bulletin 134

Disability support services: services provided under the National Disability Agreement 2014–15

Summary

Around 333,800 people used disability support services

In 2014–15, around 333,800 people used disability support services under the National Disability Agreement (NDA)—a 6% increase since 2010–11 and a 4% increase since 2013–14.

Nearly 1 in 2 service users used community support services

The most common service group used was community support (45%), followed by employment (44%), community access (17%), accommodation support (13%) and respite (11%).

Almost 3 in 4 service users were aged under 50

Around three-quarters (73%) of service users were aged under 50, with an average age of 35. Most service users were male (59%) and they were generally younger, with an average age of 32. Six per cent of service users were aged 65 and over.

Over 2 in 5 service users had an intellectual or learning disability

Many service users had an intellectual or learning disability (44%), 41% had a physical or diverse disability, 29% had a psychiatric disability and 18% had a sensory or speech disability.

Nearly 1 in 3 service users were not in the labour force

Close to one-third (30%) of service users aged 15 and over were not in the labour force. Of those in the labour force, over two-thirds (67%) were unemployed. Indigenous service users aged 15 and over who were in the labour force were less likely to be employed (22%) than their non-Indigenous counterparts (33%).

Almost 2 in 3 service users had an informal carer

Around 2 in 3 service users (65%) had an informal carer, most often their mother (72%). Over 1 in 10 service users (12%) had an informal carer who was aged 65 or over.

Around 1,900 service users transitioned to the NDIS

Around 1,900 NDA service users transitioned to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) during the year. While the NDIS is expected to largely replace the current provision of services to people with disability under the NDA, at present most users of disability services are still receiving support under the NDA and the associated data remain the main source for reporting. These data can also provide important contextual information for the implementation and operation of the NDIS.

Contents

1   The disability services environment

The disability services environment has undergone significant change in recent years, with the endorsement of the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 in February 2011, the revision of the National Disability Agreement (NDA) in December 2012, and the staged implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) from 1 July 2013. Eventually it is expected that most of the services provided under the NDA will be replaced by the NDIS. However, until the NDIS is fully rolled out, the responsibilities under the NDA remain in place and NDA data are the key source for reporting on the provision of disability support services in Australia.

1.1   The National Disability Strategy

The National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 (COAG 2011) outlines the shared national vision for achieving improved outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. The strategy is an important mechanism to ensure that the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN 2006) are incorporated into policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers. It looks beyond support provided under both the NDA and the NDIS, and covers all people with disability, irrespective of whether they require specialised disability services. The strategy is intended to drive improvements in access to mainstream services, promote a more inclusive approach to the design of policies and programs, and ensure that all people with disability can participate and fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

1.2   The National Disability Agreement

Iterations of the NDA have governed the provision of disability support services in Australia since 1991. The latest replaced the previous Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement in January 2009, and was revised in December 2012 as a result of national health reforms.

Under the NDA, Australian governments fund a range of disability support services that aim to ensure that 'people with disability and their carers have an enhanced quality of life and participate as valued members of the community'. Eligibility requirements may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and the actual service a person can receive is largely subject to the availability of services (for example, based on the number of available places in particular programs). Services are mainly delivered by 'block-funded' providers, with funding allocated directly to the provider to deliver services. Some alternative forms of funding are also available. These include 'individualised' or 'self-directed' funding, where funds are allocated to a provider for a particular service user; and 'self-managed' funding, where funds are allocated directly to the service user to then purchase services.

Information on the use of NDA services is collected in the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (DS NMDS) (see Box 1.1). In 2014–15, around 333,800 people used disability support services under the NDA (see Table 2.2). The number of service users has generally increased over the 5 years to 2014–15—by 6% since 2010–11, and by 4% between 2013–14 and 2014–15 (see Table 2.3). When service users who only used open employment services are excluded (see Box 1.2), around 217,100 people used NDA services in 2014–15—an increase of less than 1% since 2010–11, and a decrease of just over 1% between 2013–14 and 2014–15 (see Table 2.3).

> **Box 1.1: The Disability Services National Minimum Data Set**
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> The DS NMDS is an annual collection and national collation of a standard set of data items on disability support services provided under the NDA. Data are collected from service users by funded agencies and provided to jurisdictions, which in turn provide the data to the AIHW for national collation and reporting.
>
> Further information on the DS NMDS can be found on the AIHW website, <www.aihw.gov.au>. This includes: a set of supplementary tables to this bulletin; data cubes; and technical information, such as data definitions and the data quality statement (including information on scope and interpretability).
>
> In particular, readers should note that:
>
> - service user data are not collected for all NDA service types (see Section 2 and AIHW 2015 for more information)
> - counts of service users are estimates after use of a statistical linkage key to account for individuals who received services from more than one service type outlet during the 12-month period (see the data quality statement for more information).

1.3   The National Disability Insurance Scheme

In July 2012, in response to the Productivity Commission's final report on the inquiry into disability care and support (PC 2011), the Australian Government announced the introduction of the NDIS.

The NDIS is intended to help people who have a significant and permanent disability and who need assistance with everyday activities. The scheme is underpinned by an insurance model and each individual seeking access is assessed according to a common set of criteria. Individuals who are deemed eligible receive a package of funding to purchase the supports identified in their individualised plan.

Because of the fundamental change to service provision, the NDIS is being rolled out in stages, starting in trial sites from July 2013 before transitioning to full scheme implementation. Relevant to the period covered in this bulletin, the NDIS trial sites began:

- from 1 July 2013 in:
    - South Australia—for children from birth to age 14
    - Tasmania—for young people aged 15–24
    - Barwon area of Victoria—for people aged up to 65 (Indigenous people aged up to 50)
    - Hunter area of New South Wales—for people aged up to 65 (Indigenous people aged up to 50)
- from 1 July 2014, for people aged up to 65 in:
    - Australian Capital Territory
    - Barkly region of Northern Territory
    - Perth hills area of Western Australia.

The trial sites in South Australia and Tasmania can be considered age-specific, while those in the other jurisdictions are largely regionally based according to existing state disability service regions.

All states and territories, except Western Australia, have signed Heads of Agreement with the Australian Government confirming the broad time frame for the NDIS transition in their jurisdiction. The details of introduction in each jurisdiction, such as which regions and/or age groups will transition and when, are set out in bilateral agreements between the Australian Government and the individual state and territory governments. More information on the roll-out of the NDIS can be found in these agreements and on the NDIS website (COAG 2014; NDIA 2016).

The Western Australian Government has not yet agreed to full roll-out and is running a concurrent trial based on its My Way model. An independent evaluation of the two models is expected later in 2016 and will inform discussions on possible options for transition to the NDIS in Western Australia.

Data on the NDIS are collected by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), an independent statutory agency whose role is to implement the NDIS, and are published in quarterly reports.

1.4   Transition of NDA service users to the NDIS

With the progressive roll-out of the NDIS across Australia, it is expected that many existing NDA service users will transition to the NDIS and exit from the DS NMDS collection over time. Those deemed eligible to join the NDIS may choose to maintain their current support arrangements once they move across to the NDIS, or change them, provided they are consistent with the legislation under which the NDIS operates.

Not all NDA service users, however, will be eligible for the NDIS, including those aged 65 and over. Also, while some specialist disability support programs will be rolled into the NDIS, others will continue once the NDIS is introduced (see Box 1.2). Governments have committed to ensuring that people who currently use specialist disability support programs and who are not eligible for the NDIS, or who are accessing programs that will not be rolled into the NDIS, are not disadvantaged with the introduction of the NDIS. To this end, governments have put in place 'continuity of support' arrangements to enable people to achieve similar outcomes to their current support outcomes.

Box 1.2: Open employment services

Open employment services (Disability Employment Services), which are provided under the NDA and collected as part of the DS NMDS, will not be rolled into the NDIS. To provide data that better align with the types of services and service users shifting to the NDIS over time, data excluding service users who only used open employment services are included in selected tables in this bulletin and in the supplementary tables (see, for example, tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 and supplementary tables S3.1–S3.5).

The NDIA will collect detailed information about service users once they transition to the NDIS—that is, once the service user has an approved plan, and funding is available through the NDIA. At this point, there is no need for jurisdictions to continue reporting these service users in the DS NMDS. This includes service users receiving some component of their services from jurisdictions as 'cash' contributions (that is, full funding responsibility transfers to the NDIA) or 'in-kind' contributions (that is, funding and

contract management responsibility remains with jurisdictions in the short to medium term). A person might appear in both collections in the year they transition—in the DS NMDS until they transition, and then in the NDIA data for the remaining part of the year. These transitioned service users will not appear in subsequent years' DS NMDS data unless they exit the NDIS and return to using NDA services.

Data from the DS NMDS show that around 1,900 NDA service users transitioned to the NDIS in 2014–15 (see Table 5.1; see also supplementary tables S4.1–S4.5).

2 Services provided under the NDA

2.1 Who provides services?

Agencies that deliver NDA services collect data against each 'service type outlet' they operate. A service type outlet is a statistical counting unit managed by an agency that delivers one type of NDA service from a discrete location (see also AIHW 2015 and Section 2.2). An agency may provide one or more NDA service types and, as such, may collect data for one or more service type outlets.

In 2014–15, the majority (86%) of service type outlets were in the non-government sector, and most of these were income tax exempt (75% of all service type outlets) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Disability support service type outlets by service group and agency sector, 2014–15 (number)

| Service group | Government | | | Non-government | | | Total |
	Australian/ state/ territory	Local	Subtotal	Income tax exempt	Non-income tax exempt	Subtotal	
Accommodation support	1,467	49	1,516	5,358	643	6,001	7,517
Community support	678	34	712	2,076	204	2,280	2,992
Community access	50	58	108	3,425	274	3,699	3,807
Respite	116	55	171	1,661	238	1,899	2,070
Open employment	68	—	68	814	623	1,437	1,505
Supported employment	2	3	5	289	1	290	295
Advocacy, information, alternative forms of communication	16	1	17	242	40	282	299
Other support	13	56	69	71	18	89	158
Total	**2,410**	**256**	**2,666**	**13,936**	**2,041**	**15,977**	**18,643**
Total (%)	**12.9**	**1.4**	**14.3**	**74.8**	**10.9**	**85.7**	**100.0**
Total (excluding open employment)	*2,342*	*256*	*2,598*	*13,122*	*1,418*	*14,540*	*17,138*

For further information on agencies and service type outlets, see supplementary tables S2.2–S2.13.

2.2　What services are provided?

Under the NDA, the Australian Government has responsibility for the provision of employment services for people with disability, and the states and territories have responsibility for the provision of all other services. In 2014–15, 62% of service users accessed state or territory provided services (around 205,700 service users) (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Service users by service group and state and territory, 2014–15 (number)

Service group	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Total Number	%
Accommodation support	10,664	12,506	7,192	4,440	5,564	1,221	463	546	42,580	12.8
Community support	35,600	52,121	20,671	17,177	13,833	4,624	3,540	1,887	149,001	44.6
Community access	16,671	14,745	9,807	5,826	5,917	1,070	675	484	55,172	16.5
Respite	10,893	16,356	5,439	2,863	1,769	341	306	236	38,136	11.4
Total state/territory services	*54,369*	*74,241*	*27,739*	*18,835*	*18,559*	*5,847*	*4,171*	*2,664*	*205,722*	*61.6*
Open employment	40,953	32,031	29,842	8,519	11,036	2,972	1,418	421	125,795	37.7
Supported employment	7,846	4,441	2,281	2,343	2,876	427	287	103	20,585	6.2
Total Australian Government services	*48,491*	*36,272*	*32,038*	*10,742*	*13,833*	*3,384*	*1,699*	*520*	*145,539*	*43.6*
Total	**98,149**	**106,311**	**56,835**	**26,821**	**30,354**	**8,973**	**5,600**	**3,096**	**333,795**	**100.0**
Total (excluding service users who only used open employment services)	*59,139*	*77,001*	*28,961*	*19,608*	*20,086*	*6,108*	*4,291*	*2,705*	*217,122*	*..*

Notes

1. Totals for Australia may not be the sum of service components because individuals may have used services in more than one state or territory during the 12-month period.

2. Total service users may not be the sum of service group components because individuals may have used more than one service group over the 12-month period.

Services available under the NDA include 34 individual service types which can be grouped into the following seven service groups (tables 2.2, 2.3 and Supplementary Table S2.34; see also AIHW 2015):

* Accommodation support—services that provide accommodation to people with disability, and services that provide support to enable a person with disability to remain in their existing accommodation or to move to more suitable or appropriate accommodation. This group of services was used by 13% of service users and comprises: large residential/institutions (1%); small residential/institutions (less than 1%); hostels (less than 1%); group homes (5%); attendant care/personal care (2%); in-home accommodation support (6%); alternative family placement (less than 1%); and 'other accommodation support' (1%).

- Community support—services that provide the support needed for a person with disability to live in a non-institutional setting. This group of services was used by 45% of service users and comprises: therapy support (11%); early childhood intervention (8%); behaviour/specialist intervention (2%); counselling (1%); regional resource and support teams (6%); case management, local coordination and development (25%); and 'other community support' (1%).

- Community access—services designed to provide opportunities for people with disability to gain and use their abilities to enjoy their full potential for social independence. This group of services was used by 17% of service users and comprises: learning and life skills development (13%); recreation/holiday programs (3%); and 'other community access' (1%).

- Respite—services that provide a short-term and time-limited break for families and other voluntary caregivers of people with disability to assist in supporting and maintaining the primary caregiving relationship, while providing a positive experience for the person with disability. This group of services was used by 11% of service users and comprises: own home respite (1%); centre-based respite/respite homes (4%); host family respite/peer support respite (less than 1%); flexible respite (8%); and 'other respite' (less than 1%).

- Employment services—this group of services was used by 44% of service users and consists of two distinct types of services:
  - open employment (38%)—services that provide employment assistance to people with disability in obtaining and/or retaining paid employment in the open labour market
  - supported employment (6%)—services that provide employment opportunities and assistance to people with disability to work in specialised and supported work environments.

- Advocacy, information and alternative forms of communication. This group of services comprises: advocacy; information/referral; combined information/advocacy; mutual support/self-help groups; and alternative formats of communication. Service user data are not collected for this service group.

- 'Other support' services. This group of services comprises: research and evaluation; training and development; peak bodies; and 'other support services'. Service user data are not collected for this service group.

Table 2.3: Service users by service group, 2010–11 to 2014–15 (number)

Service group	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13[a][b]	2013–14[a][c]	2014–15[a][c]	Change 2010–11 to 2014–15 (%)[a][b][c]	Change 2013–14 to 2014–15 (%)[c]
Accommodation support	42,579	41,421	43,592	46,177	42,580	—	−7.8
Community support	140,156	136,236	139,142	142,549	149,001	6.3	4.5
Community access	60,509	63,247	55,403	57,493	55,172	−8.8	−4.0
Respite	36,266	37,015	38,072	39,480	38,136	5.2	−3.4
Total state/territory services	*204,226*	*203,371*	*201,675*	*207,810*	*205,722*	*0.7*	*−1.0*
Open employment	107,942	112,742	108,989	111,856	125,795	16.5	12.5
Supported employment	21,573	21,353	21,877	21,295	20,585	−4.6	−3.3
Total Australian Government services	*128,321*	*132,949*	*129,698*	*132,169*	*145,539*	*13.4*	*10.1*
Total	**314,252**	**317,616**	**312,539**	**321,531**	**333,795**	**6.2**	**3.8**
Total (excluding service users who only used open employment services)	*216,130*	*215,237*	*213,771*	*219,564*	*217,122*	*0.5*	*−1.1*

(a) From 2012–13 onwards, the Northern Territory DS NMDS data include individuals using Basic Community Care services.

(b) In 2012–13, an activity previously classified under 'community access' in Victoria was amalgamated under 'community support'. Because of a significant overlap in service users between the two service groups before the shift, the reclassification did not result in a substantial increase in the number of community support service users.

(c) From 2013–14 onwards, the NDIS was rolled out in stages.

Note: Total service users may not be the sum of service group components because individuals may have used more than one service group over the 12-month period.

Proportionally, the use of most service groups has remained relatively stable over the 5 years to 2014–15 (Figure 2.1). Over the 5 years:

* accommodation support was used by 13–14% of service users
* community support was used by 43–45% of service users
* community access was used by 17–20% of service users
* respite was used by 11–12% of service users
* employment services were used by 41–44% of service users.

Much of the change in employment services was the result of an increase in the number of service users accessing open employment services between 2013–14 and 2014–15. This was largely related to changes in income support policy over that time—for example, on 1 July 2014, compulsory work-focused activities aimed at assisting people to find employment were introduced for Disability Support Pension recipients under the age of 35 who had an assessed work capacity of at least 8 hours per week. The Disability Employment Services Employment Support Service (DES-ESS) program (open employment services) is a demand-driven program, meaning places are not capped and anyone who meets the eligibility criteria can access the program.

Source: Table 2.3.

Figure 2.1: Service users by service group, 2010–11 to 2014–15
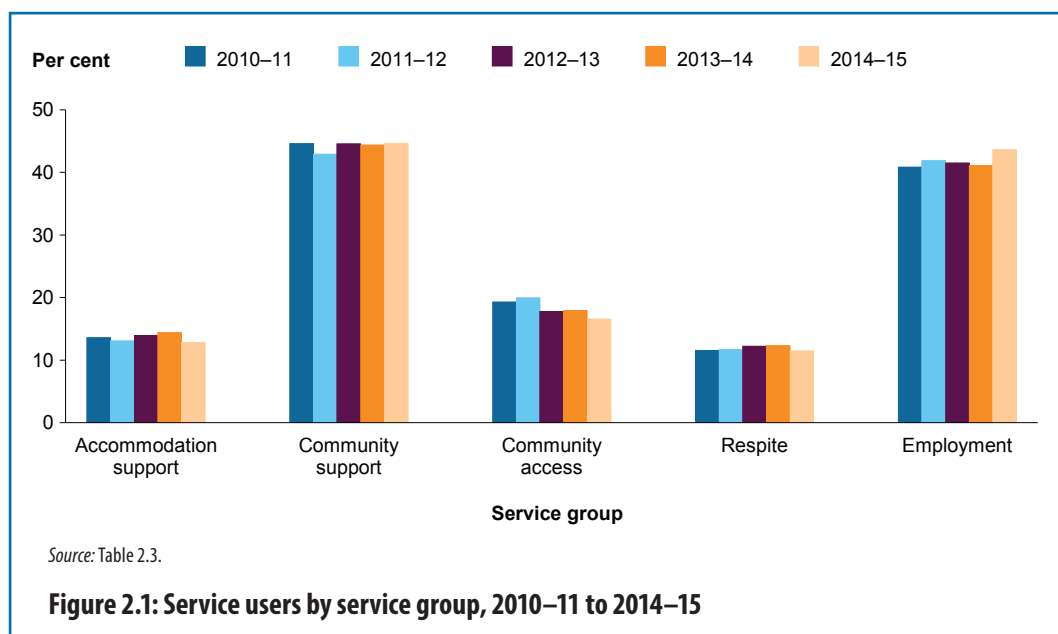
For further information on the use of services, see supplementary tables S2.14, S2.15, S2.20, S2.25, S2.26, S2.34–S2.43, S2.46, S2.53, S2.54, S2.65–S2.67, S2.69, S2.70, S2.72, S2.73, S3.3 and S4.3.

Multiple service use

On average, service users accessed 1.4 service types and 1.3 service groups each (Supplementary Table S2.43). Of those using multiple services, 42% used two different service groups, with the most commonly combined service groups being community support with community access, community support with accommodation support, and community support with respite (supplementary tables S2.40 and S2.42).

As might be expected, service users with the highest level of need for assistance in the activities of daily living were more likely to use multiple service types and to use services across more than one service group than service users with less frequent or no need for assistance in this life area (Supplementary Table S2.43; see also Section 3.5).

2.3   How much was spent?

In 2014–15, $8.0 billion was spent by Australian governments on disability support services under the NDA (excluding specialist psychiatric disability services) (Table 2.4). Of this, $7.5 billion was allocated for service delivery, representing an average of around $22,200 per service user (Table 2.4; SCRGSP 2016; see also Section 1.2).

Of the expenditure on service delivery, Australian governments spent:

+ $3.8 billion on accommodation support, or around $103,900 per accommodation support service user

+ $1.3 billion on community support, or around $9,200 per community support service user

- $0.8 billion on community access, or around $15,800 per community access service user
- $0.5 billion on respite, or around $12,800 per respite service user
- $0.7 billion on employment, or around $4,900 per employment service user.

Table 2.4: Expenditure on disability support services, constant prices by service group, 2010–11 to 2014–15

Service group	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14[a]	2014–15[a]	Change 2010–11 to 2014–15 (%)[a]	Change 2013–14 to 2014–15 (%)[a]
			Expenditure ($ million) (constant prices in 2014–15 dollars)				
Accommodation support	2,961.5	3,242.9	3,483.3	3,610.4	3,849.1	30.0	6.6
Community support	1,028.2	1,068.6	1,233.2	1,288.5	1,301.7	26.6	1.0
Community access	704.9	749.3	678.7	751.0	808.2	14.7	7.6
Respite	395.9	405.4	441.0	440.6	466.0	17.7	5.8
Employment	724.8	779.7	701.3	675.6	713.3	−1.6	5.6
Advocacy, information, alternative forms of communication	61.6	62.2	65.9	67.4	62.4	1.4	−7.4
Other support	196.2	249.6	257.8	281.4	306.6	56.3	9.0
Subtotal	*6,070.2*	*6,557.7*	*6,861.2*	*7,114.9*	*7,503.9*	*23.6*	*5.5*
Administration	499.8	527.1	488.7	498.3	498.6	−0.2	0.1
Capital grants to non-government providers	12.8	3.2	7.4	9.6	5.1	-60.0	−47.1
Total	**6,582.8**	**7,088.0**	**7,359.1**	**7,622.8**	**8,009.7**	**21.7**	**5.1**
			Expenditure per service user (2014–15 dollars)				
Accommodation support	85,006	93,074	97,954	97,408	103,928	22.3	6.7
Community support	7,359	7,863	8,891	9,064	9,176	24.7	1.2
Community access	13,726	13,483	14,223	15,152	15,781	15.0	4.2
Respite	11,650	11,642	12,371	11,807	12,836	10.2	8.7
Employment	5,648	5,865	5,407	5,111	4,901	−13.2	−4.1
Total	**19,319**	**20,411**	**21,796**	**21,959**	**22,152**	**14.7**	**0.9**

(a) Expenditure data for 2013–14 and 2014–15 are affected by the introduction of the NDIS. See SCRGSP (2016) for more information.

Notes

1. Excludes expenditure on, and service users of, specialist psychiatric disability services.

2. Expenditure data are sourced from the *Report on government services 2016* (SCRGSP 2016). In that publication, constant prices are previous years' expenditure in current year's dollars after basing expenditure on the Australian Bureau of Statistics general government final consumption expenditure chain price deflator.

3. Expenditure figures may not add to total because of rounding.

Sources: SCRGSP 2016: tables 14A.6 and 14A.10; DS NMDS 2014–15.

For further information on expenditure, see Supplementary Table S2.1.

3 Characteristics of NDA service users

3.1 Age and sex

In 2014–15, the average (mean) age of service users overall was 35, with around three-quarters (73%) aged under 50, 22% aged 50–64, and 6% aged 65 and over (tables 3.1 and 3.2). Most (59%) service users were male, and they were generally younger—with an average age of 32 compared with 38 for females. The overall sex and age distribution of service users has remained relatively stable over the 5 years to 2014–15.

Table 3.1: Age and sex of service users, 2010–11 to 2014–15

	2010–11		2011–12		2012–13		2013–14		2014–15	
Sex	Mean age (years)	%	Mean age (years)	%	Mean age (years)	%	Mean age (years)	%	Mean age (years)	%
Male	31.9	59.3	31.6	59.1	31.3	59.1	31.4	59.2	32.1	58.9
Female	37.6	40.7	37.2	40.9	37.0	40.9	37.2	40.8	37.9	41.1
All service users[a]	34.2	100.0	33.9	100.0	33.6	100.0	33.7	100.0	34.5	100.0

(a)   'All service users' includes service users for whom sex was 'not stated'.

Note: Percentages are of the total excluding service users for whom sex was 'not stated'.

Table 3.2: Service users by sex and age group, 2014–15

	0–49		50–64		65 and over		Total	
Sex	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	150,783	62.1	37,117	51.5	8,680	46.7	196,580	58.9
Female	92,209	37.9	34,974	48.5	9,891	53.3	137,074	41.1
Not stated	113	. .	24	. .	4	. .	141	. .
Total	243,105	100.0	72,115	100.0	18,575	100.0	333,795	100.0

Note: Percentages are of the total excluding service users for whom sex was 'not stated'.

The use of services was relatively consistent between males and females. Some differences included that:

* males were slightly more likely to use community support services (46% compared with 43% for females), particularly early intervention services (10% compared with 6%)

* females were slightly more likely to use open employment services (39% compared with 37% for males)

* males were slightly more likely to use supported employment services (7% compared with 5% for females) (Supplementary Table S2.36).

For further information on service users by age and sex, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.19, S2.20, S2.21, S2.23, S2.28, S2.35–S2.37, S2.62–S2.64, S2.69, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.

3.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

In 2014–15, 6% of service users were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with most aged under 50 (84%) (Table 3.3 and Supplementary Table S2.21).

Table 3.3: Service users by Indigenous status, 2010–11 to 2014–15

Year	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Not stated/ not collected[a]		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2010–11	16,577	5.6	280,434	94.4	17,241	..	314,252	100.0
2011–12	16,937	5.7	282,128	94.3	18,551	..	317,616	100.0
2012–13	17,406	5.8	283,306	94.2	11,827	..	312,539	100.0
2013–14	18,021	5.8	291,631	94.2	11,879	..	321,531	100.0
2014–15	19,031	5.9	302,736	94.1	12,028	..	333,795	100.0

(a) Includes service users who only used recreation/holiday programs (service type 3.02) and who did not provide a response. This service type was not required to complete this data item.

Note: Percentages are of the total excluding service users for whom Indigenous status was 'not stated/not collected'.

Indigenous service users were generally younger than non-Indigenous service users—with 1 in 3 aged 0–17 (33%) compared with 1 in 5 non-Indigenous service users (22%); and an average age of 28 compared with 35 for non-Indigenous service users (Supplementary Table S2.20 and Figure 3.1). This at least partly reflects the relatively young age profile of Indigenous Australians generally, as well as their higher rates of disability at younger ages (AIHW 2013).

Source: Supplementary Table S2.20.

Figure 3.1: Indigenous status of service users by age group, 2014–15
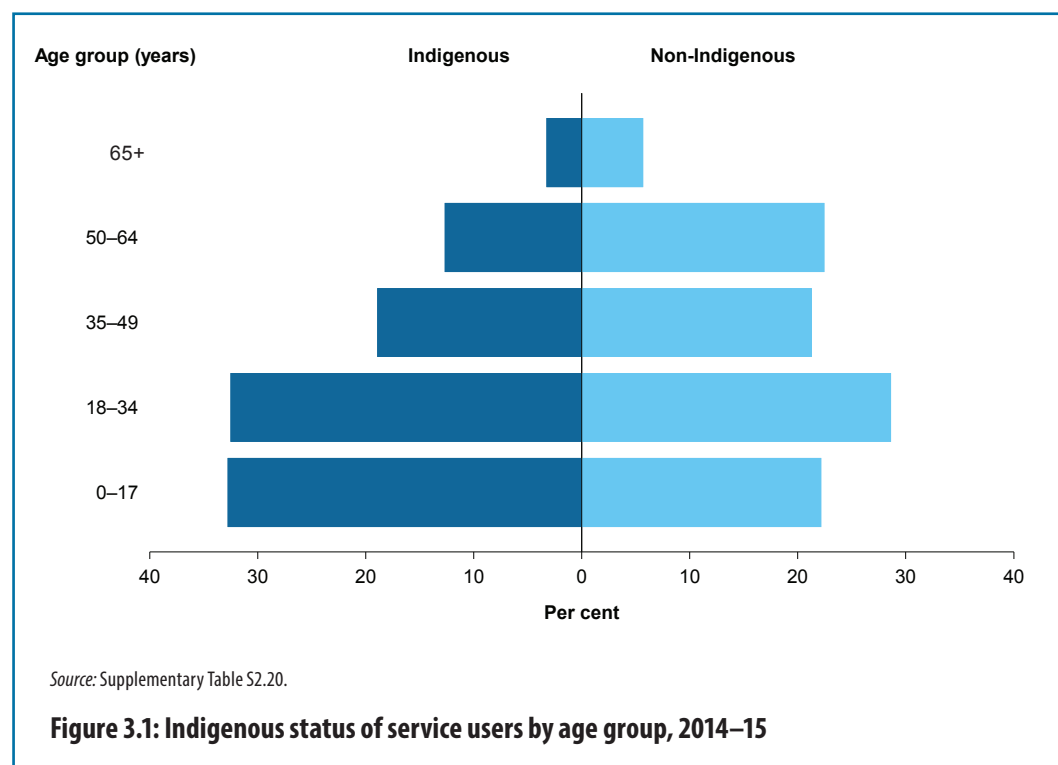
In 2014–15, 2 in 5 Indigenous service users lived in *Major cities* (40%), compared with 2 in 3 non-Indigenous service users (68%) (Supplementary Table S2.20). A further 28% lived in an *Inner regional* area, 20% lived in an *Outer regional* area, and 13% lived in a *Remote* or *Very remote* area, and did so in higher proportions than non-Indigenous service users (23%, 9%, and 1%, respectively).

For further information on service users by Indigenous status, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.19–S2.21, S2.43, S2.48, S2.60, S2.69, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.

3.3   Country of birth

In 2014–15, the majority (86%) of service users were born in Australia. Of those service users born overseas (14%), 10% were born in a predominantly non-English-speaking country (countries in English Proficiency Groups (EPG) 2–4) and 4% in a predominantly English-speaking country (EPG 1 countries) (Table 3.4). This has remained relatively stable over the 5 years to 2014–15.

Table 3.4: Service users by country of birth (English Proficiency Group (EPG) countries), 2010–11 to 2014–15

Year	Australia[a]		Born overseas, EPG 1		Born overseas, EPG 2–4		Not stated/ not collected[b]		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2010–11	257,769	86.8	12,539	4.2	26,827	9.0	17,117	..	314,252	100.0
2011–12	258,527	86.5	12,810	4.3	27,493	9.2	18,786	..	317,616	100.0
2012–13	260,863	87.0	12,109	4.0	26,882	9.0	12,685	..	312,539	100.0
2013–14	267,189	86.7	12,575	4.1	28,471	9.2	13,296	..	321,531	100.0
2014–15	275,774	85.9	14,006	4.4	31,224	9.7	12,791	..	333,795	100.0

(a)   Includes external territories, excludes Norfolk Island.

(b)   Includes service users who only used recreation/holiday programs (service type 3.02) and who did not provide a response. This service type was not required to complete this data item.

Notes

1.   Percentages are of the total excluding service users for whom country of birth was 'not stated/not collected'.

2.   English Proficiency Group is a classification of countries to enable the analysis and presentation of data on immigrants to Australia. Countries are classified to 1 of 4 groups based on the English proficiency of recent arrivals (the EP index).

For further information on service users by country of birth, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.22, S2.69, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.

3.4   Disability group

The term 'disability group' refers to a broad categorisation of disabilities in terms of underlying health condition, impairment, activity limitations, participation restrictions and environmental factors. It is not a diagnostic grouping, and there is not a one-to-one correspondence between a health condition and a disability group.

In the DS NMDS, service users are asked to record their primary disability—that is, the disability that most clearly reflects their experience of disability and which can be considered the one that causes the most difficulty in everyday life. They are also asked about any other types of disability that cause them difficulty, referred to as 'other

significant disability group'. On average, around 2 disability groups per service user were reported (Supplementary Table S2.33).

The disability groups can be further categorised into 4 broader groups—intellectual or learning, physical or diverse, sensory or speech, and psychiatric (see Table 3.5 for the composition of these broad groups). In 2014–15, many service users were in the broad group of intellectual or learning—with 42% having an intellectual or learning disability as their primary disability, or 44% when 'other significant disability' is included (Table 3.5). Of these, most had an intellectual disability—25% of service users as a primary disability, or 29% when 'other significant disability' is included.

Table 3.5: Service users by primary or other significant disability group, 2014–15

	Primary disability group		Other disability group		Total disability group	
Disability group	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Intellectual/learning	**134,391**	**42.3**	**37,554**	**11.3**	**148,128**	**44.4**
Intellectual	80,206	25.3	17,291	5.2	97,497	29.2
Specific learning/ADD	10,557	3.3	11,249	3.4	21,806	6.5
Autism	33,432	10.5	10,031	3.0	43,463	13.0
Developmental delay	10,196	3.2	1,621	0.5	11,817	3.5
Physical/diverse	**90,257**	**28.4**	**64,441**	**19.3**	**138,097**	**41.4**
Physical	59,548	18.7	46,477	13.9	106,025	31.8
Acquired brain injury	11,278	3.6	4,484	1.3	15,762	4.7
Neurological	19,431	6.1	22,090	6.6	41,521	12.4
Sensory/speech	**29,465**	**9.3**	**33,841**	**10.1**	**61,696**	**18.5**
Deaf-blind	736	0.2	1,248	0.4	1,984	0.6
Vision	13,155	4.1	11,401	3.4	24,556	7.4
Hearing	11,371	3.6	8,199	2.5	19,570	5.9
Speech	4,203	1.3	18,298	5.5	22,501	6.7
Psychiatric	**63,510**	**20.0**	**32,735**	**9.8**	**96,245**	**28.8**
Total[a]	317,623	100.0	333,795	100.0	333,795	100.0

(a)   Primary disability group was 'not stated/not collected' for 16,172 service users (which includes service users who only used recreation/holiday programs (service type 3.02) and who did not provide a response). The total for 'primary disability group' excludes these records, while the total for 'total disability group' includes these records.

Note: 'Other significant disability group' and 'total disability group' totals and broad groups are not the sum of components because individuals may report no other significant disability or report multiple types of disability. The method for calculating the broad groups for 'other significant disability group' and 'total disability group' differ from that used in previous years and data presented here are not strictly comparable to data presented in previous publications.

Service users with an intellectual primary disability were the largest group across the 5 years to 2014–15, though this group has decreased over time—for example, service users with an intellectual primary disability have decreased proportionally by 4 percentage points (from just under 30% in 2010–11 to just over 25% in 2014–15), or by 7% in terms of the number of service users (Figure 3.2). Over the same period, service users with autism have increased substantially—for example, service users with a primary disability of autism have increased proportionally by 4 percentage points (from just over 6% in 2010–11 to just under 11% in 2014–15), or by 88% in terms of the number of service users.

Primary disability group

Sources: Table 3.5 and DS NMDS 2014–15.

Figure 3.2: Primary disability group of service users, 2010–11 to 2014–15
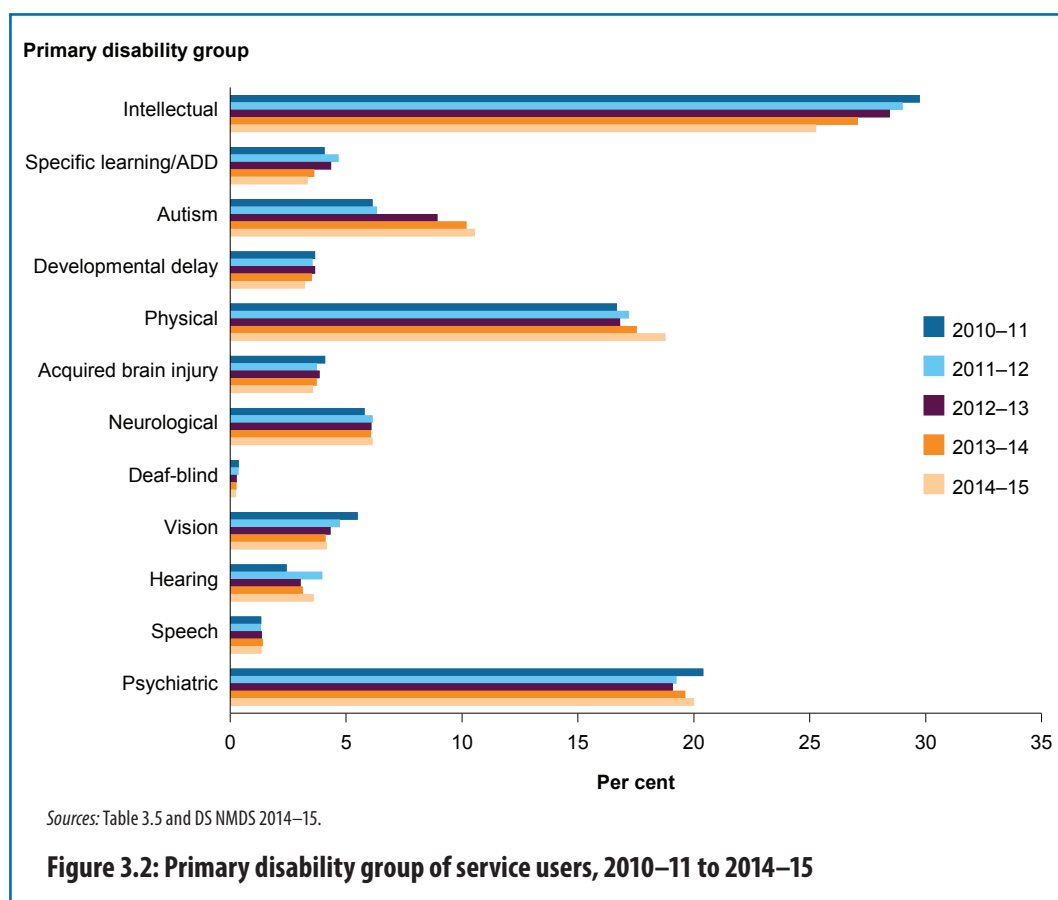
For further information on service users by disability group, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.20, S2.28–S2.33, S2.37, S2.43, S2.49, S2.70, S2.73, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.

3.5   Functional need

People with disability might require assistance to perform activities in different areas of their lives ('life area' activities). The DS NMDS includes nine data items to indicate at least some of the functional needs of service users across these life areas, and these can be grouped into the categories of 'activities of daily living' (ADL), 'activities of independent living' (AIL) and 'activities of work, education and community living' (AWEC). The level of assistance required can vary from not needing assistance at all to always needing assistance.

In 2014–15, the majority of service users needed at least some assistance in one or more of the three broad life areas—66% always or sometimes needed assistance with ADL, 80% always or sometimes needed assistance with AIL, and 85% always or sometimes needed assistance with AWEC (Figure 3.3; see supplementary tables S2.44 and S2.45 for a breakdown of the life area groups).

Functional need was generally high across the service groups, with the exception of employment service users (Figure 3.3). Employment service users were the least likely to need assistance in the broad life areas. This is affected by the inclusion in this group of open employment service users, who often have a lower requirement for assistance across the broad life areas (Supplementary Table S3.5; see also Section 2.2).
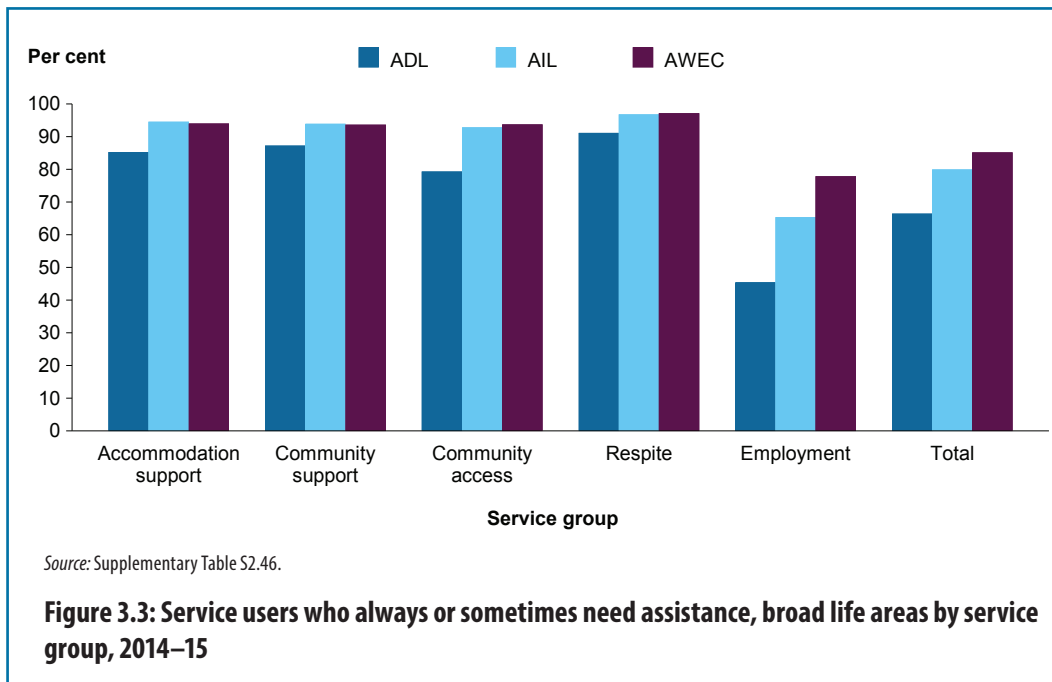
Source: Supplementary Table S2.46.

Figure 3.3: Service users who always or sometimes need assistance, broad life areas by service group, 2014–15

For further information on service users and their need for assistance in a life area, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.44–S2.49, S2.61, S3.1, S3.2, S3.5, S4.1, S4.2 and S4.5.

3.6   Living arrangement

In 2014–15, just over half (52%) of service users lived with family, 24% lived with others (such as sharing with a friend or a non-related carer) and 24% lived alone (Table 3.6). The number and proportion of service users who live alone has increased over the 5 years to 2014–15—by 20% in terms of the number of service users (from 59,223 in 2010–11 to 70,905 in 2014–15) or proportionally by 3 percentage points (from 21% to 24%).

Table 3.6: Service users by living arrangement, 2010–11 to 2014–15

Year	Lives alone		Lives with family		Lives with others		Not stated/ not collected[a]		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2010–11	59,223	21.1	150,754	53.7	70,777	25.2	33,498	..	314,252	100.0
2011–12	58,324	20.8	150,325	53.6	71,550	25.5	37,417	..	317,616	100.0
2012–13	59,355	21.2	151,128	54.0	69,332	24.8	32,724	..	312,539	100.0
2013–14	63,566	21.9	156,537	54.0	69,601	24.0	31,827	..	321,531	100.0
2014–15	70,905	23.7	155,669	52.1	72,283	24.2	34,938	..	333,795	100.0

(a)   Includes service users who only used recreation/holiday programs (service type 3.02) and who did not provide a response. This service type was not required to complete this data item.

Note: Percentages are of the total excluding service users for whom living arrangement was 'not stated/not collected'.

The majority (81%) of service users lived in a private residence. Other types of residential settings included domestic-scale supported living facilities (such as a group home) (5%), boarding houses or private hotels (5%) and supported accommodation facilities (3%) (Supplementary Table S2.16).

Over 1 in 5 (22%) service users who lived in a private residence had an intellectual primary disability, 21% had a physical primary disability and 20% had a psychiatric primary disability (Supplementary Table S2.31).

Most of the service users who lived in a domestic-scale supported living facility or in a supported accommodation facility had an intellectual primary disability (80% and 64%, respectively) (Supplementary Table S2.31). Around 12% of those living in a supported accommodation facility had a psychiatric primary disability.

For further information on service users by living arrangement and/or residential setting, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.20, S2.23, S2.31, S2.47, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.

3.7 Employment and income

Nearly one-third (30%) of service users aged 15 and over were not in the labour force in 2014–15 (Supplementary Table S2.16). This was influenced by the large number of open employment service users in the data, who, by definition, are likely to be in the labour force (see Table 2.2; see also Table 5.1 and Supplementary Table S3.1 for data on labour force status excluding service users who only used employment services).

When considered in terms of those in the labour force—that is, who were either employed or looking for employment—around two-thirds (67%) of service users aged 15 and over were unemployed and one-third (33%) were employed (Supplementary Table S2.16).

The most common source of income of service users aged 16–64, regardless of their labour force status, was the Disability Support Pension (59%), followed by 'other pension or benefit' (30%) (AIHW 2015: Table B29). Of employed service users aged 16–64, 62% were also receiving the Disability Support Pension. Of service users aged 16–64 who received the Disability Support Pension, 39% were not in the labour force, 36% were in the labour force but unemployed, and 25% were employed (Supplementary Table S2.29).

Consistent with non-Indigenous service users, around one-third (33%) of Indigenous service users aged 15 and over were not in the labour force (Supplementary Table S2.20). However, those in the labour force were less likely to be employed than their non-Indigenous counterparts—22% of those aged 15 and over who were in the labour force were employed, compared with 33% of non-Indigenous service users aged 15 and over who were in the labour force.

For further information on service users by labour force status and main source of income, see supplementary tables S2.16, S2.17, S2.20, S2.27, S2.29, S2.30, S2.68, S2.72, S2.73, S3.1, S3.2, S4.1 and S4.2.
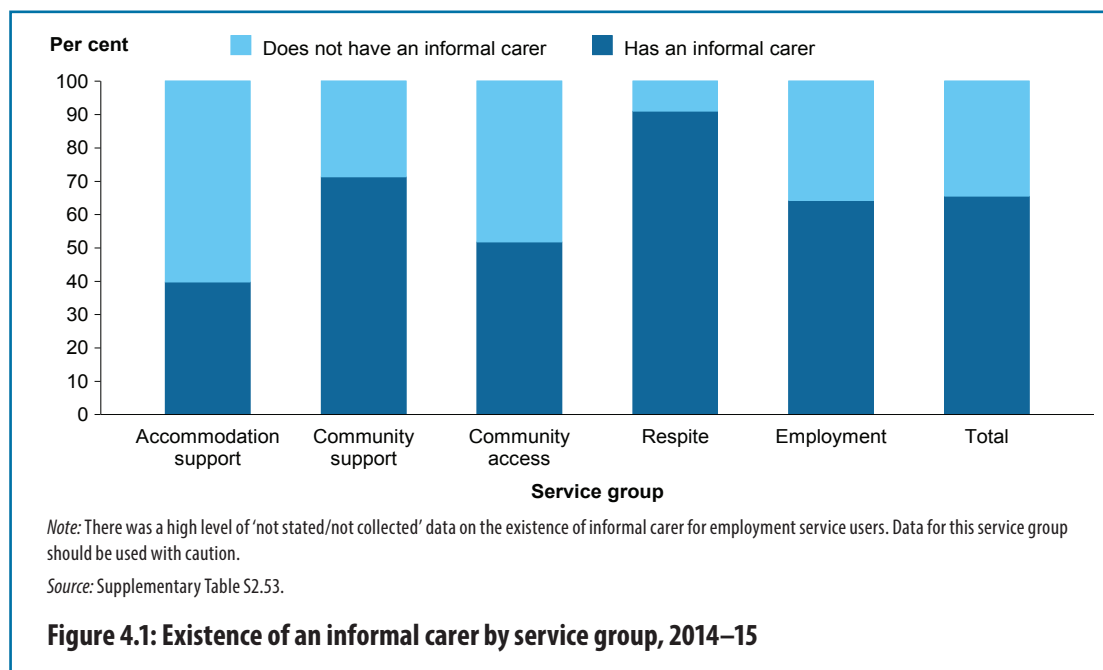
4   Informal care

Informal carers play an important role in the lives of many people with disability. An informal carer is a person, such as a family member, friend or neighbour, who provides regular and sustained care and assistance to the person requiring support. This includes people who might receive a pension or benefit associated with their caring role, but does not include people, either paid or voluntary, whose services are arranged by a formal service organisation. Informal carers provide essential support either in place of, or in addition to, NDA services. They might also be the recipient of services under the NDA, such as respite services.

In the DS NMDS, information is collected on whether the service user has an informal carer as well as some characteristics of that carer—for example, whether the carer was a primary carer, whether the carer lived with the service user, the relationship of the carer to the service user (from which the carer's sex can be derived) and the age group of the carer.

In 2014–15, around 2 in 3 service users had an informal carer (65%) (Figure 4.1). Of the service users who had an informal carer:

* most (84%) reported that their informal carer was also their primary carer—that is, an informal carer who helps with one or more of the activities of daily living: self-care, mobility or communication (Supplementary Table S2.50)

* the majority (86%) had a female carer, most often their mother (72%) (supplementary tables S2.54 and S2.50)

* 9% were cared for by their spouse or partner—as service user age increased, the likelihood of a spouse or partner being identified as a carer also increased, with being cared for by a spouse or partner the most common informal care arrangement for service users aged 65 and over (55%) (Supplementary Table S2.56)

* 12% had a carer aged 65 and over—many (72%) of these were the parent of the service user, most often their mother (59%) (supplementary tables S2.50 and S2.57).

Note: There was a high level of 'not stated/not collected' data on the existence of informal carer for employment service users. Data for this service group should be used with caution.

Source: Supplementary Table S2.53.

Figure 4.1: Existence of an informal carer by service group, 2014–15

According to service group, those who used respite services were the most likely to report having an informal carer (91%) (Figure 4.1). Accommodation support service users were the least likely to have an informal carer (40%), particularly those living in institutional accommodation (15%) and group homes (31%).

For further information on service users with an informal carer, see supplementary tables S2.50–S2.62, S3.4 and S4.4.

5 NDA service users who transitioned to the NDIS

In 2014–15, around 1,900 NDA service users transitioned to the NDIS (Table 5.1; see also Section 1.3 and Box 5.1). This equates to less than 1% of both all service users (0.6%) and of service users excluding those who only used open employment services (0.9%).

Table 5.1: Service users who transitioned to the NDIS, by state and territory, 2013–14 and 2014–15 (number)

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT[a]	Total
2013–14	1,329	1,901	2	3	403	576	—	—	4,200
2014–15	1,049	231	—	103	237	60	189	—	1,866

(a)   In 2014–15, the Barkly region in the Northern Territory commenced an NDIS trial, however, no NDA service users transitioned to the NDIS during the trial.

Notes

1.   Row totals may not be the sum of components because individuals may have used services in more than one state or territory during the 12-month period.

2.   Data in this table represent people who were reported in the DS NMDS during the collection period who then transitioned to the NDIS and may not represent all service users who transitioned to the NDIS during the 12-month period.

3.   Service users may appear as transitioned to the NDIS in jurisdictions in which there are no NDIS trial sites. This is because a service user identified as transitioning to the NDIS has moved between jurisdictions during the 12-month period.

Open employment services will not be rolled into the NDIS (see Section 1). Hence, comparisons in this section are made with both the overall service user population and with service users excluding those who only used open employment services, respectively. In comparison with these groups, service users who transitioned to the NDIS were generally:

+ younger—an average age of 30, compared with 35 and 32

+ more likely to be Australian-born—96% compared with 86% and 90%

+ more likely to have an intellectual or learning disability—69% as a primary disability group compared with 42% and 56%, and 21% as an other significant disability group compared with 11% and 13%

+ far more likely to be employed when they were in the labour force—79% compared with 33% and 59%

+ more likely to live in a supported accommodation facility—14% compared with 3% and 5% (Table 5.2; see also sections 2, 3 and 4).

For more information on service users who transitioned to the NDIS, see supplementary tables S4.1–S4.5. For further information on service users excluding those who only used open employment services, see tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and supplementary tables S3.1–S3.5.

Table 5.2: Service users who transitioned to the NDIS, selected characteristics and comparisons, 2014–15

Selected characteristics	Service users who transitioned to the NDIS[a]	Service users excluding those who only used open employment	All service users
Service group—accommodation support (%)	20.8	19.6	12.8
Service group—community support (%)	78.2	68.6	44.6
Service group—community access (%)	26.3	25.4	16.5
Service group—respite (%)	11.7	17.6	11.4
Service group—supported employment (%)	20.2	9.5	6.2
Age—mean age (years)	29.8	31.5	34.5
Sex—male (%)	61.7	59.7	58.9
Country of birth—Australian-born (%)	95.7	90.4	85.9
Indigenous status—Indigenous (%)	6.4	6.5	5.9
Primary disability group—intellectual/learning disability (%)	68.6	56.0	42.3
Other significant disability group—intellectual/learning disability (%)	21.1	13.3	11.3
Always or sometimes need assistance with activities of daily living (%)	89.0	83.5	66.3
Always or sometimes need assistance with activities of independent living (%)	93.9	93.4	79.8
Always or sometimes need assistance with activities of work, education and community living (%)	94.8	93.3	85.1
Living arrangement—lives with family (%)	66.8	69.1	52.1
Living arrangement—lives alone (%)	9.1	11.2	23.7
Residential setting—private residence (%)	77.4	77.2	80.7
Residential setting—domestic-scale supported living facility (%)	3.3	7.7	4.9
Residential setting—supported accommodation facility (%)	13.9	4.5	2.9
Residential setting—boarding house/private hotel (%)	2.3	0.9	5.3
Not in the labour force (aged 15 and over) (%)	53.8	55.6	30.2
In the labour force (aged 15 and over)—employed (%)	78.6	58.6	32.8
In the labour force (aged 15 and over)—unemployed (%)	21.4	41.4	67.2
Has an informal carer (%)	62.9	63.5	65.5

(a)   Represents people who were reported in the DS NMDS during the collection period who then transitioned to the NDIS and may not represent all service users who have transitioned to the NDIS.

Box 5.1: Important notes regarding data on service users transitioning to the NDIS

Readers should note that some of the differences observed between service users who transitioned to the NDIS and other NDA service users are the result of the age-specific focus on children and young people in some NDIS trial sites. For example, the relatively younger age profile of transitioned service users was affected by the age-specific trial sites in Tasmania (with an average age of 18) and South Australia (with an average age of 6) and the fact that people who are aged over 65 are not eligible to enter the NDIS (Supplementary Table S4.1).

Readers should also note there are several reasons why NDIA-published data on people with an approved and active NDIS plan might not match the DS NMDS data on NDA service users who transitioned to the NDIS. In particular, the NDIA data include people who have not been reported as part of the DS NMDS—for example, because they were referred directly to the NDIS. This is especially the case for very young children and those who meet the early intervention eligibility requirements under the NDIS. It is also possible for an NDA service user to have exited NDA services before their NDIS plan approval date. In such cases, they would not appear in the DS NMDS data as having transitioned to the NDIS.

Acknowledgments

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This bulletin and supplementary tables were prepared by Felicity Murdoch. The contributions of the National Disability Data Network, Melinda Petrie (Acting Disability and Ageing Unit Head, AIHW) and Mark Cooper-Stanbury (Acting Community Services and Communications Group Head, AIHW) are gratefully acknowledged.

Abbreviations

ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADL	activities of daily living
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIL	activities of independent living
AWEC	activities of work, education and community living
DS NMDS	Disability Services National Minimum Data Set
NDA	National Disability Agreement
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme

Symbols

—	nil or rounded to zero
. .	not applicable

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Related publications

This bulletin is part of an annual series which also includes supplementary data tables and data cubes. The earlier editions and any published subsequently can be downloaded for free from the AIHW website. The website also includes information on ordering printed copies.

The following AIHW publications relating to disability might also be of interest:

+ AIHW 2016. Health status and risk factors of Australians with disability 2007–08 and 2011–12. Cat. no. DIS 65. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2015. Mental health services—in brief 2015. Cat. no. HSE 169. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2015. Access to health services by Australians with disability 2012. Bulletin no. 129. Cat. no. AUS 191. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2014. Healthy life expectancy in Australia: patterns and trends 1998 to 2012. AIHW bulletin no. 126. Cat. no. AUS 187. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2014. People using both Disability Services and Home and Community Care in 2010–11. Disability series. Cat. no. DIS 64. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2013. Diabetes and disability: impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions and comorbidities. Diabetes series no. 20. Cat. no. CVD 63. Canberra: AIHW.

+ AIHW 2013. Incontinence in Australia. Cat. no. DIS 61. Canberra: AIHW.

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of data in this report.
Please check the online version at <www.aihw.gov.au> for any amendments.