



South Australian Interpreting and Translating Policy for Migrant and Non-Verbal (Sign) Languages

Scope

This policy applies to all South Australian Government agencies, including statutory bodies, as defined in Section 3(1) of the Public Sector Act (2009). Government-funded organisations are encouraged to adopt this policy.

Policy Overview

Credentialed interpreting services (used to assist with oral communication) must* be provided when requested by a client, and must be offered to a client when it is suspected that proficiency in English language is a barrier to effective communication between a member of the public and South Australian Government.

Credentialed translating services (used to assist with written documentation) *must be engaged to provide written documents to client groups where practicable. This is particularly important where informed consent is required and/or where there is potential for a decision or action to impact upon a person's life.

Interpreting and translating costs must be met by South Australian Government agencies.

** In some instances (including with respect to rare or emerging languages), a credentialed practitioner may not be available and a suitably experienced interpreter or translator may be sought from the approved service provider.*

Quality of Interpreting and Translating

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) is the national standards body for interpreters and translators in Australia. It is the only agency that provides credentialing for interpreters and translators in Australia, and does so in 60 of the most commonly spoken languages in Australia.

All interpreters and translators engaged by the South Australian Government should hold NAATI credentials.

Interpreters and translators should not be asked to perform a role beyond the skill level for which they are credentialed.

Where NAATI credentialed interpreters or translators are not available agencies may enquire through the approved service provider about engaging interpreters and translators who have recent and regular experience of providing interpreting and translating services.

Policy Principles

Members of the public have a basic right to understand and be understood in their communication with government agencies.

Government agencies have a **commitment and responsibility** to provide access to interpreting and translating services, based on fairness, equity and mutual respect.



Policy Context

This policy ensures that speakers of languages other than English are not disadvantaged when accessing or receiving South Australian Government services and information.

The South Australian population is dynamic, and its ever-growing diversity gives vibrancy to South Australian life. We have come from over 200 countries and speak more than 200 languages.

Over 280 000* South Australians speak a language other than English, including 3355 people who speak Australian indigenous languages and almost 1000 people who speak non-verbal (sign) languages.

* This reflects 2016 Australian Census data on languages spoken at home.

Bilingual staff

Staff who are required to use their language skills in their employment may seek reimbursement in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's *Determination 3.2 Employment Conditions: Remuneration – Allowances and Reimbursements*.

Aboriginal languages

This policy complements the *South Australian Policy Framework: Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators and the associated Guide*.

Agency Interpreting and Translating Policies

Each South Australian Government agency must have an Interpreting and Translating Policy in place, addressing:

- when to engage an interpreter
- how to procure interpreting and translating services
- any preferred providers
- preferred mode/s of interpreting (in-person, telephone or video)
- when/if to engage bilingual staff members
- whether family and friends may be used to provide interpreting assistance and, if so, in what circumstances
- whether the policy applies to organisations funded by the government agency.

Supporting documents

Multicultural Affairs has produced a series of resources available to other South Australian Government agencies when developing their interpreting and translating policies:

- DPC Interpreting and Translating Policy
- Using interpreting services to communicate with people
- Using translating services for written materials
- Language list by country and place
- How to decide whether to use an interpreting service
- Role of bilingual staff
- Can family and friends provide interpreting services?
- Using interpreting services: conflict of interest
- Interpreting services: your rights and responsibilities.

Monitoring and reporting

Agencies must log all occasions on which interpreting or translating services are required, whether provided or not.

This register should be used to assist in planning and budgeting for interpreting and translating services, and to identify and respond to any issues in not providing services when required.

For further information contact Multicultural Affairs:



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