

**ASSTA Forensic Speech Science Committee (FSSC)
Annual Report 2025, for AGM 10 December (online only)**

Prepared by FSSC chair Helen Fraser (Director of Research Hub for Language in
Forensic Evidence, The University of Melbourne)

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FSSC has had a quiet year in 2025, with members all exceptionally busy on individual pursuits.

We met in September to exchange news (see below) and discuss topics of mutual interest (see below).

We also discussed what, if anything, to offer as a FSSC contribution to InterSpeech 2026. The decision was, with members' interests being so diverse, not to pursue a dedicated FSSC submission, but for individual members to submit their own contributions to their own most relevant scientific streams.

Individual forensic-related news items were as follows:

- Shun Ishihara had recently travelled to Europe for IAFPA and other visits.
- Michael Carne was in the final stages of revising his PhD thesis on speaker comparison; will be teaching Language and Law again next year.
- Kirsty McDougall continues her high-level research on ear witness evidence, with a new paper in *Criminal Law Review*.
- Eleanor Kettle continues her PhD research on transcription of forensic audio featuring non-mainstream varieties of English, as well as working part time as a research assistant in the Hub.
- Paul Foulkes reported recent success with a grant for the project Census of Urban and Rural Language in England and Wales (CURLEW, co-researchers Adrian Leemann, David Britain, David Willis); also ongoing developments in forensic research and case work at York.
- Helen Fraser reported news from the Research Hub for Language in Forensic Evidence: transcription platform SoundScribe now in active use for experiments and case work; yet more experimental results indicating significant problems with the way 'audio enhancing' techniques are used in court; extension of transcription research to languages other than English; new experiment testing ability of professional typists to produce real time transcripts (in relation to historical verballing case of Stephen 'Shorty' Jamieson).

General discussion was about deepfakes (all agreeing that detailed phonetic analysis could assist in detection) and the value of enhancement / noise reduction techniques for poor-quality forensic audio.