

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF
TRANSLATORS & INTERPRETERS


Te Rōpū Kaiwhakamāori ā-waha, ā-tuhi o Aotearoa

NZSTI Report 2025

National Survey of Translator & Interpreter Rates & Working Conditions

Summary





Report Owner: New Zealand Society of Translators & Interpreters (NZSTI)

Report Author: Dr Thanos Kyritsis

This summary covers the key points explored in the full report and is publicly available.

The full report can be purchased via the NZSTI website
(<https://nzsti.org/NZSTI-Rates-Survey/19788/>), or is free to NZSTI members.

The full 92-page document covers survey methodology, translator and interpreter demographics, statistical analyses, detailed translation and interpreting rates broken down by language pair, tables and figures regarding working conditions in Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as a thematic analysis of respondent comments.



Foreword


Dear members and colleagues,

The New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters is delighted to publish NZSTI's first **National Survey of Translator & Interpreter Rates & Working Conditions** in Aotearoa New Zealand. This report is the result of the most comprehensive survey of translators and interpreters ever conducted in New Zealand, marking a significant milestone for NZSTI and the wider language services sector.

Our goal in undertaking this project was to provide current and future practitioners with greater clarity about the landscape in which we work. We also wanted to foster a sense of unity within our membership and across the profession. By working collectively to raise the bar, we aim to ensure that translators and interpreters — and the clients and communities we serve — benefit from the high standards that come with fair remuneration for a job well done.

Against a background of rapid change within the industry, it is more important than ever for us as practitioners to have access to up-to-date and accurate data about our profession. We hope this information will serve as a valuable resource to navigate these shifts and inspire conversations about the future.

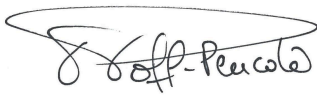
NZSTI is a volunteer-led organisation, and this project was only made possible by the input of many volunteers. We would particularly like to thank the members of the rates survey project group, Agustina Marianacci, Carolina Cannard, Diana Renker, Elizabeth Broom, and Hazel Shao. Special thanks go to project lead Hannah Burdekin for her outstanding leadership and countless hours of effort behind the scenes. Her commitment to making this report a reality has been extraordinary. Over many months, she spearheaded the effort with energy, focus, and a clear sense of purpose, ensuring that this initiative not only met but exceeded its goals.



We also wish to thank the Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE), the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), the Ministry of Justice, the Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand (SLIANZ), and the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) for their help in publicising the survey, Richard Harrison for legal advice, and Dr Thanos Kyritsis for his invaluable guidance and hard work at all stages of this project.

To all the above and to the translators and interpreters across New Zealand who responded to the survey, thank you for being part of this journey.

Warm regards,



Isabelle Poff-Pencole
NZSTI President

I. Methodology

- ❖ The New Zealand Society of Translators & Interpreters conducted its first national survey to assess rates and working conditions in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- ❖ Data was collected online between July and September 2024; participation was voluntary and anonymous on the basis of informed consent.
- ❖ A representative sample of 362 translators & interpreters took part (58 translators, 186 interpreters, and 118 translators/interpreters), covering 50+ languages.
- ❖ Data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

II. Translator & Interpreter Demographics

Based on responses to this survey:

- ❖ Translators & interpreters are more likely to be female, aged 40–59, and based in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.
- ❖ Translators tend to have more qualifications and years of experience; interpreters' qualifications and years of experience vary.
- ❖ Translators typically freelance, interpreters may be freelancers or employees.
- ❖ The percentage of income from translation and interpreting varies, but is usually less than \$60k/year.
- ❖ The majority of respondents have NZSTI membership but no professional indemnity insurance.

III. Translation Rates & Practices

- ❖ 171 translators submitted 249 responses regarding translation rates and practices (translators working with multiple language pairs could submit multiple responses).
- ❖ Data was submitted on 47 languages, with Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), English, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish receiving more than 5 responses; all other languages were grouped based on geography.
- ❖ Most translators charge per source word, per standard document, or per hour.
- ❖ Most common surcharges include urgent jobs and highly technical content.
- ❖ The minimum fee per translation job is variable, approx. \$55.07 (± 41.53).
- ❖ The majority of translators offer discounts for repetitive text.
- ❖ Translators work equally with agencies and direct clients; only about 1 in 4 translators reports being able to negotiate their rates when working with agencies.
- ❖ Most translation work covers certified, legal, and medical translation; other common services include revision of translation and monolingual proofreading.
- ❖ The majority of translators report using CAT tools.
- ❖ As of September 2024, translators held NAATI certification for fewer than 1 in 4 language pairs reported.

IV. Interpreting Rates & Practices

- ❖ 285 interpreters submitted 340 responses regarding interpreting rates and practices (interpreters working with multiple language pairs could submit multiple responses).
- ❖ Data on 53 languages was received, with Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese), Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, NZ Sign Language, Persian/Farsi/Dari, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese receiving more than 5 responses; all other languages were grouped based on geography.
- ❖ Most interpreters charge per hour or per minute (also in 15–30 min blocks).
- ❖ Most common surcharges include after-hours jobs and cancellation fees.
- ❖ The minimum fee per booking is variable, approx. \$83.87 (± 66.24).
- ❖ Only a minority of interpreters charge for preparation, approx. \$61.26 (± 60.50).
- ❖ Most interpreting work is in the domains of healthcare, other community interpreting, and legal/police interpreting; most interpreters offer telephone and video interpreting.
- ❖ As of September 2024, interpreters held NAATI certification for 1 in 3 language pairs reported.

V. Translation & Interpreting Working Conditions

- ❖ On average, compared with 5 years ago, translators report a slight decrease in rates, while interpreters report rates are about the same.
- ❖ Both translators and interpreters are somewhat dissatisfied with their rates.
- ❖ Most translators and interpreters decline jobs every year, predominantly due to limited availability, low rates, and late notice among other reasons.
- ❖ Thematic analysis of 130 respondent comments highlights five themes related to the translation & interpreting (T&I) working conditions:
 - T&I offer limited financial sustainability
 - T&I have limited professional recognition and regulation
 - T&I are impacted by emerging technologies
 - T&I are a valuable service and provide job satisfaction
 - T&I professionals are dissatisfied and call for change