

INTERMARRIAGE BY RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA

■ **Genevieve Heard, Siew-Ean Khoo and Bob Birrell**

Intermarriage between adherents of different religious affiliations is increasing in Australia. However, most intermarriage occurs between the various Christian denominations. Intermarriage between different faiths remains negligible, but is likely to increase over time as successive generations of migrant descent are exposed to the religious diversity and the forces of secularization at play in Australia.

INTRODUCTION

Religion can be a strong determinant of partner choice. Most religious groups have traditionally proscribed marriage outside the group boundaries—known as ‘exogamy’, in the language of sociology—and, conversely, have encouraged or prescribed marriage within the group (‘endogamy’). Yet, particularly in a culturally diverse nation such as Australia, religious intermarriage may also be viewed as a measure of harmony between different communities and as evidence of a tolerant society.

At the most basic level, intermarriage is considered to be the outcome of close social interactions between members of different religions,¹ and implies that the social barriers separating these groups are weak.² Intermarriage across religious boundaries may also mean that people of different religious affiliations are becoming more similar with regard to other social and demographic characteristics. People tend to look for partners with similar educational and class backgrounds to themselves.³ Where minority religious groups are socially or economically disadvantaged relative to the rest of society, exogamy is less likely, since prospective marriage partners are unlikely to bridge this gulf. Conversely, the sociological literature suggests that intermarriage between members of religious minorities will be relatively high where the members of a community achieve upward social mobility. Relatively high levels of

education, in particular, are often found to facilitate intermarriage.⁴

Using data from the 2006 census, this paper assesses the extent of intermarriage (defined here as including both formal and de facto marriage) by religion in Australian society. Where possible, trend data are used to assess the direction of change. The paper is part of a larger study of intermarriage in Australia that also examines intermarriage by birthplace, ancestry and indigenous status.⁵

The question on religion in the Australian census is optional; that is, people can choose not to answer it. Eleven per cent of the population did not state their religion in the 2006 census. The analysis that follows is based on the 89 per cent of the population that responded to the question, and relates to partnered persons only.⁶ It should also be noted that some religions require that spouses of another religious affiliation convert to that religion on marriage to a person of that religion. People can also change their religion at any time after their marriage. The census data refer to respondents’ religious affiliations at the time of the census, which may be different from their affiliations before or at the time of their marriage.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN AUSTRALIA

The census of 1933 showed that Australians overwhelmingly affiliated with the various denominations of Christianity at that time.

Table 1: Religious affiliation, Australia, 1996, 2001 and 2006

	1996	2001	2006	1996	2001	2006
		number		per cent		
Buddhism	199,812	355,732	418,756	1.1	1.9	2.1
Christianity						
Anglican	3,903,324	3,845,537	3,718,252	22.0	20.7	18.7
Assyrian Apostolic	6,236	7,096	8,189	0.0	0.0	0.0
Baptist	295,178	306,709	316,738	1.7	1.7	1.6
Brethren	22,063	19,245	24,232	0.1	0.1	0.1
Catholic	4,798,950	4,967,200	5,126,880	27.0	26.7	25.8
Churches of Christ	75,023	60,769	54,822	0.4	0.3	0.3
Eastern Orthodox	497,015	528,133	544,160	2.8	2.8	2.7
Jehovah's Witnesses	83,414	80,474	80,919	0.5	0.4	0.4
Latter Day Saints	45,112	49,386	53,199	0.3	0.3	0.3
Lutheran	249,989	247,635	251,107	1.4	1.3	1.3
Oriental Orthodox	25,106	29,147	32,711	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other Protestant	50,216	52,102	56,106	0.3	0.3	0.3
Pentecostal	174,720	193,124	219,689	1.0	1.0	1.1
Presbyterian & Reformed	675,534	631,188	596,671	3.8	3.4	3.0
Salvation Army	74,145	70,748	64,200	0.4	0.4	0.3
Seventh-day Adventist	52,655	53,238	55,251	0.3	0.3	0.3
Uniting Church	1,334,917	1,236,104	1,135,427	7.5	6.6	5.7
Christian, no further detail ^a	186,109	250,730	313,190	1.0	1.3	1.6
Other Christian	33,058	32,403	34,093	0.2	0.2	0.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>12,582,764</i>	<i>12,660,968</i>	<i>12,685,836</i>	<i>70.9</i>	<i>68.1</i>	<i>63.9</i>
Hinduism	67,279	95,128	148,119	0.4	0.5	0.7
Islam	200,885	280,435	340,392	1.1	1.5	1.7
Judaism	79,805	83,709	88,831	0.4	0.5	0.4
Other religions:						
Aust Aboriginal Trad. Religions	7,357	5,101	5,377	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other religious groups	59,333	83,657	103,645	0.3	0.5	0.5
<i>Total</i>	<i>66,690</i>	<i>88,758</i>	<i>109,022</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>0.5</i>
No religion ^b	2,948,888	2,877,299	3,706,555	16.6	15.5	18.7
Other religious affiliation ^c	56,121	349,981	133,820	0.3	1.9	0.7
Religious affiliation not stated	1,550,585	1,796,298	2,223,957	8.7	9.7	11.2
Total	17,752,829	18,588,308	19,855,288	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: ABS cat. no. 2068.0, 2006 census tables

Notes: The data here refer only to those who answered the questions on religion.

^a Comprises 'Christian, no further detail', 'Apostolic Church, so described', 'Church of God, so described', 'Australian Christian Churches, so described', and 'New Church Alliance, so described'.

^b Comprises 'No Religion, no further detail', 'Agnosticism', 'Atheism', 'Humanism' and 'Rationalism'.

^c Comprises 'Religious belief, no further detail', 'Not defined', 'New Age, so described' and 'Theism'. In

Owing to the settlement of the country mostly by people from Britain and Ireland, Protestants and Catholics dominated, albeit with sharp social divisions between the two groups.

Only in the later decades of the 20th century was this dominance challenged. In 1971, the proportion of the population affiliating with Christian denominations was 86 per cent. However, by the 2001 census, this proportion was 68 per cent.⁷ Greater religious diversity has come about through growth in the numbers of Australians, many of them migrants, practising Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and other non-western faiths. By 2006, over a million Australians (six per cent) identified with religions other than Christianity (see Table 1). Simultaneously, organised religion of any kind has lost some of its monopoly over Australian spirituality.⁸ Those claiming no religious affiliation increased in number to 3.7 million, or 19 per cent of those answering the question on religion, in 2006 (Table 1).

These changes have taken place within the context of a trend towards secularisation across the western world. A secular society is not necessarily irreligious. Rather, secularisation refers to the diminished reach of organised religion, and implies that religious institutions have less control over the identities and social lives of individuals.⁹

RELIGION AND PARTNERING

Increased intermarriage between people of different religious affiliations may be considered a sign of advanced secularisation. In turn, religious intermarriage is considered to be a major factor contributing to further secularisation. Having a partner who does not belong to the same religion increases the probability of disaffiliation and reduces the probability that children of the union will be raised in that religion.¹⁰

In 1991, Hayes claimed that ‘homogeneity along religious and non-religious lines is a characteristic feature of Australian

marriage patterns’.¹¹ Yet if secularisation implies that religious institutions have less control over the social lives of individuals, it might be expected that partnering across denominations and religions would continue to increase over time. As noted by Bouma: ‘churches are not the primary local social centres they once were when they provided dances, socials, tennis and other occasions for people to meet’.¹²

Since ethnicity and religion are so closely related, the scale of intermarriage across ethnic lines in Australia¹³ would also be expected to mean more couple relationships which also cross religious lines. That is, as migrants increasingly partner with those born in Australia or in source countries other than their own, so the salience of the religious commitments valued by their family or community of origin would be expected to diminish.

Table 2 confirms that religious exogamy—as measured by the proportion of men and women married to someone of a different religious affiliation at the time of the census—has increased marginally for the majority of religious groupings shown between 2001 and 2006. (In Table 2, and hereafter, tables and discussion are confined to the thirteen most popular religious affiliations, which claim in excess of 85,000 adherents each in Australia.)

As would be expected, rates of exogamy for each religious affiliation are similar for males and for females, with few exceptions: men with no religion are much more likely to have partnered women who have a religious affiliation (37 per cent) than are women of no religion to have partnered men who have a religion (23 per cent); and Pentecostal women are much more likely to have partnered outside their church (15 per cent) than are Pentecostal men (six per cent). Buddhist women are also more likely than Buddhist men to have a partner of a different religious affiliation. The gender differences probably reflect the fact that

Table 2: Inter-marriage by religion, 2001 and 2006

	Males				Females			
	2001		2006		2001		2006	
	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent
Catholic	1,033,398	35	1,067,406	37	1,114,383	39	1,159,527	40
Anglican	907,563	39	878,393	41	952,608	40	930,099	42
No Religion	607,761	38	789,030	37	492,693	23	658,281	23
Uniting Church	278,014	40	257,776	43	321,371	46	300,474	49
Presbyterian and Reformed	169,580	61	158,626	61	165,070	59	156,150	60
Eastern Orthodox	133,989	19	135,742	21	130,251	16	133,474	19
Other Christian	145,114	20	159,606	20	164,302	28	180,073	27
Buddhism	68,661	17	81,250	18	76,751	24	95,169	29
Islam	55,922	9	67,883	8	54,327	6	66,634	6
Baptist	67,141	32	69,910	31	73,282	36	76,907	36
Lutheran	57,254	48	57,467	51	60,903	50	61,513	53
Pentecostal	38,520	7	43,791	6	43,171	15	49,574	15
Hinduism	22,747	12	36,217	10	22,783	11	36,247	10
Judaism	20,205	20	21,581	21	19,756	17	21,127	19

Source: 2006 census customised table.

Notes: ^a Rate excludes those whose partner's religion was not stated or whose partner was temporarily absent on census night.

these affiliations allow spouses to maintain different religious affiliations. There are notable excesses of men over women professing no religion, and of Pentecostal women over Pentecostal men.

Intermarriage is more common among some religious groups than others. A substantial proportion of those who identify with the main Christian religious groups are exogamous. By 2006, some 37 per cent of Catholic men and 40 percent of Catholic women were partnered with non-Catholics. The exogamy rate was similar for Anglicans and Uniting Church adherents, while more than half of all partnered men and women affiliated with the Presbyterian and Reformed and Lutheran churches had married outside their own church. The highest overall rate of exogamy was among Presbyterian and Reformed adherents at 61 per cent for men and 60 per cent for women. Pentecostals were an exception, with exogamy rates among the lowest of all religious affiliations. The Pentecostal church is relatively recently established in Australia. Otherwise, these are all long established communities in Australia, with most of their adherents being Australia-born. Their relatively high rates of exogamy are consistent with the theory that social mobility and secularisation tend to erode exclusive religious attachments. Certainly it seems that the sharp divide between Catholics and Protestants that remained strong until well into the 20th century has largely disappeared, as measured by intermarriage between the two groups.

However, it is important to note that most exogamous Christians have spouses with a different Christian affiliation, rather than with a non-Christian affiliation. Twenty-eight per cent of Catholic men and women were partnered with someone from the main Protestant groups shown in Table 3. More than one fifth of Anglicans and Presbyterian and Reformed adherents were partnered with Catholics. Lutherans

had the highest rate of exogamy outside the Christian affiliations, yet this was only three per cent.

Studies based on earlier censuses indicated that intermarriage was negligible outside the dominant (Catholic, Anglican and other Protestant) religious groups in Australia.¹⁴ These findings are replicated in the 2006 census data. Rates of exogamy are under one quarter for all the non-Christian religious groups, with the exception of Buddhist women (29 per cent). Exogamy is least common among Muslim women and men (six and seven per cent respectively).

Table 4 shows that exogamous men and women from all the major non-Christian religious groups are more likely to be married to adherents of the major Christian denominations or to partners with no religious affiliation than they are to be married to adherents of a different non-Christian religion.

Outside the major Christian denominations, intermarriage patterns are inseparable from migration patterns. The next sections address religious intermarriage by country of birth and by generation.

RELIGIOUS INTERMARRIAGE BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH

While increased religious diversity owes much to migration,¹⁵ it should not be assumed that all migrants from non-western countries, especially Asian countries, bring non-western faiths with them. Of partnered men and women from China, Hong Kong and Japan, 'no religion' was the most common response in 2006, while Catholicism was most commonly nominated among those from Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore. The same applies to partnered immigrants from some Middle Eastern countries: men and women from Iraq were most likely to be Catholic, as were women from Lebanon. Nevertheless, many religious groups in Australia have their origin in particular migrant source countries.

Table 3: Partnered Christian men and women, religious affiliation of spouse, 2006 (per cent)

	Catholic	Anglican	Uniting Church	Presbyterian & Reformed	Eastern Orthodox	Baptist	Lutheran	Pentecostal	Other	No Religion	Total
Males											
Catholic	63	18	4	3	1	1	1	0	2	6	100
Anglican	23	59	6	4	1	1	1	0	2	4	100
Uniting Church	17	16	57	2	0	1	1	0	2	4	100
Presbyterian & Reformed	23	24	5	39	1	1	1	0	2	4	100
Eastern Orthodox	11	4	1	1	79	0	0	0	1	2	100
Baptist	10	10	3	2	0	69	1	0	2	3	100
Lutheran	19	14	6	3	1	1	49	0	3	6	100
Pentecostal	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	94	1	1	100
Females											
Catholic	60	18	4	3	1	1	1	0	2	10	100
Anglican	21	58	4	4	1	1	1	0	2	9	100
Uniting Church	16	17	51	3	0	1	1	0	2	9	100
Presbyterian & Reformed	21	22	4	40	1	1	1	0	2	8	100
Eastern Orthodox	10	3	1	1	81	0	0	0	1	3	100
Baptist	10	10	3	2	0	64	1	0	2	8	100
Lutheran	17	13	5	3	1	1	47	0	2	11	100
Pentecostal	3	3	1	1	0	0	0	85	2	4	100

Source: 2006 census customised table.

Table 4: Partnered non-Christian men and women, by religious affiliation of spouse, 2006 (per cent)

	Buddhism	Islam	Hinduism	Judaism	Catholic	Anglican	Other Christian	Other	No Religion	Total
Males										
Buddhism	82	0	0	0	7	2	3	1	5	100
Islam	0	92	0	0	3	1	2	0	1	100
Hinduism	1	0	90	0	4	1	2	1	1	100
Judaism	1	0	0	79	6	4	4	1	5	100
Females										
Buddhism	71	0	0	0	8	5	4	1	11	100
Islam	0	94	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	100
Hinduism	0	0	90	0	3	2	1	1	2	100
Judaism	0	0	0	81	4	4	3	1	7	100

Source: 2006 census customised table.

Table 5 shows the top three countries of birth for men and women of particular religious groups, and their rate of inter-marriage. Australia was the most common country of birth for Catholics, Anglicans and those of Eastern Orthodox and Jewish faiths. These are all well-established religions in Australia, of which large numbers of adherents are second- or third-plus generation Australians. Thus it is not surprising that exogamy rates for the Australia-born are relatively high. For example, amongst Catholics, the Australia-born exogamy rate is 46 per cent for males and 47 per cent for females. It is also notable that exogamy rates are similarly high for the United Kingdom-born adherents of these faiths. The explanation is undoubtedly the same. That is, these people come from a society with similar strong secular value trends, thus facilitating cross-faith partnerships.

The pattern is quite different for the smaller and more recently established religious communities in Australia. For each religious group there tends to be a distinct country-of-origin pattern and a very low rate of exogamy. For example, Australia's Buddhists were most commonly born in Viet Nam, Muslims in Lebanon and Hindus in India, and the overseas-born adherents of these religions have lower rates of inter-marriage than do their Australian-born counterparts.

RELIGIOUS INTERMARRIAGE BY GENERATION

Arguably, these findings do not help much in understanding the dynamics of religious exogamy among the less established religious groups. Most migrants when they arrive in Australia are already partnered with co-religionists. Thus where a community consists primarily of recent arrivals it is no surprise that, as with Muslims and Hindus, exogamy is low. The interest lies in what happens with second and subsequent generations within each religious com-

munity. Table 6 addresses this question by providing intermarriage data by religion and generation in Australia.

Table 6 shows that exogamy is notably low for all the first generation non-Christian religious groups, including Muslims, Jews and Hindus. Intermarriage is discouraged in almost all these faiths. In the case of many countries from which Australia's Muslim community derive, exogamy is strongly proscribed. In Australia, however, it may be more difficult to maintain such proscriptions. Although data are not available on when the marriage occurred, most partnered

members of the Islamic community are likely to have arrived in Australia as married couples—Table 6 indicates that over 80 per cent of Muslims are first generation Australians.

Table 6 also shows that intermarriage by religion increases with each successive generation. In some cases the shift is quite dramatic between generations. Whereas only seven per cent of overseas-born Muslim men are exogamous, this proportion increases to fourteen per cent among second-generation Muslim men and to 25 per cent among Muslim men who are third

Table 5: Religious intermarriage, males and females in couple families by top three countries of birth

Religious affiliation	Males			Females		
	Country of birth	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent	Country of birth	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent
Catholic	Australia	682,021	44	Australia	765,094	47
	Italy	74,432	11	Italy	55,978	6
	United Kingdom	39,677	46	United Kingdom	41,377	51
Anglican	Australia	665,018	42	Australia	717,891	44
	United Kingdom	142,592	36	United Kingdom	135,869	35
	New Zealand	19,310	45	New Zealand	20,528	48
Eastern orthodox	Australia	42,979	37	Australia	48,304	33
	Greece	39,698	9	Greece	34,405	6
	FYROM ^b	14,374	7	FYROM ^b	13,178	4
Buddhist	Viet Nam	25,994	8	Viet nam	27,545	12
	China ^c	9,305	10	China ^c	11,409	25
	Australia	9,071	57	Australia	8,677	65
Muslim	Lebanon	12,100	3	Australia	10,044	7
	Turkey	8,342	7	Lebanon	9,930	1
	Australia	7,437	16	Turkey	7,528	4
Hindu	India	18,642	7	India	18,127	4
	Fiji	7,155	8	Fiji	7,636	14
	Sri Lanka	3,910	8	Sri Lanka	3,783	5
Jewish	Australia	7,412	28	Australia	8,002	24
	South Africa	3,774	10	South Africa	3,647	8
	United Kingdom	1,306	32	United Kingdom	1,201	30

Source: 2006 census customised table.

Notes: ^a Rate excludes those whose partner's religion was not stated or whose partner was temporarily absent on census night.

^b Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

^c Excludes SARs and Taiwan Province

Table 6: Religious intermarriage by generation, 2006

Religion and generation	Males		Females	
	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent
Catholic				
First generation	350,065	23	354,990	27
Second generation	193,435	39	217,479	41
Third+ generation	488,673	46	547,896	49
Total ^b	1,067,401	37	1,159,518	40
Anglican				
First generation	186,438	36	183,011	37
Second generation	108,809	42	119,768	45
Third+ generation	558,546	42	601,716	44
Total ^b	878,388	41	930,103	42
No Religion				
First generation	227,648	32	185,096	18
Second generation	123,042	38	111,385	25
Third+ generation	419,396	39	345,936	24
Total ^b	789,031	37	658,294	23
Uniting Church				
First generation	30,023	31	34,250	39
Second generation	28,038	41	33,184	50
Third+ generation	193,388	45	225,570	51
Total ^b	257,782	43	300,477	49
Presbyterian and Reformed				
First generation	41,578	48	40,018	46
Second generation	20,030	65	20,238	64
Third+ generation	92,526	67	91,449	65
Total ^b	158,627	61	156,146	60
Eastern Orthodox				
First generation	86,987	13	79,313	11
Second generation	39,819	37	43,807	32
Third+ generation	2,675	47	3,868	36
Total ^b	135,744	21	133,474	19
Buddhism				
First generation	69,307	13	83,101	25
Second generation	2,719	53	2,788	63
Third+ generation	6,392	58	5,965	66
Total ^b	81,244	18	95,162	29
Islam				
First generation	57,606	7	53,645	6
Second generation	5,924	14	8,387	7
Third+ generation	1,352	25	1,408	12
Total ^b	67,883	8	66,637	6

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Table 6: Religious intermarriage by generation, 2006 (continued)

Religion and generation	Males		Females	
	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered number	Exogamous ^a per cent
Baptist				
First generation	20,129	24	22,441	31
Second generation	9,195	32	10,390	37
Third+ generation	38,599	35	41,883	38
Total ^b	69,909	31	76,901	36
Lutheran				
First generation	18,737	56	17,923	55
Second generation	6,859	71	8,408	74
Third+ generation	30,419	44	33,613	47
Total ^b	57,472	51	61,515	53
Pentecostal				
First generation	15,820	5	17,448	13
Second generation	6,281	7	7,184	15
Third+ generation	20,428	7	23,477	16
Total ^b	43,788	6	49,570	15
Hinduism				
First generation	34,579	10	34,408	9
Second generation	367	32	459	39
Third+ generation	461	44	516	44
Total ^b	36,217	10	36,253	10
Judaism				
First generation	13,185	17	12,099	15
Second generation	5,461	25	5,687	22
Third+ generation	1,909	33	2,290	28
Total ^b	21,581	21	21,123	19

Source: 2006 census customised table.

Notes: ^a Rate excludes those whose partner's religion was not stated or whose partner was temporarily absent on census night.

^b Totals include those whose generation was not stated.

or more generation. However, the numbers of second and third generation Muslims remain small. As the Muslim community increases in size and institutional complexity (that is, as mosques and Islamic schools and related institutions develop), the younger generation of Muslims may more easily find partners within their religious community.

THE JEWISH CASE

Exogamy is also low amongst first generation Jewish men and women. Most of these men and women would have been married at the time of migration to Australia. The rate of exogamy increases to 25 per cent among second generation Jewish men and to 33 per cent among Jewish men who are third generation or more. For Jewish women the parallel rates are 22 per cent

and 28 per cent respectively. Are these rates high or low? From the point of view of the Jewish community in Australia they may be considered high—community leaders have been concerned about any indications of increased out-marriage,¹⁶ because it often implies (as noted above) that the couple will not carry on Jewish religious traditions or raise their children as Jews. A third generation exogamy rate of around 30 per cent may indicate that Australia is following the pattern in North America, where the rate of exogamy reaches almost 50 per cent.¹⁷ Although it is possible that marriages to non-Jews may be followed by conversion, the evidence suggests that exogamy is usually associated with a decline in Jewish identification and commitment to the Jewish community institutions on the part of the intermarried couple.¹⁸

On the other hand, a 30 per cent level of exogamy amongst the third generation may seem low in the light of the theory that upward mobility and secularisation normally promote intermarriage. The Jewish community in Australia has been one of the most successful in regards to upward educational and occupational mobility. Table 7, which shows exogamy by level of education for those identifying as Jews, highlights this point. It shows that around half of Jewish

partners hold a degree or higher (a rate far higher than any other major religious group in Australia). It also shows that exogamy is low for all levels of education, including those with a degree or higher. The development of Jewish social institutions appears to have functioned as community leaders have hoped, that is to counter the erosive impact of upward mobility on ethnic attachment. According to one leader, writing of Melbourne's Jews:

[T]he organic development of an extensive structure of formal and informal community organisations has operated as a particularly effective socialising framework. Certainly the current evidence documents a relatively high level of ethnic endogamy and suggests that the experience of growing up within such a community has engendered widespread positive commitment towards the principle of ethnic continuity among succeeding generations of Melbourne Jews.¹⁹

The Jewish case shows that the trend towards greater religious intermarriage in Australia is not unidirectional and may be affected not only by broad social trends such as secularisation, but by factors specific to minority religious communities themselves.

Table 7: Jewish intermarriage by educational attainment

	Males		Females	
	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent	Partnered no.	Exogamous ^a per cent
Degree or higher	10,986	19	9,682	19
Other post-school qualification	4,194	22	3,971	18
Year 11–12	3,450	24	4,123	18
Up to year 10	1,195	24	1,324	23
Total ^b	21,581	21	21,123	19

Source: 2006 Census customised table.

Notes: ^a Rate excludes those whose partner's religion was not stated or whose partner was temporarily absent on census night.

^b Total includes those whose educational attainment was not stated, inadequately described, or none.

CONCLUSION

Religious exogamy is increasing in Australia. Rates of intermarriage by and between Catholics and Protestants, already high in 2001, were higher in 2006, suggesting the continuing erosion of the historic divide between these two groups. Catholics and Protestants are more exogamous than other groups due to their longer exposure to each other and to the forces of secularisation operating in Australia, as in most western nations. However, most exogamous Catholics and Protestants are married to spouses from other Christian denominations. Intermarriage across religions remains relatively rare in Australia.

Cultural diversification in Australia has been accompanied by greater religious diversification. However, the overseas-born Australians who are now contributing to Australia's religious diversity have often arrived as couples, and are not yet con-

tributing much to rates of intermarriage. Nevertheless, sharp differences between migrants and subsequent generations of migrant descent are evident. There is a high level of exogamy amongst second and third-plus generation Australians across religious boundaries.

It will be interesting to compare intermarriage patterns among the second generation of more recently arrived migrants from Asia and the Middle-East, whose religious attachments are to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other non-Christian religions. Intermarriage by members of these newer communities may increase over time as these groups have more opportunities to mix, both with each other and with adherents of the longer-established Catholic and Protestant faiths. Alternatively, however, the boundaries between religions may prove to be stronger than those between denominations.

References

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