Bridging the Gap

Issue 49 June 2020

Kia ora koutou and welcome to the June edition of Bridging the Gap.

I’m Helen Crabb, the Interpreter Co-ordinator for MBIE

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Immigration Update

The lockdown seems a long time ago now, but I know it was a really hard time for many people, including many interpreters. Here at Immigration things are very different at the moment and there is a lot less work for interpreters in many branches than previously.

Border and Visa Operations
The New Zealand border is currently closed to almost all travellers wanting to travel to New Zealand by either air or sea. There are some exceptions. New Zealand citizens, residents and their immediate family members can return. Otherwise, the border is closed for all but critical travel, and protecting public health in New Zealand is paramount. Here is the link to the website for COVID border changes: https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19

Refugee Quota Programme
On 22 March 2020, the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, and the International Organization of Migration (IOM) suspended refugee departures to resettlement countries, such as New Zealand. As a result, refugee arrivals as part of New Zealand’s Refugee Quota Programme remain on hold.

Refugee Status Unit
The Refugee Status Unit is continuing to process claims for refugee status. Prior to the lockdown, the RSU forecast an increase in claims from 600 in 2019/2020 to 700 in 2021/2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic and New Zealand’s lockdown and border restrictions have had an impact on decision processing times and overall refugee and asylum claim numbers. As at
the end of May 2020, 465 claims were received for the 2019/2020 year and there were 532 claims on hand.

So as you can see, there is plenty of work coming up in the refugee status area!

Please continue to take care of yourself and one another

We need to continue to look after our physical and mental health and look out for one another.

Now we are at Alert Level 1, we could think things are almost back to normal, however we need to continue to be vigilant against COVID-19. If you develop any symptoms as listed on the Ministry of Health’s website, please stay at home and contact Healthline and follow their instructions.

As important as our physical health is, we need to make sure we look after our mental health as well and remember that it’s ok to ask for help when you need it. We’ve all had very different experiences over the past few months, from working long hours under pressure, working with anxious and stressed public, to dealing with changes in the way we work, and then either having reduced work or returning to the workplace and being surrounded by crowds. We need to recognise those differences and be kind.

Try using the Mentemia app, which helps Kiwis cope & thrive through Covid-19. Mentemia is an app that coaches mental wellbeing and is free to all New Zealanders. Take a moment to practice mindfulness or have a chat with a friend. Whatever you do, please make time for your wellbeing.

Review of the processes and procedures for making refugee and protection status determinations

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) engaged Victoria Casey QC to undertake a review of the processes and procedures for making refugee determinations.

The Review of processes and proceedings for making refugee and protection status determinations under Part 5 of the Immigration Act 2009, (‘the Review’) was published on the MBIE website in December 2019 and circulated to stakeholders.

The Review included practical recommendations that will help improve the processes for refugee and protection status determinations.

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) staff have met with claimant representatives and relevant stakeholders to discuss the Review and its recommendations. INZ is working through how
the recommendations will be implemented; however, this was impacted by INZ’s response to COVID-19.

INZ has recently set up a cross-sector joint working group with key stakeholders involved in the refugee and protection status determination process. The group is expected to have its first meeting in mid-July 2020.

The working group will discuss all the Review recommendations, including the procedural timeframes, quality assurance processes and the number and length of interviews. This cross-sector approach will enable stakeholder input to ensure that the system for making refugee and protection status determinations is fit for purpose, supports quality decisions, and is efficient, fair and timely.

A small group of interpreters who regularly work with the RSU will be invited to provide the interpreter’s perspective to the working group through the group’s secretariat. Should you require information about this, please contact Loretta Elive-Daunakamakama at Loretta.elive-daunakamakama@mbie.govt.nz

Please find a copy of the review on our website at: [www.mbie.govt.nz/refugee-and-protection-status-processes-review](http://www.mbie.govt.nz/refugee-and-protection-status-processes-review)

**Dilemma training**

During the 2020 COVID-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown interpreters were offered the chance to participate in a virtual session on dilemma training and integrity.

For each session interpreters were sent a scenario for discussion. They then shared their responses in a scheduled Zoom meeting. You can see the dilemmas and responses attached. Thanks very much to all who participated. I enjoyed your excellent, well-researched responses very much. I hope you all learnt as much from the sessions as I did.

I will be continuing Zoom sessions monthly from the office. The first one will be on Thursday 09 July at 10.00. I will invite all those who registered for the previous session. Please let me know if you would like to be added to the list.

**Interpreting for refugees – free short online course**

Have a look at this free short online course on Interpreting for refugees from the University of Glasgow. It could be of benefit to interpreters who work with refugees (and of interest to all of us). Thanks to Elizabeth and Sara for sharing this link. [https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/interpreting-for-refugees](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/interpreting-for-refugees)
Latest update from the Migrant & Former Refugee Health Gain Manager, Waitematā DHB and Auckland DHB

Please find attached the latest update from the DHB which includes lots of useful information about COVID-19, and a link to a Te Papa Research Project on Chinese New Zealanders Experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I will not share these updates any more, but if you wish to receive them, you can contact the coordinator, Samantha Bennett and asked to be included in the distribution list.
Samantha Bennett (Manager) Samantha.Bennett@waitematadhb.govt.nz or Raj Singh (Project manager) Raj.Singh@waitematadhb.govt.nz
Asian, Migrant & Former Refugee Health Gain Team
Waitematā DHB and Auckland DHB

Rare languages

Recently we have been searching for interpreters in:
- Mongolian
- Kiribati
- Tokelauan
- Nuiean
- Malay
- Kinyarwanda
- Rohingya
- Tigrinya
- Turkish
- Tongan
- Samoan
- Bengali
- Tamil (Sri Lankan)
- Burmese, Kayah and Chin
- Cambodian/Khmer
- Fijian
- Te Reo Māori
- Ndebele
- Pashto
- Somali
- Swahili
- Tagalog

If you know anyone who interprets one of these, or another rare language, please ask them
to get in touch with me. We have over 100 languages on our list, but it’s still not enough!

This year we needed interpreters in 35 different languages, ranging from Arabic and Mandarin to Mongolian and Malay. Thank you all for your contribution!

**Interpreter reference resources**

Interpreters have their own resource page on the Immigration New Zealand (INZ) website which has many useful tools, such as immigration and refugee related terminology. [Interpreter Reference Resources on the MBIE website](#)

**Glossaries**

Refugee claims based on a person’s religion or beliefs are common. The terms used by some religious groups can be unfamiliar, or carry a special meaning.

To help with your preparation for these types of interviews we have added some new glossaries to the Interpreters’ page. These glossaries include Falun Gong and Church of Almighty God which is specifically for interpreters of Chinese languages.

If you feel there are any other areas that would benefit from a glossary being created please let us know. [Glossaries](#)

**Contact details**

You can contact me by phone or email:
Helen: (09) 928 2227 or email: [helen.crabb@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:helen.crabb@mbie.govt.nz)

If you need to call me urgently, for example if you miss a flight for an out of town appointment, please call as soon as possible on my mobile 027 245-7942. For routine enquiries, please call the office number or email me as above.

If you need urgent help, or to cancel an interpreting appointment at RSB at the last minute, please call the Refugee Status Unit: (09) 928 2236, or email [rsb@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:rsb@mbie.govt.nz).