



Australian Bureau of Statistics: responses to questions from the Let's Talk About Disability Data event

Response from the ABS team, provided to the National Disability Research Partnership following the Evidence to Action event, 25 May 2026.

1. **What do recent changes and investments in disability data mean for the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)? What do we know about timing, frequency and "refining" the survey?**

ABS is planning to run the SDAC in 2028 in partnership with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. Results can be expected from end 2029 or early 2030. The 2028 cycle of SDAC is not expected to have significant content changes, but ABS will consult on outputs. We expect that any future cycles will go through a content consultation phase.

2. **How does ABS currently define and measure disability? How do definitions shape who is counted and who may be missing?**

ABS has three main measures of disability: the SDAC, the Short Disability Module and the Census. The conceptual underpinnings of each measure, including their strengths and weaknesses, are outlined in the publication *ABS Sources of Disability Statistics, 2018-2023*, available on the ABS website. ABS Health and Disability Insights section are happy to meet to discuss further.

3. **How can disability be better included in mainstream data collections and surveys?**

ABS uses standard ICF-based measures in our collections.

ABS recently undertook work to support the recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission emphasising a need for a consistent way to collect data about disability across surveys and mainstream services (Recommendation 12.5). The report, *Disability Data Measures project*, is available on the ABS website. It is a starting point to develop a shorter question set that is easily incorporated into population surveys. The next stage of this work is currently being led by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA).