Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020

Multilingual communication strategies

Multilingual communication strategies are best informed by market research and client data, considering how the information will be disseminated and how the strategies will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

Different target groups may require information at different times and through various communication channels, platforms and/or formats (modes).

It may be necessary to balance reaching large identified language groups with the information requirements of smaller or emerging groups, regional or remote Western Australian Aboriginal, and/or CaLD communities.

The following steps can help in developing a multilingual communication strategy.

Why?

Identify the purpose of the communication. For example, is it to:

- raise awareness of a policy program or service?

- provide information to a particular community about accessing your agency's services?

- seek input into the development of a policy, program or service?

Who?

Identify your target audience. Analyse the client demographic data collected by your agency and other data sources such as those available from the Office of Multicultural Interests and the ABS (Census data).

How?

Consult with relevant organisations, groups and individuals such as professional interpreting and translating associations; local Aboriginal, multicultural and disability service organisations; ethnic community groups, associations, peak bodies and networks; local governments, other State or Australian Government agencies; and/or non-government organisations to:

- identify areas of greatest need for information provision

- determine the most effective communication mode to use (Do your clients have access to the internet? What are their literacy levels? If their language does not have a written form, can you use audiovisual materials?)

- check for cultural appropriateness such as the use of photography or artwork, and obtain feedback. For example, there are cultural protocols to follow in every Aboriginal community when reproducing the names and/or photographs of people who have died

- test the effectiveness of communication materials

- seek assistance from local associations and community groups, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and cultural clubs, Aboriginal language centres or land councils when developing dissemination strategies and distributing finished materials where appropriate.

Marketing government services in a multilingual form to international destinations requires cultural sensitivity. Effective marketing collateral used previously in one location or setting may not be appropriate for another. Consulting with a relevant CaLD community or group is an ideal way of product testing.

## Choosing technologies and communication modes

There is a range of communication modes through which information can be conveyed to different groups, including:

- pictures, storyboards, diagrams

- brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets, posters, welcome kits, cards

- electronic (internet, intranet, email)

- pre-recorded telephone messages (multilingual information lines using interactive voice response technology)

- community information sessions, seminars or workshops facilitated by bilingual/multilingual staff members

- audiovisual (subtitled, dubbed, voice-over or original language videos, ethnic radio and/or television scripts[1], segments, advertisements, broadcasts, audio clips, and Auslan video translations on websites, podcasts, YouTube videos, DVDs, talking posters)

- staffing of telephone lines and other referral points by bilingual/multilingual staff

- advertisements and articles in languages other than Standard English in mainstream and ethnic print media

- teleconferencing or videoconferencing.[2]

Using a mixture of communication modes can be more effective than only employing one or two.

Table 3 can help determine which technologies to use depending on the situation and communication requirements. For example:

- high-risk situations are those that may require interpreting or translation of critical information, such as health or legal information about a client's circumstances. Note that real-time online language interpreting applications or bilingual/multilingual staff members should only be used in emergencies and to gather immediate information until a tertiary qualified and/or NAATI credentialed interpreter is available

- low-risk situations are those that require translation of general product or service-related information that is not dependent on a client's circumstances

- two-way information exchange occurs when there is a dialogue between two or more people (such as in police interviews or engagement workshops)

- one-way information provision occurs when one person conveys information to one or more people (such as the promotion of new services in a brochure).
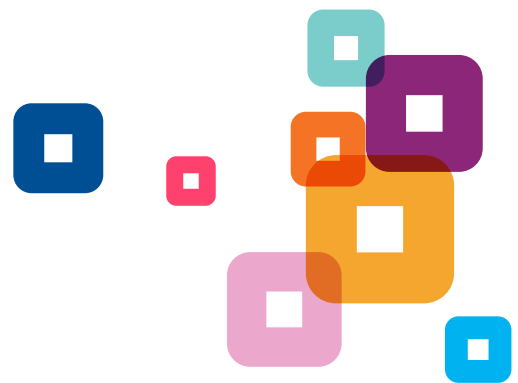
[1] Staff at radio station 6EBA FM Multicultural Radio and Television Association of WA may be able to help with this. **www.6EBA.com.au**

[2] OMI, *Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally*, p. 31

Table 3. Interpreting/translating communication modes[3]

	High-risk situations	Medium-risk situations	Low-risk situations
All types of information exchanges	Tertiary qualified and/or NAATI credentialed interpreter or translator		Bilingual/multilingual staff member
Two-way information exchange		Telephone interpreting/ Video conferencing^	Skype/emerging technologies (real-time speech-to-speech interpreting)^
One-way information exchange		Video/YouTube clips^^ Multilingual information lines+	Electronic (email internet/intranet) Web/online translation database/apps Visual/printed materials

^ Check the capabilities of telecommunications and internet services in regional or remote Western Australia. Also, some forms of this type of technology are not appropriate for use in complex health, mental health or legal settings.

^^ Producing videos with captions for the Deaf and hard of hearing is relatively inexpensive. Auslan used in a video clip helps to ensure that the information is relayed in the Deaf or hard of hearing client's first language.

+ Multilingual information lines are services supported by interactive voice response (IVR) technology, which is an automated telephone system that interacts with callers, gathers the required information and routes the calls to a specific recipient (for example Messages on Hold). Pre-recorded information is provided in the most relevant language groups for client services and a dedicated phone number for each language, or access via a single number, is provided. If the information does not meet the client's needs, the call forwards automatically to an interpreter and the relevant agency. Multilingual information lines require a contract with a relevant IVR service provider, telephone equipment, software applications, a database and supporting infrastructure.
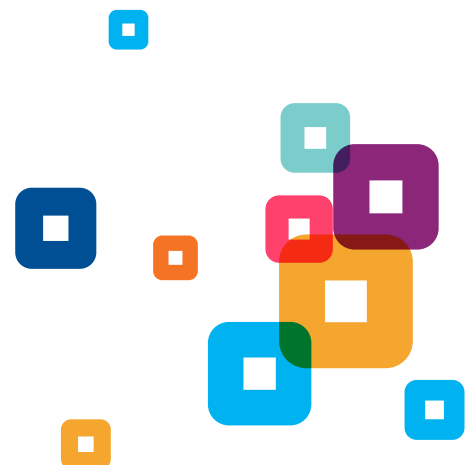
[3] Table 3 adapted from Multicultural Affairs Queensland, *Language Services Guidelines 2016,* p. 22.

■ All videos produced by Western Australian public sector agencies should be captioned in accordance with relevant standards and policies. More information can be found at Media Access Australia.

Use of machine/automated translation products and emerging technologies

Web and application-based translation products such as Google Translator provide limited translation. Most applications translate word for word without considering the context or underlying factors that affect meaning and this can result in a different meaning or understanding about what is said. This technology should not be used to replace interpreters and translators, especially in legal, health or technical settings. Translation applications are of no use for oral languages where there is no written form, and of little use where literacy levels in a specific language group are low.

Technological advancements in the development of remote interpreting software and other auto-speech applications seek to improve service delivery and reduce costs for public sector agencies, especially for regional front-line and emergency services. If considering using this technology, check your software/application service provider contract to make sure the interpreters they employ meet the practitioner standards and required training as outlined in the *Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020 and Guidelines.*

Digital inclusion

The **Australian Digital Inclusion Index** provides information about the digital literacy of Western Australians and their access to digital technology.

Western Australian snapshot[4]

DIGITAL INCLUSION

With many services now available online, barriers to going online will limit the ability of disadvantaged groups to access the benefits from a digital economy. This includes education, information, government and community services.
The Australian Digital Inclusion Index is measured using three scores ranging from 0-100 on the access, affordability and digital ability of people in Australia. The WA score on the Australian Digital Inclusion Index has improved from 2018 to 2019, however it is still sitting below the national figure.

AUSTRALIA	61.9
WESTERN AUSTRALIA	61.3
PERTH METRO	62.4
RURAL WA	56.7

61.3

In 2019, Western Australia scored 61.3 which was **below the national figure** of 61.9

Rural WA was **well below the national figure** at 56.7
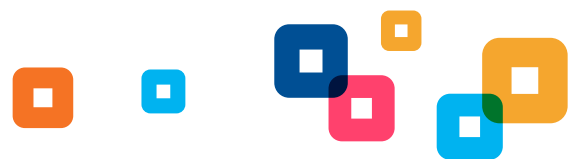
[4] Lotterywest 2019, WA Index of Wellbeing: Draft Community Impact Platform.

Case study:
Blurred Borders

The written form may not be an appropriate way of delivering information for Aboriginal language speakers. **Blurred Borders** is a collaborative Commonwealth-funded multi-agency project led by Legal Aid WA. Developed explicitly for Western Australia's East Kimberley and the western Northern Territory cross-border region, Legal Aid WA has developed a range of client communication resources incorporating visual art, plain language and storytelling to help explain, with the assistance of interpreters, critical legal concepts around bail, criminal process and family violence.

The Blurred Borders resources help people to:

- better understand legal concepts
- communicate more effectively about the law
- make informed legal choices
- actively participate in legal processes.

Further reading

State Government of Western Australia

- **Asian Engagement Strategy 2019–2030**

Department of Local Government Sport and Culture Industries—Aboriginal History

- **Gnarla Boodja Mili Mili** (Our Country on Paper) interactive place name map

Office of Multicultural Interests

- List of Western Australia's **Ethnic Organisations**
- **Metropolitan Multicultural Networks**
- **Ethnic Media**
- **Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020 and Guidelines**
- **Guide to Cultural and Linguistic Data Collection for the Public Sector**
- **Community Media Kit**

Victorian Government

- **Multilingual Information Online**

Australian Government

- **Digital Guides: Accessibility and inclusivity —design content so everyone can use it; p. 33–34.**

Making the Web Accessible

- **PDF Techniques for WCAG 2.0**
- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WCAG 2.0**

Oncall interpreters and translators

- **Website Translation**