

Responding to challenges in early identification and remediation of hearing loss in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children

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Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics health survey data confirms what many have suspected for a long time: that ear and hearing trouble for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been under-represented in formal health surveys. While non-Indigenous Australians experience the best of ear and hearing trouble, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adults experience the worst. As with many health conditions, chronic otitis media exposes societal inequities. Recent work by the National Acoustic Laboratories and Hearing Australia provides both impetus for early identification and remediation of significant hearing loss arising from chronic middle ear infection for First Nations children, and validated tools that will enable frontline workers to monitor the development of Aboriginal children's listening skills and refer to a hearing pathway earlier, and build parents' and carers' knowledge in the process.