ABOVE Chariot tracks in Pompeii Italy. PHOTO Dave Wakelin

LEFT Contemplative garden Hanoi. PHOTO Sandra Sweeting
Parthenon Greece. PHOTO Dave Wakelin
Plaszow Poland. PHOTO Michelle Edge
Editorial

Interpreters - Home and Abroad

Helping to create the best possible experience for our visitors is core for INNZ members whose diverse roles range from education to management, designer to curator, ranger and guide to business leader. Diverse are the projects that challenge us; unique are many of the challenges.

And yet we are not in isolation here in New Zealand. Interpreters all over the world face their own challenges and solve them in ways that can be applied back home. Kiwis love to travel and interpreters are no exception and an interpreter on holiday more often than not brings home plenty of new ideas and approaches to add into their toolbox.

In this issue, themed ‘Interpreters - Home and Abroad’, Dean Cato of DESIGN Strategies takes a look at New Zealand’s biculturalism: where does Te Reo fit into the scheme of interpretation; who does it serve; what does it reflect; who should pay and what are some options for incorporating it into our interpretation?

Becky Reid of Telltale gives some insights into the work of Clare Fraser, information services officer at the Dunedin Botanic Garden. Can interpretation be put to work to modify the undesirable behaviour of visitors? What happens when the interpreter dresses up as a panda?

INNZ Committee member Sandra Sweeting reports on the darker side of human history – Hoa Lo Prison in Hanoi. Telling these stories is the hallmark of a mature nation. The experience is grueling, yet very powerful; so powerful that ‘old-style’ methods of presentation worked well – the place did not need state-of-the-art to engage. Sending visitors back into the street via a courtyard garden gave time for reflection and renewal.

Dave Wakelin of Tark Communications views Europe’s heritage sites through an interpreter’s eye while Michelle Edge of Auckland Council networks with fellow interpreters at conference in Poland. Three quick-fire questions from members of overseas interpretation networks reveal that we are essentially all versions of the same beast.

Don’t miss the INNZ Spring Conference - Partnerships in Action - in Wellington this year based at Wellington Zoo: Thursday 8 October and Friday 9 October. Register on our website. Expect to be challenged. Feel free to challenge others. Does the old saying “they who hold the purse strings hold the power” have any relevance in today’s interpretation world? How do others walk the partnership and stakeholder highway?

Look forward to seeing you there!

Editors Janet Bathgate and Sarah Mankelow
NAI/INNZ Conference 2016

**Tihei Mauri Ora**

*The story begins …*

*I am the story, the story is me.*

*The story is us, the story is we.*

INNZ is excited to play host to the US National Association for Interpretation (NAI) 10th Annual International Conference in April 2016. Taking place in Wellington, “the coolest little capital in the world,” the conference will provide the opportunity to experience some of New Zealand’s best culture, cuisine, and creativity.

Take part in a gathering of the greatest minds, ideas, and innovation in interpretation as we seek to share with each other the knowledge and spirit of interpretation. The story begins here.

International Conference on Interpretation
Wellington, New Zealand
April 3-7, 2016
NAI and INNZ

**Call for Presentations**

Go to the NAI website to download full information and submit a session proposal.
http://www.interpnet.com

**A double-dip of Wellington**

Members that attend our annual Spring Conference at Wellington Zoo in October will be eligible for a double-dip discount for the April event. More details will be available soon. Keep an eye on our website www.innz.net.nz/events

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Sometimes, it’s just a no-brainer. My recent works at the Waitangi National Trust site, as you would expect, are all completely bilingual. New wayfinding, site interpretation and the Treaty history have all been re-written, translated and a consistent graphic style applied over the entire Treaty grounds. The budgets for phone and tablets apps have been approved and await the commencement of phase three of the master plan.

In the end, it is really about asking ourselves what is appropriate for each specific set of circumstances. Not every piece of interpretation needs a Māori back story, nor should we seek a Māori narrative just for the sake of it, but one thing that emerges from this debate is that in order to completely interpret a place there needs to be engagement with local iwi, after all, it was their story first.

As creators of site-specific interpretation, we owe it to our visitors to give them the best possible experience and information. An increasingly large part of that quality experience is the use of the first language to name, describe and store in the cultural memory, the flora, fauna, landscape and the physical and spiritual relationships with the place.

Māori worldview, the oral tradition of memory, of myth and legend, creates an authentic experience, a genuine sense of place, adding richness and depth to the interpretation. But is the default museum position of using Te Reo for the title, theme and possibly the opening paragraph enough?

What if the Māori version of events differs significantly from that proposed by Pakeha? In these cases a simple transliteration is not enough, the Māori text needs to be translated into English. And here is the rub; by doing so we have tripled the size of the graphic panel as well as the budget. What first glance seems a straightforward proposition, the use of Te Reo has significant impact on clients, project management, providers and the end users. Once we start developing a position on the use of Te Reo in our projects a whole raft of issues come to the surface. Which language should be first? Side-by-side? Above and below? Why are we doing this? Our visitors can’t read Māori. How can we afford this? And the list goes on.

The cost implications alone often deter clients from pursuing a bilingual approach to their communications. But the increasing ubiquity of smart phones and tablets offers a highly cost-effective method for the delivery of more than just text but audio and video files as well.
During a recent half-day guided tour of Hanoi, the 1000-year-old capital of Vietnam we queued dutifully with Vietnamese school children to see Ho Chi Minh’s Mausoleum, French-built Presidential Palace and his smaller residence. We visited the Temple of Literature, dedicated to Confucius, sages and scholars, and marvelled at the splendour of Buddhist Temples.

But an even more memorable part of the tour, if somewhat disturbing, was Hòa Lò Prison, (sarcastically) dubbed the ‘Hanoi Hilton’ by the American prisoners held there during the Vietnam War. Built in the late 1800s when Vietnam was still part of French Indochina, the prison was the quintessential example of the ‘palpable French influence’ promised in the tourist brochure, but not in a good way. In its ‘hey day’ it was a colonial tool used to suppress the Vietnamese, particularly political prisoners agitating for independence.

I appreciated the simple old-school interpretation in the museum such as the model of the prison; it was a nice touch of the communist 1950s style still evident throughout the city.

*Of course there is nothing like being inside the actual prison to give power to the stories, nicely augmented by the in-depth knowledge and passion of our local guide.*

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The ‘Hanoi Hilton’ only revealed its connection to the Vietnam War towards the end of our visit, as my capacity for human cruelty reached capacity. As our guide carefully explained, before we looked at the displays; “the government doesn’t tell lies, just half-truths”.

Clearly the content carried a communist and victorious Vietnam bias which was in itself interesting. The final site at the prison was a secluded but large garden space for contemplation, complete with altar. It was an appropriate finish to an intriguing step back in time; a gruelling but fascinating experience.

But some aspects of the museum were brought to life by our guide in unexpected ways. A simple small concrete cell seemed cruel enough, until our guide pointed out the sloping floor. He explained that when a prisoner lay down (shackled to the floor) their head would end up where faeces and urine collected; a ‘thoughtful’ design feature. Later, a simple 44 gallon drum with a small hole near the lid was revealed as a torture device – either filled with water to immerse prisoners in, or simply as a mini cell which was then beaten with sticks.
Last year my wife and I visited 18 European countries ranging from Iceland to Croatia, reveling in the natural beauty and in incredible heritage sites, some built many thousands of years ago.

Before visiting a historic site we found spending time in museums associated with the sites gave us a chance to focus on the details. Containing thousands of artefacts found during the excavation of the sites, the best museums invite you into communities from thousands of years ago and through skilled display and carefully chosen words, create empathy.

Several historic sites stood out for me for their interpretation; Herculaneum/Pompeii in Italy; and Knossos, the Parthenon and Mycenae in Greece. Herculaneum and Pompeii focused my attention on the fragility of life, while the three Greek sites in particular caused me to consider the balance between restoration or re-creation and preservation.

**Herculaneum and Pompeii in Italy**
Pompeii covers a massive sprawling area and was a centre of trade and governance. My interpreter’s eye focusses on minutiae. Noticing the wheel ruts in the paving stones left behind by thousands of chariots and carts for me created strong images of an ancient bustling busy city.

By leaving tufa (volcanic debris from Vesuvius) in place over some windows excavators have left a wonderful feature to interpret. We see windows which were barred with an iron grill in much the same way as we do today. We see the extent and compaction of the tufa, charred window sills and rusted iron bars giving a greater understanding of the violence and force of the eruption.

In the Naples Museum of Archaeology, 2000-year-old mosaics from Herculaneum and Pompeii radiated vivid colour. Gazing at these wonderfully detailed mosaics transported me into a vibrant Herculaneum villa; focus on detail has its rewards.

**Knossos, the Parthenon and Mycenae in Greece**
The most well preserved of the Minoan palaces is Knossos, thanks to Sir Arthur Evans, ex-curator of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University. Evans purchased land in Crete and excavated the site in the early 1900s. I had mixed feelings about what he left behind.

Following the excavations he used a massive amount of concrete to recreate walls and roofs. Concrete beams were given a wooden texture, columns were painted and frescoes recreated as he imagined the original might have looked.

This contrasts with Mycenae in eastern Greece where the imposing palace has been left pretty much as found when excavated. The huge stone blocks that fit so precisely together gave rise to the belief the only a giant like Cyclops could have carved and placed the stones.

Both sites have excellent museums which depict life in Minoan times but Crete’s Heraklion Museum of Archaeology was the most impressive museum we visited in all of Europe. Just reopened after nine years it focussed on telling the story of the Minoan civilisation from around 1700-1500BC with wonderful display techniques, exquisite artefacts with succinct descriptions in Greek and English. Being able to stand and marvel at what has survived for millennia goes beyond words.

At the Parthenon in Athens engineers are painstakingly replacing missing sections of the columns with marble, exactingly cut to match the original. The Parthenon is superbly interpreted largely offsite at the Athens Museum of Archaeology and at the newer Acropolis Museum at the base of the Acropolis.

All three sites took a different approach to creating their visitor experience; which led me to question; is there a limit to how far should archaeologists and interpreters go in restoring and interpreting a site? What are the boundaries? How do we decide where the focus should be?
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**is there a limit to how far should archaeologists and interpreters go in restoring and interpreting a site? What are the boundaries? How do we decide where the focus should be?**

LEFT Window grill – the depth of tufa, charred window sills and rusted iron bars gave a greater understanding of the violence and force of the eruption.

ABOVE / BELOW Knossi Palace and Parthenon – restoration versus recreation; which is the more effective or appropriate in telling the stories at heritage sites?
Capturing people’s attention while they ‘smell the roses’ in the Dunedin Botanic Garden is a challenge eagerly met by information services officer Clare Fraser.

Interpreter, event manager, sign designer, behavioural psychologist and fancy dress party enthusiast, Clare has been interpreting the 30-hectare garden’s numerous collections for the past 15 years.

On-site signs are the main interpretive medium used and each is themed to define different plant collections. Today, over 90 signs are sited within Dunedin’s infamous green space, designed to be subtle but at the same time noticeable. This takes creative balance.

Each plant collection has its own family of signs defined by size, colour and shape. For example, in the rose garden Clare explains her choices;

“The soft beauty of a rose and its perfume is contrasted with the harshness of its thorns. So I have used a clunky, bold font to represent the harshness and a cloud-like background in pastel colours for the softness.”

Both curving and angular shapes represent the contrasting sharpness and softness of a rose bush.

Clare describes New Zealand native plants as architectural in their form; “They have a solid presence and are minus the pretty, perfumed, bold flower look.” Her interpretive panels reflect that, she says, by being more modernist and bold in colour to contrast with the generally green and brown backdrop of natives.
In the geographic plant collection, a series of globe-inspired oval panels effectively pass on the message.

“The signs ‘must be secondary to the plants – salient but not dominant’.”

Most of the signs are set low, ‘framed’ by surrounding plants. One of the herbaceous border panels is surrounded in summer by bright floral forms, with text suggesting the gardener uses plants like an artist’s palette.

Also effective are the ‘pop-up’ interpretation signs that Clare has designed to respond to the changing seasons. It’s a quick process with “minimal consultation” she says. Rather than going into the ground for the next 10 years, she uses laminated prints, inserted into a bespoke steel garden prong. Graphics provide insights into seasonal behaviours of birds, insects and plants.

Human behaviour in the gardens has recently created a new interpretive challenge for Clare. Yes, drunks are her latest target visitor. Some are using the Dunedin Botanic Garden as a party space. Large trees are used to play a game known as POSSUM; people climb the tree to drink and the winner is the one who hasn’t fallen out of the tree!

Clare is attempting to get ‘inside the head of the visitor’ to come up with some behavioural messages. A personified message placed at the base of the tree appears to have been successful.

All in a day’s work
While Clare’s main job is to encourage visitors to engage with the garden environment, she also edits a weekly garden column for the Otago Daily Times and oversees the garden’s information centre in partnership with the Friends of the Botanic Garden. She’s also been known to dress up as a panda at the recent 150th Dunedin Botanic Garden birthday celebration!

Sitting among the roses and observing the responses of visitors is surely interpretive evaluation at its best. Asked what her next interpretive angle may be after the drunks are dealt with she responds coyly; “Many people court and meet in the garden’s peaceful setting; perhaps I will look at the romantic visitor group next.”

Who thought garden interpretation was just about the birds and bees?

You can contact Clare Fraser, DCC Information services officer at Clare.Fraser@dcc.govt.nz
One of the most important skills a face-to-face interpreter can have is to be flexible and considerate of their audience. Sometimes this means throwing out your interpretive rule book and adapting to the style of your group. My recent trip to Colombia was a crash course in this concept.

For two weeks in May I volunteered at an organisation called Proyecto Titi, a multi-faceted conservation programme that protects the critically endangered species cotton-top tamarins. I was keen to help them develop some of their field-trip experiences for school groups living near the forest. I had the opportunity to lead classes and sections of this trip and was surprised by the contrast between these sessions and the ones I was accustomed to in New Zealand.

It wasn’t just the language that was different; it was the mannerisms and the group behaviours as well. The building blocks of group etiquette that these students had been taught were so different than the ones in New Zealand. No better or worse; just different, and equally successful.

Three of these differences really stood out:

**Body language**
Watching the hand movements and expressions of the educators was like hearing two stories simultaneously; one via the voice and one through the body. These dynamic movements emphasized the points the educators were trying to make. The class was learning through these movements as well as through the words. Standing still wasn’t going to work for me.

**Interruption**
In these sessions, people talked over each other and yet everyone was heard. It is how they communicate as a culture (much like my family around the Thanksgiving table back in the USA). Interruption was not considered rude. Kids jumped in with thoughts and ideas in a free-flowing, group-sharing environment. Their enthusiasm to engage with the topic was welcomed.

**Noise**
Sometimes silence isn’t golden. When the classroom was silent it was not because the class was contemplating what they’d learned, it was because they were passing notes to friends and checking their cell phones. When the class was loud, it was because they were getting excited about what they were learning and wanted to share their opinions. Noise equalled engagement. I couldn’t believe it; I wanted a noisy group!

If I had tried to address these individual interruptions and the din of classroom chatter, I would have spent half of the session teaching kids a whole different cultural norm instead of teaching them about conservation. Sure I could have explained in my broken Spanish “wait until you’re called on”, but seeing as these weren’t their values, I adapted my interpreting style to meet their needs. Not only did this help me get into the mind-set of the Proyecto Titi educators and therefore give them better feedback, it also helped me as an interpreter. I gained some new insights and strategies to try with groups. The whole trip was a real lesson in throwing out predispositions on how a class should run or how a group should interact with you. Work with your group not against them. There’s more than one way to be a successful face-to-face interpreter.

Further reading: check out the innz blog
http://www.innz.net.nz/you-had-me-at-hello/
http://www.innz.net.nz/five-tips-for-a-successful-guided-tour/
It was some kind of wonderful to be in a foreign country, with zlotys as currency, goulash as a favoured food and a schmooze of interpreters from all over the world. I was delighted to breakfast with interpreters from Malta, Belarus and Germany. I talked with a Polish woman living and working in Ecuador and a Serbian interpreting in Dubai. Dinner was shared with a Ukrainian, a Scotsman and a Swede. You get the gist – this was a truly international crowd and it was more than a little intimidating to present one of my recent projects to this discerning but sharing bunch. This was a conference where the site visits closely matched the theme “Sensitive Heritage-Sensitive Interpretation” and where field trips were given equal value to the presentations. This ensured that both the academically inclined and practitioners were well catered for.

***Inspiration***

The most innovative work presented was developed by the Welsh contingent doing creative things with castle interpretation. For example they used a life-size chess board to interpret the vagaries of kings, queens and bishops and their pawns – brilliant! The Welsh also appear to be leading the way with bi-lingual interpretation – it’s compulsory there.

By far the most affecting presentation was by an American-born, Jewish woman Leora Tec, titled “I’m not Polish”. The combination of personal testimony and powerful storytelling had the most hardened in the audience in tears.

Keynote speaker Dr Andrzej Leder, a Polish academic was also impressive. Centred on the theft of an artefact from Auschwitz, he artfully picked and prodded away at the painful topic of “Who is the trustee of memory”. For a challenging and ghastly day we ‘toured’ three Nazi death camps – Plaszow, Auschwitz 1 and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

**Auschwitz - the largest cemetery**

There is no way of conveying the horror of this place. It was disturbing and overwhelming; I wanted to withdraw, to pull back and process things but this wasn’t possible in a group tour scenario. This is a place where I (and I think many other delegates) would have welcomed a cleansing ritual on arrival and departure, as we often do at our sacred sites.

The interpretation was at times spare and simple, but arresting. Perhaps the most powerful were the mounds of single objects; heaps of shaved human hair, a mountain of confiscated suitcases, and an enormous pile of shoes.

There were two memorials, well away from Auschwitz but related, which also had profound impact on me. An installation in the courtyard in the old Jewish ghetto of Krakow where Jews were herded before deportation, featured an array of empty chairs… left behind. The second was in Berlin. I’ve never been a lover of plaques of any sort but these gleaming, gold, cobblestone-sized ones on the city footpaths were very poignant. They mark the entrance to homes and apartments of Holocaust victims. I was standing on the doorsteps of their homes, from where they were taken.
Memorial chairs – a memorial of empty chairs sits in the old Jewish ghetto of Krakow where Jews were herded before deportation.

ABOVE Suitcases – piles of confiscated suitcases were a powerful story-telling tool. ABOVE RIGHT Memorial plaques gold cobblestones mark the entrance to homes and apartments of Holocaust victims.

13

...supersensitive...

A taster of Polish parks
For me visiting two of Poland’s National Parks, Tatra and Ojcow, was a highlight and provided a much needed respite from visiting sites of atrocities. At Tatra we luxuriated in a Sound of Music-like scene, soaring snow-dusted mountains, rolling meadows with wild flowers and clean alpine air.

At Tatra Park they had an unusual braille overlay on some of the signs. Life-size sculptures of the park animals were not just for the kids to recognise (and play on) but I believe, also for tactile exploration by sight-impaired.

The staff used very ‘old school’ techniques at park visitor centres but sometimes applied them superbly. I saw the best 3D map, a massive and perfectly executed diorama and an excellent film at one of the visitor centres.

Standing in a visitor’s shoes for once, I was reminded that even if the interpretation is good, if the conditions or context are innervating or uncomfortable, the whole experience is tainted. Guiding best practice was rarely adhered to on our field trips. We stood for long periods in the hot sun with no shade or shelter, and we were often talked at. Fortunately we had some young intelligent, diligent and passionate guides to offset the sexist, humourless and disinterested ones.

After the conference I ventured to Berlin and went to Checkpoint Charlie. The free street-side interpretation here takes the form of a wall and there is lots of space to tell a linear story.

Most visitors seemed to be there to take selfies but I engaged deeply with this exhibit. It was well written and the photo selection was really disciplined and evocative. I think I read every word and learnt a great deal.

I felt distaste, discomfort and unease at both the Berlin Wall and at the Auschwitz sites. These places are Holocaust and Cold War tourism destinations with bored-ticket takers, crowds, and jostle…endless rows of audio headphones, carparks full of buses and commerce everywhere. Quiet and reflective they were not. But the more people that get jolted out of apathy by going to such sites the better – right?
Q1 - What do you think is one of the biggest challenges facing interpreters today?
Interpreters are the public face of their organizations, but they are often taken for granted. In a just world, interpreters, who help achieve management goals and serve as the spokesperson for a site's resources, would be compensated in accordance with their relative importance to that site. Instead, it seems that interpreters face a marketplace slim on well-paying, full-time jobs.

Q2 - What value do you get out of belonging to your network organisation?
Whatever the field and whatever its professional association, the most valuable aspect I've witnessed (and experienced) is a shared sense of purpose with like-minded individuals. That can manifest itself in formal trainings and meetings or through informal gatherings over a meal or a beverage. Interpreters are an inspiring lot driven by a sincere purpose, but keeping a positive attitude can be difficult in the face of budget cuts or managers who might not be on the same page—especially at sites with only one or a few interpreters.

At NAI gatherings, I'm always struck by the energy interpreters draw from one another, by being around like-minded individuals driven by a similar purpose. Professional development opportunities are an important part of what associations do, but being part of a community reinforces the purpose of what we do.

Q3 - What inspires you the most about working in interpretation?
The passion that interpreters have for their craft and their resources always astounds me. I've never met people whose personal identities are more intertwined with their profession than those in interpretation, and that's a direct result of how much interpreters believe in and love what they do.

Q1 - What do you think is one of the biggest challenges facing interpreters today?
It feels at times like the invisible profession; few know what interpretation is, and if they have heard of it they think it's little more than information signs and brochures. It's more than a little ironic that a communication 'craft' which aims to create understanding struggles with an identity crisis! But I think it's because if you are experiencing good interpretation, you don't even know it's there; the story outshines the method of telling.

Q2 - What value do you get out of belonging to your network organisation?
I don't think I have yet met an interpreter that I didn't like. They are an inspiring bunch of people – naturally! I've made some great friends from people I only meet once a year, because we share the same passion, values, frustrations and challenges. I love hearing what others are working on and gain energy and inspiration from the triumphs of others.

Q3 - What inspires you the most about working in interpretation?
My father is a very inspirational character – not that he would call himself an interpreter either! But I am constantly amazed at his knowledge of plants and the bush; knowledge which he continues to accumulate and share with others. I'm driven to create in my children the same intrinsic love of nature and conservation ethics that my father installed in me, by providing memorable nature experiences that will "stick" with them for a lifetime. Helping other families to do the same is one of my driving forces. The most rewarding projects I've had the pleasure to be involved in were Kiwi Ranger, and creating Nature Play Park – my own children were the guinea pigs for both!
Q1 - What do you think is one of the biggest challenges facing interpreters today?

Obviously, budget cuts and austerity measures are always a looming threat. But, funding has always been an issue. What is a bigger, and more current, challenge, I think, is the rapidly increasing access to information that visitors have. Long gone are the times when visitors needed interpreters to be walking encyclopaedias of information. Now, visitors have all of that information at their fingertips in their smartphones. What they can’t get from technology, however, are the unique experiences and connections that an interpreter can craft for them. So, we need be better catalysts for visitors’ experiences, rather than clinging to traditional program styles that sometimes feel outdated.

Q2 - What value do you get out of belonging to your network organisation?

Being a part of Interpretation Canada is immensely helpful. I believe it is very important to belong to a community of practice. It is where professionals can share ideas and network, and where seasoned interpreters can share solutions with novice interpreters. It allows interpreters to self-identify and have a place where they feel they truly belong. Before I was a member of Interpretation Canada, I felt that I was learning everything the hard way. Joining an interpretive organization showed me that there is a vast network of people just like me that are dealing with the same problems. This was really eye-opening for me as a younger interpreter. Today, I feel that being part of an interpretive organization encourages me to continually strive for betterment. Every time I attend a conference or workshop, I’m impressed with how much there is still left to learn.

Q3 - What inspires you the most about working in interpretation?

I knew as soon as I dabbled in interpretation as a fifteen year old volunteer, that I had stumbled upon something almost magical. It is inspiring and humbling to know that spending a short amount of time with visitors has the potential to impact their lives greatly. They may not remember you or the specifics of your program, but they may always remember an experience that you gave them. I’ve shown sea stars and anemones to people encountering the ocean for the first time, lead canoe programs for immigrants to watch beavers at sunset, howled for wolves with visitors that were too scared to go out by themselves, and given children permission to get dirty in the mud and touch a slug. Each time I share an experience with people, I can see the wonder, excitement, and sometimes even a slight transformation in their eyes.
The recent NAI International Conference on Interpretation (May 3-7 2015) hosted by Interpretation Canada in Montreal, Quebec was attended by 128 interpreters from 14 countries. It was a tremendous opportunity for interpretation practitioners, planners, consultants and researchers from around the world to reflect on the many opportunities and emerging challenges associated with this diverse field.

Among the various topics of discussion, delegates were asked to contribute to an on-going conversation about the possibility of increased global cooperation between interpretation associations, perhaps through the development of an international federation of interpretation. The Montreal conference organisers facilitated several interactive sessions to introduce and discuss the idea of using a ‘federation’ model to provide an umbrella mechanism, supporting current and grassroots interpretive organisations around the world.

Among the points of broad consensus, was the feeling that the profession of interpretation needs greater recognition and legitimacy outside of our field – a legitimacy that could, in part, be realised through an international federation, or similar body. Such a federation might also have the ability to facilitate the dissemination of research and information about best practices and standards. The Montreal meeting reinvigorated a discussion about global cooperation. The next steps involve the creation of a steering committee with representation from interpretation associations, and significant others interested in promoting the process.

Jon Kohl, the NAI’s Coordinating Facilitator, and Director of PUP Global Heritage Consortium, captured the spirit of the Montreal conversation nicely with these words;

“It is hoped that in finding a way to collectively share our existing global resources, expertise, and networks of regional and national organizations, we have the opportunity to strengthen a global family of interpretation. What that organization might look like, and what goals and problems it should seek to solve for the global field of interpretation, are what this first broad discussion of many to come, sought to explore.”

Stephen Espiner – Lincoln University and INNZ Chair
Interpretation Network New Zealand is excited to welcome Melinda Loe of Kotahi Tourism as keynote speaker at this year’s Annual Conference in October.

Melinda is Managing Director of Kotahi Tourism – an award-winning Australian based-business built in partnership with husband Hohepa Ruhe. Kotahi Tourism tells Aboriginal and Māori stories of Sydney and the NSW Coast through tours and education programmes, working in partnerships with Tangata Whenua – Te Iwi Moemoea (Indigenous Australians).

Melinda has connected people and places through interpretation for over 20 years in roles on both sides of the Tasman from tour guiding on Kapiti Island to development and management of The Rocks Discovery Museum in Sydney. Melinda will draw on her experience in tourism, museums and education to explore protocols, practicalities and positive outcomes of working in partnerships to interpret cultural heritage and environment.

The theme of this year’s conference is Partnerships in Action, and the line-up of inspirational speakers is varied and exciting.

Wellington Zoo's Chief Executive Karen Fifield, twice-winner of the HER Business Network National Award in Business Leadership will introduce us to Nature Connections; Matt Maitland, senior ranger Auckland Regional Parks will co-present with representatives of the community conservation groups he works with, and Historic Advisor Steve Bagley will describes the process used by DOC and iwi to define the values and stories of Ships Cove.

We have some great guided experiences on offer too! Visitor Experience Manager Oli du Bern will guide us through Wellington Zoo’s new precinct with discussion of the partner voices threaded throughout the interpretation; and Prue Donald will introduce Te Papa’s WW1 exhibit – developed in partnership with Weta Workshop.

By working in partnership to tell stories of people and place, visitor experiences are enriched. Join us and be inspired by how others have worked collaboratively to achieve extraordinary interpretation.

“No matter how brilliant your mind or strategy, if you’re playing a solo game, you’ll always lose out to a team.”

Reid Hoffman, LinkedIn co-founder