Police cautions in language aid communication barriers
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Minister for Local Government and Community Services Bess Price has congratulated the Aboriginal Interpreter Service (AIS) on completing the police cautions app for smart devices in 18 different Aboriginal languages.

“The cautions provide assistance to Indigenous people and will help them understand their rights and also remove significant language barriers faced by Indigenous communities,” Minister Price said.

“People who speak English as an additional language are less likely to understand their responsibilities or use their rights when interviewed by police, and this was a major challenge that had to be addressed.

“The police caution app on police issued iPads includes English subtitles to be used in the field at the time of apprehension, so that people understand their rights rather than waiting for an interpreter, and police will also know what part of the caution is being read out.

“The app will reduce the need to call Aboriginal interpreters as witnesses in court cases, allowing for time in other areas of interpreting like health, education, social services and other community engagement.”

AIS worked in partnership with Northern Territory Police and the Northern Territory Department of Attorney-General to ensure the police cautions include two versions – an ‘In Custody’ version and a ‘Not in Custody’ version. Both versions can be used by law enforcement at any time, and meet all the legal requirements for the courts system.

Colleen Rosas, Director of AIS has praised the new police caution app that will be loaded onto police smart devices and said this will make law enforcement discussions clearer.

“This tool will assist in preventing miscommunication and will be invaluable in the Northern Territory, whilst interpreters always interpret to the very best of their ability, the complexities and differences between Aboriginal languages and legal English can lead to miscommunication .” Mrs Rosas said.

Minister for Local Government and Community Services Bess Price also commended the AIS and NT Police to make this project a reality.

“The project needed 50 dedicated and capable interpreters to make this a reality so thank you to everyone at the AIS and NT Police in producing these comprehensive police cautions in many languages.” Minister Price said.

The Commonwealth Attorney-General’s Department funded the AIS to undertake the project to improve legal interpreting and that included recording the police cautions into Aboriginal languages.

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