

Subject: Please conduct the ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
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Dear Minister Leigh

At the meeting for Disability Representative Organisations (DROs) at Parliament House on 4/9/2025 we were very disappointed to hear from officials that, without any reference to DROs, they decided to defer until 2027 the Australian Bureau of Statistic's (ABS) next data collection for its periodic Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC). An official claimed that the survey is conducted on a five years cycle. This claim is false; mostly, this survey is done on a three year cycle ... and it has not had a five year interval since before 1998 (if ever).

Their decision to defer the survey makes zero sense; this periodic data collection is crucial at a time when that type of information it provides is needed to inform the development of Foundational Supports, Thriving Kids, etc. And when the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) has fallen so far behind that it seems unlikely to ever reach fruition.

Officials also told the meeting that the government has no idea how many children with mild or moderate autism are on the NDIS, or how many will have to move from the NDIS to the Thriving Kids program once it starts. It is incredible (literally) that the government would announce the Thriving Kids initiative with no idea about how many mild to moderately autistic kids would be affected ... or even who those children are. No wonder families of autistic children are extremely concerned.

We urge your government to reconsider delaying the ABS SDAC; we request immediate steps to collect SDAC data this year on its usual 3 year cycle.

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A4, a recognised disability representative organisation (DRO), advocates for autistic people, their families, carers and associates. A4 is internet based so that Australians anywhere can participate in and contribute to A4's advocacy for autistic people, their carers and allies.

A4 recognises the Traditional Owners of lands in Australia; we respect their elders past, present and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded.

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The autism issue is that autistic people just don't deliver on the plans, dreams and expectations in other peoples' heads.