CRE-DH

Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health

A comparison of the characteristics of people with disability in Australia according to whether they received National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding

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in partnership with

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About this research project

Research funding

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All authors contributed to the conception and design of the project. The data analysis and generation of data visualisations was performed by GB. The first full draft was written by GB and subsequently contributed to by all authors.

A note on terminology

This report uses person-first language when referring to people and groups with disability. We recognise that language preferences are individual and that many people with disability also use identity-first language.

Suggested citation

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About the CRE-DH

The Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH) aims to identify cost-effective policies to improve the health of people with disability in Australia. There are four interconnected research areas the CRE-DH focuses on:

- mapping the health inequities between Australians with and without disabilities,
- analysing the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to the poorer health of people with disability,
- modelling the cost-effectiveness of health policy interventions, and
- policy analysis and reform.

The CRE-DH is an interdisciplinary research group comprised of academics from five universities, a team of international advisors and a Partner Advisory Group of stakeholders from the disability and health sectors. The CRE-DH Co-Directors are Professor Anne Kavanagh (University of Melbourne) and Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn (University of Sydney). The CRE-DH includes Chief Investigators from the University of Melbourne, University of Sydney, Monash University, UNSW Canberra and RMIT with multidisciplinary skills in epidemiology, health economics, health and social policy, psychology, psychiatry, public administration and public health. In addition, we have Associate Investigators from a range of national and international universities and the World Health Organization. We work in collaboration with key stakeholders including DSS, ABS, AIHW and peak bodies in the disability advocacy and service sector through our Partner Advisory Group. Several members of the CRE-DH research team and the Partner Advisory Group also have lived experience of disability.

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Executive summary

Aim

The overarching aim of this project was to compare the characteristics of Australians citizens or residents with disability aged under 65 years who were NDIS participants with those who did not receive NDIS funding. Comparisons were made according to age, sex, socio-economic characteristics, geography, type of disability, level of functioning and support needs.

Rationale

Previous research has shown a lack of investment in services and supports for people with disability who are not NDIS participants [1], with around three-quarters of people with disability aged under 65 years not receiving NDIS support. This lack of investment has a significant impact on people with disability and families, including significant financial costs. People with disability who are not NDIS participants rely heavily on informal supports and that research also showed that those informal supports currently being provided are not sustainable. These financial impacts and the unsustainability of informal supports place pressure on the NDIS because the NDIS is the primary place to access government funding for disability-specific services and supports that are essential for preventing a worsening in functioning [1].

Following the recommendations of the NDIS Review [2], the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments are currently designing disability supports outside the NDIS (referred to as foundational supports) [3].

Surprisingly there has not been a thorough description of the characteristics of the population of people with disability who are not NDIS participants or how they compare to people with disability who are NDIS participants. This information is critical for future planning. Improved understanding of the differences between people with disability who receive NDIS funding and those who do not receive NDIS funding will:

- Identify the supports needed by people who are not NDIS participants, who will now be eligible for foundational supports.
- Shed light on potential inequities between population groups in terms of NDIS participation that result from people with disability either not applying for the Scheme or being assessed to be ineligible after they applied.

Methods

This study used data from the linkage of the 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)[1], available in the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA). The analysis was restricted to people who could be eligible for the NDIS; that is Australian citizens or permanent residents less than age 65 years at the time of the SDAC survey[2].

Population weights were used to calculate estimates of prevalence and comparisons between groups. The participants in the linked SDAC sample were then assigned to two groups[3]: (i) People with disability who were NDIS participants; and (ii) People with disability who were not NDIS participants. Note that a secondary aim of the study was to compare all people with disability (regardless of NDIS participation) and people without disability; results are presented in Appendix 4.

Comparisons were made across a range of variables, including:

- prevalence of NDIS participation
- demographic characteristics (age, sex, country of birth, proficiency in English language, marital status)
- geographic and housing characteristics (state/territory, remoteness, tenure type, whether lives alone, SEIFA quintiles)
- socioeconomic characteristics (employment status, hours worked per week, whether receives the Disability Support Pension, personal income, family income, highest level of education, enrolment as a student)
- disability restrictions (disability group, primary disability, capacity to undertake core activities of daily living, capacity to look after oneself without support)
- support needs (need for assistance with daily activities, equipment or aids used for daily activities).

[1] Given that the NDIS rollout was not completed at the time of the 2018 SDAC survey, to prevent misclassifying people with disability who became NDIS participants as the rollout continued, we extended the time period in which people could have become NDIS participants. See Appendix 1 for more details.
[2] Although access to the NDIS is restricted to Australian citizens and residents aged less than 65 years when they apply for the Scheme, NDIS participants can continue to receive support from the NDIS after they are older than 65 years.
[3] Note that people identified as not having a disability in SDAC but who were NDIS participants were excluded from this analysis; see Appendix 1 for more details.

Findings

Prevalence of NDIS participation

In this sample of Australian residents and citizens aged less than 65 years who had a disability, 1 in 7 (15.4%) were NDIS participants and 6 in 7 (84.6%) did not receive NDIS funding. This equates to 2.2 million people with disability: 0.3 million people who were NDIS participants and 1.9 million people who did not receive NDIS funding.

Demographic characteristics

NDIS participants were more likely to be younger and male.

- NDIS participants were more likely to be younger than people with disability who were not NDIS participants, with 1 in 2 NDIS participants aged 0-19 years, compared to only 1 in 6 non-NDIS participants being aged 0-19 years.
- Males were twice as likely to be NDIS participants than females[4].
- Non-NDIS participants were equally likely to be male or female.

Geographic characteristics

NDIS participants were equally as likely to live in each state or territory, but more likely to live in regional or remote areas.

- The distribution of people with disability by state or territory was similar for NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants.
- Around 1 in 3 people with disability lived in regional or remote areas, with no difference observed between NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants.

Socioeconomic characteristics

NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were less likely to be employed, less likely to work 30 hours or more per week, more likely to receive the Disability Support Pension, and more likely to have lower personal income.

- 1 in 5 (20.3%) NDIS participants were employed, compared to 1 in 2 (50.9%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 11 (9.0%) NDIS participants were employed for 30 or more hours per week, compared to 1 in 3 (34.2%) non-NDIS participants.
- 2 in 3 (63.2%) NDIS participants received the Disability Support Pension, compared to 1 in 5 (18.5%) non-NDIS participants.
- 2 in 3 (62.3%) NDIS participants reported a personal income of less than $500 per week, compared to 4 in 9 (44.7%) of non-NDIS participants.
- Family weekly income was similar between NDIS and non-NDIS participants, with almost half of both groups reporting family income of less than $1750 per week.

Characteristics of disability including type, level of functions and restrictions

NDIS participants were more likely to have multiple disabilities, to have lower levels of functioning, and more restrictions. However, non-NDIS participants still have considerable disability restrictions.

- NDIS participants had a higher prevalence of most types of disability than non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 2 (58.2%) NDIS participants had psychosocial disability, compared to 1 in 4 (27.2%) non-NDIS participants.
- Over half (56.6%) of NDIS participants had an intellectual or learning disability, compared to 1 in 6 (16.6%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 2 (47.3%) NDIS participants had a sensory or speech disability, compared to 1 in 5 (19.3%) non-NDIS participants.
- 3 in 4 (72.6%) NDIS participants had disabilities that could be categorised into two or more disability groups, compared to 2 in 5 (42.8%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 4 (25.8%) NDIS participants had complex disabilities that could be categorised into four or more disability groups, compared to 1 in 15 (6.5%) non-NDIS participants.
- 3 in 4 (74.8%) NDIS participants had a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living, compared to 1 in 4 (22.1%) people who were not NDIS participants.
- 1 in 2 (51.0%) NDIS participants required assistance from another person at least once a day, compared to 1 in 10 (9.8%) people who were not NDIS participants.

Support needs for activities of daily living

NDIS participants had greater support needs for undertaking activities of daily living, both in terms of having another person assist them and in the use of equipment or aids. However, a large proportion of non-NDIS participants also had substantial support needs.

[4] Note that SDAC provided sex as a binary variable (i.e. male or female), thus it was not possible to compare the proportion of people who identified with other genders.

- The two most common activities of daily living for which assistance was required were transport and cognitive or emotional tasks.
- 2 in 3 NDIS participants needed assistance with transport (66.7%) compared to 2 in 7 non-NDIS participants (29.4%).
- 2 in 3 NDIS participants needed assistance with cognitive or emotional tasks (67.1%) compared to 2 in 7 non-NDIS participants (27.1%).
- 1 in 4 NDIS participants needed assistance with property maintenance (24.1%) and household chores (27.3%), 1 in 2 (49.7%) needed assistance with health care, and 3 in 5 (59.0%) needed assistance for mobility.
- This compared to 1 in 6 non-NDIS participants who needed assistance with property maintenance (18.9%), household chores (15.6%), health care (18.1%) and mobility (15.8%).
- 1 in 2 (48.1%) NDIS participants used equipment or aids for at least one activity of daily living. Equipment or aids were used for communication (29.2%), moving around places away from residence (16.7%), managing health conditions (15.0%) and showering or bathing (13.2%).
- This compared to 3 in 8 (37.4%) non-NDIS participants used equipment or aids for at least one activity of daily living. Equipment or aids were used for communication (21.0%), managing health conditions (15.2%), moving around places away from residence (5.6%) and showering or bathing (4.6%).

Significance of findings

This is the first study of the **18.1 million** Australian citizens and residents aged less than 65 years who would be eligible for NDIS services and supports if they met eligibility criteria, which compares the group of people who are NDIS participants to the group of people who do not receive NDIS funding.

2.2 million (12.3%) people were identified as having a disability. People with disability were more likely to be older, live in regional or remote areas, and were more socio-economically disadvantaged than the non-disabled population. Of these, 0.3 million[5] (1.7%) people were NDIS participants who had access to individualised supports through the NDIS and 1.9 million Australians with disability were not NDIS participants and relied on services and supports in mainstream systems.

Consistent with the restriction in eligibility for the NDIS to people with severe and permanent disability, NDIS participants were more likely to have a greater number and more severe disabilities and were more likely to need assistances with tasks of daily living than non-participants. Nonetheless among people with disability who were not NDIS participants, we identified high levels of need for assistance for tasks of daily living including transport, cognitive and emotional tasks, mobility, and household chores. **Approximately 2 in 7 (about 550,000) people with disability who were not NDIS participants needed assistance with transport or cognitive and emotional tasks, and 1 in 6 (about 300,000) needed assistance with property maintenance, household chores, health care or mobility. Around 3 in 8 (about 700,000) people with disability who were not NDIS participants used aids and equipment to assist with activities of daily living.**

As disability policy turns to providing supports to all people with disability through mainstream services as well as foundational supports, it must invest generously in the provision of supports across a wide range of services including personal care, getting around the home and neighbourhood, supports for tasks such as household administration and cleaning, as well as affordable aids and equipment**. The needs of non-NDIS participants must be met by services outside of the NDIS. This will require significant new investments and cross-sector, cross-jurisdictional coordination.** Without this investment, the financial and emotional strain currently experienced by people with disability and their families described by Olney and colleagues [1] will continue. This strain may see a deterioration in functioning among some people with disability in this group, resulting in higher support needs and/or burnout of informal caregivers. Both scenarios would exert pressure on the NDIS to provide these unmet needs, making it difficult for government to constrain spending on the NDIS. Importantly, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [4], the Australian Government has obligations to ensure that disability services and supports protect and promote the rights of all Australians with disability, regardless of whether those supports are provided through the NDIS, mainstream services or foundational supports.

Future research

A limitation of the present study is that we do not know who is providing support to people who do not receive NDIS funding and future research is needed to answer this question. Although there is some quantitative data present within SDAC to partially address this question, additional qualitative and quantitative studies would be needed to obtain a thorough understanding.

Finally, given that the prevalence of disability within the Australian population increased between 2018 and 2022 [5] and that the NDIS rollout was not completed

[5] The data used in this project included NDIS Participants up until 10 August 2021, thus the number of NDIS Participants observed was lower than current NDIS participant numbers.

until 30 June 2020, it would be valuable to update this project using data from the 2022 SDAC.

Conclusions

Our research findings describe the support needs of all people with disability aged under 65 years, both NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants. This is important information for the planning of foundational supports delivered by all levels of government and across different service sectors.

The findings of this study are timely in the light of recent policy and legislative reforms including the introduction of new processes for assessing eligibility to the NDIS. These new assessment methods should be designed carefully so they do not inadvertently increase inequities in access such as age and gender. They should also cover the expenses required for assessment so inequities in NDIS participation are not driven by capacity to pay for assessments.

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About this report

Purpose of the project

Of the 2.4 million people in Australia with a disability aged under 65 years [6], as of 31 December 2024 only 656,603 were National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants with approved plans [7]. Therefore, the vast majority (73%) of people with disability aged under 65 years do not receive support through the NDIS.

Data exists to characterise, in detail, the whole NDIS population, providing information on the nature of their disability, demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and indicators of participant outcomes. The data have been used in National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) quarterly reports and commissioned work for government [e.g. 8]. However, data to characterise people with disability who do not receive support through the NDIS is spread across a range of sources and there is very little published information about this population.

No single data source can be used to identify the population of people with disability who are not NDIS participants. In recent years, whole population linked data combining de-identified data from various data sources describing population demographics, employment, government payments, income, education, and health have been made available to researchers through the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA). The PLIDA data provide an unparalleled opportunity to advance knowledge of the characteristics of the population of people with disability in Australia.

At the time of this study, there was no existing method to detect all Australians with disability within administrative or survey data. In Australia, the best information about disability is provided by the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC). However, SDAC is a survey that samples from the Australian population, collecting disability-related information from a portion of the population that was selected to be as representative of the Australian population as possible. Further information about the sampling process used in SDAC is available [9].

SDAC has been administered ten times since it was first run in 1981, with the most recent surveys being administered in 2015, 2018 and 2022 [10]. While the first release of the aggregated 2022 SDAC data was published on 4 July 2024 [5], only the 2018 SDAC data was available within PLIDA during this project. Although SDAC collects data on NDIS participation, at the time of the 2018 survey the NDIS implementation was in its infancy with only approximately one quarter of the number of current participants accessing the NDIS, so it was not possible to accurately identify non-NDIS participants directly within the SDAC data. However, the 2018 SDAC data could be linked to NDIS data[6] through PLIDA. As such, for the first time, we could analyse the characteristics of people with disability who both did and did not receive NDIS supports.

Through data linkage of the 2018 SDAC and NDIS participant data in PLIDA, this project aimed to:

1. Identify people with disability in SDAC and determine which people were NDIS participants and which people were not NDIS participants.
2. Compare the characteristics of people with disability who were NDIS participants to non-NDIS participants in terms of demographic, geographic and socio-economic characteristics, as well as disability characteristics and support needs.
3. Highlight key differences between NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants.
4. Compare the characteristics of people with disability (NDIS participants, non-participants) to people without disability in terms of demographic, geographic and socio-economic characteristics, as a means of further understanding the differences between Australians with and without disability.

[6] For this project, we used NDIS data from when the NDIS first started in 2013 up until 10 August 2021. The extended period of time for NDIS data was necessary to determine NDIS Participant status given that the NDIS rollout was not completed at the time of the 2018 SDAC survey. See Appendix 1 for more details.

Brief methods

This report uses data from the household component of the 2018 SDAC. The SDAC Survey is conducted in two parts: the household component collects information from people living in private dwellings, including self-cared accommodation for the retired or aged, while the cared accommodation component collects information from people living in long-term cared accommodation for at least 3 months, such as hospitals, nursing homes, aged care hostels, cared components of retirement villages, psychiatric institutions and other 'homes' such as group homes for people with disability [11]. The cared accommodation component of the survey does not collect information on personal identifiers and could therefore not be linked via PLIDA. Due to the need to be able to link individual survey responses to NDIS Participant data, via PLIDA, the SDAC data used in this project was restricted to people who resided in households. This meant that people with disability in cared accommodation, who are more likely to have higher support needs than people with disability who live in households [11], could not be included in this project, thereby limiting the scope of the project to understanding the characteristics and support needs of people with disability who live within households. However, since the SDAC Survey estimated that only 1.0% of people with disability aged 0-64 years lived in cared accommodation [11], this is not likely to be a major limitation for the analysis.

Since the primary goal of the project was to compare people with disability who did or did not receive NDIS funding, the SDAC sample was restricted to people who met the age and residency eligibility requirements for NDIS access, namely people who were aged under 65 years and were Australian citizens or permanent residents. A secondary goal for this project was to compare people with disability to people without disability.

The participants in the SDAC sample were then assigned to four groups (see Table 1) so that the following comparisons could be made:

1. People with disability who were NDIS participants compared to people with disability who did not receive NDIS funding – Group 1 vs Group 2
2. People with disability compared to people without disability – Group 3 vs Group 4. Note that because this comparison was secondary to the main aim of the project, the data from this comparison are not presented in the body of the report but can be found in Appendix 4.

Disability is defined in SDAC as any limitation, restriction or impairment that restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months [9]. While disability may be related to an underlying health condition, people who have non-disabling long-term health conditions are not considered to have disability within SDAC.

Table 1: Comparison groups and how they were derived.

		Identification within SDAC		Identification within NDIS	
Group	Description	Does not have disability	Has disability	Not an NDIS Participant	NDIS Participant
1	Disability, NDIS Participant		✓		✓
2	Disability, not on NDIS		✓	✓	
3	Disability		✓	✓	✓
4	No disability	✓		✓	

Note: Group 3 includes all members of both group 1 & 2, representing all people with disability regardless of NDIS participation. People identified as not having a disability in SDAC but who were NDIS participants were excluded from this analysis; see Appendix 1 for more details.

The statistical analysis used person-level weights provided within SDAC to obtain population-weighted estimates for each comparison group across a range of personal characteristics and disability support needs. This approach makes small adjustments to the weight of individual responses[7], which makes the data representative of the Australian population. The results presented throughout this report represent the percentage of the population within a comparison group who have a particular characteristic, with the 95% confidence interval[8] for that estimate.

A more detailed description of the methods for this project, including full inclusion and exclusion criteria, are available in Appendix 1.

Ethics approval for this study was granted by the University of Melbourne's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics ID number: 30402).

Structure of the report

The following sections of this report describe how people with disability who receive NDIS compare to people with disability who do not receive NDIS in terms of NDIS prevalence, demographic, geographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Following this, we compare disability characteristics and support needs for people who receive NDIS to those who do not receive NDIS. Key findings are highlighted at the start of each section. We then discuss the significance of the findings, focussing on the needs of people with disability who do not receive NDIS funding. Finally, we discuss avenues of future research.

Data tables used to generate the graphs, along with additional results describing further demographic, socioeconomic and geographic characteristics, can be found in the Appendices 2 and 3.

To put the results for NDIS and non-NDIS participants in perspective with the characteristics of people without disability, Appendix 4 describes how people with disability compare to people without disability regarding disability prevalence, demographic, geographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Detailed data tables can be found in Appendix 5.

[7] Because survey data is collected from a sample of the population rather than the whole population, certain groups of people can be overrepresented in the data. To correct for this, weights are used to adjust the dataset so that it is more representative of the population, in this case the Australian population.
[8] A confidence interval is the range of values in which the estimate is likely to be true. For a 95% confidence interval, if we ran the analysis repeatedly on different samples, the estimate would be within that range 95% of the time.

Prevalence, demographic, geographic and socioeconomic characteristics

Prevalence of NDIS participation

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- 1 in 7 (15.4%) were NDIS participants.
- 6 in 7 (84.6%) did not receive NDIS funding.

Around 1 in 60 (1.7%) Australians aged under 65 years were NDIS participants (Table 2). This means that out of the population of people with disability aged under 65 years, 15.4% were NDIS participants.

Around 1 in 10 (10.6%) Australians aged under 65 years had a disability but did not receive NDIS funding (Table 2). This represents 84.6% of people with disability aged under 65 years who, if they require disability supports and services, must seek support from alternative sources, such as government agencies other than the NDIA, community-based organisations, or personal or family resources.

Table 2: Percentage of people with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.

	%	95% CI	Population size
NDIS participants	1.7	(1.6, 1.9)	312,269
Non-NDIS participants	10.6	(10.3, 11.0)	1,928,512

Note: the population size for NDIS participants is lower than the current number of NDIS participants aged under 65 years. This is due the way the sample was constructed from the available administrative data, assessing NDIS participation up to 10 August 2021 (see Appendix 1 for more details).

NDIS eligibility

NDIS eligibility criteria are specified within the NDIS Act [12]. People must be aged under 65 years when they initially apply for NDIS support, must live in Australia and must be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident. Secondly, people must have a disability that is caused by an impairment that is likely to be permanent, which affects their ability to work, study or take part in social life because they have substantially reduced functional capacity in at least one of the following activities: moving around, communicating, socialising, learning, or undertaking self-care or self-management tasks. Thirdly, the person must be likely to need NDIS support for their whole life, regardless of whether the support needs are constant or fluctuate due to their condition having an episodic nature, and their needs cannot be effectively managed through other government or community services (e.g. the health system).

Demographic characteristics

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- NDIS participants were more likely to be younger, with 1 in 2 (52.9%) aged 0-19 years, compared to 1 in 2 (53.1%) being aged 40-64 years for non-NDIS participants.
- Twice as many males received NDIS funding than females, while the people who did not receive NDIS were equally likely to be male or female.

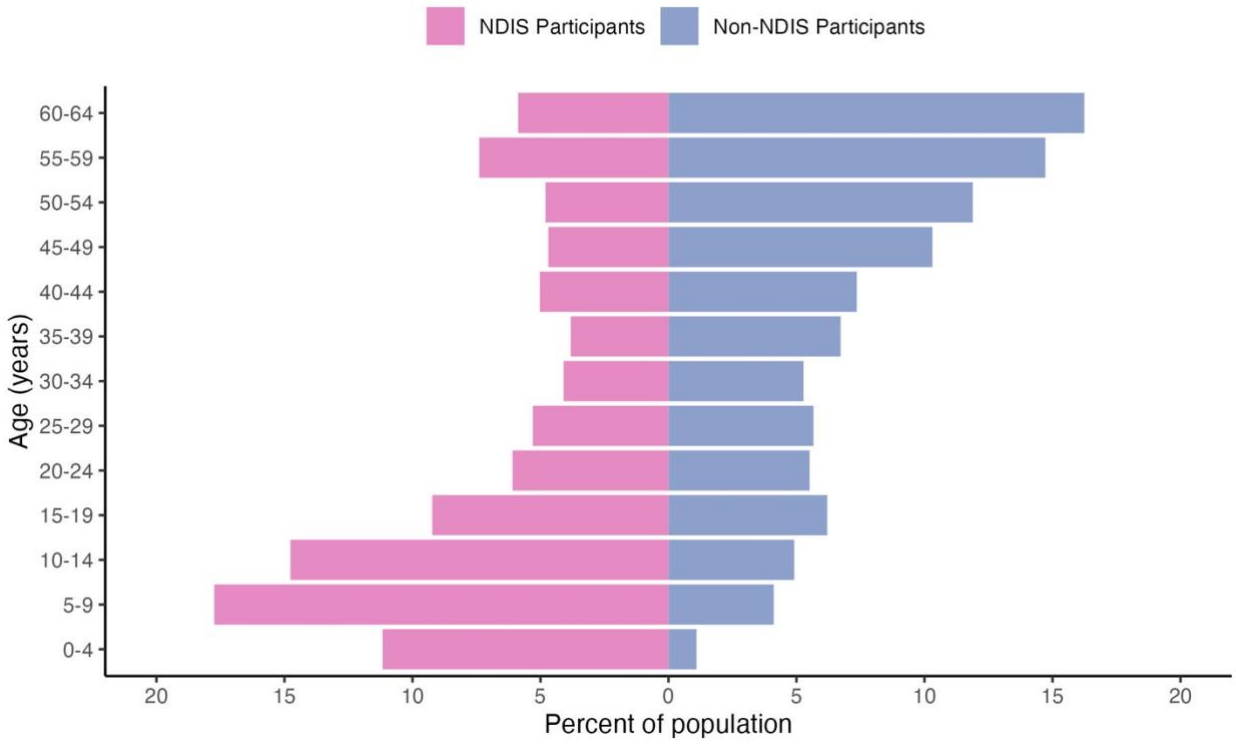
Age

There was a different age distribution for NDIS participants compared to non-NDIS participants. NDIS participants were more likely to be under 20 years, with more than half (52.9%) aged 0-19 years (Figure 1). In contrast, 16.3% of non-NDIS participants were aged 0-19 years. Non-NDIS participants were more likely to be in the older age bands, with more than half (53.1%) aged 40-64 years. In contrast, 27.8% of NDIS participants were aged 40-64 years.

Another way to consider the age difference between NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants is to look at the mean age of each group. NDIS participants on average had a mean age of 25.0 years (95% CI: 23.1, 26.9), while non-NDIS participants had a mean age of 41.5 years (95% CI: 41.0, 42.0).

One of the reasons for this difference in age distribution likely relates to the different types of ways that people can enter the NDIS. One NDIS pathway is the Early Intervention pathway, which is designed to support people who have a condition that may lead to a permanent disability, but where the impact of that condition may potentially be decreased through early intervention [13]. The Early Intervention pathway is a common entry point into the NDIS for children aged under 7 years [13]. Of the people with disability who were NDIS

Figure 1. Population pyramid showing the age distribution of people aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



participants, 16.8% (95% CI: 13.9%, 20.0%) accessed the NDIS via the Early Intervention pathway. The remaining NDIS participants were classed as either meeting disability requirements at the point of their access to the NDIS or, for a very small proportion, data was not available to determine which access type a participant had.

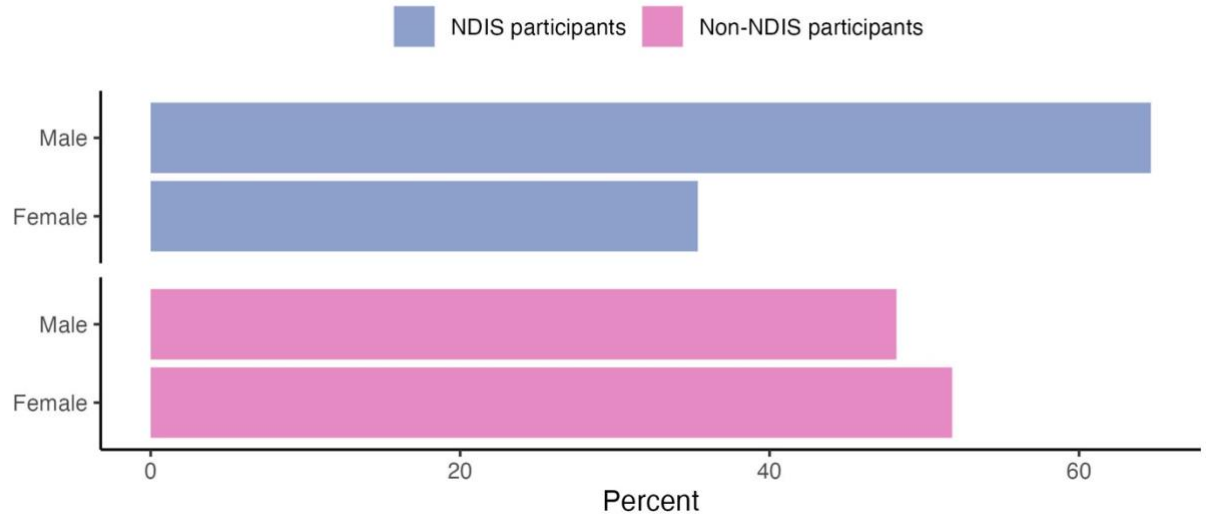
Sex

Although the *People with Disability in Australia* report indicates that there are similar numbers of males and females with disability in Australia [6], we found that NDIS participants were more likely to be male, accounting for almost two-thirds of this subgroup (Figure 2). This means that there were almost twice as many males as females receiving NDIS funding. In contrast, the subgroup of non-NDIS participants was equally likely to be male or female. Note that because sex is provided as a binary variable (i.e. male or female) within SDAC, it was not possible to compare the proportion of people who identified with other genders.

Other demographic characteristics

Additional data about personal characteristics, including country of birth, proficiency in English language, and marital status, can be found in Appendix 2, Supplementary Table 2.

Figure 2. Population sex distribution of people aged under 65, by NDIS participation.



Geographic characteristics

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- The distribution by state or territory was similar for NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants.
- Around 1 in 3 people with disability lived in regional or remote areas, with no difference observed between NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants.

State of residence

When considering how people were distributed across Australia in terms of the state or territory in which they lived, the proportion of people living in each state or territory was very similar between the two comparison groups. This means people with NDIS funding and people without NDIS funding are equally like to live within each state or territory. See Appendix 2, Supplementary Table 3.

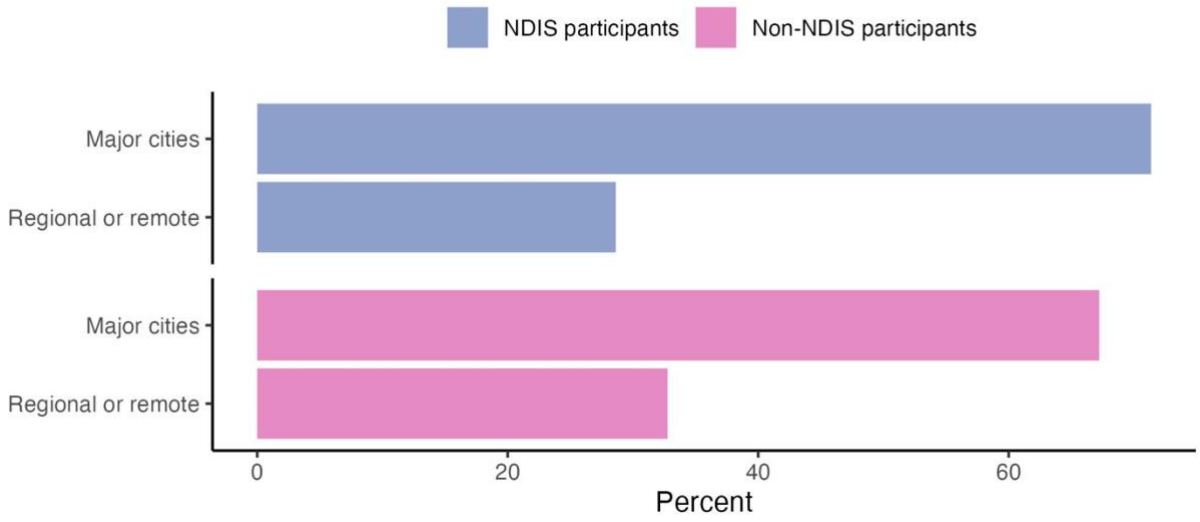
Remoteness of residence

Around 1 in 3 people with disability lived in regional or remote areas rather than in major cities (Figure 3). This was the same for both NDIS participants (28.6%) and non-NDIS participants (32.8%). This indicates a need for disability services and supports in regional and remote areas for both NDIS participants and people with disability who are not NDIS participants.

Other geographic characteristics

Additional data about characteristics relating to housing tenure, whether people live alone, and SEIFA quintiles (Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage) can be found in Appendix 2, Supplementary Table 3.

Figure 3. Remoteness of where people live for people aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



Socioeconomic characteristics

Employment and hours worked

Key findings

Among people with disability aged 15 to 64 years:

- 1 in 5 (20.3%) NDIS participants were employed compared to 1 in 2 (50.9%) non-NDIS participants.
- 3 in 4 (75.0%) NDIS participants were not in the labour force, compared to 2 in 5 (43.3%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 11 (9.0%) NDIS participants were employed for 30 or more hours per week, compared to 1 in 3 (34.2%) non-NDIS participants.

Only 1 in 5 (20.3%) NDIS participants aged 15-24 years were employed, compared to 1 in 2 (50.9%) people who were not NDIS participants (Figure 4). Both groups had a similar proportion (approximately 5%) of people who were unemployed. However, 3 in 4 (75.0%) NDIS participants were not in the labour force, compared to 2 in 5 (43.3%) people who were not NDIS participants.

NDIS participants aged 15-64 years who were employed were more likely to work reduced hours per week than non-NDIS participants who were employed (Figure 5). Around 5 in 9 (55.9%) NDIS participants worked less than 30 hours per week compared to 1 in 3 (32.9%) non-NDIS participants.

Given that only 20.3% of NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were employed, this means that only 1 in 11 (9.0%) NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were employed for 30 or more hours per week. In comparison, given that 50.9% of non-NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were employed, this equates to 1 in 3 (34.2%) non-NDIS participants aged 15-64 years being employed for 30 or more hours per week.

Employment and financial security

A key outcome area of Australia's Disability Strategy relates to employment and financial security, since these are essential for improving outcomes for people with disability [14]. This section shows results relating to labour force status, hours usually worked per week (if employed), whether people receive the Disability Support Pension, and personal and family weekly income. The data in this section refers to people aged 15-64 years, unless otherwise indicated. It is important to note that the sample size of the group of people with disability who were NDIS participants was considerably reduced for these analyses given that 43.7% of this group were aged under 15 years, and this reduction in sample size caused larger 95% confidence intervals for the estimates.

Figure 4. Labour force status of people aged 15-64 years, by NDIS participation.

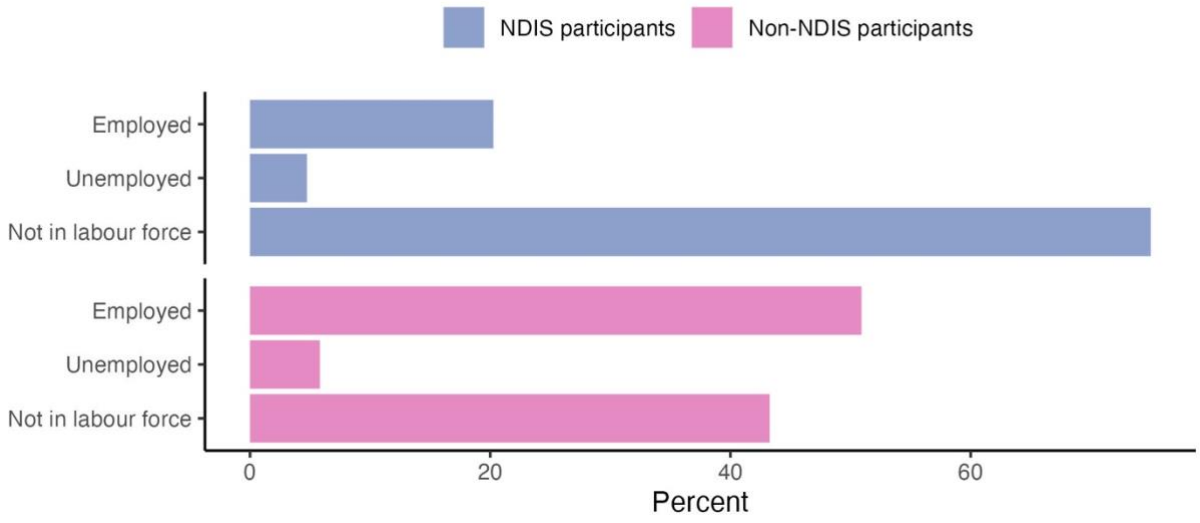
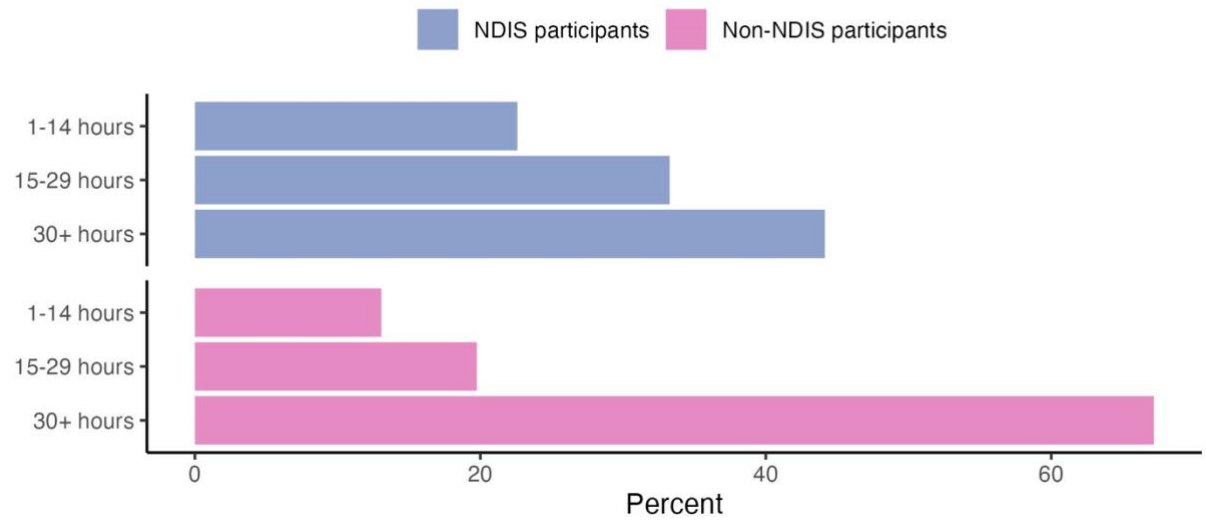


Figure 5. Hours usually worked per week (if employed) by people aged 15-64 years, by NDIS participation.



Disability Support Pension

Key findings

Among people with disability aged 15 to 64 years:

- 2 in 3 (63.2%) NDIS participants received the Disability Support Pension, compared to 1 in 5 (18.5%) non-NDIS participants.

NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were more likely to receive DSP than people with disability who were not NDIS participants (Figure 6). Almost 2 in 3 (63.2%) NDIS participants aged 15-64 years received DSP, but this was less than the total number of NDIS participants (75.0%) who were not in the labour force. It is particularly noteworthy that while 43.3% of people with disability aged 15-64 years who were not NDIS participants were not in the labour force, only 1 in 5 (18.5%) received DSP. This suggests around 1 in 3 (35.3%) people with disability aged 15-64 years who were not NDIS participants were both unable to work and not receiving DSP, thus must be reliant on other forms of financial support.

Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension (DSP), administered by Services Australia, is a form of financial assistance that is potentially available to people who are unable to work due to a physical, intellectual or psychiatric condition [15]. But it is important to note that having a disability and reduced capacity to work is not enough to qualify for DSP. There are both medical and non-medical rules that must be met, including income and assets testing. Also, the condition leading to disability must be likely to persist for at least 2 years.

Figure 6. Disability Support Pension (DSP) receipt by people aged 15-64 years, by NDIS participation.

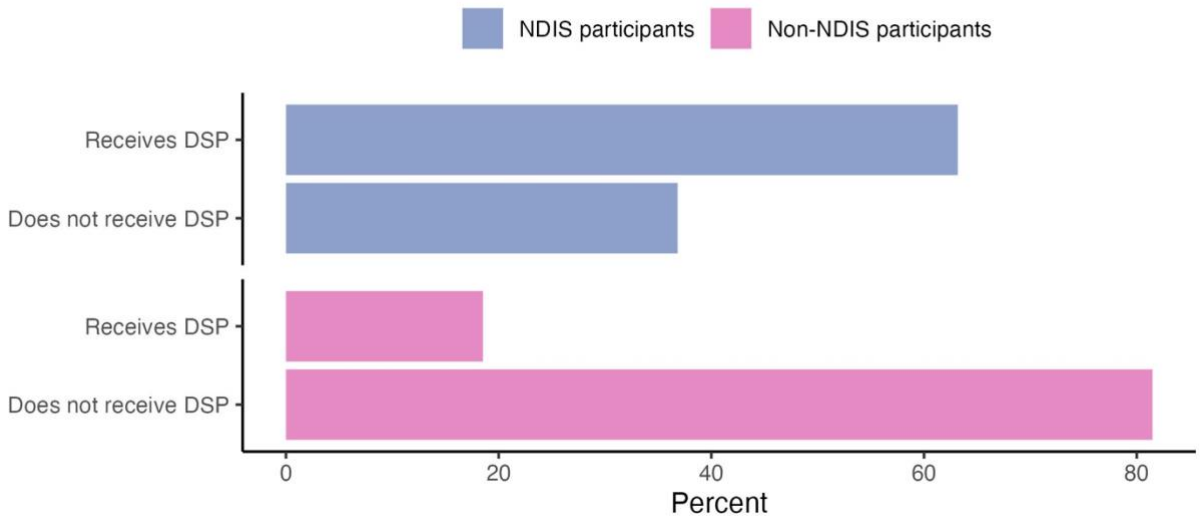
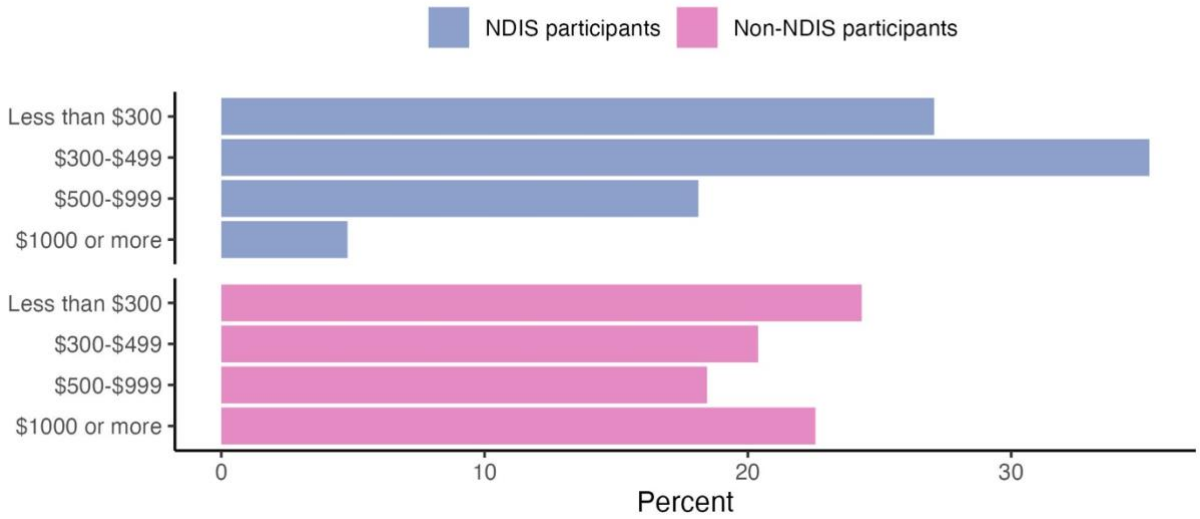


Figure 7. Personal weekly income of people aged 15-64 years, by NDIS participation.



Note: while not shown in this figure, personal weekly income was reported as "not stated" for 14-19% of people in both groups.

Weekly income

Key findings

Among people with disability aged 15 to 64 years:

- A personal weekly income of less than $500 was reported by 2 in 3 (62.3%) NDIS participants, compared to 4 in 9 (44.7%) non-NDIS participants.

NDIS participants aged 15-64 years had lower personal weekly income than non-NDIS participants (Figure 7). A personal weekly income of less than $500 was reported by almost 2 in 3 (62.3%) NDIS participants, compared to 4 in 9 (44.7%) people who were not NDIS participants.

It must be considered that 14-19% of respondents in both comparison groups did not state their personal income.

Measuring family weekly income

Family weekly income in SDAC was calculated by summing the personal weekly income of all people who belonged to an identified family unit. Although children aged 0-14 years were not included within personal income estimates, family weekly income estimates are available for all people aged under 65 years since these estimates are based on the income of all members of the family unit, regardless of their age.

NDIS participants aged under 65 years had a similar family weekly income to non-NDIS participants (Figure 8). A family weekly income of less than $1750 was reported by almost 1 in 2 (47.2%) NDIS participants, compared to 46.7% of non-NDIS participants.

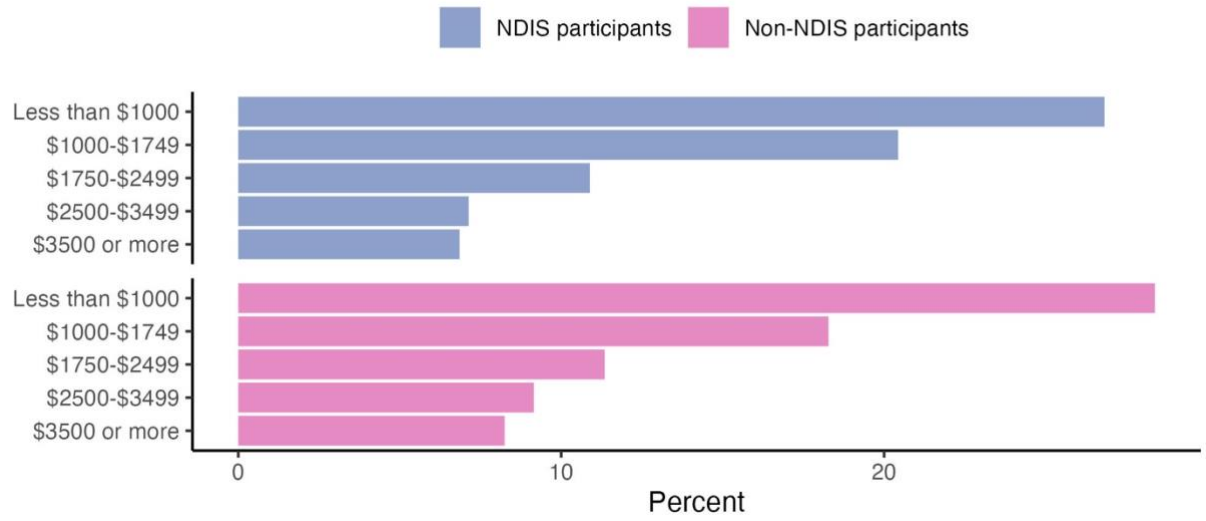
At first glance it may seem surprising that NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants have similar family weekly income, given that NDIS participants aged 15-64 years were more likely to have lower personal weekly income and receive the Disability Support Pension. However, given that 43.7% of NDIS participants are aged under 15 years and thus will not contribute to family weekly income, the reported family weekly income for these younger NDIS participants will be an indication of the income of their parents and/or other family members.

Similar to the issue that occurred with personal weekly income, it must be considered that family weekly income could not be calculated for 25-28% of respondents in the two comparison groups. The proportion of missing values is higher for family income than it was for personal income, since family income could only be calculated if personal weekly income was available for all family members aged 15 years and over.

Other socioeconomic characteristics

Additional data about employment and educational characteristics can be found in Appendix 2, Supplementary Table 4.

Figure 8. Family weekly income of people aged under years, by NDIS participation.



Note: while not shown in this figure, family weekly income could not be determined for 25-28% of people in both groups.

Disability type, level of function and restrictions

Disability type

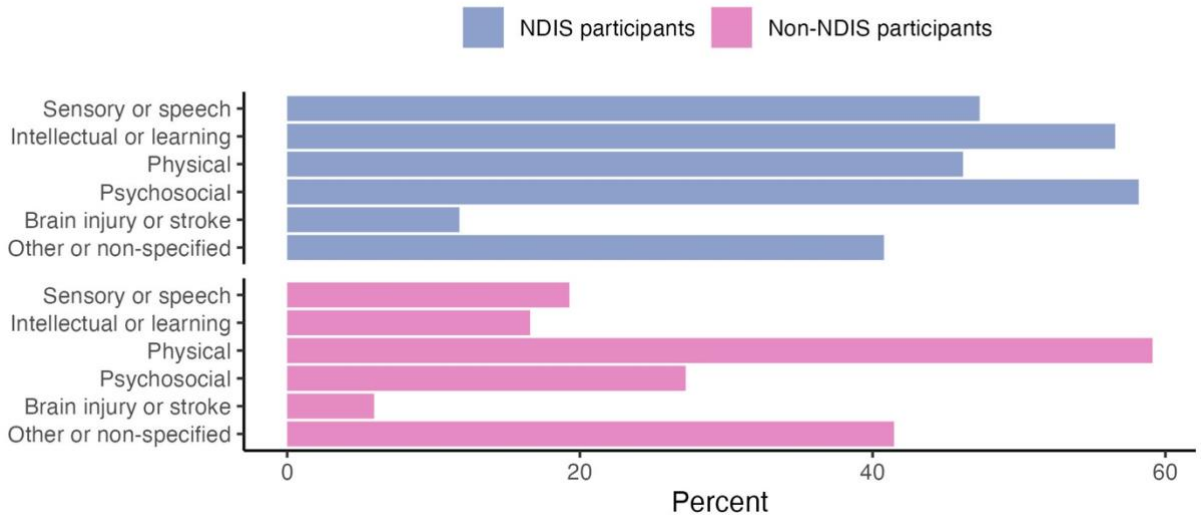
Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- 1 in 2 (58.2%) NDIS participants had psychosocial disability, compared to 1 in 4 (27.2%) non-NDIS participants.
- Over half (56.6%) of NDIS participants had an intellectual or learning disability, compared to 1 in 6 (16.6%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 2 (47.3%) NDIS participants had a sensory or speech disability, compared to 1 in 5 (19.3%) non-NDIS participants.
- 3 in 4 (72.6%) NDIS participants had disabilities that could be categorised into two or more disability groups, compared to 2 in 5 (42.8%) non-NDIS participants.
- 1 in 4 (25.8%) NDIS participants had complex disabilities that could be categorised into four or more disability groups, compared to 1 in 15 (6.5%) non-NDIS participants.

NDIS participants had a higher prevalence for most types of disability than non-NDIS participants (Figure 9). The most common disability type in NDIS participants was psychosocial disability, with over 1 in 2 (58.2%) NDIS participants having psychosocial disability compared to 1 in 4 (27.2%) non-NDIS participants. Just over half (56.6%) of NDIS participants had an intellectual or learning disability compared to 1 in 6 (16.6%) non-NDIS participants. A sensory or speech disability was observed in almost 1 in 2 (47.3%) NDIS participants compared to 1 in 5 (19.3%) non-NDIS participants. NDIS participants were also more likely to have had a brain injury or stroke, with this disability seen in 1 in 9 (11.8%) NDIS participants compared to 1 in 17 (5.9%) people without NDIS funding. However, physical disability was more common in non-NDIS participants, with 3 in 5 (59.1%) non-NDIS participants having physical disability compared to just under 1 in 2 (46.2%) NDIS participants. The prevalence of 'other or non-specified' types of disability was similar for both NDIS and non-NDIS participants, with 2 in 5 (about 41%) having disabilities of this type.

Figure 9. Categorisation of disability types for people with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation. Note that people can belong to more than one disability group.



Disability groups

Disability is a complex and diverse experience, and there are many ways to describe the experience of disability. One way that SDAC categorises the experience of disability is by broadly grouping disabilities into six disability groups based on underlying health conditions, impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions [9].

The six SDAC disability groups [9] are:

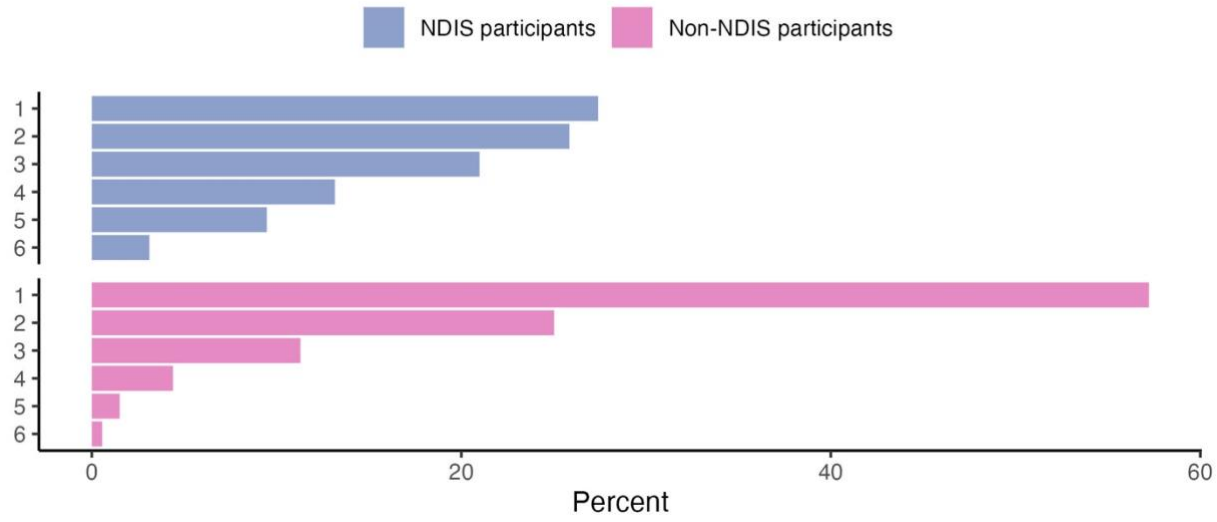
1. **Sensory or speech:** loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses); loss of hearing where communication is restricted or an aid is used; speech difficulties.
2. **Intellectual or learning:** difficulty learning or understanding things.
3. **Physical:** shortness of breath or breathing difficulties that restrict everyday activities; blackouts, seizures or loss of consciousness; chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort that restricts everyday activities; incomplete use of arms or fingers; difficulty gripping or holding things; incomplete use of feet or legs; restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work; disfigurement or deformity.
4. **Psychosocial:** nervous or emotional condition that restricts everyday activities; mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision; memory problems or periods of confusion that restrict everyday activities; social or behavioural difficulties that restrict everyday activities.
5. **Brain injury or stroke:** head injury, stroke or other acquired brain injury with long-term effects that restrict everyday activities.
6. **Other (or non-specified):** receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term conditions or ailments and still restricted in everyday activities; any other long-term conditions resulting in a restriction in everyday activities.

Depending on the disabilities that a person experiences, they may be included in more than one of the disability groups. For instance, if a person has both an intellectual disability and a physical disability, they would be included in both groups. This means that the sum of the percentage values across all six disability groups will be greater than 100%. However, it is also important to understand that if the disabilities a person experiences all fit into one group, they would only be counted once in that group. For example, if a person experienced chronic pain and had an incomplete use of their legs that limited their ability to walk, they would only be counted once within the physical disability group. In this case, the full extent of disabilities experienced is underestimated.

Multiple disabilities were more common for NDIS participants, suggesting they have more complex disability (Figure 10). 3 in 4 (72.6%) NDIS participants had disabilities that could be categorised into two or more disability groups and 1 in 4 (25.8%) had disabilities that were considerably complex and could be categorised into four or more disability groups. In comparison, 2 in 5 (42.8%) people without NDIS funding had disabilities that could be categorised into two or more disability groups and only 1 in 15 (6.5%) had considerably complex disabilities that could be categorised into four or more disability groups. This equated to 227,000 NDIS participants and 825,000 non-NDIS participants with disabilities that could be categorised into two or more disability groups, while 80,000 NDIS participants and 125,000 non-NDIS participants had complex disabilities that could be categorised into four or more disability groups.

Additional data about disability groups can be found in Appendix 3, Supplementary Table 5.

Figure 10: Number of disability groups per person with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



Level of function and restrictions

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- 3 in 4 (74.8%) NDIS participants had a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living, compared to 1 in 4 (22.1%) people who were not NDIS participants.
- 1 in 2 (51.0%) NDIS participants required assistance from another person at least once a day.
- 1 in 10 (9.8%) people who were not NDIS participants required assistance from another person at least once a day.

Severity of disability

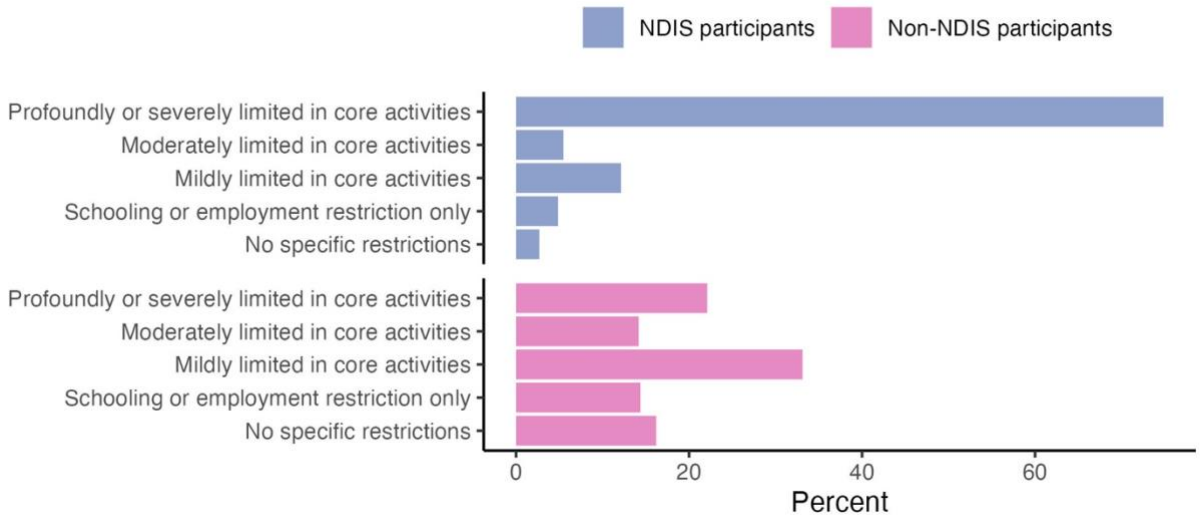
NDIS participants were more likely to be profoundly or severely limited in undertaking core activities than people who did not receive NDIS funding. 3 in 4 (74.8%) NDIS participants had a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living, while only 1 in 4 (22.1%) people who did not receive NDIS funding had a profoundly or severely limited capacity (Figure 11). This equated to 233,000 NDIS participants and 426,000 non-NDIS participants who had a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living. In contrast, 1 in 6 (17.6%) NDIS participants had a moderately or mildly limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living, while almost 1 in 2 (47.3%) people who did not receive NDIS funding had a moderately or mildly limited capacity. A further 4.9% of NDIS participants only experienced a schooling or employment restriction without any limitation in core activities, yet 14.4% of people who were not NDIS participants were restricted in this way. It is important to note that a schooling or employment restriction may also be present in people who had a core activity limitation, but that data about schooling or employment restrictions for people with core activity limitations is not presented here.

Measuring disability severity

How severe a person's experience of disability is depends on the domain of activity that is being considered. In SDAC, the severity of disability is determined based on the level of assistance that a person requires in undertaking three core activities of daily living. This includes activities related to mobility, self-care or communication [9]. If a person always or sometimes needs help from another person for at least one of those core activities, they are considered to have profound or severe limitation in core activities, and thus a profound or severe disability.

Another indication of severity of disability (or level of function) can be measured by the length of time that a person can look after themselves without difficulty. In SDAC, this information is only collected for people who have a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living.

Figure 11: Limitation in capacity to undertake activities of daily living as a result of disability for people with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



Capacity to look after oneself

Out of the people who were aged under 65 years and were profoundly or severely limited in core activities, NDIS participants were much less likely to be able to look after themselves without difficulty than people with disability who were not NDIS participants. Only 1 in 3 (31.8%) NDIS participants with profoundly or severely limited capacity in core activities could look after themselves for a less than one day without difficulty. Overall, this means that for all NDIS participants, 1 in 2 (51.0%) required assistance from another person at least once a day, equating to approximately 160,000 people.

It is noteworthy that out of the 22.1% of people with disability aged under 65 years who were profoundly or severely limited in core activities but did not have NDIS funding, approximately 1 in 2 (55.8%) could look after themselves for less than one day without difficulty. This means that of the group of people with disability aged under 65 years who did not receive NDIS funding, 1 in 10 (9.8%) required assistance from another person at least once a day, equating to approximately 190,000 people.

Additional data about disability severity can be found in Appendix 3, Supplementary Table 5.

Support needs for activities of daily living

Need for assistance with daily activities from another person

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- The two most common activities of daily living for which assistance was required were transport and cognitive or emotional tasks.
- 2 in 3 NDIS participants needed assistance with transport (66.7%) or cognitive or emotional tasks (67.1%).
- 2 in 7 people with disability without NDIS funding needed assistance with transport (29.4%) or cognitive or emotional tasks (27.1%).
- 1 in 4 NDIS participants also needed assistance with property maintenance (24.1%) and household chores (27.3%), 1 in 2 (49.7%) needed assistance with health care, and 3 in 5 (59.0%) needed assistance for mobility.
- 1 in 6 non-NDIS participants needed assistance with property maintenance (18.9%), household chores (15.6%), health care (18.1%) and mobility (15.8%).

Both NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants aged under 65 years needed assistance undertaking daily activities across a range of domains, with the two most common domains being transport and cognitive or emotional tasks (Figure 12). However, the proportion of people requiring assistance depended greatly on NDIS participation, with support needs being greater across all activities for NDIS participants compared to people with disability who were not NDIS participants. Around 2 in 3 NDIS participants needed assistance with transport (66.7%) or cognitive or emotional tasks (67.1%). In contrast, around 2 in 7 people with disability aged under 65 years without NDIS funding needed assistance with transport (29.4%) or cognitive or emotional tasks (27.1%). That equates to approximately 550,000 people needing assistance with each of those tasks.

Measuring support needs for activities of daily living

A key outcome area of Australia's Disability Strategy relates to personal and community support, with the goal of ensuring that specialist disability supports and mainstream services are available to assist people with disability to live independently and engage within the community [14].

To determine whether a person needed assistance with daily activities, people were asked whether the person with disability would need help doing a particular task if the person currently doing the task was no longer available. This implies that an additional person is likely to be needed to provide assistance with the task in question, whether by directly doing the task instead of the person with disability or by providing supervision to assist the person with disability to do the task themself.

To determine whether a person used equipment or aids when undertaking daily activities, it was asked whether the person with disability used aids for undertaking a range of specific daily tasks.

A limitation of the data relating to support needs is that it is likely to underestimate support needs, particularly if individuals have not received a personalised assessment of their individual support needs from appropriately trained allied health professionals. This is likely to be a greater issue for non-NDIS participants who are less likely to have received funding for such assessments.

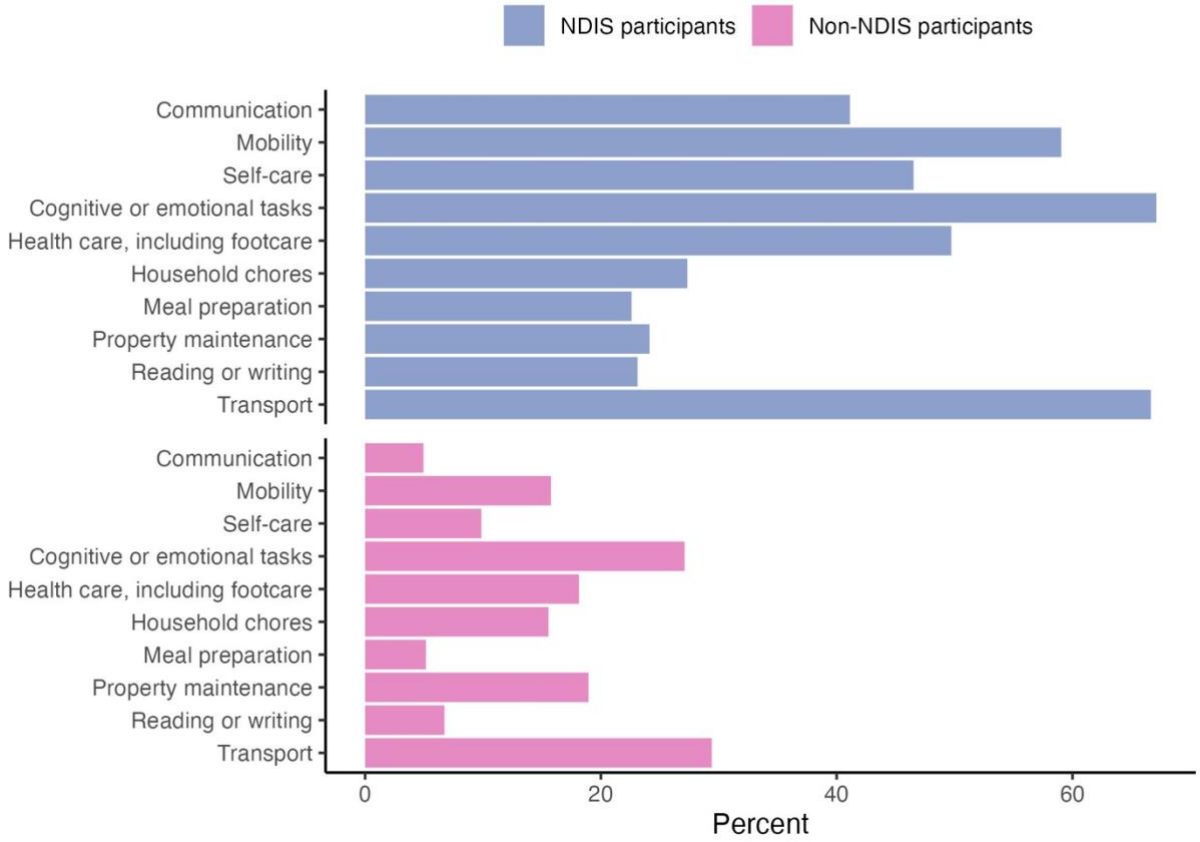
Given that 3 in 4 (74.8%) NDIS participants aged under 65 years had a profoundly or severely limited capacity to undertake core activities of daily living (see Figure 11), it is not surprising that 2 in 5 (41.1%) needed assistance for communication, 3 in 5 (59.0%) needed assistance for mobility and 4 in 9 (46.5%) needed assistance for self-care. Around 1 in 4 NDIS participants needed assistance with property maintenance (24.1%) and household chores (27.3%), and 1 in 2 (49.7%) needed assistance with health care.

It is noteworthy that around 1 in 6 non-NDIS participants needed assistance with property maintenance (18.9%), household chores (15.6%),

health care (18.1%) and mobility (15.8%). That equates to approximately 300,000 people needing assistance with each of those tasks.

Additional data about need for assistance with daily activities can be found in Appendix 3, Supplementary Table 6.

Figure 12. Need for assistance undertaking daily activities for people with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



Use of equipment or aids when undertaking daily activities

Key findings

Among people with disability aged under 65 years:

- 1 in 2 (48.1%) NDIS participants used equipment or aids for at least one activity of daily living. Equipment or aids were used for communication (29.2%), moving around places away from residence (16.7%), managing health conditions (15.0%) and showering or bathing (13.2%).
- 3 in 8 (37.4%) non-NDIS participants used equipment or aids for at least one activity of daily living. Equipment or aids were used for communication (21.0%), managing health conditions (15.2%), moving around places away from residence (5.6%) and showering or bathing (4.6%).

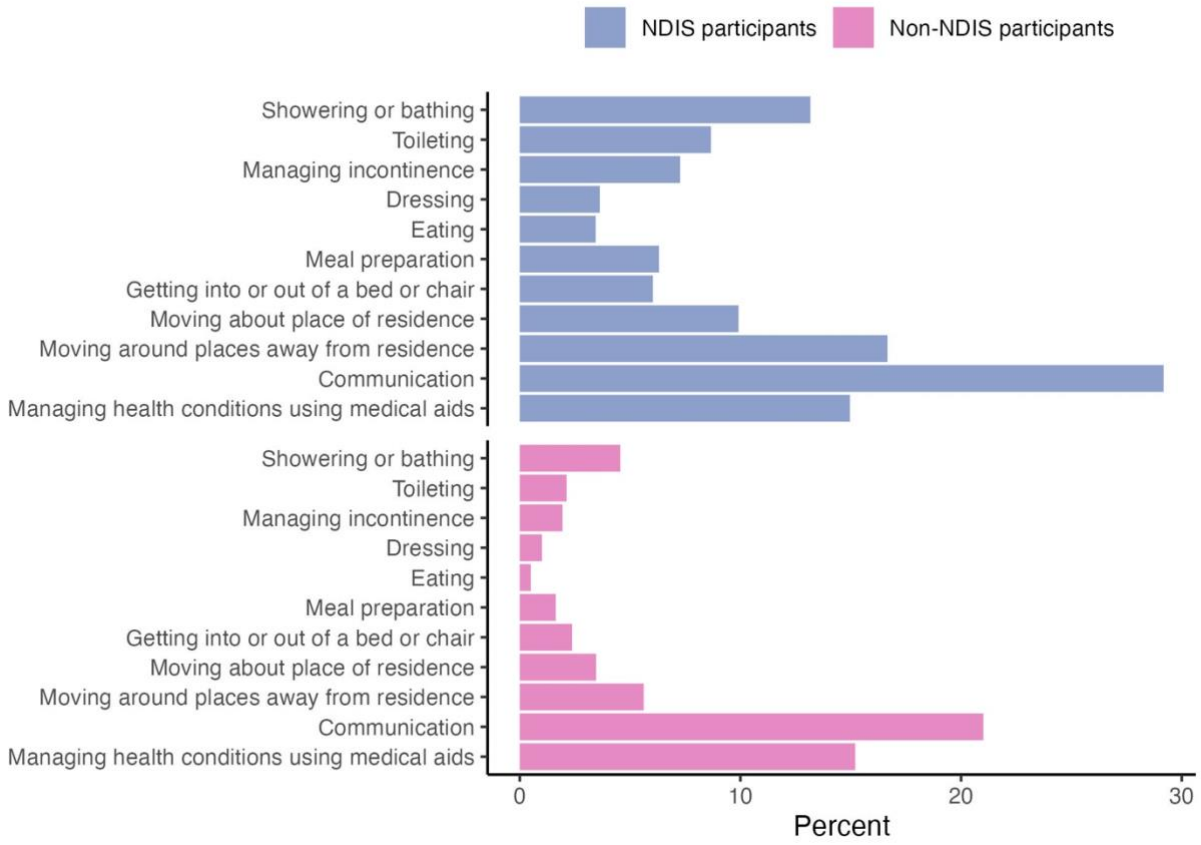
Equipment and aids were used by both NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants when undertaking daily activities, with equipment or aids more commonly used by NDIS participants compared to people who were not NDIS participants, except for managing health conditions where the use of equipment or aids was similar between the two groups (Figure 13). There was however a difference between the groups in the most common daily activities for which equipment or aids were used.

For NDIS participants, equipment or aids were most used for communication (29.2%), moving around places away from residence (16.7%), managing health conditions (15.0%) and showering or bathing (13.2%). In contrast, for people without NDIS funding, equipment or aids were most used for communication (21.0%), managing health conditions (15.2%), moving around places away from residence (5.6%) and showering or bathing (4.6%).

1 in 2 (48.1%) NDIS participants used equipment or aids for at least one activity of daily living, compared to 3 in 8 (37.4%) non-NDIS participants. This indicates that around 700,000 people who do not receive NDIS funding use aids or equipment for activities of daily living due to their disability.

Additional data about use of equipment or aids when undertaking daily activities can be found in Appendix 3, Supplementary Table 6.

Figure 13. Equipment or aids used when undertaking daily activities for people with disability aged under 65 years, by NDIS participation.



Significance and conclusions

Significance of the findings

This is the first study of the **18.1 million** Australian citizens and residents aged less than 65 years who would be eligible for NDIS services and supports if they met eligibility criteria, which compares the group of people who are NDIS participants to the group of people who do not receive NDIS funding.

2.2 million (12.3%) people were identified as having a disability. People with disability were more likely to be older, live in regional or remote areas, and were more socio-economically disadvantaged than the non-disabled population. Of these, 0.3 million (1.7%) people were NDIS participants who had access to individualised supports through the NDIS and 1.9 million Australians with disability were not NDIS participants and relied on services and supports in mainstream systems.

Among people with disability, the fact that NDIS participants were younger is not surprising and likely reflects the Early Intervention pathway for children in the NDIS. However, we cannot rule out inequities in application for the NDIS due to age-related factors that could include capacity to pay for functional assessment reports or assistance in completing access forms, knowledge about the Scheme, or acceptance of applications for the Scheme by age**.** The higher prevalence of NDIS participation among males may arise because females are less likely to apply. Recently published research also found that older people and women who applied for the Scheme were less likely to be considered eligible for the NDIS even after disability characteristics were accounted for in the analyses [16]. The difference in NDIS participation by age and sex could also be due to differences in the types of disability, severity and degree of restrictions in daily functioning. **Inequities in access are likely to entrench disadvantage related to age and sex and is an important policy consideration.**

Consistent with the restriction in eligibility for the NDIS to people with severe and permanent disability, NDIS participants were more likely to have a greater number and more severe disabilities and were more likely to need assistances with tasks of daily living than non-participants. Nonetheless among people with disability who were not NDIS participants, we identified high levels of need for assistance for tasks of daily living including transport, cognitive and emotional tasks, mobility, and household chores. **Approximately 2 in 7 (about 550,000) people with disability who were not NDIS participants needed assistance with transport or cognitive and emotional tasks, and 1 in 6 (about 300,000) needed assistance with property maintenance, household chores, health care or mobility. Around 3 in 8 (about 700,000) people with disability who were not NDIS participants used aids and equipment to assist with activities of daily living.**

As disability policy turns to providing supports to all people with disability through mainstream services as well as foundational supports, it must invest generously in the provision of supports across a wide range of services including personal care, getting around the home and neighbourhood, supports for tasks such as household administration and cleaning, as well as affordable aids and equipment**. The needs of non-NDIS participants must be met by services outside of the NDIS. This will require significant new investments and cross-sector, cross-jurisdictional coordination.** Without this investment, the financial and emotional strain currently experienced by people with disability and their families described by Olney and colleagues [1] will continue. This strain may see a deterioration in functioning among some people with disability in this group, resulting in higher support needs and/or burnout of informal caregivers. Both scenarios would exert pressure on the NDIS to provide these unmet needs, making it difficult for government to constrain spending on the NDIS. Importantly, under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [4], the Australian Government has obligations to ensure that disability services and supports protect and promote the rights of all Australians with disability, regardless of whether those supports are provided through the NDIS, mainstream services or foundational supports.

Future research

A limitation of the present study is that we do not know who is providing support to people who do not receive NDIS funding and future research is needed to answer this question. Although there is some quantitative data present within SDAC to partially address this question, additional qualitative and quantitative studies would be needed to obtain a thorough understanding.

Finally, given that the prevalence of disability within the Australian population increased between 2018 and 2022 [5] and that the NDIS rollout was not completed until 30 June 2020, it would be valuable to update this project using data from the 2022 SDAC.

Conclusions

Our research findings describe the support needs of all people with disability aged under 65 years, both NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants. This is important information for the planning of foundational supports delivered by all levels of government and across different service sectors.

The findings of this study are timely in the light of recent policy and legislative reforms including the introduction of new processes for assessing eligibility to the NDIS. These new assessment methods should be designed carefully so they do not inadvertently increase inequities in access such as age and gender. They should also cover the expenses required for assessment so inequities in NDIS participation are not driven by capacity to pay for assessments.

End materials

Acknowledgements

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Disclaimer

The results of these studies are based, in part, on data supplied to the ABS under the Taxation Administration Act 1953, A New Tax System (Australian Business Number) Act 1999, Australian Border Force Act 2015, Social Security (Administration) Act 1999, A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999, Paid Parental Leave Act 2010 and/or the Student Assistance Act 1973. Such data may only used for the purpose of administering the Census and Statistics Act 1905 or performance of functions of the ABS as set out in section 6 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975. No individual information collected under the Census and Statistics Act 1905 is provided back to custodians for administrative or regulatory purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the data for statistical purposes and is not related to the ability of the data to support the Australian Taxation Office, Australian Business Register, Department of Social Services and/or Department of Home Affairs' core operational requirements.

Legislative requirements to ensure privacy and secrecy of these data have been followed. For access to MADIP and/or BLADE data under Section 16A of the ABS Act 1975 or enabled by section 15 of the Census and Statistics (Information Release and Access) Determination 2018, source data are de-identified and so data about specific individuals has not been viewed in conducting this analysis. In accordance with the Census and Statistics Act 1905, results have been treated where necessary to ensure that they are not likely to enable identification of a particular person or organisation.

Reflexivity statement

The authors of this report work on a variety of research programmes designed to improve the lives of people with disability through the reduction of inequalities in health, employment, housing and access to disability support services. Within the research team, two researchers (GB, AK) identified as having disability and one researcher (AK) has a close family member with disability. All authors are deeply committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities. To ensure objectivity in the analysis and interpretation of the data, the authors have engaged in reflexive practices to remove any potential bias from the methodological approaches.

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Appendix 1: Detailed methods

Data sources

The Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA), which is administered by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and is accessible to approved users via DataLab, brings together linked Australian microdata from a variety of whole population administrative sources and surveys. Datasets are linked to the Person Linkage Spine using deterministic linkage methodology [17]. The Person Linkage Spine aims to include all people residing in Australia at a given point in time and is based on a combined population derived from three core administrative datasets: Medicare Consumer Directory – Services Australia, DOMINO Centrelink Administrative Data – Department of Social Services, and Personal Income Tax – Australian Taxation Office. The Person Linkage Spine is separate from the data within each individual dataset, ensuring high quality linkage whilst maintaining privacy and security of the data.

The datasets used within this study were: 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC); National Disability Insurance Scheme Participants; Death Registrations; Medicare Consumer Directory. The datasets were linked using the v6 PLIDA Linkage Spine.

Ethics approval

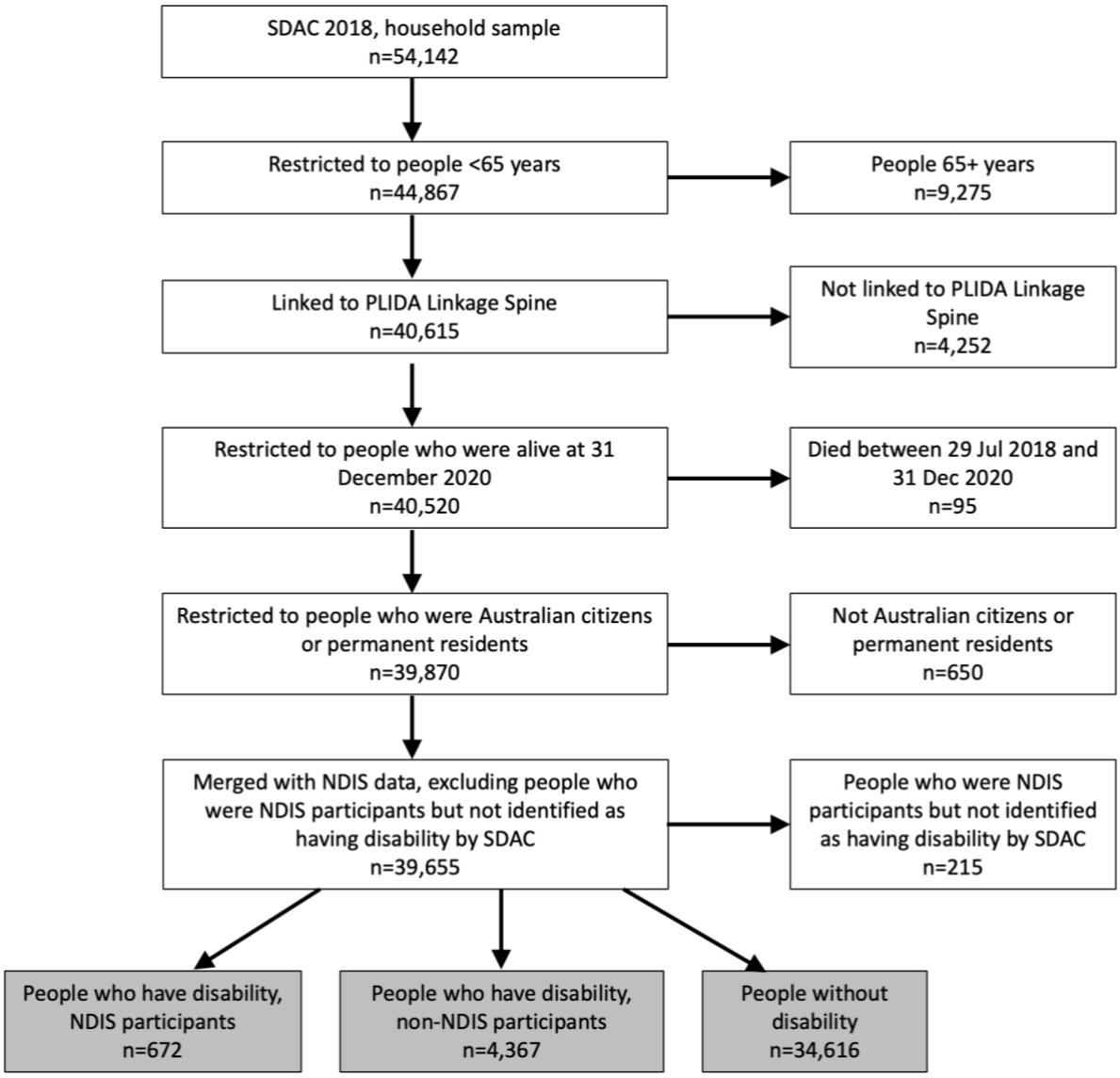
Ethics approval for the secondary analysis of PLIDA datasets was granted by the University of Melbourne's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics ID number: 30402).

Derivation of the analytic sample and linkage of SDAC to NDIS data

Linkage of SDAC household component data to NDIS Participant data presented a challenge due to the time of the SDAC survey and the rollout of the NDIS. The 2018 SDAC Survey was administered between 29 July 2018 and 2 March 2019. However, the NDIS rollout across Australia was not completed until 30 June 2020. Thus, if we limited the timeframe of NDIS data to when SDAC was administered, we would have underestimated the subgroup who would meet the criteria for NDIS funding since they may not yet have had the opportunity to access the NDIS. Thus, it was necessary to extend the time period for NDIS Participant data to give people with disability the opportunity to apply for NDIS access and receive their first plan. For this project, we considered an NDIS participant to be anyone who had received an NDIS plan up to 10 August 2021, because that was the date of the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. That date was chosen because the data presented in this report was part of a larger project that also used the 2021 Census of Population and Housing to compare people with disability who were or were not NDIS Participants.

The linkage process for derivation of the analytic sample is demonstrated in Supplementary Figure 1. The sample began with the entire SDAC 2018 household sample, which was then restricted to people aged less than 65 years, before being linked to the PLIDA spine. Death Registry data was used to exclude people who died at any point between 29 July 2018, which was when SDAC 2018 data collection began, and 31 December 2020, which was the limit of deaths data available within PLIDA when the data linkage was performed. This was done to limit data errors that may have been caused by people with disability who were detected in SDAC dying prior to being able to access NDIS. Medicare Consumer Directory data was used to exclude people who were not Australian citizens or permanent residents at any point between 29 July 2018 and 10 August 2021, since these people could not have met eligibility criteria for NDIS access. The sample was then linked to a subset of NDIS Participants data that included any person who had received an NDIS plan at any point between the start of the NDIS and 10 August 2021. Finally, people who were identified as NDIS participants but who had not been identified as having a disability within SDAC were excluded, since identification of disability within SDAC was necessary to examine disability characteristics and support needs.

Supplementary Figure 1: Flow chart depicting how the analytic population was derived by linking various surveys and administrative datasets.



To verify that extending the end date for people to become NDIS participants was necessary for this project, the timing of NDIS participants first NDIS plan was compared to the start and end dates of the SDAC survey. We found that 34.5% (95% CI: 30.0%, 39.3%) of NDIS participants received their first plan prior to 29 July 2018 (the start date of SDAC) and an additional 15.3% (95% CI: 12.9%, 17.9%) received their first plan between 29 July 2018 and 2 March 2019 (when SDAC was administered). However, 50.2% (95% CI: 45.3%, 55.1%) of NDIS participants that were linked to SDAC did not receive their first NDIS plan until after 2 March 2019, i.e. after SDAC was completed. While all of these NDIS participants were identified as having disability when SDAC was administered, it is possible that their disability support needs and the severity of their disability may have changed following SDAC, and this could lead to errors in the derived estimates between people with disability who were or were not NDIS participants.

An additional group of linked NDIS participants also needed to be considered. These are individuals who had received an NDIS plan at some point up to 10 August 2021, who were present within the SDAC household sample, but who were not identified as having disability within SDAC (see Supplementary Figure 1). These 215 individuals were excluded from the sample because identification of disability within SDAC was necessary to examine disability characteristics and support needs and it is likely that the disability needs of this group changed between when SDAC was administered and when they received an NDIS plan. Brief characterisation of these 215 linked NDIS participants indicated a

mean age of 11.8 ± 16.5 years, with 51.2% being aged 0-4 years at the time of SDAC administration, and 64.7% being male. In this group, 50.2% accessed the NDIS via the Early Intervention pathway. The most common primary disabilities of this group according to NDIS data were autism (35.8%), developmental delay or global developmental delay (34.9%), and intellectual disability (9.8%), with other disabilities together accounting for the remaining 19.5%.

Disability measures

SDAC uses a comprehensive set of questions to determine whether an individual has a disability, based on a range of functional impairments and/or limitations [9]. The answers to these questions are compiled to determine whether an individual has any type of functional impairment and/or limitation that restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months. The questions used to determine the different types of functional impairment and/or limitation of an individual are summarised in Supplementary Table 1. SDAC further aggregates individuals into six disability groups, which are also presented within that table.

Additional measures

SDAC asks individuals an extensive set of questions, including a range of personal characteristics, information about disability support needs, and other aspects of relevance to the experience of people with disability. We have analysed only a subset of the SDAC questions in this project to begin the process of gaining a fundamental understanding of people with disability who did or did not receive NDIS funding. Detailed explanatory notes of the concepts within SDAC have been published by ABS [9].

Statistical analysis

The analytic sample of people under 65 years was initially disaggregated into two comparison groups: people with disability and people without disability. This was based on the individual's disability status within SDAC. The group of people with disability was disaggregated further into people who did or did not receive NDIS funding. This was based on data linkage with NDIS that identified NDIS participants. This resulted in 4 comparison groups (previously described in Table 1).

Population-weighted descriptive analyses were conducted to describe a range of personal characteristics and disability support needs for each of the comparison groups. This was done using person-level weights provided within SDAC. Results are presented as the percentage of people within a comparison group who have a particular characteristic, with the 95% confidence interval for that estimate.

All statistical analyses were performed within the ABS DataLab using Stata MP version 18.0. Final analysis of the linked data was run within DataLab on 18 October 2023. After data had been approved for release from DataLab, graphs were prepared using R version 4.3.2, RStudio version 2023.12.0+369 and ggplot2 version 3.5.1.

Supplementary Table 1. Summary of the questions used within SDAC to detect disability and how they align with disability groups.

SDAC Module	Functional impairment and/or limitation	SDAC disability group	Key questions to assess impairment and/or limitation
2.1	Loss of sight	Sensory or speech	Do you/does anyone in the household have any loss of sight? Can you/they see normally wearing glasses or contact lenses?
2.2	Loss of hearing	Sensory or speech	Do you/does anyone in the household have any loss of hearing?
2.3	Speech difficulties	Sensory or speech	Do you/does anyone in the household have anything wrong with your/their speech?
2.4	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have shortness of breath or difficulty breathing? (Note: difficulty breathing must be due to a long-term condition)
2.5	Chronic or recurring pain or discomfort	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort? (Note: recurrent pain should have been experienced at some time in the last 12 months)
2.6	Blackouts, seizures or loss of consciousness	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have blackouts, seizures or loss of consciousness? (Note: any episodes should have occurred within the last 12 months)
2.7	Difficulties learning or understanding things	Intellectual or learning	Do you/does anyone in the household have difficulty learning or understanding things?
2.8	Incomplete use of arms or fingers	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have full use of your/their arms and fingers? (Note: include wrist and elbow problems, joint stiffness)
2.9	Difficulty gripping or holding things	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have difficulty gripping or holding things?
2.10	Incomplete use of feet or legs	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have full use of your/their feet and legs? (Note: include knee and all lower limb problems, joint stiffness)
2.11	Has a nervous or emotional condition	Psychosocial	Do you/does anyone in the household have a nervous or emotional condition? Are you/they having treatment for this condition? Are you/they restricted in everyday activities because of this condition?
2.12	Restricted in physical activities or in doing physical work	Physical	Are you/is anyone in the household restricted in doing everyday physical activity or in doing physical work?
2.13	Disfigurement or deformity	Physical	Do you/does anyone in the household have a disfigurement or deformity? Are you/they restricted in everyday activities because of this disfigurement or deformity? (Note: restrictions may be physical or psychological)
2.14	Needs help or supervision due to mental illness	Psychosocial	Do you/does anyone in the household need to be helped or supervised in doing things because of a mental illness or condition? (Note: include situations where a person with a mental illness may need supervision to prevent dangerous or harmful behaviour)

SDAC Module	Functional impairment and/or limitation	SDAC disability group	Key questions to assess impairment and/or limitation
2.15	Memory problems or periods of confusion	Psychosocial	Do you/does anyone in the household have memory problems or periods of confusion? (Note: any episodes should have occurred within the last 12 months) Are you/they restricted in everyday activities because of this condition?
2.16	Social or behavioural difficulties	Psychosocial	Do you/does anyone in the household have social or behavioural difficulties?
2.17	Head injury, stroke or any other acquired brain injury	Brain injury or stroke	Do you/does anyone in the household ever had a head injury? Do you/they have any long-term effects as a result of the head injury, that interfere with you/them doing everyday activities? Have you/has anyone in the household every had a stroke? Do you/they have any long-term effects as a result of the stroke, that interfere with you/them doing everyday activities? Have you/has anyone in the household every had any other kind of brain damage or acquired brain injury? Do you/they have any long-term effects as a result of the brain damage or acquired brain injury, that interfere with you/them doing everyday activities?
2.18	Receiving treatment for any long-term condition	Other or non-specified	Are you/is anyone in the household receiving treatment or medication for any long-term conditions or ailments? (Note: all treatments or taking of medication must have lasted, or are likely to last, for six months or more) Are you/they restricted in everyday activities even though you/they are receiving treatment or medication for any of the long-term conditions you just mentioned?
2.19	Has other long-term conditions	Other or non-specified	Do you/does anyone in the household have any of these health conditions, or any other conditions, that have lasted or are likely to last for 6 months or more (that you have not yet mentioned)? Are you/they restricted in everyday activities because of this/any of these conditions?

Note: Information in this table is summarised from the SDAC 2018 questionnaire [18].

Appendix 2: Data tables. Demographic, geographic and socioeconomic characteristics of NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants

Supplementary Table 2. Demographic characteristics of people with disability aged 0-64 years, by NDIS participation.

	NDIS participants		Non-NDIS participants	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Age group				
0-4 years	11.2	(8.5, 14.6)	1.1	(0.8, 1.5)
5-9 years	17.7	(14.8, 21.2)	4.1	(3.5, 4.8)
10-14 years	14.8	(12.1, 17.8)	4.9	(4.3, 5.6)
15-19 years	9.2	(6.9, 12.2)	6.2	(5.3, 7.2)
20-24 years	6.1	(4.3, 8.5)	5.5	(4.8, 6.3)
25-29 years	5.3	(3.6, 7.7)	5.7	(5.0, 6.4)
30-34 years	4.1	(2.7, 6.2)	5.3	(4.5, 6.1)
35-39 years	3.8	(2.5, 5.8)	6.7	(6.0, 7.6)
40-44 years	5.0	(3.4, 7.3)	7.4	(6.5, 8.3)
45-49 years	4.7	(3.1, 7.1)	10.3	(9.2, 11.5)
50-54 years	4.8	(3.3, 6.9)	11.9	(11.0, 12.8)
55-59 years	7.4	(5.3, 10.2)	14.7	(13.6, 15.9)
60-64 years	5.9	(4.3, 8.0)	16.2	(15.2, 17.4)
Sex				
Male	64.6	(60.3, 68.8)	48.2	(46.6, 49.8)
Female	35.4	(31.2, 39.7)	51.8	(50.2, 53.4)
Country of birth				
Australia	89.7	(86.8, 92.0)	80.6	(79.0, 82.2)
Not Australia	10.3	(8.0, 13.2)	19.4	(17.8, 21.0)
Proficiency in spoken English				
Only uses English at home	94.3	(91.9, 96.1)	94.0	(92.9, 94.9)
Uses other language at home, speaks English well or very well	3.0	(1.9, 4.7)	4.5	(3.7, 5.4)
Uses other language at home, speaks English not well, not at all or not stated	2.7	(1.6, 4.7)	1.6	(1.2, 2.1)
Marital status (ages 15-64 years)				
Married or defacto	22.1	(17.6, 27.4)	52.3	(50.4, 54.2)
Not married or defacto	77.9	(72.6, 82.4)	47.7	(45.8, 49.6)

Supplementary Table 3. Geographic characteristics of people with disability aged 0-64 years, by NDIS participation.

	NDIS participants		Non-NDIS participants	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
State or territory of usual residence				
New South Wales	28.0	(24.3, 31.9)	28.9	(27.3, 30.4)
Victoria	30.7	(26.9, 34.8)	25.2	(23.5, 27.0)
Queensland	22.0	(18.4, 26.2)	22.5	(20.7, 24.3)
South Australia & Northern Territory	6.3	(4.0, 9.9)	7.8	(6.5, 9.2)
Western Australia	8.0	(6.5, 9.9)	10.2	(9.4, 11.0)
Tasmania	2.8	(1.6, 4.9)	3.3	(2.7, 4.0)
Australian Capital Territory	2.1	(1.4, 3.2)	2.2	(1.9, 2.6)
Remoteness of usual residence				
Major cities	71.4	(66.3, 76.0)	67.2	(65.2, 69.2)
Regional or remote	28.6	(24.0, 33.7)	32.8	(30.8, 34.8)
Tenure and landlord type of dwelling				
Owned outright	13.5	(10.8, 16.8)	20.6	(19.2, 22.1)
Owned with a mortgage	28.2	(23.8, 33.0)	34.1	(32.4, 35.9)
Rented, private	34.5	(30.0, 39.3)	31.2	(29.4, 33.1)
Rented, state or housing authority	8.2	(6.0, 11.2)	4.7	(3.8, 5.6)
Rented, community housing provider	2.8	(1.5, 5.2)	1.7	(1.2, 2.5)
Other tenure type	12.7	(9.8, 16.4)	7.7	(6.7, 8.8)
Whether person lives alone				
Lives alone in household	12.3	(9.6, 15.5)	15.0	(14.1, 16.0)
Doesn't live alone	87.7	(84.5, 90.4)	85.0	(84.0, 85.9)
SEIFA quintiles (Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage, 2016)				
Q1 (lowest)	23.7	(20.0, 27.8)	26.9	(24.7, 29.1)
Q2	25.9	(22.6, 29.4)	21.7	(19.9, 23.5)
Q3	20.8	(17.0, 25.1)	18.2	(16.8, 19.8)
Q4	14.3	(11.9, 17.3)	19.0	(17.4, 20.7)
Q5 (highest)	15.3	(12.0, 19.4)	14.2	(12.8, 15.8)

Supplementary Table 4. Socioeconomic characteristics of people with disability aged 15-64 years (unless otherwise indicated), by NDIS participation.

	NDIS participants		Non-NDIS participants	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Labour force status				
Employed	20.3	(15.7, 25.8)	50.9	(49.0, 52.8)
Unemployed	4.7	(2.8, 7.9)	5.8	(4.9, 6.9)
Not in labour force	75.0	(68.8, 80.3)	43.3	(41.3, 45.3)
Hours usually worked per week (if employed)				
1-14 hours	22.6	(14.0, 34.4)	13.1	(11.4, 14.9)
15-29 hours	33.3	(22.3, 46.4)	19.8	(17.6, 22.1)
30 or more hours	44.1	(32.6, 56.3)	67.2	(64.5, 69.8)
Whether receives Disability Support Pension (DSP)				
Receives DSP	63.2	(56.6, 69.3)	18.5	(17.3, 19.8)
Does not receive DSP	36.8	(30.7, 43.4)	81.5	(80.2, 82.7)
Personal weekly income				
Less than $300	27.1	(22.5, 32.2)	24.3	(23.0, 25.7)
$300-$499	35.2	(29.6, 41.4)	20.4	(19.0, 21.8)
$500-$999	18.1	(14.6, 22.3)	18.4	(16.9, 20.1)
$1000 or more	4.8	(3.0, 7.5)	22.6	(21.0, 24.2)
Not stated	14.8	(10.8, 19.8)	14.3	(12.9, 15.8)
Family weekly income (ages 0-64 years)				
Less than $999	26.8	(22.6, 31.5)	28.4	(26.8, 30.1)
$1000-$1749	20.4	(17.1, 24.3)	18.3	(16.9, 19.7)
$1750-$2499	10.9	(8.2, 14.4)	11.3	(10.2, 12.6)
$2500-$3499	7.1	(5.0, 10.0)	9.2	(8.1, 10.4)
$3500 or more	6.9	(5.0, 9.3)	8.2	(7.3, 9.4)
Unknown	27.9	(23.2, 33.1)	24.6	(22.7, 26.6)
Highest level of education				
Bachelor or above	13.1	(9.2, 18.4)	19.9	(18.4, 21.4)
Diploma or Certificate	20.8	(16.0, 26.8)	36.6	(34.4, 38.9)
Year 12	24.5	(19.7, 30.1)	12.7	(11.4, 14.2)
Not completed Year 12	41.5	(35.6, 47.6)	30.8	(28.8, 32.8)
Engaged in employment, education and training				
Engaged	33.1	(27.2, 39.5)	57.8	(56.0, 59.6)
Not engaged	66.9	(60.5, 72.8)	42.2	(40.4, 44.0)
Whether enrolled in educational institution				
Student (FT or PT)	14.7	(11.1, 19.3)	13.4	(12.2, 14.6)
Not a student	85.3	(80.7, 88.9)	86.6	(85.4, 87.8)
Attends school (ages 5-20 years)				
Attending school	83.7	(77.3, 88.5)	76.9	(72.7, 80.6)
Not attending school	16.3	(11.5, 22.7)	23.1	(19.4, 27.3)

Appendix 3: Data tables. Disability characteristics and support needs of NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants

Supplementary Table 5. Disability characteristics of people aged 0-64 years with disability, by NDIS participation.

	NDIS participants		Non-NDIS participants	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Disability groups				
Sensory or speech	47.3	(43.2, 51.4)	19.3	(18.1, 20.5)
Intellectual or learning	56.6	(52.2, 60.8)	16.6	(15.3, 18.0)
Physical	46.2	(42.3, 50.1)	59.1	(57.5, 60.8)
Psychosocial	58.2	(53.5, 62.7)	27.2	(25.7, 28.9)
Brain injury or stroke	11.8	(9.6, 14.4)	5.9	(5.1, 6.9)
Other or non-specified	40.8	(37.0, 44.7)	41.5	(39.7, 43.3)
Number of disability groups per person				
1 disability group	27.4	(23.8, 31.3)	57.2	(55.5, 58.9)
2 disability groups	25.9	(22.0, 30.2)	25.0	(23.6, 26.5)
3 disability groups	21.0	(17.7, 24.7)	11.3	(10.1, 12.6)
4 disability groups	13.2	(10.8, 16.0)	4.4	(3.7, 5.2)
5 disability groups	9.5	(7.4, 12.1)	1.5	(1.2, 2.0)
6 disability groups	3.1	(2.1, 4.6)	0.6	(0.3, 0.9)
Disability severity				
Profoundly or severely limited in core activities	74.8	(71.6, 77.8)	22.1	(20.7, 23.6)
Moderately limited in core activities	5.5	(4.1, 7.3)	14.2	(13.2, 15.2)
Mildly limited in core activities	12.1	(9.4, 15.5)	33.1	(31.6, 34.7)
Schooling or employment restriction only	4.9	(3.3, 7.0)	14.4	(13.4, 15.5)
No specific restrictions	2.7	(1.5, 4.8)	16.2	(14.9, 17.6)
For people who were profoundly or severely limited in core activities, could manage without difficulty to look after oneself for:				
Less than 1 hour	66.3	(57.8, 74.0)	86.5	(83.0, 89.3)
A few hours	53.1	(45.2, 60.8)	76.1	(71.5, 80.1)
Less than 1 day	31.8	(24.1, 40.6)	55.8	(50.9, 60.5)
A few days	15.5	(10.4, 22.6)	37.9	(33.9, 42.1)

Supplementary Table 6. Support needs of people aged 0-64 years with disability, by NDIS participation.

	NDIS participants		Non-NDIS participants	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Need for assistance undertaking daily activities				
Communication	41.1	(37.0, 45.4)	4.9	(4.1, 6.0)
Mobility	59.0	(55.5, 62.5)	15.8	(14.7, 16.9)
Self-care	46.5	(42.8, 50.2)	9.9	(9.0, 10.8)
Cognitive or emotional tasks	67.1	(63.2, 70.8)	27.1	(25.5, 28.8)
Health care, including footcare	49.7	(45.8, 53.7)	18.1	(16.9, 19.5)
Household chores	27.3	(23.9, 31.0)	15.6	(14.3, 16.9)
Meal preparation	22.6	(19.4, 26.2)	5.2	(4.6, 5.8)
Property maintenance	24.1	(21.0, 27.6)	18.9	(17.6, 20.4)
Reading or writing	23.1	(19.9, 26.7)	6.7	(6.1, 7.5)
Transport	66.7	(62.2, 70.8)	29.4	(28.0, 30.9)
Equipment or aids used when undertaking daily activities				
Showering or bathing	13.2	(10.4, 16.5)	4.6	(3.8, 5.4)
Toileting	8.7	(6.4, 11.7)	2.1	(1.6, 2.8)
Managing incontinence	7.3	(5.1, 10.2)	1.9	(1.5, 2.5)
Dressing	3.6	(2.1, 6.1)	1.0	(0.7, 1.4)
Eating	3.4	(2.1, 5.5)	0.5	(0.3, 0.8)
Meal preparation	6.3	(4.3, 9.1)	1.6	(1.3, 2.1)
Getting into or out of a bed or chair	6.0	(4.1, 8.7)	2.4	(1.9, 2.9)
Moving about place of residence	9.9	(7.7, 12.7)	3.5	(2.8, 4.2)
Moving around places away from residence	16.7	(13.7, 20.1)	5.6	(5.0, 6.4)
Communication	29.2	(25.0, 33.8)	21.0	(19.8, 22.3)
Managing health conditions using medical aids	15.0	(12.5, 17.9)	15.2	(14.0, 16.4)
Number of activities person uses equipment or aids for				
0	51.9	(47.4, 56.4)	62.6	(61.1, 64.0)
1-5	41.9	(37.5, 46.3)	36.6	(35.1, 38.0)
6 or more	6.2	(4.2, 9.1)	0.9	(0.6, 1.2)

Appendix 4. Comparison of people with disability to people without disability

Prevalence of disability

Key findings

- 1 in 8 (12.3%) people in Australia aged under 65 years had a disability.
- Approximately 2.2 million Australians aged under 65 years had a disability.

Around 1 in 8 (12.3%) people in Australia aged under 65 years had a disability (Supplementary Table 7). This represents 2.2 million Australians aged under 65 years with disability.

Supplementary Table 7: Percentage of people aged under 65 years, by disability status.

	%	95% CI	Population size
People with disability	12.3	(11.9, 12.8)	2,240,781
People without disability	87.7	(87.2, 88.1)	15,904,944

Demographic characteristics

Key findings

- People with disability were more likely to be older than people without disability, with 1 in 2 (55.9%) aged 40-64 years.
- People with disability were equally likely to be male or female.

Age

When we looked at the age distribution of Australians with disability aged under 65 years, we saw a greater proportion of people in the older age bands, with more than half (55.9%) aged 40-64 years (Supplementary Figure 2). But we saw a different age distribution for people without disability, with similar proportions of people in each 5-year age band starting from 0-4 years up to 60-64 years.

Another way to consider the age difference between people with and without disability is look at the mean age of each group. The group of people with disability had a mean age of 39.2 years (95% CI: 38.7, 39.8). In comparison, people without disability were on average younger, with a mean age of 31.0 years (95% CI: 30.9, 31.1).

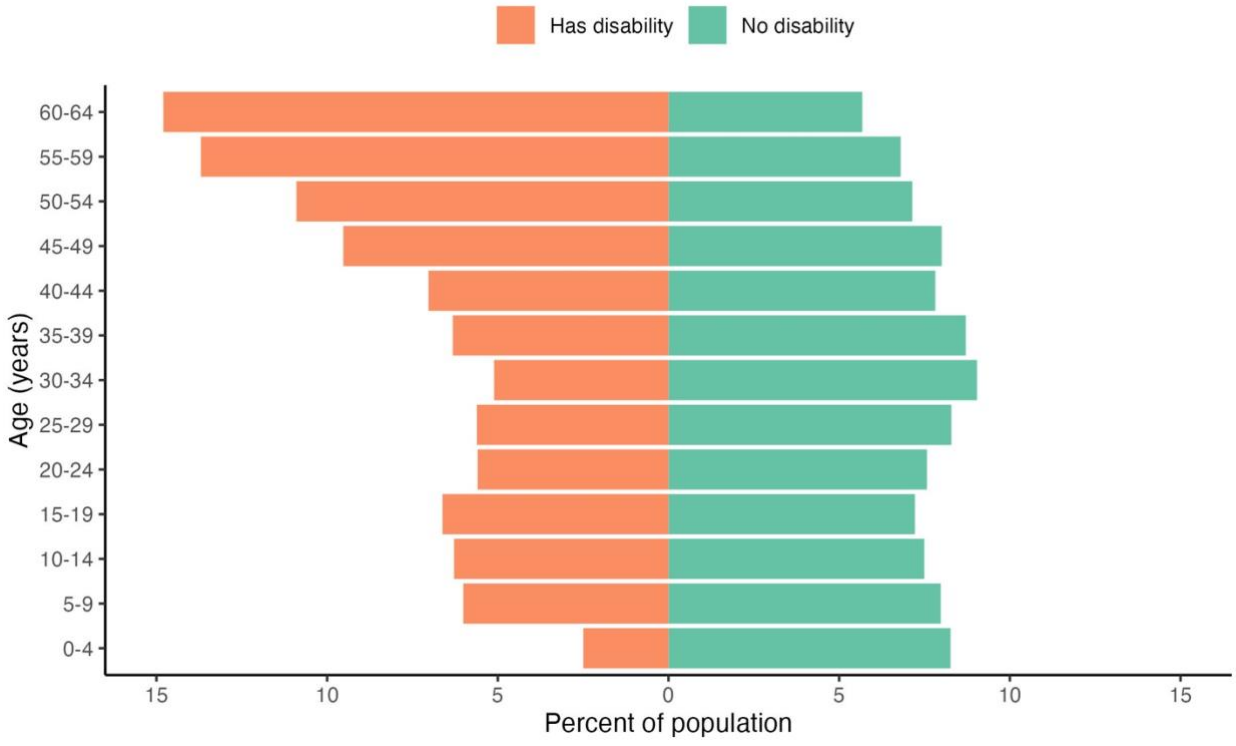
Sex

The proportion of males to females in people aged under 65 years was almost 50:50 for both people with disability and people without disability (Supplementary Figure 3).

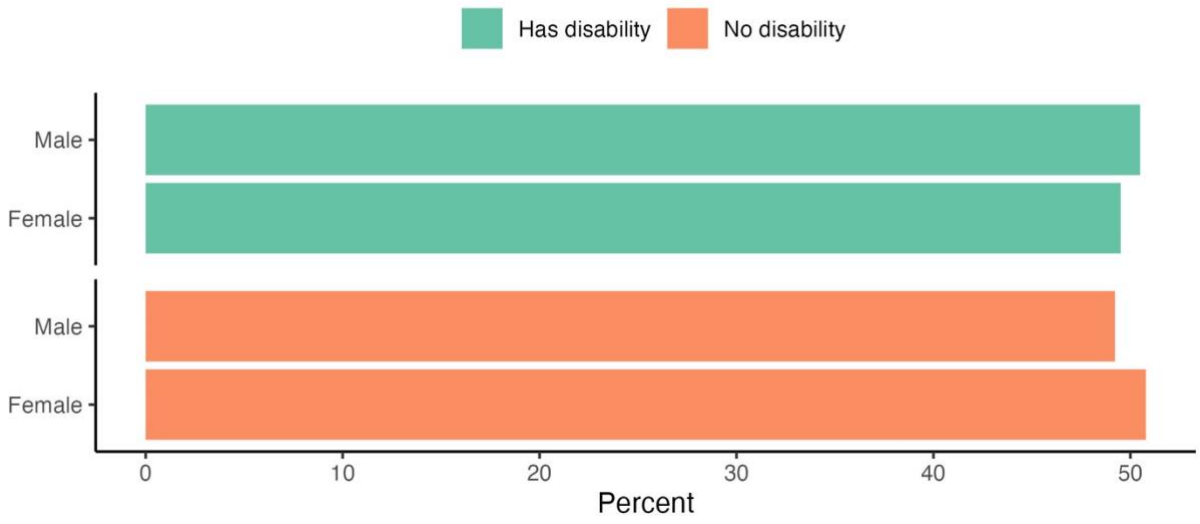
Other demographic characteristics

Additional data about personal characteristics, including country of birth, proficiency in English language, and marital status, can be found in Appendix 5, Supplementary Table 8.

Supplementary Figure 2. Population pyramid showing the age distribution of people aged under 65 years, by disability status.



Supplementary Figure 3. Population sex distribution of people aged under 65, by disability status.



Geographic characteristics

Key findings

- The distribution by state or territory was similar for people with and without disability.
- 1 in 3 (32.2%) people with disability aged under 65 years lived in regional or remote areas.

State of residence

When considering how people were distributed across Australia in terms of the state or territory in which they lived, there was little difference between people with disability and people without disability. See Appendix 5, Supplementary Table 9.

Remoteness of residence

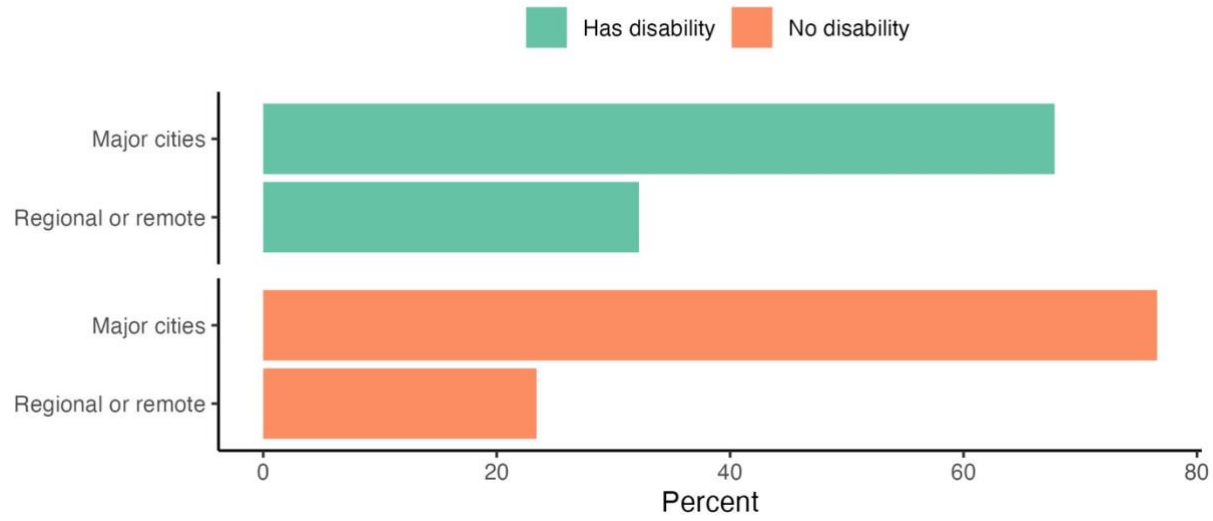
There was a geographical difference in terms of the remoteness of where people lived, such that people with disability were more likely to live outside of major cities (Supplementary Figure 4).

While 1 in 3 (32.2%) people with disability aged under 65 years lived in regional or remote areas, only 1 in 4 (23.4%) people aged under 65 years without disability lived in regional or remote areas. This is noteworthy because it indicates that there is a higher need per capita in regional and remote areas for disability services and supports for people aged under 65 years than there is within major cities.

Other geographic characteristics

Additional data about characteristics relating to housing tenure, whether people live alone, and SEIFA quintiles (Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage) can be found in Appendix 5, Supplementary Table 9.

Supplementary Figure 4. Remoteness of where people live for people aged under 65 years, by disability status.



Socioeconomic characteristics

Key findings

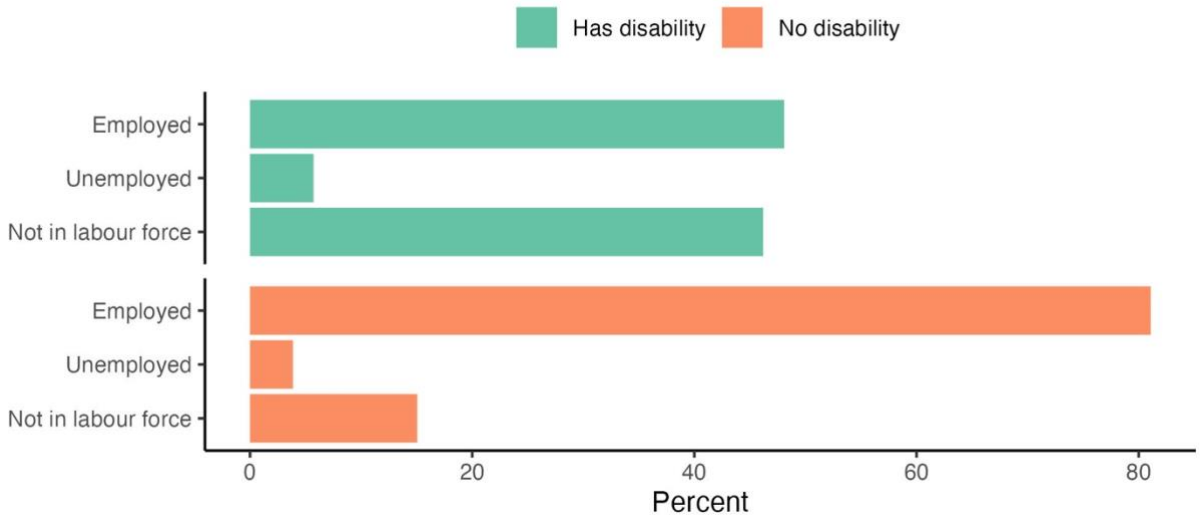
- 1 in 2 (51.8%) people with disability aged 15-64 years were unemployed or not in the labour force, compared to 1 in 5 (19.0%) people without disability.
- People with disability who were employed were more likely to work reduced hours.
- 1 in 4 (22.6%) people with disability aged 15-64 years received the Disability Support Pension.
- A personal weekly income of less than $500 was reported by 1 in 2 (46.4%) people with disability aged 15-64 years, compared to 1 in 4 (25%) people without disability.
- A family weekly income of less than $1750 was reported by 1 in 2 (46.8%) people with disability aged under 65 years, compared to 1 in 4 (26.2%) people without disability.

Employment and hours worked

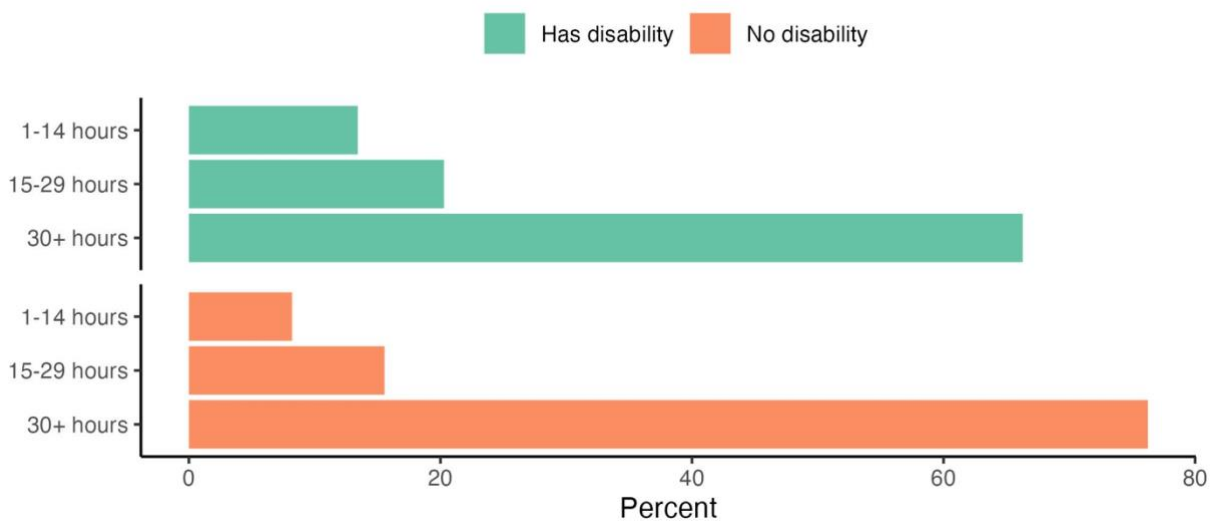
1 in 2 (51.8%) people with disability aged 15-64 years were unemployed or not in the labour force, compared to 1 in 5 (19.0%) people without disability aged 15-64 years (Supplementary Figure 5).

People with disability aged 15-64 years who were employed were more likely to work reduced hours per week than people without disability aged 15-64 years who were employed (Supplementary Figure 6).

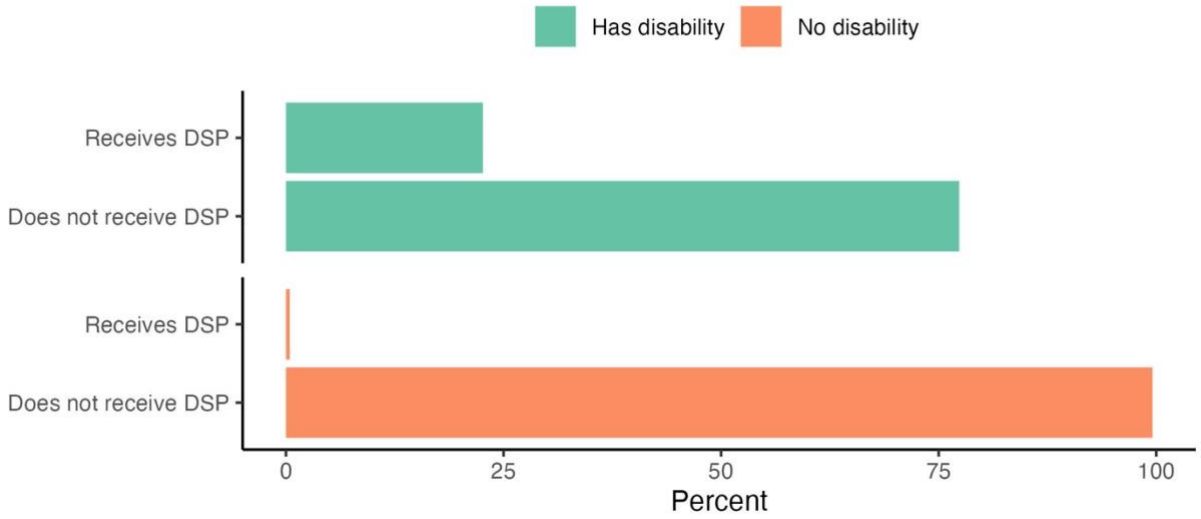
Supplementary Figure 5. Labour force status of people aged 15-64 years, by disability status.



Supplementary Figure 6. Hours usually worked per week (if employed) by people aged 15-64 years, by disability status.



Supplementary Figure 7. Disability Support Pension (DSP) receipt by people aged 15-64 years, by disability status.



Disability Support Pension

Around 1 in 4 (22.6%) people with disability aged 15-64 years received DSP. In comparison, less than 1% of people without disability received DSP (Supplementary Figure 7).

Weekly income

People with disability aged 15-64 years had lower personal weekly income than people without disability (Supplementary Figure 8). A personal weekly income of less than $500 was reported by almost 1 in 2 (46.4%) people with disability aged 15-64 years, compared to 1 in 4 (25.0%) people without disability.

It must be considered that 14-19% of respondents in each of both comparison groups did not state their personal income.

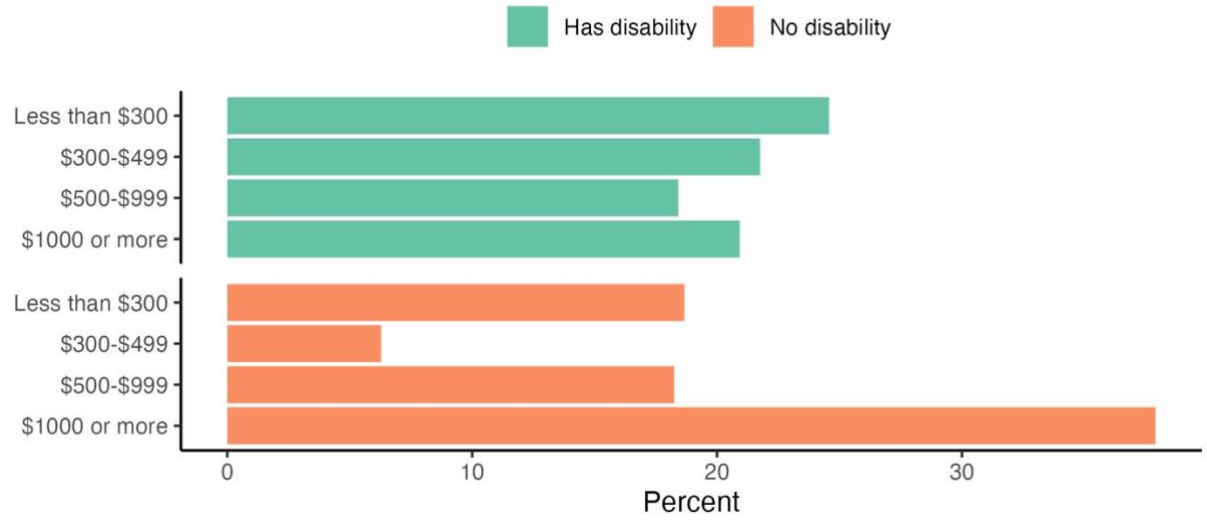
People with disability aged under 65 years had lower family weekly income than people without disability (Supplementary Figure 9). A family weekly income of less than $1750 was reported by almost 1 in 2 (46.8%) people with disability aged under 65 years, compared to 1 in 4 (26.2%) people without disability.

Similar to the issue that occurred with personal weekly income, it must be considered that family weekly income could not be calculated for 25-28% of respondents in each of both comparison groups. The proportion of missing values is higher for family income than it was for personal income since family income could only be calculated if personal weekly income was available for all family members aged 15 years and over.

Other socioeconomic characteristics

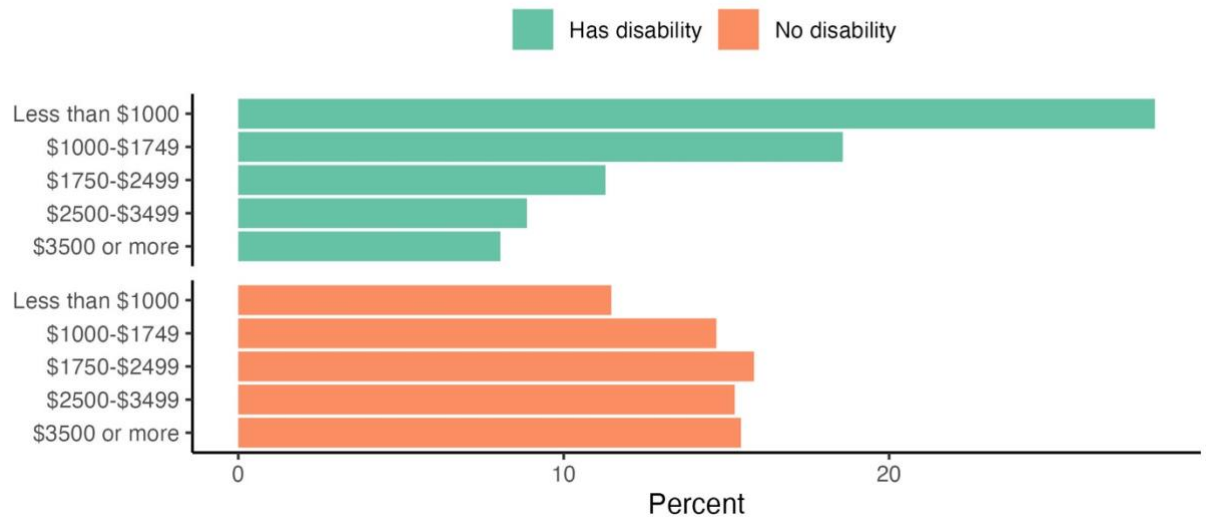
Additional data about employment and educational characteristics can be found in Appendix 5, Supplementary Table 10.

Supplementary Figure 8. Personal weekly income of people aged 15-64 years, by disability status.



Note: while it is not shown in this figure, personal weekly income was "not stated" for 14-19% of people in both groups.

Supplementary Figure 9. Family weekly income of people aged under years, by disability status.



Note: while it is not shown in this figure, family weekly income could not be determined for 25-28% of people in both groups.

Appendix 5: Data tables. Comparison of people with and without disability

Supplementary Table 8. Demographic characteristics of people aged 0-64 years, by disability status.

	People with disability		People without disability	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Age group				
0-4 years	2.5	(2.0, 3.1)	8.3	(8.1, 8.4)
5-9 years	6.0	(5.4, 6.7)	8.0	(7.9, 8.1)
10-14 years	6.3	(5.7, 6.9)	7.5	(7.3, 7.6)
15-19 years	6.6	(5.8, 7.6)	7.2	(7.0, 7.4)
20-24 years	5.6	(4.9, 6.4)	7.6	(7.4, 7.8)
25-29 years	5.6	(5.0, 6.3)	8.3	(8.1, 8.5)
30-34 years	5.1	(4.4, 5.9)	9.0	(8.9, 9.2)
35-39 years	6.3	(5.7, 7.0)	8.7	(8.6, 8.9)
40-44 years	7.0	(6.2, 7.9)	7.8	(7.7, 8.0)
45-49 years	9.5	(8.6, 10.6)	8.0	(7.8, 8.2)
50-54 years	10.9	(10.1, 11.7)	7.1	(7.0, 7.3)
55-59 years	13.7	(12.8, 14.7)	6.8	(6.7, 7.0)
60-64 years	14.8	(13.9, 15.8)	5.7	(5.5, 5.8)
Sex				
Male	50.5	(49.2, 51.8)	49.2	(49.0, 49.5)
Female	49.5	(48.2, 50.8)	50.8	(50.5, 51.0)
Country of birth				
Australia	81.9	(80.4, 83.3)	74.2	(73.4, 74.9)
Not Australia	18.1	(16.7, 19.6)	25.8	(25.1, 26.6)
Proficiency in spoken English				
Only uses English at home	94.0	(93.0, 94.9)	88.0	(87.3, 88.7)
Uses other language at home, speaks English well or very well	4.3	(3.6, 5.1)	10.1	(9.5, 10.8)
Uses other language at home, speaks English not well, not at all or not stated	1.7	(1.3, 2.2)	1.9	(1.7, 2.1)
Marital status (ages 15-64 years)				
Married or defacto	50.5	(48.7, 52.3)	62.5	(61.8, 63.1)
Not married or defacto	49.5	(47.7, 51.3)	37.5	(36.9, 38.2)

Supplementary Table 9. Geographic characteristics of people aged 0-64 years, by disability status.

	People with disability		People without disability	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
State or territory of usual residence				
New South Wales	28.7	(27.2, 30.3)	31.6	(31.1, 32.1)
Victoria	26.0	(24.4, 27.6)	26.9	(26.4, 27.4)
Queensland	22.4	(20.8, 24.1)	19.7	(19.3, 20.0)
South Australia & Northern Territory	7.6	(6.4, 8.9)	7.4	(7.1, 7.7)
Western Australia	9.9	(9.2, 10.7)	10.8	(10.7, 11.0)
Tasmania	3.2	(2.6, 4.0)	1.9	(1.8, 2.0)
Australian Capital Territory	2.2	(1.9, 2.6)	1.7	(1.6, 1.8)
Remoteness of usual residence				
Major cities	67.8	(65.7, 69.9)	76.6	(75.5, 77.6)
Regional or remote	32.2	(30.1, 34.3)	23.4	(22.4, 24.5)
Tenure and landlord type of dwelling				
Owned outright	19.7	(18.4, 21.0)	16.7	(15.9, 17.6)
Owned with a mortgage	33.3	(31.5, 35.1)	44.2	(43.2, 45.2)
Rented, private	31.7	(29.8, 33.6)	29.5	(28.6, 30.5)
Rented, state or housing authority	5.2	(4.3, 6.2)	1.2	(1.0, 1.4)
Rented, community housing provider	1.8	(1.3, 2.6)	0.4	(0.3, 0.5)
Other tenure type	8.4	(7.4, 9.5)	8.0	(7.5, 8.5)
Whether person lives alone				
Lives alone in household	14.6	(13.8, 15.5)	5.3	(5.1, 5.5)
Doesn't live alone	85.4	(84.5, 86.2)	94.7	(94.5, 94.9)
SEIFA quintiles (Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage, 2016)				
Q1 (lowest)	26.4	(24.4, 28.5)	15.9	(15.5, 16.3)
Q2	22.2	(20.6, 23.9)	18.7	(18.2, 19.1)
Q3	18.6	(17.1, 20.2)	19.9	(19.3, 20.4)
Q4	18.4	(17.0, 19.9)	22.6	(22.2, 23.0)
Q5 (highest)	14.4	(13.0, 15.9)	23.0	(22.6, 23.5)

Supplementary Table A10. Socioeconomic characteristics of people aged 15-64 years (unless otherwise indicated), by disability status.

	People with disability		People without disability	
	%	95% CI	%	95% CI
Labour force status				
Employed	48.1	(46.3, 49.9)	81.1	(80.6, 81.5)
Unemployed	5.7	(4.9, 6.7)	3.9	(3.6, 4.1)
Not in labour force	46.2	(44.3, 48.1)	15.1	(14.6, 15.5)
Hours usually worked per week (if employed)				
1-14 hours	13.4	(11.7, 15.4)	8.2	(7.7, 8.7)
15-29 hours	20.3	(18.1, 22.6)	15.6	(15.0, 16.2)
30 or more hours	66.3	(63.6, 68.9)	76.2	(75.5, 77.0)
Whether receives Disability Support Pension (DSP)				
Receives DSP	22.6	(21.3, 24.0)	0.4	(0.4, 0.5)
Does not receive DSP	77.4	(76.0, 78.7)	99.6	(99.5, 99.6)
Personal weekly income				
Less than $300	24.6	(23.3, 25.9)	18.7	(18.1, 19.2)
$300-$499	21.8	(20.4, 23.2)	6.3	(6.0, 6.6)
$500-$999	18.4	(16.9, 20.0)	18.2	(17.7, 18.8)
$1000 or more	20.9	(19.5, 22.5)	37.9	(37.1, 38.7)
Not stated	14.3	(13.0, 15.7)	18.9	(18.1, 19.8)
Family weekly income (ages 0-64 years)				
Less than $999	28.2	(26.6, 29.8)	11.5	(10.9, 12.0)
$1000-$1749	18.6	(17.2, 20.1)	14.7	(14.0, 15.4)
$1750-$2499	11.3	(10.1, 12.6)	15.8	(15.1, 16.6)
$2500-$3499	8.9	(7.8, 10.0)	15.3	(14.5, 16.0)
$3500 or more	8.1	(7.1, 9.1)	15.4	(14.6, 16.4)
Unknown	25.0	(23.1, 27.1)	27.3	(26.2, 28.4)
Highest level of education				
Bachelor or above	19.2	(17.9, 20.7)	33.6	(32.9, 34.4)
Diploma or Certificate	35.2	(33.1, 37.4)	30.3	(29.6, 31.0)
Year 12	13.8	(12.5, 15.3)	17.9	(17.3, 18.5)
Not completed Year 12	31.8	(29.8, 33.8)	18.2	(17.6, 18.8)
Engaged in employment, education and training				
Engaged	55.5	(53.8, 57.2)	87.8	(87.4, 88.2)
Not engaged	44.5	(42.8, 46.2)	12.2	(11.8, 12.6)
Whether enrolled in educational institution				
Student (FT or PT)	13.5	(12.4, 14.6)	18.7	(18.2, 19.2)
Not a student	86.5	(85.4, 87.6)	81.3	(80.8, 81.8)
Attends school (ages 5-20 years)				
Attending school	78.9	(75.8, 81.7)	78.5	(77.5, 79.4)
Not attending school	21.1	(18.3, 24.2)	21.5	(20.6, 22.5)