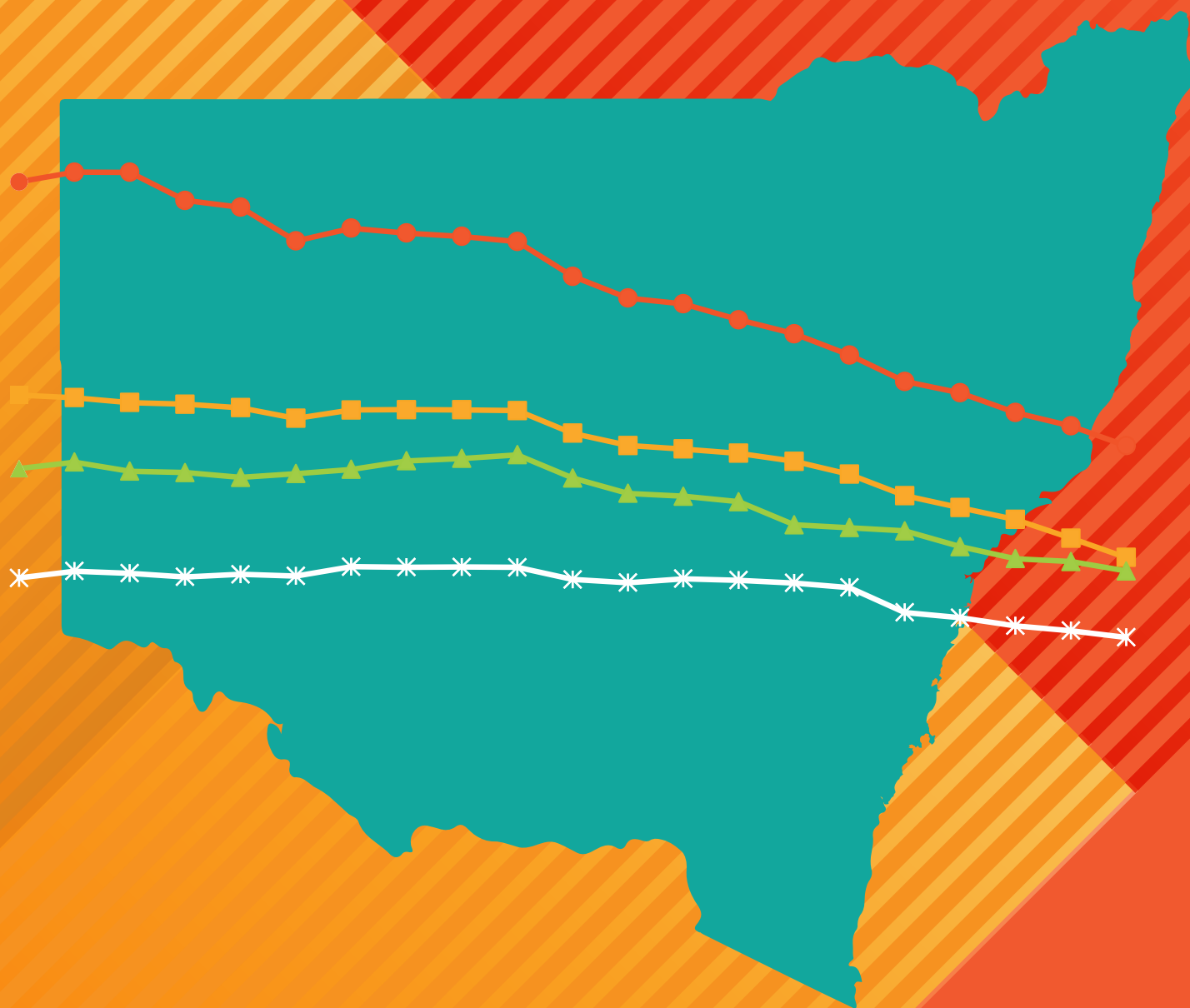


ADOLESCENT FERTILITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES AUSTRALIA: 2011-2020



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Acknowledgments

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Data Source and Limitations

Data reported in this report were provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which collects data from state and territory registrations of birth, deaths and marriages. The limitations of the ABS data 2011-2020 are noted below:

- Some births are not registered until the following year or later due to a delay in patients submitting completed forms to the registry, or delay by the registry in processing the birth¹.
- The New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSW Registry) in 2014 changed over to a new data processing system which resulted in temporary processing delays. These delays then caused a drop in the number of births registered in NSW in 2014 (91,074) which was 9,388 (9.3%) less than the number registered in 2013 (100,462)¹.
- Unrounded population data are utilised as a denominator to calculate fertility rates. Therefore, calculations that are undertaken by data users using rounded figures of the population may be different from those reported here¹.
- Fertility results based on small number of births and female population can fluctuate from year to year. They should be interpreted with considerable caution.

Acronyms

AFR	Adolescent Fertility Rate
LHD	Local Health District
LGA	Local Government Area
LARC	Long Acting Reversible Contraception

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Executive Summary

Adolescent mothers and their babies are more likely to experience short-term perinatal complications and longer-term health and psychosocial adversities than older mothers^{2,3}. Therefore, it is important to monitor the situation and trend of adolescent fertility. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, in New South Wales (NSW) and nationally, the adolescent fertility rate (AFR) has steadily decreased between 2011 and 2020. The AFR in Australia has decreased from 16 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011-2012, to 8 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2020. In NSW, a similar trend was observed during the same 10-year period. The AFR decreased from 15 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011, to 8 in 2020⁴. However, there is considerable variation in AFRs, and trends, across the Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) in NSW.

In 2020, non-metropolitan LHDs recorded an AFR (14 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19) almost triple their metropolitan counterparts (5) and above the state and the national rates (8). The AFR was highest in Far West LHD (29), Western NSW LHD (22), Murrumbidgee LHD (15), Mid North Coast LHD (14) and Hunter New England LHD (13). Unlike most other non-metropolitan LHDs, Murrumbidgee LHD has shown no clear decline in adolescent fertility during the 10-year period. All remaining LHDs had an AFR below 10 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 with the lowest AFR in Northern Sydney LHD (0.6).

LGAs Carathool, Narrandera, Edward River, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Temora, Leeton and Berrigan of the Murrumbidgee LHD, LGAs Liverpool Plains and Walcha of the Hunter New England LHD, Snowy Monaro Regional LGA of the Southern NSW LHD and LGAs Lachlan, Coonamble, Narromine of Western NSW LHD in the non-metropolitan areas recorded increases of AFRs from 2011 to 2020. From 2011-2020 all the other LGAs recorded decreases of AFRs. LHDs with a substantial decrease in their AFR in the past 10 years include Western NSW, Northern NSW, Mid North Coast, and Hunter New England. Fertility results based on small numbers of births and female population can fluctuate from year to year. They should be interpreted with considerable caution.

1 Introduction

It is broadly accepted that adolescent motherhood is associated with a number of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for both mother and baby and it may increase the risk of socioeconomic disadvantage for both child and mother^{2,3}. Adolescent mothers may experience lower education and reduced employment than their peers and tracking the rate of adolescent fertility is an important way for health service planners to identify areas where need for improved comprehensive sexuality education and training may be required or where enhanced contraception and sexual and reproductive healthcare may be warranted.

The aim of this report is to report the adolescent fertility rates (AFR) and trends between 2011-2020 by Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Local Government Areas (LGAs) in NSW to provide evidence for service planning.

The adolescent fertility rate is defined as the number of births during a calendar year in women aged 15-19 years, per 1000 females of the estimated population aged 15-19 years on 30th June of the same year¹. The small number of births to mothers aged less than 15 are also included in the numerator.

The Australian Statistical Geography Standard and Local Government Areas (LGAs) are an ABS approximation of officially gazetted Local Government Areas as defined by the state and territory Local Government Department¹.

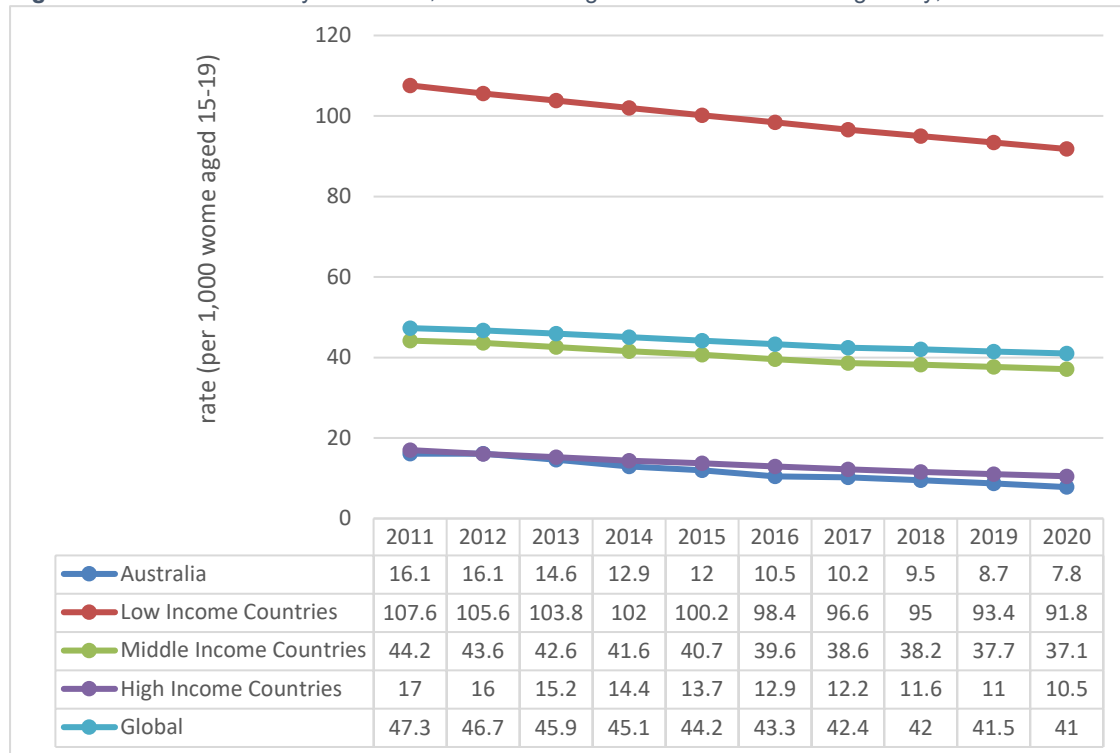
There are 15 Local Health Districts (LHDs) in NSW that are responsible for managing public hospitals and health institutions and for providing health services to the people within their district⁵. It is acknowledged that a significant portion of sexual and reproductive health services are also managed through primary care providers and patient relationships with local doctors including general practitioners. A map of LHDs can be viewed here: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/Documents/lhd-wall-map.pdf>

2 Adolescent fertility rates in NSW and Australia

Globally, the AFR decreased from 47 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 years in 2011 to 41 in 2020⁶. Similarly, in Australia the AFR also decreased from 16 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 years in 2011 to 8 in 2020. During this period, the AFRs in Australia were close to that of high-income countries, but much lower than that of low-and middle-income countries^{4,6} (Figure 1).

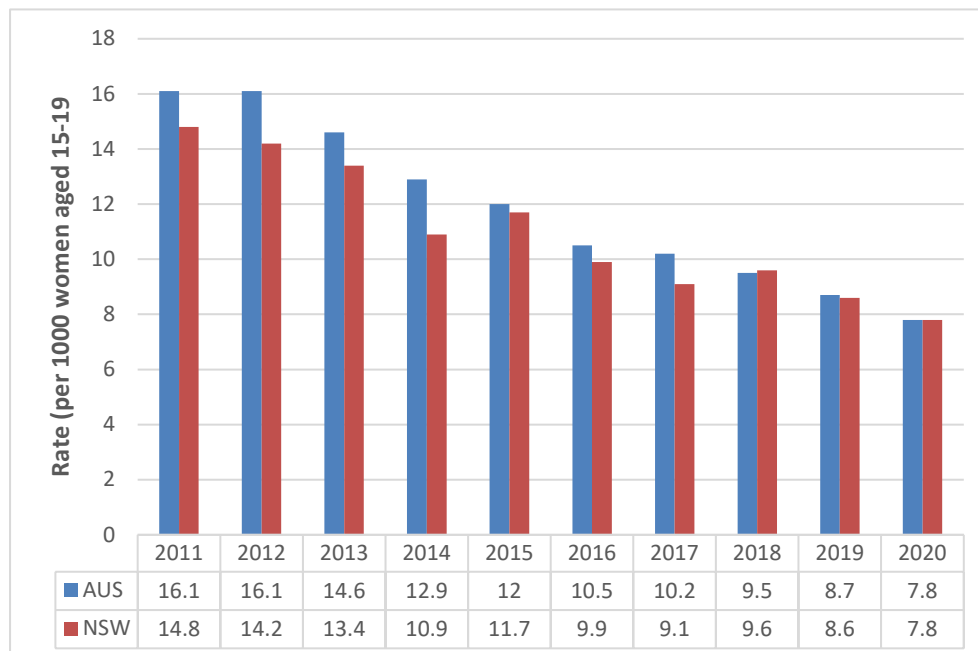
The AFR in Australia was approximately 16 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011-2012, but then steadily declined to 8 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2020. In NSW, a similar decreasing trend was observed during the same ten-year period. The AFR decreased from 15 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011, to 8 in 2020 (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Adolescent fertility rate in low, middle and high income countries and globally, 2011-2020



Source: The World Bank Group, Fertility rates; Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births. Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

Figure 2: Adolescent fertility rate in NSW and Australia, 2011 to 2020



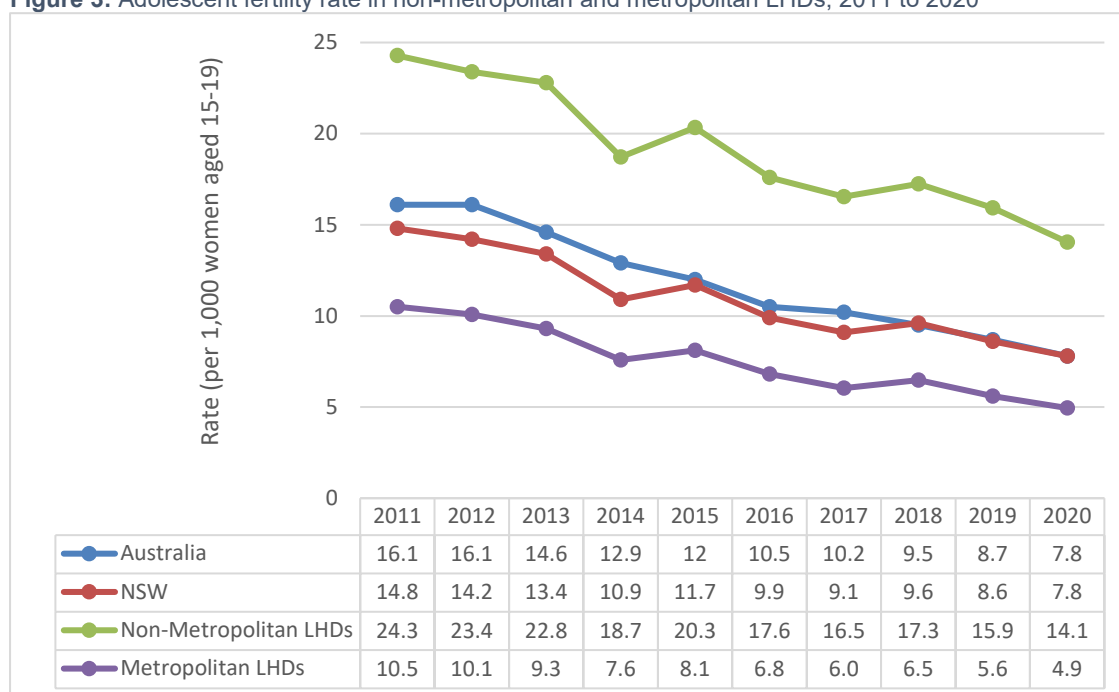
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births. Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

3 Adolescent fertility rates in NSW Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan LHDs

Overall, the AFRs in the non-metropolitan LHDs were higher than those in the metropolitan LHDs from 2011-2020 (Figure 3). The AFRs in non-metropolitan LHDs were also consistently higher than the Australia and NSW AFR rates during this period, while metropolitan LHDs were below the Australian and NSW rates.

In 2020, non-metropolitan LHDs recorded an AFR (14 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19) almost three times more than their metropolitan counterparts (5) and above the state and national rates (8). The AFR was highest in Far West LHD (29), Western NSW LHD (22), Murrumbidgee LHD (15), Mid North Coast LHD (14) and Hunter New England LHD (13). All other LHDs had an AFR below 10 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 with the lowest AFR in Northern Sydney LHD (0.6) (Figure 4-5).

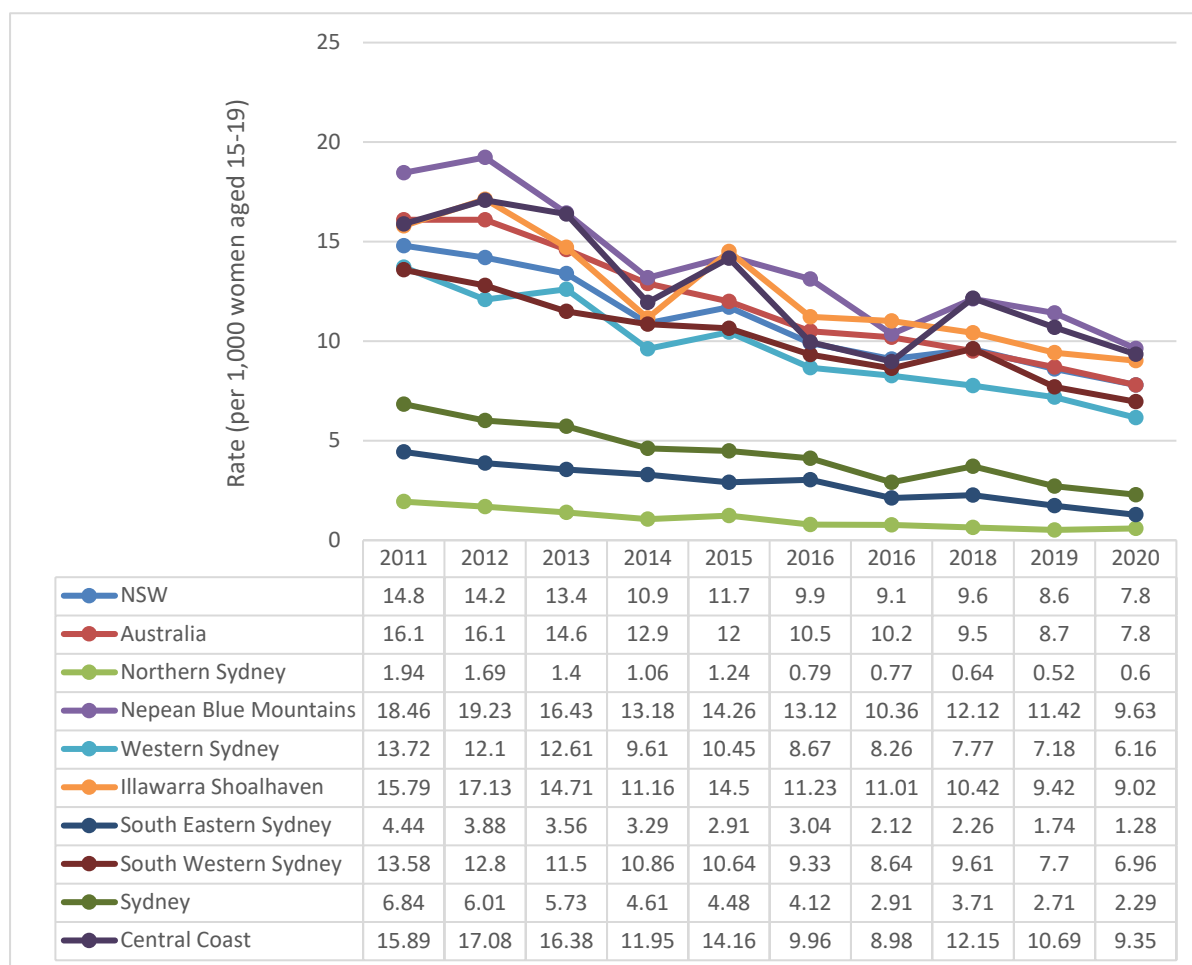
Figure 3: Adolescent fertility rate in non-metropolitan and metropolitan LHDs, 2011 to 2020



Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

In the eight metropolitan LHDs in 2020, the AFR ranged from 1 live birth per 1000 women aged 15-19 in North Sydney LHD to 10 live births in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD. The AFRs in Nepean Blue Mountains (10 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19), Central Coast, and Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD (9) were all higher than the state and national level, while the AFR in the Western Sydney LHD (6) and South-Western Sydney (7) was close to the state and national level in 2020. The AFRs in Sydney (2), South Eastern Sydney (1) and Northern Sydney (0.6) LHDs were far below the state and national level in 2020. A decreasing trend in the AFR was also observed in the metropolitan LHDs between 2011 and 2020, similar to the change of AFR at the state and national level over the ten years (Figure 4).

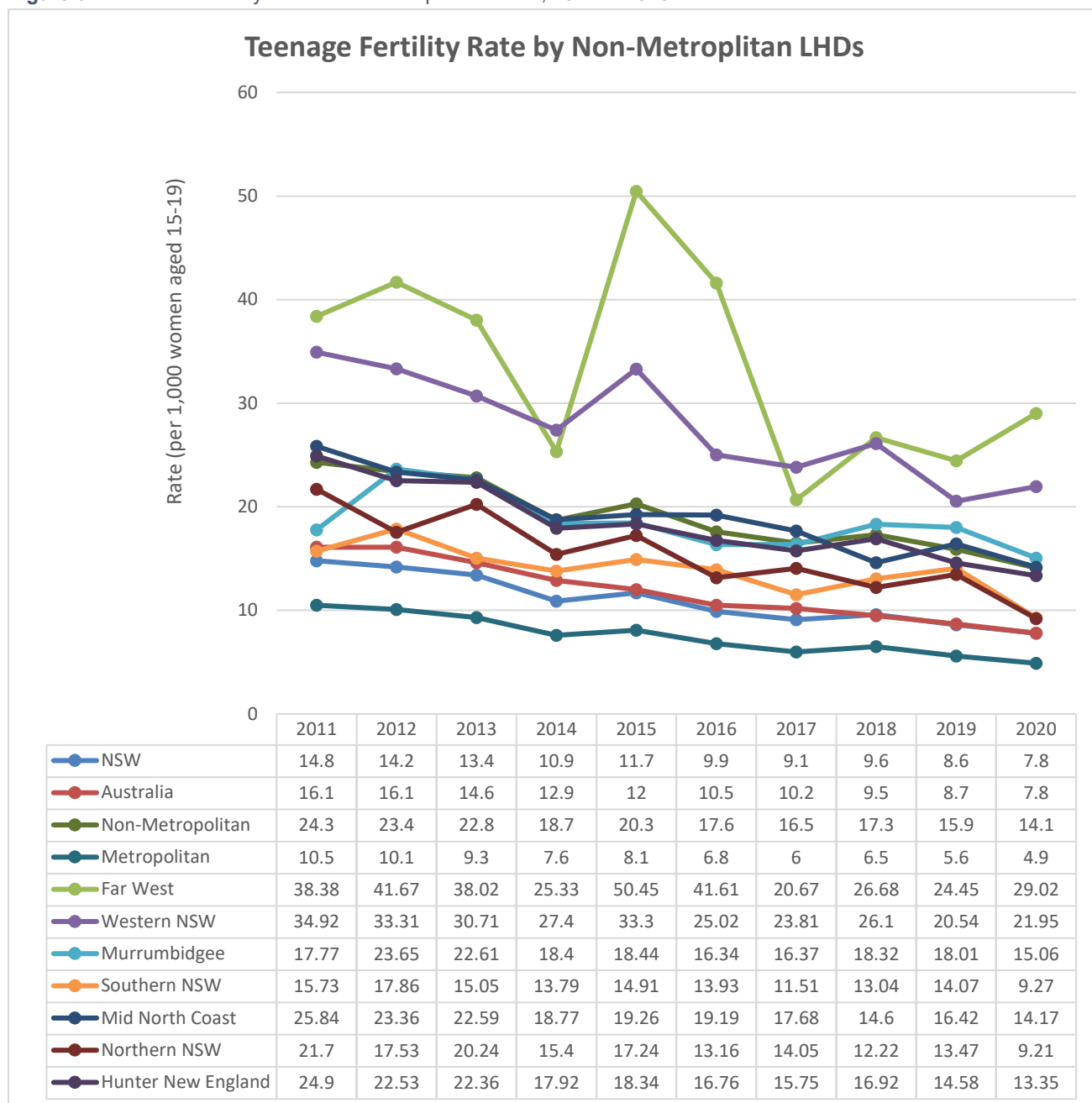
Figure 4: Adolescent fertility rate in Metropolitan LHDs, 2011 to 2020



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

Among the seven non-metropolitan LHDs, the AFR ranged from 9 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 at southern NSW LHD, to 29 live births at Far West LHD in 2020. The AFRs in all non-metropolitan LHDs were above the national and state levels in 2020. A decreasing trend was also observed in the AFR in most non-metropolitan LHDs between 2011 and 2020, although the AFRs in all non-metropolitan LHDs increased from 2014 to 2015, particularly for the Far West LHD, where the AFR doubled in 2015 (50) compared to 2014(25). It's also noted that the AFR in the Far West LHD and Western NSW LHD increased from 2019 to 2020 (Figure 5). Unlike most other non-metropolitan local health districts, Murrumbidgee LHD has shown no clear decline in the AFR during the 10-year period.

Figure 5: Adolescent fertility rate in Non-Metropolitan LHDs, 2011 to 2020



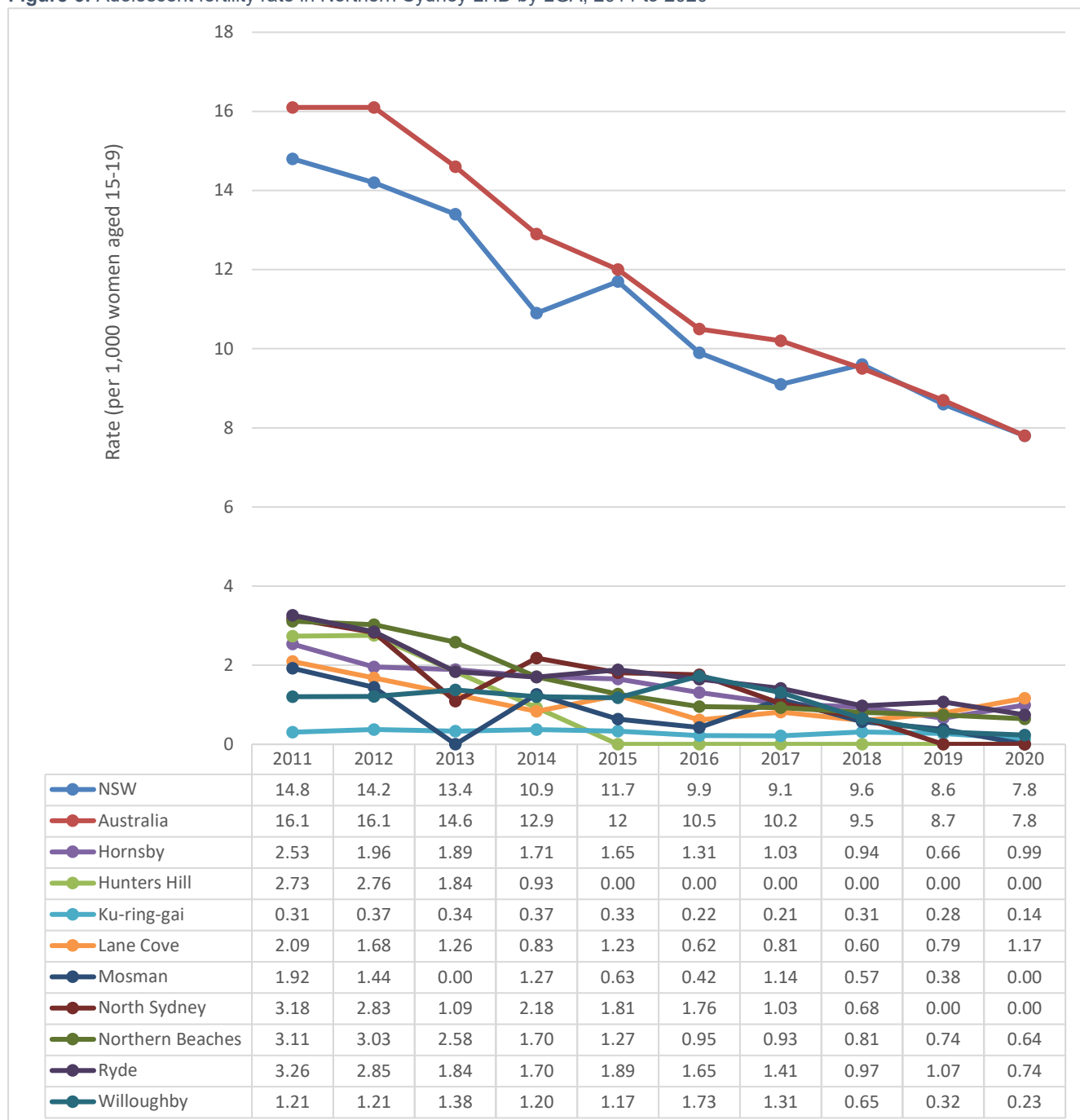
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4 Adolescent fertility rate in NSW Metropolitan LHDs by LGA

4.1 Adolescent fertility rates in Northern Sydney LHD by LGA

In 2020, the AFR of Northern Sydney LHD (Figure 6) varied from 0 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 in Hunters Hill, Mosman and Northern Sydney LGAs to 1 live birth in Lane Cove LGA. The AFRs in all the LGAs of North Sydney LHD were far below the state and national levels between 2011 and 2020. The Northern Sydney LHD also followed the national and state decline in AFR between 2011 and 2020.

Figure 6: Adolescent fertility rate in Northern Sydney LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

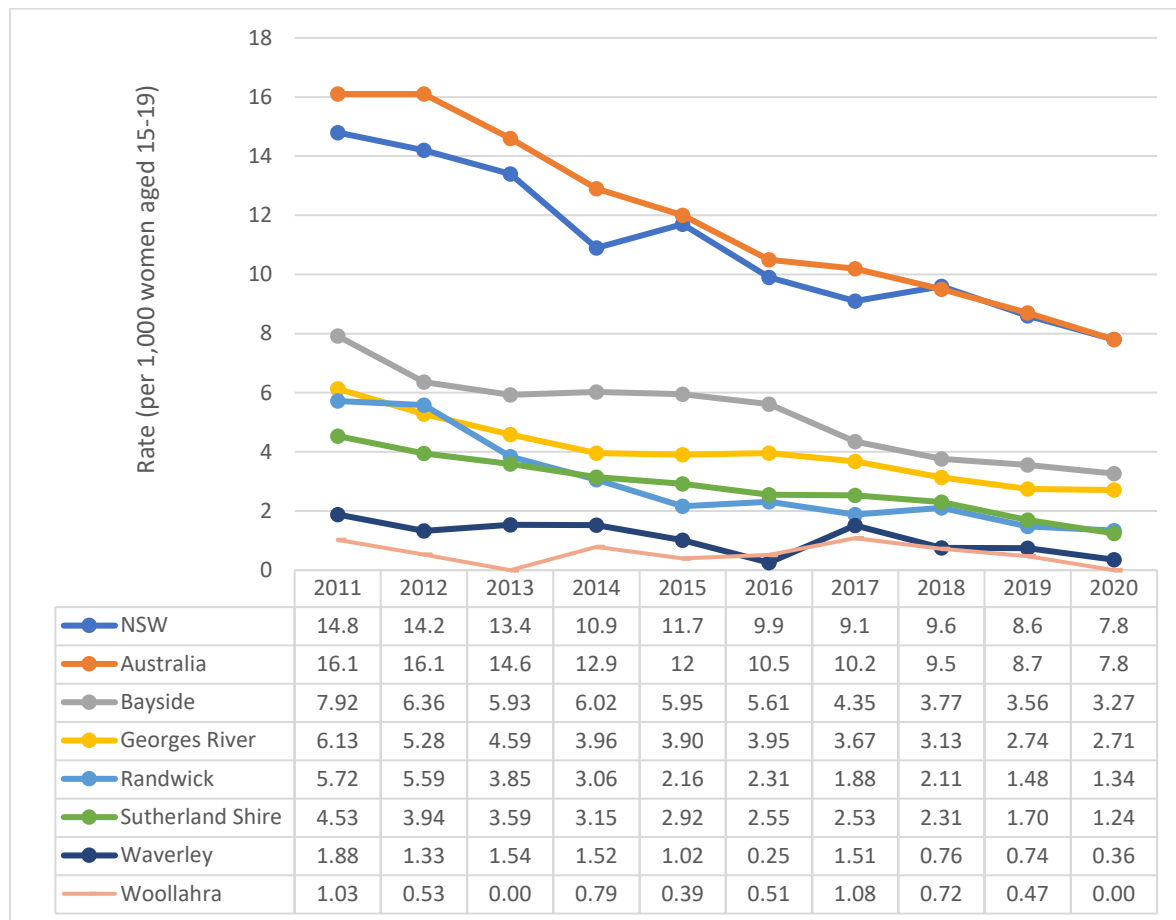


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.2 Adolescent fertility rates in South-Eastern Sydney LHD by LGA

In 2020 the range of AFR in LGAs of South Eastern Sydney LHD (Figure 7) was from 0 live births in Woollahra LGA to 3 live births in Bayside LGA. In South-Eastern Sydney LGAs, AFRs were far below the national and state levels. Among the LGAs the highest rates were in Bayside, Georges River and Randwick LGAs however they have followed similar trends of decreasing rates and brief periods of increases to that of national and state levels through years of 2011-2020.

Figure 7: Adolescent fertility rate in South-Eastern Sydney LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

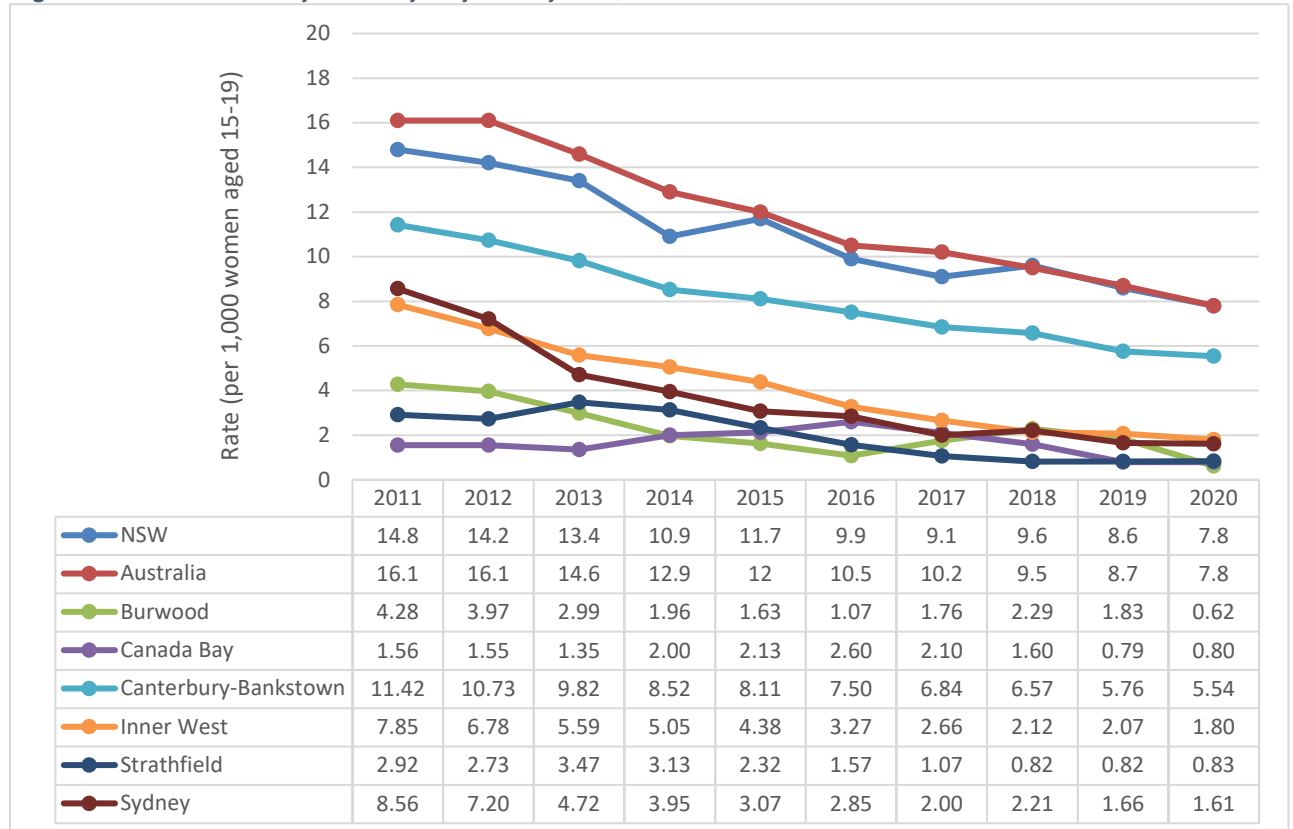


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.3 Adolescent fertility rates in Sydney LHD by LGA

In 2020 the AFR range of Sydney LGAs (Figure 8) was 1 live birth at Burwood LGA to 6 live births at Canterbury-Bankstown LGA. In Metropolitan Sydney all the LGA levels were below the national and state levels. A decreasing trend in the AFR was also observed in the Metropolitan Sydney LGAs between 2011 and 2020.

Figure 8: Adolescent fertility rate in Sydney LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

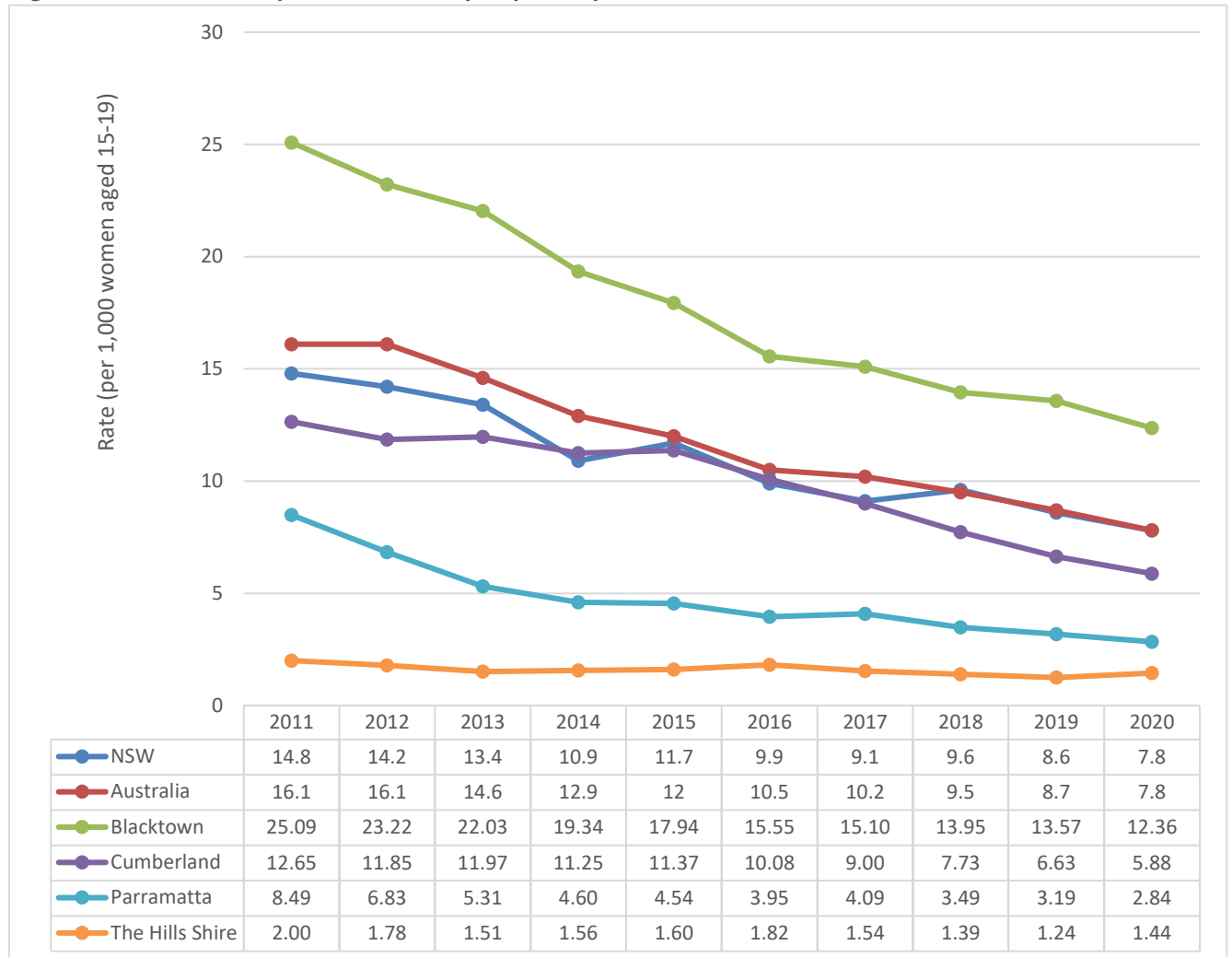


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.4 Adolescent fertility rates in Western Sydney LHD by LGA

In Western Sydney LHD (Figure 9), the AFR ranges between 1 live birth in the Hills Shire LGA to 12 live births in Blacktown LGA in 2020. Blacktown is the only LGA within this LHD that had a AFR consistently above the national and state levels from 2011 to 2020. Cumberland LGA had an AFR close to the national and state level whereas the other LGAs were far below the national and state level between 2011 and 2020. All LGAs followed a decreasing trend to that of the national and state levels from years 2011-2020, although the Hills Shire LGA has remained stable at a low level.

Figure 9: Adolescent fertility rate in Western Sydney LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

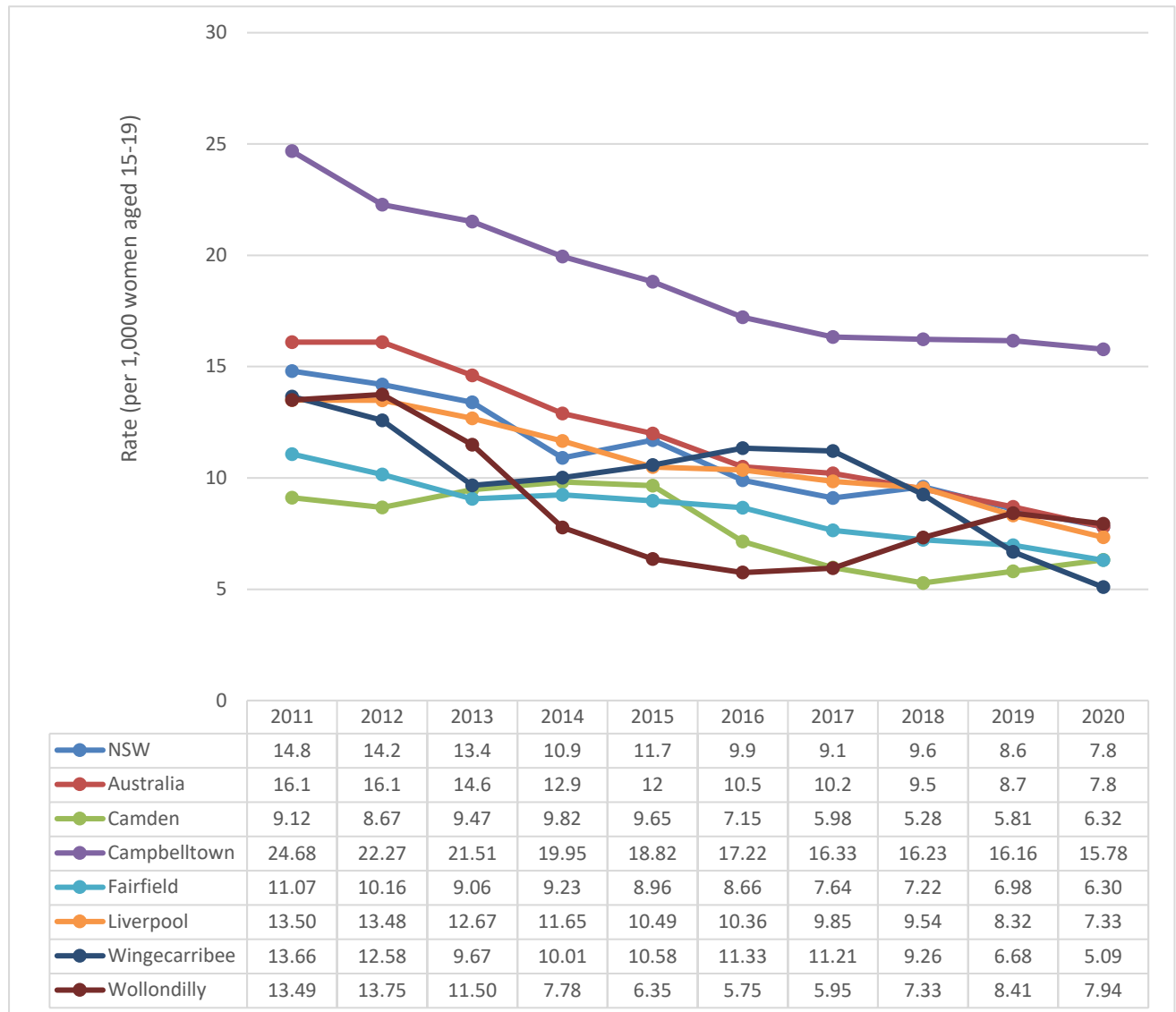


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.5 Adolescent fertility rates in South-Western Sydney LHD by LGA

In South-Western Sydney LHD (Figure 10), the AFRs varied from 5 live births in Wingecarribee LGA to 16 live births in Campbelltown LGA in 2020. The AFRs in Campbelltown and Wollondilly LGAs were above the national and state levels, while the other LGAs were below the national and state levels in 2020. All LGAs in the South-Western Sydney LHD followed a decreasing trend from years 2011-2020.

Figure 10: Adolescent fertility rate in South-Western Sydney LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

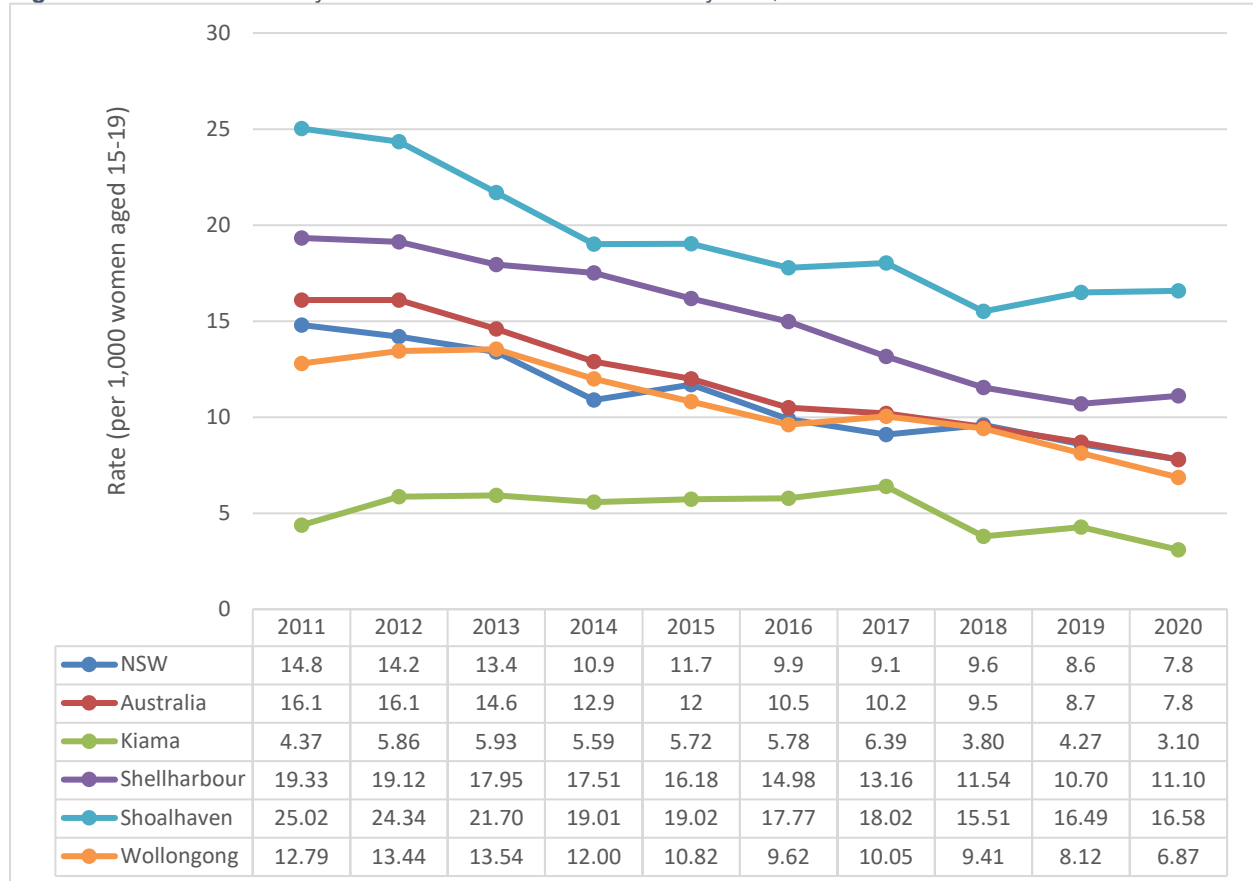


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.6 Adolescent fertility rates in Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD by LGA

In Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD (Figure 11), the AFR ranged between 3 live births in Kiama LGA and 17 live births in Shoalhaven LGA in 2020. The AFRs in Shellharbour and Shoalhaven LGAs were above the national and state levels from 2011-2020, while in Kiama LGA, the AFR was below the national and state levels from 2011-2020. The AFR in Wollongong LGA was close to the national and state levels over the same period. Apart from Kiama LGA, where the AFR in 2020 was similar to 2011, the other LGAs in this LHD experienced some fluctuation but followed a decreasing trend in the AFR from years 2011-2020

Figure 11: Adolescent fertility rate in Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

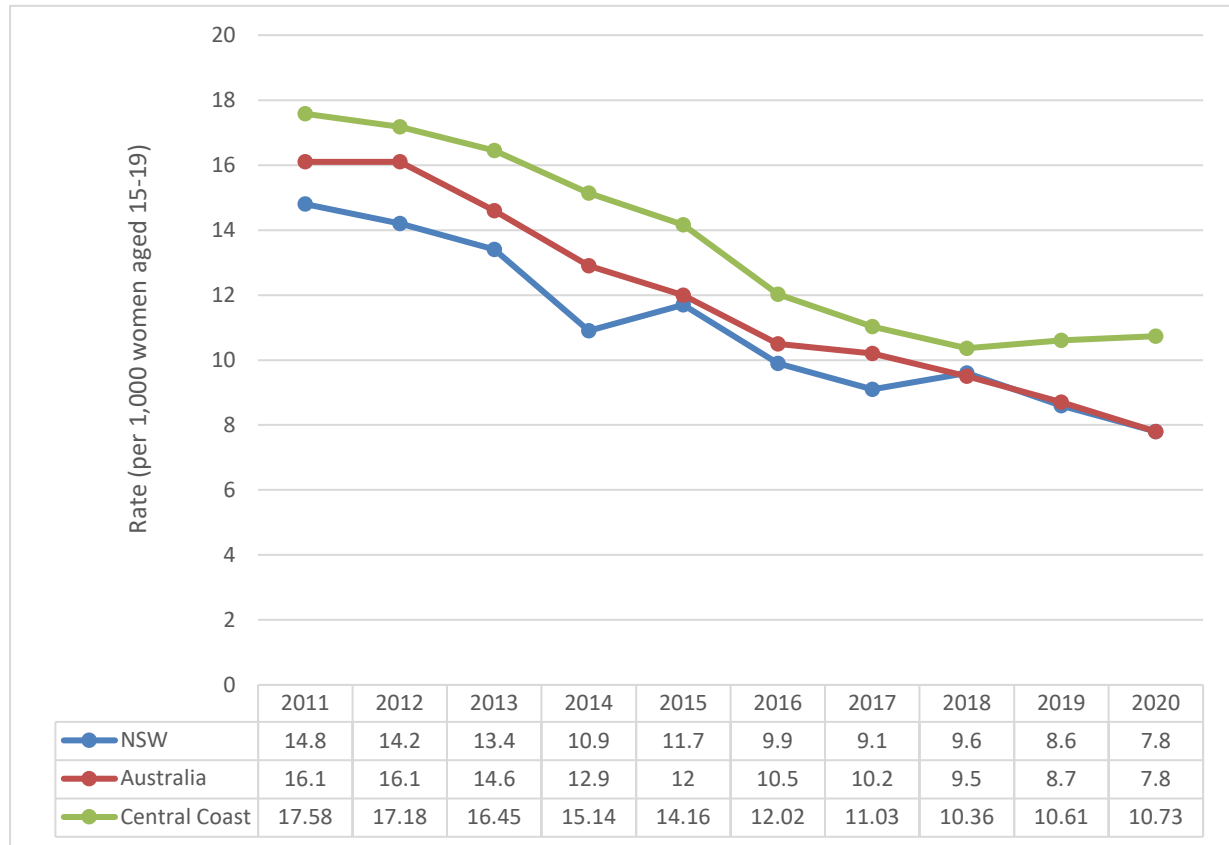


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.7 Adolescent fertility rates in Central Coast LHD by LGA

The AFR in the Central Coast LGA (Figure 12) was 11 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 in 2020. The AFRs in Central Coast LGA were consistently higher than the state and national levels while also following similar decreasing trends to that of the national and state levels from 2011 to 2018. From 2018 to 2020, the rate in Central Coast has remained stable in contrast to the decline in rates seen in the state and nationally.

Figure 12: Adolescent fertility rate in Central Coast LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

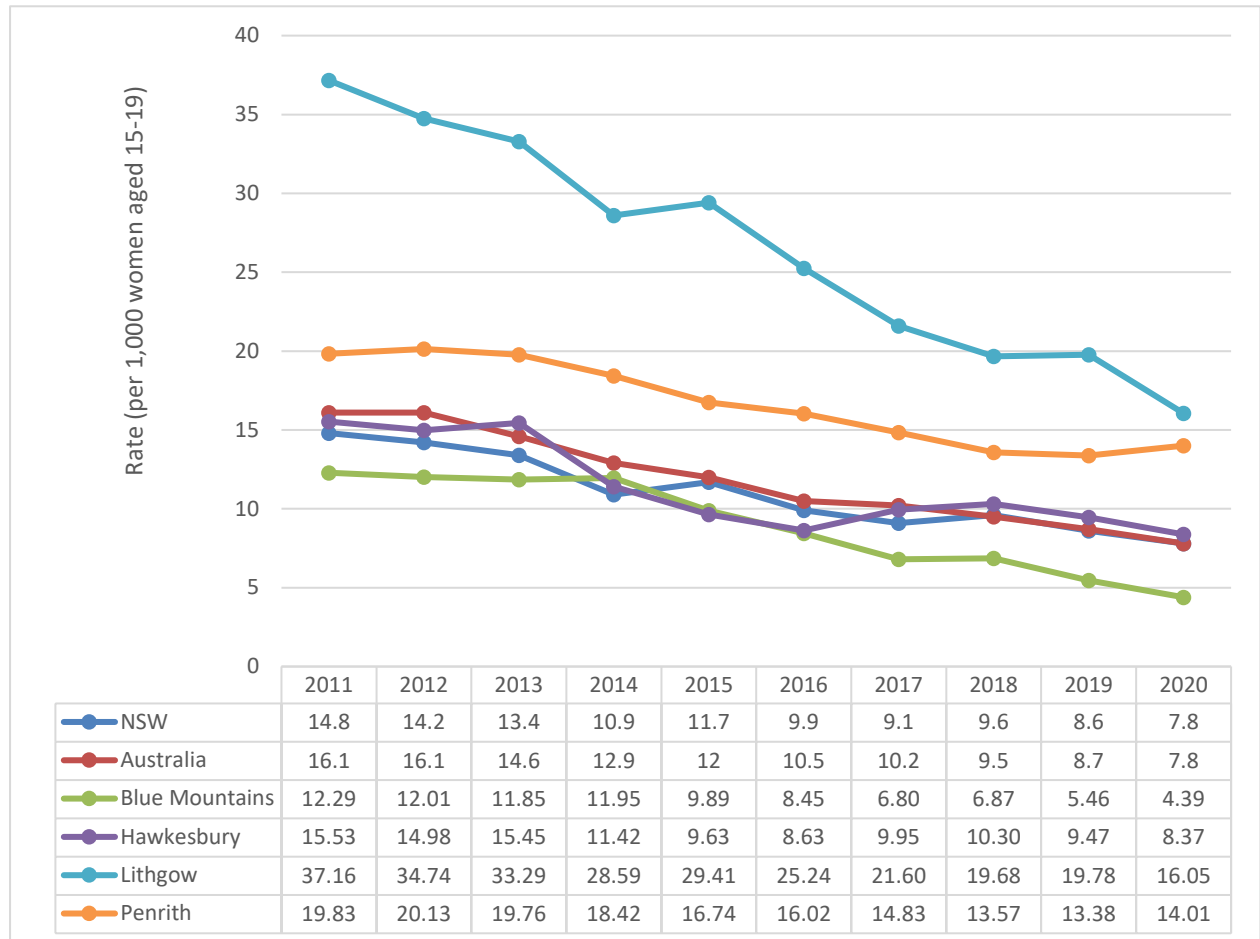


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

4.8 Adolescent fertility rates in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD by LGA

In Nepean Blue Mountains (Figure 13), the AFR varied between 4 live births in Blue Mountains LGA and 16 live births in Lithgow LGA in 2020. The AFRs in Lithgow, Penrith and Hawkesbury LGAs were above the national and state levels in 2020 while in the Blue Mountains LGA the AFR was below the national and state levels. A decreasing trend in the AFRs was also observed in all LGAs in this LHD from 2011 to 2020, although both Hawkesbury and Penrith have had periods where rates plateaued.

Figure 13: Adolescent fertility rate in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020



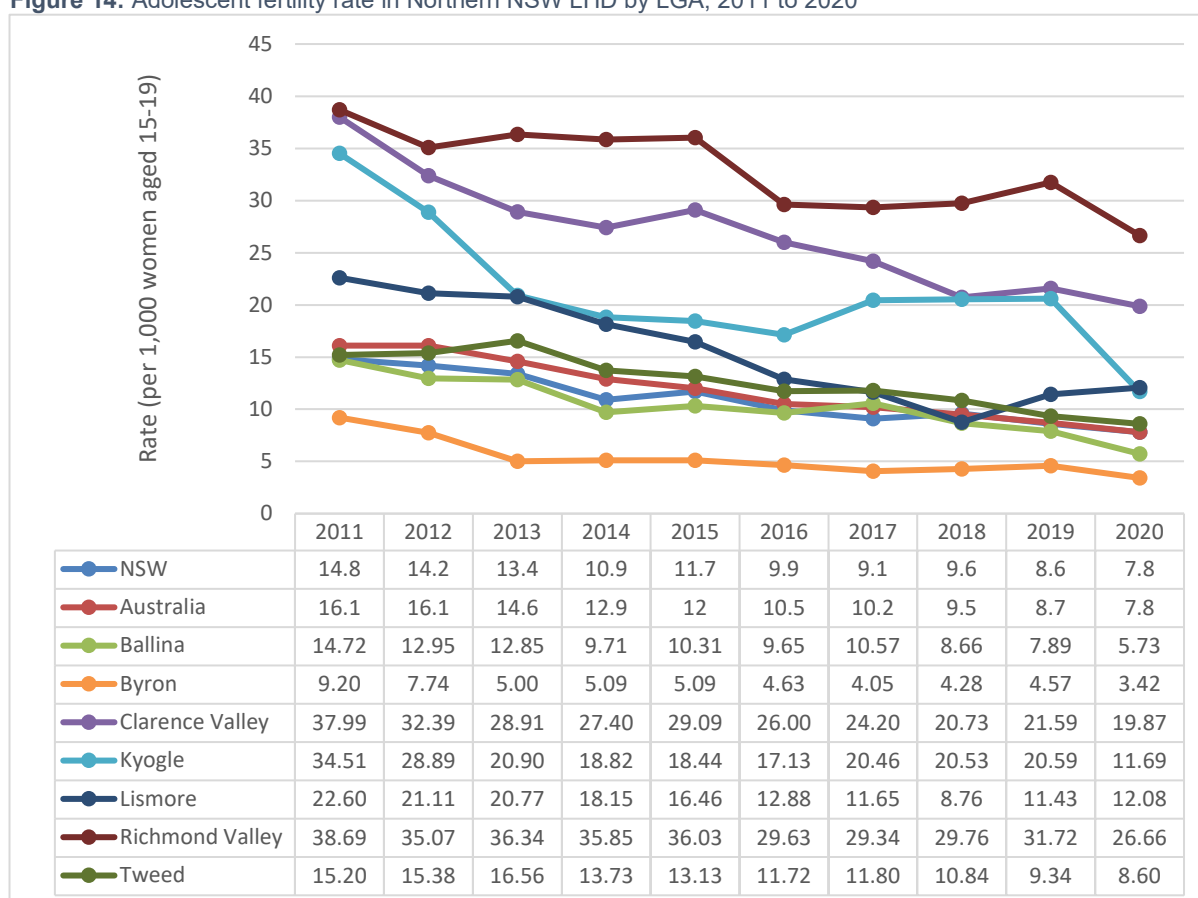
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5 Adolescent fertility rates in NSW Non-Metropolitan LHDs by LGA

5.1 Adolescent fertility rates in Northern NSW LHD by LGA

In Northern NSW LHD (Figure 14), the AFR ranged from 3 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 in Byron LGA to 27 live births in Richmond Valley LGA in 2020. The AFRs in Richmond Valley, Clarence Valley, Lismore, Kyogle and Tweed LGAs were above the national and state levels, while rates in the Ballina and Byron LGAs were below state and national levels in 2020. All Northern NSW LGAs follow a similar trend of decreases and increases to that of the national and state levels however, Kyogle LGA saw the biggest drop in AFRs from 2011 (35) to 2020 (12).

Figure 14: Adolescent fertility rate in Northern NSW LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

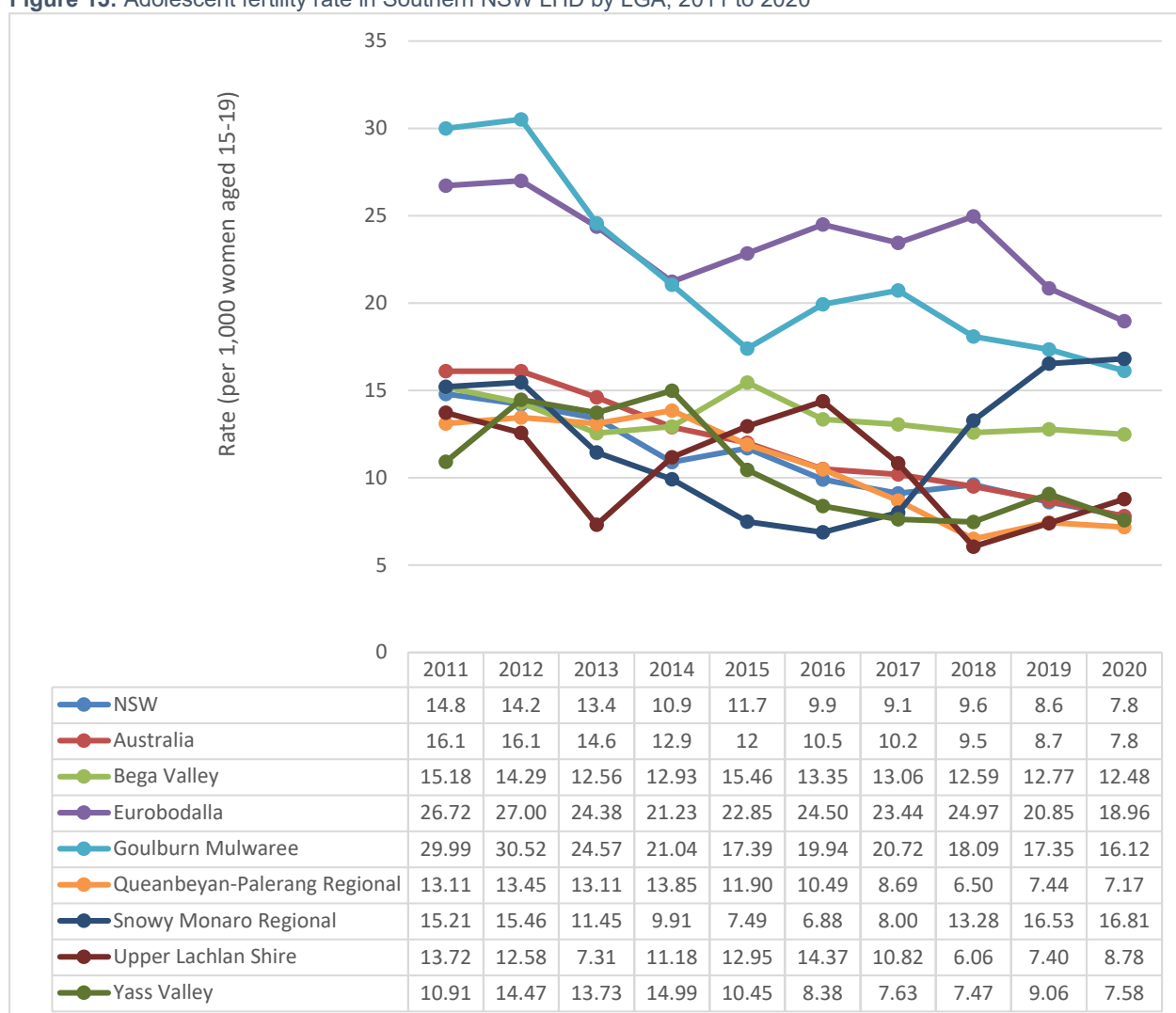


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.2 Adolescent fertility rates in Southern NSW LHD by LGA

In Southern NSW LHD (Figure 15), the AFR varied between 7 live births in Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional LGA and 19 live births in Eurobodalla LGA in 2020. The AFRs in Eurobodalla, Snowy Monaro Regional, Goulburn Mulwaree, Bega Valley and Upper Lachlan Shire LGAs were above the national and state levels, while the other LGAs were below the national and state levels in 2020. Most LGAs in this LHD saw a decrease in AFR in 2020 when compared to that in 2011. Although the AFR in Snowy Monaro Regional LGA decreased from 15 live births in 2011 to 7 live births in 2016, it then increased to 17 live births in 2020, which is above the rate in 2011,

Figure 15: Adolescent fertility rate in Southern NSW LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

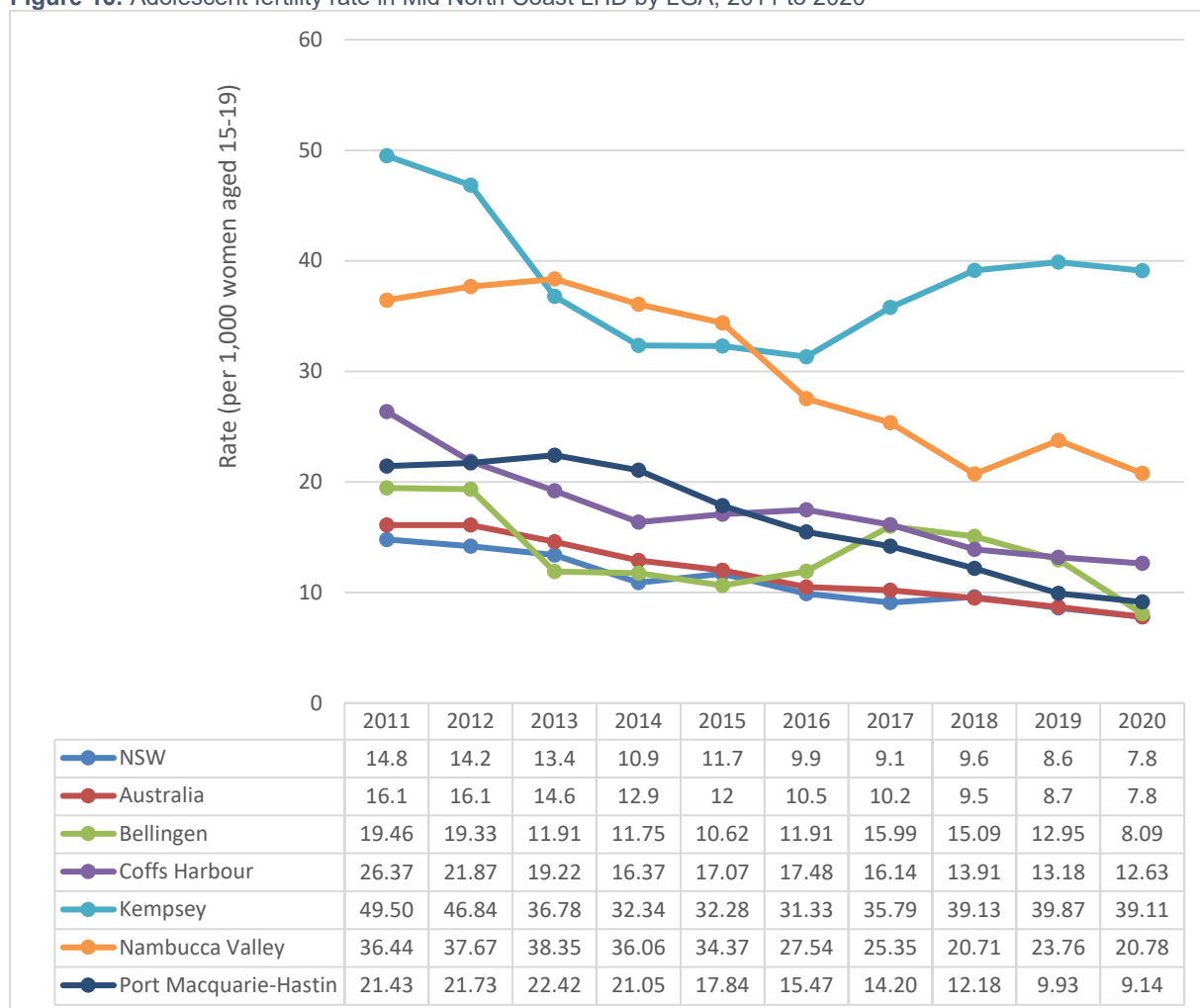


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.3 Adolescent fertility rates in Mid North Coast by LGA

In Mid North Coast (Figure 16), the AFR ranged between 8 live births in Bellingen LGA and 39 live births in Kempsey LGA in 2020. The AFRs in most of the LGAs were above the national and state levels between 2011 and 2020, although the years of 2013-2015 saw Bellingen LGA dip under the state and national levels. The AFRs of all LGAs fluctuated from 2011 to 2020 but decreased overall from 2011 to 2020. The Nambucca LGA had the biggest drop in AFRs from 2011 (36) to 2020 (21) and the Kempsey LGA saw a similar drop in AFRs from 2011 (50) to 2020 (39).

Figure 16: Adolescent fertility rate in Mid North Coast LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

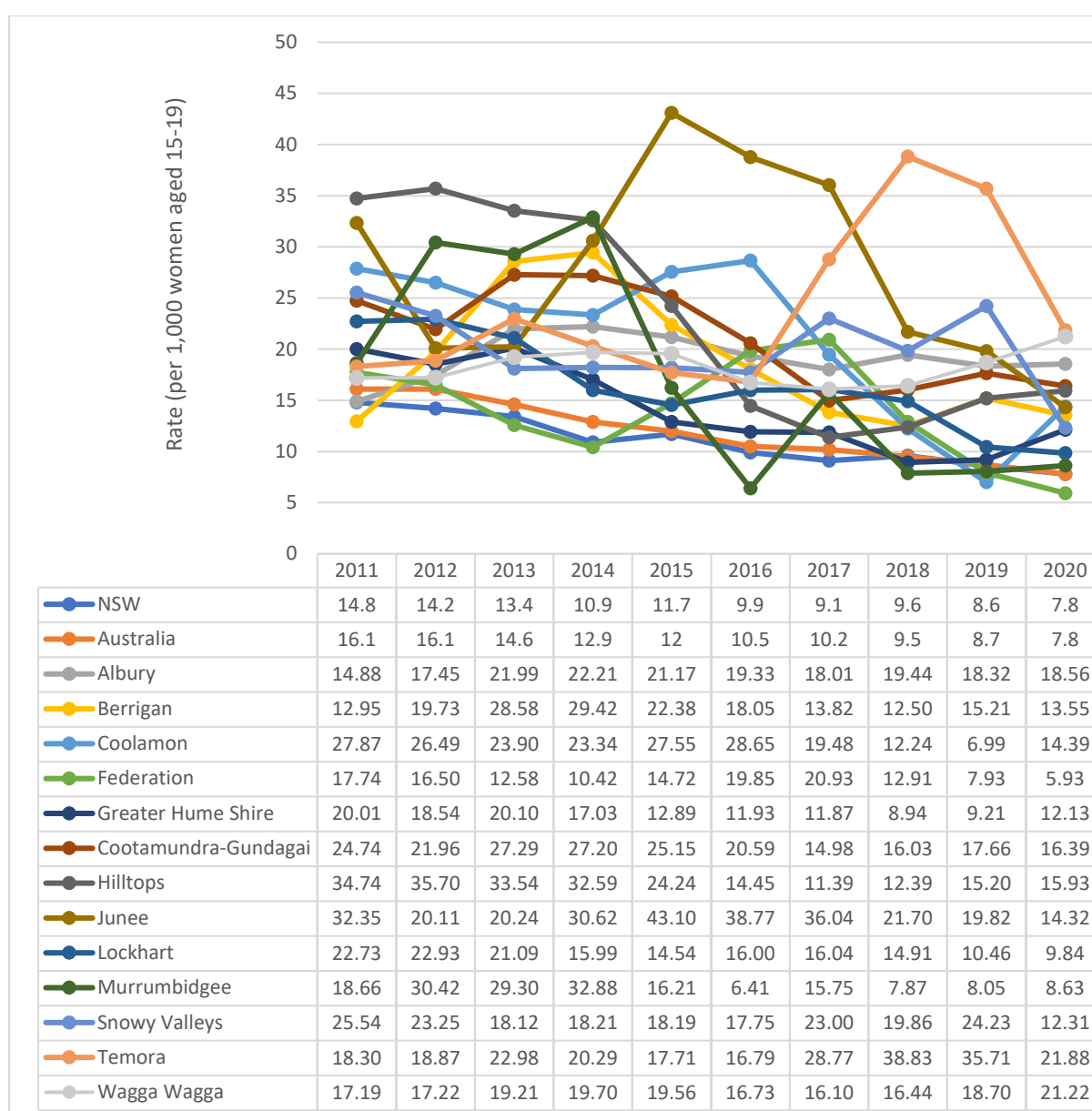


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.4 Adolescent fertility rates in Murrumbidgee LHD by LGA

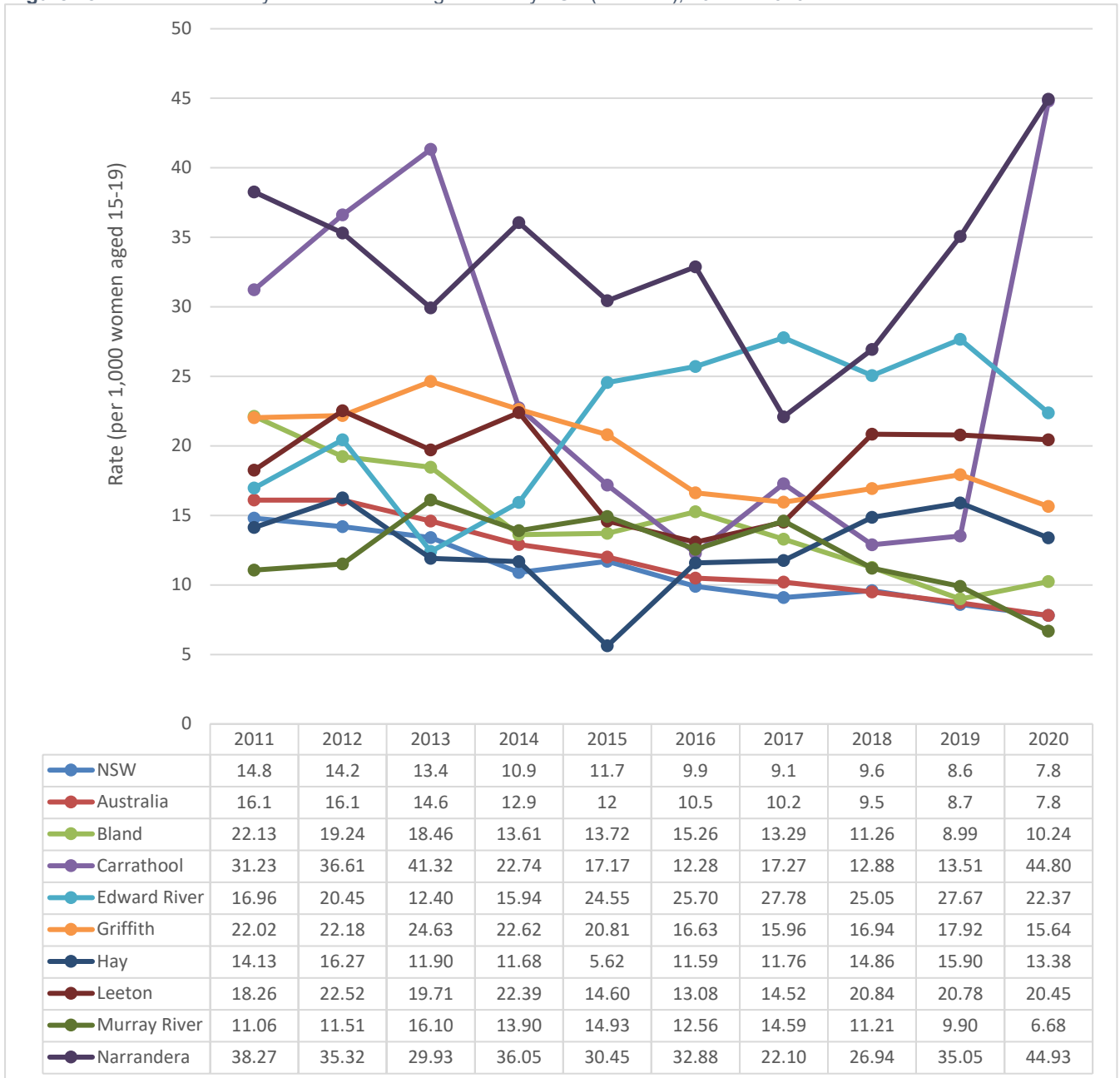
Due to large numbers of LGAs in Murrumbidgee LHD, the AFRs of LGAs spread across Murrumbidgee (Eastern) and Murrumbidgee (Western) are shown in two figures for ease of reading. In Murrumbidgee LHD (Figures 17-18), the AFR varied from 6 live births in Federation LGA to 45 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in Narrandera LGA in 2020. The AFRs in most of the LGAs in Murrumbidgee LHD were above the national and state levels, except for Federation (6) and Murray River (7) which were below the national and state levels in 2020. Carrathool, Wagga Wagga, Temora, Berrigan, Albury, Edward River, Leeton and Narrandera LGAs saw increases in their AFR from 2011-2020. It's noted that the rate in Narrandera LGA, decreased from 38 live births in 2011 to 22 live births in 2017 but had a sharp rise to 45 live births in 2020. The AFR in Carrathool LGA also had a large increase from 14 live births per 1000 women aged 15-19 in 2019 to 45 in 2020. In Hay LGA, the AFR stayed relatively similar when comparing 2011 and 2020. The other LGAs followed a trend of decreases and increases from years 2011-2020. Hilltops LGA saw the biggest drop in the AFRs from 2011 (35) to 2020 (16) while Carrathool LGA had the largest increase in AFRs from from 2011 (31) to 2020 (45).

Figure 17: Adolescent fertility rate in Murrumbidgee LHD by LGA (Eastern), 2011 to 2020



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

Figure 18: Adolescent fertility rate in Murrumbidgee LHD by LGA (Western), 2011 to 2020

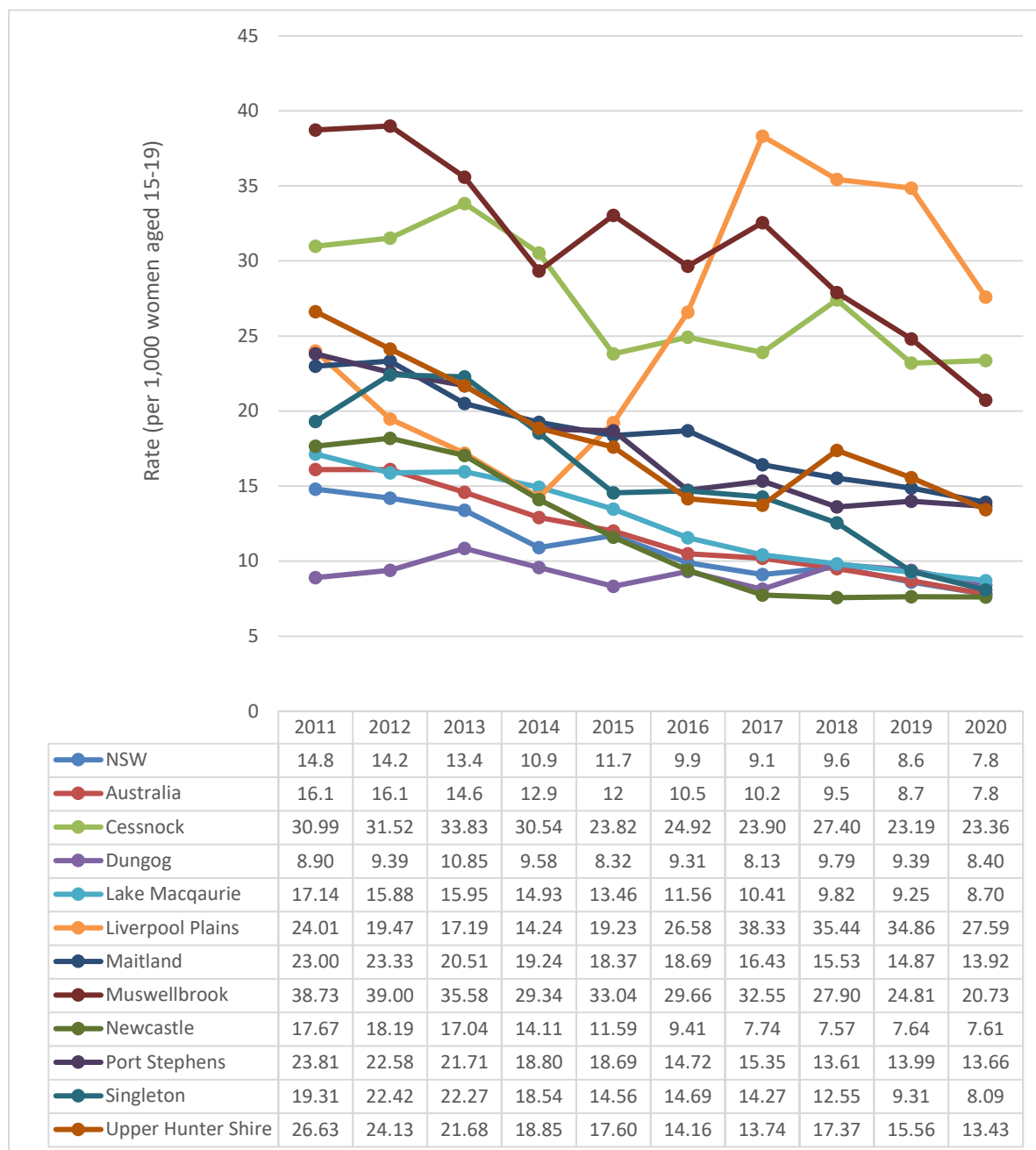


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.5 Adolescent fertility rates in Hunter New England LHD by LGA

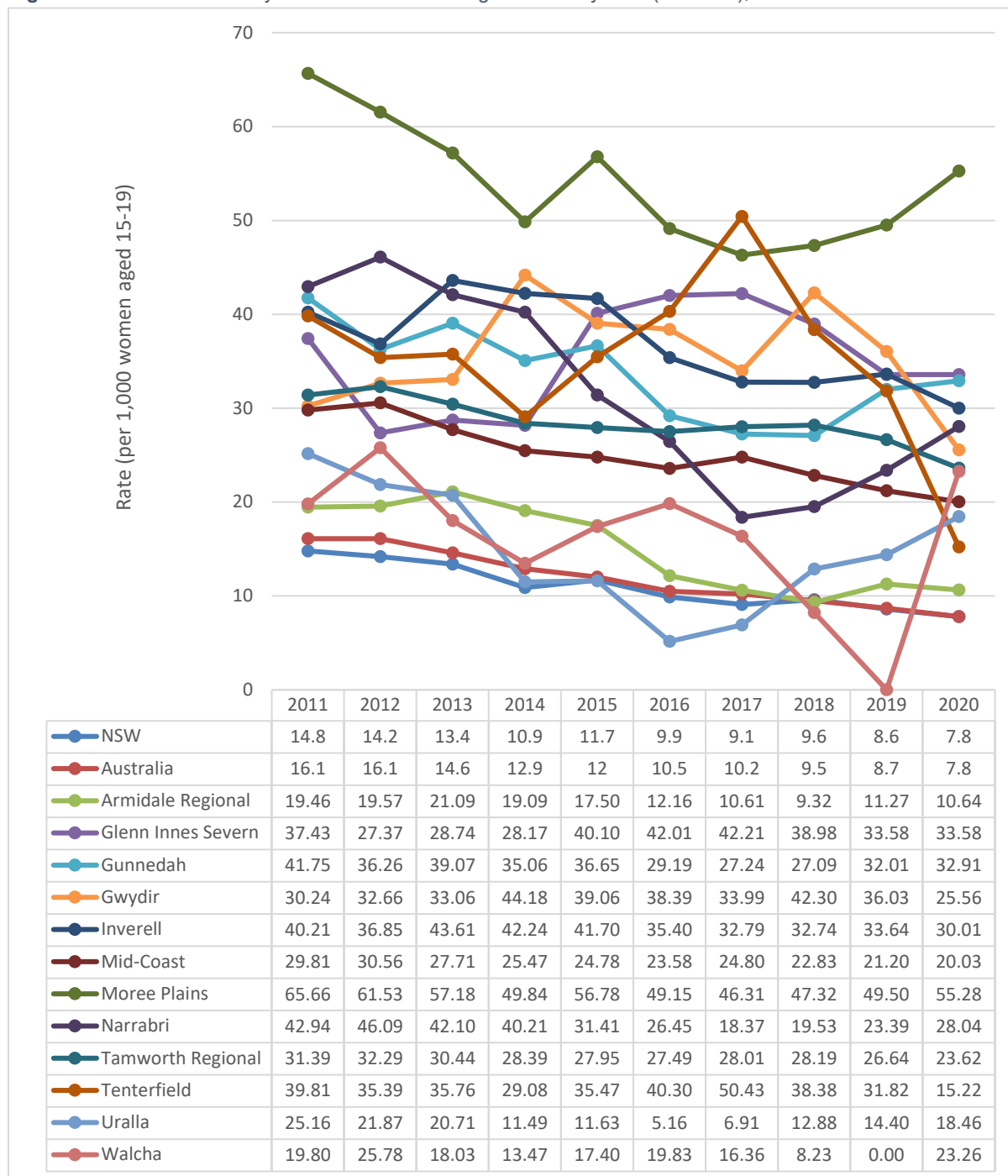
Due to large numbers of LGAs in Hunter New England LHD, the AFRs of LGAs spread across Hunter New England (Southern) and Hunter New England (Northern) are shown in two figures for ease of reading. In Hunter New England LHD (Figure 19-20), the AFR ranged between 7.6 live births in Newcastle LGA to 55 live births in Moree Plains LGA in 2020. The AFRs in most of the LGAs were above the national and state levels, particularly in the northern area, except for Newcastle which was below the national and state levels in 2020. The Liverpool Plains and Walcha LGAs saw increases in their AFR from 2011 to 2020 while in Dungog LGA, the AFRs stayed relatively similar when comparing 2011 and 2020. The other LGAs follow a trend of decreases and increases from years 2011-2020. Tenterfield LGA saw the biggest drop in AFRs from 2011 (40) to 2020 (15).

Figure 19: Adolescent fertility rate in Hunter New England LHD by LGA (Southern), 2011 to 2020



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

Figure 20: Adolescent fertility rate in Hunter New England LHD by LGA (Northern), 2011 to 2020

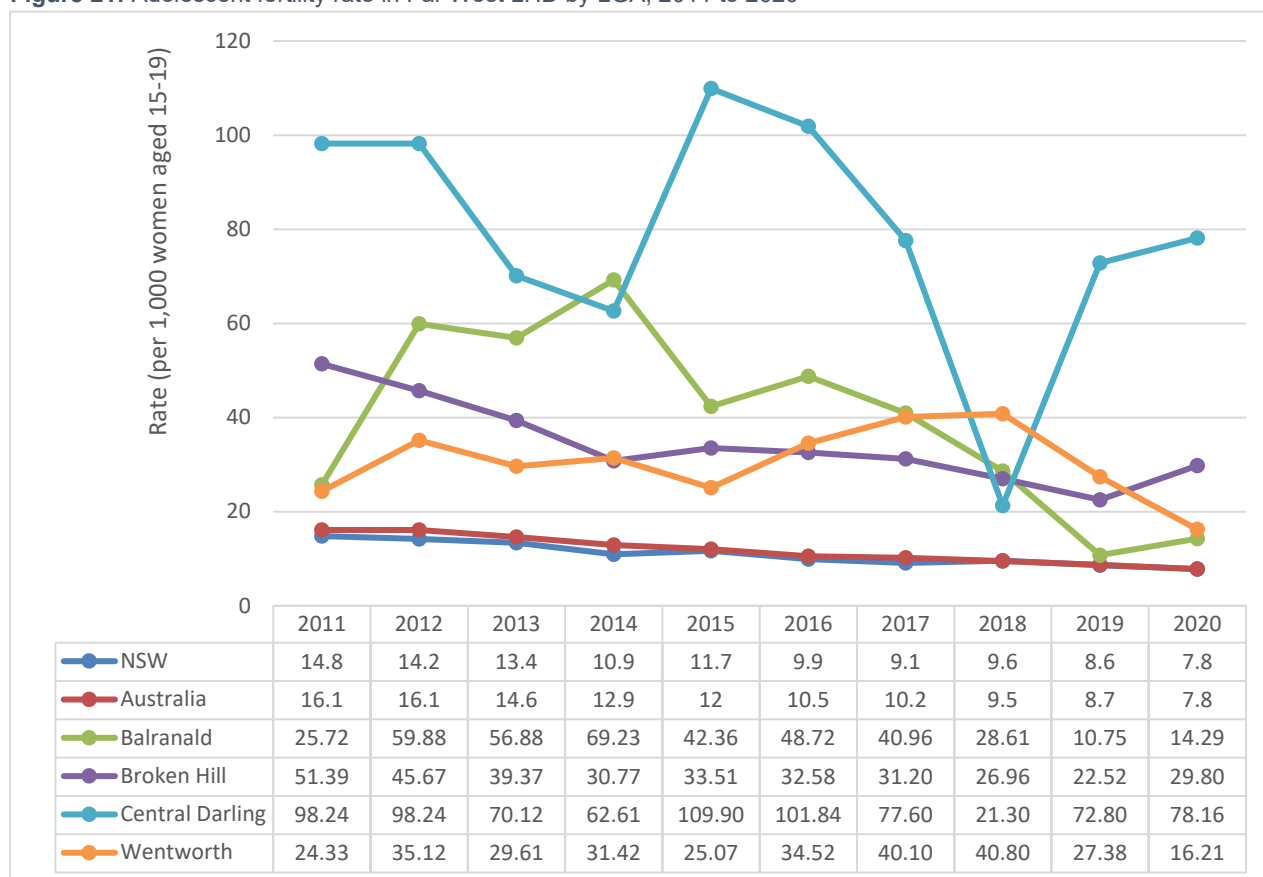


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.6 Adolescent fertility rates in Far West LHD by LGA

In Far West LHD (Figure 21), the AFR ranged between 14 live births in Balranald LGA and 78 live births in Central Darling LGA in 2020. The AFRs in all LGAs in the Far West LHD were above the national and state levels from 2011-2020. Although the rates fluctuated over the period, the AFRs in all LGAs decreased in 2020 compared to that in 2011, with the biggest drop of AFR in the Broken Hill LGA which saw 51 live births in 2011 to 30 live births in 2020. The AFR in Central Darling LGA saw large fluctuations over time and was 78 live births in 2020 compared to 98 live births in 2011.

Figure 21: Adolescent fertility rate in Far West LHD by LGA, 2011 to 2020

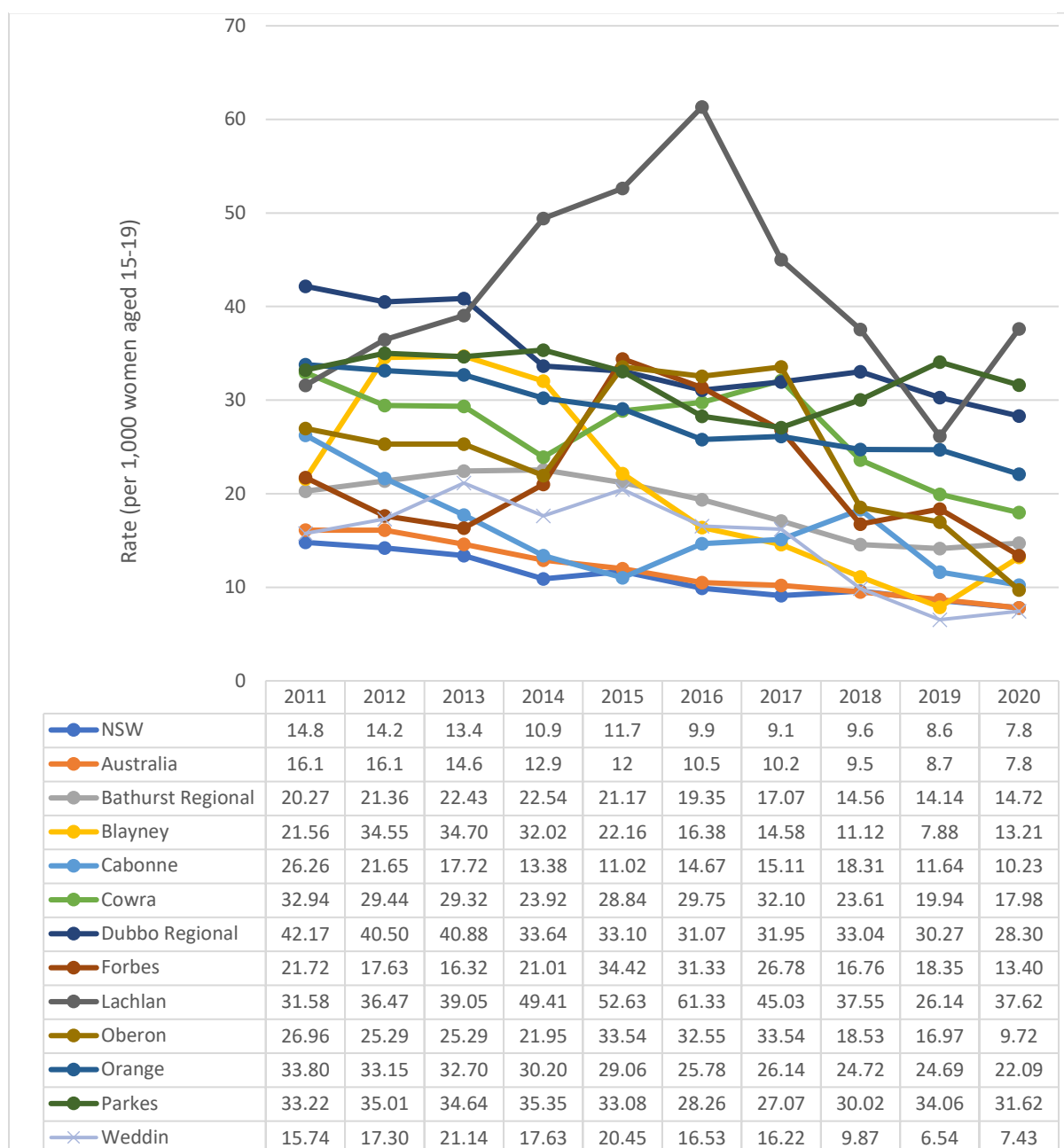


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

5.7 Adolescent fertility rates in Western NSW LHD by LGA

Due to large numbers of LGAs in Western NSW LHD, the AFRs of LGAs spread across Western NSW (Southern) and Western NSW (Northern) are shown in two figures for ease of reading. In Western NSW LHD (Figure 22-23), the AFR was varied between 7 live births in Weddin LGA and 69 live births in Walgett LGA in 2020. Apart from Weddin and Cabonne LGAs, where the AFRs were close to the national and state levels, the other LGAs in the Western NSW LHD were above the national and state levels from 2011-2020, particularly in the northern area. The Lachlan LGA saw an increase in their AFR from 2011 (32) to 2020 (38), while in Coonamble, Narromine, Gilgandra and Parkes LGAs, the AFRs stayed relatively similar when comparing 2011 and 2020. The other LGAs follow a trend of decreases and increases from years 2011-2020. Brewarrina LGA saw the biggest drop in AFRs from 2011 (93) to 2020 (28).

Figure 22: Adolescent fertility rate in Western NSW LHD by LGA (Southern), 2011 to 2020

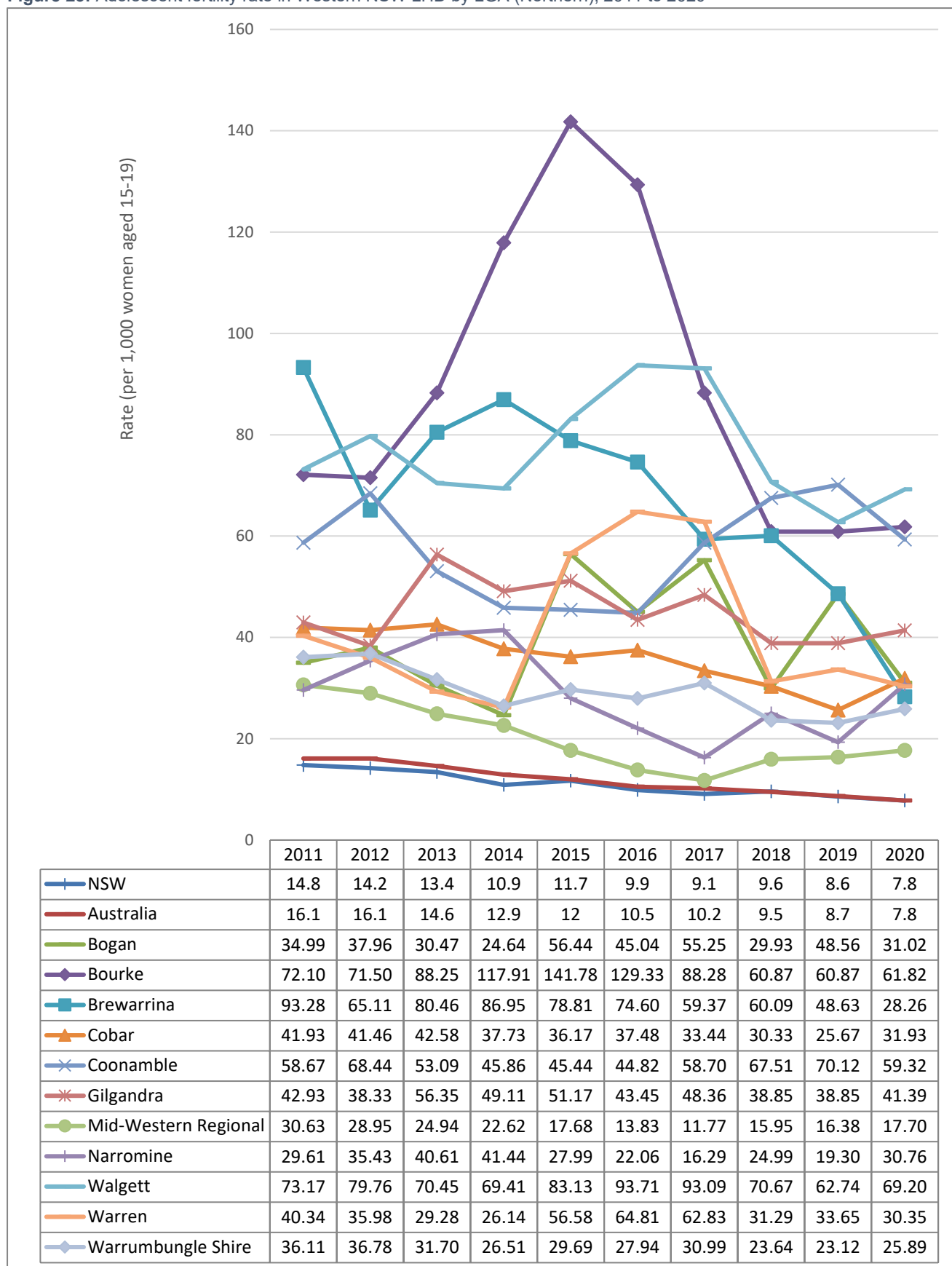


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

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Figure 23: Adolescent fertility rate in Western NSW LHD by LGA (Northern), 2011 to 2020



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, Australia (cat.no. 3301.0) [data available on request].

6 Discussion

The AFR in Australia decreased from 16 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011-2012, to 8 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2020. In NSW, a similar trend was observed during the same ten-year period. The AFR decreased from 15 live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in 2011, to 8 in 2020. However, there is considerable variation in AFRs, and trends, across the LHDs and LGAs in NSW. As mentioned in the Australian Children's Right Report 2017, particular groups are more likely to become young parents, including young people living in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds⁷. The non-metropolitan LHDs had an AFR consistently above the national and state level over time and almost triple the rate of the metropolitan LHDs in 2020. Some LGAs within Murrumbidgee LHD, Hunter New England LHD, Southern NSW LHD and Western NSW LHD in the non-metropolitan areas recorded increases of AFRs from 2011 to 2020.

During the decade in which the AFR has decreased in NSW there have been a number of initiatives internationally, nationally and locally that may have contributed to the decline and will have an impact on the AFR in the future. Internationally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals agreed upon in 2015 includes the target; "By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes." One of the key indicators to monitor progress is the adolescent fertility rate⁸. In Australia, and NSW, the declining AFR shows that progress is being made, however, the large disparity in rates across areas suggests that inequities in access to care, education and services continue.

In Australia, the National Women's Health Policy Strategy 2020-2030 was released in 2019 and it identified maternal, sexual and reproductive health as one of the five priority areas for improving the health outcomes for women and girls in Australia. The strategy advocates for actions that promote access to resources for students and parents to learn about sexual and reproductive health, strengthening of access pathways to sexual and reproductive health services across the country, particularly in rural and remote areas, and increasing the availability and uptake of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARCs) and equitable access to pregnancy termination services⁹. The Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education (2018)¹⁰ and NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education K-10 Syllabus (2018)¹¹ both include content on fertility, conception and contraception to support the inclusion of these topics in school education programs.

Within NSW, Family Planning NSW, as the leading provider of reproductive and sexual health services and professional education in reproductive and sexual health, continues to work towards high-quality reproductive and sexual health for all people and to support adolescents' control of their fertility. It has a number of initiatives that are specifically designed to support young people, including the Freedom Condom project (formerly known as the Condom Credit Card project) and specialised reproductive and sexual health training for youth workers and school teachers. It also provides comprehensive sexuality education via community education, sexual and reproductive health services at clinics and supports capacity building of local service providers in regional and rural areas to provide abortion and LARCs. Funding from LHDs and other funding bodies specifically supports the delivery of projects targeted at young people in some of the areas with high adolescent fertility rates, including Nepean Blue Mountains LHD, Hunter New England LHD and Western NSW LHD. These projects include targeted community education, development of youth-friendly resources and the piloting of direct-to-consumer free condom delivery in Western NSW. Family Planning NSW is also the provider of the Talkline and Pregnancy Choices Helpline services which provide free and confidential information, advice and options across a wide range of reproductive and sexual health issues.

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