



## Useful Hints on Working with an Aboriginal Language Interpreter

### Booking an Interpreter

Contact the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) office closest to the region where the service is required.

Clients must provide the following information when booking an interpreter (contact the AIS office to receive a booking form):

- name of the organisation/section requiring the service
- contact officer and details
- name, age and gender of the Aboriginal person/s requiring the service
- Aboriginal language required  
*(If unknown the AIS can help with determining the correct language);*
- location, date and time the service is needed
- topic of assignment.

### Pre-interview

You must conduct a pre-interview conference with the interpreter.

The following should be covered:

- introduce yourself to the interpreter
- establish a style of interpretation. For example, is it informative or direct interpreting
- explain to the interpreter any specialised words or concepts that may be difficult to interpret
- permit the interpreter to ask for clarification or repetition if the message from either party is unclear
- explain to the interpreter that you as the interviewer are in charge

- determine with the interpreter if they have any issues or concerns they wish to share with you before the interview begins
- introduce the interpreter to the client and allow the interpreter to explain their role
- in a health matter determine what the patient/family want to achieve from the interview.

### Interview

- Arrange seating in a triangular format.
- Speak clearly using short sentences and plain English.
- Do not speak too fast and only give one idea at a time.
- Allow enough time for the interviewee to answer, and for the interpreter to interpret.
- Speak directly to the client and explain the ground rules of the interview.
- Where possible do not leave the room during the interview. This can make it awkward for the interpreter and interviewee and can place the interpreter in a compromising position.
- Ask the interviewee to tell their story rather than using question and answer routines. These can be uncomfortable and/or ineffective.
- To clarify if the message has been understood both ways, ask the interviewee to tell you what they think you have said in their own words.

### Post-interview

After the interview, when the client has left, debrief with the interpreter regarding the interview.

*Understanding each other makes a difference.*