



Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Staff please always ask.
You need to ask everyone.

- ⦿ You cannot rely on appearance.
- ⦿ The only sure way to find out is to ask.

Thank you for asking this important question.

For more information contact:



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Please help us to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders

Why ask?

Health services across Australia are working to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people because there is still a large and unacceptable gap in health status and life expectancy. To know if these are improving, and to know if we are providing services in the right way, we need to know if people are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

You cannot rely on a patient's appearance. The only way to know is to ask.

What about privacy?

You can reassure your patient/client that all information collected by the health service is subject to privacy laws to ensure that your information is protected and used appropriately.

How do I ask?

This question may be asked on a form (e.g. admission form), or you may be asking verbally. As with any other question, ask respectfully, confidently and as confidentially as possible.

The question must be asked every time the patient or client presents to the health service, unless they are coming regularly for a course of treatment (e.g. dialysis). If so, they are to be asked on first presentation, and the data updated every three months.

The question is:

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

On forms, the options for answering are:

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander

(For persons of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, mark both 'yes' boxes).

Some forms have an extra box:

- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

What if the person can't answer?

If the patient is a child under the age of 15 years or a person who is too ill to respond, ask this question of the parent, guardian, carer or responsible accompanying adult:

Is (person's name) of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

What if the answer is yes?

This means that all staff can consider:

- cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients/clients and their families
- additional services, such as a hospital liaison officer or health worker
- extra immunisations for children
- earlier health checks.

It will also help us to know if we are together closing the health gap.

