# Fertility and demography of Indigenous peoples in Australia – what can the NATSISS 2008 tell us?

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# Demography of Indigenous Australians – what do we need to understand?

- The fundamentals:
  - Population size,
  - Growth,
  - Composition,
  - Changing location
- Key drivers:
  - Fertility
  - Mortality
  - Migration

# Demography of Indigenous Australians – what can we know?

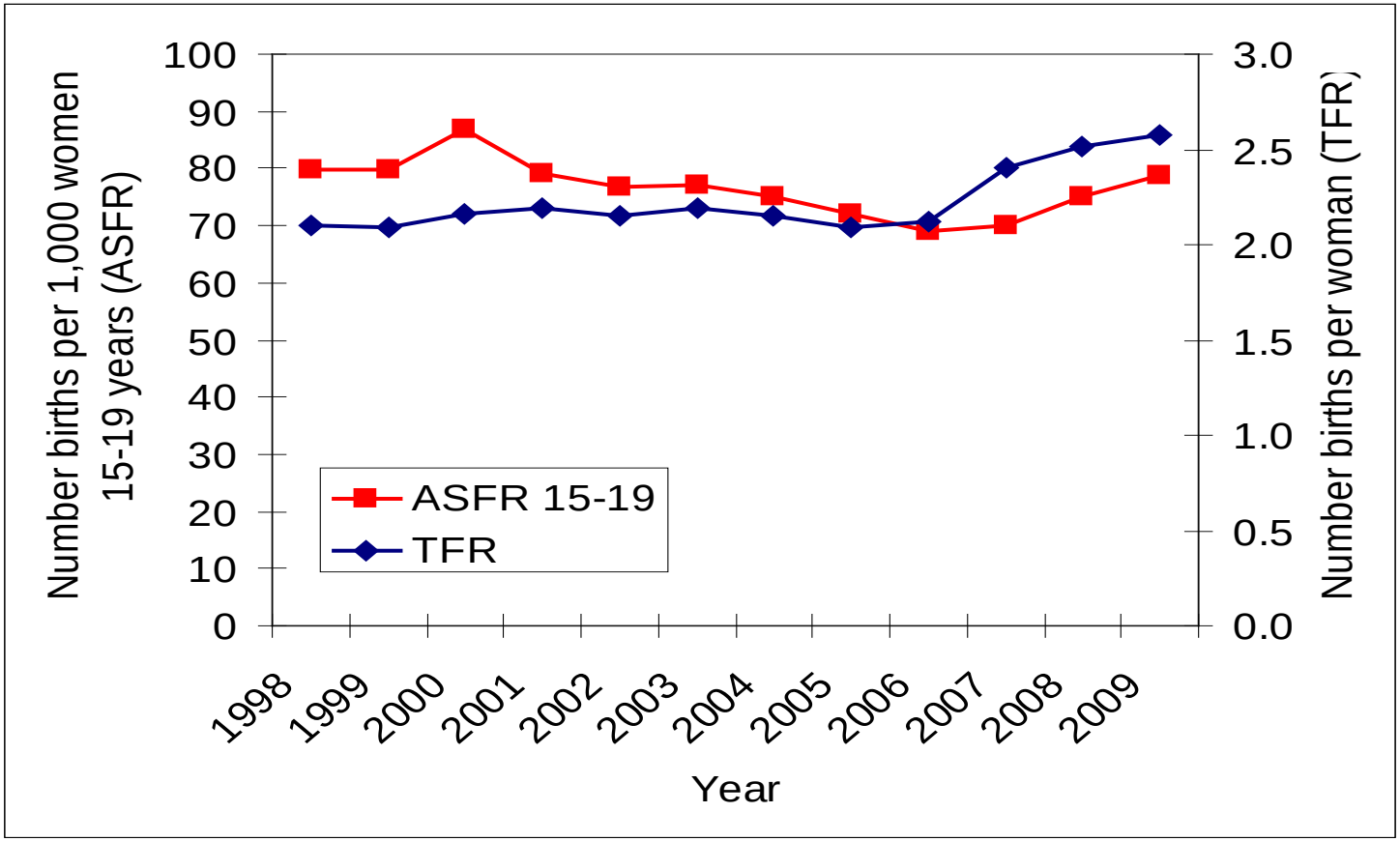
- “A frank failure of the statistical system” (Smith et al. 2008).
- Major population statistical systems now collect data by Indigenous identifiers – but issues of completeness
- Different issues across jurisdictions

# Demography of Indigenous Australians – what do we know?

- Migration – *cf* Taylor and Bell
- Mortality – lower life expectancy at birth compared to non-Indigenous population "headline" indicator for *Closing the Gap*
- Fertility – young childbearing but not large numbers of children

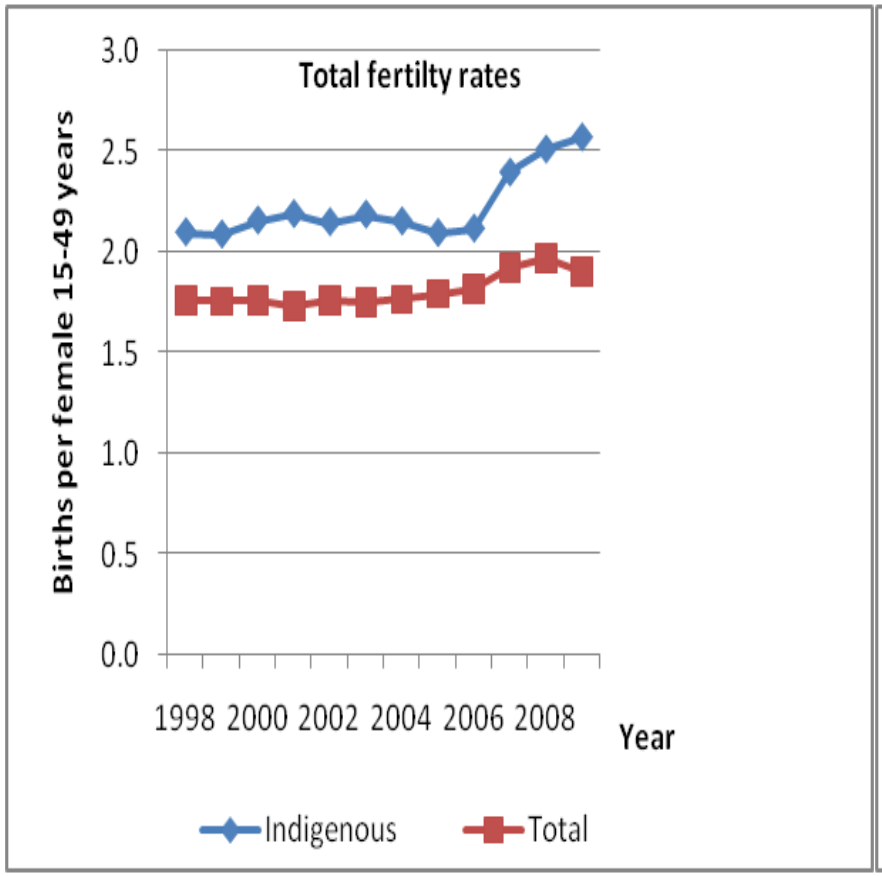
(Important regional differences for all aspects)

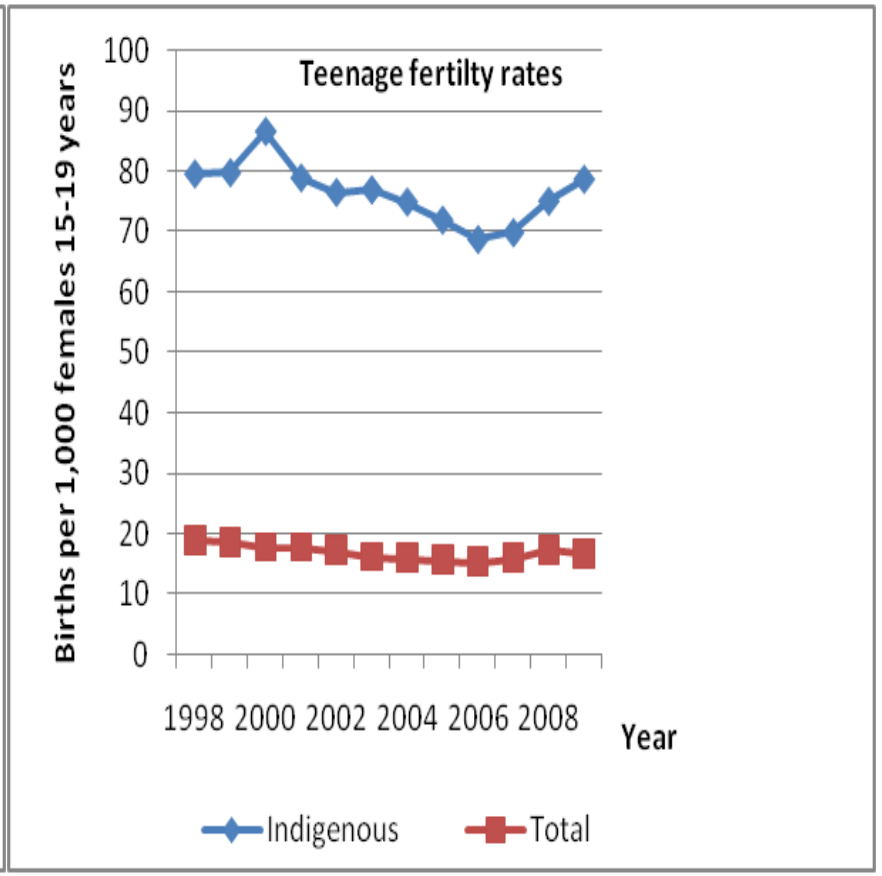
# Indigenous fertility in Australia




Source: ABS *Births, Australia, 1998-2009, Cat. No. 3301.0, Experimental life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Australia 2005-2007 Cat. No. 3302.0.55.003.*

# Indigenous fertility in Australia: a comparison




Source: ABS *Births, Australia, 1998-2009, Cat. No. 3301.0, Experimental life tables for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, Australia 2005-2007 Cat. No. 3302.0.55.003.*


Birth certificate scheme targets Dubbo Indigenous population - ABC News (Australian Broadcastin - Reminder: refer to "...
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Birth certificate scheme targets Dubbo Indigenous population
Posted Wed Mar 12, 2008 9:00am AEDT
Dubbo's Indigenous population could increase by as much as 1 per cent because of a pilot project to increase the registration of births.
Map: Dubbo 2830
The Department of Sport and Recreation identified the problem when trying to register young people, in central western New South Wales, for sporting teams who required proof of identification for insurance.
The department's western region coordinator, Mark Horton, says a partnership of agencies secured funding for a trial to obtain children's birth certificates.
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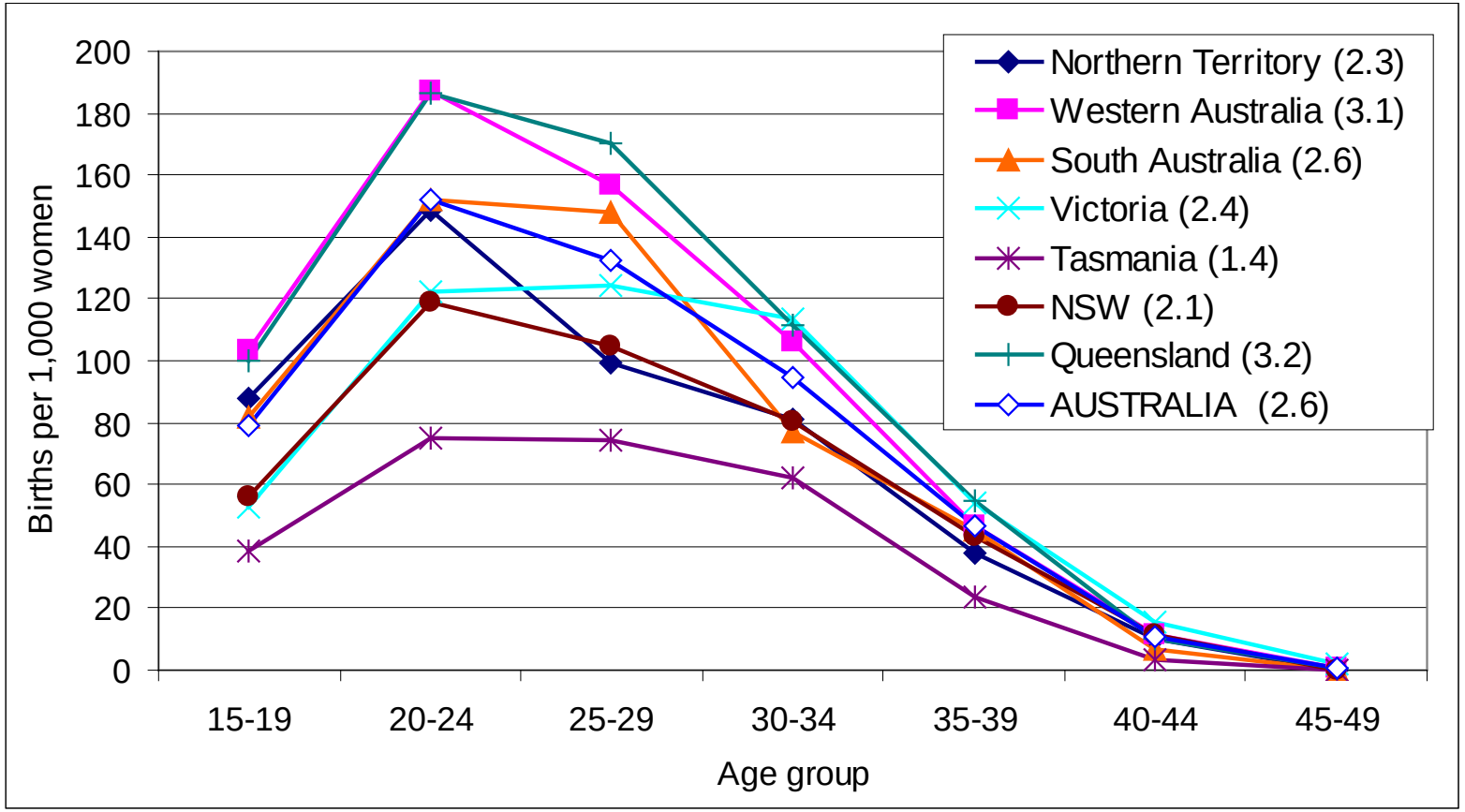
# State/territory Indigenous fertility rates, 2009

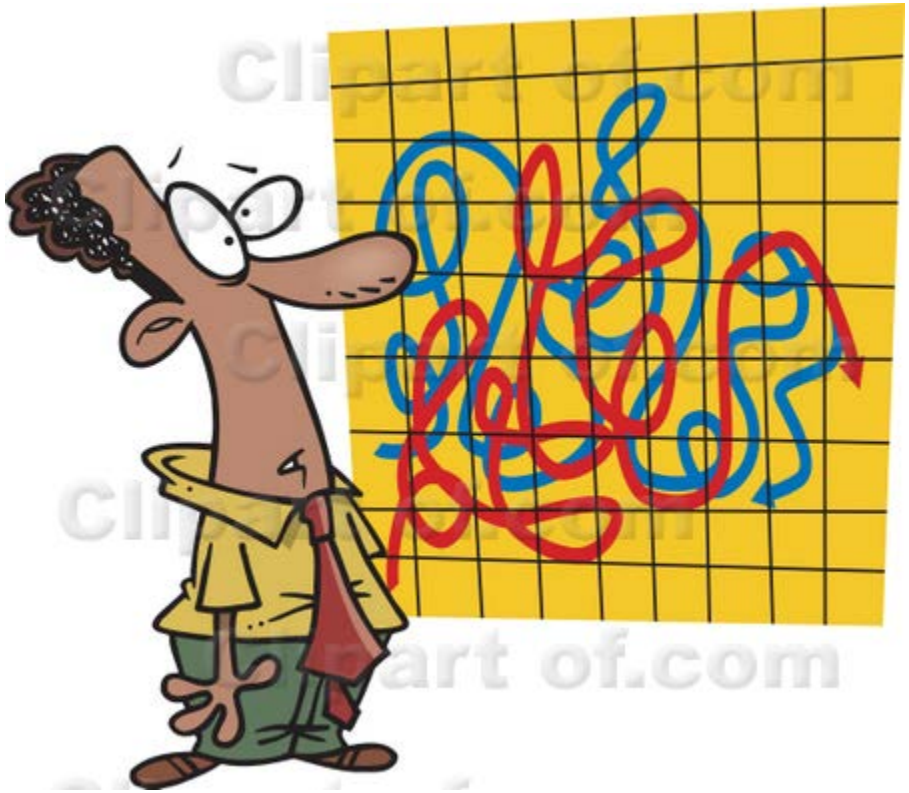



Source: ABS *Births, Australia, 2009, Cat. No. 3301.0*

# Data sources that help understand Indigenous fertility in Australia

- Vital registrations
  - Indigenous status mother, father, child; age of mother; usual residence; parity from 2007
- Perinatal data
  - Indigenous status mother; age of mother; usual residence; parity; range of MCH indicators
- Census (1986, 1996, 2006)
  - Number children ever born x indicators collected in census
- Survey data
  - e.g. number children ever born x indicators collected in survey

# So what don't we know?



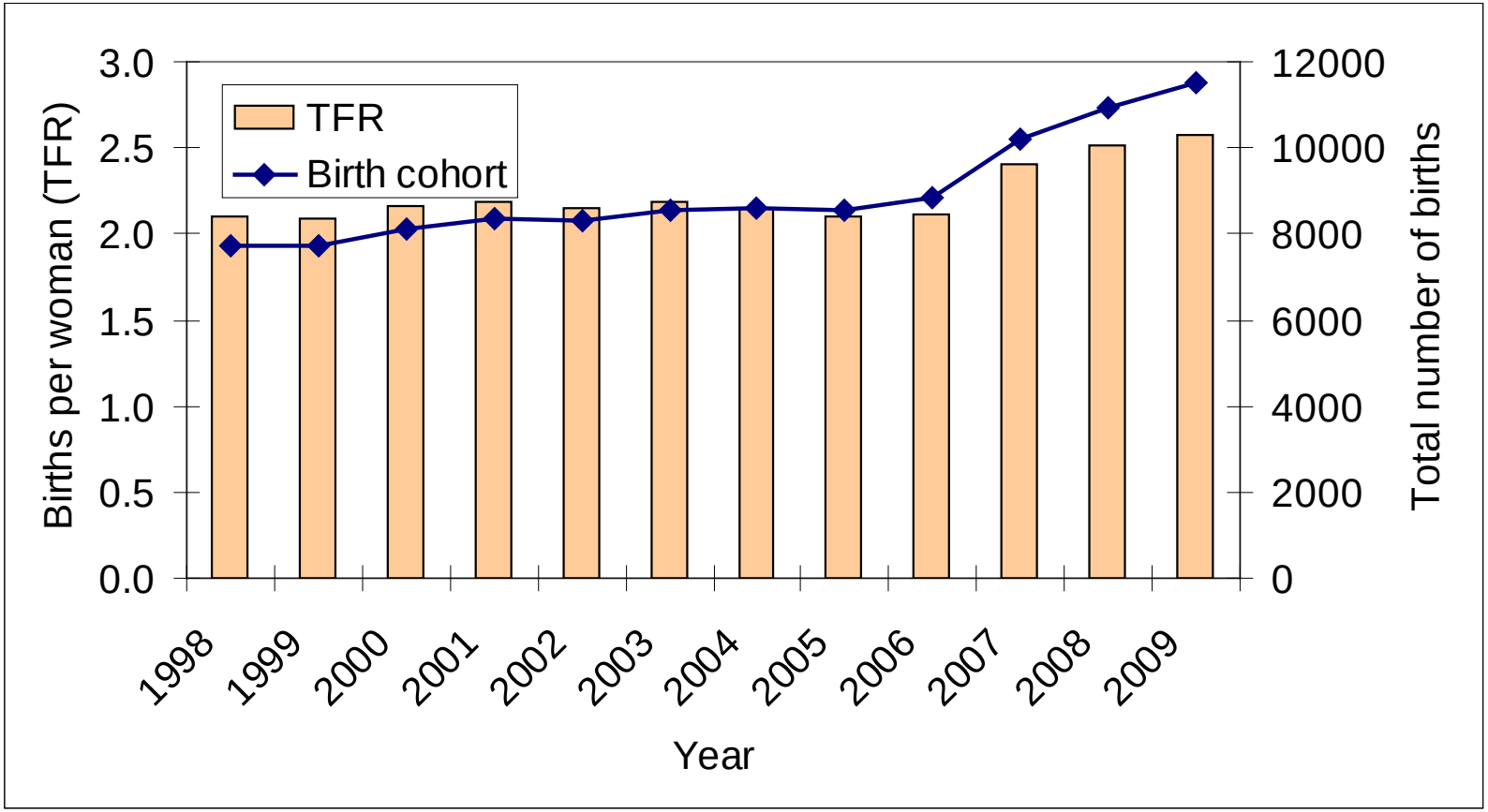
# Why should NATSISS include fertility?

- Further check on the accuracy of other data sources
- Understanding fertility's relationship with age, education, employment and income
- Pregnancy as a stressor in past 12 months:
  - 1,160 people (self, family or friends)
  - 256 (personally experience – 50 ♂, 206♀)

# What could the NATSISS tell us?

- Age of mother at birth of each child
- Likelihood of having children in the future, and ideal family size questions
- Education and employment links require information on these at time of each birth
- Cultural participation and cultural identification questions provide opportunity to understand fertility in the Indigenous context

# Why is fertility important?




Source: ABS *Births, Australia, 2009, Cat. No. 3301.0*

# Thank you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