



The population history of Tasmania to Federation

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1. The Tasmanian Aborigines
2. The convict colony
3. Marriage, fertility
4. Infant mortality, life expectancy
5. Migration, population growth
6. Sources for population data
7. Most accurate long-term population projection ever?

The Tasmanian Aborigines



Tasmania settled 20,000–30,000 years ago

9 tribes: Oyster Bay, North East, North, Big River, North Midlands, Ben Lomond, North West, South West, South East

Pre-contact population: 3,000–15,000 (no consensus)

Epidemic before colonisation?

	Aborigines	Colonists	Sheep/cattle
1803:	6,000	49	
1826:	1,200		
1830:	250	24,000	1,000,000

1820s pastoral invasion—colonists and their stock occupied Aboriginal hunting grounds—greatest impact on Tasmanian Aboriginal society



The Tasmanian Aborigines

Surviving population taken to Flinders Island in the early 1830s—terrible conditions—crude death rate of more than 20%—low birth-rate—high infant mortality

1868—3 remained—Truganini, William Lanney and Mary Ann Booker—all deceased by 1876

The myth of the ‘Last Native Tasmanian’



Truganini



The Tasmanian Aborigines



Children, Cape Barren Island, 1892

Views in Norfolk Island and Bass Strait, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Montgomery, Mitchell Library. In L Ryan 1996. *The Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 2nd ed., Allen and Unwin.

From 1800, several hundred sealers each year came on ships from Sydney, United States and Britain to hunt on islands in the Bass Strait. By 1830, 74 Aboriginal women were living with the sealers.

Lyndall Ryan: 'The sealers were instrumental in the destruction of a number of Aboriginal tribes...through exchange and abduction of women, but they also saved Aboriginal Tasmanian society from extinction because their economic activity enabled some of its traditions to continue.'

Relocated to Cape Barren Island in 1870s.

Community of 250 in the early 20th century.



60,000 men and 12,000 women were transported to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), 1803-53.

September 1803: 49 convicts and military arrived from Sydney

1804: Colonising population of more than 500

First European birth 17 February 1804—
Catherine—to Catherine and Joseph Potaski,
Polish convict

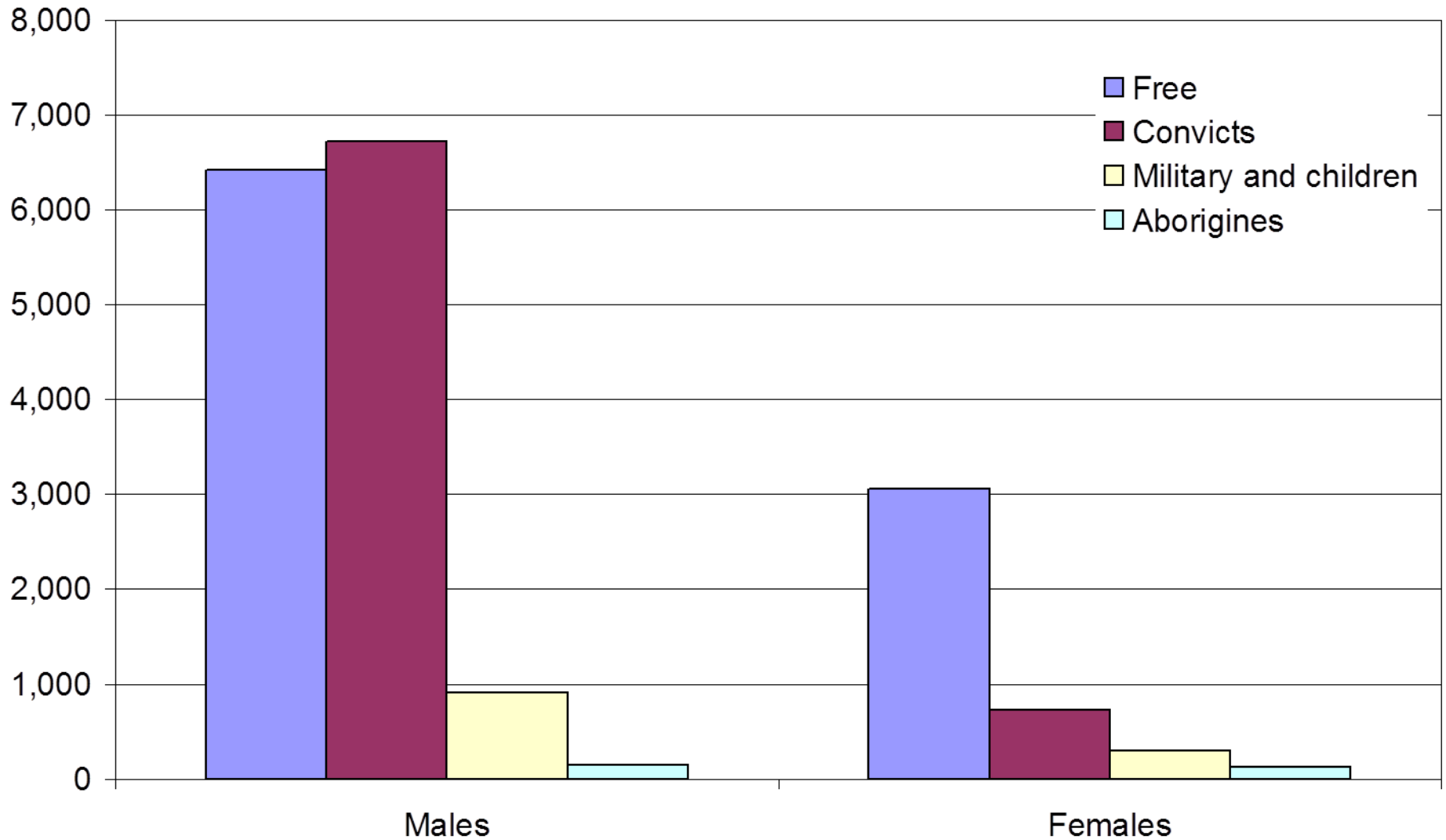
The colonising population grew to 69,000 by 1850, largely through high migration of convicts and settlers.



Catherine (Potaski) McDonald
Born 'Ocean' February 1804
Sullivan's Cove, Tasmania
Died January 1877, Geelong

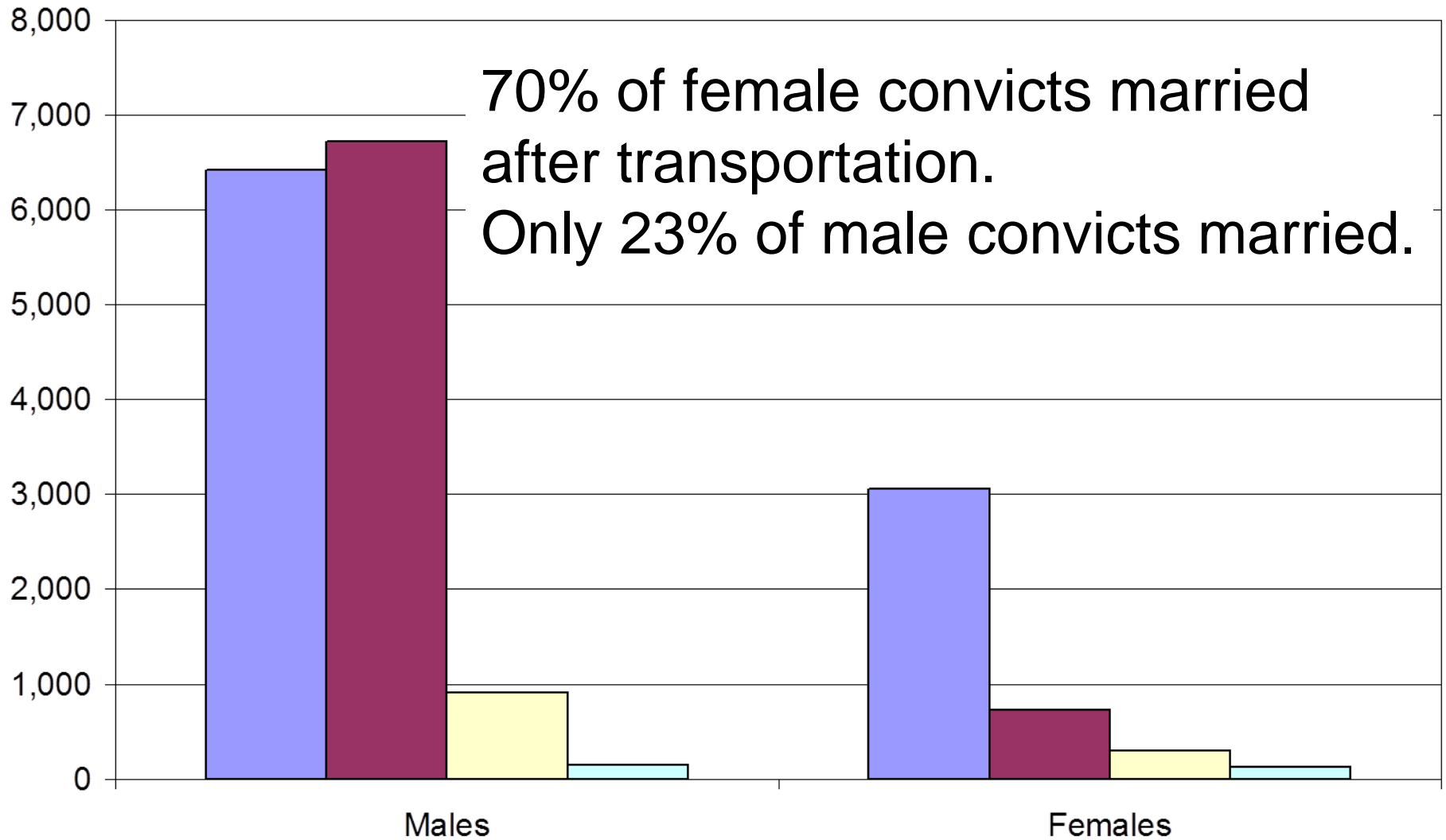


“Estimated population of Van Diemen’s Land by sex and civil status, 1828”



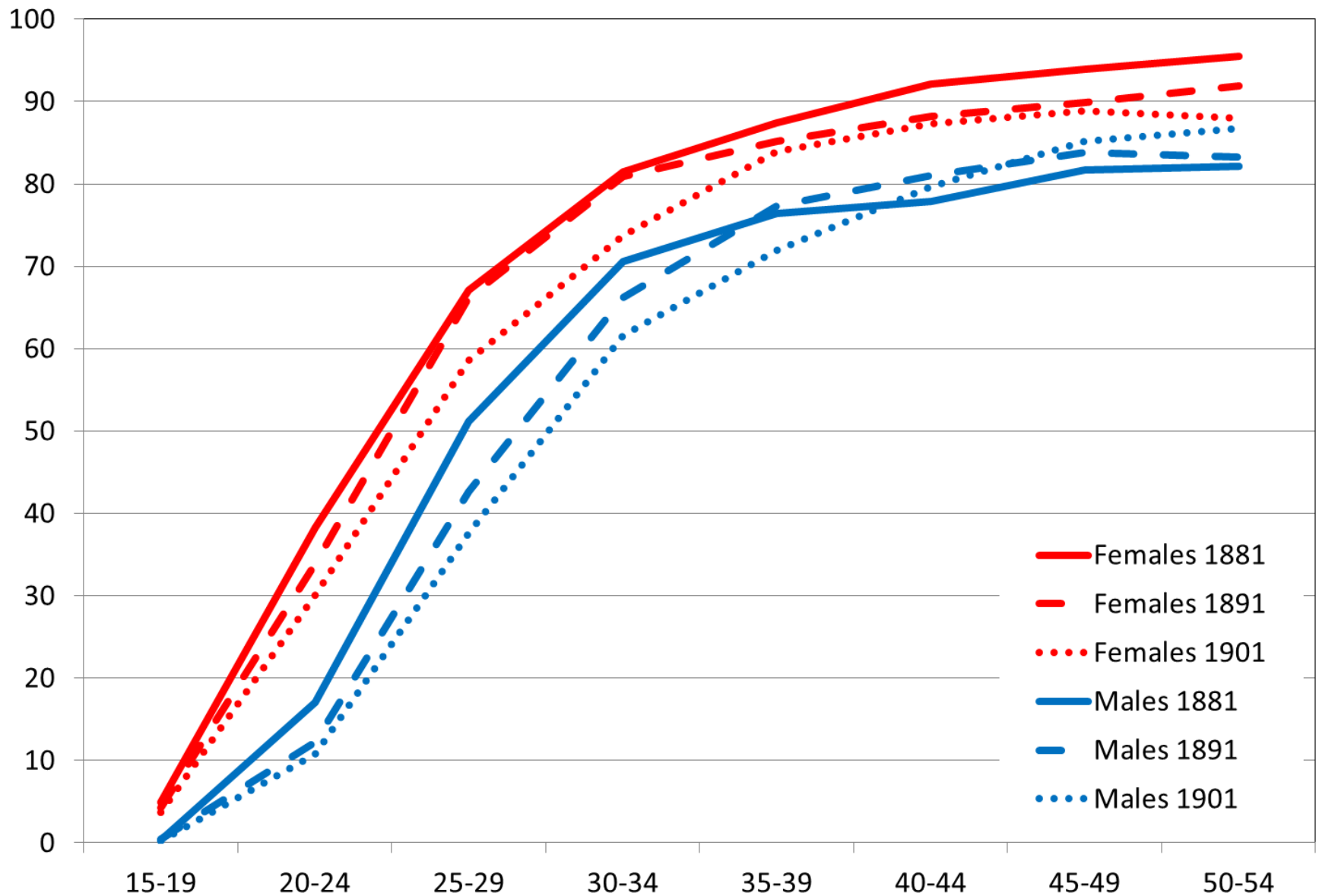


“Estimated population of Van Diemen’s Land by sex and civil status, 1828”





% ever married by age and sex, Tasmania, 1881, 1891, 1901



1. Gold discovered in the neighbouring colony of Victoria led to high out-migration—whole population of Tasmania fell 10% in less than a year:

‘The place is becoming nearly depopulated; one third of the whole free male population has already deserted, and more keep going every day...Archdeacon D[avies]...found himself obliged to lay the cloth, while Mrs D[avies] cooked the dinner, every servant they had having gone’

1852 letter in: William Denison 1870. *Varieties of Vice-Regal Life*, Longmans, Green and Co., London.

2. The last convict ship arrived in 1853, convict system disbanded soon after.

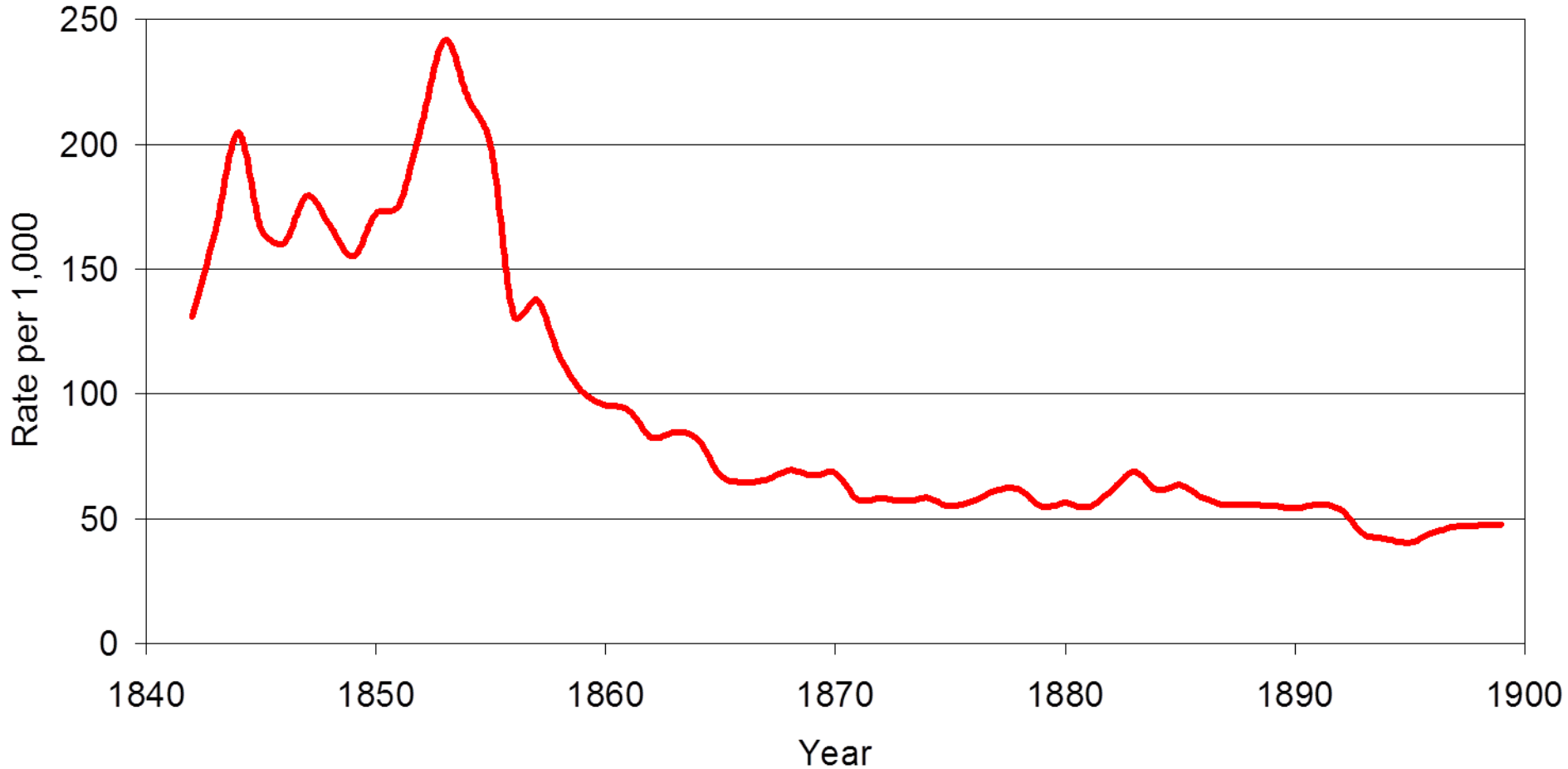
3. Marriage rates increased, ex-nuptial birth-rate decreased

4. Infant mortality decreased

Name change in 1856 from Van Diemen’s Land to Tasmania to remove the hated “convict stain”

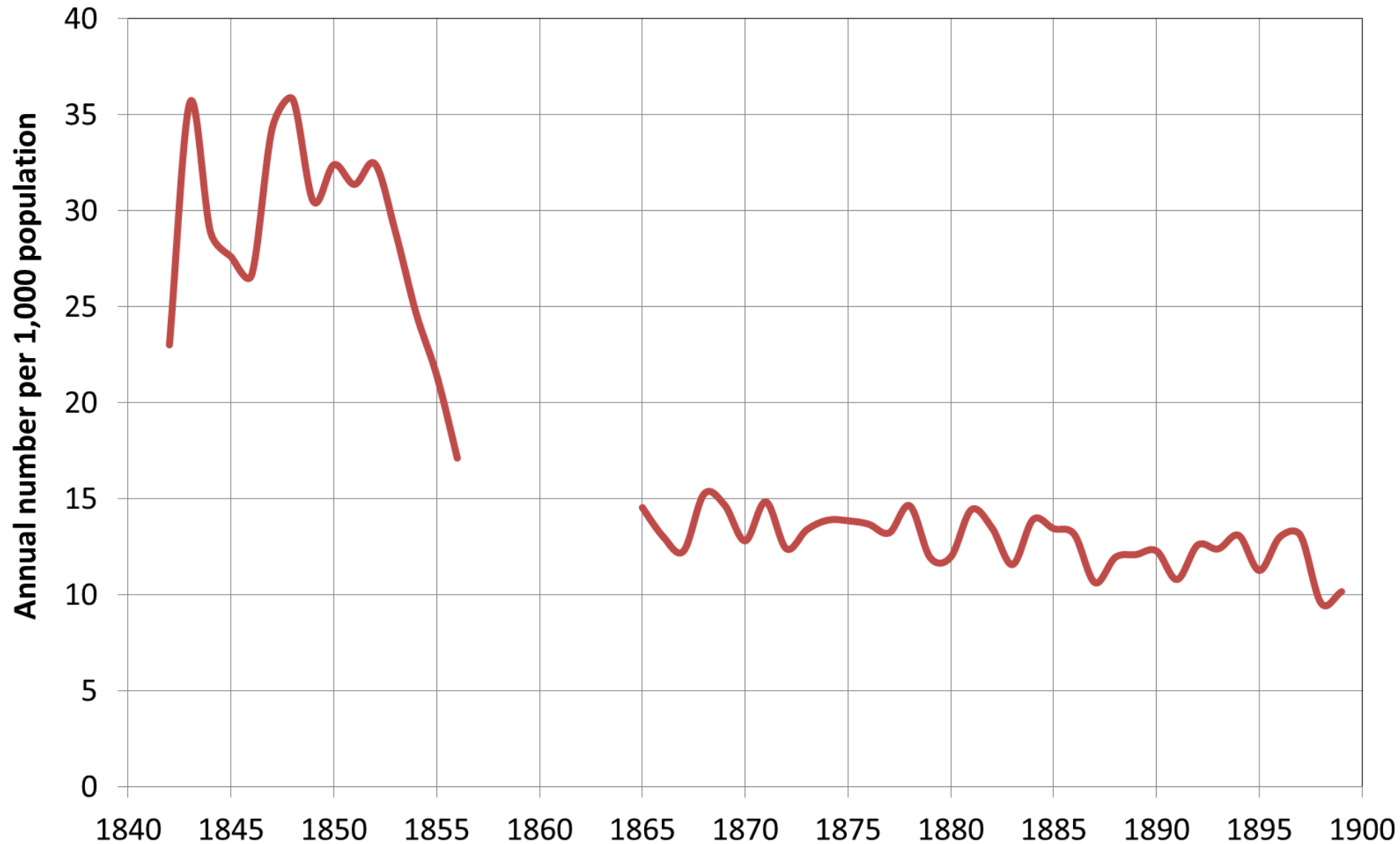


Annual marriages per 1,000 unmarried females aged 15 years and over, Tasmania, 1842–99





Annual exnuptial births per 1,000 unmarried women aged 15+ years, Tasmania, 1842–99



Most female convicts lived and worked in the community.

However, unmarried and pregnant convicts were sent back to prison to give birth in the convict nursery. The 'offence of an illegitimate child' carried a prison term of 15 months.

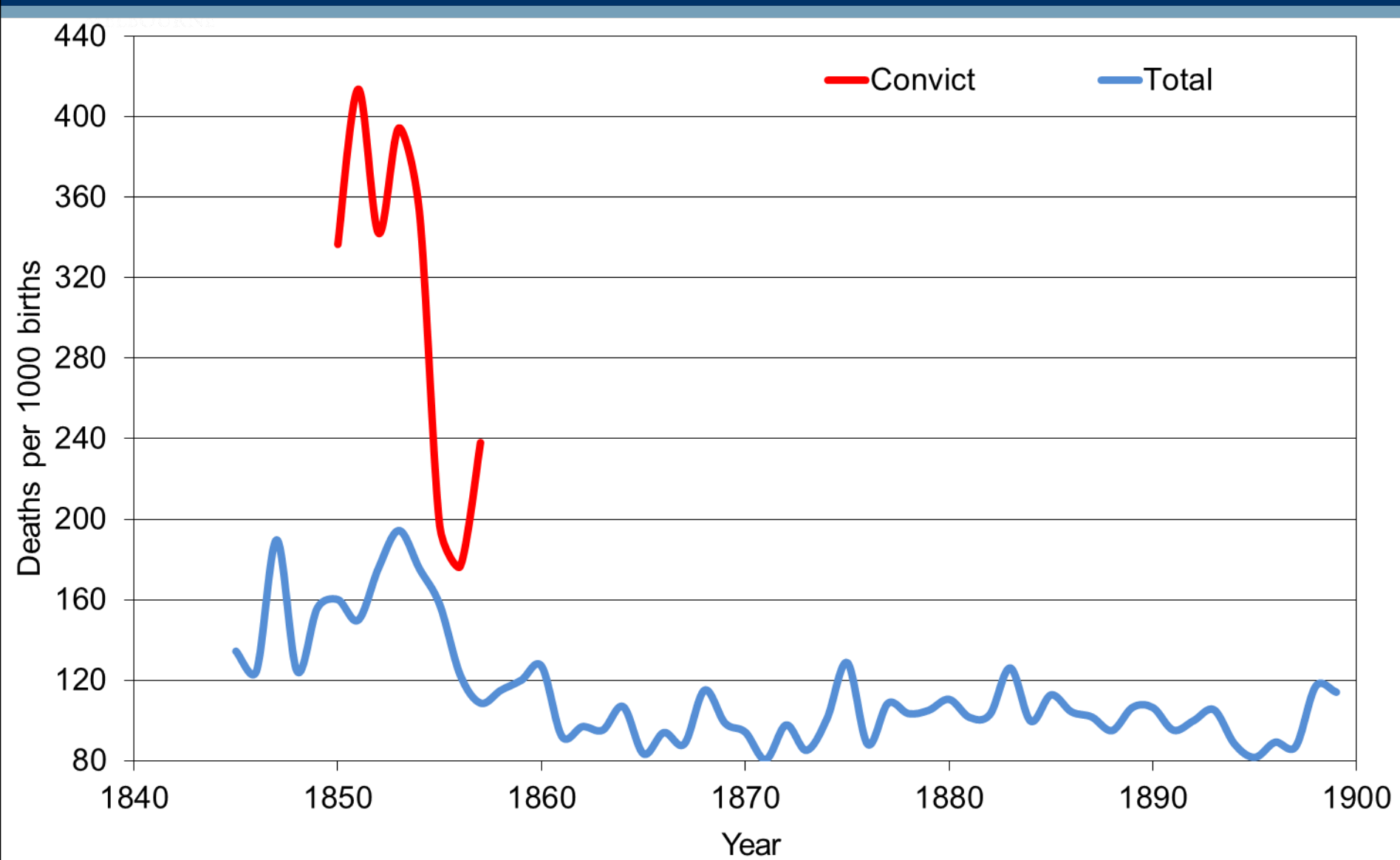
This punishment of the mothers resulted in punishment of their children.

Conditions in the nurseries were terrible, with dozens of women and children crammed into damp, cold, foetid rooms.

Overcrowding, poor diet, and inadequate dress, bedding and sanitation led to infant mortality levels as high as 40 per cent.

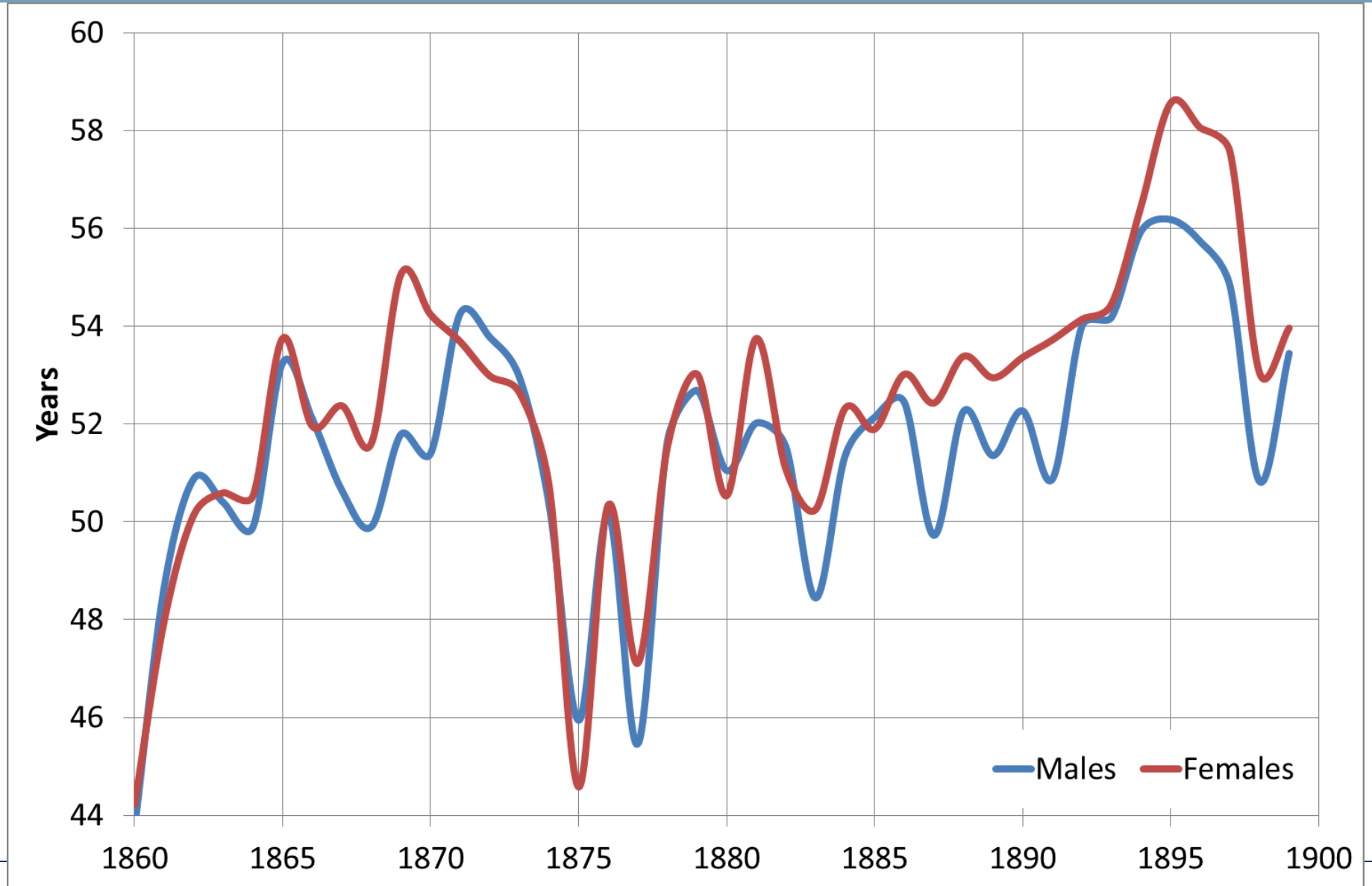


Infant mortality of children born to convict women in the female factories, and total infant mortality



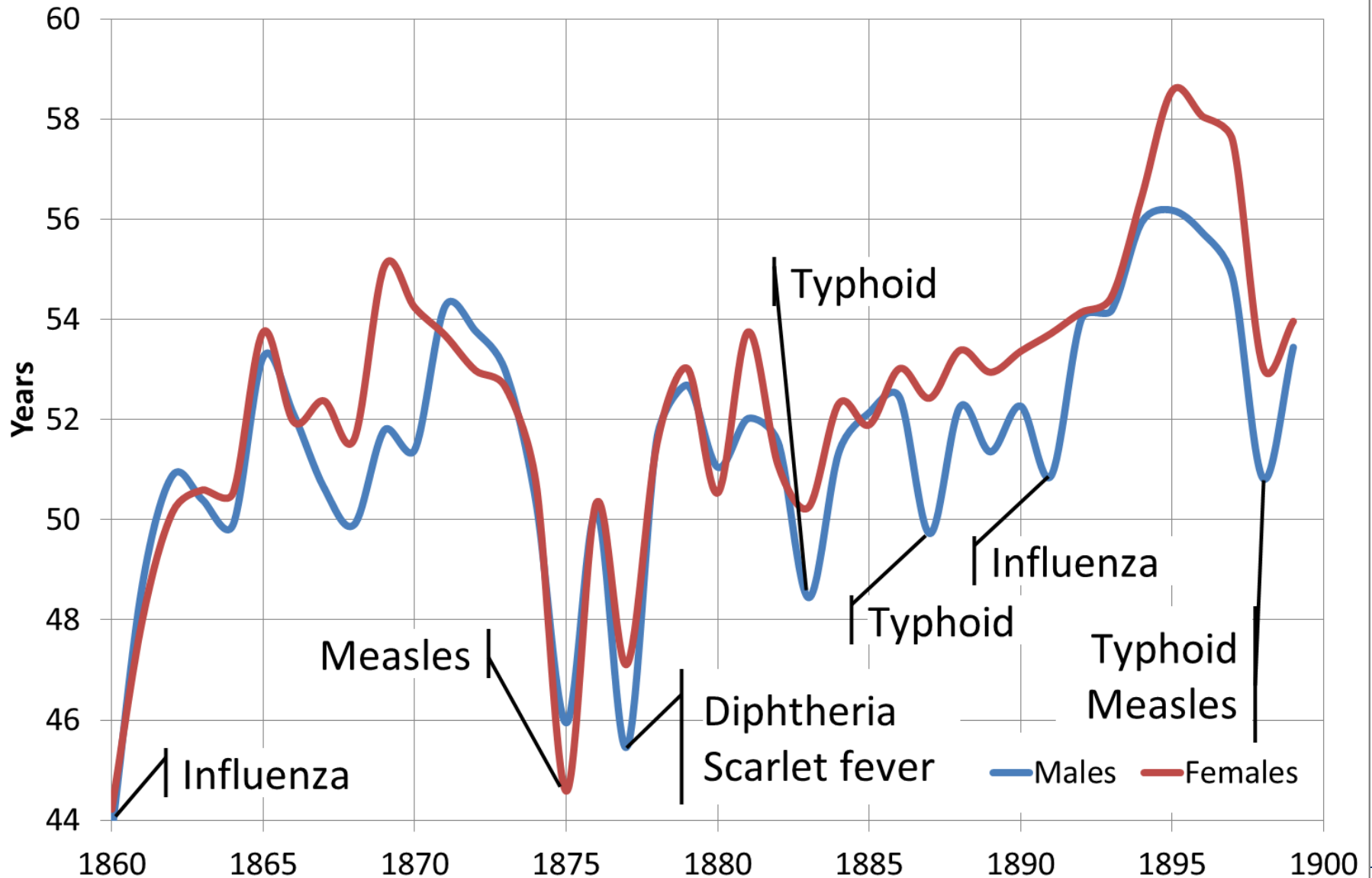


Life expectancy at birth, Tasmania, 1860-99



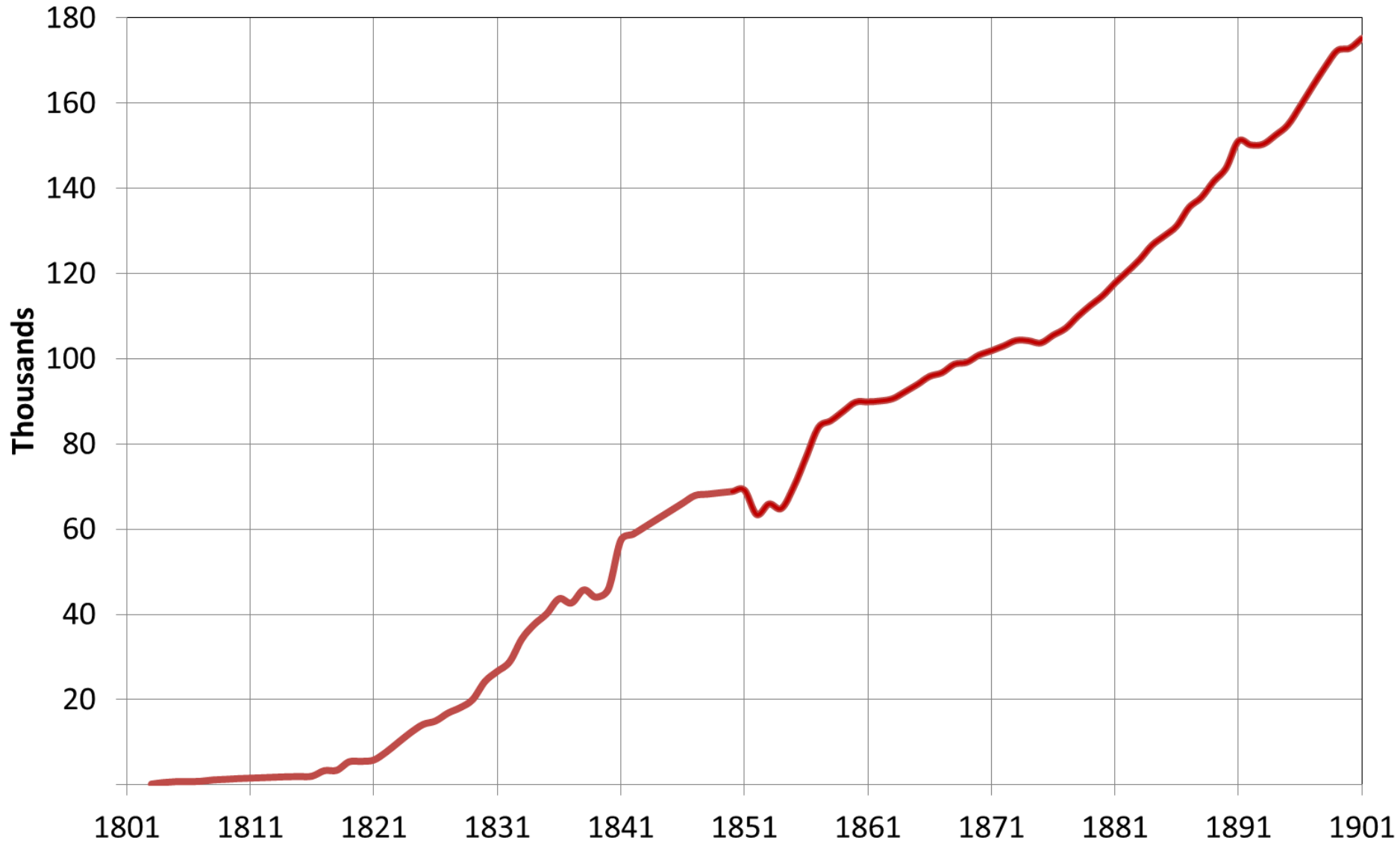


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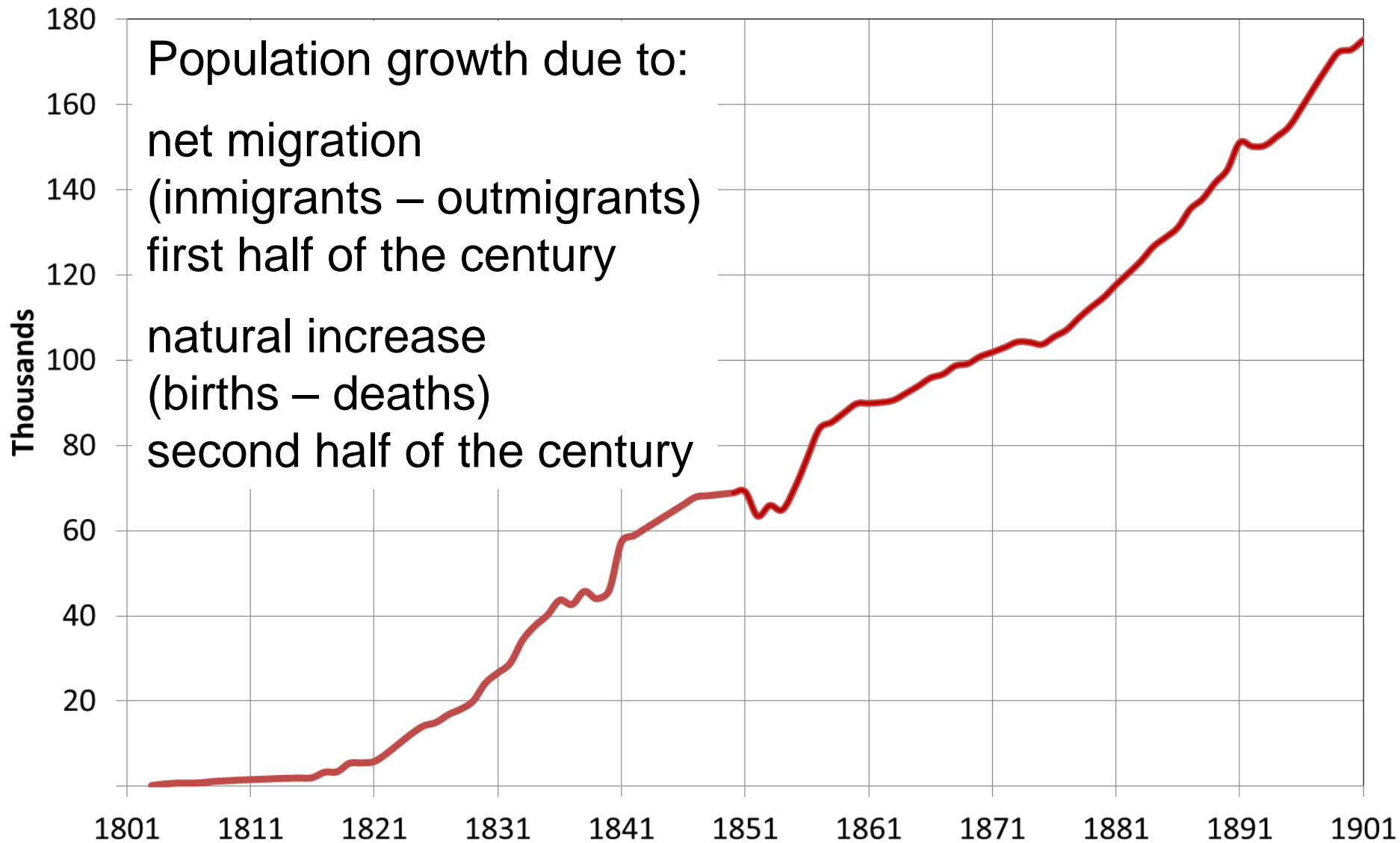


European population of Tasmania, 1803-1901



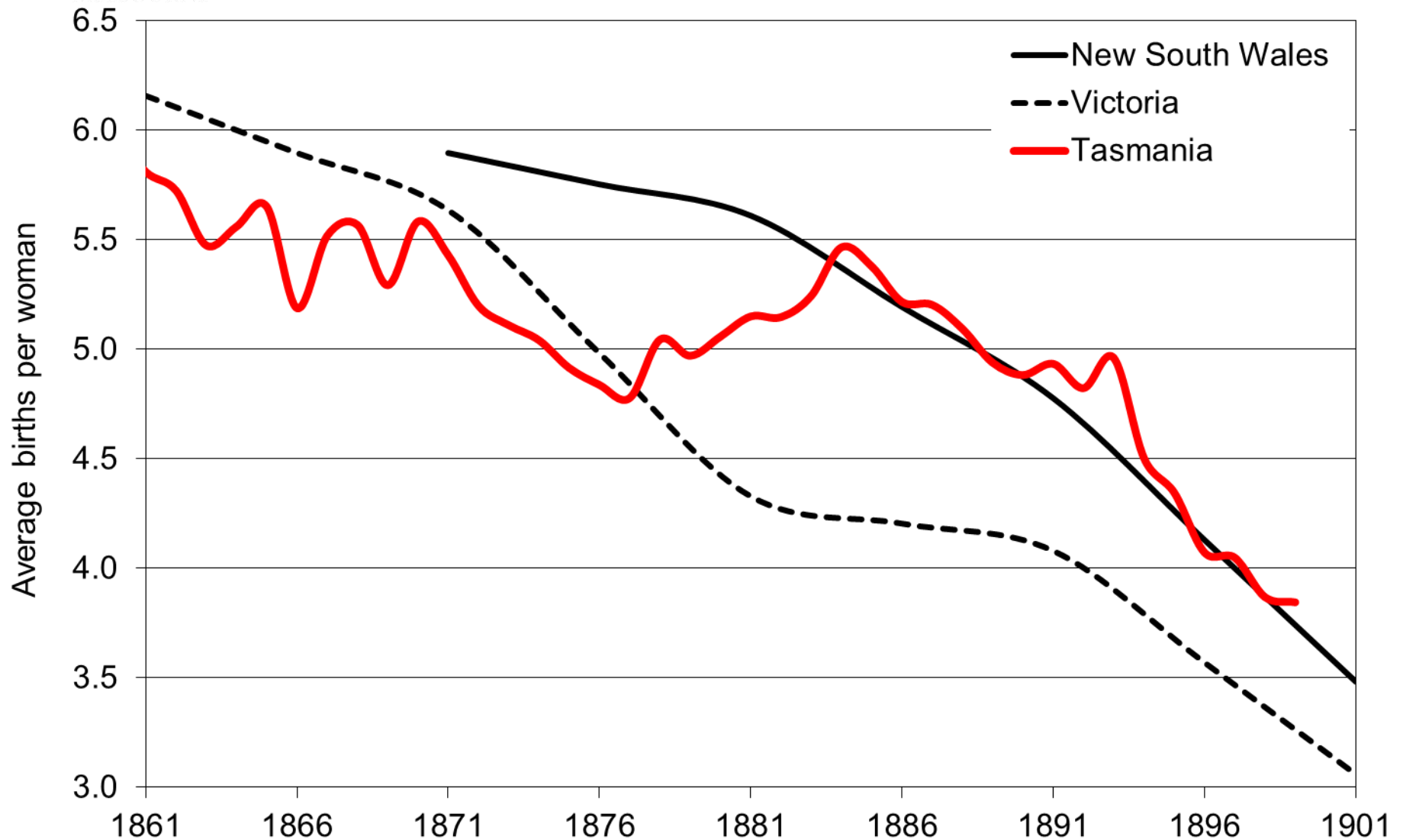


European population of Tasmania, 1803-1901





Indirectly standardised total fertility rate



Church records of baptisms, weddings, funerals

Convict musters

Other convict records

Civil registration of births, deaths, marriages from 1838

Population censuses: 1842, 1848, 1851, 1857,
1861, 1870, 1881, 1891, 1901

Annual *Statistics of Tasmania* from the mid-1850s



Born 1843, Inverness, Scotland

From railway labourer in Edinburgh to railway clerk in Glasgow. Took evening classes in a wide range of subjects.

Emigrated to Tasmania in 1870.

1870—Accountant for Launceston and Western Railway

1880—Chief Auditor for the Government Audit Department

1882—Government Statistician and Registrar of Births, Deaths, Marriages

Polymath: amateur palaeontologist, geologist, geographer, botanist, economist and political scientist, published 100+ papers in scientific journals

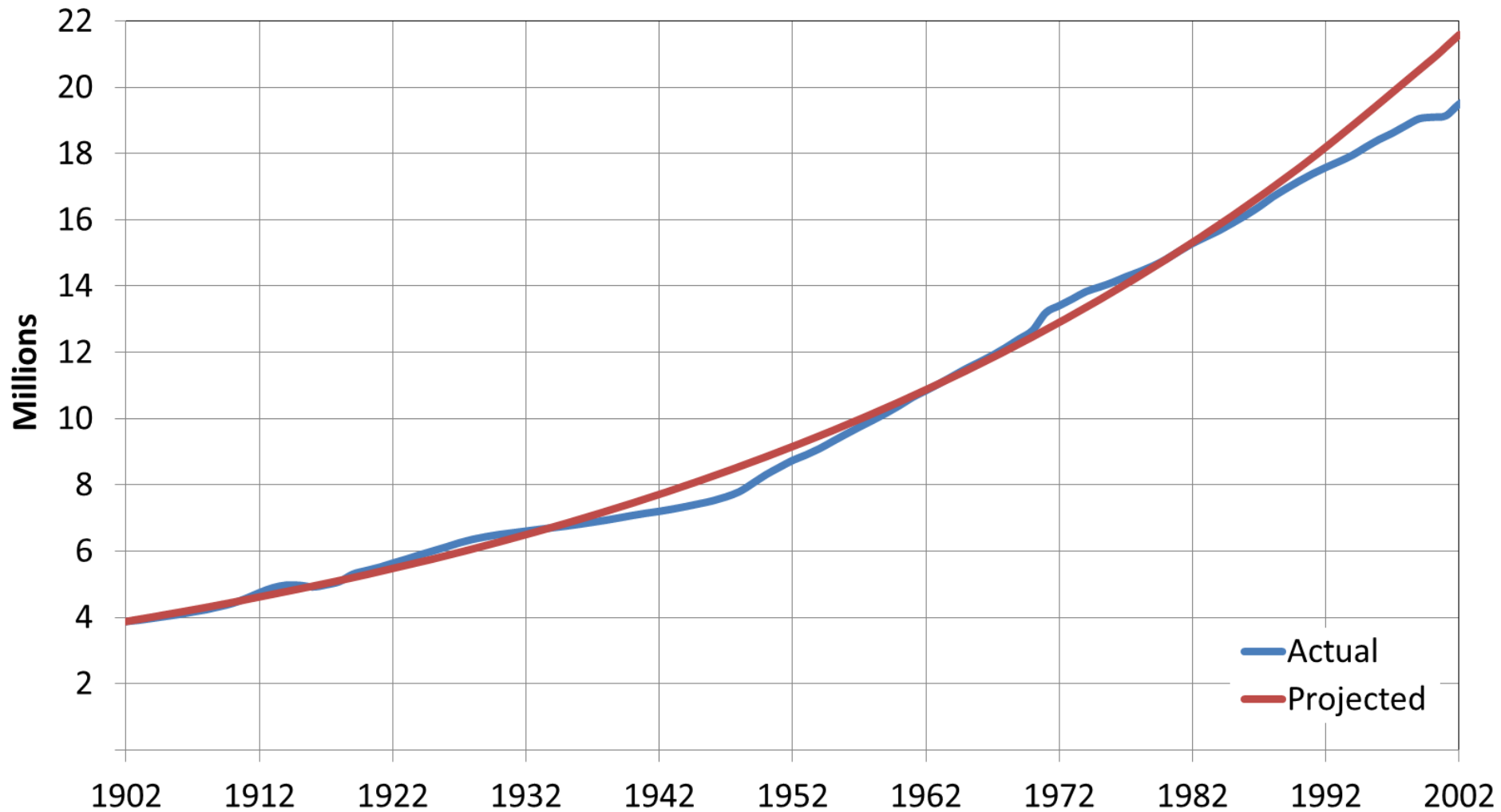
Greatly interested in population statistics, improved Tasmanian vital registration and census systems.

Made most accurate long-term population projection ever?





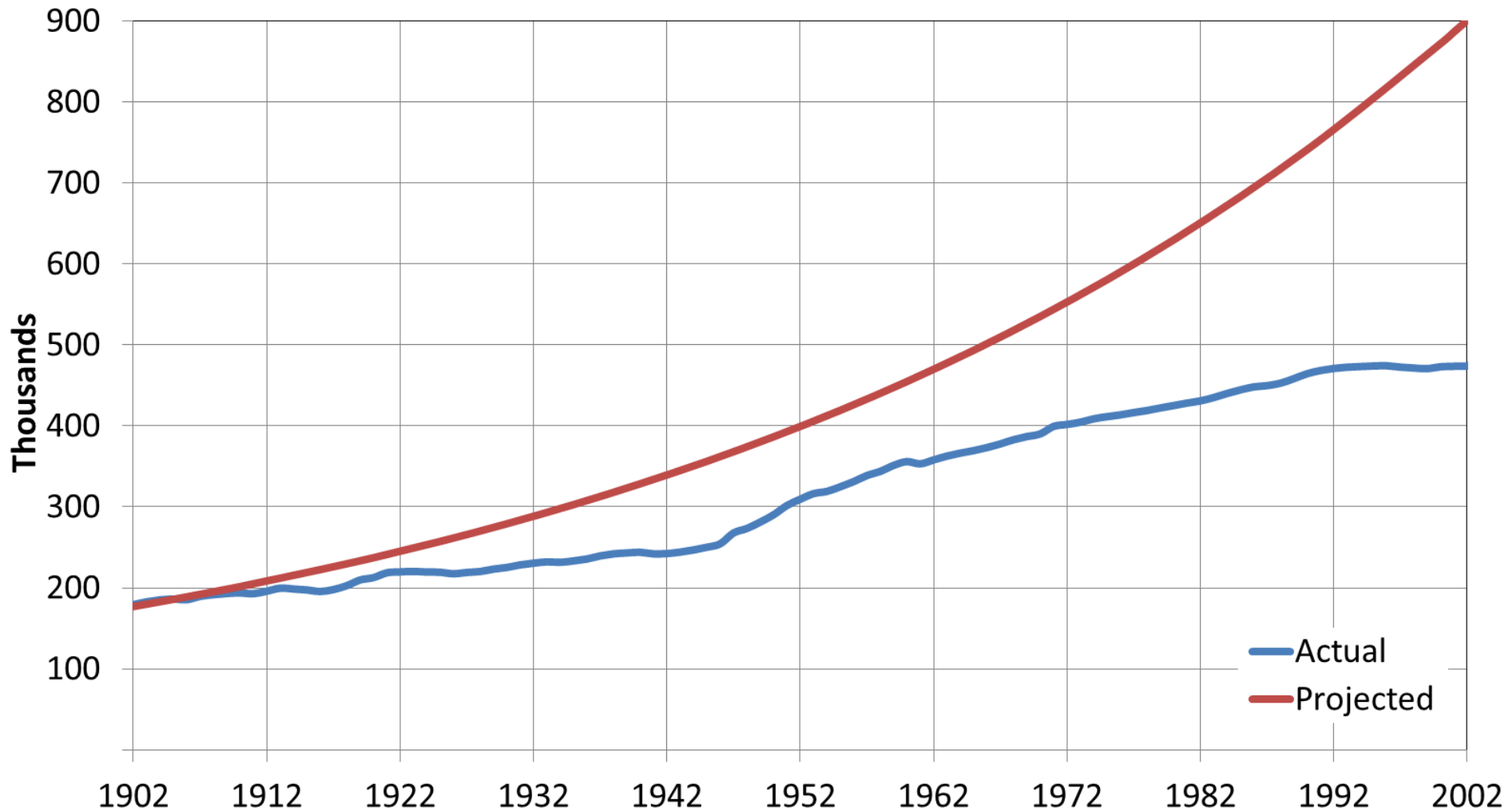
Australian population actual and projected, 1902-2002



Data sources: RM Johnston 1903. 'Conditions upon which the healthy growth of the population of young colonies depend', *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, 27-33; Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Australian Historical Population Statistics*, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001.



Tasmanian population actual and projected, 1902-2002



Data sources: RM Johnston 1903. 'Conditions upon which the healthy growth of the population of young colonies depend', *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, 27-33; Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Australian Historical Population Statistics*, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001.



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