Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

BE WISE
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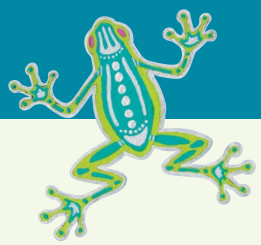
How to identify Aboriginal clients



All clients attending health services in Western Australia should be routinely asked whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander as part of registration and data collection processes.

Accurate identification supports culturally responsive care, service planning, and monitoring of health outcomes. It also aligns with Action 5.8 (page 35) of the NSQHS Standards User Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Why is identification an important question?

- Self-identification is the only reliable way to determine whether a person is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Assumptions based on appearance, surname, place of residence or other records are not appropriate.
- Helps ensure client records and health information are accurate.
- Supports access to Aboriginal-specific health programs, services and vaccines for eligible people.
- Helps identify health trends and monitor health outcomes.
- Informs the planning and delivery of culturally safe and responsive healthcare services.
- Contributes to reducing health inequities and improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people and communities.

Who to ask

It is best practice to ask all clients whether they identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This promotes consistency, respect and accurate record keeping.

Remember that identification is based on how a person identifies themselves, not on their appearance of physical features.

Identification can be collected by staff at the first point of contact or through a form completed by clients before screening.

How to ask

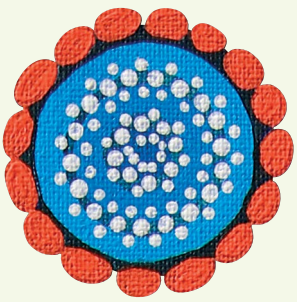
You can verbally ask all clients:

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

Alternatively, you can include the following question on a client registration or information update form:

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**



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