

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Interpreting for Allied Health and Primary Care Pilot Program

The Murray PHN region is home to more than 55,000 individuals who speak a language other than English at home, which equates to 7.9 per cent of the population. This includes people from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, both patients and health practitioners, highlighting the importance of offering accessible language services to support communication.

### What is the pilot program?

To enhance healthcare access for patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds, Murray PHN is offering the **Interpreting for Allied Health and Primary Care Pilot Program** until 30 June 2025. This program provides free access to interpreting services through the Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National, for local private allied health services, urgent care clinics and other primary care practitioners who are not eligible for other government-funded interpreting programs.

### Who is eligible?

Primary care and allied health practitioners, as well as staff working in urgent care clinics in the Murray PHN region, are eligible to register for the program, provided they do not have access to other free, government-funded interpreting services.

Patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds, including those without Medicare Cards, are eligible to access services through this program, including non-Medicare rebatable services.

### Who is not eligible?

Practitioners who already have access to free, government-funded interpreting services are ineligible. This includes:

- Medical practitioners, GPs and nurses delivering Medicare-rebatable services
- Pharmacists providing community pharmacy services
- NDIS and aged care providers
- Murray PHN commissioned mental health services.

Note: Allied health practitioners in Albury, Wodonga, Mildura and Greater Shepparton who can access the TIS National's FIS for Allied Health Professionals program are ineligible.

### What do interpreters do?

Interpreters ensure accurate communication between people who speak different languages. In health settings, their primary role is to impartially and confidentially convey spoken messages between healthcare practitioners, patients and a patient's carer or family member. This involves ensuring that the meaning of the information is preserved, and cultural nuances are reflected.

## What are the benefits for health practitioners?

By providing free language interpreting services, health practitioners can deliver improved care to patients from diverse backgrounds by reducing language barriers. This may also:

- ✓ enhance patient safety and satisfaction
- ✓ improve patient adherence to medical advice
- ✓ ensure compliance with medico-legal and ethical standards
- ✓ promote cultural competence.

## What are the benefits to patients?

- ✓ More accurate diagnoses and effective treatment
- ✓ Better understanding of medical conditions, treatment options and instructions
- ✓ Improved adherence to care plans
- ✓ Increased trust and satisfaction with the healthcare system and/or service
- ✓ Reduced risk of miscommunication.

## Is the program free?

Yes, the program is free for practitioners. Patients should not be charged an interpreting fee.

## Who provides the interpreting service?

The interpreting services are provided by the **National Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)**. For more information about TIS National services, visit <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>. Interpreters are assigned based on the highest credentialed interpreter available at the time of booking, ensuring that you receive the most qualified interpreter every time.

## What type of interpreting services are available through the program?

Registered practitioners can access the following interpreting services at no cost:

- Immediate and pre-booked telephone interpreting
- Automated telephone interpreting
- On-site interpreting
- Video remote interpreting.

## What languages are available?

TIS National has credentialed interpreters in more than 150 languages, including Indigenous and emerging community languages. The availability of certain languages can depend on factors such as the time of day, language requested and interpreter availability. For less common languages, it is recommended to book an interpreter in advance when possible.

## How confidential is the interpreting service?

TIS National interpreters are required to comply with strict professional standards of confidentiality, privacy, impartiality, accuracy and competence. All interpreters are NAATI-accredited and adhere to the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) Code of Ethics.

## How to apply?

Health practitioners interested in the program must submit an expression of interest by completing an online form, which can be accessed via the following link or QR code on the next page:

[https://murrayphn.foliogrc.com/contracts/new?contract\\_template=93&token=XWHMiqXFcGGXWx\\_x25av](https://murrayphn.foliogrc.com/contracts/new?contract_template=93&token=XWHMiqXFcGGXWx_x25av)



The form should take no longer than 10-15 minutes to complete.

Submissions will be reviewed by Murray PHN to verify eligibility. If approved, practitioners will receive an email with an invitation to review and sign an **End User License Agreement (EULA)**.

Once the agreement is signed, a TIS National client code and instructions on how to use the interpreting services will be emailed to the primary applicant.

### **Where can I find more resources on using interpreters?**

Practitioners can find guidance on accessing and using interpreter services, such as how to book interpreters, use the service and work effectively with interpreters, by visiting **TIS National**. Additionally, practitioners are encouraged to refer to the TIS National resource: *Bridge the Communication Gap: A Guide for Agencies*, or contact Murray PHN for local resources and guidance.

### **Contact details**

For more information, contact Murray PHN's Complex and Integrated Care team at e: [multicultural@murrayphn.org.au](mailto:multicultural@murrayphn.org.au)