

## **Background for SLIANZ Website**

In December 2014 a three-day workshop was held in Auckland which focused on the development of Deaf Interpreting in New Zealand (see links below for industry discussions about Deaf Interpreting). This country already has a workforce of NZ Sign Language interpreters, but almost all of the qualified interpreters to date have been hearing people who are proficient in NZ Sign Language and English. Other Western countries, however, such as the U.S, Canada, Australia and the UK all have a number of qualified Deaf people who are also sign language interpreters. New Zealand is sadly lacking in this aspect and highlights a profound lack of equity in this important professional field. This lack of expertise also means that Deaf people who would benefit from the skills of a DI are currently being denied access to information in an appropriate format.

Deaf Interpreters (DIs) overseas work in a wide variety of settings including courtroom, mental health, medical, theatre, conference and visual media. For example the Deaf presenter at the 2014 workshop, Nicholas Padden-Duncan, is a qualified DI in the UK who regularly works for the BBC and who has been involved in translation work for the United Nations, as well as interpreting at the community level. Many DIs work together with hearing interpreters, especially where there are extra communication challenges (for example working with a Deaf migrant who is not skilled in any spoken or signed language). The DI profession would therefore offer Deaf people another vital opportunity for employment; many Deaf people still struggle to find meaningful employment due to prejudice and discrimination.

A working group, comprised of several Deaf attendees from the 2014 workshop, has now been established to promote and develop Deaf Interpreting in New Zealand. To this end, the group is organising a half-day workshop in June 2015 to further explore current pathways to DI qualification overseas and possible avenues to DI qualification here in NZ (for example through Auckland University of Technology or Victoria University of Wellington, both of which have Deaf Studies programmes). The longer term aim is to develop a strategy and a timeframe for DI qualification in NZ, while at the same time promoting the concept and the need for Deaf Interpreting to the wider community.

References: Street Leverage is an online forum for professional interpreters in the US and around the world. Several articles have been written on the subject of Deaf Interpreting. Go to [www.streetleverage.com](http://www.streetleverage.com) and search for the following:

- Deaf Interpreters: In the Blind Spot of the Sign Language Interpreting Profession?
- Deaf Interpreters: The State of Inclusion
- Are Hearing Interpreters Responsible to Pave the Way for Deaf Interpreters?
- Interpreting Without a Deaf Interpreter is an RID CPC Violation
- The Contribution of Deaf Interpreters to GATEKEEPING Within the Interpreting Profession: Reconnecting with our Roots
- Deaf Interpreters: Shaping the Future of the Sign Language Interpreting Profession