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Quarterly Newsletter of the
Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc

in TOUCH

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Training program sets a high bar

David Bellos, winner of the International Man Booker prize
for Translation, speaks to *In Touch*

The Dreaming finds a Hindi audience

Australian Crime Commission seeks interpreters and
translators



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From the helm...



Dear Colleagues,

A group of translators sat in a cafe chatting about machine translation, rates of pay, changing market demands and the like.

'Thanks for referring me to that migration agent,' said a colleague to another.

'You're lucky, you can afford to be an AUSIT member,' piped up a third, seated across the table, whose language is not in high demand. A moment of silence descended. Some of the AUSIT members considered how we, translators and interpreters, differ from practitioners in other occupations. For us, belonging to the association is a luxury rather than the norm.

'But how can you be a professional otherwise?' asked someone else, and kindly suggested we establish an AUSIT fan club for those who wish they could join but are unable to afford the luxury. Another person in the group changed the topic: 'Word's getting out that AUSIT members do continuous professional development and that's why our performance is the best. Did you notice how many websites feature

the AUSIT logo these days?'

Trademarking the AUSIT Logo

Interestingly, the National Council discussed the same phenomenon recently when we came across the home page of an agency of dubious reputation. We have taken steps to obtain trademark protection for our logo and expect the process will soon be completed. Defining and then opening up the corporate membership category might also help to clarify the situation and allow our secret admirers to show their support through authorised use of the logo. Members of the Qualifications Committee are busy refining a proposal and consultation will be conducted before rolling out the membership category.

Membership

Since the AGM and the last issue of the newsletter we welcomed 16 new members. Thanks to the recently introduced online form, the evaluation of the applications will be smoother and faster than before.

Union news

APESMA, the union committed to seeing what it can do for translators and interpreters, has conducted a survey and promised to share the results with us. There are serious limitations for AUSIT when it comes to fighting for better pay and conditions, but a big organisation like APESMA will be able to mobilise resources, provided it has the numbers.

Executive Officer role to be advertised

Creating the online form was one of several brilliant innovations our Acting Executive Officer, Daniel Muller, delivered, besides carrying out the core duties of the position. The six-month trial and set-up period is soon coming to an end; as the trial was successful, the position will be advertised as planned.

Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct project

A task of the Executive Officer is provision of support to the Board of Professional Conduct. AUSIT as the professional body is the arbiter of disputes concerning the T&I industry, and we are delivering this service to the community.

The project to revise AUSIT's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct is progressing in leaps and bounds, under the stewardship of Christian Schmidt with Barbara McGilvray's generous assistance. Feedback from a second round of consultations is due to arrive back within the next six weeks.

AUSIT Biennial Conference 2012 — Jubilation 25

Finally, a few words about the main event of the year: AUSIT Biennial Conference 2012 — JUBILATION 25. We are thrilled that Macquarie University came on board as a partner, and are looking forward to a rich three-day weekend from 1-3 December 2012. The host branch is organising a few extra surprises for visitors to Sydney, but I must not disclose anything yet. See information about the conference on page 12 of *In Touch*.

AUSIT's Silver Jubilee

At the meeting of the friendly group of translators the talk turned to reminiscences on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee. There are members amongst us who remember what it was like at AUSIT's inaugural meeting and the challenges of the first year. If our pioneers want to write down their memories, we could publish an anniversary volume. If you have a cherished AUSIT moment you'll know what to do; contact me on president@ausit.org.

Annamaria Arnall

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Front cover photo: Chinese delegate (and interpreter Charles Qin) meet the Foreign Minister, Hon. Kevin Rudd at Parliament house, as part of ANZOG's China Advanced Leadership Program. Photographer: Damien McDonald

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The deadline for the Winter issue is **6 May 2012**. Please send any letters, articles or images for forthcoming editions to:

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A mysterious ingredient called flair...

David Bellos is a literary translator who has translated the work of Georges Perec, Fred Vargas and Albanian author Ismail Kadare, for which he won the 2005 Man Booker International Prize for Translation.



Bellos speaks to *In Touch* about his latest book, *Is that a fish in your ear? Translation and the meaning of everything*.

Your book (*Is that a fish in your ear?*) is really about everything, from interpreting humour to the history of translation. Did you write this book in order to raise the profile of the profession amongst English speakers? Do you think a book can change things?

Yes, I most certainly did write my book to raise awareness of the vast and fascinating field of translation, which has not been well served by most of what is called 'Translation Studies'. That is the whole point of the exercise. Do I think it can change things? Well, raising awareness is already to change things. In any case, it's all I can do!

Your book also explores how difficult it is to become a literary translator. How did you get into this field? How did the opportunities arise to work on the books you have translated?

It was simple, accidental and probably quite untypical. I read Perec's *La Vie mode d'emploi* at the urging of a colleague, became obsessed with it, and thought it would make a tremendous contribution to literature in English. I nagged the French publishers, the French publishers' bureau in New York, contacts in the world of literary agents and so forth

until finally, at long last, and by the skin of its teeth, Perec found a US and a UK publisher willing to take him (and me) on. I have always had a day job as an academic but I did not dare count 'translating Perec' as part of it, so I took six months' leave of absence without pay to do it. Things have changed since then and I now count my book-a-year translating routine as very much part of my role as a professor of French and Comparative Literature.

After reading *Is that a fish in your ear?* I went back to check who had translated two of my favourite books by the Italian writer Primo Levi and found that the same translator, Stuart Woolf, had translated both books! I started to wonder if my favourite author was Stuart Woolf.

To what degree is the translator the author of a book, is authorship shared or is the original author the true author? What special qualities does a good literary translator need to have?

I think the answers to this old question are quite obvious. The translator is not the author. The translator does not make up stories, imagine characters, describe their setting, analyse

their feelings, lead them through adventures to a happy or sad or ironical end. But the translator is a writer. He writes the text that makes the story and its characters and its wit and its sadness accessible to new readers. He is occasionally the inventor of metaphors and allusions and clarifications, but only at a very local level, within a sentence or perhaps a paragraph. If what pleases is the writing, then the translator is to be treasured. If what pleases is the story, or the characters, or the irony, or the wit, then the author is to be treasured. Most often it's a bit of one and a bit of the other, and few readers can really untangle a well-wrought book that has been well translated. That doesn't bother me at all.

What makes a good translator (or a good mechanic or a good cook) is attentiveness, care, hard work and a mysterious and unobtainable ingredient called flair. But there is, I think, a difference between a good mechanic and a good translator. Working on a really worthwhile book can also teach you how to write. I certainly think that I owe at least as much to Perec as he owes to me. As I've said elsewhere, Perec taught me to write.

You are well-respected for your translation of the Albanian author Ismail

Kadare's work, for which you won the 2005 Man Booker International Prize for translation. I understand that you translate Kadare's work from French translations. What are the challenges of working on a translation of a translation and how were these challenges overcome?

Basically, it is no different from any other translation. You translate the text that you have. In the case of Kadare, I was fortunate to be able to meet the author, to visit Albania, and to learn just a little about the original background to the stories that he tells, and then to modify small details of my translation to bring it more into line with what I imagined was the force of the work in its first form. But if you pay attention and look things up carefully, you can learn a great deal about Albania, its language, its culture and its horrendous political and social experience of the last 60 years just by reading the French translations.

How difficult is it to work for so long on a translation and get very little public recognition for the work? How did you develop your self-esteem, particularly when you were starting out?

It's very important for a writer, as well as for a translator, to get recognition. Most of us have to wait a long time for it to come, and can draw strength only from the knowledge of a job well done. I don't think the situation is very different in any creative pursuit. Life is hard!

In January, a commentator from the conservative Australian think-tank The Institute of Public Affairs wrote an article in *The Age* newspaper arguing against English speakers learning a second language at all, on the grounds that English is the dominant world language anyway.

Are you concerned when you hear people arguing for monolingualism? What is your

perspective on the value of learning a second language for an English speaker in a world dominated by English?

I am very concerned that people arguing for monolingualism are employed by 'think-tanks'! They would be better located at the very bottom of a dark, wet *un-think* tank! It has always been believed, because it is true, that a proper education beyond the level of reading, writing and arithmetic rests on two pillars: mathematics, and the learning of one or more other languages. The Romans did it, Medieval Europe did it, the Enlightenment did it and there is no earthly reason why the temporary spread of various dialects of English should alter the basic nature of what is needed to become a fully-fledged citizen of any culture in the 21st century.

It is true that Edo Japan and Ottoman Turkey did not teach any Western languages to their children. But they learned classical Chinese in Japan! They learned Koranic Arabic in Turkey! You really can't find a truly 'monolingual civilization' wherever you look, apart from the peculiar exception of Classical Athens. The Assyrians learned Sumerian, the Russians learned French...and there's every reason why Australians should learn Indonesian or Japanese or Chinese or why not, one of their own native languages!

According to Luis von Ahn [owner of the site *Duolingo*, which allows users to learn a language for free online], about two billion people are currently engaged in learning a foreign language (in full-time education, in part-time education, through purchase of language-teaching software or language teaching books). If Australian schools do not make language learning available to their students, they will be letting them down in a most irresponsible way.

In Australia the value of translation and interpreting is measured in part by the working conditions

experienced by translators and interpreters here. Translators and interpreters are mainly freelancers and work in a competitive economic market where there are few protections. Now attempts are being made to unionise the industry here.

In your book you mention the poor pay conditions and royalty rights for literary translators working in America and Britain. In your opinion, are improvements occurring and if not, what needs to happen for pay and conditions to improve? Why do literary translators fare better in some other countries?

There are many valuable skills that are poorly rewarded; I don't think translation is a special case. We pay nurses paltry wages, yet we all know that there will be a moment in our lives when a good nurse will be worth a thousand lawyers. Rewards for all sorts of other difficult and intricate skills—origami, training dogs for the blind, rescue archaeology—fall far short of what we pay airline pilots and tax consultants. But do you really want to be bored out of your mind all day long?

The status and pay of literary translators vary among different cultures with different histories in terms of their relationship to 'the foreign'. These things do change over time, but rather slowly. I think there has been an improvement in the status of translation in the last 20 years or so in the English-speaking world, but it will no doubt take something else, and something much bigger, to change the way they are remunerated. (See page 13 for a review of *Bellos'* book)

Training program sets a high bar

Charles Qin explains how to run a training program which will keep Chinese delegates coming back!

Chinese delegates on training programs are a money earner for the organiser and great for Australia too, as these visitors spend money in droves. But like the international student market — the golden goose — such programs can fall victim to dodgy practices and pretty soon the delegates move on and travel somewhere else for their training. Hosting businesses can also suffer in reputation from being associated with these ‘tours’. Many have learnt the hard way — hosting site visits, providing speakers and giving valuable time to Chinese delegates in order to share their proprietary information and experience — only to find out later that most of the ‘valuable information’ was lost. You know where I’m going with this, don’t you? Poor translation!

A model program

To set up an enduring relationship and pave the way for ongoing programs, I reckon the Australia and New Zealand School of Government’s (ANZSOG) program (which just concluded), is the model. Setting a very high bar and scooping any rivals, Allan Fels’ organisation has put together a perfect program, the *China Advanced Leadership Program*. An impressive agenda was arranged: receptions at Government House and Parliament House; meetings with the Governor-General, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister; site visits and functions hosted by major players in China relations; access to department heads in Australia and New Zealand; and presentations by leading businesspeople.

Early on, ANZSOG identified the need for a top interpreting team to



Victorian Premier Ted Baillieu at Government House welcoming Chinese delegates, with Charles Qin assisting. Photographer: Damien McDonald.

deliver the important training to the Chinese executives. The team was engaged over six months prior to the tour and was consulted on how to achieve the best results. Presentations were translated by the team too, so that delegates would have Chinese material to underpin their learning, and interpreters would be well prepared. Plenty of time was provided to the interpreting/translating team to assimilate all of the information, across topics as diverse as emotional intelligence and the revolution of technology in the media.

It was decided that interpreting would be delivered in simultaneous (SI) mode. This meant that no one got bored listening to everything twice, but more importantly, delegates would learn twice as much as a program delivered consecutively. Even on site visits, portable whispering equipment was used. Outside of a program at Harvard’s Kennedy School, this is the only program I’m aware of which delivers training at this level through SI.

Yes, of course, some delegates spoke good English. But factor in the foreign situation, strange accents and training in something new, with all the terminology that accompanies it, and even accomplished English

speakers may struggle to understand. If learning is the genuine focus, good interpreting is vital.

So what is good interpreting?

As we tell our clients, good interpreting, and therefore good results for the listening audience, come from selecting trained, experienced, professional and local interpreters. Engaging interpreters early, passing on all information, presentations and itinerary in advance, and treating them as valuable team members, will bring out their best. This will ensure your delegates (and interpreters) are happy; if delegates are happy this will lead to more business. Good interpreting is not achieved by leaving interpreter choice to the last minute, choosing someone cheap, and assuming that they will turn up and know everything they need to know about varied, complex topics. Nor should organisers rely on interpreters accompanying the group! We see these approaches often and unfortunately the monolingual organisers don’t realise just what a disaster can ensue. Education is an important part of an interpreter’s job.

The United Nations and other major conferences will have three or four interpreters on a team, yet

we rarely see this in business due to cost constraints. However, in an intensive program like this, having three interpreters meant we were able to endure the long days, the three continuous weeks of intense training, and come out at the end with our nerves intact.

Some tips for interpreters

i) Negotiate proper fees and conditions for the mode of interpreting. Value what you are offering and the benefits it brings to the organiser and delegates. Don't forget travel time and daily allowances when away from home.

ii) Prepare! Over the years I've seen good interpreters who just didn't bother to prepare and the clients suffered as a result. Chase up the program and presentations, prepare glossaries, read everything and print out for reference. If you don't

prepare, you should not be doing this job.

iii) On the other hand, if you think simultaneous (or any interpreting) means translating presentations or speeches beforehand, you are setting yourself up for failure. Speakers rarely stick to the script and you'll never be able to read out a speech or presentation like this.

iv) Listen carefully. Don't assume you know what will be said. Listening is *not* reading.

v) Outside the booth, read widely and keep up to date with current affairs in Australia and your countries of interest.

vi) Ensure you have the right equipment and tell the organiser what you require; e.g. a separate lectern or microphone on a stand, chair, water, breaks, etc.

vii) We provided a print out which

was placed on the lectern for each speaker, instructing them on pace, and providing presentation suggestions to ensure smooth running.

viii) You need notebooks at the ready (and an iPad or laptop in the booth is helpful). For consecutive interpreting a good interpreter must master note-taking skills. Otherwise you will never deliver complete and accurate interpreting. 'I've got a good memory' isn't good enough.

ix) Work in a team for simultaneous work. I am shocked to hear of SI being done by one person. Bad on many levels such as OH&S.

x) Confidence and responsiveness when working with a speaker which involves looking at the audience and being in command. Confidence and making the speaker look good works!

(Charles Qin is managing director of Chin Communications Pty Ltd.)

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How to pick a shining star

Eva Hussein explains how her struggles as a beginning interpreter led her to set up a successful internship program



Former interns Siska Lacaze (middle row, 3rd from left), Sanaa Raydan (middle row, 2nd from right) and David Uglietta (back row, 2nd from right) now employed with Polaron.

Many translating and interpreting students well into their degrees or diplomas discover, to their dismay, that in-house positions in their chosen fields are few and far between in Australia. Over the last 12 years, I have spoken to hundreds of prospective linguists, students and recent graduates wanting to know what their job prospects are. Mostly, I've had to give them the bad news: unless you are prepared to set yourself up as a freelancer, bi-lingual community worker or hospital interpreter in selected languages, steady employment opportunities in the our field are limited.

It wasn't that long ago that I received my NAATI certificates in the post. I duly registered with some T&I companies and to my surprise, the work started flooding in. I will never forget my first court assignment. On my way to the Magistrates' Court back in November 2001, I was very excited, but I was completely ill-equipped, untrained and inexperienced. I shudder when I think about how naive, arrogant, scared and irresponsible it was of me (and the companies that employed me) to walk into the courtroom without much preparation at all. On

the job training, that's for sure!

More than 10 years have passed, yet the memories of those early days are still fresh in my mind. I still remember how difficult the beginnings of my career were. Of course, the best thing I did was to join AUSIT (thank you, David Connor!) as the amount of advice, practical support, camaraderie and genuine friendship I got from other practitioners was simply priceless. As early as 2003, I decided to give back to the profession by becoming an active local branch committee member but also by taking new colleagues under my wing. I have taken budding interpreters on court assignments with me, reviewed projects with newly minted translators, helped with business plans, conference presentations, websites, publicity materials, dying patients and quotes.

The best thing I have ever done was to set up an internship program within the company I work at, Polaron. Since 2004, we have hosted over 50 long- and short-term interns and practicum students from Australia, Italy, Syria, France, Poland, Lebanon, Greece, Ukraine, Ireland, Spain,

China, Indonesia and Israel. In 2007, we set up a formal practicum program arrangement with Monash University in Melbourne and host about 10 students every year to give them a taste of what it's like to work in a translation office.

The feedback we have received from our interns and practicum students indicates overwhelmingly that the reason they value the internship opportunity so much is that they gain first-hand exposure to the industry, learn where the jobs are and how to prepare for their professional lives in their chosen field. Many of these translators commented that working with other translators, project managers and researchers has helped them focus and streamline their career choices. Several of our ex interns now work as project managers, freelance translators and interpreters, whereas others decided to apply for jobs in the public sector, not for profit organisations or in the court system.

To us, internships are an opportunity to train and support people entering the industry but also to pick some of its shining stars. Currently, three of our previous interns are employed at Polaron full time. We consider them real success stories. Here's what one of our former interns had to say:

Davide Uglietta:

What do you do at Polaron?

I'm a Translation and Multimedia Projects Coordinator. It is a multi-faceted role which involves responding to client enquiries, preparing quotes, putting together project plans, and organising translations with our contractors. I also do a fair amount of desktop publishing using software such as InDesign and Illustrator. In addition, I am a NAATI-accredited translator in the Italian language, so I do the occasional translation, time permitting.

What do you know now that you didn't know when you first started?

I never realised I would have to develop so many different skills, some in areas that you wouldn't immediately associate with translation. I have picked up a lot

about how different languages work. Specifically, I have learned what to be mindful of when dealing with multilingual texts, such as choosing the correct font, or whether the language expands or contracts in the translation from English. These are especially important during the Desktop Publishing phase of a project.

What are some of the benefits of the practicum/internship

you experienced yourself?

I started at Polaron as an intern from Monash University. I found it to be a real eye-opener as far as seeing how the industry operates in practice. There's only so much you can learn in a classroom. Then, of course, there has been the real benefit of being able to absorb and learn from the collective knowledge of seasoned translators who have had many years of experience in the industry.

What advice would you give to others starting out in the T/I industry?

It's a really competitive industry so make yourself stand out by bringing something to the table that no one else does, whether it be attention to detail, focus on customer service, or whatever. Never rest on your laurels. Develop your skills and always strive to be better. You are only ever as good as your last assignment.

The ear is faster than the eye

From lip-synching to translating for the United Nations, **Hayley Armstrong** reports on the Saint Jerome International Translation and Interpreting Conference in Mexico.

Last November, I had the pleasure of attending the XV Congreso Internacional de Traducción e Interpretación San Jerónimo 2011 (XV Saint Jerome International Translation and Interpreting Congress 2011) organised by the Organización Mexicana de Traductores (OMT).

The congress runs annually for two full days, and is held in an exhibition centre in Guadalajara, Mexico. One of the benefits of the conference is that it falls within the time frame of Guadalajara's International Book Festival (the world's second-largest book festival after Berlin) and includes having access to dozens of publishers and editors mainly from the Spanish speaking world, though there are also English publishers and a number of publishers from the 'invited country' of any particular year.

The translation and interpreting congress itself is well organised. Although the conference includes both translation and interpreting, it leans more heavily towards translation. Presentations are almost invariably given in Spanish; however in previous years I have also attended some presentations entirely in English. This year the programme included a variety of subject areas divided into two main streams: literary translation and legal/technical translation. The vast majority of presentations are

centred on the Spanish<>English language combination and many were particularly focused on the U.S. and Mexican markets. Some of my favourite sessions were:

The translator's rights within the framework of Mexican legislation by Hilda Villanueva Lomeli.

This session focussed mainly on translation copyright — what translators should know about their rights and how to enforce them. Lomeli also suggested various clauses a translator should seek to have included in their translation contracts, making it a very practical session.

Legal translation and interpreting in the new Mexican penal system by Hector Abel Soto Aguilar.

He described some of the changes the Mexican legal system has undergone during the last few years in order to provide a fairer system, in which both sides of a criminal case come to the court under equal circumstances. Trials are now interpreted orally rather than using an exchange of translated documents. This is because in the past it was possible for a judge to decide a case without ever having been in the presence of the person being accused. The process is now public and is recorded on video. Evidence is provided in one sitting so as to create greater proximity between the moment when evidence

is provided and when the sentence is handed down. It is also done in this way to ensure evidence is handed directly from the person providing it to the person receiving it, so that it cannot be contaminated.

Translating for the United Nations by Angela García.

This session was interesting because Angela, who has worked for the UN for a number of years, gave insight into the day-to-day running of the translation department within the United Nations. She described the application process and also the problems translators face once accepted into the team. Some of these problems include having to restrict translations to specific semantics because these documents are used throughout the world and the language has to be kept 'neutral'. Certain words may have negative or unintended connotations in certain countries. She also spoke of the supportive team environment and camaraderie between translators who work together to produce translations; translators are not credited individually for their translations but as a department as a whole.

Dubbing translator for a day by Angelica Cervantes.

This session was fun and practical. We worked in teams of two or three to translate the dialogue of a minute of film. (Continued on page 13)

Industry news

Australian Crime Commission to review its translation practices

Serious and organised crime poses real threats to national security, and the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) is working with other Commonwealth and State law enforcement, intelligence, policy and regulatory agencies to tackle organised crime nationally. As a result, the ACC takes part in numerous joint projects and task forces and often contributes its material to briefs of evidence for prosecution purposes.

When compiling joint briefs of evidence, it emerged there were distinct differences in forensic transcription and translation guidelines and standard operating procedures adopted by different law enforcement and intelligence agencies. These differences include the qualification and practical experience of appointed translators and transcription templates, formats and conventions. It also became apparent that the expectations of a forensic translator's role differs from agency to agency.

As a result of these issues, forum participants at the second annual *Law Enforcement Inter-Agency Translation and Interpreting Forum*,

held in October 2011, decided to establish two working groups. The forum, hosted by the ACC, focused on forensic transcription and translation and was attended by representatives from a range of law enforcement agencies.

One working group will review and benchmark existing transcription/translation practices with the view to drafting sample guidelines and templates acceptable to all partner agencies. The second group will develop proposals related to training of investigators and analysts in working with interpreters and translators and raising the profile of forensic translators within the translation and interpreting community.

Work opportunities with the ACC

During the coming year the ACC is planning to establish a multiuse list of interpreters and translators and will be seeking proposals via Austender from suitable professionals covering a wide range of languages. The ACC will be drawing on the multiuse list to meet its ongoing and ad hoc requirements for interpreters and translators.

The ACC also recruits full-time or part-time linguists who work closely in a team environment, providing linguistic support, primarily transcription and translations from

audio to document and document to document. Interpreters and translators used by the ACC need to be highly motivated with an excellent grasp of one or more foreign languages and excellent interpersonal, communication and analytical skills.

The ACC particularly values experience in interpreting listening device and telecommunication intercepts. Given the sensitive nature of ACC work, integrity and ethical standards are critical qualities. All ACC staff and contractors undergo pre-employment screening and security checking.

When selecting between two equally qualified and experienced candidates the ACC gives preference to AUSIT members as AUSIT provides its members with continuous professional development. So, if you have a degree in Interpreting/Translation /Linguistics, are accredited by NAATI, possess superior listening and comprehension skills, are able to understand the speaker's perspective and accurately render such perspective into the target language, possess analytical skills, knowledge of courtroom protocol, and are interested in employment, the ACC would like to hear from you. Please write to linguistics@crimemission.gov.au or call 02 9373 2270. *Steve Elkanovich, Team Leader, Linguistic Services, Australian Crime Commission.*

APESMA launches translators' and interpreters' union campaign

Following strong and growing support for a union in the translating and interpreting Industry, APESMA has responded to the call and commenced a major industry-wide campaign to secure long overdue improvements.

For a long time, translators and interpreters (T&I) have faced serious occupational issues and have suffered from deteriorating working conditions across the profession.

Now, in a loud and unified voice, they are calling for industry change and fair, modern working conditions. Such changes will only be won if there is widespread support from translators and interpreters themselves.

Since October last year, the APESMA

Organising Committee has set about the task of building support amongst TI communities.

The Committee has worked closely with APESMA union staff to get the campaign under way and to secure the membership support necessary to win the improvements you deserve.

Key achievements of APESMA's industry campaign to date include:

- Hundreds of people who work in the TI community have been spoken to individually and encouraged to join APESMA.
- Small group meetings, involving translators and interpreters from various language communities, have been organised and successfully conducted.
- Initial contact has been made with key industry stakeholders.
- APESMA has conducted a national

e-survey to identify the issues faced across the TI industry —with an overwhelming response rate.

- Planning is underway for a major APESMA public meeting to be held later this year in Melbourne, where the survey findings/report will be publicly released.
- Development of an organising plan to include strategies on media, government lobbying, community and industry involvement, communications and legal.

To find out more about this campaign or to join APESMA go to:

<http://www.apesma.com.au/groups/translators-and-interpreters/>

or email us at

translatorsandinterpreters@apesma.com.au

The APESMA Translators and Interpreters Organising Committee.

Creation, narration and destruction — the Dreaming finds a Hindi audience.

Rekha Rajvanshi won an AUSIT Excellence Award for translating Aboriginal Dreaming stories into Hindi, for a film animation. Here she discusses the links she found between Indian and Aboriginal culture and religion.

When I was growing up in India as a little girl, I loved reading. We had a small library at home and my older brother was in charge of it. Whenever we wanted to read books, we had to borrow from him and he would record it. I read everything — comics, religious books, ghost and Dracula stories, biographies, fiction and non-fiction, almost anything I could find. My favourite magazine was *Chandamama*, a magazine full of imaginative historical stories. I especially liked Panchtantra stories by a writer called Vishnu Dutt Sharma. These stories were written to educate the children of royal families at home.

After arriving in Australia, my first encounter with Australian Aborigines was in the year 2000 during the Olympic Games. I saw Aboriginal paintings and came to understand that Aborigines were the first citizens of Australia before British arrival. Later, I started teaching Australian history in a high school as a special education teacher and read dreamtime stories.

I found many similarities between the Dreaming and Indian mythological stories. Both Indian and Aboriginal stories were passed on orally to the next generation. Like the Indian Panchtantra stories, dreaming stories impart ancient knowledge, cultural values and belief systems to the next generation, creating a rich cultural heritage. The Dreaming, for Australian indigenous people, is when Ancestral Beings moved across the land and created life and significant geographic features; similarly, God Brahma is the creator of the Universe. Indians too believe in creation, narration

and destruction — stories in the 18 *Puranas*, four *Vedas*, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* describe mythological stories of creation, destruction and recreation.

When producer Keith Salvat of Aboriginal Nations Australia contacted me to translate 13 Dreaming stories from English into Hindi for his animation films, it was a dream come true for me. I read and viewed these stories. A particular story, Tasmanian tiger, reminded me of an Indian story in *Ramayana*. This story turned out to be the AUSIT award-winning story. The story talks about how the Tasmanian tiger came to have stripes on its body:

The story is about a young pup who saves the son of the great God Moinee from an attack by a big Kangaroo called Tarna. The God Moinee is proud of the pup's bravery; he bends down, mixing his blood and spiritual power with ashes from the fire and draws a number of marks over the pup's back — this is how the Tasmanian tiger was created.

There is similar story of a little squirrel in *Ramayana* too.

The Hindu God, Rama, asks his army to build a bridge over the sea. One day, Rama sees a small brown squirrel with little pebbles in his mouth, carrying them from the seashore and dropping them into the sea; he is helping Rama build the bridge. One day the little squirrel falls into Rama's hands; Rama holds him and says 'Little one, your love touches my heart'. As he says these words, Rama passes his fingers gently over the little squirrel's back. When he puts him down, there are three white stripes on his back.



Rekha Rajvanshi proudly holds her AUSIT Excellence in Translation award.

These are the marks of Lord Rama's fingers. From then on the squirrel carries the three white stripes on his back.

I got the English DVD of the dreaming stories so that I could get the correct pronunciation of Aboriginal terms such as: Kuneye, Yandi, D-jet, Bulbree, Mungan Ngour, Wurrawana-Kannenner, etc. It was challenging and took a long time, but rewarding, as I learnt a lot about Aboriginal lifestyle, culture, traditions and beliefs, together with correct Aboriginal pronunciation.

Some of the other challenges involved in the project included matching the captions frame-by-frame with English subtitles and choosing the right words and simple language, as the target audience were mainly children. It was sometimes frustrating to listen to the story over and over again just to get a word or name correct. No doubt, I also had a deadline to meet.

But in the end, I enjoyed watching these stories and I think it was a great way to connect with the culture of indigenous Australians.

(Continued overleaf)

As far as I am concerned, the general aim of the entire project was accomplished.

These Dreaming stories will not only help Hindi speaking Australians learn more about the culture of their adopted country but will also reach Hindi speaking people all around the world.

The Dreaming animation stories have won many international film awards, including the Festival

Internacional de cinema video, Gava, Spain (Best Animated Film, City of Gava Best Film Award — all categories — for the story of *The Dolphin*), Chicago International Film Festival (five individual awards of excellence), Annecy Film Festival Commendation, Jury Prize for the story *The Bungulunga Man*.

While working on this project, I came across an interesting article, *DNA confirms coastal trek to*

Australia on abc.net.au. The research, led by Dr Raghavendra Rao, confirms that a mitochondrial DNA link has been found between tribal Indian populations and Australian Aborigines. Although when it comes to the history of human development, I believe that all human beings are linked with each other in some way and we grew with time in the same fashion.

Rekha Rajvanshi

2012 Biennial Conference — Jubilation 25 Celebrating AUSIT's Silver Jubilee

December 1-3, 2012

Macquarie University Sydney, Australia

Call for Papers

2012 marks the 25th anniversary of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Incorporated (AUSIT). Over the past 25 years, AUSIT has made a significant contribution to improving the professional practice of translating and interpreting in Australia. On the occasion of this biennial conference, we aim to celebrate those achievements and build on the successes of the past.

Proposals for individual papers, workshops and posters are invited from both translation and interpreting scholars and practising translators and interpreters. Abstracts should be 250 words for individual papers and posters and 500 words for workshops. Presentations on all aspects of translation and interpreting studies are welcome. However, priority will be given to papers that address the following themes which focus on drawing inspiration from the past for a brighter future in translating and interpreting:

- Innovative practice in translation and interpreting
- Innovative pedagogies for translator and interpreter education
- Innovative practices in the assessment of translators and interpreters
- Innovations in the implementation of language policy for improved service provision
- Innovations in research trends in translation and interpreting studies

See www.ausitconference.org for more information.

Important dates:

Deadline for abstract submission: **6 April 2012**

Abstracts reviewed and rated from **6 April to 18 May 2012**

Notification to authors of acceptance: **after 22 May 2012**

Conference: **1-3 December 2012**

For more information contact us at info@ausitawards.org.

The ear is faster than the eye...

(Continued from page 9)

Each team had an opportunity to perform the translation live while the film was running. It was very challenging to come up with translations that fit within the restrictions of time, lip-synching and style. My team was lucky enough to almost coincide with the timing of dialogue in our attempt; however, we petered out towards the end. It gave a lot of insight into the difficulties faced by dubbing translators in their day-to-day work.

Voice synthesis as a revision tool by Salvador Virgen.

Salvador explored the benefits of using a voice synthesiser as a tool to read the texts we have translated back to us when revising. His

argument is that the ear is much faster to pick up mistakes than the eye because the eye sometimes sees what we want to see and not what is actually on the page. The technology means we don't have to have a physical person read our translation aloud for us.

The idea is not to speed up the revision process (as it adds an extra step to this process) but to create high quality through improved revision. An unexpected alternative use for this technology is to have the voice programme dictate the source text. Interpreters who also translate may prefer this use. Some programmes he recommends are:

- Acrobat Reader already has a 'read aloud' function. You only need

to download the 'voice'. You can download different voices which use the phonemes from different languages.

- Natural Reader: This one is a free online tool; however, it does not allow you to create mp3 files to save on your hard drive to listen to offline.
- Ghost Reader.
- Acapela.
- Mac computers already have this function integrated into their system.

If you are interested in finding out more information on this event, have a look at <http://www.omt.org.mx/congreso.htm>. If you decide to attend, please let me know. I will definitely go again this year and it would be great to attend with a fellow AUSIT colleague.

Review

Is that a fish in your ear? Translation and the meaning of everything by David Bellos

Translators and interpreters will find much in this book to spark their interest; as the subheading suggests, this book is about *everything*, from the influence of translation on human rights law to discussions about the suspicion in which slave-interpreters (working for the Ottoman Empire) were held, a feeling which still pervades modern diplomacy – can an interpreter ever be trusted?

I will leave this question for interpreters to answer themselves, as Bellos, a renowned literary translator, is certainly a supporter of the profession and it is hard to get a bad word out of him about the valuable role translators and interpreters play in the world. One of the central themes of the book is Bellos' desire to raise the status of the profession amongst the monolingual. Yet Bellos does not charm this intended audience (English-only speakers), depicting them throughout the book as highly ignorant and prone to saying fairly dumb things about translation!

Take for example an issue which is particularly irksome to Bellos, the

cliché that an original work is always better than a translation. Hollow praise, Bellos argues, when the people who say this (people who *only* speak English) would never be able to read the original anyway!

To illustrate this point Bellos tells a story about the now famous Albanian writer, Ismail Kadare (Bellos is Kadare's English translator), whose love of literature was sparked by a particular story, full of 'witches, ghosts and revenge' which he read as a child. Are we to say, Bellos asks, that the 'elixir' which sparked Kadare's early passion for storytelling, the play he came to know later as a translation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, was a second-rate experience, not to be compared to an experience of the original?

Bellos also discusses why translation is undervalued in the English-speaking world; this has a lot to do with social and economic power. As English is the dominant world language, it is in cultures which seek access to 'the centre' that translation has more status. Bellos gives some great examples of cultures where translation is admired, such as the almost rock-star status given to the Japanese translator Motoyuki Shibata, whose name appears in the *same size* print as the author on the book cover! Such is the esteem of

the Japanese translator, that there is even a gossip magazine which focuses entirely on the lives of famous translators!

For translators/interpreters who feel no need to boost their self-esteem with dreams of featuring in a gossip magazine, Bellos traverses many other subjects. Each chapter reads as a self-contained essay, so a busy person can dabble in random topics of interest; there are chapters on machine translation, simultaneous interpreting, interpreting humour, history, and on the quandaries which are particular to a professional translator. Bellos depicts the translator/interpreter as a kind of sleuth, a solver of multiple puzzles. Should a translation keep its 'foreign-soundingness'? What style shall I choose for this piece of literary fiction? What do I do when words do not convey context?

Bellos guides his readers effectively through complex, academic ideas, illustrated by some riveting stories. A minor criticism of the book is that I wanted Bellos to round up his themes much more at the end of each chapter. I sometimes felt as if I had been strolling along quite happily with Bellos, only to find he had led me off a cliff! But perhaps, in a small way, this is Bellos' revenge on the English-only speaker...

Rachel Judd, *In Touch* editor.



AUSIT members enjoy Queensland's annual New Year Chat Breakfast.

New South Wales

This year is an important year for NSW. Sydney will be hosting AUSIT's Biennial Conference and NSW Committee members are excited to be part of the organising process. This is going to be a rich and interesting event, a weekend filled with presentations, workshops, networking and entertainment.

For more details visit: www.ausitconference.org.

The NSW Committee sadly saw Willya Waldburger resign from her position as committee representative to the National Events Organisers due to over-commitment. Myriam Boisseau is the new secretary. Yoko Onuki is in charge of maintaining our website. Please refer to <http://sites.google.com/site/ausitnsw/home> for up-to-date information and news of events.

The PD sub-committee is busy organising events for the year. So far, a Déjà vu workshop was held at Macquarie University on 29 October 2011 and was well attended. Charlotte Brasler together with Max Doerfler held a full day hands-on training session. The participants were impressed by the amount of information they were introduced to during the day and with the expertise of the speakers. AUSIT NSW also co-sponsored the launch of Professor Sandra Hale's research report into legal interpreting in Australia, *Interpreter policies, practices and protocols in Australian courts and tribunals – A national survey*. It was launched at UNSW by Justice

Ian Harrison on 8 December 2011.

For more information, visit <http://www.aija.org.au/online/Pub%20no89.pdf>.

AUSIT had an information table manned by Willya Waldburger. On the 3rd of December, Teresa Lee helped the committee members organise a Christmas lunch and walk. Everyone appreciated the tasty Chinese food after a walk around Burwood park. Coming up is an Open Day that will host interesting speakers and networking sessions. Please keep an eye on our website for more information. A calendar of the year's events will be posted soon.

In addition to the role of Principal Delegate, I hold the position of Membership Officer. I am glad to see that membership applications can now be done online thanks to the efforts of our Acting Executive Officer, Daniel Muller. This will speed up the process of applying and give a quicker response to applicants.

In an effort to give better service to AUSIT, the NSW Committee has also decided to adopt the membership retention strategy advised by Daniel: keep in contact with members, especially new ones, and build relationships.

Amale Hourani.

Queensland

It may have rained again this January, but that didn't stop almost 40 T&Is from filling up the outdoor area of Era Café in Brisbane's Southbank, to join in AUSIT Qld's annual New Year Chat Breakfast.

Our largest turnout ever included a nice mix of old guard, new members, and a large number of non-member interpreters and students. Even former Qld members now interstate made the journey to catch up over breakfast and chat, chat, chat.

As T&Is dropped in and out throughout the morning, the chat took many turns. There were conversations about the current economic climate for the profession, work conditions, union issues, NAATI accreditations, literature and history — we covered pretty much everything! These breakfasts are a great chance for us to get to know each other as friends as well as colleagues, and the atmosphere is always relaxed. This is definitely the best sort of PD, learning from each other in a supportive way.

As an international, jet-set bunch, we were happy to welcome back recently returned colleagues, say bon voyage to those about to travel for work or family commitments and, of course, absent friends were greatly missed.

It is always exciting to welcome new faces. It is a good sign of the level of energy and interest there is in the branch. We look forward to welcoming the newest generation of AUSITeers; in fact, our youngest attendee was just a few months old. Thanks to Alison Rodriguez for organising the event over the Christmas break.

South Australia/ Northern Territory

Family picnic, Sunday 25 March

The SA/NT branch plan to start the year with a picnic, which all members and those interested in joining are warmly invited to attend with their families. This will be an opportunity to network informally with others in the profession as well as make suggestions about what the branch should be offering its members.

Meet at Rymill Park at 11.30am on Sunday 25 March, between the kiosk and the playground (look for the blue balloons). BYO drinks and chairs, and picnic to share. If you can't find us, contact Maurite on 0431264202. (If the weather is very wet or the temperature is 40 degrees, the event will not take place.)

T&I networking

SA/NT members get together at Alfonso's Continental, corner of Hutt and Halifax streets, Adelaide at 10am on the first Saturday of each month. Join us for coffee or breakfast and the opportunity to discuss industry issues with other translators and interpreters. (The AUSIT table is inside the café.) Remember that networking earns you PD points and your expenses may be tax deductible.

Email Maurite Fober at exacttranslation@netspace.net.au for more information or to indicate your attendance. (The next meeting is Saturday 3 March.) Non-AUSIT members can check the ProZ.com

'Powwows' for future dates.

Online discussion group

As part of your AUSIT membership you now have access to a new online discussion group specific to AUSIT SA/NT. The committee members would be happy to hear from members about what they would like to see happening in SA/NT in terms of professional development and to keep them informed of future projects.

You can access this group by sending an email to AUSIT_SANT_Forum-subscribe@yahoo.com or directly via the website http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AUSIT_SANT_

Forum. For postings to the group, use this email address: AUSIT_SANT_Forum@yahoo.com

Why not take this opportunity to join us online! Send a short and shiny 'Hello' to introduce yourself with your name, language pair(s) and anything else you'd like to add. With your input, this discussion tool will help us all get better acquainted with our members and discuss and improve our work.

'Gracious, dignified and compassionate'

AUSIT Queensland mourn the loss of their friend and colleague, 'Evita' Prekel-Vleugels



The community of professional interpreters and translators in Australia is deeply moved to learn about the passing away of one of the finest in our ranks. Ms Eva Prekel-Vleugels, a Spanish professional translator and interpreter of Albany Creek, Queensland, died on Friday, 10 February 2012.

Amongst her friends and industry peers, Eva was recognised for her high-level communication skills,

expertise, adherence to ethics and reliability. She was well known within the Spanish-speaking community and the government agencies that regularly called on her professional services. In particular, members of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators in Queensland will remember Eva as a passionate chair of the branch committee and a role model.

We fight back tears as we remember you, Eva, 'Evita' to the people in the community you helped every day. You will always be remembered as a beautiful person who was and will continue to be a star for all of us.

The excellence of your work, Eva, and your boundless compassion, will forever remain in the minds and hearts of everyone who came in contact with you, especially the people you assisted every day in hospitals, courts and wherever a qualified Spanish interpreter was required.

For your clients you were Evita, a gracious and dignified professional whose reassuring presence instilled in those you assisted the knowledge that their voice was being heard loud and clear beyond the language barrier. As your colleagues, dearest Eva, we will forever miss your

serene composure and understated Argentinian humour, especially the Spanish interpreters who will greatly miss you as a trustworthy colleague.

We hope that the memories of the beautiful moments you shared with your family, albeit during your brief but meaningful life as a daughter, wife and mother, will bring some comfort to them through the difficult days to come and into the future.

Eva, you were a star in life and you will continue to shine as an even brighter star in the heavens for those of us who had the fortune of knowing and sharing some time with you. We present our sincere admiration to you and your family and a big thank you for allowing us to be part of your beautiful life.

Fly Eva — and thanks for your magic with words....you got the message across time and time again! Gracias por todo y un abrazo enorme.



Language and the Law

Notice of a Conference

Hosted by the Northern Territory Supreme Court
on 'Court Interpreting'
and a Call for Papers and Presentations.

Dates: Friday 25th May — Sunday 27th May 2012

Venue: Supreme Court of the Northern Territory — Darwin

Who is this conference for?

This Conference will be of benefit to interpreters who work in the courts, judicial officers, legal practitioners, court staff, police officers and other persons who regularly deal with people for whom English is not a first language, in the context of court proceedings. The emphasis will be on interpreting Aboriginal languages, although not exclusively so. The primary focus will be on issues that arise in the courts when interpreting the main Aboriginal languages spoken throughout the Northern Territory.

The Court and the Conference Committee welcome all persons working in this field to attend the Conference on 25-27 May 2012. We encourage you to register your interest in attending in order to be kept up dated with developments and to receive details of the final programme. To register your interest in attending, please fill out and submit the *Interest in attending the conference* form to the conference organiser Ms Malika Okeil (malika.okeil@nt.gov.au). Both the Supreme Court and the Magistrates Court have incorporated the dates into the court calendars.

Issues

Procedural matters relevant to the use of interpreters will be discussed. Interpreting legal language and meaningful interpreting will be explored. A series of issues for court users who deal with interpreters will be canvassed, as well as a discussion on assistance that can be offered to interpreters, their training, accreditation and ongoing support. A Protocol is to be developed between the courts of the Northern Territory and court interpreters. The Conference Committee draws your attention to Professor Sandra Hale's publication *Interpreter policies, practices and protocols in Australian courts and tribunals. A national survey* (2011), (Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration) as the basis for ideas for a Northern Territory Protocol.

Call for papers and presentations

Through the presentation of papers and workshops, the conference will explore issues that arise in court proceedings when interpreters are required. To express interest in delivering a paper or other presentation please fill out the *Expression of interest to present a paper* or other presentation form and return to Conference Committee Secretaries, Ms S. Glass (sally.glass@nt.gov.au) or Ms S. Mairou, (stephanie.mairou@nt.gov.au).

Chairman of Conference Committee: The Hon. Justice Dean Mildren RFD

Secretariat: Stephanie Mairou **Address:** GPO Box 3946, Darwin NT 0801

Email: Stephanie.mairou@nt.gov.au **Phone:** (08) 8999 6365 **Fax:** (08) 8923 9509