



# PENRITH DISABILITY SNAPSHOT

PENRITH

**PENRITH**  
CITY COUNCIL

[penrith.city](https://penrith.city)

# INTRODUCTION

The Penrith Disability Snapshot reflects the experience of people with disability in Penrith. It was created in consultation with disability service providers, community members and Penrith City Council staff to better understand, serve and plan for the diverse communities in our City.

Disability impacts many Australians, including those with disability, their family, friends and other networks. Around 4.4 million Australians have a disability. This equates to almost 18% of the population, or just under one in five people. According to the 2016 census, more than one third of the 2.65 million carers in Australia have a disability themselves.<sup>1</sup>

This snapshot draws together social data, including statistics and stories, to help us understand the distinctive characteristics of Penrith's communities living with disability. It provides a picture of what is working well

and where we can and should improve social infrastructure and services.

It aims to:

- profile the diversity in our community
- direct decision making and planning, especially in the development of the new Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026
- be a resource for local disability and community services, and
- highlight the importance of, and crucial need for, inclusive practices.

Council commissioned Westir Ltd, a not-for-profit community organisation, to complete much of the background data analysis. Their detailed report is available on Council's [website](#).

**Council embraces diversity and works with a range of outstanding service providers and supporters to make Penrith socially inclusive and a great place for everyone.**



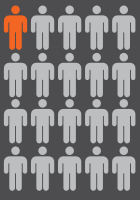
## FRONT COVER

Emu Plains resident, artist and author Susan Oxenham with her 2017 work *So Foggy over the Nepean* with Charles Bonnet. The artwork has featured in several art shows and is included in a range of greeting cards sold through Penrith Regional Gallery. Susan, who is legally blind, is dedicated to encouraging others in the community to discover the uplifting power of creativity. Photo by: Cathie Johnston.

1. ABS, 2019, SDAC 2018, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*.  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release>

# SNAPSHOT OF PENRITH

## PEOPLE

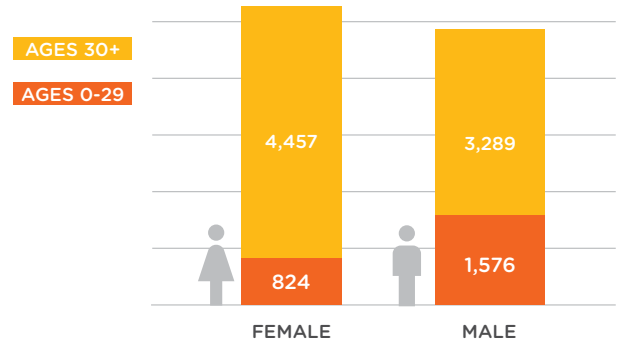


**1 in 20**

live with a profound or severe disability (10,152 people or 5.2% of the Penrith population).<sup>2</sup>

**15,150** (or 7.7%) live with a mild or moderate disability.<sup>3</sup>

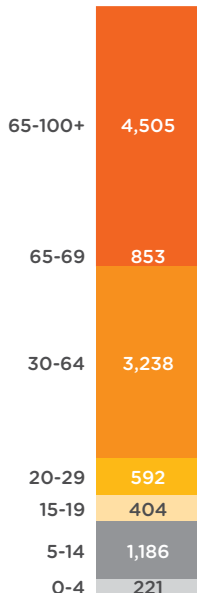
## GENDER



## AGE

**853**

853 adults aged 65-69, representing the 5 year age bracket with the highest prevalence of people living with disability



## LANGUAGE



**22%**

of people (or 2,299) living with disability spoke a language other than English at home

**250**  
ARABIC SPEAKERS

language most likely spoken other than English.

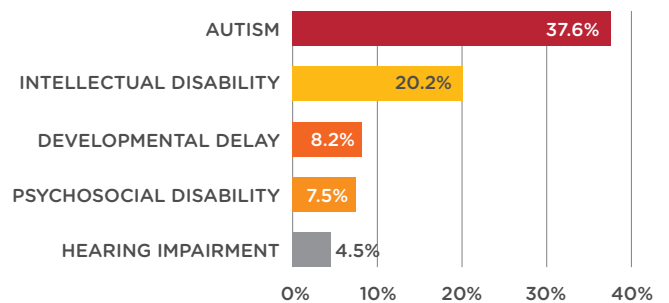
## EMPLOYMENT

Not in the labour force **72%**  
Unemployed/seeking work **2%**  
Employed **7%**



## NDIS\* SUPPORT

Most commonly provided for<sup>^</sup>:



## ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

**552** or 7.1% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are living with disability



The 5-year age bracket with the highest prevalence of people living with disability

Unless otherwise stated, the term people "living with disability" is used here to represent people with a profound or severe disability, based on ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 data and the measure "core activity need for assistance", with Penrith as their usual place of residence. 2. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 3. ABS, 2018 Survey of Ageing Disability and Carers  
\* NDIS - National Disability Insurance Scheme ^ ^ in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District

# UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

Disability affects people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. It is a normal part of life and contributes to the fabric of our community. People with disability are parents, carers and children. They go to work, school and higher education, buy goods and services and contribute to the community.<sup>4</sup>

**“There are many different kinds of disability, and they can result from accidents, illness or genetic disorders. A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn things, or ability to communicate easily, and some people may have more than one. A disability may be visible or hidden, may be permanent or temporary and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person’s abilities.”<sup>5</sup>**

Disability describes the interaction between abilities of a person’s body and features of the society in which they live. This means interventions are needed to remove physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers for people with disabilities.

Penrith City Council recognises disability as an element of diversity within our community and is committed to providing inclusive services and programs for people living with disability.

**We recognise “disability” as what occurs when a person’s functional needs are not addressed in his or her physical and social environment. By not considering disability a personal deficit or shortcoming, and instead thinking of it as a social responsibility in which all people can be supported to live independent and full lives, it becomes easier to recognise and address challenges that all people—including those with disabilities—experience.<sup>6</sup>**

4, 5. Australian Network on Disability 2021, “What is a Disability” Factsheet, <https://www.and.org.au/pages/what-is-a-disability.html> 6. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Sept 2020, *Disability and Health Disability Barriers* | CDC



## CASE STUDY

### ANTHONY MULHOLLAND, COVID-19 EXPERIENCE

“During COVID I learnt how to be more confident as a person – to take more responsibility for things that happen. I had never experienced some of these obstacles before. It was hard to overcome them. The first thing was coping with the change – it’s not always easy coping with change, and some of these changes, from COVID, had never happened before.

Being isolated was hard – you rely on service providers for support, but during COVID you couldn’t have as much support. The first COVID lockdown was really hard – not having as much support, and not having the information; rules kept changing, and because you only have a certain amount of support in your NDIS plan, you weren’t sure how much you could use, and how much you would have left. I found COVID very hard at first.

I think one of the problems was that the changes were so far reaching, and it was new for everyone. One of the positives that could come from COVID was learning to take responsibility for yourself and doing what you can for yourself – doing what you can, even when there are lockdowns and changes. You have to look to the other side of things and see the bright side.”

# DATA SOURCES AND TERMINOLOGY

Disability is defined by the physical and societal barriers inhibiting a person's access to what they need for a fulfilling life, not the impairment a person is living with or their need for assistance.

Identifying as a person with disability is a personal choice. Some people who live with an impairment or need assistance may not identify as having a disability because, with the appropriate support, they can live a full and active life. Others identify as having a disability, but their needs and experiences are not captured by Census data. Thus, while data is an important source of information, it does not tell us the whole story.

Throughout this snapshot we use the term "people with disability", "lives with disability", or "has disability" in line with recommendations from People with Disability Australia and Australian Network on Disability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016 Census of Population and Housing captures data for people with disability using the variable "core activity need for assistance". This is based on people's need for assistance with daily self-care, mobility or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition (lasting six months or more) or old age.<sup>7, 8</sup>

The degree of a person's core activity limitation is classified by the ABS as either "mild or moderate" or "severe or profound".

The ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), gives us a broader picture as the definition and reporting of "disability" is slightly different to the Census.

The SDAC includes classifications of core activity limitation as either "mild or moderate" or "severe or profound":

The SDAC figures for disability are higher than the Census figures as they include people with "mild or moderate core activity limitation" as well as people with "severe or profound core activity limitation".

## ABS CENSUS - REPORTING OF DISABILITY

It is important to note that the ABS Census variable "core activity need for assistance" when used in reports, data analysis and this snapshot indicates the number of people living with profound or severe disability and excludes people living with mild or moderate disability.

## ABS SDAC - DEFINITION OF "DISABILITY"

Any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months.<sup>9</sup>

7. ABS, 2017, 'Core Activity Need for Assistance (ASSNP)', *Understanding the Census and Census Data*, available at <https://bit.ly/2QcB3pi> 8. ABS, 2016, 'Core Activity Need for Assistance', *Census Dictionary*, available at <https://bit.ly/2SqnjYA>. 9. ABS, 2019, *SDAC 2018 Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings*.

# PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN PENRITH

The 2018 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) identified 25,867 people (12.6% of our population) with mild, moderate, severe or profound disability living in Penrith.

- 15,150 people had a mild or moderate core activity limitation
- 10,717 people had a severe or profound core activity limitation

Most people with disability were older and female, with the majority living in the suburbs of Penrith, St Marys and St Clair.

The 2016 Census identified 10,153 people as living with a severe or profound disability in Penrith – 5.2% of our population. It also found Penrith was home to a smaller proportion of people with a severe or profound disability compared to Greater Western Sydney (GWS) (5.6%) and NSW (5.4%)<sup>10</sup>.

It is important to note that in the 2018 SDAC, the number of Penrith residents with a disability (25,867 people) was more than twice the number of residents with disability reported in the 2016 Census (10,153 people). This reflects the number of people with a mild or moderate degree of limitation who are not represented in the Census figures and, to an extent, the increase in Penrith's population between 2016 and 2018.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides funding and assistance for people living with disability aged between 7 and 65 years old to access the support they need. As of 31 December 2020, there were 4,732 active NDIS participants in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (LHD) who lived in Penrith, or 44% of the people living with severe or profound disability in our City.

Knowing the gender and age breakdowns, as well as the areas where people with disability live, helps support organisations plan and advocate for better access and services.

<sup>10</sup>. Westir Ltd, 2021, Penrith Disability Snapshot Data Report.



## CASE STUDY

### FATHER OF TWO, GLENMORE PARK

"I am a married father of two and have lived in Glenmore Park for over 20 years. I have lived with the challenges of Multiple Sclerosis, a chronic disease that impacts the nervous system, for 18 of those years, including accessing local areas in a wheelchair.

In 2019 I raised a concern with Council that the closest accessible parking space to the accessible bathroom at Ched Towns Sports Fields in Glenmore Park was 100 metres away. The path of travel also wasn't helpful to people in wheelchairs or with other mobility needs.

The issue was addressed quickly by Council's Traffic Engineers and I was consulted on possible designs and location. There is now a dedicated accessible parking space for all community members to use. To me, this was a great demonstration of the community and Council working in partnership."

# DISABILITY ACROSS GENDER

## Gender

According to the 2016 Census, more females are living with disability than males (5,258 females and 4,888 males) across Penrith. This echoes a trend seen across GWS and NSW. The notable difference is in the under 30 years age group where there are more males with disability. Further gendered differences are seen among age groups. The Penrith data shows us that:

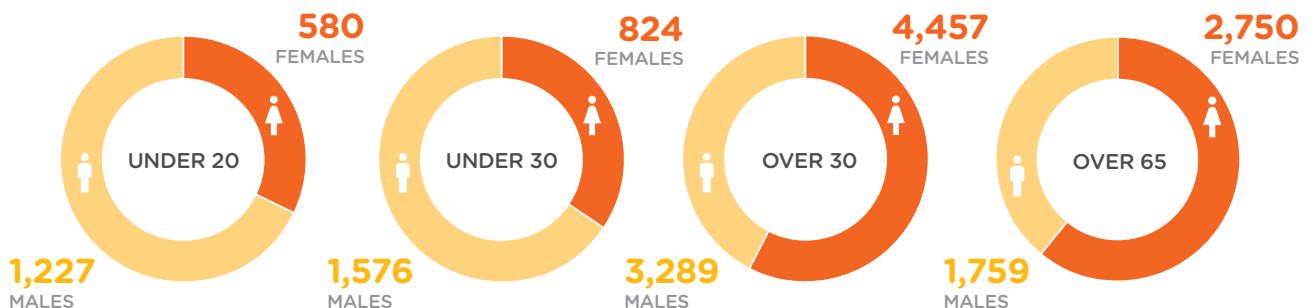
- Under the age of 30 years there are more males than females with disability – 1,576 males and 824 females
- Under the age of 20 there are more males than females with disability – 1,227 males and 580 females
- Over 30 years there are more females than males with a disability – 4,457 females and 3,289 males
- Over 65 years there are more females with disability than males – 2,750 females and 1,759 males



There are several possible explanations for these trends. With children and adolescents, the findings may support the argument that disabilities such as autism are more likely to be undiagnosed among girls.<sup>11</sup> For age groups over 65 years, the comparatively higher number of women in need of assistance may reflect the longer life expectancy of women. Reporting may also differ by gender, with some research suggesting older men are less likely than women to report if they have a disability.<sup>12</sup>

11. Autism Awareness Australia 2021, 'Autism and girls', available at <https://bit.ly/3hNwGfP>; Child Mind Institute, n.d., 'Why Many Autistic Girls Are Overlooked', available at <https://bit.ly/3fBLU4A> 12. MA Rodrigues, LA Facchini, E Thumé and F Maia, 2009, 'Gender and incidence of functional disability in the elderly: A systematic review', *Cad Saude Publica*, 25, pp.5464-5476.

FIGURE 2: GENDERED DIFFERENCES BY AGE GROUPS



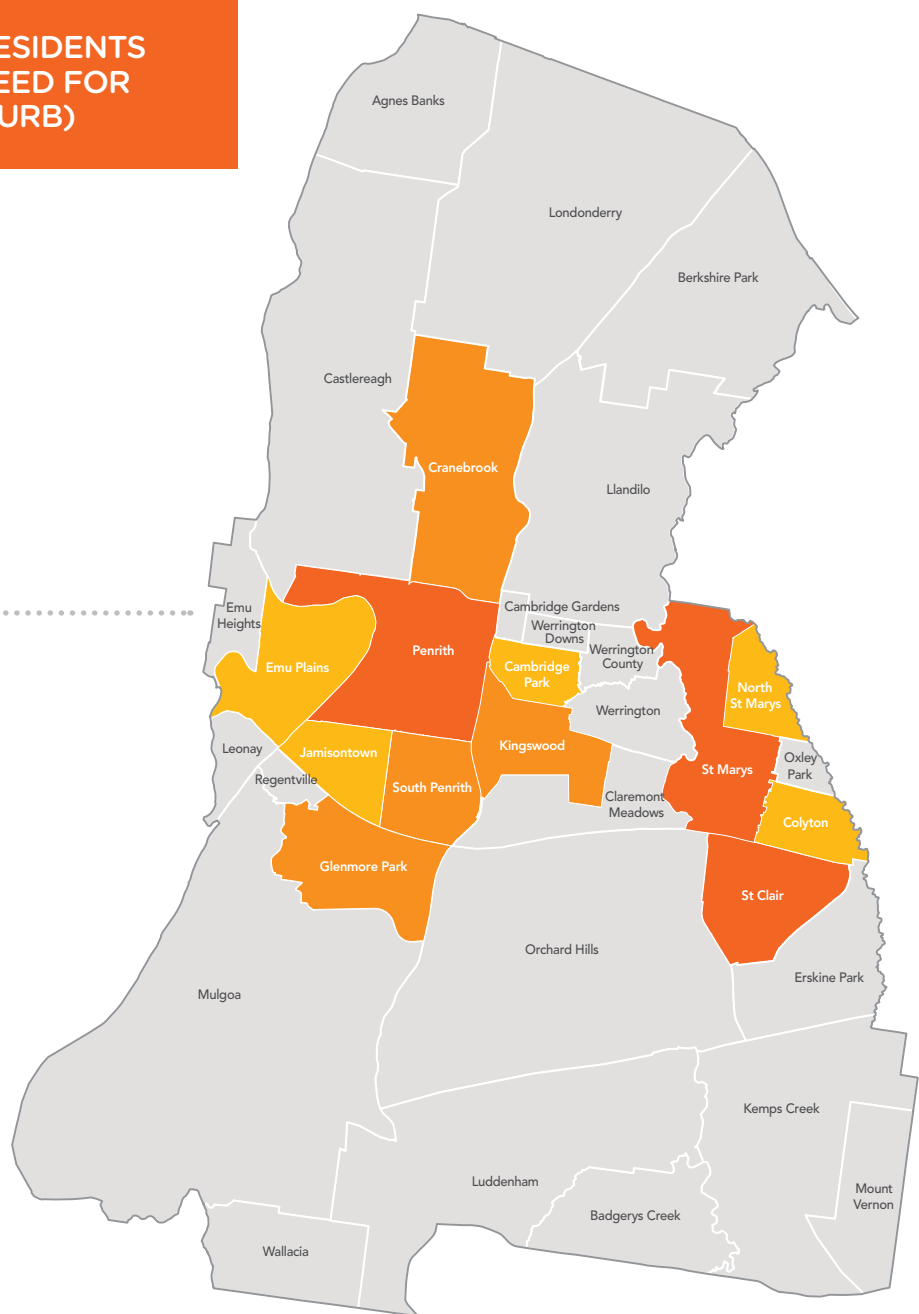
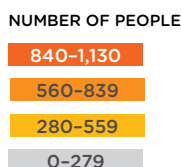
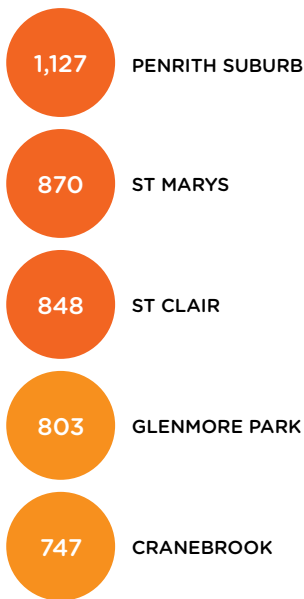
# WHERE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY LIVE

Everyone in our City has the right to play an active part in community life. It is important to know where people with disability live so we can plan and provide services, supports and accessible infrastructure everywhere it is needed.

The map in Figure 3 indicates the numbers of people living with disability. The age profile of the suburb, accessibility to services and housing affordability are among the factors that impact where people with disability live.

**FIGURE 3: PENRITH RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITY (“NEED FOR ASSISTANCE” BY SUBURB)**

Suburbs with the highest number of people living with disability



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016

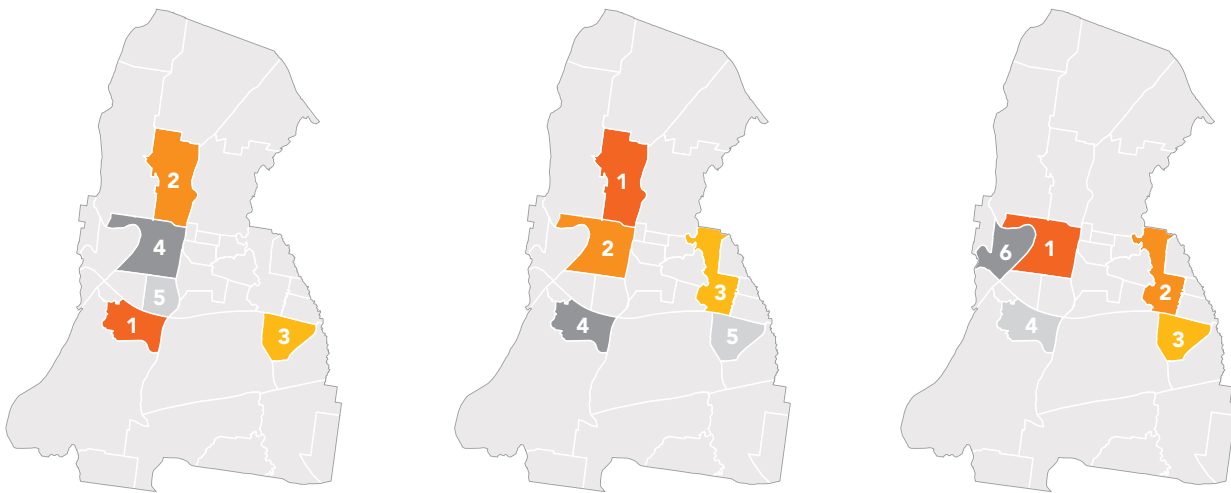


## Where people live - by age

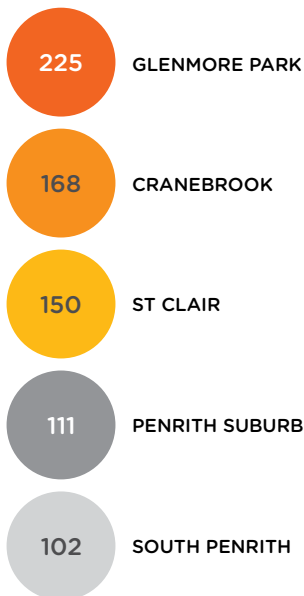
To provide the right services to the right areas, we need to identify population density trends in relation to age, because age tells us a lot about a person's needs and support requirements –

whether they are living with a disability or not. Figure 4 below indicates the suburbs with the highest number of people living with disability according to age.

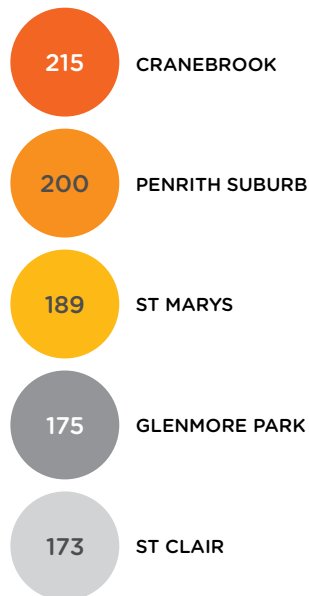
**FIGURE 4: SUBURBS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITY BY AGE**



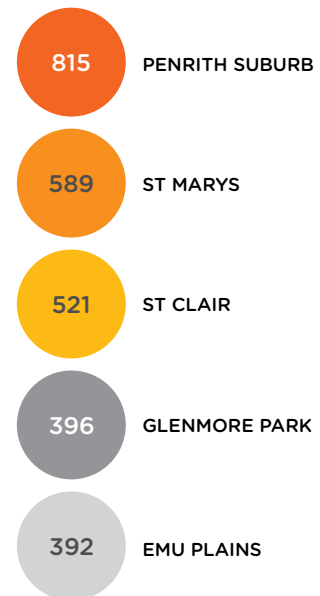
### CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS (0 TO 17)



### ADULTS (18 TO 49 YEARS)



### OLDER ADULTS (50 YEARS AND OVER)



Source: Based on ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, Place of Usual Residence. Excludes suburbs with fewer than 100 people with core activity need for assistance.

# DISABILITY ACROSS AGE RANGES

While we all share the need for love, relationships, home, work, education, health, independence and inclusion, people with disability may require support to fulfil these needs and the level or kind of support can shift with age.

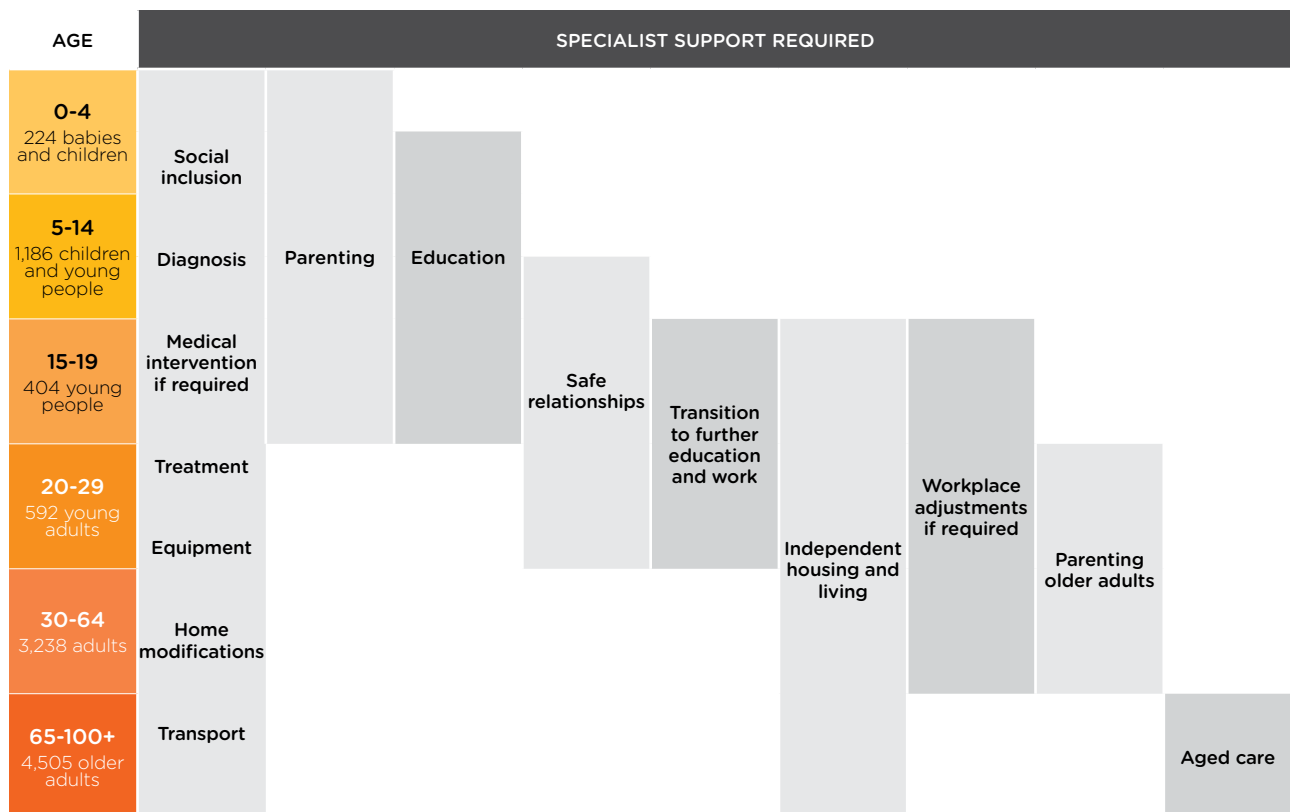
## Children and adolescents with disability

In the 2016 Census there were 221 children 0-4 years with disability in Penrith. The numbers increase significantly in the 5-9 years and 10-14 years age brackets. This may be due to babies being undiagnosed until their disability is more

noticeable due to delays in reaching neurotypical childhood milestones.

There were 648 children 5-9 years living with disability, 67% (437) male and 33% (210) female. There were 538 children and adolescents 10-14 years living with disability, 71% (382) male and 29% (157) female. The increase in numbers from age 4 indicates the important role schools play in diagnosis and support of disability in children and adolescents. Differences in the gender distribution of disability in children and adolescents can be attributed to the prevalence of autism diagnosis in boys.<sup>13</sup>

FIGURE 5: SUPPORTS OVER A LIFESPAN



Source for numbers of people: ABS Census 2016, "Need for Assistance" and "Place of Usual Residence".

13. Westir Ltd, 2020, Penrith Disability Snapshot Data Report.

# DIVERSITY OF DISABILITIES IN PENRITH

While many needs are the same for people living with different types of disability, there are some specific supports that can really make a difference to health, belonging and inclusion. For example, NDIS participation rates indicate autism and intellectual disability, particularly among young boys, are the most prevalent type of disability in Penrith. Knowing this, we can plan and provide community spaces suitable for children with autism, opportunities for social connection, tailored early intervention services, education and family caring, parenting support and the right workforce to provide specific services.

Nepean Blue Mountains LHD NDIS participation rates provide a picture of the types of disabilities people are living with in Penrith.

Nepean Blue Mountains LHD is made up of Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow, and Penrith. Penrith residents represent 58.4% of NDIS participants in the LHD.

NDIS participant data also shows how participant numbers differ by age group. People under 15 years of age represented just under half of NDIS participants in Nepean Blue Mountains LHD in December 2020 (46.7%), highlighting the demand for early intervention services and reinforcing the prevalence in support needs for children and adolescents with disability.

Nepean Blue Mountains LHD NDIS participants represented 19.3% of those in GWS and 6% in NSW. Figure 5 below shows the proportion of Nepean Blue Mountains residents who receive NDIS support for each disability type, compared with GWS and NSW.

As shown, a greater proportion of Nepean Blue Mountains residents were participating in the NDIS for autism (37.5%) compared to GWS (33.3%) and NSW (31.3%). NDIS participation in the Nepean Blue Mountains LHD also saw a slightly higher



proportion of participants with development delay (8.2%) compared to GWS (7.0%) and NSW (7.4%).

Autism was the most common disability type among NDIS participants in the Nepean Blue Mountains LHD. Support for Autism was most frequently delivered among the 7-14 year age group, with 1,613 children and adolescents receiving support, or 53.0% of the Nepean Blue Mountains LHD NDIS participants with Autism.

Intellectual disability was the next most common disability type among NDIS participants. Intellectual disability support was also most frequently delivered to the 7-14 years age group to 323 children and adolescents.

The services and infrastructure needed to help people with autism and intellectual disability fully access community life are quite different to those that support people with physical disability. Therefore, the needs of children and adolescents with autism and intellectual disability must be considered when planning and providing public spaces, social infrastructure, social activities, early intervention and parenting assistance.



## Education and learning

While inclusion in mainstream schooling is very important, and often preferred, for many children with disabilities and their families, schools tailored for students with disability, particularly with intellectual disability, also provide a rich learning environment.

There are two schools in Penrith with a specific focus on disability, Fernhill in Glenmore Park with 105 students and Kurrambee in Werrington with 107 students. In addition, Penrith Valley Learning Centre provides support for students with significant behaviour disorders and emotional disturbances.

Penrith City Council provides 23 childcare facilities and delivers leading practice support for babies and children with disabilities.

## Ageing and disability

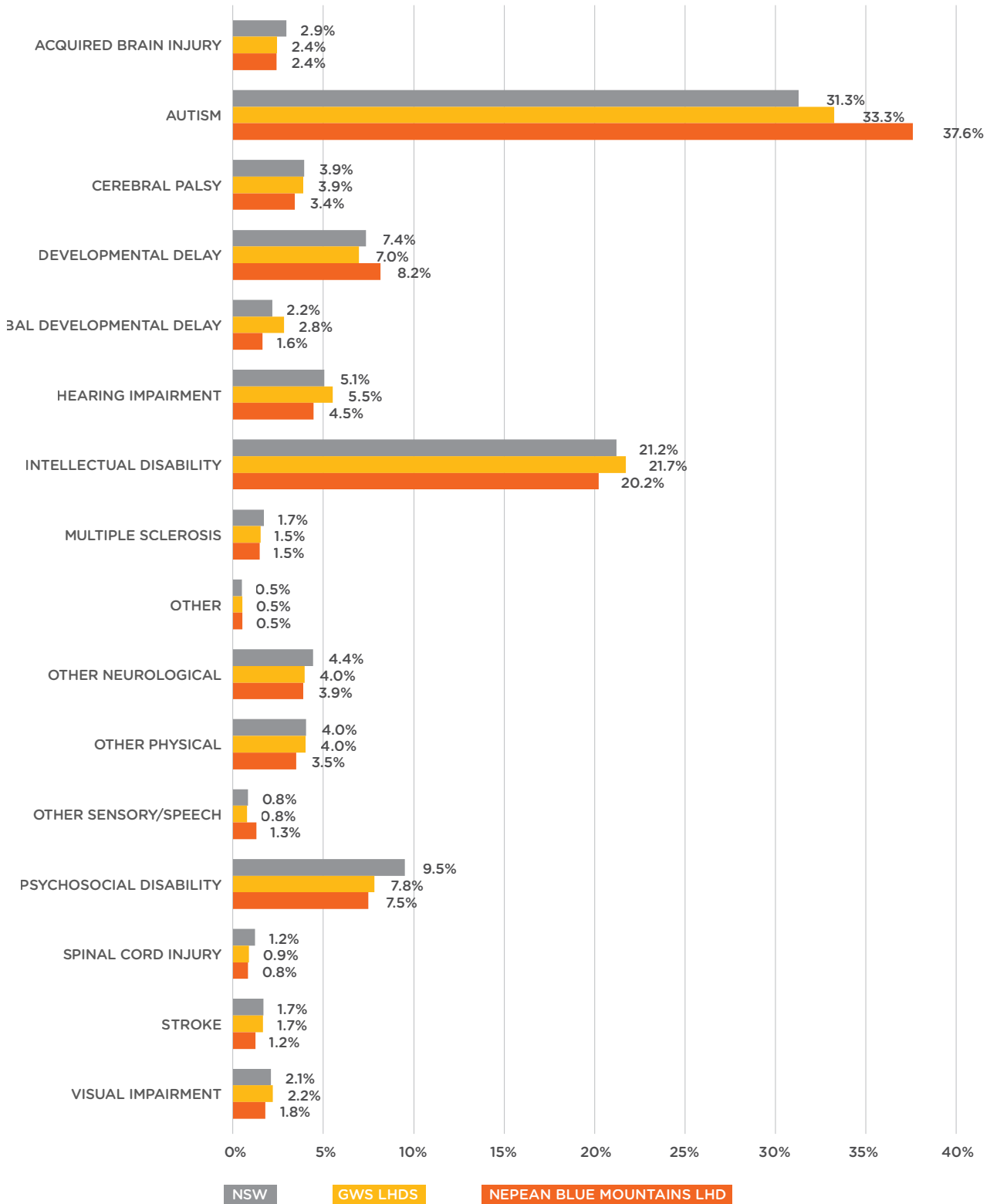
Some people are born with disability and many others acquire disability. This is particularly true as we age; there is a strong correlation between age and disability<sup>14</sup>. In Penrith, just under 45% of the total community living with disability are people



aged 65 years and over. It is important to consider the strengths and needs of this group in terms of local service provision and infrastructure. The ability to age in place is key for older people with disability. Housing and enabling infrastructure can help a person stay in their home as they age. Specialist care and access to appropriate services can also enhance the experience of older people with disability.

14. ABS, SDAC 2018, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2019*.

**FIGURE 6: PROPORTION OF DISABILITY TYPE AMONG NDIS PARTICIPANTS, COMPARISON OF NEPEAN BLUE MOUNTAINS LHD, GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY LHD'S, AND NSW (31 DECEMBER 2020)**



Source: Based on NDIS participant data, available at: <https://data.ndis.gov.au/explore-data>.

# CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Penrith has a significant and proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with 7,741 residents that make up 3.9% of the total population of Penrith, which is higher than the NSW average of 2.9%.

Of this population, 552 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living with disability, representing 7.1% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Penrith. This is considerably higher than the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community (5.5%)

The age profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability is young – children aged 5-9 years are the most significant age group, with 83 children identified.

These statistics highlight the need for culturally appropriate early intervention services as well as support and social inclusion opportunities.

There are many opportunities to learn from the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's demonstrated history of inclusion to strengthen broader practice around support for people and families living with disability.

## People who speak languages other than English at home

Penrith has lower proportions of people speaking languages other than English at home (20.7%) compared to NSW (26%)<sup>15</sup>. This number is likely to increase as GWS continues to grow. As it does, service provision will need to shift to meet the needs of all families. South-East Asian and Arabic are growing and emerging migrant language groups and Penrith can expect to see an increase in these languages being spoken at home<sup>16</sup>.

In Penrith, less than a quarter of people living with disability spoke a language other than English at home (22.6%). In GWS, over half of people living with disability spoke a language other than English at home (52%) compared to almost a third in NSW (30.1%).

**TABLE 1: PENRITH RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITY, AGE UNDER 30 YEARS AND INDIGENOUS STATUS (2016)**

AGE GROUPS	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY WHO IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER		PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITY
	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (%) (A)	
0-4 years	16	7.7%	221
5-9 years	83	13.1%	648
10-14 years	81	15.8%	538
15-19 years	57	13.9%	404
20-24 years	28	8.3%	327
25-29 years	27	11.3%	265

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, Need for Assistance, Place of Usual Residence. Please note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. No reliance should be placed on small cells.

15. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016, 2016 Census QuickStats: Penrith (C) (abs.gov.au) 16. ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data) Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, Multicultural NSW id, Language spoken | New South Wales | CRC NSW (id.com.au)

Of this group in Penrith, Arabic was the language most likely to be spoken (250 people), followed by Italian (180 people), Greek (151 people), and Maltese (140 people).

## Auslan and sign languages

In 2016, Auslan, the Australian sign language, was spoken by 141 people with only 47 of these people identifying as needing core activity assistance. A further 37 people, with or without disability, spoke a sign language other than Auslan at home, including Key Word Sign Australia and sign languages with no further definition. This may include the family and friends of people who need assistance with core activities, disability support staff or others.

The top seven suburbs in Penrith with the most people living with disability speaking a language other than English at home are, St Marys, St Clair, Penrith suburb, Glenmore Park, Colyton, Kingswood and Cranebrook, refer to Table 2 below for further details.



## SPOTLIGHT

### ON ST MARYS

St Marys is the suburb with the largest number of people with disability speaking a language other than English at home.

35.1% of people with disability spoke a language other than English at home.

The main language other than English spoken by people with disability is Arabic, with 33 people. 7 people spoke Auslan at home.

**TABLE 2: PENRITH RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITY, BY SUBURB AND LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME (MOST COMMON AND AUSLAN) (2016)**

SUBURB	TOP LANGUAGE OTE <sup>^</sup> SPOKEN AT HOME		AUSLAN	TOTAL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY, SPEAKING LANGUAGE OTE <sup>^</sup> AT HOME	
	LANGUAGE	COUNT	COUNT	COUNT	%
St Marys	Arabic	33	7	305	35.1
St Clair	Arabic	67	0	280	33.0
Penrith	Greek	16	0	209	18.5
Glenmore Park	Arabic	18	4	162	20.2
Colyton	Arabic	22	0	156	29.7
Kingswood	Serbian	11	3	135	22.0
Cranebrook	Maltese	14	0	117	15.7
<b>Total Penrith LGA*</b>	Arabic	250	47	2,299	22.6
<b>Total GWS</b>	Arabic	15,675	303	67,106	52.0
<b>Total NSW</b>	Arabic	18,947	836	120,915	30.1

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2016, Need for core assistance, Place of Usual Residence. Please note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. No reliance should be placed on small cells.

\*Local Government Area <sup>^</sup>Other Than English

# EMPLOYMENT

For many people employment brings social inclusion, a sense of belonging, ways to form relationships, a sense of value, health and wellbeing<sup>17</sup>, and opportunities to learn and contribute.

**Employment is linked not only to income and economic security, but to other aspects of wellbeing. Problems finding or keeping employment can, for example, have broader impacts on living conditions and opportunities for the individual, their family and the wider community (AIHW 2017).<sup>18</sup>**

People with disability face additional barriers to gaining employment. Some people may be permanently unable to work due to their disability.<sup>19</sup> For others, their disability may limit employment opportunities, including the type of work and their available hours. Workplaces may lack accessible facilities,<sup>20</sup> the willingness or knowledge about how to be inclusive of people with disability. Once in the labour force, people with disabilities are more likely to earn a lower personal income compared to people without disabilities.<sup>21</sup> This can contribute to further disadvantage and housing stress.

The greatest numbers of employed people with disability in Penrith lived in the suburbs of Cranebrook, Glenmore Park, and South Penrith.

Across Penrith, 199 people with disability were unemployed in 2016<sup>22</sup>. In this data, unemployed means they were seeking work. In Penrith, the rate of people with disability who were unemployed and seeking work was higher than in GWS and NSW.



Local resident Gretta Serov writes a blog On Our Own Tracks and makes and sells t-shirts, cups, and masks to her own design through a market stall. She lives in supported disability accommodation in Penrith and loves playing an active role in her community, including as part of a boccia team, having three jobs and being a part of Riding for the Disabled.

The suburbs with the greatest number of people with disability who were unemployed were Penrith suburb, St Marys, Kingswood, and Glenmore Park. The proportion of people, across Penrith, who were not in the labour force was much higher for people with disability (72.5%) than people without disability (20.8%).

17. Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2020, Health Benefits of Good Work ([racp.edu.au](http://racp.edu.au)) 18. AIHW, 2020, People with disability in Australia, Employment - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au)) 19. AIHW, 2020, 'People with disability in Australia', available at <https://bit.ly/3fG7llc> 20. A Hogan, SM Kyaw-Myint, D Harris and H Denronden, 2012, 'Workforce Participation Barriers for People with Disability', International Journal of Disability Management, 7, pp. 1-9. 21. AIHW, 2020, 'People with disability in Australia' available at <https://bit.ly/2RKp2YV> 22. ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2016, Need for Assistance, Place of Usual Residence, Employment Status



# HOUSING SECURITY

People with disability in Penrith are most likely to live in a home owned outright (32.5%). Following this, people with disability are most likely to live in a rental property (29%), then a home owned with a mortgage (25.7%)<sup>23</sup>.

Interestingly, while 32.5% of people with disability lived in a home owned outright, only 20.8% of people without disability lived in a home owned outright. These figures may be influenced by the high proportion of older people among people with disability – an age group that is more likely to own their own home outright.

The rates were very similar for living in rental properties between people with disability (29%) and people without disability (28%).

## Homelessness

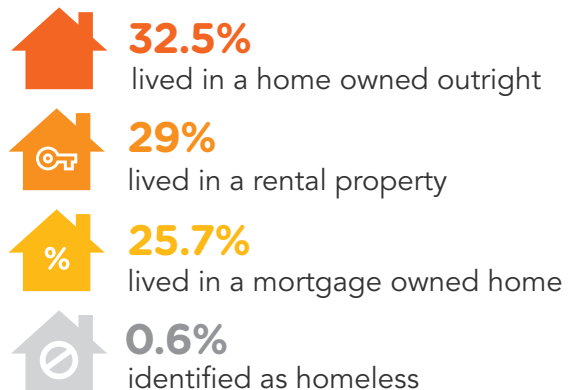
People with disability face greater risks of homelessness. Affordable and accessible housing options can be limited due to factors such as access needs, comparatively lower incomes and the additional costs of living with disability.<sup>24</sup> People with disability who are homeless may also experience a higher vulnerability. As Homelessness Australia identifies:

**People with disabilities can face barriers in accessing homelessness services. Some issues include: not being aware services exist and not knowing how to reach services or how accessible they are. Information on services is usually available in printed format – meaning people with vision impairment may be unable to access it.**<sup>25</sup>

Further issues can include the accessibility of support facilities and specialist homelessness services. Actions may also be misinterpreted and people with disability discriminated against,



## SNAPSHOT



indicating the importance of accessibility – both physical and cultural – in homelessness support services.

According to ABS Homelessness estimates (which are performed on a Statistical Area 3 (SA3) scale rather than LGA boundaries) it is estimated that 885 people in the Penrith SA3 area were experiencing homelessness or marginal housing. Of these people, 49 (5.5%) were living with disability. Of this number, 26 were living in supported accommodation for the homeless and 11 in other crowded dwellings.

23. ABS, *Census of Population and Housing 2016, Place of Enumeration*.

24. *People with Disability Australia 2019, 'Housing, Jobs and Transport'*, available at <https://bit.ly/3yADNOC>

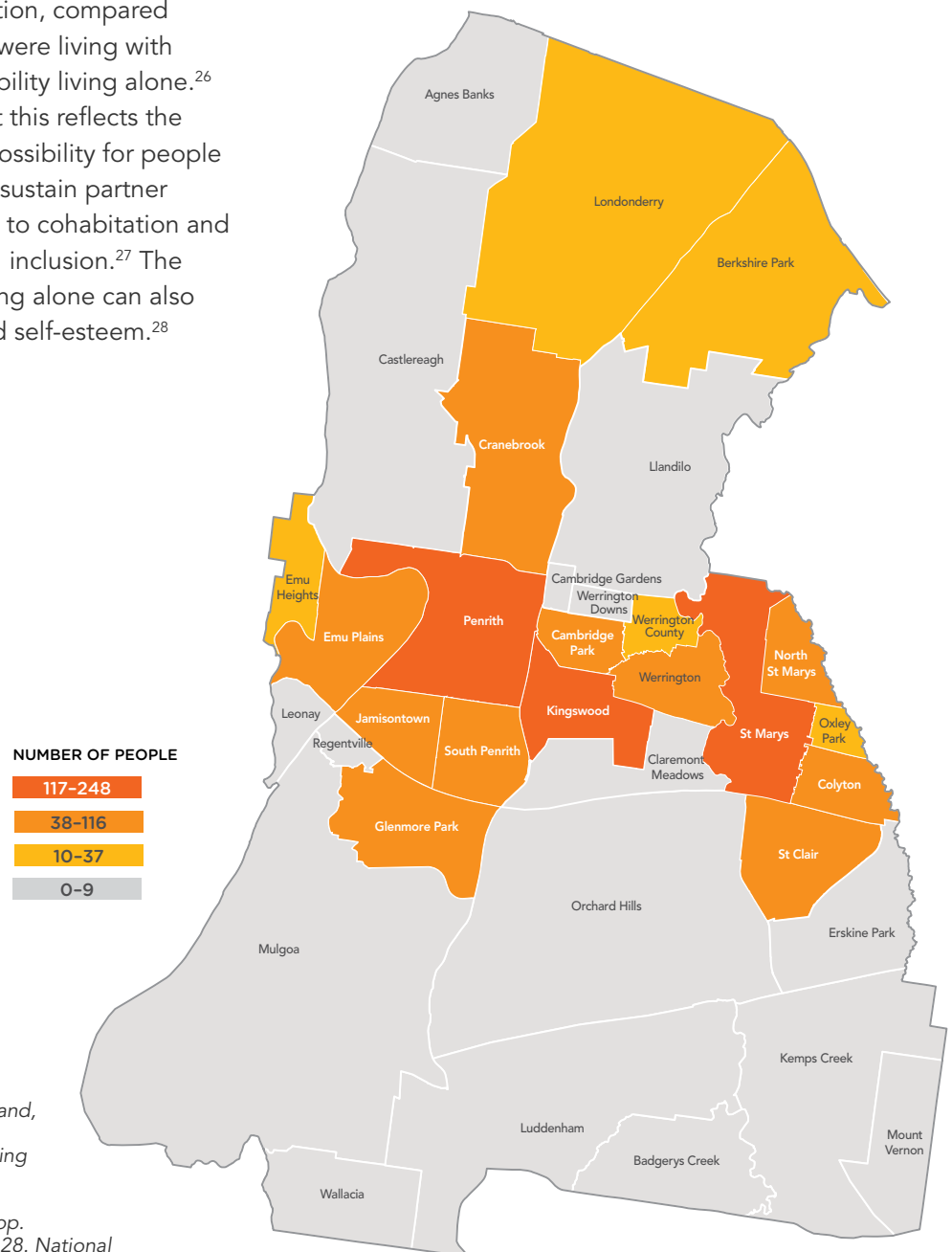
25. *Homelessness Australia 2016, 'Homelessness and Disability'*, available at <https://bit.ly/2QMEG5s>

# ISOLATION, VULNERABILITY, AND SUPPORT

## Living alone

People with disability who live in a lone-person household may face additional barriers. For example, a recent study found that people with disabilities living alone were more likely to experience low life satisfaction, compared to people with disability who were living with others or people without disability living alone.<sup>26</sup> The study also suggested that this reflects the societal barriers limiting the possibility for people with disabilities to create and sustain partner relationships, which “can lead to cohabitation and family formation” and societal inclusion.<sup>27</sup> The isolation some experience living alone can also adversely affect self-worth and self-esteem.<sup>28</sup>

**FIGURE 7: PENRITH RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITY, LIVING IN LONE PERSON HOUSEHOLD BY SUBURB**



26. G Sandström, F Namatovu, J Ineland, D Larsson, N Ng, & M Stattin, 2021, 'The Persistence of High Levels of Living Alone Among Adults with Disabilities in Sweden, 1993–2011', *Population Research and Policy Review*, vol. 40, pp. 163–185. 27. Sandström et al. 2021 28. National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, 2009, *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia, National Disability Strategy Consultation Report*, <https://bit.ly/3wv5lmd>

Source: ABS, CENSUS, 2016

In 2016, 1,157 people living with disability in Penrith were living alone. They represented 11.4% of people living with disability. These numbers reinforce concerns about isolation and other challenges among people living with disability.

Penrith's comparatively high proportion of people living with disability living alone was not uniform across each suburb. In some suburbs, this rate was even higher, with around one in five people living with disability living alone. These suburbs were Penrith (248 people, 22%), Werrington (50 people, 21.4%) and Kingswood (117 people, 19%).

People with disability who live alone may be especially vulnerable during extreme weather conditions, natural disasters and emergencies. Service providers can factor in additional support to adequately plan with people living with disability for emergency situations.

## Social isolation

Living alone does not necessarily indicate that a person is socially isolated, in a similar way that living with others is no guarantee that you will feel socially connected. However, we know people with disability can often be socially isolated with fewer opportunities to take part in community life<sup>29</sup>.

It is critical to consider how, as a community we enhance spaces where people feel welcomed and can live full lives and be proud of their identity. Disability discrimination represents 43.7% of the complaints made to the Australian Human Rights Commission with sex discrimination in second place with 25.5%. In addition, many incidents go unreported.<sup>30</sup>



29. World Health Organization and World Bank Group, 2011, *World report on disability (2011)*, p 263). 30. AIHW, 2020, *People with Disability in Australia*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/justice-and-safety/disability-discrimination>

## Disability services and support

The NDIS was rolled out in the Nepean Blue Mountains LHD area in July 2015. It provides funding for scheme participants to purchase their supports from the services they choose. Service providers have had to adapt, providing supports across different areas, tailored to individual needs and delivered through flexible business models. Outside of the NDIS, generalist community services provide information and support to all people, including people with disability. There are a few small organisations that provide support specifically to people with disability, whether they are an NDIS participant or not:

**Uniting LAC** – in addition to their work providing support for eligible people to enter the NDIS, Uniting also provides information, referral, and support for people with disability ineligible for the scheme.

**Penrith Disability Resource Centre** – provides advocacy support for all people with disability, as well as information and referral.

**PATH** – provides advocacy support particularly for children with disability and their families, as well as information and referral, and some NDIS support items.

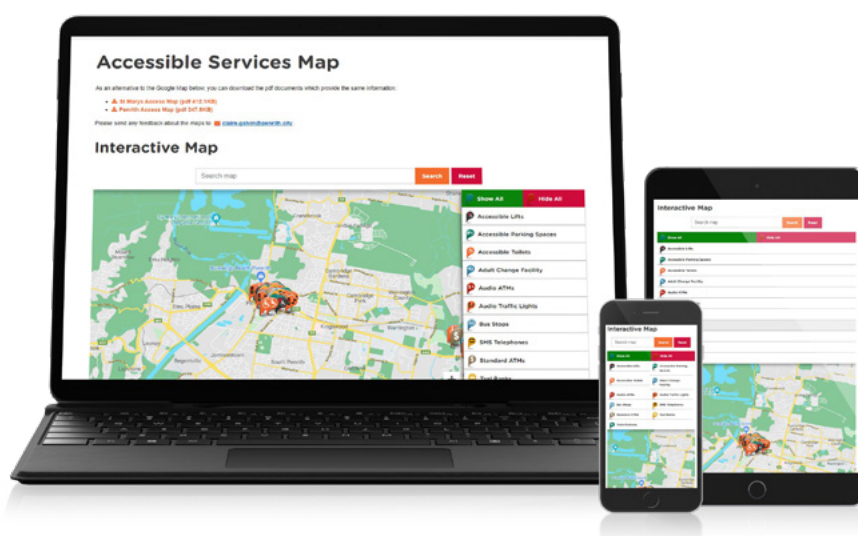
**Lifestart** – provides early intervention support for children aged 0-9 that have a developmental delay or disability.



## Transport and getting around

The Penrith City Council website has a range of information on accessible services, particularly in the Penrith and St Marys city centres.

**[penrith.city/accessibleservices](https://penrith.city/accessibleservices)**



30. AIHW, 2020, *People with Disability in Australia*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/justice-and-safety/disability-discrimination>

## Penrith Council's commitment and future work

Penrith City Council is working to make our City more accessible for everyone, regardless of age, background or ability. One of the ways in which this happens is through the Penrith City Council Access Committee, a formal committee which advises on access issues and promotes the inclusion of people with a disability as part of the diversity and strength of our City.

This committee comes together regularly and works hard to stay informed and make recommendations for the benefit of our community.

The Access Committee is made up of Councillors and community members with disability who come together with staff to:

1. advise on Council policies and procedures to ensure that legislative requirements on access are considered in Council decisions and its operations
2. promote the Universal Design approach to contribute to social inclusion
3. provide a link between Council and people in the community with disability
4. help Council identify strategies to improve access and social inclusion for people with disability, and
5. support Council in providing leadership for the broader community to achieve social inclusion of people with disability.

Another key driver for supportive inclusion across the City is Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). The current DIAP 2017-21 is being reviewed and reported against to continue improvements in accessibility across Council and our City.

### Key achievements from the current DIAP include:

- In 2017-2018, the Nepean Jobs For All project included a series of regional business breakfasts to educate local businesses about the benefits of employing people with disability and, with the help of especially created videos, address some common myths and stereotypes. It was led by Penrith Council in partnership with Blue Mountains City Council, Hawkesbury City Council through the Regional Strategic Alliance.
- In 2018-2019, six Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant bus shelters were installed in Claremont Meadows, Cambridge Park, Jamisontown, Cranebrook, St Clair and Kingswood.
- In 2018-2019, 80 tactile indicators were installed at bus stops in high priority locations.
- In 2018-19, Council's traineeship program employed 15 trainees who identified as having a disability in Business Administration and Children's Services.
- In 2019-2020, Council was successful in being awarded NSW Government Everyone Can Play grant funding of \$140,000 to upgrade three playgrounds in Oxley Park, Cranebrook, and Glenmore Park, to improve accessibility and inclusiveness of these play spaces.
- In 2019-2020, twenty staff were trained by the Centre for Inclusive Design to create accessible documents in Word, Excel, and PDF format. Resources are being developed that will be available on Council's staff intranet site.

Engagement to create Council's new DIAP will start in 2021-22 and lead to the development a new plan to support access and inclusion across the City.

**PENRITH**  
**CITY COUNCIL**

For further information please contact  
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4732 7943 or [SocialPlanning@penrith.city](mailto:SocialPlanning@penrith.city)