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# SILA

SUMMER INSTITUTE OF  
LINGUISTICS AUSTRALIA

## ANNUAL REPORT

January to December 2014

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# 1. The Purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia

The purpose of the Summer Institute of Linguistics Australia (SILA) is, in voluntary cooperation with SIL International, to serve minority language communities worldwide through language development activities. SILA does this through integrated programs of vernacular language study, literacy, translation, and development in order to facilitate understanding and communication, and to 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 (in association with SIL International) the following activities:

- training of linguists, translators, literacy facilitators, language documenters
- sponsoring such fieldworkers in their study of languages (primarily of minority communities), many of which are unwritten
- documentation and comparison of the languages studied
- publishing of helps for persons engaged in such linguistic research
- preparation of literature both by original composition and by translations into the languages studied
- development of alphabets and promotion of literacy among the peoples whose languages are studied
- training of community representatives to develop local literature and promote literacy programs and practices
- promotion of community development projects among these language groups

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.

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## 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 April 2013. The following are the names of the Directors of SILA who served in 2014:

Dr Moses Khor	Chairman (from March 2009) (Board member since 1999; Mathematics and Science Teacher, Camberwell Grammar, former lecturer Tabor Victoria; Melbourne)
Dr Moyra Dale	Vice Chair (from April 2013) (Board Member since 2011; Missiologist St Andrew's Hall Melbourne; Adjunct Research Fellow, Melbourne School of Theology; Melbourne)
Prof David Grayden	Secretary (from March 2011) (Board Member since 2009; 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)
Mr David Nicholls	Executive Member (from April 2013) (Board Member since 2013; Director of Training and Development Pacific Area, SIL International; Melbourne)
Mr Philip Bignall	(Board Member since 2001; Wideband Planner, Telstra; Brisbane)
Rev Graydon Colville	(Board Member since 2005; International Director, Global Recordings Network; Sydney)
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 Dr Steven Etherington	(Board member 2011 – November 2014; Anglican Priest, Bible translation project; Tamworth, NSW)
Rev Julian Holdsworth	(Board Member since 2013; Director of Ministries and Church Relations, Wycliffe Australia; Melbourne)

Meetings of the full Board were held: 7 February, 2 May, 8 August and 7 November 2014. 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 2014.

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### 3. SILA program activities

Mrs Joan Finlay served as Interim Principal Executive Officer (PEO) until 30 June, Mr David Nicholls from 1 July – 30 August and Mr Barry Borneman from 1 September 2014. 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 the period the language development training program of SILA continued to function at the SILA campus, Kangaroo Ground, Victoria. For 64 years (since January 1950), SILA has provided intensive 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

In 2014 the decision was made not to offer these courses beyond the intensive six-week course in January and February. Student enrolments were low and the viability of the educational environment was at risk.

The registration of SILA as a higher education provider and the accreditation for both courses were due to expire in 2014; the Diploma on 30 June, and the registration and Graduate Diploma on 30 November 2014. 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 another institution.

SILA had an existing Memorandum of Understanding with Tabor College Victoria 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 with Tabor College Victoria to also deliver and assess applied linguistics subjects in additional Tabor 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

Academic staff consisted of both permanent and sessional personnel with considerable field experience in linguistics and language development activities. Support staff serviced the office, child minding program, student welfare, computer laboratory, and library.

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## Summer School

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

Fourteen students studied at the Summer School, ten at the Graduate Diploma level and four at the Diploma level. Students came from Australia, Germany, Malaysia and New Zealand. Subjects taught were Language Awareness, Anthropology, Language Learning, and Phonetics.



Some of the students and staff, Summer School 2014

## Semester 1

Six students studied Introduction to Sociolinguistics by distance in Semester 1.

Some of the students who studied here during 2014 are already involved in language development work, while others are still in preparation stages for service in Australia or PNG.

## SILA Academic Governance

The Academic Board provides guidance to the SILA training operations. The Board consists of members appointed by the SILA Board from among the Australian academic community who are involved in disciplines taught at SILA with experience in Tertiary,

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Higher or International Education. Other members of the Board are the SILA Principal (or designee) and senior academic staff.

Members of the SILA Academic Board during 2014 were:

Dr Tonya Stebbins	Chair (until April 2014) (Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Communication, Arts and Critical Enquiry Centre for Research on Linguistic Diversity, La Trobe University, Melbourne)
Dr Audrey Grant	(retired Senior Lecturer, Education Studies, La Trobe University, Melbourne)
Dr Simon Musgrave	(Lecturer, Linguistics, Monash University, Melbourne)
Mr David Nicholls	(SIL Pacific Area Training Director)
Mrs Joan Finlay	(SILA Principal (until 30 June 2014) and SILA Department Head)
Mr Bruce Symons	(SILA Department Head)
Mrs Glenys Waters	(SILA Consultant) (until April 2014)

The functions of the Academic Board are:

- the maintenance of academic standards, including:
  - monitoring professional development and qualifications of staff
  - monitoring benchmarking, moderation and grading
- monitoring and reviewing academic policies and procedures and their implementation
- ensuring effective quality assurance arrangements are in place for SILA's higher education operations encompassing systematic monitoring, review and improvement, including:
  - approving proposals for new courses and modifications to existing course structure, documentation and delivery arrangements
  - monitoring and reviewing courses and individual subjects in accordance with the Course Review Policy
- supporting the PEO in academic governance of the SILA training operations and reviewing the report submitted by the PEO of the proceedings of the SILA Education Committee, commenting and advising as necessary
- supporting the PEO and Education Committee regarding reporting to external parties such as TEQSA and the Department of Education.

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)
- the maintenance of an active Academic Board including subject experts who are faculty members of a number of Australian universities (as above)

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- 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
  - publication

## **Professional development**

One permanent and seven part-time or sessional staff were enrolled in formal study programs at Masters or PhD level in 2014.

Several academic staff members attended a two-part workshop on Digital Tools for Teaching.

Several staff members were involved in field consultation for a literacy project in the Solomon Islands.

Administration staff attended a seminar on the tuition protection scheme. IT staff ensured they kept up to date with Moodle and various other software and current technologies.

## **Accreditation**

Accreditation of the Diploma of Language Description and Development expired on 30 June 2014. Accreditation of the Graduate Diploma of Language Description and Development, the registration of SILA as a Non Self-Accrediting Higher Education Institution, and CRICOS registration (required to enrol overseas students) expired on 30 November 2014. As mentioned (see page 3) it was decided not to pursue the expensive and burdensome reregistration and reaccreditation processes.

## **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 extensive literacy, language development and community development activities under the auspices of the organisation.

### **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 \$27,795 was raised through donations and \$19,471 distributed to WRA for projects.

In 2014, through this fund SILA continued to support the Solomon Islands **Literacy Support Project 2 (LSP2)**, building on the earlier project run from 2008-2011. The focus of this project was to build increased capacity for literacy training and materials development in two Solomon Islands NGOs. The project was officially completed in mid-

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2014 and since then all materials have been archived and made available to Solomon Islands NGOs. Over the scope of the two projects adult literacy materials were developed collaboratively with LASI, the local literacy organisation. Initial materials were developed in Solomons Pijin and then made available to other organisations for adaptation into local languages. The project assisted LASI in adaptation of some of the primers into 5 languages and SILA consultants assisted SIBTLP to adapt some of the materials into 12 other languages. LASI has also assisted several other language communities to adapt the primers into their languages. Materials developed with LASI include, but are not limited to, primers, story materials, literacy awareness materials, teaching guides, monitoring tools and training manuals.

The **Massalit Literacy Project** among a refugee community in the Republic of Chad continued in 2014. Funds remitted from SILA covered the costs of reprinting copies of the revised Grade 4 & Grade 5 (part 1) readers, along with supplementary material. Funds were also applied to two in-service training workshops with 39 participants resulting in an adequate number of trained and experienced teachers for both grades. An illustrator's workshop was run to discover and train artists for new publications. Four new easy reader titles (wild animals/birds) were published with six more books nearing completion. The more recent challenge for the project is the decision for the schools to change to following the Chadian school curriculum which includes different key languages and learning pathways. This has caused a deal of uncertainty for the Massalit teachers and refugee community who fear losing their Sudanese identity and ties. School attendance has also become a concern as the UN has had to cut back on their support for the people in the camps owing to reduced funding, so refugees have had to travel long distances to find places to grow food.

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



Children's literacy classes in Chad

The **China Minority Education (CHiME) project** was approved in July 2014 and will operate for three years. The project aims to facilitate the establishment of an educational capacity building partnership in China's Yunnan Province. The partnership will encourage the development of mother tongue-to-national language transition Minority Language Education programs in remote rural areas. 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 through the development

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stages. It is a \$213,000 project and it is expected that up to half of the funds will be provided through SILA.

### **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.

#### **Solomon Islands Literacy Support Project 2 (LSP2)**

From 2011-2014 SILA consultants Glenys Waters and Robyn Terrey have worked closely with the Literacy Association of the Solomon Islands (LASI) to strengthen the delivery of adult literacy at village level. They also worked with the Solomon Islands Bible Translation Partnership to develop literacy materials for 12 of their language projects. Glenys and Robyn concluded their last consultation on 5 June 2014. On this visit they were able to work with LASI to finalise descriptors of the phases of adult literacy acquisition appropriate for the Solomon Islands.

Together with LASI training staff they reviewed and improved the timetabling and content of the *Basic* and *Advanced* training workshops. This included collating teaching materials and handouts into draft manuals. LASI literacy program supervisors were given additional training on how to use monitoring tools to assess the delivery and effectiveness of the literacy tutors. Further facilitation was provided to assist LASI in the completion of the final four Pijin primers and primers 1 and 2 in the Kwaio language. In all, the project's legacy is a set of nine reading primers that cover the five steps of literacy development appropriate to the Solomon Islands as described by LASI. The consultation has been collaborative throughout and a very rewarding experience.



SILA consultants Glenys Waters and Robyn Terrey with the LASI team

#### **Review of Bougainville Adult Literacy Pilot Project**

During October 2014 SILA Consultant Glenys Waters was engaged by the Department of Education, Autonomous Region of Bougainville, PNG, to conduct a review of a pilot project which had commenced adult literacy programs in communities in Bougainville.

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The purpose of the review was to evaluate the progress of the literacy project and to determine how the program could be strengthened before roll out to other communities. Glenys concluded that the program was very much needed and was having a positive impact on learners and communities but was struggling as a result of poor administration, inadequate teacher training and a lack of reading materials. She offered a number of recommendations to strengthen the administration of the program and the classroom teaching.

### **Chinese 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 in 2006. 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 will see this pilot program continue to develop, with opportunities for replication in other dialect areas and minority language groups in rural China.

The Billards visited the project in November 2014 and had constructive meetings with officials. They continue to support the project via electronic contacts and plan further visits.

### **Language Technology**

#### **Adapt It – Computer Assisted Adaptation Program**

Three SILA consultants are working on a project developing Adapt It, a computer assisted adaptation program which facilitates translation in related languages. Bruce Waters, based in Melbourne, is Team Manager, Erik Brommers, based in the USA, is a developer, and Graeme Costin, assists part-time from Sydney.

Adapt It is currently at version 6.5.8. Bruce is currently working on some changes that will make it suitable for certain East Asian languages which do not use wordbreaks. Another developer has helped with the server-based knowledge base (kb) sharing feature (a 'kbserver') and is also working on some 'portable' server options to work with that feature such as a kbserver on a virtual machine. A local developer, Leon Pearl, has developed a kbserver on a bootable usb stick and it is planned to have one on the web soon. Erik Brommers is making good progress developing Adapt It Mobile, targeting smartphones and tablets, particularly Android ones. He is close to having a very basic alpha version. Graeme and Leon are also working on a Scripture data entry mobile app called 'Key-It', again targeting similar mobile platforms. It will be a companion app to Adapt It Mobile.

Help desk work has also been a focus in 2014.

The Kaffa people of Ethiopia recently received their published Scriptures – and that work was done with Adapt It.

A generous public donation has given the Adapt It software development work useful funds for future plans.

#### **Dictionary development support**

Joan Finlay continued to mentor and guide a colleague in the development of a dictionary for a minority group in Asia.

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## 4. Challenges and Opportunities

In 2014 a number of decisions were made that brought greater clarity to the future direction of SILA. First it was decided to allow the registration as a Higher Education Institution to lapse once the term had expired. This removed significant compliance costs and opened up a broader discussion about who SILA might partner with to deliver our courses. SILA already had an agreement with Tabor College Victoria to teach the applied linguistic subjects of their Bachelor of Arts degree so it was not too difficult to expand this by adding a specialisation in applied linguistics to their existing Graduate Diploma in Arts. SILA would continue to deliver the course at the Kangaroo Ground training facility with the courses being accredited through Tabor Victoria. This was a very satisfactory immediate solution allowing SILA to continue to deliver training in 2015.

Long-term decisions needed to be made around the potential future student base. While a proportion would still come from Australia attracting overseas students was equally important. Tabor College does not, however, have the required registration to enrol overseas students. Negotiations were therefore commenced with another higher education institution to form a partnership which would cater for overseas students. These discussions are ongoing with the intention to offer courses from 2016. There is also potential for expanding the offerings to include in-service and professional development short courses or workshops. All of these possibilities will serve to strengthen SILA's training options.

SILA involvement in consultancy has been limited but recent successful literacy consultancies in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville suggest that this is a potential market that could grow. Consultancies also offer opportunities for teaching staff to mix their teaching with concrete field experience. There is significant synergy to be had with an approach that combines teaching with research and consultancy and it is one that SILA plans to continue to explore.

A number of opportunities also exist in supporting development and education programs that are undertaken in cross-cultural settings. Cross-cultural development programs are fraught with risk when there are significant cultural and language barriers to overcome. The critical factor for SILA is the quality and experience of the staff on the ground. Any growth therefore will be gradual and dependent upon the strength of relationships and local knowledge. A new program called Next Step Development managed by SILA will endeavour to develop such new partnerships in 2015.

In conclusion, the future is promising as SILA enters a new phase in the delivery of key services. The decisions taken in 2014 mean that SILA services will be significantly strengthened through key partnerships with likeminded organisations and individuals.

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## 5. Financial Statements

### SIL Australia Operating Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2014 (Statement of Financial Performance)

	2014	2013
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Education Fees and Operations	43,597	137,717
Rental Income	24,933	31,806
SILA General Income	18,261	1,165
Donations and Gifts		
Overseas Aid	27,795	17,858
Aborigines and Islanders Support Program	230,631	285,198
SIL School Building Fund	11,755	8,911
Investment Income	8,028	8,010
Other revenues	11,920	13,005
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>376,920</b>	<b>503,670</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Education Operating	105,555	141,653
Overseas Projects	19,471	26,632
Domestic Projects	230,631	285,197
Depreciation	7,956	10,878
Other expenses	13,525	18,093
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>377,138</b>	<b>482,454</b>
Excess of Revenue over Expenses (shortfall) from continuing operations	<b>(218)</b>	<b>21,216</b>
Funds available for future use at beginning of financial year	212,562	244,036
Amount transferred to/from reserves	49,397	52,691
Funds available for future use at end of financial year	<b>162,947</b>	<b>212,562</b>

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**SIL Australia**  
**Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2014**  
(Statement of Financial Position)

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets		
Cash Assets	385,934	325,255
Receivables	6,268	3,759
Other		
Non-current Assets		
Property, plant and equipment	21,398	23,920
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>413,600</b>	<b>352,934</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Payables	120,133	59,250
Other		
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>120,133</b>	<b>59,250</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>293,467</b>	<b>293,685</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Reserves	130,520	81,123
Funds available for future use/retained earnings	162,947	212,562
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>293,467</b>	<b>293,685</b>

*Audited full financial statements are available on request.*

**SIL Australia**  
**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
**For the Year Ended 31 December 2014**

	Retained Earnings	Reserves	Total
Balance at 1 January 2014	212,562	81,123	293,685
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	(218)	0	(218)
Amount transferred (to) from reserves and other fund	(49,397)	49,397	0
Balance at 31 December 2014	162,947	130,520	293,467

**SIL Australia**  
**Table of Cash Movements for Designated Purposes**  
**For the Year Ended 31 December 2014**

	Cash available at beginning	Cash raised during year	Cash disbursed during year	Cash available at end of year	Comments
Aborigines & Islanders Support Prog	4,963	230,631	231,732	3,862	All donations are forwarded to AuSIL
Overseas Aid & Development Fund	7,845	27,795	22,400	13,240	Contributions to overseas development projects
SILA General & Training	241,882	78,489	15,390	304,981	
Total for Other Purposes	70,565	40,005	46,719	63,851	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>325,255</b>	<b>376,920</b>	<b>316,241</b>	<b>385,934</b>	



## 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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