

Fact sheet number 10: Australia

Social Health Atlas series

PHIDU

Disability

Disability support pensioners

Volume 1: Australia, page 88 -91

- 4.3% of the population in Australia were receiving a disability support pension in 1996.
- The proportion of this group has increased across Australia over the period 1989 to 1996, from 2.6% to 3.9% in the capital cities and from 3.4% to 5.0% in non-metropolitan areas. The increase in this group has been the most substantial in Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales. Centrelink have suggested this increase is related to an ageing population and to people with a disability being squeezed out of a more competitive labour market, with relatively high unemployment rates and increasing numbers of long-term unemployed.
- Areas in the capital cities with a high proportion of people on disability support pensions were socioeconomically disadvantaged, as measured by the IRSD ($r=-0.69$). These areas also had higher proportions of:
 - low income families ($r=0.83$)
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.85$)
 - children in families receiving income support ($r=0.74$)
 - unemployed people ($r=0.74$)
 - female sole parent pensioners ($r=0.63$)
 - unskilled and semi-skilled workers ($r=0.59$)
 - Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders ($r=0.60$)
 - single parent families ($r=0.51$)
 - public rental housing ($r=0.49$)

These areas also had low proportions of high income families ($r=-0.69$) and lower female labour force participation rates ($r=-0.55$) (*pages 353-354*)

- Non-metropolitan areas with a high proportion of people on disability support pensions also had higher proportions of:
 - unemployed people ($r=0.66$)
 - people aged 65 years and over ($r=0.57$)
 - children in families receiving income support ($r=0.53$)

These areas also had low proportions of high income families ($r=-0.50$) (*pages 355-356*)

Handicapped people

Volume 1: Australia, page 122 -125

- The standardised ratio for people living in the capital cities with a handicap was 98. Brisbane had the highest ratio (102) and Sydney (86) and Darwin (87) had the lowest.
- Ratios were somewhat higher in non-metropolitan areas than in capital cities. The highest ratios were in the non-metropolitan areas of Victoria (106) and Queensland (106) and the lowest were in the Northern Territory (97) and New South Wales (98).
- The highest proportion of people with a handicap were in the lowest socioeconomic status quintile, while the lowest was in the highest quintile. (*page 362*)
- Areas in cities with a high proportion of people with a handicap also had higher proportions of:
 - people on unemployment benefits ($r=0.85$)
 - dwellings with no motor vehicle ($r=0.54$) (*pages 353-354*)