



FACTSHEET 8: PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

This factsheet provides demographic information about people with a disability in the City of Whitehorse. Although primarily based on 2016 Census information, different statistical sources were used to compile this factsheet. The definition of disability changes between statistical sources which makes direct comparison difficult.

PREVALENCE OF DISABILITY

The 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (ABS 2015) [SDAC] found that 4.3 million people in Australia (18.3 per cent) reported having a disability. This data is not broken down into local government areas; however, when applying the Victorian percentage of 18.5 per cent to Whitehorse’s estimated population of 170,093 residents, approximately 31,467 residents may report having a disability. Around 16 per cent had a specific limitation or restriction such as a schooling or employment restriction (e.g. unable to attend or required specific equipment) and or limitation with core activities. A further 21.7 per cent of people undertaking the SDAC reported a long term health condition that did not restrict their everyday activities.

As depicted in Diagram 1, of the 18.5 per cent of people reporting a disability, 6.4 per cent reported a severe or profound disability.

The rate of disability increases with age. Reports of disability for Whitehorse residents were less prevalent in children four years or under (1 per cent) than for people aged between 65-69 years (6 per cent) or in comparison to people aged 85 plus (41.9 per cent) reporting a disability.

Diagram 1: Percentage representation of disability in Victoria

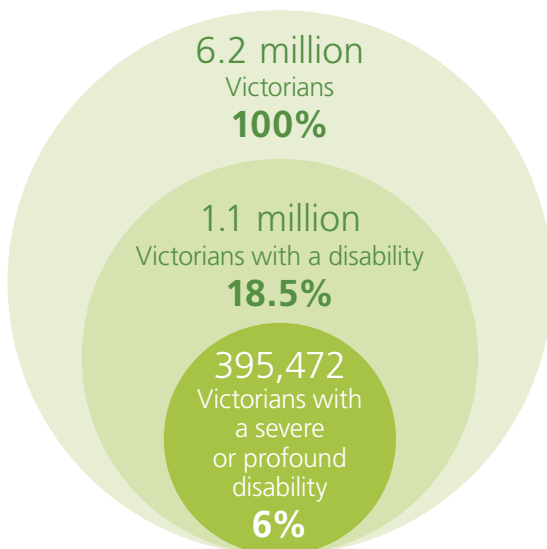


Diagram 1 highlights the percentage reported disability across age groups in Whitehorse and Victoria. It is important to note that this data set relies on the self-report of the need for assistance with daily living tasks.

DISABILITY TYPE

Disability types tend to be classified under broad categories that relate to the primary disability. Categories differ between statistical sources and where self-report is used it relies heavily on the person’s understanding of what is the primary disability. A person with a physical and intellectual disability may identify one or the other as the primary disability.

Over three-quarters of people with disability (78.5 per cent) report a physical condition as their main long-term health condition, with the remainder reporting mental and behavioural disorders (21.5 per cent) (SDAC, 2015). The most commonly reported physical conditions are back problems (13.8 per cent) and arthritis (12.7 per cent). For mental and behavioural disorders, intellectual and developmental disorders (6.3 per cent) and depression and mood affective disorders (4.2 per cent) are the most commonly reported conditions.

Diagram 2: Percentage of disability by age group in Whitehorse and Victoria



## PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITY

Psychosocial disability includes mental illness, memory problems, periods of confusion, social or behavioural problems or nervous and emotional conditions which cause restrictions in everyday activities. In 2015, 4.5 per cent of Australians (1,045,900 people) reported having a psychosocial disability. Of all people with a disability, almost one-quarter (24.4 per cent) had a psychosocial disability.

The 2015 SDAC showed that the majority of the 1,045,900 people who reported a psychosocial disability reported having one or more other impairments or restrictions (87.4 per cent). Two-thirds (66.2 per cent) of those people with more than one impairment or restriction had a physical disability.

Almost two in five people (39.5 per cent) with a psychosocial disability also reported difficulties in learning or understanding, a rate more than four times higher than for people with a disability other than psychosocial (8.9 per cent). Around one-third of people (34.9 per cent) with a psychosocial disability reported having a sensory disability (i.e. loss of sight or hearing or speech difficulties).

Many people with psychosocial disability reported that they had more than one long-term health condition. These conditions may contribute to or coexist with their disability. In 2015, the most common long-term health conditions among all people with psychosocial disability were anxiety related disorders (which included phobic and anxiety disorders, nervous tension and stress) and depression—39.5 per cent and 37.6 per cent, respectively.

Other long-term health conditions commonly reported amongst people with psychosocial disability included arthritis (27.4 per cent), back problems (24.5 per cent), and hypertension (22.2 per cent), in part reflecting the older age structures in this population. One in six people (15.4 per cent) with psychosocial disability had dementia (including Alzheimer’s disease).

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE REPORTING A DISABILITY

People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds experience higher rates of disability than other Australian population groups. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations are one and a half times as likely to have a disability or long-term health condition, and more than twice as likely to have a profound/severe core activity limitation<sup>1</sup>.

Approximately 0.2 per cent of residents in the City of Whitehorse identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Of the people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander 6.1 per cent of people reported a disability.

Table 1: Percentage of eastern region population by LGA that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and presence of disability<sup>2</sup>

| Local Government Area | People identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander | Presence of disability in people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Boroondara            | 0.2% (317 people)  | 7.8%   |
| Knox                  | 0.5% (754 people)  | 6.3%   |
| Manningham            | 0.2% (213 people)  | 7.4%   |
| Maroondah             | 0.5% (566 people)  | 6.8%   |
| Monash                | 0.2% (414 people)  | 7.5%   |
| Whitehorse            | 0.2% (358 people)  | 6.4%   |
| Yarra Ranges          | 0.9% (1,355 people)  | 7.1%   |

## ACCESSIBILITY

Access to transport networks is a critical element of participation in society and can be particularly difficult where disability is present. In 2015, 40.2 per cent of Australians aged 5 years and over with disability used public transport (1.6 million people). The majority of people with disability could use all forms of public transport (78.5 per cent), most with no difficulty (65.9 per cent). A further 6.1 per cent could use some but not all forms of public transport and 14.7 per cent could not use any.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010), The Health and Welfare of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Cat. No. 4704.0.

<sup>2</sup> Accessed via [www.socialstatistics.com.au](http://www.socialstatistics.com.au), 2017

## EDUCATION OUTCOMES

The completion of schooling and higher levels of education are important for providing opportunities to people with disability to meaningfully participate in society and the workforce, as well as achieving financial independence. Participation in education can be affected by the support, assistance and equipment available for people with disability.

The disparity between educational outcomes for people with a disability and those without becomes more apparent when qualifications are considered. In Australia, a smaller proportion of people with disability (41.0 per cent) reported Year 12 or equivalent as their highest year of school completed compared with those without disability (62.8 per cent). Similarly, a smaller proportion of people with disability reported having completed a Bachelor Degree or above compared with those without disability (17.0 per cent and 30.1 per cent, respectively).

Table 2: Education

| Education Level              | People with a disability | People without a disability |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Completed a Degree or higher | 17.0                     | 30.1                        |
| Completed Year 12            | 41.0                     | 62.8                        |
| Certificate Level            | 28.4                     | 22.5                        |

People with a disability were more likely to have attained a Certificate level qualification (28.4 per cent) than those without a disability (22.5 per cent).

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

In 2015 the Australian labour force participation rate for those aged 15-64 years with disability was 53.4 per cent, much lower than those without disability (83.2 per cent).

Generally, labour force participation decreases as the severity of disability increases. In 2015 Australians with a mild disability had a labour participation rate of 58.9 per cent while those with a profound or severe disability had a labour participation rate of 25 per cent. The same year 762,600 people aged 15 to 64 years with disability who were not in the labour force had an employment restriction, of which 74.3 per cent (566,700) were permanently unable to work.

In 2015, around two in five people of working age with disability (41.9 per cent) reported that their main source of income was a government pension or allowance. Those with a profound limitation were more than twice as likely to report a government pension or allowance as their main source of income (82.8 per cent) than those with a mild limitation (37.2 per cent) and the median gross income for a person with disability was \$465 per week, less than half the \$950 per week income of a person without disability.

Of the one million Australians aged 15 to 64 years with a disability who were employed just over half (52.6 per cent or 543,800) reported employment restrictions such as needing time off work (142,900) or special equipment (42,300) because of their disability.

## DISCRIMINATION

In Australia over one-third of women (35.1 per cent) and over one-quarter of men (28.1 per cent) aged 15 years and over had avoided situations because of their disability. Older people (aged 65 years and over) were less likely to avoid situations because of their disability (20.1 per cent) than younger people (46.5 per cent).

Almost one in 12 Australians with disability aged 15 years and over and living in households (281,100 people or 8.6 per cent) reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their disability in the last 12 months. The rates of reported discrimination were similar for men (8.3 per cent) and women (8.9 per cent). Higher proportions of young people with disability (aged 15 to 24 years) reported the experience of discrimination (20.5 per cent) compared to those aged 65 years and over (2.1 per cent).

An employer was the source of discrimination for almost half of those aged 15 to 64 years with disability who were unemployed (46.9 per cent) or employed full-time (46.2 per cent) and just over one-third (34.6 per cent) of those employed part-time.

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## MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about **PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY** refer to:

City of Whitehorse Community Profile: [profile.id.com.au/whitehorse](http://profile.id.com.au/whitehorse)

City of Whitehorse Community Atlas: [atlas.id.com.au/whitehorse](http://atlas.id.com.au/whitehorse)

Department of Human Services: [services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability](http://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability)  
[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)

Australian Bureau of Statistics: [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

You can also contact the **MetroAccess Development Officer**, Whitehorse City Council on **9262 6516**.

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## CONTACTING COUNCIL

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### POSTAL ADDRESS:

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(Service for the deaf or hearing impaired people)

**TIS:** 131540

(Telephone Interpreter Service. Call and ask to be connected to Whitehorse City Council)

**Email:** [customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au](http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

### SERVICE CENTRES

#### Whitehorse Civic Centre

(main Service Centre)  
379-397 Whitehorse Road  
Nunawading 3131

#### Box Hill Service Centre

Box Hill Town Hall  
1022 Whitehorse Road  
Box Hill 3128

#### Forest Hill Service Centre

Shop 130,  
Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre  
Canterbury Road  
Forest Hill 3131

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