

## Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference



### Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004

incorporating the Queensland Government  
Language Services Policy



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Multicultural Affairs Queensland  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Street address: Level 1, 61 Mary Street, Brisbane  
\*MAQ will be moving to Level 5, Executive Annexe, 102  
George Street, Brisbane by mid 2005.

Postal address: PO Box 15185, CITY EAST Q 4002  
Telephone: 07 3224 5690 or freecall 1800 102 225  
Facsimile: 07 3224 5691 or freecall 1800 000 658  
Email: [MAQ@premiers.qld.gov.au](mailto:MAQ@premiers.qld.gov.au)  
Web address: [www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural](http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/multicultural)

Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference  
Queensland Government Multicultural Policy 2004

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The Queensland Government Language Services Policy was endorsed by  
the Queensland Government in November 1998.



## A message from the Premier

Queensland is home to hundreds of cultures and our great diversity should be supported and fostered to our advantage.

Multiculturalism is one of the Smart State's great strengths, in terms of our workforce, communities, business and trade.

Our inclusive culture and our capacity to celebrate difference are being supported by my government through increased funding for the Multicultural Assistance Program and strategies to promote and utilise our diversity.

We want to:

- Improve our use of the range of skills and talents of our multicultural workforce
- Increase employment opportunities
- Maximise the economic benefits of cultural diversity, particularly in education, tourism and trade
- Improve the responsiveness of government services to cultural diversity
- Develop a greater awareness and acceptance of multiculturalism.

We have an opportunity and an obligation to ensure that every Queenslander, irrespective of their cultural background, enjoys the benefits of life in the Smart State.

Please join with my government in building on our multicultural achievements and enhancing harmony and equity.

Peter Beattie MP  
Premier and Minister for Trade

January 2005



# Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference

## Introduction

Queensland is a dynamic and diverse society with many cultures, languages and religions.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the special position of the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of the land and recognises their rich diversity in cultures and languages and contribution to Queensland.

People from all over the world have come to call Queensland home. The State is growing rapidly and cultural diversity is increasing. One of our great strengths is our diverse community.

Queenslanders are increasing their contact with diversity due to the greater global movements of people, business and trade developments, travel opportunities, advancements in communications and information technology.

Since 1998, the *Multicultural Queensland Policy* has guided our efforts to maximise the benefits our cultural diversity offers. As a strengthened Queensland Government policy commitment, *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference* is a new blueprint for how to best manage this ever-increasing diversity for the economic and social well-being of all Queenslanders.

As a policy, multiculturalism promotes social justice and equity for disadvantaged non-English speaking communities, women and young people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and newly arrived refugees and migrants. It also fosters economic development and participation by supporting skilled migrants, people with multilingual skills and people with overseas connections and by nurturing cultural capital. Multiculturalism also underpins community cohesion by raising awareness of the benefits of diversity and promoting respect for difference.

## Queensland Government commitment

The Queensland Government will promote equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all Queenslanders, regardless of their cultural, ethnic, religious background or gender. It will continue to foster an inclusive, cohesive and open society so that everyone is:

- given opportunities to share their knowledge, values and cultural heritage to contribute to building the State
- offered a fair go and equitable access to services
- able to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities
- protected from discrimination.

Multiculturalism is for everyone – all Australians are expected to:

- have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia and its interests and future
- enjoy freedom to express, share and value one another's cultural heritage
- have equality of opportunity to benefit from, and contribute to, all aspects of life without prejudice or discrimination
- hold universal ideals of human rights based on mutual respect and cooperation.

Through *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*, the Queensland Government upholds these values:

- **Promoting the economic and cultural benefits of diversity** – all Queenslanders share the economic and social benefits of cultural diversity
- **Ensuring access** – All Queenslanders have equitable access to services and programs regardless of their cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds
- **Assisting community development and participation** – All Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland
- **Promoting community relations and cohesion** – All Queenslanders share responsibility for the continuing development of Queensland as a cohesive and fair society.



## Delivering on commitment — a plan of action

We are committed to *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference* and will implement it through these strategies:

- **Productive diversity economic strategy** – strengthening our Smart State standing as a place that values and wishes to attract intellectual capital, overseas investment and secure further gains through harnessing cultural diversity in key areas such as trade, skilled migration, education, tourism, and science/technology
- **Supporting communities** – funding and investing in Queensland’s communities to further multiculturalism through research, policy development, advocacy, community awareness, festivals, services, projects and networks
- **Strengthening multiculturalism in the Queensland public sector** – changing how activities of Queensland Government agencies are planned and delivered to ensure all Queenslanders, regardless of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, have access to services
- **Community relations and anti-racism** – strengthening the sense of belonging Queenslanders have in their local environment and in the global community.

## Making it happen

### Productive diversity economic strategy

Our diversity is one of Queensland’s greatest assets both for social and economic benefits. We have a highly educated, skilled, multilingual and culturally diverse workforce which contributes to developing Queensland as the Smart State. Migrants have made enormous contributions to the community in areas such as business, arts, culture, trade, agriculture, tourism and education. Successful management of multiculturalism involves capturing the economic advantages of our cultural and linguistic diversity.

Language skills, knowledge of overseas markets, overseas contacts and expertise in cultural protocols can be valuable tools to businesses wanting to develop a competitive advantage. To embrace this notion of ‘productive diversity’, Queensland Government agencies will:

- Establish partnerships between government agencies and business, industry, tourism, and education sectors to promote and maximise the economic advantages of cultural diversity and promote the State as a destination to work and live
- Develop supporting strategies for multiculturalism in international relations, tourism, trade and export areas
- Develop educational and promotional activities to increase awareness of the economic benefits of multiculturalism
- Develop strategies in the public sector to better capture the benefits of a diverse workforce
- Support strategies that increase Queensland’s population, particularly in regional areas, to address Queensland’s economic and social future.

In time this could lead to:

- 3 Improved connections with overseas business cultures to strengthen our existing networks and skills base
- 3 Improved opportunities for Queensland in the import and export sectors, tourism, arts, education, trade and business
- 3 More jobs for Queenslanders.



## Supporting communities

Queensland communities need support if they are to meet future local and global challenges. The Queensland Government acknowledges that working collaboratively with a range of partners is an effective way to deliver services and outcomes to Queenslanders.

Under *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*, partnership opportunities will be sought with community organizations to foster a greater acceptance of multiculturalism.

The Queensland Government will support diversity by providing:

- grants through Multicultural Affairs Queensland to organisations for policy development, advocacy, education, service delivery activities, research and to identify needs
- access to other Queensland Government funding opportunities for community organisations to undertake multicultural projects that promote cultural diversity, strengthen communities and increase understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism
- funding to local government agencies through the Local Area Multicultural Partnership program to support multiculturalism at a local and regional level
- information about cultural diversity in Queensland through publications and promotional activities
- funding projects which enhance the capacity of ethnic communities to participate in all elements of Queensland life.

In time this could lead to:

- 3 A greater acceptance and understanding of multiculturalism and its benefits
- 3 Increased capacity for communities to contribute to the State's development
- 3 More jobs for Queenslanders
- 3 Enhanced community harmony and sense of belonging.

## Strengthening multiculturalism in the Queensland public sector

Queensland Government agencies are significant employers of Queenslanders. These government agencies also develop State policies and legislation, deliver services and programs and form partnerships with community groups and organisations. In this context, Queensland Government agencies need to ensure issues of cultural diversity and multiculturalism are addressed strategically. This strategy aims to improve the Government's delivery of service and how it incorporates diversity into its core business.

The strategy will involve:

**CEO leadership** – multicultural performance indicators will be incorporated into CEO performance agreements and progress on performance will be reported directly to the Premier. CEOs will take an active role in providing leadership in delivering relevant portfolio outcomes under *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*.

**Departmental annual action plans** – Queensland Government departments will develop annual multicultural action plans identifying key priorities and outcomes that will be delivered through *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*. Progress on outcomes will be reported to Government and in agency annual reports.

**Action teams** – teams will be formed to develop, assist with and oversee the implementation of departmental multicultural action plans. The action teams will be sponsored by a Deputy Director-General or equivalent.

**Evaluation and continuous improvement** – departments will establish key priority projects and areas, resource allocation, performance milestones and an evaluation mechanism to measure progress towards achieving outcomes under the policy. This will ensure that multicultural best practice initiatives can be sustained and strengthened over time.

**Reporting** – Departments will report on the progress of their multicultural action plans in their annual report, and Multicultural Affairs Queensland will coordinate a report to Government on the implementation of *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*.



In time this could lead to:

- 3 Improved accessibility to all Government services and programs
- 3 Improved public sector employment outcomes for Queenslanders of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 3 A more responsive and skilled public sector to manage cultural diversity
- 3 Improved awareness of rights and responsibilities of Queenslanders of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 3 An enhanced sense of belonging and ability to participate in government activities for Queenslanders of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## Community relations and anti-racism strategy

There is a need for enhanced understanding of cultural diversity and a greater sense of belonging among all Queenslanders particularly in times of global instability and conflict. Community harmony and stability are dependant upon our people feeling they are accepted as part of the community. The community relations and anti-racism strategy will help Queenslanders overcome social exclusion, more readily contribute to the State and will create greater community awareness of the value of cultural diversity.

The Queensland Government is committed to building a cohesive society which accepts and respects cultural diversity through:

- Developing a whole-of-Government strategy to address systemic racism
- Using funds from the Cultural Diversity Support Strategy to assist community organizations to deliver community relations and anti-racism initiatives
- Establishing signature events including the Queensland Multicultural Festival to promote multiculturalism to the wider community
- Promoting positive and cohesive community relations across the whole community through a renewed community relations plan
- Continuing the recognition of, and commitment to, specific disadvantaged community groups including the Australian South Sea Islander communities
- Supporting initiatives that raise awareness and address racism.

In time this could lead to:

- 3 Enhanced community cohesiveness and a greater acceptance and understanding of multiculturalism and its benefits
- 3 Increased capacity for communities to contribute to the development of the State
- 3 More jobs for Queenslanders
- 3 Improved understanding of rights and responsibilities
- 3 Fewer instances of racism
- 3 Increased access to complaints mechanisms.



## Roles and responsibilities

The effective implementation of *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference* will require the commitment, resources and efforts of various sectors in the community and individual Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government is committed to driving the multicultural agenda in its various roles as leader, policy-maker, fund distributor, service provider and employer. It will also work with local and federal governments, the business sector, tertiary education sector, institutions and the community to ensure everyone plays a part in helping Queensland realise the benefits of multiculturalism.

The Government will also ensure the public sector plays its part and all Queensland Government agencies will have clear responsibilities in the implementation of *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*. An annual report will be presented to Government to ensure progress is on track and any adjustments required to the policy are made.

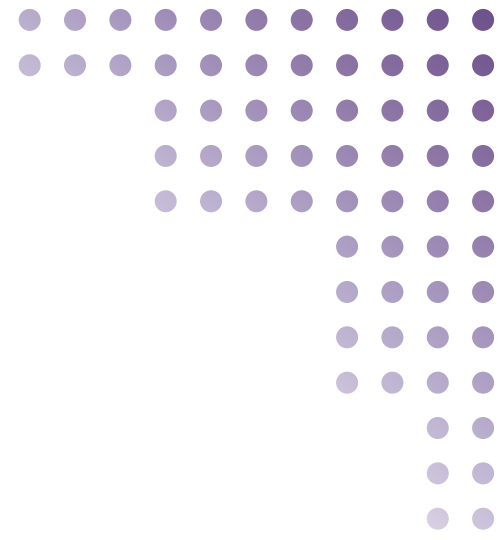
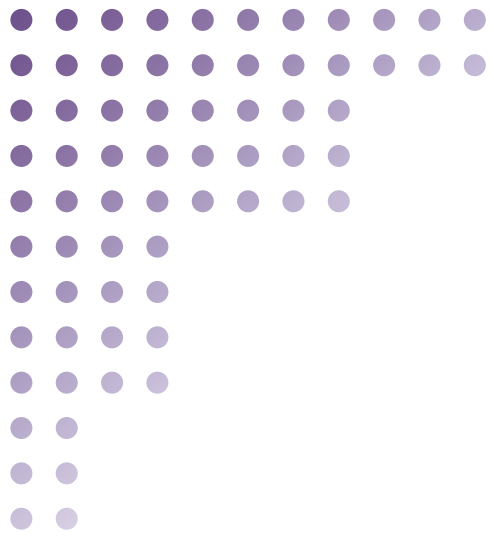
Multicultural Affairs Queensland will:

- Advise and assist agencies to implement *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*
- Assist agencies to develop departmental multicultural action plans
- Coordinate an annual report to Government on the implementation progress of *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*
- Conduct workshops to inform agencies about the purpose of and standards for the policy
- Coordinate activities across Queensland Government agencies through an interdepartmental committee and related working groups
- Provide cross-cultural training and advice to the public sector
- Work with commonwealth and state/territory governments on issues of national significance
- Consult regularly with agencies and stakeholders in the community and across government on multicultural affairs
- Develop activities and publications to support the understanding of multiculturalism
- Administer grants through the Cultural Diversity Support Strategy.

Queensland Government agencies through the leadership of each Director-General will:

- Nominate a senior officer to sponsor overall implementation of the policy in the department
- Incorporate strategic multicultural action plans into all business plans
- Establish departmental action teams to implement the policy
- Participate in the interdepartmental committee on multicultural affairs
- Report on the progress of multicultural development in departmental annual reports and through Multicultural Affairs Queensland
- Consult with the community as part of delivering on *Multicultural Queensland – making a world of difference*
- Resource and fund multicultural initiatives including language services support and interpreters where appropriate
- Develop strategies to further promote employment of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in agencies.





## Queensland Government Language Services Policy



## Introduction

The *Queensland Government Language Services Policy* (QGLSP) reflects a whole-of-Government commitment to the development of communication strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements. These strategies include the engagement of professional interpreters in circumstances where clients have difficulties communicating in English.

QGLSP incorporates a model *Language Services Policy* at Appendix 1, which may be used by Queensland Government agencies for the development of agency-specific language policies. Guidelines and suggested performance indicators are also provided. Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet can advise agencies how to develop a language services policy which will best serve agencies' clients.

## Definitions

**Language services** are services provided by agencies which address communication issues affecting clients with limited proficiency in English.

The services include engagement of professional interpreters via the telephone or videoconference or face-to-face, the employment of, and access to accreditation for bi- or multilingual staff, and the use of multilingual information strategies.

An **interpreter** is a person who conveys oral messages or statements from one language into another language.

A **translator** is a person who makes a written transfer of a message or statement from one language into another language.

In this policy, **professional interpreters** are:

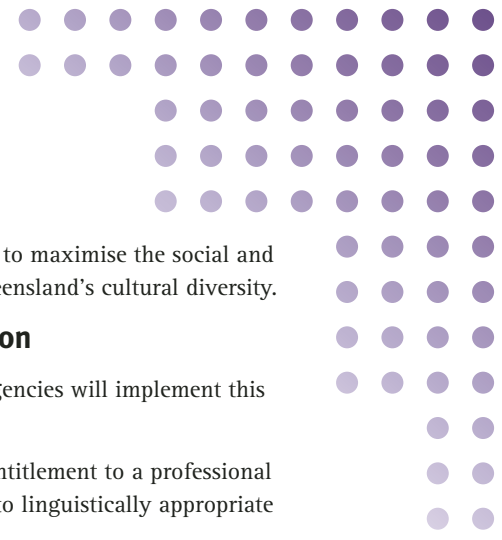
- Interpreters currently contracted through the Commonwealth Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), or the Queensland Deaf Society.
- Interpreters accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) at the Paraprofessional, Interpreter or Conference Interpreter Levels, or with NAATI Recognition.
- Conference interpreters who are members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC).

The **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** is a generalist interpreting service operated by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. It has a base of contracted accredited and non-accredited interpreters, some of whom are experienced in trade, business, legal, health, police and court work. The Queensland Government purchases interpreting services through TIS and private providers.

**Multilingual information management** is planning and developing information in languages appropriate for a client group in a way that best meets their information needs. Information is then provided in English and in languages other than English.

The **Queensland Interpreter Card** assists non-English speakers to inform Queensland Government agency staff that they require an interpreter. The card is similar in size and quality to a credit card and identifies the language in which an interpreter is required.

The **Queensland Interpreter Card Kit** complements the Queensland Interpreter Card and assists Queensland Government agency staff to distribute and respond to the card and to access professional interpreters.



It includes:

- Queensland Interpreter Card
- multilingual message to give clients information on how to use the card
- poster for display at public counters to let clients know that they can present their card to obtain an interpreter
- procedural checklists for agency staff on how to work with interpreters
- TIS request form for on-site interpreting
- a summary of TIS client service charges
- a TIS customer feedback form.

## Queensland Government Language Services Policy

### Policy statement

The Queensland Government recognises that a significant number of people do not speak English at all or well enough to communicate adequately with officers of Queensland Government agencies. This policy will enable clients to access services fairly and equitably and ensure service delivery is responsive and high quality.

Queensland Government agencies will, wherever possible:

- work with professional interpreters to improve communication with people unable to communicate in English
- adopt a planned approach producing and disseminating information about services, policies and activities in English and other languages after consulting client groups
- plan for language services by incorporating interpreting and multilingual information needs into agency budgeting, human resource and client service program management
- make maximum use of the cultural and linguistic skills of employees in the development and implementation of this planning.

### Policy aim

Queensland Government agencies will, wherever possible:

- establish coordinated measures which address clients' communication difficulties and improve equitable access to programs, services and information
- introduce strategies (such as working with

professional interpreters) to maximise the social and economic benefits of Queensland's cultural diversity.

### Policy implementation

Queensland Government agencies will implement this policy by:

- acknowledging clients' entitlement to a professional interpreter's services or to linguistically appropriate information
- establishing protocols for engaging professional interpreters
- ensuring language services are culturally and linguistically acceptable by taking into account gender and ethnicity preference and the appropriateness of telephone as opposed to on-site interpreting
- acknowledging that providing interpreting and other language services is the responsibility of the agency and not the client
- developing a human resource base of staff trained in cross-cultural skills and how to work with professional interpreters.

## Guidelines for working with interpreters

### Assessing the need for an interpreter

- Generally speaking, agencies should provide an interpreter in situations where a non-English-speaking client has difficulty communicating in English. When a client requests an interpreter (eg by proffering a Queensland Interpreter Card), he/she should be provided with one.
- It may be difficult to assess whether a client needs an interpreter. The ability to converse in English does not necessarily indicate that a person comprehends the English spoken by doctors, nurses, magistrates, lawyers, police officers etc or that the person understands written English. If there is any doubt as to a person's ability to communicate in and comprehend English, an interpreter should be engaged.
- Engaging a qualified interpreter will be crucial in certain circumstances such as obtaining 'informed consent' (health, mental health, aged care assessment), raising a record of interview (police), or in the swearing of affidavits or statutory declarations. Costly mistakes leading to complaints or litigation may result from an agency neglecting to provide an interpreter in these situations.

- A professional interpreter assists both parties to communicate. It is acceptable for an officer to engage an interpreter to assist him/her to communicate even if the client or a family member or carer considers that he/she does not need one.
- When assessing the need for an interpreter, agencies should also consider other factors such as gender, levels of literacy, and hearing impairment. Even when an interpreter is present, other factors, including the level of comfort of the client in the interview environment, may create communication difficulties and impact on the communication outcome.

### Order-of-preference protocols for engaging interpreters

- When obtaining professional interpreting services through TIS or other sources, it is advisable to recruit practitioners accredited by NAATI. The highest level of NAATI accreditation is Conference Interpreter (Senior) and Conference Interpreter. This level is required if organising an international conference. For most public sector usage, however, the second highest level of accreditation is sufficient. Depending on availability and the interpreting task, the ideal order of preference protocol for engaging professional interpreters is:
  1. Interpreter (Formerly Level 3) (in a legal/health setting it may be preferable to request an interpreter with specialist skills in the relevant area)
  2. Paraprofessional interpreter (Formerly level 2)
  3. NAATI Recognised or other interpreter registered with TIS
- Non-professional interpreters should not be used unless the situation is urgent and a professional interpreter is unavailable.
- It is important to consider gender and language preferences of the client.
- In Queensland, the majority of accredited interpreters are qualified at the Paraprofessional level. In languages of small communities, particularly those recently arrived, there may be no accredited interpreters and only a small number of recognised interpreters.
- Access to professional interpreters in regional Queensland is often limited to interpreting by telephone through TIS. However, some qualified interpreters are available for on-site work in regional centres such as Cairns and Townsville. Availability of accredited interpreters can be checked through TIS and the NAATI Regional Officer for Queensland.
- Complex interpreting work which may have serious implications for the client and the agency should be undertaken by the most qualified interpreter available.

### Professional interpreters vs family and friends and bilingual staff as interpreters

- As far as practicable, friends and family members should not be used as professional interpreters. Children and young relatives are not appropriate interpreters in any context.
- Both clients and family members may be embarrassed when family members act as interpreters. Communication may be distorted or changed because of lack of competence in English or the other language and bias on the part of the family member or advocate. However, the client may feel more comfortable with a family member or bilingual associate or worker and a professional interpreter present.
- Professional interpreters are trained to maintain confidentiality, impartiality and accuracy as part of their code of ethics. This does not apply to relatives, friends and advocates, or bilingual staff of agencies.
- Bilingual, non-accredited staff may assist clients in the language other than English, for example when a Mandarin-speaking officer promotes a Government product to a group of Chinese business people. Where the bilingual staff member's language skills are not adequate, agencies should work with professional interpreters.
- If clients decline the services of a professional interpreter, agency staff should be trained to respond that non-professional 'interpreters' may compromise or misinterpret important information. Staff should emphasise that the use of professional interpreters serves the interests of both parties.

### Arranging an interpreter

- Professional interpreting services may be over the phone (in Queensland solely through TIS) or when the interpreter is physically present (on-site). There is also the potential for audiovisual access to interpreters through available videoconferencing networks. To arrange an interpreting service, contact:
  - TIS – on-site (face-to-face) interpreting. Pre-book by fax on 1300 654 151 or email: [tis@immi.gov.au](mailto:tis@immi.gov.au) with reasonable notice. Request forms available from TIS. Alternatively telephone 1300 655 081. After hours access to TIS is through TIS Melbourne, where operators may need fuller details of Queensland locations to obtain an on-site interpreter.
  - TIS – telephone interpreting. Pre-book by fax as above or phone 131 450 immediately. Pre-booked telephone interpreting jobs will be charged over and above the basic rate. Priority lines for doctors (1300 131 450), police/emergency services (1300 655 010) and hospital (1300 655 030) are established for immediate access to interpreting services.

– Queensland Deaf Society (for AUSLAN and other Deaf community interpreters). Pre-book by fax on an Interpreter Request Form on 07 3392 8511, or phone 07 3892 8500 (office hours) or 1800 630 745 (after hours). More information from: [www.qds.org.au](http://www.qds.org.au) or email: [qds@qds.org.au](mailto:qds@qds.org.au).

– NAATI accredited interpreters available through the current NAATI Directory or from the NAATI Regional Officer, Brisbane on 07 3393 1358.  
Website: [www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au).

– The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) Australian members on 02 6633 7122. Email: [swehov@nor.com.au](mailto:swehov@nor.com.au).

– Private agencies and businesses available through the Yellow Pages under “Interpreters”.

- Always check the NAATI accreditation and other qualification details of any interpreting services.
- Give as much notice as possible when requesting interpreting services. Brief interpreters on the nature of the assignment, providing relevant documents where appropriate.
- Inform clients that TIS or other professional interpreters are available.
- Establish language and gender preferences for interpreters and to request these from the provider. Request the same interpreter where continuity and client confidence are important.

### **Paying for interpreting services**

- Agencies are responsible for budgeting for and paying for interpreters. Clients of Queensland Government agencies do not pay for interpreters.
- Some non-Government, community-based, non-profit organisations in the health and welfare fields are eligible for free interpreting services provided by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs through the Translating and Interpreting Service. General Practitioners and Members of Parliament are also entitled to free interpreting services. Free language services are mainly provided for a range of settlement purposes. Further details about eligibility for free interpreting services can be obtained from: <http://www.immi.gov.au/tis/feefree.htm#1>
- Details of current TIS charging policy and rates are available from TIS on 1300 304 604.
- For details of rates recommended by AUSIT, the professional association of interpreting/translating practitioners, call AUSIT Queensland on 07 3356 8255.

### **Most effective interpreting mode**

- Agencies accessing TIS interpreters on the telephone benefit because telephone interpreting is cost-effective, readily available regionally, can access most languages through the TIS national network, is more immediate and preserves confidentiality. Disadvantages include the delay that may be experienced in connecting the parties, and the difficulty for all the participants when visual cues are absent.
- On-site interpreting is often more appropriate in business, police, health and counselling contexts. It is a more detailed communication option. It offers the possibility of continuity with the same interpreter, a vital factor in confidential situations affecting women and refugees in particular, as well as delicate business negotiations.
- Videoconferencing networks can be used in health and other contexts.
- Conference environments where simultaneous interpreting is required in a number of languages can be arranged using Queensland facilities or by hiring electronic equipment and booths.

### **Accountability**

- Professionally accredited interpreters must observe professional obligations as well as comply with codes of ethics and professional conduct to maintain confidentiality, accuracy and impartiality. The AUSIT Code of Ethics for Interpreters and Translators, which is endorsed by NAATI and TIS, can be obtained from AUSIT representatives.
- Staff should check TIS interpreters’ Identity Cards and accreditation details. Unsatisfactory performance should be reported to TIS 131 450 or via email: [tis@immi.gov.au](mailto:tis@immi.gov.au).

### **Skilling staff in working with interpreters**

- The Queensland Interpreter Card Kit should be kept where it can be easily referred to by staff who may need to arrange an interpreter. Kits are available from Multicultural Affairs Queensland.
- Agency staff will benefit from training in working with interpreters in their workplace.
- MAQ has a training program available to Queensland Government agencies. MAQ can also provide information about the availability of other cross-cultural trainers. For information, contact MAQ on 07 3224 5690.



## Guidelines for multilingual information planning

### Media

- Information strategies which include components in English and languages other than English may be in one or a combination of the following:
  - in print – translated brochures and booklets, factsheets, business card advertising flyers and postcards, poster slogans, forms and papers, advertisements or inserts in these media.
  - electronically – translated or original language messages on the Internet or by email, printout on demand of information from local offices.
  - audiovisually – sub-titled, dubbed, voice-overed or original language videos, audio-cassettes, multilingual telephone information lines, ethnic radio television scripts, focus group or information-sharing sessions and seminars through an interpreter/bilingual worker.

### Planning

- Multilingual communication requirements need to be planned based on market research and use of client profile data which identifies language spoken, literacy levels, age, gender and recency of arrival in Australia. Planning also includes dissemination strategies and evaluation and feedback mechanisms.
- Choice of languages should be based on in-house locally-researched data as well as external data sources such as ABS Census and other demographic data.
- Client groups including ethnic communities, business associations and peak agencies should be included in decisions about information needs, formats and dissemination strategies. Agencies should organise their own networks with the assistance of the Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory and/or with the advice of Multicultural Affairs Queensland staff, or through contracting services.
- These same networks may be available to give valuable feedback on the draft multilingual product. This checking for cultural and linguistic appropriateness is a vital part of any multilingual information strategy, and will include feedback on the appropriateness of photography and artwork (eg cartoons) as well as language.
- Agencies need to balance the imperatives of getting information to large identified groups with the pressing information requirements of smaller or emerging client groups, women and regional/isolated communities.

- The marketing of government products and services in multilingual form to international clients requires a sensitivity to local acceptability factors. Queensland's multicultural community is ideal for product testing.
- Planning can include professional development of bilingual staff to encourage staff to attain NAATI accreditation so as to use their language skills in the workplace.

### Contracting out work

- Multilingual material (including translation work) used in any of these strategies should be obtained through professional sources. In Queensland the majority of translation and audiovisual work is contracted out to private agencies.

## Suggested performance indicators for policy implementation

### Identification of client language services needs in the agency

- Ethnicity data collection mechanisms, including country of birth, first language spoken, English proficiency/need for an interpreter and language for which an interpreter is required are part of agency market research and client profile descriptors. Cross-linking with other agencies/sections on data is encouraged for a standard approach.
- Requests for interpreters and languages are recorded.
- Agency is aware of appropriate mode of interpreting for its client base (on-site only, telephone only, on-site and telephone, personal computer or site-based video conference).
- Agency has installed conference or dual handset telephones in public contact areas and interview rooms.
- Agency has researched information needs of its non-English speaking clients.
- Procedure is in place to flag a client's interpreter needs through agency services (eg by noting a client's file and records).
- Procedure is in place to obtain and record feedback from clients on levels of satisfaction in terms of both access to, and quality of, service delivery through the increased use of interpreters.



## Working with interpreters

Note: There must be flexibility in policies to cater for the language service needs of regional and remote area populations.

- Policy and planning and public contact staff are aware of and understand the desirability of working with professional interpreters for effective communication, and have been trained to do so.
- Staff members are familiar with when to engage professional interpreters.
- The Queensland Interpreter Card poster (available in the Queensland Interpreter Card Kit, through Multicultural Affairs Queensland), is prominently displayed in areas accessed by the public.
- Procedures are available for staff obtaining interpreters in planned and unplanned (emergency) situations. Staff know how to respond to and distribute the Queensland Interpreter Card.
- Budgeting arrangements have been made with regard to the payment of professional interpreters by the agency.
- Policies guide staff not to use friends and relatives as interpreters except as a last resort.
- Staff are aware that a refusal to provide an interpreter could be indirectly discriminatory and understand the importance of professional interpreters in obtaining informed consent in legal, police, health and other government agency contexts.

## Multilingual information planning and management

- Communication plans are made before the agency produces multilingual (including English) information for ethnic communities or other clients.
- Choices on media, languages and cultural appropriateness of information and its packaging based on relevant data.
- Evaluation of past and present multilingual projects is used as part of planning to inform future information/promotion strategies.
- Effective dissemination links are in place through ethnic media and community networks.
- Bilingual staff members are involved in supporting effective information provision to clients.

## Integration of language services policy into organisational processes

- Data on languages spoken by clients is used as an important part of building responsive client services.
- Language service initiatives including interpreter usage and multilingual information projects are part of core business planning and budgetary processes.
- A language/cultural skills audit has been undertaken of consenting agency staff for use as a resource.
- A register of accredited and non-accredited bilingual/multilingual staff is available and policy exists relating to their use as interpreters.
- Language services-related initiatives such as access to NAATI accreditation for existing staff are part of agency enterprise bargaining, EEO and selection and recruitment processes.
- The agency has centralised its interpreter-booking and recording functions where appropriate for greater efficiency in budgeting and data collection.
- The agency provides its staff with access to training in cross-cultural communication, working with interpreters and planning multilingual information strategies as aspects of its management of cultural and linguistic diversity internally and externally.
- The agency has trained its contact staff in product knowledge for an accurate response in either English or languages other than English (through interpreters) to information requests.



# Appendix 1

## Model Language Services Policy

### Policy statement

In accordance with the *Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society*, which provides a framework for the planning and delivery of quality services and programs, this agency is committed to using strategies to inform eligible clients of services and their entitlements and how they can obtain them.

We will work with professional interpreters wherever possible to assist communication with people unable to satisfactorily communicate in English.

We will adopt a planned approach to the production and dissemination of information regarding services, policies and activities in English and other languages after consultation with client groups.

We will plan for language services in this agency, incorporating interpreting and multilingual information needs into agency budgeting, human resource and client service program management. We will make maximum use of the cultural and linguistic skills of our workforce in the development and implementation of this planning.

### Need for the policy in this agency

This agency recognises that a significant number of our clients or potential clients do not speak English at all or well enough to communicate adequately with agency officers. This policy will enable our clients to access services fairly and equitably and ensure our service delivery is of high quality.

### Policy aim

This agency will, wherever possible:

- establish coordinated, agency-wide measures which address the communication difficulties of our clients and assist their equitable access to programs, services and information
- promote coordinated communication measures such as working with professional interpreters as a means of maximising the social and economic benefits of Queensland's cultural diversity.

### Policy implementation

This agency will implement this policy by:

- assessing clients' language or other communication needs and determining the most appropriate response
- acknowledging clients' entitlement to the services of a professional interpreter or to linguistically appropriate information in situations of communication difficulty
- ensuring interpreting services and multilingual information are available to clients according to quality standards and protocols outlined in this policy
- establishing protocols for the engagement of professional interpreters
- ensuring that language services are culturally and linguistically acceptable to the client by taking into account gender and ethnicity preference and the appropriateness of telephone as opposed to on-site interpreting
- investigating alternative methods of communication (eg. via the Internet, video conferencing) as a means of reaching non-English speaking clients
- installing equipment such as conference or speaker phones at client contact points to encourage and facilitate telephone interpreting, particularly in areas where access to on-site interpreting services is very limited
- acknowledging that interpreting and other language services will be provided at the expense of the agency rather than through volunteers including friends and family
- formally acknowledging language expertise in workplaces and encouraging those officers to seek accreditation as interpreters and translators
- skilling staff in working with professional interpreters through training programs and relevant information
- recognising, and providing for the cultural diversity that exists in the community when undertaking public consultation.





## Appendix 2

### Adapting the model to meet agency requirements

The Model Language Services Policy at Appendix 1 may be adopted as agency policy, or be used as a guide to developing an agency-specific policy.

When developing an agency-specific language services policy, you may need to consider:

- An assessment of services the agency delivers, its methods of service delivery and an analysis of its client base.
- Consultation with the community and particularly with non-English speaking clients is important in the development of a language services policy.
- The possible application of the language services policy to non-Government agencies funded by Queensland Government agencies.
- It may be useful for agencies to develop these lists as a guide for staff:
  - situations where professional interpreters should always be engaged
  - types of information which should be produced in English and languages other than English (in print, electronically or audiovisually). MAQ can assist agencies to identify situations where the use of interpreters and the provision of information in languages other than English is crucial.
- The information contained in Guidelines for Working with Interpreters (page 9), Guidelines for Multilingual Information Planning (page 12) and Suggested Performance Indicators for Policy Implementation (page 12) will assist in the development of a language services policy.
- Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet can provide advice to agencies on how to develop a language services policy.

