



# 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 local government authorities use interpreters

Australia has a rich cultural diversity. The 2016 Census revealed that Australians were born in almost 200 different countries and speak more than 300 languages.

Local government authorities provide essential services to their residents and will sometimes need the help of 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.

## 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
- pre-booked phone interpreting
- pre-booked onsite interpreting

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

- access to over 3000 interpreters in over 160 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 an interpreter to arrive onsite 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. Onsite interpreter bookings must be for a minimum of 90 minutes.



## Eligibility

Local government authorities are eligible to access the Free Interpreting Service to communicate with anyone in Australia who has a Medicare card.

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 (e.g. health and safety inspections)
- citizenship ceremonies
- services provided on behalf of another government body (i.e. services funded by state, territory or Commonwealth governments)

## Register for a client code

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 on 1300 575 847.

## How to access the Free Interpreting Service

1. Call TIS National on 131 450.
2. Provide the operator with the language of the interpreter that you need
3. Provide your client code and the name of the local government authority
4. Request an interpreter of a particular gender, if required (subject to availability).

## More information

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