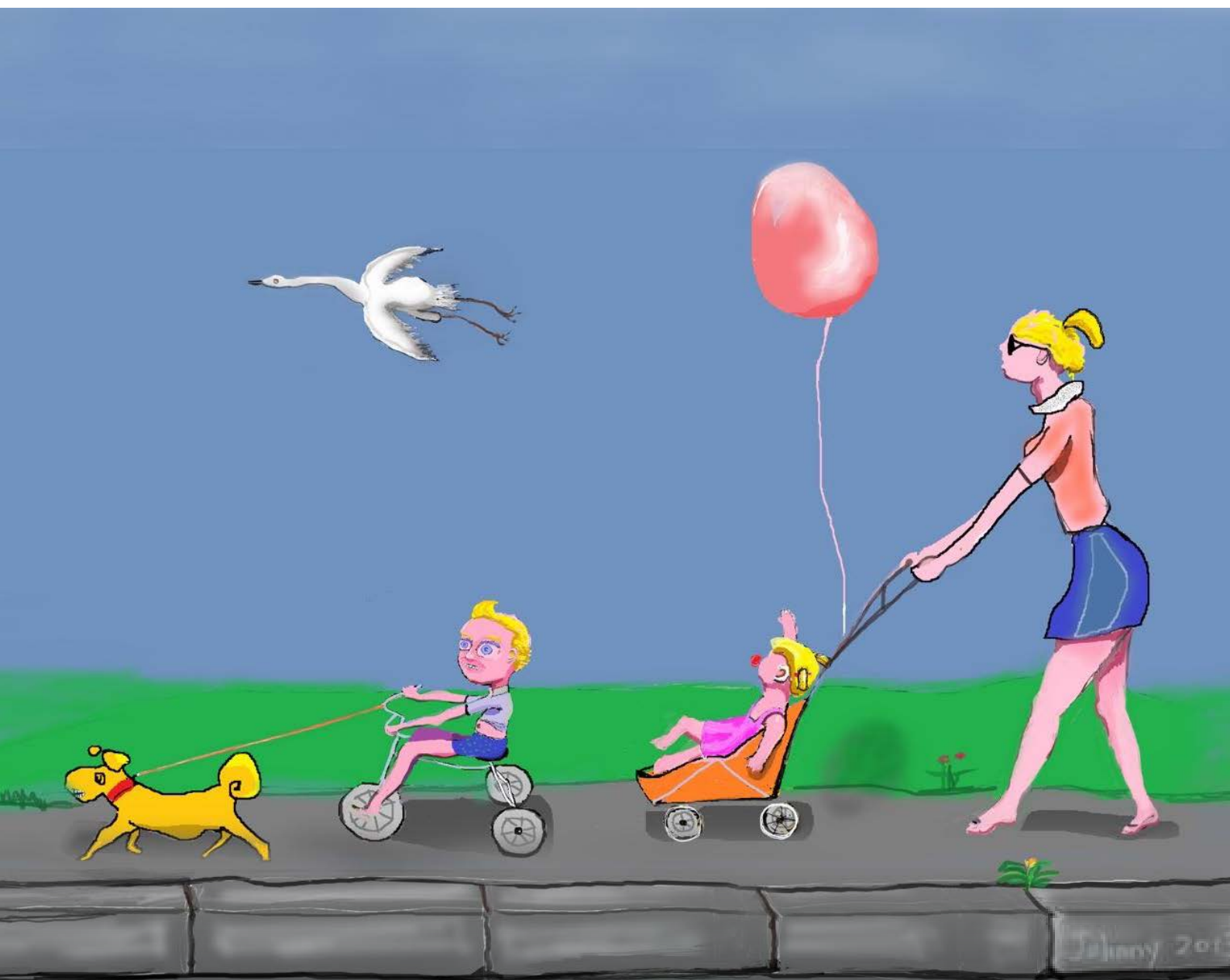


AUSIT

Volume 31 < Number 4 > SUMMER 2023-24

IN Touch

MAGAZINE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS



AUSIT National Conference 2023

Opinions and images from the biggest AUSIT conference to date
< pages 6-7 & 9

Live subtitling for sporting events

A practitioners' account
< pages 10-12

AUSIT Excellence Awards

Five awards for outstanding performance in our industry
< pages 8-9

T&I for forensic use

... described by two experts
< pages 14-16

Plus more ...

... including the AUSIT Translation Competition 2023; Yilin Wang on why she took up translation; a practitioner shares his creative output and prompts a callout for members to submit creative works; and another AUSIT role.

< In Touch

Summer 2023–24

Volume 31 number 4

The submission deadline for the
Spring 2024 issue is 1 February
Read our Submission Guidelines [here](#)

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Mum, children, a dog and a bird
by Johnny Yi Wang (see pages 4–5)

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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 respects to them and their
cultures, and to Elders past and present.

< Editorial Committee

Hayley Armstrong (Chair)
Elvira Bianchi
Lavinia Napaltjarri Heffernan
Jemma Ives
Sophia Ra
Cristina Savin
Tania Stuart
Vera Gu
Xiaoxing (Amy) Wang

Letter from the editors

Our final (fourth) issue of 2023 includes:

- an overview of the recent AUSIT National Conference 2023, plus the AUSIT Excellence Awards 2023;
- a follow-up interview with translator Yilin Wang, who successfully challenged the British Museum this year over their use of her work;
- transcription and translation of covert

recordings for forensic use;

... and, as always, a great deal more.

We'd like to finish a very busy year, in which we've moved from three annual issues to four, by thanking three of our Editorial Committee members who have moved on – **Christy Filipich, Claudia Schneider and Nicola Thayil** – for many years of thoughtful contributions.

Happy summer reading!

Hayley and Helen

AALITRA Translation Awards 2024



Focus language: French
Entries open: 28 February to 28 May
Categories: prose & poetry
Prizes: \$500 (winners), \$250 (runners-up)
Look out for more info [here](#)

Medal for Excellence in Translation 2024



Awarded biennially for a book-length translation into English (any genre, any language and period)
Entries due to open: April 2024
Find more info [here](#), or subscribe to AAH's newsletter for updates



Would you like to advertise in *In Touch*?

First check out our range of **sizes** and **prices**, our **publication dates** and the corresponding **advertising deadlines** [here](#), then contact our **Communications Officer**.

It's that simple!

[image: iStock.com/gustavofrazaa]

Contributions welcome

At *In Touch* we appreciate regular contributors (we'd be lost without you!) ... but like any professional publication, we need frequent infusions of new blood to keep us alive and kicking.

So, whether you're a member – from students to Senior Practitioners – or other T&I stakeholder, if you have an idea for an article on a particular topic / a reflection from your own experience / some news, a sketch, a poem ... get 'in touch' (sorry, we really can't escape the pun!). We're happy to advise whether your topic will work for our readers, or help you shape a good idea into an interesting read.

Here's how to make a submission:

- 1) check our submission guidelines and deadline*
- 2) if you have any questions, email Hayley or Helen (the editors) or an Editorial Committee member*
- 3) then ... go for it!

* this page, first column



Member organisation Fédération Internationale des
Traducteurs International Federation of Translators

AUSIT

News in brief

(a review of T&I-related items that have appeared in the media since the last issue of *In Touch* went to press):

2 Oct: SA government seeks Greek interpreters and translators [neoskosmos.com](https://www.neoskosmos.com)

4 Oct: Thinking about a translation career? Know the difficulties Hindi translators face with sensitive documents [sbs.com.au](https://www.sbs.com.au)

4 Oct: South Australian government calls for Greek interpreters and translators *The Greek Herald*

5 Oct: Translation is a humbling process: Vivek Shanbhag at the launch of his new book 'Sakina's Kiss' *The Times of India*

6 Oct: Jhumpa Lahiri Translates the Varieties of Strangeness *The New York Times*

10 Oct: A classic Italian novel finally gets the translation it deserves *The Washington Post*

11 Oct: Multicultural NSW honours translator interpreter Seng Phoummathep [thesenior.com.au](https://www.thesenior.com.au)

16 Oct: Finding power in (not providing) translation [artshub.com.au](https://www.artshub.com.au)

17 Oct: Why Bailador reckons Straker is well positioned to capitalise on generative AI *The Australian / Business*

25 Oct: Lost in translation: Parents of special ed students who don't speak English often left in the dark [hechingerreport.org](https://www.hechingerreport.org)

1 Nov: Grammar Changes How We See, an Australian Language Shows [scientificamerican.com](https://www.scientificamerican.com)

1 Nov: Interpreters are wizards – at times they seem to have read my mind. AI could never compete [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com)

01 Nov: Indigenous language app Gurray gives First Nations words pride of place for learning and preserving *ABC News*

9 Nov: Warwick Announces 2023 Shortlist for Women in Translation Prize [miragenews.com](https://www.miragenews.com)

9 Nov: AI interpreter to help conversations without missing a beat asia.nikkei.com/business

10 Nov: How Angélica makes hospital less daunting for those with limited English [sbs.com.au](https://www.sbs.com.au)

11 Nov: Accidental translator Shanna Tan signs four book deals, including for South Korean bestsellers [straitstimes.com](https://www.straitstimes.com)

11 Nov: Translators for German UN troops in Mali fear Taliban-style fate [bbc.com/news](https://www.bbc.com/news)

12 Nov: STRONG GROWTH IN LEGAL TRANSLATION REQUESTS REPORTED BY LINGUISTICO [digitaljournal.com](https://www.digitaljournal.com)

15 Nov: The art of translating William Saroyan's '70 Thousand Assyrians' [sbs.com.au](https://www.sbs.com.au)

17 Nov: Victorian government unveils scholarships for aspiring Greek Interpreters [neoskosmos.com](https://www.neoskosmos.com)

21 Nov: Portuguese-language novel receives prestigious National Book Award for Translated Literature *heraldnews.com*

Volunteer interpreters and translators participate in the research project described in the article below (photo courtesy of Monash University)



28 Nov: Dutch version of controversial book on British royal family taken off shelves in Netherlands [edition.cnn.com](https://www.edition.cnn.com)

28 Nov: Volunteer translators and interpreters play a vital role in Shepparton but union says there are significant risks [abc.net.au/news](https://www.abc.net.au/news)

1 Dec: ATA to Hold Virtual Roundtable in Response to Film Translators [finance.yahoo.com/news](https://www.finance.yahoo.com/news)

1 Dec: Royal book translator says names were there 'in black and white' [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au)

5 Dec: Small Publishers Boost Importance in Literature Translation [miragenews.com](https://www.miragenews.com)

5 Dec: Few Interpreters, a Byzantine System, and a Child in Need of Learning – Welcome to New York [motherjones.com](https://www.motherjones.com)

6 Dec: Japan firm nixes translation of U.S. book questioning trans surgery [japantimes.co.jp](https://www.japantimes.co.jp)

8 Dec: Lost in translation: Fostering trust in interpreting services lens.monash.edu

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Inspired by a split second: recreating glimpsed summer scenes

Mandarin-English T/I **Johnny Yi Wang** recently submitted some digitally drawn images to *In Touch*, and we think these two fit really well into our Summer issue! We asked Johnny to tell us more about how he creates his images, and what inspired these two.



Creative drawing has been my passion for many years, and always will be. I use the computer software app Sketchbook to draw/paint in my spare time.

The drawing *Ice Cream* stemmed from a scene I saw when I visited the Gold Coast, Queensland.

The drawing *Mum, children, a dog and a bird* was also inspired by a glimpsed scene, when I saw beauty in the combination of the people, the dog and an ibis flying by (I'm still working on this drawing).

All my drawings stem from beautiful details of our daily lives. The imagination is sparked in a split second – this can easily be missed, and won't be repeated again in this busy world ... so when I see a scene that inspires me, I memorise it so I can recreate it later. Of course, I remember some parts better than others, so in order to complete each drawing I have to use my imagination.

These drawings both fit into the theme 'A Mother's Day' – the theme of a good mum will be never out of date!

I have two tasks that I want to complete in the coming years: one is to sharpen my translating and interpreting skills; the other is to improve my drawing skills.



Ice Cream (above)

Mum, children, a dog and a bird (opposite page and cover)

Johnny Yi Wang was born in Beijing, China in the late 1950s, and emigrated to Australia in the 1990s. He holds two master's degrees – one in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) from UTS, Sydney and another in T&I from the University of Queensland – and has been working as a federal government contractor for sixteen years.

Callout for creative works

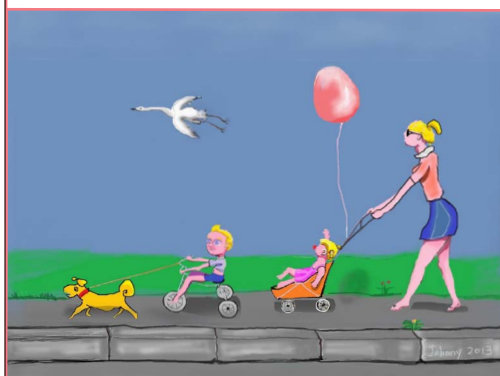
This isn't the first time we've published visual artworks created by AUSIT members.

Editorial Committee member Tania Pineda-Stewart conceived and commissioned a series of three cartoons drawing on common themes in T&I, which appeared in the magazine in 2018 and 2019.

And our **Winter 2020** issue included three drawings, as well as a poem, by Swahili-English T/I Jean Burke. Much of Jean's work is with refugees, and she described how her creative activities help her to express what it's like to work with traumatised people and in stressful situations.

Johnny's email has prompted us to consider how members' artworks could be more frequently included in *In Touch*. We're hoping to build up a bank of images that can be included in upcoming issues.

If you have images that you've created and you'd like to submit them for consideration (whether they are directly related to your T&I work or not), we'd love to hear from you. You'll find our email addresses (editors Hayley and Helen) in the first column on the inside cover of the magazine (page 2).



AUSIT Translation Competition 2023



Each year, AUSIT invites students and recent graduates of its **Educational Affiliate** institutions to enter its Translation Competition. The focus languages vary from year to year.

Of the six languages proposed for this year's competition, the Education Committee – who organise the competition – were able to go ahead with four: French, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish.

For Arabic there were too few contestants and for Korean too few assessors ... while Mandarin had so many entries, an 'honourable mention' was awarded in addition to a winner.

The winners will each receive free passes to two half-day AUSIT webinars. Congratulations to:

FRENCH winner	JAPANESE winner	MANDARIN winner	SPANISH winner	MANDARIN honourable mention
				
LACHLAN KING	BROOKE SUZUKI	XIAOYU LIU	ALESSIA CARBONARO	SUKY SHAM

AUSIT National Conference 2023

23–25 November, University of New South Wales (Kensington Campus), Sydney, on Bedegal country



There were almost 500 registrations for AUSIT's 36th Annual National Conference and related events. *In Touch's* Editorial Committee and the conference's Organising Committee, made up of NSW Branch members, have put together this overview of what was, yet again, AUSIT's biggest conference to date.

photos by Matthew Georges

DAY 1

On an unusually cool, grey Thursday afternoon, the conference was opened by AUSIT National President J. Angelo Berbotto and Professor Colin Grant, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of UNSW.



The ensuing two-and-a-half-day program of workshops, presentations, roundtables and more delved into the crucial role that T/Is play in facilitating communication and understanding across diverse cultures, communities and industries. It provided the opportunity to reflect on essential next steps in the national space, where important policies and protocols relating to translation and interpreting have been published but not fully implemented.

Keynote speakers

Tish Bruce is the Executive Director, Health and Social Policy Branch at the NSW Ministry of Health. Her plenary '**Interpreting in Health Care Settings**' highlighted how NSW Health's 'Standard Procedures for Working with Health Care Interpreters' policy, as a mandatory directive, underscores the significance of interpreters in such settings more fully than the guidelines offered in other states and territories.

The Honourable Justice François Kunc sits in the Equity Division of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. Justice Kunc, speaking on '**Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals**', noted that we are at a critical point in our journey to ensure that adherence to the Recommended National Standards for working in these settings becomes an integral and unremarkable part of the judicial process.

Some of Friday's sessions

Steve Elkanovich of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission presented on '**Special Requirements for Linguists Working in Law Enforcement and Intelligence Settings**'. He emphasised the need for specific training in this area where cross-cultural communication, legal interpreting and translation overlap – especially in regards to role boundaries when participating in investigations (see his article, pages 14–16).



Michael Broughton, addressing '**Adjusting translation pedagogies to a world of AI**', explained a novel project-based multimodal translation process he's been using in his translation classes.

The session by **Beatrice Cortis** titled '**Game Changers: The Rise and Impact of Translators in Australia's Video Game Localisation Landscape**' made a welcome change from more



weighty topics, and gave some insight into this new area in which many translators are now finding employment.

Welcome Cocktails and Gala Dinner

While many attendees enjoyed catching up with old friends and making new ones over drinks and canapés on Thursday evening, the **Gala Dinner** was the main event. The food was great, and a spectacular floorshow – by Indian dancers Raj and Jennifer plus the Colombian Cultural Folkloric Organisation – followed. Comments included 'I've never seen anything like it!' (meant in a good way!) and 'I feel like I'm at the Oscars!' And spirits remained high, with the dance floor being put to good use right until the end of the evening.

During dinner, the **AUSIT Translation Competition 2023** winners were announced (see page 5) and the **AUSIT Excellence Awards 2023** were presented (see pages 8–9).



... we are gaining spokespeople in stakeholder industries ...



perspective of the translation professional. Some very current, fascinating and even controversial topics were discussed. Ludmila's colleagues **Sean Cheng** and **Jia Zhang** were brilliant and had a great deal to say about technology, while **Mustapha Taibi** spoke briefly but interestingly about using 'community reviewers', and **Alisa Tian** shared some fascinating insights on the subtitling work that she does for SBS.

In a dynamic co-presentation with **Miranda Lai** on 'Transcription and translation of indistinct audio used as evidence in criminal



Above: for a third year, AUSIT's Educational Affiliate institutions provided simultaneous interpreting – this time in Chinese, French, Korean, Lao and Spanish
photo: Xiaoxing (Amy) Wang

Jill Blewett Memorial Lecture 2023

This year's JBML was given by lawyer **Rob Aurbach**, a highly experienced regulator and a consultant in making complex governmental systems work better ... and a great speaker! Addressing the sustainability of the T&I profession, and referencing recent Queensland-based research into health care interpreting, Rob gave an overview of our industry and how it operates, state by state, from the perspective of an outsider, then suggested some key areas where change could be made – for example, he advocated for interpreting to be considered a 'critical service' by both state and federal governments. It's great that we are gaining spokespeople in stakeholder industries (in this case the legal profession) who feel passionate about our work, and are helping us create both the connections that we desperately need to improve our conditions and an awareness of our profession outside our own industry.

continued at bottom of page 9

DAY 2

Keynote speaker

Associate Professor Erika Gonzalez (T&I, RMIT University) is AUSIT's Immediate Past President (2019–22). Speaking on 'Community Translation Protocols and Translator Tools', she focused on AUSIT's engagement with the national taskforce to improve both the translation of messages of public significance, and tools that have been developed for translation to this end.

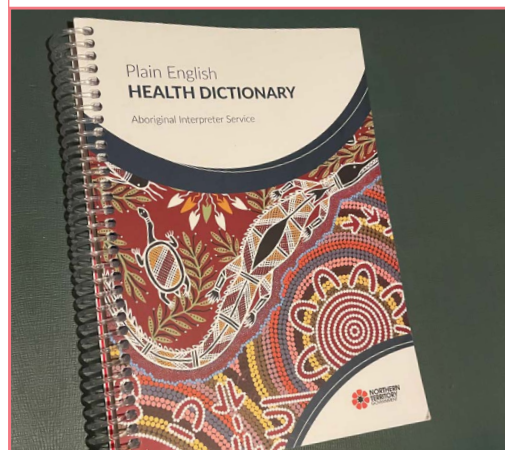
Some of Saturday's sessions

Erika's address was followed by a UNSW-led roundtable, 'Translation Today – Protocols, Tools & Technology'. Moderated by **Professor Ludmila Stern**, the panel considered specific challenges and tools – including AI – from the

trials', **Helen Fraser** described what she calls 'priming' by demonstrating to all present that our ears can trick us into hearing different things, depending on what contextual clues are provided, which poses risks when using forensic transcripts in court.

A valuable resource

The most coveted giveaway at the conference (and winner of a prestigious AUSIT Excellence Award, see pages 8–9) was the Northern Territory **Aboriginal Interpreter Service's Plain English Health Dictionary**. The 150 copies generously donated by the AIS ran out early on Saturday, disappointing the many attendees who hadn't already snapped one up. The AIS assure us that this valuable resource is being reprinted and will soon be available for purchase, while a digital copy can be downloaded for free [here](#).



AUSIT Excellence Awards 2023

The **AUSIT Excellence Awards** recognise initiatives and activities by individuals and organisations operating in all sectors of the translating and interpreting industry. They encourage best practice, professionalism, dedication to quality, innovation and outstanding contributions. In 2023, Excellence Awards were given to celebrate four individuals and one team, in the following categories:

Outstanding Contribution to Translating

Mecia Freire

One of the first accredited Portuguese translators in Australia, Mecia remains highly respected in the sector. Noted, among other things, for her generosity and availability to advise and support those new to the profession, as well as for her engaging workshop presentations, she is described as the 'matriarch' of Portuguese translators. This industry respect is reflected in Mecia receiving more nominations than any other candidate in any category for these Excellence Awards.

Outstanding Contribution in Languages of Limited Diffusion (LLDs)

Aboriginal Interpreter
Service (AIS)

There were several worthy nominees in this category, but the AIS was chosen in particular for its work with Northern Territory health professionals on the *Plain English Health Dictionary*, developed over two years and launched in June 2023. The aim of the dictionary is to facilitate better communication between First Nations people and health service providers, and it could potentially serve as a model for resources in other languages, especially LLDs.

runner-up: Janet Lor

Outstanding Contribution to Capacity Building

Fatih Karakas

Fatih has been evaluating and preparing for current and future needs of the profession since 2020, developing and producing PD in the form of *Conversations*, the only podcast dealing specifically with Australian T&I content. His interviews with lecturers, practitioners and industry personalities, including legal practitioners and health professionals, are informative and inspiring.

These podcasts also contribute to documenting the history of translation and interpreting in Australia.

runner-up: Rema Nazha

Outstanding Contribution to Interpreting

Xiaoxing (Amy) Wang

Amy is a conference interpreter, a consummate professional and an excellent role model. She has demonstrated her commitment to the profession over many years, serving on AUSIT's NSW Branch Committee in various capacities. At the national level Amy has been a hard-working PD coordinator and National Vice President for PD & Events, sourcing quality professional development initiatives that continue to benefit practitioners across Australia.

runner-up: Liying Geng

Outstanding Leadership in the Profession and/or Raising the Profile of T/Is in the Community

Cintia Lee

Cintia is a Spanish translator and conference interpreter who has been a leading figure in the profession for many years, with a passion for helping others. She has contributed significantly to AUSIT's Professional Development Committee, and is currently serving on the NSW Branch Committee. Cintia works tirelessly to improve the working conditions of court interpreters in particular, including the implementation of the Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals.

joint runners-up:
Silvia Martinez, Patricia Avila

Photo (opp page
top) L->R:
National President
J. Angelo Berbotto
Cintia Lee
Mecia Freire
AIS representatives
Mandy Ahmat,
Maria Corpus and
Allan Girdler
Fatih Karakas
and (inset)
Xiaoxing (Amy) Wang



NOTE: you can read about the Excellence Award 2023 Assessment Panel and the other nominees in the President's Newsletter, November 2023.



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The end of the event ... and the inauguration of a new tradition

There was time for plenty of socialising between conference sessions, but National President J. Angelo Berbotto helped the attendees keep tabs on start times by vigorously wielding the brand new **AUSIT Conference Bell** – a large, elegant brass handbell which will be engraved and handed over from one organising committee to the next from now on.

During the Closing Ceremony Angelo ceremonially handed the bell, engraved with 'AUSIT – 36th National Conference – Sydney', over to Karine Bachelier, Chair of the Victorian Branch, which will organise the 2024 Conference.



Thank you for making it happen!

On behalf of all attendees, a huge 'Thank you!' to the **Organising Committee (OC)**: Silvia Martinez and J. Angelo Berbotto (co-Chairs), Camille Lapierre, Hania Geras, Juliana Frantz, Louis Ndagijimana, Marcia de Almeida, Marion Gevers, Rebeca Paredes Nieto, Reza Shariflou, Rosario Lázaro Igoa, Sophia Ra, Suzan Gendy and Vesna Dragoje.

The **OC**, in turn, would like to extend its thanks to **Helen Sturgess** for her impeccable work in reviewing texts and calling out anything that didn't make sense, and to **OzParty Events** – in particular **Alana Brettle** and **Caitlin Johnson** – for their professional assistance in delivering the conference.

On your marks ... get set ... subtitle!



Nancy (top) and
Jemma



Delivering live subtitles for a major international sporting event in more than one language is a race in itself. Live subtitlers **Nancy Guevara** and **Jemma Ives** share their experience of doing so for this year's French Open tennis tournament (also known as Roland-Garros).

It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Dear Novak, we can't wait to respeak you again soon!

Novak Djokovic is on court. Two games before the end of the match, we receive an orange alert: time to get ready. Hearts racing, hands sweating, we do our final checks:

- A quick message to our team: 'Are we on the right court – Chatrier/Lenglen/Mathieu?'
- Send the test line to check that the captions are being sent to the right court and are displaying properly.
- Check that the interpreter sound is coming through clearly on the correct audio channel.
- Check that all the systems are in working order, including the back-up equipment.

We glance at the score: Djokovic has won. The red alert message comes through. Will he speak in English or French? The on-court interview begins. Go! Our hearts stop briefly. The first caption has displayed well on the big screen of the tennis court. Breathe. Keep going!

During the cold winter month of June 2023, for fifteen consecutive nights, we were both transported (alas virtually, each from our own home-based workspace) all the way to beautiful Paris. We were part of a team of interpreters and live subtitlers working remotely to deliver French interpreting of on-court interviews for the live broadcast of Roland-Garros 2023, and the English and French subtitles on the big screens for the crowds on the three major courts. The Paris-based agency Abaque* was entrusted with the massive task of providing both the technology and the human resources to deliver these interpreting and live subtitling services for one of the biggest tennis tournaments in the world.

For Abaque, the task of planning and organising the service was huge: getting the technical workflow in place, finding interpreters, respeakers** and providers, renting equipment and having it delivered, getting clear instructions from the client, communicating with everyone involved, and – most importantly – running many tests. The test period lasted about a week and a half. Nothing was left to chance: every

single part of the workflow had a backup, and everything was tested and re-tested. According to Abaque's project coordinator, Margaux Bochent:

The selection of linguists was a crucial step: I needed to find interpreters and respeakers who were comfortable with such a mission, with an appetite for challenges and tennis-related content, who were flexible with the schedule (long shifts, on-call periods, different time zones) and who were proactive. But what made a real difference compared to the previous Roland Garros editions we worked on was that I had enough time to get to know the linguists before I selected them. The result was a success: a splendid human experience, all team members were committed and showed solidarity with each other. That's, according to me, one of the reasons for the success.

But it wasn't an easy ride. We began preparation for this event back in March, with multiple meetings held to test the software and workflow we'd be using. In April, we began immersing ourselves in the world of tennis, to understand the background knowledge we'd need: the terminology, the big names, the history, and the latest news on the Grand Slam

photo: Nancy ... still smiling at 1:30 am!

circuit. We read tennis news, watched documentaries, listened to podcasts, and chatted with friends who live and breathe tennis. We prepared our equipment and software to ensure everything was in top working order, and also prepared a backup set of equipment – including computer, headphones, various software, internet connection, even a backup power source. As the start of the event approached, we began preparing for the respeaking process itself: training the software's vocabulary with all the key terms, the names of the main courts, the on-court interviewers, the players (including their nicknames) and their coaches, plus their partners and other family members likely to attend. We tested to ensure good recognition of terms, and we practised respeaking using press conferences from previous Grand Slams. And in the final week, we spent a day practising within our teams, each of which was made up of a French–English interpreter, a French respeaker and an English respeaker, to prepare for every possible situation.

And then, finally, after all of this preparation, our night shifts at Roland Garros finally began – amongst nerves, excitement and some very strange sleeping patterns! We continued to prepare, but this time it was more targeted preparation for the matches scheduled for that day, training and testing terms and names, reviewing the procedure to follow and any amendments to it, and triple-checking that all the technology was performing as expected.

At times, the technology was not on our side. Several software packages were used in the workflow, and each had issues at some point: not responding quickly enough, introducing unexpected errors into the captions, or interacting with one another in unexpected ways. We had to resort to our backup equipment on more than one occasion.

Another big challenge was meeting expectations about the minimum possible delay in the subtitles appearing on screen. In a live

setting, some delay between the spoken word and the captions appearing on screen is unavoidable, and when interpreting must be carried out before subtitles are produced and delivered it is longer. Added to this are any delays introduced by glitches in the technology, the interpreter processing information, language switching during the interview, and the respeaker correcting any important errors. With constant communication with the project coordinator over the course of the event, along with software adjustments, preparing shortcuts, trying different respeaking speeds and implementing editing solutions, we were able to reach a reasonable delay (around six seconds is ideal), and to keep the client happy overall.

Working on this project was an incredibly enriching experience. It gave us the

opportunity to learn so much: about tennis; about working remotely and under pressure, troubleshooting, making adjustments and adapting; about using technology to effectively communicate with colleagues to achieve an ideal workflow; but most of all, we learnt the value of working in a great international team. It was a privilege to work with Abaque, who approached the coordination of this project with such positivity, professionalism and generosity. They had great planning and processes, shared information well, were willing to understand every team member's perspective and accept feedback, and had a collaborative attitude of 'let's fix this together' when challenges arose.

So, after fifteen nights of witnessing great tennis ... of ongoing preparation and constant testing ... of feeling nervous and excited every

continued overleaf



SUBTITLING (continued)

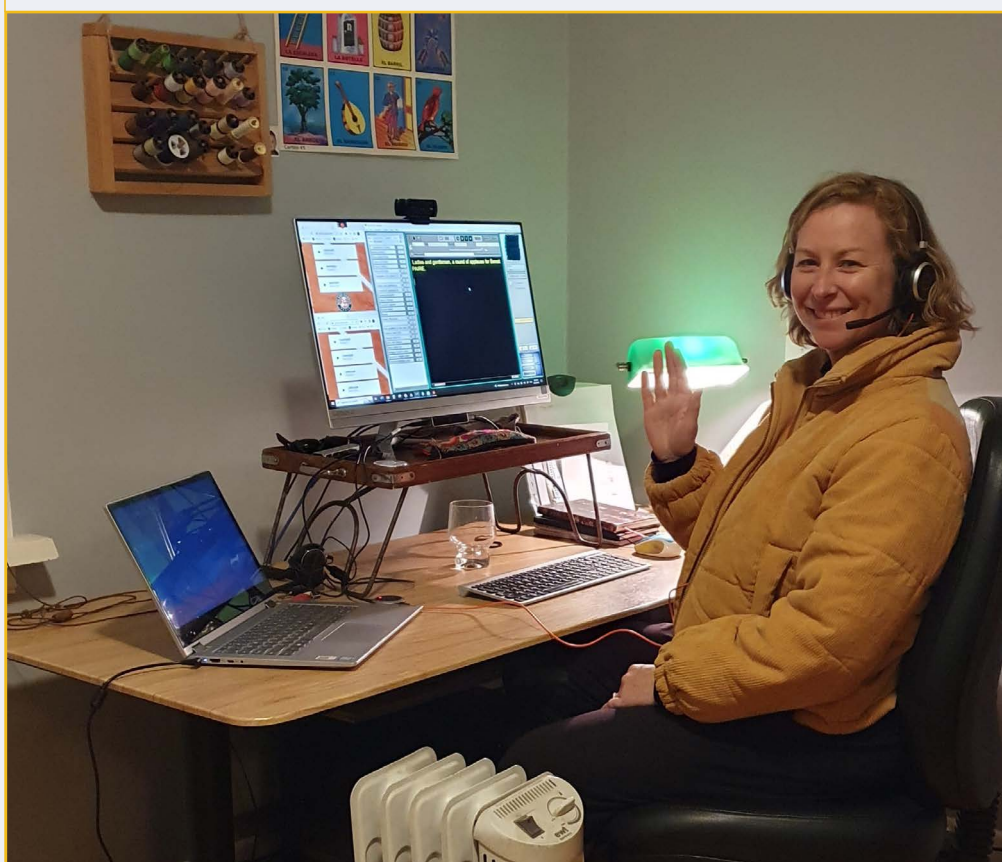
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time we received an orange alert ... of dealing with the imperfections of technology ... of great teamwork and interesting conversations ... we were both left with an immense sense of accomplishment, *and* a newfound interest in tennis. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Dear Novak, we can't wait to respeak you again soon!

Nancy Guevara is a Spanish translator and live subtitler / speech-to-text interpreter based in Queensland. Nancy started working as a live subtitler in 2019 upon completing specialised training with the University of Vigo, Spain, and recently graduated with a Master of Accessibility to Media, Arts and Culture from the University of Macerata, Italy. She has accumulated valuable experience providing live subtitling services for high-profile international clients and public institutions.

Jemma Ives is a live subtitler, an interpreter, a translator, and a sessional T&I trainer at Monash University. She has dedicated her working life to language and communication, has extensive experience working in both corporate and community contexts, and believes in the power of sharing and collaboration between colleagues. Jemma is a member of In Touch magazine's Editorial Committee.

... we were both left with an immense sense of accomplishment, and a newfound interest in tennis.



Jemma ready for another long night of tennis (above) and intralingual subtitles on screen during an on-court speech (below)



* Note: Nancy and Jemma have obtained Abaque's permission to share this experience.

** Respeaking is one of five methods used to create live subtitles. You can read more about it in a pair of articles that Nancy wrote for us on this recently emerged T&I-related skillset. You will find them in our Autumn and Summer 2021 issues, [here](#) and [here](#).

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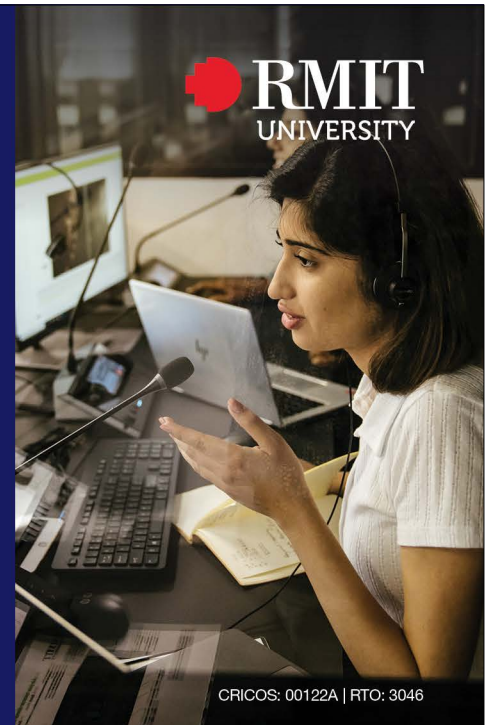
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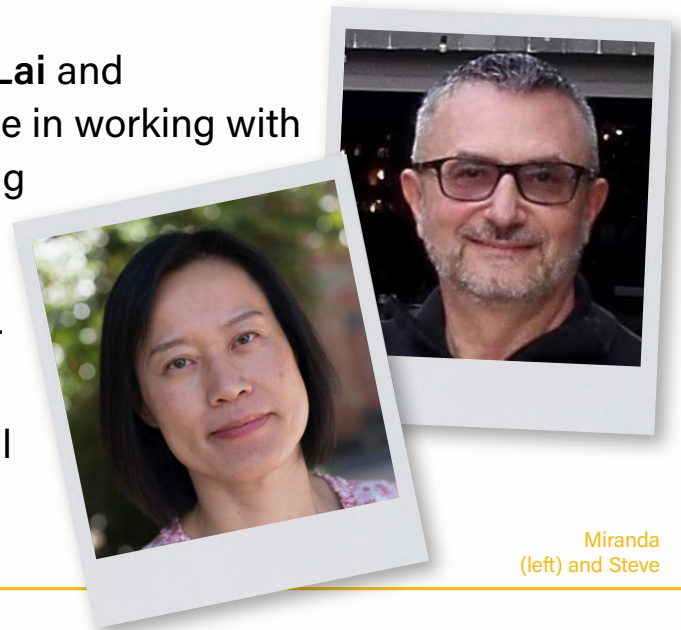
Successful candidates will be required to possess:

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- good command of interpersonal and communication skills
- Cert IV of TAE or willing to start and complete Cert IV of TAE within 2 months from date of appointment.

Interested applicants are invited to send in their resume and a cover letter addressing the above criteria to: coordinator@siit.nsw.edu.au

Forensic transcription and translation: so much responsibility, so little guidance

T&I practitioners and educators **Dr Miranda Lai** and **Steve Elkanovich** share a wealth of experience in working with law enforcement agencies, including providing language services for covertly obtained private communications. For those who haven't have the chance to attend one of their recent masterclasses in forensic transcription and translation, we've asked them to tell us all about this lesser known area of T&I.



Miranda
(left) and Steve

Many T&I colleagues are no strangers to working with law enforcement agencies – in investigative interviews or the taking of witness statements in police stations, or in live operations in the field.

However, there is another, less visible area of law enforcement activity that often requires T&I services: covert recordings conducted legally in order to collect information that may be used to prevent or solve crimes. In an increasingly globalised world, crimes do not observe national or linguistic borders, so covert recordings obtained by Australian law enforcement services may contain languages other than English (LOTE).

To realise the intelligence value of the recordings, these segments require conversion into English, and this must often be achieved in real time in order to enable crime-fighting operations – for example, by assisting police officers to get to the right place at the right

In an increasingly globalised world, crimes do not observe national or linguistic borders ...

time, in order to arrest persons of interest or seize targeted illegal commodities.

Furthermore, when cases enter legal proceedings, covert recordings may be used by the prosecution as forensic evidence, in order to let words uttered by the defendant and caught 'on tape' speak for themselves¹ – for example admissions of guilt, or of involvement in or knowledge of criminal activity.²

Covert recordings are obtained through two channels: telecommunications and surveillance. Telecommunications relates to telephone and any communications via the internet, both monitored live intercepts – for example, of telephone or Voice over Internet Protocols (VOIPs) such as Whatsapp, Line, Wechat – and stored communications, such as retrievals of voice or text messages. Covert audio

surveillance is achieved by planting and monitoring audio or audiovisual recording devices in targeted venues and vehicles.

Obviously, the recordings obtained may have high evidentiary value when used in criminal trials – if the 'triers of fact' (that is, the judge and jury) are able to *hear* what is caught 'on tape' and *understand* what is being said. Often, however, recordings obtained through surveillance devices feature poor acoustic quality.

The source(s) of speech may be distant from the device; unwanted background noises (radio, a dishwasher, playing children, a barking dog, street noise) can be indiscriminately picked up in the recording; and most significantly, as the speakers are not intending to be 'overheard', the discourse tends

to be ‘messy’ – it may feature overlapping talk, talking out of turn, use of dialects or in-group language, code switching and so on.

When it is challenging for the triers of fact to hear what is in a recording presented as forensic evidence, the law allows them to be assisted by a transcript (referred to in Australian courts as an *aide memoire* [French: ‘memory aid’])³ produced by the investigating officer.

When a recording contains LOTE(s), regardless of the quality of recording, translations must be produced to enable the triers of fact to understand what’s being said. Such forensic translations are admitted as evidence in addition to the recording itself, and the T&I practitioner who has produced a translation becomes an expert witness if subpoenaed by the court.

Translating covert recordings for evidentiary purposes is extremely challenging. To some extent it is analogous to court interpreting, in that it should render not only *what* has been said but also *how* it’s been said – but in writing.

Further, like a court interpreter, a translator of covert recordings must take care to strike a balance between literal and meaning-based approaches, in order to produce understandable outputs without usurping the law. When working with T&I services, the judiciary is often particularly wary about the potential for translation to convert implication into fact. For



Below: monitoring a ‘wire tap’ [image: Shutterstock/Anelo]
Below left: an audio surveillance device (miniature microphone) [image: iStock.com/ANGHI]



example, ‘red and white buttons hidden under the bed’ should be rendered as is, rather than ‘drugs hidden under the bed’, leaving such ‘interpretation’ to the prosecution.

The main *difference* between court interpreting and forensic translation of covert recordings (FTCR) is that a court interpreter can resort to asking the presiding judge permission to clarify the meaning of an utterance, when necessary, with the person who produced it, whereas FTCR is carried out in isolation from the actual speech event, so questions cannot be posed to the speaker(s) in a recording.

FTCR used as evidence in criminal trials has significant consequences. As the contents of a recording can be incriminating – or conversely, exculpating – the accuracy of their rendition is critically linked to ensuring fair administration of justice.

In FTCR, a number of factors combine to make the task of deciphering the utterances extremely challenging. These include:

- the lack of ‘ground truth’ – i.e., the accurate, incontestable knowledge of what was really said⁴

- the often poor acoustic quality
- the lack of visual cues when in audio format
- the ‘messiness’ which comes with lay speech in private communications in any language
- the usual challenges of interlingual translation.

Listening to aural signals in a recording involves ‘interpretation’ of the sounds, which is never a neutral activity. In other words, the way one T&I practitioner ‘interprets’ a sound heard in a recording may be different from how another practitioner ‘interprets’ the same sound, particularly when the sound is indistinct.

For FTCR assignments, practitioners often need to physically attend the law enforcement offices and use the IT systems there, rather than working from home as they do for most other translation work.

Practitioners are also sometimes provided with contextual information that is relevant to the case they are working on (but has yet to be tested by the trial process⁵). In such situations, the risk of suggestibility in what a practitioner

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hears may impact on the reliability of the translation. For example, imagine mishearing ‘a packet of gum in the car’ as ‘pack the gun in the car’,⁶ which could have serious legal consequences.⁷

It is also worth pondering how T&I practitioners who haven’t received training in forensic phonetics (in English, not to mention in LOTE) are able to perform FTCT satisfactorily.

And in FTCT, as in conventional translation, there is never just one way of rendering a source text. Both activities involve decision making, the difference being that conventional translation deals with written source text, while FTCT deals with oral source text. Unless the practitioner writes down the utterances in LOTE first (i.e., produces a LOTE transcript), they have to resort to repeatedly pausing and reviewing sections of the recording to access each segment of the oral source text in the process of producing a forensic translation.

The nature of FTCT makes it a hybrid activity, requiring a practitioner who possesses both an interpreter’s acumen in deciphering spoken discourse *and* a translator’s skills in rendering it into the target written text. However, both interpreters without NAATI translation credentials and translators without NAATI translation-into-English credentials are often engaged by law enforcement to listen to and translate covert recordings for evidentiary purposes.

Even if a T&I practitioner has experience in this area, there are often no guidelines available to law enforcement officers to govern how to work with T&I practitioners, and vice versa. Issues that would benefit from such guidance include the need for briefing, and the timing and extent of briefing; how best to format and present the forensic translation; and what kind of translator’s notes (containing para-, extra- and sociolinguistic information) to provide and to expect in the translation.

There is also the issue of whether voice identification and speaker profiling (i.e. giving an opinion on what dialect a person speaks

In the absence of evidence-based training and work protocols, T&I practitioners do their best ...

and/or what region they might be from) – often requested by law enforcement officers – *should* be performed by T&I practitioners. A paper published earlier this year by [the co-author of this article] Miranda Lai provides a description of the national landscape of this under-researched area.⁸

In the absence of evidence-based training and work protocols, T&I practitioners do their best to perform FTCT. However, we can take heart from the **Recommended National Standards for Working with Interpreters in Courts and Tribunals**, which are already resulting in positive change facilitating better interpreting services for all involved.

Following this example, the way forward may be to formulate a set of dedicated national standards for FTCT. This is in line with the 2017 Call to Action (initiated by the Australian Linguistic Society, and supported by AUSIT among other national organisations) seeking reform of the legal handling of covert recordings used as evidence in criminal trials.⁹ The topic was taken up at the AUSIT National Conference 2023 by Professor Helen Fraser from the University of Melbourne’s **Research Hub for Language in Forensic Evidence**.

Steve Elkanovich is Assistant Director, Language Services at the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. He studied linguistics at the University of New South Wales and interpreting and translation at the Belarusian State Linguistic University. An AUSIT member since 1996, Steve has worked as a professional T&I specialising in investigative and forensic T&I in Europe, Africa and Australia, and has also taught languages and interpreting for many years at Sydney Institute of Technology (TAFE).

*Dr Miranda Lai is a senior lecturer in interpreting and translating studies at RMIT University. She has completed a PhD in interpreter-mediated police interviews and co-authored two books on the topic: **Police Investigative Interviews and Interpreting (2015)** and **Ethics for Police Translators and Interpreters (2017)**. Miranda has recently published a paper on Australian interpreters and translators undertaking forensic transcription and translation assignments (see reference below).*

¹ Fishman CS (2006). Recordings, transcripts, and translations as evidence. *Washington Law Review* 81(3):473–523, p. 475.

² Love R & Wright D (2021). **Specifying Challenges in Transcribing Covert Recordings: Implications for Forensic Transcription**. *Frontiers in Communication* 6, p. 2.

³ See: **Butera v Director of Public Prosecutions (Vic) [1987] HCA 58; (1987) 164 CLR 180 (8 December 1987)**.

⁴ Fraser H & Loakes D (2020). **Acoustic injustice: The experience of listening to indistinct covert recordings presented as evidence in court**. *Law, text, culture* 24:405–429, p. 416.

⁵ Fraser & Loakes, as above, p. 417.

⁶ Harrington L (2023). **Incorporating automatic speech recognition methods into the transcription of police-suspect interviews: factors affecting automatic performance**. *Frontiers in Communication* 8, p. 8.

⁷ This is an example in English to illustrate the possibility of mishearing. For more examples of mishearing in English and relevant studies refer to **Forensic Transcription Australia**.

⁸ Lai M (2023). **Transcribing and Translating Forensic Speech Evidence Containing Foreign Languages – An Australian Perspective**. *Frontiers in Communication* 8:1–18.

⁹ Fraser H (2021). **Translating covert recordings: Why more support is needed**. *In Touch* 29(2):13.

AALITRA's inaugural 'Literary Translation Slam'

In what was probably a first for Australia, the Australian Association for Literary Translation (AALITRA) recently presented a 'Literary Translation Slam.' One of the co-organisers, **Elaine Lewis**, explains what such an event entails.



A couple of years ago a French translator friend, Mireille Vignol, asked me to help her present a 'literary translation joust' here in Australia.

Mireille lived here for seventeen years, but now lives in France, and had already run some successful 'joust' events (*joutes de traduction*), both there and in Tahiti.

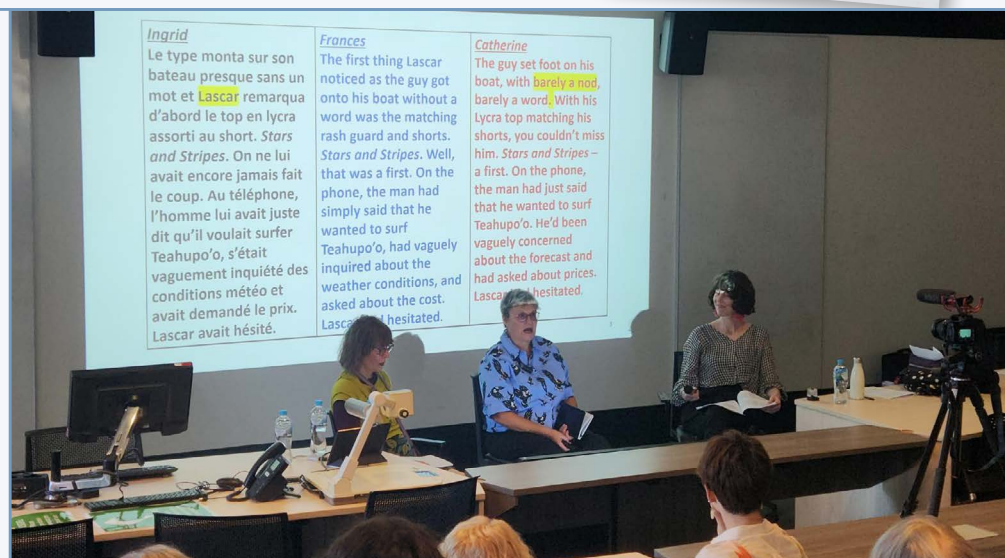
The UK and the USA have adapted the idea to present 'translation slams'.

The event finally took place on 15 November, at RMIT in Melbourne. The room was full, and the audience of ninety included a number of members of ISFAR (the Institute for the Study of French–Australian Relations) and others with a particular interest in France and/or the French language, as well as some of Melbourne's best-known writers and translators, plus lovers of reading, writing and translation.

The two 'jousting' literary translators were Catherine de Saint Phalle and Frances Egan, and the moderator was Mireille.

A month before the event, Catherine and Frances were given the same piece of text – an excerpt from the French novel *La Vague* (*The Wave*) by Ingrid Astier – to translate into English. Three weeks later the texts were sent to Mireille, who then prepared them for the event.

On the day, the audience could read the three versions side by side on a screen (they were also available as handouts). The moderator highlighted dissimilar translations and the jousters defended their choices to the audience, who joined in with comments from time to time.



L->R: Catherine de Saint Phalle, Mireille Vignol and Frances Egan (photo by Kerry Mullan)

Mireille is known to readers of *The French Australian Review* (of which I'm an editor), as we published an interview with her in the last issue (number 74). She explained that the 'literary joust' was launched by the ALTF (*L'Association des traducteurs littéraires de France* / the Association of French literary translators).

As moderator of this Australian translation slam Mireille kept events moving, and asked pertinent questions which the translators endeavoured to answer as best they could.

Both translators were very open and gave considered answers, sometimes agreeing to differ. It was amazing to see the differences in the two translations, and their explanations of their choices and decisions – whilst entertaining and sometimes amusing – gave the audience some insights into the art of literary translation.

You can watch a recording of the event [here](#), and (if you read French) find out more about literary jousts/slams [here](#).

AALITRA would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Kerry Mullan, RMIT and ISFAR for their assistance.

The AALITRA Database of Australian Literary Translators is now live! This database is intended to help users easily find experienced Australian translators of literary texts.

Now based in Melbourne, **Elaine Lewis** began translating French poetry shortly after establishing the Australian Bookshop in Paris in 1996. Her book *Left Bank Waltz* was published by Random House Australia in 1996. She is currently a member of AALITRA, co-editor and book review editor of *The French Australian Review*, and a reviewer for *The Music Trust's* e-zine *Loudmouth*.

Yilin Wang on why, as a writer, she started translating Mandarin poetry

interviewed by Sophia Ra



Yilin (top)
and Sophia



Our **October issue** covered literary translator **Yilin Wang's** recent battle with the British Museum, which had published her translations without her knowledge or permission. To find out more about Yilin and her work – which ranges across translation, writing and editing – *In Touch's* Editorial Committee members **Sophia Ra** and **Cristina Savin** put together some questions, which Sophia then put to Yilin via Zoom.

Sophia: Yilin thank you very much for your time today, it's a great pleasure and honour for me to interview you. In the last issue of *In Touch* we examined your recent battle with the British Museum and settlement with them. Today, I'd like to focus on you and your work. So before we move on to your work, can you please tell us a bit about how and when your interest in translation or in language originated?

Yilin: I came to translation with a creative writing background. I'd been writing original works of fiction, poetry and nonfiction for over ten years, and became increasingly interested in non-Western, non-European literary traditions – especially Sinophone literature, being someone who is bilingual in Mandarin – as a source of inspiration. I wanted to open myself up by reading works that embrace a wider range of storytelling, and different ways of using language and of experimenting with writing and genre and form. While doing my MFA (Master of Fine Arts) in creative writing, I started to experiment with translation in this context. I took a multi-genre writing workshop for which you could submit original work in any form or media, or translations, and I submitted some of my translations of Classical Chinese poetry.

... I witnessed some racism: a bookseller used slurs to describe a Chinese poet reading in Mandarin ...

This was also around the time when Sinophone speculative fiction was becoming very well known in North America, winning awards and so on. It was part of a wider trend of East Asian dramas and science fiction, fantasy and comics becoming very popular here, and I started meeting other writers who had crossed over to translation, so that was a part of it too. And during my MFA, which I did in Canada, I witnessed some racism: a bookseller used slurs to describe a Chinese poet reading in Mandarin and was very disrespectful. I started thinking a lot about how the Canadian publishing industry isn't very welcoming towards people of colour – all the gatekeeping, especially towards people writing in other languages. So, all these different factors contributed to me wanting to pick up translation and try to bring more translated works into English.

Sophia: It's interesting that you were a writer

first, then you became a translator. I'm wondering if there's any intersection or influence between these different disciplines?

Yilin: Definitely. Yeah. To be a literary translator, you generally need to be a very strong writer in the language that you're translating into. So even though I'm doing literary translation, it feels to me like a form of creative writing, because I'm reading works written in Mandarin and then (re)writing them in English. So for me it's very similar, but obviously you're working within many constraints, that's the one difference, and it forces you to be very creative. So doing literary translation has trained me to read in a more careful way, different from what I do as a writer, and I now bring this skill back to my own writing.

And when I write in English, as someone who is Chinese Canadian, I write a lot about diaspora experiences and about my relationship



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with language. I'm often dealing with materials that require a lot of cultural context and sensitivity – so even before I'd done literary translation I was practising the skills a translator uses: I had to explain, I had to think about how to bring certain concepts or terminology into English in my original work, I've always been thinking about that. Doing literary translation has made me think more about that, become more conscious of such decisions. And as I'm multilingual, it's been very helpful for me to take that and apply it to how I think about my own writing.

And then editing ... I've been an editor for different literary publications and journals, and I've also done some copyediting of translations for publishers, and given feedback as a sensitivity editor for translated works, or works featuring Chinese culture and characters.

My work as an acquiring editor for publications really overlaps with my literary translation work, because as a translator, especially for poetry, I'm often deciding for myself who I want to translate and picking the poems, then asking for permission, then translating them. I have to think like an editor in some ways, because I choose poetry that I think is well written, that I like, but also that I think would be suitable for publication in English when I send it out to a lit magazine or a book publisher. So I'm using that kind of editorial sense when I choose works.

And then, of course, as a copy editor and sensitivity editor, again, I use cultural knowledge – which I also use as a translator, thinking about how phrases are being rendered and looking at, perhaps, the use of Chinese language and how context is described.

Sophia: So you work mainly from Mandarin to English?

Yilin: That's right.

Sophia: To me translating into English is more challenging, as English is my second language. Do you see any difference between the two?

Yilin: As a writer in English, I tend to have my own voice and style that I'm used to. I've experimented with different forms, but I have certain genres and aesthetics that I'm most comfortable with and that I can bring to my original writing. When I translate, I encounter writers who write in different styles and voices and registers, which pushes me out of my comfort zone. I find it kind of fun, but also difficult to translate their voices into English and work within the constraints of the source text.

And in Mandarin, for example, there are lots of idioms, like *chengyu* – four-character phrases that are very, very compact and have whole cultural stories embedded in them. These are very hard to render.

And with classical poetry, again, it's very different from English, so I have to cross a big divide in terms of how different the languages are. And stylistically it can be quite challenging, because so much is left ambiguous and unsaid and it's very compact, and the syntax is different and you have to interpret. Those are the things that I don't encounter when I'm writing my original work. So in these ways, translation can be more challenging. And some of the poets I translate, including Qiu Jin, are not living authors, so it's not like I can ask them questions – I'm just left with the poems to decipher.

Sophia: That's true, and as you mentioned, Korean, Chinese and some other Asian languages are kind of contextual – they don't necessarily explicitly explain what is meant, but we sort of guess based on the background or context. So it's probably a bit more tricky to deliver messages from those languages into English, which is more explicit, I think.

Yilin: I agree. Yeah. I think there's a lot that's

implied and left ambiguous, for readers to infer. But English is a language in which more information has to be made explicit – for example verb tense, or whether something is plural or singular.

Sophia: Yeah, that's true. So you translate from Mandarin into English, two very different languages and very different cultures as well. So focusing on poetry now, do you experience more constraints, limitations, or more freedom in recreating poems from Mandarin into English?

Yilin: I do think of translation as a form of creative writing, creative art, so I do feel empowered when I translate poetry to take more risks and, kind of, be more free, and I think more about the effect that it creates rather than what's literally on the page, word by word. So I do feel I have that freedom.

I do find it challenging with Classical Chinese poetry, because there are lots of formal qualities that don't translate well into English. For example, the meter is based on tonal variation, because Mandarin is a tonal language, and English doesn't have tones. And also, when you're translating from the classical language, we don't even know what the original poem sounded like, because Classical Chinese sounds quite different from modern Mandarin. Lines that are supposed to rhyme often don't any more. So then what do you do with that when you translate it into English, which is even more different? That's something I think about a lot.

And also the compactness and conciseness. Qiu Jin's poetry was written in the period that was transitioning from the classical language to modern Chinese, so her poetry poses for me the specific challenge of navigating that linguistic shift. It's rooted in a classical poetic form, but using more modern vocabulary and diction, and it's kind of following the constraints but also kind of breaking them at the same

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LITERARY TRANSLATION (continued)

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time, so that has been one of the bigger challenges for me as a translator of poetry.

Sophia: So are you able to translate Qiu Jin's mix of the modern and traditional styles of poem into English?

Yilin: I do try to do that. For example, when I translate Chinese poetry – in classical Chinese poetry, we have a lot of parallelism ...

Sophia: Yes, I know.

Yilin: Is it similar in Korean?

Sophia: When I was in high school we actually learned Chinese poems. They always have a few different lines with the same, sort of, rhyme [Sophia gestures with her hands, implying two things parallel] ... that's how I remember it.

Yilin: ... so you know there's a parallelism with the imagery, and also with the rhythm and the syntax ... a lot of things are in parallel. So when I translate Qiu Jin, I do try to preserve that kind of quality and bring it to my translation of her work because as a poet, I do care about these kinds of details, and I understand that they're often intentionally done by the poets. Being a writer myself, I can put myself in the writer's shoes and imagine why they made certain kinds of decisions, and I use that to guide me in thinking about what to prioritise when I translate.

So I don't necessarily translate things like rhyme, which is more contrived and harder to render in English in a way that's natural compared to the Mandarin. But I try to translate the larger stylistic features, for example, in terms of the parallelism or the general feeling of the classical poetry. And in terms of the modern aspects, depending on the poem, I do try to make the diction and the register feel a little more modern and colloquial at times, even in that classical form. That's something I'm always trying to find the balance for, because it's an older style, but at the same time, not as old as the ancient classics.

Sophia: Fascinating, really interesting. I've never translated poetry. I keep comparing your work with my own. I usually do subtitling, and because there's a time/space limit, I always have to be creative. So, moving on to your upcoming book *The Lantern and the Night*

Moths, I think you've just finalised the editing?

Yilin: I've submitted my final manuscript and we're at the copyediting stage now and proofreading, and it's being laid out as a book.

Sophia: And you've focused on some of China's most innovative modern and contemporary poets – Fei Ming, Qiu Jin, Zhang Qiaohui (sorry about my pronunciation!), Xiao Xi and Dai Wangshu ... I'm wondering why you chose these particular poets. Can you give our readers a glimpse into any of the poems or poets that you introduce?

Yilin: This project came about as a result of my work as a poetry translator over the last few years. Drawing on my skills as an editor, I read a lot of modern and contemporary poetry, and found poets whose works I feel are very innovative, unique and interesting, yet weren't being widely read by Western poets and readers of poetry. Some are better known and have been translated in the past, especially Dai Wangshu, who is one of China's most famous modern poets, but are mostly being read in academic circles.

So what I wanted to do was to bring my background as a poet and editor to translating these writers' works, so that they can hopefully reach a more mainstream audience and be considered in context with Anglophone poetry – so people in the Chinese diaspora, and others who can't read Mandarin but are interested in Chinese poetry, can access the works of some modern and contemporary poets from China.

A lot of people have heard of the Classical Chinese poets like Li Bai and Du Fu, but the modern and contemporary poets who were writing in their aftermath are less well known. So I think of my book as offering a selection of some very interesting voices from these times.

Qiu Jin, as folks may already know, was basically the first modern feminist poet from China, and is well known as a historical figure. But her work has mostly only been translated in an academic context, and I wanted to offer more creative translations of her work. And there are other contemporary poets, like Xiao Xi and Wangshu, whose works are unique but have never been translated before.

Have you heard of the Three Percent Problem?

So there's a range of different voices here, and for each poet I've included a short essay that reflects on what's interesting or unique about their work, or what I was thinking about as a translator when I was translating it – reflecting on the translation process. Many of the essays have to do with the art, craft and skills of literary translation, and are rooted in my experience as a translator from the Chinese diaspora. I hope the book can serve as an introduction for folks interested in modern Sinophone poetry or in translation, or both.

Sophia: So in this book you're a translator and a writer at the same time?

THE LANTERN AND THE NIGHT MOTHS

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FIVE MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY
CHINESE POETS SELECTED AND TRANSLATED BY

YILIN WANG 王艺霖

Yilin: That's right.

Sophia: I think what you're doing is really important, letting other people access great works that are not written in English – poems in your case. I look forward to it.

So, that's pretty much all my questions. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about, or anything that's missing?

Yilin: You asked really great questions. Thank you so much for putting this together. There *are* a couple more things I'd like to mention. Have you heard of the Three Percent Problem?

Sophia: No, I haven't.

Yilin: Okay. So the Three Percent Problem came out of a study done in North America. It describes the phenomenon that of the books published in the US every year, translations into English constitute only three percent. And this is *all* languages into English, and every kind of book – textbooks, nonfiction, instruction manuals ... and within that, I think, 0.7 percent is literary translation. So the problem is: how do we increase this percentage? I'm sure that translations *into* Chinese published in Sinophone regions – and translations into Korean published in Korea, too – make up a higher percentage of the totals, so it's not an equal exchange that's happening.

Sophia: Yes, that's interesting.

Yilin: Lastly, I want to talk briefly about another reason I was interested in translating Chinese poetry. I was noticing some unethical practices in its translation into English, which I think happen a lot with Asian poetry. Have you heard of 'bridge translation'?

Sophia: No.

Yilin: So, in bridge translation, a writer in the target language who doesn't speak the original language is asked – often by a translation organisation or publisher – to take a literal word-by-word rendering of a text and rewrite it. For example, for a twenty-character Classical Chinese poem they would first have a Mandarin speaker – maybe an actual translator

as a poet who actually knows the language, I felt I needed to ... retranslate, or just get involved ...

– write down the definition of each of the characters in English. These would then be given to an English-speaking poet or writer who doesn't know Classical Chinese, to write a poem based on the definitions. The result – which could be a very creative piece – is called a translation and credited to the English speaker, while the person who did the word-by-word translation is often sidelined or totally left out.

The issue is that the English speaker didn't actually *translate*, in the sense that they didn't have access to the original, only the word-by-word definitions, which I don't think is sufficient to give a full picture of the original.

I think this happened with Qiu Jin's poetry – reading some of the early translations from eighty years ago, I can feel that the 'translator' didn't actually know the original language, because in Mandarin we have multi-character words and phrases, and these were translated as individual characters, not as the full words or phrases. For example, they broke up the word 'Japan' – 日本 – into 日 (sun) and 本 (the original or source), then rendered it – as if it were two completely different separate words – as 'The Sun's Root Land', which is very exoticising.

Unfortunately, this is how a lot of Classical Chinese poetry was 'translated' into English in the early days. And as it was often done by white academics or writers, and continues to be, there's also this racial undertone to it which I find very upsetting. And some contributors to modern poetry in English, such as Ezra Pound, were also doing this to Chinese poetry. In other words, a lot of English modern poetry is built on this cultural appropriation of Chinese poetry. So, as a poet who actually knows the language, I felt I needed to – in some cases – retranslate, or just get involved in poetry translation, to push back against this kind of harmful practice. It feels like people are projecting their own

views of the poetry, rather than actually looking at the originals.

And bridge translation still happens in contemporary times, believe it or not – translation organisations, magazines or publishers advertise workshops to monolingual people and are like, 'You can all become translators. We'll give you a literal translation, then you can kind of translate.' It's like they don't believe that translators who are native in a non-English source language are capable of translating by ourselves, they have to give our work to native writers in English – even if they don't know the source language – to 'improve' it.

As this interview is for a translation magazine, I want to highlight that. I don't think people are necessarily aware – especially if they don't translate poetry – that this is widespread, and I think it's very problematic. And when I talk to Chinese diaspora poets writing in English, many of them are horrified to hear it.

Sophia: Yes, that's really surprising, that's horrible. Okay, thank you very much again for your time Yilin. We really look forward to your upcoming book.

Yilin: Thank you so much, I really appreciate it. I'd never really interacted with Australian translators or associations before what happened with the British Museum, so I'm happy that we got to chat, it's been so nice.

You can read about Yilin's battle with the British Museum [here](#), read more about her work on her website [here](#), and find her book The Lantern and the Night Moths [on pre-order here](#).

Ethics and Professional Practice Committee member



For the tenth interview in this series on the various roles taken on within AUSIT by its members, we talk with **Marita Quaglio**, a member of the Ethics and Professional Practice Committee.

Hours/week:
1-3

Voluntary?
Yes

AUSIT member for:
23 years

Time in this role:
5 years

Other AUSIT roles (past and/or present): none

Q1. What does the E&PP Committee do?

The Committee aims to raise awareness of the AUSIT Code of Ethics and promote ethical conduct amongst practitioners, as well as investigate complaints of alleged unethical behaviour from and by AUSIT members. It also undertakes tasks such as developing policy and procedure documents to guide the work of AUSIT's re-formed Board of Professional Conduct (which prompted one of the recent amendments to the AUSIT Constitution, so that the new procedures are in line with it), and we've done a lot of work towards updating the AUSIT Best Practices for The Translation of Official and Legal Documents. The Committee meets bi-monthly, and members give time between meetings according to their skills, interests and availability.

Q2. Can you give examples of the types of issues that you deal with (while maintaining confidentiality of course)?

I'm happy to say that during my time as a member, allegations of unethical behaviour by AUSIT members have been few. One such

involved an alleged breach of the principle of Professional Solidarity. This was investigated and resolved in the negative, as the conduct referred to occurred in the private sphere, and could in no way be interpreted as bringing the T&I profession into disrepute. The Committee also sometimes receives requests for guidance and advice on ethical issues and questions. These can range from suspicion that a personal document presented for translation may not be genuine, to how interpreters living and/or working in small communities can best navigate encountering – in the course of their work – people with whom they are familiar.

Q3. Why did you take this role on, and what skills/qualities are needed?

Living and working in regional Australia, I've had limited opportunity to connect with other AUSIT members or contribute to the organisation's work. Having been a member for many years, I decided that it was time. I seized the opportunity to participate in the work of the E&PP Committee, as I feel strongly about the critical importance of ethical conduct in our profession. And nowadays, of course, with meetings happening by Zoom, it's much easier for members living all over Australia to participate. The current Committee is

composed of members who bring a wide variety of experience and skills, and there is room for all to contribute. The main thing, obviously, is a thorough understanding of – and commitment to the principles of – the AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

Q4. Who (including other AUSIT office bearers) do you mainly liaise with or advise?

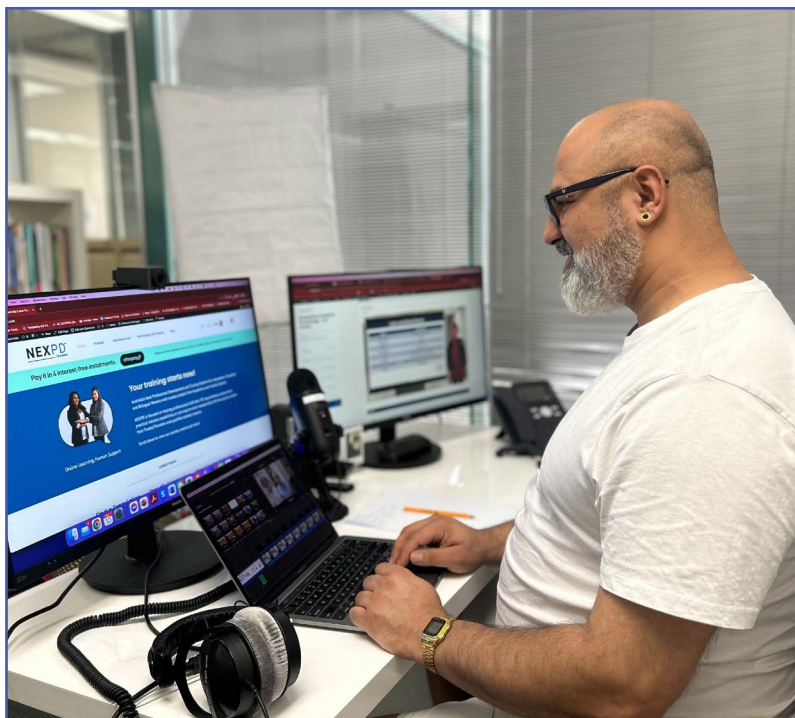
The Committee liaises with and provides advice to members of the AUSIT National Council, language service providers, AUSIT's educational affiliates, other organisations and individuals who work with T/Is, AUSIT members, students, the general public ... and, of course, the editors of *In Touch*.

Q5. What advice would you give to someone thinking of joining the E&PP Committee?

Working with this committed, experienced and skilful team is rewarding. You can also learn a lot by participating in the valuable work of the Committee. I certainly feel privileged to play a part, and encourage members to consider this role as your way of contributing to AUSIT.

Providing PD: three quick questions for Fatih Karakas, head of training for a large language service provider

All Graduates provides T&I services across New Zealand and Australia, and also conducts PD programs via its training division, NEXPD (formerly Conversa Training). We asked All Graduates' program coordinator, **Fatih Karakas**, a few questions about how and why T/Is are employed to teach on the program.



1. What qualities are you looking for when you engage T/Is to conduct PD and training?

As we provide a lot of self-paced PD that can be accessed online, our trainers have to create pre-recorded presentations, so they need to be comfortable with speaking to an empty screen. This may take some time to get used to. However, we have a very experienced audiovisual team who are skilled in helping inexperienced presenters to relax ... and also in editing out any bloopers once the recording is completed!

2. Do you look for specific qualifications and experience? If yes, what?

Yes we do. We prefer working with trainers who have teaching qualifications, at either the higher or the vocational education level. We also look for domain-specific qualifications – specifically

NAATI's Certified Specialist Health Interpreter (CSHI) and Certified Specialist Legal Interpreter (CSLI). To conduct PD in a particular domain, such as legal, health or speech pathology, it's also essential that they have relevant expertise and experience. For example, we conduct PD on many specific medical areas – nephrology, geriatrics, orthopaedics, rheumatology and so on – so it helps if an applicant has extensive T&I experience in health care settings. It's also important that our trainers are interested in T&I education, as their enthusiasm both informs and enhances their presentations. And lastly, they need to be good public speakers.

3. You hire T&I trainers on a casual basis. What would make you more likely to hire someone to conduct PD again?

In addition to expertise, experience and public speaking skills, three main things would make a

trainer stand out: their presentation preparation skills, how they engage with learners, and whether they provide relevant and practical training materials and resources. It's important for trainers to demonstrate that they have a deep understanding of the needs of their audience, and can tailor their training accordingly. A good trainer gives well-organised, engaging presentations that are visually appealing and relevant to the topic at hand, and they manage their time effectively to keep the audience on track. They create a positive and interactive learning environment, using a variety of teaching methods and activities to keep learners engaged and motivated, and can answer questions clearly and concisely. And they provide learners with relevant and practical training materials and resources that can be used to apply what they have learned in the training session: handouts, worksheets, online resources, or even just a list of recommended books and/or articles. Trainers who demonstrate all these qualities are more likely to be hired again, as they provide learners with the most valuable and engaging learning experiences.

MEMBER PROFILES



NAME:

Translator or interpreter (or both):

Language(s) and direction(s):

Location:

Practising as a T/I since:

Member of AUSIT since:

Main area(s) of practice:

JULIETA CARROLL

interpreter

Auslan–English

Gold Coast, QLD

2020

2023

education and medical

GIULYANNE SOUSA COSTA

translator

Portuguese<>English

Perth, WA

2010

2018

documents for visa purposes and skills assessment, community translation

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

I started working in a school with a significant Deaf population, and I noticed a few students who craved communication and connection, so I started to learn Auslan from other staff so I could converse with them about their days. I met many wonderful Deaf people who were passionate about Auslan and sharing their language. Many years later a colleague encouraged me to enrol in a diploma of interpreting (Auslan–English). I was full of doubt and withdrew from the course several times, but I persevered, completed my Diploma in 2019, and in 2020 passed NAATI's Certified Provisional Interpreter test – my most fulfilling academic achievement to date.

A2

During COVID many Deaf students were learning online, and our school team had to quickly come up with solutions to ensure all announcements and resources were accessible. A Deaf adult with experience in NZ schools suggested live-streaming all announcements and assemblies. We moved quickly to secure the technology needed to livestream with interpreters visible (picture-in-picture to meet COVID regulations), and streamed to our local community. It was incredible to see extraordinary innovation and skill development during this time – in our school-based interpreting team we upskilled ourselves to become audiovisual technicians, onstage interpreters and production managers. We were thankful to have a school principal who believed in what we needed to do, as a result of which we were supported financially and systemically to ensure we established access and connection for our Deaf community.

A1

I grew up in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil, surrounded by government buildings and embassies. I've always been fascinated by different cultures, and the idea of working for one of the embassies often crossed my mind. When deciding what to study at university, I chose translation because I saw it as a pathway to achieving that goal. The course brought me numerous perspectives, and I absolutely loved it, so I decided to pursue a career in this field. When I moved to Australia to be with my partner, I initially worked in customer service roles, but once I obtained my NAATI certification, I returned to working solely as a translator.

A2

Assisting people in obtaining their visas or accomplishing their goals is always rewarding, but the projects I find most fulfilling involve police investigations. During my internship in Brazil, I had the opportunity to work with the Brazilian Federal Police, and it was fascinating to witness the important role translators play in dismantling large criminal operations. However, some of these projects can be quite challenging. Recently, I worked on a project related to child sexual abuse, and it was difficult not to be emotionally affected by the distressing material involved, especially as I have children of my own. Some of the victims' statements were very detailed and made me feel sick. I had to take frequent breaks to clear my mind and be able to complete the project.

