

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

NT Interpreting Service

The Interpreting service is a very important service. Many services that use the Interpreting service are aware that there is often a shortage of interpreters. At times, patients and doctors at the hospital are waiting many hours for interpreters or just have to continue without language support.

1. How many Yolngu language interpreters are there in the NT Interpreting Service?
2. How many more Yolngu interpreters are needed to meet service needs?
3. How many more Indigenous interpreters are needed for language groups across the NT?
4. What extra funding has been provided in the 21/22 budget to meet the growing need for interpreters in the NT?
5. Do any remote schools have an interpreter training program through VET or otherwise for Senior Secondary students?

Answer:

1. Currently, 33 contracted Yolngu interpreters are employed by the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS).
2. Yolngu Matha languages are one of the high demand languages in the Top End region. Between the period 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, AIS received 2774 requests for Yolngu Matha interpreting services and completed 1820 of these requests. 954 of these requests were cancelled.

Currently, AIS has one of its most experienced national certified interpreter based at Galiwinku for three months. The purpose of this is to recruit new Yolngu Matha interpreters and to provide training to current Yolngu Matha interpreters.

3. AIS currently employs 17 staff interpreters and 163 casual interpreters. AIS provide services for 18 of the more commonly used Aboriginal languages in the Northern Territory. There are differences with these languages in terms of demand and available interpreters. To ensure that AIS is in a strong position to meet demand and maintain the highest level of service delivery, AIS is undertaking a review to strengthen its service delivery model and develop career pathways for Aboriginal interpreters, which include options to further recruit, retain and support all of the 18 languages the AIS provide services for.

4. There has been no increase in the AIS budget. The current AIS review will look at identifying future resourcing and budget needs of the service.
5. There are no remote schools or other education providers in the Northern Territory that provide interpreting training through VET. AIS is working in partnership with the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters to pilot projects aimed at recruiting and encouraging young people to become interpreters through hosting camps, such as the recent camp in Darwin focused on Murrinh-Patha interpreters from Wadeye.