

# **The Kaleidoscope of practice A national survey of translators and interpreters in Australia**

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In 2007 AUSIT, in collaboration with ASLIA, the AFDS and Macquarie University, undertook to survey translators and interpreters in Australia in order to provide an empirically-based profile of practitioners and their work.

Nearly 800 translators and interpreters responded to the survey providing rich data on their demographic profile (age, gender, country of origin), qualifications, income and the nature of the work undertaken by them. The broad findings confirm that the translating and interpreting profession in Australia is largely female with a predominance of interpreters working in community settings in the languages of Australia's migrant communities (43% of the respondents). A large number undertake both translating and interpreting work (34.5%). Most were born in Australia and consider English is their dominant language and their mean age is 40-49. The majority of translators and interpreters have university degrees, though not always in T & I. TAFE qualifications predominate for interpreters. There are few differences between males and females in terms of work status (full/part-time), education, income, etc.

A key finding to emerge from the study is that, while translators and interpreters are most often satisfied with their work, they are overwhelmingly preoccupied with their working conditions which don't provide sufficient income to be their principal employment. Membership of professional associations did not rank highly for respondents.

Each of these findings has been investigated in depth and will be presented along with the views and opinions of the respondents on their work providing a unique insight into our profession.



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