



VITS LANGUAGELINK

STATEMENT OF CORPORATE INTENT

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ABOUT US

VITS LanguageLink is a Victorian Government owned Government Business Enterprise, with over 30 years experience as a specialist language service provider. Over 80% of our services are purchased by state, federal and local government and their agencies.

We compete in an open market with other commercial language service providers for both clients and specialist language service practitioners. Since our inception in 1999 as a purely commercial enterprise we have continued to pay annual dividends to government, and will continue to do so during the 2008-11 planning period.

Our guiding business imperative is to be consistently recognised throughout Australia as the leading provider of high quality, relevant language services to both the public and private sectors. We have realised this objective through rigorous quality control and by instilling an ethos of customer service throughout our business. A measure of our disciplined focus on customer service is that we only recruit Professional Level or higher, NAATI accredited interpreters and translators wherever a language is tested to this level – an increasingly important competitive edge in a growth industry.

Our current clients include Victorian government departments and agencies, Federal government departments and agencies, non-profit and community based organisations, as well as large commercial entities. VITS does not provide interpreting services directly to the public. Our mode of operation is to work with Government and business to integrate interpreting and translating services into service delivery.

VITS is now one of the most successful organisations in the language service (interpreting and translating) market in Australia. Our future as a specialist language service provider is thus assured as we enjoy an established revenue stream and unlimited opportunities for growth.

PURPOSE

Our primary purpose is to provide high quality language services at a competitive price to State Government and its agencies. Consequently, our charter is not to derive profits but to deliver a high quality service at affordable prices. We use our business income from other sources to cross-subsidize fees charged to Victorian government departments and agencies and thus fulfil our charter to provide competitively priced, high quality services to the Victorian community.

GOVERNANCE

VITS is governed by a 7-member Board of Directors appointed by the Government that reports regularly to the Premier as Minister for Multicultural Affairs as well as the Treasurer. Our annual accounts are audited by the Auditor General, to ensure that they comply with the relevant accounting standards required by the professional accounting bodies, as well as the Victorian Government.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

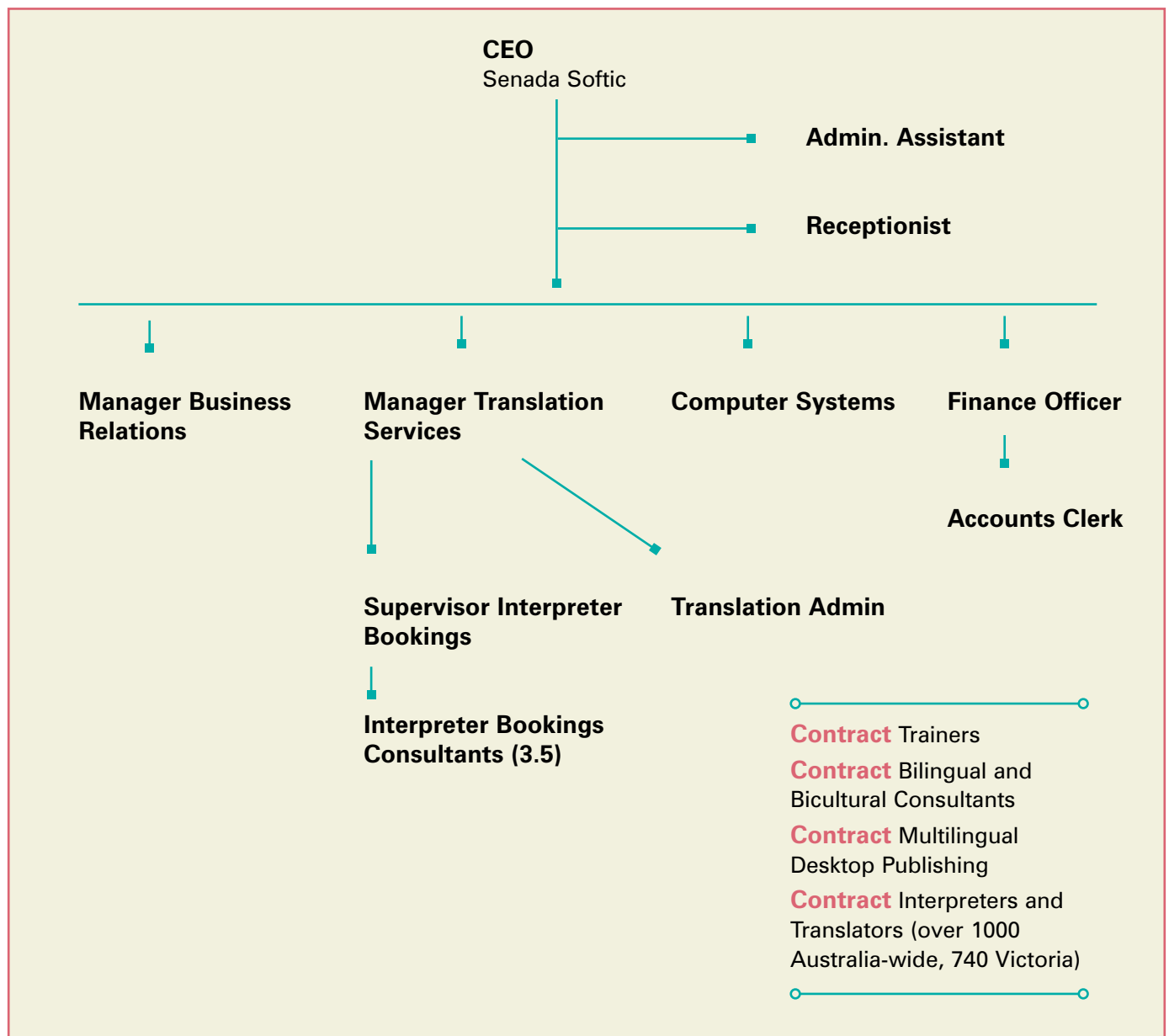
Professor John Nieuwenhuysen AM	Chair
Ms Voula Messimeri-Kianidis	Deputy Chair
Mr Rosario Buscemi	Member
Ms Marina Williams-Wynn	Member
Mr Trevor Tappenden	Member
Ms Genevieve Overell	Member
Mr Alex Andrianopoulos	Member

SUB COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

Risk Management
Audit and Remuneration

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

During the 2008-11 planning period, VITS will contain organisation administration to a core of 13.5 EFT. The number of contract staff (currently 1000) will however vary according to demand for new services and new languages.



Core business

VITS' core business is interpreting and translating.

We provide specialist language services in Legal, Mental Health, Education, Health, Translating, Telephone Interpreting and a LanguageLink Multilingual Information Service. In addition, VITS offers a highly specialised simultaneous conference interpreting service named Conference Interpreting Australia and an innovative web cam interpreting facility, the 'Interpreter Kiosk'. These services, together with an innovative Ethnic Communication Consultancy and Marketing arm, make VITS the most comprehensive and diversified language services provider in Australia.

Our specialised language services currently include:

- » Specialist interpreting in law, health, education and commerce
- » A growing list of languages in telephone interpreting (currently 115 including Auslan)
- » Specialist conference interpreting (simultaneous and consecutive modes)
- » Technologically advanced translation in over 96 languages
- » Multilingual desktop publishing facility in 80 languages
- » LanguageLink multilingual information service in 67 language lines
- » Cross-cultural communication training
- » Expert production of multilingual audio and video material
- » Ethnic communications and marketing
- » Specialist bilingual and bicultural consultancy
- » A new high tech interpreting service, 'Interpreter Kiosks', that can provide virtual interpreting to remote locations using city based accredited specialist interpreters

Corporate responsibility

VITS commitment to good corporate citizenship is demonstrated through the allocation of a significant portion of net profits to funding projects and research through our 'Good Corporate Citizen Program' (GCCP).

VITS has now contributed over \$1.1m in both direct and indirect expenditure since the GCCP commenced in 2000.

We are the only commercial language service provider that invests profits in research and development and then freely shares the results with the whole industry – commercial providers and community agencies – and government.

VITS' GCCP projects have focused on improving and enhancing language services through research, industry development and funding innovative technology. To date, this has included:

- » Commissioning and piloting new technology (Interpreter Kiosks) to extend the reach of cost effective, accredited language services to rural and remote Victoria
- » Developing structured training modules for both consumers and professionals working with interpreters and translators
- » Developing preparatory training for non-accredited interpreters in conjunction with relevant tertiary institutions
- » Funding research into factors affecting current and future supply and demand for language services

Financial management

Since VITS was proclaimed a State Business Corporation on the 1 January 1999 its level of reporting has increased commensurate with its elevated business profile as a highly profitable State owned enterprise. We report as required under the State Owned Enterprises Act and provide ongoing reports to the Commercial Advisory Services Group within Treasury.

As well as submitting annual corporate and business planning documents, VITS also reports regularly through the year to both the Premier and Treasurer on progress towards meeting the financial and productivity targets set in the agreed plans.

Competitive strengths

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

VITS reputation as a high performing organisation is based on four key cultural requisites: individual responsibility, teamwork, performance accountability and continuous professional development

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

VITS' financial viability is demonstrated by the continued return of operating profits to government. VITS' financial viability is secured by its ongoing diversification of services, development of new products, targeting of new clients and taking advantage of new business opportunities.

SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

VITS is strongly committed to providing staff with a safe and secure workplace. We intend to preserve our 30-year record of maintaining an accident-free workplace during the coming 2008-11 planning period.

ACCESS TO TRAINED CONTRACTORS

An established database of over 1000 contract interpreters and translators across Australia (over 770 contractors in Victoria), covering over 115 languages, ensures that VITS is able to meet the needs of its many clients.

WELL REMUNERATED WORKFORCE

VITS maintains the loyalty and commitment of staff and contractors by rewarding effort. We offer quality contract work at higher professional rates to that of our competitors. We revise contractor fees annually, and through our graduated pay scales, offer financial incentives to contractors to upgrade their accreditation.

Similarly, administrative and operational staff are assessed annually on their ability to meet agreed performance standards, and rewarded appropriately.

STAFF AND CONTRACTOR SKILLS

VITS proudly acknowledges that its people are its greatest asset. The organisation's reputation and strength stem largely from the specific expertise of individual staff, valued for their computer literacy, extensive industry knowledge and absolute commitment to customer service.

All of VITS senior and line management are multi-skilled and qualified practitioners of interpreting and translating, with 'insider' knowledge of language services.

Together, VITS staff and contractors provide a consistently high level of service, for every hour of every day of the year.

SERVICE STANDARDS

VITS commitment to maintaining high standards, and thus one of its competitive strengths, is demonstrated in its policy of refusing to employ unqualified interpreters and translators in languages where the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) testing is available. (NAATI is the only authority in Australia authorised to provide testing and accreditation for interpreters and translators. NAATI's portfolio includes accreditation of tertiary courses in interpreting and translating.)

The lowest level of accreditation we accept for languages that have been tested to Level 3 and above is NAATI Professional Level 3. (NB NAATI accreditation ranges from Para-professional (Level 2) to Advanced Professional (Level 4) for conference interpreting and complex text translations in technical, scientific, medical and other specific fields.)

Where an accredited NAATI interpreter and/or translator is unavailable because NAATI does not test the language, VITS will, with the client's approval, provide an interpreter or translator assessed and trained by VITS.

VITS service contracts are all based on this policy. Our current statistics demonstrate that VITS continues to successfully match 97% of all requests with NAATI Level 3 (or above) interpreters or translators.

STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

VITS is committed to making available ongoing professional development training to contractors and staff to ensure that current skills are maintained and new skills acquired.

We provide induction workshops for newly recruited VITS contract interpreters and translators, specialised and tailored contractor training to meet the needs of individual clients, and intensive involvement with various regional and metropolitan training institutions in developing appropriate professional development and training programs.

All administrative and operational staff are required to undertake a minimum of 12 hours of professional development training each year.

CLIENT SERVICE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The future success of VITS is dependent upon its continuing compliance with the rigorous standards it has set for itself. Well-developed mechanisms and procedures for reviewing progress, standard of services and client satisfaction, include:

- fully documented and current policies and procedures manuals
- training manual for new staff
- multi-skilling policy to work across fields
- detailed position descriptions incorporating performance targets
- annual performance appraisals of staff and contractors

- client feedback through annual and ad hoc customer satisfaction surveys and direct client contact initiated by VITS after the assignment is completed

- complaints register documenting actions taken and result

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SYSTEMS

VITS' major asset, and another competitive strength, is its use of cutting edge technology in delivering newer and better client services. Continuous investment in modern technology provides the greatest opportunity for VITS to increase its market share and to improve services to the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Victoria.

During the 2008-11 planning period, we will continue our practice of upgrading systems and technology. More importantly, we will also concentrate on promoting and marketing the innovative services that we developed during 2006/07, such as our new website and on-line booking and reporting portal, and our Interpreter Kiosks.

Planned activities 2008-11

The continuing challenge for VITS LanguageLink will be to grow the business by innovation in a variety of value added services, to strengthen our brand name and to continue to build an innovative and dynamic service culture within our organisation. We have set some challenging but realistic targets for the next three years, which we will achieve through marketing, innovation and conservative financial management.

These include:

- » Accelerating plans and activities aimed at achieving expansion and growth, building on our successes of 2007-8
- » Capitalizing on our competitive strengths and industry reputation to achieve growth in local and national markets
- » Actively pursuing robust growth, building on the new opportunities created by client diversification and our success in recruiting new government, commercial and community clients
- » Capitalizing on our existing technology platform by investigating every opportunity to value-add innovative services
- » Continuing our successful policy of providing returns on equity dividends to government and adhering to a fiscally prudent financial management strategy
- » Expanding the number of languages we offer to match client demand

With regard to service quality and professional service delivery:

- » We remain firmly committed to providing high quality client services using only professionally trained and accredited interpreters and translators
- » We remain committed to offering rural and regional Victoria a range of high quality language services comparable to those offered in metropolitan Melbourne
- » We will continue to review our service capabilities to ensure that we meet all client requests on time and to the expected professional level

The Board and the organisation are committed to achieving VITS' primary business goal of providing a high quality 'one stop shop' for all types of language services.

We are also committed to ensuring that VITS remains a dynamic and flexible entity, able to support our plans for accelerated growth during the next planning period.

The Board and CEO will continue to assess the operating environment and monitor, modify and adjust the Plan to meet any new challenges that impact on our business environment.

Key Result Areas

KEY RESULT AREA 1: Client service, quality and price

OBJECTIVE

To provide the highest quality language service at a competitive price

STRATEGY

- » Extend and promote free client education program to any existing or prospective client
- » Continuously assess and report levels of customer satisfaction with service delivery and identify areas of additional or unmet service requirements

KEY RESULT Area 2: Business growth/marketing

OBJECTIVE

To consolidate and expand VITS' position as a significant language service provider in the Victorian and national marketplaces

STRATEGY

- » Continue to be a financially stable, innovative and profitable government business enterprise
- » Revitalize and grow VITS business through a targeted strategy of recruiting new clients and developing new markets for the full suite of VITS language service products
- » Actively pursue available opportunities to attract new partner to develop and lever new products off existing technology platform

KEY RESULT AREA 3: Efficiency and cost effectiveness

OBJECTIVE

To continuously develop innovative products and new markets for language services

STRATEGY

- » Maintain currency of VITS systems and infrastructure

KEY RESULT AREA 4: Human Resources/OHS

OBJECTIVE

To develop and sustain a workforce culture that values safety, responsibility, efficiency and professional competence.

STRATEGY

- » Provide a safe and secure physical and operating environment that encourages individual responsibility and values performance and development

KEY RESULT AREA 5: Relationship with the profession

OBJECTIVE

To further enhance VITS' reputation and influence with government and industry

STRATEGY

- » Support and lead debate on issues of policy and practice related to language services
- » Maintain constructive working partnerships with the language services profession through active involvement in training, development and research.
- » Promote VITS reputation as an industry leader by actively seeking representation on influential government, peak industry and regulatory bodies.
- » Continue training partnerships with relevant tertiary and specialist trainers and contribute to course delivery in rural and regional Victoria

Key performance targets

PRODUCTION

During the planning period VITS plans to achieve the following targets in the 3 major service areas:

PROJECTED NUMBER OF ON-SITE INTERPRETER BOOKINGS

48,000 bookings (Year 1)

50,000 bookings (Year 2)

52,000 bookings (Year 3)

PROJECTED NUMBER OF TRANSLATED WORDS

Average of 3,200,000 words (Year 1)

Average of 3,200,000 words (Year 2)

Average of 3,500,000 words (Year 3)

PROJECTED NUMBER OF TELEPHONE INTERPRETING CALLS

25,000 calls (Year 1)

27,000 calls (Year 2)

29,500 calls (Year 3)

PERFORMANCE

- » Meet minimum of 97% of all customer requests
- » Interpreter non-attendance not greater than 0.8%
- » Telephone Interpreting to receive more than 100 interpreter connected calls
- » LanguageLink multilingual information lines to receive between 250-400 calls daily
- » Booking turnaround within 72 hours from time of request
- » 75% of all urgent requests for interpreters to be confirmed within 2 hours and an interpreter on site within 3 hours of confirmation
- » 80% of all telephone interpreting calls to be connected to an interpreter within 180 seconds and 90% connected within 240 seconds

