



COMMONWEALTH PROTOCOL FACT SHEET 4

Procuring Indigenous Interpreting and Translation Services

PURCHASING INDIGENOUS INTERPRETING SERVICES

- **Contracts with language service providers.** Where there is significant expenditure on language services, Commonwealth Government agencies should assess the benefits of establishing a formal contract with an approved language service provider. Such contracts should specify the same standards required of the provider that the agency would apply to itself; for example, contracts should specify that interpreters accredited by either the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service (NT AIS) or accredited by Kimberley Interpreting Service (KIS) should be engaged wherever possible.
- **Ad hoc buying.** Where demand and expenditure are low or unpredictable, Commonwealth Government agencies may wish to procure language services on an as needed basis from a language services provider (while ensuring that these purchasing processes are in line with Commonwealth Procurement Rules), or drawn from a panel of interpreters/translators already established.
- **Direct employment.** Some Commonwealth Government agencies directly employ full-time or part-time interpreters/translators or bilingual workers where there is stable and significant demand in a given language, and/or where interpreters using particular languages are often needed in emergency situations, such as in hospitals. This approach is not suited to Commonwealth Government agencies with low levels of demand, or where there are changing levels of demand in different languages, or where this may represent a conflict of interest. While bilingual workers may be employed by government agencies they should not be asked to carry out sensitive/complex translating and interpreting tasks because they are not independent to the proceedings; in those cases, NAATI or NT AIS-credentialed or KIS registered interpreters should be engaged.

INDIGENOUS INTERPRETING SERVICES

Commonwealth Protocol Fact Sheet 1, Attachment C provides contact details for Indigenous Interpreting and Translation Services.

COMMONWEALTH PROCUREMENT GUIDANCE

The Department of Finance [website](#) provides resources for Commonwealth agencies to assist in the procurement of services, including those for interpreting and translation. Agencies will have their own internal guidance for staff to follow when undertaking procurements.