

INTERPRETING SERVICES POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to outline EACH Housing's (EHL's) commitment to ensuring that individuals from non-English speaking backgrounds, or those with limited English proficiency, have equitable access to EHL's housing services through the provision of professional interpreting services and plain-language communication.

This policy applies to all individuals accessing EHL's housing services, including applicants, renters, and their support people or advocates. It is also relevant to all EHL staff who are responsible for communicating with the public.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

EHL is committed to providing inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe services. To ensure all individuals can understand and engage with tenancy information and processes,

EHL will:

- Provide all written and verbal communication in plain, accessible English.
- Offer professional interpreting services (either in-person or over the phone) to renters, applicants, and advocates with limited English proficiency or who request language support.
- Offer interpreting services at no cost to the individual.
- Ensure interpreting is available at key points in the tenancy lifecycle, including but not limited to:
 - Housing applications and sign-ups
 - Rent setting, hardship or arrears discussions
 - Complaints and feedback processes
 - Tenancy breaches, compliance discussions or Notice to Vacate
 - End-of-tenancy meetings or exit procedures

EHL staff must not rely on family members, particularly children, to interpret except in urgent situations where no alternative is immediately available.

Staff will receive guidance and support on when and how to offer interpreting services, and renters will always have the right to decline language support if they prefer to communicate in English or use their own support person (noting that EHL staff must consider any associated risks or limitations in those cases).

3.0 DOCUMENT OWNER

The EHL Manager, Operations is the subject matter expert and person responsible for this document review.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Interpreting Service	A service that facilitates spoken communication between individuals who do not share a common language. Interpreters assist in person or over the phone to support understanding of housing-related information.
Translation	The process of converting written text from one language to another. EHL's primary focus is on interpreting for

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	verbal communication, although written translation of key documents may be arranged where needed.
Support Person	A friend, family member, caseworker or advocate who may assist a renter to understand or communicate during tenancy matters. Note: a support person is not the same as a trained interpreter and may not be appropriate for complex or legal matters.
Plain English	A style of communication that uses clear, straightforward language free of jargon, making it easier for people of all literacy levels to understand.

5.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)
- Housing Registrar (Vic) Performance Standards
- Interpreting Services Procedure