

Talking another language

You really can't afford to have anything lost in translation when you're interpreting for visiting dignitaries

COVER STORY

Daniel Hoy

MAGGIE Bracher has an important job — one slip could spark an international incident.

Bracher has been a translator since the early 1980s and in that time her most memorable job was translating and interpreting for the prime minister of Vanuatu and his delegation when they visited Melbourne.

"I began translating in the early 1980s soon after completing my studies at Melbourne University," she says.

"I spent several years in Paris and lived with a French family where the mother of the family was very involved in literary translation. My interest in translation developed from there."

After living and working in Paris, translating seemed like a natural progression when she came home.

"Once I settled back in Melbourne I completed my Masters degree in systemic linguistics and cross-cultural communication," she says.

"My thesis focused on business language communication, which was useful in assisting me with the business I set up in 1994, Corporate Language Communications."

In the early days before CLC she worked closely with her partner, Michael Bula — an international lawyer also fluent in French — offering French and English translation and interpreting services expressly in the areas of legal, commercial and technical work.

"In those days, Michael was principally in charge of handling the legal translation assignments," she says, "while I attended interpreting assignments in the corporate sector or provided English training to executives from non-English speaking backgrounds."

Their French translation firm grew to become CLC, an agency specialising in translation, interpreting, language and cross-cultural

training. Not just in French and English, but all languages.

Bracher says she still enjoys her job and that it can be challenging at times. The assignment she is working on now is with Chamber Music Australia and is an interesting one, she says, involving providing high-level internationally qualified AICC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) to simultaneously interpret the proceedings at the 53rd general assembly of the World Federation of International Music Competitions, which is taking place this week in Melbourne.

"Delegates are flying in from around the globe, many of whom rely on French as their preferred language of communication," she says.

"The federation's home office is in Geneva, Switzerland, so the common language for the proceedings is always in French.

"Our interpreters will work as a team to provide the bridge between English and French."

They work from a sound-proof booth and take turns translating in "real time".

"So speeches will be transmitted simultaneously to up to 200 audience members through their headsets, in French or English," she says.

For more information go to www.corporatelanguage.com.au and www.mbsols.com.au

job lot

To become a translator you need:

A BACHELOR'S degree in the language, experience, and to pass a National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters exam.

THERE are other postgraduate paths to accreditation in specialist translation courses offered by Universities in Australia and overseas.