

# Same-sex couples opt for marriage over civil union

Embargoed until 10:45am – 05 May 2015

The number of same-sex couples entering into civil unions dropped significantly in 2014, with couples opting to join in marriage instead, Statistics New Zealand said today. This is the first full year of same-sex marriage registrations since the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013 came into effect in August 2013.

"New Zealanders registered 486 same-sex marriages in 2014, up from 209 in 2013," population statistics manager Vina Cullum said. "Only 19 same-sex civil unions were registered to New Zealanders in 2014, down from 121 in 2013".

There were also 19,639 opposite-sex marriages registered to New Zealand residents in 2014, up from 19,028 in 2013. A further 2,507 opposite-sex marriages, and 391 same-sex marriages were registered to overseas residents.

In 2014, 8,171 married and 63 civil union couples divorced. Just over one-third (35 percent) of couples who married in 1989 had divorced before their silver wedding anniversary (25 years).

In New Zealand, an application for divorce can be made by either partner on the grounds that the marriage or civil union has broken down irreconcilably, provided a two-year separation requirement is satisfied. However, couples may be separated for longer than two years before divorcing or may separate and never formally divorce. Therefore, no same-sex marriages have yet been dissolved.

See [Marriages, Civil Unions and Divorces: Year ended December 2014](#) for more information.

**Ends**

**For media enquiries contact:** Anne Howard, Christchurch 03 964 8700, [info@stats.govt.nz](mailto:info@stats.govt.nz)

Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician  
5 May 2015