



**QUEENSLAND
POLICE
SERVICE**

**LANGUAGE
SERVICES
STRATEGY**

**Launched July 1997
Revised June 1999**

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
LANGUAGE SERVICES STRATEGY

The Queensland Police Service is committed to providing an effective, professional service for all, based on the core principles of access, participation and cohesion outlined in the Multicultural Queensland Policy of August 1998.

The Service acknowledges the importance of addressing communication needs irrespective of background, origin or physical disability.

Effective communication and mutual understanding are essential for the administration of law and order in a culturally diverse environment.

The Queensland Police Service Language Services Strategy is a response to the challenge of fostering an inclusive, cohesive and open society, through the development of strategies that facilitate the delivery of equitable and appropriate policing services.

J P O'SULLIVAN
COMMISSIONER

INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Police Service is committed to providing appropriate and accessible services to all members of our linguistically and culturally diverse State. In 1996, seventeen per cent of the population of Queensland were from countries where the main language spoken is not English. There are over 100 languages now spoken or signed in Queensland.

Communication difficulties arising from cultural, social and physical factors should not limit access to essential services or understanding of legal rights.

The provision of appropriate interpreter and translator services is necessary to identify needs, reduce misunderstanding and ensure reasonable access to police services by people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf or hearing impaired members of the Queensland community.

Distinction between the Deaf and people who are hearing impaired:

In recent literature and practice, Deaf with a capital D refers to people who identify with the Deaf community and Deaf culture, use Australian Sign Language (Auslan) as their preferred means of communication, and who do not view themselves as disabled but as members of a linguistic minority group.

In contrast, the use of the word 'deaf' in lower case or the term 'hearing impaired' usually refers to people with a degree of hearing loss who do not identify with the Deaf community, and who do not use Auslan as their main language even though they may require the services of a qualified interpreter. Competency Acquisition Program Unit CI 009 'Disability, Policing Services and the Community' provides further information.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

The formulation of this Strategy has been guided by the:

- Queensland Police Service Strategic Plan 1999 - 2001;
- Queensland Police Service Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 1996 - 2000;
- Queensland Government Language Services Policy (November 1998);
- Multicultural Queensland Policy (August 1998);
- *Policing in a Culturally Diverse Australia* Governing Principles of the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau; and

Of particular significance are the following principles:

- (i) Multicultural Queensland Policy (August 1998)

The following core principles have been adopted by the Queensland Government in developing its multicultural strategies.

1. *Access:* All Queenslanders enjoy equitable access to services and programs.
 2. *Participation:* All Queenslanders enjoy equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of life in Queensland.
 3. *Cohesion:* All Queenslanders share responsibility for the continuing development of Queensland as a cohesive and harmonious society.
- (ii) National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau *"Policing in a Culturally Diverse Australia Governing Principles"*

Principle 2: Communication

The underlying philosophy behind this communication principle is the recognition by police jurisdictions in Australia of the right of all people to:

- *understand and to be understood in their interaction with police; and*
- *have a good understanding of the positive role and services of police in a democratic country like Australia.*

Police jurisdictions in Australia will endeavour to advance community understanding of the police services, practices and procedures through community education and information strategies.

In order to facilitate communication with all Australians, police jurisdictions in Australia are committed to the provision of the most effective means of communication, including the use of appropriately qualified and accredited interpreters and/or translators.

Every care will be taken to ensure that all forms of communication will exclude stereotyping and language which might generally be interpreted as offensive by ethnic communities.

ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

The Queensland Police Service has undertaken, or is developing, a range of programs and activities to address communication and linguistic requirements of police officers, staff members and clients. These include:

- (i) The Queensland Police Service Non-Discriminatory Language Guide

The Non-Discriminatory Language Guide was prepared in 1990, supervised by a broad-based working party. Extensive consultation was undertaken with government agencies and community groups prior to the printing of the Guide which contains a policy statement, guidelines and general principles on avoiding the use of discriminatory language.

- (ii) Information package 'You, the Law and Society'

This information package has been specifically designed to meet the needs of persons settling in Queensland and of new arrivals with refugee and humanitarian status. It contains information on important community and police related issues, including personal safety, the issuing of drivers licences and crime prevention. Previously translated into thirteen languages, this revised version was launched in 1998 in consultation with the Australian Red Cross and is published in English, Arabic, Farsi and Bosnian. Accompanying videos in the same languages have also been produced.

(iii) Chapter 6 of the Queensland Police Service Operational Procedures Manual

One of the Service's major administrative tasks has been the development of the Operational Procedures Manual which provides operational policy guidelines for police officers. This Manual became effective from 1 January 1995. Chapter 6 refers to persons with special needs including the inability, or limited ability, to speak or understand the English language. Section 6.3.7 includes policy and procedures relating to interpreters.

(iv) Diploma of Police Practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Since 1991 the Queensland Police Service has collaborated with members of the indigenous communities and TAFE personnel in the development of courses to assist indigenous people seeking entry to the Service. The initial 1991 'bridging course', a Certificate of Tertiary Preparation (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People), underwent subsequent revisions based on evaluative information supplied by the Service before being finally accredited as the Diploma of Justice Studies (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People) in June 1998. This Diploma continues to be offered by the Tropical North Queensland and Southbank Institutes of TAFE.

In September 1998 the Queensland Police Service developed and had formally accredited a Traineeship which leads to the qualification of Diploma of Police Practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. This Traineeship is delivered jointly by the Service and the Tropical North Queensland and Southbank Institutes of TAFE. The Service offers twenty Traineeships per year.

Successful applicants for the Traineeship complete four phases over a period of 18 months. In Phase 1 trainees undertake a set range of modules including criminal justice and law studies, cultural studies, communication, physical skills, keyboarding and first aid, at either the Tropical North Queensland or South Bank Institute of TAFE. Phase 2 is a field placement for a minimum of three weeks at a police establishment. Phase 3 is an on-the-job skills development component in the areas of operational driving skills, operational computer skills, operational physical skills, operational survival and firearms skills. Phase 4 comprises a two-week station duties placement in a police establishment observing and participating in practical policing activities. Phases 3 and 4 form part of the Police Recruit Operational Vocational Education

Program (PROVE) which all police recruits are required to successfully complete before being appointed as a Constable.

(v) Competency Acquisition Program Contemporary Issues Units

The Competency Acquisition Program, Human Resource Development Branch, Queensland Police Service Academy, has developed a Contemporary Issues Unit CI 009 "Disability, Policing Services and the Community" for use by police officers and staff members. The unit includes information on communicating with persons with intellectual and sensory disabilities. In addition, the concept of computer based training and concise 'ready reference' material on using interpreters has been developed for the Queensland Police Service Intranet 'Bulletin Board'.

(vi) Language Abilities Index

In 1986, the Queensland Police Service included on the Queensland Police computer system a 'Language Abilities Index' giving details of police officers who voluntarily acknowledged that they could interpret or translate languages other than English. Their skills can be used when there is no conflict of interest or when it is not practicable to use professional, independent interpreters or translators. The scope and structure of this index is being reviewed and expanded into a modern Human Resource Management Branch computer database.

LANGUAGE SERVICES POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Queensland Police Service to provide professional, accessible and equitable services in response to the communication requirements of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf and those with hearing impairments.

THE PLAN

In response to this Language Services Policy Statement, four major strategies have been identified.

- (1) Ensure that in situations of communication difficulty, the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf, and those with hearing impairments, are appropriately met in accordance with anti-discrimination, human resource management, and equal employment opportunity principles and practices.**
- (2) Provide appropriate education for police officers to increase their knowledge and skills in working with interpreters and translators.**
- (3) Encourage the development and use of the bi-lingual, multi-lingual and sign language skill resources of police officers and staff members, to enhance service delivery.**

(4) Inform people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf, and those with hearing impairments, on matters relating to policing and justice.

A number of key actions have been identified to support the implementation of the four strategies.

(1) Ensure that in situations of communication difficulty, the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf, and those with hearing impairments, are appropriately met in accordance with anti-discrimination, human resource management, and equal employment opportunity principles and practices:

- use National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited interpreters and translators where practicable by contacting the Translating and Interpreting Service's (TIS) telephone and on-site interpreters/translators, and the Queensland Deaf Society Sign Language interpreters;
- ensure that professionally qualified interpreters and translators can be readily located;
- use plain English in police forms to assist understanding;
- use multilingual language cards, or refer to the Queensland Interpreter Card if presented, to identify the language spoken;
- ensure that hands-free, loud speaking or parallel telephones are available for telephone interpreter use;
- ensure that the telephone typewriter (TTY) facilities within the Queensland Police Service are fully utilised when communicating with the Deaf and hearing impaired persons who have access to similar machines; and
- support appropriate tertiary/bridging courses which increase the communication abilities of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are desirous of seeking employment in the Queensland Police Service.

(2) Provide appropriate education for police officers to increase their knowledge and skills in working with interpreters and translators:

- ensure that where appropriate, training courses for recruits and police officers, and Competency Acquisition Program units, contain comprehensive information about working with interpreters and translators;
- encourage police officers to attend 'Working with Interpreters' training programs and workshops;
- disseminate information to police officers and staff members about working with interpreters, including brochures and material supplied by TIS, the National Police Ethnic Advisory Bureau and Multicultural Affairs Queensland; and

- ensure appropriate reference material relating to the use of interpreters and translators, including videos, is available to police officers through the Queensland Police Service Academy library in conjunction with other resource centres.

(3) Encourage the development and use of the bilingual, multilingual and sign language skill resources of police officers and staff members, to enhance service delivery:

- support and encourage police officers and staff members to acquire, develop and use bi-lingual/multi-lingual/sign language interpreting and translating skills to enhance communications and service delivery to ethnic and indigenous communities, and the hearing impaired;
- ensure that police officers who study languages other than English and sign languages, which may enhance the delivery of policing services, are entitled to the standard benefits of the Study and Research Assistance Scheme (SARAS);
- maintain, on a voluntary basis, a *Language Abilities Index* on the Queensland Police Service computer system indicating interpreter and translator qualifications and skills of police officers and staff members;
- include bi-lingual/multi-lingual/sign language interpreting and translating skills as desirable criteria in Service position descriptions when such skills are a major component of the principal responsibility of that position or demographic and cultural factors at a location place emphasis upon such skills; and
- ensure that bi-lingual/multi-lingual/sign language interpreting and translating skills are taken into general consideration by recruitment panels and the Recruitment and Selection Board during merit based selection.

(4) Inform people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the Deaf, and those with hearing impairments, on matters relating to policing and justice.

- ensure that information is presented in plain English, and that it is unambiguous and culturally appropriate;
- provide, where practicable, multi-lingual and culturally appropriate information on policing and related topics to ethnic and indigenous communities;
- utilise existing resources and/or conduct research with service providers, ethnic and indigenous communities, the Deaf, and the hearing impaired, to identify information needs and communication barriers which must be addressed to facilitate effective understanding and use of policing services; and

- develop communication and marketing strategies at the local level tailored to meet the information needs of ethnic and indigenous communities, the Deaf, and the hearing impaired, utilising a full range of options to overcome communication barriers, including the use of interpreters and translators, and information distribution through the ethnic and indigenous electronic and print media.

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