



Modern Family is yours?

A recently published NATSEM report, takes a look at the rise of the female breadwinner, blended families and the different trends emerging within birth and marriage rates. What is a typical Australian family these days?

Many of us were raised to believe that a family unit meant Mum, Dad and a couple of children. But times have changed. Today's 'modern family' is almost unrecognisable from this more traditional view.



Marriages were once the cornerstone of Australian families but over the past few decades Australian families have undergone significant change. Marriage rates are declining, cohabitation rates are rising and couples living together is now the usual pathway to marriage. We have also seen divorce rates stabilise, a decline in fertility rates and people postponing having children.

More women are now working with households where both parents are employed now make up 58% of all couple households with children compared to only 40% in 1983 (ABS 1995).

Having two earners in a household has now become necessary for many families to make ends meet and to enter and remain in the housing market.

Over time, the presence of dual-earner households has not only increased, but so has the importance of the female partner's earnings. Many households now have a female breadwinner—that is, where the woman earns more in wages than their male partner. Interestingly, over the past 10 years, female breadwinner households have increased in Australia from 22.3 per cent in 2001 to 24.2 per cent in 2011.

These days, the typical pathway for family formation is for young people to continue with education and training until their early twenties, travel and work full time before moving in together then marrying in a civil ceremony in their late twenties.

Modern family planning means that having children can be delayed or spaced out, and while it is more common for the woman to be the primary carer, the majority of mothers will quickly return to the workforce at least on a part-time basis. Divorce is an option if things don't work out, but most families remain intact.



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To read the full NATSEM Report, please go to

<https://www.amp.com.au/wps/amp/au/FileProxy?vigurl=/vgn-ext-templating/fileMetadataInterface?ids=b7cea027c62e1410VgnVCM1000004320220aRCRD>

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