

# SLIANZ

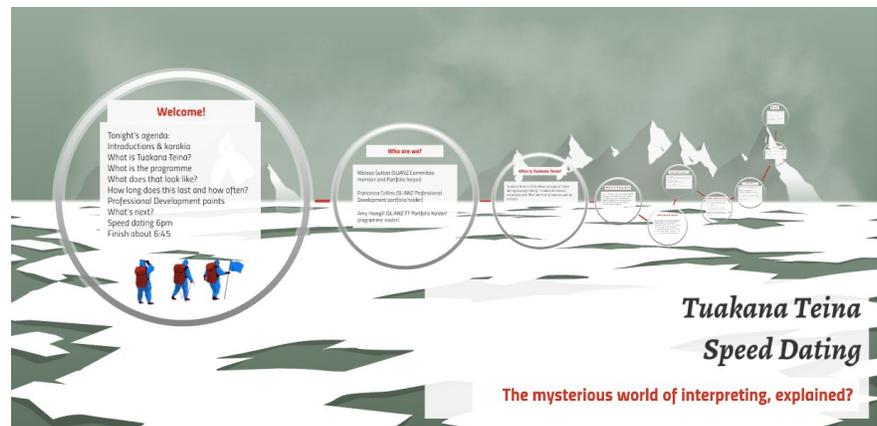
Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand  
Te Rōpū o Ngā Kaiwhakamārama Reo Turi o Aotearoa

## KIA ORA KOUTOU

What a year we have had! It has been a difficult time for most of us this year and we wanted to have this newsletter reflect on some of our experiences of 2020. Whilst jobs were being cancelled left and right, our online PD opportunities shot through the roof. Thank you to Scott Hamilton for sharing a reflection of one of those with his Red Chair Zoom PD session write up. Thank you also to Lynx for another educational article on supervision, a good reminder to us all to professionally

reflect on our work, especially this year. Lastly, thank you to our interpreters and Deaf community members for sharing their personal experiences through COVID. Insights such as these are a valuable reminder that our experiences can be different and that every person's emotions and experiences through times like this are valid. Kia kaha e te whanau and we hope this newsletter brings perspective, reminders of self compassion and the importance of continuing professional development.

**The Tuakana Teina will be needing more Tuakana for March 2021 third year AUT students.** It's minimal PD time for your return, you can develop a special professional relationship with an emerging interpreter and learn new skills and research ideas from them as well. It requires some critical thinking and collaboration. It's a positive challenge for all of us.



If this sounds like something you'd like to know more about, please be in touch with Amy at [Tuakanateina.slianz@gmail.com](mailto:Tuakanateina.slianz@gmail.com)

## Newsletter

November 2020

- Red Chair Session- Media Interpreting
- Two Deaf Wellingtonians' experiences
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- Reflections on interpreting during Covid 19

## RED CHAIR SESSION- MEDIA INTERPRETING

**It was Tuesday the 18th of August and we were in lockdown here in Auckland. Luckily we could all zoom into this Red Chair session from the comfort of our home bubbles and that meant keeping safe, away from the pesky virus!**

The Red Chair started last October as a face to face peer support session. In the current climate using Zoom seems to be a more nationwide accessible format where we can all join in. I think this will be the way forward unless we need to do some practical sessions which will be on the cards, watch this space!

Now, these Red Chair sessions provide a safe and relaxed space where we can have constructive in-depth discussions about interpreting. We can all share skills and learn from others, which should in turn better our

own working practices and improve our work quality for the audience we serve.

I contacted Wenda and asked her if she was keen to do a talk for us on 'Interpreting in a Media Setting' and she said YES! Yay, thanks Wenda! Now I asked her specifically because I know she was involved at the start when parliament started using Interpreters in their daily briefings. So she has been there all the way through, doing a fantastic job I might add! So, with fresh eyes she had gone through the process from start-up to status quo. I thought she would be a great resource to give us some insight and tell us what she has learnt along the way.

Wenda talked about: [READ MORE HERE](#)

## TWO DEAF WELLINGTONIANS' EXPERIENCES:

### A retired Wellingtonian

**How did you find Level 4 lockdown in Wellington?**

Level 4 was the hardest. It was so restrictive. I couldn't go for walks where I normally went. I had to walk up and down the same track which was rather boring. Other than that, I'm retired so it wasn't a huge change to my life, apart from the freedom to go anywhere I wanted to.

**Do you think it was harder for Deaf people?**

It depends. If you had technology like a computer or smartphone where you could make video calls, you'd be fine. If you didn't, it would've been awfully hard. I had access to Zoom and Facebook messenger to talk to people.

**Did you have trouble getting anything you needed or wanted through lockdown?**

I wanted to go shopping but because of my age, there were too many people and queues so it was handy my kids could help just by me sending texts.

**Where did you get most of your information about coronavirus, about the rules and what you needed to do?**

The television and internet. It was all there and quite clear.

**So 1 o'clock, everyday? With captions, or no captions?**

Yes, 1 o'clock, on the 200 Kordia channel. Captions - it depended. If I didn't understand the interpreter, I'd switch on the captions.

**So, do you think you got the same information as hearing people?**

Yeah, because we had interpreters there, all the time, every day.

**If we went back 30 years ago and coronavirus happened what would that be like?**

It would be very different! I would have to buy newspapers from the local dairy and read those. That would be the only way to find out anything. It would be on the news but all we'd see is a silent talking head – no sign language.

**Lucky you know English then. What if you didn't though? What could you do?**

That would be hard, without video technology. How would people know what was going on? They would have to guess what was happening.

**Thanks for your time**

## TWO DEAF WELLINGTONIANS' EXPERIENCES:

### A working Wellingtonian

**Hey, what was your world like through lockdown?  
What was your access to the world like, from a need  
and/or wants perspective?**

Life became a lot more quiet (laughter). I watched interpreters every day on t.v. That helped me know that things were going to be alright. It was reassuring. I'm not good with staying at home- that was a struggle.

**Did you feel like you were in the same boat as other people or did you feel like things were worse for you?**

No, I felt I was the same as everyone else, in the same boat really. This thing was happening and we needed to adjust to a new normal.

**If this pandemic hit 30 years ago, what might it have been like?**

Oh, that's a good question. Thirty years ago, we had just three interpreters and I doubt they would have been broadcast on t.v. I wonder whether the Deaf Association (now Deaf Aotearoa) at that time would have been so vociferous in demanding interpreters be broadcast like they were this year. It would have been very different thirty years ago.

**Information wouldn't have been available like it is today. It would've been quite a different experience.**

Deaf people would have continued getting together, like they used to, oblivious to the 'stay home' message! Parties galore!

**Right, there would have been more fun. There may have been more arrests of Deaf people though!**

That would make a good short film! Jails full of Deaf people. Their crime? They didn't stay home...

**Is there anything you missed, after the first lockdown?**

Nothing! I was desperate to get back to work. When I thought we may have to stay home again with the August outbreak in Auckland, I asked my manager if we could still come in to work. Because I'm an essential worker, I'm allowed to. I'm the kind of person that needs to be at work to work. I don't miss eating all the time! There was a lot of eating in level 4.

What was nice though was all the reading I did. I now don't have the time to read. When I'm at work I can't read, when I'm home I'm catching up with house stuff, and reading isn't a priority. I miss it.

**Given that this is an article that interpreters will read, is there anything you would like interpreters to know? It could be about interpreting on Zoom, through other media, or just in general?**

My number one message is self-care. Interpreters are often doing a lot of work, and it can be hard work. Zoom, for instance, is energy sapping. Coronavirus media interpreting is stressful by nature. Interpreting in situations that are already stressful then adding in the personal impact of coronavirus on people is tough. All reasons why self-care is crucial.

**Thanks for your time**

## PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION: AN UPDATE BY LYNX

**Things are really starting to take off with supervision for interpreters, despite the constraints of Covid both here in Aotearoa/New Zealand and overseas.**

I'd like to thank, again, all those who participated in the survey about supervision earlier this year – part of the final project for my Post-Grad Diploma. 28 respondents, representing just over a quarter of all SLIANZ ordinary members, reported having had some form of supervision in the last 12 months. I am fairly confident in guessing that that is the highest proportion anywhere in the signed language interpreting world. Fantastic evidence of NZSL interpreters' attitude to ongoing reflective practice.

International collaboration and the sharing of resources is starting to flourish, with connections in the UK, the Netherlands and Australia. Ali Hetherington, an interpreter in the UK who established a Diploma course in Professional Supervision specifically for interpreters, invited me to write a Blog for the 360 website about my journey as a supervisor. This can be accessed here:

<https://360supervision.co.uk/read-more/>

Supervision via Zoom has proved successful, with regular group supervision sessions for interpreters who are more isolated as well as for those in the larger centres. One to one supervision continues to be a source of ongoing support for several individuals, both online and face to face. [READ MORE HERE](#)

## REFLECTIONS ON INTERPRETING DURING COVID 19

**When the government announced the level 4 lockdown in New Zealand, all my work for the next few months was erased from my calendar within the space of a few days, and I was anxious as to how I would manage.**

Thankfully the Government also announced the wage subsidy which was a great help through that time. It was also a time to pivot and embrace the fact that interpreting would look different for the next few months. There are a few areas that stand out to me as unique to interpreting during this pandemic which I will reflect on here: The new challenge of interpreting on video platforms, the balancing act of family and work at home, interpreting face-to-face while the virus continued to circulate in our community. While these are my reflections, the challenges I mention are not unique to my experience, and I'm sure other interpreters will relate having all had to navigate working in a COVID world.

Zoom interpreting has become a normal part of our lives, but the first few jobs I found challenging. I found the distraction of managing pinning and muting/unmuting etc took up vital mental capacity that was desperately needed in this 2D format. There were also a number of times I thought there was an awkward pause in the conversation, to then realise that everyone was waiting for me to start interpreting, since the Deaf person's thumbnail had slipped off my screen! Then there were the times that I was confidently voicing away only to realise that I'd been on mute the whole time! I found all of these things added to the demands on me as I worked, but as time went on these issues had less impact. A second screen ensures that pinning one person's screen doesn't send others off the main screen, and a quick press of the spacebar has become much more automatic. [READ MORE HERE](#)

**Lockdown was like riding Space Mountain at Disneyland.**

My parents (Jacinda) told me that it was coming up very soon and I panicked; I didn't get to prepare in any way and even simply visualizing was impossible as I had no frame of reference. I was just going to have to trust my Jacinda-rents while making sure I had nothing loose in my pockets (had enough masks) and that I was tall enough to ride (my wellbeing was as supported as possible).

To begin with, I was doing many hours of (unpaid) planning and preparation for the switch to online interpreting. I've never had so many meetings in my

life. Some organisations that I work for weren't really supporting me and that was particularly disappointing. In fact, disappointment was a key theme of my lockdown and still is to some degree. Disappointed at my wifi connection and the lighting (or lack of) in my house; disappointment that some people were having a great time and I wasn't; disappointment at the toilet paper and flour scenario; disappointment that the world seems to be in a very tough state; etc.

Now, still, online work is both terrible and excellent and allowing this dichotomy to exist, as-is, in my professional life is difficult. Grant me the wisdom to know the difference, eh. [READ MORE HERE](#)

