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# Marital status

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: Int. NCSDD & NHDD  
Knowledgebase ID: 002014 Version number: 4  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NCSIMG & NHIMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
Effective date: 01-MAR-05  
Definition: A person's current relationship status in terms of a couple relationship or, for those not in a couple relationship, the existence of a current or previous registered marriage.  
Context: Marital status is a core data element in a wide range of social, labour and demographic statistics. Its main purpose is analysis of the association of marital status with the need for and use of services, and for epidemiological analysis. Marital status also acts as an indicator for the level of support adult recipients of the welfare system have at home. The item is also used in comparisons of administrative data and population censuses and surveys.

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## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric  
Representational form: CODE  
Representation layout: N  
Minimum Size: 1  
Maximum Size: 1  
Data Domain: 1 Never married  
2 Widowed  
3 Divorced  
4 Separated  
5 Married (registered and de facto)  
6 Not stated/inadequately described

Guide For Use: Refers to the current marital status of a person.  
Code 5, Married (registered and de facto), includes people who have been divorced or widowed but have since re-married, and should be generally accepted as applicable to all de facto couples,

including of the same sex.

Code 2, Widowed, and Code 4, Separated, usually refer to registered marriages but when self reported may also refer to de facto marriages.

Code 6, Not stated/inadequately described, is not for use on primary collection forms. It is primarily for use in administrative collections when transferring data from data sets where the item has not been collected.

Collection Methods: This data element collects information on social marital status. The recommended question module is:

Do you/Does the person usually live with a partner in a registered or de facto marriage?

Yes, in a registered marriage

Yes, in a defacto marriage

No, never married

No, separated

No, divorced

No, widowed

It should be noted that information on marital status is collected differently by the ABS, using a set of questions. However, the question outlined above is suitable and mostly sufficient for use within the health and community services fields. See below (Source document) for information on how to access the ABS standards.

While agencies are encouraged to use the recommended question described above, it is acknowledged that this is not always possible in practice. For example, where the data collection is a by-product of the provision of a health or community service, the information may be ascertained using different means. However, the recommended question should be used wherever practically possible.

Related metadata: supersedes the NCSDD data element Marital status version 1  
supersedes the NHDD data element Marital status version 3

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: The ABS standards for the collection of Social and Registered marital status appear on the ABS Website.

<<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary>>, select: Other ABS Statistical Standards/Standards for Social, Labour and Demographic Variables/Demographic Variables.

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

National Health Data Committee.

National Community Services Data Committee.

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Comments: This metadata item is common to both the National Community

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Services Data Dictionary and the National Health Data Dictionary. The ABS standards identify two concepts of marital status: Registered marital status - defined as whether a person has, or has had, a registered marriage; Social marital status - based on a person's living arrangement (including de facto marriages), as reported by the person. It is recommended that the social marital status concept be collected when information on social support/home arrangements is sought, whereas the registered marital status concept need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection. While marital status is an important factor in assessing the type and extent of support needs, such as for the elderly living in the home environment, marital status does not adequately address the need for information about social support and living arrangement and other data elements need to be formulated to capture this information.

### *Data Element Links*

#### *Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

NCSIM Social-cultural characteristic

#### *Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

NMDS - Admitted patient mental health care	From 01-Jul-04 to
NMDS - Community mental health care	From 01-Jul-04 to
NMDS - Residential mental health care	From 01-Jul-04 to

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