



People with disability in Australia 2026

Summary fact sheet 1: How many people have disability?

About this fact sheet

This fact sheet is part of a series summarising key findings from the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report. Each fact sheet presents information about experiences and outcomes for people with disability in a selected life area.

In these fact sheets and the *People with disability in Australia* report, disability is an umbrella term that includes impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions (for more information, refer to '[Defining disability](#)'). Increasingly, disability is recognised as something that affects most people, directly or indirectly, to varying degrees and at different life stages.



In 2022, there were an estimated **5.5 million** Australians with disability (**21%** of the total population).

Most (97%) people with disability live **in the community** (in households), and 3.3% live in cared accommodation such as group homes or aged care facilities.

People with disability are diverse. They have different types of disability and different support needs, and come from all demographic and socioeconomic groups. For example, of people with disability in 2022:

- 51% were female
- 9.4% were aged under 15, 49% were aged 15–64, and 42% were aged 65 and over
- 3.5% (of those living in households) identified as First Nations people
- 26% were born overseas, including 15% in non-English speaking countries
- 25% reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition (the condition causing them the most problems) and 75% reported a physical disorder as their main condition
- 37% had severe or profound disability – that is, needed assistance with one or more core activities of self-care, mobility, and communication
- 51% (of those aged 5 and over and living in households) had a schooling or employment restriction.

6 in 10 people with disability living in households needed **assistance with one or more activities** of daily living:

- 30% needed assistance with health care
- 25% needed assistance with cognitive or emotional tasks
- 25% needed assistance with mobility
- 46% of those aged 65 and over needed assistance with property maintenance (24% of those aged 15–64).

Disability rates increase with age – the longer people live, the more likely they are to experience some form of disability. In 2022:

- 11% of children aged 0–14 years had disability
- 14% of people aged 15–24 years had disability
- 17% of people aged 25–64 years had disability
- 52% of people aged 65 years and over had disability.

The rate of disability in Australia increased between 2018 and 2022, from 18% to 21%. This could be because people have a better understanding of disability now than they did in the past. It could also be because some health conditions have become more common, or because new 2022 data collection methods were better at identifying disability.

People in Australia are living longer. As life expectancy goes up, so do the numbers of years people can expect to live with and without disability. Living with disability does not mean poor health, and the years lived with and without disability are equally valuable. Knowing the number of years people are expected to live with and without disability helps shape policies and services to support good health, independence, and community involvement.

- **Boys born in 2003** could expect to live 78 years on average, of them 59 years without disability and 19 years with disability. **Girls born in 2003** could expect to live 83 years on average, of them 62 years without disability and 21 years with disability.
- **Boys born in 2022** can expect to live 81 years on average, of them 62 years without disability and 20 years with disability. **Girls born in 2022** can expect to live 85 years on average, of them 64 years without disability and 22 years with disability.

Where can I find out more?

More information about how many people have disability, types of disability, activities people with disability need assistance with, use of aids by people with disability, and disability-free life expectancy can be found in '[Disability population and characteristics of disability](#)' chapter of the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report.

Where did these data come from?

All findings in this fact sheet are based on data from the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022. They either come from ABS (2024) Summary of Findings, or were derived by the AIHW from the ABS detailed microdata. For more information about specific data sources, refer to '[Disability population and characteristics of disability](#)' chapter of the *People with disability in Australia 2026* report.