NAATI Language Selection Policy

1. Preamble

NAATI is the standard setting organisation for the translating and interpreting industry in Australia. The processes and systems in place to identify and define the languages in which NAATI awards credentials to practitioners are central to maintaining integrity in the industry.

2. Policy Outcomes

This policy is intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- consistency and integrity in certification and service delivery outcomes
- consistency in information provided to applicants.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all languages approved for translator or interpreter testing offered by NAATI.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Defining a Language

NAATI aims to clearly define languages in which testing or other credentials are offered. NAATI awards credentials in a pair of languages (for example, English-Chinese or German-English). For the purposes of defining and labelling a language to enable consistent credentialing, NAATI primarily refers to the following two databases: Ethnologue for languages of other countries and AUSTLANG for Indigenous languages.

Where a new language is identified for testing by NAATI, NAATI will produce a statement defining the characteristics of the language. This will include information about the different forms of the language (oral, written, signed and/ or other), acceptance of standardised or non-standardised usage and regional variations of the language and other factors that ensure applicants and other stakeholders understand the structure and limitations of credentials offered in this language.

Any such statement will be produced in consultation with users of the language within the Australian community and major service providers. See 4.4 Offering or Ceasing Certification Testing in a Language for more information about language selection.

While dialects of languages are not normally made available for certification by NAATI, NAATI may offer a Recognised Practising credential in dialects where dialects are not mutually intelligible with the main language. Dialects are represented in the NAATI system as in the following example: Shanghainese (dialect of Wu Chinese).

4.2 Language Name Displayed on Correspondence and Practitioner Products

NAATI will only issue correspondence and practitioner products (such as ID cards, certificates or translator stamps) under the official language name recorded on NAATI's systems.

Generally, NAATI will label a language with the primary name listed on one of these databases, unless the users of the language in the Australian community more commonly refer to it by one of its alternate names listed on one of these databases.

4.3 Amendments to a Language Name

There are occasionally instances where NAATI receives a request to alter a language name listed in its systems. In these situations, NAATI will follow this process:

1. establish whether evidence supports the case to change the language name,
2. if this evidence exists, NAATI will write to each practitioner holding certification in the language to seek feedback on the proposed change and will consider this feedback,
3. submit the proposal for the language name change to the NAATI Board for decision, including information about the estimated cost associated with the change, and
4. advise affected practitioners and stakeholders formally of the change and update its systems/credentials accordingly.

4.4 Offering or Ceasing Certification Testing in a Language

A decision to provide or cease certification testing in a language requires the approval of the NAATI Board. NAATI will provide a business case to support the Board's decision making, considering the below criteria. The criteria are not all of equal weight, and the decision will be based on the overall business case. For example, strong humanitarian reasons may outweigh the need for a neutral net cost in some instances. The results of these decisions will be publicly notified on the NAATI website.

4.4.1 Criteria

Community demand

Community demand is demonstrated by the numbers of non-English speaking people in a particular language community or by reported demand for interpreting in that language by major service providers in the industry (such as TIS National or Department of Human Services) or stakeholders.

Humanitarian reasons

Humanitarian reasons exist where there are particular language needs arising from the refugee status of a non-English speaking community in Australia, even where there isn't high demand for the language (as described above).

Net cost

Generally, NAATI will only establish a new language for testing if the language will result in neutral or positive net cost. The calculation of net cost is based on the following:

• the cost associated with establishing a new language for testing (including sourcing a panel of Examiners to set and mark tests, role player costs, venue hire and travel costs, and administration), and
• expected revenue from paying applicants per year plus any additional revenue associated with testing the language.

5.   Policy Review

The effectiveness of this policy is reviewed by NAATI management on a regular basis.

6.   Policy Approval

Policy approved by NAATI Board of Directors pursuant to a Resolution of the Board 142/5.1.4.