

## Meet your account manager

At the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) we know how important our service is to those who use our interpreters to speak with their non-English speaking clients. We strive to make our service simple to access and easy to use.



*Fleur Stott, Manager Client liaison and promotions team*

To allow us to improve the way we communicate with our clients, we recently introduced a new account manager structure. The new structure aims to enhance the overall client experience by providing a personalised, competent and tailored service.

We have specialists to provide assistance to a wide range of our client groups, including:

- commonwealth and state government agencies
- private sector businesses
- hospitals
- medical practitioners in private practice
- community sector organisations
- utility companies
- police and courts
- local government
- schools and universities
- emergency services.

## How can our account managers assist you?

Our account managers can:

- respond to any TIS National-related enquiries from clients or prospective clients
- promote cost-effective TIS National service channel options suited to your individual needs
- investigate, respond and act on feedback about a service, interpreter or operator
- update your account information
- compile data and usage reports
- attend information sessions and facilitate training requests from clients
- establish Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between federal and state government departments and agencies
- provide advice on promoting TIS National to your staff and clients.

Account managers are responsible for managing a particular portfolio of clients, dedicated to building stronger relationships with our clients and enhancing the experience clients have when accessing TIS National services.

## How to contact our account managers

To contact your account manager you can call the client liaison and promotions team on 1300 655 820, or send an email to [tispromo@immi.gov.au](mailto:tispromo@immi.gov.au) and your account manager will provide a customised response to your enquiry.

If your enquiry relates to free services available through TIS National, you can call the language policy liaison team on 1300 575 847, or send an email to [tis.language.policy.liaison@immi.gov.au](mailto:tis.language.policy.liaison@immi.gov.au) and your account manager will provide a customised response to your enquiry.



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# Serving you better

At TIS National we always take our clients' feedback on board and look for new ways to enhance the services we provide to the community by developing our current systems and processes to provide you with more options to access an interpreter.

We are currently implementing a range of new innovations to improve access to our services by introducing new service options and improving existing services.

## ATIS Voice

ATIS Voice is an improved version of our existing Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS). The original ATIS system allowed our English speaking clients to directly access an immediate telephone interpreter by dialling a phone number corresponding to the language required before manually selecting the service required using the phone keypad. Feedback showed that our clients found using ATIS to be time consuming and difficult to navigate without a copy of an ATIS help card.

ATIS Voice uses the latest voice recognition technology to identify the language requested and automatically connects users with an interpreter in that language.

You can access ATIS Voice through a single free call 1800 number reducing flag-fall costs for high volume users. Services requested through the automated ATIS Voice service also receive a 10 per cent discount on operator-assisted phone services offered through the TIS National contact centre, so using ATIS Voice is an excellent opportunity for clients to reduce interpreting costs.

ATIS Voice provides immediate phone interpreting in the following high demand languages:

- Arabic \*
- Bosnian
- Cantonese
- Croatian
- Dari
- Greek
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Khmer
- Mandarin
- Persian
- Russian
- Serbian
- Spanish
- Somali
- Turkish
- Vietnamese

\* Sudanese Arabic is not available through ATIS Voice.

We also plan to expand the number of languages available through ATIS Voice to cover 50 languages.

If ATIS Voice is unable to allocate an interpreter for a request, the call will be re-directed to a TIS National operator. When calling ATIS Voice please have your TIS National client code ready in case your call is re-directed to an operator.

To use ATIS Voice, you need to have an ATIS Voice account and access number (this is different to a TIS National client code). To register for access to ATIS Voice please complete the ATIS Voice registration form on the TIS National website at [www.immi.gov.au/tis](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis) or contact a client liaison and promotions account manager by emailing [tispromo@immi.gov.au](mailto:tispromo@immi.gov.au) or calling 1300 655 820.

Clients who are already registered with an ATIS account

and access number can continue to use these details when using ATIS Voice.

<b>STEP 1</b>	Dial 1800 131 450.
<b>STEP 2</b>	Say the language you need when prompted. An automated voice will repeat the language back. Confirm if the language repeated back is correct by saying 'Yes' or 'No'.
<b>STEP 3</b>	Choose the preferred gender of your interpreter by pressing: 1. to select either gender 2. to select a female interpreter 3. to select a male interpreter.
<b>STEP 4</b>	Enter your ATIS Voice account number followed by your ATIS Voice access number, then press #.
<b>STEP 5</b>	You will be given a job number. Write this down as a record of your conversation and use of ATIS Voice. You can seek the assistance of a TIS National operator at any time by pressing '0' on your phone.

## TIS e-Comms

At TIS National we are transitioning from a largely paper based communication model to an electronic model.

Supporting our new electronic communication initiative, this edition of Talking TIS is the first edition to be produced in electronic format to provide the same useful updates and information, in an environmentally friendly format. We are also developing many of our popular brochures into electronic products which will be available to be viewed, printed or saved directly from the TIS National website, proving instant access to these resources.

In response to client requests, we will soon introduce a new e-billing service for our agency clients. Currently most TIS National clients receive their invoices by post which can be slow and difficult to track if it is lost. Receiving your TIS National invoices by email allows you to easily maintain and retrieve records of services, while also reducing environmental impact.

To help us transition to the new e-billing system, please contact the TIS National finance administration team by calling 1300 304 604 or email to [tis.finance@immi.gov.au](mailto:tis.finance@immi.gov.au) to provide us with your organisation's current contact details to start receiving your TIS National invoices by email.

New technology enhancements have also enabled us to make our booking processes more efficient. When clients use the online booking request forms on the TIS National website, the request registers automatically in our system, reducing errors and freeing up time for our team of booking officers to focus on matching the right interpreter to your request. Booking requests sent using the online forms are monitored 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

There are several benefits to using the online forms to submit your interpreter booking requests to TIS National. The online forms:

- are easy to access and quick to complete
- allow us to process your request in the shortest possible time frame
- ensure all of the information required to process your request is included
- automatically record all request details in the TIS National booking system, ensuring no manual entry errors are made
- help TIS National's system work efficiently, assisting our booking officers to promptly register and process your requests.

In a move to streamline our booking processing systems, we have recently removed our fax booking request forms from the TIS National website. If you do not have access to the internet and need to send booking requests to TIS National by fax, please contact a client liaison and promotions account manager by email to [tispromo@immi.gov.au](mailto:tispromo@immi.gov.au) or by calling 1300 655 820 for a copy of our new fax request form.

## TIS Online



The TIS National website is changing. At TIS National we are working to develop the new TIS Online website, to provide our clients with clear, easy to find information.

The website will provide information and services tailored to three key groups: non-English speaking clients, agency and business clients and interpreters.

Non-English speaking clients will soon be able to access information in their own language through a range of frequently asked question (FAQ) documents, which provide a list of commonly asked questions and answers about TIS National, our services and our interpreters.

The agency and business client section of the website will provide improved access to general information about TIS National, answers to FAQs, price and eligibility calculators, the latest TIS National news, promotional materials and service channel information. The new website will also evolve to introduce an online booking tool for our English-speaking agency and business clients.

The online booking tool will allow clients to log into their personal TIS National account where they can view and manage all of their booking requests in one location and easily update their profile and contact details.

The section dedicated to interpreters will provide general information about TIS National, answer some FAQs, provide an overview of our current recruitment priorities, provide information about becoming a TIS National interpreter and working for TIS National. The new website will also allow our interpreters to accept, view and self-manage their on-site assignments with TIS National.

The new TIS National website is due to launch soon with new features and functionality introduced throughout the rest of 2013.

## Video conferencing pilot



TIS National has been running a pilot to trial Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) video conference technology for the use of interpreting assignments. The aim of the

pilot is to be able to provide face-to-face interpreting where an interpreter cannot attend on-site.

The pilot has been limited to selected clients since it was introduced. Agency clients currently trialling the service are finding it to be a beneficial service to have access to when on-site interpreters are not available and phone interpreting is not suitable. The pilot trial is continuing to address some minor technical areas for improvement before it can be introduced as a new service option for all agency clients. More updates will be provided as the pilot progresses.



## Did you know: Online feedback form

You can now provide compliments, comments or complaints to TIS National quickly and easily using the online feedback form available on the TIS National website.

All feedback received is recorded in our system and directed to the relevant TIS National representative to review and address where required.

## Coaching for service quality

TIS National's mystery shopping quality assurance pilot program recently ended. It was a big success, providing information that was used to support interpreters to deliver the high quality service our clients expect. A third party telephone mystery shopping agency worked in conjunction with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) to assess the quality of TIS National services. The twelve month pilot ended in June 2012.



This program is unique in the interpreting industry and was based on real information about strengths and areas for improvement of TIS National services. TIS National does not use the quality assurance program as a punitive measure. It is an instrument to assist with coaching and development of our interpreters.

TIS National interpreter liaison officers and team leaders have held regular coaching conversations with interpreters and operators whose performance was assessed, assisting them to develop strategies to enhance their skills.

Interpreters have provided feedback indicating that they have appreciated these coaching conversations for the insights they provide into the perspective of the client.

On many occasions TIS National interpreters received feedback that the NAATI examiner had assessed one of their assignments as achieving the highest levels of excellence.

TIS National is pleased to announce that following the success of the pilot, it has now implemented a permanent mystery shopping quality assurance program to validate the quality of interpreting provided

by TIS National interpreters.

The calls are made by bilingual mystery shoppers, and the interpreter and the TIS National operator are assessed by the external service provider and a NAATI examiner. The results of the mystery shopping are used to observe trends and areas for performance development. The program which will continue to be developed currently assesses 140 randomly selected calls per month to monitor and assess the quality and professionalism of TIS National interpreters and operators.

Agencies will not receive any mystery shopping calls without their approval. Any agency who would like to participate in this program should contact the TIS National client liaison and promotions team by emailing [tispromo@immi.gov.au](mailto:tispromo@immi.gov.au) or calling 1300 655 820.

## Workplace health and safety: What's my role?



A new Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Act was introduced on 1 January 2012. Since the new Act was introduced TIS National has been working intensively with its panel of interpreters to advise them of their obligations under the new legislation.

All TIS National interpreters have been advised that under the new legislation they must co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers. As our interpreters may perform on-site work on your request, they are subject to the WHS policies and procedures of your workplace.

Safety is everyone's business. The best way to help TIS National interpreters minimise risks of health and safety to themselves and your workers is to factor them into your workplace health and safety planning. A good way of doing this is by providing interpreters with an orientation when

they arrive at your workplace.

Orientation for interpreters may cover topics such as:

- the nature of the operations of your organisation
- the hazards and risks associated with the operations of your organisation
- resources and processes in place to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks
- processes for reporting hazards, risks or incidents in your workplace.

TIS National has provided information to its interpreters advising them of their obligation to attend WHS site orientations when requested while performing on-site interpreting assignments.

If an incident happens while an interpreter is attending an on-site assignment at your workplace, you should immediately advise the TIS National interpreter liaison team by calling 1300 132 621 or emailing [interpreters@immi.gov.au](mailto:interpreters@immi.gov.au).

# Real estate pilot update



In 2009-10 the Department of Immigration and Citizenship initiated a limited pilot which enabled selected real estate agencies to have access to a free telephone interpreting service through TIS National.

In October 2011 the Free Interpreting Real Estate Pilot was expanded to include more areas of high settlement across Australia and extended until 30 June 2013. The pilot aims to increase the ability of non-English speaking residents, especially humanitarian entrants, to independently interact with participating real estate agencies to access the private housing market. The pilot is currently being evaluated to assist in determining the extent to which real estate agencies use this service and the effectiveness of this program.

As part of the pilot evaluation, participating real estate agents, along with settlement service providers have been surveyed about their experience during the pilot and using TIS National interpreting services. Initial feedback indicates the pilot is well received in the community and that real estate agents that have used TIS National interpreters have been very satisfied with the service. The most common reason agents used TIS National interpreting services was to explain rights and responsibilities to tenants, and 88 per cent of surveyed real estate agents that used the TIS National services indicated it moderately to greatly improved their ability to communicate with non-English speaking clients.

First National City Residential real estate in Melbourne (formerly of Noble Park) was nominated for the pilot and has been successfully utilising the service since 2009. Senior property manager Vince Diaco stated that the pilot has assisted his agency to find rental accommodation for new migrants.

The agency first utilised the service at their Noble Park office where they found the Burmese and Sudanese languages were the most requested. Mr Diaco remembers one Sudanese client who would only use First National because of their ability to provide an interpreter free of charge.

Mr Diaco believes that the pilot assists with 'breaking barriers' in communicating with humanitarian settlers and new migrants. The support of the pilot is crucial in assisting with transitioning new migrants into the wider community as well as assisting individuals to meet the basic need of finding suitable shelter. Mr Diaco believes challenges faced by new settlers can be very complex and difficult, but with TIS National implementing the pilot 'it is easier'.

Outcomes of the pilot's review are likely to be finalised in the second half of 2013.

Real estate agencies were able to join the pilot through nomination by a local provider of either the Settlement Grants Program or Humanitarian Settlement Services

To assist real estate agencies to communicate with their non-English speaking clients about tenancy issues, the department in partnership with the Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) has translated the REIA Consumer Fact Sheet - Renting a Property - Tenant into the top ten new and emerging community languages: Arabic, Hazaragi, Farsi, Chinese, Karen, Chin Haka, Tamil, Kurdish, Nepali and Dinka.

These fact sheets are available on the REIA website at <http://reia.com.au/renting-leasing-properties.php>

Please feel free to distribute these through to your members.

## What's the best time to call TIS National?



When using TIS National's immediate phone interpreting service (which you can access by calling 131 450) you may have experienced difficulties connecting to an operator during our peak demand

hours between 10 am and 5 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST), Monday to Thursday.

High demand for interpreting services can affect the amount of time it takes for you to connect with an operator and for our operators to allocate an interpreter to you.

To avoid lengthy wait times and to improve your ability

to connect with an available interpreter, particularly in high demand languages, it may be helpful for you to contact TIS National during our quieter times.

Currently, TIS National experiences lower demand for services between the hours of 8 am and 10 am (AEST) from Monday to Thursday, and all day on Friday.

While it is not always possible to plan when you will need an interpreter and you may require an interpreter for your client at short notice, if you have the ability to schedule the time, you may find calling during an off-peak time more efficient.

## Meet Susan Margaret Laval

Susan is a Swahili and Kiswahili interpreter with TIS National and loves being the voice that can facilitate change in people's lives. Susan was born in Tanga Tanzania where everybody looked out for each other and all the elders were like parents. Susan remembers Tanga as being like a big extended family.

Susan and her family moved to Australia in 1969. The decision to move away from her extended family, support systems, culture and sense of belonging was difficult, but was a decision she hoped would give her sons a better education and life.

At first it was hard to adjust as everything was so far removed from what was familiar. 'I found the language difficult to learn', however once the initial difficulties were overcome she found her new life exciting. 'I embraced the freedom, safety, different cultures and traditions that make up Australia. I love music, reading and swimming and I live on the coast with beautiful beaches' Susan said. Susan remains both equally passionate about her country of birth and the country she now calls home.

Embracing the opportunities available to her, Susan went back to school to study English and began work assisting children with disabilities. 'I wanted to give back to my community', something she continues to do as an interpreter. Interpreting is a passion for Susan. 'It is a varied

profession and many challenges come your way', she said. Susan mentioned a career highlight was having a baby named after her. 'In the birthing suite I don't know who was in more pain, the mother or I'. The mother was so thankful for Susan's interpreting during the birth she named the baby in her honour.

Susan believes interpreters make a difference to people's lives to assist in such important events. 'I love my role as an interpreter, the work is so valuable being the voice that helps change someone's life. It may be a doctor or hospital appointment, a lawyer or court room, just to be able to empower the non-English speaker is so rewarding. I was once in their shoes'.

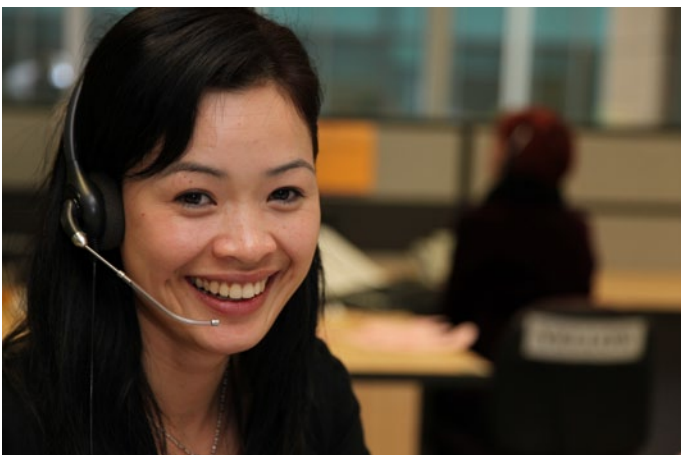
Susan believes interpreting assists progress within settlement and empowers communities to adjust to their new lives. She believes interpreters are new migrants' voice until they are able to "fly on their own".

Susan's advice to other interpreters is 'every client deserves your best. You should use short but complete sentences, maintain eye contact and speak in the first person'.

'You should put yourself in their shoes and always abide by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics. Be neutral, impartial and committed to your client and profession'.

## Did you know: Interpreter recruitment

TIS National is continuing to recruit interpreters to meet the ongoing growth in demand for interpreting services in Australia. We always encourage interpreters to have accreditation at the professional level from the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) where available.



At TIS National we strive to recruit interpreters in response to client requests. Of the more than 300 interpreters recruited since July last year, the majority had skills in Dari

and/or Persian, Kurdish, Mandarin, Hazaragi and Arabic languages. In response to very high demand for Tamil interpreters, TIS National has contracted 57 new Tamil interpreters to our interpreter panel since November 2012.

To be eligible to become a TIS National interpreter a practitioner must:

- be an Australian permanent resident or citizen
- have the required qualifications for the language they wish to interpret in
- be willing to undergo a police clearance
- be available to work mainly between business hours and potentially after hours as well
- have a true interest and commitment to helping the Australian community.

We are currently very interested in speaking with interpreters in Bengali, Nepali and Rohingya languages.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a TIS National interpreter, please refer to the career opportunities for interpreters section of the TIS National website ([www.immi.gov.au/tis](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis)) for more information call our interpreter liaison team on 1300 132 621.