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... including the 2017 NAGM and Mini-  
Conference; a new national president;  
and an AUSIT office-bearer is NAATI  
Champion 2017

## < In Touch

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A migrant health education session in a baby health centre, c. early 1970s

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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respect to them and their cultures, and to Elders past and present.

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# A letter from our new national president

Dear fellow AUSIT members,

Firstly, let me say that I am truly honoured and humbled by this opportunity to lead our national professional association. My sincere thanks to you all for entrusting me with this task. I also thank the members of the National Council—and in particular our immediate past president, Professor Sandra Hale—for the faith they have shown in me.

I'm sure we would all agree that Sandra has done a momentous job in her three-year tenure. If I may, I would like to express, on behalf of all members, our gratitude to her for all she has achieved for our profession, not only during her tenure as national president, but as an active member of AUSIT since it was founded in 1987.

I'd like to tell you a little about the trajectory that has led up to my election as National President of AUSIT. My parents came to Australia from Italy in the great post-World War II migration wave. I was born in Perth, and my educational journey began there with the Christian Brothers and their lay colleagues, who taught me throughout my primary and secondary schooling.

The Brothers constantly reminded us of the 'business of learning', and this instilled in me a love of learning that I have to this day. (In this regard perhaps they were inspired by this saying attributed to Saint Jerome, the patron saint of translators: "Begin now to be what you will be hereafter.") This sound educational grounding meant that, by the time I got to university, my mind was 'terreno fertile', as we say in Italian, i.e. fertile ground; I was eager to learn more.

On leaving school I studied law/arts (with honours), and prior to embarking on an academic career, I practised as a lawyer for ten years. I was awarded my PhD by the University of Western Australia (UWA) in 2014, and presently lecture there in the Master of Translation Studies program, as well as at Curtin University's Law School.

My particular research interest is the translation difficulties that arise from the differences between continental legal systems and the English 'common law' system, upon which Australian law is based. I'm a NAATI-certified translator (Italian>English), and have served on AUSIT's Education Committee (as secretary) and Awards and Events Committee, as well as the WA Branch Committee.

As the incoming national president my message to you is a simple one: consolidation and growth. We've matured so much as an organisation over the last three years that I believe the time has come to consolidate our success so that we can continue to grow. We are professionals who take pride in our work, and have an important role to play in the life of our country. We are AUSIT members for these reasons, and we should approach the future with confidence. I'm very much looking forward to working with the National Council, the state branches and all members in this next, exciting phase of AUSIT's proud history, and in this endeavour I ask you all for your understanding and support.

Here's to another 30 years of professionalism and success!

*Rocco Loiacono, National President*

## Contributions welcome

Calling T&I practitioners, academics and students, plus industry stakeholders. To share your professional opinions, expertise or interesting T&I experiences:

Check our submission guidelines\* and date\*\*

... email any questions to the editor or a committee member\*\* ... then go for it!

\* under 'Contribute' at: [ausit.org/AUSIT/Publications/In\\_Touch\\_Magazine.aspx](https://ausit.org/AUSIT/Publications/In_Touch_Magazine.aspx)

\*\* this page, first column



Member organisation Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs International Federation of Translators

**AUSIT** FOCUS ON AUSTRALIA'S  
NEW AND EMERGING  
LANGUAGES

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# News in brief

(a summary of T&I-related items that have appeared recently in the mainstream media):

**24 Oct: Award-winning app boosts language skills to improve Indigenous health**

A dictionary app adapted to help Indigenous people communicate with medical professionals wins an Indigenous Digital Excellence award. *Radio National 'Life Matters'*

**9 Nov: Machine translation: Why businesses can't afford to rely on automated tools**

The three main issues with relying on machine translation are summed up as lack of contextual knowledge, imperfection of the translations, and the sheer number of languages in the world. *ABC Money*

**15 Nov: Sign language interpreter's emotional response to gay marriage win**

An Auslan interpreter's errors during the announcement of the gay marriage survey results are put down to "the emotion of the occasion"; and the Australian Bureau of Statistics is congratulated for providing an interpreter. *news.com.au*

**11 Dec: Pope Francis Suggests Translation Change To The Lord's Prayer**

Discussion of the Pope's statement that existing translations of a line in the 'Lord's Prayer' (originally written in Greek), such as the common English translation 'Lead us not into temptation', should be altered to remove the implication that people are 'pushed' into temptation by God. *NPR*

**11 Dec: Google's Pixel Buds are not the Babel fish they were made out to be**

Google's Bluetooth earbuds, intended to render spoken communication between different languages possible, are described as "pretty underwhelming". *lifelacker*

**16 Dec: Signing Santa elicits laughter, tears of joy ... in WA**

Families with hearing-impaired children converge on Bunbury, WA to visit WA Deaf Society's special 'Signing Santa'. *ABC TV News*

**4 Feb: Key Bible translator jailed in Islamic nation ...**

Bible translation group Wycliffe Associates voices concern for the safety of Bible translators in Islamic nations, following the arrest of one of its contacts. *sightmagazine.com.au*

**11 Feb: Review: Huawei Mate 10**

A review of Huawei's latest 'Mate' smartphone lists its 'Translator' function as the most impressive of several native functions. *PC & Tech Authority*

**17 Feb: The troll factory: What we know about the 13 Russians indicted ...**

The Internet Research Agency, a Russian 'troll farm', is revealed to have run an extensive 'translator project' to target Americans and pursue "information warfare against the United States." *The Age* (see also *The Australian*, 18 Feb)

**21 Feb: Perth Festival Reviews**

A review of Russian writer-director-performer Evgeny Grishkovets's live performance at the Perth Festival muses on the performance of an onstage Russian>English interpreter, and the interplay between the two men. *Daily Review*

**1 Mar: Bela Shayevich's Translation of 'Second-Hand Time' Wins ...**

The English translation of a Nobel prizewinning, 700-page historical nonfiction work wins the inaugural TA First Translation Prize, awarded by the London-based Society of Authors (a union for professional writers, illustrators and literary translators). *Publishing Perspectives*

**13 Mar: Man Booker International Prize 2018 longlist announced**

The 13 titles longlisted for this now annual prize for a book translated into English include two from Australian independent press Text Publishing: Wu Ming-Yi's *The Stolen Bicycle*, translated by Darryl Sterk, and Olga Tokarczuk's *Flights*, translated by Jennifer Croft. *booksandpublishing.com.au*

# David Moore—2017 NAATI Champion



Last year, as part of its fortieth anniversary celebrations, NAATI announced a one-off accolade to recognise an Australian T&I professional for their outstanding contribution to the country's T&I sector. The 2017 NAATI Champion Award was inspired by the organisation's Accolades for Excellence, awarded during its thirtieth anniversary in 2007. AUSIT's SA-NT branch nominated its NT representative, **David Moore**; and in September 2017, following careful consideration at both regional and national level, NAATI's CEO Mark Painting announced that David had won. SA-NT branch delegate **Ludmila Berkis** summarises David's achievements below.

**D**avid Moore has worked in the Alyawarr and Anmatjerr languages of Central Australia as a community interpreter and translator, has taught courses in Arrernte, and works as an interpreter and forensic linguist in courts and tribunals. He is particularly interested in cross-cultural communication and the challenges faced by interpreters in remote Aboriginal communities, and is currently studying for his doctorate in linguistics at the University of Western Australia.

David's career highlights to date include involvement in Darwin's inaugural Language and the Law Conference (2012), as well as founding the Society for the History of Linguistics in the Pacific (SHLP), the Translation Tracks project for high schools, and AUSIT's Central Australian sub-branch in Alice Springs.

In proposing the creation of this sub-branch to cover the remote areas of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, David stated that "The middle of nowhere is our home! And our challenge is to support T&I in these vast regions. For us the border between NT and WA hardly exists".

The vision and spirit that helped David to achieve this goal continue to drive his crusade to promote T&I in Central Australia whenever and however possible. He actively lobbies for the cause at every level—talking to judges, ministers and anyone else relevant—and also works to improve training, professional development, and recognition of T&I as a profession.

David has organised a number of conferences for T&I practitioners, as well as for various government services that employ them—including the first T&I conferences ever hosted in Alice Springs.

Recently, David has been instrumental in bringing into being the Translation Tracks project—a translation course at high school level for students of Aboriginal languages. Since its launch in 2015, the course has expanded to a number of schools in Central Australia, and there is a great deal of interest from others. Spanning years eight to 12, the course aims to give students a solid grounding in translation; and in the future David hopes to add interpreting to the program—a massive undertaking which is set to raise T&I in Aboriginal languages to a new level.

Congratulations, David, on your award!

***Ludmila Berkis** has an honours degree in microbiology and a background in medical research. A practising Russian<>English interpreter and Russian>English translator for over 22 years, she has also been an active member of AUSIT's SA-NT branch, holding various positions, since 2009. In recent years Ludmila has also served on AUSIT's National Council—first as the SA-NT branch's delegate, then general secretary (2013–16), and now again as branch delegate.*

*"David ... is worthy of the title ... on the grounds that he has passionately promoted interpreting and translation in every way possible in Aboriginal languages ... [he has] put the profession on the map in the Northern Territory ... The scale of his undertakings is considerable ..."*

An excerpt from David's nomination, written by Ludmila Berkis on behalf of the SA-NT branch and endorsed by AUSIT's then National President Sandra Hale.



## AUSIT National Mini-Conference, NAGM and Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture 2017

Mid-November 2017 saw over 100 registered attendees flock to Canberra for AUSIT's biennial National Mini-Conference and related events, held over two days. **Simone Aliano**—a Spanish>English translator and Spanish<English interpreter currently studying for her master's at RMIT—co-presented two conference sessions, and gives an overview here.

On the first jam-packed day, Friday 17 November, the mini-conference 'Translation and Interpreting: Ethics and Professionalism' opened with a keynote speech on the AUSIT Code of Ethics delivered by exiting President Sandra Hale. This was followed by two plenary and 11 parallel sessions, each of which covered a different aspect of the year's topic. The conference day came to a close with the Paul Sinclair Award ceremony, followed by AUSIT's thirtieth anniversary celebration—giving guests the opportunity to network and mingle over canapés and cake.

On the second day, Saturday 18 November, attendees were treated to the annual Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture. Titled 'The Unethical Illusionist: reflections of a jobbing translator', it was given by Dr Kevin Windle, Emeritus Fellow at the Australian National University and recipient of the International Federation of Translators' Aurora Borealis Prize for Outstanding Translation of Non-Fiction Literature 2017. [The lecture will shortly be available for download on AUSIT's website, and extracts will be published in the next (Winter) issue of *In Touch*.]

Following the lecture, AUSIT members were invited to attend the National AGM, which saw the election of incoming President Rocco Loiacono. For most attendees the busy schedule of events ended there, while members of the National Council stayed on into the afternoon for their annual Post-AGM Meeting.

*Interested in participating in AUSIT's National Conference 2018 in Adelaide this November? Further details TBA. Stay tuned!*

## Paul Sinclair Award for Outstanding Contribution to AUSIT 2017

In 2009, the AUSIT National Council (NC) established the Paul Sinclair Award to honour the late Paul Sinclair's contribution to the association and the profession. Nominations are invited from branch committee and NC members, and the final decision is made by the NC via an anonymous vote.

### Winner:

**Sam Berner** for the organisation of the twenty-first triennial FIT World Congress, which took place in Brisbane last August. As vice-chair of the FIT2017 Organising Committee (Operations), Sam took care of the bulk of the organisation. She put her life on hold to make sure that every single email was replied to, every presenter and sponsor was happy, and everything ran smoothly. Her tenacity, tireless work, insight and good economic sense ensured that the conference was a resounding success.

### Runner up:

**David Deck** for his meticulous work improving key administrative texts, including revising AUSIT's constitution and by-laws, and updating the membership categories and candidate protocols. He also significantly contributed to the Vic/Tas branch's induction course modules and oversaw the working group for the 2016 National Conference in Melbourne.

Above right: Conference-goers peruse the anniversary issue of *In Touch*

Sam Berner (right) with Dalia Ayalon Sinclair OAM, wife of the late Paul Sinclair, who presented the award and certificates

### Commended:

**Daniel Muller** for his work—while AUSIT's National President (2010–11) and executive officer (2011–14)—re-designing the organisation's administrative infrastructure to streamline operations and reduce its reliance on volunteer labour.

**Amy Wang** for her work as chair of the NSW branch; in particular for attracting younger members to the committee and regularly arranging the very successful Coffee Mornings—a networking tool for practitioners that also allows AUSIT to promote the organisation to non-members.



## NSW Health Care Interpreter Service turns 40!



The NSW Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its inception in 2017, and its ground-breaking achievements and contributions were acknowledged with a special event and book launch held at the state's Parliament House in Sydney on Friday 17 November. Vesna Dragoje, director of Sydney HCIS, reports on the event and reflects on four decades of growth and development.

**T**he celebration included speeches from Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, who wrote the foreword to the book (see below); Dr Teresa Anderson, Chief Executive, Sydney Local Health District (LHD); and Tish Bruce, Executive Director, Health and Social Policy Branch, NSW Ministry of Health.

Attracting more than 300 guests, it was an opportunity to launch *The NSW Health Care Interpreter Service: The First Forty Years*.

Published by Health NSW, the book is the product of a collaboration between Sydney LHD and the state's five Health Care Interpreter Services, which individually belong to and operate within its five LHDs: Sydney, South Western Sydney, Western Sydney, Hunter New England and Illawarra Shoalhaven.

Lisette Engel (née Pollak) and Terry Chesher were key figures in the early history of the service, and their personal archives and memories underpinned this project. Their co-authors were Paul Ashton, a semi-retired professor of public history with a strong commitment to democratic history-making, and senior members of Sydney HCIS Vesna Dragoje, Carla Knox and Marlis Walther.

The origins of the service lie in the late 1960s: immigrants, language and education—hot political topics at the time—stimulated interest in the migrant experience in academic circles, and this resulted in an increase in literature on

the subject. Professional health workers—especially those in mental health—soon joined the discussions, and they began to advocate vigorously for provision of interpreter services, particularly in hospitals.

The need for these services in NSW, already becoming increasingly apparent, was highlighted by a 1970 survey on interpreter needs in the state's hospitals, instigated by the NSW Association for Mental Health's Standing Committee for the Mental Health of Migrants.

In their subsequent report the committee, accepting that it was “impractical to staff all hospitals with interpreters, though this would be ideal”, made a “practical proposition [to appoint] a professional interpreter to each of the large metropolitan hospitals”, adding that other areas with significant migrant populations “could be regionally grouped, with a peripatetic interpreter appointed to operate within each group”.

In 1976, under the Wran government, the state's first four health care interpreters were appointed, based at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children at Camperdown. By 1977, 18 more had joined the service. They were based in hospitals in Sydney's Inner Metropolitan Health Region, with headquarters at Crown Street Women's Hospital in Surry Hills (closed down in 1983). One of their number, Lisette Engel, is credited with coining the term ‘health care interpreter’ around that time.

Today, the five Health Care Interpreter Services in NSW—three of them operating in metropolitan and two in rural LHDs—together cover all public health facilities in the state. Committed to enabling health services

to deliver responsive and equitable care for their populations, they provide interpreting services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, covering 160 languages (including Auslan). On average, 260,000 interpreter sessions are provided annually.

Times have changed since those early beginnings; the first generation of interpreters has now mostly retired, and some have sadly passed away. It is important to honour these people who helped to build our profession in Australia and beyond, many of them playing pivotal roles in the process.

*Vesna Dragoje is the director of Sydney Health Care Interpreter Service (Sydney Local Health District), and a co-author of The NSW Health Care Interpreter Service: The First Forty Years.*

An immunisation poster in Turkish, c. 1980



Right: Prof. The Hon. Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO (centre, in black) and Dr Teresa Anderson, Chief Executive, Sydney LHD (in white) with the six co-authors, L->R: Paul Ashton, Carla Knox, Marlis Walther, Vesna Dragoje, Lisette Engel, Terry Chesher

Images courtesy of the Media and Communications Unit, Sydney Local Health District



One day I'm called to a hospital. At the patient's bedside the Australian doctor says to me in English:

*Tell this man he is dying and will be dead in a few days. He has very powerful bacteria in his blood and our strongest antibiotics have been unable to kill them. In fact the bacteria have been feeding off the antibiotics. The bacteria love the antibiotics and they have been growing. He now has very healthy, large and strong bacteria in his blood and soon the blood will no longer carry oxygen but just bacteria to his brain and heart and lungs. We have told him this in English but he apparently wants to hear it from someone like you in his own language which is Italian, is that right?*

I nod. I am overwhelmed at the responsibility that is being thrust on the Italian language about to come out of my mouth. I am overcome with grief but as I open my mouth and start to speak I feel that old familiarity and warmth enter the relationship that the language is gently constructing between me and the dying man. He looks at me and watches the words flow out of my mouth. He relaxes visibly when I start speaking Italian. He has no family or friends who speak Italian.

The dying man taught me something that day. When he was born, the first language he heard was Italian. Now that he was dying he wanted to be told in the same language. Dying was like a new birth. He would come out of the womb again to the sound of his death. Your own language is your mother holding your hand, caressing your forehead. You do not want to die in a foreign language.

Extract from 'A Short History of the Italian Language'\* by AUSIT member **Moreno Giovannoni**. Moreno is an Italian-English interpreter and advanced translator. His debut novel *The Fireflies of Autumn* will be published by Black Inc. later this year.

\* Published in: Anna Goldsworthy (ed), *Best Australian Essays 2017* (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2017). © Moreno Giovannoni 2017; reprinted by permission of Moreno Giovannoni and Black Inc.



## Vera Crvenkovic: A veteran of the HCIS

When Vera Crvenkovic retired in 2016, she had been with the NSW Health Care Interpreter Service since its inception in 1977. Vera arrived in Australia in 1959 as a refugee, with her husband and baby son, having been a medical student in her native Croatia. Here's how she came to be one of New South Wales's first health care interpreters.

When we arrived in Sydney a fellow Croatian refugee employed me as a secretary and interpreter, and I was often asked to accompany Croatian women to hospital appointments. I held their hands, and helped them to communicate with medical personnel and find their way around.

In 1977 I was working for prominent NSW politician Douglas Darby. He encouraged me to improve and extend my skills, and when we heard that the Wran state government was recruiting people to train as interpreters, he encouraged me to apply.

The 12 successful applicants—of which I was one—beat over a thousand others to become the first interpreters officially trained to work in health care here. We spent our first six weeks in training specifically designed for health care interpreters, plus compulsory linguistics studies at UNSW, and by the time we received certificates qualifying us as interpreters and translators, we were already working!

At first, on a normal working day, our team was based in one hospital, and spent time together there between call-outs to other hospitals in our area; then later on more bases opened in other hospitals.

Between us we covered Croatian and Serbian (that was me), Macedonian and Russian, Italian, Greek and Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish and Arabic. The doctors and nurses were over the moon to have us helping them communicate with patients, but the booking clerks were often quite hostile. We had to ask them for the names of outpatients who were due to come in, and I'd often find myself saying "I'm here in an official capacity, employed by the Health Commission, I haven't walked in off the street!"

Not long after the interpreter service began, a terrible incident occurred in King George V Memorial Hospital. An Italian woman who'd just given birth to her fourth child was asked—without an interpreter present—whether she wanted more children. She said no—without realising he was asking for her consent—and was taken for surgery: they cut her tubes! The patient and her husband only found out

afterwards—from a cleaner who'd overheard the conversation. They were terribly upset, and he went raging around the hospital saying he was going to kill the superintendent, so the Italian interpreter was called in to mediate. After that, we tried to make sure we always accompanied women who were having babies.

There were no medical consent forms in those days, but we insisted that we be allowed to write in the patients' notes—not on medical matters, but recording what language(s) they spoke, how much English they understood, and so on. This was very important; but some hospitals didn't let us. We also wrote down important facts that patients told us in their own languages. In one case, a mother suspected her husband was interfering with their child (the patient), and I wrote this down. As her husband was saying something else in English, it was important that she was heard too.

On the job, we continued to train with Lisette Pollak and her colleagues, doing roleplays and so on. At that time our job was not only to interpret, but also to promote our new service. After a few years, we had compulsory studies in medical terminology. I got a high distinction—easy, with my medical background! I also did some optional courses in specific areas, such as nephrology and psychiatry.

In 1982, I took a NAATI English>Croatian translation test, then took on additional work with Terry Chesher's Health Translation Service. I translated health-related articles into Croatian, for the Croatian community newspaper and so on.

From 1984, when I became an interpreter-in-charge, I had to look after interpreters' cars,



wages and so on, promote the service, and teach new staff how to work with interpreters. Despite all my other tasks, though, I continued to take on interpreting calls right through until my retirement.

The work could be stressful, so right from the start we were offered sessions with social workers and psychologists; plus a psychiatrist based in the mental hospital in Rozelle was a mentor for us interpreters, and he was always available. Later on there were short compulsory courses in relaxation techniques and even aromatherapy. We really had plenty of opportunities to talk about the stresses of the work, and were encouraged to, but actually I found I was able to keep my work separate from my home life quite well.

*"The doctors and nurses were over the moon to have us helping them communicate with patients ..."*





When we interpreted for patients with mental illnesses, we had to learn to take care. For example, one client was swearing terribly, and he got angry that I was translating it, saying "Why translate? They understand!" He tried to burn me with a cigarette, and had to be restrained. Usually, though, I had an OK time at the mental institutions, because I stayed calm, which helped the patients to keep calm too.

In the early days some patients preferred to have a family member interpret for them, but that doesn't happen much now. The value of interpreters has become more accepted within the community, as people tell each other how useful they are because of their training and experience. Nowadays, interpreters are treated more as professionals, rather than as family support.

As my colleagues and I gained experience we became more confident; and we found sharing our experiences helped too. We couldn't talk about specific patients, of course, as we had to maintain their confidentiality; but we could talk generally about our work and compare notes.

Even fairly recently, though, I had to support an interpreter who was having problems because she'd become too familiar with the medical staff. I reported the situation to the medical authorities, and it was sorted out. The interpreter and the other staff had to work together to reassess how they interacted, and the interpreter regained her privacy.

In my last few years, I was covering a wide area, and the travelling had become a lot more strenuous and time-consuming. This is actually why I retired; it was the driving that became too much for me, not the work. I feel the areas that interpreters are expected to cover are too big nowadays. I did have some health problems, too. It was OK if the car was parked downhill when I left an appointment ... but if it was uphill I would get out of breath! Well, at 86, maybe it was enough!

At the HCIS fortieth anniversary event last year, I received a commendation for having given my heart to the service, but actually I feel we *all* did.

*From an interview with Vera Crvenkovic conducted by Helen Sturgess, editor, In Touch.*



## Congratulations Terry



Terry Chesher's name occurs frequently in accounts of the history of health care interpreting in NSW. Terry is an AUSIT founding member and Fellow whose contribution to the industry is inestimable. Some thoughts from Terry:

*The job title 'health care interpreter' (HCI) reflects the unique role of interpreters working in the health system. I've been lucky enough to have known and worked with many HCIs who care a great deal about their work.*

*In 1976, having been a migrant health educator with Italian mothers and babies, I began working with Lisette Pollak and Roy Richter, who were planning the operations and designing the training*

*course for the new Health Care Interpreter Service. This gave me insight into both the complexity of the health system and the challenges for interpreters, who have to familiarise themselves (in both languages) with medical terminology covering all major health issues.*

*When HCIs first went into hospitals, many health professionals were unused to working with professional interpreters; and many had low expectations and a lack of trust, due to a history of non-qualified staff (cleaners, porters, relatives) being used for interpreting.*

*Over time, HCIs have had to educate both health professionals and patients to understand the role of the trained interpreter and recognise that they are often working in crisis situations. While impartially interpreting for often emotional people, interpreters also have to deal with their own emotions, for example if they have themselves suffered from similar crises. I admire the commitment and resilience of HCIs in a challenging work environment.*

*Congratulations on the first forty years!*

Terry Chesher (left) and Lisette Engel, presenting at a health care conference, c. mid-1980s



Opposite page, top: Vera Crvenkovic after receiving her commendation in November

Opposite page, bottom: Vera promoting the Central Sydney and South Eastern Area Health Service's HCIS in the late 1990s

Images courtesy of the Media and Communications Unit, Sydney Local Health District

Above by cartoonist Bruce Petty, first published in the edited collection *Readings in Migrant Health* in 1984

Left: Three of the first trainee interpreter intake, c. 2011, L->R: Angela Lukas still works part time for Sydney HCIS; Vera Crvenkovic retired in 2016; Mohammed Hussein still works sessionally for NSW HCIS



## Interpreting medical consent

In Australia, we are asked to sign consent forms of all kinds—to formally permit a job search provider to contact a prospective employer, for example, or allow our child to go on a school trip. The list is endless, but for T&I **Zdenka Gajinov** there is one such form that she privately calls ‘the real McCoy’: the medical consent form. As signing one of these indicates that we want to undertake the medical procedure or treatment specified, it is vital that our consent is informed—i.e. that we understand not only the potential benefits, but also the inherent risks.

**I**nterpreting a medical consent form is a very complex task; and as it requires a vast knowledge of medical terminology, we could easily categorise it as a medical document; however, it is actually, by the nature of its purpose, a very serious legal document.

There are only a few legal documents which, if interpreted, require that the interpreter sign and affix their credentials—among them wills, enduring ‘powers of attorney’ and medical consent forms—and all with good reason.

By signing these forms, you (the interpreter) are making a statement that you have faithfully sight-translated or interpreted the document itself, and relayed all information and messages conveyed in it to the patient. There are no circumstances in which I could imagine accuracy to be more important than these.

Medical consent form templates are freely available on the websites of Australia’s state health departments, and I keep my own personal collection. I use them to familiarise myself with less common medical terminology, which could be essential in processing a particular consent.

I would congratulate any interpreter who can interpret, without any preparation or a doctor’s explanation, passages like: “... we will try to repair this fault in your dura mater, accessing the site endoscopically through your air cells, because we believe that the fistula is at the junction of your cribriform plate and anterior cranial fossa in your ethmoid roof ...”.

Unfortunately, in some cases, exactly that is expected of us. Having this in mind, the best we can do is to prepare ourselves with the technical knowledge and vocabulary, but this is not enough.

Accuracy is also vital in interpreting conversation related to consent forms. A patient’s statement like: “The doctor knows best, he will do what is best for me” or “I don’t care. Whatever must be done, must be done” is *not* a consent for the procedure. Such statements must be interpreted exactly, so the doctor understands what is going on and can make sure they get a clear and informed answer from the patient, before the form is signed by doctor, patient and interpreter. A true consent goes something like: “Yes, I understood everything that was interpreted, I understand the risks and I want to have this procedure/treatment.”

Although professional ethics obligate us not to interfere with the course of the conversation, I would personally allow an exemption here to make sure that we obtain a clear verbal statement from the patient that he or she has

understood everything that was interpreted, if that has not already been stated.

Unfortunately, probably to improve time efficiency or maybe for convenience, the proportion of medical consents that are done over the phone, with phone interpreters, is on the increase. Added to the complexity of the task, in these cases, are possible issues with the equipment, such as a bad phone line, which can create a nightmare for the interpreter.

Life throws many challenges at us, and we must do our best in any scenario, but unfortunately sometimes our best isn’t good enough. So just in case, when working with medical consents, it is wise to carry valid professional indemnity insurance. As I said ... just in case.

*Zdenka Gajinov migrated here from Serbia in 1990, and holds a degree in economics from the University of Novi Sad. She is a NAATI-accredited Serbian<> and Bosnian<>English interpreter with expertise in note-taking skills and symbols, as well as memory retention, for interpreters. Zdenka has taught on the Advanced Diploma in Interpreting program, Southbank Institute of Technology, Brisbane, and in NAATI-QLD workshops; has sat on NAATI’s Bosnian panel of examiners; and nowadays specialises in phone interpreting.*

# CAUTION: Police and interpreters talking

So you'd like to be a police interpreter? **Uldis Ozolins** gives a rundown of the challenges.



**T**he range of work covered in police interpreting is vast—from ad hoc interviews for minor matters with local police, to lengthy criminal investigations using extensive interception technologies and embedded interpreters. Working in the more complex areas of police work, such as voice recognition and telephone intercepts, requires a multitude of skills.

Cultural advice—often very specific and related to language—can play a crucial role, particularly when there is a breakdown in communication. There are often layers of culture to understand, and criminal subcultures can have their own idioms and ways of communicating. In such situations, police depend heavily on the assistance of language professionals.

Cultural knowledge ranges from theology to specific jargon. Interpreters need to be honest in whether and how they present any insights;

and it is ultimately up to the police to decide what advice they will use. For intelligence purposes, police often need the opinion of the interpreter as a speaker of the language, and also as someone with a closer relationship to the community. However, stereotypes must be avoided—for example, it is illegitimate for a police officer to ask “Is this the normal thing in ‘x’ culture?”

In the most complex cases, interpreters are embedded in police teams during long-term investigations, building up knowledge and expertise. They may help police, for example, to rephrase questioning of suspects as more understanding is gained of their language and behaviour.

The role of the interpreter can change over a long-term investigation. At the investigative stage, the police and interpreter are looking at everything, trying to uncover and piece together every potential piece of evidence or lead. At the evidentiary stage, however, when preparing for a court case, the focus shifts to ensuring complete accuracy, so that facts can be presented and defended under cross-examination.

Other interpreting situations impose their own demands. Interpreters in on-the-spot investigations or interviews need to be prepared for variable work hours, often in stark environments. At times, they are thrust into ad hoc situations for which there can be no briefing—such as media interpreting in an unfolding and dramatic murder case—so they have to be mentally prepared for such events.

Because of the nature of police interpreting assignments, the safety and security of the interpreter should be integral to the police work. The interpreter also needs to be aware of their own level of comfort in a situation. Threats can be directed at an interpreter (although rarely); and when they are, this should be reported immediately to the investigating team.

Confidentiality is, of course, of utmost importance in this situation. Interpreters are usually well aware of this obligation, but their police counterparts also need to be aware of the interpreter’s undertaking in this regard. Sometimes police keep important facts close to their chests, and this can prevent adequate briefing; so interpreters need to be assertive in requesting information, in order to be sure they fully understand the context of the interpreting assignment.

From the interpreter’s perspective, when starting out in police work they often don’t understand how cognitively demanding it will be. From the police perspective, those who have often worked with interpreters over long investigations know well how valuable the interpreter is and how skilled their job is, but others still require education. Good training and good briefing on both sides is the key to a successful relationship.

*Dr Uldis Ozolins is an associate professor and Director of Academic Programs—Languages, Linguistics, Interpreting and Translation, TESOL—in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts (SoHCA) at Western Sydney University.*

*These reflections are drawn from the seventh Annual Legal Interpreting Symposium run by UNSW’s Interpreting & Translation team, which took place in April 2017 and was focused on interpreting in police work.*

*For UNSW Newsroom’s article on the symposium, visit:*

[hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/articles/symposium-caution-police-interpreters-talking/](http://hal.arts.unsw.edu.au/newsroom/articles/symposium-caution-police-interpreters-talking/)



# My journey to ISO 17100 certification

German↔English translator and interpreter **Claudia Koch-McQuillan** recently gained ISO (International Organization for Standardization) certification 17100 for translation services. If you're unsure exactly what that means, you're not alone! Claudia sets out here to describe this ISO standard, her experience of the certification process, and the subsequent requirements on her practice; and to ponder the value of both process and certification.

**F**or the past six months, I've been proudly sporting an ISO 17100 certification logo underneath my email signature. It comes in a pretty blue, but does anybody—I'm thinking particularly of clients and prospective clients—know what it means? Has it delivered any benefits to me? And is it something I'd recommend doing, especially at a time when many of us T&I professionals here in Australia are already busy enough with paperwork for our transition to certification?

To answer this last question right at the start: I found ISO 17100 certification to be a very interesting exercise from a professional practice perspective. It's an expensive process, though, and hasn't delivered me any financial returns so far—but this may be because I haven't put much effort into marketing it yet. What I *have* already gained out of the process is a more

structured and professional approach to my work, having had to take a good, methodical look at how I do things.

So what *is* ISO 17100, and what does the certification process entail?

ISO 17100 'Translation Services -- Requirements for translation services' is a standard developed by the ISO's Technical Committee for Translation, Interpreting and Related Services, of which Australia has been an active member for the past two years.

The standard "specifies requirements for all aspects of the translation process directly affecting the quality and delivery of translation services" and "includes provisions for translation service providers (TSPs) concerning the management of core processes, minimum qualification requirements, the availability and management of resources, and other actions necessary for the delivery of a quality translation service" (ISO 17100:2015).

It's designed to apply to TSPs of any size, from freelancers through to large agencies. So far it's been mainly adopted by translation companies; yet there's nothing to stop individual translators (like me) from pursuing certification under this standard, as all requirements are

scaled according to the size of the TSP. For example, the project management processes required of me, a freelancer, are much simpler than those required of an agency, as I will perform most of the tasks myself rather than divide them between a project manager and a translator.

ISO 17100 certification is similar to NAATI certification in that it is awarded to me as a service provider, but doesn't necessarily apply to all the translations I do, only to those that I complete according to the requirements.

Of these requirements, the one that is probably the most important is known as the 'four-eyes principle': each translation to be certified under ISO 17100 must have been first carried out by a qualified translator, then revised by another equally qualified translator. I think we will all agree that this is likely to improve quality if we bear in mind the 'equally qualified'. This stipulation encourages the formation of constructive translator/ reviser partnerships, which I really like. A fresh set of eyes cast over a tricky text can often spot oversights and find better solutions, helping both translator and reviser to build their skills while also making sure that the client receives a flawless translation.

Many of you would already work with revisers when translations are intended for publication, especially in print. If you do, you have probably experienced the frustrations of working with unqualified revisers who, despite having little or no understanding of translation, sometimes attempt to impose their—often inadequate—stylistic preferences.

So, in a nutshell, how do I do a translation according to ISO 17100?

1. I follow my documented processes for receiving and analysing the text and agreeing translation specifications with the client.
2. I translate the text according to the specifications agreed with the client, provided I have the necessary linguistic, technical, research and domain competences, and I perform my standard checking and proofreading routines.
3. I send my translation to an equally competent reviser for a bilingual revision. What this means is that the reviser checks the target text against the source for accuracy, completeness, correct terminology, spelling and so on, according to the specifications agreed with the client.
4. I implement suggested changes in collaboration with my reviser, then send the final text to the client.
5. I follow the documented processes that I have developed for concluding the project, including invoicing; the active collection of feedback; the handling of queries and complaints; and archiving of the material.

Naturally, somebody needs to pay for the extra revision step; and this is why, although I'm ISO 17100 certified, not all translations I do will be certified; only those where the client wants—and is prepared to pay for—this added quality assurance.

ISO 17100 certification for service providers is awarded either on the basis of an audit, or by 'self-declaration'. For this latter option, TSPs merely declare that they comply with the standard; however, external certification by an auditor certainly bears more weight (which must be paid for, of course).

It is important to note that certification is not awarded indefinitely based on the initial audit; ongoing compliance is verified via annual review audits. A fee is charged for these, and I believe they take a fair bit of time and effort.

Now to the certification process, which I found interesting in itself and not particularly onerous:

1. First, I needed to show that I was familiar with the standard, which I purchased for the purpose (it's available directly from the ISO—at [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)—for approximately \$160; or from other, national standards organisations).
2. My auditor then gave me a checklist of questions to answer, mainly concerned with whether I have documented procedures in place to cover all of the requirements. I wrote a concise 'procedures manual' for this purpose, and found this to be a useful exercise, as it made me reflect on my

processes and how they could be improved—archiving and feedback collection above all! My auditor reviewed this manual, and gave me some pointers regarding where I needed to be more specific.

3. Once this was done, I had to show him how I'd implemented my procedures in three translation projects of my choice. (Larger TSPs would presumably be required to show compliance in more projects.) My auditor wanted to see how I received and accepted projects; how I made sure that both translator (i.e. myself) and reviser were appropriately qualified according to the standard; and how I handled complaints and client queries.

All in all, the audit process took me a couple of months, mainly because work kept getting in the way. The most time-consuming task was writing the procedures manual. For me the entire process was done online, as my auditor was in the UK; so far there are no auditors in Australia, because the standard has not yet been adopted here.

Australia *is* planning to adopt ISO 17100 in the near future. However, it's worth noting that standards are not mandatory unless they are prescribed by law or regulation. It will always be up to the translator and client to negotiate and agree on work to be done according to this standard; and in the USA and the European Union, where ISO 17100 is already widely used, it's often included in translation tender requirements.

So, am I planning to keep up my certification by jumping through ISO's annual hoops? Definitely, for the time being at least; and I hope it'll encourage me to put more effort into marketing myself internationally.

*Claudia Koch-McQuillan is a freelance German<>English translator and conference interpreter, and is AUSIT's representative on the Standards Australia and FIT committees dealing with T&I standards.*



# Launch of the Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Australian Courts and Tribunals

On 20 October 2017, at Old Parliament House in Canberra, a set of Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Australian Courts and Tribunals was launched by the then Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja. Dr Rocco Loiacono, then secretary of AUSIT's Education Committee and now its National President, represented AUSIT at the ceremony. Rocco reports here on what is a momentous step in Australia's legal history, and for its T&I profession.



**T**he launch of these Recommended National Standards is the culmination of many years of consideration, discussion and work. In March 2009, the Australasian Institute for Judicial Administration (AIJA) brought together judicial officers and interpreters for a national conference in Fremantle, WA on 'The Use of Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals', and subsequently commissioned a national survey of interpreters, judicial officers and tribunal members.

The 2011 report on this survey<sup>1</sup>, prepared by AUSIT's immediate past president Professor Sandra Hale, identified the need for:

- recognition of the complexity of legal interpreting
- specialised legal interpreter training
- those working with interpreters to share the responsibility for quality
- adequate working conditions for interpreters
- court interpreters to be adequately remunerated.

The report's 16 recommendations addressed all the above issues, and proposed that a national protocol on working with interpreters in courts and tribunals be established.

(A 'protocol', in legal terms, is an agreed set of rules, procedures and/or conventions that apply to a particular matter or situation.)

The legal and T&I professions both accepted this proposal, and were instrumental in taking matters forward.

With this shared momentum, the proposed protocol rapidly evolved into a much larger project; and in 2015 a specialist committee made up of experts from both professions was appointed by the (then recently formed) Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity (JCCD).

As acknowledged by Minister Seselja in his speech at the launch, Australia is one of the world's most culturally and linguistically diverse countries; and the JCCD's remit is to understand and address the needs of our culturally diverse communities, including the "significant barriers to accessing justice" that

can be experienced by members whose first language is not English.

With this in mind, the specialist committee's brief was to create a comprehensive national set of standards laying out optimum ways in which Australian courts and tribunals can work with interpreters.

(A 'standard', in legal terms, is a requirement that members of a particular sector or profession agree to abide by; a set of standards, therefore, is similar to a 'code of conduct'.)

These standards are intended to play a significant part in ensuring the application of one of the most fundamental rights under our legal system: that of natural justice, and within it, the right of anyone who appears before a court or tribunal to be heard.

In order to do so, the final document includes much more than the standards themselves; it also contains educational material and resources, a set of 'model rules' to govern the use of interpreters and the conduct expected of them, and a 'model practice note' for judges.

('Practice notes' are issued by Australian courts to provide information to parties involved in proceedings, and their lawyers, on particular aspects of the Court's practice and procedure. In the case of these standards, the practice note explains to judges how to refer to the standards in order to implement them.)

AUSIT's immediate past president Professor Sandra Hale has been a key figure—a driving force, in fact—in the process that has culminated in the development of the standards, and was one of the main authors of the final document. This in addition, of course, to being

a prominent, consistent and steadfast advocate for the T&I profession in Australia since the inception of AUSIT some 30 years ago. I was honoured and privileged, therefore, to represent AUSIT, and Sandra, at the launch of the Recommended National Standards.

On behalf of AUSIT, I can only express gratitude and appreciation to Sandra and her fellow specialist committee members for their tireless work on this project. The interpreting and legal professions will both benefit significantly from a unified approach across Australian courts and tribunals. These standards are indeed—as they were described to me recently—not just a milestone, but a ‘giant leap’ for our profession. Many of us in T&I are most pleased; we cannot wait to see the standards put into practice, and are fervently hoping that the will that brought them to fruition will be matched at political, administrative and judicial levels, to ensure they are implemented.

**Rocco Loiaco**, National President of AUSIT and formerly secretary of its Education Committee, is a lecturer in Translation Studies at the University of Western Australia and at Curtin Law School, Curtin University. Rocco worked as a lawyer for ten years, and completed his PhD in 2014. His particular research interest is the translation difficulties that arise out of the differences between continental legal systems and those, such as Australia’s, that are based on the English ‘common law’ system.

*The Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Australian Courts and Tribunals can be found here:*

<http://jccd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/JCCD-Interpreter-Standards.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> Sandra Hale, *Interpreter Policies, Practices and Protocols in Australasian Courts and Tribunals. A National Survey* (Melbourne: Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration Incorporated, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Moutsacalis, cited in Robert Todd, ‘Court Interpreters Inadequate?’, *Law Times*, Canada, April 2008.

*“... so many people who put their trust in the administration of justice ... have suffered from incompetent interpretation. If you do not understand the proceedings through competent interpretation, you are denied justice.”*

Canadian lawyer Anthony Moutsacalis<sup>2</sup>

JCCD office-bearers and some of the specialist committee members gathered at the launch, L->R: Carla Wilshire, CEO, Migration Council Australia; The Hon. Chief Justice Chris Kourakis, Supreme Court of South Australia and Chair Elect, JCCD; The Hon. Justice Melissa Perry, Federal Court of Australia and Chair, specialist committee; Mark Painting: CEO, NAATI; The Hon. Chief Justice Wayne Martin, Supreme Court of Western Australia and Chair, JCCD; Dr Rocco Loiaco, then secretary, Education Committee (representing Prof. Sandra Hale, then National President), AUSIT



# Let's talk machine translation

In the second half of our feature on machine translation, our team of translation technology researchers—**Stephen Doherty, Sheila Castilho, Federico Gaspari and Joss Moorkens**—investigates how the quality of its output can be assessed. Then to round up the series of articles the team's leader, **Stephen Doherty**, takes a look at the latest developments and trends in machine-generated subtitles and captions.

## New and not-so-new approaches to the assessment of quality in machine translation

by Stephen Doherty, Sheila Castilho, Federico Gaspari and Joss Moorkens

**T**he need to assess machine translation (MT) systems via their output has existed since the early days of MT, and it is no surprise that evaluation continues to receive significant attention across the industry. Despite the increasing prevalence of MT and the significant impact it has on translation workflows, there is little public awareness of how developers actually measure the quality of their systems; and this often leads to a mismatch between provider and buyer in terms of quality and cost, as stakeholders are literally speaking different languages. In this article we review established approaches to evaluation, and also the most recent developments.

The quality of MT, much like that of professional (i.e. human) translation, can be assessed in a wide range of ways. There is no single approach or metric sufficient to address all evaluation purposes and scenarios; however, one rather basic distinction that can be useful is that assessment of MT quality can be manual (i.e. human) and/or automatic.

Manual evaluation is often claimed to be subjective and slow, as well as expensive to perform, and inter-rater agreement can be an issue when multiple evaluators are involved. A comprehensive evaluation process may be desirable in principle, as it can be used to assess complex linguistic phenomena such as error types, adequacy and fluency, provided that the evaluators have a good grounding in translation and linguistics. However, manual evaluation also varies depending on the skill(s) of the evaluator(s).

There are commonalities, of course, with theoretical discourse on quality in professional translation, and with accepted approaches to its assessment; most notably in the dichotomy between source-oriented notions of *accuracy* and *adequacy* on the one hand, and target-oriented notions of *fluency* and *acceptability* on the other.

The design of manual evaluation has a direct impact on the cost, duration and granularity of the evaluation process; as can the purpose, which typically ranges from basic system development to fine-tuning and compliance testing.

In contrast, automatic evaluation is generally assumed to be objective, and also relatively time- and cost-effective. However, it has been

claimed that it is less comprehensive than manual evaluation, and also that it doesn't readily indicate the type(s) of quality issue(s) existing in the translated text.

Automatic evaluation is a thriving area at present, with many hands working on testing and improving the relevant automatic metrics, and also on proposing new ones. The modus operandi of state-of-the-art automatic evaluation metrics (AEMs) is to compare the output of an MT system to one or more professional reference translations, which are assumed to represent good translation because they are human quality, which is considered to be the 'gold standard'.

AEMs therefore measure how close the output of a given MT system is to the reference translation(s), computing a score to quantify this similarity/difference. The first AEMs, such as Word Error Rate (WER), came from the speech field. WER computes the insertions, deletions and substitutions required for the MT output to match the reference translation, normalised by the length of the reference translation.

Other error rates, such as Translation Error Rate (TER), have also become relatively popular. Bilingual Evaluation Understudy (BLEU) gained considerable popularity by showing strong and consistent correlations with human judgement, earning it a reputation as the de facto standard. Other popular early automatic metrics include General Text Matcher (GTM) and METEOR.

Several new AEMs have been developed since then, and individual developers and providers often adopt a variety of metrics. While BLEU



remains the de facto standard across the board, recent comparisons have found that new-generation AEMs can outperform it in terms of correlation with human judgement, showing that the debate on the best approaches and metrics for evaluating MT quality is ongoing. One of the main arguments for using AEMs is that, unlike their manual counterparts, they don't require bilingual evaluators—and are therefore, it is assumed, more objective. This also renders them much more cost-effective, albeit with the risk of losing granularity.

However, it is important to note that as translators are used to create the (often singular) reference translation(s)—the gold standard quality of which is assumed, but not verified—elements of subjectivity and variability are introduced. Hence it can be claimed that while AEMs provide scores that appear to be objective and reliable, they are based on a number of assumptions that can raise concerns as to their actual value.

As automatic evaluation provides rapid feedback it is often used on an ongoing basis during MT system development, to test changes and to gather valuable indications as to how performance can be improved. However, another problem with these metrics is that at present their ability to assess syntactic and semantic equivalence in MT output is severely limited, since they lack linguistic analysis and understanding, and face just as many challenges as the MT system itself.

Although METEOR allows for non-exact matches such as synonyms and paraphrases, the processing of complex and subtle levels of syntactic and semantic equivalence remains a serious challenge for AEMs. To overcome this shortcoming, a number of automatic metrics exploiting deeper linguistic analysis have been proposed.

Crucially, however, as with METEOR, even when an AEM can incorporate rich linguistic knowledge, this increased ability to analyse and factor in linguistic variation relies on rather sophisticated technologies, resources and language processing tools; and these are available only for a limited—although admittedly increasing—number of languages.

To sum up, when it comes to evaluation of MT output, the purpose of the evaluation and also the resources available generally guide the choice of approach—manual or automatic—and its metrics; the end result being that you get what you pay for!

## Machine-generated subtitles and captions: new media, new challenges and new opportunities

by Stephen Doherty

The breadth, depth and complexity of audiovisual (meaning audio to visual) translation (AVT) are growing at a rapid rate, and it is becoming increasingly merged with language technologies.

Interest in—and applications of—AVT have experienced a boom, with traditional usage of subtitles for foreign movies and accessibility supplemented by new usage scenarios, including general and higher education, first and foreign language learning, and even clinical interventions.

This growth comes hand-in-hand with the now commonplace expectations that digital content is available simultaneously in a multitude of languages across the globe (known as the sim-ship model), and also accessible to diverse audiences.

A range of new language technologies have emerged to enable and indeed elicit this growth, including computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, machine translation (MT), and automatic speech recognition (ASR).

While these developments bring unprecedented opportunities for all stakeholders, from content creators to language service providers and end users, they also bring new challenges. Indeed, it is now commonplace for subtitling software to be used in tandem with CAT tools in order to extend its potential benefits of productivity, consistency, and interoperability across projects and languages.

This is, in turn, leading to a growing body of subtitle datasets being shared online, both publicly and privately. As a result of this increased availability of data and wider technological developments, MT systems have begun to show significant improvement in their output quality when processing AVT content (i.e. subtitles and captions).

In attempting to deal with the explosion of digital content that requires subtitling and captioning, some emerging ASR systems are demonstrating increasingly acceptable levels of accuracy and usability. Intra- and interlingual subtitles can be created by ASR systems automatically transcribing dialogue into text—in both prerecorded and live applications—across language pairs, genres and platforms.

YouTube's automated subtitling and captioning software—based on ASR technology provided by Google that has reported accuracy rates of approximately 80%—is an excellent example of the state of the art. It comes with manual setting options to allow users to upload their own subtitles and captions, and to combine auto-timing



functions with manual intervention, as well as with iterative development that enables the system to improve itself over time.

Further improvements can be made to the system by training the software to specific speakers' voices, reducing noise, avoiding unnatural speech, and using pre-recorded scripts and post-editing.

*“... although concerns over quality and the vulnerability of users are growing, many viewers and also providers simply consider machine-generated subtitles and captions to be better than none.”*

There are no technical guidelines provided in terms of standards or quality, but general tips are provided for using automated captioning, including using high-quality sound and being mindful of overlapping speakers.

The example below was created by a popular YouTuber using the automated captioning software. It demonstrates how the resulting captions do not adhere to the traditional standards of AVT, including punctuation, segmentation, line breaking, indicating change of speaker, and usage of static block subtitles.

It also shows how suspected issues in accuracy are indicated. Greying-out of words, such as “aha” and “five day leave” in the first line (below), indicates to the viewer that confidence in the accuracy of these words does not meet a predetermined level of acceptability.

This is a representative example of what has become the default approach to subtitling and captioning in the absence of any alternative. Many issues remain in terms of accuracy (particularly accuracy of transcription in the presence of noise, multiple speakers or irregular speech), presentation, timing, presentation rate and segmentation. In order for automated subtitling and captioning to even begin to approach professional quality, these issues will need to be addressed.

aha they're about five day leave on  
Tuesday a week yeah okay so how

In addition to these features, YouTube encourages its content creators to profile their viewer base in order to determine the requirements of their existing audience. Its guidelines encourage content creators to provide subtitles and captions in order to extend access to viewers in other language communities and for accessibility purposes. The service then provides several options, including uploading one's own subtitle and caption files, outsourcing the work to the YouTube community, and making use of its automated captioning software.

It now appears, however, that such systems are becoming the de facto standard for most public and commercial new media services, flouting the widely accepted standards used in traditional media such as television and cinema. Indeed, although concerns over quality and the vulnerability of users are growing, many viewers and also providers simply consider machine-generated subtitles and captions to be better than none.



**Dr Stephen Doberty** is a senior lecturer and the Program Co-Convenor in Interpreting and Translation Studies and Linguistics at UNSW, where he teaches courses

in translation technology, media translation and specialised translation. He is currently investigating the cognitive aspects of human and machine language processing, with a focus on translation and language technologies.



**Dr Sheila Castilho** holds a master's degree in natural language processing. She recently completed her PhD dissertation at Dublin City University, and is currently carrying out postdoctoral

research at its ADAPT Centre, with a focus on machine and human evaluation of automatically translated subtitles.



**Dr Federico Gaspari** is a professor at the Università per Stranieri “Dante Alighieri” di Reggio Calabria. He holds a PhD in machine translation from the University of

Manchester, and is currently researching machine translation at the ADAPT Centre, Dublin City University. He is also a member of the editorial and advisory boards of the journals *New Voices in Translation Studies* and *inTRAlinea*.



**Dr Joss Moorkens** is an assistant professor in the School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies at Dublin City University and a researcher at its ADAPT Centre. He is co-editor of

a book on translation evaluation soon to be published by Springer, and has also authored a number of journal articles and book chapters on issues relating to translation technologies.

# Member profiles



## AURÉLIE SHEEHAN

Aurélie Sheehan has been a member of AUSIT since 2015. She is an English>French translator, and is based in Canberra.

Aurélie has been practising since 2008. Her main areas of practice are: world organisations / human rights / international aid; localisation/technology; travel; and marketing.



## MIN FEN (MINNIE) ZHANG

Min Fen (Minnie) Zhang has been a member of AUSIT since 2004. She is a Mandarin<>English interpreter and translator, and is based in Brisbane.

Min Fen has been practising since 1990. Her main areas of practice are medical and legal.

## Q&A

**Q1**  
How did you come to be a translator and/or interpreter?

**Q2**  
Tell us about a project you have worked on that was especially interesting or challenging (within the bounds of confidentiality of course).



**A1**  
My passion for languages led me from France to England, where I trained to be a teacher of French and Spanish. The day that I found myself singing a song to my secondary students to teach them some grammar, I realised, disillusioned, that I needed to fulfil this passion of mine another way. So, when I left for Australia in 2008, I gave my career a fresh start and became a translator. I obtained my NAATI accreditation in 2010, and started my freelance business while working as an in-house translator. I am now a full-time freelancer, and loving it!

**A2**  
I was asked to translate several articles for the UN Women website: each one told the success story of a woman living in a country where women's rights are repressed. I enjoyed translating them, as they narrated the women's life journeys in a journalistic style punctuated with personal testimonies that allowed me to adopt a more creative style. These articles also contributed, within the UN's broader agenda for equality, to raising awareness about the empowerment of women, what women can achieve, and how they can inspire others. I was happy, both as a translator and as a woman, to be the mediator of such positive and humbling stories.

**A1**  
I was born and raised in Shanghai, and came to Australia in 1990 to learn English. I intended to complete advanced training in paediatrics, but ended up getting a scholarship to do a PhD in paediatric immunology. I was introduced to T&I when I was living in Adelaide, by a friend who was a cinematographer for Channel 7 at the time. He wanted to make a Mandarin version of a video he'd made, for a potential joint venture project in video production, and he asked me to work with him on it, translating the dialogue into Mandarin. Since then I've taken on T&I work off and on, especially for delegations, because I find it more fun than doing dry research and medicine (GP training), ha ha ...

**A2**  
In 2000, a local government delegation from a northern area of China visited Adelaide, where I was living. The purpose of their trip was to explore opportunities to develop businesses, and I interpreted and translated for them while they were here. We visited car manufacturers in Adelaide, and also took a day trip to the Murray River. This experience was a very practical exposure to interpreting and translating—very natural and spontaneous.



# PSP50916 - Diploma of Interpreting (LOTE - English) introductory units

This practical course is based around three core units from the Diploma of Interpreting to provide bi-lingual individuals with skills development for interpreting related work.

## About the course

The course has a focus on speaking and listening skills including vocabulary and expressions for a wide range of topics. The course is most suitable for individuals with some experience of interpreting including community-based contexts.

## Introductory units

- PSPTIS001 Apply codes and standards to ethical practice
- PSPTIS003 Prepare to translate and interpret
- PSPTIS042 Manage discourses in general settings

## Pathway

The introductory units are nationally recognised and can be used towards Diploma of Interpreting and other qualifications. You will receive a Statement of Attainment for these 3 units. (The full Diploma of Interpreting involves 12 units of competency: 7 core units and 4 elective units and 1 unit of LOTE specialisation)

## Duration

Semester 2 (Starting 16 July 2018) 1 session per week:  
Tuesday 9am – 12pm or 5 – 8 pm (Depending on Numbers)

\* Days and times subject to change

## Location

Perth (Northbridge) Campus  
25 Aberdeen Street, Northbridge

## Cost

\$ 500 (approximately)

\* If accepted into the course, you may be interested in applying for an OMI scholarship of \$500 for this preparation course. Scholarship forms will be available on the interview day. VET Student Loans are available to eligible students.

## Application Process

The application process involves an interview from Monday 28 May till Friday the 1 June 2018.

## Contact

To express your interest in this course please email us before 1 May 2018: [interpreting@nmtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:interpreting@nmtafe.wa.edu.au)