



# How to identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients

All clients of health services should be asked if they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the process of routine data collection.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, collection of Aboriginality will play a major role in identifying and notifying at risk communities where outbreaks or clusters of COVID-19 transmissions occur in higher populated Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander geographical areas.

## Why is identification an important question?

### Main reasons:

- Deciding if a person is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander based on looks/features/appearance is not reliable. The only sure way to find out is to ask.
- Aboriginal people are most at risk of COVID-19 (particularly those over 50 years of age with one or more chronic medical conditions and those living in rural and remote Aboriginal communities).

### Why ask?

It is best to ask all clients if they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Remember that identification is based on their self-identity and not their physical features/appearance.

Identification can be asked by the practice staff members who are the first point of contact for clients **OR** through a written form that clients can complete before having their screening done.

### How to ask?

You can **verbally** ask all clients 'Do you identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?'

or you can include the **following text** in a form to all clients when updating client information:

Do you identify as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

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

## More information

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/national-guidelines-collecting-health-data-sets/contents/table-of-contents>

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.