

Supporting Aboriginal people with cognitive disability

Disability Justice Project

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The reported prevalence and nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - prevalence of disability (NATSISS Analysis)*	
Prevalence of disability within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population	45%
Prevalence of severe and profound disability – raw	7.7%
Prevalence of severe and profound disability – age standardised (to allow for comparison with non-Indigenous)	9.1%
Prevalence differential compared to other Australians	2.1 times
Estimated number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with severe and profound disability (2016 population estimate)	58,000
Annual growth rate using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projections	2.2%

* Aged 15 and over, private households

The under-reported prevalence and nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability



- Under-reporting - no word for 'disability'
- Disability in childhood eg. Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Prisons and other institutions
- People who are homeless
- The living environment (eg. urban vs remote)
- Trauma – 'broken spirit'

The life trajectory of an Aboriginal Person with disability



LIFE-STAGE	Peri-Natal	Early childhood	Schooling years	Young people	Justice	Health	Ageing
ASPECT							
Aboriginal	Low awareness of disability Environmental factors, increased likelihood of low birth-weight	Low awareness of disability Exposure to trauma Increased likelihood of OOHC – off country, unstable home setting	Low awareness of disability “Bad black kid syndrome” – punitive schooling over supported disability	Less likely to secure employment Increased likelihood of police contact	Denial of rights-over incarceration	Subconscious bias – institutional racism	Reduced life expectancy Disability happens earlier in life and with more co-morbidities.
Disability	Low birth weight and environmental factors in developmental disability	Disability assessments aren’t carried out to the extent that they need to be	Undiagnosed and unsupported disability	Less likely to secure employment Communication impairments, reduced capacity to negotiate conflict	Denial of rights – indefinite detention and fitness to plea for people with cognitive and psychiatric disability	Subconscious bias – diagnostic overshadowing	Inadequate public infrastructure especially in remote communities.

Suggested citation: Avery S. (2016) ‘The life trajectory for an Aboriginal and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Persons with disability’. In: First Peoples Disability Network *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives on the Recurrent and Indefinite Detention of People with Cognitive and Psychiatric Impairment*.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE RECURRENT AND INDEFINITE DETENTION OF PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE AND PSYCHIATRIC IMPAIRMENT

A Submission to the Senate Inquiry on the Indefinite Detention of
People with Cognitive and Psychiatric Impairment

Prepared by:

FIRST PEOPLES DISABILITY JUSTICE CONSORTIUM

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organisations, disability, justice and legal researchers,
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A model of disability justice based on wellness and healing



- Community direction
- Trauma-informed, acknowledge systemic barriers and discrimination across the life course
- A multi-disciplinary response, integrating knowledge of disability and legal systems
- Diversion and post release support
- System mapping between justice systems and the NDIS
- Highlight Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)
- Safeguards, checks and balances in legislation and codes of practice

Contact



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