

HOUSING CIRCUMSTANCES OF AUSTRALIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Access to adequate, safe, secure, accessible and affordable housing is a fundamental human right. People with disabilities are at much greater risk of living in unaffordable housing and face a higher risk of homelessness, prompting concerns about a disability housing crisis in Australia.

Our Study

Our study¹ compared the housing circumstances of people with and without disabilities in Australia in 2011 prior to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey.

Our analytic sample included 11,394 people aged between 25 and 64 years, including 2,729 people with a disability and 8,665 people without a disability.

Housing affordability

Households that fall in the bottom 40% of income and spend more than 30% of their income on housing are defined as being in unaffordable housing. It was found that 11.2% of people with disability lived in unaffordable housing compared with 7.6% of people without disability.

11.2% vs 7.6%

Our study then compared differences in the proportion of people living in unaffordable housing for different impairment types. The highest risk of unaffordable housing was for people with intellectual disability (19.1%) and psychosocial impairments (17.3%).

Housing Type

Social Housing

We compared housing types (eg. owner occupied, private rental and social housing) for people with and without disability. We found that 7.9% of people with disability lived in social housing compared to 1.5% people without disability.

7.9% vs 1.5%

When we further examined the proportion of people living in social housing for different impairment types, we found large differences. For some impairment types, the proportion of people living in social housing was much higher, such as people with intellectual disability of whom 18.4% lived in social housing.

Private Rental

A similar proportion of people with disability lived in private rental (26%) compared to people without disability (29.5).

26% vs 29.5%

When we further examined differences by impairment type, we found similar proportions of people living in private rental accommodation.

Summary

Prior to the NDIS, Australians with disabilities were more likely to live in social housing and unaffordable housing. The NDIS is likely to result in greater housing demand because more people with disabilities will be able to live independently. **New strategies are needed for affordable and accessible housing for Australians with disabilities.**

¹ Aitken Z, Baker E, Badland H, Mason K, Bentley R, Beer A & Kavanagh AM (2019) Precariously placed: housing affordability, quality and satisfaction of Australians with disabilities, *Disability & Society*, 34(1):121-142

