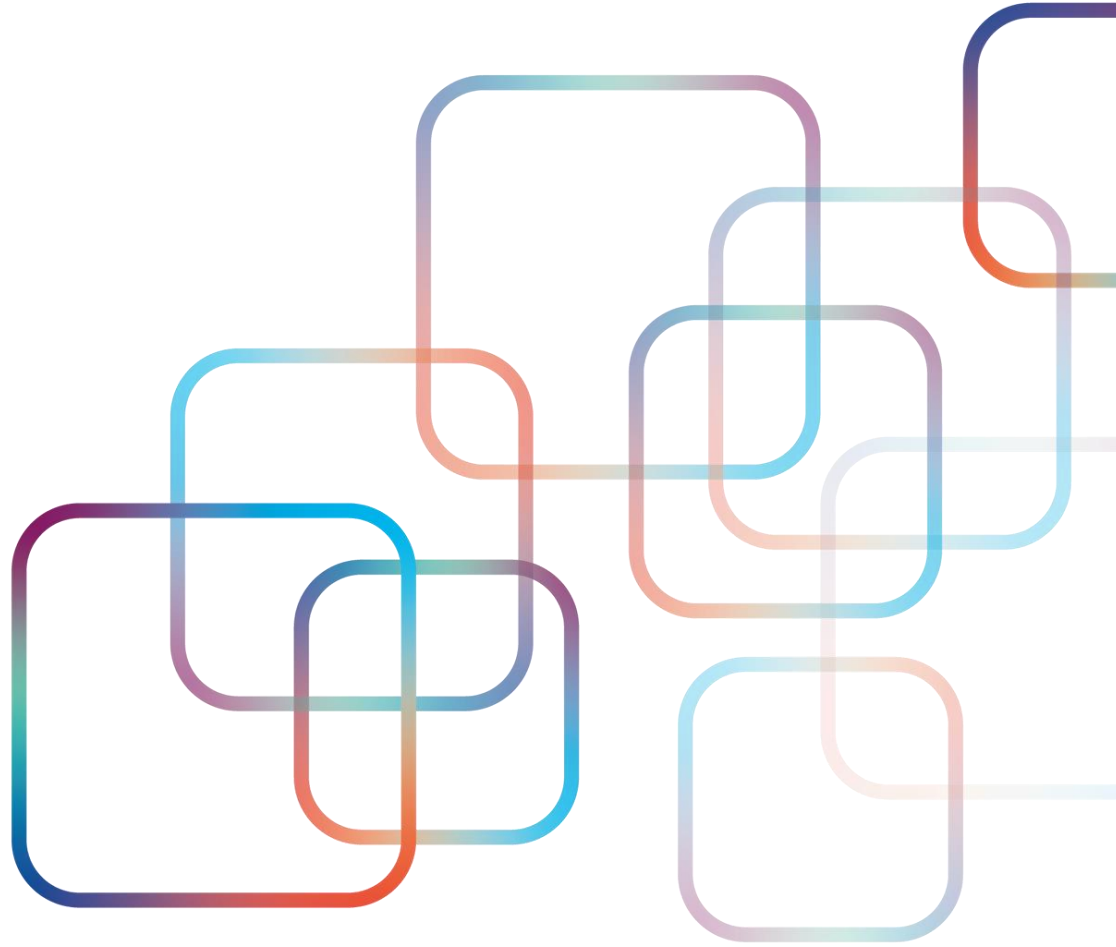




Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**



**OFFICE OF
MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LANGUAGE SERVICES

April 2025

Language Services

Language services refers to interpreting and translating services used to support people who are not able to communicate effectively in written and/or spoken Standard Australian English. This may include some First Nations peoples, some people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

To achieve this, WA Government agencies must:

- be client-focused in the delivery of services, including responding to clients' language needs
- inform clients who are not able to communicate in spoken and/or written Standard Australian English of their right to communicate in their preferred language and dialect and to request an interpreter
- provide free and targeted language services that adequately address the client's rights and risks to their health and safety.

Artificial Intelligence in Language Services

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) -driven technology in language service delivery is expanding across the public, private, and community sectors. This growth has been driven by significant advancements in Large Language Models, which have transformed AI by enabling powerful natural language understanding and generation.

Within the language services sector, AI-based advancements in technology offer transformative potential while also posing complex challenges that need to be considered as part of service implementation. This fact sheet offers an overview of both the benefits and limitations associated with using AI-powered language service systems to provide language services as well as guidelines associated with its use in the public sector. This information has been compiled using available evidence-based research and acknowledges the evolving nature of this subject matter.

Benefits

- **Increased accessibility**

Various AI-powered language service systems such as Google Translate, DeepL, Gemini and ChatGPT can provide instant translations for a broad range of languages, overcoming language barriers.

- **Speed and cost efficiency**

In comparison with traditional translation methods, AI-powered language service systems have significantly reduced time and costs associated with translation, which is an advantage for large-scale projects, supporting operational agility.

- **Real-time communication**

With enhancements in AI-powered language service systems, voice recognition tools and chat platforms have helped bridge language gaps in real time, facilitating immediate interaction across languages including the use of text, speech and images.

Limitations

- **Inaccurate and misleading information**

AI-powered language service systems rely on statistical patterns and the data available for a given subject. For example, translation data for languages like French, Chinese and Spanish is more abundant compared to languages such as Swahili or Hazaragi. This disparity can lead to inconsistencies in translation quality across languages.

- **Cultural sensitivity**

AI-powered language service systems have a critical disadvantage in interpreting idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and context-dependent phrases. These are deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts and may lead to misrepresentation, reinforcement of stereotypes, failure to recognise historical subtleties and cultural nuances, and miscommunication of information.

- **Ethical concerns**

There are several ethical concerns relating to the use of AI-powered language services systems such as data safety, security, confidentiality and information quality. While these concerns apply across all industries, they pose a unique challenge for the health, law enforcement, legal and social service sectors where privacy and confidentiality of client data must be adhered to.

Guidance

While AI-powered language service systems often allow language services to be accessed more easily and efficiently, it is essential that WA Government agencies continue to adhere to the WA Language Services Policy 2020 and all relevant WA Government Artificial Intelligence policies.

It is advised:

- agencies delivering essential services continue to engage with qualified language service practitioners for interpreting and translating requirements
- any implementation of AI-powered language services must align with and be used in conjunction with the [WA Government Artificial Intelligence Policy](#) and the [WA Government Artificial Intelligence Assurance Framework](#)
- agencies should write using plain language where possible as per the [Australian Government Style Manual](#), as this will help AI translations.

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters has also advised that AI-driven language service systems should not be used in high-risk assessments without the expert supervision of a certified human language service practitioner.

Resources

- [WA Government Artificial Intelligence Policy](#)
- [WA Government Artificial Intelligence Assurance Framework](#)
- [Australia's AI Ethics Principles](#)
- [WA Language Services Policy 2020](#)

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