

Facts about people with disability and people who experience mental illness in Australia.

The 2003 Australian Bureau of Statistics' Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers indicated that:

Almost twenty per cent of Australians (just under 4 million people) have a disability. 3.3 million people in this group (17.1 per cent of the total population) say they are restricted in carrying out one or more daily activities - such as self care (eg. bathing, dressing and personal hygiene tasks), mobility (eg. physically moving around in their homes and using public/private transport to access the community) and communication (eg. talking or signalling what they need and want in a way that is understandable to others).

1 in 5 Australians will experience some form of mental illness during their lives

As people age, the rate of disability increases.

7 percent of people with disabilities (279,500) live in care accommodation such as hostels, institutions, supported accommodation in the community, in retirement homes or in children's homes.

79% of people with disability live in households with partners, relatives or friends who informally help with one or more of their daily activities. Even some of these people need 'top up' assistance from formal government and non-government service providers. That leaves 21% of people with disabilities who get all their assistance with daily living tasks elsewhere, through government funding and/or charitable assistance.

The usual assistance required is to move around or go out, shower or dress, prepare meals, do housework, undertake light property maintenance, complete paperwork or communicate.

Relative to the non-disabled population, less people with disability work. 53 per cent of people with disabilities between 15 and 64 years were employed in 2003, compared with 81 per cent of people without disabilities.

The unemployment rate experienced by people with disability is significantly higher than the general population. 8.6 per cent of people with disabilities were unemployed (that is, they were actively seeking work) compared with 5 per cent of people without disabilities.

Should you require more detailed statistics on disability matters, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) offers consultancy services on a user-pays basis. Go to the ABS Website: www.abs.gov.au.