

Person—Indigenous status, code N

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Person—Indigenous status, code N

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Indigenous status
METEOR identifier:	723676
Registration status:	Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 21/10/2019
Definition:	Whether a person identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, as represented by a code.
Context:	The purpose of this data element is to provide information about whether persons identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.
Data Element Concept:	Person—Indigenous status
Value Domain:	Indigenous status code N

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Representation class:	Code
Data type:	Number
Format:	N
Maximum character length:	1

	Value	Meaning
Permissible values:	1	Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin
	2	Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin
	3	Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
	4	Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander origin
Supplementary values:	9	Not stated/inadequately described

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:

This metadata item is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard for Indigenous status. For detailed advice on its use and application please refer to the ABS website as indicated in the Reference documents.

The classification for Indigenous status has a hierarchical structure comprising two levels. There are four categories at the detailed level of the classification which are grouped into two categories at the broad level. There is one supplementary category for 'Not stated/inadequately described' responses. The classification is as follows:

Indigenous Australians:

- Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander origin.
- Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal origin.
- Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Non-Indigenous Australians:

- Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander origin.

Not stated/inadequately described:

This category is not to be available as a valid answer to the questions but is intended for use:

- Primarily when importing data from other data collections that do not contain mappable data.
- Where the answer cannot be determined without clarification from the respondent (for example, 'No' and 'Yes, Aboriginal' are both selected).
- Where an answer was declined.
- Where the question was not able to be asked because the client was unable to communicate or a person who knows the client was not available.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Reference documents: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014. Indigenous Status Standard Version 1.5, Canberra. Viewed 29 September 2015, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/a866861f12e106e0ca256a38002791fa/5609d66dcc94996eca257d6a000fb3fc!OpenDocument>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010. National best practice guidelines for collecting Indigenous status in health data sets. Cat. no. IHW 29. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 29 September 2015, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442468342>.

Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:

This metadata item is based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard for Indigenous status. For detailed advice on its use and application please refer to the ABS website as indicated in the Reference documents.

The Indigenous status question allows for more than one response. The procedure for coding multiple responses is as follows:

- If the respondent answers 'Yes, Aboriginal' and 'Yes, Torres Strait Islander', then their response should be coded to 'Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin'.
- If the respondent answers 'No' and one or more of the following:
 - 'Yes, Aboriginal'
 - 'Yes, Torres Strait Islander'
 - 'Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander'

then the response should be coded to 'Not stated/inadequately described' if the response cannot be clarified with the respondent.

Collection methods:

The following information provides advice on the recommended way to ask the Indigenous status question.

Self-enumerated collections

For self-enumerated collections (for example, self-completed questionnaires or forms), the following question is recommended:

Q1. [Are you] [Is the person] [Is (name)] of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

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

If [you] [the person] [(name)] are of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, answer using both 'Yes' options.

This approach may be problematic in some data collections, for example when data are collected using screen based data capture systems. An additional response category of 'Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' may be included if this better suits the data collection practices of the agency or establishment concerned.

If the Indigenous status question has not been completed on a returned form, this should be followed up and confirmed with the person.

Interviewer-conducted collections

For interviewer-conducted collections in which the Indigenous status of one person is collected, the following question set is recommended:

Q1. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- Yes
- No (no more questions)

Q2. Are you of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

- Aboriginal
- Torres Strait Islander
- Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The first question is used to sequence out non-Indigenous Australians. The second question is used to determine the specific Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin of the person. A benefit of this approach is that the interviewer is not required to prompt the respondent with response categories. The 'Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' response category can be included or excluded in interviewer conducted collections depending on which option best suits the data collection practices of the agency concerned. Including the additional response category ensures that respondents are aware of the option to identify as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Various articulations of the standard question are recommended to address the following circumstances:

Person is present and answers

This question wording is recommended where it is known that the person being interviewed is the subject:

Q1. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Q2. Are you of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

Person is not present and someone else who knows the person well answers

The following question wording is recommended when another member of the household answers for the person. Examples of such incidents include: parents answering for children, or relatives answering in hospital situations.

Q1. Is [the person] [(name)] of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Q2. Is [the person] [(name)] of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

Person is deceased and someone else answers on their behalf (for example, death information form)

In these circumstances a close relative or friend should answer. Only if a relative or friend is unavailable should the undertaker or other such person answer. The suggested question wording follows:

Q1. Was [the person] [(name)] of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Q2. Was [the person] [(name)] of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

Person is an infant and parents answer (e.g. perinatal information form)

In this circumstance it is recommended that parents are asked:

Q1. Is [the baby's] [(name)'s] mother of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Q2. Is [the baby's] [(name)'s] mother of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

and

Q1. Is [the baby's] [(name)'s] father of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

Q2. Is [the baby's] [(name)'s] father of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

For interview conducted collections in which the Indigenous Status of more than one person is collected from a household representative, the following question set is recommended:

Q1. Is anyone who (usually lives here) (or) (is visiting here) of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- Yes
- No

Q2. Who are they?

Question 3 is asked of each person identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Q3. [Are you] [Is (name)] of Aboriginal origin, Torres Strait Islander origin, or both?

- Aboriginal
- Torres Strait Islander
- Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

The first question is used to sequence out households in which no Aboriginal and/or

Torres Strait Islander people usually live (or are visiting). The second question is used to identify those usual residents (and visitors) of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. This approach eliminates the need to repeatedly ask the Indigenous status question of each individual in a household when data are collected on a single household form. It is particularly advantageous when collecting from areas with a large proportion of households with non-Indigenous Australians.

For both self-enumerated collections and interviewer-conducted collections

The Indigenous status question can be used in circumstances where a close relative, friend, or another member of the household is answering on behalf of the subject. It is strongly recommended that the question be asked directly wherever possible.

When the subject person is not present, the person answering for them should be in a position to do so, that is, this person must know the person about whom the question is being asked well and feel confident to provide accurate information about them.

The Indigenous status question must always be asked regardless of data collectors' perceptions based on appearance or other factors.

The Indigenous status question may only be left unanswered in the following circumstances:

- Where the person declined to answer
- Where the question was not able to be asked because the client was unable to communicate or a person who knows the client was not available.

Comments:

The following definition, commonly known as 'The Commonwealth Definition', was given in a High Court judgement in the case of *Commonwealth v Tasmania* (1983) 46 ALR 625.

'An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives'.

There are three components to the Commonwealth definition:

- descent;
- self-identification; and
- community acceptance.

In practice, it is not feasible to collect information on the community acceptance part of this definition in general purpose statistical and administrative collections and therefore standard questions on Indigenous status relate to descent and self-identification only.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

Reference documents: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014. Indigenous Status Standard Version 1.5, Canberra. Viewed 29 September 2015, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/a866861f12e106e0ca256a38002791fa/5609d66dcc94996eca257d6a000fb3fc!OpenDocument>.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2010. National best practice guidelines for collecting Indigenous status in health data sets. Cat. no. IHW 29. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 29 September 2015, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442468342>.

Relational attributes

**Related metadata
references:**

Supersedes [Person—Indigenous status, code N](#)
[Children and Families](#), Superseded 20/01/2021
[Community Services \(retired\)](#), Standard 25/08/2005
[Disability](#), Superseded 29/02/2016
[Early Childhood](#), Superseded 24/07/2018
[Health](#), Superseded 19/11/2015
[Homelessness](#), Superseded 10/08/2018
[Housing assistance](#), Superseded 30/08/2017
[Independent Hospital Pricing Authority](#), Standard 01/11/2012
[Indigenous](#), Superseded 16/10/2017
[Tasmanian Health](#), Superseded 01/09/2016
[WA Health](#), Standard 04/03/2014

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[Children and Families](#), Superseded 20/01/2021
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[Early Childhood](#), Superseded 24/07/2018
[Health](#), Superseded 19/11/2015
[Homelessness](#), Superseded 10/08/2018
[Housing assistance](#), Superseded 30/08/2017
[Independent Hospital Pricing Authority](#), Standard 01/11/2012
[Indigenous](#), Superseded 16/10/2017
[Tasmanian Health](#), Superseded 01/09/2016
[WA Health](#), Standard 04/03/2014

**Implementation in
Indicators:**

Used as Disaggregation

[Number of lumbar spinal decompression \(excluding lumbar spinal fusion\) hospitalisations per 100,000 people aged 18 years and over, 2012-13 to 2014-15 and 2015-16 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of lumbar spinal fusion \(with or without lumbar spinal decompression\) hospitalisations per 100,000 people, aged 18 years and over, 2012-13 to 2014-15 and 2015-16 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of myringotomy hospitalisations per 100,000 people aged 17 years and under, 2012-13, 2015-16 and 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of potentially preventable hospitalisations - cellulitis per 100,000 people of all ages, 2014-15 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of potentially preventable hospitalisations - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\) per 100,000 people of all ages, 2014-15 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of potentially preventable hospitalisations - diabetes complications per 100,000 people of all ages, 2014-15 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of potentially preventable hospitalisations - heart failure per 100,000 people, of all ages, 2014-15 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of potentially preventable hospitalisations - kidney and urinary tract infections per 100,000 people of all ages, 2014-15 to 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)

[Number of tonsillectomy hospitalisations per 100,000 people aged 17 years and under, 2012-13, 2015-16 and 2017-18](#)

[Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, Standard 27/04/2021](#)