



Government of Western Australia
Department of Training
and Workforce Development

LANGUAGE SERVICES POLICY

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All policy and procedural statements contained within this document are lawful orders for the purposes of section 80(a) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA) and are therefore to be observed by all Department of Training and Workforce Development employees.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Training and Workforce Development is committed to adopting the principles of and adhering to, the obligations of The Western Australian Language Services Policy 2008 through the effective and efficient engagement of interpreters and translators.

SCOPE

The Western Australian Government acknowledges difference as an integral feature of the Western Australian community. It seeks to ensure that language is not a barrier to services and programs for people who require assistance in English. Among Western Australians who require assistance with communicating effectively in spoken or written English are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, migrants and those who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Effective communication between service providers and clients is essential to delivering high quality services and programs that meet the needs of Western Australia's diverse population.

Interpreting and translating services can make Government more accessible to people who use Auslan or speak a language other than English, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and is an important way to improve interaction and engagement with the State's diverse clientele.

PRINCIPLES

The principles of this policy are to ensure compliance by the Department of Training and Workforce Development with The Western Australian Language Services Policy 2008 through effective and efficient engagement of interpreting and translating services where and when required.

This policy is intended to achieve the following objectives.

1. The Department is responsive to the needs of clients who are unable to communicate effectively in spoken or written English.
2. The Department interactions with clients for whom English is not a first language are improved.
3. The rights of Western Australians, who are unable to communicate effectively in spoken or written English, to access Government funded services are not compromised by this inability.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 the Premier endorsed The Western Australian Language Services Policy (LSP) which was developed by the Office of Multicultural Interests. The LSP states that the Western Australian Government is committed to providing accessible and responsive services to all Western Australians.

The central tenet of the LSP is that clients not able to communicate through written or spoken English may require access to competent translators and interpreters when accessing and using Government services, depending on the particular service provided.

Interpreting and translating services can make Government more accessible to people who use Auslan or speak a language other than English, such as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- people with a hearing impairment; and
- people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Government agencies are required to have policies for funding and delivering translating and interpreting services that take account of relevant Government policy, legal circumstances and the needs of current and potential clients.

The focus of the LSP is aimed at areas of the Department that are identified as having or the potential to have high levels of client contact. These areas include:

- the Aboriginal Workforce Development Centre services;
- the Overseas Qualification Unit;
- the Career Centre;
- Education and Training International;
- WestOne;
- ApprentiCentre;
- TAFE Admissions; and
- Communications and Marketing.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASLIA

The Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association is a national federation of professional associations for sign language interpreters.

AUSIT

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Incorporated is a professional association for translators and interpreters.

AUSLAN

Australian Sign Language is a recognised language used by the Australian Deaf community.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS CONTINUED

Competent interpreters and translators

Those who adhere to a professional Code of Ethics for Practitioners incorporating the principles of impartiality and confidentiality, and performance that is accurate and faithful, and who meet at least one of the following criteria.

1. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited, which can be achieved by passing a NAATI test; or by successfully completing a course of studies at an Australian institution approved by NAATI; or by providing evidence of specialised qualifications in translating and/or interpreting obtained from a recognised training institution outside Australia.
2. Obtained a formal qualification interpreting or translating from an accredited tertiary institution.

In languages where there is neither training nor NAATI accreditation.

3. NAATI recognised, which requires evidence of English proficiency, two referee reports and completion of a short training course.
4. Recognised by an approved or contracted service provider – such as the Translator and Interpreter Service (TIS), Deaf Interpreting Service (DIS), Kimberley Interpreting Service (KIS), or other private sector providers.
5. An employee of an organisation who is a Bilingual Worker with additional training in interpreting services e.g. completed nationally accredited training module.

In interpreting, NAATI accreditation or a formal qualification from an accredited tertiary institution is available at a number of levels. This policy refers to the paraprofessional and professional levels.

The level of competence of an interpreter or translator is commensurate with their level of accreditation or training.

Indigenous

This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Interpreter

A person who conveys an oral or signed message or statement from one language into another with accuracy and objectively to enable communication between two parties who use different languages.

Language services

Refers to actions taken by agencies to help people who experience difficulty communicating in English, including the engagement of interpreters and translators and the use of planned multilingual information strategies. Language services in relation to this Policy does not refer to language maintenance.

NAATI

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters is a national standards body owned by the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments. NAATI is also an advisory body for the translation and interpreting industry in Australia, providing advice and consultancy services on translation and interpreting standards, accreditation, recognition, revalidation, the role and conduct of translators and interpreters, and translation and interpreting skills in various settings.

Paraprofessional Interpreter

An interpreter qualified at a paraprofessional level (NAATI accredited or Diploma of Interpreting equivalent) is capable of interpreting for general conversations, generally in a non-specialist context where specialised terminology, more sophisticated conceptual information or depth of linguistic ability is not required.

Paraprofessional Translator

A translator qualifies at paraprofessional level who is capable of producing a translated version of non-specialised information.

Professional Interpreter

An interpreter qualified at professional level (NAATI accredited or Advanced Diploma of Interpreting or equivalent) or above who is capable of interpreting across a wide range of subjects involving dialogues at specialist consultations. Professional interpreters must be used in a complex situations where an individual's rights, health and safety are at risk, such as hospitals and courts.

Professional Translator

A translator qualified at a professional level (NAATI accredited or Advanced Diploma of Translating or equivalent) or above, who is qualified to work across a range of subjects involving documents with specialised content. Professional translators must be used in highly complex situations where an individual's rights, health and safety are at risk, such as hospitals and courts.

Translator

A person who makes a written transfer of a message or statement from one language into another language with accuracy and objectivity to enable communication between two parties who use different languages.

WAITI

The Western Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters Incorporated is a State based professional association for translators and interpreters.

PROCEDURES

Western Australians who are unable to communicate through spoken or written English are made aware of:

- their rights to communicate in their preferred language; and
- when and how to ask for an interpreter. This is particularly important in the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who would not request an interpreter as a matter of course.

The circumstances in which professional or competent interpreters and translators should be used are as follows.

- Western Australians who are unable to communicate through spoken or written English are provided with professional level interpreters and translators in their preferred language where they:
 - need to be informed of their legal rights and obligations;
 - need to give informed consent;
 - are required to enter into a legally binding contract or agreement with the State and are not required to engage their own interpreter or translator;
 - require essential information to fully participate in decisions or proceedings relating to their rights, health and safety; or
 - require essential information to protect their rights.
- Interpreting and translation services are provided by professional interpreters and translators or persons who have completed an accredited interpreting and translating training course in all other situations.
- In exceptional circumstances, where an interpreter is required and a professional or competent interpreter is not available, a person who has not been training as an interpreter but who speaks and understands the language and English may be used. However, the decision to do so and the circumstances justifying that decision must be officially documented.
- In the case of Indigenous Western Australians, experienced paraprofessional level interpreters should be used where professional level interpreters would be otherwise required, until such time as professional level interpreters in Aboriginal languages are available.
- Persons under the age of 18 years must not be used as interpreters or translators.

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Language Services Policy 2008 – Office of Multicultural Interests
- Building Diversity and Equity in Training 2010 – 2018: Equity is everybody's business
- The Policy Framework for Substantive Equality

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

REVIEW DATE

24 March 2015

CONTACT INFORMATION

Service Delivery Operations Branch
Service Delivery Directorate