



# WASLI

World Association of  
Sign Language Interpreters

Regional Representative Yearly Report: July 2018- July 2019  
&  
End of Term Summary

Australasia Oceania  
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The WASLI Conference in Paris, July 15-19 2019, marks the end of my term as WASLI Oceania representative. Over the 4 years I worked to the following goals:

- Help to facilitate more open communication and collaboration between interpreter associations ASLIA and SLIANZ in the region for sharing of resources, information and efforts to support WASLI initiatives.
- Continue to open up channels of communication with the network of interpreters (representatives from each country) throughout the region.
- Support the development of emerging interpreter associations eg Sign Language Interpreters Association Fiji (SLIAF)
- Hold an inaugural WASLI Oceania regional conference in Fiji in 2018.

I have had the privilege to represented WASLI at a number of conferences and events listed below:

- Annually attend SLIANZ National conference/AGM
- NAC- ASLIA and Deaf Australia combined National AUSLAN Conference. Melbourne, Australia, October 2016
- Signs of Professionalism Conference- combined SLIANZ and NZSL Tutors Association Conference, Auckland, New Zealand, November 2017. Also attended a meeting after this conference with representatives from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Is, Fiji and New Zealand to discuss development within the region.
- FIT conference and post-conference workshop in Brisbane, Australia, August 2017. Spoke to Auslan interpreters about WASLI and the WASLI Oceania conference. Met with ASLIA president and WASLI Oceania Conference organising team

- Pacific Regional Conference on Disability, Samoa. February 2017. Supported local interpreters working and led a workshop on WASLI. Attended an Oceania meeting between Deaf participants to talk about future developments in the region.
- Attended WASLI board face-to-face meeting 2017 in Panama. Also represented Oceania at the Latin American Regional Conference also in Panama.
- Attended WASLI board face-to-face meeting held prior to the WASLI Oceania Conference, August 2018 in Nadi, Fiji.
- Will attend WASLI board face-to-face meeting in Paris, France July 2019 as well as represent Oceania at the WASLI Conference.
- Meetings with Deaf Aotearoa, New Zealand
- Meetings with Kyle Miers, WFD Secretariat Oceania.
- Meetings with Creating Opportunities Fund (COF) Australia
- Meetings with country representatives throughout Oceania via Facebook messenger or skype.
- March 2019. Was consulted as the regional representative for WASLI Oceania on the situation of sign language interpreters in the Pacific. This was for a design of a situational analysis on the lives of Deaf people in the Pacific that if funded could potentially have a large impact on improving the lives of Deaf people in Oceania.

#### Major goal for the term:

The WASLI Oceania Regional Conference, held in Fiji from the 17th-19th August 2018 was the focus of my regional rep role for a large chunk of the last 2 years of my term as rep. This was a collaborative approach between New Zealand, Australia and host country Fiji. As conference co-chair, along with Susan Emerson, I was responsible for a large amount of the organisation and delivery of the conference. The conference met it's aims in bringing interpreters and the Deaf community from throughout the region together to learn, share and network under the theme of 'No Interpreter is an Island'. The conference theme came across strongly as participants learnt and were able to witness first-hand about collaboration and what it meant to be an ally, particularly between interpreters and the Deaf community. This was shown in the post conference workshops when some of the interpreters from emerging countries began to realise the impact their role and ethics can have on the lives of Deaf people. Feedback on the conference and workshops was extremely positive and from what I have seen it made an impact on the participants from all over Oceania and beyond. The theme of collaboration and being an ally came through strongly,

#### Change of name

The name of this region was changed at the WASLI board meeting in 2017 from Austroceania to Oceania.

### Limitations

Contact with Pacific Island people is best done face to face as internet connections and written English is not very accessible for many. I was fortunate to have flights and accommodation funded so I could travel to Samoa where I met with interpreters from 3 different Pacific Islands. I have also previously worked in the Solomon Islands so I have fairly good contact with them. However, it would have been great to have more opportunities like this where I could meet interpreters where they are and get a better understanding of the issues they face and be able to offer them more training opportunities. It was therefore important that we got funding for as many Pacific Island interpreters and Deaf community leaders as we could for the WASLI Oceania Conference in Fiji. Having a good number of delegates from around the Pacific meant they could not only learn from the presentations but they could also learn from each other and we could learn from them and their experiences. They also had a chance to receive much needed training which is the main need that is requested.

Not having funds to be able to travel to meet with interpreters around the region is a limitation of this role.

### Summary of activities over the past year:

#### Collaboration in Oceania

The presidents of ASLIA and SLIANZ have regular online meetings where they share professional development opportunities and any issues impacting the interpreting profession.

SLIANZ have been helping SLIAF with their constitution.

#### New regional rep: Joneti Rokotuibau

The WASLI executive board, ASLIA and SLIANZ discussed the position of the WASLI Oceania Regional Representative for the next term 2019-2023. Previously the role has alternated between Australia and New Zealand as the only two countries in the region to have registered national interpreter associations. The Sign Language Interpreters Association in Fiji (SLIAF) is growing and almost at a stage of registration so based on the work we saw at the conference in Fiji we offered Fiji the next regional representative role.

We received one nomination from Fiji: Joneti Rokotuibau. Joneti has extensive experience as a sign language interpreter in Fiji and is a previous chairperson of the Sign Language Interpreters Committee (SLIAF). She has been involved in supervision, mentoring and training of interpreters. Joneti worked with George Major during her term as regional representative and also had the experience working with me to train and support teachers, sign language interpreters and Deaf students in the Solomon Islands. Her vast experience and passion for interpreting and seeing the profession grow makes her a suitable candidate to represent Oceania. "We have full confidence that Ms Rokotuibau will do an outstanding job in terms of building rapport with sign language interpreters in the Pacific and maintain a sustainable network that will allow for training and assistance within our Pacific countries." Patricia Rokotuinuku, SLIAF Chairperson.

In addition, ASLIA and SLIANZ give their full confidence and support and have offered to support the regional representative with an advisory group made up of the outgoing rep, ASLIA and SLIANZ members. A terms of reference is currently being written for this group.

#### Draft design on the Deaf People in the Pacific.

There are significant gaps regarding the situation of deaf children and adults living in Pacific Island Countries. Deaf children and adults are not able to participate in development opportunities and enjoy their human rights due to some fundamental barriers that includes a lack of service provision.

Dr Elena Jenkin, Philip Waters, Krishneer Sen and Paul Heuston were the project team appointed by Pacific Disability Forum to design a Situational Analysis on Deaf People in the Pacific. The team had a collaborative development approach to the design that included consultation with deaf people, their families, government and non-government stakeholders in Solomon Islands, Samoa and Fiji. In addition, individuals and organisations working in the region, together with DPO representatives from neighbouring Pacific Island countries were also consulted.

The draft design report found the following key themes to stand out:

Education, sign language interpreters, deaf community/association, employment/livelihoods and sign language communication.

The situational analysis design proposes to gather an evidence base by which to:

- A) Promote, develop and record sign language
- B) Promote inclusion within human rights reform
- C) Foster and expand early intervention and education services

The proposed design recommends that interventions are to be made over two phases: A technical team will be established to carry out activities with the aim of handing over the work to local organisations to provide advocacy or service delivery. The Technical team will provide technical advice to key stakeholders, provide training and capacity building activities to strengthen service delivery.

The team also provided 7 recommendations. The second recommendation was focused on sign language interpreters: Increase the availability, accessibility and skill of sign language interpreters.

It is proposed that Pacific wide, there would be certificates in sign language that lead to a 1-year Diploma/Certificate IV of sign language interpreting course. Further, there was a recommendation to increase the number of sign language interpreters via paid employment opportunities.

#### Upcoming activities

SLIANZ National Conference and AGM will be held on the 6-7 July in Wellington, New Zealand. ASLIA National Conference (ANC) will be held 18-21 September in Newcastle, Australia. Deaf View 4 13-15 September 2019, Auckland New Zealand.

Deaf Aotearoa has bid to host WFD 2023 and if successful the WASLI Conference could be in New Zealand. SLIANZ have been preparing for this possibility and with Tourism NZ have

prepared a feasibility study. This would have significant impact for Oceania's interpreter and Deaf community and Deaf Aotearoa has already approached the New Zealand Government to support Pacific Is attendance. The announcement of the successful bid will on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July.

Personal note

It has been an absolute pleasure to be the Oceania representative for the past 4 years. I have learnt a lot and feel very honored to be welcomed into the wider Oceania community through this role. I thank the interpreter associations of this region, especially SLIANZ who have been extremely supportive and generous. My passion for the interpreter development in the Pacific has grown and I look forward to staying involved and supporting Joneti going forward.