



SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC

THUMBS UP | Quarterly Newsletter

March 2011

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Kia Ora All

I hope you all had a restful holiday break and have had an enjoyable start to 2012.

The SLIANZ committee has kicked off the year well, with two mini face-to-face meetings - one in Wellington and one in Auckland. The SLIANZ committee is currently focusing on the complaints procedure, the ethics review, and organising the upcoming conference, among other things. Keep an eye on the SLIANZ website for the latest information.

Upcoming events include NZSL week and regional professional development. Now is also the time to start thinking about presenting at our conference, or making a film for the 'Interpreter Film Festival'.

On another note, SLIANZ congratulates and welcomes Mojo Mathers as a deaf Green party MP and we're excited to see what the next three years will bring.

Take care,
Jenn Gilbert

Newsletter Editor

Oceania WASLI Representative Update

By Sheena Walters

Hello all,



Along with all the enjoyment of the holiday season, since the last update much has been happening in this WASLI region. You may recall that two of the key goals for the region is to work with local deaf organisations and to develop long term, sustainable training for interpreters in the region. In working towards this, we are hoping to secure funding to conduct a situational analysis of deaf people in the Oceania region. The purpose of this is to collect information on the status of living for deaf people including their access to interpreting services. We hope to gain further insight into the needs of the deaf community and with that develop sustainable plans for capacity building of deaf people and training for interpreters.

I was fortunate to be included in the second ever WFD Oceania meeting that took place in Geelong on 13 January 2012. Deaf Australia, Deaf Aotearoa (NZ), the Fijian Association of the Deaf and representatives from the deaf community in Samoa met to further the establishment of an official WFD regional secretariat for the region. All parties are eager to work together to build the capacity of deaf people in the region and I am now part of a working group with representatives from the WFD Oceania group that will be working on applying for funding for a situational analysis to be carried out. It is wonderful to be working on this in collaboration with WFD Oceania and we hope that we will be successful in securing funding soon.

Another goal for this region was to develop a communications plan to keep interpreters in the region updated on local and international WASLI work. This has been developed for 2012 and includes bi-monthly updates in the ASLIA eUpdate, contribution to the SLIANZ newsletter, Facebook and website updates. The WASLI website has recently been updated with information on the status of sign language interpreting in the region, if you'd like to take a look, go to <http://www.wasli.org/region-information-australasia-and-oceania-p157.aspx>. While I was in Geelong I also took the opportunity to enjoy some of the Australian Deaf Games and presented information about WASLI to an interested group at the Hub on Sunday, 16 January.

On the international level, you may have seen that WASLI has recently been accepted as a member of the AIIC, the International Association of Conference Interpreters. This is an important recognition of WASLI at a global level and it is hoped that useful alliances will be forged within that network.

Finally, five months to go until the SLIANZ Conference! I'm about to book my flights and really looking forward to it.

That's all for now, if you have any queries or suggestions about WASLI work in the region feel free to send me an email on austoceania@wasli.org.

Sheena Walters
WASLI regional representative - Australasia & Oceania

Sign Language in Vanuatu

By Jacqui Iseli

WASLI and WFD have been developing policy for Deaf in the Pacific to help them access their basic Human Rights. The Vanuatu government has recently signed the UN Charter giving the Deaf and those with disabilities here access to full rights and inclusion (the working out of this naturally takes time). I have met quite a few deaf while on assignment with VSA in the Republic of Vanuatu. The deaf (*sora i fes* in Bislama and/or *nambut* in *manples lanwis* or local language) do not have the opportunities that NZ Deaf have of going to school, learning sign language, or Deaf Club, or Deaf Aotearoa and NZSLTA equivalent organisations.

Linguistically Vanuatu is the most diverse place where if you meet two people in the road the likelihood of them having the same mother tongue is 0.5%. There are over 105 local languages plus Bislama (lingua franca), English and French through the 83 islands. Malekula where we are based has over 28 - some tell me there was over 60 but are lost now. The linguist Dr Terry Crowley is well known here for the research and books he has written on the languages of Vanuatu. Also Massey University lecturer Dr Martin Paviour-Smith is documenting the Aulua language from South East Malekula. Recently I met up with Dr Miriam Meyerhoff from Auckland University over on Espiritu Santo doing some research. NZ has a history with the people of Vanuatu.

We live on Malekula in Malampa Province. Transport is walking or on the back of a ute, *truk*, and on very rough roads. Just riding can be a workout on its' own. Our home is made from a natangura roof, walls of woven bamboo, and the floor is tiled concrete. Life is very simple here in the villages and for most people revolves around family and growing food.

We have met plenty of deaf living here, on Ambrym, Paama and in the main centres of Port Vila and Luganville. A Malekula Deaf man is on the Vanuatu Cricket Team and played in New Caledonia in the Pacific Games in August. One has been to NZ fruit picking with a team of Ni-vans. Another one works on the Big Sister boat that does a circuit through the islands every week.

Wills (D) who plays for the Vanuatu Cricket Team. Sign BAT



Ronnell (D) from Lavalsol Malekula. Sign APPLE



VSA have linked me with the SANMA Frangipani Association (SFA) and they invited me to teach NZSL for a two week workshop, in Lukanville, in June last year. There is a lot of interest by deaf and hearing. This was an extremely challenging teaching situation due to the hearing having a variety of disabilities and most of the deaf were unschooled. But it was an exciting positive experience. The Government is planning to bring an overseas sign language for education purposes. Mrs Dorian Naliupis of SFA is being proactive in moving forward with a sign language now.

There are challenging issues over literacy for all children as many speak two languages very early on and many Ni-vans speak 3-7 languages. Also Bislama has very loose pronunciation and consequently spelling rules. For example: 'd' and 't', 'g' and 'k', 'p' and 'b' are interchangeable pairs. One of the deaf children and her mama I have been working with occasionally, between us we put 5 languages in the mix. The child has home signs which her mama uses local language and its' accompanying mouth patterns with, mama and I try to communicate in Bislama, but have to resort to English sometimes and I am teaching them some NZSL. My head is *fulap* by the time I catch the boat to return.

Also my work indirectly covers looking for those with disabilities hidden in the villages. Through a friend I heard about a boy who could not walk. Upon visiting him, in his village, grandmother told me he is 13 years old and too heavy to lift so spends all day in the doorway until being put to bed in the same small local materials house. This boy cannot move his body or speak, but knows local language and Bislama. We were able to access a donated sports pushchair which fits him and now his grandmother pushes him around the village. There is another child who is further up on another small island and unable to walk which has been difficult to get to. A SLI in NZ kindly located a donated sports buggy for me and Air NZ recently sent this over for free. This was a very encouraging experience for everyone involved.

On a lighter note another role not anticipated, that I have embarked on at fifty years, is modelling for tourism brochures. My husband Howard is on assignment with VSA working with the local tourism officer in Lakatoro. They have recently set up a Contact Centre for overseas bookings at malampa.travel. Look this up if you are thinking about having an adventure over this way. The deaf and the locals would love to meet you and there are plenty of opportunities to expand your horizons in the quiet lane!



Roswell & Jacqui in Lakatoro. The smoke in the background is from someone cooking dinner on an open fire.

Formal Interpreter Registry: Who Leads

By Catherine Winfrey

For the past few years, I've held the belief that the way to remedy many of the problems related to "sign language interpreting" in New Zealand is to have a formal register of interpreters, as some other professions have registries (e.g. doctors, nurses, psychologists, lawyers, teachers).

When I say "problems related to sign language interpreting," I'm referring to the following types of complaints (raised by interpreters, Deaf people, and/or hearing consumers of interpreting services):

- people without formal training or qualifications practicing as interpreters
- lack of consequences for interpreters who provide poor service or breach ethics
- lack of ongoing monitoring/assessment beyond initial interpreting qualification.

While we do have SLIANZ, ultimately this is a voluntary organisation which people (qualified interpreters and others) can choose to join - or not. SLIANZ has a complaints procedure, but the organisation does not have the power to act in the sense of sanctioning a member, limiting the settings in which they work, etc.

For example, when a hospital complains that someone without an interpreting qualification has misrepresented herself as a qualified interpreter and worked at the hospital, there is very little that hospital can "do" other than to not hire that person again.

As another example, when a Deaf person complains that an interpreter who is not a member of SLIANZ is not maintaining client confidentiality, again, there is little that can be done, other than individual clients and agencies choosing not to book that person. While some Deaf people and organisations vote with their purse-strings, others - whether due to lack of information or limited alternatives - continue to book the "problem practitioners."

It seems to me that the only way to provide a degree of certainty to people booking and using interpreters about the skills and qualifications of the people they engage, and about their ability to seek redress if things go wrong, is to have a register of interpreters, along with a mechanism for administering that register. This would involve, potentially, setting the standards for interpreters to join the registry and to keep their registration current. It would also handle complaints made against interpreters, to provide protection for clients and interpreters alike.

Establishing such a registry and mechanism would require a law to be passed, which would mean lots of work demonstrating the need for such a law, getting decision-makers (MPs) on board, drafting a bill, and having that bill go through the legislative process - in the same way the NZSL Bill slowly made its way through the process to become an Act.

Without this process and legislation, ultimately anything we (as interpreters) do would be limited to a self-governed voluntary basis, such as what we have now through SLIANZ, or the terms/conditions/processes of particular interpreting agencies or practitioners.

None of the above is new or different to what I have been saying for a while now. But what I want to add - the recent shift in my thinking - is that [assuming for a moment that interpreters want a formal register] perhaps interpreters should not be leading the call for such a register. Perhaps this is a battle for the Deaf community to spearhead.

Previously I thought that we, as interpreters, [those of us] who see the value in having a formal system for registering interpreters, should lead the campaign for legislation and registration. After all, we are the ones whose reputations are tarnished by unsuitably skilled people taking on interpreting work, and we are the ones who are looked at suspiciously today by clients who have had bad experiences in the past.

But are these reasons really strong enough to justify our being at the forefront of lobbying for interpreter registration? Or should Deaf people themselves decide if and when such a measure is required? For all the risk to people's perception of interpreters as a profession, it is arguably Deaf people themselves who stand to lose the most by people interpreting without training or without regard for our Code of Ethics. Perhaps the fact that Deaf people themselves are not seeking a formal interpreting registry in New Zealand demonstrates that they are satisfied with the status quo - or at least not dissatisfied enough to work to change it.

In any event, with so many Deaf voices from New Zealand and abroad speaking critically about the way interpreters have grabbed the reins of the interpreting profession, maybe the question of how to address some of the big questions about unqualified practitioners and unethical behavior is one Deaf people want to answer themselves, in their own time.

What do you think - what is the role of interpreters in responding to the criticisms and complaints we've heard from Deaf and hearing consumers of interpreting services? Do we have a professional responsibility to tidy up our working environment, and provide a greater level of security to our clients? Or should we wait for Deaf people, who have been instrumental in developing our profession so far, to determine the priorities and the processes through which interpreting will continue to improve?

If you would like to contact Catherine in relation to this article, please email her on catherine.winfrey@gmail.com. If you would like to talk to the committee about this article, or any other interpreter related issues, feel free to contact us on secretary@slianz.org.nz

SLIANZ congratulates the eleven interpreters who successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in NZSL-English Interpreting in November 2011. Their diplomas will be conferred at the Macquarie University (Sydney) graduation ceremony in April 2012. Those who also complete a practicum portfolio (in progress now), will also gain NAATI Professional level accreditation in NZSL-English. The advanced study undertaken by this cohort of interpreters is expected to raise the quality of professional practice in New Zealand. The PGDip graduates are: Saran Goldie-Anderson, James Bichan, Rosanne Butler-Stoney, Phillipa Caradus, Louise Hackshaw, Kelly Hodgins, Evelyn Pateman, Shizue Sameshima, Bridgette Strid, Alan Wendt, Catherine Winfrey. We also acknowledge the achievement of Viola Luki, who unfortunately had to withdraw near the end of the programme for family reasons.

The two-year programme was intensely challenging and the participants showed great stamina and professional dedication to meeting the demands of the course whilst simultaneously earning a living, supporting families, and surviving earthquakes. The collaborative delivery of this programme by Victoria University and Macquarie University was made financially viable by the support of sponsoring organisations who provided for study grants that offset the cost of participation; sincere thanks are due to the Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Economic Development, J R McKenzie Deaf Development Fund, and Oticon Foundation NZ, who have demonstrated their practical support for development of the sign language interpreting profession in NZ.

Congratulations!

SEARCHING FOR DEAF CHAMPIONS

Do you know someone or an organisation who has been a champion of NZSL or the Deaf community?

The search is now on to find this year's New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) in Action Award winners, including "Interpreter of the Year".

Held annual by Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand, the awards are a way to acknowledge the significant contribution made by businesses, organisations and individuals throughout the country in supporting both NZSL and the New Zealand Deaf Community.

The "Interpreter of the Year" award recognises the outstanding efforts of a registered NZSL Interpreter who has shown passion, dedication and professionalism in the area of interpreting.

Last year, Jeremy Borland and Evelyn Pateman were jointly awarded the "Interpreter of the Year Award", for their work following February's earthquake in Christchurch. The pair was instrumental in relaying news and updates to the Deaf community with their work at televised media briefings, as well as during special events and services after the devastating event. While they had their own worries following the earthquake, both Jeremy and Evelyn worked tirelessly to ensure that the Deaf community were accounted for and informed.

In 2012 a new category has been included in the Awards, the "Magnet Youth Award", which seeks a young (14-24 years) Deaf or hearing impaired leader who motivates others, has overcome significant challenges and is a strong advocate for NZSL.

Entries close on 30 March, with the winners announced during New Zealand Sign Language Week (30 April – 6 May).

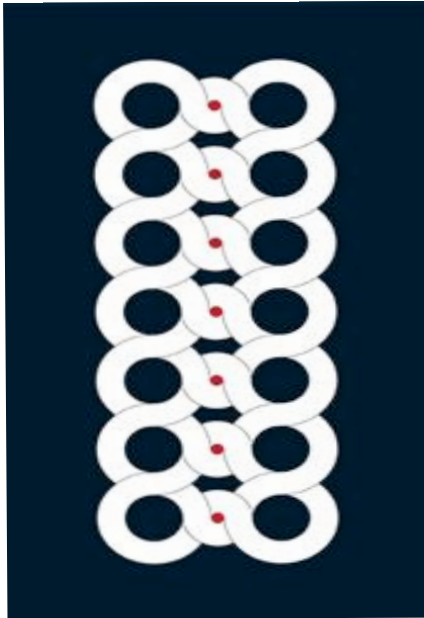
Deaf Aotearoa Chief Executive Rachel Noble says "Through the NZSL in Action Awards, Deaf Aotearoa is able to thank a wide range of people and organisations that have embraced NZSL and ensured Deaf people are an active part of New Zealand society. I look forward to seeing this year's entries."

NZSL In Action Award categories are open for:

- Deaf Individuals
- Maori Deaf Individuals
- Young Deaf or hearing impaired individuals
- Businesses or Organisations
- Service Providers/Government Agencies
- Schools
- Teachers
- Interpreters

For further information or to complete an entry form please visit www.nzsign.co.nz





Interpreter Film Festival

Be a part of the world's first known
Sign Language Interpreter Film Festival.

Make a short film reflecting this year's
SLIANZ Conference Theme: **Identity**.

Then come and enjoy a celebration of
interpreter identity on **Friday 20th July** to
mark the opening of the SLIANZ Conference.

Film entry closes
Friday, 22 June 2012.



Voyages of Malolo

Robert Bonville is the author of a new novel 'Voyages of Malolo,' which features a deaf character who becomes one of the most loved and valued members of the crew of ancient Polynesian mariners. To learn more about his book, visit www.authorrobertbonville.com/

For your diary

Upcoming important dates

April 2012

1 April – Membership forms and fees due, and Professional Development annual forms due

1 April – Deadline for presentation submissions for SLIANZ Conference

May 2012

30 April - 6 May – NZSL Week

25 May – Cut off date for articles for June newsletter

June 2012

8 June - AGM information sent out

22 June- Cut off date for SLIANZ Conference Film Festival Entries

July 2012

6 July – Deadline for business for AGM

7/8 July- NZSLTA 12th Conference and BGM

20-22 July SLIANZ annual Conference in Tauranga

September 2012

29/30 September– NZSL camp in the South Island (Venue confirmed early 2012.)



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