



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

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that South Australian Government agencies are aware of their commitment and responsibility to provide access to interpreting and translating services, based on fairness, equity and mutual respect. The policy provides guidance to South Australian Government agencies on the development of an interpreting and translating policy that will aid effective communication with all community members and enable their informed decision-making.

Background

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.

About 317 290¹ South Australians stated that they spoke a language other than English, including 4450 people who speak Australian Indigenous languages and about 1400 people who communicate with non-verbal (sign) languages.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census

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

Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the Chief Executive, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), for the Government of South Australia.

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. This policy addresses language barriers only.

This policy complements the [South Australian Policy Framework: Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators](#)

Policy Detail

Professional interpreting services (used to assist with oral communication) must be engaged when proficiency in English language is a barrier to effective communication and

understanding between South Australian Government staff and a client, or when requested by a client.

Professional 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 wellbeing.

Standard of interpreting and translating services

All interpreters and translators engaged by the South Australian Government should be credentialed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) at the Certified Interpreter/Translator level.

Where a Certified Interpreter/Translator is not available (sometimes in the case of rare or emerging languages), a practitioner credentialed at the Recognised Practising level may be sought from the approved service provider.

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

Cost of interpreting and translating

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

Interpreters or Translators Allowance for South Australian Government employees who hold NAATI credentials

The *Part Time Interpreters or Translators (Public Service) (SA) Award* provides for the payment of both a Linguistic Allowance and a Performance Allowance to a South Australian Government employee provided that an employee meets the necessary prerequisites detailed in the Award to qualify for receipt of these allowances. Refer to the [Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's Determination 3.2 Employment Conditions: Remuneration Allowances and Reimbursements](#)

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 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.

Terms and Abbreviations

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) is the national standards body for interpreting and translating in Australia. It is the only agency that provides credentialing (also known as accreditation or recognition) for interpreters and translators in Australia and does so in 60 of the most commonly spoken languages in Australia.

Roles and Responsibilities

Multicultural Affairs in DPC is responsible for maintaining this policy and supporting documents.

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.

References and Links

The following DPC documents may be used as templates by other South Australian Government agencies when developing their interpreting and translating policies:

DPC Interpreting and Translating Policy

Fact sheets

- Fact sheet 1: Using interpreting services – a guide for service providers
- Fact sheet 2: Using translating services for written materials
- Fact sheet 3: Language list by country and place
- Fact sheet 4: Deciding when to use an interpreting service
- Fact sheet 5: Can family and friends provide interpreting services?
- Fact sheet 6: Role of bilingual staff in your organisation
- Fact sheet 7: Using interpreting services: conflict of interest
- Fact sheet 8: Interpreting services: your rights and responsibilities.

For further information and assistance

For assistance or information about your agency’s Interpreting and Translating Policy, contact your agency’s Policy Register or Corporate Services Division.

For general assistance or information about interpreting and translating, contact Multicultural Affairs, DPC:

Email: MulticulturalAffairs@sa.gov.au
Postal address: GPO Box 2343
Adelaide SA 5001

Document Control

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