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Western
Australian

Institute of

Translators and
Interpreters Inc

Newsletter

August 2005

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FROM THE COMMITTEE

WAITI AGM - Saturday, 13 August (10:00 am to 12:30 pm)

The WAITI AGM will convene at 10:00 am on the morning of Saturday, 13 August. The venue is the staff room on the 3rd floor at Central TAFE, Museum Street, Northbridge. The meeting is scheduled to finish at 12:30.

At the AGM the WAITI Constitution requires that Bente Sorensen step down as Executive Secretary. All other positions on the Committee are also available for nomination. Committee membership is an excellent way to keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening in the profession. Nomination forms are included with this newsletter.

Professional indemnity for WAITI members Better cover needed for practitioners in the health sector

At its June meeting the WAITI Committee resolved to investigate affordable professional indemnity insurance for WAITI members. The Committee is not convinced that policies underwritten by AON and QBE and offered by AUSIT provide cover that is appropriate to interpreters, particularly those working in the health sector. Potential insurers have been invited to tender against the below criteria. The Committee hopes to have satisfactory insurance available for WAITI members by the end of August.

- Value for money –the policy must provide cover that is relevant to the occupational realities of member practitioners
- Client understanding –the policy must reflect an informed understanding of interpreting and translation and the differences in task and associated risk between the two occupations

- Partner approach –the insurer and their underwriter must be prepared to work with the Institute to refine the risk cover over time as progress is achieved in the quality control and risk management applied by member practitioners
- Marketability – the policy must be effective in encouraging practitioners to become members of the Institute
- Risk to the Institute – the profession is immature, and confronts multiple challenges. The Institute needs to protect itself as it works to improve the overall performance and accountability of practitioner members.

Telephone, e-Bulletin and website

All things being equal, WAITI's new telephone number should appear in the new editions of both the White and Yellow Pages. Just in case, the **new WAITI telephone number is: 0432-832-036**. Please remember that enquiries for practitioner services received via either telephone or website will be automatically posted to the e-Bulletin. Members are reminded not to respond to the e-Bulletin, but to make direct contact with the entity seeking practitioner services. Members are also asked to let WAITI know if their e-mail address changes. Simply send a note to: **waiti@inet.net.au**

WA Deaf Interpreting Service wants regulation

Report of meeting - 14 June 2005

Fran Roberts, the WAITI President, and Heather Glass represented WAITI at a meeting convened by Robyn Tsapazi, Coordinator of the Deaf Interpreting Service. Other organisations represented were: WA Deaf Society, ASLIA(WA), ASLIA(National), NAATI, and UWA. Ms

Tsapazi delivered a presentation calling for the establishment of an Interpreter's Registration Board. She did not suggest a similar authority for Translators.

The WAITI Committee has considered the WADIS proposal and has asked to be kept advised of any developments. WAITI's current priorities, however, are the Review of the State Language Policy, the development of National Competency Standards, the Administrative Review of NAATI, and the status of practitioners in the health sector. The Committee feels that these initiatives will bring results far sooner than a campaign for registration, and has indicated that at this point the Institute has no official position on practitioner registration and does not propose to re-direct limited resources to it.

Committee Candidacy Statement **Heather Glass, FWAITI**

WAITI members will be aware that I have served as Special Projects Coordinator for the Institute since early in 2002, first in a voluntary capacity, and for the last two years as an elected Committee Member. I have to date been reluctant to offer myself as a candidate for President of WAITI, feeling that I could be more useful in a supporting role.

Many will remember the Marketing Plan I presented to the 2002 AGM. I set us four tasks:

- to be 'seen'
- to be 'heard'
- to undertake direct marketing
- to provide member services

Three years on, we have lifted our membership to 80 – rather short of my ambitious target of 200 – but an

improvement nonetheless. The goals we have met are:

- member networking and professional development opportunities
- the e-bulletin
- a CD-ROM member's kit
- a public practitioner directory linked to our Yellow Pages ad
- industry up-dates to WA practitioners
- a current Australia-wide data base
- the infrastructure for a members-only website (content to be developed)
- a strong profile with government service providers and stakeholders at state and federal level

Successes not forecast in 2002 are the influence WAITI has had in precipitating a review of NAATI test administration and the national project to develop competency standards for interpreter and translator training.

Where I believe we have still not succeeded, however, is in achieving among members a sense of 'ownership' of their Institute, and a profile among industry stakeholders that is consistent, and generally positive.

I believe the key to both those failures is the same factor that has brought us our success; communication. Disinformation and dissension are the bane of our industry. Better communication means information that is accurate, consistent, and common knowledge.

As President of WAITI I will continue to pursue the goals set in the Marketing Plan endorsed by the AGM in 2002. My commitment will be to achieving better communication --- among members, among the wider practitioner community, with our colleague professional associations, and with stakeholders in our industry. I look forward to your support in

my candidacy for President at the coming AGM.

How well do you know your industry? Test your knowledge of NAATI

Is NAATI a government authority? The National Accreditation Authority of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) Ltd, was established in 1977 as an arm of the federal immigration authority, DIMIA (Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs). Its aim was to establish standards for interpreting and translation, through a system of testing and accreditation. In 1983, however, NAATI became a public company limited by guarantee. It is therefore not a government authority and is not subject to the rules of public sector governance, such as transparency and accountability, that apply to public sector entities.

Who owns NAATI Ltd? The shareholders of NAATI (known as Members) are the Federal and State Ministers for Immigration and Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs. Their authority devolves to their heads of department (known as Members Representatives).

Who runs NAATI Ltd? For some 20 years NAATI has had the same Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Sherrill Bell. Otherwise, NAATI is managed by a Board of five Directors, appointed by the Members. The Board meets four or five times a year. The current Chair of the Board is David When, a former senior DIMIA bureaucrat. His appointment dates back to October 2001. Other Board members are:

- Deputy Chair, Vicki Mitsos, Centre Manager, Multicultural Education Centre, Goulburn TAFE, Victoria (since September 2002)
- Dr Max Brandle, Adjunct Professor, Griffiths University (since September 2002)
- Susan Bures, Administrator, Grand Synagogue, Sydney (since September 2002)
- John Kiosoglous, Chairman of SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission (since August 2003)

Where does NAATI Ltd source its revenue, and how much? NAATI's annual revenue is in the order of \$3 million, of which around \$900,000 is contributed proportionally by the Member governments, with 50 per cent coming from the Commonwealth, through DIMIA. NAATI Ltd's gross profit has been in the order of \$500,000 for the last couple of years. NAATI's ability to generate revenue was given a significant boost in July 1999, when DIMIA nominated NAATI accreditation as worth 60 points towards a migrant visa, and NAATI Ltd began delivering tests in selected overseas locations. In addition to testing, for an ongoing fee NAATI approves courses in interpreting and translation delivered at universities and TAFEs. NAATI also delivers short fee-for-service courses to would-be candidates, primarily in test preparation.

How does NAATI Ltd deliver testing? NAATI administers 55 examiner panels setting and marking tests in 57 languages. The panels comprise over 300 examiners located all around Australia,

who are paid on a piece-work basis. NAATI has full or part-time regional offices in most capital cities to process candidate applications and invigilate tests.

What is the pass rate for NAATI testing?

There are four levels of accreditation, the key one of which is the Professional level. This level of accreditation was sought by 90 per cent of candidates in 2002/03. Of those, 82 per cent failed. In 2003/04, 78 per cent of all NAATI test candidates failed.

What is NAATI Ltd's core competence?

NAATI has no linguistic, educational, or testing expertise in-house or on salary, and no current educational expertise on the Board. Such expertise as it has resides in its Qualifications and Assessment Advisory Committee (QAAC). The QAAC has six members, who meet a few times a year. Otherwise, the staff of NAATI Ltd typically come from administrative or clerical backgrounds.

Who is on the NAATI QAAC? Since at least 1999 – if not before (six years or more) – the core membership of the QAAC has been Dr Emy Watt, Ms Anna Grassi, and Ms Amalia Milman. Mr Ari Pappas, an employee of a private sector service provider, has served for at least three years, as has Ms Helen Slatyer, a well-respected researcher in testing, but of ESL (English as a Second Language), not interpreting or translation. Dr Jemina Napier, a leading Auslan academic and well-known practitioner, was appointed a year ago.

Where do practitioners fit in NAATI Ltd?

Individual practitioners are NAATI Ltd's main clients, and as examiners, provide

NAATI Ltd with the means to earn revenue, by setting and marking tests for the company. Examiners have no management function or input to NAATI Ltd. Regional Advisory Committees (RAC) in each state include practitioners, but only as individuals, by invitation from NAATI Ltd. Stakeholder organisations are formally represented in the RACs, but practitioner professional associations are not. RACs meet infrequently throughout a year on an unremunerated basis, to provide advice on how to promote NAATI Ltd in their region. The RACs have no management function in NAATI Ltd.

Competencies Scoping Project - Feedback to be incorporated to Final Report

The Service Industries Skills Council reports that feedback on the Draft Report for the Scoping Project was generally supportive of the concept of Competency Based Training (CBT) for Interpreting and Translation. Criticism received focused on inadequacies in the Report and revealed that its purpose has been poorly understood.

The aim of the Draft Report was only ever to summarise what has come out of the Scoping Project, which has been a process of practitioner consultation. The intent of the Draft and Final Report is to present the facts, not to debate them. As a result, the Final Report will have to reflect due process and summarise the findings of the consultations, including identifying additional work to be done and questions to be answered. That detailed work will come in the next stage.

The feedback from the period of public comment, which closed on 15 July, will

be considered by the Steering Group, of which WAITI is a prominent member. At a meeting on 10 August, the Group will decide what to incorporate or address in the Final Report, which will then be again widely circulated. The objective of the Final Report will be to garner general support for the process going forward and elicit further funding.

The primary intent of a Scoping Project is to identify industry's view of the skills and knowledge it requires. As practitioners typically operate micro-businesses and contract their services, rather than being employed, under the National Training Framework it is practitioners who are defined as the industry.

Limited input was invited from stakeholders, such as training institutions and service providers, or users of practitioners, through separate focus group meetings. It was some 180 practitioners Australia-wide, working in practitioner-facilitated workshops, who were the core of the consultation process. As a result, the range of skills and knowledge that practitioners said they need and want is much wider than has ever been previously considered or addressed in conventional practitioner training and education.

An important objective of the practitioner workshops was to educate attendees about CBT. Feedback on the Draft Report confirms that there is still work to be done, particularly among stakeholders, to raise the general level of understanding of the current national training situation. There is a tendency for the uninitiated to equate 'training' with mechanical skills, a la training a dolphin. Modern training,

however, takes a holistic and integrated approach to both skills and knowledge.

One of the more exciting implications of the Qualifications Framework suggested in the Draft Report is that it outlines a continuum of training and education, from the level of language speaker, through to university degree and beyond. While university education and academic research must continue to be the epitome of our profession, CBT provides a structured way for all to reach that goal. The Framework will offer a pathway for all levels of language speaker aspiring to, or being required to act as an interpreter or translator, with flexible entry and exit points.

The Draft Report is as much a summation of the varying perspectives of members of our profession, as it is the basis for consensus. Practitioners can expect many more opportunities to give input going forward, to what it should be remembered is a significant Work in Progress.

Footnote: An important realisation has been the need to achieve consistency in the terminology we use to talk about our work. Terms used in the body of the Draft Report are as agreed in online and face-to-face practitioner workshops conducted in advance of the Scoping Project, and subsequently used by practitioners in the consultation process. Ultimately, however, those terms may be superseded by consensus on a glossary now available for comment and debate at: <http://www.ausit.org/eng/showpage.php3?id=851>.

Review of State Language Policy - Opportunity for practitioner input on Saturday, 20 August (1:00 to 5:00 pm)

As reported in the May 2005 newsletter, the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) has appointed Prime Focus Consulting to review the State Language Policy.

An important recommendation of last year's Report on the Analysis of Needs for a State Language Service was that professional associations be part of any State Government action on language. Prime Focus will convene a working group on or about August 25, comprising educators, professional bodies and the Department of Indigenous Affairs. The working group will be tasked with drawing up minimum standards and basic guidelines for the State Language Policy.

WAITI has secured funding from OMI to convene a joint workshop of the three professional associations represented in WA - WAITI, AUSIT (WA) and ASLIA (WA) - to inform the professional association input to the Review of the State Language Policy. It is also hoped to be able to reach unaffiliated practitioners working in the hospitals and for Centrelink. The target is for participation from up to 100 practitioners.

The objective is to develop a clear position paper on minimum standards and guidelines, from the practitioner perspective. The practitioner position paper will be submitted to the August 25 working group, but any consensus from the joint practitioner workshop will not preclude professional associations or practitioners separately advocating on issues specific to their individual and independent circumstances.

OMI's ultimate goal is to achieve a language policy that has 'teeth'; in other words, that ensures government agencies use interpreters and translators to deliver services to NES members of the West Australian community.

WAITI, AUSIT (WA) and ASLIA (WA) believe that the practitioner goal should be a language policy that enshrines principles that will maximise practitioner performance. The practitioner workshop will therefore address guidelines and standards for:

- Occupational Health and Safety may cover such topics as team interpreting, de-briefing, workplace counselling, working hours
- Quality Control may cover such topics as criteria for assessing practitioner competence, practitioner management, process management, pre-assignment briefing, team translation
- Contractual issues may cover such topics as contractor/employee status, compensation for the real cost of interpreting (eg travel, preparation time), worker's comp, superannuation
- Risk management may cover such topics as indemnity, informed consent, grievance/complaint procedures, development of formulaic material to ensure consistency (eg police interview formats, oaths/affirmations), practitioner briefing, supervision of inexperienced practitioners (particularly in rare or emerging languages)

The joint practitioner workshop will be held on Saturday, 25 August, from 13:00 to 17:00. The venue is the Lecture Theatre on the Museum Street side of Central TAFE in Northbridge. See the enclosed flier for details and RSVP advice.

For background: Analysis of the Need for Interpreting and Translating Services within the Western Australian Government Sector: http://www.omi.wa.gov.au/OMI_Publications.asp

WAITI Position Paper on a State Language Service:

<http://www.waiti.iinet.net.au/publications.htm>

(on the website by mid-August)

Administrative Review of NAATI - Practitioner Power needed to make Report public

As a result of further correspondence received from disaffected NAATI candidates from within and outside Western Australia, at its June meeting the WAITI Committee resolved to write to the Members of NAATI (the Federal and State Ministers for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) to demand that the Report on the Administrative Review of NAATI be made public.

The Committee will approach its colleague national associations to do the same, and urges WAITI Members to write to their local Members of Parliament (See how at the end of this article). WAITI will also call for expertise in modern education and testing, current interpreting and translation, and professional management and best practice to be introduced to the NAATI structure.

In May, WAITI invited its members and practitioners nationwide to send submissions to the Consultant appointed to review NAATI's test administration. In late June Mr John Cook indicated that, largely as a result of WAITI's call, he had received so many submissions that he had scheduled a series of further interviews and would seek an extension on the deadline for his Report.

The latest edition of NAATI News (Vol. 18 Issue 2 April/May/June 2005) confirms that agreement has been reached to extend the date of completion to 31 August 2005.

Mr Cook has stated that his primary finding is that testing needs to be tied to the profession. He professed himself to be 'very, very impressed' with the people he has met who are in the front line of interpreting and translation in Australia.

In Mr Cook's view, the interpreting and translating profession is 'where teachers were a hundred years ago, and where nurses were 30 years ago'. He has been encouraged that the NAATI Board has asked him to extend his report to include specific proposals for action.

WAITI expects that the NAATI Board will be faced with some hard decisions once it receives the Cook Report.

The NAATI Board can no longer ignore, nor continue to pay lip service to the concerns brought to Mr Cook by Australian practitioners. The Board must be held accountable to the profession. The Cook Report must be made public.

How to write to your local Member of Parliament

The surest way to ensure something is made public is for as many elected politicians as possible to receive letters from their constituents demanding its publication. In democratic Australia, public officials, particularly Ministers, must respond to letters from the public.

WAITI members are urged to write to their local State and Federal Members. The advice given to WAITI is that our individual stories in our own words and handwritten, is best, but the message should be consistent: publish the Cook Report.

If you are not confident about your written expression in English, WAITI would be happy to edit your letter for you. Simply send your draft to: waiti@iinet.net.au. Otherwise, you could adapt the sample letter in this newsletter. If you copy your correspondence to WAITI, the Institute will also follow up with the Member of Parliament.

To find the address of your local State Member of Parliament just key your suburb

into:

<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/web/newwebportal.nsf/iframewebpages/Members+-+Electorate>

To find your Federal electorate:

<http://www.aec.gov.au/eseach/main.htm>

To find the address of your local Federal Member of Parliament:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/members/mi-elctr.asp>

If you cannot find your own Member of Parliament, or wish to write to the NAATI Members (Ministers of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs), see the addresses accompanying this newsletter.

In the news.....(and beyond it)

DIMIA 'culture' under fire

NAATI Ltd is effectively an arm of DIMIA. Its current Chairman of the Board is a former senior DIMIA bureaucrat. Much of the language reported in the press in relation to DIMIA in recent months resonates strongly with practitioner experiences with NAATI.

Adapted from The West Australian - 26 May 2005

Immigration as a whole appears to be a shambles.... The secretary of the department Bill Farmer says he is 'deeply sorry' for what happened to [Cornelia Rau and Vivian Alvarez]. Admitting mistakes were made, he has promised changes to 'systems, processes or attitudes'...

Adapted from The West Australian - 7 June 2005

DIMIA secretary Bill Farmer concedes his department has made mistakes and says there is need for change in its organizational culture.

On [May 25], Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone spoke of the need for 'cultural change' in her department to achieve 'greater customer focus, timeliness, openness to complaints and appropriate mechanisms to identify problem areas'.

The case against DIMIA was documented in an address to the Sydney Institute by migration agent Marion Le on October 5. Ms Le provided evidence of serious cases of maladministration by DIMIA – including relatively junior bureaucrats effectively reviewing their own decisions, the refusal to acknowledge mistakes, the acceptance of evidence from anonymous sources and more besides.

Adapted from The West Australian - 16 June 2005

The operation and culture of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs has been condemned in a draft report from the Palmer inquiry that has been given to Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone.

Two chapters of the draft report are understood to be highly critical of the department. [One] details the entrenched culture of the immigration report. It advises more transparency and accountability with reviews by an independent arbitrator as a means of breaking down the department's culture.

The Hon. Ray Halligan asks more questions in State Parliament

Adapted from Hansard - 18, 19 and 24 May 2005

Subsequent to the May newsletter, the Hon. Ray Halligan, State Liberal Spokesperson for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, drew responses to a series of questions on notice to the Ministers for Police, Housing, Health, Justice, and Education about government interpreting services. He asked each Minister how many interpreters and translators are employed by their department, for how many hours a week, at what rate of pay, and how practitioner qualifications are assessed.

In summary, the responses he received are:

- WA Police Service – Translators [sic] are sourced through TIS on a fee-for-service basis.
- Department of Housing Interpreters are employed on a fee for service contract through TIS. The cost of the service is \$141.05 for 90 minutes. At Mirrabooka, Fremantle, Cannington and Bentley offices on site interpreters in six different languages are offered for two hours at a time on various days of the week.
- Health Department Across the health system are 180 contractors employed on a needs (casual) basis, and seven full-time Translators [sic]. Their qualifications are assessed by NAATI and their rate of pay varies between \$19.62 per hour and \$42.50 per hour depending on level of interpreting competence. Out of hours payments are higher.
- Department of Justice The Justice Department employs no practitioners, but does engage Interpreters and/or Translators on a fee for service basis from a number of organisations.
- Education Department The Department employs 52 Auslan Interpreters and two Braille Transcribers. The majority of Auslan Interpreters are employed 29 hours 15 minutes per week at a rate of between \$18.28 and \$19.92 per hour (Education Assistant Level 3). The Braille Transcribers are each employed 37.5 hours per week at between \$38,661 and \$42,957 per annum (Public Servants). Auslan Interpreters are required to provide documentary evidence of qualifications and experience as part of the public sector merit selection process. Other staff who have NAATI qualifications are required to provide documentary evidence. Police clearances and referee checks are also undertaken.

Mr Halligan has confirmed that his questions are the result of appeals to him as the Local Member by a constituent. He indicated that he will be asking more

questions when State Parliament resumes in August.

For the full transcript use the search function at: <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/hansard>

WAITI website acknowledged in NAATI News

NAATI News Vol. 18 Issue 2 April/May/June 2005

A pleasant surprise in the latest issue of NAATI News is the inclusion of the URL for WAITI's website in the list of 'Websites of interest.' WAITI appears with the likes of AUSIT, ASLIA, AIC and DIMIA. Could this be a sign that the previously recalcitrant authority is beginning to acknowledge that WAITI is a legitimate industry voice? Who knows, eventually WAITI may even be invited to appoint a representative to the RAC (Regional Advisory Committee) in WA. The Committee is not holding its breath!

Doctor challenges hospital for failure to obtain informed consent

If an English speaking doctor is not properly informed by a hospital about a procedure he is to undertake as a patient, what hope the NES patient suffering sight translation from an Interpreter, in the absence of a doctor?

Extract from The West Australian - 30 July 2005

Surgeon sued over unwanted operation

A Perth surgeon is being sued over a \$284 hospital bill for an operation performed not by him, but on him, which he claims was done without his consent.

Dr James Kent said he had refused to pay the gap bill for the Mount Hospital where he was admitted last February for a biopsy of a lesion in the lining of his left lung. He said that instead of having small pieces of tissue removed for a pathology test as he believed was intended, the whole lesion was removed

by the surgeon, leaving him with substantial complications.

Dr Kent said he was refusing to pay the bill out of principle because hospital staff did not follow protocols and check exactly which operation he was giving his consent to.

‘The hospital needs to change its practices to ensure that informed consent is obtained for every operation so patients know exactly what they are agreeing to,’ Dr Kent said.

‘Many people wouldn’t be in a position like mine to stand up and fight the matter,’ he said. ‘When a mistake is made it needs to be recognised.’

Coming PD Workshop Forensic linguistics

In October, WAITI hopes to bring Dr Duncan Markham to Perth to explore perceptions of language by language-users and specific issues which arise in criminal investigation and trials. Dr Markham is a psycholinguist and forensic phonetician: someone who is trained to identify idiosyncrasies in the speech of individuals. The workshop will be designed for practitioners, criminal lawyers and the police, and will invite participants to revisit the topics of surveillance tapes, identifying voices, acting as an expert witness, and other translation and interpreting minefields.

WAITI MEMBER NETWORKING Regular opportunities for WAITI Members and Associate Members to exchange ideas, opinions, and learning in a convivial atmosphere with other like-minded, practicing members. Held on the last Friday evening of the month.

P O Box 663, Subiaco WA 6904, Tel 0407 420 688, waiti@iinet.net.au, www.waiti.iinet.net.au