Innovative App Improving Training for Interpreters

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An innovative app has been developed that allows Aboriginal interpreters to practice for high-pressure legal situations like police interviews and Supreme Court trials.

The Department of Community Service’s Aboriginal Interpreter Service has developed the training program, which is in the final testing stages.

Minister for Community Services, Bess Price, said the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) helps to alleviate the language barriers faced by many Indigenous people throughout the Northern Territory and the app will assist with training interpreters.

“This AIS Interpreter Training Centre app allows the interpreters to practice realistic legal situations and check for accuracy and speed,” Mrs Price said.

“The training app creates a new video, combining both the original footage and the audio interpretation.”

After watching 1-2 sentences of dialogue, the interpreter presses the ‘interpret’ button, which pauses the video and activates the microphone. The interpreter interprets what has been said, and then presses play, continuing the process until they’ve interpreted the entire scene.

This video is automatically uploaded to Aboriginal Interpreter Service trainers for assessment, and can be reviewed and shared by the interpreter themselves.

Aboriginal Interpreter Service Program Manager Ben Grimes said legal interpreting is extremely difficult.

“The problem is legal training role plays can’t fully replicate the speed and complexity of real court. The app lets interpreters view short video clips, similar to YouTube, and is really good for practicing complex legal dialogue,” Mr Grimes said.

The legal scenes were filmed using local lawyers, magistrates and police who volunteered their time. Interpreters can choose from specific types of legal scenes, such as police interviews, bail applications and interpreting for witnesses.

The app is only available on android devices and will be available for use by the interpreters within two months.

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