

National Newsletter

THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS INC.

Volume 12, Number 1, March 2004

SPECIAL PAY & CONDITIONS ISSUE

In this Issue

From the President	1
Who's Who	2
Member Profile	2
Excellence Awards	3
A Victory in Acronym Hell	4
Pay & Conditions Supplement	5
Branch News	12
FIT Asian Forum	13
Professional Development	14
Back Office	15

From the President



Translators and interpreters aspire to be fully recognised as professionals and to be rewarded accordingly.

A significant step in this direction was recently achieved when AUSIT was accepted as a member of Professions Australia, the peak national body for professional associations. It openly confirms our status and gives us access to resources and opportunities to pursue major issues, united with other professions.

In order to ensure our presence is noticed in all relevant forums and to help lift the profile of AUSIT, I have also been talking with major industry players in several states.

In a meeting held in February, I conveyed to NAATI's CEO our concerns regarding NAATI's insistence that their re-accreditation proposal will go ahead. This plan would affect us all, without necessarily benefiting the profession. Whilst AUSIT supports professional development and on-going practice as the hallmarks of professionals, we plan to develop our own criteria, based on our knowledge and experience as industry practitioners. A working group is currently formulating a comprehensive proposal that will recognise different kinds of practitioners, with professional development and networking opportunities for all.

Extensive representations were made to Centrelink when new terms and conditions for interpreters were issued in January under the pressure of a tight deadline, with no prior industry consultation, no room for individual or group negotiation, no pay adjustment in sight and many onerous clauses on practitioners. The legal advice we obtained is now accessible in the Log-in section of the AUSIT website. Much has been learned from this exercise and the Pay and Conditions Committee will soon outline a strategy.

These meetings convinced me that AUSIT needs to continuously promote the profession in order to achieve the status and the recognition we want. End-users and clients must be made aware of the benefits that our profession brings to them and learn how to obtain the best service at the right price. A national program of professional development and regular events would anchor our standards and confirm our commitment to quality.

To structure ourselves accordingly, we have to secure the services and resources necessary to our activities, moving away from volunteer contributions. AUSIT's tiny budget is to be gradually brought in line with our professional objectives. Membership fees have been static for four years and need to progressively catch up. Advertising revenue has already been obtained and more will be sought.

continued on page 2

From the President

continued from page 1

With these resources and the on-going support of our committees and members, we will be well positioned to complete structural projects for the benefit of the profession and to deliver the services and the professional image AUSIT wants to be known for.

*Yveline Piller
President*

Member Profile

Greetings to all from Ita Szymanska, the new Chair of AUSIT Queensland branch.

Ita is a linguist, teacher and translator (Polish). Since 1987 Ita has practised as a translator in government, community and private sectors. She has translated documents for newly arrived immigrants from Poland, works on social topics, technical texts and participated in providing major multilingual information to ethnic communities.

Prior to migrating to Australia, Ita managed private English training services in Poland and taught Polish and cross-cultural awareness in the US. In Australia, Ita designed and conducted short ESL courses for non-English speaking background adult learners in the migrant services sector, developed and provided training for Queensland community interpreters in preparation for NAATI testing and designed a Working with Interpreters short course which she delivered to Queensland's public and community sectors.

She is a member of NAATI Regional Advisory Committee (Qld) and other networks aiming at developing and promoting the translating and interpreting industry in Queensland.

Who's Who

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS 2003-2004

PRESIDENT:	Yveline Piller actyve@iprimus.com.au
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:	Moreno Giovannoni morgio@bigpond.net.au
VICE-PRESIDENT:	Annamaria Arnall arnall@git.com.au
SECRETARY:	Tineke Millard national@ausit.org
TREASURER:	Louis Vorstermans louis@doubledutch.com.au
PRINCIPAL DELEGATES	
ACT	Mike Ovington travtext@webone.com.au
NSW :	Barbara McGilvray bmcg@bigpond.net.au
VIC/TAS:	Chris Poole cptandrw@ozemail.com.au
WA:	Younghi Newman korealink@another.com
QLD:	Ita Szymanska poltrans@optusnet.com.au
SA/NT:	John Hallett hallett@senet.com.au
NORTHERN NATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:	Tineke Millard tinekemillard@ozemail.com.au nsw@ausit.org
SOUTHERN NATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR:	David Connor europatrans@optusnet.com.au victas@ausit.org

How to contact AUSIT

National Telephone Number: **1800 284 181**

Website: **www.ausit.org**

Northern Region (ACT, NSW, QLD)

PO Box 5108

Turrumurra South NSW 2074

E-mail: nsw@ausit.org

Southern Region (NT, SA, Tas., Vic., WA):

PO Box 1070

Blackburn North VIC 3130

E-mail: victas@ausit.org

The regional administrators, Tineke Millard (Northern Region) and David Connor (Southern Region), will be happy to assist you with membership inquiries / renewals and all other administrative matters.

AUSIT Excellence Awards - Celebrating our Achievements

Gaining public recognition for what we do is a key element of enhancing the image of our profession. By publicly celebrating our achievements, we can create more awareness for the significant role our industry plays in Australian society.

The AUSIT Excellence Awards (Victoria/Tasmania) will be an annual award to promote and showcase professional excellence and exemplary business practices of Translators and Interpreters, language service providers and institutions that are part of or related to the translating and interpreting industry. There will be a number of awards to recognise different kinds of contributions to the industry, such as Excellence in Translating, Excellence in Interpreting and Excellence in Delivering Translating and Interpreting Services.

Ms Sarina Phan, Chairperson of the AUSIT Vic/Tas branch, believes that having our own Awards will help our profession become much more visible. She said that despite the fact that in Australia interpreters and translators have been facilitating communication in settings such as legal, health and business for many years, their efforts should be given much more prominence.

Interpreters and translators fulfil an essential role in removing the communication barrier. They are highly skilled professionals doing extraordinary things or ordinary things extraordinarily well and we look forward to receiving nominations from all walks of the industry. With the different categories a wide spectrum of achievements will be honoured which in turn helps publicising T&I competencies and good business practices.

There will be a number of awards to recognise different kinds of contributions to the industry

The Awards were announced at the AUSIT (Vic/Tas) End of Year Cocktail Party on Friday, 12 December 2003. While the Excellence Awards campaign is spearheaded by the AUSIT Vic/Tas branch, we hope that other branches will embrace the concept and join forces with us. The credibility and transparency of the Excellence Awards process is crucial to the success of the AUSIT Excellence Awards to be presented in Australia. We would therefore like to call on all AUSIT members and those with an interest in the industry to get involved – be it by

nominating a potential project or by lending the subcommittee your expertise in formulating detailed assessment criteria. A jury made up of representatives from the various fields of the T&I industry is yet to be appointed.

The submission deadline for the inaugural AUSIT Excellence Awards (Vic/Tas) is on 1 September 2004 and the Awards presentation will be held in December 2004. Details on the submission process will be available on the AUSIT website (www.ausit.org) in late March 2004.

To share your views and/or expertise, please contact Silke Gebauer (Public Relations, Vic/Tas branch) on silkegebauer@aol.com who is acting as coordinator of the working group currently consisting of Moreno Giovannoni (Immediate Past President), Eva Hussain (Vice Chairperson Vic/Tas branch) and Louis Vorstermans (National Treasurer).

Apart from our eBulletin in English, AUSIT also runs 15 specific language discussion groups called eForums (or eFora, if you prefer!). You can discuss terminology and write in your own language. Simply contact your Administrator for more details on how to join them.

Newsletter Contacts and Editorial Policy

National Newsletter Editorial Team:

Anne Richardson, Editor Niki Baras, Design and Production Louise Dyer, Proofreading

Particular thanks are also due to David Connor for his assistance in liaising with the printers.

Contributions deadline for next issue: 14 May 2004.

Please make every effort to ensure that all contributions reach the editor no later than the due date to avoid delaying publication.

Please send all contributions to the Editor

E-mail: amric@ozemail.com.au

Tel./fax: (03) 9886 5282

The AUSIT national newsletter is published four times a year. Letters to the Editor, short articles and items for the calendar of events and other sections are invited. The Editor reserves the right not to publish or to edit any item submitted for publication. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or of AUSIT or its executive.

A Victory in Acronym Hell

By Chris Poole

In 2003, a battle was fought and won on behalf of our industry, the significance of which has not been fully understood. It is a complex issue, and is buried in acronyms. Before I get to the good news, bear with the following background brief.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) oversees training and education in Australia, which is delivered within the context of the National Training Framework (NTF). The NTF is based on Training Packages - the new term for curricula - which comprise Competency Standards. Training Packages are developed by Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) who submit them to ANTA for national endorsement and delivery through RTOs (Registered Training Organisations). The Public Service ITAB is PSETA; Public Education and Training Australia. A set of Competency Standards is a highly structured document consisting of a "key statement" followed by "units" and "elements" that define the skills and knowledge required in a particular occupation. Increasingly, TAFE and other vocational courses are designed to achieve outcomes defined by Competency Standards, which shape modern education, training, and occupational assessment in Australia.

Early in 2003 our sister organisation, WAITI (the Western Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters), started a project to develop competency standards for translation and interpreting. In their preliminary inquiries they discovered to their considerable surprise that a project was already underway – and no one had

consulted the industry!

PSETA was reviewing its Training Package and had decided to whip up some Competency Standards to allow public servants doing ad hoc interpreting and translation to claim some sort of recognition for their status. PSETA engaged several consultants (confirmed to be ignorant of T&I), convened two focus groups in Adelaide - only one of which included practitioners - and had produced four (risible) draft standards, before anyone got through to them that in fact most T&I practitioners are NOT public servants and that there are several general and special interest professional bodies around the nation representing the REAL industry who perhaps should have been consulted first!

This is a very important victory. It clears the way for our industry to take complete responsibility for developing the one authoritative definition of what it means to be an interpreter or translator in Australia.

It took a vigorous four-month campaign, combining the forces of WAITI, AUSIT, ASLIA and various friends and supporters - including the TAFE network and the Kimberley Interpreting Service - before PSETA got the message. The campaign was led by the indefatigable Heather Glass of WAITI, who as well as bombarding the bastions of bureaucracy, had to simultaneously educate knuckle-heads like me as to the true meaning of all this. Key elements in the campaign were the expert input of a consultant engaged by WAITI,

and a meeting in Canberra attended by Heather, myself, Michael Grunwald from AUSIT NSW, and Mandy Dolejsi of ASLIA National, with some timely assistance from Sherrill Bell of NAATI.

PSETA has formally announced they have removed the Standards from their Training Package. Had they been successful, they would have created a dual pathway to T&I "competency" based on completely unusable standards that would have compromised existing TAFE courses, and ultimately, the value of NAATI accreditation.

This is a very important victory. It clears the way for our industry to take complete responsibility for developing the one authoritative definition of what it means to be an interpreter or translator in Australia. The project – hosted by WAITI - is open to all, and everyone is encouraged to visit the website at <http://www.waiti.iinet.net.au> to register their involvement.

This article was first submitted for publication in the December 2003 issue of the Newsletter but was held over until now due to lack of space. Apologies to Chris Poole and all others concerned for the late publication of this item (Editor).

SPECIAL PAY AND CONDITIONS SUPPLEMENT

It is with particular pride and pleasure that I present this special issue on Pay and Conditions. Never before has AUSIT dedicated so much space in its newsletter to promoting this hot issue.

To help achieve more, a structure has been set up to support the tireless efforts of our volunteers. Pay and Conditions now have:

- a formal Committee, facilitated by Immediate Past President, Moreno Giovannoni in Melbourne and chaired by myself from Sydney,
- a dedicated website section, with lots of information for members, a small budget,
- a regular newsletter feature and
- this special issue as promised to the Committee when we met in December in Melbourne.

Right from the start, the Committee has been busy with substantial issues. We wanted to be present and visible where Pay and Conditions are under threat.

In this issue, read about the pioneering efforts of our South Australian branch, the Centrelink interpreters' contract in NSW, the efforts of the Victorian branch committee on CHIS' closing down, and much more.

You can help by giving a copy of this newsletter to any non-members you know. All practitioners should learn what is happening in the profession, so we can join forces where it counts.

On behalf of AUSIT members, I'd like to express heart-felt thanks to those who have already worked so hard for the benefit of all:

Niki Baras, George Ishkan, John Gare, Monika Mayson, Pavlinka Georgiev, Silvana Pavlovska, Moreno Giovannoni, Nella Schulz, Kass Halastanis, Vivian Stevenson, Mary Heath, Sarah Walls, Annamaria Arnall, Tineke Millard, David Connor.

Yveline Piller
National President

EXAMINING THE OPTIONS:

In line with AUSIT's Constitution, the Pay and Conditions Committee's aims are:

- a) to carry out an annual review of pay and conditions for interpreters and translators in Australia and to report to the Annual General Meeting with recommendations for action;
- b) to negotiate working conditions and remuneration with key service users.

After meetings with the Australian Services Union (ASU) and the Community & Public Sector Union, the Committee is examining two proposals for protecting the working conditions of interpreters and translators:

Option 1 - Registration as an Industrial Organisation

AUSIT could apply to become a registered organisation to represent the industrial interests of interpreters and translators.

Assuming legislative requirements are met and objections settled, AUSIT could then seek to

establish a national award with major employers.

The Australian Services Union could conduct this work at a fee for service.

The Writers' Guild and The Rugby Players' Association are examples of registered organisations. AUSIT would simply add another function to the range of services it provides to members.

Option 2 - ASU Membership

Alternatively, AUSIT members could become ASU members at a proportion of the union fee (approx: \$350) depending on weekly hours. The ASU would represent interpreters and translators in the process of making an award.

Any decision along these lines would need to be approved by a general meeting of members. The Committee will soon meet with the Union again to assess the issues and to report to AUSIT's National Council.

CENTRELINK CONTRACTS – PRESIDENT YVELINE PILLER MEETS CENTRELINK MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

On January 28, President Yveline Piller and AUSIT member Vivian Stevenson met with three senior Centrelink representatives.

Centrelink's answers to members' concerns over the new interpreters' contract were as follows:

- Pay levels: Centrelink said very clearly that there is no plan to update pay levels (unchanged for at least 5 years).
- Superannuation: Centrelink will continue to pay 9% super for sole traders/individuals.
- Worker's compensation, professional indemnity insurance: not provided
- Public liability insurance: applies on Centrelink premises only
- The Centrelink Development Agreement (Enterprise Bargaining Agreement) does not apply.

- Onerous clauses (access to contractor's premises, intellectual property, solvency, indemnity of legal costs, long core hours): explained away as "already implicit in the current contract", "standard clause", "has never been used" or "unlikely to ever be used".

Notes:

Centrelink makes negligible pay differentiation between NAATI levels and is not concerned about the lack of experience or quality of newly accredited or non-accredited interpreters. Centrelink's \$4M budget for over 2,000 interpreters represents an average income of \$2,000 p.a per interpreter, hardly enough to cover the various insurance policies.

Update:

According to legal advice received by AUSIT, the Centrelink contract is legal because it breaks no laws. Not because it is a moral document. It just doesn't break the law.

Our legal advice also suggests that it is not illegal for AUSIT to commence negotiation on behalf of a group of members who have each signed the Centrelink contract individually. AUSIT is examining this option.

Centrelink representatives seemed somewhat unsettled by AUSIT's actions, limited as they were. Centrelink offered to meet in Melbourne with the Pay and Conditions Committee.

Centrelink has started a review of the translator's contract.

Community Interpreting in Australia – NAATI Level Zero

by Vivian Stevenson, Pay and Conditions Committee, NSW

STD - on-Site, on-Time and on-Demand

AUSIT members would be aware of recent efforts by AUSIT to represent concerns about interpreter pay and conditions to a major service user, Centrelink, which recently invited interpreters to sign new contracts.

A report published by AUSIT last year, Australian Interpreter Remuneration 1993-2003, (researched and written by John Gare, a member of the Pay and Conditions Committee), showed an undeniable erosion of pay and conditions across the board, with

the economics of working as a community interpreter becoming unviable. The new Centrelink initiative promises more of the same.

Access and equity policy means Centrelink has to provide interpreters on-Site, on-Time and on-Demand - what I term 'STD'. Indeed, at a recent meeting between AUSIT and Centrelink much of the time was taken up by Centrelink explaining its difficulties in guaranteeing STD service across the nation.

However, while Centrelink (and other agencies) express a prefer-

ence for NAATI L3 accreditation, they will happily engage L2s and even unaccredited people, whom they term "Level Zeros" (half the Centrelink panel of 2100 interpreters fits these latter two categories).

Furthermore, there is no recognition for professional development of any kind and therefore no incentive to maintain skills.

Interpreting is not a free market service

Community interpreting is an essential service that was created by the Government – there are no

Continued on page 8

This is a summary of a longer overview presented to ABC talkback radio in February 2004 prior to members of the Pay and Conditions Committee appearing on talkback to explain AUSIT's concerns about the poor standards of service being delivered in Victoria. See the AUSIT web site for a press release on Pay and Conditions and the full text of this overview.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN VICTORIAN INTERPRETING

Community Interpreting and Money

(Community Interpreting is interpreting in health, welfare and legal contexts, as opposed to business).

When the Victorian Health Minister, Bronwyn Pike, said on Jon Faine's morning program (26/2/04) that the 'budget for interpreter services was being maintained', did she know that interpreters now earn 30% less than they did ten years ago? (See the recent AUSIT report on Interpreter Remuneration on the AUSIT web site).

If the Victorian Government has been putting money into interpreting, it has certainly not gone into interpreters' pockets.

It was the Kennett Government that privatised the industry (except for the Central Health Interpreter Service – CHIS - the closure of which was announced last week) and the present Labor Government has continued to under-fund interpreting.

AUSIT has no problem with the agencies who tender for the work – they are simply running their businesses as best they can. It's the Government that provides – or doesn't provide - the money to run the system. It's the system that is bad.

Community Interpreting and Quality

The Victorian Government outsources interpreting and pays lip service to the quality of the

service it gets back. If you have a workforce delivering a vital community service, and its remuneration drops 30% over 10 years you have to ask yourself what is happening to the quality of the service that gets delivered.

Many AUSIT members have dropped out of community interpreting.

The Minister didn't say on radio that all agencies who hire interpreters have an escape clause in their government agreements, which says they will provide an accredited interpreter provided they can get one.

There are two levels of accreditation. Interpreters accredited at the lower level are being used more and more often – even in established languages like Italian and Greek where there are plenty of qualified people available to interpret.

What next?

The Victorian Government needs to:

- 1) Review its outsourcing and its quality control measures, including the interpreting budget it pays to contract holders so the contract holders can in turn pay the workforce; otherwise all they're getting for their peanuts are more monkeys.
- 2) Ensure its own access and equity guidelines are followed to ensure that users of interpreting services employ interpreters with the appropriate skills and that

interpreters are used as a matter of course, and children and friends are not asked to do the interpreting.

Examples of Bad Practice

The following cases reported by AUSIT members highlight the crisis in community interpreting throughout Australia.

Health Sector

- The TAC uses a husband to interpret for the wife. Husband and wife have a serious relationship problem. He deliberately misinterprets what she is saying. She is not assertive enough to complain.
- A Victorian pain management clinic routinely sends notes in English to all non English-speaking clients to ensure that they bring a family member or a friend for their next appointment, as the hospital does not fund interpreters.
- A few weeks ago a patient who had been seen at a Victorian Public Hospital for testicular cancer appeared on ABC talkback radio. He told listeners about his 12 year old daughter being asked by hospital authorities to interpret for him.

WorkCover

- The doctor says to the client: "How long have you been living in Australia?" She says that she's been here 15 years, to which the doctor replies: "I don't think you need an interpreter. Your English seems perfect to me".
- Half way through the appointment the patient is asked to go to another room and change. The interpreter is asked to go

Continued on page 8

Victorian Interpreting

with her to “help her get undressed and stay there in case she needs any help”.

Family Court

- According to Family Court Chief Justice Alastair Nicholson, the court has a considerable shortage of qualified interpreters and a senior Family Court staff member said children as young as 10 had interpreted for parents. Justice Nicholson said people were being forced to discuss intimate details in front of their children and other relatives.

Magistrates Court

- A Chinese lawyer always translates his clients’ documents although he is not an accredited translator. He then asks his clients to sign a document stating they are accurate translations. Bi-lingual lawyers who are not accredited interpreters interpret for their clients in courts and magistrates allow this to happen.

Supreme Court

- A judge tells the defence lawyer: “Your client doesn’t need a professional Interpreter. He can get a friend or a family member to help him next time”.

From a local newspaper in Ryde, NSW:

"Gladesville police are seeking volunteers who speak fluent English and another language to develop a register of local residents willing to assist in dealing with victims of crime. Once established, police may call upon a volunteer on the register by phone to help in translating information to victims of crime. All languages are sought after, however translators in immediate need include Korean, Mandarin and Cantonese speakers."

Community Interpreting

free market forces at work in community interpreting and without a minimum interpreter rate of pay (such as might be provided by the old-fashioned award concept), private and public sector agencies can pay only what the Governments (state and federal) make available in their budgets.

This is incontrovertible: there are no jobs for community interpreters other than Government ones. It is misleading to compare them to other trades or services such as electricians, cleaners or IT specialists - all of whom have options outside the government ambit and whose work may not be performed by unlicensed/unqualified persons.

How do users of interpreters ensure costs are kept down? As interpreters drop out of the system because of the poor pay and conditions, state and federal users of interpreters simply demand that NAATI continue to test new people willing to work for less.

Interpreters as ducks

The interpreter is treated as a curious mixture of employee (uniform, dictated pay rates, and strict compliance conditions – including discretionary ‘entrance’ examination, i.e. NAATI) and independent contractor – with all the attendant responsibilities of competence, training, record-keeping, legal advice, travel, equipment (telephone, mobile, computer, internet) that produce significant overheads. Yet s/he

can only ever work for Centrelink or other Federal and State bodies. To maintain that the community interpreter is an ‘independent contractor’ is a fiction. We all know that if it walks, quacks and looks like a duck then it’s a duck.

What is needed

We need:

- a general recognition that the whole contractor notion is a sham, that interpreters are a species of public servant that has been created to provide a service which interpreters can’t sell elsewhere.
- an award rate for Commonwealth and state interpreting jobs. Any agency, government or private, supplying interpreting services must pay the award, and factor it into its cost base.

Finally, interpreters need not worry about re-accreditation. Just let your accreditation lapse and you’ll still have a job and a future as a Level Zero with Centrelink.

The AUSIT e-Bulletin Conditions of Use are now in force and can be accessed on the website. Space permitting, they will be published in full in the next newsletter.

VICTORIA – TALKBACK ON THE STATE OF HEALTH INTERPRETING

The following are excerpts from 774 ABC Melbourne “Mornings with Jon Faine” Thursday, 26 February 2004, a Melbourne radio program.

One major talkback issue concerned the closure of CHIS (Central Health Interpreter Service) by the Victorian Government. Kassiani Halastanis is a member of the Health Services Union and the AUSIT National Pay and Conditions Committee. Transcribed by John Gare. See the AUSIT web site for the full text.

Jon Faine We’re going to tell you a story about another Victorian state government cut-back. This time, interpreters in hospitals. Apparently it’s going to be outsourced or privatised or something similar. You’d have thought that was a fundamental right and a basic service that Government would provide, wouldn’t you? Kass, in Richmond. ‘Morning, Kass.

Kass Good morning, Jon. I’m a qualified interpreter and have worked in the public health sector on a full-time, part-time and casual basis for a number of years, and I’m seriously concerned with a couple of the issues that the Minister raised. She did say that CHIS has become unviable... that’s only because CHIS is the only agency that pays interpreters at award rates. It’s an open competitive market that the Government has endorsed for the various interpreting services to compete in ... and the only way that other services ... including VITS ... have become competitive, is because they pay interpreters at below award rates...

JF. So have they been undercutting CHIS?

K. Basically that’s it.

JF. So how much less do you get paid if you’re ... if you’re booked by another agency instead of CHIS?

K. If you’re booked by another agency you can be paid anywhere between five, ten or fifteen dollars less and there is no WorkCover and no super paid to you...

JF. Does it mean that people don’t want to do the work ... It’s not worth doing it if you’re forced to do it as a contractor?

K. Yes. I’ve been working in the industry for about seven years now... and I’m seriously considering exiting the industry... It would probably pay me more to work as a courier... I’d get paid twenty-five dollars an hour if I worked as a courier... Where the Minister gave assurances that in public hospitals there will be accredited interpreters always available... I ... beg to differ. I have been asked many times by various departments in hospitals to explain to patients that, when they come for their admission or for their radiology procedure ... is it possible for them to bring a relative ...or a neighbour, to do the interpreting, because the hospital can’t afford [to pay].

JF. That’s totally unprofessional.

K. One hospital I know has it clearly spelt out, in writing, where patients could bring, for radiology

procedures and admissions, their family or their friends in ...

JF. Well, if you’d give us a copy of that document, I’m happy to put it to the Minister when we speak to her next. Thank you Kass. Very interesting to hear ... there, there had to be more to it than met the eye, and now you’ve explained what the missing element was.

Note: A few days later a patient who had been seen at a Victorian Public Hospital for testicular cancer appeared on the same radio program. He told listeners about how upset he was that his 12 year old daughter had been “roped in”, as Jon Faine put it, to interpret for him.

At the same time a standard letter on the Northern Hospital’s letterhead was faxed to Jon Faine. The letter invited patients to bring a friend or relative to help them with their admission.

The Victorian Health Minister later admitted on radio that the letter was inappropriate, as was the use of a 12 year old girl to interpret for her father. She promised it wouldn’t happen again.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACTS ON PAY AND CONDITIONS

The South Australia/Northern Territory Branch of AUSIT, through its Enterprise Bargaining Representative Nella Schulz, put some hard work into trying to improve the pay and conditions of interpreters and translators recently.

Here is what Nella had to say.

Casual interpreters and translators employed by the Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) are public servants and were therefore eligible to place a claim at the current round of Enterprise Bargaining.

We requested that the Public Service Association lodge a claim on our behalf, with our instructions. The negotiations were meant to be finalised in November 2003 but the time line has been extended until a resolution is achieved.

We are hoping that once the PSA (Public Service Association) and the State Government settle the current salary claim dispute, then the fine details of our claim will be dealt with. Certainly we expect some significant improvement from our current position.

The text of the claim prepared by the PSA on behalf of SA interpreters employed by the ITC is available from AUSIT.

Nella and the SA branch are to be commended for the work they have done, which should be an inspiration to the committees of other branches.

VICTORIAN BRANCH CONCERN FOR CHIS CONTRACTORS

Eva Hussain, Vic/Tas Branch Deputy Chair, reports: When the closure of the Central Health Interpreting Service (CHIS) was announced the Victorian Branch became concerned about the lack of information available to CHIS's pool of casual employees.

Many had interpreting bookings scheduled well into 2004 and no effort had been made by CHIS or the liquidator to inform them of their entitlements. We expressed our disappointment that the workforce CHIS relied on for so many years was treated with such disrespect. For many, hospital work was their only source of income.

Penny Duckworth, Acting Manager of Multicultural Strategy Unit at the Department of Human Services, agreed to meet with AUSIT for the purpose of developing closer links. At no stage was AUSIT contacted or consulted on this matter.

The Branch also spoke to the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs Commissioner, wrote to the Premier Steve Bracks and to the Minister for Health, and contacted the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria to express its concerns.

Note: a few days after representations by the Vic/Tas Branch, the liquidator wrote an explanatory letter to all CHIS contractors. At least they now know what is going on.

Déjà Vu Software Author Dies In Madrid

It is with the greatest sorrow that we announce the passing away of Emilio Benito, President and Founder of ATRIL and original author of the Déjà Vu software concept. Emilio died aged 56 last Sunday morning in Madrid, Spain, after a long struggle with a cruel disease.

For more than a decade prior to his effective retirement in early 2003, Emilio's legendary work inspired the translation software industry, setting the standard for translation software quality, speed, reliability and, perhaps more than anything else, customer care.

Following a smooth, seamless transfer of roles over the past two years, Emilio's work has been continued by ATRIL's team of software and support engineers led by his son, Daniel Benito. From the solid Déjà Vu 3 platform designed by Emilio, Daniel has taken the Déjà Vu approach to new heights with the Déjà Vu X software range, marking the beginning of the new Déjà Vu era - an era that has only just begun. Emilio's life and work is the legend of a humble man with the mind of a genius who practised software programming as a form of art and customer support as an act of love. His example will not be in vain. While we mourn Emilio's death, we shall use the inspiration he left us with to reach the goals that he visualised for ATRIL and those of Déjà Vu users worldwide.

Emilio will be remembered forever in our hearts. May he rest in peace.

ATRIL, Madrid, 12.02.2004

EQUITY FOR SOME: IS THE "EQUITY" OF PATIENT HEALTH COSTING THE "EQUITY" OF INTERPRETER REMUNERATION?

by Kassiani Halastanis, Pay and Conditions Committee, Victoria, AUSIT & HSU member

Since this article (in summary form here) was written, the Victorian Government has closed the Central Health Interpreter Service. See the AUSIT web site for the full text.

Delivering Health Interpreting Services in Victoria

In delivering health services through public hospitals in Australia, the need to provide interpreter services to patients of Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds has been a responsibility taken up by Government, in direct relation to Government's adoption of multiculturalism as a policy and specifically, to Government's adoption of access and equity policies. In the case of Victorian metropolitan public hospitals, interpreters of the languages most in demand were employed directly by hospitals from the early 1970s. But in the 1990s, management of various hospitals decided to outsource interpreter services and established contracts between some hospitals and the Central Health Interpreter Service Inc. (CHIS), a quasi-government interpreter service agency, with the specific purpose of creating a more coordinated, responsive, accountable and efficient service.

1990s Public Sector Reform

In the context of the 1998 Commonwealth Government's public service reform agenda, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) articulated its reform objectives clearly

by naming the principles of its "Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society" (1998) as those of: access, equity, communication, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. The Charter was endorsed at all levels of Government and its framework was specifically intended to "commit all Government service providers to integrating the Charter's seven principles into their strategic planning, policy and corporate processes"¹.

Interpreting in Public Hospitals

In the case of public hospitals, the principles of efficiency and accountability in the Government's public service reform agenda were paramount in outlining the specifications of the hospitals' contracts with CHIS. Central to the contracts were the concepts of productivity, measurable outcomes and accountability. This necessarily entailed the absence of interpreter staff overheads (leave entitlements, WorkCover, superannuation) for the hospitals, that is, the outsourcing agency (CHIS) would absorb all such costs.

The Bottom Line – Interpreter Remuneration

Those interpreters now employed directly by hospitals on a full-time or part-time basis are currently paid award rates and conditions (WorkCover, superannuation, leave entitlements), whilst their colleagues who are engaged by the same hospitals on a casual

basis are denied that which is clearly stipulated in the Health Services Award and that which was observed by the previous provider, CHIS.

In attempts to cut costs, hospital interpreter budgets are being reined in by sacrificing the working conditions of casual interpreter staff. This sacrifice has been facilitated by hospital management teams who have breached their Agreement with the Health Services Union (HSU), by outsourcing casual interpreter appointments to competitive private non-award paying agencies. This was achieved without any consultation with interpreters.

.....the principles of its "Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society" (1998) are those of: access, equity, communication, responsiveness, effectiveness.....

¹. "Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society" (1998), Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

Australian Capital Territory

Just before Christmas the ACT Committee invited members to participate in a survey of possible Professional Development sessions during 2004. And the winners are:

1. Legal issues for T&I practitioners and

Demonstration of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) software

(above two equal first)

2. Marketing techniques for T&I practitioners

3. Workshop for interpreters and new entrants to the profession

(last two scores almost equal but well below No. 1)

We are now planning a PD program with those four sessions over the next 5-6 months. We hope to advise our members towards the end of February of arrangements for the first session, which will probably take place around the end of March.

Members are welcome to suggest other topics for the second semester 2004.

Mike Ovington, Chair
13.02.2004

New South Wales

Our first event of the new year is a PD/networking presentation on Thursday, 26 February 2004, presented by Michael Grunwald on INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION theory in translation and interpreting practice.

A planned session by our member Ignacio Garcia from Western Sydney Uni on the "Déjà Vu" computer-aided translation program had to be postponed because computer system engineers at Western Sydney are not willing to

set up the CAT software on the local network.

The NSW issue of driver's licence translation remains unresolved. The branch committee will approach the RTA senior management directly.

The branch committee strongly supports AUSIT's membership in "Professions Australia".

Our relationship with the Bar Association in NSW goes on and keeps bearing fruit. More events are planned to provide better insight into court interpreting for the benefit of Bar Association members in their professional development program.

The branch is planning to edit a little brochure issued by our British colleagues and use it for promoting the profession.

We are looking at the issue of competencies for training T&Is. They may be a good basis for NAATI accreditation and AUSIT membership categories. Wouldn't that make an excellent subject for the next AUSIT national conference in October 2004: Competencies – a useful and meaningful basis for training and accrediting T&Is?

Uli Priester, Chair
17.02.2004

Queensland

No report as such had been received from the Queensland branch at the time of going to print, however the branch has not been idle. Ita Szymanska has recently taken over the Chair from Mira Chapman who has worked tirelessly for AUSIT for a number of years. The committee has met this year and is working hard at developing a PD program for the year.

Editor

South Australia / Northern Territory

Committee Meetings

We have great plans and ideas but lack the time and manpower to implement them all. Please be patient and understanding. We do the best we can. And we always welcome "new blood". Why not join us in one of our next committee meetings, just to have a peep "behind the scenes"? There is nothing secret going on, just a get-together to discuss what is going on in AUSIT, what our plans are, and how to go about it. We meet every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 6pm - 7.30pm. The new meeting venue is the "Left Bank Cafe" at Pulteney Street, opposite the old meeting place, Cafe du Val. Please contact us first to confirm the time and venue.

Social Events

Our end-of-year gathering in December at Eagle on the Hill was a cosy little affair. We had the opportunity to catch up with colleagues and meet new T&Is while enjoying the magnificent view over Adelaide.

Seminars

Our next seminar will most likely be on 1 April 2004 (no April fool's joke, I assure you! Really. Do believe me.). We will send out invitations in due time to notify you of the event. The topic?

"Marketing your services" - How to go about it, what to look out for, etc. We are inviting a marketing specialist who knows her job and is willing to share her secrets with us. Afterwards we'll have an informal networking session with finger food. That should give everybody the chance to mingle, meet up with colleagues, ask questions, have fun.

Plan

Future events might include a talk about "Literary Translations". This is still in the planning stage, but we are optimistic that we could hold this seminar in May. Another seminar on the cards is "Court Interpreting", but again, this is still in the planning phase.

Ideas

We always welcome feedback from our members. Any seminars, social events, issues, etc. that you would like to see organised, discussed, tackled? Do let us know.

Hope to see you soon in one of our events.

Andrea Hoffmann, Chair
20.02.2004

Victoria / Tasmania

No branch report as such had been received at the time of going to press, however the Vic/Tas branch has been very active on a number of fronts this year. A very successful PD workshop (Linguistic Issues for Interpreters and Translators Working in Legal Settings) was held in late February, an Excellence Awards scheme has been announced and committee and branch members have been actively involved in discussions and negotiations relating to pay and conditions and competency standards (see relevant items elsewhere in this newsletter).

Editor

Western Australia

The WA members turned up in great numbers to the End-of-Year party on 29 November 2003 at the Hellenic Club in Perth. The evening's program included Greek (Bouzouki) music, Greek dancing demonstrations and lessons, and of course fantastic food and drinks! But the highlight was the presentation by our PD committee member, Rita Pasqualini, entitled "*The Blue*

Stocking Angel – the case of unsafe text". It was a series of cautionary tales of mistranslations – sometimes hilarious, sometimes chilling – that surely everyone could relate to. It was a great evening and everyone had a jolly good time.

The WA Committee is having the year's first meeting on 16 February 2004. In the meeting we plan to approve the formal transfer of Treasury duties from Barbara Delevoy to Diana Rodriguez-Losada.

Also at the meeting, the forthcoming PD sessions will be discussed:

Our first session is planned on 21 February and is entitled "Subtitling courtroom dramas across states, countries and languages". Again Rita will preside at the session which features a solicitor from Legal Aid WA. Next session will be called "Steel Yourself" (how not to break down while interpreting in distressing situations), and is scheduled for April 3rd.

Other items on the agenda include a planned meeting with NAATI national executives who are visiting Perth on 4 March 2004, and the method of decision-making (by email conference).

The committee is almost back to full strength and fresh from a couple of months' break. We are looking forward to another fruitful year of activity!

Yutaka Kawasaki, Secretary
13.02.2004

FIT Fourth Asian Translators' Forum

Date and Venue:

October 29-31 2004, Tsinghua University, Beijing, P.R. China

Short Description:

The Asian Translators' Forum is a regional conference held once every three years under the auspices of the International Federation of Translators [FIT]. The first Forum was held in Beijing in 1995, the second in Seoul in 1998, and the third in Hong Kong in 2001.

The Fourth Asian Translators' Forum, co-hosted by the Translators' Association of China and Tsinghua University, will be held at Tsinghua University on October 29-31, 2004. About 300 participants from all over the world are expected to attend the forum.

The Fourth Forum will comprise sessions in the following formats: plenary, panels, workshops, round table discussions and book exhibitions.

The working languages of the forum will be English and Chinese.

Theme(s):

1. Translation and Cognition;
2. Teaching of Translation and Interpretation;
3. Translation and Mass Media;
4. Translation and Intercultural Communication;
5. Translation Corpus and Machine Translation

Contact Details:

Luo Xuanmin, Department of Foreign Languages, Tsinghua University, Beijing, 100084, P. R. China. Tel: 86-10-62783579. Email: fld@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn

Invited Speakers: Betty Cohen, President of FIT (Canada), Lin Wusun, Executive Vice President of TAC (China), Martha Cheung,

Continued on page 15

Professional Development

One step forward – Surveying the reality of PD in Translation and Interpreting

Continuous self-education is the core characteristic of a contemporary practitioner in all professions. We all do it, in one way or another. We keep up with new developments in the language by reading newspapers, books, magazines and by listening to recorded speech via radio and television. Occasionally we travel and update our vocabulary through immersion in that language. We attend TAFE or university courses or upgrade our accreditation level. We keep up with new developments in technology by learning to work with new software, hardware and using the internet. The task of managing our own business also demands that we should take notice of and follow changes in several related fields: taxation, contract law, marketing etc.

Keeping up with advances within the profession is a controversial problem. Some cherish the belief that once you have learnt how to translate and interpret and obtained accreditation, you are set for life and there is no real need to continue learning. However, most of us

profess an insatiable thirst for knowledge and wish to follow developments in academic research, study how others perform the same T/I tasks; we aspire to do something better each day, we feel we should be constantly moving ahead.

AUSIT has always offered opportunities for learning. Our team currently responsible for organising professional development works hard to continue and expand the tradition.

Wishing to know how our colleagues keep up with the changes, what works for them, what difficulties they encounter and what kinds of PD events they like best, we began to ask questions and are gathering responses. Many thanks to those who already sent back their questionnaire and to those too, who are yet to volunteer their participation. The results of the PD Survey will be published in the next issue of this Newsletter.

*Annamaria Arnall,
Vice President*

AUSIT Joins Professions Australia

We have great pleasure in announcing that AUSIT has just affiliated with Professions Australia (formerly known as the Australian Council of Professions, Ltd), which is the national peak body for professional associations.

AUSIT need no longer be a "lone voice in the wilderness". It is now allied with many other professional associations which have sought and achieved much for their members.

Professions Australia is an organised network of other professional associations, aimed at improving the lot of its affiliates, who, collectively, give it greater political "clout". As such, it has gained recognition in the "corridors of power" as the legitimate spokesman for the associations.

Professions Australia has already fought many battles, and has experience in addressing many issues of current relevance to AUSIT. It is well placed to provide both information and advice on a range of issues, and to help press our case on important matters.

The benefits for AUSIT members and committees will

include :

- sharing in Professional Development events organised by other members;
- discussing issues of common interest, such as higher education, price setting, national competencies, members' credentials, taxation, registration boards, codes of conduct, privacy policy, DIMIA professional occupation list (i.e. the 60-point issue), etc.;
- cooperation at branch level between AUSIT and local branches of professions as users or potential users of T&I services, as well as space in their newsletters or even exchange of articles;
- having access to the political arena and a voice and
- opportunities to speak before the Senate or to lobby relevant parties;

Paul Sinclair and Yveline Piller

New Members

To February 2004, National Council has admitted the following people to AUSIT membership or associate membership:

Ikuko Tamon (QLD), Mie Tsumori (QLD), Andrea Sinclair (ACT), Hadar Bensaul (NSW), Frank Lapere (NSW), Dong-Ly Phan (VIC), Kassiani Halastanis (VIC), Heike L. Kavanagh (WA), Yukali Armstrong (ACT) and Amaro Pinas Mueller (NSW).

Congratulations and a warm welcome to all our new members.

From the Administrators

Have a look at the members' section of our website www.ausit.org

New documents are regularly uploaded there, recent examples being the President's end-of-year report and other reports on the issue of pay and conditions for translators and interpreters. If you need your password and ID for access to the members' section, just ask your administrator.

If you compare the current AUSIT membership fees to those in other countries, you'll realise that you get remarkable value for your money. In the UK the annual membership fee of the Institute of Linguists is £81.00 Sterling (approx. A\$200) and those of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting are £184.00 (A\$460). The American Translators' Association charges US\$120 (approx. A\$160) for membership, and an extra US\$15 (A\$20) for each specialised group (language, medical etc.) you belong to, whereas with AUSIT for no more than A\$90 you get access to the e-Bulletin and any one or more of the 15 language groups available by e-mail. There are also two new

e-mail groups: literary translation and translation technology. Please contact your administrators for any help with the above, or with your entry in our on-line database, or on any matter relating to your membership. E-mail us or give us a call on 1800 284 181.

Tineke Millard (NSW, ACT & Qld)
nsw@ausit.org

David Connor (Vic/Tas, SA/NT & WA)
victas@ausit.org

New Chair of QLD Branch

I am delighted that Ita Szymanska has agreed to take the Chair of the Queensland branch. We met during my visit in November and I look forward to talking to her again soon.

Warm thanks to Mira Chapman, outgoing Chair, for her tireless work over the last few years. I am glad Mira is planning to remain involved as it will be for the benefit of all.

Yveline Piller

Do you ever feel isolated in your work as a T/1? Would you like to be able to ask for advice or opinions from colleagues, or share your concerns? Do you ever wonder what AUSIT is doing and how debates and developments in the T&I industry may affect your work? Then subscribe to the AUSIT e-Bulletin. Simply send a blank e-mail message to: AUSIT-eBulletin-subscribe@yahoogroup.com to be able to exchange news and views with hundreds of colleagues throughout Australia and beyond.

Hong Kong Baptist University (HK), Cay Dollerup, University of Copenhagen (Denmark), Edwin Gentzler, University of Massachusetts (USA), Theo Hermans, University College London (UK)

Registration: Conference Fee: RMB1000 (Mainland China), \$250 USD (Others);

URL: www.tsinghua-translation.org.cn

<<http://www.tsinghua-translation.org.cn/>>



A Touch of Glamour!

(From the Sydney Morning Herald, Jan 31 - Feb 1)

"The United Nations said a movie starring Nicole Kidman would be made at UN headquarters in New York, a location where Hollywood has failed for decades to get permission to film. The movie, to be directed by Sydney Pollack, is called *The Interpreter*. Kidman will play a Kenyan-born translator who overhears an assassination plot, becomes a target too and helps stop the killing of an African leader addressing the General Assembly.

(.....) *(Reuters)*

It's good to see T/Is finally getting a share of the limelight. We've always known that doctors and lawyers aren't the only professionals to lead glamorous, exciting lives! As National President Yveline Piller says, though, "I wonder how she is going to cope with the ethics angle!" . Would anyone like to offer Nicole a few pointers? *(Editor)*

SPECIAL OFFER
SAVE US\$100!

Get Ready!

Today, more words need to be translated than ever before, and the trend is expected to continue.*
Get Ready to translate faster and better with TRADOS 6.5 Freelance, the world's most popular Translation Memory software.

- Increase your productivity and complete jobs faster
- Ensure consistency and language quality at the term and sentence level
- Avoid ever having to translate the same sentence more than once
- Win more business

• Translate virtually any file format including Excel, PowerPoint and Word 2003

Order today at www.translationzone.com or email us at autralia@trados.com.

More Power, More Freedom, More Value

SAVE US\$100

- Now just US\$795
- Retail price ~~US\$895~~
- Big savings also on upgrades



TRADOS 6.5[®]
Freelance
Language Technology for Professionals

*A majority of members of ProZ.com, the world's largest community of translators, agree with the statement, "The translation industry has never been busier."
© 2004 TRADOS, Inc. All rights reserved. Special offer expires June 21, 2004. All pricing is in USD. This offer cannot be combined with any other TRADOS offers unless otherwise specified. Certain other restrictions apply.