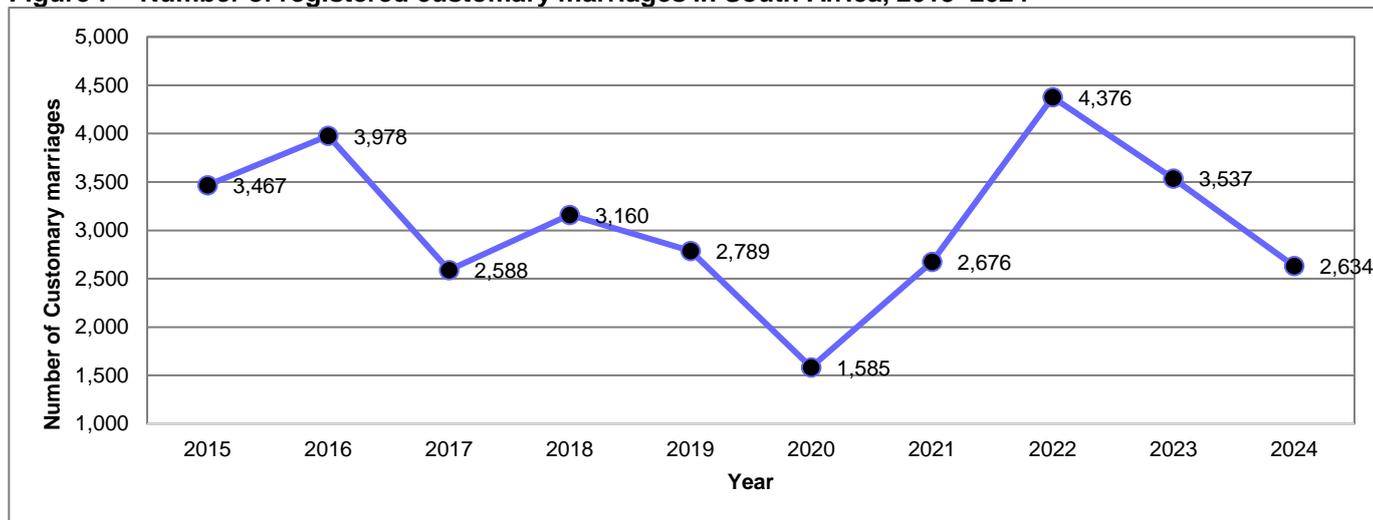
Figure 6c and Figure 6d show the median ages at marriage for the divorced and widowed. The median age of male divorcees increased from 57 years in 2020 to 60 years in 2024 and the median age of female divorcees increased from 51 years to 53 years during the same period. There was a seven-year age difference in the median ages between male and female divorcees who married in 2024. The median ages of widowers and widows in 2024 were 62 years and 34 years respectively, resulting in a 28-year age gap.

## 4.2. Customary marriages

### 4.2.1. Trends in the registration of customary marriages (2015–2024)

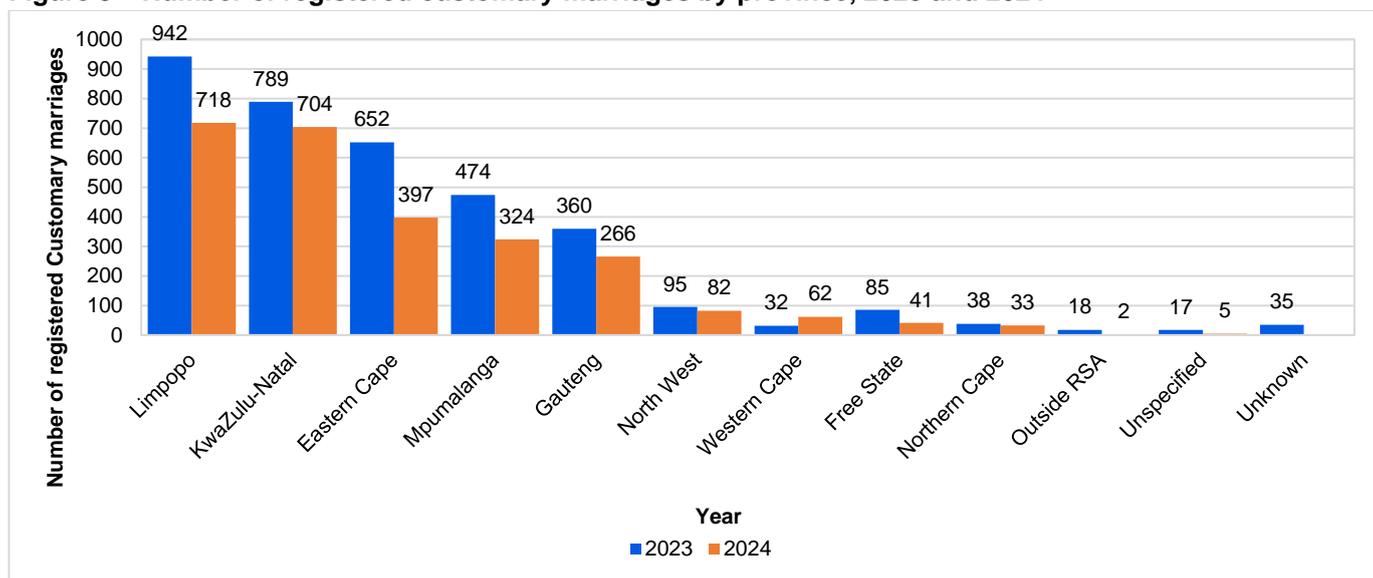
The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998) prescribes that customary marriages entered into after the commencement of this Act must be registered within three months after the conclusion of the marriage and those entered before the Act to be registered within 12 months of the commencement of the Act.

**Figure 7 – Number of registered customary marriages in South Africa, 2015–2024**



It is observed from Figure 7 above that the number of registered customary marriages have been fluctuating over the 10-year period, 2015 to 2024. In 2024, 2 634 customary marriages were registered at the DHA, indicating a decrease of 25,5% from 3 537 customary marriages registered in 2023. The highest number of registered customary marriages was recorded in 2022 (4 376) whilst the lowest number was recorded in 2020 (1 585).

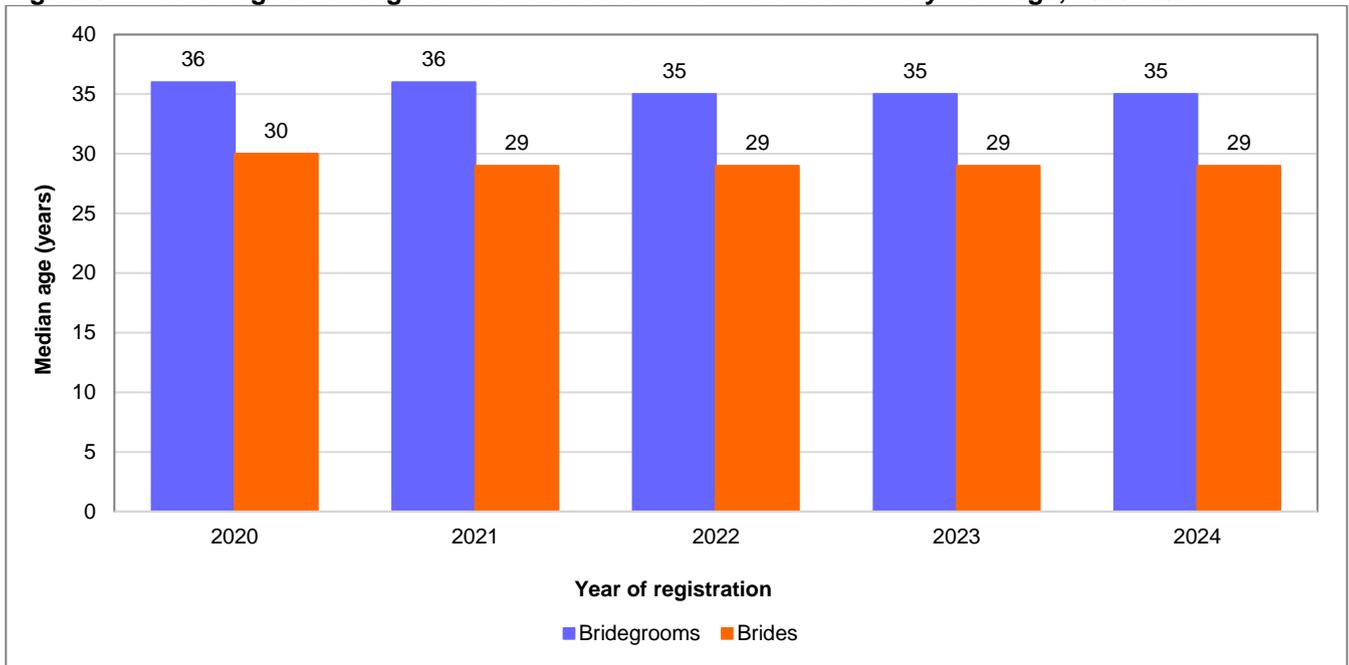
**Figure 8 – Number of registered customary marriages by province, 2023 and 2024**



A comparison of registered customary marriages between 2023 and 2024 per province shown on Figure 8 above indicates decrease for eight out of nine provinces. Registered customary marriages increased (93,8%) in Western Cape from 32 records in 2023 to 62 records in 2024. Free State showed the highest decrease of 51,8% (from 85 marriages in 2023 to 41 marriages in 2024), followed by Eastern Cape with a decline of 39,1% between two years. Although Limpopo had the highest marriages registered with 718 records, the 2024 figure represents a 23,8% decline from the 2023 registrations. KwaZulu- Natal is the second highest with 704 marriages registered in 2024. Over half, 142 (54%) of customary marriages registered in 2024 were from the two provinces.

4.2.2. Age at the time of customary marriage

Figure 9 – Median age of bridegrooms and brides at the time of customary marriage, 2020–2024



The median ages at the time of customary marriage are presented in Figure 9 above. Similar to civil marriages, bridegrooms were generally older than brides, with an age difference of about six to seven years for customary marriages registered between 2020 and 2024. The median age of bridegrooms decreased from 36 years in 2020 to 35 years in 2024 whereas that of brides decreased from 30 years to 29 years during the same period.

Figure 10 – Proportion of customary marriages registered by age group and sex, 2024

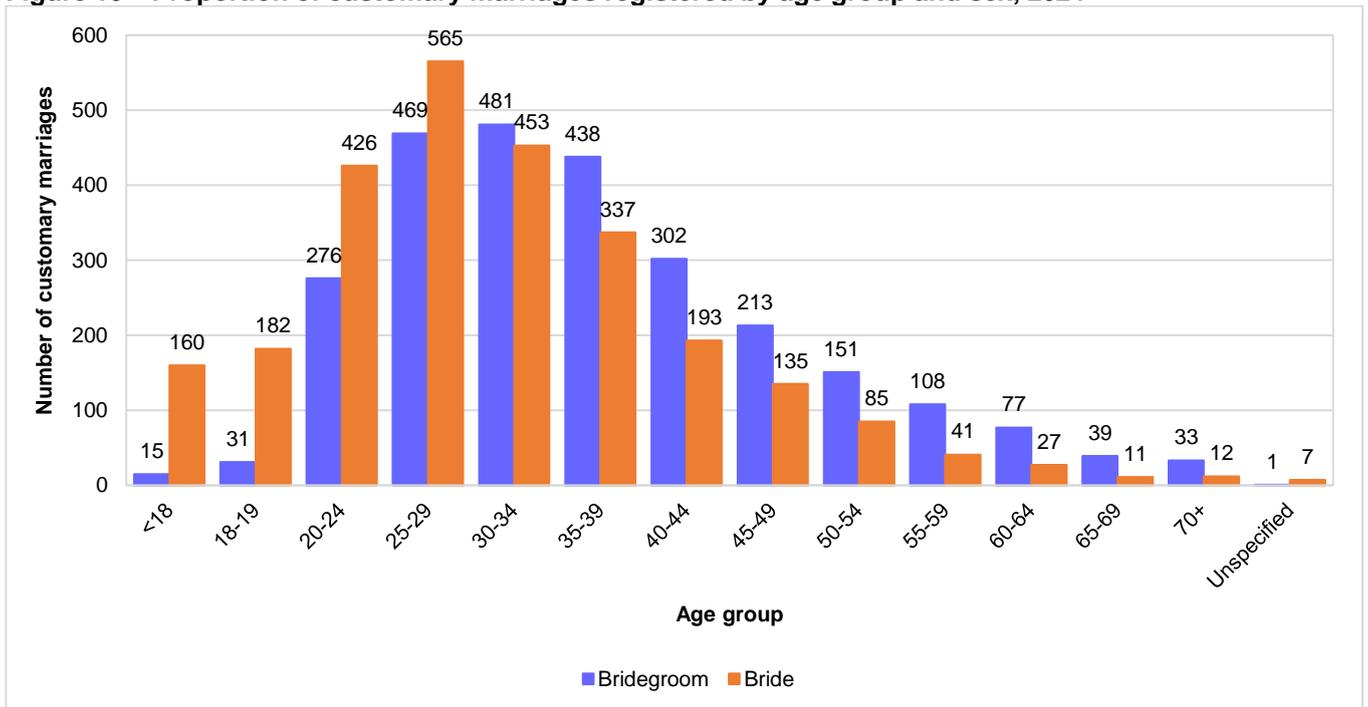


Figure 10 above shows that more bridegrooms were aged 30–34 years 481 (18,3%) and 21,5% (565) of the brides were aged 25–29 years. Marriages for children aged less than 18 years were more likely for brides 160 (6,1%) than bridegrooms 15 (0,5%). Detailed information on age distributions of bridegrooms and brides by year of marriage occurrences is shown on Annexures C and D on pages 35 and 36, respectively.

**Table 4 – Number and percentage distribution of customary marriages by province of marriage registration and age difference, 2024**

Province of registration	Number					%				
	Total	Bridegroom older	Bridegroom younger	Same age	Unspecified	Total	Bridegroom older	Bridegroom younger	Same age	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 634</b>	<b>2 232</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>84,7</b>	<b>9,5</b>	<b>5,5</b>	<b>0,3</b>
<b>Western Cape</b>	62	42	8	9	3	100,0	67,7	12,9	14,5	4,8
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	397	354	27	15	1	100,0	89,2	6,8	3,8	0,3
<b>Northern Cape</b>	33	27	4	2	-	100,0	81,8	12,1	6,1	0,0
<b>Free State</b>	41	35	4	2	-	100,0	85,4	9,8	4,9	0,0
<b>KwaZulu-Natal</b>	704	586	74	41	3	100,0	83,2	10,5	5,8	0,4
<b>North West</b>	82	69	9	4	-	100,0	84,1	11,0	4,9	0,0
<b>Gauteng</b>	266	218	31	17	-	100,0	82,0	11,7	6,4	0,0
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	324	270	38	16	-	100,0	83,3	11,7	4,9	0,0
<b>Limpopo</b>	718	626	53	38	1	100,0	87,2	7,4	5,3	0,1
<b>Outside RSA</b>	2	2	-	-	-	100,0	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
<b>Unspecified</b>	5	3	2	-	-	100,0	60,0	40,0	0,0	0,0

The results presented in Table 4 above show that in 2024, 2 232 (84,7%) bridegrooms were older than their brides, 250 (9,5%) spouses were of the same age and 8 (0,3%) did not specify their age. Looking at age comparison between spouses in each province, Western Cape had more bridegrooms younger 8 (12,9%) than their brides.

#### 4.2.3. Marital status at the time of customary marriage

Since the Customary Marriages Act of 1998 recognises polygyny, a husband who has registered his marriage under the Act is permitted to register additional marriages under the Act provided he adheres to the regulations under the Act regarding his property. That is, at his own cost, the husband must get an order from a competent court that will regulate his future matrimonial property system. It would be of interest to distinguish between first-time spouses and those who have previously married (i.e. those in polygynous marriages, divorcees, widows and widowers). However, the information is not available in the dataset provided.

### 4.3. Civil unions

This chapter provides information and analysis on the trends and distribution of registered civil unions during 2024 and earlier. It focuses on absolute numbers and percentage of registered civil unions by demographic characteristics of spouses in civil union and geographic distribution of registered civil unions.

#### 4.3.1. Trends in the registration of civil unions (2015–2024)

Figure 11 below shows that in 2024, 2 229 civil unions were registered. The number of civil unions registered in South Africa increased between 2015 and 2022 except a decrease in 2020. Civil unions registered decreased by 3,0 % from 2 297 in 2023 to 2 229 in 2024.

**Figure 11 – Number of registered civil unions in South Africa, 2015–2024**

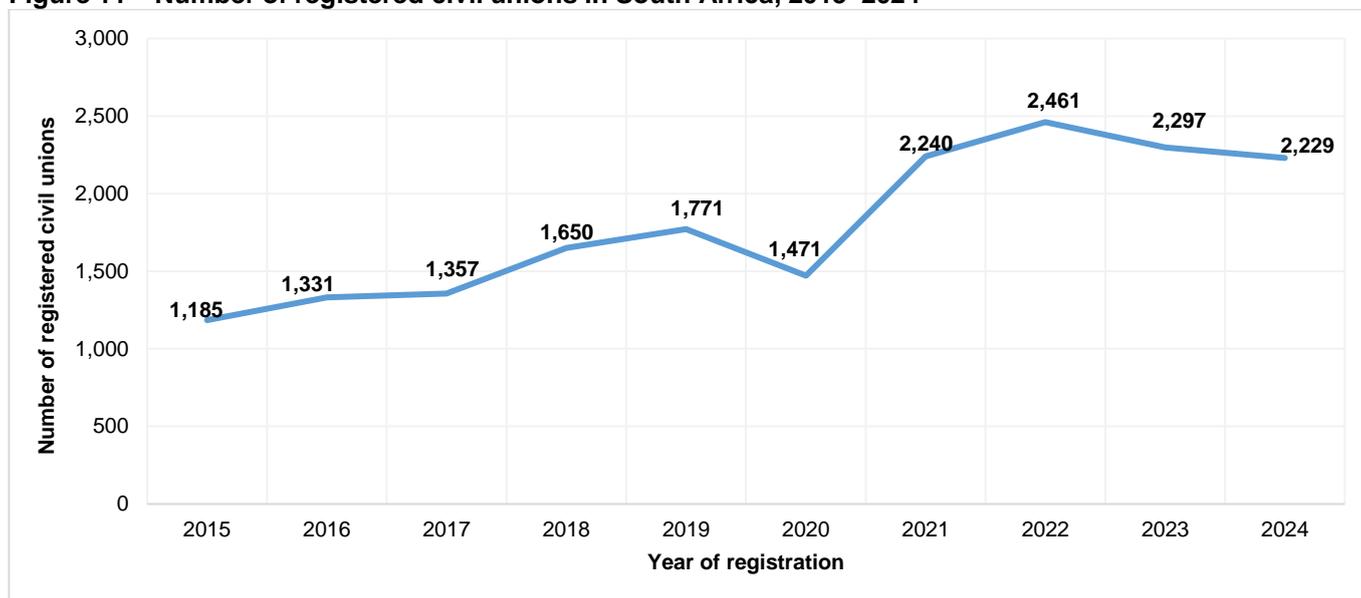


Table 5 below shows that provincial distribution of civil unions registered in 2023 indicates that Gauteng 943 (42,3%) and Western Cape 751 (33,7%) were the provinces with the highest number of registrations of civil unions. In total, 76,0% of civil unions in 2024 were registered in these two provinces. The lowest number of registered civil unions was recorded in North West 36 (1,6%) and Limpopo 21 (0,9%).

**Table 5 – Number and percentage distribution of civil unions registered by province of registration, 2020–2024**

Province of registration	Number					%				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1 471</b>	<b>2 240</b>	<b>2 461</b>	<b>2 297</b>	<b>2 229</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Western Cape	434	553	721	661	751	29,5	24,7	29,3	28,8	33,7
Eastern Cape	48	53	90	123	78	3,3	2,4	3,7	5,4	3,5
Northern Cape	6	20	23	26	41	0,4	0,9	0,9	1,1	1,8
Free State	32	50	52	41	45	2,2	2,2	2,1	1,8	2,0
KwaZulu-Natal	168	209	378	324	268	11,4	9,3	15,4	14,1	12,0
North West	22	44	37	57	36	1,5	2,0	1,5	2,5	1,6
Gauteng	659	1 193	1 032	961	943	44,8	53,3	41,9	41,8	42,3
Mpumalanga	23	26	32	35	40	1,6	1,2	1,3	1,5	1,8
Limpopo	5	16	29	28	21	0,3	0,7	1,2	1,2	0,9
Outside RSA	-	4	3	10	6	-	0,2	0,1	0,4	0,3
Unspecified	74	72	64	31	-	5,0	3,2	2,6	1,3	-

### 4.3.2. Age at the time of civil union

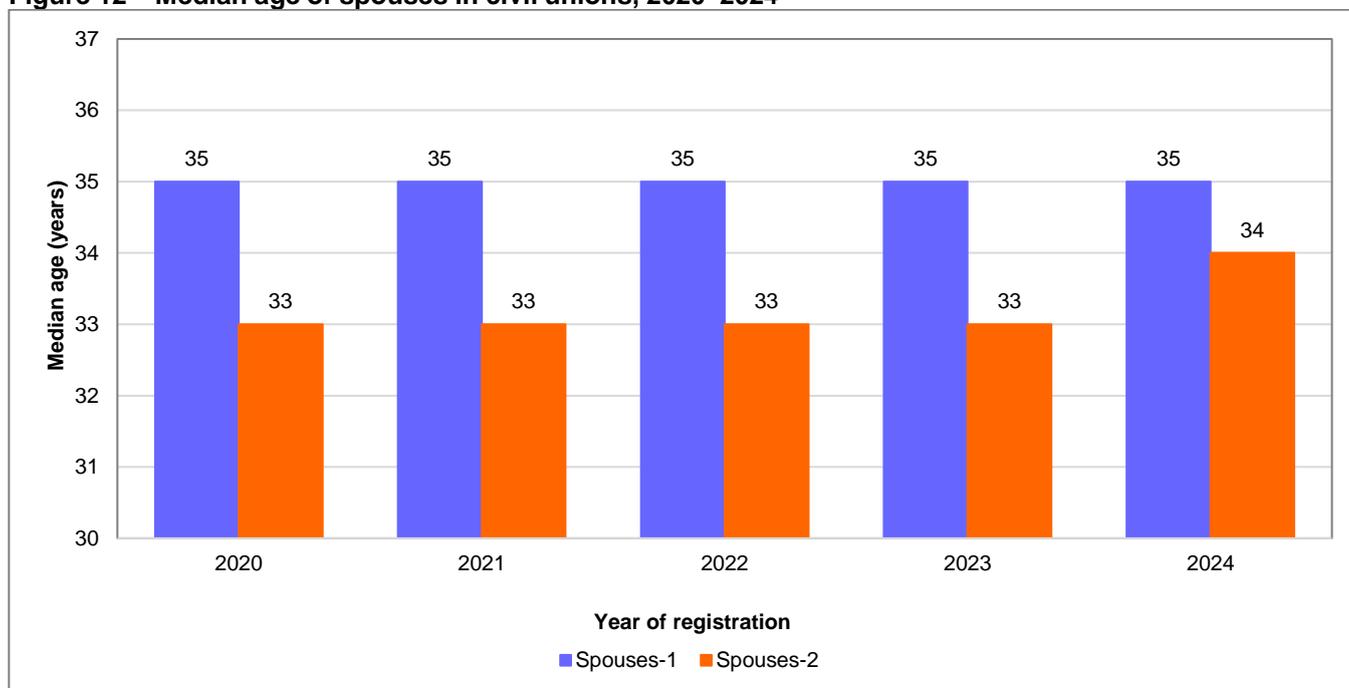
The number of civil unions classified by the ages of spouse-1 and spouse-2 at the time of the solemnisation of civil union is presented on Table 6 below. Spouses are distinguished as spouse-1 and spouse-2, based on the information completed by the spouses at the time of civil union registration. The highest number of spouses-1 and spouses-2 were aged 30–34 [583 (26,2%)] and [579 (26,0%)] respectively. Detailed information on age distribution is on Annexure E on page 37.

**Table 6 – Number of civil unions by age group of spouses, 2024**

Age	Spouse-1	%	Spouse-2	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 229</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>2 229</b>	<b>100,0</b>
18-19	3	0,1	6	0,3
20-24	69	3,1	121	5,4
25-29	385	17,3	480	21,5
30-34	583	26,2	579	26,0
35-39	414	18,6	408	18,3
40-44	280	12,6	249	11,2
45-49	167	7,5	132	5,9
50-54	132	5,9	120	5,4
55-59	94	4,2	65	2,9
60-64	46	2,1	35	1,6
65-69	31	1,4	21	0,9
70+	25	1,1	12	0,5
Unspecified	0	0,0	1	0,0

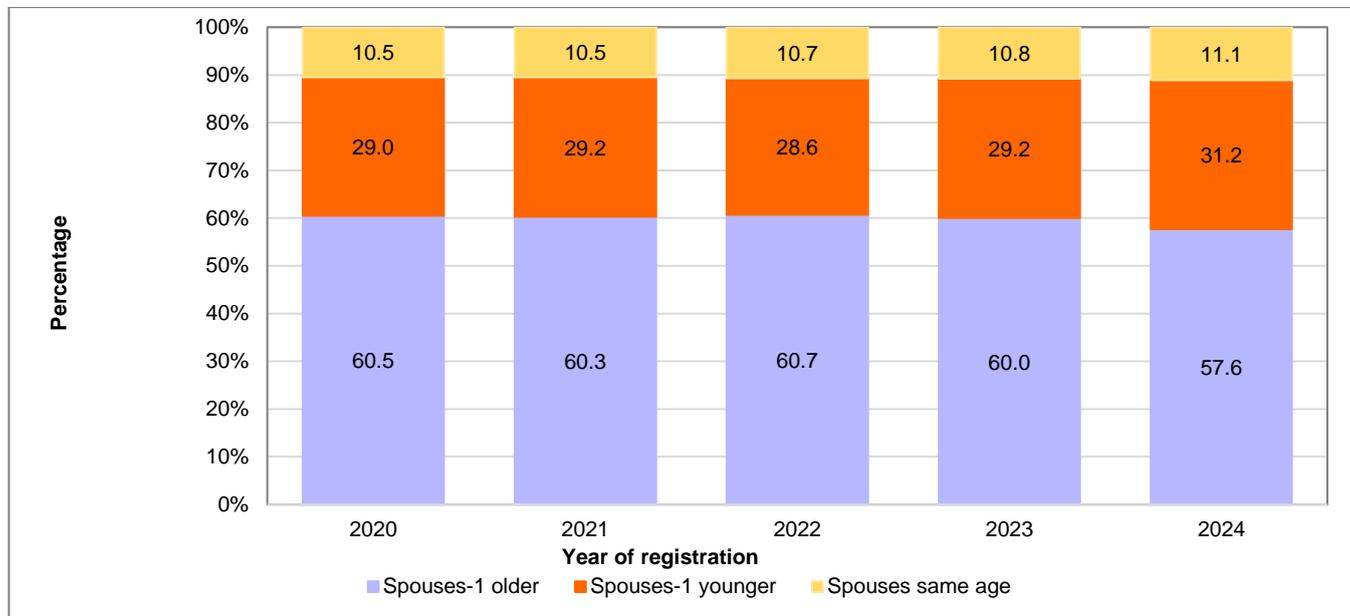
As observed in Figure 12 below, the median ages of spouses-1 were higher than those of spouses-2. The median ages of spouses-1 remained the same at 35 years between 2020 and 2024 whereas the median ages of spouses-2 remained the same at 33 years between 2020 and 2023 and further increased by one year to 34 years in 2024.

**Figure 12 – Median age of spouses in civil unions, 2020–2024**



Information in Figure 13 below shows that in 2024, 57,6% of spouses-1 were older than their spouses, whilst 31,2% were younger than their spouses and 11,1% were of the same age as their spouses.

**Figure 13 – Percentage distribution of civil unions by age differences between spouses at the time of union, 2020–2024**



## 5. Divorces

This chapter provides information and analysis on the distribution of divorces granted during 2024 and earlier. It focuses on absolute numbers and percentages of divorces granted by demographic and geographic background characteristics of divorcees.

### 5.1. Trends in divorces (2015–2024)

**Table 7 – Number of published divorces in South Africa by population group, 2015–2024**

Year	Total	Numbers						%						
		Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified	Total	Black African	Coloured	India/Asian	White	Mixed	Unspecified
2015	25 260	10 841	4 213	1 566	6 588	837	1 215	100,0	42,9	16,7	6,2	26,1	3,3	4,8
2016	25 326	10 641	4 711	1 529	6 293	841	1 311	100,0	42,0	18,6	6,0	24,8	3,3	5,2
2017	25 390	11 309	4 517	1 401	6 048	833	1 282	100,0	44,5	17,8	5,5	23,8	3,3	5,0
2018	25 284	11 721	4 540	1 214	5 780	779	1 250	100,0	46,4	18,0	4,8	22,9	3,1	4,9
2019	23 710	10 677	4 502	1 299	5 268	816	1 148	100,0	45,0	19,0	5,5	22,2	3,4	4,8
2020	16 097	7 566	2 459	983	3 855	484	750	100,0	47,0	15,3	6,1	23,9	3,0	4,7
2021	18 208	9 175	3 202	881	3 652	499	799	100,0	50,4	17,6	4,8	20,1	2,7	4,4
2022	20 196	11 048	3 179	867	3 912	554	636	100,0	54,7	15,7	4,3	19,4	2,7	3,1
2023	22 230	12 362	3 350	915	4 343	672	588	100,0	55,6	15,1	4,1	19,5	3,0	2,6
2024	24 202	13 284	3 363	990	5 008	716	841	100,0	54,9	13,9	4,1	20,7	3,0	3,5

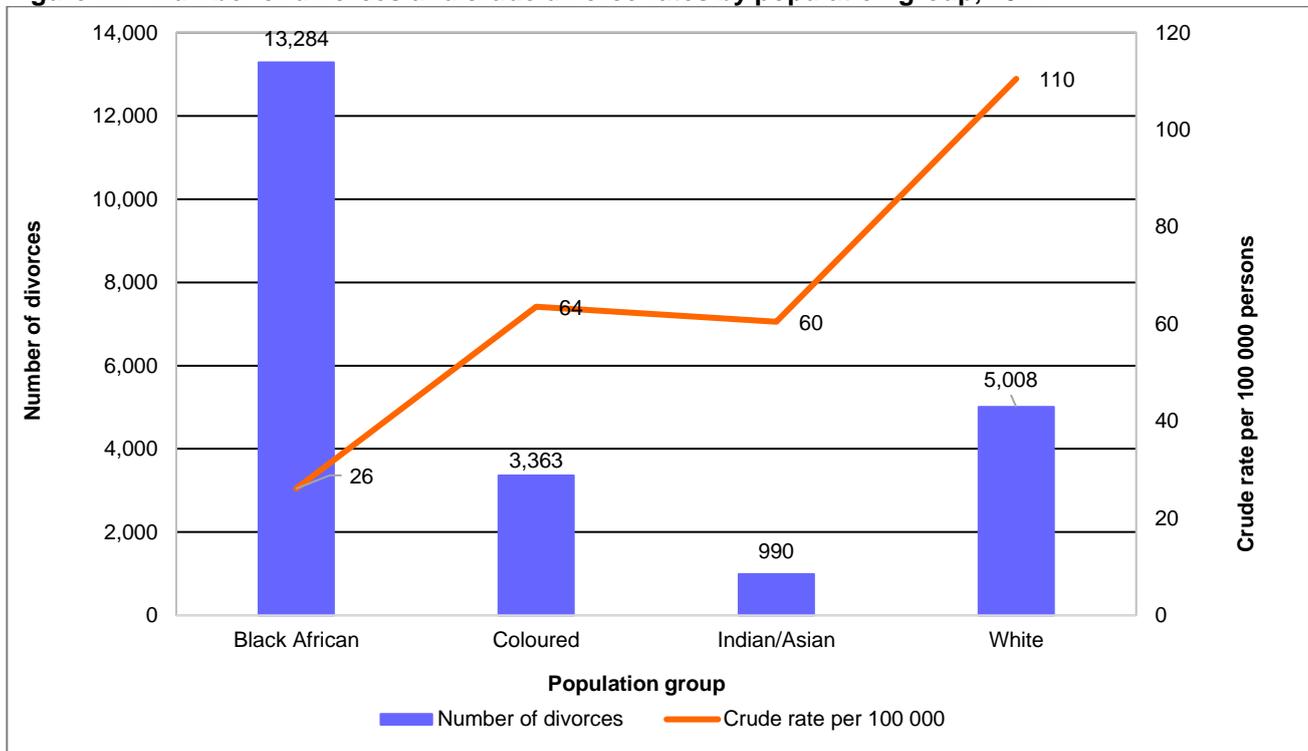
The 2024 divorce data reported in this statistical release is based on 24 202 completed divorce forms that Stats SA received and processed. The number (24 202) indicates an increase of 1 972 (8,9%) divorces from the 22 230 cases processed in 2023, see Table 7. The table shows that the total number of divorces increased between 2015 and 2017; and decreased between 2018 and 2020. The observed crude divorce rate was 39 divorces per 100 000 resident population in 2024<sup>1</sup>.

Table 7 also provides data on divorces classified by population group and the year in which the divorce was granted. In 2024, black African couples had the highest number of divorces compared to other population groups; this pattern has been the same for the 10-year period (2015 to 2024). A total of 13 284 (54,9%) of the 24 202 divorces granted in 2024 were from the black African population group, followed by white 5 008 (20,7%), coloured 3 363 (13,9%), India/Asian 990 (4,1%) and divorces from marriages of different population groups (mixed) 716 (3,0%). The population group of 841 (3,5%) divorcees was not specified.

<sup>1</sup> The crude divorce rate refers to the number of divorces per 100 000 persons in the population

Figure 14 below demonstrates the number of divorces and crude divorce rate by population group. The crude divorce rates by population groups shows that the white population group had the highest rate of 110 per 100 000 estimated resident population, followed by the coloured and Indian/Asian population groups with 64 and 60 per 100 000 respectively. The black African population had 26 per 100 000 estimated resident population.

**Figure 14 – Number of divorces and crude divorce rates by population group, 2024**



## 5.2. Characteristics of plaintiffs

The 2024 data presented in Table 8 show that more wives [13 853 (57,2%) ] than husbands [7 976 (33,0%)] initiated divorce proceedings and that only 1 107 (4,6%) divorces were initiated by both husband and wife. The sex of the plaintiff was not specified in 1 266 (5,2%) cases. The provincial distribution indicates that Gauteng (7 256), Western Cape (4 259) and KwaZulu-Natal (3 344) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. Together the three provinces contributed 61,4% of the divorces granted in 2024. However, this could also be due to the fact that these provinces have the largest populations.

**Table 8 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by province of divorce registration and plaintiff, 2024**

Province of divorce registration	Number					%				
	Grand Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>7 976</b>	<b>13 853</b>	<b>1 107</b>	<b>1 266</b>	100,0	33,0	57,2	4,6	5,2
Western Cape	4 259	1 414	2 579	90	176	100,0	33,2	60,6	2,1	4,1
Eastern Cape	2 111	634	1 127	243	107	100,0	30,0	53,4	11,5	5,1
Northern Cape	341	122	181	5	33	100,0	35,8	53,1	1,5	9,7
Free State	1 836	672	1 022	55	87	100,0	36,6	55,7	3,0	4,7
KwaZulu-Natal	3 344	1 060	1 910	145	229	100,0	31,7	57,1	4,3	6,8
North West	1 567	512	910	63	82	100,0	32,7	58,1	4,0	5,2
Gauteng	7 256	2 310	4 289	328	329	100,0	31,8	59,1	4,5	4,5
Mpumalanga	1 472	500	782	92	98	100,0	34,0	53,1	6,3	6,7
Limpopo	2 016	752	1 053	86	125	100,0	37,3	52,2	4,3	6,2

Table 9 below shows that, across all population groups, more women are likely to initiate divorce than men, this is also observed for the mixed couples. The coloured population group had the highest proportion of women plaintiffs with 61,0%. The proportion of women plaintiffs for white and Indian/Asian population groups were 60% each, and black African population group was 54,9%. The plaintiffs for the mixed/ interracial couples show that 59,6% of the divorces were filed by wives. Among black African divorcees, divorce initiated by both partners constituted about 5,9%.

**Table 9 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and plaintiff, 2024**

Population group	Number					%				
	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified	Total	Husbands	Wives	Both	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	24 202	7 976	13 853	1 107	1 266	100,0	33,0	57,2	4,6	5,2
Black African	13 284	4 453	7 299	779	753	100,0	33,5	54,9	5,9	5,7
Coloured	3 363	1 065	2 052	96	150	100,0	31,7	61,0	2,9	4,5
Indian/Asian	990	332	599	19	40	100,0	33,5	60,5	1,9	4,0
White	5 008	1 675	3 016	144	173	100,0	33,4	60,2	2,9	3,5
Mixed	716	190	427	43	56	100,0	26,5	59,6	6,0	7,8
Unspecified	841	261	460	26	94	100,0	31,0	54,7	3,1	11,2

Table 10 below indicates information on the occupation of husbands and wives at the time of divorce. It is noted that a high proportion of husbands (33,3%) and wives (36,8%) did not specify the type of occupation they were engaged in at the time of divorce. In addition, 14,1% and 18,5% of husbands and wives respectively were unemployed at the time of divorce. Both male and female divorcees were largely employed in professional, semi-professional and technical occupations with 3 874 (16,0%) and 3 934 (16,3%) respectively, while for 8,4% of divorces, both divorcees were in managerial and administrative positions at the time of the divorce.

**Table 10 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by type of occupation at the time of divorce, 2024**

Occupation	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Professional, semi-professionals and technical occupations	3 874	3 934	16,0	16,3
Managers and administrators	2 038	2 044	8,4	8,4
Clerical and sales occupations	992	1 922	4,1	7,9
Transport delivery and communications	718	87	3,0	0,4
Services occupations	3 185	2 302	13,2	9,5
Farming and related occupations	104	27	0,4	0,1
Artisans apprentice and related occupations	1 039	207	4,3	0,9
Production foreman mine and quarry worker	786	281	3,2	1,2
Not economically active / Unemployed	3 403	4 485	14,1	18,5
Unspecified	8 063	8 913	33,3	36,8

### 5.3. Number of divorces by way of solemnisation of marriage

Information presented in Table 11 below shows that 12 640 (52,2%) of the 2024 divorce cases were from marriages solemnised by DHA marriage officers and 9 421 (38,9%) by religious marriage officers. About 67,3% of divorces from the white population group and 61,6% of divorces from the coloured population group were from marriages that were solemnised by religious marriage officers. Most divorces from the black African and Indian/Asian population groups were from marriages that were solemnised by DHA marriage officers at 71,8% and 49,3% respectively.

**Table 11 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and way of solemnisation of the marriage, 2024**

Population group	Number				%			
	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified	Total	Religious	DHA	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>9 421</b>	<b>12 640</b>	<b>2 141</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>38,9</b>	<b>52,2</b>	<b>8,8</b>
Black African	13 284	3 003	9 539	742	100,0	22,6	71,8	5,6
Coloured	3 363	2 072	947	344	100,0	61,6	28,2	10,2
Indian/Asian	990	364	488	138	100,0	36,8	49,3	13,9
White	5 008	3 371	949	688	100,0	67,3	18,9	13,7
Mixed	716	290	353	73	100,0	40,5	49,3	10,2
Unspecified	841	321	364	156	100,0	38,2	43,3	18,5

### 5.4. Number of times married

Results presented in Table 12 below show that the 2024 divorce cases for both men and women were mainly from individuals who had married once. More than 87% of divorces for men and women were from first-time marriages compared to 8,6% of men and 6,8% of women from second-time marriages. Less than 1% of both men (0,9%) and women (0,7%) were divorced for at least three times.

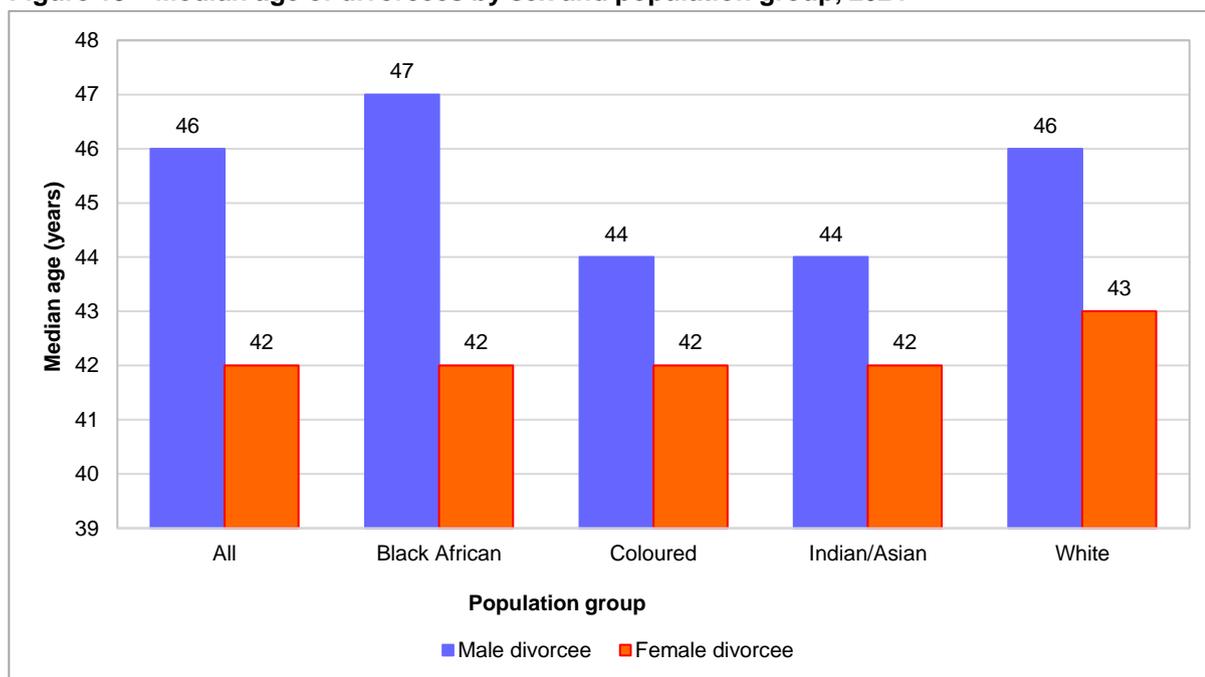
**Table 12 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by number of times married at the time of divorce, 2024**

Number of times married	Number		%	
	Husbands	Wives	Husbands	Wives
Total	24 202	24 202	100,0	100,0
Once	21 219	21 567	87,7	89,1
Twice	2 082	1 638	8,6	6,8
Three or more	225	161	0,9	0,7
Unspecified	676	836	2,8	3,5

### 5.5. Age at the time of divorce

The median age at the time of divorce in 2024 was 46 years for males and 42 years for females, indicating that generally, divorced males were older than divorced females, with a difference of about four years (see Figure 15 below). The pattern of median ages in 2024 by population group showed that black African males had the highest median age of 47 years followed by white males with median age of 46 years. The coloured and Indian/Asian males had the median age of 44 years each. The difference in the median ages at the time of divorce between males and females was greater in the black African population group (five years) compared to the coloured and white population with three years and Indian/Asian population with two years.

**Figure 15 – Median age of divorcees by sex and population group, 2024**



Detailed information on the age and population groups of divorcees is presented in Figure 16 for males and Figure 17 for females below. Although there were differences in the ages at which most men and women from the various population groups divorced, the age patterns were quite similar. There were fewer divorces among the younger (less than 25 years old) and the older (65 years and older) divorcees.

For males, the peak age group for black African and coloured population groups was 40 to 44 years with 20,5% and 19,3% respectively. The peak age group for Indian/ Asian and white population groups was 45 to 49 years with 17,1% and 15,1% respectively. Actual values on divorce for male by age group and population group is on Annexure F on page 40. The black African males had lowest number of divorcees at ages below 35 years than the other three population groups.

**Figure 16 – The proportions of divorces by age group and population group (males), 2024**

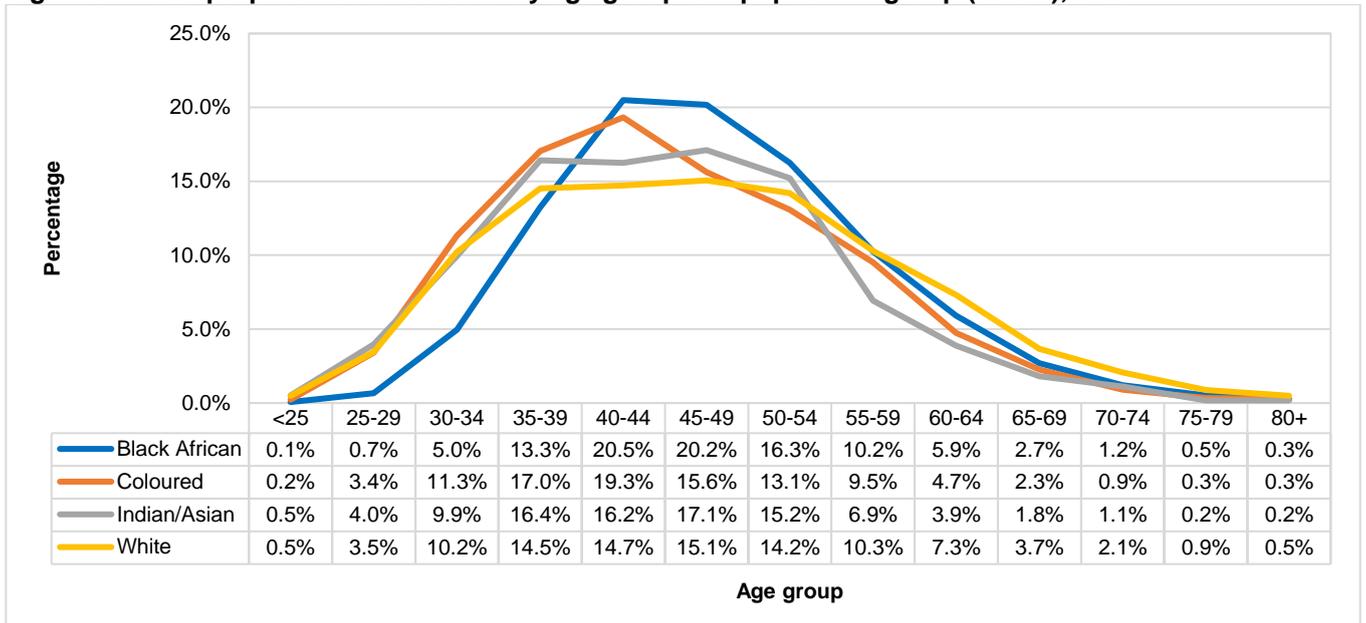
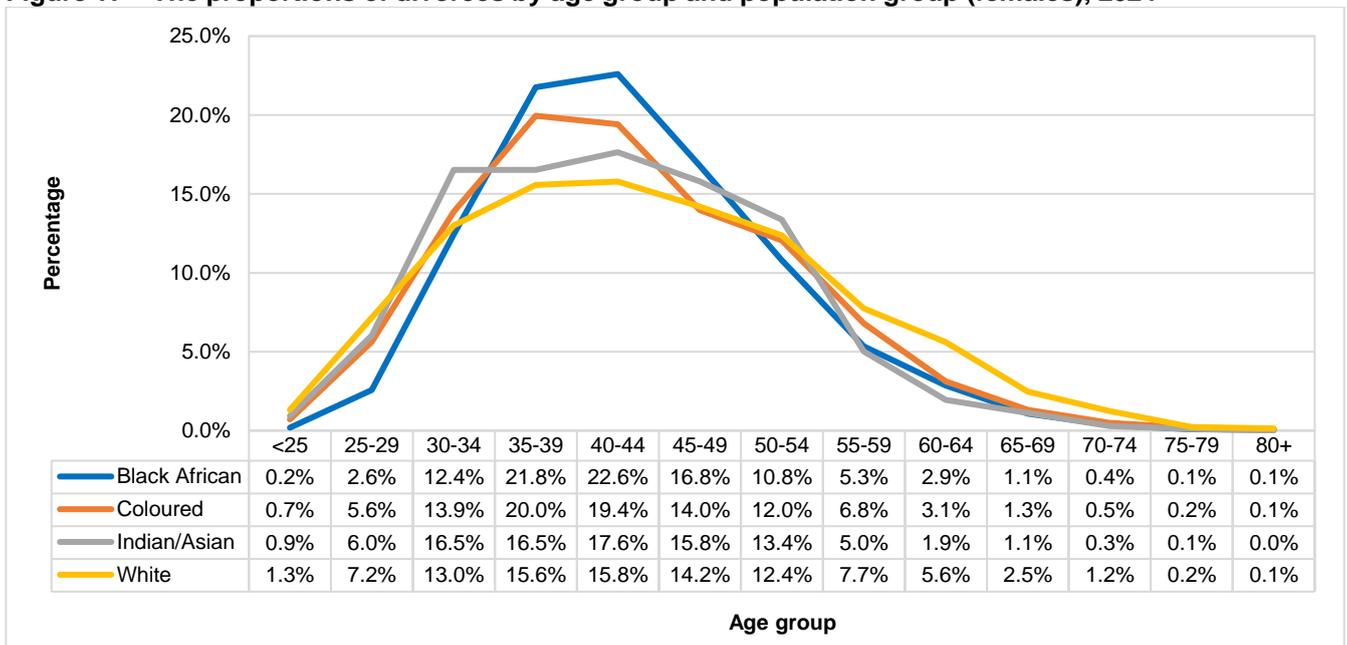


Figure 17 below show that the peak age group at divorce for females was 35 to 39 years for the coloured population group (20,0%), and 40 to 44 years for black African (22,6%), Indian/ Asian (17,6%) and white (15,8%) population groups. Actual values on divorce for female by age group and population group is on Annexure G on page 41.

**Figure 17 – The proportions of divorces by age group and population group (females), 2024**



## 5.6. Duration of marriage of divorcing couples and population group

Statistics from the annual divorce data do not give a comprehensive picture of the number of marriages ending in divorce. However, there is data on the duration of marriages for divorces granted in 2024. Table 13 and Table 14 below show that the largest number [6 451 (26,7%)] of divorces were for marriages that lasted between five and nine years. This group is followed by marriages that lasted between 10 and 14 years [5 167 (21,3%)] and marriages that lasted for less than five years [3 650 (15,1%)]. Results further show that four in ten divorces 10 101 (41,7%) of the 24 202 divorces granted in 2024 were from marriages that lasted for less than 10 years.

Table 13 below shows that the highest number of male divorcees were from the age group 40 to 44 years 4 532 (18,7%) followed by those in the age group 45 to 49 years 4 384 (18,1%).

**Table 13 – Number of divorces by age group and duration of marriage (male divorcees), 2024**

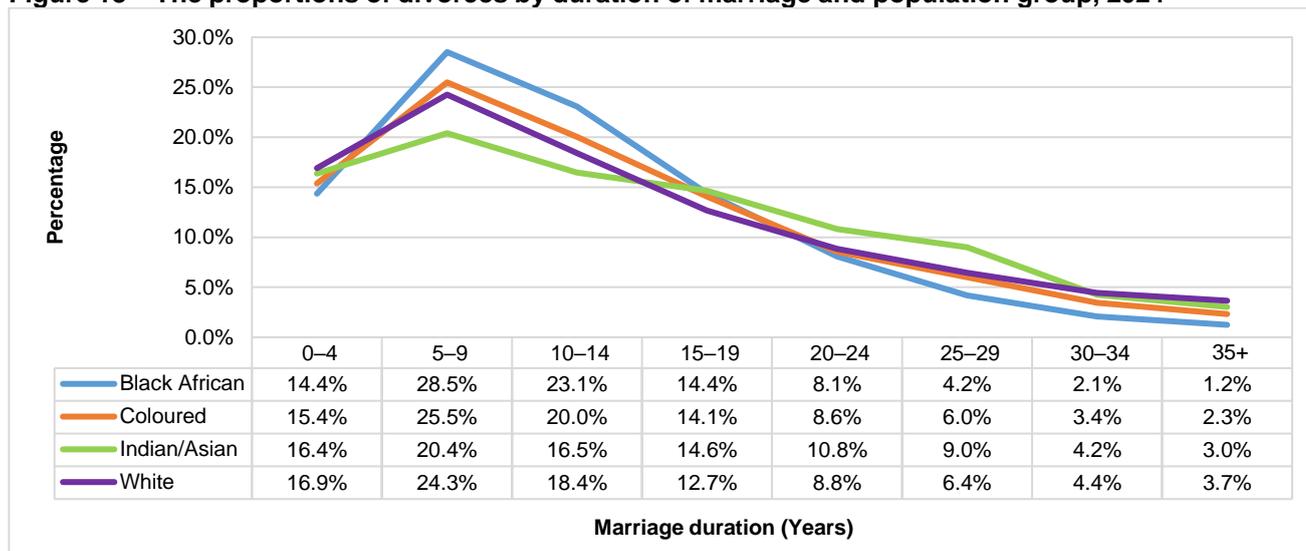
Age group of husband	Duration of marriage									
	Total	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35+	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>3 650</b>	<b>6 451</b>	<b>5 167</b>	<b>3 391</b>	<b>2 058</b>	<b>1 241</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>1 060</b>
<25	50	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
25-29	443	300	122	3	-	-	-	-	-	18
30-34	1 772	704	859	138	2	-	-	-	-	69
35-39	3 441	758	1 578	860	111	-	-	-	-	134
40-44	4 532	626	1 493	1 432	708	103	1	-	-	169
45-49	4 384	452	999	1 146	1 027	504	72	1	-	183
50-54	3 688	330	536	697	750	672	444	83	5	171
55-59	2 411	151	322	344	369	378	394	292	52	109
60-64	1 450	101	192	173	170	208	201	178	154	73
65-69	670	36	80	98	79	63	58	87	132	37
70-74	332	26	41	42	31	41	28	23	78	22
75-79	136	14	17	14	12	12	14	7	38	8
80+	72	10	7	18	3	9	4	6	11	4
Unspecified	821	99	205	202	129	68	25	27	10	56

Table 14 below shows that the highest number of female divorcees were from the age group 40 to 44 years 4 906 (20,3%) followed by those in the age group 35 to 39 years 4 775 (19,7%). About 133 (0,5%) divorces were granted to females below the age of 25 years.

**Table 14 – Number of divorces by age group and duration of marriage (female divorcees), 2024**

Age group of wife	Duration of marriage									
	Total	0–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35+	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>3 650</b>	<b>6 451</b>	<b>5 167</b>	<b>3 391</b>	<b>2 058</b>	<b>1 241</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>1 060</b>
<25	133	112	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
25-29	1 008	526	405	16	-	-	-	-	-	61
30-34	3 125	891	1 602	492	25	-	-	-	-	115
35-39	4 775	749	1 775	1 582	465	15	-	-	-	189
40-44	4 906	531	1 194	1 481	1 147	360	18	-	-	175
45-49	3 807	346	597	755	885	769	275	10	-	170
50-54	2 789	209	342	376	459	527	520	219	8	129
55-59	1 476	85	159	160	167	194	253	274	109	75
60-64	850	50	80	92	98	85	108	114	177	46
65-69	346	26	36	39	34	30	27	36	96	22
70-74	140	12	13	11	12	11	9	10	56	6
75-79	31	2	2	5	1	3	3	1	12	2
80+	17	1	1	3	-	-	3	2	5	2
Unspecified	799	110	232	155	98	64	25	38	17	60

**Figure 18 – The proportions of divorces by duration of marriage and population group, 2024**



Population group variations show that 28,5% of divorces from the black African; 25,5% from coloured, 24,3% from white and 20,4% from Indian/Asian population groups were from marriages that lasted between five and nine years as indicated on Figure 18. The proportion of divorces in all population groups declined as the duration of marriage increased, with a significant decline being observed after 14 years of marriage, however the Indian/Asian population group had slightly higher proportions for marriages that lasted between 20 to 24 years (11%) and those that lasted between 25 to 29 years (9%).

**5.7. Divorces involving couples with children less than 18 years**

In 2024, 13 490 (55,7%) of the 24 202 divorces had children younger than 18 years whereas 10 699 (44,2%) divorces had no children younger than 18 years, see Table 15 below. The profile of white divorcees shows that 57,2% were without children. Looking at the black African and coloured divorcees, divorces involving couples with children constituted about 61,2% and 58,0% respectively.

**Table 15 – Number and percentage distribution of divorces by population group and divorces with and without children (children aged below 18 years), 2024**

Population group	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children	Unspecified	Total	Divorces with children	Divorces without children	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>13 490</b>	<b>10 699</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>55,7</b>	<b>44,2</b>	<b>0,1</b>
Black African	13 284	8 136	5 143	5	100,0	61,2	38,7	0,0
Coloured	3 363	1 952	1 411	-	100,0	58,0	42,0	0,0
Indian/Asian	990	494	496	-	100,0	49,9	50,1	0,0
White	5 008	2 143	2 865	-	100,0	42,8	57,2	0,0
Mixed	716	367	349	-	100,0	51,3	48,7	0,0
Unspecified	841	398	435	8	100,0	47,3	51,7	1,0

**Table 16 – Number and percentage distribution of children (aged below 18 years) affected by divorces by population group, 2024**

Population group	Total number of children involved	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 916</b>	<b>100,0</b>
Black African	14 100	61,5
Coloured	3 355	14,6
Indian/Asian	734	3,2
White	3 436	15,0
Mixed	617	2,7
Unspecified	674	2,9

Table 16 above shows that about 22 916 children less than 18 years were affected by divorces that took place in 2024. The table further indicates that 61,5% of children affected by divorce were from the black African population group; 14,6% from the coloured population group; 15,0% from the white population group and 3,2% from the Indian/Asian population group.

## 6. Summary and concluding remarks

This statistical release provides information on civil and customary marriages, civil unions and divorces for 2024, based on data from the South African national marriage registration systems of the DHA and data of divorces granted at all magistrate and high courts that deals with divorce matters.

Marriages has generally declined at an annual rate of 1,3% before COVID-19 from 2015 to 2019, followed by annual increase of 6,5% between 2021 and 2022 indicating recovery in marriage numbers. From 2022 to 2024 marriages declined by 4,6% annually.

A total of 102 373 marriages and unions were registered in 2024, these were constituted by 97 510 civil marriages, 2 634 customary marriages and 2 229 civil unions. Civil marriages registered indicate that more than half, 54 444 (55,8%) were solemnised by DHA marriage officers. The highest number of civil marriages was registered in Gauteng 23 509 (24,1%), followed by Western Cape 22 382 (23,0%) and KwaZulu-Natal 16 991 (17,4%) while the lowest was registered in Mpumalanga 3 080 (3,2%). Most civil marriages in 2024 for both bridegrooms 77 463 (79,4%) and brides 82 431 (84,5%) were first time marriages, with women generally entering marriage at younger ages than men.

The number of registered customary marriages was 2 634 in 2024, which decreased by 25,5% from a total of 3 537 recorded in 2023. Most bridegrooms [2 232 (84,7%)] were older than their brides, with the gap in median ages at registration of customary marriage wider than for other types of marriages. Over half of customary marriages in 2024 were registered in Limpopo 718 (27,3%) and KwaZulu-Natal had 704 (26,7%). The number of customary marriages decline in three provinces Free State (51,8%), Eastern Cape (39,1%) and Limpopo (23,8%). Out of 2 229 civil unions registered in 2024, most unions were registered in Gauteng 943 (42,3%) and Western Cape 751 (33,7%) and lowest in Limpopo 21 (0,9%).

Regarding divorces, the data showed that 24 202 divorces were granted in 2024. Divorces were mainly from people who had married for the first time. There were more wives (57,2%) than husbands (33,0%) who filed for divorce, with husbands generally getting divorced at a later age than wives. The provincial distribution showed that Gauteng (7 256), Western Cape (4 259) and KwaZulu-Natal (3 344) were the provinces with the highest number of divorces granted. In 2024, about 22 916 children aged less than 18 years were affected by divorces that took place.

Overall, the information provided in this release showed a decreasing trend in the number of registered civil marriages, fluctuations on customary marriages and an increasing trend on civil unions except in 2020, 2023 and 2024. The number of divorces granted showed an increase from 2015 to 2017; decreased between 2018 and 2020 and an increase between 2021 and 2024. Areas of improvement in the quality of data were noted, particularly

relating to completeness of information pertaining to unspecified province of registration, way of solemnisation and marital status at time of marriage for the data on marriages and civil unions; and unspecified population group and occupation of the divorcees.

## ANNEXURES

## Annexure A – Number of civil marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2024

	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>77 463</b>	<b>4 187</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>15 402</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>82 431</b>	<b>2 859</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>11 965</b>
<18	-	-	-	-	-	20	18	1	1	-
18	10	9	1	-	-	92	86	2	4	-
19	36	36	-	-	-	253	248	2	3	-
<b>18-19</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>
20	116	115	-	1	-	440	427	5	6	2
21	244	242	-	2	-	799	773	6	18	2
22	421	415	-	5	1	1 236	1 219	2	13	2
23	836	829	1	6	-	1 820	1 799	4	10	7
24	1 378	1 364	-	9	5	2 690	2 650	6	11	23
<b>20-24</b>	<b>2 995</b>	<b>2 965</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6 985</b>	<b>6 868</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>36</b>
25	1 802	1 792	-	4	6	3 227	3 197	4	10	16
26	2 273	2 247	1	12	13	3 590	3 536	8	10	36
27	2 622	2 588	2	12	20	4 092	4 009	8	4	71
28	3 108	3 074	1	8	25	4 240	4 133	8	13	86
29	3 301	3 247	5	8	41	4 364	4 236	11	7	110
<b>25-29</b>	<b>13 106</b>	<b>12 948</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>19 513</b>	<b>19 111</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>319</b>
30	3 362	3 283	2	8	69	4 379	4 209	10	6	154
31	3 544	3 428	5	5	106	4 391	4 182	16	4	189
32	3 601	3 458	11	5	127	4 275	4 033	15	5	222
33	3 529	3 347	14	3	165	4 191	3 903	19	2	267
34	3 601	3 385	9	3	204	4 136	3 785	27	2	322
<b>30-34</b>	<b>17 637</b>	<b>16 901</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>21 372</b>	<b>20 112</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1 154</b>

**Annexure A – Number of civil marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2024 (continued)**

	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>77 463</b>	<b>4 187</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>15 402</b>	<b>97 510</b>	<b>82 431</b>	<b>2 859</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>11 965</b>
35	3 511	3 282	11	2	216	3 895	3 514	34	1	346
36	3 446	3 178	15	2	251	3 654	3 262	46	2	344
37	3 517	3 171	19	1	326	3 387	2 942	41	2	402
38	3 392	3 004	23	2	363	3 255	2 781	48	2	424
39	3 410	2 949	30	4	427	3 100	2 633	54	1	412
<b>35-39</b>	<b>17 276</b>	<b>15 584</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1 583</b>	<b>17 291</b>	<b>15 132</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1 928</b>
40	3 270	2 796	31	1	442	2 932	2 388	58	1	485
41	3 266	2 719	37	1	509	2 697	2 120	67	-	510
42	3 068	2 529	35	-	504	2 589	2 006	75	1	507
43	2 672	2 145	55	-	472	2 142	1 620	78	-	444
44	2 587	1 993	65	-	529	2 036	1 521	71	-	444
<b>40-44</b>	<b>14 863</b>	<b>12 182</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2 456</b>	<b>12 396</b>	<b>9 655</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2 390</b>
45	2 387	1 783	56	1	547	1 849	1 347	57	-	445
46	2 176	1 593	63	1	519	1 645	1 137	73	-	435
47	2 175	1 516	79	-	580	1 559	1 068	72	1	418
48	1 994	1 270	96	-	628	1 516	983	89	-	444
49	1 891	1 236	87	1	567	1 330	858	103	-	369
<b>45-49</b>	<b>10 623</b>	<b>7 398</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2 841</b>	<b>7 899</b>	<b>5 393</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2 111</b>
50	1 890	1 158	121	-	611	1 308	793	98	-	417
51	1 643	950	109	-	584	1 163	669	95	-	399
52	1 751	978	130	-	643	1 108	624	87	-	397
53	1 394	721	118	-	555	872	455	80	-	337
54	1 428	742	139	-	547	894	489	102	-	303
<b>50-54</b>	<b>8 106</b>	<b>4 549</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2 940</b>	<b>5 345</b>	<b>3 030</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1 853</b>

**Annexure A – Number of civil marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides and marital status at the time of marriage, 2024 (concluded)**

Grand Total	Bridegroom					Bride				
	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widower	Unspecified	Total	Never Married	Divorcee	Widow	Unspecified
	97 510	77 463	4 187	458	15 402	97 510	82 431	2 859	255	11 965
55	1 231	600	123	1	507	759	396	70	2	291
56	1 210	552	138	12	508	776	382	101	3	290
57	1 034	440	156	16	422	579	273	89	3	214
58	932	391	143	11	387	521	246	87	3	185
59	913	365	162	17	369	469	219	64	7	179
<b>55-59</b>	<b>5 320</b>	<b>2 348</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>2 193</b>	<b>3 104</b>	<b>1 516</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1 159</b>
60	909	352	151	18	388	455	219	73	10	153
61	861	348	141	28	344	421	188	85	7	141
62	738	284	145	26	283	374	169	80	10	115
63	607	224	124	23	236	277	106	65	6	100
64	584	196	133	24	231	252	90	61	11	90
<b>60-64</b>	<b>3 699</b>	<b>1 404</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1 482</b>	<b>1 779</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>599</b>
65	492	147	132	26	187	230	90	67	10	63
66	496	154	151	16	175	205	74	61	6	64
67	372	123	109	21	119	177	50	46	5	76
68	371	111	131	26	103	138	43	49	4	42
69	255	73	86	8	88	108	34	38	4	32
<b>65-69</b>	<b>1 986</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>70+</b>	<b>1 853</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>139</b>

**Annexure B – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2024**

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 634</b>	<b>2 634</b>
<b>&lt;18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>160</b>
18	12	97
19	19	85
<b>18-19</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>182</b>
20	41	86
21	38	76
22	56	80
23	67	92
24	74	92
<b>20-24</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>426</b>
25	94	103
26	90	114
27	80	116
28	103	118
29	102	114
<b>25-29</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>565</b>
30	94	91
31	116	99
32	97	96
33	87	74
34	87	93
<b>30-34</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>453</b>

**Annexure B – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2024 (continued)**

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
35	92	71
36	99	64
37	72	76
38	91	54
39	84	72
<b>35-39</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>337</b>
40	79	45
41	60	35
42	64	39
43	58	39
44	41	35
<b>40-44</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>193</b>
45	56	28
46	42	23
47	45	37
48	34	22
49	36	25
<b>45-49</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>135</b>
50	26	25
51	29	20
52	33	12
53	31	16
54	32	12
<b>50-54</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>85</b>

**Annexure B – Number of customary marriages by ages of bridegrooms and brides at the time of marriage, 2024 (concluded)**

Age	Bridegroom	Bride
55	20	10
56	20	15
57	24	5
58	21	2
59	23	9
<b>55-59</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>41</b>
60	26	8
61	17	4
62	9	6
63	16	5
64	9	4
<b>60-64</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>27</b>
65	11	2
66	7	4
67	8	1
68	9	3
69	4	1
<b>65-69</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>70+</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

**Annexure C – Distribution of bridegrooms/ men of customary marriages by birth age group and year of marriage occurrence age group**

Age group	1938–1947	1948–1957	1958–1967	1968–1977	1978–1987	1988–1997	1998–2007	2008–2017	2018–2024	Grand Total
<18	-	1	3	5	4	2	-	-	-	15
18–19	-	-	3	7	16	4	1	-	-	31
20–24	1	1	19	62	95	41	24	20	13	276
25–29	1	3	19	66	114	98	44	72	52	469
30–34	-	-	5	30	55	78	58	106	149	481
35–39	-	-	2	13	22	42	52	118	189	438
40–44	-	-	-	4	15	31	30	79	143	302
45–49	-	-	1	-	4	16	23	55	114	213
50–55	-	-	-	-	1	5	10	42	93	151
55–59	-	-	-	1	2	1	6	24	74	108
60–64	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	13	57	77
65–69	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	6	32	39
70+	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	3	29	33
Unspecified	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>2 634</b>

**Annexure D – Distribution of brides/ women of customary marriages by birth age group and year of marriage occurrence age group**

Age group	1938–1947	1948–1957	1958–1967	1968–1977	1978–1987	1988–1997	1998–2007	2008–2017	2018–2024	Grand Total
<18	-	1	10	46	69	14	8	3	9	160
18–19	1		11	37	71	33	18	11	-	182
20–24	1	2	17	64	103	87	54	63	35	426
25–29	-	2	8	28	52	109	67	137	162	565
30–34	-	-	5	8	20	42	48	138	192	453
35–39	-	-	1	2	10	21	34	79	190	337
40–44	-	-	-	3	2	10	10	54	114	193
45–49	-	-	-	-	3	3	5	31	93	135
50–55	-	-	-	1	-	2	5	15	62	85
55–59	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	34	41
60–64	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	25	27
65–69	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10	11
70+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	12
Unspecified	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>2 634</b>

**Annexure E – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2024**

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 229</b>	<b>2 229</b>
18	-	2
19	3	4
<b>18-19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
20	7	6
21	4	8
22	12	19
23	21	39
24	25	49
<b>20-24</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>121</b>
25	44	56
26	62	88
27	79	93
28	103	136
29	97	107
<b>25-29</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>480</b>
30	110	109
31	121	124
32	115	120
33	140	109
34	97	117
<b>30-34</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>579</b>

**Annexure E – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2024 (continued)**

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
35	89	101
36	92	91
37	93	70
38	84	77
39	56	69
<b>35-39</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>408</b>
40	71	58
41	57	61
42	56	59
43	50	29
44	46	42
<b>40-44</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>249</b>
45	32	28
46	42	24
47	27	35
48	30	30
49	36	15
<b>45-49</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>132</b>
50	34	36
51	31	18
52	22	21
53	26	31
54	19	14
<b>50-54</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>120</b>

**Annexure E – Number of civil unions by ages of spouses-1 and spouses-2 at the time of civil union, 2024 (concluded)**

Age	Spouses-1	Spouses-2
55	20	15
56	16	13
57	16	14
58	24	9
59	18	14
<b>55-59</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>65</b>
60	15	15
61	5	10
62	10	5
63	8	3
64	8	2
<b>60-64</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>35</b>
65	11	8
66	7	2
67	4	7
68	4	0
69	5	4
<b>65-69</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>70+</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Unspecified</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>

**Annexure F – Number of divorces by age and population group (male divorcees), 2024**

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>13 636</b>	<b>3 586</b>	<b>1 157</b>	<b>5 206</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>564</b>
<25	50	9	8	6	25	-	2
25-29	443	89	122	46	180	-	6
30-34	1 772	675	406	115	532	1	43
35-39	3 441	1 807	611	190	756	3	74
40-44	4 532	2 795	693	188	766	4	86
45-49	4 384	2 751	560	198	784	5	86
50-54	3 688	2 216	469	176	739	7	81
55-59	2 411	1 397	341	80	536	1	56
60-64	1 450	807	170	45	381	2	45
65-69	670	366	81	21	191	-	11
70-74	332	164	32	13	108	-	15
75-79	136	71	12	2	46	-	5
80+	72	35	9	2	26	-	-
Unspecified	821	454	72	75	136	30	54

**Annexure G – Number of divorces by age group and population group (female divorcees), 2024**

Age group	Population group						
	Total	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Other	Unspecified
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 202</b>	<b>13 546</b>	<b>3 719</b>	<b>1 077</b>	<b>5 158</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>695</b>
<25	133	25	26	10	68	-	4
25-29	1 008	349	209	65	369	1	15
30-34	3 125	1 686	516	178	671	1	73
35-39	4 775	2 947	742	178	803	1	104
40-44	4 906	3 061	722	190	814	-	119
45-49	3 807	2 274	520	170	732	-	111
50-54	2 789	1 463	448	144	638	-	96
55-59	1 476	722	253	54	399	-	48
60-64	850	387	116	21	289	-	37
65-69	346	146	49	12	127	-	12
70-74	140	48	18	3	64	-	7
75-79	31	11	7	1	12	-	-
80+	17	7	3	-	7	-	-
Unspecified	799	420	90	51	165	4	69

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### 1. Definitions of terms

**Civil marriages:** these are marriages registered according to the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No. 25 of 1961). In the release, the term 'civil' is used to differentiate marriages that were solemnised by licensed DHA marriage officers from marriages that were solemnised by religious marriage officers.

**Customary marriages:** these are marriages that are negotiated, celebrated or concluded according to any of the systems of indigenous African customary law which exists in South Africa as prescribed in the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No. 120 of 1998).

**Civil unions:** refers to the voluntary union of two persons who are both 18 years of age or older, which is solemnised and registered by way of either a marriage or a civil partnership, in accordance with the procedures prescribed in the Civil Union Act, 2006 (Act No. 17 of 2006). Spouse-1 and Spouse-2 are used because the data does not specify the sex of the spouse.

**Crude Marriage Rate:** the crude marriage rate indicates the ratio of the number of marriages in a specific year to the mid-year population in that year. It is expressed as marriages per 1 000 population.

**Crude Divorce Rate:** the crude divorce rate indicates the ratio of the number of divorces in a specific year to the mid-year population in that year. It is expressed as divorces per 100 000 population.

**Mixed population group:** refers to couples with different population groups.

**Occupation:** occupation is coded using the *Standard Classification of Occupations*, Report No 09-90-01, First Edition, 1986 published by Stats SA.

**Plaintiff:** spouse(s) who filed the divorce case.

**Unknown province of registration:** the information about the name of placename is not known, as the province is derived from the provided placename.

**Unspecified province of registration:** the information about the name of the placename is not specified (missing), as the province is derived from the provided placename.

### 2. Symbols

- = Nil
- < = Less than
- ≥ = Greater than or equal to sign

### 3. References

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### Enquiries:

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(012) 310 8692 (technical enquiries)  
(012) 310 8251 (orders)

Email: [TshwaroG@statssa.gov.za](mailto:TshwaroG@statssa.gov.za) (technical enquiries)  
[info@statssa.gov.za](mailto:info@statssa.gov.za) (user information services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

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