

## HAVE YOU ASKED THE QUESTION?

# “Are You of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Origin?”



### Why do you need to ask?

Determining if a person is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin based on appearance is unreliable. You should ask all members of a family as Aboriginal families are diverse. Sometimes only one partner or only one parent may be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. The only sure way to find out is to ask.

#### *Be sensitive*

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person may not self-identify for a number of reasons and this may include past experiences of racism or not feeling culturally safe to disclose this information at initial contact. Reassure each individual that their information remains confidential. Respect privacy. You may wish to ask again next time.

#### *Be confident*

There is nothing discriminatory about asking the question. It's the same as asking a person how old they are or what sex they are. If the person was born in Australia, ask them if they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

### Possible Staff Responses:

The answer you provide may depend on the conversation with the consumer and whether they are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

#### *Why do you need to ask that question?*

*“This is a routine question that we ask of everybody using this service”*

*“We need to collect information about the people who attend our service and what services we provide”*

*“It isn't right for us (service providers) to guess or make assumptions about each person. The only way to get this information correct is for us to ask this question and people answer for themselves”*

*“We want to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access some of the services available to 'close the gap', like health checks, immunisations or being able to see an Aboriginal liaison worker if they wish”*



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