



NATIONAL ETHNIC DISABILITY ALLIANCE

What does the data say?

People from
non English speaking background
with disability in Australia

People from NESB with disability in Australia: What does the data say?

March 2010

This project was commissioned by National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)

Consultations: Brian Cooper, Dinesh Wadiwel
Report Preparation: Dinesh Wadiwel, Sibylle Kaczorek
Editing, Layout and Design: NEDA

National Ethnic Disability Alliance
PO Box 9381
Harris Park NSW 2150
Ph: 02 9687 8933
Fax: 02 9635 5355



NATIONAL ETHNIC DISABILITY ALLIANCE

Foreword

Australia is an increasingly diverse country, with a robust history of migration which has a strong impact upon Australian values, culture and composition, particularly with respect to the contribution that has been made by of a growing proportion of Australians with non English speaking background (NESB) ancestry. People from diverse backgrounds also include people with impairment and illness, with an increasingly large number of Australians from non English speaking backgrounds with disability.

Despite evidence of a strong impact of cultural and linguistic diversity on the 'face' of Australia, there remains very little data on the role of non English speaking migration in shaping contemporary Australia and Australians.

While data is released through Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys on select characteristics for migrants and people born in countries where English is not the primary language, the sophistication of this reporting has arguably been lacking.

For example, as is discussed below, while the ABS Census of Population and Housing includes questions on ancestry, the ABS is yet to release a substantial analysis on the ancestry of Australians, and how this might shape outcomes and characteristics for different population groups.

Similarly, it is fair to say that within the Australian social policy literature, there has been a lack of analysis on how culture, language and faith affect participation and socio-economic outcomes, or how and whether these circumstances change between first and second generation migrants. It is palpably apparent that in order to understand social inclusion and exclusion in Australia, cultural, linguistic and faith diversity must also be understood, yet there is scant analysis in Australia of work in this area.

This report highlights issues of significance for people from NESB with disability on the basis of the currently available data.

Further, it highlights areas for urgent improvement with respect to data collection and analysis.

Embracing such improvements will go a long way towards assessing progress of a socially inclusive Australia, avoiding discrimination against people from NESB with disability on the basis of lack of accountability alone.

Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs
GSS	General Social Survey
MENSC	Major Non English Speaking Countries
MESC	Major English Speaking Countries
NEDA	National Ethnic Disability Alliance
NESB	Non English Speaking Background
SDAC	Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers

Contents

Foreword	1
Acronyms	2
About NEDA	4
Executive Summary	5
2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers	8
Disability status and Country of Birth (weighted)	9
Disability and Country of Birth by Age	10
Census of Population and Housing	11
Need for assistance, Major English Speaking Countries	12
Need for assistance, Major Non English Speaking Countries	13
Need for assistance and Ancestry	14
2006 General Social Survey	17
Internet Access, Employment Participation and Restrictions	18
Conclusion	19
Disability and Country of Birth (not weighted)	20
References	22

About NEDA

The National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) is the national peak organisation representing the rights and interests of people from non-English speaking background (NESB) with disability, their families and carers throughout Australia.

NEDA is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to provide policy advice to the Australian Government and other agencies on national issues affecting people from NESB with disability, their families and carers.

NEDA actively promotes the equal participation of people from NESB with disability in all aspects of Australian society.

It manages a range of projects relating to NESB and disability communities and works closely with its state and territory members to ensure that its policy advice reflects the lived experiences of people from NESB with disability.

In states and territories where no NESB-disability advocacy agency exists NEDA undertakes development work to establish a structure that can support people from NESB with disability, their families and carers.

Following organisations are NEDA members:

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF)

New South Wales

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA)

Northern Territory

Multicultural Community Services of Central Australia (MCSCA)

Queensland

AMPARO Advocacy Inc.

Tasmania

Multicultural Council of Tasmania (MCOT)

Victoria

Diversity and Disability (DnD)

Western Australia

Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre (EDAC)

Executive Summary

The *People from non English speaking background with disability: What does the data say?* Report provides three snapshots of data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- 2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers,
- 2006 Census of Population and Housing, and
- 2006 General Social Survey respectively.

All three of these surveys use both different identifiers for disability, and collect different data in relation to 'ethnicity,' which affects the comparability of data.

However, while this poses consistency problems in analysis, it does create the opportunity to provide different perspectives on the same subject of analysis (namely people from NESB with disability).

The aim of this paper is to use these snapshots to, *firstly*, deepen our understanding of the characteristics of people from NESB with disability in Australia, and *secondly*, pose a set of questions regarding existing data sources and their problems.

Gaining understanding about the lives of people from NESB with disability in Australia on the basis of data analysis is critical if we are to assess social inclusion and exclusion in Australia.

So far the question of involvement of people from NESB with disability in Australian life has largely been under-analysed in literature and data.

It is noted that there are only two regular pieces of data relating to people from NESB with disability that are publicly reported.

Both are sourced from the Australian Institute and Health and Welfare and reported annually by Australian Government Productivity Commission, namely the:

- Commonwealth States and Disability Agreement Minimum Data Set figures of service utilisation by people born in a non English Speaking Country, and
- Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers derived data on labour force participation by country of birth.

However, these large collections are limited due to the relatively unsophisticated variable of 'Country of Birth' with little understanding of how people from NESB with disability might differ, particularly those who belong to different migration waves, are migrants or refugees, are different by age or sex, have radically different countries of origin, who have different faiths, or belong to a first or second generation of migrants.

In other words, as is the case in relation to broad reporting on ethnicity and multiculturalism in Australia, there is a lack of sophistication and depth in our understanding of people from NESB with disability.

Improvements in the recording of data and subsequent analysis will be of great assistance for social policy in Australia working towards social inclusion and social justice.

Such improvements will directly assist Government planning processes and decision making in regards to disability rights, issues and services.

Key findings

- More than 1 million people with disability are from non English speaking backgrounds.
- Some form of recent migration heritage is a characteristic for over 40% of people with disability.
- There is a higher prevalence of impairment for people born in a non English speaking country aged over 45 years of age, especially for 'first wave' non English speaking migrants, up to 3 times that of the Australian born population.
- All people with disability face barriers to social participation – access to employment, technology, social activity and economic wellbeing – however people from non English speaking countries are likely to face deeper forms of marginalisation.

Key improvements in data collection and analysis would include

- Consistency is needed across the identified data collections in regards to defining disability.

The 'need for assistance' approach by the Census is considered not useful in a culturally and linguistically diverse context due to an implied Anglo-centric set of values and assumptions underlying the meaning and concept of 'need for assistance'.

The broad characteristics of the SDAC appear to be the more useful approach in capturing differences in need.

- Consistency is needed across the identified data collections in regards to defining ethnicity.

The combination of the country of birth and ancestry approach of the Census is considered as most useful as it also captures people born in Australia but being raised in a NESB family context.

- The sampling size of the SDAC is inadequate and will not be improved by simple quantitative increase, even doubling.

A proportional, stratified sampling within cultural and language groups would be substantially more effective for informed data analysis.

2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers

The 2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers (2003 SDAC) is often regarded as the most authoritative survey of disability in Australia. The survey involves a sample size of close to 40,000 people, and is weighted to enable a degree of representativeness and comparability.

The 2003 SDAC uses a very broad definition of disability: it is on the basis of this survey that the ABS concluded that 1 in 5 Australians (or 4 million people in 2003) report a disability.

The 2003 SDAC does include a single ethnicity indicator. However although the survey asked a country of birth question, the ABS did not report on key characteristics for people born in countries other than Australia, in particular non English speaking countries with disability, in the SDAC summary of results.

As discussed below, because the SDAC only asked a country of birth question, there is little capacity within this survey to understand other variables of ethnicity for people with disability (e.g. language use and literacy, or people born in Australia with one or both parents born in a non English Speaking Country).

Nevertheless the data is capable of providing some interesting characteristics relating to people from NESB with disability in Australia. Table 1 reports people with disability who have indicated a need for care by country of birth, the latter category broken down into “Main English Speaking Countries” and “Other Countries.” According to this table, approximately 21% of people with a profound, severe or moderate restriction who require support are born in a country other than a main English speaking country.

Chart 1 compares disability type by country of birth.

SDAC is also capable of producing some interesting data on the relationship between disability, ethnicity and age. Chart 2 describes the prevalence of disability by age. It is relatively well known that the disability rate increases with age for most Australians: that is, older Australians are more likely to have a core activity restriction.

However it is noted that migration history appears to have a significant impact on this population characteristic. Chart 2 describes the disability rate by Country of Birth, broadly broken into the categories Australian born and non Australian born.

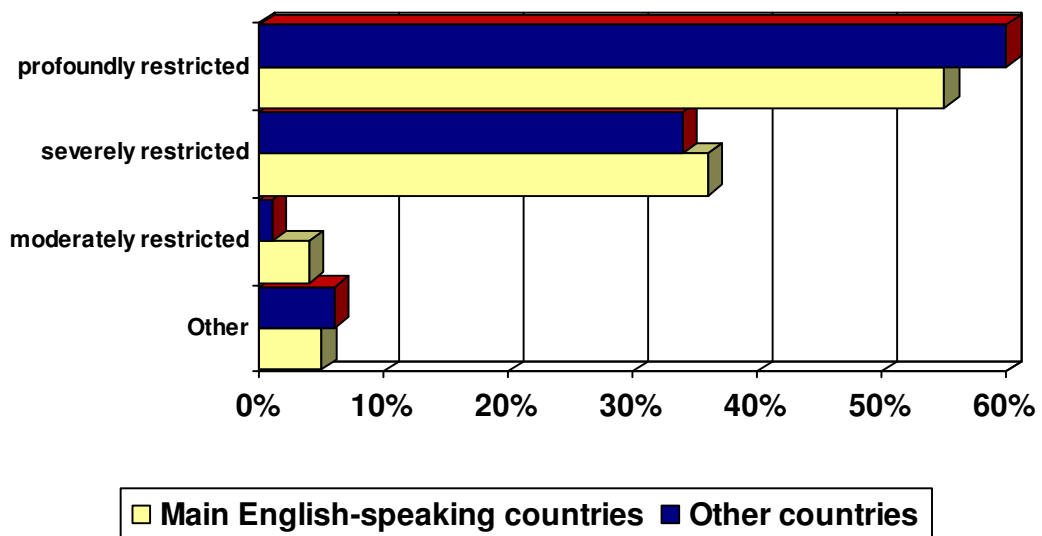
The table shows a comparatively low rate of disability for younger migrants, which at around the age of 45 years of age increases to a level well above the rest of the population.

Table 1
Disability status (1) of main recipient of care (weighted) by Country of Birth

	Main English-speaking countries	Other countries	Total
Not applicable	16,609,509	2,710,111	19,319,621
Has disability and profoundly restricted in core activities	181,177	41,999	223,176
Has disability and severely restricted in core activities	117,959	23,845	141,804
Has disability and moderately restricted in core activities	12,636	601	13,237
Other	17,404	4,052	21,456
Total	16,938,685	2,780,609	19,719,293

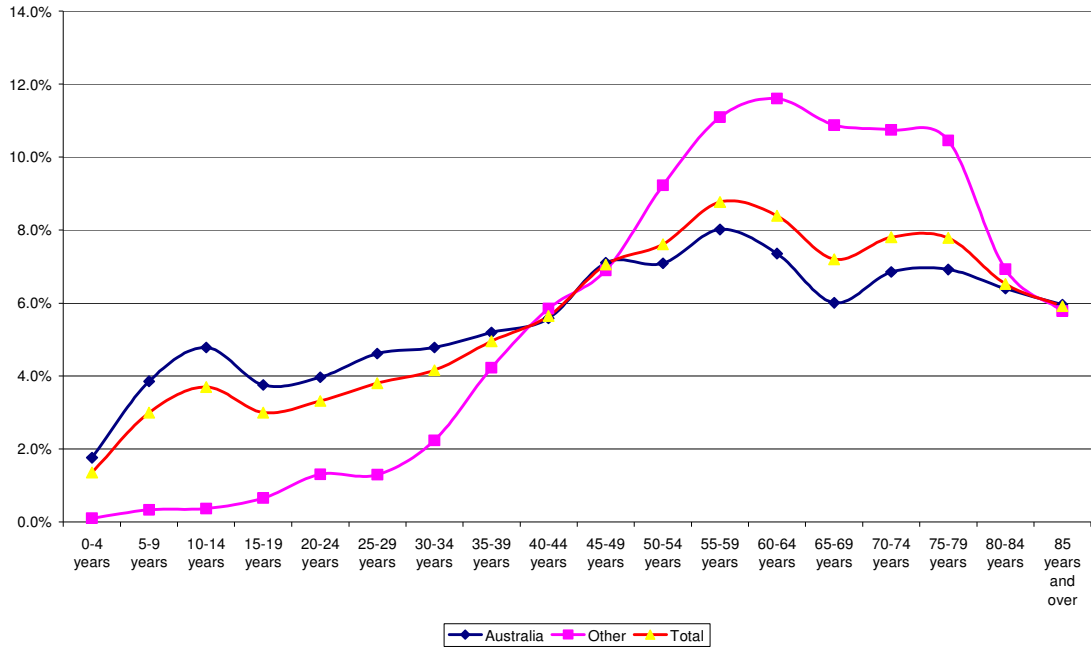
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2003

Chart 1
Disability status of main recipient of care (weighted) by Country of Birth



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2003

Chart 2
Disability and Country of Birth by Age



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2003.

Chart 2 is interesting for two reasons.

Firstly it arguably demonstrates the effects of Australia’s migration policies, which by effectively screening migrants with disability, artificially skew Australia’s migrant intake toward migrants without disability.

Secondly the chart confirms the anecdotal information from advocates in the field, who have suggested a much higher prevalence of impairment amongst migrants over 40 years of age, typically as a result of acquired disability through exposure to more risky labour, and through previously undiagnosed (or ‘hidden’) disability that makes itself known in middle age.

Census of Population and Housing

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing has the potential to provide an immensely rich source of data on ethnicity in Australia. The survey not only collects country of birth, but other ethnicity indicators including language spoken at home, and ancestry (that is country of birth for one or both parents).

However, although the Census includes a measure of disability – on ‘need for assistance’ – it is limited, and this definition of disability is not comparable with either the 2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers, or the 2006 General Social Survey.

Because the need for assistance question in the Census was limited in scope, there were a narrower band of people with disability identified through this survey.

Like the Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers, it is possible to use country of birth as a main indicator of ethnicity. Table 2 compares need for assistance by country of birth, broken into two categories: major English speaking countries, and other.

There is a higher need for assistance recorded for people born in a country other than a major English speaking country (4.0% for people born in a major English speaking country, 5.6% for people born in a country other than a major English speaking country).

Table 2
Need for Assistance and Country of Birth

	Does not have need for assistance with core activities	Need core activity	Not stated	Total
Major English Speaking Countries	94.20%	4.00%	1.80%	15,551,027
Other	92.60%	5.60%	1.80%	2,926,707
Total	17,363,691	784,328	329,715	18,477,734 ¹

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

¹ Excludes not stated 1,366,309 persons

It is possible to provide more depth to understanding this difference in need for assistance by examining the prevalence rates by country of birth in more detail.

Table 3 reports on need for assistance with core activities for major English speaking countries, Table 4 for Other Countries.

Table 3
Place of Birth Major English Speaking Countries

Country of Birth	Has need for assistance with core activities		Does not have need for assistance with core activities		Not stated		Total
Australia	549,561	3.9%	13,266,694	94.3%	256,896	1.8%	14,073,151
United Kingdom	58,651	5.6%	967,100	93.2%	12,409	1.2%	1,038,160
Northern America	2,227	2.4%	90,622	96.6%	981	1.0%	93,830
Ireland	2,514	5.0%	47,054	93.6%	684	1.4%	50,252
New Zealand	9,173	2.4%	373,984	96.0%	6,306	1.6%	389,463
Total MESC	622,126	4.0%	14,745,454	94.3%	277,276	1.8%	15,644,856

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

Table 4 Place of Birth Non English Speaking Countries							
Country of Birth	Has need for assistance with core activities		Does not have need for assistance with core activities		Not stated		Total
Caribbean	147	3.6%	3,824	94.6%	70	1.7%	4,041
Central America	495	3.8%	12,213	94.3%	244	1.9%	12,952
Central Asia	984	4.9%	18,311	91.4%	743	3.7%	20,038
Central and West Africa	162	1.4%	10,631	94.5%	451	4.0%	11,244
Chinese Asia (includes Mongolia)	8,794	2.9%	291,459	95.5%	4,786	1.6%	305,039
Eastern Europe	16,580	12.8%	110,316	85.2%	2,538	2.0%	129,433
Japan and the Koreas	1,153	1.4%	80,653	96.5%	1,789	2.1%	83,595
Mainland South-East Asia	9,107	3.8%	221,737	93.7%	5,879	2.5%	236,723
Maritime South-East Asia	6,186	2.0%	305,590	96.8%	3,939	1.2%	315,715
Melanesia	651	2.4%	26,554	96.1%	414	1.5%	27,619
Micronesia	41	3.9%	993	94.4%	18	1.7%	1,052
Middle East	13,841	7.1%	175,049	90.4%	4,743	2.4%	193,633
North Africa	4,002	7.0%	50,902	89.5%	1,968	3.5%	56,872
Northern Europe	1,353	4.7%	26,942	94.0%	353	1.2%	28,648
Polynesia (excludes Hawaii)	2,796	3.6%	72,941	94.0%	1,897	2.4%	77,634
South America	2,538	3.7%	65,439	94.6%	1,185	1.7%	69,162
South Eastern Europe	33,702	10.5%	281,157	87.4%	6,753	2.1%	321,612
Southern Asia	6,129	2.5%	237,838	96.1%	3,515	1.4%	247,482
Southern Europe	33,757	12.5%	231,597	85.6%	5,339	2.0%	270,693
Southern and East Africa	3,443	1.9%	174,594	96.7%	2,541	1.4%	180,578
Supplementary codes	822	7.7%	9,175	86.5%	611	5.8%	10,608
Total Other	146,683	5.6%	2,407,915	92.5%	49,776	1.9%	2,604,374
Not stated	36,486	2.7%	391,278	28.6%	938,545	68.7%	1,366,309
Total Australia	805,295	4.1%	17,544,647	89.4%	1,265,597	6.5%	19,615,539

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

The need for assistance rates for some people born in non English speaking countries are comparatively high, particularly for those born in Southern, South East and Eastern Europe.

It is noted that this is should come as no surprise as these groups are usually associated with first wave non English speaking migrants, and would include migrants who, as identified in Chart 1 above, have acquired disability while in Australia.

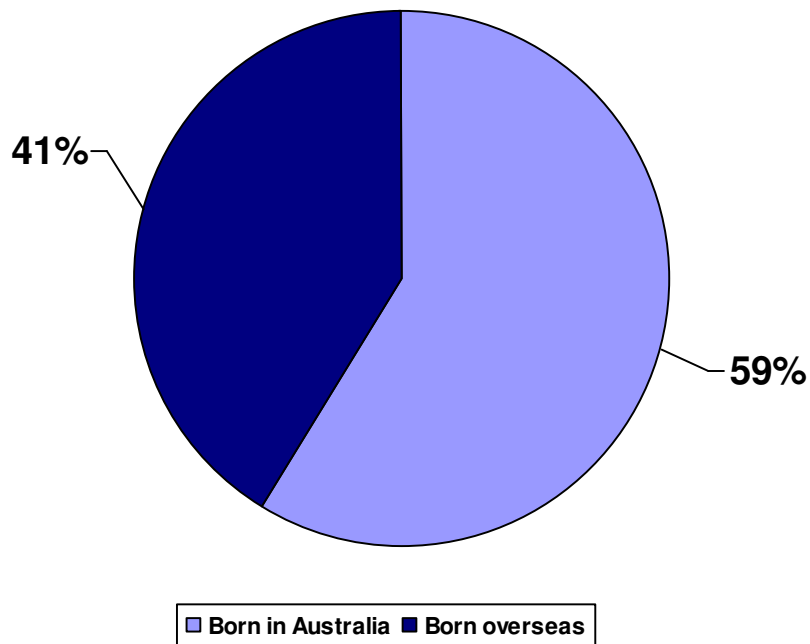
Because the census offers a range of ethnicity indicators, it is possible to generate more sophisticated measures of cultural diversity, including a more accurate picture of non English speaking background Australians.

One of the drawbacks with the use of country of birth as an indicator of ethnicity is that it fails to capture people born in Australia, but raised in a non English speaking family context.

This is of vital importance to understanding the characteristics of people from NESB with disability because, for example, outcomes will change for some people with disability with family members or carers form non English speaking cultures, where low English proficiency might affect access to information, services and social networks.

Racial discrimination also affects people who may have high English proficiency, and /or are born in Australia: country of birth lacks sophistication as a measure of these types of barriers.

Chart 5
Need for Assistance and Ancestry



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

Chart 5 provides an illustration of need for assistance by ancestry, broken down into born in Australia and born overseas categories.

This chart demonstrates that of the people who answered positively to the need for assistance with core activities question in the Census, 41.4% were either born overseas, or one or both of their parents were born overseas. In other words, experience of migration, either directly or through a birth parent, is a common experience for people with disability in Australia.

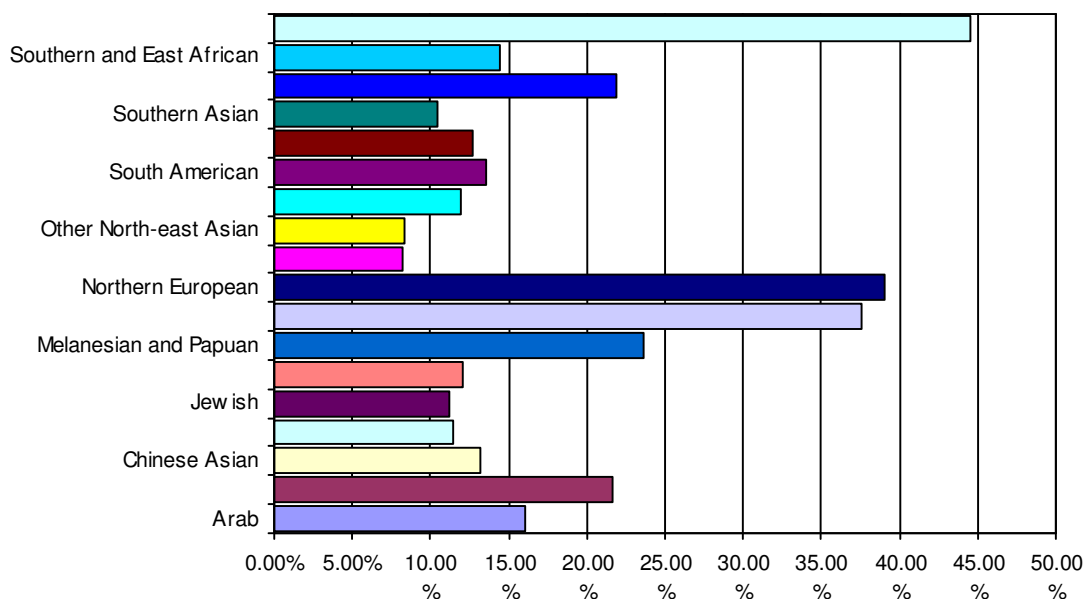
The results are perhaps more startling if when identifying people with non English speaking country heritage with disability.

Table 5 provides this breakdown: it shows that of the people who answered the need for assistance question in the census, approximately 23.7% percent were born in a non English speaking country or had one or both parents born in a non English speaking country.

Reading this back into the broad definition of disability provided by the 2003 SDAC, and utilising current population data; one can note that there are over 1 million people from non English speaking backgrounds with disability in Australia.

Further, it is noted that the need for assistance varies dramatically across different groups on the basis of ethnicity. Chart 6 shows need for assistance rates for different ancestry groups: the rates of need for assistance are startling for some groups, including as discussed for the first wave non English speaking migrants.

Chart 6
Ancestry by Core Activity Need for Assistance



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

The need for assistance by language other than English spoken at home data also confirms a similarly high level of diversity amongst people with disability: approximately 19% of people with disability use a language other than English in their homes.

Table 5
Australia, Ancestry 1st Response (ANC1P) and Country of Birth of Person (BPLP)
by Core Activity Need for Assistance (ASSNP)

Core Activity Need for Assistance (ASSNP)	All Persons			
	Need For Assistance	No Need for Assistance	Not Stated	Total
Ancestry 1st Response (ANC1P)				
Arab	11,389	214,016	4,946	230,351
Caribbean Islander	52	2,234	44	2,330
Central American	281	8,509	126	8,916
Central Asian	1,634	31,549	909	34,092
Central and West African	106	7,414	320	7,840
Chinese Asian	14,641	607,889	8,067	630,597
Eastern European	19,576	236,004	3,005	258,585
Jewish	964	9,033	279	10,276
Mainland South-East Asian	6,741	212,674	4,372	223,787
Maritime South-East Asian	3,277	169,564	2,314	175,155
Melanesian and Papuan	140	6,966	148	7,254
Micronesian	8	533	11	552
Northern European	2,241	43,787	524	46,552
Other North African and Middle Eastern	5,953	115,564	3,141	124,658
Other North-east Asian	1,173	87,215	1,637	90,025
Polynesian	1,695	61,734	1,614	65,043
South American	1,418	49,959	737	52,114
South Eastern European	36,981	551,186	8,736	596,903
Southern Asian	6,103	321,062	4,360	331,525
Southern European	46,311	831,777	11,430	889,518
Southern and East African	1,547	92,850	1,731	96,128
Western European	32,620	661,639	7,500	701,759
Total	194,851	4,323,158	65,951	4,583,960

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Table builder

2006 General Social Survey

The 2006 General Social Survey is a broad survey on lifestyle, wellbeing and cohesion. Like the SDAC it only has one ethnicity indicator (country of birth), however it also includes other relevant variables including English language proficiency and visa type.

Once again, the GSS uses a different definition of disability, both broader than the Census, yet narrower than SDAC.

The GSS is a rich source of data, and potentially at least in the future, an important source of information on social participation and cohesion.

It is noted that the social participation outcomes will be measures within the new Australian Government National Disability Agreement and National Disability Strategy: for this reason the GSS and similar surveys will be important sources of data in future for Government planning processes and decision making.

There is much that can be extracted from this survey that is relevant to people from NESB with disability. Highlight below are two areas of interest from the GSS.

Chart 7 reports on Internet usage by country of birth and disability. It is known that people with disability can experience lower utilisation of some communication technology than other Australians.

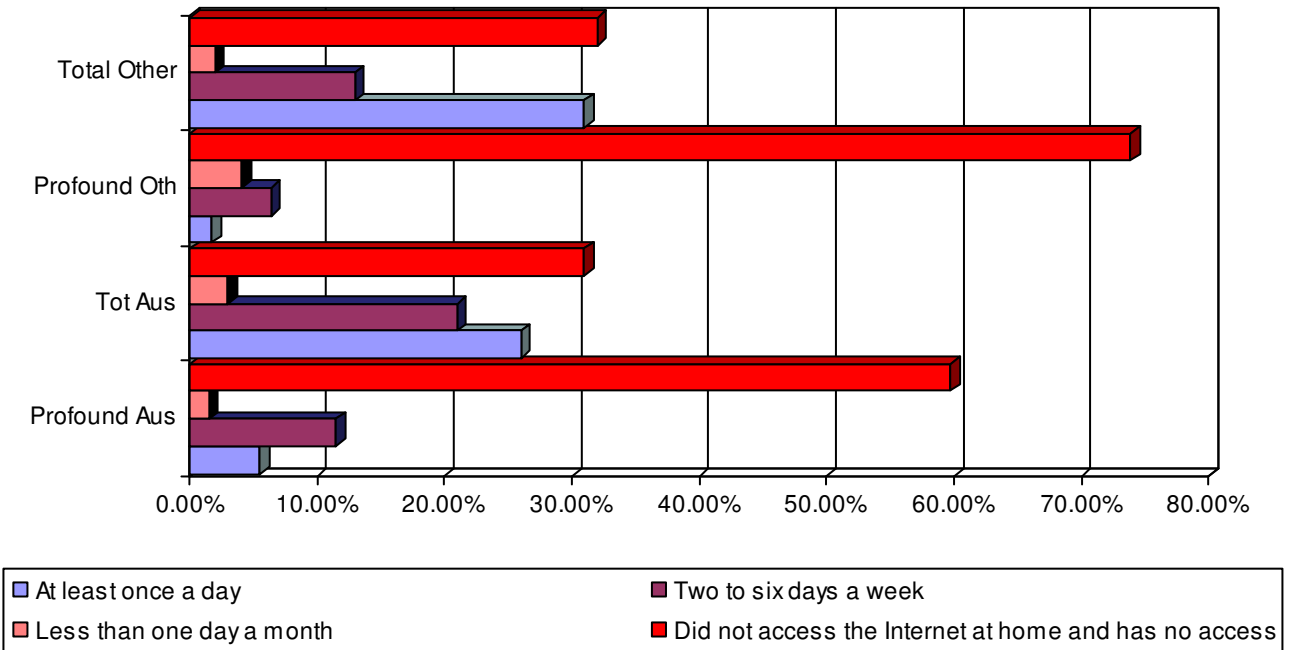
Chart 7 demonstrates that country of birth also influences internet usage: 73.8% of people with profound core activity restriction born in a country other than that where English is the main language have no access to the internet whatsoever, compared to 59.7% for people with a profound core activity restriction born in an English speaking country.

Chart 8 displays employment participation for people who identified a schooling or employment related restriction by country of birth.

It shows a higher proportion of people looking for full time or part time work who identify as having a schooling or employment restriction, and are born in a country other than a major English speaking country.

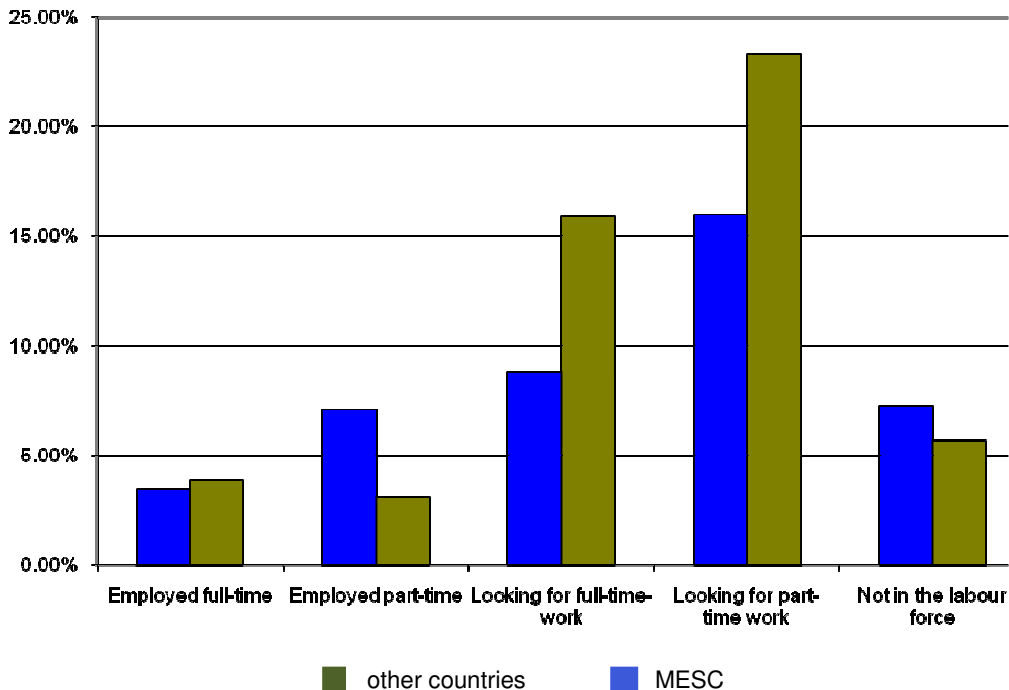
The unemployment rate for this group – based on the GSS – is close to 40%.

Chart 7 Frequency of Internet access at home in the last 12 months (Has profound core activity restriction) by Place of Birth



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, General Social Survey 2006

Chart 8 Employment Participation, Schooling and Employment Restriction and Place of Birth



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, General Social Survey 2006

Conclusion

This report has provided a short overview of data relating to disability and ethnicity from the 2003 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers, the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and the 2006 General Social Survey.

It is clear that from the existing data sources cited there is a wealth of information available in these large surveys that provide a picture on the characteristics and circumstances of people from NESB with disability.

Four significant findings so far unreported are:

1. The Census indicates that it is fair to say that close to one in four people with disability can cite non English speaking ancestry, either directly or through one or both of their parents. Reading this back into the Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers (SDAC), this suggests that more than 1 million people with disability are from non English speaking backgrounds. Further that some form of recent migration heritage – either directly or through one or both parents – is a characteristic for over 40% of people with disability.
2. The prevalence rate of impairment in relation to age for people born in non English speaking countries is radically different from other Australians. For Australians in general, the rate of disability increases with age. For non English speaking migrants and refugees, there is a low impairment rate which spikes dramatically at middle age, with a significantly higher prevalence of impairment for people born in a non English speaking countries aged over 45 years of age.
3. Building on the last point, the data indicates that there is a very high prevalence rate of disability for what may be associated with ‘first wave’ non English speaking migrants – Southern, South East and Eastern European – with a proportion of people with disability up to 3 times that of the Australian population. Thus in relation to prevalence, this group differs significantly from English speaking migrants in terms of prevalence.
4. In terms of social participation, country of birth makes a difference for some measurements of inclusion / cohesion for people with disability. It remains true that all people with disability face barriers to social participation – access to employment, technology, social activity and economic wellbeing – however people from non English speaking countries are likely to face deeper forms of marginalisation. The data extracted from the GSS suggests that this is measurable, and should be a key feature in future Government planning processes.

Finally, there are key problems with data and analysis in Australia which have a bearing on future interpretation in this area.

Firstly, it is noted that there is a lack of consistency in defining disability and ethnicity among the three sets of data. It has been pointed out that the approach of the Census in regards to ethnicity is the most useful approach as it takes into account country of birth and ancestry.

With respect to disability, the broad characteristics of the SDAC appear to be the more useful approach in capturing differences in need.

Secondly, it is noted that there is a key deficiency with SDAC in relation to providing sophistication in understanding the characteristics of people with disability in Australia: the limited sample size of the survey, which removes the ability to assess detail differences at less than general levels of specificity.

Table 6, provides a breakdown of the raw unweighted survey participants in the 2003 SDAC, broken down by core activity restriction and country of birth.

Of the 40,474 people surveyed in the 2003 survey, less than 800 people reported a core activity restriction and required care. A mere 128 of these people were born in a country other than a main English speaking country: clearly not a large enough sample size to draw any significant conclusions from.

It seems odd that a survey with such a strong impact as the SDAC – on Government and community planning and decision making – relies on such a small sample size.

The proposed doubling of the sample size will not necessarily fix this problem, and it would be surprising if this will create any great improvements in data quality in relation to those from diverse backgrounds.

Instead a proportional, stratified sampling within cultural and language groups would be substantially more effective for informed data analysis.

Table 6 Disability and Country of Birth – English Speaking Country and Non English Speaking Country.

Disability status (1) of main recipient of care (not weighted)			
	Main English-speaking countries	Other countries	Total
Not applicable	35,244	5,230	40,474
Has disability and profoundly restricted in core activities	346	76	422
Has disability and severely restricted in core activities	232	44	276
Has disability and moderately restricted in core activities	24	1	25
Other	29	7	36
Total	35,875	5,358	41,233

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2003.

The latter issue highlights something of a political problem in Australia in relation to data and ethnicity: namely that despite the strong cultural, linguistic and faith diversity in Australia, planners, governments and statisticians have not taken seriously the characteristics of people from NESB, or their past or continuing impact on Australian life.

This is particularly apparent for Australians with low English proficiency, where so far little attention has been paid by the ABS in improving participation in large scale surveys.

The question raised by this report analysing the existing data is as follows:

When will the Australian Government commission a large scale survey on culture, language and faith in Australia to accurately capture the picture for NESB Australians including those with disability?

References

ABS (2004) *4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings* Canberra, Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS (2006 A) *6503.0 - Household Expenditure Survey and Survey of Income and Housing: User Guide, 2003-04*, Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS (2006 B) *1200.0.55.001 - Disability Variables, 2006*
<http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/636908EF302996D0CA2571F40083226A?opendocument> accessed 23 February 2010.

ABS (2007) *4159.0.55.002 - General Social Survey: User Guide, Australia*, Canberra, Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

ABS (2009) *Themes - Disability, Ageing and Carers Noticeboard*
<http://www.abs.gov.au/Websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/4302c0d294e39e93ca2572f300149cff!OpenDocument> accessed 23 February 2010.

ABS (2010) *TableBuilder* <http://www.abs.gov.au/tablebuilder> accessed 23 February 2010.

DFAT (2008, April 2008) *Australia: a culturally diverse society*
http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/culturally_diverse.html accessed 23 February 2010.