

Disability



Disability is an umbrella term for physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. Disability can be permanent or temporary, visible or invisible. Some conditions and impairments are present from birth. Other people acquire or develop disability during their lifetime from an accident, condition, illness or injury.



Disability can involve multi-layered experiences, often known as 'intersectionality'.

Children and young people



7.6% of Australians aged 0-14 years live with a disability (9.5% of males and 5.7% females)

Children and young people living with disability are more likely to:



experience difficulty being included and accessing services



lack post school pathways to training and employment



experience bullying and discrimination

General practice data



8,792 Gippsland residents living with disability had a current disability diagnosis recorded in their general practice records.

Top types:

- **2,684** Autism Spectrum Disorders
- **950** Parkinson's disease
- **1,124** Intellectual disability
- **568** impaired cognition
- **515** multiple sclerosis

Of these residents:



19% had a mental health plan



18% had a GP management plan



17% had a team care arrangement, based on Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) data

Health and wellbeing of adults living with disability



24% rate their health as excellent or very good (65% without disability)



42% rate their health as fair or poor (7.0% without disability)



32% experience high or very high psychological distress (8.0% without disability)

Neurodiversity refers to people whose thought patterns, behaviors, or learning styles fall outside of what is considered neurotypical, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

"I would love to be recognised as an artist and member of the community first, and a person with disability second."
- 'Ashleigh' Submission to Royal Commission

Prevalence

In Gippsland:

An estimated 54,152 people live with a disability (18% of the total population)

50% of people aged 65+ live with a disability



19,356 (7.8%) People living with a severe or profound disability
Second highest of PHNs in Australia
Australia: 6.0%

Disability groups:



sensory and speech



intellectual



physical



psychosocial



head injury, stroke or acquired brain injury



other (due to other long-term conditions)

Main form of disability:



77% physical



23% psychosocial or behavioural

Key data



96% of people living with a disability reside in private dwellings



3 in 5 people living with a disability residing in private dwellings need help with at least one daily activity



47% of adults living with disability have experienced violence after the age of 15 years



35,859 people in Gippsland provided unpaid assistance to a person living with a disability (14.4% of people 15 years or older, the highest proportion of Australia's PHNs) Australia: 11.9%



8.0% of people in Gippsland aged 16-64 years received a Disability Support Pension
Victoria: 4.0%

People living with intellectual disability:



die younger



experience multiple health problems in addition to their disability



have high levels of co-occurring mental health concerns



may experience barriers accessing services, including National Disability Insurance Scheme

Disability



” It is not the inability to walk that keeps a person from entering a building by themselves but the stairs that are inaccessible that keeps a wheelchair-user from entering that building. ”

- Community member

Social Model of Disability

<https://pwd.org.au/resources/models-of-disability/>

Needs identified in Gippsland



Disability workforce shortages



Need for increased skills for health staff working living with people with disability



Getting support is hard and requires navigating a complex system



People living with disability are the most frequent users of health services, but 70% experience significant barriers accessing required services



Social isolation is especially problematic for people living with a disability who also experience housing and employment concerns



Mental health is the most common co-occurring health issue and often not well serviced



People living with disability most likely to report a health problem that had not been well managed (44% compared to 22% of all respondents)



People living with disability least likely to think they can get the help they need if they had a health issue (26% compared to 10% of all respondents)



People fall through the gaps if they don't fit into the categories or eligibilities of the system

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) data



9,067 people in Gippsland participating in NDIS (an estimated 47% of people living with a profound or severe disability)

Top three primary disability types:



2,746 autism



1,566 intellectual disability



1,182 psychosocial disability

” Treat us as humans as we are entitled to be heard, shown respect and offered dignity. ”

- Person living with disability

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



The rate of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is almost twice as high as that among non-Indigenous people.



37% of Indigenous Australians aged 15 years and over reported a disability or long-term health condition.

Policy and Strategy



- **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability** was conducted 2019 to 2023 with 7,944 submissions and 222 recommendations for a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability
- **Senate Enquiry into Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** completed in November 2023 with 701 submissions and 15 recommendations for a more coordinated approach, affordable and accessible services, better quality of care, and improved awareness.
- **National Autism Strategy** in development, covering reform areas of service access, healthcare, education and employment.

Gippsland PHN programs



- **Gippsland Psychosocial Support Program**
- **Gippsland Pathways, including Health Assessment for People with an intellectual Disability**

How to improve the system for people living with disability and their carers



- Involve people living with disability and carers in decision making for a more person-centred, accessible and connected system
- Mainstream and specialist services are accessible, safe and of high quality
- Specialist disability support services work as part of a broader holistic teams to manage complexities and intersectionality
- Collaboration across many sectors and groups of people
- Measure outcomes and wellbeing

Access more Gippsland PHN Issues Papers discussing mental health and other topics: gphn.org.au/resources/

Version 2 March 2024 Please contact tellgippslandphn@gphn.org.au with feedback or to request a reference list.