About Disability Support Pension

Disability Support Pension (DSP) is an income support payment for people who are unable to work for 15 hours or more per week at or above the relevant minimum wage, independent of a Program of Support due to permanent physical, intellectual or psychiatric impairment. A DSP claimant must be aged 16 years or over and under Age Pension age at date of claim, however once in receipt of DSP, a person can continue to receive DSP beyond Age Pension age.

At June 2016, 16.5% of DSP recipients were aged less than 35 years, while 40.0% were aged between 35 and 54. Recipients aged 55 and over make up 43.5% of the total population. The number of DSP recipients aged 65 and over has increased from 25,773 in June 2012 to 30,841 in June 2016.

There are slightly more males (53.2%) than females on DSP (46.8%). The proportion of females is slowly rising following incremental increases in the Age Pension age for women (which is now the same as for men) and the closure of alternative payments such as Wife Pension and Widow B Pension.

measures improving the quality of assessments for DSP have been effective in reducing the growth in the DSP population and recently the population has started to decline. As at the end of June 2016, there were 782,891 people receiving DSP, down from 814,391 in June 2015.

Expenditure on DSP has increased over time due to the rate of payment. In June 2016, expenditure on DSP was 1.0% of Gross Domestic Product (ABS National Accounts).

The number of DSP recipients identifying as indigenous increased from 44,899 in June 2012 to 47,397 in June 2016, however the indigenous proportion of the total DSP population has remained relatively steady at between 5.8% and 6.1%

In June 2016, 610,291 (78.0%) DSP recipients were born in Australia. This proportion has increased slightly since June 2012, when 74.4% of DSP recipients were born in Australia.

At June 2016, 587,533 DSP recipients were not partnered. This proportion has risen slightly over time from 70.7% in June 2012 to 75% in June 2016.

In June 2016, 201,307 (25.7%) DSP recipients were homeowners. This proportion has reduced slightly since June 2012, when 29.1% of DSP recipients were homeowners.

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Data Descriptions

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Recipient Numbers: Recipients of Disability Support Pension who are paid by DHS.

Note: Recipient numbers are point-in-time as at the end of the quarter, using the definition above, these numbers differ from the data elsewhere.

Report Details: Payment trends and profiles report - June 2016 - Produced by the Department of Social Services.

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Source: Department of Human Services Administrative data (DSS Extracts).

Data Date: Data as at the 24th June 2016

Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product: Table 34 Time Series Spreadsheets (cat. no. 5206.0).

Glossary:

Duration: Duration refers to duration on Disability Support Pension.

Rate: The rate of the recipients payment.

Indigenous: Indigenous recipients include only those who have voluntarily identified as indigenous. This data may therefore represent an undercount.

Earnings: Earnings refers to employment earnings reported in the last fortnight of the reported period. This includes earnings from supported employment and from open employment.

Previous income support status: Looks at the income support status of people who were receiving DSP on 30 June 2016, 12 months previously at 30 June 2015.

Subsequent income support status: Looks at the income support status of people who were receiving DSP on 30 June 2015, 12 months ahead at 30 June 2016.

Expenditure: For previous financial years, the data reflects actual expenditure, for future or current financial years the data is sourced from the relevant Department of Social Services Portfolio Budget Statement.