

Organising translations

Introduction

Translated information can be an effective way to increase community knowledge and awareness of Government services.

You can use translated materials to:

- deliver important information
- convey detailed information
- reinforce face-to-face information
- provide information that can be kept and referred to when needed
- provide information in places accessible to your clients.

Translated information should be considered as a supplement to interpreting, not as a replacement.

Providing translated information requires time, money and organisation. This booklet aims to assist Victorian Government departments and funded agencies to prepare and distribute translated information.

This booklet is a practical guide to:

- organising translations and choosing a translation agency
- choosing information and languages for translation
- preparing text for translation
- checking and finalising translations
- producing and distributing translations
- maximising translation resources through partnerships and sharing.

This booklet also covers translating personal documents from other languages into English.

Information on interpreting services is available in Section 2 - Working with Interpreters.

Organising translations

Departments and agencies often have arrangements in place for obtaining translating and interpreting services, including authorisation procedures, funding responsibilities and preferred translating agencies. Some areas within departments may also have binding contracts with preferred providers.

Before commencing any translation project, make sure you are aware of any such arrangements by contacting the relevant multicultural, diversity or communications area within your department or agency.

Where do I find an accredited translator?

Quick Reference

Working with accredited translators maximises accuracy and professionalism and shows your commitment to a quality service for your clients.

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI) accredits translators at four levels: paraprofessional translator, professional translator, advanced translator and advanced translator

(senior). For rare languages, accreditation through NAATI may be unavailable. To address this situation, NAATI accords 'recognition' which does not specify a level of proficiency, but acknowledges that the candidate has had recent and regular experience as a translator.

For further information on NAATI accreditation see Section 1- Policy and procedures.

Language 'Directions'

Accreditation of translators is also divided into 'language directions'.

Translators may be accredited to:

- translate work from English into another language
- from another language into English or
- in both language directions.

Professional translating and interpreting agencies are listed in the Yellow Pages. Accredited translators can be found using the NAATI Directory of Accredited and Recognised Practitioners of Interpreting and Translating, which is available at www.naati.com.au, or from the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc (AUSIT) website, available at www.ausit.org.

How do I know if a translator is accredited?

People who work as translators may not always have accreditation. To verify that a translator is accredited or recognised, you should ask to see their NAATI accreditation certificate, identification card or translator's stamp.

You can also ask that translations be stamped with a NAATI translator's stamp. This stamp shows:

- the translator's accreditation level
- the language/s they are accredited to translate
- the direction in which the accreditation is valid
- the translator's NAATI number.

Victorian Government policy is that translators used by government departments and funded agencies be NAATI accredited to a Professional level or above. Paraprofessional translators should only be used where NAATI accreditation is not available at the professional level or where no professional translator can be sourced. Where NAATI does not accredit practitioners in a particular language, a recognised translator may be used. Translators are also expected to observe the national Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Interpreters and Translators developed by AUSIT, which is reproduced in Appendix D.

What types of translating service are available?

Most translating agencies offer a range of services including:

- basic translations
- checking of text
- multilingual desktop publishing and design and e-translations
- preparation of bromide-quality hardcopies suitable for printing.

Translating agencies should be able to provide the final translation in hardcopy (printed on paper) and/or electronically (on computer disk, CD-ROM or by email).

If you receive the final translation electronically make sure to specify the type of file you need. Unless your computer system has special multilingual software, you may have difficulty with electronic files containing foreign language characters, such as Chinese or Arabic scripts. This problem can be avoided by asking for documents in PDF format. Scripts of the main languages used in Victoria are reproduced in Appendix E.

You may also need to configure your computer or check the computer and printer memory is sufficient to download and print documents in other language scripts or fonts.

Audio and videotape translations

Audiotapes or videotapes of important information can be played in the office or at home and are an alternative to written translations. These are worth considering if your clients include children, people whose schooling has been disrupted by war or famine, or people from countries with poor literacy rates.

Getting a quote

How are translations costed?

Fees for translating services will generally vary according to:

- the complexity of the translation and layout required
- whether checking by another accredited translator is needed
- the urgency of the assignment
- the format in which information is provided: bromides, electronic or hardcopy.

Quotes for work may be based on:

- a rate per 100 English words
- a rate per page
- a flat fee for the project.

What should I ask?

When obtaining and comparing quotes from different agencies, it is important to get as much information as possible. The following questions are essential:

- Who are some of the agency's clients? Do they offer similar services to your organisation?
- Does the quote include independent checking, editing and proofreading by another accredited translator?
- How will any difference of opinion between the original translator and checker/s be resolved?
- Does the quote include layout and/or desktop publishing and does the agency have the necessary skills to complete this work to the required standard?
- What fees apply if you need to make major changes to the English text or the project is cancelled?
- How long will it take to complete the translations and what additional fees apply to urgent requests?
- What levels of translator/s will be used? Will the agency provide a statement or NAATI stamp certifying these levels?
- Does the agency use glossaries of specialised terms that are relevant to your organisation?
- In what format will the finished product be delivered?
- Does the agency or translator have professional indemnity insurance cover (in case your organisation becomes implicated in a legal case in relation to the translation)?

For major work, you may also wish to include quotes for cultural testing of translated information using focus groups.

Choosing information and languages for translations

If information is important for clients who read and write English then it is probably also important for clients with a preferred language other than English.

The need for translated information should therefore be considered as part of your general client communication needs.

When deciding what information to translate and what languages to choose consider:

- the languages your current and potential clients read and write
- the level of literacy among clients not proficient in English
- other sources of information already available to the client
- your available budget.

The Victorian Settlement Planning Committee has produced a model to assist agencies in assessing their translating and interpreting needs. This is available at www.immi.gov.au/tis/model.pdf.

Which languages should I translate?

The most common languages used in Victoria or Australia are not necessarily the languages used by your clients.

Quick Reference

The need for information in particular languages will vary depending on the age and gender of clients and the type of services you provide. For example, Greek and Italian are widely spoken in Victoria, but most young people who speak these languages also speak English very well. So there would be very little demand for information on pregnancy and childbirth in Greek or Italian. However, health information for older people would probably need to include these languages.

Languages you choose will also depend on the region your agency services. For example, some local government areas may have more Vietnamese, Cantonese or Arabic speakers than others.

To maximise the use of resources, your choice of languages should be based on data and consultation.

Sources of Information

The following departments, agencies and guides provide data to help you assess which languages you may need to translate:

- *ABS Census*

This includes country of birth, language spoken at home, English proficiency, country of birth of parents, year of arrival in Australia. (See www.abs.gov.au)

- *Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) Settlement Database*

This includes country of birth, immigration category, preferred language, English proficiency, year of arrival of entrants to Australia and local government area of intended residence. It is one of the few indicators of population change between censuses other than data from births, deaths and marriages. (See www.immi.gov.au).

- *Translating agencies*

These agencies may keep records of requests for translating and/or interpreting services by language and region.

- *Local government authorities*

May have information on country of birth, preferred language and language spoken at home.

- *World Bank or SBS World Guide*

These include information on major languages used and literacy rate by country and by gender. (See www.worldbank.org or www.sbs.com.au).

- *Client files or client data systems*

These may include country of birth, preferred language, language spoken at home, and/or need for an interpreter.

- *Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs (VOMA) website*

This holds data on a range of multicultural indicators such as birthplace and languages spoken by local government area, based on 2001 ABS census data. (See www.voma.vic.gov.au).

Consultation: the key to producing effective information

The number of potential clients using a particular language is not the only relevant factor when choosing appropriate languages for translation.

To ensure that printed materials are useful and culturally appropriate, it is important to consult with ethnic community organisations, community workers (preferably those that work in the specific field covered by the information material) and/or potential clients.

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These people will have additional insight into the following crucial factors:

- A client's preferred language or the language they speak at home is a better indicator of need than whether they need an interpreter for spoken English. Some clients who do not need an interpreter for verbal communication may still prefer written information to be translated. In the case of Auslan users, the majority will be comfortable reading and writing in English.
- Some people may not be literate in their preferred language.
- Workers in the field can advise about which language groups have a significant need for translated information.
- Smaller, newly arrived communities are likely to have fewer alternative information sources than established communities.
- Some groups may be accessing generic information from overseas via the Internet.

- Some language groups regard printed information as a more useful source of information than ethnic radio, ethnic community groups or community agencies.

- Some languages do not have a written form or have had a written language for a short period of time only. As a result they have no history of using written texts for information.

In some cases, the most effective communication strategy may be to combine translated material with other information distribution strategies.

The VOMA website has information about how CALD people prefer to receive information. (See the publication 'The CALD Report - Access to Information About Government Services Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Audiences' www.voma.vic.gov.au).

Use existing translations where possible

Quick Reference

After determining the need for information, you should also check to see whether existing translations may be suitable - or could be suitable with minor changes - particularly if you are translating non-specific information. This approach can save your agency time and money.

Places to check for existing translations include:

- multicultural or diversity areas within government departments
- peak bodies
- State Library of Victoria catalogue (<http://www.statelibrary.vic.gov.au/slv/govpub/>)
- interstate or overseas organisations performing similar functions to your own
- translation agencies who may have done similar work for other clients.

Many organisations have made existing translations available on the Internet and departments are increasingly developing electronic libraries of translated information that can be accessed by service providers.

Existing translated information should always be checked for quality before being used. Always seek formal approval from the author or authorising person before reproducing or amending their work.

Where there is no appropriate translated information, you may think about establishing networks to share the cost and responsibility of producing information, or investigate using up-to-date quality assessed translations from the Internet. For example, the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service has translated health information on a range of topics and in a number of languages. (See <http://www.mhcs.nsw.gov.au/>).

Preparing text for translations

When preparing information for members of the public, text should be in clear, easily understood language. The same rule applies to translations. A translation will be far more effective if the original English is clear and the style is consistent.

Before you start writing

Your content should take account of the cultural and religious backgrounds of your clients, so you may want to consult on the material with ethnic community organisations before it is translated. The Victorian Multicultural Resources Directory contains descriptions and contact details for ethnic community organisations and multicultural services. The Directory is available online at www.voma.vic.gov.au or from the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Focus groups can also be an effective way to ensure that the English version of written information is appropriate for a particular cultural group.

For example, you could:

- prepare a list of the major points you want to convey to readers
- arrange for an interpreter or bilingual person to discuss these points in the

community language with a focus group

- prepare the English version based on these consultations.

Your writing checklist

The following points will help you prepare clear and easily understood English texts for translation.

1. Put the main idea first.
2. Don't include too much information.
3. Use short, easily understood sentences (generally not over twenty words) and keep language simple. For example, the word advantageous could be replaced with useful, and the word magnitude with size.
4. Use the active rather than the passive voice. For example, 'Our staff can help you find work' is better than 'Help with finding work is provided by our staff'.
5. Repeat nouns if pronouns will create ambiguity. For example, 'There are also three nurses and three interpreters on duty. They speak Croatian, Serbian, Greek and Italian'. Who does 'they' refer to? This is better: 'There are also three nurses and three interpreters on duty. The interpreters speak Croatian, Serbian and Greek and all three nurses speak Italian'.

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6. Avoid metaphors, colloquialisms, and culturally-specific humour. These are usually untranslatable.
7. Avoid 'officialese', 'bureaucratese', 'legalese' and professional jargon. If you must use highly specialised terminology, provide an explanation in brackets.
8. Spell out acronyms in full.
9. Avoid lengthy titles or try to break them up. For example: Mental Health Division Early Childhood Team is difficult to translate.
10. Use specific rather than general terms. For example, write hospitals, community health centres and infant welfare centres instead of health centres.
11. If something is difficult to explain, consider whether you really need to include it. Alternatively, difficult ideas may best be explained through examples or diagrams.
12. Explain concepts that may be unfamiliar or may lose their meaning in translation, such as Neighbourhood Watch or Meals on Wheels.
13. Provide translators with background material to help them understand the document, including a glossary of any specialist terms used, the purpose of the document and the target audience.
14. If basic information is likely to change, format the document so it can be altered in-house. For example, office hours or phone numbers can be put in a separate text box and updated when necessary.
15. Check to see if material is copyright and seek formal approval from the author or authorising person before organising a translation.

Working with translators

Translating is a complex process and you should ensure that you and the translator understand each other's requirements and expectations.

Always provide the name of a contact person within your agency so the translators can check the meaning of a term or sentence that may be unclear. Remember that more than one translator will probably be used if the text is translated into a number of languages.

Checking and finalising translations

Checking your translations

Poor quality translations will confuse or frustrate clients. Checking translations against the original version is therefore essential.

This vital stage of the translation process is a way of:

- maximising the effectiveness of your material
- ensuring it does not contain inaccurate or misleading information.

You can either request checking from the original agency, or arrange it independently.

Checking should always be carried out by a second independent and accredited translator. They should use the brief provided to the original translator.

Testing your material

Testing material following translation is another way of checking its appropriateness and making sure it does not provide inaccurate or misleading information.

Translations should be tested separately with each language/cultural group.

You may also use competent bilingual staff within your agency to:

- check the translation against the original
- read the translation and restate it in English, to check they have received the intended message.

If you arrange the checking or testing of a translation, you should ensure that comments are provided in English. Comments should be as specific as possible, explaining the reasons why any changes are suggested, and proposing an acceptable version. The original translator remains responsible for their translation and is normally provided with the opportunity to comment and make amendments where necessary.

Getting help to check your translations

You may wish to obtain professional support to check translated materials or to run focus groups. Several consultancies in Melbourne provide such assistance, and you may wish to advertise or tender for their services.

Finalising your material

When finalising translated materials, remember to:

- ensure the names of departments and services are provided in English
- date the publication
- ensure the name of the language into which the material has been translated is in English on the front of the publication
- ensure the topic is in English on the front of the publication.

Producing and distributing translated information

Getting your message across

The effectiveness of translated information depends on how well it reaches its target audience.

When determining the most suitable method for producing and distributing translated information consider:

- the nature of the message and its importance
- the expected life-span of the information (for example, the duration of any information campaign)
- the breadth and diversity of your client groups
- your budget.

Recent research shows:

- Ethno-specific organisations play a central role in disseminating information and may act as information gatekeepers, analysing and critically assessing the relevance of information before passing it on.

- Some ethnic communities are more trusting of information given by a person rather than an institution. Verbal information sessions, perhaps run at community centres, may be a more direct and effective method of communicating.
- When English language campaigns have a strong message or visual impact (such as the TAC or Workcover advertisements) and are complemented by translated information, they can be an effective way to reinforce a message to ethnic communities.

For more information on this research see 'The CALD Report - Access to Information About Government Services Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Audiences' on the VOMA website (www.voma.vic.gov.au).

Four ways to reach your clients

Keeping this research in mind, you may find the following ways of disseminating information to be effective:

- direct mailouts (if you know which languages your clients use and where they live)
- traditional ethnic media - such as print and radio (larger communities are more likely to have established networks - such as newspapers - than new and emerging communities)

- internal community networks and channels including:
 - religious avenues such as churches, temples or mosques
 - specific community groups such as older persons' clubs
 - professionals such as doctors, other health professionals, lawyers, or teachers.
- local English language papers, which are widely read by people who use another language particularly by those with proficient English language skills.

Depositing your publication

New Government publications, including brochures and pamphlets, must be deposited with the State Library of Victoria within two months of publication. Translated documents, along with the original text, should be forwarded to:

Government Publications
State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Phone (03) 8664 7139
Fax (03) 9663 1480

Non-Government translated documents should also be deposited with the State Library of Victoria, but should be addressed to the Legal Deposit Officer.

Translations on the Internet

Research has shown that an over-reliance on electronic media and the Internet to reach culturally and linguistically diverse clients is inappropriate at this stage.

In general, clients in need of translations are less likely to own computers than other Victorians. And clients who are older, poorer, refugees, less literate or going through the process of resettlement are less likely than other Victorians to have access to the Internet.

However, many younger people from newly arrived communities have used the Internet before and are strong users of the Internet in Australia. They are comfortable accessing information through the web. Some newly arrived migrants also learn to use the web in adult English classes or learn through their children.

In addition, workers and other intermediaries who can print relevant information from a website in the appropriate language and provide it to clients during appointments find translated information on the Internet very useful. The Internet is also a cost-effective way of updating and distributing material.

Electronic libraries of translated information

Departments are increasingly developing electronic libraries of translated information that can be accessed by service providers.

These libraries also enable agencies to share translated texts and reduce the need for agencies to organise their own translations.

By adding your own translated documents to these libraries you are increasing the pool of translated information and, ultimately, increasing community knowledge and awareness of services.

The Internet is not the best way to give clients translated information. However, it is an effective way to make information available to teachers, health workers and other intermediaries who provide services to people who speak another language.

Translating personal documents

What does TIS provide?

DIMIA's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) funds a free document extract translation service for the purpose of settlement.

This is available to permanent residents within their first two years of arrival on a valid permanent residence visa or onshore grant of permanent residency, whichever occurs later.

The fee-free service provides an extract or summary translation of up to 100 words of one document from each of the following categories:

- birth, marriage, death and divorce papers – except when used in legal proceedings
- certificate of change of name (issued before immigration)
- baptismal certificate (only in lieu of a birth certificate and if required for the purpose of demonstrating their date of birth or for enrolment in a Catholic educational institution)
- national identity document (in lieu of a birth certificate)
- employment certificate/record/reference
- educational certificates, either:
 - a primary school certificate, secondary education certificate or tertiary education certificate, or
 - a vocational certificate (professional and trade). Only educational certificates pertaining to the highest level of education held by the client are covered by this second category.
- NB University syllabus, course descriptions and similar documents do not fall into this free category. Nor do certificates that verify attendance at a short course, seminar or workshop but contain no assessment of the bearer's performance and/or does not confer any qualification
- driver's licence
- police/penal certificate (if required for employment purpose)
- medical reports issued before immigration to Australia and required for medical treatment here
- vaccination certificate issued before immigration to Australia.

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If eligible, the client can lodge a request for translation directly at a Document Collection Centre in their state (listed below). Any agency that requests translations of personal documents on behalf of a client will be charged.

Approval of longer documents

In certain cases, such as the translation of academic transcripts, the fee-free service covers documents over 100 words. However, longer documents need to be approved by TIS before being translated. In these cases, the first step is to lodge an application at a Document Collection Centre.

Clients should not forward documents directly to TIS.

TIS no longer provides document translations in any other circumstance and does not do commercial translations.

Phone: 131 450
 Email: tispromo@immi.gov.au
 Address: Casselden Place,
 2 Lonsdale Street,
 Melbourne VIC 3000

Internet: www.immi.gov.au/tis/index.htm

DOCUMENT COLLECTION CENTRES (ADULT MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM PROVIDERS)

<p>ASCOT VALE Wingate Community Centre Wingate Avenue Ascot Vale 3032 Tel: 9376 5244 Fax: 9376 2676</p>	<p>BOX HILL 34-36 Prospect Street Box Hill 3128 Tel: 9890 0425 Fax: 9890 2078</p>	<p>BROADMEADOWS Cnr Blair & Belfast Streets Broadmeadows 3047 Tel: 9302 3700 Fax: 9309 9667</p>	<p>COBURG Level 1 362-366 Sydney Road Coburg 3058 Tel: 9386 3053 Fax: 9386 1867</p>	<p>COLLINGWOOD Collingwood Secondary College 1 Vere Street Collingwood 3066 Tel: 9417 6134 Fax: 9415 1257</p>
<p>DANDENONG 70a Kirkham Road Dandenong South 3175 Tel: 9794 5660 Fax: 9794 5065</p>	<p>DANDENONG Level 1 314-316 Thomas Street Dandenong 3175 Tel: 9769 2199 Fax: 9769 2766</p>	<p>FLAGSTAFF Level 3, 255 William Street Melbourne 3000 Tel: 9926 4717 Fax: 9926 4727</p>	<p>FOOTSCRAY 289 Barkly Street Footscray 3011 Tel: 9687 3494 Fax: 9689 9851</p>	<p>FRANKSTON Suite 1, Level 2, 54-58 Wells Street Frankston 3199 Tel: 9783 6123 Fax: 9783 6232</p>
<p>GEELONG Geelong North High School Separation Street Geelong North 3215 Tel: 5272 1128 Fax: 5272 1047</p>	<p>LALOR Lalor Park Primary School Linoak Avenue Lalor 3075 Tel: 9464 4063 Fax: 9464 4064</p>	<p>MT WAVERLEY 45 Miller Crescent Mt Waverley 3149 Tel: 9809 5701 Fax: 9809 5703</p>	<p>NOBLE PARK Frank Street Noble Park 3174 Tel: 9547 0553 Fax: 9546 1117</p>	<p>OAKLEIGH 61 Warrigal Road Oakleigh 3166 Tel: 9563 4777 Fax: 9563 4711</p>
<p>PRESTON 505 High Street Preston 3072 Tel: 9478 4774 Fax: 9470 5338</p>	<p>ST ALBANS 16 Victoria Square St Albans 3021 Tel: 9366 0433 Fax: 9367 8769</p>	<p>SPRINGVALE Cnr Boulton Street & Springvale Rd Springvale 3171 Tel: 9546 0099 Fax: 9558 4704</p>	<p>WERRIBEE Suite 7 & 8, Level 1 75-79 Watton Street Werribee 3030 Tel: 9731 1599 Fax: 9731 1134</p>	