

Kimberley Interpreting Service

www.wn.com.au/mirima

NAATI Interpreters for Aboriginal Languages

Tel: 08 9169 3161

Issue 2

May 2001

Refresher courses for NAATI interpreters in the Kimberley

Eirlys Richards is conducting 3 refresher courses for interpreters in May

The long awaited refresher courses for Kimberley interpreters are taking place in May 2001. As KIS is an organisation that aims not only to raise awareness of the need for interpreters in the local community; act as an agent matching interpreters to jobs but also provide training and professional support to interpreters and the professionals who use them; the Refresher Courses are an essential part of the 2001 KIS Action Programme.

Refresher Courses 2001 were held in FITZROY CROSSING on 17. - 18 May, in BALGO on 22. - 23. May and in HALLS CREEK on 24. – 25. May.

Refresher Course Lecturer, Eirlys Richards, travelled from Broome to Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek and Balgo to ensure that Kimberley interpreters and Aboriginal people interested in becoming an interpreter had access to the course. The courses were funded by a grant from the Kimberley Development Commission. Our next newsletter will feature a detailed report about the courses, course content, participation and outcomes.

HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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Kimberley Interpreting Service sends interpreter to Darwin

NT AIS and KIS working together

The Kimberley Interpreting Service was approached by the Director of Public Prosecutions in Darwin to supply an interpreter for a 2 day court case in Darwin in April.

As Aboriginal Interpreter Services in Australia are keen to work together, KIS advised the DPP's office to book a Kimberley interpreter through the NT Aboriginal Interpreter Service in Darwin. Colleen Rosas, Co-ordinator of the NT AIS, booked then the interpreter through KIS and organised travel, accommodation and travel allowance for the Broome based Kimberley interpreter. Frankie Bellou from One Mile Community just out of Broome travelled to Darwin to assist in a court case as a Mangala interpreter. The DPP's office as well as the NT AIS in Darwin were happy with the interpreter supplied by KIS and are looking forward to working together in the future.

Co-ordinator Colleen Rosas is planning to come on a road trip to the Kimberley. She will be talking about her experience in the NT with interpreters, interpreter training and interpreting jobs. Kimberley interpreters and those who would like to become interpreters will have a chance to learn from her experience and can establish important work contacts. KIS will advise when dates are confirmed.



Federal Attorney General, Daryl Williams with staff of the NT AIS in Darwin.

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INTERPRETERS – A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT!

How often do you hear people arguing about basic human rights? The right to keep and use firearms, the right to have access to reproductive health treatment and so on. What exactly are human rights and how do they relate to the need for interpreters?

According to community leaders from all non-English speaking groups 'Language Rights' are the key to participation in the political and civil life of a community. Yet despite pressure from these communities, governments are slow to develop legislation enshrining the right to an interpreter.

International law does tend to provide for the right to an interpreter but it often does so indirectly and these laws are often not followed by domestic government. Here are some examples of international declarations linked to language and the right to an interpreter.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966)

Article 9 of this provides that if arrested, a person has a right to be informed of the reasons for the arrest and of any charge against them.

Article 14 also goes on to say that 'everyone shall be entitled to.... have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.'

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

Article 40 provides that a child alleged or accused of having infringed the penal law must have the free assistance of an interpreter if the child cannot understand or speak the language used. This Convention was signed by Australia on 22 August 1990.

The Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention (1989)

This convention provides that measures shall be taken to ensure that members of these peoples can understand and be understood in legal proceedings, where necessary, through the provision of interpretation or by other effective means.

This convention applies to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and yet has not been ratified by Australia. Lawyers in Australia also argue about what these conventions actually mean and how they apply to Australian law.

Australian courts tend to rely on common law entitlements established through case law and usually follow a series of principles set down by the English Court of Criminal Appeal in 1916. These principles are:

- Unrepresented defendants must be provided with an interpreter, to communicate to the accused the case made against him and to enable him to make his answer to it
- Where the non-English speaker is represented by a lawyer, the safer and therefore the wiser course is that evidence should be interpreted to him
- Any substantial departure from the depositions or any additional evidence must be translated
- The proceedings will not necessarily be invalid if these requirements are not met, unless this would amount to a substantial miscarriage of justice.

Still within the legal setting, Australian courts also note the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody:

- (#99) 'Where there is doubt and reservations about an Aboriginal defendant's ability to fully understand proceedings in the English language ' a competent interpreter is provided without cost to that person'.
- (#100) Governments should 'recruit and train Aboriginal people as court staff and interpreters in locations where significant numbers of Aboriginal people appear before the courts'.

Fortunately, the Court system in Kununurra has been working closely with the Kimberley Interpreting Service since it began operating in November 2000 with all the requests for Interpreters coming from the Ministry of Justice so far.

This does, however, have implications for the other areas where Interpreters may be required but there is no written policy outlining clients' 'right' to an interpreter. Kimberley Interpreting Service will start focusing on Centrelink, the health system and other organisations in the community to ensure the right to an interpreter is recognised and acted on by everyone.

Information for this article was taken from Interpreters and the Legal System (1994) Laster, K. & Taylor, V.L. Federation Press, NSW

KIS receives KDC grant

Kimberley Development Commission provides grant to Kimberley Interpreting Service to fund Refresher courses and office and management facilities.

In April, the Chairperson of Mirima Council Aboriginal Corporation, David Newry, received on behalf of Kimberley Interpreting Service a financial assistance grant from the Kimberley Development Commission. The primary purpose of this grant is to fund the Kimberley Refresher Courses for Professional Development of Aboriginal Interpreters in Balgo, Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek.

The grant covered most of the costs for the Refresher Courses. KIS paid from its own budget catering, transport and accommodation for their own interpreters.

KIS has been very grateful about this grant which has enabled KIS to conduct the long awaited Professional Development Training Course for Aboriginal Interpreters in the Kimberley. Many interpreters had been out of training for several years and urgently in need of revising terminology and the code of ethics, as well as practice in different contexts.

Telephone interpreting was another novelty which is becoming increasingly more important. On several occasions an interpreter for Kukatja, a language spoken in the Balgo region, was requested by health institutions in Derby. Even though organisations may have a budget for interpreters, they may not have a budget for a return charter flight from Balgo to Derby, as this is very expensive. In these cases telephone interpreting may be useful.

Furthermore, the grant provided by the KDC also funds the purchase of a new laptop, printer and a Database Program.

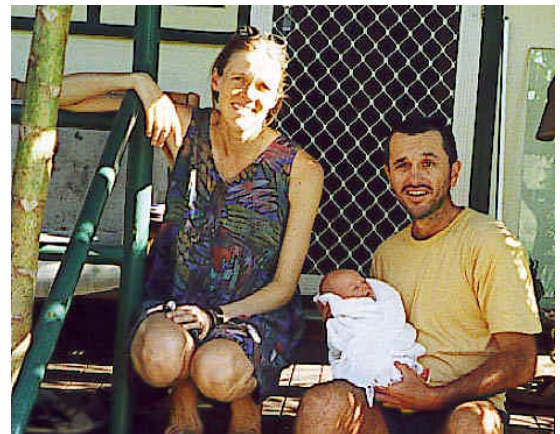
KIS greatly appreciates the financial assistance received so far from the KDC and the Department of Employment and Training. However, it is still looking for permanent funding to secure its operation.

Don't forget to check out the official website of the Kimberley Interpreting Service

www.wn.com.au/mirima

If you are not yet registered for this newsletter, just check out our website and register with us or call us on 9169 3161

Keeley and Craig Palmer with their new arrival Daniel!



Mirima Language Centre Co-ordinator Keeley Palmer and husband Craig are proud parents of a charming little baby boy. Little Daniel was born on 11 April 2001 at 4.20 a.m., weight - 6lbs 14oz! He is very happy and the whole Palmer Family is very happy. Congratulations Keeley and Craig!

While Keeley has been on maternity leave since April, former Co-ordinator of the Mirima Language Centre, Daniel Suggit, was able to fill in. We are all very grateful about Daniel's professional and fantastic work. It was "Business as usual" at the Language Centre - thanks Daniel!

We all look forward to Keeley coming back mid June.

New KIS Brochures and Videos

Our new colour brochures have been very popular and we have already ordered a second run. Please let us know if you need brochures and we will send you some straight away. Simply call us on 91693161 or send an email to:

kis@wn.com.au.

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Kimberley Interpreter becomes AUSIT Member

Annette Chunama will be the first Aboriginal interpreter to become a member of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators Inc. (AUSIT).

What is AUSIT?

AUSIT is the national association for the Translating and Interpreting profession. It was formed in 1987, bringing together existing local associations and specialist groups of translators and interpreters in Australia and setting up branches in each State and Territory.

AUSIT is now a fully independent association, incorporated in the ACT, with a growing Australia-wide membership.

Members of AUSIT are mainly practicing translators and interpreters, but those interested in the support and development of the profession are encouraged to join as well.

The AUSIT Code of Ethics has been long recognised as setting standards for the profession. The Code has been endorsed by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and many other organisations. All Kimberley Interpreters working for KIS are strictly adhering to AUSIT Code of Ethics.

Objectives and Goals

- To represent the interests of the profession as a sector of society to governments and the community
- To promote the importance of the Translating and Interpreting profession to governments, the client community and public.
- To promote and organise professional development attributes (including workshops, conferences and seminars).
- To assist in determining and promulgating/promoting appropriate remuneration rates for Translators/Interpreters
- To create better public understanding of the Translating and Interpreting profession, thereby reinforcing public confidence in it.
- To uphold the highest professional ethics.

Benefits of Belonging to AUSIT

- AUSIT's annual journal, *Antipodean* has articles and information on Translating and interpreting related issues, plus a quarterly newsletter for the exchange of information and ideas and the latest news in the field.

AUSIT can help with:

- Discounted entry fees to workshops and seminars
- Special low premium for indemnity insurance
- Inclusion on AUSIT's database and its directory
- Representation in government and other forums dealing with matters pertaining to Interpreters/Translators.
- Representation to government and the private sector to achieve better pay and conditions for the profession as a whole.
- Quality assurance: acknowledgement of a member's high standard of work. Members are expected to conform to AUSIT's Code of Ethics and serious breaches may lead to a review of membership status.

For further information visit www.ausit.org

The first Aboriginal member of AUSIT

Annette Chunama is becoming a member of AUSIT on behalf of other Kimberley interpreters. KIS's aim is to raise awareness of the importance of Aboriginal interpreters, to put Aboriginal interpreters on the same level as "ethnic" interpreters, to promote the availability of skilled Aboriginal interpreters and to show their professionalism. We believe that with Annette joining the national professional association of translators/interpreters, it is a first step towards these goals.

Dates for Diploma of Interpreting Course

Dates for legal interpreting workshops:

18-22 June

30 July - 3 August

20-24 August

10-14 September

Venue: All workshops will take place in Batchelor, NT. Transport and accommodation will be organised and provided for. So far Patsy Bedford, Topsy Chestnut, Gracie Mulligan and Doreen from Fitzroy Crossing have enrolled for the course and we encourage anybody interested in becoming an interpreter to contact us to find out more about it. After the legal interpreting workshop, other workshops will follow during the course of one year to form the Diploma of Interpreting.

Mary Coley will be the Lecturer in Interpreting.

Mary.Coley@nt.gov.au

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