

Interpretation
Australia

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2028**





Interpretation Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first interpreters. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and sky. Our organisation advocates for a future that respects, acknowledges and empowers Australia's First Peoples to interpret their diverse culture, belief system, language and history.

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ABOUT THIS STRATEGIC PLAN

President's foreword



This strategic plan is the culmination of many conversations and an identified need around the future of Interpretation Australia. In 2022, when the executive committee assessed current initiatives and previous goals, we determined that the completion of a strategic plan to inform future activities of the organisation was a key priority.

My sincere appreciation to everyone who engaged in our strategic planning process, facilitated by Scott Killeen of Kelp Creative. The participation of our membership community, and especially our executive committee members, provided invaluable feedback helping ensure the development of focused and realistic goals that align with the needs of our organisation.

The result, set out in this strategic plan, provides a framework that serves as an important guide to help Interpretation Australia succeed in finding innovative opportunities for strengthening our organisational capacity and supporting our membership.

Our vision, mission and values not only articulate our primary purpose to nurture, support and inspire the interpretation profession but also serve as a call to action for us to recognise the context of our diverse membership.

This will be achieved through a recommitment to our restated values of being member-focused, inclusive, collaborative, sustainable, and providing a safe environment for all to participate in. If we continue to embrace these values as the foundational principles for our endeavours, they will foster unity in meeting our mission, vision and goals identified in the strategic plan.

My thanks again to everyone who engaged in this strategic planning process, shaping the contents of this plan and enabling the rollout of a dynamic guide for the future. I welcome your continuing participation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Kylie Christian". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kylie Christian
President (2017-19 and 2021-23)

A renewed commitment



Interpretation Australia (IA) was founded in 1992 and was initially known as Interpretation Australia Association. As a professional association of interpreters, the organisation supports a range of professionals who interpret Australia's natural and cultural heritage. At the first national interpretation conference in 1992, IA passed the following Deakin Declaration:

Interpretation is the means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people enrich their understanding and appreciation of the world and their role within it. We believe that interpretation makes an essential contribution to the conservation of Australia's natural, social and cultural heritage by raising public awareness and creating opportunities for understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.

Today, 30 years after this initial declaration, IA continues to support and nurture the practice and practitioners of interpretation throughout Australia. The next five years will see the organisation build on its past success to further enhance interpretation as a recognised profession within Australia.

The challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic highlighted the importance of visiting and valuing our natural and cultural sites, as well as our intangible cultural values. IA's work in supporting the professional practice of interpretation to help foster the appreciation and protection of these sites and values has never been more important.

This five-year strategic plan describes the next step in the organisation's development. It is a simple, honest and achievable plan that focuses on amplifying what IA does well rather than seeking broad-scale transformation. Our point of difference is our sole focus on interpretation and interpreters within Australia.

No one else can do the work we do. Focusing on this core purpose, our true north, is key to this next stage of IA's evolution. Thirty years after IA was established, we still believe interpretation is critical to protecting and sharing our natural and cultural heritage and values. Put simply, this strategic plan is our renewed commitment to further the professional practice of interpretation within Australia.

A renewed commitment

OUR VISION

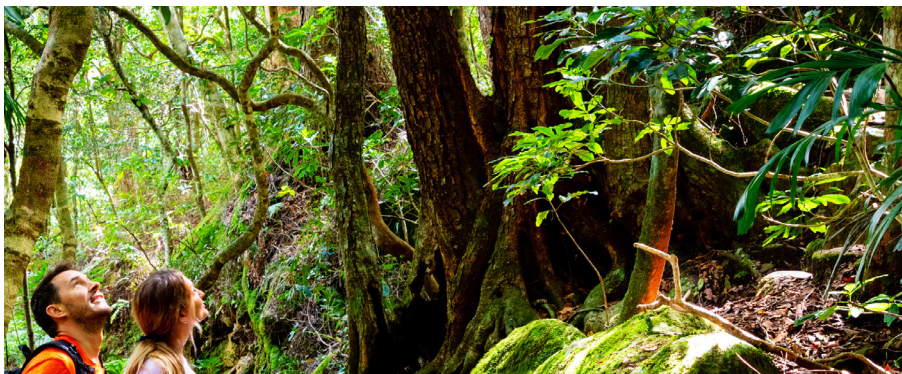
Interpretation is valued in the protection and sharing of Australia's natural, social and cultural heritage.

OUR MISSION

Nurture the professional practice and practitioners of interpretation within Australia.

OUR VALUES

A series of values guide actions and how we engage staff, volunteers, members and partners.



Member-centric

We enhance the professional practice of interpretation through our members. We work to ensure our members are valued, supported and skilled professionals.

Inclusive

We are the peak body for natural and cultural heritage interpretation within Australia. Our diverse membership is drawn from a range of sectors, locations, experience levels and cultural backgrounds. We are known for our respectful and welcoming culture.

Collaborative

We recognise interpreting our natural and cultural heritage is multi-layered and take inspiration from storytellers from varied sectors and industries. We foster networks and partnerships with like-minded organisations and individuals.

Sustainable

We aspire to be an environmentally and financially sustainable business, aligning our resources with our aspirations.

Safe

We consider each other's safety and wellbeing in all that we do and always treat each other with respect and consideration.

How to use this plan



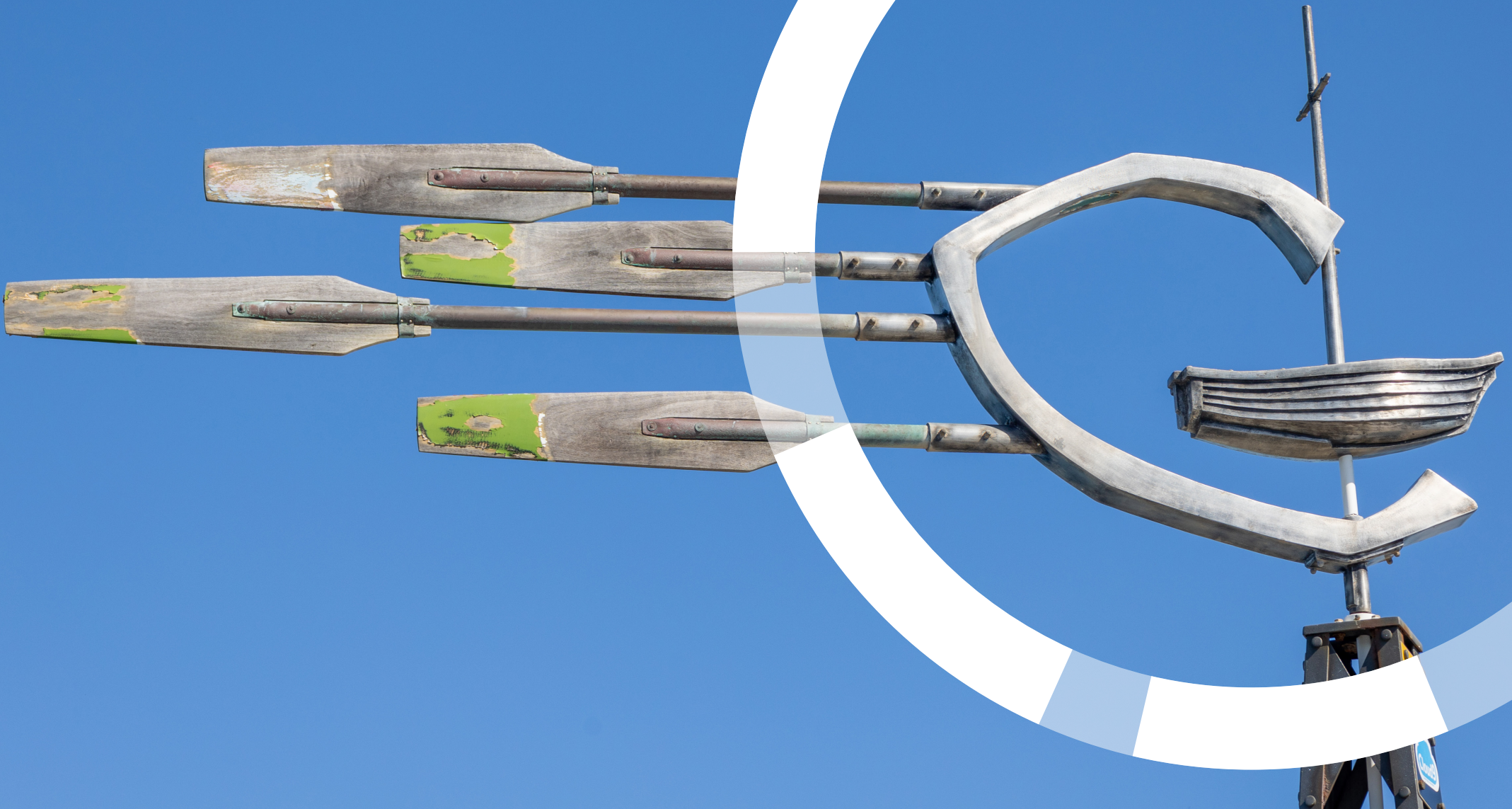
This Strategic Plan is designed to clearly articulate IA's aspirations and priorities over the coming five years for everyone that engages with the organisation:

Executive Committee: guides the efforts and actions of IA's Executive, providing a greater level of structure and accountability.

IA Members: describes how IA will support its members and the professional practice of interpretation within Australia, better defining IA's value proposition for members.

Industry: defines IA's niche role within the industry, positioning the organisation to collaborate, rather than compete.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Strategic priorities

Interpretation Australia Strategic Plan 2023-2028 outlines the organisation's renewed commitment to nurturing interpretation and interpreters across Australia. This strategy builds on the organisation's past success, and we thank everyone that has contributed to IA over the past 30 years. **Three priority areas will guide IA's actions over the next five years:**



Priority 1: National, engaged network



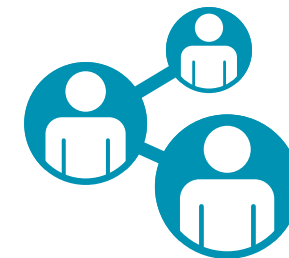
Connecting interpreters across Australia

We will strengthen networking opportunities for members through a dynamic and thriving national network. The network will be defined by a common passion for interpreting our nation's natural, social and cultural heritage rather than state boundaries.

Our membership will reflect the diverse field of interpretation, uniting people from a range of sectors including built heritage, environment, wildlife, cultural values, cultural institutions, arts, conservation, education, urban planning, placemaking and government. Together our network of members and partners will share ideas, challenges, solutions, innovation, research and experience.



Priority 1: National, engaged network



GOALS	ACTIONS			
DIVERSE Our membership reflects the diverse field of interpretation, uniting people from a range of sectors, cultural backgrounds and varying levels of industry experience.	Develop a 'membership plan' focused on growth and retention, including encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people taking up membership.	Grow membership numbers and member retention rates to increase the organisation's reach, impact and financial stability.	Improve efficiency of membership data management to improve data analysis including retention rates and member participation.	Work with First Nations representatives to review IA's Acknowledgment of Country and First Nations protocols for communications and activities.
CONNECTED We facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences between members, regardless of their location or speciality.	Employ a Member Engagement Coordinator to drive membership engagement and participation.	Grow volunteer participation in the organisational structure and executive committee to ensure continued stability and growth.	Develop an annual 'member network plan' to shift members from being passive observers to active participants in IA.	Explore member appetite for 'special interest groups' that connect members from similar sectors to foster specialist conversations.
VALUED IA provides value to members and is seen by the industry as crucial to contemporary practice.	Investigate an annual member survey to measure satisfaction and ensure IA continually meets membership needs.	Explore the value of a 'member recognition program' that acknowledges and rewards members for ongoing membership.	Enhance the suppliers' database to maximise value it offers members and suppliers.	Identify and develop partnerships with like-minded organisations across Australia to extend IA's network.
VISIBLE IA is known as the 'go to' for interpretation amongst interpreters, industry and government.	Review the organisation's brand and website to ensure strategic alignment and consistent brand use across all platforms.	Develop a member communications plan to ensure IA is regularly communicating with members, including a rapid response to key trends and events.	Develop a 'badge' for members to promote their membership on emails and proposals.	Enact a plan for IA to engage with relevant forums, conferences and publications.

Priority 2: Enhance professional practice

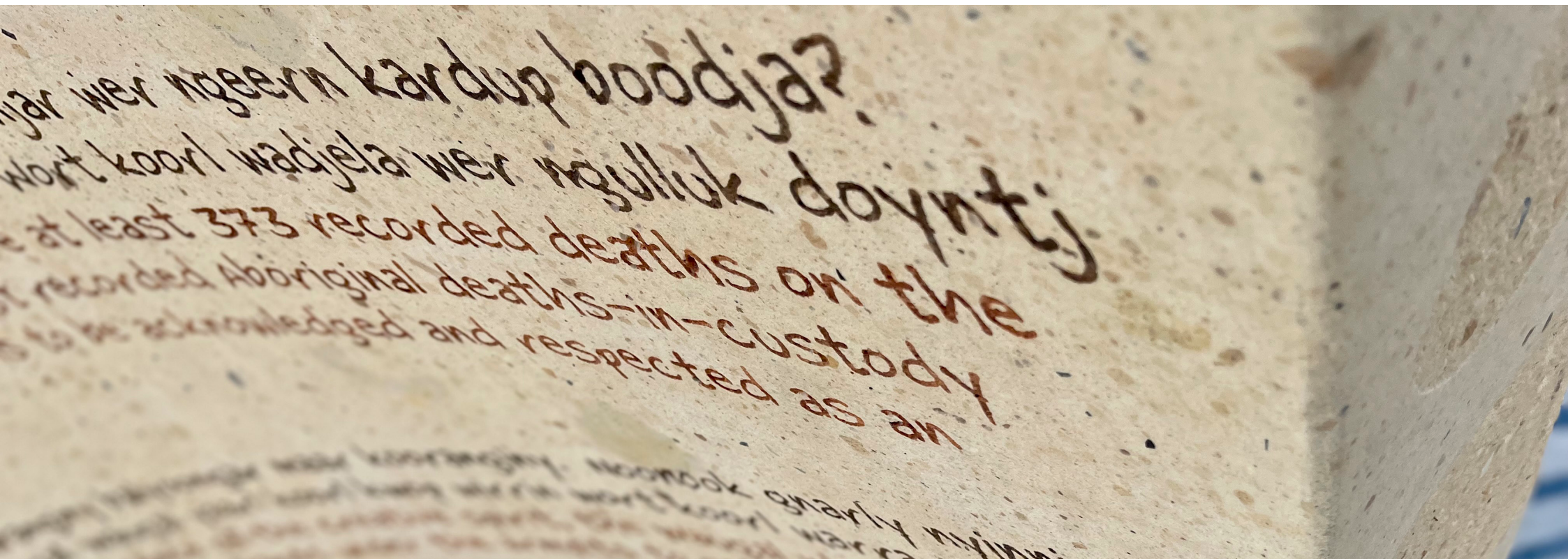


Australia's 'go to' for natural, social and cultural interpretation

We believe interpreting our natural, social and cultural heritage enriches people's understanding and appreciation of the world and their role within it. Therefore, nurturing the practice of interpretation is critical to the way people experience these significant places and cultural values.

Interpretation Australia is the only organisation dedicated to enhancing interpretive practice within Australia and will continue to be the nation's peak-body for interpretation. We will continue to bring together leaders and innovators from our sector, as well as other industries, to continually push innovative interpretive practice and to ensure that Australia remains connected with interpretive organisations worldwide.

Our online and face-to-face professional development program will strive to be of the highest quality whilst our library of resources will continuously grow and inform interpretive practice. Our Awards program will continue to recognise and celebrate interpretive excellence. We will enhance interpretive practice throughout Australia through building member capacity and interpretive skills.



Priority 2: Enhance professional practice



GOALS	ACTIONS			
NURTURE Our professional development opportunities are highly regarded and sought after.	Deliver a quarterly national professional development program that includes online and face-to-face activities addressing natural and cultural heritage interpretation.	Investigate the feasibility of a 'blended' conference in 2024, offering face-to-face and online participation.	Engage IA members in the development and delivery of professional development opportunities.	Investigate the feasibility of a mentorship program that links new interpreters with experienced practitioners.
SHOWCASE We celebrate and recognise great interpretation in order to promote insight, learning, and inspiration.	Continue to strengthen the National Awards so it becomes a 'hallmark' annual event for IA.	Baluster the Georgie Waterman award to maximise recipient engagement with IA and members.	Develop an 'Interpreter spotlight' that regularly features the diversity within IA's membership	Develop an 'innovation showcase' that regularly showcases the work of IA members.
RESOURCE Our library of professional resources is a key feature of IA membership.	Expand online member resources to include 'how to' practical tools both IA-owned and commercially available resources.	Undertake a 'definitions project' to confirm the use of key terms in the industry such as 'interpretation' and 'heritage.'	Work with First Nations representatives to develop IA's 'Guidelines for Interpreting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Culture and Country.'	Add a research section to IA's resources, working with partners to share research from Australia and the world.

Priority 3: Enduring voice for interpretation



Advocating the value of interpretation and interpreters

We are and will continue to be known and respected for the work we do. Individuals and organisations will seek out IA to engage with current trends, research and innovative practice. We will continue to be an avid advocate for interpretation and interpreters, building the community's understanding of the critical role interpretation plays in protection and sharing of our natural, social and cultural heritage.

Underpinning these operations will be financial and environmentally sustainable practices and a robust organisational structure, ensuring that we have the long-term capacity to deliver our vision.



Priority 3: Enduring voice for interpretation



GOALS	ACTIONS			
SUSTAINABLE We deliver our vision through sustainable operations.	Develop a sustainability policy or statement that outlines IA approach.	Review and improve the sustainability of IA's current operations.	Investigate feasibility of achieving a sustainable certification.	
ROBUST Strong finances and transparent governance underpin our operations.	Enact a sponsorship program including the IA awards and professional development activities.	Identify relevant grants and explore the value/effort of registering IA as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.	Develop a succession plan and hand-over pack for IA Executive to provide a greater level of continuity in the organisation's corporate knowledge. Review the IA Constitution with regards to the effectiveness of board membership terms and length of tenure.	Investigate refocusing State Chapter roles with roles that support IA's three strategic priority areas.
GLOBAL We are the gateway to global organisations, helping keep Australia's finger on the world's interpretive pulse.	Continue to strengthen IA's involvement with the Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation and its partner organisations.		Develop at least one project with an international partner each year.	Explore the feasibility of enhancing reciprocal benefits with our global partners.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation phases

The strategic priorities, each with a series of goals and action, will be delivered across three phases.



Resources

Throughout IA's history, the organisation has been driven by passionate and dedicated volunteers. These volunteers have brought invaluable insight and experience to the organisation. The Executive Committee are fundamental to the organisation's operations and straddle both strategy and operations. Relying largely on a volunteer workforce does have its limitations and this is a key factor that limits the organisation's growth. The goals and action within the strategy aim to focus the Executive on the strategic growth of the organisation by providing a clear direction for the next five years with increased operational support.

Administrative Officer

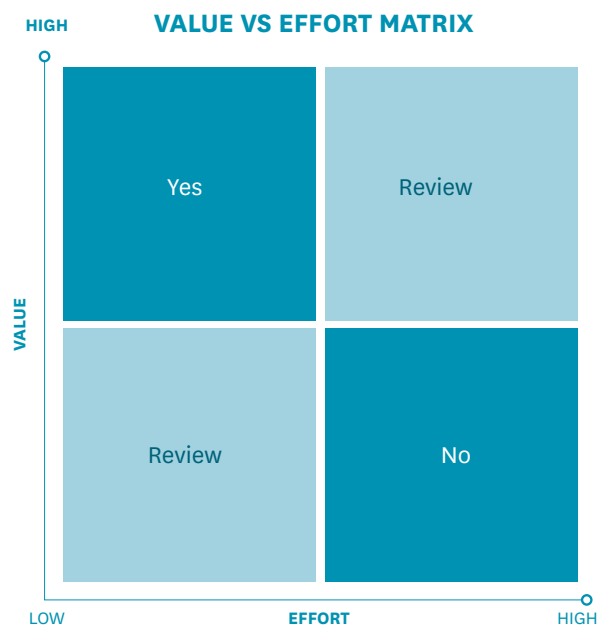
IA's Administrative Office plays a critical role in the daily operations of the organisation and is critical to the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan. As membership numbers grow, so too will the administrative requirements of the organisation. It is expected that the resources allocated to delivering this function will increase accordingly.

Member Engagement Coordinator

IA exists to further the professional practice of interpretation through its members. Member growth, engagement and retention, are key to the ongoing success of the organisation. To significantly grow member engagement, a new role is proposed for the organisation. Backed by a business case, the Member Engagement Coordinator will be employed to increase key member benefits including professional development and resources, as well as generating income. It is imagined the role will commence as a part-time resource and grow as membership and member engagement opportunities increase. Shifting this function from a volunteer capacity to a funded role, ensures member benefits can be delivered consistently to a high level, aligned with member expectations.

Value vs effort

Prioritising projects based on their value and effort, helps decide where to dedicate resources and time. Value vs effort is a prioritisation framework, or a decision-making framework. It will allow Interpretation Australia to evaluate each initiative according to how much value the idea will offer and the effort it will take.



Prioritising projects based on value and effort identifies those projects that promise to deliver the most value for the least effort. Each initiative is assessed and given a low, medium or high score, which is then plotted using the value vs effort matrix (pictured below). Prioritising projects in this way also prompts conversations about how value can be added, or effort can be reduced, to improve a project's score. Just as importantly, the matrix helps identify when we should walk away from those projects that just don't deliver strategic outcomes. Using this approach enables the matrix to be used as a quick and consistent tool. Over time, numeric-based assessments can be developed for more in-depth analysis.

Defining value

Interpretation Australia determines the value of a project by assessing the following:

- **Strategy** – how strongly does the project align with IA's three strategic priorities?
- **Members** – how many members is the project likely to engage?
- **Reputation** – how strongly does the project strengthen IA's reputation?

Defining effort

Interpretation Australia determines the effort of a project by assessing the following categories:

- **Time** – can the project be implemented immediately, or will it take weeks, months or years
- **Resources** – does IA have the required skills and capacity to undertake the project?
- **Cost** – does the project funded or supported by an IA approved business case?

Assessing value vs effort

- **High value, low effort** (upper-left). It's a yes for these projects. They are the top priorities and deliver quick wins.
- **High value, high effort** (upper-right). Review these projects to see if their effort can be reduced. If not, reconsider them in future. However, sometimes projects are worth the effort!
- **Low value, low effort** (lower-left). Review these projects to see if their value can be increased. If not, reconsider them in future.
- **Low value, high effort** (lower-right). It's a 'no' for these projects. They are hard to deliver and no one thinks they're important.

Action plan

- **Low effort:** can implement now
- **Medium effort:** needs resource reallocation
- **High effort:** requires collaboration and additional resources

FOCUS AREA	GOALS	ACTIONS	METRIC	Priority	Resources	Years				
						Consolidation		Growth		Reach
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Priority 1: National, engaged, network	DIVERSE Our membership reflects the diverse field of interpretation, uniting people from a range of sectors, cultural backgrounds and varying levels of industry experience.	Develop a 'membership plan' focused on growth and retention, including encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people taking up membership.	Plan completed by June 2023.	★	●					
		Grow membership numbers and member retention rates to increase the organisation's reach, impact and financial stability.	Total members of 500 and a retention rate of 90% by 2028.		●					
		Improve efficiency of membership data management to improve data analysis including retention rates and member participation.	Management system reviewed and improved by December 2024.	★	●					
		Review IA's Acknowledgment of Country and First Nations protocols for communications and activities.	Protocols are developed by June 2024.	★	●					
	CONNECTED We facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences between members, regardless of their location or speciality.	Employ a Member Engagement Coordinator to drive membership engagement and participation.	Income exceeds 20% of costs of the position by 2025.	★	●					
		Grow volunteer participation in the organisational structure and executive committee to ensure continued stability and growth.	Filling of all roles for both executive and non-executive roles.	★	●					
		Develop an annual 'member network plan' to shift members from being passive observers to active participants in IA.	Every member can access at least two networking opportunities per year.	★	●					
		Explore member appetite for 'special interest groups' that connect members from similar sectors to foster specialist conversations.	Proposal presented to members by June 2026.		●					
	VALUED IA provides value to members and is seen by the industry as crucial to contemporary practice.	Implement an annual member satisfaction survey to ensure IA continually meets membership needs.	Satisfaction survey initiated by December 2024.		●					
		Explore the value of a 'member recognition program' that acknowledges and rewards members for ongoing membership.	Proposal developed by June 2025.		●					
		Review the suppliers' database to maximise value it offers members and suppliers.	Completed December 2023.	★	●					
		Identify and develop partnerships with like-minded organisations across Australia to extend IA's network.	25% increase in partnerships by 2027.		●					
	VISIBLE IA is known as the 'go to' for interpretation amongst interpreters, industry and government.	Review the organisation's brand and website to ensure strategic alignment and consistent brand use across all platforms.	Review completed and changes implemented by 2024 conference.	★	●					
		Develop a member communications plan to ensure IA is regularly communicating with members, including a rapid response to key trends and events.	Plan developed by April 2023.	★	●					
		Develop a 'badge' for members to promote their membership on emails and proposals.	Badge launched by end of 2023.		●					
		Develop a plan for IA to engage with relevant forums, conferences and publications.	Plan developed by December 2025.		●					

Action plan

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FOCUS AREA	GOALS	ACTIONS	METRIC	Priority	Resources	YEARS				
						Consolidation		Growth		Reach
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Priority 2: Enhance professional practice	NURTURE Our professional development opportunities are highly regarded and sought after.	Deliver a quarterly national professional development program that develop interpretive skills through online and face-to-face activities addressing natural and cultural heritage interpretation.	Post-event evaluations show a satisfaction rating for PD activities rate an average of 8/10.	★	●					
		Deliver a 'blended' conference in 2023, offering face-to-face and online participation.	Business case established by April 2023 showing a return of 20% based on average attendance of past conferences.	★	●					
		Engage IA members in the development and delivery of professional development opportunities.	Engage IA members to run at least 50% of IA's professional development by 2025.		●					
		Investigate the feasibility of a mentorship program that links new and experienced interpreters.	Mentorship proposal develop by early 2027 for possible implementation by mid 2027.		●					
	SHOWCASE We celebrate and recognise great interpretation in order to promote insight, learning, and inspiration.	Continue to strengthen the National Awards so it becomes a 'hallmark' annual event for IA.	35% increase in awards nominations by 2024.		●					
		Bolster the Georgie Waterman award to maximise recipient engagement with IA and members. Review criteria of assessment to standardise and make transparent the requirements for award.	Georgie Waterman award reviewed by 2024 AGM.		●					
		Develop an 'Interpreter spotlight' that regularly features the diversity within IA's membership.	Implemented by April 2023.		●					
		Develop an 'innovation showcase' that regularly promotes the work of IA members.	Implemented by April 2023.		●					
	RESOURCE Our library of professional resources is a key feature of IA membership.	Expand online member resources to include 'how to' practical tools, both IA-owned and commercially available books and resources.	25% increase in resources by end of 2026.	★	●					
		Undertake a 'definitions project' to confirm the use of key terms in the industry such as 'interpretation' and 'heritage.'	Completed by December 2024.	★	●					
		Establish a working group to develop IA's "Guidelines for Interpreting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Culture and Country."	Guidelines reviewed by December 2025.		●					
		Add a research section to IA's resources, working with partners to share research from Australia and the world.	Research resources added to IA website by June 2027.		●					

Action plan

- **Low effort:** can implement now
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FOCUS AREA	GOALS	ACTIONS	METRIC	Priority	Resources	Years				
						Consolidation		Growth		Reach
						2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Priority 3: Enduring voice for interpretation	SUSTAINABLE We deliver our vision through sustainable operations.	Develop a sustainability policy or statement that outlines IA approach to environmental sustainability.	Policy developed by June 2026.		●					
		Review and improve the sustainability of IA's current operations.	Review completed by June 2025.		●					
		Investigate feasibility of achieving a certified sustainable 'status'.	Options identified by December 2026.		●					
	ROBUST Strong finances and transparent governance underpin our operations.	Enact a sponsorship program including IA awards and professional development activities.	Program developed by IA conference 2023.	★	●					
		Identify relevant grants and explore the value/effort of registering IA as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.	Charity registration proposal completed by June 2024.		●					
		Develop a succession plan and hand-over pack for IA Executive to provide greater level of continuity in organisation knowledge. Review the IA Constitution with regards to the effectiveness of board membership terms and length of tenure.	Executive hand-over pack developed by 2024 AGM and succession plan implemented by 2025 AGM.	★	●					
		Investigate refocusing State Chapter roles to support IA's three strategic priorities.	Review by 2024 AGM.		●					
	GLOBAL We are the gateway to global organisations, helping keep Australia's finger on the world's interpretive pulse.	Continue to strengthen IA's involvement with the Global Alliance for Heritage Interpretation and its partner organisations.	50% increase in IA's participation with the Alliance by 2028.		●					
		Strengthen networks with the interpretation organisations in the NZ, USA, Canada, Europe and UK.	MOUs in place with each organisation by June 2026.		●					
		Develop at least one project with an international partner each year.	Annual projects in place by June 2027, as part of MOUs.		●					
		Explore the feasibility of enhancing reciprocal benefits with our global partners.	Reciprocal benefits in place by 2028 as part of MOUs.		●					

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