



The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT)

Queensland

Annual General Meeting 2022 (10PD)

Followed by PD Session: “Linguistic Ecology” presented by Assoc. Prof. Uldis Ozolins (10 PD)

DRAFT Minutes

The 2022 Annual General Meeting was attended by 27 AUSIT members, no apologies.

1. The AGM was declared open via Zoom at 9:00 AM.
2. Carina Mackenzie (Chair) acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land and welcomed participants.
3. Mariam Elliott moved to accept last year’s AGM minutes, and Elisabeth Kissel seconded.
4. **Carina presented the Chair’s annual report for 2021-2022:**

Carina informed in her report that the highlights of the QLD Branch activities this year were organising the National Conference and three in-person professional development events, and working in partnership with ASLIA to improve conditions for interpreters.

The QLD Branch met in January to decide on the structure of the Conference Organising Committee (OC) for the National Conference which was going to be held at the University of QLD in November 2022. Committee members and several AUSIT members from outside the committee helped organise the event with tasks such as project management and abstract review. Carina thanked everyone involved in organising the conference.

PD coordinator Renata Oliveira organised two in-person professional development events and a social event after a long period of online events only due to the pandemic. Carina thanked all those that attended those events.

The partnership with ASLIA started at a meeting in November 2021 with Multicultural Affairs QLD, the government department responsible for managing the contract with language service providers. Since the latest contract came into effect five years ago, interpreters in QLD have experienced a decline in their conditions and pay. AUSIT and ASLIA were invited to provide feedback on the SOA - Standing Offer Arrangement - and to obtain reliable data on the situation. Both organisations commissioned The University of Queensland to design and conduct a survey on interpreter satisfaction that was going to be sent to practitioners soon.

5. Professional Development Report:

Even though the QLD branch was very busy organising the AUSIT National Conference that would take place in November, Renata Oliveira – the PD Coordinator – managed to organise the three events, bringing back face-to-face events after two years of the COVID-19 restrictions.

In February, members gathered at the Brisbane Botanical Gardens for a networking coffee that was attended by seasoned professionals and newcomers.

In May, there was a hybrid event for more than 250 participants from all over the country, some attended in-person in Brisbane to learn more about Ethics for Translators with Dave Deck.

In August, Glenine Hamyln from the Institute of Professional Editors gave a talk on intricacies of post-editing work and similarities and differences between translation and editing. This was also an in-person event held in Brisbane CBD.

6. Membership Report:

Carina informed that there were 58 new members in QLD in the last year, added to a total of 314 members. As at 31 of July 2022, AUSIT has 1,699 members nationally.

7. Scholarship Program:

Leisa Maia explained that the Queensland Preparing Interpreters Scholarship Program was jointly funded by AUSIT and NAATI to offer the ten-week NAATI preparation course and subsequent NAATI exams for speakers of languages in demand.

There were three scholarships places offered to speakers of Arabic, Persian, and Italian. They successfully concluded the course and were preparing to sit their NAATI tests.

Leisa informed that although this funding was exhausted, but 2M and TAFE SA is offering a similar program through a QLD grant called Interpreter Booster Program. This initiative was created to fill the gap in the market between supply and demand for those languages in demand.

8. Your voice to the industry

Carina informed that AUSTI is focusing its efforts on supporting interpreters mainly because interpreters rely primarily on government contracts that are awarded to the language service providers. LSPs provide interpreters to courts, hospitals, and other government departments and this system has been causing difficulties for interpreters to work directly with the clients.

Patricia Avila, Carina, and Andrea participated in a meeting with Multicultural Affairs in Brisbane to explain some issues interpreters are faced with in QLD due to the structure of the interpreting services.

Since this meeting, AUSIT requested to provide feedback on the next government contract (SOA) that should be signed early 2023. AUSIT worked together with ASLIA, as we realised during RAC - Regional Advisory Council meetings that sign language interpreters face the same problems as spoken languages interpreters in QLD. Carina informed that the finalisation of the SOA might be postponed to allow us to give feedback and implement changes.

AUSIT has also been involved in the NAATI RAC, where different stakeholders from the T&I industry - such as NAATI, QLD Courts, QLD Health, and LSPs - meet four times a year to discuss how to improve the industry.

As a result of this joint efforts, AUSIT and ASLIA decided to commission the Department of Business Psychology at the University of Queensland to organise a survey on interpreter satisfaction. The results will be compiled into a report that will be presented to the Department of Multicultural Affairs, the government department responsible for awarding the government contracts.

Carina informed that the questions for the survey have been finalised and are going through ethics approval. Every interpreter in QLD should receive a copy and AUSIT encourages all certified and recognised interpreters to respond to the survey, mostly composed by multiple choice questions. This will provide empirical data on the effects of the SOA on our industry. This initiative started due to anecdotal data that suggested that interpreters are abandoning the profession or being forced to find a second job due to low pay and working conditions.

Carina informed that AUSIT is also involved in negotiations with Professionals Australia, LSPs, and other organisations to advocate for an industry award and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

9. Excellence Award

Every year, AUSIT offers Excellence Awards to thank members for their engagement in the profession. Four students from the University of Queensland Master of Art program in T&I won the award this year:

Zichen Zhao

Xiaochen Zhen

Mizuki Harthan

Sophia La Selva

10. AUSIT Committee

Carina invited participants to become committee members. She informed that the committee meets once a month, mostly online as it makes it easier and practical for people to join in. She stated that she has learnt a great deal about the industry over the past year, as she is new to the industry in Australia and it has been a very rewarding experience.

Leisa also recommended joining the committee. Leisa told us that she joined the committee five years ago as she was feeling disconnected from the industry and alone, not having close connections to colleagues. She stated that the committee also allows you to utilise skills outside of our translating and interpreting practices and learn new ones and it is very rewarding. It is also interesting to know how the industry works. She stated that participation can improve your life professionally and personally.

Patricia Avila said that 20% of her skills that helps her work as an interpreter she learnt in the committee. She said that you will learn things from more experienced professionals and have fun. "I highly recommend it. It pays to belong."

11. Election

Carina opened the election 2022-2023 for the QLD branch committee. She informed that nominations should be sent to the committee before the AGM. There were 27 participants. The names of nominated committee members were then read out and members were asked to vote in by zoom poll. Treasurer, Deputy Branch Delegate, and Membership Liaison Officer positions remained opened to be discusses in the first meeting.

12. Voting result

The following members were elected:

Carina Mackenzie - Chair

Andrea Dallape – Secretary

Carina Mackenzie – Branch Delegate to National Council

Sam Berner – PD Coordinator

Elisabeth Kissel – Committee member

Han Xu – Committee member

Fabiana Franco – Committee member

Carina thanked all committee members that were stepping down for their invaluable contribution and welcomed the new committee. AGM was closed at 9:53 am.