

# WASLI Newsletter 2008 - 03



*WASLI is committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide*

- A new sign language interpreter Association in Romania
- WASLI Secretary visits New Zealand
- New Zealand Government invests \$100,000 in Sign Language Interpreter Training
- NAOBI 2008 "Embracing the History ... Empowering the Future" 19-22 June 2008 USA

## **ROMANIA – A NEW SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER ASSOCIATION**



Area: 238,391 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 22,390,000  
Capital: Bucharest  
Language: Romanian, Hungarian, German and others  
Currency: Romanian Leu (US\$1=33,107.10 Leu)  
GDP: USD \$44,800  
(Source: Readers Digest World Atlas (2005))

A new sign language interpreter association has been established in Romania. It is called the Romanian National Association of Accredited Sign Language Interpreters (ANIALMG ROM).

WASLI received a communication of introduction from the very first President Gelu Bogdan and with the hopes that soon they will be able to take up WASLI membership. ANIALMG ROM has been established with the support of the National Association of the Deaf of Romania.

WASLI wishes ANIMLG-ROM well in its aim to develop the profession of sign language interpreting and to the benefit of the Romanian Deaf community and will work to support them in their work where we can.

## NEW ZEALAND – WASLI SECRETARY VISIT



Area: 270,534 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 3,850,000  
Capital: Wellington  
Language: English, Maori  
Currency: NZ Dollar (US\$1=1.54 NZD)  
GDP: USD \$57,241  
(Source: Reader's Digest World Atlas (2005))

WASLI Secretary, Zane Hema, was in his home country of New Zealand in March 2008 and ran a series of workshops on Mentoring for SLIANZ (the Sign Language Interpreter Association of New Zealand). This was a wonderful opportunity to meet many interpreters and to learn about how the profession is developing in New Zealand.



*(Interpreters in Auckland)*



*(Interpreters in Christchurch)*



*(Interpreters in Wellington)*

George Major is the WASLI Regional Representative for Australasia & Oceania and was in the last weeks of her time in New Zealand before moving to Australia to do further study, but still continue her role as representative with the support of the 2 National Members of the region.

The Secretary also had the opportunity to visit the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington, where he met up with David McKee (Research Director of the Deaf Studies Research Unit and Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics) and Rachel McKee who is the Programme Director of Deaf Studies.

Rachel was the Guest Editor of the WASLI 2005 Conference Proceedings.

He also gave a lecture to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Students of the Sign Language Interpreting Programme at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

"There were many highlights during this visit. It is always good to meet interpreters and to talk about interpreting. It was great to meet interpreter students and it was also great to meet others who together play a significant role in shaping developments in the fields of Deafness, Education, Research and Interpreting.

On a personal note, I finally met a Deaf cousin who I had only heard of by name. He told me that I have 8 other Deaf cousins and I had the pleasure of meeting 2 of them during my visit.)



(Above: left to right: - George Major (WASLI Regional Representative for the Australasia & Oceania Region, Alan Wendt (President of SLIANZ) and Zane Hema (WASLI Secretary)

## **NEW ZEALAND – TRAINING OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS (March 2008)**

Communications and Information Technology Minister David Cunliffe has announced the government will fund twenty scholarships for training in sign language.

"The government has set aside \$100,000 in scholarships for the Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting through Auckland University of Technology," said Mr Cunliffe.

"We currently have a shortage of qualified interpreters in New Zealand. The scholarships, which are available from this year, should encourage more people into training. This is important for the development of new services for the Deaf community."

Later this year the government will consult on a video relay service to enable the Deaf to communicate via sign language interpreters. This would build on the telecommunications services already provided through the New Zealand Relay service.

"It is critical that we have enough qualified interpreters to make future resources for the Deaf viable."

To assist raising awareness of this important occupation, the funding agreement requires Auckland University of Technology to actively promote the Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting course and the availability of the new scholarships.

#### Background:

The New Zealand Relay service is administered under the Telecommunications Service Obligations (TSO) framework by the Ministry of Economic Development. The service provides telecommunications for people who are deaf, hearing-impaired, deaf-blind or speech-impaired. The service involves a relay assistant who voices everything that is typed and types everything that is said.

The TSO framework ensures the availability of certain telecommunications services, such as New Zealand Relay and local telephone service for residential customers, which would otherwise not be made available commercially.

Further information about the New Zealand Relay Service is available at [www.nzrelay.co.nz](http://www.nzrelay.co.nz)



## **NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BLACK INTERPRETERS**

"NAOBI is the only national organisation that supports sign language interpreters from the African diaspora. As such, we recognise that we stand at an important crossroad. We do not stand alone. The fact that many cultures meet and converge here is what makes our existence so important."

NAOBI is based in the US and was established in 1987. The current President is Leandra Williams. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Professional Development Conference (NAOBI 2008) "Embracing the History ... Empowering the Future" takes place in Boston, Massachusetts USA.

WASLI wishes the conference well. For more information about NAOBI visit their website [www.naobi.org](http://www.naobi.org)

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