

PULSE

REPORT BRIEFINGS FROM MCCRINDLE RESEARCH



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Baby Names Australia 2008

Shifting trends and contemporary attitudes in popular given names

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The Australian Top 10

BOYS	GIRLS
1. Jack	1. Ella
2. Joshua	2. Emily
3. Lachlan	3. Mia
4. William	4. Isabella
5. Thomas	5. Chloe
6. Riley	6. Charlotte
7. James	7. Olivia
8. Cooper	8. Sophie
9. Ethan	9. Lily
10. Noah	10. Sienna

In 2007, 11.7% of Australian babies were given one of these 20 first names (that's a total of 33,380). Approximately 1.4% of baby girls were named Ella while 1.7% of boys were named Jack. In accordance with existing trends, boys converged around a smaller pool of names with the top 5 boy's names accounting for 10,403 births compared to 8,370 generated by the top 5 girl's names.

Jack and Ella strike again

Jack is by far the most popular boy's name today. In 2007, there were 2,418 boys named Jack (410 clear of its nearest rival Joshua). It's been #1 for the last 4 consecutive years (or 6 times in the last 8 years) and is also the fourth most popular name for male Australian dogs! In fact, 8 of the top 10 male names for canine's are in the current top 100 for boys while girls only share 5 of their top 100 with the top 10 names for pooches.

Although though Ella has topped the list for the last two years and was the choice for 1899 girls in 2007 (231 ahead of Emily), it is Emily that has dominated the 2000s with four #1s, two 2nds and one 3rd.

State versus state

Jack topped the boy's list in 6 states and territories. However, in the ACT, Lachlan was #1 whereas Jack only managed to make it as far as #10. Ella, however, only topped in 2 states and territories (QLD and WA), while the remaining segments of the nation each had a different #1 (i.e. Emily in ACT, Isabella in NSW, Lily in NT, Sophie in SA, Olivia in VIC).

Spell it for me

Not content to simply find a distinctive name, many parents are resorting to unique spelling for their newborns. In fact, many names on the popular lists are repeated several times—including those in the top 10 (which are underlined hereafter). These often incorporate an emphasised phonetic spelling and occasionally the use of an apostrophe or hyphen.

Kaiden (14 variations) and Mikayla (18 variations) registered the highest number of different spellings for boys and girls respectively. Following that, Jayden (12) and Riley (10) for boys and Alicia (13) and Amelia (11) for girls also recorded double-figures for the number of permutations applied by Australian parents in 2007.

For boys, names with an ‘-aiden’ suffix were the most likely to undergo numerous spelling changes: Jayden (12), Aidan (9) and Brayden (7). Several other names ending in ‘n’ that drew such attention included Coen (8), Jackson (7), Declan (6) and Lachlan (5). Isaac (9), Zachary (6) and Zac (5) all generated alternatives, as did both Coby (6) and Cody (5).

For girls, names ending in an ‘ah’ sound were subjected to the largest numbers of spelling variations: Mikayla (18), Alicia (13), Amelia (11), Tahlia (9), Brianna and Isabella (8), Alannah and Sienna (7), Kayla (6) and Savannah (5). Both Isabella (8) and Isabelle (5) scored several adaptations, with ‘ee’ suffixes also featuring prominently: Hayley (8), Emily, Jamie and Lily (7), Bailey and Riley (6), and Stephanie (5).

Some specific examples of the more creative spelling variations include Giordan, Kamron, Tai-son, Abi-gail, Bree-anna, Camryn, Emma-lee, Immojyn, Karleigh, Loryn, Ryleigh, Skarlet, Steffinie and Tahleyah.

Gendered names triumph

While the names that are currently experiencing a peak in their popularity have changed over time—more so for girls—one trend that is becoming stronger is the preference for softer-sounding names for girls and firmer names for boys. Looking at the top 10 lists, 90% of the girl’s names end in a vowel (100% if we include ‘y’) and 90% of the boy’s names end in a consonant. Furthermore, only one of these 20 top names is currently adopted as a unisex option (hereafter highlighted in green where relevant). Here Riley is the only example that is commonly considered to be interchangeable between the two sexes—the rest are distinctly boy’s or girl’s names.

Some of the girl’s names from the top 100 that are currently being used for boys are Jade, Mackenzie, Taylor and Dakota. Conversely, girls are utilising the pool of the currently popular boy’s names on a much grander scale (15 versus 4)—these comprise the names Riley, Charlie, Dylan, Tyler, Bailey, Hayden, Jordan, Cameron, Ashton, Cody, Kai, Jesse, Luca, Jamie and Rhys.

Pride of place

More girls are named Victoria in New South Wales (83) than in the state of Victoria (62). Furthermore, girls were much more likely to be named after the Australian state of Victoria (163) than they were by several states or cities in the US: Dakota (146), Indiana (47), Phoenix (19), Memphis (3), Chicago (1) and Tennessee (1). Though Victoria was outdone by Charlotte (1558) and Georgia (867), it was the NSW central tablelands town of

Isabella (1,595) that featured highest among all the place names by ranking 4th overall. In addition to Georgia, other countries that featured on the popular girl’s names list included Jordan (40), Asia (2) and Ireland (2).

While Jordan (609) also featured on the boy’s list—along with several US-American place names [Jackson (775), Memphis (8), Dakota (7) and Utah (1)]—cities, states and countries were not as prevalent among males as they were with females. In fact, Byron (54) and Tasman (4) were the closest examples of boys being named after an Australian locale.





Outside inspiration

For reasons unknown, some parents reject mainstream trends and instead opt for names that, in many cases, are quite literally one-of-a-kind. As is often the case with these more distinctive names, the point of origin or inspiration seems to stem from a range of English words that are more frequently used to signify the following:

Cars:

Bentley, Holden, Lexus and Liberty.

Feelings:

Blessing, Cherish, Lucky, Miracle and Nirvana.

Fictional characters:

Anakin, Casper, Hermoine, Mystique, Remington, Rocky, Storm and Tinkerbell.

Food and drink:

Cherry, Chilli, Cinnamon, Maison and Saffron.

Nature:

Fern, Meadow, Ocean, Opal, Phoenix, Rain, Raven, River and Zephyr.

Short and simple?

Can't wait to give your child a nickname? Many parents are indeed jumping straight to this option by bestowing their children with an abbreviation from birth. Looking at the list of popular girl's names, Sophie is now more popular than Sophia, Lily and Lilly are more popular than Lillian, Evie is more popular than Evelyn, and Kate is more popular than both Kaitlyn and Katelyn. Other common shortenings among the girls were Lucy, Abbey/Abby, Eliza, Ellie, Katie and Charli/Charlie.

Likewise, examining the boy's list, Jack is now more popular than John, Jackson and Jaxon, Max is more popular than Maxwell and Charlie is more popular than Charles. Boys were, however, more likely to receive a nickname as their moniker with the other popular diminutives being Liam, Luke, Jake, Harry, Alex, Henry, Zac, Sam, Luca, Archie, Jamie, Ben, Nate, Will, Eli, Jay and Leo.

Shooting for the Stars

Names sported by popular actresses are also in vogue, with the more popular examples including Sienna (Miller), Scarlett (Johansson), Eva (Longoria), Keira (Knightley) and Angelina (Jolie). Even the names of Angelina Jolie's children (Maddox and Shiloh) are being adopted by some Australians. Following that, other recent girl's names draw on singers like Shakira and Delta (Goodrem), though these examples are much less popular.

Meanwhile, the most obvious instances of celebrity influence on the boy's names list this year were actors Harrison Ford, Ashton Kutcher and Orlando Bloom along with musicians Xavier Rudd and Ozzy Osbourne.

Time after time

Comparing some of the national top 10 lists from 1900 to 2007, more interesting trends begin to make themselves known.

Girl's names have a significantly shorter shelf-life

While names like William and James had top 10 status in 1900 and have remained staples ever since, the first time any of the current top 10 girl's names began to appear on the top 10 list was not until the 1990s (Emily)—Olivia, Chloe, Sophie and Isabella soon followed suit in the year 2000.

Half of the top 10 from 1990 do not even rate a mention in the top 100 names of 2007 (i.e. Ashley, Brittany, Amanda, Jennifer and Megan). Meanwhile, 9 out of the top 10 boy's names from 1990 were still in the top 100 of 2007 (Justin only just missed out at #105). This is further highlighted by the fact that the name Jennifer — #1 in 1980 and #6 in 1990—only received a total of 16 registrations for 2007.

Meanwhile, Ashley (#2 in 1990) now sits in 109th place, wedged between Claudia and Bethany. In 2007, there were 13 girls named Ava for every Ashley.

Similarly, Stephanie (#5 in 1990) has slid down to #74, perched between Madeleine and Laura. Stephanie was outnumbered by Sienna, 5 times over.

Believe it or not, the following girl's names were once in the top 10 during the 20th Century: Florence, Bertha, Dorothy, Mildred, Ethel, Virginia, Betty, Doris, Judith and Nancy. None of these names have been seen en masse for a long time and, based on the current trends, it is unlikely that they will be returning anytime soon.

Biblical boys and European girls

Historically we gravitate most to a strictly European pool of names for our females, with the top 10 currently being dominated by examples whose origins are English and/or Italian (Sophie being the only exception). Of the top 15 girls names only two are Biblical (Chloe and Hannah), conversely, more than half of the top 15 boy's names are Biblical—examples being Joshua, Thomas, James, Ethan, Noah, Samuel, Daniel, and Benjamin. Those that are not of Biblical origin include newcomers like Lachlan, Riley and Cooper, which now have much more sway over golden oldies like John, Michael and Peter:

- Michael, the #1 of 1990, has since dropped to 35th on the list—just after Oscar and right before Mitchell. In 2007, the name Lachlan was 3 times more popular.
- John, the top name 1950, is now down at #82 and tucked in between Flynn and Finn. For every John born in 2007, another 6 boys were named Riley.
- Peter, which was #2 in 1950, has plummeted way off the top 100 list—and last year there were only 27 boys nationwide named Peter.



Australian attitudes and approaches to naming

Now that we know about the popular names, different spellings, sources of inspiration and some of the other national trends, it's time to examine the attitudes and approaches of Australian parents towards the child-naming process.

It's something to think about

The most important considerations for new Australian parents when naming their children are the sound of their given name(s), pre-empting future possibilities for teasing, and the spelling or the look of their given name(s). They are much less concerned about listening to names that have been suggested by others, getting approval from family and friends, and the resultant initials when combined with their surname.



Family is important

In instances where children are named after a specific person, two-thirds of those children are named after a family member (66%). This dwarfs other results including friends (16%), TV/film celebrities (16%), historical figures (12%) and famous sportspeople (2%).

But so is personal research

Books:

Three-quarters of parents consult baby name books or dictionaries.

Family:

One-quarter listens to suggestions from their relatives.

Internet:

17% refers to internet baby naming resources.

Friends:

1 in 6 takes on advice from friends.

Genealogy:

15% researches their family tree for baby names.

We're divided over spelling

Only 1 in 7 Australians think that phonetic and alternate spellings of children's names are a great idea and that they make a recognisable name slightly different. Similarly, Australians are largely dismissive of the use of apostrophes (') and hyphens (-) in given names, with 57% saying there is no need.

And we stick to our guns

The most common approach to naming a child was to decide on a name before the birth (50%), closely followed by writing a short list and deciding after the birth (41%). Following the birth of a child, 18% of parents changed their original name selection based on their child's appearance. Only 39% of parents were adamant that their child had a distinctly male or female first name and (not a unisex name), while 27% wanted to make sure that the first name they selected was not popular.

The International Top 10 (Anglophone countries)

BOYS	GIRLS
1. James	1. Emily
2. Daniel	2. Olivia
3. Joshua	3. Emma
4. Jack	4. Isabella
5. Ethan	5. Chloe
6. Ryan	6. Grace
7. Matthew	7. Hannah
8. William	8. Lucy
9. Thomas	9. Ava
10. Alexander	10. Ella

Upon examining the collective trends across Australia, Canada, England & Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland and the United States:

- While Jack racked up the most #1s, it was not as popular in Canada (16) and the US (38)—making James a much more consistent performer across all 8 national lists.
- Meanwhile each country had a different #1 girl's names, except for Australia and New Zealand (Ella). However, it was Emily that proved to be the most consistently popular name for newborn girls in 2007.
- Australia shares 6 boy's names and 5 girl's names with the above international top 10 list.
- Australia's top 10 lists most resembles those of New Zealand (5 boy's and 7 girl's names in common) and the combined list of England & Wales (5 boy's and 6 girl's).

- In North America, names like Jacob, Matthew, Emma, Ava, Madison, Sophia, Abigail and Hannah make it into each of the top 10 lists.
- In the Gaelic countries, names like Daniel, Ryan, Emma and Katie appear in each of the top 10 lists.



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Sources

Results on Australian attitudes and approaches to naming children were produced from a survey prepared by McCrindle Research and distributed via its online panel, AustraliaSpeaks (www.australiaspeaks.com).

For statistics relating to the number of births in Australia for the year 2007 (as well as male to female ratios), please consult 3301.0 Births, Australia, 2007 — released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on October 28, 2008 on their website (<http://www.abs.gov.au>).

For statistics relating to the occurrences of individual baby names in Australian states and territories for the year 2007, please consult their respective websites:

Australia Capital Territory

www.rgo.act.gov.au/bdm/bdm_births.html

New South Wales

www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/births/popularBabyNames.htm

Northern Territory

www.bdm.nt.gov.au/justice/bdm/popnames.shtml

Queensland

www.justice.qld.gov.au/453.htm

South Australia

www.ocba.sa.gov.au/bdm/babynames.html

Victoria

online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/popular-names

Western Australia

www.justice.wa.gov.au/B/babynames.aspx?uid=1698-5030-2186-7313

Additional information has also been sourced from Naming Baby (Penguin, 2007) as well as The Penguin Dictionary of First Names (Penguin, 2004).

For statistics relating to the occurrences of individual baby names in the international countries mentioned in this report, please consult their respective websites:

Canada

www.babycenter.ca/pregnancy/naming/top2007/

Ireland

www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/births_d_m/current/babynames.pdf

New Zealand

www.bdm.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Births-Deaths-and-Marriages-Most-Popular-First-Names?OpenDocument

Northern Ireland

www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/babynames/first_names_2007.pdf

United Kingdom (England and Wales)

www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=184

United Kingdom (Scotland)

www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/popular-names/the-most-popular-names-in-scotland-2007/popular-names-2007-detailed-tables.html

United States of America

www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/

Please note: Tasmania is currently the only Australian state that does not compile a list of the most popular baby names on an annual basis and, as such, is not included in these results.

APPENDIX A:

The Australian Top 100 (Boys)

1. Jack	35. Michael	69. Andrew
2. Joshua	36. Mitchell	70. Brodie
3. Lachlan	37. Harry	71. Jett
4. William	38. Angus	72. Marcus
5. Thomas	39. Hayden	73. Anthony
6. Riley	40. Jordan	74. Darcy
7. James	41. Connor	75. Zac
8. Cooper	42. Zachary	76. Aaron
9. Ethan	43. Cameron	77. George
10. Noah	44. Xavier	78. Charles
11. Samuel	45. Logan	79. Tyson
12. Oliver	46. Joseph	80. David
13. Ryan	47. Seth	81. Flynn
14. Daniel	48. Adam	82. John
15. Benjamin	49. Nathan	83. Finn
16. Liam	50. Alex	84. Levi
17. Lucas	51. Christian	85. Jai
18. Matthew	52. Patrick	86. Sam
19. Alexander	53. Ashton	87. Declan
20. Jacob	54. Sebastian	88. Luca
21. Luke	55. Caleb	89. Brock
22. Harrison	56. Cody	90. Archie
23. Nicholas	57. Toby	91. Elijah
24. Jake	58. Henry	92. Lincoln
25. Charlie	59. Kai	93. Taj
26. Jayden	60. Jesse	94. Jonathan
27. Max	61. Christopher	95. Brayden
28. Dylan	62. Aidan	96. Jamie
29. Tyler	63. Mason	97. Dominic
30. Jackson	64. Hunter	98. Tristan
31. Bailey	65. Callum	99. Hudson
32. Isaac	66. Hamish	100. Owen
33. Blake	67. Joel	
34. Oscar	68. Aiden	

APPENDIX B:

The Australian Top 100 (Girls)

1. Ella	35. Paige	69. Natalie
2. Emily	36. Amy	70. Anna
3. Mia	37. Lilly	71. Amelie
4. Isabella	38. Summer	72. Brooke
5. Chloe	39. Tahlia	73. Madeleine
6. Charlotte	40. Molly	74. Stephanie
7. Olivia	41. Scarlett	75. Laura
8. Sophie	42. Bella	76. Madeline
9. Lily	43. Abigail	77. Eliza
10. Sienna	44. Kayla	78. Bianca
11. Ava	45. Lara	79. Ellie
12. Jessica	46. Mackenzie	80. Abby
13. Hannah	47. Elizabeth	81. Tayla
14. Grace	48. Phoebe	82. Savannah
15. Amelia	49. Zara	83. Sofia
16. Ruby	50. Samantha	84. Rebecca
17. Sarah	51. Abbey	85. Kaitlyn
18. Georgia	52. Claire	86. Taylah
19. Emma	53. Eva	87. Brianna
20. Zoe	54. Mikayla	88. Katie
21. Jasmine	55. Lauren	89. Caitlyn
22. Madison	56. Kate	90. Alice
23. Lucy	57. Keira	91. Gemma
24. Matilda	58. Amber	92. Gabrielle
25. Hayley	59. Layla	93. Victoria
26. Chelsea	60. Alexandra	94. Skye
27. Holly	61. Isabel	95. Rachel
28. Isabelle	62. Maya	96. Charli
29. Maddison	63. Kiara	97. Dakota
30. Jade	64. Erin	98. Alana
31. Sophia	65. Stella	99. Ebony
32. Caitlin	66. Annabelle	100. Poppy
33. Imogen	67. Evie	
34. Alyssa	68. Alexis	