



## **SURVEY OF DISABILITY, AGEING AND CARERS (SDAC) PODCAST TRANSCRIPT**

About the SDAC and key findings from the 2015 survey

**Introduction (David):** Welcome to the first Disability, Ageing and Carers podcast, brought to you by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. My name is Dave, and today we'll be hearing about the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers or the SDAC, an important survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics since 1981.

**David:** When people think of disability, certain images may come to mind: a wheelchair for example, or perhaps a person in a nursing home.

But the true picture of disability in Australia is far more diverse. One of the ways we can discover more about people with disability, older people, and those who care for them is through the Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers. Here at the Australian Bureau of Statistics, or the ABS, we've been collecting disability data for almost 50 years, and a lot has changed over that time.

**Chris:** We've seen some significant changes for people with disability, older people, and their carers in the last few decades

**David:** That's Chris, one of the data analysts from the ABS.

**Chris:** In 2015, 2.7 million Australians cared for an older person or someone with disability. Over 850,000 were primary carers.

**David:** In the SDAC, a primary carer is anyone 15 years and over who provides the most informal assistance to a person with disability.

**Chris:** The latest survey found that, over a third of Australia's primary carers also had disability themselves.

And when we asked all primary carers why they took on that role, the most common reason was a sense of family responsibility.

We know this because of the SDAC. The ABS began collecting disability information back in 1967. Now a survey in its own right, over 75,000 people participated in 2015.

**David:** Having such a large survey enables the ABS to get a comprehensive picture of people with disability, older people and their carers, which in turn informs government policy, and allows for improved service provision for those needing assistance. For example, the SDAC was one of the data sources used to create the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It's all about asking the right questions to the right people.

**Chris:** By working closely with our government and community, we can measure how we're doing as a nation to deliver services to the people that need them, as well as how we're supporting their carers.

**David:** So the survey measures all the fundamental information about these population groups, one of which being the number of people with disability.

**Chris:** In 2015, there were 4.3 million people with disability, that's almost one in five Australians.

**David:** But the survey goes deeper than that. It asks questions about whether people need assistance because of their disability, and whether they actually get that help.

**Chris:** The latest data found that just over two thirds of people who needed assistance had their needs fully met. But that means that almost a third of people who needed help were missing out on some of that help.

**David:** The survey has adapted over time to reflect changing community attitudes. For example, the latest SDAC includes information about people's experience of disability discrimination.

**Chris:** We found that over 20% of people with disability aged 15-24 said they'd experienced discrimination because of their disability. That's a large amount – one in five.

**David:** Disability can be complex, and people can be affected by more than one disability. By measuring the types of disability that people have, the SDAC can track changes over time.

**Chris:** One area where we've seen a lot of change in recent years is in mental and behavioural disorders. In 2015, over 21% of people with disability reported one of these conditions, that's up from less than 15% in 1998. Some of that movement reflects changes in the way we collect the data, as well as changes in the way these conditions are diagnosed.

**David:** It may also reflect changes in community attitudes, as people today may be more comfortable reporting mental or behavioural conditions. One such condition is Autism, which has received a lot of media attention in recent years, particularly as it more commonly affects children and young people.

**Chris:** Over four in five people with Autism were under 25, and the overall number of people diagnosed with the condition has increased. There were over one hundred and sixty thousand people with Autism in 2015, almost five times higher than in 2003.

**David:** And as our population ages, getting a snapshot of life for older Australians is increasingly important.

**Chris:** The number of older people in Australia is rising. In 2015, there were three and a half million people aged 65 years and over, that's over one million more than in 1998.

**David:** In the 2015 SDAC there was good news for our older population.

**Chris:** Around half of older Australians participated in physical activities for exercise or recreation. Back in 1998, it was just over one in five.

**David:** These are just some of the key findings from the survey. You can find out more information on the SDAC, as well as our other disability collections at our website: [www.abs.gov.au/disability](http://www.abs.gov.au/disability).

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for listening, and thanks to the countless people who have completed the survey and helped improve our understanding of people with disability, older people and their carers.