

## Introduction and Aims

We know very little about hearing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults in Australia.

There is **NO** available literature on how hearing loss:

- affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults
- is perceived and managed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and health professionals.

**Aim: To determine the knowledge, attitude, experiences & impacts of hearing loss & its management for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander adults.**



## Methods

- We yarned with:
  - urban living Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people aged 15+
  - staff members of an Indigenous healthcare service in Inala, Brisbane, Australia.
- We used **thematic analysis** to identify overarching themes to explain:
  - patient experiences of hearing loss,
  - hearing loss management, &
  - how management could be improved.
- Data from the 2 groups were analysed separately.



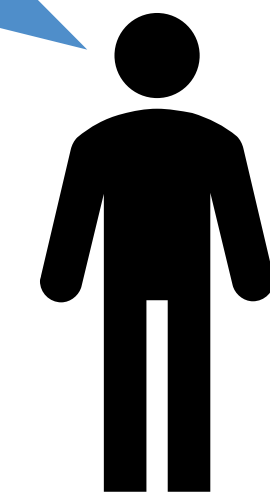
## Results

## 2 themes identified

## 1. Hearing is valued

- Treating hearing loss has positive outcomes
- Untreated hearing loss has a profound impact on social and emotional well-being.

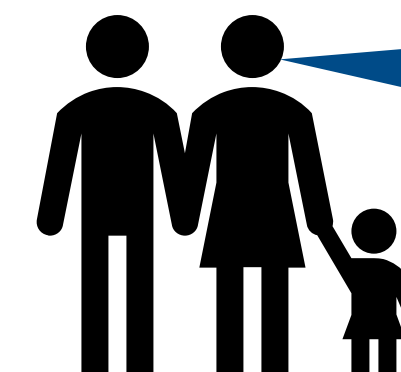
*Because I haven't got the brains for it really. Because I missed out. See. Because I didn't have that [hearing aid]. Well, it would have been different if I would have had it. But oh no I didn't have that experience.*



*I've sort of seen family members go through that. Like, you know, have had hearing loss all his life. Go through the justice system and then end up in jail. Over, you know, very small offences too. And not knowing, you know, it's sad, not having a hearing aid and understanding it, and not even hearing what they're talking about. You know, that's huge. That's a huge impact. And, you know, could change someone's life.*



*But now I'm happy because he he's got it [hearing aid] now and we see the difference and the household is more.... you know... more manageable.*



## 2. Cycle of Silence



## Conclusions

1. There is a lack of awareness of importance of hearing & effective management of hearing loss.
2. Barriers to adequate hearing health care leads to profound consequences to health & wellbeing of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults.
3. We must increase awareness among health professionals, increase culturally safe care, and change the dialogue around hearing loss.

## Community solutions:

- Increase awareness of hearing loss
- Increased social support
- Hearing screens in health check
- Hearing clinics at Aboriginal Medical Services



We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First People and Traditional Custodians of Australia. We also acknowledge that this research was conducted on the unceded lands of the Yuggera people.

