Transcript for ‘Analysis of participants by gender’

This presentation provides an analysis of NDIS participants by gender as at 31 December 2019.

Page 2 – Outline

The structure of the presentation is as follows:

* Introduction
* Key findings
* NDIS participants by disability and gender
* Male to female ratios for disability types
* Male to female ratios by age
* Male to female ratios standardised for NDIS age mix
* Appendix presenting detailed results.

Page 3 – Introduction

As at 31 December 2019, 62% of NDIS participants were male and 37% were female. 1% of participants had an indeterminate gender or their gender was not recorded.

The purpose of this report is to examine this gender disparity and better understand the underlying drivers of gender mix across Scheme participants, compared with other populations.

Comparisons have been made between the NDIS participants and 2 groups:

* The first group used for comparison is the “Tier 3 disability population” from the 2015 Survey of Disability and Aged Care, also known as SDAC. These are people with significant and enduring support needs who would be eligible for individualised support. This grouping within SDAC is most closely aligned to the eligibility criteria of the NDIS as defined in the original Productivity Commission costings for the NDIS. (See the report: Productivity Commission 2011. ‘Disability Care and Support’.) Comparisons with other SDAC groupings are also included in the detailed results.
* The second group used is the General population, which is based on an estimated resident population for 2017, derived from 2016 census data.

In this report, the ratio of males to females across disability and age groups were analysed, including the use of age standardisation across populations. This is to better understand the extent to which age and disability impact the gender ratio in the NDIS.

Pages 4 and 5 – Key Findings

The following two pages outline the key findings of the report. The following observations have been noted:

* As mentioned previously, at 31 December 2019, 62% of NDIS participants were male and 37% were female. 1% of participants had an indeterminate gender or their gender was not recorded. For the target age group of 0-64 years, this is a male to female ratio of 1.70.
* Autism is the most common primary disability type of NDIS participants. There are 3.2 times the number of male participants with autism compared with females.
* Intellectual disability and developmental delay is also more prevalent in males than females.
* Autism, intellectual disability and developmental delay are the most common disability types in children. As a result, the ratio of males to females in the NDIS is highest at young ages. This is also the case in other disability populations such as the ‘Tier 3 disability population’ from the Survey of Disability and Aged Care (SDAC).
* Overall gender ratios are impacted by the age and disability mix in the NDIS population and introduce bias when compared to other populations.
* Age standardisation has been applied to the SDAC Tier 3 population to provide a more direct comparison with the NDIS. The results are used to gauge the extent to which the high proportion of males in the NDIS is explained by age.
* After standardising to the NDIS age distribution, the ratio of males to females in SDAC Tier 3 population is 1.61 which is close to the NDIS ratio of 1.70. The male to female ratio for the SDAC Tier 3 disability population, before standardising to the NDIS age distribution, is lower at 1.45.
* The remaining discrepancy has not been investigated but it is noted that the eligibility criteria of the NDIS is not identical to the profile of the SDAC Tier 3 population.

In summary, the high male to female ratio across NDIS participants is due to the relatively high proportion of children entering the Scheme. The most common disability types at younger ages are autism and developmental delay, which are far more prevalent in males than females.

Page 6 - NDIS participants by disability and gender

The ratio of male to female NDIS participants was 1.7 as at 31 December 2019, for ages 0 to 64. Ages 65 and over have been excluded.

On this page, a chart, labelled as Figure 1, sets out the distribution of Scheme participants by primary disability and gender. Figure 1 also includes the males to female ratio for each disability type. Participants with an indeterminate gender have been excluded from this analysis. At 31 December 2019, the gender of 1% of participants was reported as ‘Other’, including where gender was not recorded. Also, the Intellectual Disability category includes participants with Down syndrome.

Page 7 - Male to female ratios for disability types

The chart depicts the following results:

* **Autism** is the most common primary disability type of NDIS participants. There are 3.2 times the number of male participants with autism compared with females, which is the highest ratio across all disability groupings.
* **Intellectual disability** is the second most common primary disability type. It also has a clear bias towards males, with 1.3 times the number of male participants compared with females. Some of this difference is driven by participants having both autism and intellectual disability, noting that the prevalence of autism is higher for males than females. Across all participants with a primary disability of intellectual disability, 11% also have autism as a secondary disability. For that group, the ratio of males to females is 2.4.
* **Developmental delay** and **global developmental delay**, which primarily relate to children, have male to female ratios of 2.5 and 2.3 respectively.
* **Acquired brain injury, known as A-B-I** and **spinal cord injury, known as S-C-I,** are smaller groups as a percentage of total Scheme participants. However, males are over-represented in these categories as well. This is consistent with accident compensation schemes where rates of injury are higher in males compared with females.

Page 8 - Male to female ratios by age

A chart, labelled as Figure 2, shows the male to female ratios by age for the NDIS population compared with the ‘Tier 3 disability population’ from the SDACand also the general population. The ‘Tier 3 disability population’ from the Survey of Disability and Aged Care, or SDAC, are people with significant and enduring support needs who would be eligible for individualised support. Tier 3 is the SDAC grouping most closely aligned to the eligibility criteria of the NDIS, as defined in the original Productivity Commission costings for the NDIS.

The chart shows that the ratio of males to females in the NDIS is highest at young ages. This is driven by autism, developmental delay and intellectual disability which are more prevalent in male children compared with females.

The same trend of higher male to female ratios at young ages is evident in other disability populations including the SDAC. Note the ratio for the general population is close to parity for all age groups analysed.

For the SDAC Tier 3 population, the overall ratio of male to female is **1.45** compared with **1.70** for NDIS participants. Although the NDIS ratio is higher, in both cases, the overall predominance of males is driven by the high ratios at younger ages.

Page 9 - Age mix in the NDIS and the impact on male to female ratios

This page describes the age mix in the NDIS and the impact on male to female ratios.

With a focus on Early Intervention, the NDIS has a high proportion of participants at young ages. 41% of NDIS participants under 65 are aged 0 to 14 years. This figure is 29% in the SDAC Tier 3 population and 22% in the general population.

This difference in age distribution, combined with the prevalence of certain disability types in children, is a key driver of the ratio of males to females in the NDIS being high relative to other disability populations.

Hence, overall gender ratios are impacted by the age and disability mix in the NDIS population and introduce bias in comparisons to other populations.

**Age standardisation** has been used to allow for this bias.

* In order to gauge the extent to which the high proportion of males in the NDIS is explained by age, the SDAC Tier 3 population has been standardised to the age distribution of the NDIS population at 31 December 2019. This includes those aged 0 to 64 years and excludes those of indeterminate gender, while retaining the same gender mix across each age group.
* The male to female ratios for SDAC Tier 3 are then recalculated and compared with the NDIS profile.
* In simple terms, age standardisation tells us what the male to female ratio of the SDAC Tier 3 population would be if 41% of the group was aged 0 to 14 years. This provides a more direct comparison with the NDIS male to female ratio.

Page 10 - Male to female ratios standardised for age

A chart, labelled as Figure 3, shows the male-to-female ratio for the NDIS population and the SDAC Tier 3 population, before and after age standardisation. After standardising to the NDIS age distribution, the ratio of males to females in SDAC Tier 3 population increases from 1.45 to 1.61. This confirms that there is a strong relationship between gender and age mix.

Figure 3 shows that the age-standardised male to female ratio of 1.61 for the SDAC Tier 3 population is close to the NDIS ratio of 1.70. The remaining discrepancy has not been investigated. However, it is important to note that the eligibility criteria of the NDIS is similar but not identical to the Tier 3 definition and so differences between the populations are to be expected, including the gender mix.

In summary, the results of this analysis indicate that the high male to female ratio across NDIS participants is due to the relatively high proportion of children entering the Scheme. The most common disability types at younger ages are autism and developmental delay, which are far more prevalent in males than females*.*

Page 11 - Appendix – detailed results (1)

In the detailed results in the following 5 pages, the NDIS population is compared with the general population as well as three distinct population groups available from the 2015 Survey of Disability and Aged Care, known as SDAC.

* The first group is all people with a disability
* The second group is people with a profound and/or severe core activity limitation only
* The third group is the “Tier 3 disability population”, which are people with significant and enduring support needs who would be eligible for individualised support.

The SDAC Tier 3 population is most closely aligned to the eligibility criteria of the NDIS, and was used as the basis of the original Productivity Commission costings for the NDIS. Hence, it is used as the comparative disability population in the main report.

Page 12 - Appendix – detailed results (2)

A chart labelled Figure 4 shows the gender distribution of the NDIS population, including those under 65 and excluding those of indeterminate gender, as compared to the general and SDAC population. The figures are as follows:

* Of the NDIS population, 63% of participants are male and 37% are female. 63% is the proportion of male NDIS participants after excluding participants with indeterminate gender. When those with indeterminate gender are included the proportion of males is 62%.
* Of the general population, 50% are male and 50% are female.
* Of the SDAC (all disability) population, 51% are male and 49% are female.
* Of the SDAC (profound and severe limitations only) population, 52% are male and 48% are female.
* Of the SDAC (Tier 3) population, 59% are male and 41% are female.

Page 13 - Appendix – detailed results (3)

Figure 5 shows the age distribution of the NDIS population, including those under 65 and excluding those of indeterminate gender, as compared to the general and SDAC population.

The chart shows that for the NDIS population and the SDAC Tier 3 population, the highest percentage of people are aged 7 to 14. Amongst the general population, the 25 to 34 age band has the highest percentage of people. For the SDAC (all disability) and SDAC (profound and severe limitations only) categories, the highest percentage of people lie in the 55 to 64 age band.

Page 14 - Appendix – detailed results (4)

This page features 2 tables. The table on the left, labelled Figure 6, shows the distribution of the NDIS population (excluding those of indeterminate gender) by disability and gender. The table shows that Autism makes up the highest proportion of the NDIS population at 32%, and has the highest male to female ratio at 3.23. Intellectual disability makes up the second highest proportion of the NDIS population at 20%.

The table on the right, labelled Figure 7, shows the distribution of the SDAC population (all disability) by disability and gender. The table shows that Autism has the highest male to female ratio at 4.26. Note that Intellectual Disability as reported in SDAC data includes developmental delay and global developmental delay as well as Down syndrome.

Page 15 - Appendix - detailed results (5)

There are 2 tables on this page. Figure 8 on the left shows the distribution of the SDAC (profound and severe) population by disability and gender. Other Sensory/speech disabilities have the highest male to female ratio at 3.84, followed by Stroke at 3.77 and Autism at 3.49.

Figure 9 on the right shows the distribution of the SDAC Tier 3 population by disability and gender. Other Sensory/speech disabilities have the highest male to female ratio at 4.53, followed by Autism at 4.25 and Stroke at 2.07.

Page 16 - Appendix – detailed results (6)

A chart labelled Figure 10 shows the male to female ratios by age groups and before and after standardisation.

* The total male to female ratio for the NDIS population is 1.70.
* The total male to female ratio for the SDAC (all disability) population is 1.03 before standardisation and 1.28 after standardisation.
* The total male to female ratio for the SDAC (profound and severe limitations only) population is 1.09 before standardisation and 1.30 after standardisation.
* The total male to female ratio for the SDAC (Tier 3) population is 1.45 before standardisation and 1.61 after standardisation.