

From House-Hubbies to On-Duty Dads, Australian Fathers are Actively Parenting.

Aussie dads are a diverse bunch. From workaholics to house-hubbies, McCrindle Research has crunched the statistics on what fatherhood looks like in 21st Century Australia... including what presents dad should expect to receive this Father's Day!

A snapshot of fatherhood in Australia

20% of Australia's population is made up of dads. There are approximately 4.6 million dads in Australia, with an estimated 2.2 million dads currently with children aged under 18. Of these, approximately 156,000 are single-parent fathers, who look after 228,000 children, which averages at 1.5 kids for each single dad.

Stay-at-home dads:

ABS figures show that in Australia there are approximately 144,000 stay-at-home dads with dependent children. This means that of the 4.4 million dependent children in couple families where one parent is employed full time, 3% have a mother who is employed, while the father is not.

Fatherhood - a later life pursuit

There is certainly a trend of fatherhood becoming a delayed life stage, with the average age of a new father now 33.1 years of age! The **Northern Territory** and **Tasmania** are home to our nation's youngest dads, with the median age of fathers at 31.5 and 31.7 years respectively at the child's birth. However, **Victoria** and the **ACT** have the oldest dads, with a median age of 33.7 years at birth.

Time spent fathering the same...but roles are a-changing

While fathers spend roughly four hours a day caring for their children (the same in 2006 as it was 11 years before in 1997), the role of the father has significantly evolved. In a study conducted by McCrindle Research in 2010, it was uncovered that men under 30 are less likely to be adept at building a cubby house, fixing a tap or a punctured tire, but more likely to be able to change a baby's nappy, bake a birthday cake, wash clothes and drop the kids off at school. In comparison, mum's spend 8.5 hours caring for their children, up from just under 8 hours in 1997.

Work hard for the money:

Our nation's men are more likely to feel their work and family responsibilities are out of whack, with 16% saying these are rarely or never in balance (ABS, 2007). This could be due to the fact that men with children do not work any less than men without children – that is, 42 hours per week on average. This shows that while our dad's are working hard, they still greatly value time with their greatest asset - their children.

FATHER FACTS

1 in 5 Australians are dads!

There are 156,000
single-parent fathers

Approximately 144,000 dads
are 'House Hubbies' looking
after the kids.

The average age of a dad with a
newborn baby is now 33

Googling the perfect present:

Interestingly, Google search trends show “Father’s Day” was one of the most popular searches in Australia... in June 2012! Rather than it being about shoppers getting in early, this shows the globalisation of these events, as America’s Father’s Day took place on June 16.

For those who got the date right, we can see some interesting trends in what presents people are considering for their dads. By using Google analytics and exploring what Australian’s are googling in the ‘shopping’ category recently, we’ve seen some interesting trends:

1. One search term trending at the moment is for GPS navigation devices. This shows that perhaps dads today, though evolving in many ways, still share one fundamental attribute... that is, they’d still rather not stop and ask for directions!
2. Soccer is rising in popularity in Australia and perhaps a dad or two is looking to get on field, with a sporting retailer specialising in soccer supplies at the top of the search list.
3. Hardware and outdoors supplies are popular at the moment, with a supplier of this traditional choice in the top ten search trends in Australia at the moment.
4. For the rev-head dad, we are also seeing a car merchandise supplier in the top ten.
5. The traditional ‘socks and jocks’ approach seems to be going up a level with the advent of online shopping and our good exchange rate of the moment. Over the past week we have seen ‘shoe size conversion’ trending in Google search... get ready dad to receive some fancy European loafers or German Birkenstocks!

References:

ABS, McCrindle Research, Google Analytics

For further analysis:

For more information or to organise an interview with demographer and social analyst Mark McCrindle, please contact Francesca Dalton on 02 8824 3422 or email francesca@mccrindle.com.au