

# **Disability support services 2005–06**

**National data on services provided under the  
Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement**

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DISABILITY SERIES

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Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement**

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# Preface

This report is an important annual examination of Australia's national disability services. The report focuses on services funded under the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA), and covers both the services provided under the agreement and the people who access these services.

Data presented in the report are from the 2005–06 National Minimum Data Set (NMDS). This collection is the third full financial year of available data from this data set. Some new data are presented throughout the report detailing trends in various data items over the three year period (2003–04 to 2005–06).

*Disability support services* reports have been produced by AIHW since 1996. The information provided in the reports allow service providers, government departments, academics, members of the general public, service users and their families to obtain comprehensive information about CSTDA-funded services and their clients.

For the first time, this report includes a special chapter focussing on service users with autism spectrum disorders. It is envisaged that future editions of this report will contain a special chapter with a new focus.

Penny Allbon  
Director

# Acknowledgments

The authors of this report were Jason Brown, Rachel Carr, Tim Beard and Peter Braun. The report builds on previous reports from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, as well as developments in, and contributions from, all jurisdictions.

The successful completion of the CSTDA NMDS collection in 2005–06 owes much to:

- the service providers and service users who completed questionnaires and provided comments
- all departments, organisations, peak bodies and individuals who provided suggestions or comments
- the staff in the disability services funding departments who conducted the collection at the Australian Government and state and territory levels.

Our thanks go to all these people.

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Several other AIHW staff made important contributions to this report. The invaluable support of Sally Bullock throughout the data cleaning process, and comments on previous drafts of this report provided by Chris Stevenson and Louise O’Rance, are gratefully acknowledged.



# Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
ADD	attention deficit disorder
ADL	activities of daily living
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIL	activities of independent living
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
Aus Gov	Australian Government (formerly referred to as 'Commonwealth')
AWEC	activities of work, education and community living
CSDA	Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement of 1998
CSTDA	Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement of 2002-07
DEWR	Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DIMA	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DSP	Disability Support Pension
EP Groups	English Proficiency Groups
FaCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FTE	full-time equivalent
MDS	minimum data set
NDA	National Disability Administrators
nfd	no further definition
NMDS	national minimum data set
OHS	occupational health and safety
RA	remoteness area (geographical classification)
SCRCSSP	Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

# Symbols

n.a.	not applicable
–	zero, or null cells
0.0	rounded to zero (less than 0.5 but more than zero)



# Summary

This report presents information on disability services collected from over 9,000 service outlets throughout Australia, which are funded under an agreement between the Australian and state/territory governments. These services aim to improve the quality of life of people with disability by providing support and assistance across a range of life activities. The report profiles the people with disability who use the services, the types of services they use and the supports they need (including information on their informal carers). Most information presented in this report is derived from the 2005–06 Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set (CSTDA NMDS) collection.

- Over 217,000 people with disability accessed services during the collection period, or 1 in every 100 Australians. Almost half (45%) of all service users accessed one or more community support services (including services such as therapy, early childhood intervention and case management), and over one-third (34%) used employment services (which assist people to obtain and/or retain paid employment). Over a quarter (26%) of service users accessed more than one service type during 2005–06.
- Approximately 58% of all service users were male. The median age of services users was 31.4 years – higher for females (35.3 years) than males (28.7 years). This was lower than the median age of the Australian population in 2006 (37 years).
- Intellectual disability was the most commonly reported primary disability group (33%) by service users, followed by psychiatric (14%) and physical disability (12%). The complex and diverse needs of service users is shown by their multiple disabilities – over one-third (34%) of service users reported more than one disability group; on average 1.6 disability groups were reported per service user.
- Indigenous service users comprised about 1 in 30 users (3.3%). These service users were much younger than other users, with a median age of 24.7 years, and more likely than others to report multiple disability groups.
- Compared with the overall CSTDA service user group, the 8% of service users with autism were more likely to be male, and were much younger than the general service user population (median age of 15.8 years, compared with 31.4 years overall). They were also more likely to report higher levels of support need across all reported life areas.
- Nearly one-third (32%) of the 158,187 service users of working age (15 to 64 years) were employed. A further quarter (25%) were unemployed, and a further third (33%) were not in the labour force. Over half (56%) of service users aged 16 years and over reported that the Disability Support Pension was their main source of income.
- The most common areas in which service users always needed support were working (24%), education (22%) and community (civic) and economic life (21%).
- Most service users reported living in a private residence (68%), and over half of all users reported living with their family (55%).
- Close to half (45%) of all service users reported having an informal carer; 57% of these informal carers lived with the recipient of care. Informal care was provided in the majority (59%) of cases by the service user's mother and 1 in 8 carers (12%) were aged 65 years or over. Over 80% of service users with a carer reported that their carer assisted with one or more activities of daily living (self-care, mobility and communication).