

# AUSIT

Quarterly Newsletter

# - in TOUCH

Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

Volume 17, number 4  
Spring 2009

**Excellence Awards / D-Day Round-up**



Member organisation  
Federation Internationale  
des Traducteurs  
International Federation of  
Translators

including tributes to Paul Sinclair

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## From the editor

The deadline for the summer issue is **10 February 2009**. Thanks, as always, are due to all contributors, and the new NC. Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to me at my NEW postal address:

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*Front cover photo: The crowd enjoys 2009 AUSIT National Excellence Awards and Gala Dinner in the sumptuous Adelaide Town Hall on 6 November.*

## Important dates in local and international T&I

11 December, 6pm-11pm

**Vic/Tas Branch End of Year Party**

Celtic Club, 316-320 Queen St, Melbourne

Queries: 03 9895 4473

15 December, 7pm for 7.30pm

**NSW Branch End of Year Dinner**

Medusa Greek Taverna, 2 Market St (cnr Kent St), Sydney

Queries: 02 9267 0799

26-30 July 2010

**Critical Link 6**

Aston University, Birmingham, UK

30 September 2010

**International Translators Day**

5-6 November 2010

**Synergise Biennial Conference**

Registrations open January 2010

30 July 2011

**Next FIT Statutory Congress**

San Francisco, USA

# AUSIT

Australian Institute of Interpreters & Translators Inc

# Synergise!

Feed the soul – Stimulate the mind – Enjoy your profession  
Interact with like-minded people – Discover your colleagues  
Share common concerns – Work out common solutions  
Learn and teach  
Have fun along the way

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU  
at the 2010 AUSIT Biennial National Conference  
Fremantle, WA 5-6 November

THANK YOU

Annamaria, Diana, Ella, Jean, Michele, Trish, Valosh & Yutaka

# From the helm

## Newly-elected AUSIT President **Sam Berner** and the 2009-10 National Council have exciting plans

I believe in miracles. Well, 90 per cent of them. I assure you, the rest of the new National Council believes in them too!

This is not some sort of a belief in the paranormal. I believe in miracles simply because 90 per cent of them are not so. They happen because people want them to happen and then do something to make them happen. I believe we can do the same in AUSIT.

The Brisbane Conference was a miracle. The Adelaide Excellence Awards, successful despite a tiny team, were a miracle. In fact, every winner of these awards is a miracle of sorts. Gaining 10 new members in WA following a single Open Day was a miracle. A new, young, active committee in NSW is a miracle. Each miracle is a sign we have grown as an organisation, because our members have grown as individuals.

At the National AGM after the new National Council was elected, I was torn between wanting to say something and wanting to make an impact. I opted for the adage that a picture is better than a thousand words, and showed a short video clip on what our executive team envisioned as 'leadership'. I would like to share this clip with you all, because I would like this vision to become a shared one. I have uploaded it to my website for you to download and watch: <<http://www.samberner.com/media/Leading.flv>>.

I am concerned with the lack of healthy, vibrant debate on the eBulletin. We all get so stuck in our work that we find no time to talk about our dreams, futures and concerns. But unless you 'chatter' to us — the team that leads you — then we will, by default, dream our own dreams, and build a future that only we envision. Communication is the key to a successful community. The newly elected National Council has decided — at its very first meeting — to promote the flow of communication between Council and members, and will be sending out 'What's Up?' eFlashes on a monthly basis to inform members of our activities and invite debate.

The new NC has many dreams to share — a new website is being

developed to present the world a modern, professional image of ourselves, and to give us a better tool for communicating, educating, and marketing. The WA Branch is busy preparing for the forthcoming Biennial National Conference in November next year. NT has proposed to host the 2011 Excellence Awards in Alice Springs. There was even a proposal to host the 2012 Biennial Conference in Hobart. Suddenly we are not just planning a year at a time, but a few years ahead. Excitement is infectious, and a good virus for a community of practice to catch.

But excitement alone will not go far if it is not supported by planning and action. We need a unified vision to be able to face up to the various challenges the industry is posing, both locally and globally. Our numbers have not grown much in the past three decades. We need a strategic, targeted outreach program to attract the best in our profession, so that we become a real peak body. Both our Code of Professional Practice, and our Constitution are well overdue for review — this time we have legal minds on board and we are adamant some tangible results will be produced. The Qualifications Sub-committee has been working very hard all year, and we have their recommendations for streamlining the application process to review and endorse. The Professional Development team, now headed by Eva Hussain, is working on new state and national PD calendars, on sharing and preserving AUSIT's intellectual property, and on extending our focus to regional centres. NC is supporting these ventures by making the Orientation Day a free, open annual event in every capital city. Last year these O-days proved to be good generators of new members, and this is something we want to focus on.

The outgoing NC has done an amazing job. Thank you not just for the great work you have done so far, and for the huge commitment of time and energy to AUSIT, but also for your faith in this new team; your belief helped encourage us to put our hands up and take on the torch from you.

The amount of work that has been started and completed is overwhelming: the competencies project, establishing PAMS as our administrative body, the orientation days, website upgrade, qualifications committee, procedural manual, two awards ceremonies and one national conference... and much more. We, the newly elected National Council, are fully aware this was not easy. We promise to carry on the fantastic work you have all done. And you will never be far away from us, because we still need your expertise and knowledge.

Last, but not least, thanks are due to those who had faith in us, have extended a helping hand to make AUSIT a success, have provided constructive criticism, and those who have maintained the discourse across distance and time.

Special thanks are due from me, in chronological order, to the following people: Mira Chapman (Qld) for talking me into joining AUSIT; Jadranka Brown (Qld) for giving me my first opportunity to present a workshop for AUSIT and for long years of support and ideas; Ita Szymanska (Qld) for mentoring me and helping me become a leader; Tea Dietterich (Qld) for showing me how to market AUSIT and agreeing to take the second place when she should have been in the first; the whole Qld team for being so supportive, cooperative and fun over the past five years; the late Paul Sinclair for explaining to me what AUSIT is all about; Annamaria Arnall (WA) for giving me the opportunity to get involved with PD at the national level; and Rona Zhang (Qld) for being such an inspiration to dream big dreams.

I look forward to bringing to AUSIT's leadership the ethos of service and community building that I believe in strongly, and I ask you — all of you AUSIT members — to put your hands together, so that we grow into a strong tree with many branches, a leading organisation, and the vanguard of a professional body which sets standards others can follow.

# National Council 2009-10

## National Executive



### **Sam Berner — National President**

I have 26 years of experience in translation and managing businesses. I am a NAATI-accredited professional Arabic > English translator and a computer geek. My Brisbane-based business, Arabic Language Experts, assists Australian businesses trading in the Middle East with bridging the cultural and linguistic gap. Prior to coming to Australia in 1995, I lived for over 20 years in the Middle East and North Africa, teaching, publishing and translating. I have been an active member of AUSIT since 2003, acting as Qld branch PD Coordinator, Qld Branch Secretary, Chair of the Brisbane Biennial Conference Organising Committee, National CPD Team Leader, AUSIT Website Re-development Coordinator and more. I continually travel interstate to deliver workshops for various organisations. In previous lives, I was an ESL teacher, writer, publisher, and knowledge manager, to mention just a few. I am a community-builder who believes good things happen when enough people want them. I am also an avid photographer and a bibliophile who does not miss a single book sale within four hours drive from base.



### **Tea C. Dieterich — National Vice-President**

I am a NAATI advanced translator and interpreter and hold degrees in translation, interpreting and cultural studies for Spanish, English, German and French from the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (FASK Gernersheim) and the University of Granada (EUTI). I was recruited by the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and came to Sydney in 1997. In 1999 I founded my translation agency Multimedia Languages and Marketing (MMLM). In 2000 I helped establish, then managed, the Kimberley Interpreting Service (KIS) in WA, which provides NAATI-accredited interpreters in Indigenous languages and promotes the right of Aboriginal people to interpreter services. In 2002 I moved to Cairns where I opened another branch of MMLM; today I operate out of our head office in Brisbane. I have been Vice-President and President of the AUSIT Qld Branch in my past three years in Brisbane and adore working with our local branch. I also chair the AUSIT Marketing Subcommittee. I am a member of Brisbane Marketing, the German-Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the German-Australian Business Association, the Australian Institute of Export and other corporate and tourism associations. I use my extensive business networks in Australia to promote and increase AUSIT's exposure in the corporate sector and export industry.



### **Ilke Brueckner-Klein — National Secretary**

I am a NAATI-accredited professional translator (German <> English) and an AUSIT Senior Practitioner. I grew up in Germany where, after grammar school I undertook three years of professional training as a T/I (English, Italian, Spanish). After several years work as a bilingual personal assistant I migrated to Australia in 1997 and have been self-employed as a full-time professional translator ever since. I have been an AUSIT member for almost 12 years now. After initially organising networking sessions in Melbourne and compiling informal email updates for Vic/Tas members (Keeping In Touch), I filled the roles of Vic/Tas Branch Secretary (2001-03) and National Secretary (2001-03), as well as being PR Manager for the 2008 AUSIT Biennial National Conference and Assistant Secretary for the AUSIT QLD Branch (2008-09). In 2008 I took on the responsibility of National Secretary again and was re-elected last month. I enjoy the geographical flexibility my translation business (Klein Corporate Contracting Pty Ltd, The German, Ilke's Translation Services) offers; I choose to live and work in Melbourne during the summer months and in Brisbane during the winter. Spending many hours in front of a computer screen requires some sort of physical outlet, so chances are you'll see me on a commuter bike zipping around Melbourne, or on a fast road bike in hilly Brisbane.



### **Diana Rodriguez-Losada — National Treasurer**

I was born in Argentina, but have also lived in Spain, England, the Dominican Republic and Papua New Guinea. We relocated to Australia in 1987 before settling in Perth in 1993. I am the mother of Ivan, Indira and Karel, and in a happy relationship with my partner Rod. I enjoy travelling (who doesn't?), reading, dancing and active involvement in the communities I belong to.

I am an accredited Professional Spanish <> English Translator, a practising community interpreter, an experienced Spanish teacher, and have worked as a language/ relocation consultant for local and overseas companies. I have been an AUSIT member since 2002 and more recently was accepted as a Senior Practitioner. I have been in the AUSIT WA team for the last five years. My 25+ years of practice is supported by a BSci in Agriculture (Argentina) and a Grad Dip in Business Management (Australia), as well as most PD offerings in T&I. I have been treasurer and chairperson of the Latin American Cultural Association Inc, giving me experience in committee work, consultation within a multicultural environment and liaising with sponsorship bodies, including the submission and acquittal of grants for large events.



### **Sarina Phan — Immediate Past President**

I have been active within AUSIT for over a decade now. I first joined the Vic/Tas Committee as a committee member back in the 90s, when I was a learner and observer. I then served as Chair of Vic/Tas for three years and joined the NC in 2000. For the last two years in my role as National President, I worked on, among other things, strengthening AUSIT's administration. As a Vietnamese T/I in my own right I support and push for training and professional development. I have mentored several newcomers to the industry, am currently the PD Coordinator for AUSIT Vic/Tas, and am also an AUSIT Senior Practitioner.

# State Principal Delegates

## Tarja Karjalainen — ACT Principal Delegate

I am representing the ACT Branch this year on the NC, with Malcolm Leader continuing as the Branch Chair. I am also the Public Officer for AUSIT. I have been an AUSIT member since 2000 and served the last six years as the ACT Branch Treasurer.

I am originally from Finland, but have lived in Australia since 1982. The profession of translating and interpreting only became my second career after I trained as a nurse and worked as a registered nurse (and had children). For the last 10 years or so I have been working part-time in T&I between Finnish and English. My interpreting jobs are mainly in the medical field, which is also my favourite area of translation. However, as with most T/Is in low-demand languages, the amount and variety of my daily work can vary enormously, from driver's licences to community brochures, to legal correspondence, and anything in-between. This is what makes the work so interesting, although at times also challenging.



## Yveline Piller — NSW Principal Delegate

I am a Fellow of AUSIT. Though French-born, my passion for languages and cultures has taken me to live in Western and Eastern Europe, as well as South Africa and, of course, Australia. I have studied Latin, German, Spanish, Japanese and Polish and am currently learning to decipher ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. I particularly enjoy the variety and intensity of conference interpreting and am an AIIIC pre-candidate. I hold NAATI accreditation as a French <> English professional translator and interpreter. A former international senior executive, I recently graduated with a Master of Management from MGSM and like to utilise my skills in finance, IT projects and strategic management. I am also a volunteer mentor and help qualified but bewildered newly-arrived translators find their way around the Australian T&I landscape. I was a finalist in the recent awards for Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT for my work as National President and Immediate Past President from 2003 to 2006. Highlights of this period include writing and presenting a detailed submission to the Federal Parliament on the working conditions of community interpreters, and establishing the Board of Professional Conduct.



## Rona Zhang — Qld Principal Delegate and Chair

I have been an active T&I practitioner for over 10 years, specialising in business and legal interpreting. Besides my NAATI accreditation as a professional Chinese translator and Mandarin interpreter, I have a Master of Arts Degree in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Queensland (UQ) and a certificate in Conference Interpreting from China. I also teach the Master of Arts in Chinese Translation and Interpreting program at UQ, and am a trainer for the Interpreter Training and Mentoring for Emerging Languages Project organised by AUSIT Qld. I am also on the board of the NAATI Regional Advisory Committee and an advisor for the Queensland Chinese United Council. I aim to inspire peers and T&I students through my presentations and workshops, e.g. the T&I Industry Forum organised by UQ, AUSIT workshops in Brisbane and a recent workshop at the AUSIT D-Day in Adelaide.



I am currently Chair of the AUSIT Qld Committee and really enjoy being part of this team. I hope to carry on their great spirit and look forward to working with other members of the National Council for another rewarding year for AUSIT.



## Claudia Ait-Touati — SA/NT Principal Delegate

I joined AUSIT in 2003 and became really excited about our organisation after the 2004 Melbourne conference. I served as the National Secretary from 2006-07 and as Chair of the SA/NT Branch from 2007. This year I chaired the committee for the National Excellence Awards and the D-Day Conference, the first ever Australian trade exhibition for translators and interpreters.

I have worked both directions as a freelance translator in Dutch since 2001. I am currently working on my BA in translating in the Netherlands. I am also a mum of four beautiful kids and married to a wonderful bloke. We live in a rural town in the SA mallee region, near the Coorong.



## Andre Bevez — Vic/Tas Principal Delegate and Chair

During my formative years in a migrant neighbourhood of Melbourne, I had ample exposure to a range of European languages. I completed a BA at Monash University with major sequences in German and Slavic Studies, including Ukrainian, the language of my own heritage; Ukrainian now forms a significant part of my activities as a translator and language trainer. My interest in the theory and practice of translation stretches back to the early 1990s; my wife Anne and I have managed a translation business since 2002. I have been a member of AUSIT since 2004. I joined the Vic/Tas Branch Committee in 2007 and have held the position of Chair since October 2008.



## Patricia Will — WA Principal Delegate

I am an experienced German-English translator with almost 30 years in the profession. After obtaining my MA in French and German from the University of Glasgow, I undertook a training internship at the EU's Directorate-General of Translation in Brussels. I subsequently spent 11 years in Germany as an in-house translator before returning to the UK and setting up as a freelancer in 1994. I have lived in Perth with my family since 2000 and have been an active member of the WA Branch Committee for several years. I am also involved in the work of the AUSIT Qualifications Committee. I enjoy passing on my experience by mentoring new practitioners. When not translating for my mainly overseas clients or working on AUSIT matters I can be found juggling my busy family life with husband Ian (an engineer and my in-house computer expert), son David and daughter Ruth.

# What a show!

This year's National Excellence Awards and Gala Dinner were as glamorous and successful as ever. **Sompit Watkins** compiled this report.

## BURNING ISSUES WIN LINGUISTS TOP AWARDS IN THE TRANSLATING & INTERPRETING INDUSTRY

Indonesian translator Suzan Piper and Arabic interpreter Mona Jabbour have been honoured by their peak industry organisation, the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc. (AUSIT), with national awards for 'Excellence in Translating' and 'Excellence in Interpreting' respectively for their work on two of today's burning issues — global warming and asylum seekers.

The awards, along with three others, were recently announced at the AUSIT National Excellence Awards Presentation Gala Dinner at Adelaide Town Hall.

### EXCELLENCE IN TRANSLATING AWARD FOR SUZAN PIPER



**Suzan Piper**, professional translator in Indonesian and English, won the 'Excellence in Translating' Award for her translation and subtitling of the award-winning documentary *The Burning Season*. Suzan has nearly forty years experience researching, writing and working in and on Indonesia. She has worked as an Indonesian translator/interpreter for over 15 years on various projects and for clients from the World Bank to Australian government departments and community welfare organisations, as well as working on university research, Australian TV, and for Indonesian and Australian creative

writers, dramatists and film-makers. Her joint translation, *Eyewitness*, a short story collection on East Timor, won the 1997 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Translation.

*The Burning Season* <<http://www.theburningseasonmovie.com/>> is an 'eco-thriller' about plans to protect the rainforests in Indonesia, save the orang-utan from extinction and make a real impact on climate change. It has garnered awards and positive reviews from festivals around the world. The film was directed and produced by film-maker Cathy Henkel and has been broadcast on ABC (Australia), BBC (UK), CBC (Canada) and distributed worldwide by National Geographic International.

Some jury and reviewer comments on Suzan Piper's submission include: 'The translation posed many challenges, both linguistic and organisational, which were all overcome with a great amount of creativity. The research done for this assignment is impressive and the translated "product" works well despite the many different layers and registers that needed to be projected.'

Suzan was thrilled to receive the award, saying: 'This film was such a worthy and yet challenging project in many aspects. The major challenge of this project consisted in providing subtitles that faithfully rendered the speech and narrative for characters ranging from major world leaders to palm-oil farmers and environmental activists. This covered an emotional arc from global warming negotiations, the orang-utan and farmers competing for survival in the forests, to the epic journey toward achieving an innovative solution.'

### EXCELLENCE IN INTERPRETING AWARD FOR MONA JABBOUR

**Mona Jabbour**, professional interpreter in Arabic and English, won the 'Excellence in Interpreting' Award for her interpreting services between counsellors and traumatised asylum seekers and refugees.

In 1992, Mona obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Translating and Interpreting from Deakin University. Coming to Australia in 1984 from



Lebanon, Mona herself has first-hand experience of the atrocity of wars; this equips her with deep understanding of refugees and asylum-seekers' situations. Mona's career in translating and interpreting spans over 16 years, during which she has shown unparalleled patience, a great sense of responsibility, dedication and strict professional ethics. All these traits contributed to her winning the award for a series of related interpreting assignments.

Part of the jury's comments: 'A highly professional interpreter who consoles, reassures and builds trust, Mona has shown herself to be a role-model through a variety of skills, including punctuality, language expertise and meticulousness.'

Mona revealed after receiving the award, 'I felt happy and optimistic that more and more organisations have become aware of our highly demanding profession which requires great abilities to concentrate, analyse meanings, and switch from one language to the other, plus the ability to cope with trauma and survival stories whilst maintaining confidentiality, accuracy and emotional detachment'.

### OTHER AWARDS

The winner for 'Outstanding Contribution to the T&I Industry' is **Queensland Health Multicultural Services** for the Queensland Health Interpreter Service Model: An Innovative Approach, including professional development of interpreters providing services in a health context. The 'Outstanding Contribution to Indigenous Interpreting' Award was won by the **Kimberly Interpreting**



Clockwise from top left — 2009's Excellence Awards Winners Mona Jabbour, Ilke Bruekner-Klein (AUSIT Qld), Vicky Zeng (AUSIT Qld), Ita Szymansky (Qld Health Multicultural Services), Danielle Danielson (AUSIT Qld), Alison Rodriguez (AUSIT Qld), Rona Zhang (AUSIT Qld), YoYo Dong (AUSIT Qld), Tea Dietterich (AUSIT Qld), Sam Berner (AUSIT Qld), Dee Lightfoot (KIS), Dalia Sinclair, Glennis Galbat Newry (KIS), and Suzan Piper; Sarina Phan and Eva Hussain listen on as Dalia Sinclair accepts an 'Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT Award' on behalf of her late husband Paul; '50ft' entertain the crowd.



**Service (KIS)** for the development and implementation of a multi-faceted professional development plan and interpreters' handbook.

Dee Lightfoot from KIS said after receiving the award: 'The Excellence Awards are an inspiration to all interpreters and we are proud to have been honoured by our peers. This award is a real achievement for us, given the difficulties of working in remote areas, and the large number of languages that need to be catered for'.

The local **Queensland Branch of AUSIT** won an Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT (henceforth to be known as the Paul Sinclair Award) for their role in facilitating the AUSIT 2008 Biennial Conference held at University of Queensland.

Other recipients of 'Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT' Awards were **David Connor** and the late **Paul Sinclair**, whose widow Dalia accepted the award.

#### ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Excellence Awards were pioneered in Victoria in 2004 and their success led to expansion to the national level in 2007. The National AUSIT Excellence Awards are now held biennially, alternating with the AUSIT National Translation and Interpreting Conference. The Excellence Awards recognise initiatives and activities by individuals and organisations operating in all sectors of the translating and interpreting (T&I) industry. They encourage best practice, professionalism, dedication to quality, innovation and outstanding contributions to the industry in the five categories 'Excellence in Interpreting', 'Excellence in Translation', 'Outstanding Contribution to the T&I Industry',

'Outstanding Contribution to Indigenous Interpreting and 'Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT' (henceforth to be called the 'Paul Sinclair Award'). In addition, state awards may be given to entrants from the Awards' host state at the discretion of the panel of jurors.

Sam Berner, incoming AUSIT National President, said: *'Translators and interpreters provide Australian businesses, government and the community at large with very specialised services. They play a major role in facilitating our communication with the outside world, as well as within our Australian, multicultural, multilingual society. For most of their lives, they remain the unsung heroes. By participating in the Industry Excellence Awards, they have an opportunity to showcase the amazing talent, dedication and hard work they do. Congratulations first and foremost to this year's winners, but also to all the nominees! Recognition starts with recognising your own worth.'*

Participation in the Awards is open to all NAATI accredited, or recognised T&I practitioners, or those with equivalent qualifications residing in Australia, and to organisations in Australia with an interest in translating and interpreting.

Claudia Ait-Touati, Chairperson of Excellence Award Committee, said: *'Translators and Interpreters are the invisible messengers behind the scenes, the facilitators of cross-cultural communication. The AUSIT Excellence Awards will place our most outstanding colleagues in the limelight as role models for the industry. Let's all strive towards excellence in our profession and embrace outstanding performance.'*

AUSIT's 2009 National Excellence Awards were sponsored by VITS

LanguageLink, TAFE SA, Multicultural SA, NAATI, TIS, Gray Lines, Macquarie Dictionaries, Multicultural Communities Council of SA, Danielle Ho, Advanced International Translations, AETS and SDL Trados, Multilingual Computing, and Deaf CanDo.

Sophia Koutes, Acting CEO of VITS LanguageLink, Event Partner of the AUSIT Excellence Awards, said: *'VITS LanguageLink is proud to be the event partner for the Biennial AUSIT Excellence Awards in Adelaide and would like to recognise all the effort of the dedicated AUSIT team and congratulate them in regard to the organisation of such an aspiring event. As a Victorian Government Business Enterprise we are committed to the promotion and professional development of both interpreters and translators and committed to our professional partners AUSIT in the attainment of a recognised and appropriately rewarded profession.'*

*'We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation to Sarina Phan for her drive and passion for AUSIT and congratulate new appointee Sam Berner, all award nominees and translators and interpreters for their contributions in raising the profile of the T&I industry.'*

#### PANEL OF JURORS

The seven jury members appointed by AUSIT are highly qualified and respected individuals representing different sectors of the T&I industry, with Dr Rita Wilson from Monash University acting as jury spokesperson.



# D-Day conference & JBML

**O**n Friday 6 November the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT) held its Biennial National Excellence Awards Dinner at the Adelaide Town Hall. Major sponsor and event partner, TAFE SA's tourism, events and languages program also played a major role in hosting the AUSIT National AGM on the Friday and the Jill Blewitt Memorial Lecture and D-Day Conference the following day.

'D-Day' was a one-day networking event for translators and interpreters plus about 90 delegates, including linguists, academics, agency owners, project managers, trainers and other industry players from all over Australia. The conference was held at the Adelaide City campus, a wonderful facility for sharing knowledge, networking and professional development.

The D-Day workshops covered a range of topics, including presentations by SBS on subtitling and demonstrations of their software, and by TAFE SA on multimedia

tools which are free and useful for translators and interpreters. There were also sessions on voice and vocal health, cross-cultural marketing, Indigenous displays and a forum debate: 'Will the language industry survive the economic and technological crisis?'

Coinciding with D-Day, AUSIT invited author Peter Goldsworthy to deliver the annual Jill Blewitt Memorial Lecture (JBML) in Adelaide. As well as being a tribute to the late Jill Blewitt and her contribution to the development of T&I in Australia, this prestigious event provides members and the wider public with an opportunity to reflect on the state of the profession here.

TAFE SA Translating and Interpreting Coordinator Magdalena Rowan said, 'The event was very successful in showcasing South Australia and TAFE SA to interstate visitors. Part of this success was due to the hard work and dedication of staff and students in playing host, including staff members Lifeng Liu, Lily Yang, Makiko Bache, and



Heather Loades from Deaf CanDo interprets Peter Goldsworthy's JBML lecture.

Renato Di Stefano and students Cassandra Lim, Sophie Qin, Sonny Guo and Yuki Kuboi'.

Ms Rowan said, 'Special thanks go to lecturing staff Pip Cody and Gail Umehara for their workshop presentation and for Pip's "karaoke" AUSLAN performance, which provided an entertaining finale'. For information call Magdalena Rowan, 08 8207 8272 or email <magdalena.rowan@tafesa.edu.au>.



## Connections over dinner

*Clockwise from top left — The 2009 Awards were an introduction to AUSIT for Katherine Stuart, left, from Melbourne, pictured here with Caroline Saunders, who was inspired to join AUSIT after hearing Sarina Phan speak at the Adelaide Expo;*

*Maya Cifali travelled from Alice Springs to attend the Excellence Awards and thought they were so exceptional she offered to host the 2011 awards event in her home town;*

*Dee Lightfoot from Kimberley Interpreting Services and KIS Interpreter Glennis Galbat Newry both felt their award was a real achievement given the isolation of working in remote areas. The awards evening was a great chance to reconnect with interstate colleagues while the conference was hugely rewarding;*

*YoYo Dong, who presented at D-Day and Alison Rodriguez, Qld Branch Secretary, enjoying the historical venue and toasting the success of the Awards Dinner.*



Clockwise from top left — WAITI's Heather Glass with Pip Cody, South Australian AUSLAN Interpreter, who 'sang' so divinely in AUSLAN at the Karaoke event, and who found interpreting for Peter Goldsworthy a rare opportunity: 'interpreting for such an articulate speaker posed some interesting challenges';

the AUSIT Biennial Conference 2010 to be held in Perth was on the lips of WA Delegate Trish Will, centre, as she caught up with Qld Member Tineke Van Beukering, left, and Sompit Watkins, Vice-Chair Vic/Tas Branch;

for Maurite Fober, from Adelaide, the Awards were a chance to catch up with former colleagues Ilke Brueckner-Klein and Vicky Zeng from Qld, and a fitting tribute to absent colleague Paul Sinclair; some great moves were busted on the town hall dance floor.

— Alison Rodriguez



## Narrowing the gap: a new professional development and internship program

In the first phase of an effort to bridge the gap between education and the working world, Monash University has developed a new and unique CPD program for translators and interpreters. The program has been developed with funding and collaboration from the Victorian Multicultural Commission and aims to enhance the skills of T&I practitioners, facilitate a transition into practice for recently qualified practitioners (particularly in high-demand languages), discuss ethics, roles, and socio-cultural contexts of the profession, and explore best practice in legal and health T&I settings.

The curriculum has been designed in consultation with industry and government service providers who have identified areas of urgent need for T&I training. Participation in the program will equip practitioners with key skills and knowledge, improve their confidence, provide opportunities for networking, and enhance their marketability to employers. Participants will also be able to receive PD points towards revalidation of their NAATI accreditation.

The program comprises the following eight modules, each of four weeks duration, to be delivered in Jan/Feb and June/July of 2010 and 2011:

### **Entry-level modules** (targeting high-demand languages of new migrant communities)

- Community translation & interpreting
- Domain-specific translation & interpreting: An introduction

### **Specialisation-level modules:** (focused on T&I in the legal and health sectors)

- Legal interpreting 1
- Legal interpreting 2
- Legal translation
- Health interpreting 1
- Health interpreting 2
- Health translation

Practitioners may select and combine modules flexibly, according to their individual interests and requirements. The modules are delivered in a 'blended' approach, combining face-to-face sessions with online learning activities. The latter will include case studies on T&I domains, glossary development, interpreting practice from recorded dialogues, and translation exercises. Participants will also be provided with a range of written and audiovisual material through the Monash Blackboard website. A range of instructors will be involved in delivery of the weekly sessions, including Monash lecturers, industry and government representatives, and T&I practitioners with particular areas of expertise. The sessions will be held at the Monash Caulfield campus on Saturdays and weeknights, enabling practitioners to fit them around work and other commitments.

For participants in the legal interpreting modules, there are up to eight bursaries available for eligible candidates (sponsored by VITS LanguageLink) to cover the fees for those modules.

Concurrently with the modules taught, participants will also be encouraged to participate in an internship program to broaden their professional experience, benefit from mentoring, establish contacts and strengthen specialisation skills.

Monash is currently recruiting participants for the entry-level modules and legal specialisation modules to be offered in Jan/Feb 2010. The application deadline is **15 December**.

An information booklet, which outlines the content, fees, dates and times of each module, plus the application form are available from the Monash University Translation and Interpreting Studies website:

<<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/translation-interpreting/prof-development.php>>.

Email: <[Translation.Studies.Enquiries@arts.monash.edu.au](mailto:Translation.Studies.Enquiries@arts.monash.edu.au)>.

# Facing the challenges: be proactive!

## Andy Bell on keeping your business sustainable in a rapidly changing industry

The industry has been abuzz over recent months with rumours of tricky times ahead and an industry on a difficult footing. These concerns include, but are not limited to continued improvement in Machine Translation (MT), sharing of intellectual property (translation memories) via online Translation Environments Tools or *TenTs* (including Lingotek, Across, Heartsome, ForeignDesk, Fusion, Idiom WorldServer, MemoQ, Wordfast Anywhere, Wordfisher etc.), the global economic downturn, and downward pressure on rates from agencies and business-naïve translators. Many translators seem to fear a future where our role will switch from translation to post-editing of raw MT content. Industry experts, however, will tell you it is not the threat people think it is — at least not yet — and so isn't my major focus in this article. Nor do I think we should be too intimidated by non-professionals who charge little for their services: translation agencies (or at least those that want to remain viable) are not in the business of taking risks, and anyone who charges an unsustainable fee for their services clearly isn't serious about their business. However, I do think our industry has a reactive rather than proactive culture which has to change if we are to stay ahead of technological advances and maintain a sustainable industry.

My perception is that many translators have, to some degree, allowed this situation to develop by accepting unreasonable deadlines, accepting rates below 'quality cut-off'; allowing (some) agencies to drive down prices through a lack of effective negotiating skills, and by settling for payment terms and conditions that would be unacceptable in any other industry (60-90 days — come on!) Consequently, the industry has become increasingly powerful, and translators appear to be reacting to the changes rather than shaping them. I believe that by acting proactively we can change this situation and ensure our survival.

### SWOT-analysis

For those unfamiliar with the term, a SWOT analysis is a strategic planning

method used to evaluate the **Strengths**, **Weaknesses**, **Opportunities**, and **Threats** involved in a project or in a business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the **internal** and **external** factors which are favourable and unfavourable for achieving that objective.

Here is a list of some of the internal strengths and weaknesses I think can be broadly applied to the industry:

#### Internal Strengths

- Proactive response to business threats and opportunities
- Resilience
- Intelligence
- Ability to adopt new technology quickly
- Communication skills
- Flexibility of lifestyle
- Ability to expand role
- Transferable skills
- Multi-tasking
- IT competence
- Industry know-how
- Strength through professional organisations
- Ability to foster relationships with clients
- Marketing know-how
- Selling to our strengths

#### Internal Weaknesses

- Reactive, rather than proactive, culture
- Relative isolation of freelance community
- Lack of access to CPD
- Lack of cohesion amongst T&I community
- Lack of control over outside influences
- Power imbalance — agencies vs freelancers
- Lack of control over industry developments, rates, IT etc.
- Relative naivety about potential threats (e.g. online CAT tools and VLTMs — providing the material to improve the quality of MT)

Now let's take a look at some potential external threats and opportunities:

#### External Threats

- Unregulated industry (anyone can claim to be a translator and charge below the market mean for their services)
- CAT tool providers with an eye on the bottom line, not the sustainability of your industry in the long term
- Global economic downturn
- Machine Translation
- Downward pressure on rates from agencies
- CAT matrices — strong position of agencies vs freelance translators due to relative unfamiliarity of many translators with the matrix system
- Increased use of English as second language — impact on some languages (e.g. encroachment of English into other languages)
- Constant need to update software, e.g. operating systems, CAT tools, OCR software etc.
- Lack of affordable CPD online
- Variations in technological advancement depending on geographic location

**External Opportunities** (I know this makes the acronym SWTO, but I like to end on an up-note)

- Increasing demand for translation services
- Increased access to potential clients across geographic boundaries
- Technological advancements
- Access to CPD through professional organisations
- Social and professional networking opportunities
- Ready access to industry-related tools (CAT tools, dictionaries, books etc.) irrespective of geographic location
- Expedient communication
- Marketing opportunities
- Ability to create a global presence

#### Changing from reactive to proactive

In his book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People*, Stephen R. Covey suggests that one way we can become more self-aware about our own degree of proactivity is by looking at where we focus our time and energy. These

concerns can be grouped within what Covey calls a 'Circle of Concern', in other words, those things we react to. Covey also talks about the 'Circle of Influence', i.e. things about which we can be proactive. According to Covey, people acting proactively focus their efforts in this latter circle. People behaving reactively, on the other hand, focus on the issues affecting them, but over which they have no control. Focus on this area and the negative energy thus created causes their Circle of Influence to shrink. By focusing on things we can change (including recognising those things we cannot), the positive energy and decisions made can increase our area of influence. If, for example, the economic downturn causes us to lose some key clients this becomes an item for concern. If, however, we continue to market consistently and gain new clients not only can we counterbalance the natural attrition of our client group, but we can actually increase our client stable. This will not only prevent sine wave workflow during stable periods, but will also act as a buffer during economically lean times.

#### Meeting others' needs

In his book, *Unlimited Power*, Anthony Robbins suggests that success in our business or personal lives involves 'the skill or the ability to specifically define exactly what others want, and then to fill others' needs quickly and elegantly.'

This makes real sense. I'll use a charity bike ride I participated in recently to illustrate the point. Woefully ill-prepared, I agreed to take part in a 200 km ride in my part of Western Australia. I've just bought a new racing bike, but it hadn't arrived on the day in question so I rode my old hybrid bike, assured that there would be other people on equally slow machines. Anyway, after about 50 km my handlebars loosened, my legs were numb, and I was wiggling my head round like an idiot to get the sweat from my eyes. Frankly, I'd hit the wall and was looking for any excuse to stop pedalling and get on the bus! Fortunately, the support crew involved a bus loaded with candy, iced water, dried fruit and other treats, plus a friendly driver who was happy to load your bike on the trailer and chat with you while you rested until you felt ready to continue. For the backmarker, with the bus about 10 feet from your rear wheel, the decision to stop hurting and hop on board was not a difficult one. (I should point out that once I'd rested for a while I continued cycling and

did 120 km in total, which was a good starting point for me). My point is that the proximity of the bus to the cycling group, the friendly and accessible driver, the pleasant chat and the rest all made the decision to stop cycling an easy one — too easy really. If, on the other hand, the bus had travelled further behind, if the driver had been unfriendly, and if there had been no snacks or drinks on board, I probably would have soldiered on until the next official stop. So, by being the friendly, professional and accessible translation service provider (the bus) we can encourage the potential purchaser of language services (the cyclist) to stop pedalling (looking for another TSP) and come on board our bus!

In summary, I'd like to list some of the ways we can be proactive rather than reactive in our business dealings, and how we can add value to the service we provide to customers.

#### Proactive measures

- Network with colleagues, keep abreast of industry developments
- Undertake regular CPD, go to conferences, make new friends and meet clients
- Expand your skill base: take courses, e.g. proofreading and copy-editing, subtitling, transcription, medical writing etc.
- Join one or more professional associations, subscribe to monthly or bimonthly journals
- Join professional e-groups
- Educate clients: give all new or prospective clients (not agencies) a copy of *Getting it Right*
- Become a niche translator. Look at specialty fields you might enter, e.g. automotive, technical, medical, legal, pharmaceutical etc.
- Don't settle for unreasonable deadlines, payment intervals or rates below the quality cut-off. These are only successful strategies because **some people accept them**. If professional translators continue to demand acceptable rates and payment conditions then change will take place. If you are approached by an agency and you want to check their payment practice, try [www.paymentpractices.com](http://www.paymentpractices.com) or ProZ Blue Board before signing the dotted line
- Improve your negotiating skills. Many clients are willing to negotiate over rates or a CAT tool matrix. Before saying 'no' and sending an angry email response to an

unreasonable offer, see if there's room for compromise

- Market consistently and effectively
- If you don't have a website, create one now or pay someone to create one for you. There's no point having excellent skills and services if no one knows you're there
- Don't neglect family and colleagues. As Robbins says, 'if you get to the top of success mountain on your own, chances are you're going to want to jump off.' Nurture yourself and those who provide you with support
- Say sorry if you stuff up — it costs nothing and clients appreciate it
- Thank clients for payments received
- Write for pleasure and to enhance/maintain your writing skills

#### Adding value

- Go the extra mile
- Try and resolve all issues before returning a project to a client
- Use a problem-solving approach with project managers
- Pay a professional associate for proofreading or editing where the job merits it
- Be easy to work with. Remain friendly, accessible and try and respond to emails expediently
- Invest in a CAT tool and decent OCR software. Familiarise yourself with more than one translation environment. Use your **local** TM, as opposed to a server-based TM
- Maintain and update your IT skills
- Perform language maintenance
- Communicate effectively and listen to the client

I should also add that where I mention agencies I am referring almost exclusively to those which urge inexperienced translators (or those unskilled in negotiating terms) to accept unreasonable rates, deadlines and payment intervals. The majority of my client group are translation agencies, most are repeat clients and I normally send all of them a Christmas card! I also consider many of the project managers friends and rarely get asked to accept unreasonable terms.

This article is not intended to be the beginning and end of this topic, but I hope some of the information proves useful. Comments, as always, are welcome.

*This is an edited version of the article originally published 2 November 2009 on Watercooler, <<http://andytrans.wordpress.com/>>*

# Face-to-face beats cyberspace

## Claire Loftus Nelson reflects on the annual highlight for NZSTI

Understanding Through Language — *Te Māramatanga mā te Reo*, was easily the best of the nine NZSTI conferences I've attended, thanks to good timing, easy online registration, aesthetically pleasing surroundings, good networking opportunities and a well-balanced diet of plenary and parallel sessions, interpreting and translation input, the academic and practical, and micro and macro views.

Instead of trailing over three days, the conference made the most of two, starting promptly on the Saturday morning. An informal gathering at the Southern Cross on Friday evening was well attended. The pleasant ambience, with warm fires and a socialising area to ourselves, plus yummy nibbles, made it a perfect place for transitioning from travel to conference mode. I appreciated being greeted warmly and provided with a *kefe* full of goodies that included a classy name label and full-colour programme.

Interpreters never seem to have any trouble striking up a conversation and even translators, though they are typically introverts, do appear to like emerging at least once a year for some human contact. (I once met one in Sydney who loved working at home, alone, yet had shaved for the first time in two weeks especially so he could go to the AUSIT branch meeting!) It was delightful to witness people putting faces to names they knew well — perhaps someone they had emailed about NZSTI matters or worked with for many months coordinating the publication of conference proceedings, but never met personally. I also enjoyed meeting new members and hearing about their countries and cultures. Learning about Portugal's relationship with Brazil and Angola compared to Spain's relationship with its colonies from people who have lived there was quite fascinating.

On Saturday morning we arrived at Massey University — still 'the museum' to those of us who grew up in Wellington — to find it transformed, its interior magnificence restored. There was a

spacious auditorium, just right for our plenary sessions, and a beautiful airy upstairs space called the Tea Gardens for breaks and lunches. With delicious, healthy food, and plenty of room for viewing the many displays and socialising without being overwhelmed by noise, it was perfect.

The conference committee, under Christine Goodman's 'generalship', organised everything with military precision. Christine's background in the diplomatic world made her an excellent MC. She provided a touch of humour when she thanked The Nature Company, a sponsor, for providing possum merino hats for our visitors from the winterless north (interpreters from the Kimberley in Northern Australia), adding that she hoped the 'possum element' would not cause any distress!

I did observe one or two late-night-working translators, who must remain nameless, ducking out for a 'micro sleep' in order to survive, but sessions were so interesting and varied that the rest of us had no problems. From Te Haumihiata Mason of Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori/ the Māori Language Commission, we heard about sourcing examples of excellent Māori language steeped in Māori 'ethos', and the concept of 'decolonising the mind.' Many new translators are second-language learners of Māori and this is posing new challenges for training and quality assurance.

Special guests at this conference were three interpreters from KIS, the Kimberley Interpreting Service. Their presentation introduced us to the vast, remote geographical area they cover and the sheer number of languages they deal with (47 languages and dialects split into five language groups). The KIS runs on 'pride, passion and patience' and is working to see an increase in the value people place on interpreting as a key to reaching agreement. Valma Banks closed by thanking NZSTI for bringing them here to share their story and form connections. 'Don't be shy,' she said. 'Come and talk to us!' Friendships from the AUSIT conference in Brisbane last

November were renewed and new ones made.

In the hour before lunch there was a stellar panel of celebrities in their fields:

Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner, Human Rights Commission, posed the question 'Why wait?' in response to the inertia displayed by authorities with regard to making multilingual content and services available to the public. He challenged us to 'Put it together, sell it to the government, then tell people they'd better get on board!' He advocated a logic of intervention and the importance of having a coherent and unifying languages policy.

Judi Strid, Director of Advocacy for the Health and Disability Commissioner, spoke of the Commission's role in ensuring the provisions of the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights are met. The role of Commissioner was set up in response to the Cartwright Enquiry in 1988, which revealed the particular vulnerability of women who didn't speak English.

Judge Bruce Davidson of the Wellington District Court drew on thirty years experience in criminal law to describe the changes he has seen in court proceedings. He had had two jury trials involving interpreters the previous week, one in Samoan and one in Cantonese, and was to preside over one in Arabic in



the coming week. 'Interpreters, you do fantastic work, and the courts in New Zealand could not operate without you.' He, too, encouraged us to not be shy. 'Ask the local court if you can visit and learn more,' he urged us. This was consistent with the theme that emerged throughout the conference: expanding our horizons.

From there we went on to a combined session in which Peter Low entertained us all by talking about the translation of humour. Then followed the tricky task of choosing between parallel sessions. I opted for an academic appraisal of literary translation in Argentina by Dr Caro Miranda from Victoria University of Wellington, who showed how a publishing elite controlled what was being translated.

Though we had not colluded, Susann Herold from the University of Leipzig and I were intrigued to find that aspects of our talks, my own on treating myself and my clients with respect, and hers on 'Training the Translator', echoed some key thoughts.

From Sunday's offerings I chose more useful tips and tricks from Dr John Jamieson's store of delights: things I use almost daily in my work, which give me confidence to back up my translation choices when clients who know some English question my work. Then I heard Peter Tuffley on working with SLOTE (speakers of languages other than English) who gallantly tackle the task of translation into English and how editors need to provide professional solidarity and remain objective in giving feedback.

This conference was held in parallel with our Māori colleagues' annual get-together and those of us learning their language were grateful for the opportunity to sit in on sessions and

## Are you LinkedIn?



The AUSIT group on LinkedIn is the perfect starting point for online networking. It also enables you to make contact with individuals outside AUSIT who are connected to your fellow AUSIT members. Joining the AUSIT group on LinkedIn is a fast track to building your e-network. Take advantage of your AUSIT membership. Joining LinkedIn gives you an instant community to grow your network quickly. Why wait? Get your online networking underway. To join just visit <http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=1933378>

Sometimes it's a small world, and that's what LinkedIn is about

collect vocabulary, or even follow the debate, relishing the chance to see body language as well as hear spoken language. For me, 'live' language learning is so much faster and a lot more fun than via radio or television, the Internet or books! I'm looking forward to having Kāhui Kaiwhakamāori keeping us up to date with developments as their membership grows. I wonder whether we might invite overseas visitors to our next conference where indigenous translators and interpreters also work in the context of language revitalisation and perhaps could discuss how that affects their role in the T&I world?

In the afternoon, Dr Te Taka Keegan, who has been working on computer science in Māori since 1997, told us about his six-month study leave from the University of Waikato, spent at Google's head office in Mountain View, California and what is being developed in the way of mouse-hovering, non-clicking translating technology. He wondered whether we thought MT (machine translation) was a dirty word,

an evil word, or perhaps a joke word? MT is moving from a rules-based to a statistics-based approach, the better and newer method.

As well as primary produce, Aotearoa New Zealand is now exporting words, according to Jean Anderson and her panel. New expressions include 'straight black', 'tight stocking' and 'hoof and tooting a paddock'. The environment is an exciting area, producing 'bush corridors' and 'insurance populations', while crime is highly innovative — a 'Kate Sheppard' is a \$10 note\*. We Kiwis even have 44 unique terms for becoming angry, including 'throwing a wobbly', 'packing a sad', and 'spitting tacks'. After a walk in the bush and visit to a 'poo pot' (the official Department of Conservation term), we might want to go back to our *kaumatua* flat, or perhaps to a *huiette*, where we would contribute at least *golden koha*, or possibly even *folding koha*, but after so much Māorification we'll probably be *puckeroed* and opt for a *cyberhui* next time instead.

As for me, I find spending so many hours at the computer working for overseas clients far too 'virtual', so cyberhui have lost their appeal. Next year's conference will definitely be on my calendar to ensure an annual fix of face-to-face contact and live presentations. I also hope that we'll again send a good big contingent to the 2010 AUSIT conference, which happens only every two years, to follow up the Kimberley connection and expand our horizons even further.

\* The most prominent member of New Zealand's women's suffrage movement, Kate Sheppard's image appears on the note.

## AUSIT website news

After many months of work by our marketing committee on revamping the AUSIT website, *AUSIT — In Touch* has been reliably informed the new site will appear around February of next year. For detailed information on what information the new site will contain, what new features will be introduced, what old features will be retained, and the rationale for any changes, refer to the 'Brief of AUSIT Website Requirements' on page 11 of the *AUSIT 2008-09 Annual Report*, October 2009.

In the meantime, our familiar old website still chugs along full of masses of useful material, while also providing many very handy functions.

Recent additions to the site include:

- Minutes of the 2009 AUSIT NAGM
- New AUSIT News
- Calls for papers for Critical Link 6

As always, the 'National Office', 'News' and 'Training' pages are the places to be. So enjoy and stay tuned.

# Being a 'rare language' interpreter

By **Jean Burke**, accredited paraprofessional Swahili translator and interpreter, and NSW AUSIT member.

I enjoy being a 'rare' interpreter and translator — my second language is Swahili, a language categorised both as 'rare'<sup>1</sup> and 'emerging'<sup>2</sup> in Australia. I learned Swahili while living in the United Republic of Tanzania for twelve years. Our family was sent by the Church Missionary Society to work as partners with the Anglican Church of Tanzania. After four months of language school, we lived in villages and later the capital — rich environments for language learning. When I returned to Australia a few years ago I discovered there were many more Swahili-speakers here than when I had left. They were mainly refugees being settled in Australia from Tanzanian and Kenyan camps, who had originally fled war in Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. A colleague suggested I consider responding to the need for interpreters. I leaped at the chance to gain flexible employment which could help me retain (and maybe expand) my second language, and might guide me in finding 'my place' in Australian society again.

Swahili is a rare language in Australia in the sense that only a few people speak it and there is not enough interpreting work to sustain full-time employment. This creates a challenge as many interpreters move onto other full-time work as soon as they can. When I hear Swahili being described as a rare or emerging language in Australia I often feel amused because it is actually the most commonly spoken language in Africa and a regional lingua franca. Swahili is spoken by somewhere between 50 and 100 million people throughout East and Central Africa and is an official language in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, while also spoken in Burundi, Zambia, Mozambique, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Somalia, and Sudan.

The first agency I worked with took me on even though I had no training or

recognition. At one of my first jobs, I discovered a teenage boy had missed about 16 days of TAFE lessons due to the interpreting he had been doing for his family. They had become so used to interpreters being unavailable they had given up requesting one. Despite difficulties in those initial jobs, I persisted because what I had to offer was better than nothing! The agency provided exemplary support, and as I gained confidence and skills at their training sessions, I approached and entered contracts with other interpreting agencies. However, I found myself in a *Catch-22* dilemma: agencies required me to have recognition status, yet I was unable to gain such status until I had referral letters from two agencies vouching for my work experience with them. Later, the NAATI New Interpreter's Project provided training and helped me gain an opportunity to sit the Swahili paraprofessional exam when it became available. Interpreters of 'rare' languages only receive income from casual appointments, and usually do not have high incomes. Exam fees and NAATI membership fees are a disincentive in pursuing recognition or accreditation, but the NIP overcomes these barriers.

Other constant challenges of being a Swahili interpreter relate to the multilingual abilities of many Africans. While Swahili is a rare language, some other languages spoken by Swahili-speakers, like Kirundi (by Burundians) or Kinyarwanda (by Rwandans), are rarer still. At times I have found my Swahili is understood but I have had more trouble understanding the African for whom I am interpreting. At other times I have been told clients only understand half of what I say. Sometimes I have been called on to interpret in court for women who speak Kirundi and only some Swahili learnt when camped in Kenya or Tanzania. Their level of Swahili was adequate for basic conversation but not for negotiating legal discussions,

yet I was unable (ethically) to convey opinions about their Swahili fluency. Without a Kirundi interpreter, let alone one with recognition status, we sometimes persisted as best we could. This might end with the magistrate deciding to dismiss the case or seeking another chance to locate a suitable Kirundi interpreter.

There are variants of Swahili — not enough to say they are different dialects, but enough to cause challenges in interpreting. The purest Swahili is spoken on the Swahili coast, that is, the coast from Dar es Salaam north to Mombasa in Kenya. The word Swahili in fact comes from 'Sahel' meaning 'coast'. The Swahili spoken in Tanzania, even inland where I lived, is considered purer or 'better' than Swahili spoken elsewhere. In the main, all Swahili-speakers understand each other well enough, but sometimes confusion can arise. An example is how weekdays in Congolese Swahili differ from Tanzanian Swahili, as they are based respectively in counting cycles from the Lord's day on Sunday, or from the Muslim Great Day on Friday.

I have discovered that it is rather common for Congolese (who call themselves Kongomani) to speak four languages: Swahili, French, English and Lingala or a tribal language. This means Swahili conversation may be peppered with French or other words I do not recognise or am unable to interpret. I try to concentrate on using Bantu-based Swahili words from inland, avoiding Arabic-based Swahili words used more on the coast.

You know you are an interpreter of a 'rare' language when:

- the court magistrate consults you on your availability when scheduling a hearing date;
- you discover it is your client's third appearance at court. Their first appearance clarified their need

<sup>1</sup> **rare language** *n.* A language (in a given geographical area), the demand for which is insufficient to constitute, by itself, a full-time living for a single interpreter in that area. 'Translating and interpreting terminology', (AUSIT 2005) <<http://www.ausit.org/eng/showpage.php3?id=851>>, accessed 22/9/2009

<sup>2</sup> **emerging language** *n.* Language (in a given geographical area) for which there is a growing demand that is not matched by the supply of accredited interpreters. (AUSIT 2005)

for an interpreter. At their second appearance you were unavailable. So third time lucky!

- you are heavily booked out one week. The consequence of this is a man is kept in gaol for several days until he can be told about his bail release;
- you explain that you don't speak Kirundi, Igo, Shona (or any other African language) but only Swahili!

#### Being a 'white' Swahili interpreter

I defy the usual expectations of African interpreters. I speak English with an Australian accent, since it is my mother tongue, and I do not have the 'expected' African appearance: my skin and hair are not black. My name comprises good Scottish and Irish names, which match my appearance of white, freckled skin with red hair. For some Swahili-speakers my appearance as a *mzungu* (white European) is extra reassurance about confidentiality: they know I am not moving in their close-knit community. For this reason I usually wear a distinctly African item of clothing or jewellery to show I am bicultural in identity, not just bilingual. I am in a sense a vegemite sandwich — black inside, white outside.

You know you are a vegemite sandwich when....

- you walk into a police station, and the officer on duty looks surprised and asks if you've seen the movie *The Interpreter*. You say you have and recall how Nicole Kidman played a white African interpreter!
- your Swahili-speaking client watches you with doubt, then responds with delighted surprise when you begin to speak in Swahili;
- there is confusion about your name, as your clients were expecting a black African man from Central Africa with the French name Jean;
- you arrive at a job, accompanied by a black African friend. The service provider looks confused about which of you is the interpreter until you explain it a second time;
- you watch the puzzlement on a professional's face, until they give in and ask you where you learned Swahili.

**Abstract to 'A review of Australian judges' rulings on appeals on the grounds of incompetent interpreting', a thesis by AUSIT member Alejandra Hayes as part of her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Languages and Linguistics. (To access the full thesis, see the "document browser" > "members' writing/papers" section in the members' area of the AUSIT website, <[www.ausit.org](http://www.ausit.org)>.)**



It has been argued by many that, in order to professionalise legal interpreting, any participants in the process who possess

power need to be aware of the pivotal role of Aboriginal, foreign and signed language interpretation and the consequences of not employing competent interpreters at all levels of the judicial process. Empirical research has found inadequate interpreting can have a significant impact on the outcomes of legal cases, including evaluations of witness testimonies and witness' understanding of questions (Benmaman, 2000; Berk-Seligson, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2008; Cooke, forthcoming; Hale, 2004, 2007a and b, 2008, forthcoming; Mikkelsen, 2008; Morris, 2008; and others). While most interpreting inaccuracies go unnoticed in bilingual cases, some (possibly the most salient ones) have led to appeals. This paper analyses the outcomes of fifty court and tribunal appeals on the grounds of incompetent interpreting from New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia between 2006 and 2008. The findings reveal that even when the performance of interpreters during a trial or hearing is questioned on appeal, the higher courts are not convinced by the linguistic arguments presented regarding the impact of poor interpretation on the witness' or applicant's credibility or the outcome of the case, unless the interpreting errors are directly related to an issue of specific significance to the case and constitute jurisdictional error. As a result, this ground of appeal rarely succeeds. It is suggested that this approach unknowingly denies all the research in forensic linguistics (Loftus, 1979; O'Barr, 1982; Conley and O'Bar, 1990) and court interpreting (Berk-Seligson, 1990; Hale, 2004) which highlights the importance of pragmatically accurate interpreting. In doing so, this approach compromises the administration of justice.

## D-Day Special Offers



**AUSTRALIAN EXPORT  
TRANSLATION SERVICE**

AETS provides a terrific deal whereby AUSIT members can purchase SDL Trados Studio 2009 and MultiTerm 2009 (the CAT tools that even manage to work with PDF!!) for half the normal online price as advertised on the SDL Trados website, meaning the software is now available at AUD\$535, the lowest price ever.

AETS is also making available to ALL Ausit members until Christmas the Product Software Maintenance and Agreement, which is normally 20% of the licence full price, for only AUD \$85. In order to get most out of your software, AETS has offered to provide webinars where members can download from their FTP. These will be available from November 20<sup>th</sup> to all members who have purchased the software.

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All D-Day delegates will receive a free six-month subscription to the online Macquarie Dictionary. Speakers will receive a free 12-month licence. We are mailing a list of all speakers and delegates to Macquarie Dictionaries and you will be contacted shortly.

We would like to thank all our sponsors for these wonderful specials and we look forward to working with you in the future.

## QLD Branch report

It has been another busy quarter for the QLD branch, with the launch of the Training and Mentoring Project for Interpreters in languages from new emerging communities. The project is off to a great start with some 20 interpreters attending weekly training sessions covering interpreting skills, ethics, cross-cultural communication and information skills. Classes are given by Sam Berner, Rona Zhang and Jadranka Brown, and generously supported by the Brisbane City Council and the School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland.

St Jerome wasn't one to party, but he would have approved as we celebrated International Translator's Day 2009 with a picnic for AUSITeers, friends and family. The informal get-together in the form of a picnic at Brisbane's Roma Street Parklands was well attended and gave everyone a chance to relax and talk about life outside translation and interpreting.

AUSIT QLD once again put up a stall at the annual Queensland Multicultural Festival which celebrates cultural diversity and harmony. This year there was a great response from the public, with volunteers receiving many general and specific queries about the T&I industry, what we do and how we do it. It was great to see a lot of new members joining in to help us hand out all those AUSIT balloons!



Left to right: Alanna Wilson-Duff, Ilke Brueckner-Klein, Tea Dietterich, Rona Zhang, Max de Montagne, Ita Szymanska, Vicky Zeng, Veerle Vanderplaschen.

Following the AGM in September, the new Qld Committee is: Rona Zhang, Chair; Ita Szymanska, Vice-Chair; Alison Rodriguez, Secretary; Max de Montaigne, Treasurer; Veerle Vanderplaschen, Assistant Treasurer; Alanna Wilson-Duff, PD Coordinator and Veronique Maes, PR Coordinator. We are also proud to see our long-standing committee members Tea Dietterich and Sam Berner elected to National Council as Vice-President and President respectively. Ilke Brueckner-Klein continues in her role as National Council Secretary. Congratulations girls, you've done us proud!

Proud doesn't describe the feelings running high in Queensland after the

recent National Excellence Awards. The Organising Committee of the AUSIT National Biennial Conference 2008 were awarded the inaugural 'Paul Sinclair Award' — 'not for us... for all those who could not be here.... for what AUSIT can do' in the words of Conference Committee Chair, Sam Berner, when receiving the award from Paul's wife Dalia. Thank you to everyone who supported the committee, the conference and the Excellence Awards, and thank you especially to our families for not turning us out onto the street when talk of the conference threatened to drive them mad. Now they can be proud too.

*Alison Rodriguez, Branch Secretary*

## AUSIT WA Open Day — 'I had an MBA in 15 minutes'

Left to right — Mr Bill Marmion MLA, Member for Nedlands, representing the Hon. John Castrilli MLA; Mr. Paul Farrell, WA State Director of DIAC; Mr. Ben Harvey, Policy Manager, Office of Multicultural Interests.



Such was the impression made on Mr Bill Marmion MLA by the presentations at the AUSIT Open Day in WA on 26 September.

After Mr Marmion's greetings and (partly) impromptu speech, the Head of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in WA Paul Farrell also addressed the audience about interpreting and issues at DIAC.

This Open Day was a very successful event with many new and familiar faces there to enjoy instructive and amusing talks by Eva Hussain and Sam Berner, as well as the interpreting role play performed by Eva (the Centrelink officer) and AUSIT WA members Dr Lidia EliceGUI (the interpreter) and Yvonne Galan (the recalcitrant benefits recipient), which received great applause.

The light lunch and afternoon coffee by Carlos was excellent as usual, especially as it was served in the light-filled courtyard of the heritage venue at the Tresillian Community Centre in Nedlands. And our ranks have swelled as a direct result of this very worthwhile event. Another all-round success!

*Jean Deklerk, WA Branch Secretary*



# Vale Paul Sinclair



Paul Sinclair, who died suddenly on 31 July 2009 at the age of 73, was a larger-than-life figure in AUSIT at various stages throughout its history. From 1987, when he was instrumental in setting up the national professional association and one of its founding members, his vision for AUSIT and his commitment to its cause never wavered. In his inimitable way he described himself, with a twinkle in his eye, as 'AUSIT's No. 1 Member'.

Paul was a big-picture man: always brimming with ideas, colourful, eccentric, and passionate about the interests closest to his heart — notably languages and vintage cars. When he decided to take up a cause he would put one hundred per cent of effort into it, and more. The causes were often language-related, ranging from the inclusion of languages in the school curriculum to language acquisition, and most importantly for us of course, translation and interpreting.

After passing French, German and Latin among his Leaving Certificate subjects, Paul majored in French, German and psychology at Sydney University, and later studied Russian at ANU. In Sydney in 1965 he completed a Diploma of Education with a specialisation in foreign languages, and in 1984 gained an Associate Diploma in Portuguese from Perth's Edith Cowan University. He gained NAATI professional-level accreditation from French to English and German to English, and at various stages also studied Italian, Spanish, Greek, Sanskrit, Hebrew and Indonesian. Whether he learned Hungarian as well I'm not sure, but it was certainly part of his plan.

In the late 1950s Paul worked with the Department of Immigration in Sydney and Canberra, and later in Rome. One of the tasks for which his language skills came in particularly handy was meeting migrants as they arrived by ship and helping them feel at ease in their new country.

After NAATI ceased to be a government authority, Paul became its Executive Secretary in 1985-86, and then Executive Director from June 1987 until July 1988. In that time he worked hard to implement the commitment contained in NAATI's charter to fostering the emergence of a national professional association. Indeed, he was largely responsible for bringing representatives of the various state associations to the weekend meeting in Canberra in 1987 which united them all under the umbrella of a new national association. The name chosen for this body, after much discussion and debate, was the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, or AUSIT.

Former Queensland member Tony Tri, from whom Paul took over as Chair of the Queensland branch in 1993-4, says his fondest memories of Paul are from the day in 1987 when, as Executive Director of NAATI, he signed Tony's letter of accreditation at level three. (He signed mine the same year, but unfortunately it was handed to me by the postman, not by Paul.) Like many other members, Tony first met Paul at the inaugural national meeting of AUSIT held in the splendid ambience of the Sydney Opera House.

Another Queenslanders who knew Paul from that time is longtime NAATI Board member Dr Max Brandle. At the time Paul was Secretary of the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, and Dr Brandle confirms Paul's great commitment to language learning and teaching, as well as his considerable language skills. He also recalls the vintage cars Paul used to drive at weekends around the hilly green suburb of St Lucia: there were five, including a Chevrolet, and driving them was an obsession he thoroughly enjoyed. Max also remembers Paul's eccentric (but healthy) eating habits: 'When living in Brisbane he used to order huge consignments of nuts from his traditional Canberra suppliers - he did not trust anyone else - and he told

his neighbours living in 10th Avenue in St Lucia that he was pursuing the gift of longevity with a formidable daily diet of nuts, fruit and vegetables.' Former NAATI CEO Sherrill Bell tells of hearing him on the phone on one occasion, instructing the caterer for a NAATI function to provide 'plenty of salad, and make sure it's undressed'. (Paul's use of English could be as idiosyncratic as it was erudite.) Max Brandle remembers the NAATI lunches as 'great fun. Fruit and fruit, and fruit and nuts and more nuts. It looked great but I felt hungry at the end.'

Paul left Queensland to live in Israel in 1995. In 2002 he moved back to Sydney, his birthplace, with his third wife Dalia; they had met when he was Chair of AUSIT Queensland and she approached him about including AUSIT in a Sun Newspapers feature on multicultural Australia. He then served on the NSW branch committee for several years and represented AUSIT on NAATI's NSW Regional Advisory Committee.

He was a thorn in various sides as he pursued the vision he had for the translation and interpreting profession in Australia and AUSIT's leadership role in it. Lobbying behind the scenes was one of his major occupations in recent years. Uli Priester, first NSW Chair and then National President during Paul's terms on the branch committee, reports that Paul never tired of seeking contact with politicians and bureaucrats, NAATI Board members, T&I teachers and prospective AUSIT office bearers. No politician or bureaucrat connected with the T&I field would ever walk away from a public event Paul was at without hearing about AUSIT and NAATI and how they should relate to each other.

Central to his vision was AUSIT, as the organisation representing the profession, taking over the responsibility for approving university and TAFE courses in T&I. Testing in major languages would be replaced by systematic training, and policy responsibility for T&I would be moved from the Immigration portfolio to Education. Paul developed his own 'blueprint for AUSIT' with these ideas spelt out in detail. He also insisted on AUSIT maintaining a close relationship with its New Zealand counterpart, NZSTI, so that issues of common interest could be pursued jointly across the Tasman.

Anybody in AUSIT who stood for national office would inevitably be contacted by Paul to discuss these matters. He was not always able to convince the person concerned, but his strategic direction was generally regarded as well-founded and his advice as sound. The vision never diminished; his big regret was the failure of the governments, through NAATI, to provide the level of funding originally envisaged to support the development and growth of AUSIT as the effective national professional association it aims to be.

Paul is remembered with affection by many AUSIT members, most often with gratitude for his support and encouragement, with appreciation for his wit, outspokenness and unflinching courtesy, and for his contribution of valuable ideas. Yveline Piller recalls that during her term as National President Paul was the original driving force behind AUSIT being admitted to membership of Professions Australia and T&I thus being recognised as a profession. Uli Priester points out that Paul provided mentorship for a number of colleagues new to the profession in Australia — and not only new ones:

Immediate Past President Sarina Phan describes him as 'a mentor, advisor and true friend' (see her tribute below), while Claudia Ait-Touati is another prominent contributor to AUSIT activities who remembers him as a mentor.

His ideas were always backed up by sound argument, occasionally in the form of a written paper or submission. As one member put it, he was 'always ready to launch into a debate about standards and accreditation — and sometimes listened to his adversaries!' Alan Raisbeck, longtime manager of the Sydney Regional Office of NAATI, describes Paul as '...always very affable and likeable. He was a man of strong ideals and opinions but I always found him open to reason. He had a good intellect and was passionate in championing the T&I profession.'

He was a personality you would not easily forget. Dalia's description in her eulogy at her husband's funeral seems very apt: 'an old-timer and yet so young at heart; [...] handsome, charismatic, cheeky, charming, cheerful and tearful, challenging and unique, almost as rare as your Packard' — the wonderful old

Packard in which Paul was known to offer AUSIT members a ride around town (whichever town they happened to be in at the time), and which featured in many a motor show. It was parked outside the church at his funeral. He also loved music and opera, and in recent years took lessons to develop what Dalia describes as his beautiful tenor voice. For his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday she was able to arrange for his long-held dream of conducting an orchestra to become reality.

Paul is greatly missed by the AUSIT community. We remember him full of life, as always, at the Brisbane National Conference last year and at most of the branch's professional development activities (not to mention joining the belly-dancer in performing a number at the branch Christmas dinner in a Turkish restaurant). Our thoughts are with his family, and especially his wife Dalia at this time of her sudden, devastating loss.

*The above article was put together by Barbara McGilvray, who thanks Mrs Dalia Sinclair and the AUSIT members and others who contributed material.*

*Paul Sinclair was recently honoured at the AUSIT Excellence Awards Gala Dinner in Adelaide when AUSIT National Council presented Dalia with a special award honouring her late husband's invaluable work for AUSIT. In future this will be known as the 'Paul Sinclair Award for Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT'. The worthy recipient, will, like Paul, have made a significant contribution to not only our association but our profession as well. Below is an edited version of Immediate Past President Sarina Phan's tribute to Paul Sinclair at the Awards Dinner.*

I met Paul Sinclair for the first time in 2004 at the 'Power to The Profession' Conference in Melbourne. As I chatted with Paul, whom I did not know much about at the time, I was impressed by his positive energy, his knowledge and passion for AUSIT.

During my two-year tenure as President of AUSIT I had the opportunity to work more closely with Paul, which only confirmed my first impression of him. When we discussed AUSIT matters I could see Paul's primary concern was for the profession and AUSIT. He always spoke with objectivity and facts and was a great source of information, history and advice on AUSIT and the profession. I sought Paul's counsel on many things; the last topic we spoke about shortly before his passing was the reestablishment of the NSW Branch Committee.

Paul's contribution to AUSIT would be well known to you all. As one of our founding members, his dedication to our association was unsurpassed. Without a doubt we would not be here without Paul's perseverance,

dedication and vision.

Paul was a man of knowledge and integrity, a man of history, but also someone with vision and a view towards the future. I am very proud to say he was a true friend of mine and an even truer friend of AUSIT. He held many roles over his working life, yet there were common themes through all of them — language, dedication and working for the betterment of society.

As he was invited to sit on many advisory boards and held many roles to do with education and languages, Paul was an extremely valued member of AUSIT. He was even involved in writing the texts for teachers and students of English and French as second languages, published by the Commonwealth Office of Education. During his time as chief executive officer of NAATI, he also studied language policy making. In this role he continued to have significant input into the development and success of the organisation and was instrumental in pushing for the establishment of the professional association for interpreters

and translators. As a result AUSIT was born.

His love of travel often saw him pick up languages very quickly, to the point of conversing so well in them locals responded as if he spoke their language fluently! After explaining his knowledge was limited, they would still embrace him for even attempting sometimes very difficult languages like Greek, Yiddish or Arabic.

Paul married Dalia in 1995 and they found so much happiness with each other. Although his children Mark, Elizabeth and David may at times have lived in far away places, they were never far from his heart and he was so incredibly proud of them, and their achievements.

Whether it was his love of languages, Australia, native animals, antique cars or travel, Paul's zest for life should inspire us all. It gives me great pleasure to know his memory and legacy will live on whenever the Paul Sinclair Award is presented.



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