

Best Practice Guidelines:

Communicating with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities

**He kupu ārahi: Te whakawhitiwhiti
kōrero i ngā tāngata o ngā hau e wha**

CLING (Community Languages Information Network Group)

March 2021



Foreword

I am grateful to the Community Languages Information Network Group (CLING) for publishing these updated Guidelines on how to communicate effectively and well with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

As outlined in the Executive Summary many significant events have happened since the Guidelines were first published in 2012 after the Canterbury earthquakes.

What is constant is the increasing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity that is enriching Aotearoa New Zealand. It is even more important for those communicating and consulting with CALD communities to follow best practice at all times.

This key message stands alongside that of 2012 which was to get to know our communities now. Do not wait until an event – such as the Canterbury earthquakes – to start building relationships based on respect and understanding.

These latest Guidelines challenge organisations to commit to and adequately resource effective communications with CALD communities. They also provide us with advice on how to make that work well.

The recent Royal Commission of Inquiry's report into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019, Ko tō tātou kāinga tēnei, called for greater social cohesion as a way to prevent a similar event happening again.

They defined social cohesion as when individuals and groups have a true sense of belonging, inclusion, participation and recognition as well as confidence that their public institutions will treat them fairly.

Ensuring that communities have access to clear, timely and relevant information is critical to that sense of belonging and recognition.

A large part of achieving social cohesion is the information we provide and how we go about providing it. It will help create fairer, equitable access to government and community services that are culturally, linguistically and religiously safe.

Communicating effectively is important. It is my recommendation that this report becomes not only essential reading for all those involved in engaging with CALD communities – but also that it will shift practice on the ground for the benefit of those who are most at risk of missing out on crucial information and services. I commend CLING for continuing this essential work.

Meng Foon
Race Relations Commissioner





Contents

Executive Summary	2
What is CLING?	5
CLING's work during and after the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes	6
CLING's 2012 <i>Best Practice Guidelines</i>	7
CLING's work beyond the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes	8
Reasons for reviewing the 2012 Best Practice Guidelines	9
A decade of disasters	9
Natural disasters	10
Manmade disaster: 15 March 2019 mosque terror attacks	10
Health disaster: COVID-19 and lockdowns	12
... And times of 'normalcy'	14
Changes in the CALD landscape	15
<i>Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies</i>	17
<i>Actions</i>	22
Glossary	23

Executive Summary

Following the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010-11, CLING (Community Languages Information Network Group) was established as an inter-agency network to advocate for improved communication with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

In 2012, the group released its [Best Practice Guidelines: Engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) Communities in Times of Disaster](#). These Guidelines were based on findings from a literature review, consultation with key stakeholders including CALD communities, and information sent by statutory agencies about their CALD disaster communications to Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner at the time.

The Guidelines included recommendations for agencies and CALD communities to help ensure better engagement during and after disasters. The key message of the report was: “If you want to communicate well with CALD communities following a disaster, don’t wait until something really bad happens. Get to know them now - build a relationship with CALD communities based on mutual trust, respect and understanding”.¹ The Guidelines were endorsed by Mr de Bres, and have generated widespread interest both within Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas.

At the beginning of 2021, CLING updated the Guidelines to take into account its observations and learnings across the decade since the Canterbury earthquakes. During this period, Canterbury and Christchurch have experienced other significant disasters spanning natural, manmade and health disasters, as well as extended periods of ‘normalcy’. There have also been major changes in the CALD landscape over this time, with both increasing ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity within Aotearoa New Zealand and ever-more policy and practice seeking to celebrate this diversity at the national and local levels.

¹ Sarah Wylie, *Best Practice Guidelines: Engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Communities in Times of Disaster*, July 2012, p. 6.



In terms of communication with CALD communities, CLING's learnings from this period can be distilled into three key points:

- ✿ Disseminate clear and timely information to communities, and tailor messaging to the needs of the target audience where possible.
- ✿ Embed cultural competency within all agencies, including knowledge of the specificities of local CALD communities.
- ✿ Ensure all agencies and all agency staff realise their obligations for providing translated and interpreted information, and ensure staff know how to and are comfortable using professional interpreters.

In addition, at times of disaster:

- ✿ Ensure a single agency has oversight and coordination of a disaster response, so that agencies involved can determine who has fiscal and operational responsibility (for example, to engage interpreters).
- ✿ Ensure collaboration between agencies involved in disaster response work.

These recommendations are intended to minimise confusion and the 'gaps' in disaster response - including gaps in relation to communication with CALD communities - which result from this confusion.

Taking these key learnings into account, the Guidelines have two main messages in terms of facilitating effective communication with CALD communities: first, the importance of establishing relationships between agencies and these communities; and second, the importance of working to best practice at all times. CLING's observations across the decade show that the barriers which compromise communication during disaster are often the same barriers as during times of 'normalcy'; thus, working to best practice principles during times of normalcy would counteract many of the barriers and shortcomings of disaster communication because effective systems would already be in place. In recognition of this truism, CLING has removed the reference to 'disaster' in the Guidelines' original title.

The Guidelines stress that agencies need to commit to, prioritise and adequately resource effective communication with CALD communities. The ability to access information is a fundamental human right enshrined in both domestic and international policy, and ensuring and facilitating this access will become ever-more imperative as the ethnic makeup of New Zealand continues to diversify. In addition, skilled and compassionate communication can enhance people's sense of belonging, whereas poor-quality communication can further 'other' and alienate minority communities.

The updated Guidelines comprise two components: *Guidelines for Agencies and Actions.*

The Guidelines for Agencies are listed under the following headings:

- ❖ Guidelines for enabling your workforce to effectively communicate with CALD communities
- ❖ Guidelines for establishing relationships with CALD communities
- ❖ Guidelines for developing effective messages for CALD communities
- ❖ Guidelines for developing accessible resources for CALD communities
- ❖ Guidelines for disseminating translated information
- ❖ Guidelines for disseminating information to CALD communities.

The suggestions listed in Actions are divided into two headings:

- ❖ Suggestions to help you and your community to connect, communicate, participate and be safe
- ❖ Suggestions to help you and your community access resources in your language.

Both these components are incorporated into this booklet but are also published as separate documents. The *Actions* document has been translated into a number of languages, which can be found on the CLING [website](#). This booklet also contains information about CLING and its work, and sets out the rationale for updating the original Guidelines.



What is CLING?

CLING (Community Languages Information Network Group) is a network of agencies that works to support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)² communities in Ōtautahi Christchurch, in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The group's Vision is that "All communities have equitable access to public information and services, and the ability to communicate and participate in society". In this regard, CLING advocates for the provision of accessible and comprehensible information for all, including through the use of professional interpreters, translated materials and ethnic media. CLING's work is underpinned by a human rights framework and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Immigration New Zealand; [New Zealand Red Cross](#); and [Plains FM 96.9 Community Access Radio](#). CLING's members are thus drawn from a variety of sectors including central and local government, health and CALD service provision, and bring to the group a range of practical experiences and skillsets as well as the knowledge and observations of their individual agencies.

In March 2021, CLING comprised of representatives from the following agencies: [Interpreting Canterbury](#); [Christchurch City Council](#); Lebern and Associates; [Citizens Advice Bureau](#); Community and Public Health, Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB); [Pegasus Health](#); [Christchurch Resettlement Services](#);

"All communities have equitable access to public information and services, and the ability to communicate and participate in society"

² CALD groups include migrants and refugees from Asian, Middle Eastern and African backgrounds. Many issues faced by these communities, including those in relation to communication, will also be experienced by Māori and Pasifika communities.



CLING's work during and after the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes

In 2010 and 2011, the city of Christchurch and the Canterbury region of New Zealand experienced a sequence of earthquakes and aftershocks. As a result of these earthquakes, 185 people died, several thousands were injured, and there was considerable damage to buildings and infrastructure. The psychosocial and economic impacts of this disaster have been far-reaching for the Greater Christchurch community.

CLING was established by several government and non-government agencies in the aftermath of the devastating February 2011 earthquake to address the fact that post-earthquake emergency and recovery information was not reaching CALD communities.

- ✿ Information was not communicated in plain English.
- ✿ One-size-fits-all messages did not facilitate understanding by groups from a diverse range of cultures and background experiences.
- ✿ Professional interpreters were not being used.
- ✿ Few, if any, of the messages were being translated, and stakeholders sought guidance about which languages to choose for translating materials.
- ✿ More action was needed to connect with local CALD groups to enlist their assistance with tailoring messages, appropriately distributing information and assisting with the recovery effort within their

own communities and the broader community.

In order to address these gaps, CLING's work initially focused on improving the quality of communication with and public information for CALD communities within the context of post-disaster settings. To this end, the group put together and shared information to help agencies effectively disseminate information to CALD communities, including brochures which detailed [how to disseminate information to CALD communities](#) and [how to use language and sign interpreters](#). CLING also arranged for emergency information to be communicated to CALD communities via the local access radio station, pertinent health information to be translated into 14 languages, and professional interpretation services to be provided at CALD community briefings delivered by Civil Defence Emergency Operations Centre staff.

The work of CLING and other groups has had some perceptible impact on New Zealand's emergency management practice. Tangible outcomes are the incorporation of a "Please let us know if you need an interpreter" message in EQC³ letters sent to homeowners in the aftermath of the 2010-11 earthquakes, the 2012/13 Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) [report](#) which laid out information about including CALD communities in disaster response work, and the recent collaboration between the Christchurch City Council's CDEM team and Plains FM community access radio to produce and air emergency preparedness and response messaging in a range of languages.⁴

³ EQC (Earthquake Commission) is a New Zealand government Crown Entity which, among other roles, provides insurance to residential homeowners in the event of natural disaster. <https://www.eqc.govt.nz/>

⁴ The joint Christchurch CDEM and Plains FM project "Civil Defence Multilingual Emergency Messaging for Radio" was funded by the [CDEM Resilience Fund](#), and supported by the Canterbury CDEM Group. The audio files of the emergency preparedness messages in 10 languages are available on getready.govt.nz under the [Resources tab](#) at the bottom of the page. [A Civil Defence multilingual emergency messaging for radio](#) resource guide has also been produced.

CLING's 2012 Best Practice Guidelines

Beyond the immediate post-disaster response phase, an analysis was conducted to gauge how effective local and national government agencies had been in their engagement with CALD communities following the earthquakes. This analysis recommended identifying and disseminating best practice for engaging with CALD communities during the rescue, recovery and rebuild post-disaster phases.

CLING thus initiated a research project which resulted in the publication of the [*Best Practice Guidelines: Engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) Communities in Times of Disaster*](#) in 2012. These Guidelines captured learnings about communication practices between support agencies and CALD communities following the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes and, as detailed in the Guidelines' accompanying research report, were developed based on a literature review and in-depth interviews with people involved in the earthquake response including CALD communities.

There were two components to the Guidelines:

✿ [*Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies: Communicating with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) Communities in Times of Disaster*](#)

✿ [*Advice for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities.*](#)

In addition to these recommendations, CLING also released a [poster](#), inviting agencies to assess their current

engagement with CALD communities against a checklist and determine whether they would be ready to communicate with these communities during a disaster.

The key message of the report was:

“If you want to communicate well with CALD communities following a disaster, don't wait until something really bad happens. Get to know them now - build a relationship with CALD communities based on mutual trust, respect and understanding”.

CLING has been recognised domestically and internationally for its *Best Practice Guidelines* and post-earthquake work, and has been invited to share its experiences through Immigration New Zealand's *Settlement ACTIONZ* magazine in 2016 and again in 2020, the 2018 [Canterbury Earthquakes Symposium](#), and a [webinar](#) and [publication](#) for the International Organisation for Migration's '[Migrants in Countries in Crisis](#)' initiative.

CLING's work beyond the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes

In the decade since the earthquakes, CLING has continued its advocacy work, seeking to raise awareness within agencies in Canterbury and New Zealand on best practice communication and engagement with CALD communities - not only after a disaster but as a normal, daily, practice. CLING has focused on initiatives which promote the human right to effective communication (which is enshrined in both domestic and international policy and law⁵), particularly advocating for best practice and building cultural competency⁶ within support agencies through presentations and staff trainings.

Within this space, CLING has undertaken some major projects in regards to communication with CALD communities. Notably, in 2017, CLING partnered with

the University of Canterbury Internship Programme to explore the [barriers](#) faced by CALD communities in New Zealand when accessing information from government and non-government agency websites. Of the 29 websites studied, few provided information in languages other than English - and where information was translated into other languages, it was difficult to locate. Recommendations included translating materials of interest to CALD communities, ensuring such materials were easily accessible, and communicating clearly that professional interpreters were available when required. In the longer term, this study recommended a full translation of the Government of New Zealand [website](#), which includes advice on using a range of government services.

⁵ At the domestic level, the right to effective communication and/or linguistic rights are laid out in various policy and legislative documents including the Tiriti o Waitangi, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights 1996. International documents which reference these rights include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007.

⁶ CLING considers cultural competency as the ability to understand, communicate and effectively interact with people across cultures. It depends on one's awareness both of one's own cultural worldview and of others'.



Reasons for reviewing the 2012 *Best Practice Guidelines*

At the beginning of 2021, CLING reviewed the *Best Practice Guidelines* to take into account contextual changes between 2012 and 2020, as well as CLING's observations and learnings across these years.

A decade of disasters...

The first reason for reviewing the Best Practice Guidelines was to incorporate CLING's observations and learnings from other recent disasters in Canterbury.

The 2012 *Best Practice Guidelines* were developed from observations and experiences about the communication practices which occurred after the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes. Yet in the decade since these devastating earthquakes, the region has experienced a number of other disaster events, most notably widespread flooding in Christchurch in 2014, the 2016 Kaikōura earthquake, the 2017 Christchurch Port Hills fires, the 2019 Christchurch mosque terror attacks, and the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant lockdowns from March 2020.

Thus, within a relatively short space of

time, Canterbury and Christchurch have experienced a period of repeated upheaval encompassing extremely significant natural, manmade and health disasters. Through the work of its individual members and its advocacy as a network of agencies, CLING has been both a part of and a witness to the communication that has taken place between support agencies and CALD communities before, throughout and beyond each of these disasters.

The fact that CLING brings to the revised *Best Practice Guidelines* its observations and learnings from disaster events which span three types of disaster - natural, manmade and health - makes the Guidelines particularly robust in terms of their applicability to all kinds of disaster scenario, not solely to the disasters experienced in Canterbury.

Natural disasters

In addition to their work in response to the 2010-11 earthquakes, some CLING members have been involved in the response and recovery phases of other natural disasters in the region through their business-as-usual roles.

It has been regrettable that, despite seeming widespread dissemination of lessons learned from the 2010-11 Canterbury earthquakes (including CLING's Best Practice Guidelines), it appeared that very few of these lessons were implemented following subsequent natural disasters. In fact, many of the same problems arose in terms of agency communication - including in relation to communication with CALD communities, such as a decline in requests for professional interpreters in the immediate aftermath of disaster and the view that translated disaster messaging is 'nice to have' rather than imperative. Witnessing these same issues reiterated for CLING members the fundamental importance of high-quality communication during disaster and the need for clear, timely and tailored messaging.

Another learning, which became apparent especially during the Kaikōura earthquake and Port Hills fires responses, is the importance of ensuring a single agency has oversight and coordination of the disaster response. This coordination would not only improve efficiency and minimise confusion among both response agencies and affected communities, but would also correspondingly lead to an improvement in post-disaster communication.

Manmade disaster: 15 March 2019 mosque terror attacks

On 15 March 2019, a lone gunman opened fire on worshippers at the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, live streaming the attack on social media. He then drove to the

nearby Linwood Mosque and continued the violence. Fifty-one people were killed in the attacks and many more injured, the worst terrorist act committed in New Zealand. The event triggered an outpouring of grief and solidarity across the country and internationally, compelled the government to pass legislation restricting gun ownership, and prompted the Christchurch Call which pushes social media platforms to accept greater responsibility in controlling the dissemination of violent content online. These outcomes provide some solace for Christchurch's Muslim communities who were the targets and victims of the attacks, yet the physical and emotional scars are still very much present.

Working for agencies which support Christchurch's CALD communities, including its Muslim communities, CLING members were closely involved in the immediate response to the 15 March 2019 mosque attacks, and many continue to be involved in ongoing support work. CLING acknowledges that the situation has been both highly distressing and unprecedented, and that support agencies have achieved a lot under very difficult circumstances - but also that many elements of the response need to be improved upon, including communication between mainstream support agencies and CALD communities.

Some of this poor communication practice, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, stemmed as much from a lack of understanding about Islam and Islamic practices as from language barriers. There are inherent dangers in this lack of awareness; for example, a cultural faux pas inadvertently committed by a support agency staff member could be construed by community members as a lack of sensitivity, which could in turn negatively impact the viability of the agency-community relationship and/or potentially re-traumatise victims. The especially upsetting nature of this disaster event - the deliberate targeting of a minority population, the brutal massacre of people

during prayer time, and the livestreaming of the violence - meant that it was imperative for support agencies to display cultural sensitivity in their communication with victims and the wider communities.

In the days following the event, a public building close to the Al Noor Mosque was set aside as a place where victims and bereaved families could go to seek information from the various government agencies involved in the response⁷, as well as access Victim Support services, CDHB specialist mental health services and the services of non-governmental organisations. This 'one-stop shop' proved a good idea, and examples of positive engagement with affected communities within this space included the provision of tea, coffee, biscuits etc. for people (although this diminished over time), and the fact that Ministry of Social Development brought Muslim male and female staff down from Auckland which helped ease some of the cultural barriers, particularly because many of the victims were widows. There was also a realisation that the situation required flexibility, and agencies were often willing to adapt as needed (e.g. many of the victims were neither citizens nor permanent residents and were therefore ineligible for New Zealand benefits; however, changes were put in place to enable financial support).

CLING acknowledges the wholehearted commitment, compassion and professionalism of all those involved in the response; however, it also has some major concerns about how some of the services within the centre were carried out. The most concerning gaps included:

- ✿ No agency had responsibility for the overall fiscal and operational coordination of the response, which led to significant gaps in service delivery. This lesson points to the importance of ensuring a single agency has oversight of the disaster response.

- ✿ A reliance among agency staff on family or community members for interpreting, with almost no use of professional interpreters. Again, this oversight stemmed in part from a lack of cohesion around which agency had overarching responsibility for the services, including the fiscal responsibility to engage interpreters.

- ✿ A lack of interconnectivity between the government agencies present which meant that victims needed to recount their story several times to different agencies, which served to re-traumatise them and was also an inefficient use of agency resource. Although there was an informal 'triage' process in place (in that victims recounted their stories to one person, who then advised them which agencies to visit and provided the initial agency representative with an overview of the situation), there were too many victims for one person to carry out this role effectively. This initial triage process needed to be formalised and resourced, and then a system put in place to enable victims to bring their story with them to the next agency, for example through a 'connector'.

- ✿ While there were 'front-of-house' people to provide immediate psychosocial first aid to people arriving on-site (i.e. someone to sit with them and offer a cup of tea), this support was not adequate or sustainable for the enormity of the situation.

There were challenges beyond the immediate disaster response phase, too, which stemmed in large part from the layers of bureaucracy and leadership involved in the recovery, including:

- ✿ The strain placed on CALD sector agencies to rapidly upskill mainstream support agency staff in addition

⁷ For example, victims could talk with Immigration New Zealand about bringing family members to New Zealand from overseas, or with the government beneficiary service Work and Income New Zealand about financial support.

to supporting communities, who also had increased needs.

- ✿ The University of Canterbury-led 'Lessons learned' project invited high-level managers of government agencies to share their views but did not solicit the views of other government or non-government staff involved in the response.

Bearing witness to the challenges of the immediate post-disaster and longer-term recovery phases - and not being able to share its views through the 'Lessons learned' project despite its members' intimate involvement in the response - were powerful motivators for CLING to revise its *Best Practice Guidelines*.

Key lessons for CLING from this disaster were:

- ✿ The importance of ensuring a single agency has oversight for disaster response.
- ✿ The importance of ensuring agencies and staff are skilled in cultural competency before an event occurs.
- ✿ The importance of collaboration between response agencies.
- ✿ The importance of ensuring that response agencies and staff (including those brought in from elsewhere to assist) understand and respect the local context and existing cultures and relationships within it.
- ✿ The importance of ensuring all agencies and all agency staff realise their obligations for providing translated and interpreted information.

Health disaster: COVID-19 and lockdown

As elsewhere around the world, Canterbury and Christchurch have been impacted by the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus COVID-19. Despite having only relatively few COVID-19 cases in the country, New Zealand went into Alert Level 4 lockdown on 26 March 2020 in a proactive bid to minimise the spread of COVID-19. Under this lockdown, schools, public places and businesses (except essential services) were closed, travel was severely restricted and face-to-face contacts were limited to people in the same 'bubble' (usually immediate households). Over a period of several weeks, the country slowly moved up through Alert Levels before a return to Alert Level 1 on 10 June 2020 (meaning the disease was contained in New Zealand but not overseas). Since this time, there

have been a number of regional Alert Level changes in response to the constantly evolving situation.

CLING as a network collated COVID-19 materials for CALD communities every week throughout the March–May 2020 lockdown (throughout Alert Levels 4, 3 and 2) and disseminated these materials through its [Facebook page](#) and sector mailing lists in Canterbury and around New Zealand. As a result of the oversight into communication practices gained through this work, CLING produced [Communicating with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse \(CALD\) communities during disaster: Observations and recommendations from New Zealand's COVID-19 response](#). This report notes that while some information for CALD communities was highly accessible and effective, especially when it had been produced in partnership with

recipient communities, some COVID-19 resources for CALD communities were not created and delivered in line with communication best practice. Causes for concern included:



The delay in making translated/interpreted information publicly available.



Seeming inconsistency around the selection of languages for translation/interpreting.



The failure to provide important information on translated/interpreted resources such as date and the source of the message.



The limited usability of some online platforms.

Similarly, while large amounts of information were available, this information was produced by so many agencies that people did not necessarily know where/how to find the information they needed. This situation again highlights that disaster communication would be improved by ensuring active collaboration between response agencies whilst also delegating oversight of the response to a single agency.

While it is too soon to gauge the full impacts of lockdown, including mental health outcomes, there have been immediate repercussions for many people, particularly those who have lost their jobs. CALD communities have arguably been among the groups most affected by the changing employment landscape, especially migrants on work visas: they often work in sectors like hospitality and tourism which have seen major business downturn and large-scale job losses; their visa status may be dependent on their job, and so losing their job may compromise their right to remain in New Zealand; if they are searching for a different job, they are now competing with New Zealanders who

may have lost employment or may have returned because of the pandemic and who must be considered first for employment before migrants; and, they are not eligible for New Zealand welfare benefits, unlike unemployed citizens or permanent residents, and thus have few options for sustainably residing in New Zealand without a job. It is likely that many of these impacted migrant workers will have no choice but to return to their home country despite their desire to stay.

Further complicating the situation is the fact that New Zealand closed its borders to all non-citizens or permanent residents in March 2020, with tight border restrictions still in place one year later. The border closures have affected CALD communities in many ways, not least because travelling overseas is now often difficult and expensive, with very few flights available. Other significant impacts of the border closures include temporarily halting the entry of key CALD groups including international tourists, international students, seasonal agricultural labourers and intakes of UNHCR 'Quota' refugees, and the emotional strain which CALD communities feel, being separated from and worrying about family overseas with no assurance of when they will readily be able to see them.

CLING members have been engaged with supporting CALD communities throughout New Zealand's COVID-19 response. During lockdown, members often layered additional responsibilities over their core work; for example, facilitating the contactless distribution of relief parcels to families in need, arranging online public information sessions or maintaining regular telephone contact with CALD community members to ensure they remained aware of the current situation. CLING members remain actively involved in working with CALD communities as the repercussions of the lockdowns and the ongoing border closures continue to be felt.

... And times of ‘normalcy’

The second reason for reviewing the *Best Practice Guidelines* was to highlight that communication best practice during times of disaster is in fact the same best practice as during times of ‘normalcy’.

The revised *Best Practice Guidelines* draw on CLING’s observations and experiences of agency communication with CALD communities during times of disaster; however, they draw just as heavily on CLING’s observations and experiences of agency communication with CALD communities during times of ‘normalcy’. These experiences are derived both from the everyday work of CLING’s members supporting CALD communities and from a recognition of the linkages between communication during disaster and normalcy:

- ✿ The barriers to effective communication which CALD communities experience during times of disaster are very often the same as during times of normalcy.
- ✿ What constitutes communication best practice during and after disaster also constitutes communication best practice during times of normalcy.

As such, disasters highlight why communication best practices are critical at all times; working to best practice principles during times of normalcy would counteract many of the barriers and shortcomings of disaster communication because effective systems would already be in place.

In addition, disasters provide a ‘lens’ which reveals both strengths and shortcomings of agencies’ pre-disaster (i.e. existing or business-as-usual) communication practices, service provision and competency. If agencies seek to build on these shortcomings, disasters can raise awareness and lead to positive change, for

example by fostering a greater appreciation within support agencies for the provision of accessible, plain-language information (ideally with accompanying visuals), the timely dissemination of this information to affected populations, the importance of professionally translated and interpreted resources, and the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity and competency amongst their staff.

Building on these observations about the linkages between communication with CALD communities during disaster and normalcy are observations drawn from the day-to-day work of CLING members. As staff of agencies which support CALD communities across a variety of sectors including social services, language support and health, CLING members bear witness to communication which takes place with these communities. They facilitate connectivity between CALD communities and support agencies, and regularly give presentations and trainings to key groups within Canterbury. Through its work, CLING has developed a reputation within New Zealand and internationally, and has been called upon to provide expert advice, particularly in relation to interpreting and translation policy.

Its work has also led CLING to recognise several major ongoing challenges to best communication practice with CALD communities, including:

- ✿ A general lack of cultural competency among agency staff. As a result, staff are often unaware of the needs - including the communication needs - of CALD communities, and have limited knowledge of how to work with these groups.
- ✿ The continued under-utilisation of professional interpreters. Organisations and staff are often

unaware of people's right to a professional interpreter when dealing with government services, lack the confidence to request and/or work with interpreters, and do not realise they have a responsibility and legal obligation to provide these services.

- ✿ As a result, CLING continues to see an overreliance on family, children or community members as interpreters, which contravenes best practice.
- ✿ A lack of inclusive community strategies to guide staff behaviour, such as a cross-sector policy to guide the use of interpreters.

Changes in the CALD landscape

The third reason for reviewing the *Best Practice Guidelines* was to take into account changes in the CALD landscape in New Zealand over the past decade.

This period has seen significant changes in the CALD landscape in New Zealand, particularly in terms of ever-increasing ethnic diversity⁸ and an increased recognition of the economic and cultural value of this diversity. Some of the most important changes are:

- ✿ In 2019, the New Zealand government increased the country's intake of refugees via UNHCR processes (so-called 'Quota' refugees) from 750 to 1,500 people per year. As a result, refugees are currently being resettled not only in major cities but also in smaller centres. With this increasing ethnic diversity comes an ever-greater need for cultural and linguistic competency among agency staff and members of the public in these towns.
- ✿ Immigration New Zealand has successfully piloted its [Welcoming Communities](#) initiative in three centres across New Zealand including Ashburton, a major rural centre in Canterbury. In partnership with the

Office of Ethnic Communities and local councils, in 2020 the programme was being rolled out in towns and cities across the country.

- ✿ The Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has been working on a Language Assistance Services [project](#) to establish and implement a whole-of-government set of standards for using interpreters.

There have also been some important steps taken in Christchurch and Canterbury in terms of recognising and valuing CALD communities. These steps coincide with the region's rapidly increasing ethnic diversity⁹, especially following the arrival of large numbers of migrants into Christchurch after 2011 to help with the city's post-earthquake rebuild. Some of these steps are:

- ✿ Increased governmental acknowledgement of the need to involve Māori, as tangata whenua, across all stages of project design and implementation. Locally, this change has stemmed in large part from the appointment of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as a statutory partner in the post-earthquake rebuild.

⁸ In the 2018 Census, 27.4 per cent of people counted were not born in New Zealand, a slight increase from the 25.2 per cent of people not born in New Zealand counted in the 2013 Census. Stats NZ, 'New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity', 23 September 2019, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity> accessed 13 December 2020.

⁹ 23.4 per cent of people in Canterbury counted in the 2018 Census were born overseas Stats NZ, 'Canterbury region', <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/canterbury-region>

- ✿ In 2017, Christchurch became the first city in New Zealand to produce a [Multicultural Strategy](#), influenced in part by the work and advocacy of CLING and other groups in the CALD sector. This Strategy is exciting because it provides a remit for change in how the city approaches multiculturalism, and its implementation is supported by the Christchurch City Council and the CCC's Multicultural Advisory Group.
- ✿ In 2020, the Canterbury health sector drafted *Professional Interpreter Services: Best Practice Guidelines for the Canterbury Health System* to improve the consistency and delivery of interpreting services across the Canterbury health system including interpreting for New Zealand Sign Language, Pasifika and CALD languages.
- ✿ Increasing numbers of cultural festivals, including festivals which celebrate single cultures and those which celebrate the city's increasing multiculturalism.

Such initiatives embrace, respect and celebrate CALD communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. In this way, they have a flow-on effect in terms of increasing public awareness of CALD communities and the richness they bring to the country, which in turn supports the development and implementation of further programmes.

Indeed, CLING has noticed some really positive improvements over the past ten years in terms of communication between agencies and CALD communities. Most notably, there has been a marked increase in awareness among health, justice and non-government agency staff of people's rights to access a professional interpreter, and a corresponding increase in awareness that relying on family, children or community members to interpret information is not acceptable practice. CLING has also noticed that support agencies are progressively more engaging professional interpreters as part of their practice and that staff are displaying increased cultural competency and knowledge of how to access interpreters. There has also been a corresponding increase in recognition that organisations need to budget for the use of interpreters.



Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies

These Guidelines set out principles of best practice to support agencies in their everyday communications and interactions with CALD communities.

These revised *Best Practice Guidelines for Agencies* build on the original 2012 Guidelines, but have been expanded to take into account CLING's observations and learnings over the past decade in relation to different types of disaster as well as during times of 'normalcy'. As Aotearoa New Zealand becomes ever-more culturally and linguistically diverse, effective communication with CALD communities correspondingly becomes ever-more important and is something we should all strive to embrace.

The key message of the 2012 *Best Practice Guidelines* was the importance of establishing relationships between agencies and CALD communities before disaster occurs, because it is these relationships which enable the effective flow of information during disaster. The same message is reiterated in these revised Guidelines: relationships are vital. The other main message from these revised Guidelines is the importance of working to best practice at all times; not least because engaging in good practice during times of normalcy will automatically improve communication during times of disaster.

Guidelines for enabling your workforce to effectively communicate with CALD communities

- ✿ Employ a diverse workforce so that cultural, religious and linguistic knowledge is embedded in your organisation, including your communications team.
- ✿ Establish CALD liaison roles within the workplace, and utilise their knowledge.
- ✿ Continually improve cultural competency within your organisation through professional development.
- ✿ Include resource for the dissemination of messaging to CALD communities (e.g. via ethnic media and other channels) in your budgets.
- ✿ Include resource for professional translation and interpreting in your budgets.
- ✿ Create an interpreting policy for your agency, and ensure staff wholly understand it.

- ✚ Promote the use of professional translators and interpreters (both face-to-face and telephone) amongst your staff.
- ✚ Ensure staff are confident working with interpreters by providing training in this area.

- ✚ Ensure staff know who to contact to carry out translation and interpreting work (this is especially important when you require quick turnaround; for example, during times of disaster).

Guidelines for establishing relationships with CALD communities

- ✚ Research the ethnic and linguistic makeup of your local CALD communities, and create a profile of these communities.
 - Use a variety of sources to determine the key languages in your area, and ensure your decision is equitable. The size of the language community is not the only factor in determining a language's importance, so use knowledge of communities' circumstances and contexts alongside Census and local demographic data.
 - Refresh this knowledge regularly, as it can change quickly.

- ✚ Identify key contacts within each CALD community.
 - These contacts are likely to be credible, respected community members; democratically-elected leaders; influencers; and CALD service providers. Be sure to include women and young people when reaching out.
 - Connect into your local CALD media as a means of identifying potential contacts.
 - Identify how you can best connect with and support these key

community contacts, including in the event of disaster.

- ✚ Establish strong relationships with your local CALD communities.

- Learn about your local CALD communities.
- Build trust with and demonstrate respect for CALD communities.
- Understand the diversity within each CALD community.

- ✚ Recognise and value the strengths of CALD communities.

- Recognise and value the resilience and connectedness within CALD communities.
- Recognise that CALD communities want to participate in their wider community, including in post-disaster response and recovery. Supporting this participation provides a sense of belonging and makes CALD communities more resilient.
- Recognise and value the importance of CALD community gathering places and marae, including as post-disaster recovery centres.

- Recognise and value existing networks of dissemination including ethnic media.
- Store this information electronically (i.e. in the Cloud) and in hard copy at multiple locations to ensure accessibility of information following disaster.
- ✿ Ensure CALD community databases are kept updated.

Guidelines for developing effective messages for CALD communities

- ✿ In addition to professionally translating and interpreting mainstream messaging, work with CALD communities and service providers to develop messages which are relevant to them.
 - Co-created messages are more appropriate to the target communities, and thus more effective.
 - Note that the diversity within CALD communities means that messages developed for 'CALD communities' - or even for specific ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic CALD communities - may not be relevant to all members of those communities.
- ✿ Keep messages simple.
- ✿ Use consistent branding for all resources in a series.

Guidelines for developing accessible resources for CALD communities

- ✿ In the first instance, produce resources that are written in plain English and incorporate visuals / infographics for universal accessibility.
 - Such resources are more comprehensible to everyone, including people with limited English language competency.
- ✿ As a second step, have these resources professionally translated and/or interpreted into the key languages of your target audience or locality.
 - Engage professionals if you undertake translation or interpreting.

Guidelines for disseminating translated information

- ✿ If you are translating information, ensure the original English language document is easily accessible so that English speakers are aware of the exact content of the messaging.
- ✿ Clearly state on translations - in English - the language of the translation.
- ✿ Ensure translations are clearly dated, in English and the other language.
- ✿ Ensure translations clearly state their information source, in English and the other language.

Guidelines for disseminating information to CALD communities and agencies, organisations and community groups that support them

- ✿ Know how to get information out to CALD communities.
 - Use established networks and systems e.g. via community leaders, ethnic media, community media such as local radio, agencies with Bilingual Workers.
 - Produce written, audio and film resources that can be disseminated via multiple channels.
 - Consider sharing translations in both written and oral forms (either audio-only or video). These oral forms can be more accessible, including to people with lower literacy.
 - Share information online.
 - Also have information available in hard copy.
- ✿ Know when to get information out to CALD communities
 - Ensure information for CALD communities is made publicly available in a timely manner (which requires prioritising the dissemination of information to CALD communities).
- ✿ Where possible, plan for events and produce resources in advance.
- ✿ Where possible, work with other organisations to get messages out to CALD communities.
 - Coordinate with other agencies about the content and timing of your messages to avoid overloading communities with information.
 - Coordinate with other agencies to minimise duplication.
 - Recognise resources produced by central government may require amending to make them appropriate for local contexts.
- ✿ If you are sharing language resources online:
 - Make it obvious on the landing page of a website where to find language resources, and provide 'click-through' buttons in these languages.

- Avoid listing all language resources under one website page; rather, use separate pages and tabs to facilitate people finding and using the resources.
- Consider uploading resources under both the relevant language and a topic heading. People can then search for translations either by language or by topic.
- Make it obvious which resources are the most recent/up-to-date by including a date beside the link to each resource, ensuring website “Last updated” information remains current and removing or archiving redundant messaging.



Actions

Some actions to connect and participate in communication.

These actions were developed from research undertaken with communities in 2012.

- ✚ Get to know your neighbours.
- ✚ Establish good relationships with your community.
- ✚ Recognise the willingness of people to participate and contribute to the common good.
- ✚ Know who might need extra help in your community and ensure these people are supported.
- ✚ Be part of regular community meetings/forums in person or online.
- ✚ Know your community leaders and people in key local government agencies that you can call upon.
- ✚ Provide feedback to agencies about their communication with your community and let them know when their messaging works well.
- ✚ Share your knowledge with your community.
- ✚ Have a family/community plan in place in case of emergencies.

These suggestions will help you and your community access resources in your language.

- ✚ It is your right to access information and to request an interpreter when you speak with a government agency - ensure you ask for this service if you need it.
- ✚ Know where to find official information on websites, as some resources might be translated in your language.
- ✚ Link into your organisation's social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), and check community newspapers.
- ✚ Listen to your local community access radio [station](#) as they have content in many languages other than English.
- ✚ Share your knowledge with your community.

"Remember that having good relationships is essential in everyday life and in times of crisis."

Glossary

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCC	Christchurch City Council
CDHB	Canterbury District Health Board
CDEM	Civil Defence Emergency Management
CLING	Community Languages Information Network Group
EQC	Earthquake Commission

