

Subject: Fwd: ABS will release an article on Autism in Australia later this year [SEC=OFFICIAL]
From: "Bob Buckley (A4)" <convenor@a4.org.au>
Date: 4/07/2024, 3:48 pm
To: "Falkingham, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Falkingham@ndis.gov.au>

FYI

The NDIS is meant to grow no more than 8% p.a. - but autism numbers are growing at 9% p.a. This means any CPI increases above -1% results in funding for individual autistic NDIS participants going backwards.

Overall, autism got slightly more severe from 2018 to 2022. There are 10% fewer autistic NDIS participants than the the number of autistic Australians with severe or profound disability - not all severely autistic Australians are on the NDIS (and there are very few aged over 65 years).

Bob Buckley
Co-convenor, *Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia* (A4)
website: <http://a4.org.au/>

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.

Recipients of correspondence from A4, especially politicians and government officials, are all subject to A4's policy on unanswered questions: see <http://a4.org.au/node/1419>.

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

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Re: ABS will release an article on Autism in Australia later this year [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date:Thu, 4 Jul 2024 15:29:14 +1000
From:Bob Buckley (A4) <convenor@a4.org.au>
To:Linda Fardell <Linda.Fardell@abs.gov.au>
CC:Suraksha Maharaj <Suraksha.Maharaj@abs.gov.au>

Thanks for that information. And thank you for including those data in the report.

I'm sorry, I didn't see it in my scan of the data I downloaded ... which is why I wrote to you.

While those are some very basic numbers, they are quite valuable. They show estimated growth in the autism diagnosis rate at around 9% per year - which is quite alarming. It is a higher rate than the growth limit on the NDIS. My memory tells me that the increase was around 7% per year in the previous period. The reported severity increased slightly while most people expect that the

increase in diagnoses is from more milder cases being diagnosed.

This indicates that 63% of autistic Australians are NDIS participants - 10% fewer than the estimated number of autistic Australians with severe or profound disability.

I'm puzzled by the "91.4% of people with autism had disability". A proper DSM-5/ICD-10 or ICD-11 ASD diagnosis is of a "disorder" that at least "needs support" in two parts of the diagnostic criteria. How do people have autism without having a disability? What is the definition of autism used in the survey?

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On 4/07/2024 2:41 pm, Linda Fardell wrote:

Hi Bob

Thanks for your interest in SDAC 2022 data.

I can reassure you that there has been no change in the way disability has been conceptualised in the SDAC 2022. We have used the same criteria as previous cycles to calculate disability prevalence, status and type. We've updated long term health conditions to the latest ICD -10 version and we've done a concordance to enable time series comparisons. The only change we can see that you might be referring to in the report released today is that the 'schooling and employment restrictions' category now also includes people who had Core activity limitations. The 'schooling and employment restrictions only' figure (i.e. the figure we had in previous releases) is available in the methodology section. It's 1.6% which is not a statistically significant change from 2018.

People with autism are included in the SDAC 2022 data. The commentary on people with Disability includes the following text:

Autism and disability

In 2022:

- there were 290,900 (1.1%) Australians with autism, a 41.8% increase from the 205,200 (0.8%) people with the condition in 2018
- 91.4% of people with autism had disability, similar to 2018 (88.0%)
- 73.0% of people with autism reported having a profound or severe core activity limitation.

We wanted to include some key summary figures in today's release. The detailed analysis of autism in Australia will be available in a future article. (We've mentioned that this article is coming in today's release under the dot

points above.)

I couldn't figure out a way to directly link the section on autism but if you go to the following link and then expand the 'main long-term health conditions of people with disability section' in the link and scroll down you'll see it: [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-bureau-of-statistics/news-media/press-releases/2022/07/2022-07-20-disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-of-findings-2022)

As per previous releases, the autism in Australia detailed article and accompanying datacubes will follow the main release. We're hoping to publish this information in October. We haven't consulted on the content as yet but will do so in coming months. We welcome your input.

If you look at the 2018 release now it does look different to the 2022 release. The 2018 release has the 'Autism in Australia' heading which makes it easy to find information about Autism. But at the time we originally released the 2018 results on 24 October 2019 we didn't have that heading. We added it once the autism article was available which was in late November 2019. The only way to tell that this change was made after release now though is in the log of the changes we made in the 'post release changes' section of the SDAC 2018 (by going to the following link and clicking 'show all'. [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-bureau-of-statistics/news-media/press-releases/2018/11/2018-11-20-disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-of-findings-2018)

Finally, extensive consultation was undertaken for output decisions to the SDAC 2022 with the SDAC reference group which consists of Government, Academic and Disability, Ageing and Carers organisations. The final product reflects these decisions. For example, we have added the Plain Language, Easyread, Auslan versions of key findings in response to feedback from this group.

We are very happy to meet with you to discuss further if you'd like? That could be a good chance to kick off a conversation about the article too.

Regards
Linda

Linda Fardell (she/her)

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