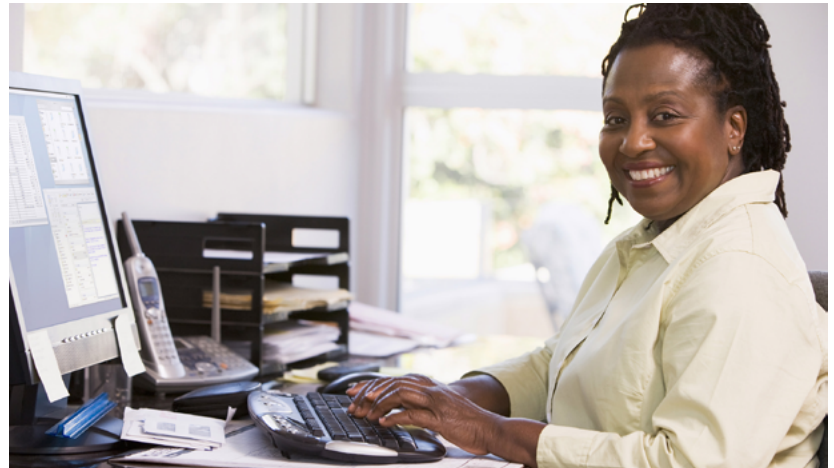




# Free Interpreting Service for local government authorities

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

Local government authorities (also known as councils, cities or shires) can access the Free Interpreting Service to communicate about most local government services.



## Why should local government authorities engage interpreters?

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.

Local government authorities provide essential services to their residents and will sometimes need to engage a credentialed interpreter to communicate with people who have limited or no English language proficiency. This is particularly important when communicating complex or technical information and can facilitate better access to these services.

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 local government authorities

Local government authorities 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 planned meetings with residents, local council information sessions, library 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

Local government authorities 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 deliver local government services and activities including, but not limited to:

- rates enquiries
- parking and building permits
- planning and urban services
- local government funded community support services
- emergency preparedness and response activities
- local government funded library and recreation services
- parks and public amenities services and maintenance
- animal safety, control and registration (excludes compliance activities)
- food or building safety and regulation (excludes compliance activities).

The Free Interpreting Service cannot be used by local government authorities for:

- local tourism or other commercial activities
- compliance visits (for example, health and safety inspections)
- citizenship ceremonies
- services provided on behalf of another government body (for example, services funded by state, territory or Commonwealth governments).

## Register for the Free Interpreting Service

Each local government authority 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 Free Interpreting Service Team 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 local government authority 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)

24 hours a day, every day of the year