
SILA

SUMMER INSTITUTE OF
LINGUISTICS AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT

January to December 2015

Contents

1. The Purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia.....	1
2. Directors and Board meetings	3
3. SILA program activities	4
a. SILA training	4
b. Funding of development projects.....	6
c. Consultant support for language development projects.....	9
4. Challenges and opportunities	10
5. Financial statements	11

1. The Purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia

The purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia (SILA) is to serve minority language communities worldwide through language development activities. SILA does this through integrated programs of vernacular language study, literacy, translation, and development. Such programs facilitate understanding and communication, and help alleviate poverty, health problems and the disadvantaged state of these communities. SILA recognises that language is the building block for development activities in all of these areas.

To facilitate this purpose, SILA carries out, promotes or supports the following activities:

- effective training in language description and development



- specialised consulting to language development projects



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- promotion and funding support of language and community development projects in ethnolinguistic communities



All of SILA's work is people-centred and community based. It is concerned with all aspects of human life. There is an emphasis on training and partnership with indigenous people, and the development of locally owned sustainable programs. Promotion of the work of SILA is assisted within Australia by its major partner organisation, Wycliffe Bible Translators Australia, with whom an agreement for services has been signed.

2. Directors and Board meetings

The Board of SIL Australia is elected at its Biennial Conference. Approximately half of the Board members are elected each two years and serve for not more than four years without re-election. The most recent Biennial Conference of SILA was held in May 2015. At this time it was agreed to reduce the size of the Board to eight Directors. The following are the names of the Directors of SILA who served in 2015:

Dr Moses Khor	Chair (until May 2015) (Board member 1999 – May 2015; Mathematics and Science Teacher, Camberwell Grammar, former lecturer Tabor Victoria; Melbourne)
Dr Moyra Dale	Chair (from May 2015) (Board Member since 2011; Missiologist St Andrew's Hall Melbourne; Adjunct Research Fellow, Melbourne School of Theology; Melbourne)
Mr David Nicholls	Vice Chair (from May 2015) (Board Member since 2013; Director of Training and Development Pacific Area, SIL International; Melbourne)
Prof David Grayden	Secretary (until May 2015) (Board Member 2009 – May 2015; Professor, Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, University of Melbourne; Melbourne)
Mr Timothy K Wilson	Treasurer (from April 1991) (Board Member since 1991; Chartered Accountant, Registered Company Auditor and Tax Agent; Melbourne)
Ms Gillian Asquith	(Board member from May 2015; Lecturer, Melbourne School of Theology; Melbourne)
Mr Philip Bignall	(Board Member 2001 – May 2015; Wideband Planner, Telstra; Brisbane)
Rev Graydon Colville	(Board Member 2005 – May 2015; International Director, Global Recordings Network; Sydney)
Mr Greg Conwell	(Board Member since May 2015; Business Manager SILA; Melbourne)
Dr Catherine Easton	(Board Member since May 2015; Lecturer, Speech Pathology program Charles Sturt University, Albury)
Mr Paul Eckert OAM	(Board Member since 2009; Linguist/Translator with Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project; Production Coordinator, Remote and Indigenous Ministry Support, Bible Society Australia; Part-time Pitjantjatjara language teacher at UniSA and the Adelaide School of Languages; Adelaide)
Rev Julian Holdsworth	(Board Member 2013 – May 2015; Director of Ministries and Church Relations, Wycliffe Australia; Melbourne)
Mrs Roslyn Manson	(Board Member since May 2015; MA student, HR Administrator, Wycliffe Australia; Melbourne)

Meetings of the full Board were held: 6 February, 2 May, 1 June, 1 & 2 August and 7 November 2015. Committees of the Board met as required between the Board meetings. The Annual General Meeting of SILA, in accordance with the requirements of ASIC Legislation, was held on 2 May 2015.

3. SILA program activities

Mr Barry Borneman served as Interim Principal Executive Officer (PEO) until 1 May and Mrs Glenys Waters from 1 June. The PEO serves as both the CEO of SILA and the Principal of the training program.

SILA is associated with SIL International as a 'Collegial Organisation', with a Memorandum of Understanding between the bodies. The MoU is the primary document expressing the formal agreement between the two bodies. This connection provides a formal means of input and feedback within the international corporation for personnel, training and language development projects.

a. SILA training

During 2015 training for language description and development continued to be delivered at the SILA campus, Kangaroo Ground, Victoria. For 65 years SILA has provided training in language learning, descriptive and applied linguistics, and literacy for SIL workers, members of other organisations, and members of the public.

SILA normally offers a variety of training courses and seminars which for a number of years included two accredited yearlong courses:

- Diploma of Language Description and Development
- Graduate Diploma of Language Description and Development

The accreditation of these courses and the registration of SILA as a higher education provider expired in 2014 and the decision was made by the Administration and Board of SILA not to pursue renewal of registration and accreditation but to seek accreditation of the courses through partner organisations.

SILA had an existing Memorandum of Understanding with Tabor College Victoria (now Eastern College Australia) to deliver and assess the units in the Applied Linguistics major of their Bachelor of Arts. In 2014 a new Memorandum of Understanding was signed under which SILA would deliver and assess applied linguistics subjects in additional Eastern courses as from January 2015. The courses include:

- Graduate Diploma in Arts (Applied Linguistics specialisation),
- Graduate Certificate in Arts (Applied Linguistics specialisation)
- Associate Degree in Arts (Applied Linguistics minor)
- Diploma of Arts

A new partnership was forged with Melbourne School of Theology (MST) and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed late in the year. A lot of work was put into repackaging SILA's subjects to fit the normal course structure for an Australian College of Theology (ACT) award and this has strengthened SILA's offerings, particularly in the areas of translation principles and practice and training for transformational development. A number of units were approved by the ACT during 2015 and the rest are expected to be processed early in 2016 to enable SILA to teach them in Semesters 1 and 2, 2016.

SILA also offered non-accredited training during 2015. Two workshops were run under the auspices of SILA in November: Participatory Methods for Engaging Communities (PMEC) and Project Planning and Design. There were 16 participants in PMEC and 12 in the planning workshop. Participants included SILA students and staff, SIL International workers, Wycliffe Australia staff and field workers from Vanuatu and Indonesia.

SILA's training and consulting operations rely on volunteer staff. Academic staff consisted of both permanent and sessional personnel with considerable field experience in linguistics and language development activities. Support staff serviced the office, library, student welfare, IT services, and the occasional child minding program.

Summer School

SILA's 6-week Summer School serves as an intensive introduction to the yearlong courses as well as providing a stand-alone introductory course for students studying language learning, basic linguistic analysis and anthropology.

The course was non-accredited in 2015 unless students were enrolled at Eastern College. Nineteen students studied at the Summer School; one was an Eastern student and two were from New Zealand. Subjects taught were Language Awareness, Anthropology, Language Learning, and Phonetics.



Some of the students and staff, Summer School 2015

Semesters 1 and 2

Seven students were enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Arts (Applied Linguistics specialisation) in Semester 1, and one in the BA Applied Linguistics major, at Eastern College Australia. Four students were full-time and four part-time.

All units were delivered at the SILA campus at Kangaroo Ground by SILA staff but students were required to take one Eastern subject – *Faith, Reason and Justice* – either online or on the Eastern campus at Mulgrave.

Two students graduated with a Graduate Diploma in Arts at the end of the year. Most of the students who studied with SILA during 2015 are continuing their studies in preparation for service in language development work in such places as Australia, Malaysia, PNG or SE Asia.

SILA Academic Governance

For many years SILA benefitted from the guidance and oversight of the Academic Board. The members of this board were appointed by the SILA Board and drawn from the Australian academic community involved in disciplines taught at SILA with experience in Tertiary, Higher or International Education. The Academic Board was disbanded in 2015. As partnerships develop the SILA training operations will be incorporated into the academic governance structures of the partner organisations. Former members of this board have offered their disciplinary expertise in an advisory capacity as required.

In addition to this Academic Board, an internal Education Committee comprising SILA academic and support staff processes the academic matters needing development and documentation on a regular basis throughout the year.

Promotion of academic activity in major discipline areas

Academic perspectives of SIL Australia are enhanced by:

- seminars and visiting lecturers
- the maintenance of academic membership on the SILA Board with academics from Australian tertiary institutions (see Section 2 above for detail)
- attendance by SILA staff at academic conferences and seminars relating to the disciplines taught
- the involvement of several SILA members developing a computer program to aid translation of texts in related languages

Professional development

Seven part-time or sessional staff were enrolled in formal study programs at Masters or PhD level in 2015.

One staff member attended the SIL International Literacy and Education Global Gathering in Dallas, Texas. She presented a paper entitled: *Attending to the voices of illiteracy*.

An academic staff member attended the joint conference of the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA), the Applied Linguistics Association of New Zealand (ALANZ) and the Association for Language Testing and Assessment of Australia and New Zealand (ALTAANZ) at the University of South Australia in Adelaide. The theme of the conference was: *Learning in a Multilingual World*.

Three academic staff members took an online course through the University of New South Wales, *Learning to Teach Online* in July/August in preparation for developing more online subjects.

b. Funding of development projects

SILA Aborigines and Islanders Support Program

Since 1995, SILA has managed and promoted a development fund, as a Deductible Gift Recipient, for the support of work among Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people. SIL members and projects assisted by this Program work with the Australian Society for Indigenous Languages (AuSIL) in affiliation with SIL International, and carry out literacy, language development and community development activities under the

auspices of the organisation. In November, the SILA Board considered it was no longer appropriate to oversee this fund as it was too difficult to assess compliance at a distance so agreed to close down the fund. AuSIL has been encouraged to set up their own fund to continue this support.

SILA Overseas Aid and Development Fund

SILA's Overseas Aid and Development Fund is a Tax Deductible Gift Recipient fund which provides assistance to literacy and education development projects. During the reporting period, a total of \$26,625 was raised through donations and \$22,000 distributed to World Relief Australia (WRA) for projects.

In 2015, through this fund SILA continued to support the **Massalit Literacy Project** among a refugee community in the Republic of Chad. This year funding cuts made in the level of support services provided in the UNHCR refugee camps have meant that food distribution has been cut to very little and salaries for refugees employed by NGOs have also been cut. This has affected staff morale and student attendance. Students and teachers are trying to do all they can to find other ways to feed themselves. People are losing hope and are very concerned for their futures. Despite these things Eunice Kua (SIL Massalit literacy worker) encouraged literacy teachers and writers to continue to promote and develop Massalit literacy programs and materials and has begun to expand the program to include Grade 3. Funds remitted from SILA covered printing costs for classroom materials and teacher training. Funds also enabled Catherine Young, an SIL International Literacy Consultant, to visit and review the project in January. She conducted consultations with teachers, community representatives and with Eunice and made several recommendations regarding future work priorities.



Eunice working with Massalit writers and editors

Work continued on developing materials for library boxes. These boxes allow people to have access to books that are in their own language at an appropriate level of difficulty. They are creating interest amongst community members and inspiring people to want to read.

Eunice Kua (SILA graduate) is the key literacy worker in the project and Glenys Waters (SILA consultant) assisted with advice and project reporting.



Massalit library in a box

The **China Minority Education (ChIME) project** was approved in July 2014 and funding started coming in during 2015. The three-year project aims to facilitate the establishment of an educational capacity building partnership in China's Yunnan Province. The partnership is encouraging the development of minority language education programs in remote rural areas in the province. It is a mother tongue-to-national language transition program based on a pilot program established by Dr Brian and Dr Liz Billard amongst the Bai people in 2006. It is envisaged that the national funding commitment will increase so that the program will in time be self-sustaining but international engagement and funding support is needed during the development stages.



Children enjoying the preschool program

Funding through the OADF has enabled the Billards to continue to take trips to the project area to maintain contacts with the local project workers and officials, to progress the transition of the Bai program to demonstration school status and to encourage a local university to consider incorporating minority language education into their curriculum. They were also able to oversee the official approval and publication of curriculum materials.

World Relief Australia

SILA is a signatory to the World Relief Australia Code of Conduct. As a signatory, SILA wishes to express its commitment to the responsible and effective use of donations, to help the poor and needy in developing countries irrespective of nationality, race, gender, political conviction or religious belief, and to improving the quality and effectiveness of SILA development initiatives.

c. Consultant support for language development projects

SILA provides specialist consultant services to entities and partners of SIL International where language development work is being carried out.

China Minority Education (ChiME) Project

SILA consultants Dr Brian and Dr Liz Billard are supporting the ChiME project, building on the Bai bilingual education program they established in Yunnan Province. The Bai program has been successful in providing access to education in Chinese for Bai and other minority language children. It has been running semi-independently since 2009. The ChiME project is building on this pilot program and is encouraging the replication of the model to other communities in Jianchuan county in China. Billards are seeing a gradual take-up of responsibilities in these areas.

Language Technology

Software Development Project

The project has had a successful year. Three applications are under development: the desktop version of Adapt It (AID), Adapt It Mobile (AIM) and Key It (KIT) (a scripture keyboarding mobile app).

Principal areas of focus have been:

- AID – the knowledge base sharing feature is nearing completion, to be released in version 7.0.0.
- AIM – now at alpha stage
- KIT – Graeme and Leon are making steady progress. Leon's use of Python in this development is novel, but has great promise.
- Help Desk work – this has taken about a quarter of Bruce's work time during the year.

Adapt It continues to have a good reputation worldwide, and occasional feedback from users has been encouraging.

Distributed development teams are a common feature of SIL's IT work and this team is no different. Several members are Melbourne-based, one is in Sydney, and one is in the USA, full-time remotely assigned to SILA and this arrangement may be extended to others in the future.

4. Challenges and opportunities

The partnership with MST will provide new opportunities for SILA's training, including the possibility of increased student numbers. There is potential for students studying other awards to include some of the units SILA delivers as electives in their studies at MST and for these units to be delivered online for students in other colleges affiliated with the Australian College of Theology (ACT). Other partners of MST have also expressed interest in their personnel taking these units. While most of the units will continue to be delivered at SILA's campus at Kangaroo Ground it is hoped that some will be offered at the MST campus and that this will raise awareness amongst the student body there. The partnership with MST also allows for overseas students to again enrol in SILA training as MST has the requisite CRICOS registration.

In 2016 SILA subjects will be offered as units in a Graduate Diploma of Divinity, an existing ACT award. The challenge for 2016 is developing a new award which can be offered from 2017 that will comprise all the SILA units.

Eastern College has been gracious in maintaining SILA subjects in their offerings so SILA will be able to 'teach out' students enrolled in 2015 who have yet to complete their awards. They are happy to continue the partnership for as long as it is useful to SILA.

Continuing low student numbers and the expectation of more flexible education options provide SILA with both a challenge and an opportunity. A focus for the organisation in 2016 will be to develop more units for online delivery and to be more innovative in the use of online media.

Several new personnel are planning to join the SILA staff in 2016. They will give SILA extra capacity and the ability to take up new opportunities in consulting and development projects overseas, managed by Next Step Development.

The synergy resulting from partnering with like-minded institutions gives a sense of hope for the future as SILA continues to provide services in training, consulting and supporting development and education programs in multicultural contexts.

5. Financial statements

SIL Australia Operating statement for the year ended 31 December 2015 (Statement of financial performance)

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Revenue		
Education Fees and Operations	104,455	43,597
Rental Income	30,509	24,933
SILA General Income	679	18,261
Donations and Gifts		
Overseas Aid	26,625	27,795
Aborigines and Islanders Support Program	194,284	230,631
SIL School Building Fund	7,490	11,755
Reallocation of Special Purpose donations	82,296	
Investment Income	8,485	8,028
Other revenues	25,337	11,920
Total Revenue	480,160	376,920
Expenses		
Education Operating	141,437	105,555
Overseas Projects	22,000	19,471
Domestic Projects	194,284	230,631
Scholarships given	15,313	
Depreciation	10,779	7,956
Other expenses	14,950	13,525
Total Expenses	398,763	377,138
Excess of Revenue over Expenses (shortfall) from continuing operations	81,397	(218)
Funds available for future use at beginning of financial year	162,947	212,562
Amount transferred to/from reserves	112,527	49,397
Funds available for future use at end of financial year	275,474	162,947

SIL Australia
Balance sheet as at 31 December 2015
(Statement of Financial Position)

	2015	2014
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash Assets	320,659	385,934
Receivables	20,141	1,866
Other	848	4,402
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	37,562	21,398
Total Assets	379,210	413,600
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Payables	4,346	120,133
Other		
Total Liabilities	4,346	120,133
Net Assets	374,864	293,467
Equity		
Reserves	99,390	130,520
Funds available for future use/retained earnings	275,474	162,947
Total Equity	374,864	293,467

Audited full financial statements are available on request.

SIL Australia
Statement of changes in equity
for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Retained Earnings	Reserves	Total
Balance at 1 January 2015	162,947	130,520	293,467
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	81,397	0	81,397
Amount transferred (to) from reserves and other fund	31,130	(31,130)	0
Balance at 31 December 2015	275,474	99,390	374,864

SIL Australia
Table of cash movements for designated purposes
for the year ended 31 December 2015

	Cash available at beginning	Cash raised during year	Cash disbursed during year	Cash available at end of year	Comments
Aborigines & Islanders Support Prog	3,862	194,288	194,354	3,796	All donations are forwarded to AuSIL
Overseas Aid & Development Fund	13,239	26,625	24,749	15,115	Contributions to overseas development projects
SILA General & Training	213,862	193,410	283,417	123,856	
Total for Other Purposes	63,851	47,562	63,520	47,892	
TOTAL	294,814	461,885	566,040	190,659	



World Relief Australia

Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia partners with the World Relief Overseas Aid Fund by acting as its agent for fundraising and the delivery of relief and development projects in developing countries.

Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia is a signatory to the World Relief Australia Code of Conduct.

<https://www.wra.org.au/>

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