

Australia: Estimated abortions, 1970-2015

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Abortion began to be legalized in 1969 in some Australian regions, with policies varying from region to region. At the national level Australia has only reported Medicare-funded abortions, with such data available from the mid 1980s to the present. South Australia has reported total abortions—both Medicare and privately funded—for 1970-2013 (Scheil et al., 2015), and Western Australia has done likewise for 1999-2012 (MCHU, 2013). Chan and Sage (2005) estimated nationwide about 15% additional private abortions for 1985-2003. Of two Medicare item reports associated with induced abortion, they consider item 35643 (associated with most abortions) but not item 16525.

To estimate total Australian abortions, we use the Chan and Sage estimates as a starting point. These are adjusted for 1994-2003 by adding available reports of Medicare-funded 16525 abortions. On average Chan and Sage estimate an additional 15.6% privately funded abortions relative to Medicare reports for 1994-2003 (range 14.5% to 16.7%); this percentage is used to adjust Medicare figures for 2004-2015. Omission of 16525 abortions from the Chan and Sage estimates represent an average of 0.8% of abortions for 1996-2003 (range 0.7% to 0.8%) but an average of 1.1% for 1985-1988 and 1994-1995 (range 1.0% to 1.2%); the latter percentage is used to adjust their estimates for 1985-1993. Reported or estimated figures for 1970-1971 and 1983-1984 are adopted from (UN 1979; Siedlecky 1988; Henshaw et al. 2001). For 1972-1982, growth of figures is based on a trend model derived from superposed epoch analysis for developed countries (WP1, 2016) (PRELIMINARY). Table 1 provides the figures used for the analysis and the resulting total estimated abortions for Australia for 1970-2015.

Table 1. Australia, reported or estimated abortions from various sources and final estimates, 1970-2014

year	Australia, reported Medicare abortions, items 35643 + 16525	Australia, reported Medicare abortions, item 35643	Australia, estimated total abortions (CS2005)	Australia, total abortions (various sources)	South Australia, reported abortions Medicare and private	Australia, estimated total abortions (this analysis)
1970					1,440	1,440
1971				2,519	2,409	2,519
1972					2,692	4,200
1973					2,847	5,800
1974					2,867	7,400
1975					3,000	9,100
1976					3,289	12,100
1977					3,494	15,200
1978					3,895	18,200
1979					3,880	23,800
1980					4,081	29,400
1981					4,096	35,000
1982					4,061	40,600
1983				46,500	4,036	46,500
1984				54,600	4,091	54,600
1985		56,371	65,240	57,000	4,079	66,000
1986		59,876	69,296	60,500	4,327	70,100
1987		60,271	69,752	61,000	4,229	70,500
1988		62,420	72,240	63,200	4,263	73,000
1989		66,414	76,862		4,342	77,700
1990		69,223	80,113		4,463	81,000
1991		70,361	81,430		4,696	82,300
1992		73,448	85,003		4,717	85,900
1993		74,395	85,153		4,959	86,100
1994	77,627	76,691	87,965		5,140	88,900
1995	78,237	77,218	90,182		5,475	91,200
1996	78,072	77,375	89,076		5,545	89,800
1997	76,216	75,569	87,497		5,609	88,100
1998	75,788	75,183	86,862		5,488	87,500

1999	74,001	73,392	85,731		5,679	86,300
2000	75,543	74,888	86,931		5,580	87,600
2001	77,046	76,332	88,306		5,579	89,000
2002	75,906	75,282	86,552		5,467	87,200
2003	73,623	72,967	84,460		5,216	85,100
2004	72,897				4,931	84,300
2005	70,153				4,715	81,100
2006	72,550				4,889	83,900
2007	72,638				4,885	84,000
2008	72,594				5,101	83,900
2009	72,300				5,057	83,600
2010	66,200				5,048	76,500
2011	62,820				5,010	72,600
2012	62,315				4,765	72,000
2013	60,532				4,681	70,000
2014	57,373					66,300
2015	54,700					63,200

Figure 1 shows these reported and estimated abortion series over time. South Australia abortions are also shown scaled by a factor of 10, showing the similarity of trends for that region to national trends for 1995-2013.

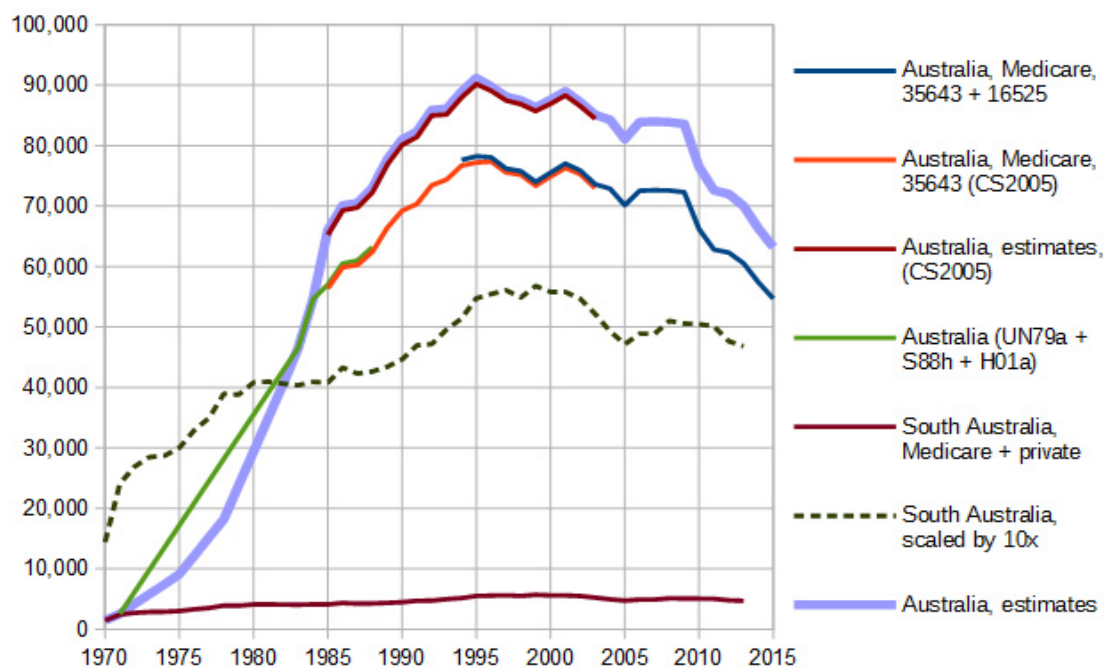


Figure 1. Reported and estimated abortions in Australia, 1970-2015.

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