

## Senate Standing Committee on Economics

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

31 May – 2 June 2011

Question No: BET 29

Topic: Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Fifield asked:

Regarding the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers:

1. Can the ABS provide data regarding the number of people with:
  - a. Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - b. Cerebral Palsy
  - c. Downs' Syndrome
  - d. Fragile X Syndrome
  - e. Deafblindness
  - f. Sight impairment
  - g. Hearing impairment
  - h. Other
2. Can the ABS provide a breakdown of the medical conditions of people it classifies as 'other' with respect to question 1 above?
3. Can the ABS please explain why disability specific data is not made publicly available, without charge?

Answer:

1. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) can provide data on request on the number of people with:

- Autism and related disorders (includes Rhett's syndrome and Asperger's syndrome)
- Cerebral Palsy
- Down Syndrome.

The ABS cannot provide data on the number of people with Fragile X Syndrome.

The ABS cannot provide data on Deafblindness as a single condition, but can provide data on the numbers of people with:

- Sight impairment (partial or total sight loss)
- Hearing impairment (partial or total hearing loss)
- A combination of both sight/hearing impairment (partial or total loss).

2. The category 'Other' is used by the ABS to group those remaining items that are not identified separately within a classification (often they are rare or poorly specified by the respondent). While these items are reported by the ABS as a group, the original reported item (by the respondent) is available on request subject to a number of parameters.

The ABS is able to provide data on the number of people with conditions other than those specified in Question 1, subject to statistical reliability of that data and to provisions regarding the preservation of confidentiality of information collected under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

3. Under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the ABS is obliged to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information while also maintaining the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.

In accordance with Government policy, general information products for the benefit of the Australian community are made available free of charge via the ABS website as part of the ABS Basic Information Set (generally in the form of publications and associated tables).

Information or services beyond the Basic Information Set are provided on a cost recovery basis. Charges in relation to these are set by the ABS in accordance with Australian Government Cost Recovery and Competitive Neutrality Guidelines.

Specifically in relation to disability statistics, the following form part of the Basic Information Set:

- *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings* (cat. no. 4430.0)
- *Disability, Australia* (cat. no. 4446.0)
- *Aspects of Disability and Health in Australia* (cat. no. 4367.0)
- *Disability, Vocation and Education Training, 2009* (cat. no. 4438.0)
- *Social Participation of People with a Disability* (cat. no. 4439.0).

Access to more detailed statistics is available on a cost recovery basis through the ABS information consultancy and microdata services.