

Australian Visual Atlas Co-operative History Project

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ARC Discovery Project - Co-operatives in Australia – Explaining Growth, Decline and Revival
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The Significance of Gary Lewis's Research

- Most significant writer on co-operatives since Reverend Frank Pulsford, a Congregationalist Minister in Sydney and the author of the influential 1913 book entitled *Co-operation and Co-partnership*. Pulsford organized an All-Australian Co-operative Congress in Sydney in April 1920, with representatives of 78 co-ops, but the conference ended without any major decisions.
- While there has been a number of articles, commission histories since the 1980s, nothing matches the breadth of Gary's scholarship

The Visual Atlas Project

- Specifically, the project aims to:
 - Develop an online, interactive visual data exploration environment (database) of co-operatives, here called the Visual Atlas of Australian Co-operatives, that charts their development both over space and time in a visual and highly interactive way
 - Fill major gaps in the existing literature on co-operatives in Australia by undertaking detailed case studies of co-operatives
 - Develop a theoretical framework based on the atlas/database that attempts to explain the growth, decline and revival of co-operatives in Australia since their first appearance in the 1820s

The Visual Atlas and Garry Lewis

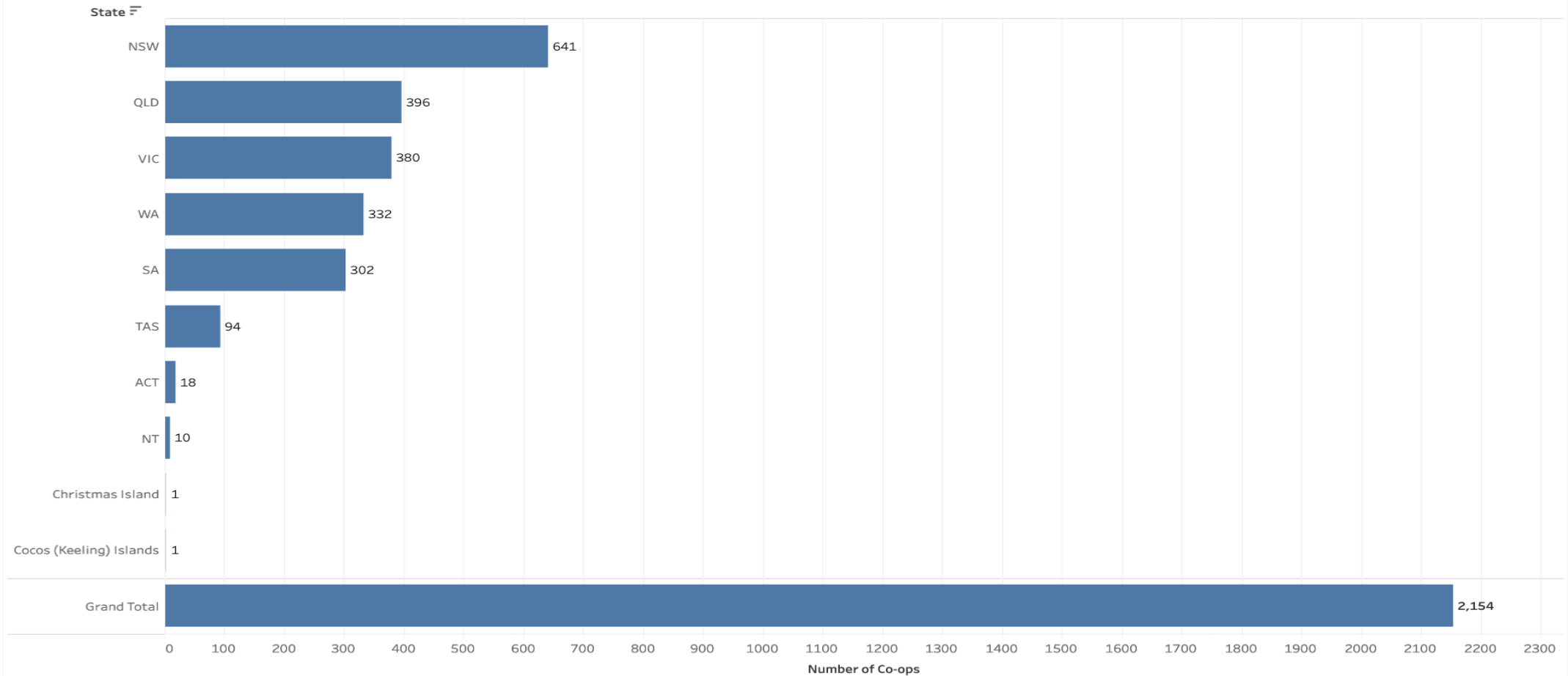
- Garry's work essential reference tool for Atlas
- His work on the pre-1850 period provides the starting point especially the early activities of Cunningham in the Upper Hunter Valley in the late 1820s.
- The Atlas is broader in the types covered as it includes building societies and Starr-Bowkett Societies
- Gary's interest in co-operative women's guilds underlies the co-operative auxiliary type in the Atlas. It highlights that co-operatives have a movement as well as business dimension to them
- Identification of bogus or false co-operatives is more important than ever. Gary had strong views on the principle of one vote irrespective of the number of shares. Historically principle not followed with the Civil Service Co-op model or silence in early co-op legislation. We have allowed models up to 5 votes that meet all other criteria of co-op e.g. No external trading of shares. A example - King Island Co-operative Company 1920-1990, 1 vote per share for every 20 shares or proportion of 20 up to 75 votes per members. Ongoing problem e.g. Co-operative Motors Pty Ltd. (Tasmania), Playford Community Food Co-op (SA). Highlights that we have been very strict in placing a 'co-op' in the Atlas especially for the nineteenth century and early twentieth century
- Importance of legislative practices in each state - there can be varying patterns between states that influence the numbers and types of co-ops e.g.. Registered clubs (NSW), community advancement co-operatives (Victoria) vs. incorporated associations (WA).

Some Early Findings of the AVACHP

- https://public.tableau.com/profile/algon.turi#!/vizhome/CoopFinalVer15_0/Welcome
- 2,154 co-ops currently in database (on 1st Nov 2019)
- 1220 state suburbs
- 651 agricultural co-operatives including 67 fishing co-ops and 15 irrigation co-ops
- 506 consumer co-operatives + 7 consumer wholesale co-operatives
- 440 financial co-operatives
- 121 Community co-operatives
- 76 business co-operatives
- 47 Indigenous co-operatives
- 46 worker co-operatives + 21 producer co-operatives
- 31 housing co-operatives
- 31 co-operative auxiliaries
- 2 platform co-operatives

Co-operatives Entered

Total Co-ops within each state

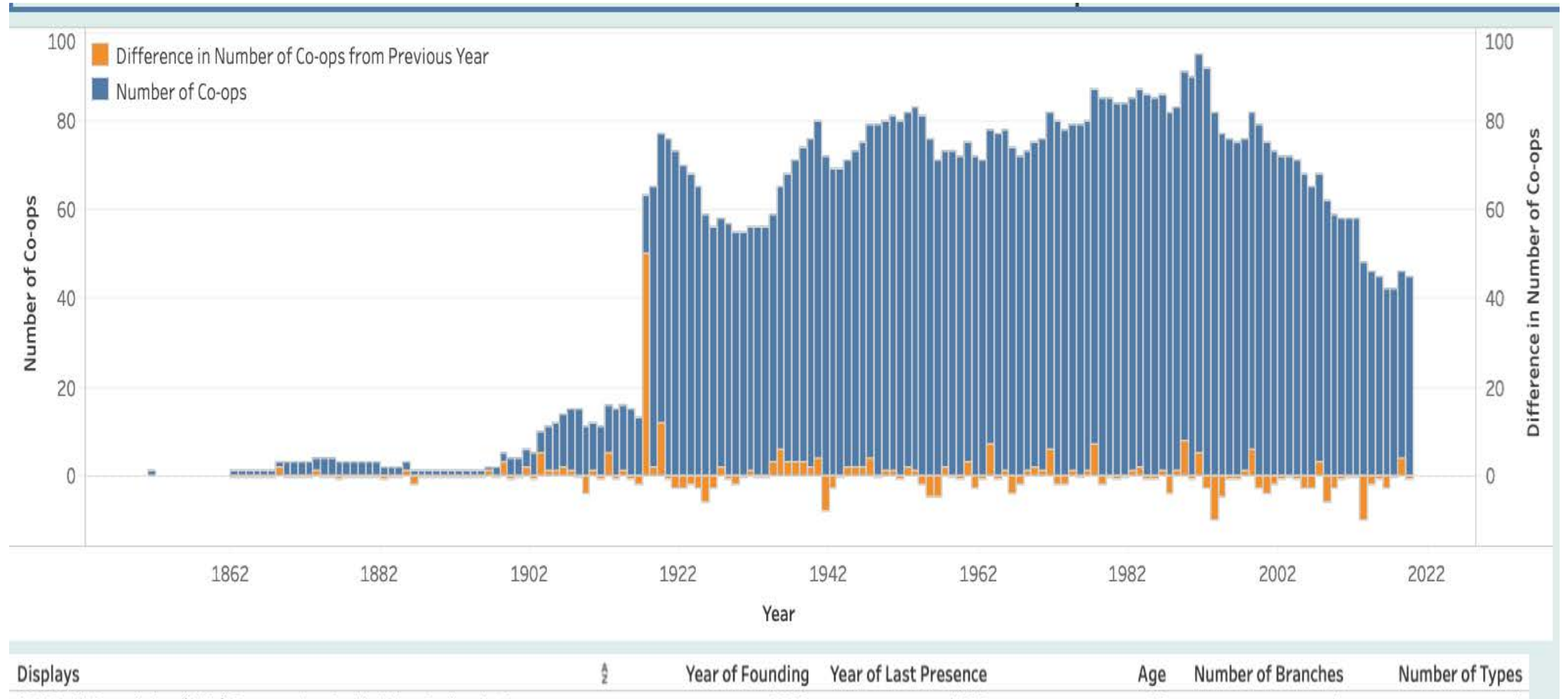


The Development of Australian Co-ops*

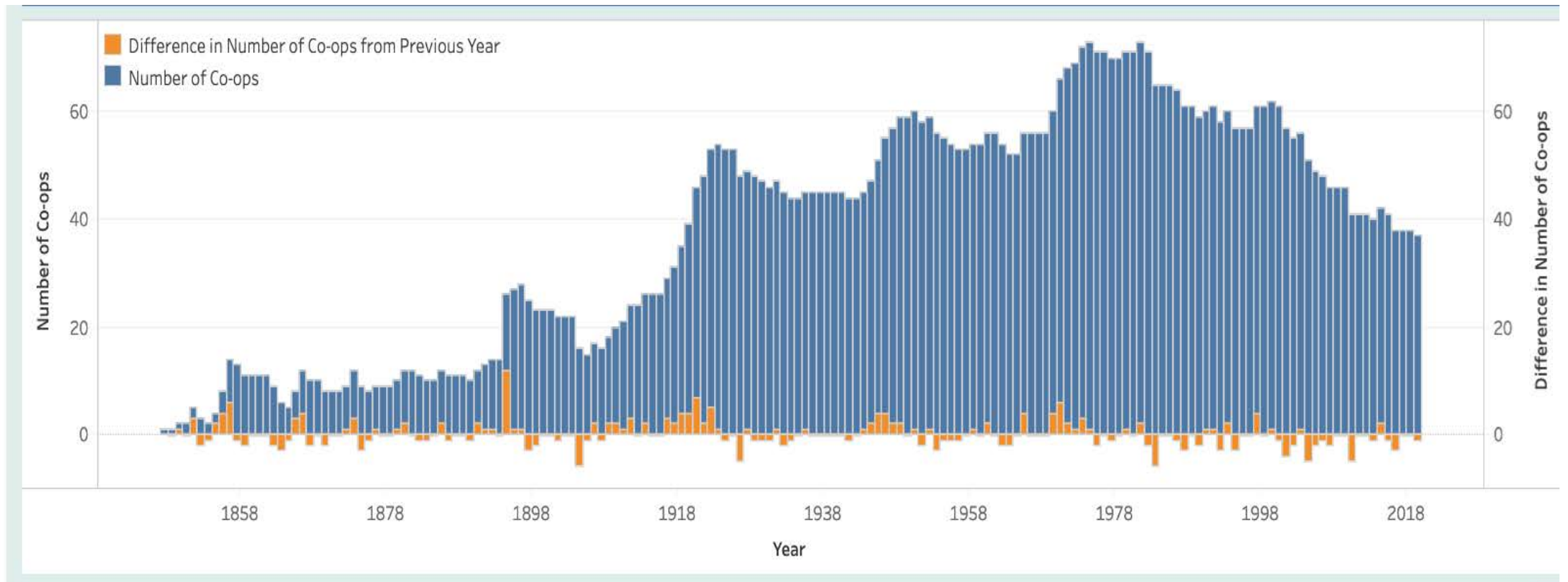


* These are static snapshots of an interactive data visualisation

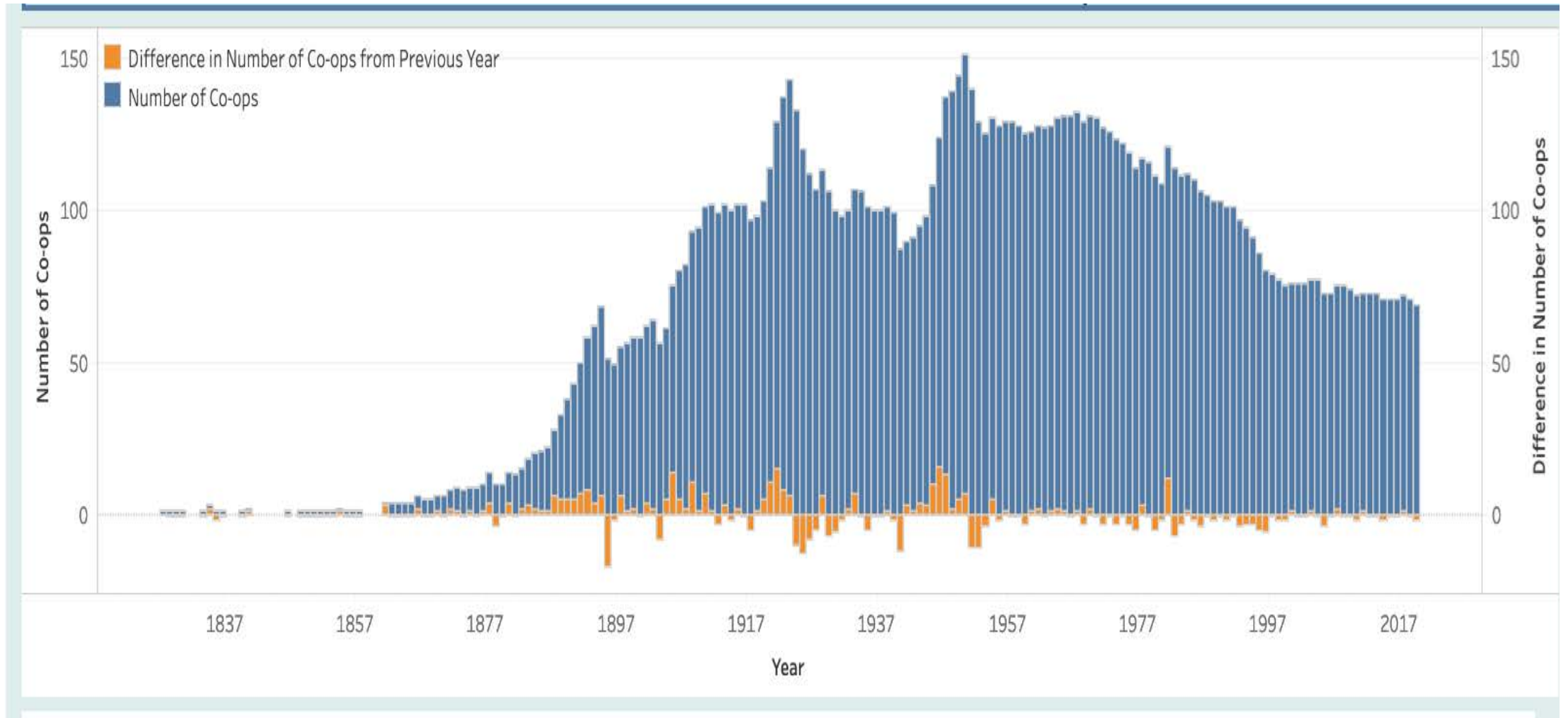
Differing State Patterns - WA



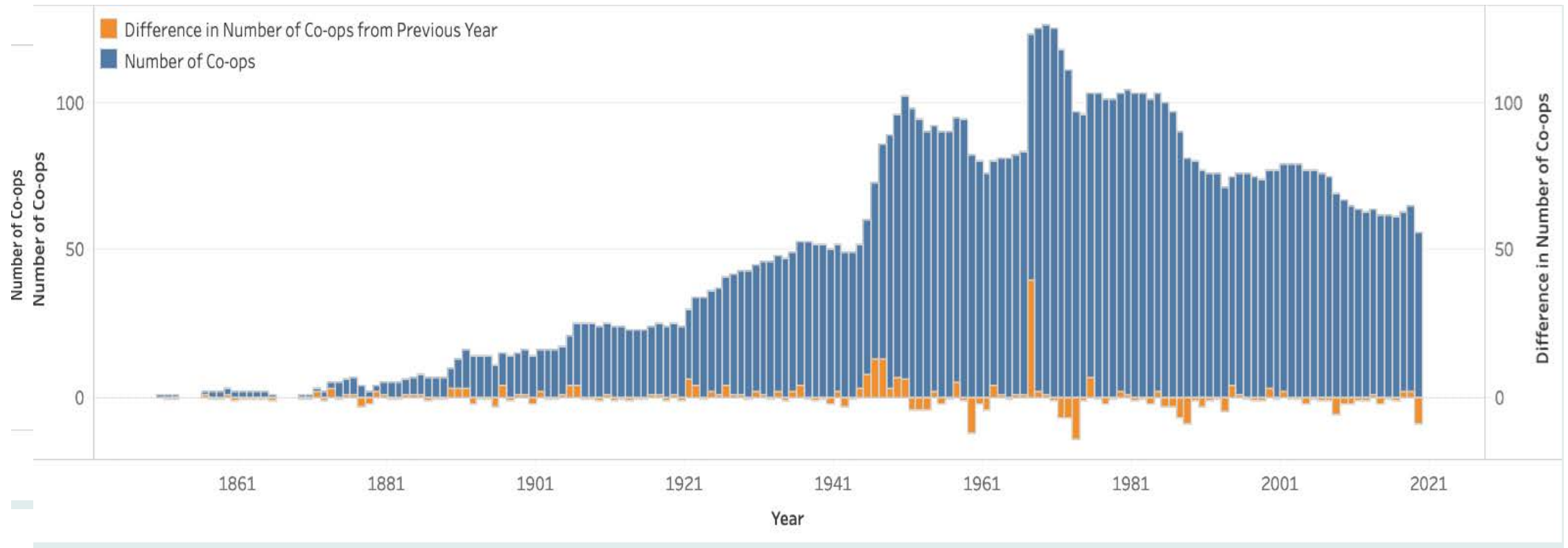
Differing State Patterns - SA



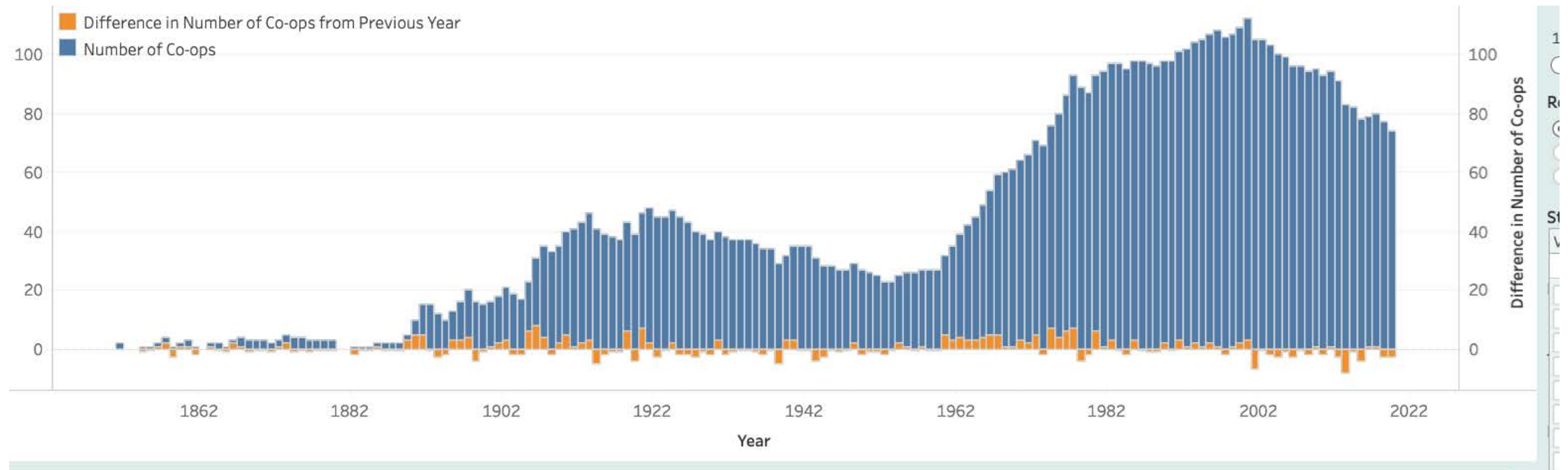
Differing State Patterns - NSW



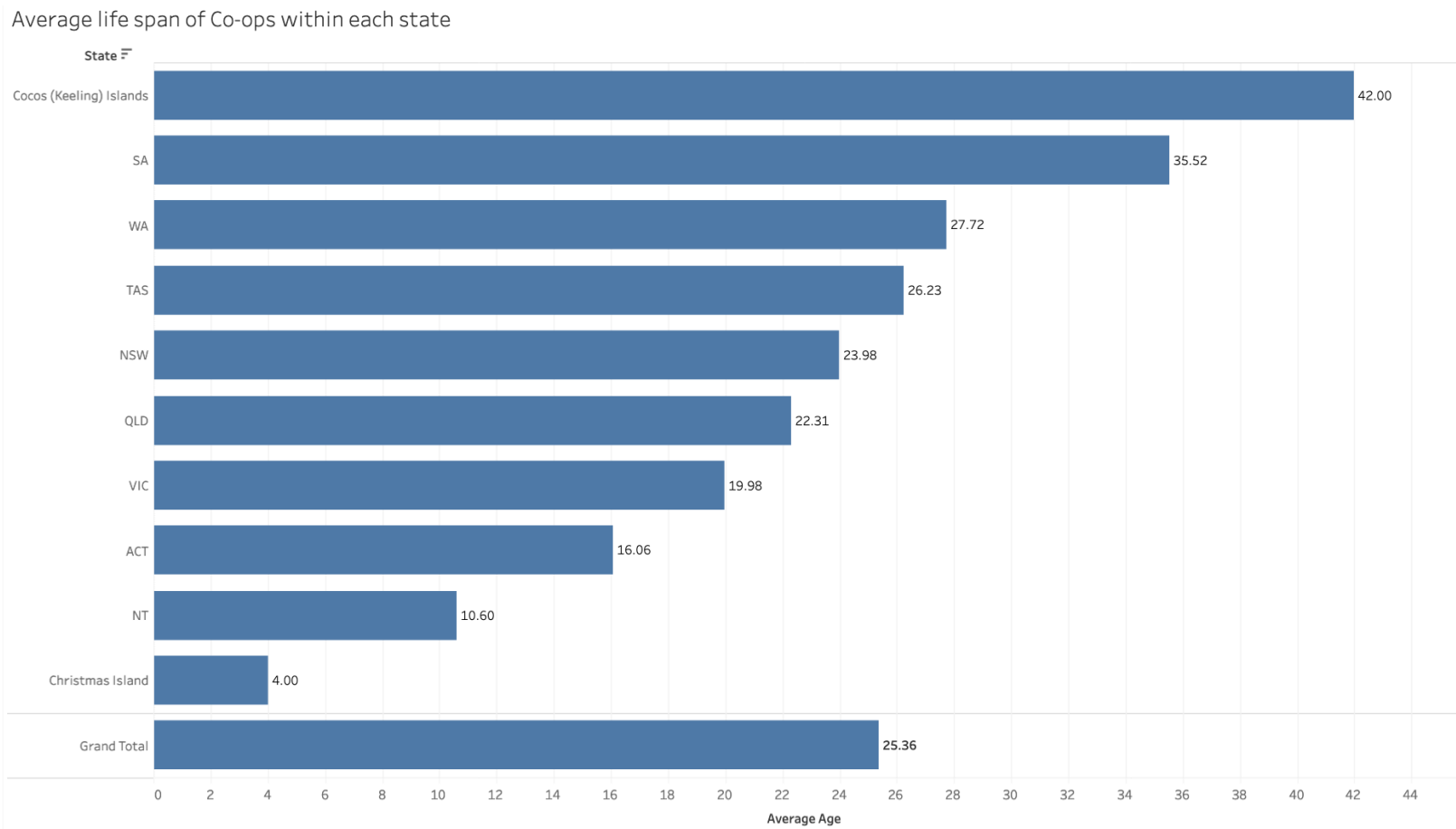
Differing State Patterns - Queensland



Differing State Patterns - Victoria



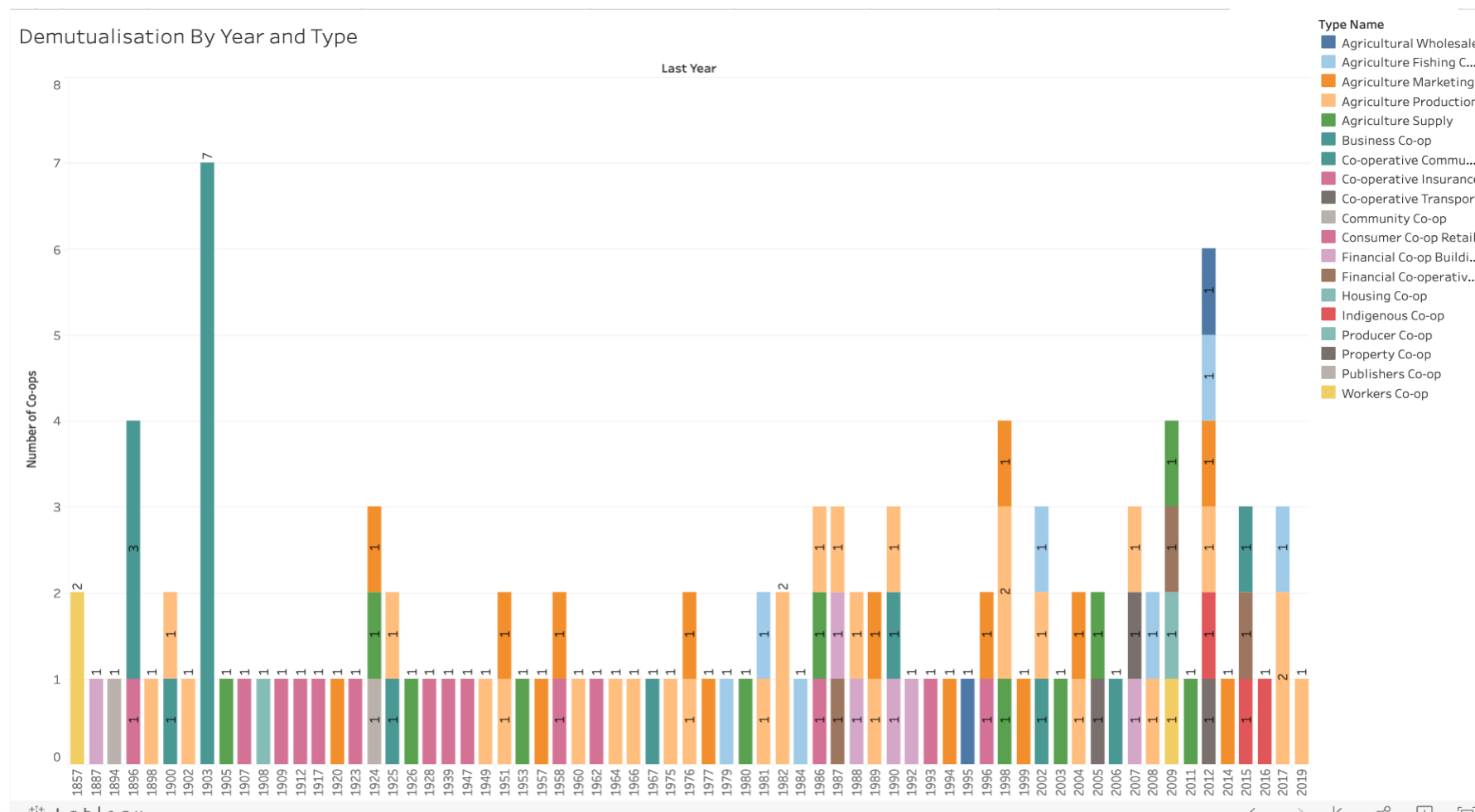
Average Life Span of Co-operatives



Exit Summary

- Amalgamation 231
- Demutualisation 115
- Liquidation 499
- Cancellation 487
- Other 9
- Total 1,341

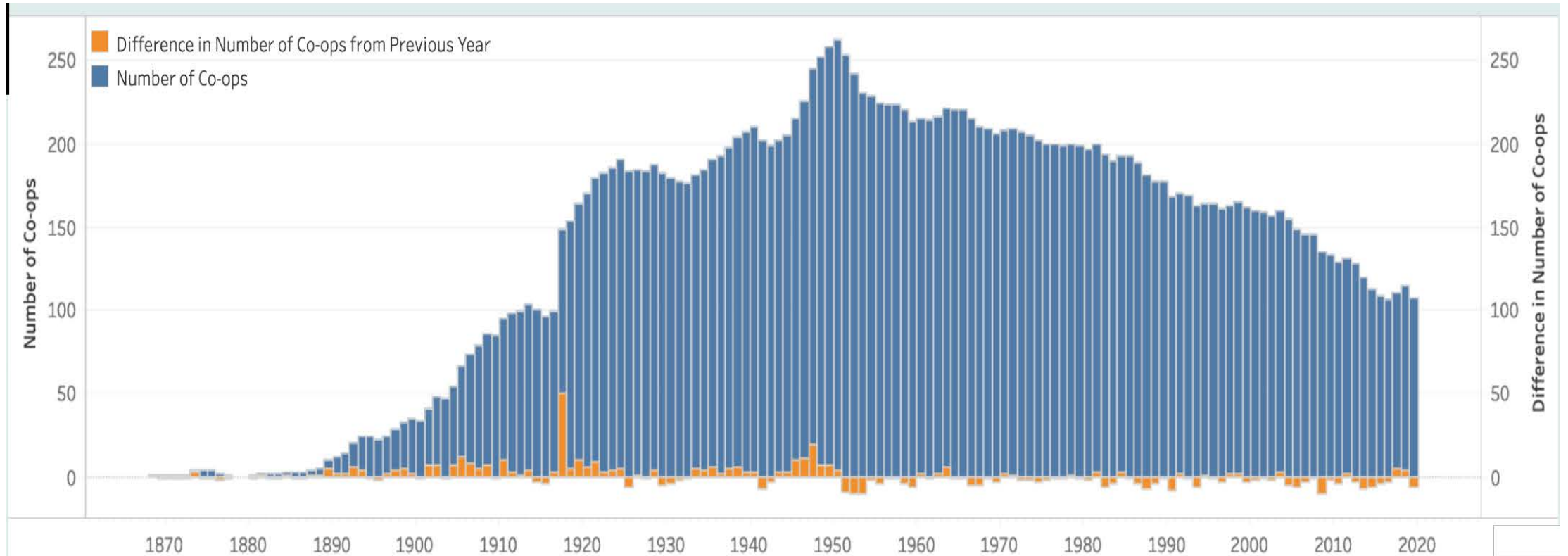
Australian Demutualisation Over Time



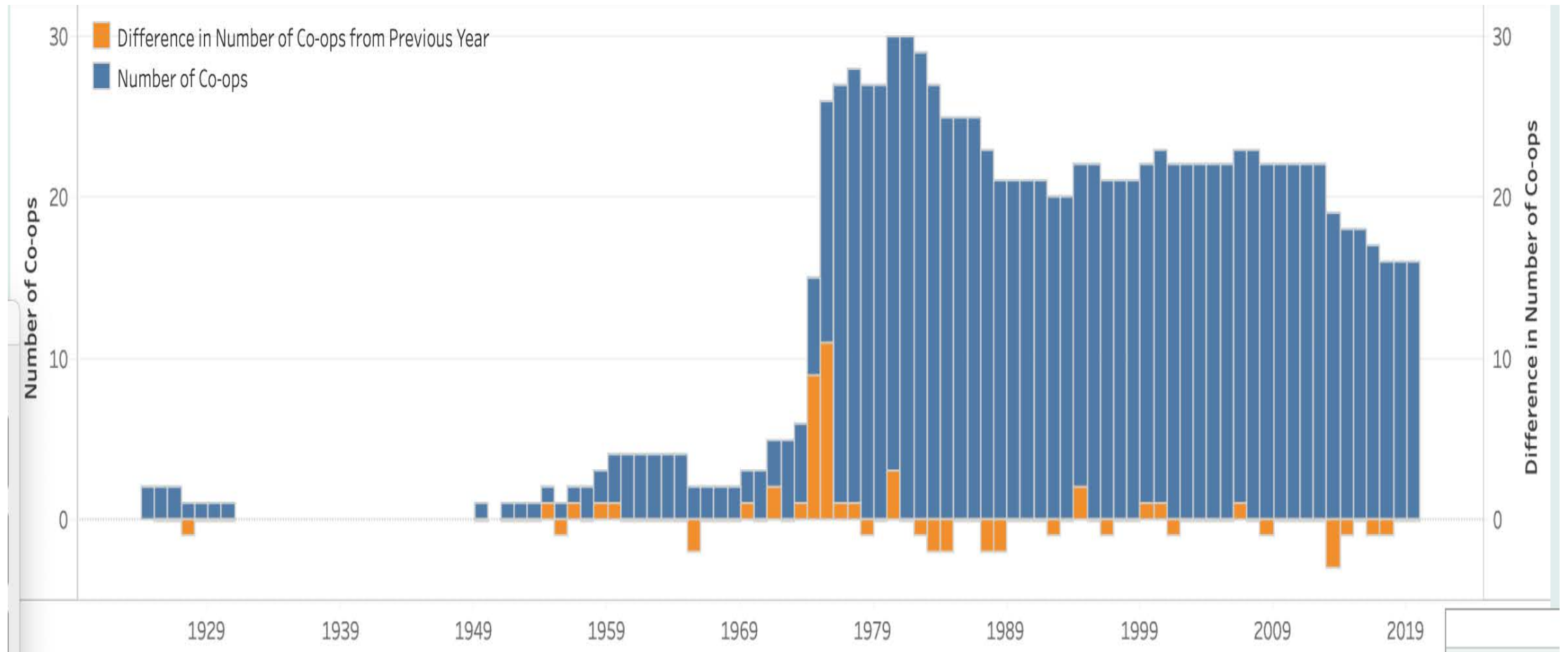
Visual Atlas and Demutualisation

- Agricultural Co-ops 64% (30%), Financial Co-ops 11% (21%)
- 1857 (2), 1896 (3), 1903 (7), 1923-5 (5), 1979-82 (6), 1986-1990 (13), 1992-1996 (10), 1998-2000 (5), 2002-2009 (18), 2011-2012 (7), 2015-2017 (8)
- NSW 16% (29%), Queensland 28% (19%), Vic 10% (17%), SA 22% (15%), WA 15% (13%)

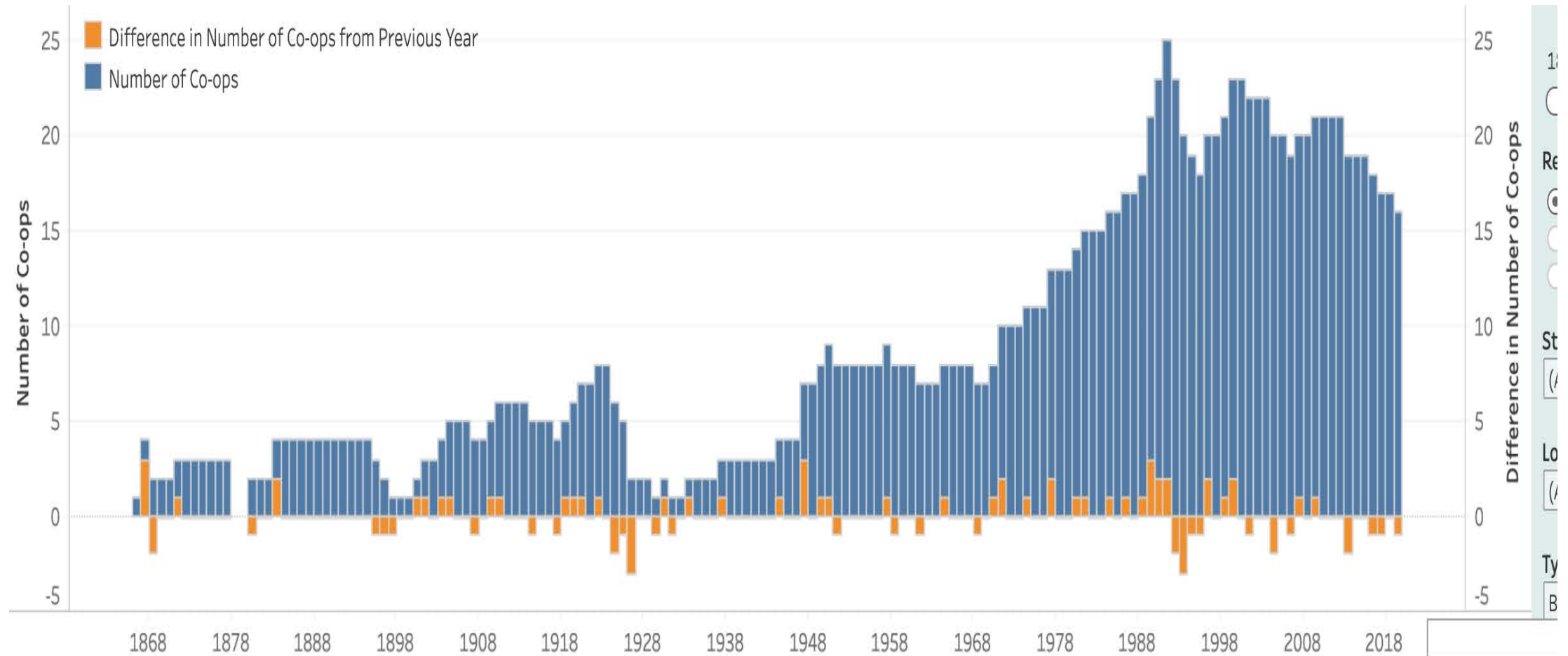
Type – Agricultural Co-operatives



Type – Indigenous Co-operatives

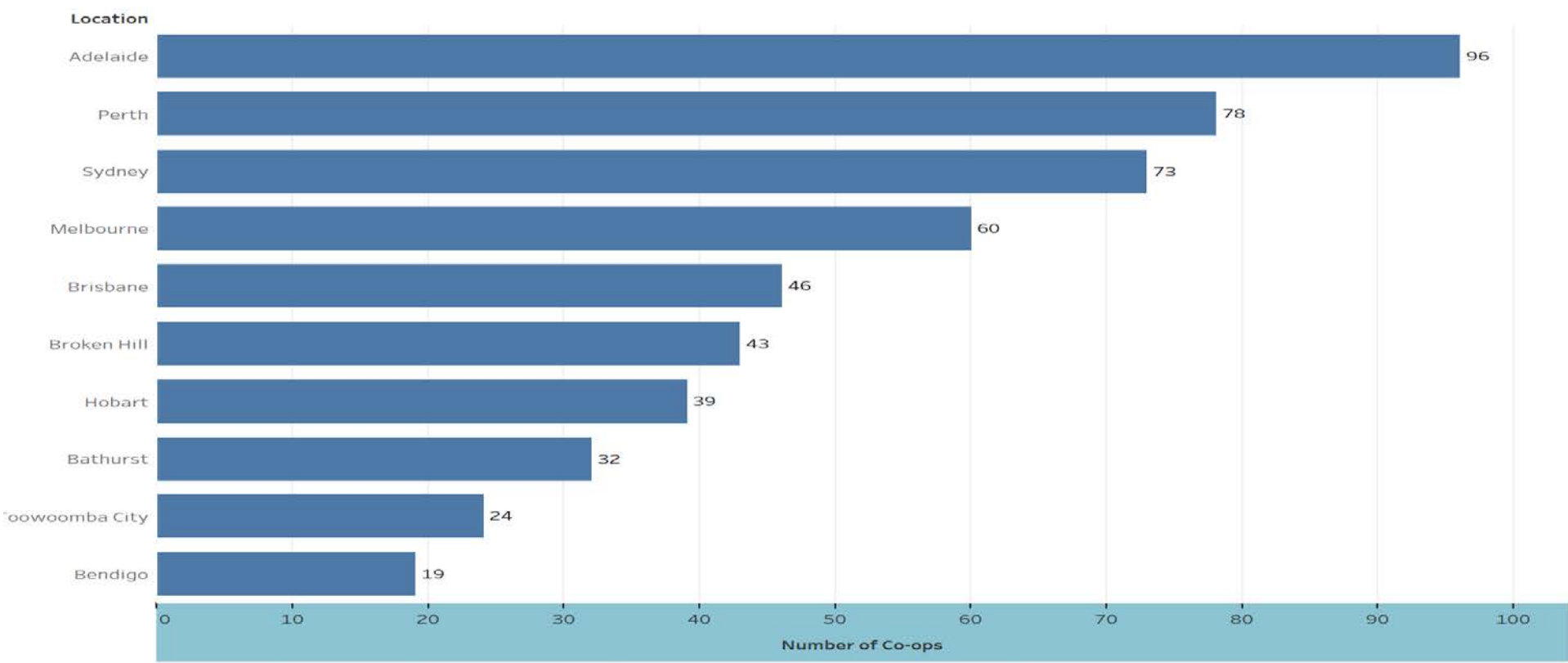


Business Co-operatives



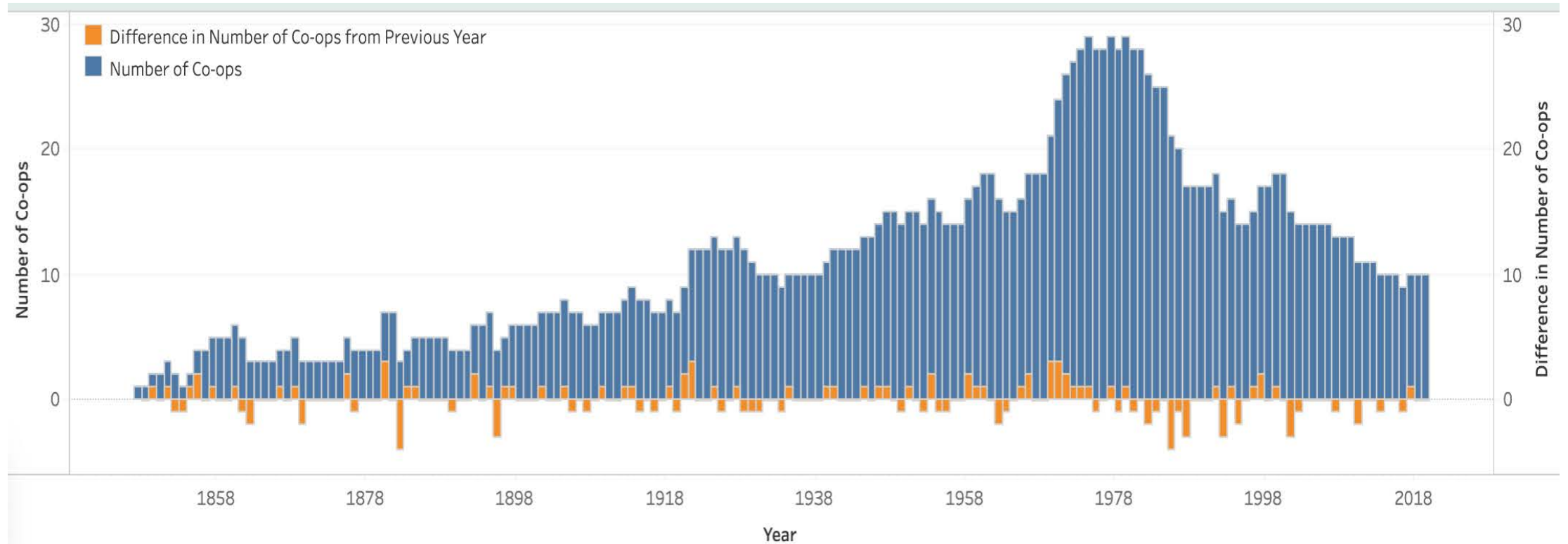
Ten Top Co-operative Locations

Top 10 "Hot" State Suburbs for Co-ops

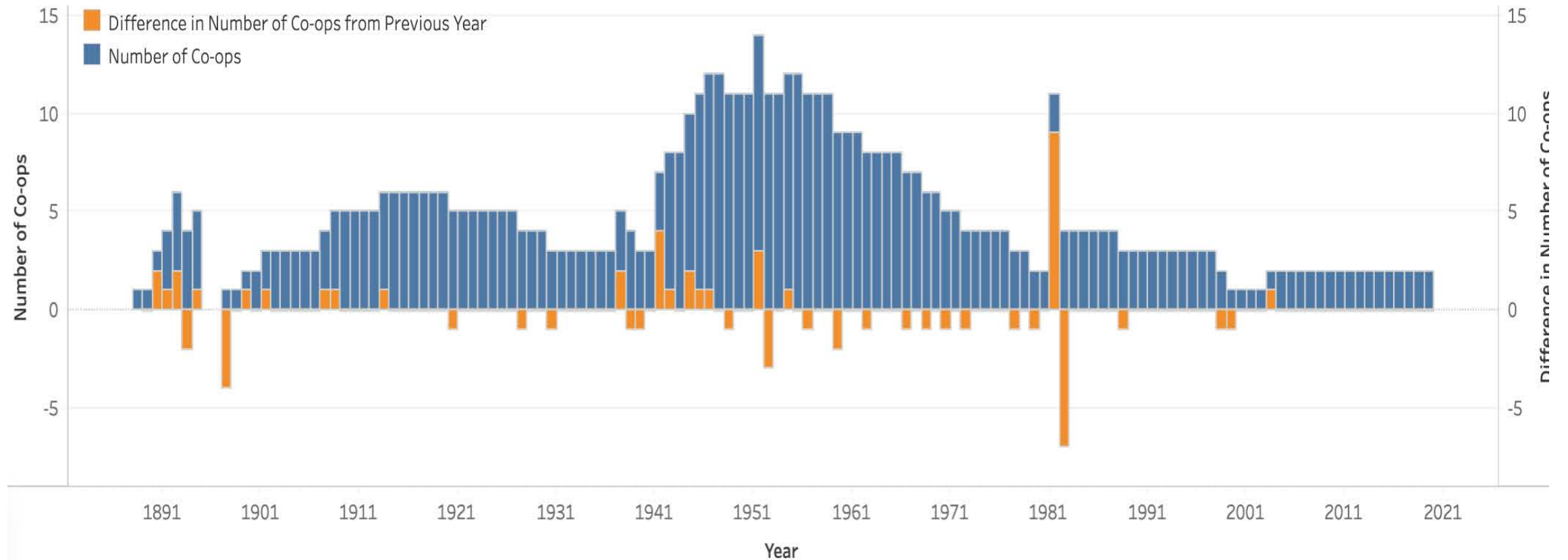


of Co-ops for each Location. The marks are labelled by # of Co-ops. The data is filtered on Rank of # of Co-ops, which ranges from 1 to 10. |

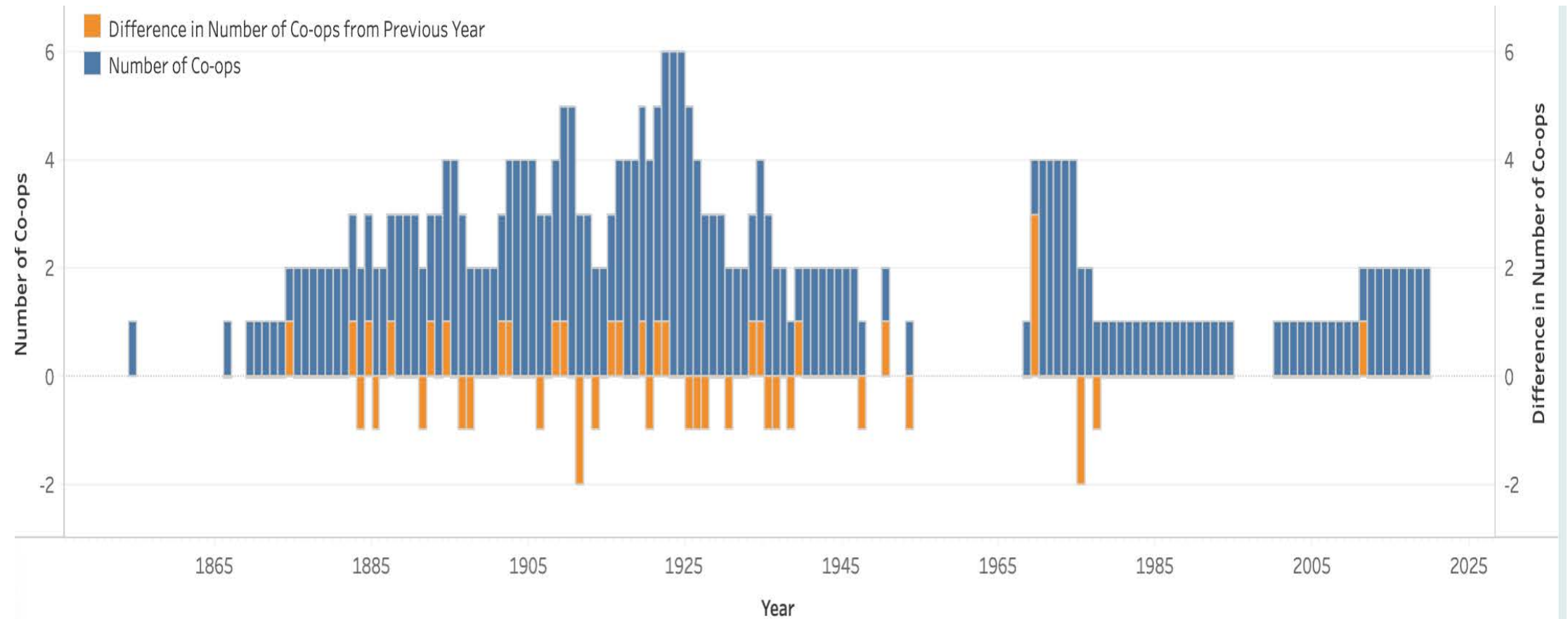
Location - Adelaide



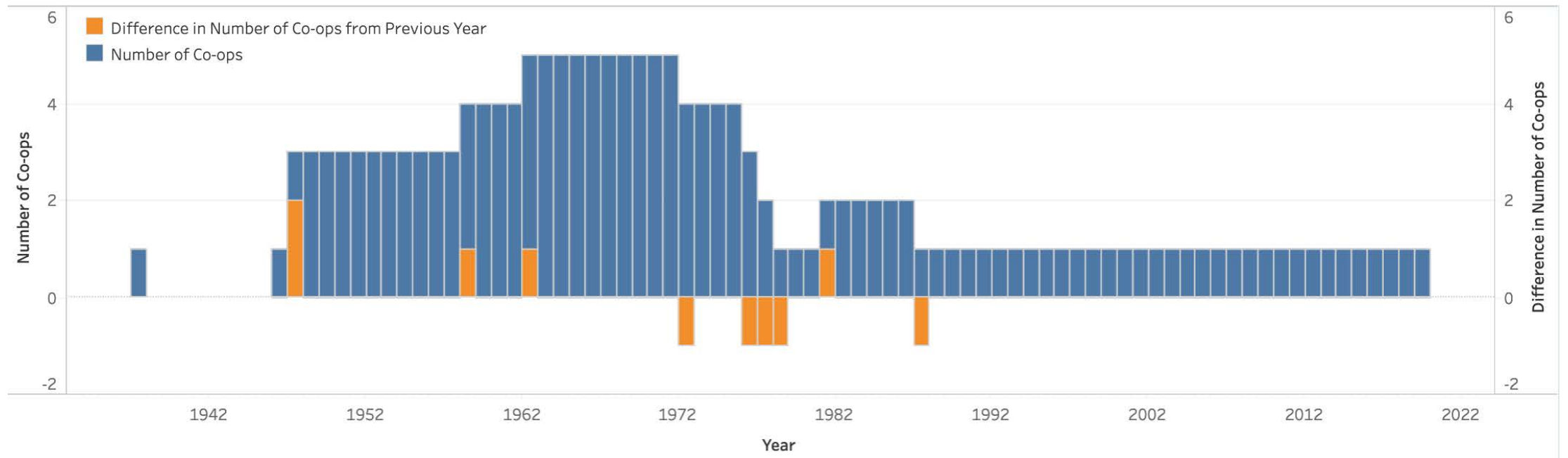
Location – Broken Hill



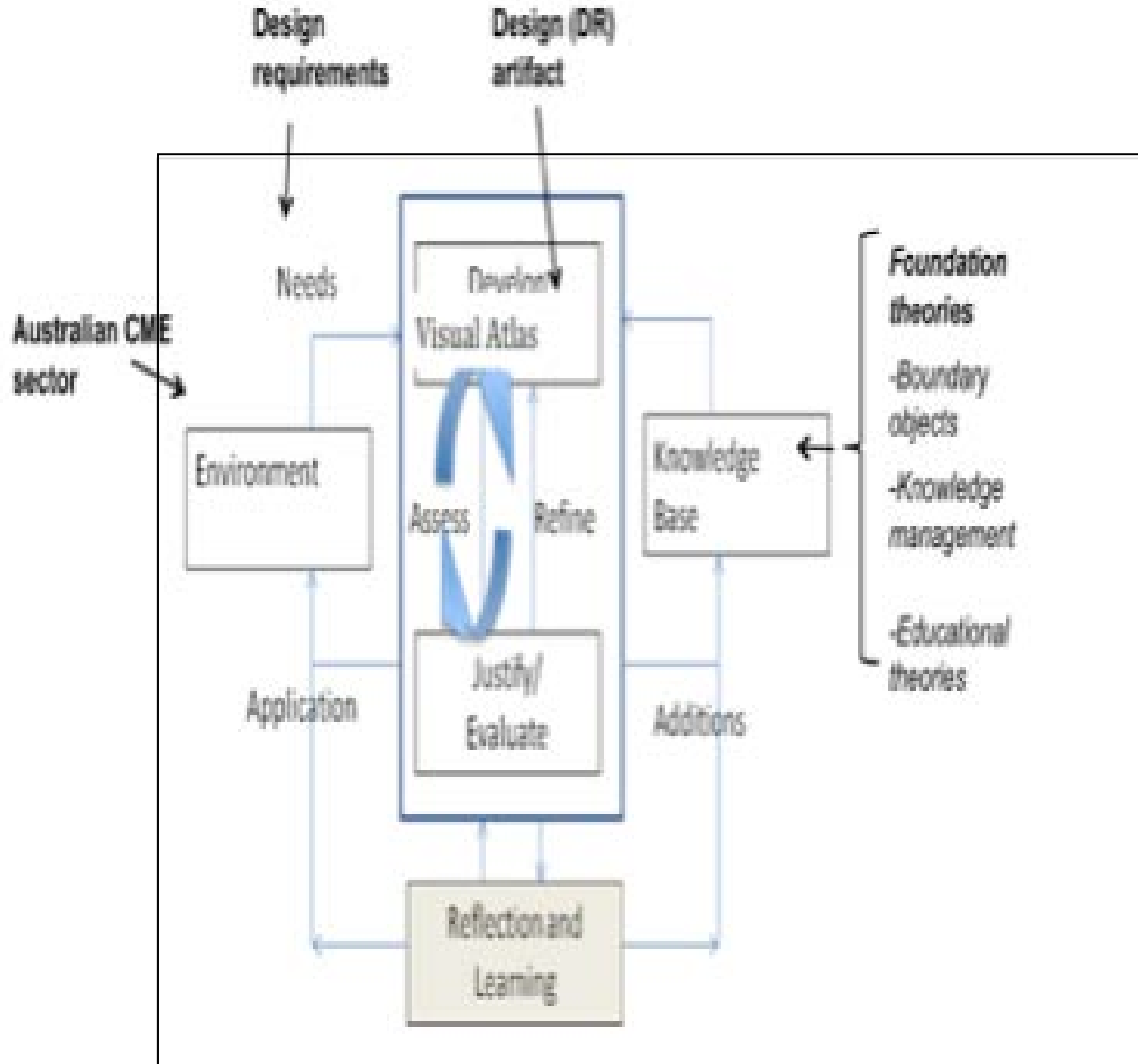
Location - Bathurst



Location - Katoomba



Behind the Scene: Transdisciplinary Action Design Research Project



Design research artifacts & new opportunities:

- A very comprehensive high-quality data set **collected and verified by historians**
- A “Visual Atlas” infrastructure **ready for future opportunities**
- A new method of empowering practitioners to engage in **ongoing data exploration** through secondary design
- Formulating of new interesting questions
- **Ongoing discovery of interesting research challenges:** Visual Ethics, Participatory data quality methods; Crowd-sourcing of data from industry practitioners, Visual storytelling etc.

Our acknowledgments and thanks to the Visual Atlas team members/Sponsorship

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Dr. Yasmin Rittau - Research Assistant, Macquarie University

Garry Cronan - Research Assistant, The University of Sydney

Caitlin Gardner - Research Assistant, The University of Sydney

We welcome both in kind and financial sponsorship to allow the Atlas to further develop and become even more a significant analytical tool for the sector.