



23-25 November 2023
UNSW, Sydney

Conference Statement

The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators and all the translating and interpreting practitioners gathered in Sydney at the 36th AUSIT National Conference –

reaffirming the essential role that translating and interpreting play in contemporary multicultural Australia,

committing to working competently and ethically to enable communication between speakers of different languages and the wider Australian community,

desiring to ensure working conditions capable of attracting and retaining competent practitioners in the profession,

inspired by the presentations, discussions and debates held during this 36th National Conference,

acknowledging that the quality of translating and interpreting services is the responsibility of multiple stakeholders, and

considering that the AUSIT National Conference has provided a meeting place for many such stakeholders

– issues this Conference Statement and calls on relevant institutions, practitioners and partners to commit to the following:

1. Sustainability of the profession

- a) to pay translating and interpreting practitioners rates for their work that are commensurate with the intellectual skill and length of training required in their role as communication professionals.
- b) (in the case of Federal, State and Territory governments, as the largest buyers of translating and interpreting services) to ensure that working conditions and rates are not reduced in order to win tenders in government procurement processes.

- c) to work towards adequate remuneration, in order to attract and retain the next generation of competent practitioners. Adequate remuneration should be at a standard and level acceptable by the profession.
- d) to ensure that proper resources are made available for the education and training of future translators and interpreters.

2. Working conditions

- a) to encourage working conditions that are conducive to ensuring quality interpreting and translating services.
- b) to ensure that the most suitable interpreters and translators are engaged, bearing in mind qualifications, experience and credentials required for the specific assignment.
- c) to promote the use of in-person and video-conference interpreting over telephone interpreting.
- d) (in the case of language service providers) to ensure that appropriate background information (briefing) is provided to interpreters at the point of booking their services.
- e) (on the part of lawyers, health care staff and administrative staff) to require more accountability for *not* implementing the relevant protocols and guidelines on working with translators and interpreters.
- f) (in the case of leaders in the judiciary, governments, hospitals, health care providers, police forces, emergency services, educational organisations and businesses) to become champions in their organisations of best practice in working with translators and interpreters.

3. Interpreting in courts and tribunals

- a) to ensure that all judicial officers in Australia, together with registry and court/tribunal staff, are aware of and implement the [Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals](#).
- b) (in the case of Australian Law Societies and Bar Associations) to incorporate, as part of the standard yearly offering of continuing professional development (CPD), training on working effectively with interpreters in courts and tribunals.
- c) (in the case of Australian Law Schools) to develop content in their courses that train the lawyers of tomorrow in working with interpreters.
- d) (in accordance with AUSIT's 2017 endorsement of the Linguistics Call to Action) to continue working with the Australian Linguistics Society and the Research Hub for Language in Forensic Evidence (University of Melbourne) to ensure that forensic audio featuring languages other than English (LOTES) is handled appropriately by the courts.

4. Interpreting in health care settings

- a) (in the case of hospitals, clinics and doctors' surgeries) to provide information to patients about access to interpreters.
- b) (in the case of health care workers) to implement the [Guide for Clinicians Working with Interpreters in Healthcare Settings](#) and to be aware of the 'best practice' guide for NSW Health Staff: [Developing health resources for people from refugee backgrounds](#).
- c) (in the case of hospitals) to create in-house interpreter positions for high-demand languages.

5. Community Translation

- a) (in the case of language service providers) to adopt the [Recommended Protocols for the Translation of Community Communications](#) developed by AUSIT and FECCA.
- b) (in the case of government staff involved in writing copy for translation) to require that they receive training on intercultural communication and intercultural literacy.
- c) to use AI and machine translation with caution in community settings, and to ensure that human, NAATI-credentialled (either certified or recognised) translators revise and undertake quality control of drafts before translated materials are disseminated to the wider public.
- d) to promote greater transparency in translation processes, by stating if a text has been produced using MT.
- e) to adopt a co-design approach by involving the community or end users in the design.
- f) (for dissemination of messages) to take into account the level of literacy and particular needs of the target audience, so that the most appropriate and effective mode of delivery (oral or written form / video or audio / interactive posters) is used.
- g) to adopt Plain English and/or Easy English drafting.
- h) (in the case of commissioning organisations) to establish realistic deadlines and budgets for community translation projects.