

Australian Capital Territory

# COURTS AND TRIBUNAL

## Improving access to the ACT Magistrates Court for the culturally and linguistically diverse community in the ACT when seeking protection from family violence

### ACTION PLAN

The ACT Magistrates Courts held a consultation workshop on 13 July 2018 with representatives from the ACT culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community, key agencies and NGO's to consider ways to improve access to courts for the CALD community when seeking protection from family violence in the ACT. The workshop feedback has been translated into the following key themes and action plan below.

| Key Theme                 | Task   | Action  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Cultural Awareness        | <b>Cultural awareness:</b> Court staff need to be trained in cultural awareness, be competent when working with diverse clients and recognise cultural and religious differences when designing and delivering services.   | Court staff will participate in an online cultural awareness training specifically designed for the ACT Courts environment.   |
| Cultural Liaison Officers | <b>The Court should provide cultural liaison officers</b> to coordinate and engage with CALD communities on behalf of the Court.   | The Courts will look for opportunities to attract funding for Cultural Liaison Officers.  |
| Concierge Services        | <b>Provide concierge services:</b> The Court should provide concierge services to assist those persons requiring specialised assistance as they enter the building.  | A concierge service will commence in the Court foyer in early 2019 as part of the new Courts Building. One of the functions of this service will be to identify and assist people who require specialised assistance.   |
| Court Processes           | <b>Court staff and judiciary should recognise the complex challenges and barriers</b> CALD communities face in accessing the Court, including language, cultural, security and residency issues.<br><br><b>The Court should allow more time for</b> conferences and hearings times when people require interpreters. | The Court will continue to look for opportunities to work with the CALD community to improve access to the Court.<br><br>The Court will continue to accommodate the additional time required in conferences and hearings for people who require interpreters. |
| Multilingual information  | <b>Multilingual information:</b> The Court should provide information in different languages at the entrance to the Court, along with information  | Information provided by TIS National <a href="http://www.tisnational.gov.au">www.tisnational.gov.au</a> is available from the Courts Concierge Service and Courts Registry  |

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|----------------------------|---|--|
|                            | about how to request a telephone interpreter to assist them.  | counter that allows staff to identify which language an interpreter is required.   |
| <b>Interpreters</b>        | <b>Make available telephone interpreters:</b> The Court should ensure a telephone is available for persons to contact an interpreter when making enquiries at the Court's enquiry counter.  | The Court will ensure that a telephone is available to contact interpreters.   |
| <b>Plain English</b>       | <b>Use plain English where possible:</b> Information should be provided in plain English then transcribed into different languages for both applicants and respondents, including diagrams and pictures where appropriate.  | Information in plain English has been developed for both Applicants and Respondents involved with the Family Violence Protection Order processes and these will be translated into 11 languages identified as priority for the ACT by the Courts in 2019.  |
| <b>Community Education</b> | <p><b>Deliver community education programs:</b> The Courts should deliver community education programs about court processes for those seeking protection from violence.</p> <p><b>Develop a community outreach strategy:</b> The Court should develop and implement a community outreach strategy using all forms of media, including print, radio, television and internet. The Court should aim to establish relationships and develop programs targeting community leaders.</p> | The Courts will work with ACT Legal Aid, Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Community Services Directorate to develop a community outreach strategy for those seeking protection from violence along with making arrangements for regular engagement with community leaders to discuss matters of mutual interest. |