



Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020

Engaging translating services

What is a translator?

A translator “transfers the source text from one language to another, usually within an extended time frame to allow for corrections and modifications and without the presence of the participants requiring the translation”.

(ANZSCO 272413)

Translations should be accurate and functionally equivalent to the source text.

For Deaf clients, Auslan translators can convert written information in one language into Auslan, or vice versa, through live video streaming or recorded video.

What is the role of a translator?

Translators transfer a source text in one language (such as Standard English) into a target text (that is, a target language). As with interpreters, translators are only responsible for the communication process, and not the information provided.

When to translate public documents

Translations can be a useful way to convey information to groups and communities, although this is not the only way and face-to-face communication is often more effective (see multilingual communication strategies).

Before deciding to translate public documents, consider the:

- purpose and nature of the information to be provided
- intended (target) audience and their language service requirements
- relevance of the information for the target audience
- availability of existing translations.

These considerations will help determine whether a written document is the most effective mode of communication.

Purpose

Translation needs will vary according to the purpose of your communication.

A translation may be requested by a client, or an agency may be considering translating important or promotional information in several languages. At this point, it is important to assess the need and purpose for translating a document.

Translated documents may be useful to clients who do not need an interpreter for verbal communication, but who may not have sufficient Standard English skills to read and write.

However, translations are not recommended for:

- people who may not be literate in their preferred language, such as people from countries with oral traditions
- people who may not be literate in their language because life circumstances prevented them from accessing education
- languages with no written form (for example Auslan) or have only recently developed a written form, and therefore have no history of using text for information. Arabic dialects such as Algerian, Moroccan and Levantine are not usually written: writing takes place in Modern Standard Arabic instead; also some Chinese and African dialects and Australian Aboriginal languages have no written form.

Consulting with other agencies or organisations can provide useful insights into the need for, and relevance of, translated information for particular individuals and community groups.

Target audience

When choosing languages for translations, demographic data for Western Australia or local government areas is available from the Office of Multicultural Interests website. You can find **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)** data for:

- the number of speakers of languages other than English who speak English not well or not at all by age
- language groups with the largest numbers of people with low English language proficiency
- language groups with the largest proportion of people with low English proficiency.

The Office of Multicultural Interests' **Search Diversity WA** website also provides ABS statistics for birthplaces and languages including:

- English proficiency levels of community members who speak a language other than English
- distribution of language speakers in local government areas.

Read more about data collection in Data collection and reporting in the **Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020 and Guidelines**.

□ Census 2016: The top 10 language groups with low English proficiency (hence a likely need for interpreting and translating services)

Language groups with highest number of low English proficiency

□ Mandarin	11,500
□ Vietnamese	6178
□ Cantonese	4062
□ Italian	3182
□ Arabic	2425
□ Korean	2260
□ Punjabi	1253
□ Karen	1062
□ Persian	1027
□ Burmese	1011



Language groups with highest percentage of low English proficiency

□ Karen	51.3%
□ Chin Haka	50.8%
□ Mon	41.1%
□ Hazaraghi	38.3%
□ Timorese	34.6%
□ Korean	31.8%
□ Vietnamese	30.5%
□ Khmer	27.9%
□ Dari	26.9%
□ Mandarin	24%



Availability of existing materials

Before deciding to translate a document, check whether there are existing translations on the same topic, or any that would be suitable with minor changes.

Always check the accuracy of translated information before it is used and seek formal approval from the author or authorising person before reproducing or amending their work (copyright and intellectual property).

Places to check for existing translations include:

- diversity officers within public sector agencies
- non-government organisations or 'peak bodies'
- interstate organisations providing similar service functions.

How to find a translating service

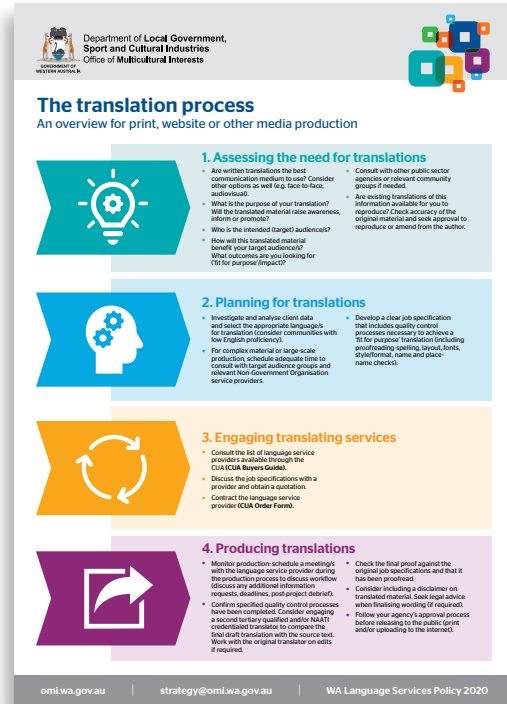
The Department of Finance (Government Procurement - Contracts WA) **Common Use Arrangement (CUA) for Interpreting and Translating Services** provides a list of contractors who have been assessed against criteria to deliver language services.

Most language service providers offer a range of services, including:

- translating the original document
- checking the accuracy of translated text
- editing translations for publication
- proofreading
- multilingual desktop publishing and design
- preparation of quality PDFs or artwork suitable for printing.

The translation process

Download a copy of **The translation process: An overview for print, website or other media production** here.



Obtaining a quotation for translation services

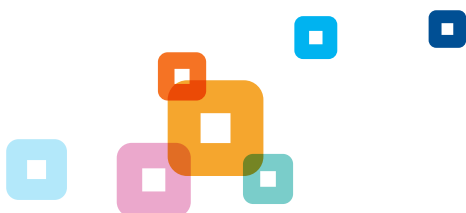
Fees for translating services will vary according to the complexity of the material; whether checking, editing and proofreading by another tertiary qualified and/or NAATI credentialed translator is needed; the time frame for the job; and whether the format is provided as a hard or electronic copy.

Prepare a list of questions to ask when obtaining a quotation. You may wish to clarify:

- the tertiary qualification and/or NAATI credential required for the task
- what fees would apply if changes are made to the English text
- whether the translating agency has provided similar services to other public sector agencies.

Public sector agencies should provide details about:

- the language of the original material and the language into which it will be translated
- the purpose of the translation, for example to inform, advise, promote, legally bind
- the target audience, including age group, gender, and any other details such as cultural sensitivities



- the subject area, for example health, education, law, agriculture, employment
- where the translated material will be used, for example website, written correspondence, internal information purposes
- the type, format and style required, for example letter, brochure, flyer or form. Inform the provider if an agency style guide needs to be adhered to, and if the documents are to be distributed electronically or by hard copy
- legal and ethical requirements, such as copyright and confidentiality issues
- the timeline for the work, factoring in enough time for the translator to clarify any information with the agency and for independent checking of the final material
- the agency's preferred process for editing and proofreading (see monitoring production).
- providing suitable working conditions if the assignment is being carried out onsite
- identifying each version of the document with a version number, a time and date, and tracking changes
- checking that the document/s have been edited and proofread.

Checking and finalising translations

It is recommended that the final draft of the translation is edited and then checked by another tertiary qualified and/or NAATI credentialed translator. This checking can be requested through your contracted translating service provider.

Preparing text to be translated

Ensure that the original document is written in plain, concise Standard Australian English and avoids the use of idioms, metaphors, acronyms, colloquialisms and jargon. This will assist a wide variety of clients including those with limited English literacy or other comprehension difficulties. It will also be of great assistance to a translator.

It is important that the content considers the cultural and faith backgrounds of the target audience. Consultation with relevant community organisations, service providers or focus groups will help determine the appropriateness of the content before it is translated.

Remember to seek any necessary approvals from the author or authorising person before reproducing or amending their work, and check the accuracy of the material for translation before sending to the translator.

Monitoring production

Agencies have a role in monitoring the production of the translation by:

- reviewing the specifications agreement before beginning the assignment
- clarifying any terminology and providing any reference materials and glossaries of terms
- providing the contact details of a staff member to whom queries can be directed during the assignment

Translations of personal documents, such as birth certificates and driver's licences that are used to prove a person's identity may require a NAATI translator verification stamp which includes the:

- type of credential
- language of the credential
- NAATI number.

Distributing translated information

The effectiveness of any translated information depends on how well it is disseminated and how many of the target audience have access to the material.

Relevant community organisations, leaders, networks and service providers, faith networks, churches, mosques, temples, community service providers, cultural clubs, Aboriginal and ethnic media including community newspapers, and peak associations are good channels for dissemination of translated documents or promotion of their availability. Read about how to develop **multilingual communication strategies** here.



▣ **Factors resulting in poor-quality translated resources:**

- **poor quality of the original source material prepared for translation (incorrect information, spelling/grammar errors)**
- **poor use of existing resources (not accessible, incorrectly targeted)**
- **poor quality assurance processes in managing the translation project, from procurement to final product**
- **lack of awareness of cultural differences impacting the transfer of messages and meaning to the relevant community (no consultation undertaken).**

Client services

The Australian Government through the Department of Social Services (DSS) provides people settling permanently in Australia with access to the **Free Translating Service (FTS)**. Permanent residents and select temporary or provisional visa holders can have up to 10 eligible documents translated into Standard Australian English within the first two years of the date their eligible visa was granted.

Documents suitable for translation through the FTS include:

- identity and relationship documents, such as birth certificate, family register
- facilitation documents, such as driver's licence, police clearance, medical documents
- educational documents, such as primary and secondary school certificates, vocational and tertiary certificates
- employment-related documents, such as professional and trade certificates.

Information about the FTS, including eligibility, is available at

<https://translating.homeaffairs.gov.au> .

Further reading

Office of Multicultural Interests

- **Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020 and Guidelines**

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)

- Translation: Getting It Right
- Best Practices for the Translation of Official and Legal Documents, 2014

Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs

- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)**

