

A review of publicly available guidelines for working with interpreters in Australian courts and tribunals

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Accurate interpretation is vitally important in courts and tribunals to ensure fair and equitable proceedings, not only for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, but for those with hearing or speech impairments as well. Accurate interpreting depends on very high-quality interpreting, but also on the right working conditions that will allow interpreters to perform to their optimum level. Currently there are no consistent and clear policies about interpreting practices across the country. With the support of the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, the University of Western Sydney's Interpreting and Translation Research Group (ITRG) is conducting a study which aims to review the current policies and to seek the views of interpreters, tribunal members and judicial officers on what needs to change or improve to facilitate better quality services. The results will be used to recommend the establishment of a national protocol for the use of interpreting services in Australian Courts and Tribunals. As part of this study, a review of publicly available information on existing protocols for the use of interpreting services across Federal, State and Territory jurisdictions of Australian courts and tribunals has been conducted. This review has included analysing and categorising the guidelines available to judicial officers and tribunal members, as well as information provided by these organisations for interpreters. Silvia Martinez has carried out this work as Research Assistant under Associate Professor Sandra Hale's supervision, and will be presenting some of the findings from this section of the study.



Silvia MARTINEZ works as Research Officer in the University of Western Sydney's Interpreting and Translation Research Group, providing both research assistance and project management of the Group's various initiatives. She also tutors in Spanish as part of the University's Legal Interpreting and Accreditation Studies team, and works as a freelance translator and interpreter specialising in legal interpreting. Silvia is currently doing her BA (Languages & Linguistics) Honours degree at UWS, with a research project that proposes to look at current practices in the contracting of legal interpreters in Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Business (Employment Relations), Graduate Diploma in Interpreting and Translation and is accredited by NAATI at the Professional Interpreter and Translator level (English<>Spanish). And of course she is a member of AUSIT.