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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: NHDD  
Knowledgebase ID: 000089                      Version number: 2  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NHIMG                      Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
Effective date: 06-JUN-01

Definition: Current marital status of the person.

Context: Marital status is a core data element in a wide range of social, labour and demographic statistics. Its main purpose is to establish the living arrangements of individuals, to facilitate analysis of the association of marital status with the need for and use of services and for epidemiological analysis.

The ABS has defined registered marital status based on a legal concept and social marital status, a social, marriage-like arrangement (i.e. de facto marriage). The ABS standards working party recommended that the ABS registered marital status be accepted (ABS 1993).

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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 (including de facto)
6	Not stated / inadequately described

Guide For Use: The category Married (registered and de facto) should be generally accepted as applicable to all de facto couples, including

of the same sex.

Collection Methods: 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 arrangements and other data elements need to be formulated to capture this information.

Related metadata: supersedes previous data element Marital status version 1 has been superseded by Marital status version 3

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: ABS Directory of concepts and standards for social, labour and demographic statistics, 1993

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Comments: ABS standards (see ABS: Directory of Concepts and Standards for Social, Labour and Demographic statistics) identify two concepts of marital status:

- registered marital status - defined as whether a person has, or has had, a legally registered marriage;
- social marital status - based on a persons living arrangements (including de-facto marriages), as reported by the person.

ABS recommends that the social marital status concept be collected when information on marital status is sought, whereas the registered marital status concept need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection and only in areas of consent if necessary. Most community services data collections ask clients to self-report their marital status. Hence, the operative concept is one of 'social' marital status.

### *Data Element Links*

*Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

NHIM Social characteristic

*Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

NMDS - Community mental health care From 01-Jul-00 to 30-Jun-01

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