



# Free Interpreting Service for trade unions

The Free Interpreting Service aims to provide equitable access to key services for people with limited or no English language proficiency.

Trade unions can access the Free Interpreting Service to assist workers to access support and advice.

## Why should trade unions engage an interpreter?

Australia has rich cultural and linguistic diversity. The 2021 census revealed that over 5.5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home. Further, Australians represent over 250 different ancestries and speak more than 350 languages.

Trade unions represent the interests of their members and help them to access supports. Trade unions can engage a credentialed interpreter to communicate technical or complex information to members with limited or no English language proficiency. This is particularly important when explaining entitlements, advocating on behalf of a member or promoting workplace health and safety.

Using the Free Interpreting Service is easy and convenient. It is quick and simple to register and you will be connected to a phone interpreter within a few minutes of calling.

## Services available to trade unions

Trade unions can use the Free Interpreting Service to access interpreting services delivered by TIS National, including:

- immediate phone interpreting
- Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS)
- pre-booked phone interpreting
- on-site interpreting
- video remote interpreting.

Immediate phone interpreting is most useful for unplanned interactions. It provides:

- access to more than 2700 interpreters in more than 150 different languages
- interpreting services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- connection to an interpreter within a few minutes of calling.

Pre-booked phone interpreting is useful for planned interactions, such as member meetings or events, or if you need to request a less common language.

When phone interpreting is not suitable, TIS National can arrange for an interpreter to arrive on-site for a face-to-face appointment. This may be important when you have a group of people needing the same language interpreter, when you are discussing complex ideas or when you anticipate that the appointment will go for an extended period of time.

Video remote interpreting complements TIS National's existing phone interpreting services and allows agencies to connect with an interpreter via a video conferencing platform.





## Eligibility

Trade unions are eligible to access the Free Interpreting Service to communicate with anyone in Australia who is eligible for Medicare.

The Free Interpreting Service can be used to provide support and advice to workers, including but not limited to:

- employment or award conditions
- union services
- occupational health and safety concerns
- representing a member during a dispute resolution.

The Free Interpreting Service cannot be used by trade unions for:

- contract negotiation
- recruitment activities and membership drives
- attending legal proceedings, where the responsibility for providing interpreting services lies with the Fair Work Ombudsman or the relevant court or tribunal
- communicating with people who are not eligible for Medicare.

If you need to communicate with members on matters not covered by the Free Interpreting Service you may wish to set up a user-pays code with TIS National.

## Register for the Free Interpreting Service

Each trade union will need a unique client code to access the service.

To register for a client code, complete the online [client registration form](#) on the TIS National website. If you require assistance with registering contact TIS National on 1300 575 847 or [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au).

## To access the Free Interpreting Service

1. Call TIS National on 131 450 to access immediate phone interpreting.
2. Provide the operator with the language and gender (if specified) of the interpreter that you need.
3. Provide your client code and the name of the trade union to the operator.

You can easily request and manage all of your pre-booked phone, video remote, and on-site interpreter bookings through TIS Online. All agencies registered with a TIS National account are automatically registered to use TIS Online.

## More information

- **Read:** about the Free Interpreting Service: [tisnational.gov.au/FIS](https://tisnational.gov.au/FIS)
- **Read:** about how to access TIS National's online booking system [TIS Online](#)
- **Watch:** videos about TIS National services and how to work with interpreters: [tisnational.gov.au/videos](https://tisnational.gov.au/videos)
- **Order:** free promotional materials from the online TIS National catalogue: [tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials](https://tisnational.gov.au/promomaterials)
- **Contact:** TIS National Free Interpreting Service Team on 1300 575 847 or [tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:tis.freeinterpreting@homeaffairs.gov.au)