

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health**

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19  
pandemic**

**Written questions received on 17 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000477**

**Question Subject:** Be Covid Safe Leaflet

**Type of Question:** Written

**Senator:** Stirling Griff

**Question:**

Can the Department provide answers to the following:

1. The Federal Health Department's leaflet entitled 'BE COVID SAFE' translated in Arabic aimed at encouraging Arabic speakers to wear face masks has been reported by the ABC as "nonsensical" and "gibberish" and according to the Refugee Council of Australia's Deena Yako, a native Arabic speaker, so poorly formatted it "doesn't make sense".

Can the Department advise:

- (a) What the process for translation of the multicultural 'BE COVID SAFE' leaflet was?
- (b) Was an automated method used for the translation and if so, what automated method was used?
- (c) If an automated method was used was it checked by an accredited translator, if not, why not?
- (d) If any automated method was used what was the rationale for this decision?
- (e) If an automated method was used why were accredited translators not used as the preferred method of translation?
- (f) If accredited translators were used what method did the Department use to confirm the accreditation of the translators?
- (g) What was the method of verifying the translation prior to publication?
- (h) How much has the incorrect translated leaflets cost the Government?
- (i) Has the Government reprinted the leaflets with the correct translations? If so, how much has the corrected reprint cost the Government?

**Answer:**

- (a) The Be Covid Safe leaflet was translated by a certified translator from the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). It was double-checked by a translation typesetting specialist and final checked by a second NAATI-certified translator. An error in the Arabic 'BE COVID SAFE' resource was identified on 11 August, rectified quickly and republished on the website. The original translation was correct, however a technical error occurred when the document was uploaded to the website. This error can occur with specific fonts. Now that this technical issue is known, the Department has engaged a translation supplier to also review documents after upload.
- (b) There is no automation used at any point to translate resources, all translations are performed and checked by NAATI-certified translators.
- (c) N/A
- (d) N/A
- (e) N/A
- (f) The accreditation of the translators is provided at the time that the service provider is engaged.
- (g) This translation was completed by a NAATI-certified translator, double-checked by a translation typesetting specialist and final checked by a second NAATI-certified translator.
- (h) No additional costs were incurred.
- (i) The leaflet is available on the website and is not printed. No printing costs were incurred.

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**Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19  
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**Written questions received on 17 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000478**

**Question Subject:** How many languages are the covid safe messages translated to

**Type of Question:** Written

**Senator:** Stirling Griff

**Question:**

How many languages are the current COVID SAFE messages available in?

**Answer:**

Key information is currently available in 63 languages covering factsheets, videos, editorials and posters.

The COVIDSafe app is available in nine languages (Arabic, Korean, Vietnamese, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Italian, Greek, Punjabi and Turkish). All nine languages are available in the Apple store. Seven languages are available on Android with Punjabi and Turkish currently being finalised.

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**Written Question received 17 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000479**

**Accuracy of translations:**

**Written**

**Senator:** Stirling Griff

**Question:**

How has the Government assessed the accuracy of those translations? If not why not?

**Answer:**

The Department of Health uses Government translation service provision arrangements which includes mechanisms to minimise the risk of errors in translated material. The arrangements require translators to be NAATI-accredited and translations are double-checked by a second translator. If type setting is required, it is done by a translation typesetting specialist and then checked again by a NAATI-certified translator.

An additional step of having a translation supplier review a document after uploading has recently been added to the quality assurance process to ensure any technical issues that occur during the publishing process are addressed.

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**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**Inquiry into the Australian Government's response to the COVID-19  
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**Written Question received 17 August 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000480**

**Correct/incorrect language translations:**

**Written**

**Senator:** Stirling Griff

**Question:**

- (a) If the Government has assessed the accuracy of all translated COVID SAFE material – how many have been found to include mistakes or incorrect information?
- (b) If there are other examples of incorrect translations what are they and how much have the incorrect translated leaflets cost the Government?
- (c) Has the Government reprinted the leaflets with the correct translations? If so, how much have the corrected reprints cost the Government?

**Answer:**

- (a) The Department of Health is committed to making COVID-19 public health information available to all Australians, inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. All translated materials go through a quality assurance process to ensure that information is correct. An error in an Arabic translated resource was identified on 11 August. This was rectified quickly and republished on the website. The supplier confirmed the translation was done by a community translator, and a translation typesetting specialist and then it was reviewed again by a NAATI-certified translator. The original translation was correct, however a technical error caused by the font file occurred when the document was uploaded to the website. To avoid such issues in the future, the Department now has a translation supplier also review documents once live on the website.
- (b) As the error was a technical issue when publishing on the website, it was fixed internally at no cost.
- (c) The Government does not print the translated resources. The resources are uploaded onto the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs' websites.