



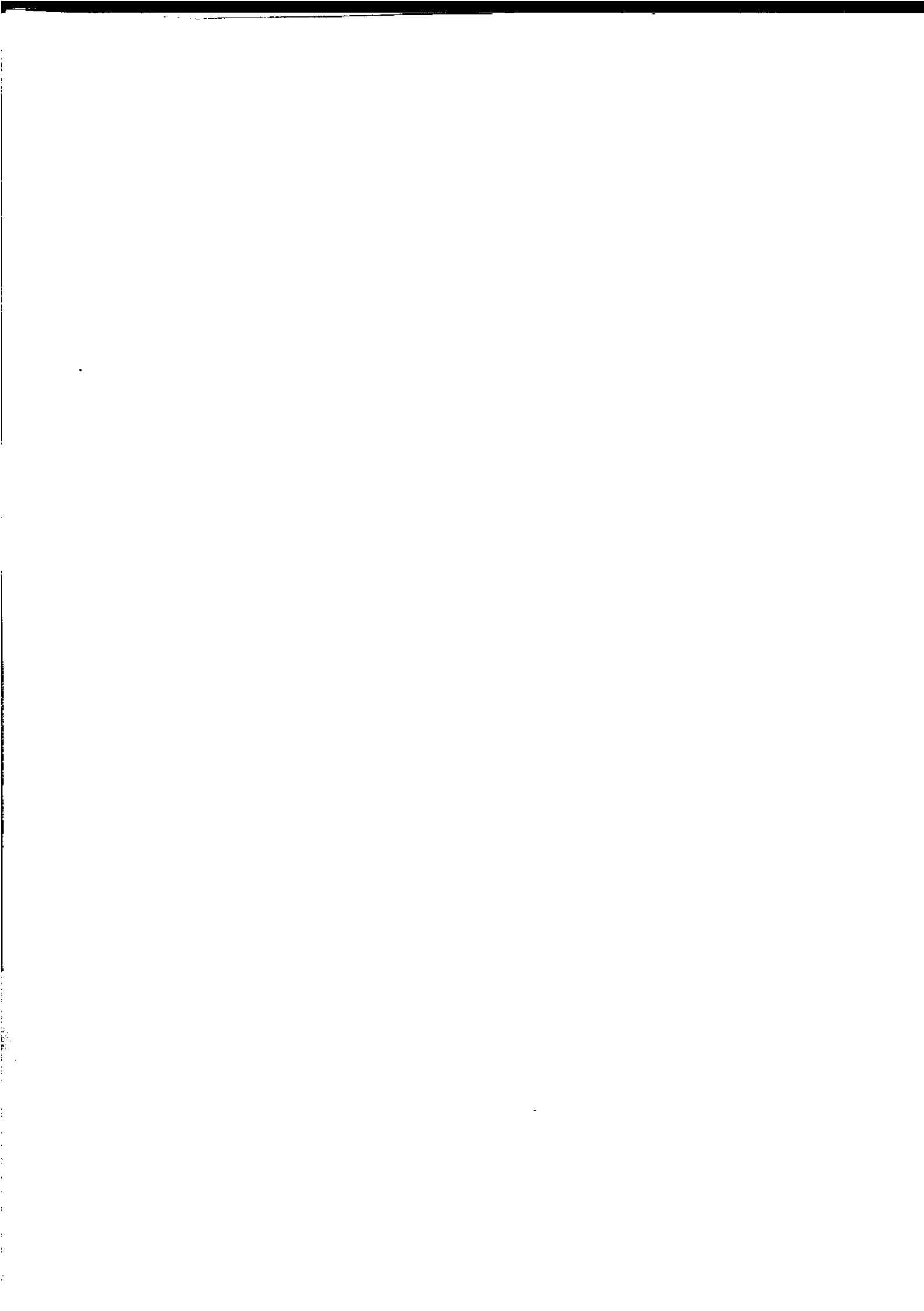
Ageing &
Disability
Department



Facts on

Disability

in NSW



FACTS ON DISABILITY IN NSW

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Foreword

Facts on Disability in NSW is the product of close cooperation between the Directorate on Disability of the NSW Ageing and Disability Department and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). It presents an up to date overview of persons with disabilities in NSW.

This joint publication marks a further step in the direction that ABS has taken of working together with other organisations to provide reliable information on issues of social concern. I would like to thank the staff who have prepared this publication at the Directorate on Disability and the NSW Office of the ABS.

Gregory W. Bray
Deputy Commonwealth Statistician
Australian Bureau of Statistics

October 1995

Preface

The Ageing and Disability Department was established in 1995 to ensure that all people with a disability and people who are ageing are included as equal participating members of the community.

The new Department is responsible for policies and programs for people with disabilities and people who are ageing.

One of the aims of the Ageing and Disability Department is to cooperate with agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics in order to gain accurate data on the needs of people with a disability. I wish to thank the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in particular the Social and Labour Statistics Unit, for their help and guidance in producing this publication. Specific thanks to Carol Chan and Elizabeth Pogson of the Unit, and to Jill Saffron of the Ageing and Disability Department.

This small booklet which provides the most recent and comprehensive data, is aimed at showing the extent of disability across the State and at heightening awareness of disability issues in NSW.

Jane Woodruff
Director General
Ageing and Disability Department

October 1995

Introduction

Facts on Disability in NSW is intended to answer some of the most common questions about people with a disability. Included is information about the number of people with a disability and with a handicap, their age, the main disabling condition causing a disability, their living arrangements, their level of education, whether or not they work, their income and the type of help people need and receive.

The information is presented in three sections:

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What is disability?

Definitions of disability vary. Most of the data presented in this booklet are from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers conducted in 1993 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This survey identified people as having a disability if they had *one or more of a selected group of limitations, restrictions or impairments, which lasted or was expected to last, for a period of six months or more.*

Another important definition is that of handicap. A handicap limits a person's ability to perform certain tasks associated with daily living. It is the result of a disability. In the survey the limitation had to be in relation to one or more of the areas of self-care, mobility, verbal communication, schooling and employment.

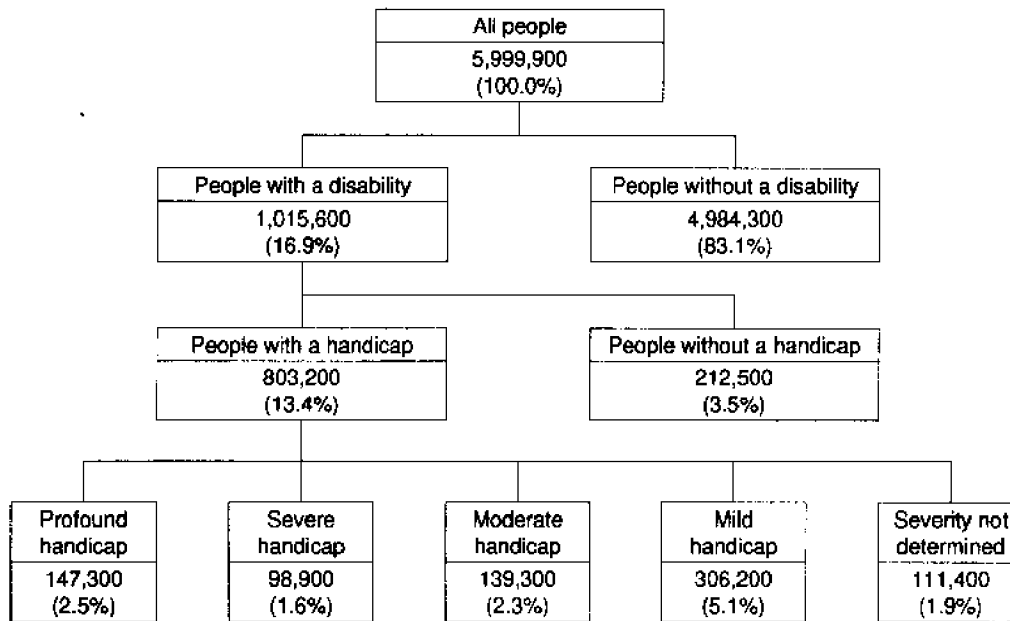
Demographic characteristics

How many people in NSW have a disability?

In 1993, an estimated 1,015,600 people in NSW had a disability. This number represented 17% of the population or 1 in every 6 people. People with a handicap were just over 13% of the total population and 79% of people with a disability.

Figure 1 shows the number of people with a disability and with a handicap and the severity of their handicap.

Figure 1. PROFILE OF DISABILITY AND HANDICAP, NSW, 1993



Severity of handicap was based on the person's ability to perform tasks associated with self-care, mobility and verbal communication and the amount of help they required either from another person or by using an aid.

The most frequently reported area of handicap was mobility (where 602,100 people reported limitations) followed by employment (472,000 people), self-care (312,100 people), verbal communication (160,900 people) and schooling (49,200 people).

Who has a disability?

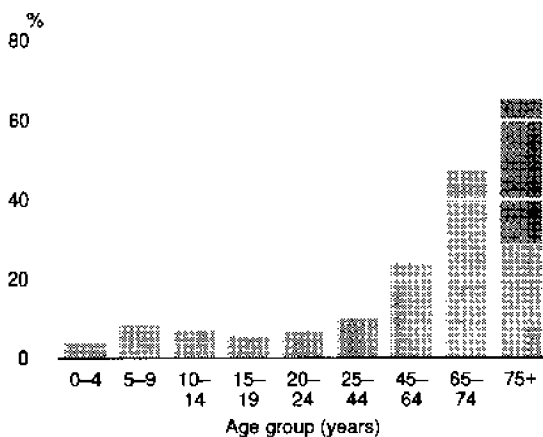
In NSW in 1993 there were 518,300 males and 497,300 females with a disability. Although males were 51% of all people with a disability, they represented 49% of people with a handicap.

There was a larger proportion of females whose handicap was described as profound, 24% compared with 18% of males. Nearly half (48%) the males and 41% of females had a mild handicap. The predominance of females with a more significant level of handicap is partly a result of women living longer than men, as severity of handicap increases with age.

How old are people with a disability?

As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of people who reported a disability increased with age. In 1993 in NSW, 4% of children aged 0-4 years had a disability. This rate rose to 65% of people aged 75 years and over.

Figure 2. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY: AGE, NSW, 1993
Proportion of each age group



Males represented 65% of people aged 0-14 years with a disability, 50% of those aged 15-24 years, 55% of those aged 25-64 years, but only 43% of those aged 65 years and over. This last figure reflects the lower number of men in this age group in the total population.

More than half (54%) of both males and females over 65 years of age had a disability.

Facts on Disability in NSW

People aged 65 years and over were 55% of those with a handicap in the area of self-care, 48% of people with a mobility handicap and 65% of people with a verbal communication handicap.

Table 1 indicates that where severity of handicap was identified, one-third of children aged 5–14 years had a mild handicap and another 1 in 3 a profound handicap. About half the people aged 15–24 years (53%) and aged 25–64 years (48%) had a mild handicap. Among those aged 65 years and over, 41% had a mild handicap and 28% a profound handicap.

Table 1. PEOPLE WITH A HANDICAP: SEVERITY OF HANDICAP (a) AND AGE, NSW, 1993

Severity of handicap	Age group (years)					Total
	0–4	5–14	15–24	25–64	65 and over	
Profound	n.a.	12,500	*7,200	35,800	91,800	147,300
Severe	n.a.	*5,600	*3,900	54,400	35,000	98,900
Moderate	n.a.	*7,400	*4,400	61,700	65,800	139,300
Mild	n.a.	12,400	17,500	142,000	134,400	306,200
Total	n.a.	37,800	33,100	293,900	327,000	691,800
Not determined (b)	17,000	14,900	11,100	51,700	16,700	111,400
Total	17,000	52,800	44,200	345,500	343,700	803,200

(a) Severity of handicap was determined for each of the three areas of handicap: self-care, mobility and verbal communication. (b) Included children aged 0–4 years with a disability.

What language is spoken at home?

In 1993 approximately 65,200 people with a disability did not use English as the main language spoken at home. This represented about 7% of all people with a disability aged 5 years and over.

How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a disability?

In the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, an estimated 2,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5 years and over in NSW were identified as having a severe or profound handicap resulting from a disability.

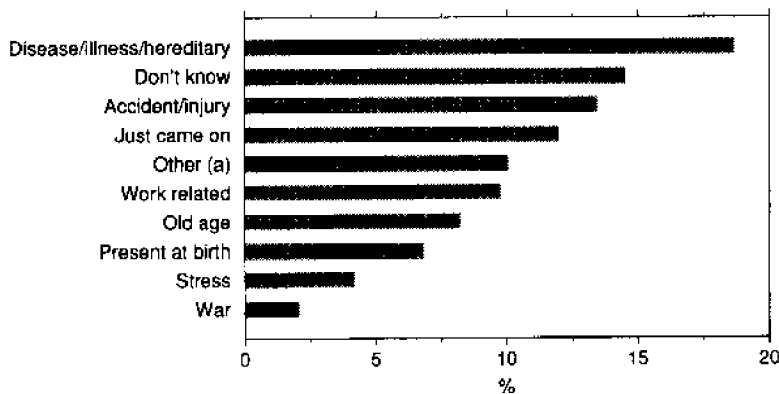
Data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey and the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers should not be compared due to differences in sample size, scope, methodology etc.

What are the main disabling conditions?

Physical conditions were the main disabling conditions of 908,100 people (89%) with a disability. The most frequently reported conditions were arthritis (162,400 people) disorders of the ear and mastoid process, including hearing loss (143,600 people) and other musculoskeletal disorders (119,300 people). Mental disorders were reported by 107,600 people.

As shown in Figure 3, disease, illness or hereditary were identified by the largest number of people (190,200) as the cause of their main disabling condition. A further 137,400 people stated that an accident or injury was the cause.

Figure 3. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY: CAUSE OF MAIN DISABLING CONDITION, NSW, 1993



(a) Includes personal or family problems/death; food, pollution, climate; other reasons; unspecified.

The causes of disabling conditions varied between males and females. The main causes reported by males with a disability were accident or injury (16%), disease, illness or hereditary (16%) and work related (14%). Disease, illness or hereditary was the main cause given by 22% of females with a disability, a further 16% did not know the cause and 14% said that it just came on.

What are the living arrangements of people with a disability?

About 6% of people with a disability (57,800) lived in establishments such as hospitals, hostels and nursing homes and over 80% of these people were aged 65 years and over. The other 94% (957,800) lived in households.

Among those who lived in households, 4 out of every 5 lived with other people. An estimated 190,000 people lived on their own and 59% of them (111,400 people) were aged 65 years and over.

Disability issues

Help and support needed and received

People with disabilities often need help and support to undertake a variety of tasks associated with daily living. Family, friends, government, community and commercial organisations provide much of the assistance needed by people with a disability.

Table 2 shows that 475,300 people with a disability needed help with at least one of the following activities — self-care, mobility, verbal communication, health care, home help, home maintenance, meal preparation, personal affairs and transport.

Table 2. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY (a): ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH HELP WAS NEEDED AND RECEIVED, NSW, 1993

Activity	People who needed help		People who received help	
	No.	No.	No.	%
Self-care	113,800		103,800	91.2
Mobility	165,200		143,700	87.0
Verbal communication	35,400		28,300	79.9
Health care	149,300		138,900	93.0
Home help	221,600		190,600	86.0
Home maintenance	314,400		294,700	93.7
Meal preparation	55,000		49,300	89.6
Personal affairs	87,700		78,800	89.9
Transport	242,900		224,000	92.2
<i>Total activities</i>	<i>1,385,300</i>		<i>1,252,000</i>	<i>90.4</i>
Total people needing/receiving any help at all	475,300 (b)		443,700 (c)	93.3

(a) People aged 5 years and over living in households. (b) People needing help with at least one activity. Total is less than the total activities since people may need help with more than one activity. (c) Received help with at least one activity. Total is less than total activities since people may have received help with more than one activity.

Overall, help with at least one of the activities outlined above was received by 443,700 (93%) of people with a disability. There were differences between the amount of assistance required and received. Only 80% of people who required help with verbal communication received such help. People were most likely to receive at least some of the help they needed in the areas of home maintenance (94%), health care (93%), transport (92%) and self-care (91%).

There were many activities for which people did not receive any of the help they needed. Home help was needed but not received by an estimated 31,000 people, assistance with home maintenance by 20,000 and there were 21,500 who needed but did not receive help with mobility.

About half the people who needed help were under 65 years of age.

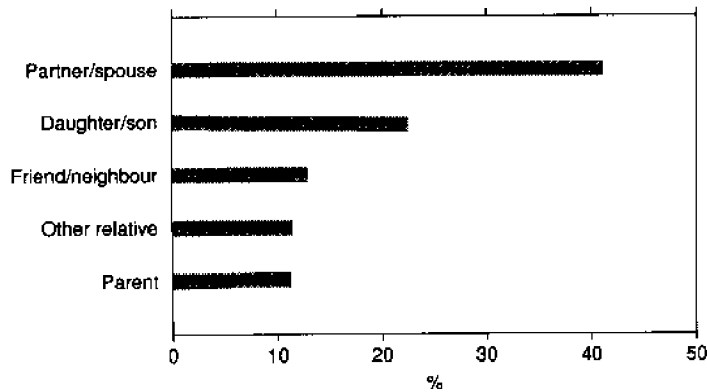
Providers of help and support

Family members were the main providers of help or care to people with a disability living in households.

Family members provided help for 87% of activities and friends and neighbours for 13% of activities where help was provided by family, friends and neighbours. Figure 4 shows that partners or spouses provided help for 41% of the activities for which help was given and children for about one-quarter.

Where care was provided by government, community or commercial organisations, help with 38% of activities came from privately arranged help or a commercially provided service. A further 19% was provided by home help, home care or a home handyperson and 23% by physiotherapists, chiroprpodists and podiatrists.

Figure 4. MAIN PROVIDERS OF INFORMAL HELP (a), NSW, 1993



(a) Main providers of informal help to people living in households.

Education

School education

In 1993 an estimated 54,700 children aged 5–12 years and 31,700 children aged 13–18 years had a disability. Nearly 89% (76,600) of these children attended school.

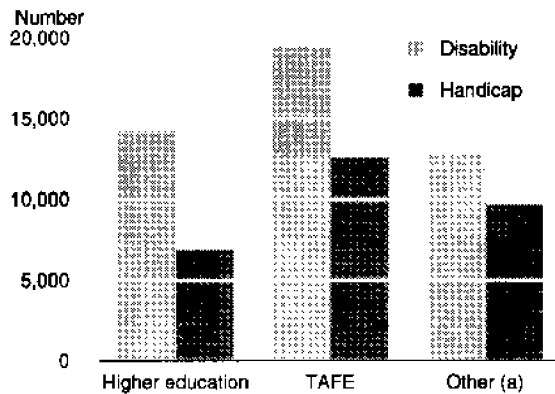
Sixty-one thousand children (79%) who were at school attended a government school and 15,200 attended a non-government school. Only a small proportion of students attended special schools.

The majority of students with a disability (71%) who attended primary and secondary schools attended ordinary classes at these schools. The remaining students who attended primary and secondary schools attended special classes.

Post-school education

There were 46,600 people with a disability, including 29,300 with a handicap, who were attending a post-school educational institution. Figure 5 shows that 42% (19,500) of these people were attending TAFE. A further 31% (14,300) were at higher education institutions. The remainder were attending institutions such as business colleges and industry skills centres.

Figure 5. ATTENDANCE AT POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, NSW, 1993



(a) Includes business colleges, industry skills centres and other.

Post-school qualifications

Table 3 shows that 348,300 people with a disability living in households, had obtained an educational qualification since leaving school. This figure included 242,000 people with a handicap. For a large number of these people their disability developed after they obtained post-school qualifications.

A trade certificate or apprenticeship had been obtained by 131,000 people with a disability. There were 28,800 people with a bachelor's degree and 21,200 people with a diploma, degree or doctorate at the post-graduate level.

**Table 3. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY (a):
HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS OBTAINED SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL, NSW, 1993**

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>No.</i>
Higher School Certificate	*3,900
Trade certificate/apprenticeship	131,000
Technicians certificate/advanced certificate	34,700
Other certificate	98,400
Associate diploma	19,700
Undergraduate diploma	*7,000
Bachelor degree	28,800
Post-graduate diploma	*8,300
Masters degree/doctorate	12,900
None of the above	*3,800
Total	348,300

(a) People living in households, aged 15 years or more and not attending school.

Employment

In 1993, an estimated 228,900 people (44% of those aged 15–64 years) in NSW with a disability living in households were employed. This included 141,200 men and 87,700 women. Of those employed, 131,800 had a handicap and 97,200 had a disability, but no handicap.

People with a handicap had a low labour force participation rate and a high proportion of those participating were unemployed.

There were 48,700 people with a disability who were unemployed. At this time the unemployment rate for the total labour force was 12.3%. However, the rate for people with a handicap was 21.6% compared with a rate of 11.3% for people with a disability but no handicap and 11.7% for those with no disability. (See Table 4.)

There are also significant differences in labour force participation rates. The overall labour force participation rate was 73.2%, but the rate for those with a handicap was 44%. By comparison the participation rate for people with a disability, but no handicap was 75.9% and for those with no disability it was 76.4%.

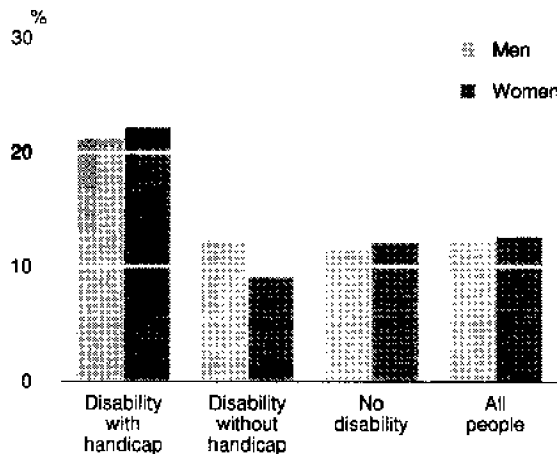
Table 4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS (a), NSW, 1993

Labour force status	Disability		No disability	All people
	With handicap	Without handicap		
	—no.—			
Employed	131,800	97,200	2,321,800	2,550,800
Unemployed	36,400	12,300	308,500	357,200
Total labour force	168,100	109,500	2,630,400	2,908,000
Not in the labour force	213,900	34,800	814,500	1,063,200
Total	382,000	144,300	3,444,900	3,971,200
	—%—			
Unemployment rate	21.6	11.3	11.7	12.3
Participation rate	44.0	75.9	76.4	73.2

(a) People aged 15–64 years. This data is from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers and may differ from that reported in the ABS Labour Force Survey due to differences in survey sample size, the scope rules applied and the complexity of the questions asked to determine labour force status.

Figure 6 shows that unemployment rates for men and women were generally similar.

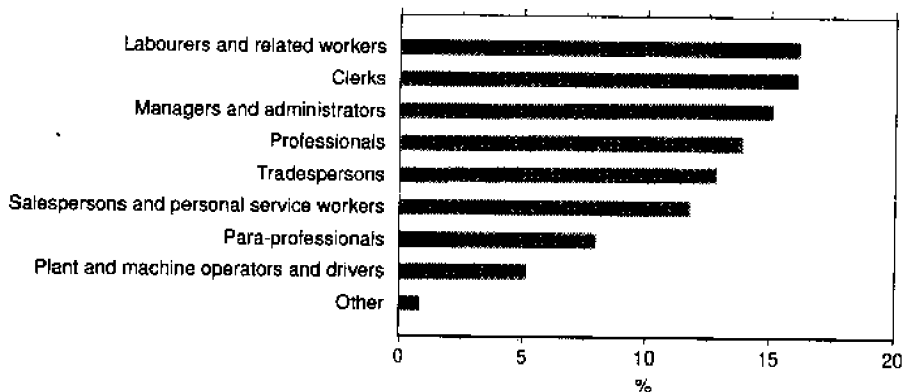
Figure 6. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY DISABILITY STATUS, NSW, 1993



Nearly three-quarters (74%) of employed people with a disability worked full-time with 86% of men and 56% of women in full-time employment. These proportions were only slightly lower than the levels of full-time employment among people without a disability.

Figure 7 shows that people with a disability were employed across a range of occupation groups. Labourers and related workers, and clerks each accounted for about 37,000 people, or just over 16% of people with a disability who were employed.

Figure 7. EMPLOYED PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY: OCCUPATION (a), NSW, 1993



(a) Australian Standard Classification of Occupations.

Occupation patterns of people with a disability varied slightly from those without a disability. For people with no disability the occupation groups with the largest proportions were clerks (17%) and professionals (16%).

Income

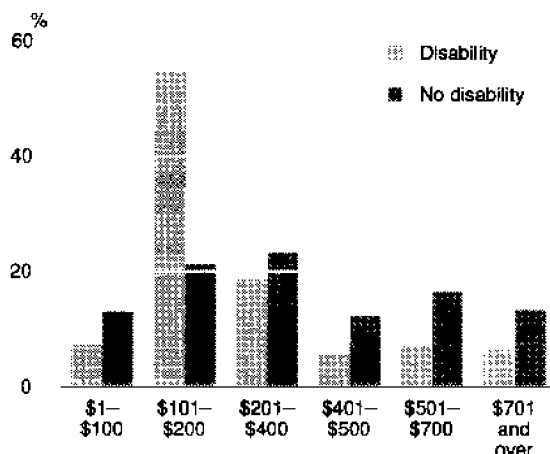
Weekly income levels were generally higher among men with a disability than among women.

The largest proportion of both men (46%) and women (64%) with a disability had a gross weekly income in the range \$101–\$200. For both men and women about two-thirds of these people were aged 60 years and over. 50% of men and 26% of women had a weekly income greater than \$200.

There were nearly three times as many men (38,100) as women (13,800) whose income was more than \$700 per week. These people were 9% of men and 3% of women with a disability.

By comparison, 77% of men without a disability had an income of more than \$200 per week and 21% had an income of more than \$700 per week. For women without a disability 54% had an income of more than \$200 per week and 6% more than \$700 per week.

Figure 8. WEEKLY INCOME (a), NSW, 1993



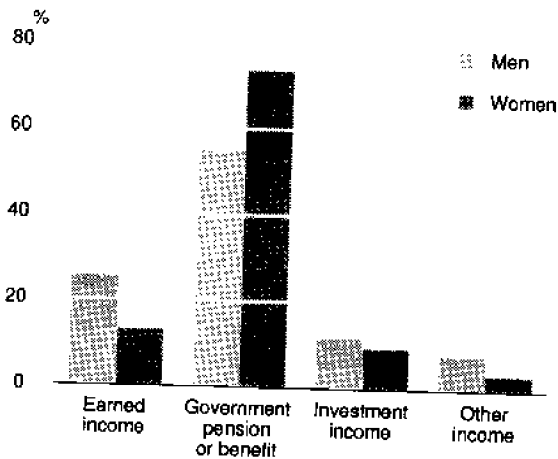
(a) Excludes people aged less than 15 years; people living in establishments; people whose income was nil, negative, not stated or not known.

Some 533,300 people with a disability (64%) said that a Government pension or benefit was their main source of income. The majority (332,700) were aged 60 years and over. For people aged 15–59 years, nearly one half (46%) said that a government pension or benefit was their main source of income. This compared with 17% of people without a disability.

There were more women than men who said that a government pension or benefit was their main source of income. Among people with a disability, 74% of women and 55% of men received a government pension or benefit as their main source of income.

Men with a disability were more likely than women to receive an earned income — 26% of men compared with 13% of women. Investments, dividends and interest, and other sources were the main source of income for 20% of men and 13% of women.

Figure 9. PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY (a): MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME



(a) Excludes people aged less than 15 years; people living in establishments; people whose income was nil, negative, not stated, or not known.

Transport and mobility

Access to public transport is restricted for a significant number of people with a mobility handicap. This situation has an impact on the way people are able to participate fully in a range of activities and their access to services, shops, entertainment, family and recreational pursuits.

As shown in Table 5 the main reason given for not using public transport was the difficulty in getting into a vehicle or carriage. The majority of these people (143,600 or 74%) gave 'steps' as the reason. Getting to the bus stop or railway station was the second most likely reason.

Table 5. REASON FOR NON-USE OF/DIFFICULTY USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, NSW, 1993

Reason for non-use of/difficulty using public transport	No.
Getting to bus stop/station	88,100
Sight problems	20,000
Getting into vehicles/carriages	194,100
Crowds, poor ventilation	32,900
Lack of seating/standing	66,100
Behavioural problems	22,400
Other	58,500
Don't know	**600
Total (a)	260,200

(a) Total is less than the sum of the reasons as people could report more than one reason.

An estimated 14,000 people stated they had needed or had used a special taxi.

Use of a private vehicle was quite extensive. There were 519,500 people with a disability including 365,300 with handicap who drove a car at least once a week.

Of all people aged 5 years and over with a disability and living in households, 700,700 (75%) were able to go out as often as they wanted to. There were 225,200 people with a disability (24%) who did not go out as often as they would like and of these, 210,700 had a handicap.

There were 15,000 people (about 2% of people with a disability) who did not leave home at all.

Half (51%) the people who did not go out as often as they would have liked, gave their illness or condition as the main reason. The next most common reason, given by 15% of people, was that they could not afford to go out.

Symbols and other usage

- n.a. not available
- * subject to relative standard error between 25% and 50%
- ** subject to sampling variability too high for most practical uses

Estimates have been rounded and discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals

The household component of the survey included all private and special residential dwellings. Private dwellings were defined as houses, flats, home units, garages, tents and other structures used as private residences. Special dwellings included hotels, motels, boarding houses, educational and religious institutions, construction camps, caravan parks.

Establishments were defined as hospitals, nursing homes, hostels, retirement villages and other homes.

Related ABS Publications

- Disability, Ageing and Carers, 1993 —*
 - Summary of Findings (4430.0)*
 - User Guide (4431.0)*
 - Data Reference Package (4432.0)*
 - Visual Impairment (4434.0)*
 - Hearing Impairment (4435.0)*
 - Disability and Disabling Conditions (4433.0) #*
 - Brain Injury and Stroke (4437.0) #*
- Trends on Disability and Handicap, 1981, 1988 and 1993 (4439.0) #*
- Focus on Families: Caring in Families: Support for Persons who are Older or have Disabilities (4423.0)*
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994: Detailed Findings (4190.0)*
- Older People in New South Wales: A Profile (4108.1)*
- New South Wales Families: A Profile (4426.1)*

These publications are expected to be released by the end of 1995.

These publications are available from the ABS Bookshop, Level 5, St Andrew's House, Sydney Square, Sydney 2000, telephone (02) 268 4620, fax (02) 268 4668.

For more information from the ABS...

Inquiries about these statistics

More detailed information about disability can be obtained from Elizabeth Pogson on Sydney (02) 268 4212.

ABS special data services

The ABS has available information about disability which is not included in these publications. Tables tailored to suit client's needs are available in a variety of formats such as floppy disk and hard copy. A charge is made for providing unpublished information. For this service telephone Jill Tomlinson on Sydney (02) 268 4493.

General information inquiries

The ABS publishes a wide range of statistics and other information on Australia's economic and social conditions. For further information telephone Sydney (02) 268 4611.

For more information from the Ageing and Disability Department...

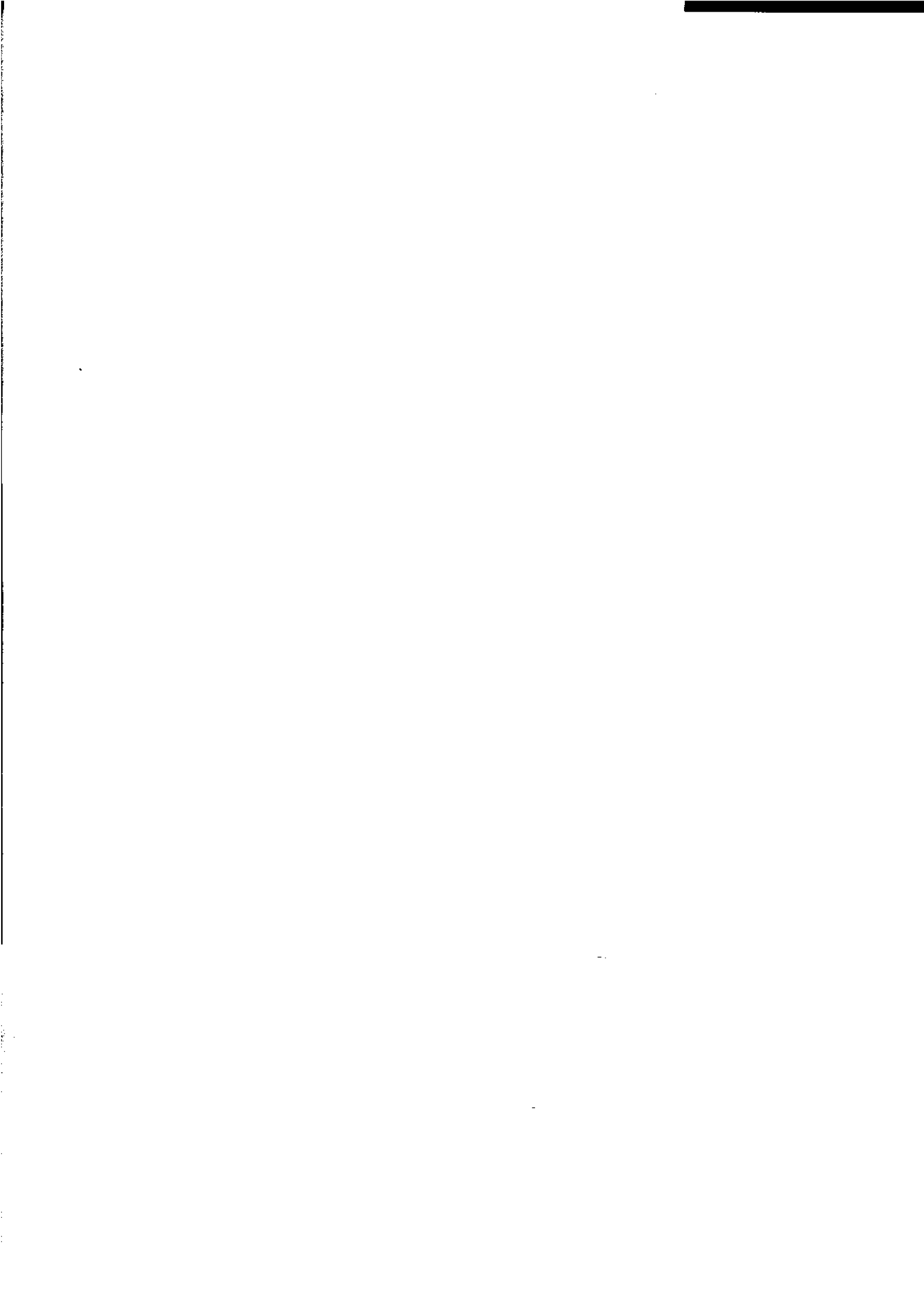
General Information inquiries

Inquiries can be directed to the Directorate on Disability, Level 13, 83 Clarence Street, Sydney 2000.

Telephone inquiries can be made to (02) 367 6851.

The TTY number is (02) 367 6868.

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