

SA law now in 10 languages

The State's largest legal practice has unveiled an SA first.

The Legal Services Commission is publishing - in TEN languages - a summary of the State's key laws in a series of guides aimed at migrants. The laws relate to common life events including renting a home, buying a car and getting married.

Never before have these SA legal publications been made available in so many different languages.

Law For You is available in ten languages commonly spoken by new arrivals (Arabic, Burmese, Chinese [Mandarin], Dari, English, Hindi, Persian, Swahili, Nepali and Vietnamese).

The guides mirror the sentiments of Australia's top judge - who recently highlighted the legal hurdles facing migrants.

A fortnight ago the Chief Justice of the High Court, The Hon. Robert French AC, said: "those involved in the administration of justice in various ways should ensure so far as they can that people are not disadvantaged in their access to or interaction with the justice system by reason of their culture.

"With the very significant shift in the composition of the Australian population and the many countries of origin from which Australians now come, the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation, by people of different cultures, concerning the working of the justice system and the potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation of those people by those involved in the justice system is real."

"The Law For You guides are free of legal jargon and are extremely practical," says Commission Director Gabrielle Canny. "They directly address some of the concerns raised by Chief Justice French.

"They're a go-to guide for new migrants wanting to know the basic legal elements concerning commonplace issues. These include consumer protection laws, workers' rights, dealing with the police and government departments, and caring for children."

Migrants played a key role in shaping the guides. The Legal Services Commission consulted widely with various language groups to better understand what information they required.

"The Commission provides legal advice to all South Australians - and that must include those for whom English is not their first language," says Ms Canny.

"We also provide free telephone advice services with specialist interpreters. All members of the public can also make an appointment to seek legal advice in person at one of our offices – again, at no charge and with an interpreter present if required."

Background: in the previous financial year, the Legal Services Commission distributed more than **85,000** legal information publications to South Australians from all walks of life. In addition, it responded to nearly **100,000** enquiries and legal questions. It has offices throughout Adelaide as well as in some regional centres.

For further information about the guides, contact Kate Muslera at the Commission on (08) 81115 742 or kate.muslera@lsc.sa.gov.au