



One decade on...
Teenage mothers talk about
parenting, education and work

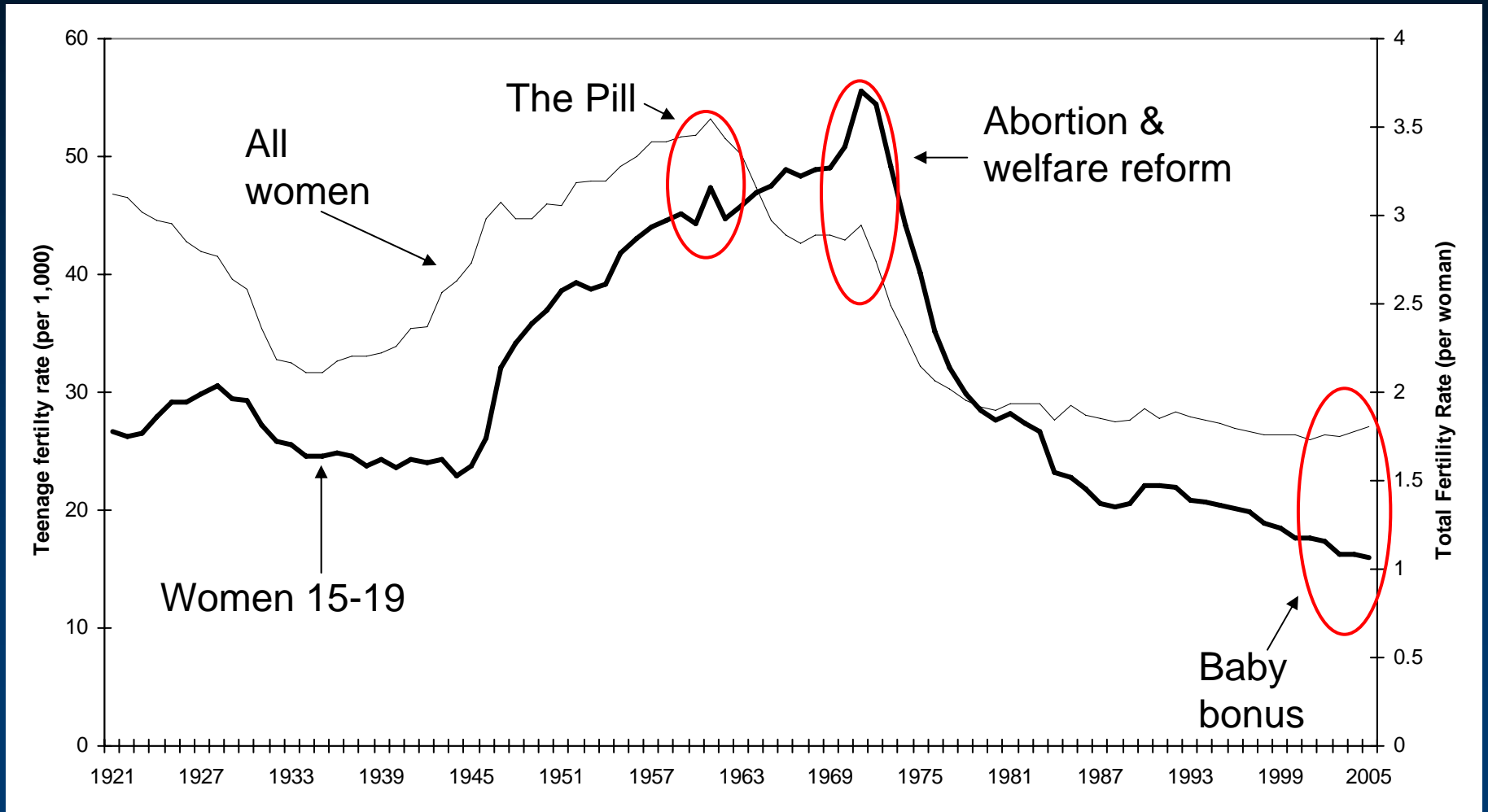
ARHA, Let's talk about Sex: Young Women's Gathering
Sydney 14th July

Ann Evans

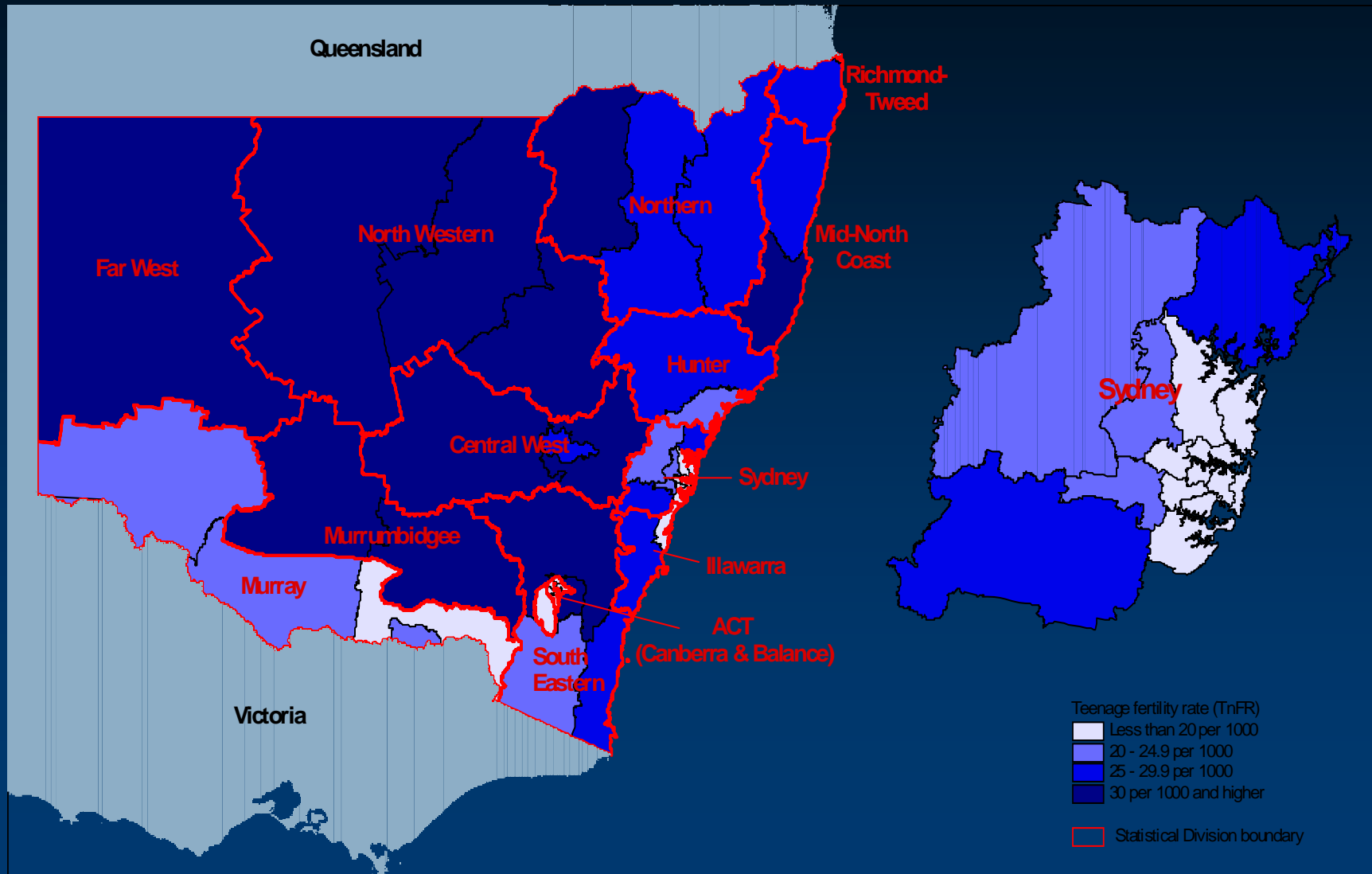
Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute
The Australian National University

The girl who has an illegitimate child at the age of 16 suddenly has 90% of her life's script written for her. She will probably drop out of school..., not be able to find a steady job...; she may feel impelled to marry someone she might not have otherwise chosen. Her life choices are few, and most of them are bad (Campbell 1968: 238).

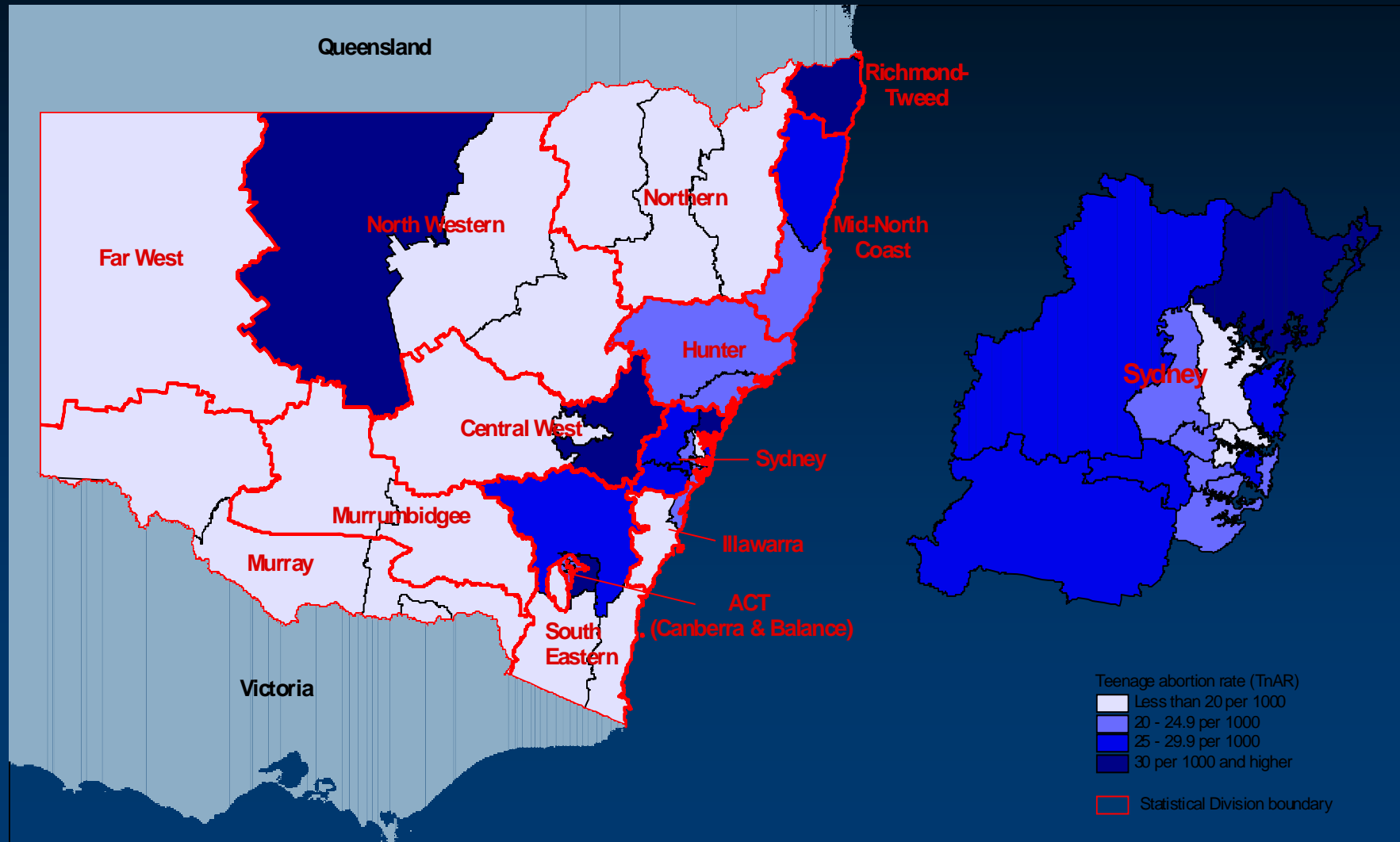
Teenage fertility in Australia-Trends



Teenage fertility rate NSW, 1996



Teenage abortion rate NSW, 1996



- 1998

- Young women's pregnancy study

1200 women



50 mothers

- 2006

- Teenage mothers and social exclusion
- Sydney, Canberra, country and coastal NSW
- 44 had an unplanned pregnancy
- 37 were in a relationship when they became pregnant
- 20 are still in the same relationship
- 37 had more children

- Crucial for successfully negotiating motherhood
- Foundation to pursue study and work

- Ideal support provided by family (mothers)
- In-house, intensive support
- Negotiating family support



Services supporting teenage mothers

- Family support can be replaced by services
- In-home visits
- Replicates family support

- Two pathways to completing education
 - Continue straight through
 - Baby is the impetus to return

- TAFE provides manageable education options

- Work provides
 - Income
 - Self-esteem and satisfaction
 - Role model for children

- Managing work and family similar to other mums

- Primary structural barriers are child care and flexibility

... as a young mum you're not destined to a life of welfare and negative comments from people because if you're determined you can do it and I did it and, you know, I'm still here and happy and enjoying my life and it doesn't mean that you have to close the door on your hopes and your dreams...

(Laura 2006)