FEDERAL CIRCUIT AND FAMILY COURT OF AUSTRALIA

Interpreter policy and guidelines

Interpreter services

If you have difficulty with English and need an interpreter to understand what is being said at a court hearing, you will need to arrange for any interpreter that you or your witnesses may require. An accredited interpreter is required to provider interpreter services for hearings where cross examination will occur, except in exceptional circumstances where no accredited interpreter is available for the language required.

The Judge or Registrar retains the discretion to determine whether an interpreter is acceptable for the circumstances for which they have been employed.

If you cannot afford to pay for an interpreter, the court may be able to arrange an interpreter for you

To ask for an interpreter:

- for family law matters call 1300 352 000, email enquiries@familylawcourts.gov.au, or by LiveChat
- for general federal law matters call or email the registry

You should contact the Court at least two weeks before the hearing. Otherwise, the court may not be able to arrange an interpreter in time.

Interpreter guidelines

The basic principles of access and equity are that no court client should be disadvantaged in proceedings before the Court or in understanding the procedures and conduct of court business, because of a language barrier. The two-way process of communication and understanding between the client and the Court may require that the Court engage an interpreter or a translator.

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia have guidelines in place to ensure uniform access to interpreter and translator services.

Services available at the courts

Hearing loops

Each registry has at least one courtroom with a hearing loop installed. Arrangements can be made to assist clients who are deaf or hearing impaired to utilise this facility where practicable. See court locations to find details of your closest registry.

Interpreter services

Interpreter services for deaf, hearing impaired and/or speech impaired clients are available. Arrangements can be made for AUSLAN interpreters or CART (Communication Access Real-time

Translation) service providers to accompany clients who are deaf, hearing impaired and/or speech impaired at court events.

The National Relay Service

The National Relay Service (NRS) is a free telephone service that allows deaf, or hearing and/or speech impaired clients with a TTY machine, to make telephone calls to a Registry. Telephone: 133 677 (clients who are deaf or hearing impaired) or 1300 555 727 (clients who are both deaf/hearing impaired and speech impaired) www.relayservice.gov.au.

Translating and Interpreting Service

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) is funded by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and provides a service that facilitates communication between people who do not speak English, and English speakers. TIS can provide both telephone and onsite interpreters. Telephone: 131 450.

Code of Ethics

Interpreters engaged by the courts are bound at all times to act in accordance with the standards set out in the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics. AUSIT is the national professional association of interpreting and translation practitioners. General principles of the Code of Ethics include: Professional Conduct; Confidentiality; Competence; Impartiality; Accuracy; Employment; Professional Development and Professional Solidarity. Further information can be obtained from www.ausit.org.

Feedback and complaints

Clients are encouraged to provide feedback to the courts on the standard of interpreting and translating services provided.

Where a complaint is made concerning the calibre or use of interpreter services, the complaints officer in accordance with standard complaints handling procedures, should handle the complaint. Clients who are deaf or hearing impaired should telephone the National Relay Service on 133 677. Clients who are deaf/hearing impaired and speech impaired should telephone 1300 555 727.