A review of
NZSL interpreting standards

developed for the

NZSL
New Zealand Sign Language
Board

by

FITZGERALD
&ASSOCIATES

January 2017

Acknowledgements

January 2017

Contents

Executive summary

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreting is a complex human service that is not well understood outside the profession. Interpreters have no mandatory monitoring requirements after graduation, and the NZSL Board, Office for Disability Issues (ODI) and the Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand (SLIANZ) believe that the time is now right to revise the system of postgraduate standards to more accurately reflect the quality of services that the profession is able to deliver and consumers now expect.

This review was required to address the current situation facing NZSL interpreters, undertake a comparative review of standards in four countries with some similarities to New Zealand, and hold a series of local discussions with interpreters, Deaf communities, and relevant organisations in order to develop a range of options for the revision of interpreter standards.

The review found that NZSL interpreting services in New Zealand have many strengths that can be built upon to advance the quality of interpreting to Deaf people. In particular, it has a mature workforce with a range of skills, qualifications and experience that supports standards development, in addition to a good degree course. The NZSL interpreting workforce is predominantly female and New Zealand European. Sixty percent of this workforce is aged between 35 and 54 and have between 6 and 15 years' experience, and one third of all interpreters have some skills, experience or qualifications in specialist NZSL interpreting areas. Some geographic areas have higher levels of access to interpreters, especially the three major cities and regions of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, while other regions and smaller towns have relatively little access

New Zealand also has the benefit of a professional interpreter association in SLIANZ that provides, with voluntary resources, some mentoring options, professional development, a directory of members, and support for its active membership. Nearly half (47%) of all interpreters contract directly with consumers and nearly two thirds contract with a number of interpreter agencies as freelancers. However, current provisions for interpreters are not sufficient to guarantee the quality of service required by Deaf people. The review found that NZSL interpreter services are considered by the Deaf community to be overall of moderate quality and highly variable.

Some Deaf people and interpreters reported a culture that can at times be both competitive and defensive, and both groups seek opportunities for greater self-reflection and collaborative development among interpreters. Many interpreters indicated they are demotivated and discouraged with aspects of their work situation and career options, including the level of support and development available. Newer interpreters, in particular, do not have enough interpreting work and therefore income, while the Deaf community paradoxically report having too few interpreters available. This is due to many factors, including a heavy reliance on hearing people in government departments to be responsible for purchasing a service they have no personal need for, nor understand well.

Consequently, the reliability of interpreter supply may be at risk in the future. Nineteen interpreters indicated their intention to give up their role over the next six years. The widespread lack of interpreting for Deaf people, especially in the regions outside the main centres, is likely to worsen if less interpreters are available in the future. Sounder funding systems for interpreting will address this problem, and enable self-sustaining standards to be implemented.

January 2017

As the international comparisons identified, there are a range of options that can be used to enhance interpreter standards, and there are many ways these can be configured. The review found overwhelming support for the establishment of a registry that certifies, lists, validates and assesses NZSL interpreters, as the single most important standard. Nearly all review participants supported the idea it should be compulsory for all NZSL interpreters to register in order to develop a cohesive and motivated profession under an agency that is directly responsible for setting, monitoring and supporting the achievement of more detailed standards, adapting them as needed over time.

The review concludes with a range of options to enhance the quality of NZSL interpreting services at different levels of investment. Most important for the Deaf community and interpreters were better opportunities to access ongoing postgraduate training. Interpreters in the regions largely supported the idea that more online resources could be developed to limit the need for expensive travel, but still wanted some face-to-face time with their colleagues.

Many Deaf people and interpreters, particularly the SLIANZ standards subcommittee, favoured formal assessments that comprehensively and formally measure competencies of interpreters in language levels, language transfer and practice ethics at an advanced postgraduate standard. There was some indication both internationally and locally, however, that assessments every three years or so may be less influential on interpreter quality than ongoing monthly expert or peer mentoring and teaming. Interpreters were strongly of the opinion that any assessment or other systems should be supportive and constructive, rather than simply fault-finding, if interpreters are to embrace them. A range of assessment and mentoring options are briefly described. The ability to give feedback and/or make complaints, and have them dealt with effectively, is also of high importance to the Deaf community and optional systems are outlined.

The review also sought to clarify whether there should be NZSL interpreter standards developed for specialist areas, such as court, health, mental health, Māori and compulsory education. Most Deaf and interpreter participants argued that, while specialisms are needed, it is most important to get realistic and efficient standards in place for generalists first. Many noted the difficulty in developing local interpreter specialisms in the regions with fewer interpreters, and the trust and financial barriers to bringing in specialists from outside the region that would otherwise enable access.

All the systems that enhance interpreter standards are envisaged as being required by the registry gradually over a five-year period. This would give the country some time to develop the registry and its systems, trial and review them, and discuss their impact on smaller areas, as yet unqualified interpreters, interpreter booking agencies and training providers.

A range of options for the management of a registry are also explored. Options include placing it under SLIANZ, ODI, secretariat to the NZSL Board, or the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). The latter two options may be preferred because they offer some impartiality in managing the register, while having some understanding of Deaf people's needs and some access to the interpreter expertise needed to operate such a service. At the same time, separation of the more regulative registry that monitors individual interpreter compliance could allow SLIANZ greater freedom to take those roles that actively support and advocate for interpreter interests. They could provide professional development through training, peer and senior mentoring, resource development, and also advocacy and promotion for interpreting. Wherever the registry is placed, some strong Deaf and interpreter partnership will be required to ensure both a culturally appropriate and professionally informed registry.

1 Introduction

The establishment of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) interpreting services in New Zealand was a significant milestone in the development of Deaf rights. Earlier models of friends, family and teachers helping Deaf people to communicate with hearing people, for the most part, was replaced by a professional group of formally trained interpreters who enable impartial communication in health, education, and many other areas of Deaf peoples' lives.

The roughly four thousand Deaf people in New Zealand's (Johnson, 2006) right to communication has been supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which recognises "the importance of accessibility to … information and communication, in enabling persons with disabilities to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms" (UN, 2006) The latest Disability Strategy (ODI, 2016) also expects that disabled people "are not … segregated from or isolated within our communities" (p. 27) and that people "who use different languages (in particular New Zealand Sign Language) … have ready access to them" (p. 24). Without access to communication support, the New Zealand Government has recognised that Deaf personal achievement and integration within communities is not possible.

In 2006, the NZSL Act came into force, recognising NZSL as an official language of New Zealand and entrenching the rights of Deaf people to communication support. One lone standard was set for the Ministry of Justice that required it to only use qualified interpreters with at least two years' work experience. SLIANZ also developed some informal standards that require ongoing professional development of its members. No other formal postgraduate standards were developed but there was an intention to review this status a few years after the implementation of the NZSL Act. This review serves to address this commitment.

The NZSL Board is an independent advisory board. It was established by the Government to promote and maintain NZSL by ensuring the development, preservation and acquisition of the language; ensure the rights of Deaf people and NZSL users to use NZSL; and to provide expert advice to government and the community on NZSL. It is currently supported by the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) as a secretariat. The NZSL Board has developed a three-year action plan to support the achievement of its vision. This plan will guide the NZSL Board and government agencies in progressing priorities for NZSL as approved by Cabinet. One of the five priorities of the NZSL Board is to develop interpreter standards to ensure that professional NZSL interpreting is high quality, reliable, and appropriate for the situation.

In 2017, the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) celebrates its 25th anniversary of running the NZSL interpreter training programme, from which over 150 people have graduated with either a diploma or degree in NZSL interpreting. These qualifications have served as the benchmark standard for consumers, the interpreting profession, and contractors of interpreters since the first graduate group in 1994. The NZSL Board, ODI, and SLIANZ believe that the time is now right to revise postgraduate standards and their management to more accurately reflect the that Deaf consumers now expect from interpreters.

This review was therefore commissioned to deliver four things. A status report on the interpreting workforce was sought as well as a review of standards within a limited number of reasonably similar countries. Thirdly, consultation with NZSL interpreters, Deaf community and other relevant organisations and consumers of NZSL interpreting services was to address the need for more standards and finally a set of options for the development and implementation of standards was called for. No recommendations were sought nor have been provided, but the options serve to inform the future development of the NZSL interpreting standards. New standards need to be clear and practicable, encouraging the sector and workforce development to achieve higher levels of service for the Deaf community.

This report now outlines the methodology used in this review, then describes the key characteristics of the interpreter workforce, before proceeding to examine the standards of four international countries. The views of Deaf consumers, interpreters and others follow, finishing with a range of options that can be further considered by ODI and the NZSL Board.

2   Methodology

This review conducted a survey of current interpreters to answer some key questions required by ODI. Then four broadly similar international countries were analysed as comparisons. The experience and the views of New Zealand interpreters, Deaf communities, other major consumers and booking agencies were sought on current and possible future NZSL interpreting standards. In addition, some local spoken-language interpreter groups and other professional associations have been examined as points of comparison.

Specifically excluded from the review were unqualified interpreters or 'communicators', funding mechanisms for NZSL interpreters, promoting the use of NZSL interpreting, identifying gaps in the current provision of NZSL interpreter services, and investigating issues and potential solutions to increase the number of trilingual interpreters.

Working closely with the SLIANZ standards subcommittee and its delegates, the review began by identifying an agreed plan of action. Early decisions from the plan included nominating:

- 5 sample Deaf communities from whom to seek opinion in open discussions;
- 5 groups of interpreters;
- 4 international comparison countries that were broadly similar to New Zealand in terms of the number of interpreters per population, dispersed population and access to resources for the Deaf;
- Other relevant high users of NZSL interpreters;
- Other organisations that might have relevant expertise for this assignment; and
- Other relevant reports and papers that would be useful for this review were nominated by participants throughout the review.

Local and international experts were identified by local professionals. Website information and literature was sourced prior to the international interviews, which were held in person, Skype or equivalent, or by phone.

Questionnaires were developed to provide a semi-structured guide for Deaf and interpreter interviews and ensure some consistency in approach, SLIANZ also had input into these guides. However, participants were encouraged to speak freely on their perspectives, even if they veered

somewhat from the subjects outlined in the interview guides. In addition, written notes were taken by the author after each meeting for later consideration.

SLIANZ also helped to refine the interpreter survey that sought to draw out key features of the interpreter workforce. The survey was distributed through a number of avenues, including on SLIANZ's website, and also by e-mail from SLIANZ, iSign, Connect Interpreting (Connect), the Deaf Education Centres, and all interpreters were encouraged to send the survey on to anyone that may not have received it.

Flyers were sent to all targeted Deaf communities and interpreters, identifying the purpose of each meeting and promising refreshments. Reminders were sent prior to each discussion group. Interpreters were invited to submit written answers if they were unable to attend a meeting. Deaf community members not able to attend discussions were also invited to submit their thoughts on a specifically developed Facebook page. Meetings with SLIANZ or its representatives continued throughout the review.

The major community and interpreter meetings were held as follows:

Deaf community discussions	Dates held	Numbers attending
Auckland	5th October	30
Palmerston North	7th October	14
Hawkes Bay	8th October	7
Northern Māori	28th October	9
Christchurch	29th October	7
Facebook		14

Interpreter discussions	Dates held	Numbers attending
Palmerston North	7th October	2
Auckland	18th October	21
Wellington	19th October	10
Christchurch	29th October	8
Rural interpreters (online)	1st November	6
Written responses		7

Other participants are listed in Appendix 1.

3   Interpreter demographics

Although it is known that 150 interpreters have graduated from AUT programmes, the number of interpreters actively working in New Zealand is still not known precisely. SLIANZ currently has 90 members, some of whom are no longer interpreting. This section outlines the responses from 81 interpreters who replied to the confidential survey, and the SLIANZ subcommittee thought only a small number of working interpreters did not respond. Additionally, eight survey participants identified as no longer or rarely working as an interpreter. Nevertheless, SLIANZ believes this reflects nearly all of the current qualified and working interpreters in the country and their number can be assumed to be around 90. The following section outlines the demographics of the interpreting profession emerging from this data.

3.1   Ethnicity

Which ethnicity do you primarily identify with?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
New Zealand European	75.3%	61
Māori	8.6%	7
Samoan	4.9%	4
Cook Island Māori	0.0%	0
Tongan	1.2%	1
Nuiean	0.0%	0
Chinese	0.0%	0
Indian	1.2%	1
English	3.7%	3
Australian	1.2%	1
Other	3.7%	3
	Total responses	81

Other ethnicities noted: NZ Born Tongan, Japanese American, Indian and Dutch.

The first question identified that over ¾ of all interpreters are NZ European. Just over 8% identified as Māori and a further 6% were from the Pacific Islands. No Chinese interpreters were available. This compares to the 2013 census which recorded European (59%) Māori (11%), Pacific peoples (15%) and Asian (23%). The low level of representation is even more challenging because the number of Māori and Pacific Deaf people are known to be proportionately higher than their hearing counterparts (ODI).

There are also growing numbers of other ethnicities among the Deaf population. However, anecdotally, most learn NZSL quickly, rather than require interpreters with other sign languages. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that there is currently insufficient cultural diversity within interpreters to match Deaf consumers' culture.

3.2   Gender

What is your gender?	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	11.1%	9
Female	88.9%	72
	Total responses	81

Interpreting is a female dominated profession. Nearly nine in every ten interpreters are women and it would seem this profession is not attractive to men. Some explanation of this may be found in the low pay rates discovered in the 2013 SLIANZ report (see references), which discovered the average income to be $30,000, before tax, and the low number of hours for some interpreters (see section 3.7 below).

3.3   Age

What is your age range?	Response Percent	Response Count
18-24 years old	0.0%	0
25-34 years old	29.6%	24
35-44 years old	34.6%	28
45-54 years old	25.9%	21
55-64 years old	9.9%	8
Over 65 years old	0.0%	0
	Total responses	81

3.4   Interpreting experience

How much experience do you have as an interpreter?	Response Percent	Response Count
0-2 years	13.3%	10
3-5 years	16.0%	12
6-8 years	24.0%	18
9-15 years	34.7%	26
16-20 years	6.7%	5
Over 20 years	5.3%	4
	Total responses	75
	skipped question	6

There were no interpreters under the age of 25 who responded to the survey. Just over 90% were aged between 25 and 54, with just over a third aged between 35 and 44. Nearly 10% were aged between 55 – 64.

Interpreters therefore form a mature workforce with just under 60% having between six and fifteen years' experience and 70% having more than 6 years' experience. Only 10 interpreters had less than two years' experience and nine had more than 16 years' experience. Most interpreters might be expected to continue providing services in 10 years' time.

3.5   Use of Te Reo Māori

Have you ever formally or informally learnt Te Reo Māori to a conversational level?	Response Percent	Response Count
No	75.0%	60
Yes, at school/at home	7.5%	6
Yes, as an adult	17.5%	14
	Total responses	80
	skipped question	1

How well can you understand Te Reo Māori?	Response Percent	Response Count
Very well/well	0.0%	0
Fairly well	7.5%	6
Not very well	25.0%	20
No more than a few words or phrases	67.5%	54
	Total responses	**80**
	skipped question	**1**

How well can you speak Te Reo Māori?	Response Percent	Response Count
Very well/well	0.0%	0
Fairly well	3.8%	3
Not very well	20.0%	16
No more than a few words or phrases	76.3%	61
	Total responses	**80**
	skipped question	**1**

One quarter (25%) have had some training in Te Reo Māori. Six (8%) interpreters can understand Māori fairly well, three (4%) can speak it fairly well, while over 90% do not understand or speak Māori very well. This makes it significantly harder to interpret for Deaf Māori in Māori settings.

3.6   Interpreting location

In an average week, please estimate what % of your interpreting work is located in the following areas	Response Average %	Response Count
in a city (more than 30,000 people):	89.8	77
in a town (between 1,000 – 30,000 people):	7.3	77
In a rural area (less than 1,000 people):	2.9	77
	Total responses	**77**
	skipped question	**4**

Over the last 6 months, where has most of your interpreting work been located?	Response Percent	Response Count
Northland	2.6%	2
Auckland	46.8%	36
Waikato	3.9%	3
Bay of Plenty	2.6%	2
Taranaki	1.3%	1
Wanganui	0.0%	0
Hawkes Bay	2.6%	2
Manawatu	2.6%	2
Wellington/Wairarapa	16.9%	13
Nelson/Tasman	0.0%	0
West Coast	0.0%	0
Canterbury	15.6%	12
Otago	0.0%	0
Southland	0.0%	0
Other	5.2%	4
	Total responses	**77**
	skipped question	**4**

Others areas of work noted included: nationally (3), Gisborne (1), no longer or rarely interpreting (2), Australia and the UK (1).

The vast majority of NZSL interpreting takes place in cities across New Zealand. Less than 3% took place in smaller rural areas and just over 10% took place in towns of less than 35,000 people. While there appears to be an uneven use of interpreters across the country, this question sought to know where the majority of interpreting was located, rather than a precise view of interpreting assignment location. Nevertheless, as an indicator it suggests that the three main centres of Auckland, Canterbury, and Wellington account for just under 80% of interpreter use. Auckland uses nearly half of all interpreters, as compared to the proportion of their population in the 2013 Census[1] (34%), Canterbury uses 15.6% (13%) and Wellington uses nearly 17% (11%). In contrast, Waikato uses just under 4% while the population constitutes 10% of the mainstream population, and Otago appears to be without qualified interpreters despite being 5% of the general population. This may be because:

- interpreters servicing the smaller areas also service the larger centres and/or
- interpreters are not available in some areas and/or
- not all interpreters answered the survey and/or
- some Deaf populations (e.g. the strong oral Deaf in Dunedin and Invercargill as cited by interpreters) may have become accustomed to operating with little interpreting support.

3.7 Hours of work

On average, how many hours per week do you prefer to work as an interpreter?	Response Percent	Response Count
0-2 hours	9.3%	7
3-4 hours	2.7%	2
5-6 hours	0.0%	0
7-8 hours	1.3%	1
9-10 hours	5.3%	4
11-15 hours	6.7%	5
16-20 hours	22.7%	17
21-25 hours	33.3%	25
Over 25 hours	18.7%	14
	Total responses	75
	skipped question	6

On average, how many hours a week do you work as an interpreter?	Response Percent	Response Count
0-2 hours	13.3%	10
3-4 hours	2.7%	2
5-6 hours	6.7%	5
7-8 hours	4.0%	3
9-10 hours	13.3%	10
11-15 hours	8.0%	6
16-20 hours	14.7%	11
21-25 hours	16.0%	12
Over 25 hours	21.3%	16
	Total responses	75
	skipped question	6

---

[1] http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7501

January 2017

This data suggests that interpreters do not interpret as much as they would like. Over half of the surveyed interpreters (52%) would prefer to work more than 21 hours a week but only 37% do so. Similarly, while 13% would like to work 8 hours or less a week, over a quarter (27%) do so.

The lack of work available for some interpreters was supported by the 2013 SLIANZ survey and by the interviews in provinces, where interpreters most commonly had less than fifteen hours a week work and often under five hours a week. The major finding in the 2013 report was that most participants felt that they have less work than needed to sustain 'full-time' employment as an interpreter. Nearly all participants stated that they are available and willing to work considerably more hours than they are currently offered. Reasons given for insufficient working hours included: problems with coordinating assignment requests with interpreters' availability; multiple agencies controlling the distribution of work; fluctuation in demand linked strongly to tertiary and school academic term times; underutilisation and underfunding of interpreting services in compulsory education and community sectors.

The average annual income for participants was $30,000, before tax (SLIANZ, 2013), which is below the average full-time wage. It is clear from iSign interpreter income data that there is a significant range of incomes, with the top four freelancers earning an average gross income of $75,000, and the top 20 earning an average of $41,500 from iSign assignments (iSign communication).

Several participants commented that new interpreters are entering a saturated job market, with preferences given to more experienced and skilled interpreters. Responses from interpreters who have less than two years' experience confirm that they struggle to earn a living from interpreting, with most getting 10 or fewer hours per week (SLIANZ, 2013). This contrasts strongly with Deaf people's experience of not having enough interpreters available when and where they need them (see section 5.1 below).

3.8 Reasons for no longer interpreting

If you are a qualified interpreter who no longer works as an interpreter, what is the main reason you no longer interpret?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
This question does not apply to me (I still work as an interpreter)	91.8%	67
I decided to start a family and never went back to interpreting	1.4%	1
There was not enough interpreting work where I lived	2.7%	2
Other		5
	Total responses	73
	skipped question	8

Eight people responded as to why they were no longer interpreting or, as the question above on hours suggests, may be interpreting very little. Two noted that they gave up interpreting to have a family, two noted they did not have enough work to continue, and perhaps related to this, two found a full-time job, one moved area, and 1 pursued further study.

3.9 Employment type

Just over a quarter of interpreters are employed directly by an organisation or interpreter agency. Nearly a half (47%) contract directly with consumers and nearly two thirds (64%) contract with a number of interpreter agencies. Note that interpreters could answer more than one of these options and so the total adds up to 137%.

How are you employed as an interpreter? (tick one or more boxes if applicable)	Response Percent	Response Count
Employed as a staff interpreter with one or more organisations	17.6%	13
Employed as a staff interpreter with an interpreting agency	9.5%	7
A freelance interpreter contracting directly to service providers or Deaf consumers	47.3%	35
A freelance interpreter contracting most of my interpreting work through one or more interpreting agencies	63.5%	47
Total responses		74
skipped question		7

3.10 Qualifications

Do you have a formal sign language interpreting qualification?	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I have a NZSL interpreting qualification	92.0%	69
Yes, I have a sign language interpreting qualification from overseas	5.3%	4
No, I do not yet hold a formal sign language interpreting qualification	2.7%	2
Total responses		75
skipped question		6

Please specify where your overseas sign language interpreting qualification is from:	4 from the UK

What is your interpreting qualification?	Response Percent	Response Count
Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting	71.2%	52
Degree in Sign Language Interpreting	15.1%	11
Postgraduate diploma in Sign Language interpreting	12.3%	9
Other	8.2%	6
Total responses		73
skipped question		8

This survey was sent to qualified interpreters so it is unsurprising that 92% of those that answered this question have a NZ qualification and a further 5% have an overseas qualification in sign language interpreting, all from the UK. Over two thirds (71%) of those qualified hold the Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting, 15% hold the degree and a further 12% hold the postgraduate diploma. Other qualifications included the Certificate in Advanced Interpreting in Legal and the 1985 certificate in interpreting from Dan Levitt. Only two participants were as yet unqualified.

Do you have any other qualifications?	Response Percent	Response Count
No	43.8%	32
Yes (please specify)	56.2%	41
My other qualifications (see Appendix 2)		42
Total responses		73
skipped question		8

Many sign language interpreters have been committed to education in various forms. Over half of participants held qualifications in areas other than sign language interpreting and some noted their

continuing education. Fourteen held a certificate or diploma, twenty hold a BA, other bachelor programme or advanced diploma. Five hold a Master's degree or are working towards one. One has a PhD and another is in the process of acquiring one. Five of the bachelor or masters programmes are related to linguistics. In addition, eight people have acquired practical or non-academic qualifications. The full list of additional qualifications is listed in Appendix 2.

3.11 Generalist and specialist work

Regarding specialist interpreting, which of the following do you feel best matches your situation?	Response Percent	Response Count
I am a generalist, working in most or all contexts asked of me (e.g. community, education, legal, health)	68.9%	51
I believe I have some specialist skills and experience (to specify in next question)	31.1%	23
Total responses		74
skipped question		7

I believe I have some specialist skills and experience in the following areas:	Response Percent	Response Count
Court and legal	25.0%	6
Hospital and health	45.8%	11
Mental health	25.0%	6
Tertiary education	58.3%	14
Primary and secondary education	33.3%	8
Work places	45.8%	11
Other	62.5%	15
Total responses		24
skipped question		57

I have some training or additional interpreting qualifications in these specialist areas:	Response Percent	Response Count
Court and legal	12.5%	3
Hospital and health	20.8%	5
Mental health	16.7%	4
Tertiary education	4.2%	1
Primary and secondary education	12.5%	3
Work places	8.3%	2
None	54.2%	13
Other: Conference and Performing Arts		1
Total responses		24
skipped question		57

Do you use these specialist skills?	Response Percent	Response Count
Most or all of the time	33.3%	8
Often	20.8%	5
Sometimes	37.5%	9
Rarely	8.3%	2
Never	0.0%	0
Total responses		24
skipped question		57

If the volume of work was sufficient, what percentage of your interpreting would you prefer was specialist in nature?	Response Percent	Response Count
0% (I would prefer to generalise only)	8.3%	2
0-25%	4.2%	1
25-50%	12.5%	3
50-75%	37.5%	9
75-95%	29.2%	7
95-100%	8.3%	2
	Total responses	24
	skipped question	57

Over two thirds (69%) of all survey participants identify as generalist interpreters. Just under one third (31%) or 24 interpreters see themselves as having some specialist skills, some in more than one area. Fourteen identified as having specialist skills in tertiary education and nine in the area of compulsory education. Eleven identified health interpreting and workplace interpreting. Six identified as having specialist skills in legal settings and the same number in mental health. Other specialist areas through qualifications or experience were added by eleven people including conference (3), performing arts (5), government and policy (2), religious and ceremonies (4), Deafblind (1), minimal language and immigrants (1), or translation (1).

Half of those with some specialist skills (twelve) interpreters identified as having some specialist training or qualifications. Five have some training in hospital and health settings, four in mental health, three in court and legal settings, three in compulsory education and one in tertiary education. Two have some training in workplaces and one in conference interpreting.

Thirteen (54%) of these interpreters used their skills and/or qualifications often or all the time. Another 11 used their skills rarely or sometimes. In contrast, eighteen (75%) of the 24 participants would prefer to use these specialist skills at least 50% of the time, while six preferred to use them less than 50% of the time.

Matching interpreters to specialist interpreting assignments may be problematic with insufficient training available, and the complexity of matching specialists to assignments in a large geographic area with a small but widely dispersed population but there are at least 21 interpreters in New Zealand available and interested in providing specialist services and eleven already with specialist qualifications.

3.12 Interpreters' tenure

How much longer do you expect to stay working actively as a NZSL interpreter?	Response Percent	Response Count
Not much longer	8.1%	6
1-3 years	12.2%	9
4-6 years	5.4%	4
6-10 years	25.7%	19
10-20 years	31.1%	23
More than 20 years	17.6%	13
	Total responses	74
	skipped question	7

Are you planning some time out of the interpreting profession for travel, study, or family?	Response Percent	Response Count
No	59.5%	44
Yes	40.5%	30
	Total responses	74
	skipped question	7

How long do you estimate your time out from the interpreting profession will be?	Response Count	Response Percent
Just holidays	7	23%
Less than a year	1	3%
1 year	4	13%
1-2 years	2	7%
2 years	3	10%
3 years	2	7%
5 years	2	7%
Long term	2	7%
Unsure	7	23%
Total	30	100%

And which year(s) might that be?	Response Count	Response Percent
Unsure	43%	13
2016/17	37%	11
2018/19	10%	3
2019/20	3%	1
Yearly	7%	2
Total	100%	30

Reliability of interpreter supply may be at risk in the future. Nineteen interpreters (26%) with a wide range of ages and experience intend to give up their interpreting role over the next six years. Six interpreters intend to give up interpreting for a period of time in the near future. A further nine may give the role up for between one and three years, and four between four to six years. Nearly three quarters (74%) intend to stay in the role over six years.

Thirty interpreters identified that they will take some time out in the future, although seven were unsure how long this would be for. Seven of these identified they would be taking holidays only and one would be away for less than a year. Thirteen identified they would take between one and five years off and two said they would be away long term. Around half were either unsure when their time off would occur or planned to take off periods each year. Eleven noted they would be leaving in the 2016 or 2017 years and four in 2018 or thereafter.

There is an average of five to six interpreters graduating each year from AUT, apparently replacing but not significantly expanding the number of experienced interpreters available.

3.13 Summary

There are around 150 graduate interpreters in New Zealand, although many are no longer or are rarely working as such. It is estimated that there are around 90 qualified interpreters currently working in New Zealand. The NZSL interpreting workforce is predominantly female and NZ European, with less than 10% able to speak or understand Te Reo Māori.

Sixty percent of this mature workforce is aged between 35 and 54 and have between 6 and 15 years' experience. The primary route to becoming an interpreter in New Zealand is through the AUT diploma - now degree - programme and a further 13% have additional interpreting qualifications. In addition, over half of research participants hold qualifications in areas other than sign language interpreting. Just under one third (30%) of all interpreters have some skills, experience or qualifications in specialist NZSL interpreting areas.

Just over a quarter of interpreters are employed directly by an organisation or interpreter agency. Nearly a half (47%) contract directly with consumers and nearly two thirds (64%) contract with a number of interpreter agencies.

Some areas have greater access to interpreters, especially the three major areas of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, while small towns have relatively little access. Interpreters, particularly the newer ones, do not have enough work, while the Deaf community report having too few interpreters (see section 5.10).

Turnover is quite high with nineteen interpreters intending to leave over the next six years and 30 expected to graduate in that time. There is some evidence of support for the 2013 SLIANZ survey that claimed interpreting is not a sustainable full-time career for many.

4   International comparisons

4.1   Australia

With an estimated 30,000 Deaf Australian Sign Language (Auslan) users and 400 interpreters, Australia has roughly one interpreter for every 75 Deaf people. Deaf Australians share a number of features with Deaf New Zealanders, including a widely dispersed Deaf population and very few indigenous interpreters.

An accreditation system for the qualification of Auslan interpreters is available under the National Authority for the Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). Effectively acting as a registry, NAATI is a national company owned by the Australian government and managed by a board of directors appointed by the Commonwealth Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs. It is the standards authority responsible for accrediting practitioners working in the translating and interpreting profession in Australia, in either a spoken or a signed language. Australia is one of the few countries that accredits spoken and sign language interpreters through the same system.

NAATI uses a panel of experts (native and non-native consumers) to assess a prepared video. It has a standardised system of examining language and interpreting proficiency across many languages, including Auslan. There is some concern that one size does not necessarily fit all, and Auslan is a less standardised language than most. However, it is also considered valuable to be connected to other spoken languages through NAATI and the major interpreter trainer, Macquarie University, because it allows the opportunity to collaborate with a wider range of interpreters. Nevertheless, the major disadvantage with this connection, is that many Auslan interpreters are involved in educational interpreting, but this is almost irrelevant for most spoken languages, as children hearing acquire spoken English quickly, and so little NAATI training is available in this area.

Accreditation in Auslan can be achieved in one of two ways. Firstly, it can be through completion of a NAATI-approved language course, such as a Diploma of Auslan, through a number of TAFE (Technical and Further Education) colleges in all major Australian cities or Deaf Education Networks over 2 to 4 years. It is recognised that fluency in Auslan needs to develop further over time, during and after the completion of the Diploma of Auslan. Secondly, students, including those who have not been formally trained, can undertake a practical examination through NAATI using a panel of Auslan examiners made up of qualified interpreters, interpreter educators and deaf consumers. There is an argument in Australia and in NZ that individuals should undertake an accredited course, rather than just an assessment of skills, as the course provides the practitioner with a qualification, consistent and broad-based training, and far better equips the interpreter to undertake the complex task of language transfer.

NAATI accredits the individual in one of four levels of interpreting:

1. Paraprofessional Interpreter. This represents a level of competence in interpreting for the purpose of general conversations. Paraprofessional Interpreters generally undertake the interpretation of non-specialist dialogues.
2. Professional Interpreter. This represents the minimum level of competence for professional interpreting and is the minimum level recommended by NAATI for work in most settings including banking, law, health, social and community services. Professional Interpreters are capable of interpreting across a wide range of semi-specialised situations and are capable of using the consecutive mode to interpret speeches or presentations.
3. Advanced Conference Interpreter. This represents the level of competence required to handle complex, technical and sophisticated interpreting, in both consecutive and

simultaneous modes, in line with recognised international practice. Conference interpreters operate in diverse situations including at conferences, high-level negotiations, court proceedings or may choose to specialise in a particular area(s).

4. Advanced Conference (Senior) Interpreter. This is the highest level of NAATI interpreting accreditation. It reflects a level of excellence in conference interpreting, recognised through demonstrated extensive experience and international leadership. It encompasses and builds on the competencies of Conference Interpreter accreditation.

New Zealand's current degree in sign language interpreting is believed to most closely relate to NAATI Level 2. Australian court interpreters are required to have the level 3 interpreter accreditation and are not required to be a member of a professional body. Because most Auslan interpreters are accredited at the paraprofessional level and because of the legal requirement to have higher level qualifications for courts, most level 3 interpreters primarily work in court interpreting.

On completion of the Diploma requirements, students can transfer to a NAATI approved tertiary interpreting course. For example, since 2003, RMIT in Melbourne also offers an Advanced Diploma in Interpreting in a range of languages. The oldest course, though, is at Macquarie University in Sydney, which offers a Graduate Diploma of Auslan-English Interpreting. This prepares the interpreter to a professional level. Classes are a combination of online study and intensive three-day on-campus blocks. The course provides a practicum component which is endorsed by a wide range of organisations, and an Auslan lab – designed specifically for Auslan interpreting students. The numbers are limited to 12 and the course runs every 2 years. Macquarie provides electives in medical, legal, educational, platform conference, and Deaf interpreting.

There are also accreditation and paraprofessional level courses now available for Deaf interpreters, although funding is difficult to access for paid services (personal communication with Goswell).

The NAATI examination process is not always thought to guarantee quality of interpreting. Some experts consider ongoing mentoring to be more useful for assessing interpreter quality than a single examination. Peer support and mentoring systems are provided by some employers or providers, and practice groups have been developed based on the Demand Control Schema (DCS) theory (described in more detail in section 5.5 below). Without ongoing systems of self-reflection and peer mentoring, such as DCS, interpreters were described as often defensive and less able to absorb critique. This is despite the fact that, by its very nature, it is not possible to do a perfect interpreting job, and continual learning is needed.

Since July 2012, the NAATI qualification has been valid for three years only. After that, interpreters' accreditation needs to be 'revalidated'. There was a 5-year sunset clause that allowed people to opt out but from 2017, all interpreters need to comply with these requirements. Revalidation acts as a 'quality' seal or standard that shows that the interpreter is:

- Consistently working as a translation or interpreting professional;
- Constantly developing ethical decision making and professional skills;
- Maintaining their language and vocabulary;
- Contributing to the overall translating and interpreting profession.

During the three years, log books are filled out to show what work and training have been done to meet the NAATI criteria of 40 professional development points each year over 3 years. This includes the minimum points in the compulsory categories of Ethics of the Profession (30 points over 3 years), Maintenance of Language (30 points over 3 years) and Translating & Interpreting Skills

Development (30 points over 3 years) (NAATI website). The NAATI assessments therefore enforce ongoing professional development and assessment.

Most Auslan interpreters are freelancers and work for several interpreting agencies. Booking systems vary in quality with some allowing Deaf people to choose their interpreter, for example in medical settings, and are carefully matched to interpreter skills, while other agencies offer a more administrative function.

All major interpreting agencies require interpreters to have a minimum of a paraprofessional accreditation. Professional interpreter status is then expected within nine years. Higher scales of pay are available for more highly trained interpreters. Interpreter agencies ask that interpreters are a member of the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA) in order to get preferred interpreter placement. Interpreter agencies work closely with ASLIA, for example in requiring their Code of Ethics to be followed or in organising conferences for mutual benefit. Membership of ASLIA, established in 1991, is not compulsory.

ASLIA has state branches which organise professional development for interpreters and provide advice on state policy. ASLIA provides a number of functions:

- Is a national peak body representing the interests of interpreters,
- Provides working policies for interpreters,
- Provides guidelines for interpreters, including a Code of Ethics,
- Provides training and seminars and an annual conference from a proportion of membership fees, including for Deaf interpreters,
- Represents interpreter views on training, ongoing professional development, recruitment, working conditions, remuneration and provision of services.

ASLIA has recently employed one manager. It is something of a hybrid association in comparison to teaching and legal associations. For example, complaints usually go to the provider but ASLIA has the power to cease membership in extreme cases. Auslan interpreters are also eligible to join the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (AUSIT).

Key funding sources for interpreting are the Employment Assistance Fund, and a national Disability Scheme is being rolled out for Deaf people under the age of 65. Interpreting in compulsory education is also commonly funded.

4.2   Canada

With around 350,000 Deaf American Sign Language (ASL) users dispersed across a large country, there are several thousand interpreters[2] with around 900 being members of the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada (AVLIC). Of all four comparator countries, AVLIC takes the strongest central role in standardising the sign language interpreter profession. It is involved in assessment, accreditation, governing the sector, and dispute resolution. The association has a role in serving on advisory boards of interpreter education programs and lobbies for quality education and works to address the gap between graduation and certification by offering professional development. Constant consumer education is another AVLIC role in which consumers learn what it means to hire a professional interpreter as opposed to a signer.

The entry qualifications for an interpreter in Canada is generally that they complete the formal interpreter education program. AVLIC recognises a number of interpreter education programmes

---

[2] The number of Canadian interpreters has been estimated at 4,000 in Table 1

across Canada and in the US. Of the five in Canada, one is a degree in linguistics with a minor in sign language interpreting. Another is moving to a full degree in sign language interpreting, and three require students to take a 12-18 month Deaf Studies program to learn ASL, then to apply and be screened for a full-time two or three year sign language interpreting program.

AVLIC has a stringent national post-graduate certification process, known as the Canadian Evaluation System (CES) and is only available to AVLIC members. AVLIC members who have successfully completed the CES process are awarded the Certificate of Interpretation (COI). In Canada, it is not required to have this certification to work as an interpreter, but it is recommended that all AVLIC members work towards this certification.

Membership of AVLIC is not compulsory. However, some employers do require AVLIC membership for employment and some interpreter programs require the AVLIC Test of Knowledge (see below) as a graduation requirement which then means the interpreter must become an AVLIC member to take the test. Employers or booking agencies may have their own screening tools that often require proof of graduation, successful pass on the AVLIC Written Test of Knowledge, which then requires active AVLIC membership, and then success on the agencies performance test. These tests are often videotaped with two interactive scenarios and one ASL monologue and one English monologue, and are based on typical community appointments, such as a parent-teacher interview, nurse-patient intake, presentation on preparing a will or bilingual education for Deaf learners. Ongoing CES status requires ongoing AVLIC membership.

AVLIC members agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct and to 'incorporate current theoretical and applied knowledge, enhance that knowledge through continuing education throughout their professional careers and will strive for AVLIC certification' (AVLIC website). There are four phases to the CES.

Phase One: Written Test of Knowledge (WTK)

This involves multiple choice questions and is offered four times a year to AVLIC members, including to interpreting students in their final semester. Passing this level does not constitute any form of certification and may not be considered as partially certified interpreter.

Phase Two: Preparation

This prepares interpreter candidates for the professional interpreting examination.

Phase Three: Test of Interpretation (TOI)

This annual examination evaluates candidates' ability to provide message-equivalent interpretations between American Sign Language and English, and under the guidance of a facilitator, samples are rated by three Deaf raters then three certified interpreters and awards a Certificate of Interpretation (COI).

Phase Four: Certification Maintenance

This phase is currently under development and not yet in place but intends to demonstrate ongoing professional development and practice. AVLIC is currently focused on revising and developing Phase 2 - Test of Interpretation Preparation and reviewing the rating process for Phase 3 - Test of Interpretation (TOI) for the benefit of the majority of AVLIC members. With only 65 of 900 members certified at Phase 3 across Canada, it is anticipated that AVLIC will be able to shift its focus to the development of Phase 4 - Certificate Maintenance by 2020.

All the training and systems described above pertain to ASL-English interpretation. Deaf people who use Langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ) have limited access to training and other support systems.

In 2015, AVLIC members voted to support the Professional Compliance Review Process (PCRP), which recommended that AVLIC develop policies and procedures to ensure all members comply with their professional requirements. The goal of the PCRP program will be to provide consumers with a legally sound mechanism to receive and mediate complaints regarding the professional conduct of an AVLIC member by a disputes resolution process. In addition to the two full-time administrative staff and contractors for specific tasks, a review manager will be employed to oversee the development of the PCRP program at an administrative level. It is hoped to launch the programme in 2018, and until then AVLIC will continue to run Level 1 of its Dispute Resolution Process (DRP), a mediation service for consumers. The British Columbian Westcoast Association of Visual Language Interpreters (WAVLI) also operates a provincial grievance committee.

The CES standards were created and supported by both the Canadian Deaf community and national Deaf organisations, although the system of certification has a low pass rate and is seen as expensive to maintain and renew. AVLIC acknowledge that other current challenges include convincing employers to only work with trained interpreters, a general lack of interpreter funding, uneven access to interpreters, and the uncertain future use of video relay services.

There is no consistent requirement for additional training or experience in specialist areas after completion of the interpreting programs. The training is often offered by the professional associations or interpreter employers. It is usually funded by cost-recovery or funded by the Government.

Each province has their own interpreter referral service screening and the standards vary about who is employed. For example, British Columbia has Medical Interpreting Services (MIS), funded by their Provincial Health Services Authority, that provide interpreters for emergency and non-emergency medical appointments in communities across BC. The Ministry of the Attorney General in Ontario has a different specialised interpreter test. Medical interpreting generally requires two years of experience and one province provided a post-diploma in medical interpreting, although it is offered inconsistently. Booking interpreters is unregulated and it is up to the service to determine interpreter qualifications required.

Most courts only use AVLIC certified interpreters, as recommended by one of the many best practice papers and resources produced by AVLIC. AVLIC offered a 5-day legal course that included pre-readings, court observations, and required a minimum of 3 years' experience. This not a requirement of the courts, but is desired by competent practitioners.

There are no formal systems of mentoring or peer mentoring in place nationally. At AVLIC's recent AGM in 2016, a committee was established to look into the topic of mentoring and bring back recommendations for next steps. AVLIC, however, does provide an e-mail buddy program. This program is offered to active and student members and it is a program which introduces two members by e-mail so they can begin corresponding privately about issues related to sign language interpreting, including ethics, professional conduct, semantics, politics etc. In the pairing, typically one of the interpreters will be newer to the field (or even a student member) and the other will have more experience; and efforts are made to have members from different regions matched.

The Ontario Interpreting Services' Internship Program has run for 18 years that twice a year takes four recent graduates and offers them an intensive professional development and mentorship model for 10 months on a salary of $26,000 a year.

One province, British Columbia has licensure, or protected title for interpreters. No one else can legally use these titles. WAVLI now holds three protected titles which are restricted for use by WAVLI members only: Registered ASL/English Interpreter, Registered Sign Language Interpreter and Registered Visual Language Interpreter.

AVLIC does not provide training opportunities specifically for Deaf interpreters, although there are ad hoc courses available across Canada. Some Deaf interpreters also choose to enter ASL-English interpreter training programs as a means to gain knowledge and skills in interpreting as well as ethical considerations. These two very different paths are recognized in AVLIC's criteria for Active Deaf Interpreter membership which is:

- Graduation from an AVLIC-recognised interpreter education program, or
- Within the last 4 years to have:
  - Minimum of 40 documented hours of work as a Deaf Interpreter,
  - Minimum of 20 documented hours of professional development specific to Deaf Interpreting,
  - Minimum of 20 documented hours of professional development specific to ethics,
  - Letter of support from the applicant's local affiliate chapter, and
  - Letter of support from a Deaf organisation in good standing in the province where the applicant resides/works, OR a letter of support from an active AVLIC member who has experience working with the applicant.

Within its draft strategic plan, AVLIC has committed to investing in their infrastructure which will enable greater responsiveness to the professional development and training needs of all of its members, including Deaf interpreters. There is no funding that AVLIC is aware of for Deaf individuals to access interpreter training.

4.3   Ireland

With around 5,000 Deaf people who use Irish Sign Language (ISL) and around 100 trained and 75 actively working interpreters, the ratio of interpreters is close to New Zealand's. The only recognised basic interpreter training programme in Ireland is run by Trinity College as a four-year Bachelor in Deaf Studies. In years 3 and 4, profession-specific competencies are taught to those wishing to learn ISL teaching or ISL/English interpreting. The degree replaced a two-year diploma, although diplomas are still offered by some institutes such as the Centre for Sign Language Studies. Interpreters can also train in Northern Ireland or England.

There is no expectation that interpreters with the Trinity College degree are ready to work in courts. Ad hoc training in specialist areas is provided, and interpreters are sometimes called upon to interpret in specialist settings for which they are not ready. The majority of professional ISL/English interpreters are self-employed and sole traders. Interpreters generally register with one or more agencies upon gaining their qualification, which offer work as it arises. Ireland seems to mirror many features of New Zealand interpreting.

Like New Zealand, there are significant issues for Irish interpreters around having sufficient work and low levels of income, especially outside of the cities, and maintaining quality in interpreting. Insufficient work also reduces the desirability of ongoing training for interpreters. Many interpreters leave the profession for want of a clear career path, adequate matching to jobs, and sufficient work. At the same time, Deaf people have a sense of insufficient interpreter availability, and have questioned the quality of interpreting available, with limited mentoring, monitoring, feedback, or training provided.

The Sign Language Interpreter Service (SLIS) is the largest referral agency and is funded by government. It was previously a provider of interpreter services but these have been withdrawn and now primarily refers and advocates for interpreting services. Accreditation of interpreters was undertaken by SLIS in the past at the basic generic and higher specialist interpreting levels (SLIS, 2009). Accreditation focussed on addressing five components: ISL to written English, ISL to spoken English, spoken English to ISL, role plays, and a panel interview with Deaf and hearing members. This was essentially similar to the Centre for Deaf Studies assessment. Because this was only one interpreter agency, not all interpreters signed up to it, only seven passed this system and it has not functioned since 2009.

Irish informants spoke of the need to include minority populations such as Deafblind or Deaf interpreters in the undergraduate course or later. There was a sense that there needs to be systems for generic interpreters before specialisms are further developed. Nevertheless, SLIS have established a medical panel to select interpreter applicants with appropriate skills to provide interpreting for beneficiaries to attend doctor visits, but not hospitals or emergencies. Most interpreters are now working in educational interpreting because access to interpreter income is easiest there.

There are two main interpreter providers and twelve in total (including spoken language interpreting agencies), all of whom have a relationship with the Council of Irish Sign Language Interpreters (CISLI). CISLI was founded in 2011 after an earlier version of the association folded. CISLI is small without any paid staff and provides one-off courses and workshops once or twice a year with conferences, including family law and Deaf interpreting. CISLI membership is not compulsory and is still considered low. CISLI objectives include:

- To lead the development of a national registration process for ISL interpreters through partnership with the national Deaf-led organisation, with the key stakeholders (sign language interpreter service providers and interpreter trainers)
- To provide advice and support to consumers and providers of interpreting services and other interested individuals and/or organisations, especially through the Board of Evaluators of Interpreting (BEI),
- To represent the interests of the profession of ISL interpreting to appropriate bodies,
- To encourage and promote initiatives to improve standards of sign language interpreting and interpreter training,
- To work to secure recognition of the profession of ISL interpreting. (CISLI website)

It is hoped that Deaf interpreters will become a dedicated subcommittee of CISLI, although payment sources and training are complex issues that are still to be resolved.

CISLI has developed the BEI to assess interpreters, although it is not moderated, and decisions have been legally challenged. Two Irish commentators said assessment was disliked by many interpreters for its critical fault-finding and there are some arguing that other methods may be more effective. Continuous improvement of practices of training, peer discussions, and self-reflection may be preferred as a means to develop an evolving and cohesive interpreter profession.

There is criticism that the contracting system for interpreters does not encourage a culture of continuous learning or team learning. However, there is some informal mentoring happening through a CISLI-inspired 'What's up' group online chat system that allows the sharing of resources and video files.

Currently, SLIS-registered interpreters are expected to do 10 hours' professional development a year or 15 hours over 2 years. More advanced training is difficult to provide due to a lack of trainers for a widely-dispersed population. Online training is seen to have some possibilities for the future for interpreters out of the cities, particularly with occasional weekend block courses. There remains a question over which body will accredit these courses and whether there can be sufficient number of interpreters to be sustainable, including for the academic masters available. Europe is seen as moving closer to advanced academic courses, such as Masters programmes rather than short courses.

Complaints are managed by the interpreter agencies, albeit often slowly and without transparent processes. CISLI are wary, but believe they must be involved in complaints processes because they are intrinsically linked to the interpreters' Code of Ethics, and have established a grievance committee to consider future possible arrangements. An independent investigation may be needed that reports back to the Council or other regulatory body. Legal costs need to be considered and have been faced in the past by CISLI.

A register of interpreters was established in 1999 but is no longer functioning. The matter of whether interpreters should oversee their own register has been contentious, as it was in the UK. While self-monitoring occurs in other Irish professions, the small numbers of interpreters and the small Deaf community mean that monitoring individual interpreter progress can raise large issues of trust and confidentiality. Their larger UK neighbour is considered by informants unlikely to require compulsory registration, but is expected to develop an independent system that has the capacity to raise concerns, rather than a grievance, allowing mediation with the consumer and possibly the interpreter to find a resolution.

In conjunction with the Irish Deaf Society, there have been recent moves to establish standards through an Irish Sign Language Act. It is hoped that this will enable the compulsory registration of interpreters through an Irish Sign Language Board with funding for the BEI to accredit interpreters and for professional development. CISLI has not yet discussed their proposal with members but hopes for a funded BEI model, with interpreters involved in developing an assessment system, that has a requirement to re-register every four years. There is a sense that many European countries are now leaning towards statutory registration and CISLI is drawn to this, although getting buy-in from interpreters for compulsory registration has been a challenge. One informant noted that with compulsory registration, interpreters who are not registered could become criminally liable. Some noted that it could be expensive, because of testing requirements and the provision of systems for Deaf interpreters and Deafblind consumers. It was suggested that it may be easier to accredit programmes with specific learning outcomes, rather than individuals.

If the Irish Sign Language Act is not legislated, and compulsory registration is not required, an agreement with interpreter agencies that they only recognise and employ CISLI members is another route being considered, with a robust voluntary register. SLIS and CISLI are now discussing the possibility of voluntary registration systems with professional development requirements and commitment to a code of practice. Like New Zealand, Ireland is committed to increasing the standards required of interpreters through registration and ongoing mechanisms for improvement.

4.4   The Netherlands

There is a four-year Bachelors programme (available part-time and full-time) at the College of Utrecht that officially started in 1998, following the closure of a one-day-a-week degree. The degree serves both teachers of the deaf and interpreters, and the main subjects in the programme are

Dutch Sign Language, interpreting or teaching skills and Deaf culture. The degree offers four interpreting minors in deafblind, children, health and court. Interpreter trainees, such as children of Deaf adults, can be tested against the curriculum so that they can be fast tracked in two years to acquire a degree.

Interpreter graduates receive a Sign Language Interpreting certificate that is accredited by the government and they are automatically listed in the Registry of Sign Language Interpreting (Register Tolken Gebarentaal en Schrijftolken or RTGS). The College of Utrecht also offers a masters programme in Deaf Studies, which is open to interpreters who hold a BA degree.

Government research looked at the number of interpreters required to serve the 5000 members of the Deaf community and focused on boosting their numbers from 60 in 2001 to 500 more recently. Together, the Government and interpreter leaders formed a Working Committee to look at international research and what a registry might look like.

The professional association of interpreters, Nederlandse Beroepsvereniging Tollen Gebarentaal (NBTG) agreed that both supporting and policing interpreters were contradictory functions that may not be sustainable co-located, and a separate registry was advocated. Arguing that available government money for deaf children and adults in education (Dutch Deaf have interpreting funded in education until 30 years old) and yearly quotas (30 hours are available for interpreting in daily life and 168 hours are available for deafblind people) should only be spent on trained interpreters, Government was convinced that compulsory registration was the best protection of interpreting quality when purchased with public resources. Only work in police or court settings requires you to be sworn in officially as an interpreter, but unregistered interpreters cannot be paid from any government resources. The RTGS registry was voted in by interpreters and approved by the Government's National Assembly. NBTG focusses on advocacy, promotion, professionalisation and knowledge exchange to meet the requirements of the registry. There are currently 500 members.

Both the Registry and NBTG provide a range of interpreter courses. Registered interpreters must do 60 hours of professional development every four years with minimum amounts in language, interpreting, attitude, and audiences. A current issue for the registry is the number of hours that interpreters must work to retain registration.

Ongoing registration is assessed by the Committee of Professional Education, a subcommittee of the Registry, comprising experts in interpreting and Sign Language. In addition, there is a separate National Complaints Committee which receives complaints about interpreting services that is also an independent body under the Registry.

All interpreters must be registered for Police and legal work in a Justice registry. There is a specific course for working in legal settings that requires one day a week over one semester. In general, interpreters with a theoretical basis in their undergraduate and postgraduate training, and with 120 hours of practice in a specialised area are considered specialists, but are expected to continue with peer mentoring.

For example, freelancers in mental health settings work with experienced mentors, and peer group meetings are held three to four times a year. Supervision meetings, or 'intervisie', are a type of peer-mentoring meeting used, where professional cases or dilemmas are discussed. These are not required as part of the registry but help interpreters to gain continuing education credits, if specific criteria are followed. The supervisor must be officially recognised by the Registry and is paid for by participating interpreters.

Peer mentoring is widely considered better than an assessment in front of a panel. Further assessment processes are still being considered but are not viewed as the most important part of the registration system. However, an interpreter returning to the interpreting profession requires a special assessment to see if they have retained sufficient skills.

Booking coordinators are seen as needing to be highly informed of challenges and be able to handle emergencies.

Table 1: Summary of international comparison

	Australia	Canada	Ireland	Netherlands
# Deaf	30000	350,000	5000	5000
# interpreters	400	4000 (estimate ~900 members in AVLIC)	75	500
Ratio 1:	75	88	67	10
Interpreter training	TAFE -Macquarie: Postgraduate Diploma & MA. Ongoing PD required	5 Canadian training programmes. Ongoing PD will be required	Trinity College Bachelor programme. Ad hoc post grad training available.	4 year BA + MA. Ongoing PD required
Specialist training	Some available through NAATI. Few indigenous interpreters.	Ad hoc offerings. French interpreters have less access to training.	Ad hoc and limited; medical panel now funded for beneficiaries to GP	Four minors available. 120 hours experience for specialist areas.
Registration	No registry. ASLIA membership is not compulsory	No registry. AVLIC membership is not compulsory	No registry. CISLI membership is not compulsory	RTGS registry - compulsory by regulation
Assessment	NAATI	Screening tools vary. Canadian Evaluation System	CISLI board of evaluators but limited resources	No post-grad assessment
Mentoring	ASLIA	Some internships available and informal systems	Ad hoc and informal; have online forum (unmoderated)	Peer mentoring available
Revalidation	NAATI revalidation	Certificate maintenance not yet in place	None	Registry requirements must be fulfilled
Code of Practice	ASLIA	AVLIC	CISLI	NBTG and Registry
Complaints	Providers and ASLIA	AVLIC undertakes complaints procedure	Providers & CISLI provide limited dispute resolution	National Complaints Committee
Role of interpreter association	PD training, advocacy, policy development, mentoring	Assessment, accreditation and governing plus dispute resolution.	Promotion of quality, support interpreters, training and soon assessment.	Training, mentoring, advocacy, promotion.
Deaf interpreters	No funding or standards but training courses now set up	AVLIC recommends but no clear training process	CISLI provides some training & aims to incorporate	Not on register - no training or recognition by Government

5 Interpreter standards discussion: Deaf community, interpreters and significant consumers

The consultation sessions with samples of the Deaf community, interpreters and other significant consumers of the service aimed to identify what standards would be both effective and feasible in advancing the quality of interpreting services in New Zealand.

It was widely agreed among all participants in all sections that the system needs to foster trust, be transparent, supportive, achievable and efficient. It was with these things in mind that discussions considered what would enable this to occur to design measurable standards that could support both the Deaf community and interpreters. There was general agreement that a single service standard does not necessarily reflect the growing complexity of the situations in which interpreters are expected to work, and that the setting of standards was a complex task that needed to take into account many possibilities. The most important standards to get in place soon are registration, which, in turn, should require ongoing training, assessment, mentoring, strong adherence to a Code of Ethics and getting a good complaints or feedback system in place.

5.1 Current interpreting quality

Deaf community members were asked about their view of the current quality of the interpreting services to ascertain where the perceived standard of interpreting currently lay.

Most interpreters are OK (Deaf person)

Most Deaf people thought the quality of what was available was average (5 on a scale of 1 - 10). Several thought the interpreting service they received was great, rating it around seven or eight, while several others experienced their service as very poor, rating it between one and three. Most agreed that the service was not yet nearly as good as it could be. Variability in interpreting quality was a constant theme.

In contrast to interpreters' view that there was not enough work, there was a strong belief among Deaf people that there was not enough interpreting support available.

Most Deaf participants also thought interpreting services had improved over recent years, even though a few noted that they had not seen any improvement in that time. Some commented that they had witnessed previously motivated interpreters gradually lower their expectations and drive to get feedback over the years, and becoming more defensive when critiqued.

A range of criticisms of NZSL interpreter services were raised by Deaf community members. They are included below for possible areas of future improvement. They do not relate to all or most interpreters, nor in all circumstances, remembering that most Deaf people said the interpreting service was adequate. The list rather provides a list of the most negative aspects of NZSL interpreting services experienced by the Deaf community and may be useful for future individual and collective consideration.

Sometimes the boundaries of interpreting work are not clear

Some interpreters jump in to the conversation, like a social worker

Some interpreters' sign language skills are not adequate

Sometimes the communicator has better language than some interpreters

Voicing (from NZSL to English) seems to be difficult for some

Some interpreters constantly interrupt their team, while voicing

Some interpreting is robotic and needs more expression and fluency

Sometimes interpreters think they're better than they are, and don't translate things clearly

The booking system is frustrating, sometimes having to move appointments

There's a general lack of fingerspelling skills

There's a lack of knowledge of our local dialect

Interpreters need to better code switch - they need a variety of signing styles and levels. It's hard to find interpreters that can match my register

Some interpreters are not confidential

There are some fake interpreters around pretending to be qualified (Deaf comments).

Many Deaf people and interpreters (internationally as well as locally) noted that there are not enough opportunities or support for interpreters to focus on continuous improvement in a genuine safe learning culture. Given the intensely diverse needs facing interpreters, there is a sense that with greater attention to self-reflection with peers, there is more chance of developing a culture that accepts imperfection but always strives collectively and individually for improvement. While again noting that Deaf people generally considered NZSL interpreting services to be adequate, a number of comments also emerged that highlight the areas that could sometimes be improved for Deaf people.

Interpreters can hold a lot of power in the Deaf community

Some interpreters argue with each other and are competitive

Some can be upset if you choose another interpreter. It's important to accept the consumer's choice

Do those interpreters self-reflect and try to polish up their areas of failure?

There needs to be more respect and encouragement of each other (Deaf comments)

There was agreement that the AUT degree programme built upon the previous Diploma and was an improved qualification. While there were many comments on the training programme (e.g., need for specialisations), and some international certifications were examined (e.g., Michigan, USA, has a 3-tiered level of certification for noncomplex settings, moderately complex and for legal proceedings or psychiatric exams), this review did not address the curriculum of the degree programme.

There was some acceptance that the New Zealand interpreting profession is still emerging, and will almost inevitably have problems as it develops. There was agreement that the quality of interpreting is often contextual, depending on many factors, including knowledge and connection with the Deaf person, regardless of the length of interpreter experience. This is further discussed in the next section below.

Some Deaf community members, particularly those from smaller areas, maintained that the Deaf person needs to be familiar with the interpreter in order to use them well. Some intensely personal areas, such as health and court work, are especially important for feeling comfortable with the interpreter and maintaining critical continuity.

It's good to know who you can most easily communicate with consistently (Deaf person).

Nevertheless, one local interpreter was not seen as enough to meet all the different needs of one Deaf community. Rural interpreters noted that they tended to have a strong relationship with their communities because of the smaller size. Knowing your community was seen by some as a specialisation in itself.

5.1.1   What is quality?

The notion of interpreting quality is a complex subject, on which interpreters and consumers often have different views. According to some academics in this area, it is impossible for the consumers or the interpreters to agree on one definition of quality. The definitions of quality result from the norms individual interpreters use and are, therefore, not necessarily commonly shared. These norms are defined and shaped by years of interpreting experience, self-analysis by the interpreter, and also through the feedback interpreters receive from consumers. In reality, the production of the interpretation relies on a compromise between the interpreter and the consumers, especially the sign language users. Quality is therefore not a factual value, but is contextually determined (De Wit and Sluis, 2012).

It's hard to determine quality interpreting when we all have different level of NZSL, and English. Even harder if we do not have access to transcripts so we can compare what is actually being said and what is being interpreted (Deaf person)

The interpreter strives towards the ideal quality as identified in their training, but the reality and circumstances facing the interpreter are often not ideal. For example, a rapid or mumbling speaker, or unfamiliar content may affect the quality of the interpretation. Because the situation encompasses many variables that may complicate interpreting quality, the interpreter must consider these to find the best possible approach or strategy.

The fact that interpreting quality does not always correspond to the expectations of consumers can be attributed to various causes. The Deaf consumer might have expectations, which cannot be met due to the skills of the interpreter, or because of situational factors which cannot be changed. It seems that Deaf consumers generally have a lack of knowledge and understanding of the interpreting process, which can result in unrealistic expectations. If Deaf consumers do not share their expectations with interpreters prior to an assignment, the interpreter is then unaware of what is expected, but is also unable to inform the deaf consumer whether these expectations can be met or not (De Wit and Sluis, 2012).

De Wit and Sluis' (2012) study suggests that many Deaf sign language users lack awareness of the professional requirements of the interpreter, and also many interpreters lack insight into the expectations of the Deaf sign language user. The most frequent complaints regarding sign language interpreter quality from the perspective of Deaf sign language users concerned unprofessional attitudes and challenges in sign-to-voice interpreting. De Wit and Sluis' (2012) research developed the following priorities for interpreting criteria, which echoed throughout the consultations with Deaf communities. The interpreter:

1. interprets faithfully (100% is interpreted);
2. interprets clearly and understandably / fluently/ with clear signing;
3. has a professional attitude;
4. can interpret into spoken language (voicing);
5. uses sign language / linguistic variety / non-manual markers correctly;
6. ensures there is no miscommunication;

7. continues their professional development;

8. maintains confidentiality;

9. evaluates with the consumer following the assignment;

10. is flexible;

11. prepares him/herself for the assignment;

12. is familiar with the setting related terminology and context; and

13. is involved with the Deaf community.

5.1.2   The problem

There are several key issues arising from this review. Firstly, many or most hearing consumers in government and other agencies lack understanding of why interpreters are so important to Deaf people and the complexity of the interpreting process. As observed for spoken language interpreters (MBIE, 2016), government agencies need training and guidelines on the use of interpreters. There were many anecdotes in this review of hospitals, mental health and other situations such as police using unqualified interpreters, or family members, including children, as interpreters.

It makes (our children) grow up too fast (Deaf person)

Frequent misconceptions of the interpreter role were also noted.

We're (often) not seen as professionals but as a helper (interpreter)

Secondly, the cost and time constraints of contracting and, in more remote areas, transporting in skilled interpreters discourages courts and other government agencies from using interpreters more frequently. At least one District Health Board (DHB) has issued a contract to interpret health services with an unqualified interpreter. There seems to be a poor understanding of the need to assign an appropriately skilled interpreter in order for communication to be effective and safe.

There's a lack of scrutiny (interpreter)

Thirdly, the lack of standards for interpreters means that there are no clear guidelines available for interpreters, as a selection of the examples provided by senior interpreters show below what can go wrong in the interpreting process. This review is not suggesting that these examples are necessarily common place nor that all interpreters make these kinds of errors in judgement. Rather the review notes that such errors *can* happen. The limited knowledge of NZSL and interpreting within New Zealand communities means it is almost impossible for anyone to question interpreters, other than their peers or more experienced interpreters, and because there is no requirement for interpreters to engage in these discussions, there is currently little to ensure that the interpreter performs effectively or is constantly improving.

(I was) interpreting with a colleague for workplace mediation between two staff who are at loggerheads. It is heated. Your team keeps missing out important placatory remarks and tone. You watch intently and try to insert the missed propositions in your interpreting subtly when it is your turn to avoid the situation escalating. Your team (interpreter) is angry with you for watching their work too intently. You have no authority over them.

A new interpreter tells you about work they are doing. From their performance in your presence, you can see that very few Deaf people are going to be able to decipher the message given their level of fluency in NZSL. You have no say over what jobs they do. They are being given the work and they are proud of it. They are working in very high stakes settings.

A senior interpreter talks about their role in the community and you can see they are way outside the bounds of interpreter ethics. You try to gently suggest which ethic this may put at risk but they disagree with your perspective.

A Deaf person tells you that they don't like an interpreter because that interpreter always controls what is happening and tries to persuade hearing attendees to adopt their opinions. You then work with this interpreter and see it happening. If you mention it, you know they won't talk to or work with you again.

You are a participant at a meeting where an interpreter mistakenly switches a negative for a positive when voicing. They are talking about when to give which medication. The error could lead to a death. It is caused by poor NZSL comprehension. Everybody else in the room thinks the interpreter is doing perfectly well and is totally unaware of the errors.

(I was) sent to a job that was messed up by the previous interpreter. The Deaf person nearly lost their job. When you get there, you're able to get across the relevant paralinguistic aspects that save the person their job - tone, placatory acts, attitude etc. The situation is defused but you wonder if they would have kept their job if the other interpreter had not been replaced. Suspect the interpreter was unable to recognise and/or accurately render paralinguistic factors from NZSL to English in this setting.

You interpret for someone who can't afford to pay their mortgage. They were not told that the initial interest only period was for 12 months, after which they would start to pay (principal and interest). The bank must have mentioned this but you suspect it was not made clear enough by the previous interpreter due to either not coping with speed or inadequate expressive NZSL fluency.

You are working in a school and another interpreter is called in who doesn't know how to talk/sign to children. Their register is inappropriate. The children feel unsafe and confused.

You are working in a police evidential interview. The police officer asks questions that have already been answered. They are checking that the person's story is consistent. Your teammate asks you if they should answer the question for the Deaf person as they already know the answer.

You listen to an interpreter voicing over for an academic Deaf person. The register is all wrong and it makes the Deaf person sound inept. English is the interpreter's first language but their NZSL comprehension is weak and is taking up so much of their working memory that they are unable to attend to the target language register. The Deaf person sees the interpreter as academic and doesn't realise that their register is so badly affected by this pressure. They think they've selected the best interpreter for the job.

You are called to a mental health unit to interpret for someone under compulsory orders. They say they hate interpreters but (the Deaf person) is clearly lost without one. They do watch when you interpret. The clinician interviews them and begins asking questions about previously unmentioned delusions. They turn to ask you if it's normal for Deaf people to claim to hear voices. Nobody checked to see if you had experience in this field. If you didn't do this job, you're aware that the next qualified interpreter would have been selected and this may well have been someone who would have been out of their depth. There are very few interpreters in the region where you are. (Senior interpreter comments)

It is clear from these examples that the crucial communication needs occurring for Deaf people require a professional and versatile workforce that is continuously improving its skills.

5.1.3   An interpreter view

Interpreters are aware that while general competency is sought, the interpreting process and outcome must also suit the consumer. For example, recent immigrants, children, teenagers, people with minimal language and oral Deaf may all have quite different needs, so versatility is important.

Anecdotally, interpreters are conscious of a general perception by interpreting consumers that they earn high hourly rates and therefore enjoy high incomes. Data from a 2013 SLIANZ survey showed that this is not the case. Average incomes, especially for new interpreters, can be quite low. Two thirds of interpreters work as freelancers and many do not have the opportunity to work full-time hours. Their chargeable hours must also cover unpaid administrative and travel time, as well as holiday and sick leave and periods of lean income (SLIANZ 2013). Interpreting has to provide at least most of the workforce with a sustainable income and is further discussed in section 5.10 below. The cost of interpreters needs to be recognised by all funders (e.g., workplace, health and tertiary).

Interpreters thought that this review was timely as they have been thinking about developing systems for some time. More resources are seen as needed to provide adequate supervision and training to maintain and develop the quality of interpreting and develop a career pathway. Systems that are implemented must, however, be sustainable in the longer term.

It has to be sustainable (interpreter).

Interpreters are leaving the profession because of burnout, frustration, and failure to make a living wage. Interpreters consider the development of career pathways essential to hold them in the profession, and to also provide all communicators or unqualified interpreters with incentives and avenues for development.

Some interpreters argued that they do operate collegially and supportively, especially, in the smaller areas, Wellington and the Video Interpreting Service. It was agreed though that it is harder to hand over jobs and ideas supportively to colleagues who are also competing freelancers.

Interpreters agreed that they need a safe environment in which they can give and receive support and focus on continuous improvement openly. Most thought that encouragement and support was more useful than any punitive or intimidating mechanisms. Developing a culture of self-reflection in a supportive environment may be key to interpreter development and quality.

There's fear of failing but if professional development is constructive we can build trust (interpreter)

5.2   Registry

There was widespread agreement that there should be a compulsory register, that in turn requires interpreters to undertake professional development in the form of ongoing training and some form of assessment, in addition to operating by the SLIANZ Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. Interpreter booking agencies currently require interpreters to abide by these codes, but there is no monitoring and weak complaints systems in place. Regular assessment including evidence of continuing professional development and successful day to day practice should be mandatory, as with some other professions, such as teaching.

If this cannot be mandated by Government through regulation, government departments could be instructed to require it within their own services and within contracts to interpreting providers. Furthermore, booking agencies could mutually and formally agree to only employ registered interpreters in all booking assignments. The latter situation is not far from reality now with booking

January 2017

agencies already or nearly committed to this approach. It should be noted that neither informal nor formal registration necessarily stop all use of unqualified interpreters.

The key tasks of an independent registration authority of NZSL interpreters are further discussed throughout this section and could include:

- Provision of a mapping and certifying system for international qualifications;
- Maintaining a public list of interpreters that identifies experience, areas of expertise (if specialist skills can be clearly identified), location and contact details;
- Managing the revalidation of registration requirements through portfolios of practice and professional development;
- Independent oversight of and moderation of quality by assessing or examining language, interpreting and ethics for interpreters or courses provided to them;
- Ensuring all interpreters working with vulnerable children or specified environments have a police vet check;
- Managing complaints and feedback;
- Acknowledging practical experience;
- Providing mentoring;
- Providing identification for interpreters that is recognised as a quality mark.
  There has to be a consequence if you don't (meet PD requirements) (interpreter)

Many participants noted that failure to complete registration requirements should result in real consequences, such as deregistration. Requirements for interpreter registration, therefore, might be voluntary at first and can be brought in gradually, for example over five years. This would give time to ensure that Deaf people are not disadvantaged by registration that excludes non-qualified or non-practicing interpreters. Persuasion, time or further training options may be useful to encourage all to join before it is made compulsory.

Both Deaf people and interpreters acknowledge the situation of unqualified interpreters, especially in the provinces where there may not be a big demand for interpreting. They need as an accessible pathway through to qualification as possible but compulsory registration is expected to mean that unqualified interpreters are ultimately not or minimally used.

The costs of joining the registry would need to be established so that it was not unfair on interpreters working lower numbers of hours. For example, the number of hours of practice required for rural or occasional interpreters need to be determined and their relationship to cost, training and assessment requirements.

It must be affordable (for us) (interpreter)

There was considerable discussion around who would provide this register. Some saw great sense in SLIANZ taking this role because it is already an expert group and because it could bolster the good work being done by volunteers attempting to create a cohesive specialist profession. Others, including many SLIANZ standards subcommittee members, think it may be better that the registry is run by an independent group so that SLIANZ is freer to provide interpreter support, rather than the more mechanistic policing functions that may benefit from greater independence from interpreters.

5.3   Generalists and specialists

It was widely agreed that new interpreter graduates can often successfully work with the community, such as in sports, funerals, polytech, work place, WINZ, dentist, insurance, a school

meeting, or for a simple doctor's appointment. Ideally, new interpreters are frequently teamed with an experienced interpreter, and if they have the right academic background, the new graduate might also work in a tertiary setting.

You can't be an expert in all areas (interpreter)

However, there are some assignments listed below that require both more generalist experience and specialist knowledge. Interpreters cannot be good at everything, and specialists are needed. Usually this is because these areas are of high consequence to the Deaf person and/or additional knowledge is needed to operate in that context. There was agreement that formal training should eventually be required in these areas. Some participants thought that some work (e.g. legal, mental health) should only be given to specialists, rather than spreading the workload among generalists. Some also thought newer interpreters should have the opportunity to be trained in specialist roles through training and/or teaming.

The key specialist areas are now discussed, but because court requirements currently hold the only standard, section 5.3.1 below is devoted to this area.

Medical specialists, such as surgery. There is some interpreting theory in health training currently in the AUT programme, but more practical courses involving Deaf people are needed. One DHB has provided training in working in a health context, but coordination is needed to maximise their benefit throughout the country.

Māori kaupapa. It was widely agreed among Māori Deaf and non-Māori Deaf that all interpreters should have some Māori knowledge. Basic training should be part of the undergraduate AUT programme and ongoing training should also be available on Māori language and culture. Māori needs are discussed further in section 5.3.2 below.

Compulsory education (primary and secondary schools). Unlike other spoken language interpreters, education is a key interpreting requirement for Deaf children and, as our international examples show, is frequently a well-resourced area of interpreting internationally. Interpreters working in education should have training in working with children, teachers, the curriculum, and school systems, as well as jargon and culture for teenagers. The lack of NZSL interpreters for Deaf children in compulsory education is widely considered shameful and needs urgent remedy. One Deaf staff member noted that even their Deaf Education Centre did not always appreciate the importance of providing professional interpreters.

Child welfare. For example, CYFS meetings often involve vulnerable families and are particularly sensitive and complex.

Tertiary education. Tertiary institutes argued that some training should be provided in the undergraduate degree on teaming and working with lecturers in a tertiary context.

Mental health. People working in mental health need training and skills for that area, and perhaps between 3 and 5 years' experience as a minimum. They must be able to work with Deaf interpreters and other support staff to ensure effective communication. Some interpreters mentioned their appreciation of the work undertaken by Connect, ensuring specialised supervision, peer mentoring, and active support on the job.

Deaf interpreting. Training in working with a Deaf interpreter is needed too, often most importantly in court and mental health settings. A Deaf interpreter service is in still in an early formative stage.

Disabled Deaf. Most Deaf community meetings noted that disabled Deaf people (e.g. Deafblind or Deaf people with learning impairments) are important and require specialist interpreting.

In addition, many participants noted that there are so many areas to specialise in, and wondered whether it was realistic or cost effective to establish training for all of them. With around 5 – 6 graduates a year, training costs need to be efficient. It might be better to prioritise a few areas where there is high demand and high risk, such as court, health and mental health.

There is some agreement that specialist interpreters should be paid more, in order to incentivise the additional study. ISign does charge out interpreters at the same rate, as requesting organisations may not understand the need for experience. However, both iSign and Connect pay interpreters at different rates depending on their experience, if the assignment is an overnight emergency or requires trilingual interpreting. No higher payments for other specialists are currently made.

Although the widespread agreement that there are important specialist areas, many participants also identified that many types of interpreting work can be of high consequence (e.g. a work appraisal or a real estate transaction). Some areas, like court and mental health, are usually but not always of higher consequence. For example, setting dates for meetings are not likely to be challenging assignments. Much relies on the skill of the booking agency, if one is used, to identify the level of complexity and skill level required, and thereby allocate the appropriate person.

Despite the need for specialist training, it was widely agreed that the primary focus at this stage of interpreter development should be first on setting standards that enhance the quality of generalists, in order for e NZ interpreter services to have a strong foundation. Several Deaf people and interpreters mentioned that at least very basic training in key important areas such as legal, health, and working with Māori and children should be available to all interpreters to minimise potential catastrophes. Getting the standards and systems in place to enhance overall interpreter quality is widely considered the priority.

You have to generalise in smaller areas (interpreter)

This priority also emerged partly because specialisation of interpreters in rural areas is challenging, unless they can work in other areas or online or specialists can be brought in. Generalists are required for the very varied interpreting assignments available in smaller areas. Interpreter and booking agencies noted that paying customers often found getting interpreters from out of town too expensive. There is therefore often severe pressure on interpreters to take specialist assignments, because the alternative is to have no one or an unqualified interpreter and lose much needed work and income. Moreover, many local Deaf people require people who are familiar with the local dialect, signs and people, which makes bringing in external specialists difficult. Resolving the situations facing generalist interpreters across New Zealand is most important.

When requirements for more specialists are introduced, it was noted that a number of years' experience can be a very blunt measure of quality because it does not directly translate to skills. Some interpreters with little experience can be well suited for some specialist areas while others with many years of experience may not be. In contrast, Bontempo (2014) found that age and experience were "significantly correlated" with higher levels of interpreter competence.

However, many interpreters argued that a package of requirements, possibly consisting of interpreter observations and working directly with an experienced interpreter in that field, passing a specialised course, and/or the number of hours' experience working in that area might be more reliable. This might require a more complicated registry system, although one provider wondered

January 2017

whether meeting the requirements to report hours could be automated by linking booking sheets with invoicing capabilities, so that records can be easily maintained by the interpreter, and the registry might simply note them. An established registry might design future specialist requirements and accredit the training programmes provided.

5.3.1   Court

The current standard requires the NZSL interpreter to be qualified and have two years' general community experience. In line with the NZSL Act's requirements for information from all government services to be made accessible to the Deaf community, the NZ court system currently has guidelines for interpreters' conduct on the Ministry of Justice website and there is also a "Guide to working with NZSL interpreters", developed by ODI.

Most people thought the current standard for courts was inadequate. The interpreter should have maturity to deal with a range of contexts, normally with broad experience of community interpreting. Many people thought that with a degree plus three to five years' experience and specific legal training, the interpreter should be adequately prepared. If the performance measure was only length of experience, the interpreter should have between three and five years' experience, with most preferring higher levels. In relation to length of experience, the interpreter survey demonstrated that 70% of interpreters have 6 years' experience or more, and 87% have 3 years or more experience, so specifying a longer requirement of experience may be achievable, without leaving important legal situations without an interpreter.

As mentioned above, many interpreters preferred that experience is measured in hours worked rather than years, so that it is clearer how much actual time has been spent interpreting. Low weekly hours or lengthy absences are masked by simply counting years. However, the number of hours worked may be hard to determine easily, given freelancers often contract directly and may not keep records that can be verified. Systems would be required that enable hours of work to be confirmed.

Again, many argued that experience should not be the only criteria. It was widely acknowledged among Deaf people and interpreters that much depended on the individual interpreter. While specialisation might be usually more feasible after two years of general experience, a few might manage court with some additional training after graduation. Other interpreters may not manage effectively after 5 or 10 years.

In addition, some court assignments are relatively easy, such as a traffic infringement, while a criminal trial is strenuous and complex. If it is an indictable charge, then the level of competence required is raised, as there is a higher consequence at stake. Some suggested that multiple standards are needed, depending on the requirement. Booking agencies are typically used by the courts system and currently booking agents are relied upon by court officials to ensure an interpreter with the required skill level is assigned.

Court interpreters should also be skilled in either communicating with people with minimal language or working with a Deaf interpreter. Guidance from more senior colleagues and law professionals was also helpful for some interpreters. Several people noted that all key legal interviews should be videoed and transcribed so that they can be checked for accuracy if needed. Every major court case should be an opportunity to train interpreters in teams. In legal settings, AVLIC also recommends teaming, use of Deaf interpreters where needed, and visually recording key statements, interviews, or testimonials.

AVLIC, the interpreter association in Canada, has defined the skills interpreters require to work in legal settings as:

January 2017

1. a superior level of sign language and English skills;

2. a superior level of interpreting skills;

3. specific knowledge of the legal, medical, and mental health systems;

4. an understanding of protocol and expected behaviour in legal settings;

5. familiarity with legal discourse; and

6. interpersonal characteristics which support professional behaviour, team work, an ability to be assertive when dealing with consumers and legal personnel, and respect for cross-cultural dynamics.

Specialist training for courts is clearly a challenge for interpreter training, and New Zealand is not alone. A European survey found that only one third of interpreter training programmes had specialist modules on interpreting in legal settings and that their quality was inconsistent. Most have no specific code of conduct nor training for Deaf people on working with interpreters in legal settings, nor were there many quality assurance processes (Napier and Haug, 2015).

The current legal and health paper at AUT provides a general overview of the legal and health systems for all language interpreters, but does not cover Deaf culture or needs and does not provide practical experience in using NZSL in these contexts. This course is taken by many spoken language interpreters and cannot be changed easily but might be adapted for future stand-alone training. The New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) also has a legal course but is not considered comprehensive nor practical enough nor does it involve Deaf participants. The postgraduate Diploma offered by Macquarie University provided a specialist legal paper and/or experience in court and its systems, including working with Police, and was considered ideal. Any future specialist training might use this or an adapted version.

5.3.2   Māori

Similar to other indigenous or minority populations in our comparison countries, Māori Deaf are not as well served with interpreting services as their pakeha peers. It was noted that some Māori youth have difficulty with interpreters, as many are oral and use Te Reo Māori, and wish to frequent marae and other Māori settings. To work on marae, considerable Māori knowledge is required. Māori Deaf were supported by other Deaf people, arguing that ongoing training, including Māori language and culture, should be available in the undergraduate and in postgraduate professional development. The group based at Kelston Deaf Education Centre offered AUT students to come on the Ruamoko marae to learn Māori kaupapa.

Everyone needs some basics in Māori (language and culture) (interpreter)

Ideally though, the Māori Deaf group has strongly believed, since 1991, that there should be a larger number of trilingual interpreters as specialist interpreters. Participants spoke of their drive to increase their number over the years and have persuaded six people who are fluent in te reo to go through the AUT programme, but commented that the AUT programme was very English-based and there was a low pass rate. In addition, six Māori went through the Deaf Studies programme at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and only three passed. There are currently six scholarships specifically for Māori to attend AUT, funded by the Ministry of Education and AUT with Te Ara Poutama (Māori Development faculty). Registration requirements for trilingual interpreters should be discussed and negotiated with existing trilingual interpreters.

5.3.3   Online Interpreting

NZ Relay currently operates a video interpreting service (VIS). A high level of proficiency is needed because there is enormous variety of interpreting with little warning of what is to come. NZ Relay currently requires two years' community experience plus SLIANZ membership, as required by their MBIE contract. Some interpreters feel that video relay interpreters should have at least five years' experience. There is extra management required because the interpreter is unprepared for each call and has to manage a huge variety of assignments and contexts.

Rural interpreters were most in favour of online interpreting, perhaps through existing video conferencing facilities, e.g. Ministry of Education, while acknowledging they are not always appropriate for therapeutic assignments. Some tertiary agencies in more remote areas, e.g. Dunedin have used video remote interpreting reasonably successfully. There are some limitations with the quality of the video link and the ability to hear other students' questions and comments, other than the lecturer with a microphone.

AVLIC in Canada finds Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) useful for remote communities where it can be expensive to bring in teams of interpreters. For example, when the court appearance will be a short one, such as setting a date, and is concluded in less than ten minutes. VRI is also considered useful as a tool in communities where there is a shortage of qualified interpreters to work with such settings and a skilled booking agent to determine if it is appropriate. Both spoken and sign language interpreters have delivered interpreting services through the use of VRI for short appearances but not sensitive or longer cases. There are several ways in which video conferencing has been used with ASL-English interpreters in Canada, for example:

- Deaf accused held in custody, appearing by closed circuit TV from the remand centre, while the interpreter is in the courtroom;
- Deaf accused appearing at a bail hearing with the interpreter and police officer present, and the Judge appearing via video conferencing from a courtroom;
- preparation interviews between lawyers and Deaf parties, where they are present in the same facility and the interpreter is in another location;
- trials that involve Deaf parties where the interpreters are not present and appear via video conferencing.

The decision to use video remote interpreting services should be made with input from all participants, and AVLIC urges caution when considering VRI use, given the numerous limitations. New Zealand's views on using VRI are still developing and AVLIC agrees that VRI may not be suitable for situations involving the following:

- Complex dialogue and discussions and/or complex trials;
- Communications that are emotionally charged or when participants are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol;
- Individuals with challenges (e.g. Deaf-blind) that may interfere with their ability to use the technology;
- Young children;
- Individuals who are not fluent users of ASL or have unique communication needs. (AVLIC website)

5.4   Professional development- training

Similar to all other countries examined, postgraduate ongoing interpreter training was considered to be extremely important in all discussion groups. While some training is provided now, it is run with

42

the good will of SLIANZ or other key players in the sector. Currently, SLIANZ requires 16 professional development points to be gathered each year, but this is a voluntary system, and not all professional development is accessible to interpreters in more remote locations.

Without widely accepted compulsory registration, it is not possible to demand compliance, and dispense a consequence of failure. Compulsory professional development is considered a key component of what could be added to add to the current interpreter registration system. Training could be provided by any number of providers, and training courses could require accreditation so as to maintain a level of quality desired. Registration may also require overseas or returning interpreters to undertake a basic course in NZSL, a Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) or an interpreting assessment. The amount of interpreter training required may have to be weighed against hours worked, as it was frequently noted that interpreters on low incomes may not be able to pay for much training.

Rural interpreters thought there was not enough accessible professional development offered, and were most strongly in favour of online learning and online interpreting to increase accessibility for training and the cost-effective use of interpreters at distance. It was thought that webinars could be more widely used. Online resources such as Māori greetings, swearing in at court, or guidelines for health (e.g. body parts and illness vocabulary or hospital admission processes) and Police rights could also be developed.

Block courses should be provided to enable some important face to face learning at least once a year, to facilitate connections between interpreters. For example, both the Connect workshops and annual conference were appreciated. AUT personnel noted that they had tried to provide online learning but did not find it easy, although it was also noted that technology may have improved in the interim. The international interpreting examples all either provide or are considering providing some online learning and resources.

We can do more online training at distance with block courses (interpreter)

Many interpreters and Deaf community members noted that further training does not necessarily mean that interpreters are paid more, but if further incentives to train are to be established, higher pay rates should be further examined.

Sources for training fees will need to come from Government, interpreter booking agencies, sponsors or employers. Alternatively, interpreters will need to pay this themselves, but the low income of some interpreters needs to be borne in mind.

5.5   Professional development - assessment of quality

One interpreter noted she had taken on many assignments over the past decade or two that she wasn't qualified for and may have disadvantaged consumers, but had learned through the process. Many Deaf and interpreter participants argue that this kind of learning is costly in terms of communication quality and the interpreter system should provide appropriate training opportunities. Many interpreters maintain that trust and confidence in professional standards requires proof of individual competence. Some form of assessment was seen as valuable, particularly by Interpreters who often work on their own, and need validation and concrete feedback to improve their performance levels. All of the mechanisms for assessment will benefit

from core competencies or criteria being developed that outline indicators of expected performance[3].

Considered most important to assess are new interpreters, two years after completion of the AUT programme. This would be useful to act as a formal 'warrant of fitness' to witness that their continued learning had reached a defined next level. It was agreed that interpreters who are away for period of time should also be prioritised for assessment. While some interpreters may lose fluency and skill in a relatively short time, perhaps a year, others may maintain their sign language levels over several years through contact with the Deaf community. Others who have ventured overseas may come back with a different signing style and may need a refresher sign language course. Only an independent view of their skills can ensure service quality.

It would be useful to have observations – we work a lot on our own (interpreter)

Many interpreters noted that assessment systems are important for improving skills, but the emphasis needs to be on constructive development, using goal setting and must be perceived as valuable support, rather than a punitive or stressful test. There needs to be a culture of collective and individual continuous improvement fostered among sign language interpreters. The SLIANZ standards subcommittee were particularly interested in making sure that interpreters are operating at levels that are reliable and safe for the Deaf community. They argue that regular assessments are needed to ensure that interpreters do not slip in their skills and get useful feedback and goals are set.

A number of options have emerged as possibly meeting the need to monitor quality of registered interpreters at varying levels of formality and expertise.

NAATI

The Australian NAATI system is one option. AUT graduates are considered to be at least the equivalent of NAATI professional level (AUT). Several NZSL interpreters have NAATI qualifications and there was a variety of views on whether this would be appropriate for New Zealand. The great advantage of this possibility is that the system is already developed and could be extended to include NZSL.

However, the majority of interpreters, including SLIANZ subcommittee members, were opposed to the idea because firstly it would still require NZSL assessments to be developed and because the quality of the assessment overall is questioned. Some consider the assessment to be an unwieldy, artificial, and unreliable tool that is expensive for interpreters ($1,100 for the paraprofessional level and $1,600 for the professional level). Only 28 of the 250 spoken language interpreters contracted by Interpreting NZ have obtained a NAATI qualification. It is a particularly high benchmark for people who work very few hours as an interpreter. If an assessment is to be developed many believe it would be better undertaken in New Zealand, because it allows greater potential for flexibility and innovation involving the local Deaf population, as described in the following options.

NZ expert assessment system

Alternatively, there might be paid expert assessors appointed to a registry. These would include interpreting and linguistic experts, including Deaf people. These experts would develop a formalised and standardised assessment against specific sought competencies and might use a range of

---

[3] One example of competencies includes teachers, who identify their key criteria for regular appraisals https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/registered-teacher-criteria-1

January 2017

assessment tools to test competence, including role plays. There is some concern that the pool of interpreters in New Zealand may be too small to maintain testing validity of the instruments.

Currently, there are few interpreting assessments undertaken. Some tertiary interpreters are appraised every year and interpreters noted that it was a valuable but stressful chance to reflect on their performance. Agencies may also conduct their own assessments (e.g. VIS, iSign) but there is no requirement to do so, nor any competencies to measure against. It may be possible to strengthen moderation for assessment so that AUT exit standards or higher are entrenched in practice.

Assessors might be employed in a central registry body that administers a recognised national accreditation process, such as teachers. These experts might be available through contracted universities (e.g. AUT, VUW) or Deaf-related organisations such as SLIANZ. These contracted individuals would need to be trained to consistently assess against the standardised competencies. Alternatively, the registry could contract a single commercially impartial institution to provide these assessments, such as AUT.

There were varying views on how often interpreters should be assessed. it was agreed that AUT's award of a degree is effectively an assessment and does not need to be duplicated. However, SLIANZ would ideally like all interpreters to be regularly assessed to see where their performance currently lies. Some people thought 20 to 25 interpreters could be assessed every year to ensure they have adequate language, interpreting, interaction, and ethics management and, in this way, all interpreters would be assessed over a five-year period.

Re-entry assessments for interpreters who have been away could possibly be undertaken by AUT at novice graduate level. AUT might also be interested in more advanced assessments and would have the skills to develop and use the instrument at least in generalist settings.

If lower cost assessment methods, such as peer mentoring, are inadequate to enhance interpreter quality, and expert assessments are determined to be essential, perhaps the sector can contribute to the costs in addition to the individual interpreters. For example, VIS conducts team appraisals, using external interpreters, and one tertiary institute spoken to already conducts independent appraisals for interpreters. There may be a possibility that all leading providers, such as the booking agencies, Deaf Education Centres, health bodies, and tertiary institutes that employ interpreters may contract and pay for or subsidise these assessment processes to be undertaken. If the registry undertakes all assessments for the booking/employing agencies, this might allow the provider to focus on supporting the interpreter to reach their stated learning goals, rather than acting as enforcers. Interpreters are also a possible source of funding but interpreters who work infrequently and have low incomes will need to be considered.

Alternatively, government funding or individual interpreters would need to cover the cost of assessments.

Accreditation of training

Another option is to accredit the postgraduate training courses that interpreters take for professional development, as is common in the US (regulations for government, 2016). The trainers then may be responsible for ensuring each student has acquired and demonstrates the knowledge satisfactorily within the training environment.

Video assessments

Many believe that formal assessments must be in person rather than online, while others think that constructive assessments could be done by video. Assessments could be simple peer assessments with interpreters trained how to assess or critique usefully. Some regional interpreters also thought, with consumers' consent, videos might be viably taken and shared with expert assessors, possibly watching the filming of one interpreting assignment. Although it was acknowledged that it is always better to see people physically, it was also better to have some feedback than none. The video interpreting service (VIS) saw itself as another option for assessment at distance. Others argue assessments cannot be done effectively this way.

Formative appraisals

A less formal assessment system might include formative appraisals in which senior interpreters appraise interpreters in real life interpreting assignments against key criteria and offer recommendations for future development. This would still require training on how to appraise effectively but may be less demanding in the time taken and the precision and moderation required of validated assessments. There may be some loss in the thorough and comprehensive approach offered by more formalised assessments.

Mentoring

Mentoring is seen as particularly but not only important in the early years of interpreting both among participants and in the wider international interpreting community (Lee and Winston, 2016). SLIANZ already operates a buddy system, Tuakana / Teina, currently for third year students and for the first two years after graduation. This system teams newer interpreters with more experienced colleagues to mentor their development. This is hoped to be extended to a wider group, including experienced interpreters.

Do those (unskilled) interpreters have support from the more experienced interpreters? (Deaf person)

One person noted that if an assessment could be undertaken by a mentor then formal independent assessments could be randomly provided for a smaller number of people.

Formal supervision is not commonly undertaken in New Zealand interpreting. An independent supervisor or mentor might be useful to provide unbiased and focussed guidance, but would need to be paid for by either a central fund or the interpreter. The challenge for developing such formal systematic assessments or supervision is its cost and lack of obvious funder. Some also call for the mentees to also be paid.

Tertiary institutes thought the need to learn how to team effectively is fundamental to working in their educational environment. However, it was widely agreed that ideally younger interpreters would be frequently teamed with more mature practitioners for their learning in a wide range of environments. If the interpreting assignment requires two interpreters anyway, there is no extra cost and it is simply a booking issue. However, if there is a need to transport and pay another person to go to another area such as a small town or rural area, it is much harder to arrange. Ideally, an expert would be brought in to team and mentor the less experienced interpreter. Rural interpreters, however, rarely get the opportunity to team and offer each other feedback.

Some mentoring resources can be found here: http://www.interpretereducation.org/aspiring-interpreter/mentorship/mentoring-toolkit/.

Peer mentoring

Networking and informal mentoring for and among interpreters was encouraged by many participants. Some international and local informants maintain that informal but very constructive assessment could be given by mentors, or professional leaders as teachers do. Some interpreters suggested that, with consumers' consent, videos might be viably taken and shared with an online or face-to-face gathering for peer supervision, watching and critiquing one interpreting assignment. Peer mentoring could be instigated by SLIANZ or interpreter providers but could also be self-organised by interpreters.

Peer supervision ideally has an expert facilitator available on a regular basis to ensure a sound process is being followed. Demand Control Schema (DCS) is one model used internationally and is described here to show the type of discussion involved. Dean and Pollard (2001) used the framework of demand-control theory to examine the nature of demands and controls in the interpreting profession specifically. They defined four categories of job demands that act upon interpreters: environmental demands, interpersonal demands, paralinguistic demands, and intrapersonal demands. Environmental demands are interpreting challenges or success requirements that pertain to the assignment setting (e.g., the need to understand consumers' occupational roles and specialised terminology for a given setting or tolerance of space limitations, odours, extreme temperatures, or adverse weather). Interpersonal demands are interpreting challenges or success requirements that pertain to the interaction of the consumers (e.g., the need to understand and mediate cultural differences, power differences and dynamics, differences in information, or the unique perceptions, preconceptions, and interactional goals of the consumers). Paralinguistic demands are interpreting challenges or success requirements that pertain to overt aspects of the expressive communication of deaf and hearing consumers, i.e., the clarity of the raw material the interpreter sees and hears. Examples of paralinguistic demands are when a hearing individual has a heavy accent or is mumbling, or when a deaf individual is signing lazily, lying down, or has an object in his or her hands. Finally, intrapersonal demands are interpreting challenges or success requirements that pertain to the internal physiological or psychological state of the interpreter (e.g., the need to tolerate hunger, pain, fatigue, or distracting thoughts or feelings).

SLPI

There is a current review underway that is looking at developing a Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI). This is a tool for assessing functional sign language skill, using an interviewer with native or near native language skills to enquire about family and background and other familiar subjects. The interview is recorded and analysed by three raters from novice to superior plus in seven rating grades.

The Ministry of Education are leading this review with funds obtained from a grant from the NZSL Board to undertake the work on designing a national NZSLPI adult assessment system. It is designed for any adult who wishes to undertake an NZSL assessment, although it is likely that professionals working in the Deaf sector will make up the bulk of people assessed. It is hoped that there will be no charge for this assessment, similar to the Māori language assessment, which is discussed further in section 5.11 below.

Although this tool could not be used to measure interpreter skills or interpreter ethical commitment, it is relevant for two reasons. Firstly, it could be used to assess language skills, and this is important because most NZSL interpreters have learned NZSL as a second language. Secondly, if a unit is

established to administer this interview, consideration should be given to co-locating an interpreter register with it.

5.6   Complaints

Feedback

Feedback was thought to be a better term than complaints by some members of the Deaf community as they wanted to establish a practice of ongoing feedback for interpreters. Some communities also mentioned that wanted ongoing dialogue with interpreters through regular meetings and social connections. Competency could also be measured through formal feedback systems, such as in rating cards or online systems. In some environments, such as in education, there may also be trained Deaf sector professionals who can provide useful feedback directly to the interpreter.

Interpreting NZ, a spoken language interpreter service, regularly undertakes customer evaluations that ask whether professionalism was demonstrated, whether communication was assisted and whether transparency was demonstrated, e.g. in side conversations. Connect and iSign have both instituted feedback mechanisms but these are not required nor consistently applied.

Complaints mechanisms for spoken language interpreting within Interpreting NZ are as follows:

- via the entity that hired the interpreter (e.g. to the court, the Police, hospital, etc)
- to the interpreter provider – there is a formal complaints process and a feedback form on their website
- to the professional body, NZSTI, assuming the interpreter is a member
- to the Health & Disability Commissioner, at least for health issues, since the code of consumer rights that health providers sign up to has a right to clear communication in a language of the patient's choice.

Individuals found it hard to complain about an NZSL interpreter and the current system of approaching the interpreter, the booking agency and then SLIANZ was not seen to be working well. Some Deaf people in these consultations did not know they could complain.

Are we allowed to complain? (Deaf person)

The current expectation in NZSL interpreting is that a complaint about NZSL interpreting will go directly to the interpreter, then to the agencies, if one has been used, and then to SLIANZ. SLIANZ does not have the resources to follow up complaints and is intuitively inclined to support, rather than sanction its own members, and also has no mandate to manage complaints about the broader interpreting system. The Health and Disability Commissioner is already a funded avenue to complain about health and disability services, and could see NZSL interpreting as a hearing disability service. This may be a cost-effective way to get a formal and reliable complaints mechanism in place, although the Commissioner is likely to need support from interpreters and Deaf people to establish and operate this avenue of redress for the Deaf community. There is however a risk that Deaf people may not use it because of its association with disability and impairment, rather than their intuitive preference for associations with other cultural groups.

5.7   Booking

While nearly half (47%) of NZSL interpreters contract with Deaf people and organisations directly, two-thirds also go through interpreter booking agencies. Several Deaf people and interpreters mentioned their appreciation of having more than one booking agency and greater choice. Some

conflict is perceived between these agencies and there is a view that this needs to be remedied to enable greater collaboration. Some think that all the booking agencies should work with all interpreters to maximise Deaf choice. Trust in the booking agencies is critical, as with interpreters, and although the booking system was not the focus of this review, it is inherently part of the quality of the interpreter system, from a Deaf perspective.

Booking is the problem (Deaf person)

The first major point was made many times in all consultation groups. There was a question as to who is responsible for booking the interpreter. Although government agencies might be responsible for booking and payment, they understand little about the importance of communication for the Deaf person and mistakes are often made. Some government agency staff continue to use pen and paper rather than bring in an appropriate interpreter. With low awareness, the requirement to book interpreters needs to be in each government agency's policies, procedures and budgets.

The second major point made was around the importance and right of choosing their interpreter or telling them why the interpreter is not available. The booking of interpreters could be online and more user friendly. Some Deaf asked whether an online booking system (e.g., http://govineya.com/) is possible. Deaf people want to know interpreter names, see their photos and areas of expertise, not just preferences, and be able to book them directly. Deaf people in the smaller cities were most interested in knowing the interpreters so they could be sure of their signing style and trustworthiness.

On the other hand, interpreters and booking agencies point out that while the best interpreter available is usually wanted, interpreting requires specific skills, knowledge and experience. These aspects, as well as alternative and higher priority demand for interpreters, are often not known to consumers. A professional decision is needed where to deploy the resources to maximise safe access for the most number of people at any given time.

Interpreting booking requires information on Deaf preferences as well as interpreter skills and preferences, and how important each assignment is for the Deaf person. It requires knowledge of both the interpreter and Deaf communities and ability to prioritise and communicate within a system. It is much more complex than a typical administration job and requires skills that are continuously improving to maximise the quality of interpreting. Local knowledge is seen as useful in order to negotiate time for preparation, and travel costs. Also, to be negotiated are the payment rates, depending on the level of experience needed, and to give basic training to hearing and Deaf consumers on how to use the interpreter.

iSign already pays slightly higher rates to interpreters for being a member of SLIANZ to encourage joining. iSign is in the process of requiring membership of a professional body (SLIANZ or NZSTI), and adherence to their professional standards, as does Connect. It was suggested many times that agencies need to agree not to give work to unregistered or unqualified interpreters, although this may conflict with Deaf people's right to choose their interpreting support. Presumably the same should be asked of Deaf community members, who may contract them directly.

5.8   Deaf interpreters

Many Deaf people act as interpreters for other community members now, although the numbers are unknown. They work with culturally Deaf people too, not only Deaf with minimal language. They fill a gap that many hearing interpreters struggle to meet. Trust is most critical in this relationship as they are likely to see their consumers socially.

Deaf interpreters acknowledge they need training too, but new or adapted programmes are needed that fit their needs. For example, they may not have to be fluent in English, and need less Deaf cultural awareness than other interpreters. However, interpreting and ethics papers are also valuable for Deaf interpreters. Training qualifications and service systems are currently being researched by Deaf Interpreters New Zealand.

Partnership with hearing NZSL interpreters is sought by both Deaf interpreters NZ and SLIANZ. Some training is occurring but is ad hoc and depends on the time and effort available to interpreter leaders. A recognised training programme (perhaps a diploma or certificate to start with) is preferred with established funding streams for employment. Currently, there is little or no funding available for this group, but as the international comparisons suggest, this is an important area to grapple with and resolve.

5.9   Role of SLIANZ

Currently, SLIANZ is a major provider of interpreter professional development and interpreting resources, including interpreting policies. SLIANZ has also developed a widely-accepted Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct and also a directory of interpreters. SLIANZ is the only current organisation with some form of accountability for the quality of interpreters. There was widespread acknowledgement of SLIANZ efforts and the impossibility of achieving the desired result with volunteers. They will need resources to undertake a bigger role.

SLIANZ maintain a directory of their full (ordinary) members and make this available to the public, however many Deaf people and interpreters noted that the directory is not often used, as it is unlinked to any booking process. Therefore, although interpreters could have been removed from the SLIANZ Directory for not achieving the professional development points, this has not occurred in practice and, even if it had, would have little impact on the interpreter. Without standards, SLIANZ has no mandate to demand compliance.

Several people thought SLIANZ should be better supported and grown to monitor the standards. However, the majority of participants thought that standards should be independent from both the professional association and interpreting agencies to be completely impartial.

This would allow SLIANZ to undertake supportive functions such as professional development including training, mentoring, and resource development, advocacy and promoting the use of interpreters. It was widely agreed that they should not necessarily run but be involved in key complaints to ensure interpreter interests are protected. SLIANZ might also comment on and influence interpreter conditions. Given the large number of part-time interpreters, SLIANZ could also be involved in determining their requirement to pay registration and membership fees, and meet their professional development obligations or a proportion thereof. Most people see that membership of SLIANZ or NZSTI should also be compulsory.

5.10 Funding

While this review did not attempt to address funding issues for interpreting, they were resolutely raised at every consultation. The funding issues are significant and are discussed here because they impact directly on interpreter services and their standards.

Deaf people widely referred to the lack of interpreters, while many interpreters spoke of insufficient work. There were frequent references to barriers to getting government agencies to book interpreters because of cost and their difficulty in understanding and prioritising the need for effective communication. The paying customer often does not have a strong sense of the need for

the service they are purchasing. The recent spoken language interpreting report (MBIE, 2016) has found similar issues and recommended whole of government funding for former refugees and migrants.

Two thirds (64%) of interpreters answered they were primarily freelancers. Freelancing is a service model that relies on a healthy market. That is not believed to be the case, with insufficient resource available rather than insufficient demand. Either more funding is needed or, as is true in typical free markets, interpreter rates have to be reduced to meet market expectations. The latter option is complicated by the distortions in market information for current purchasers, as described above, and might result in more interpreters leaving and less access to interpreting for the Deaf community.

Funding for interpreters is problematic in many parts of the world and government is forced to fund prioritised areas, most commonly education, work and health. In New Zealand, the Tertiary Education Commission provides population based funding to institutes, the Ministry of Health contracts interpreting services with iSign and the MSD Job Support funding, administered by Workbridge, has provided a capped but individualised fund for Deaf people in their workplaces. Other government departments make interpreters available on request if they see them as needed.

Two of our comparison countries, Australia and the Netherlands, provide individualised interpreter funding. Little attention has been given to funding mechanisms in this review, but the consistent call for remedy to poor access to interpreters and its potential impact on interpreter standards has led to suggestions for two possible options that are individualised. Unlike former refugees and migrants, Deaf people are not able to learn spoken English and their needs for interpretation include but extend beyond access to government services.

In New Zealand, the disability enhanced individualised funding[4] is currently being trialled. This could provide interpreting access to the Deaf individual depending on their need. Alternatively, interpreting costs might be recognised as the cost of a hearing disability within the Disability Allowance. If the supply of interpreting could meet Deaf people's needs, the issues facing interpreters and their standards would ease with fuller employment and greater ability to demand higher standards.

5.11 Other certifying and professional bodies

Te Taura Whiri I te Reo Māori

Māori is the only other official language in New Zealand and the Te Taura Whiri I te Reo Māori, as part of the Māori Language Commission, licenses or certifies Māori translators and interpreters. They examine each candidate with three hour written and one hour oral exams, and other roles include operating a register of translators, identifying their level of registration and contact details, conducting research on the revitalisation of Māori language and providing advice to the community and business sector on the use of Māori language.

After they have passed their examinations, no ongoing training, re-assessment of interpreters, resolution of complaints, nor the provision of a code of practice is required.

---

[4] http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/disability-services/types-disability-support/new-model-supporting-disabled-people/enhanced-individualised-funding

NZSTI

The New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) is a nationally representative body of translators and interpreters that provides a networking forum for its members, represents members' interests, and promotes continued professional development, quality standards and awareness of the profession within government agencies and the wider community. There are no formal standards for spoken languages in New Zealand, although a recent report has recommended their development (MBIE, 2016) in addition the provision of guidelines and improved purchasing systems for government agencies, better self-organising access, funding and support systems.

In the meantime, NZSTI reports that the default standard for spoken language interpreters is that they are good enough for the task required and the best possible available person is used. NZSTI is a professional society that operates on voluntary standards by credentialing international qualifications and experience in order to become a member. It provides workshops for ongoing professional development and has a Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for members. NZSTI is affiliated to SLIANZ, which has a permanent seat on the NZSTI Executive Council. NZSTI is also an affiliate member of NAATI and has 700 of the 2,500 spoken language interpreters in New Zealand as members.

Similar to the NZSL interpreting experience, government departments do not have dedicated budgets for spoken language interpreting and do not always grasp its importance. Each District Health Board makes decisions on how to spend operationally, for example through bulk funding or local ward decisions. The Ministry of Justice is already required to make funds available. NZSTI supports video interpreting as an efficient way to use resources in more remote areas.

NZSTI operates an interpreting complaints system with the Ministry of Justice, in which the final decree of a joint committee is final and cannot be challenged unless through a judicial review. This is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Justice.

NZ Sign Language Teachers Association (NZSLTA)

One comparison within the Deaf sector, NZSLTA has a Registration Advisory Panel, made up of three experienced tutors who determine tutors status as provisional, certified as tutors. Registration is online and depends on their hours of teaching experience.

NZ Speech and Language Therapist's Association

NZSTA is a self-regulating association. It has a 'Programme Accreditation Framework' for all training programmes in New Zealand and a qualifications approval process for overseas applicants. They do not monitor individuals' competency directly, but all members are required to complete a new graduate programme, a continuing professional development requirement annually, and all ethical complaints are logged. Speech-language therapy is not a registered profession and is therefore not mandatory to be member of the Association to practice in NZ. However, many employers mandate it, such as the DHBs.

Teaching

The *Education Council of New Zealand* is the professional organisation for teachers and focuses on promoting good practice by providing a register, (re)certification process, and complaints processes. Teachers are assessed against criteria by professional leaders employed in schools, as noted earlier. Ten percent of teachers are randomly selected for an independent and external assessment annually.

January 2017

The *New Zealand Education Institute* is the professional voice of New Zealand principals, teachers and support staff and the industrial voice of educators, committed to securing the best employment terms and conditions possible for all members: They negotiate members' pay and conditions, provide assistance to members, co-ordinate members' activities nationally, campaign on education and employment issues, and support new teachers.

The *New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association / Te Wehengarua* (PPTA) provides ongoing advice, guidance and advocacy for members about their conditions of employment.

Nursing

The *Nursing Council of New Zealand* is the regulatory authority responsible for the registration of nurses. Its primary function is to protect the health and safety of members of the public by ensuring that nurses are competent and fit to practise. It fulfils this function by:

- registering nurses
- setting ongoing competence requirements and issuing practising certificates
- setting scopes of practice and the qualifications required for registration
- accrediting and monitoring education providers and setting the state examination
- providing guidelines and standards for practice
- receiving and acting on notifications of health and competence concerns
- receiving and acting on complaints about the conduct of nurses
- promoting public awareness of the Council's responsibilities.

The Council's role and responsibilities are outlined in the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act, 2003.

The *NZ Nurses Organisation* (NZNO) is committed to the representation of members and the promotion of nursing/midwifery and provides members with resources, support and discounts on a wide range of items.

Social Work

Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers is not compulsory to join but provides a range of benefits for members, including competency assessment programme, continuing professional development, resources, advocacy and insurance. The ANZASW competency assessment service is approved by the Social Workers Registration Board for the purposes of becoming a registered social worker.

The *Social Workers Registration Board* provides a (re)certification process (accepting ANZASW assessments), public register and Code of Conduct and a complaints process.

Plumbing

Master Plumbers is also non-compulsory association that provides members with training, information, representation, networking, a brand, resources, and insurance. They also do no assessment of their members.

The range of functions undertaken by these certifying and professional bodies demonstrate that many approaches are possible for NZSL interpreters. Some professions manage competency and professional advocacy separately. Some are more or less demanding than others in how that competency is demonstrated. Most of these organisations have significantly larger memberships than NZSL interpreters have, however.

January 2017

6   Options discussion

NZSL interpreting services in New Zealand have many strengths that can be built upon to advance the quality of interpreting to Deaf people. In particular, it has a mature workforce with a range of skills, qualifications, and experience that supports standards development, a good degree course, and a professional association that provides some mentoring options, professional development, a directory, and supports its active membership.

However, there are also a number of issues relating to quality standards that require remedy. This review offers the opportunity to identify the key standards that will build in incentives to enhance quality and consistency.

6.1   Registration

Registration is considered the single most important standard to establish initially. The registry body then might establish systems and standards, possibly including:

- Provision of a mapping and certifying system for international qualifications;
- Maintaining a public list of interpreters that identifies experience, location, contact details and areas of expertise, if possible. Ideally this list would link with booking agencies, to ensure it is used regularly and kept up to date;
- Managing the revalidation of registration requirements through portfolios of practice and training;
- Independent oversight of and moderation of quality by assessing or examining language, interpreting and ethics for interpreters or courses provided to them against a list of expected competencies;
- Ensuring all interpreters working with vulnerable children or specified environments have a police vetting check;
- Providing identification for interpreters that is recognised as a quality mark or brand.

Registration could be voluntary at first but made compulsory over a five-year period to ensure the sector is fully supportive and not disadvantaged. For example, unqualified interpreters would be given time and the means to acquire qualifications, existing interpreters given time to adapt to the system and time to discuss the implications with the Deaf community.

A range of possibilities to manage the registry have been preliminarily explored, including the NZSL Board, ODI, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Health and Disability Commissioner, Te Taura Whiri I te Reo Māori, or even the Ministry of Justice. The Health and Disability Commissioner aims to protect consumer rights but does not provide any other similar professional registration service, nor do they have a great knowledge of Deaf issues and needs. Similarly, the Ministry of Justice has the only current standard in place now but is narrowly focussed on court and legal matters and does not have a strong Deaf perspective. The Māori interpreter unit has a strong and singular focus on Māori language, and does not have as thorough an approach to maintaining standards as Deaf people require, because of their comprehensive and ongoing NZSL communication needs. The NZSL Board clearly has strong Deaf expertise but largely provides advice for ODI, with few operational resources. ODI has a strong commitment to Deaf services and has an operational budget that may be able to be extended to provide a registration board alongside the jurisdiction of the NZSL Board and SLPI assessment.

The management of such a registry therefore may be best placed under either SLIANZ or ODI which also supports the NZSL Board. An ODI unit might be constructed that also oversees the

implementation of the SLPI assessment. Alternatively, MSD may be an appropriate place for a unit to oversee some key Deaf services. The latter options are preferred by the sector if possible, because they have independence from interpreter service provision and advocacy, and because they allow SLIANZ a clearer and more supportive role (see 6.6 below). Furthermore, SLIANZ does not have any management infrastructure now and would need to establish a range of functions in addition to the establishment of assessment systems required of any other agency. If the registry was within ODI or MSD, some strong Deaf and interpreter representation would be required, to guide those agencies to provide both a culturally appropriate and professionally informed service.

6.2   Generalists and specialists

While there is wide agreement to focus on the registration and enhancement of generalist interpreter services at this point in time, the need for specialist qualifications has been well reported in a range of areas including health, mental health, legal, compulsory and tertiary education and children. The strongest request for expanding generalist skills was that a basic level of Te Reo Māori and culture should be included in basic and ongoing training. All interpreters should also be aware of how to work with a Deaf person functioning as a Deaf interpreter.

Because court requirements are considered so important and because there is a standard currently in place, this review offers two options to develop that further.

1) Increase the requirement of courts to employ only interpreters with five years' experience of community interpreting, or
2) Delay until confirmation can be provided by the registry that the interpreter is certified for court work, as that system develops. This is likely to require specialist training and experience in the court system, teaming where possible with more experienced mentors. Higher rates of payment could be expected for court specialists.

6.3   Professional development - training

The registry would oversee that professional development in both training and practice is undertaken by interpreters to remain registered. There are a number of options as to which organisations might develop and provide both the generalist and specialist training. Given the international nature of sign language interpreting, it is likely that some training materials may be available for adaptation to New Zealand requirements.

- The registry, and/or
- The universities involved in Deaf education or interpreter training, and/or
- SLIANZ, and/or
- Interpreter agencies, and/or
- Other relevant organisations.

As a minimum, the registry should comment on whether the available training meets the needs of interpreters, and encourage more provision where needed.

Funding for the development and running of specific courses will need to be found. For example, the development of a legal paper may involve international expertise and resources to establish it within an organisation. Ideally, interpreters not working many hours may not have to pay the full costs of attendance, with at least a part subsidy in place.

6.4 Professional development - assessment

There are a variety of ways that quality can be assessed.

Assessment may be a costly and unwieldy endeavour, because it provides a single artificial instance in which to judge performance in a field where quality is highly contextualised. It nevertheless also provides highly valuable information for interpreters in advancing their practice. There are a number of assessment options for the registry to consider.

1) Incorporating NZSL within NAATI is perhaps the simplest option to implement. It could test basic skills and provides a much larger pool of assessments for validation. There is however some reluctance in New Zealand to incorporate what is seen as a limited and expensive system into New Zealand, and a strong preference to develop our own.

2) Training and contracting 1 – 2 assessors for a minimum of a single assessment two years after graduation (or earlier if ready for transition), which confirms graduates as fully registered interpreters, who have continued to develop their professional skills. Additional assessments might be available for interpreters after that period, for interpreters re-entering the field or perhaps every three to five years automatically. This option assumes there will be competencies in place that can be reliably measured against and validated with a small population of 100 interpreters in the country. Assessments may be able to be undertaken at times when the interpreting community gathers, such as at conferences to minimise travel costs.

3) The same option might be applied with five to six interpreters trained to assess in different parts of the country to increase ease of access for regional interpreters.

4) Formal but simpler appraisals could be undertaken by or with senior interpreters, if trained to do so.

5) Instead of training assessors, the registry could accredit all key courses and workshops provided for interpreter professional development, which in turn passes or fails those attending the programme.

6) Mentoring involves senior interpreters providing advice and encouragement for younger interpreters, possibly linked in teaming situations.

7) Peer mentoring largely involves voluntary and self-organised interpreter meetings for critiquing and supporting individual members. Paid senior members might attend twice yearly to ensure the processes are working.

The registry might contract assessors or accreditors individually, or to organisations such as AUT or SLIANZ. There will be reasonably substantial development costs to build the framework, competencies and training. Ongoing costs will consist of the assessment and reporting and will either be funded by new resources and/or interpreters directly. There will be costs of mentoring unless a systematised teaming approach can be negotiated with booking agencies. Peer mentoring incurs lower costs and relies on the commitment of individual interpreters to ensure the process is constructive. While mentoring could be self-funded by the interpreter directly, the low income of many interpreters may prohibit their use of this function and so may need to be limited in frequency or centrally funded. Affordability of training and assessment is expected to increase for interpreters with higher funding levels for Deaf people.

Groups of peer mentors may be practicable and affordable, as long as people are trained to participate constructively. All assessors and mentors would need some training to undertake their roles. Booking agencies would need to collaborate in the system, including possibly providing partial funding for the process, as at least one interpreter agency has been doing.

6.5   Complaints and feedback

The registry is encouraged by both the Deaf community and interpreters to ensure a robust complaints system is in place. This system is expected to encourage complaints to be resolved directly with the interpreter, and - if unsuccessful - to liaise with the booking agency, and - if unsuccessful there - to liaise with an official complaints service. There are two essential options available:

1) The registry could provide this service directly. This will involve the appointment of a complaints manager who will need to be able to respond to and resolve complaints around the country.

2) Acknowledge interpreter services as a disability service and engage the Health and Disability Commissioner to manage the complaints as they do with other parts of the disability sector.

In either case, the complaints service requires additional promotion, as awareness of the complaints process is poorly understood or utilised in the Deaf community. In addition, booking agencies should be encouraged to establish automatic and user-friendly feedback systems for both hearing and Deaf consumers of interpreting services.

6.6   The role of SLIANZ

If the registry separately undertakes the roles of for example, certifying, listing, revalidating, and assessing interpreters, as is true in the case of Australia and the Netherlands, SLIANZ would be likely to take on those roles that actively support and advocate for interpreter interests. They could provide professional development through training, peer and senior mentoring, and resource development, and also advocacy and promotion for the need for interpreting.

6.7   Booking agencies

The registry is unlikely to have any power over booking agencies but accessibility to services will be enhanced if current discord between booking agencies could be resolved. If leadership could be shown here, booking agencies could explore ways of collaborating to make booking easy for Deaf consumers, enable consistent teaming to enhance the skill level of newer interpreters and/or develop common feedback systems that enable ongoing consumer assessment of quality. Commitment to the skilled allocation of interpreters is critical but may not be able to be influenced by the registry.

6.8   Possible future costs

The following costs are broad estimates only and need to be refined before being considered accurate. There are, for example, no overhead, venue or travel costs included. No costs of a complaints service are included.

There are a number of ways these tasks could be undertaken that will affect costs. For example, one person employed on contract for 14 weeks may be able to undertake the first two tasks at a cost of around $27,000.

Task	Possible costs
Set up registry	Identifying systems, mapping and certifying processes and contracting individuals. No location costs included Two months' work ~ $20,000
Administering registry	Assume 10 hours a week @ $60,000 pro rata ~ $15,000
Competencies & standards for full registration are developed	Assume 6 weeks' work for one person @ $100 per hour $24,000
Training assessors	3-day panel for 6 people @ $100 per hour including trainer, and accommodation for trainer $15,000
Assessment for first two years	$180,000 ($2,000 * 90 interpreters) – 1st year $70,000 (30 – once every three years plus 5 new recruits) Plus travel and accommodation if needed No costs of interpreters being assessed included
Professional development training	Trainer only costs for two months Assumes training courses already available ~ $20,000
Specialist training competencies and modules	1 months work scouring international sources ~ $10,000
Training for mentoring and establishing systems	2 day panel for 20 people @100 an hour, including trainer $32,000
Appraisals provided once a year	Assume 3 hours per appraisal for 80 interpreters. Appraiser costs only $24,000
Mentors (1 hour a month for 10 months a year for interpreters)	Mentor costs only $50,000 per annum ($1000 * 50 interpreters * 10 months)

6.9   Interpreter standards options

Although these estimates should be treated with considerable caution, a number of options have been outlined below to provide indications of how investments in service improvements might be made over three years. There are many combinations possible within the options, but the following opportunities are built around varying levels of investment.

It is assumed that if additional funds were located to better meet Deaf people's interpreting needs, the system could be self-sustaining through increased interpreter income after three years.

1)   Retain the status quo

There is the possibility of doing nothing to change interpreter standards, retaining the existing standard for court interpreting. The advantage of this option is that no new resources would need to be made available. The disadvantage is that interpreting services would be left unsupported to

improve from their current level of quality, which clients rated as mediocre, with few systems to monitor its quality.

2) Minimal investment

A second option would be to establish and administer the registry and provide some resource for the professional development required. This would require relatively little resource and would both require and enable some ongoing training, but would not necessarily establish a culture of self-reflection nor enable the professional skills and needs of individual interpreters to be identified with recommendations for improvement.

Table 2: Possible costs for minimal investment

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Set up registry	$20,000			
Administering registry	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	
Professional development training	$20,000	$10,000	$10,000	
Total	**$55,000**	**$25,000**	**$25,000**	**$105,000**

3) Moderate investment

A third option might be to make a moderate investment in the interpreter service, providing the registry, developing clearer standards for postgraduate interpreters after two years and. It would provide mechanisms for expert and peer mentoring, and could provide interpreters with ongoing support and feedback. Training and mentor costs are only covered, rather than interpreter participants. It does not provide the more detailed and comprehensive assessments sought by SLIANZ.

Table 3: Possible costs for moderate investment

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Set up registry	$20,000			
Administering registry	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	
Competencies & standards developed	$24,000			
Training for mentoring and establishing systems	$32,000			
Mentors	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	
Professional development training	$20,000	$10,000	$10,000	
Total	**$161,000**	**$75,000**	**$75,000**	**$311,000**

4) Substantial investment

A fourth and final option is to invest relatively heavily in the registry, and SLIANZ to provide another clear postgraduate level and formal assessment systems that identify individual interpreter strengths and areas for development in meeting this level of practice. All interpreters in this option would be assessed in the first year and then a three-yearly cycle of assessment would begin. All graduate interpreters would be assessed no later than their second year of practice.

This option also provides mechanisms for ongoing mentoring or appraisals and training resources to ensure interpreters can attend desirable training opportunities required for reregistration. Other funding sources such as interpreter employers and interpreter co-funding could be further explored.
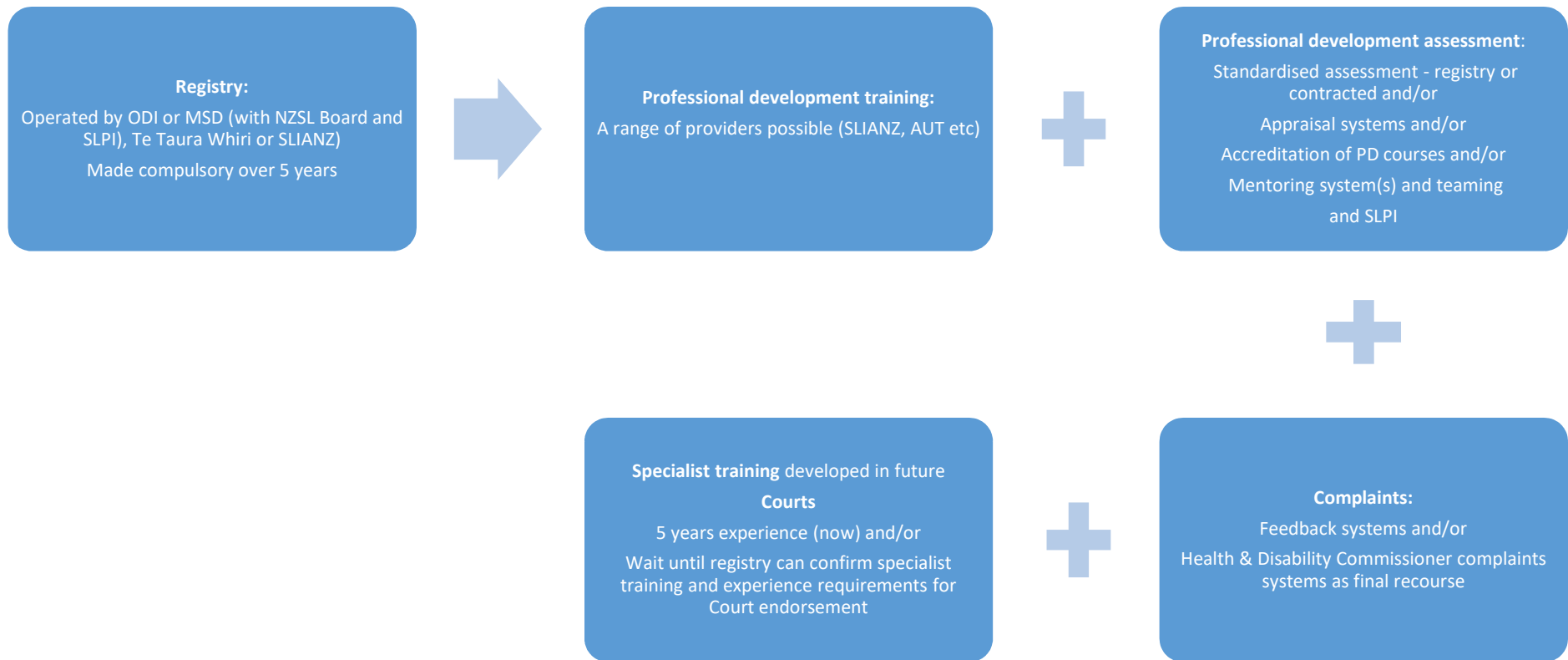
Table 4: Possible costs for substantial investment

Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
Set up registry	$20,000			
Administering registry	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	
Competencies & standards	$24,000			
Training assessors	$15,000			
Assessment	$180,000	$70,000	$70,000	
Professional development training	$20,000	$10,000	$10,000	
Specialist training competencies and modules		$10,000		
Training for mentoring and establishing systems	$32,000			
Mentors	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	
Total	**$356,000**	**$155,000**	**$145,000**	**$656,000**

The diagram below summarises and outlines the essential options available to ODI and the NZSL board.

Figure 1: Interpreter standards options

Registry:

Operated by ODI or MSD (with NZSL Board and SLPI), Te Taura Whiri or SLIANZ)

Made compulsory over 5 years

Professional development training:

A range of providers possible (SLIANZ, AUT etc)

Professional development assessment:

Standardised assessment - registry or contracted and/or

Appraisal systems and/or

Accreditation of PD courses and/or

Mentoring system(s) and teaming

and SLPI

Specialist training developed in future

Courts

5 years experience (now) and/or

Wait until registry can confirm specialist training and experience requirements for Court endorsement

Complaints:

Feedback systems and/or

Health & Disability Commissioner complaints systems as final recourse

References

- Boers-Visker, E, Poor, G, and Van Den Bogaerde, B (no date). The Sign Language Proficiency Interview: Description and use with sign language of the Netherlands; Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands.
- Bontempo, K., & Levitzke-Gray, P. (2009). Interpreting down under: Sign language interpreter education and training in Australia. In J. Napier, C. Ball & L. S. Gibson (Eds.), (pp. 149-170) Gallaudet UP. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/742399325?accountid=8424
- Bontempo, K., Napier, J., Hayes, L., & Brashear, V. (2014). Does personality matter? an international study of sign language interpreter disposition. Translation & Interpreting, 6(1), 23-46. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1692279761?accountid=8424
- CISLI (2016): ISL / English Interpreter Income Survey Report; Ireland.
- De Wit, M and Sluis, I (2012). Sign Language interpreter quality: the perspective of deaf sign language users in the Netherlands.
- Dean, R. K. & Pollard, R. Q (2001). The application of demand-control theory to sign language interpreting: Implications for stress and interpreter training. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education 6* (1), 1-14 .
- *EFSLI (2013) Learning Outcomes for Graduates of a Three Year Sign Language Interpreting Training Programme*
- Ministry of Business innovation and Employment (2016). Fair and Accessible Public Services: Summary Report on the Use of Interpreters and Other Language Assistance in New Zealand; Wellington downloaded from https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/the-language-assistance-services-project
- Irish Sign Link Ltd (2006). Once Off Accreditation for Irish Sign Language/English & Deaf Relay Interpreters; Ireland.
- Johnston T (2006).W(h)ither the Deaf Community? Population, Genetics and the Future of Australian Sign Language Sign Language Studies Vol 6 (2).
- Lee, R and Winston, B (2016): Ushering in New Generations: The Critical Role of Mentorship; a presentation at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland, Critical Link International
- Napier, J and Haug, T: Justisigns (2015). A European overview of sign language interpreting provision in legal settings.
- Office for Disability Issues (2015): Interpreting-relevant feedback from NZSL Board Action Plan community consultation, Wellington.
- Office for Disability Issues (2016): New Zealand Disability Strategy; downloaded in October 2016 from http://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/
- Regulations for government website; downloaded in October 2016 https://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=ED-2016-OSERS-0005-0001
- Russell, D (2013). Interpreting Legal Discourse and Working in Legal Settings: An AVLIC Position Paper Synopsis prepared for ASL Translation, AVLIC.
- Sign Language Interpreting Service (2009): Accreditation; Ireland.
- SLIANZ (2013). NZSL Interpreters Work Survey

- Statistics New Zealand. 2013 census http://stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx?request_value=13170&tabname=Culturaldiversity
- Lemay, S and McBrearty, M (May 2015). Recommendations for Professional Compliance Review Process, A paper presented to the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada.
- The Interpreter Issues Working Groups (2004). New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter Issues: NZSL Interpreting in Court and Systems for Funding and Supply of Interpreter Services: A Report to the Office for Disabilities.
- Tri-City Herald (2016). New sign language interpreting rules take effect in Michigan http://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/business/health-care/article90749252.html
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006, downloaded in October 2016 from http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml

Key international interpreting websites

- https://www.naati.com.au/
- http://www.avlic.ca/
- https://cisli.ie/
- http://www.nbtg.nl/
- http://www.stichtingrtgs.nl/
- http://www.nrcpd.org.uk/

Appendix 1: Research Participants

In addition to practising interpreters and members of the Deaf community, the following people participated in this review.

- Alan Wendt and Kellye Bensley, iSign
- Andrea Cooke and three interpreting staff at the Video Interpreting Service
- Anne Shorland and David Foster, Kelston Deaf Education Centre
- Anna Miles, Professional Standards Portfolio, New Zealand Speech-language Therapists' Association
- Ashley Campbell, AVLIC President, Canada
- Associate Professor Rachel McKee, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
- Catherine White, senior interpreter, Ireland
- Cormac Leonard, Chairperson, CISLI, Ireland
- Dan Hanks, Lynx, Shizue Sameshima, Connect Interpreting
- Deaf Interpreting New Zealand Executive
- Debra Russell, President, World Association of Sign Language Interpreters
- Della Goswell, Lecturer, Convenor Auslan-English Interpreting Program, Linguistics Department, Macquarie University, Sydney,Australia
- George Major, Lecturer and Programme Leader: NZSL and Deaf Studies; NZSL-English Interpreting; Translation and Interpreting, Auckland University of Technology
- Henry Liu, President of the International Federation of Translators
- Karen Bontempo, Honorary Associate, Linguistics, Macquarie University
- Lachlan Keating, CEO, Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand
- Lorraine Leeson, Professor of Deaf Studies at the Centre for Deaf Studies, Trinity College, Dublin
- Lynette Pivac, Lecturer in New Zealand Sign Language and Deaf Studies, Auckland University of Technology
- Mary Nixon, Ministry of Justice
- Maya de Wit, Trainer, Researcher, Consultant Interpreter, Netherlands
- Quintin Ridgeway, President New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters
- Rachel McKee, Programme Director, NZSL Studies, Victoria University of Wellington
- Robyn Pask, Chief Executive, Interpreting New Zealand
- Shannon McKenzie, Wordsworth interpreting agency
- Simon Hesselberg, Rexash Consultancy, UK
- Sonia Logan, consultant on the SLPI project, Wellington
- Tertiary instituts: Kyle Macfadyen, Gerard Chow, Kristina Luli

Appendix 2: Other qualifications:

Not related to NZSL, but I also have a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Bachelor of Arts in English literature

BA in Psychology and Education (double major)

BA, MA

Batchelor of Arts in Second Language Education

Bachelor of Arts

Bachelor of Arts; Major Educational Philosophy

BA, MA, PhD

BA in theatre and film from Victoria University

BA, Diploma in Education of students with Hearing Impairment, Reading recovery certificate, Graduate Diploma in Education, Coaching/Supervision Certificate

BA in English

BA, Level 6 Certificate in BSL, LTCL (piano)

B Commerce

Bachelor of Commerce and Administration

Bachelor of Early Childhood Education

Bachelor of International Communication

Bachelor of Sport & Recreation, majoring in Outdoor Education

Engineering, Health and Social care, Mental health

National Certificate in Community Support Services Level 2 and Level 3

Cert in Teaching people with Disabilities

DipLTA

Diploma in Biblical Studies (Laidlaw)

Dip London City & Guilds and Dip Art and Creativity

Diploma in unrelated area, certificate in small business management

Diploma in Fine Arts

two more papers to complete to qualify for the Degree in Sign Language Interpreting

Diploma in sign language interpreting

Diploma in Sign Language interpreting

BA in Linguistics and Art History from Uni of Auckland

BA in Linguistics

Postgraduate diploma Applied Language Studies, working towards an MA Applied Language Studies

M.A. applied linguistics

M.A. in Sign Linguistics

NAATI

I did the AUT Medical and Legal Interpreting Certificates after graduation

Dip. Mental Health Support work

Postgraduate Diploma of Sign Language Interpreting (NZ)

Dip Occupational Therapy first year professional exams

Post Grad Diploma in Language Teaching from Uni of Auckland

PhD (in progress)

Chef

Certificate in secretarial studies

NZ Comp Nurse

Diploma in Hotel Management

Qualified Swim Instructor specialising in adaptive water skills, babies, infant, toddler and preschool. Qualified Manager in a Swim environment. First aid (response) trained. Qualified Barista.

Certificate in Joinery

NZ Ceramics Certificate

January 2017