

From the President

Karen Gillen, who had only been ANZSI President since January this year, has unfortunately been forced to resign from the position due to recent events in her personal life. Karen has also resigned as President of the Victorian Branch. We wish her well and hope to see her back within ANZSI at some time in the future.

As a result of these changes the Executive of the ANZSI Council has appointed me as President until the Society AGM, according to the ANZSI Constitution. The AGM will be held in September or October.

Although there has been a change of leadership the ANZSI Council will continue to work as a coordinated team on a range of projects for the benefit of all ANZSI members. Financial planning for the forthcoming financial year is well underway to ensure members funds are used in the most prudent manner, considering the range of projects in hand. For example, overseeing the Website Development has been a major priority. Members will be most impressed by the many new features which will enhance the useability and

accessibility of the site, when it goes 'live' in the near future.

The Council is also vigorously investigating incorporation of ANZSI. We have learnt through legal advice that because we are an unincorporated society all ANZSI members, not just the Council or the Executive, could be liable in the event of a claim against the Society. So as you can see, effective governance of ANZSI is our highest priority.

In the previous issue of the Newsletter members will have noted an item about subscriptions to *The Indexer*. Although it was suggested that members subscribe directly, the mechanism to do so is not yet in place, so please hold off subscribing until the issue has been resolved. We will notify members of the new procedure shortly.



*Max McMaster
ANZSI President*

July is tax month . . .



<www.monolivet.org/dotclear/images/ImpotsHumour.jpg>

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It is *your* newsletter, and we are totally dependent on contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact the editor if you have any questions about the suitability of items for publication. The editor reserves the right to edit or abridge contributions.

Please send files via email in MS Word Rich Text Format or plain text (ASCII). Do not embed footnotes in Word files.

Next deadline

3 August for the August 2007 issue.

Graphics

Image files can be accepted in most common formats. Do not embed images in text files. Camera-ready art and photos can be scanned by the editor. Note that photos need to be clear, sharp and contrasty if they are to copy well in black and white.

Advertising charges

Full page A\$175; half page A\$90; quarter page A\$35; full year 10 for the price of 8.

Membership charges

A\$60 per year; A\$35 half year (Jan to June).

Student member A\$35.

Subscriptions to the Newsletter A\$45 p.a.

The Indexer

(international indexing journal)

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ANZSI NSW event attendance sponsorship

ANZSI NSW Branch would like to encourage members to attend events run by related professional groups, to ensure that:

- we learn about other people's interests and priorities; and
- other professionals learn about indexers, indexing and the things that matter to us.

Amount sponsored

The Branch will offer sponsorship of up to \$100 for attendance at an approved event. An additional allocation of \$50 may be made for long-distance transport costs.

If you spend up to \$50, you get the amount you spend. If you spend \$50 to \$500, you get \$50, and if you spend over \$500 you get 10% up to a total of \$100 (ie, anything between \$50 and \$100).

This program is on trial for one year only. Members will be eligible for funding once only within the financial year.

Eligibility

Eligibility will be assessed by the NSW Branch committee. Approval is likely to be granted for indexers to attend events organised by groups such as:

- editors;
- information architects, content managers, knowledge managers;
- technical communicators;
- writers and illustrators;
- librarians and information specialists.

Events such as lunches which are primarily social will be considered.

To be eligible to apply, people must have been members of ANZSI NSW on 1 July 2007 and must show evidence of indexing work or study. Out-of-state people who have put NSW as their branch are eligible.

Members must apply for funding before the event is held.

Obligations

Members who receive funding are required to write a report for the NSW Committee on the event, including any advice for further communication. Members are also asked to promote the Society during the event, as appropriate. This could include handing out brochures or cards and mentioning upcoming events.

*Glenda Browne
President, NSW Branch*

NSW Branch August event and news

ANZSI NSW will be holding a panel discussion on specialist indexing at the NSW Writers' Centre at Rozelle from 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm on 11 August. The Writers' Centre website provides details of access by bus and light rail. Parking is available in the Sydney College of the Arts carpark about 100 metres to the front of the building.

Speakers will be Caroline Colton and Tricia Waters on food and wine indexing, Madeleine Davis on biography indexing and Mary Coe on medical indexing. The event will be free for ANZSI members and cost \$15 for non-members. Afternoon tea will be provided. Inquiries to Lorraine Doyle, at +61 2 8587 7229, or <lorraine.doyle@thomson.com>.

In June the NSW Branch ran a successful two-day book indexing course over two Saturdays. Many thanks to Lorraine Doyle for hosting and feeding us, and to Thomson Legal & Regulatory for kindly allowing us to use their facilities.

Glenda Browne

ASI – proposed new Special Interest Groups

At the American Society of Indexers (ASI) conference in Philadelphia some members began discussing the idea of starting two new special interest groups (SIGs), which ANZSI members are also eligible to join. The new SIGs would be distinguished by their functional area/method/market, rather than by their subject area: *Periodical & Database Indexing* and *Taxonomies & Controlled Vocabularies*.

1. Periodical & Database Indexing

There are many periodical indexers out there, both freelance and in-house, but many do not currently belong to our indexing societies perceiving the societies to be focused on back-of-the-book indexing, and we would like them to join us. While some freelancers index both books and periodicals, others get enough work in freelance periodical indexing alone. Periodical indexing includes both indexes created with back-of-the-book indexing software and indexes created in database systems. There is also database indexing work that is not limited to periodicals, but may include reference book articles, pamphlets, curriculum guides, etc.

2. Taxonomies & Controlled Vocabularies

Taxonomies is a field of growing interest, both within the indexer community and within the broader world of business information management. Half-day workshops on taxonomies were well attended at both the ISC/ASI Toronto and ASI Philadelphia conferences. There is freelance work for taxonomy creation, but those who request the services don't know where to look for freelance taxonomists. Taxonomy work, often for corporate content management, can be highly lucrative work.

Controlled vocabularies is the broader field and includes thesauri for periodical and database indexing, so this is also an area of interest among individuals in periodical and database publishing companies. A relatively new Taxonomy Community of Practice Yahoo group has been very active and successful, but most of its members are taxonomists or managers who oversee taxonomies developed and used internally within a company. The target of an indexing society SIG, on the other hand, would be people who create or edit taxonomies for external clients or audiences, either as freelancers/consultants or as in-house developers of taxonomies/controlled vocabularies for externally offered (sold) information sources.

For either SIG, members could be practising in the area full-time, part-time, on occasion, or merely be interested in working in the specialty.

The objectives/activities of the new SIGs would likely include:

- provide a discussion forum, facilitate contacts for peer reviews, network for work projects or jobs;
- collect resources, compile bibliographies, identify software tools, gather useful links, etc. to go on a SIG web site;
- promote standards of quality and further indexer education through arranging conference sessions (a.k.a. 'sponsoring' conference sessions), and arranging for articles to be published on the subject area in indexing society bulletins and elsewhere;
- raise awareness in the broader publishing/information services industry of each SIG's specialty as a professional field.

We would like to start off the new SIGs with discussion groups for each. If we find from the discussion groups that there is enough committed interest to sustain a regular SIG, the next step is to proceed with formally establishing the SIG. We would hope to achieve this by then end of the year in order to formally include the SIGs for the 2008 registration year. Minimal dues might be collected for each SIG to support the hosting of a web site, but not until after the start of the year.

If you are interested in joining one or both of these SIGs, please contact:

- Periodical & Database Indexing: Linda Dunn at <linda47dunn@yahoo.com>
- Taxonomies & Controlled Vocabularies: Heather Hedden at <heather@hedden.net>

Because running a successful SIG takes more time and effort than a single person can usually contribute, please let the contact person know what you are willing to do. If you are interested in taking an active role (manager, co-manager, webmaster, member registrar/database administrator, treasurer), that would be especially appreciated.

Heather Hedden

Thought for the month . . .

A book without an index is like a mind without a memory.

Author forgotten (and probably unindexed)

Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Medal Winners

Report by Max McMaster and John Simkin

Books containing ANZSI Medal-Awarded indexes, along with a list of Medal winners and those whose work had been highly commended, were on display at the recent ANZSI Conference in Melbourne. This was the first time these books have been collected together and displayed, and conference delegates were able to browse through them and make their own assessments of the indexes. A complete list of the titles of the books, medal winners and those who were highly commended is provided below. (Missing years indicate no competition or no award.)

Medal Winners

- 1985 Jeremy Fisher *Australian encyclopaedia* 4th edition (Grolier Society of Australia, 1983)
- 1988 Elmar Zalums *History of Australia: the old dead tree and the young tree green, 1816–1935, with an epilogue*, by Manning Clark (Melbourne University Press, 1987)
- 1989 Alan Walker *The Penguin literary history of Australia*, by L. T. Hergenhahn (Penguin Books, 1988)
- 1991 Geraldine Suter *Index to the Argus, 1860* (Council of the State Library of Victoria, 1860)
- 1992 Max McMaster *Infectious diseases in pregnancy and the newborn infant*, by G.L. Gilbert (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991)
- Marjorie Price *The law handbook, 1992* (Fitzroy Legal Service, 1992)
- 1993 Max McMaster *Chemistry and biology of (1–3)- β -glucans*, by Bruce A. Stone and Adrienne E. Clark (La Trobe University Press, 1992)
- 1994 Barry Howarth *Portrait of the family within the total economy*, by G.D. Snooks (University of Cambridge, 1994)
- 1996 Lynette Peel *The Henty journals: a record of farming, whaling and shipping at Portland Bay, 1834–1839*, by Edward Henry, edited by Lynette Peel (Miegunyah Press, 1996)
- 2000 Max McMaster *The Oxford companion to Aboriginal art and culture*, edited by Sylvia Kleinert and Margo Neale (Oxford University Press, 2000)
- 2003 Garry Cousins *Fundamentals of pharmacology: a text for nurses and allied health professionals*, by Alan Galbraith, Shane Bullock and Elizabeth Manias 4th edition (Pearson Education, 2003)
- 2004 Tordis Flath *Toss Woollaston: a life in letters*, edited by Jill Trevelyan (Te Papa Press, 2004)

Highly Commended

- 1985–88 category not used
- 1989 Michael Harrington *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* 4th edition (Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988)
- 1990 Max McMaster *Kimberlites and related rocks. 4th International Kimberlite Conference, Perth, 1986* (Blackwell Scientific, 1989) 2v.
- Elmar Zalums *Australia's Commonwealth Parliament, 1901–1988: ten perspectives*, by G.S. Reid (Melbourne University Press, 1989)
- 1991 Dorothy Prescott *Geology of the mineral deposits of Australia and Papua New Guinea*, edited by F.E. Hughes (Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, 1990) 2v
- Elmar Zalums *Gipps-La Trobe correspondence, 1839–1846*, edited by A.G.L. Shaw (Miegunyah Press, 1989)
- 1992 Josephine Cardale *Insects of Australia: a textbook for students and research workers*, CSIRO, Division of Entomology 2nd edition (Melbourne University Press, 1991)
- 1993 Michael Cathcart *Manning Clark's History of Australia*, abridged by Michael Cathcart (Melbourne University Press, 1993)
- Elmar Zalums *The Cambridge history of Southeast Asia*, edited by Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge University Press, 1992)
- 1994 Patricia Holt *A history of Hawthorn*, by Victoria M. Peel, Deborah R. Zion and Jane Yule (Melbourne University Press, 1993)
- Kingsley Siebel *The laws of Australia, volume 5: Civil procedure* (Law Book Company, 1994)
- Geraldine Suter *Australian criminal justice*, by Mark Findlay, Stephen Odgers and Stanley Yeo (Oxford University Press, 1994)
- Alan Walker *Blackstone's Guide to Australian legal books, 1986–1990*, general editor, Paul K. Cooper (Blackstone Press, 1993)
- Alan Walker *ASC digest*, by Alan Walker, Christine Skourleton, et al (Australian Securities Commission, 1994)
- 1995 Glenda Browne *Pharmacology and drug information for nurses* (Harcourt Brace and Company, 1995)
- Pamela Johnstone *Online currents*, volume 9, 1994 (Enterprise Information Management, 1995)
- 1997 Clodagh Jones *The silence calling: Australians in Antarctica, 1947–97*, by Tim Bowden (Allen & Unwin, 1997)
- Max McMaster *Exploring Central Australia: society, the environment and the 1894 Horn expedition*, edited by S.R. Morton and D.J. Mulvaney (Surrey Beatty & Sons, 1996)
- Dorothy Prescott *A guide to maps of Australia in books published 1780–1830: an annotated cartobibliography*, compiled by T.M. Perry and Dorothy Prescott (National Library of Australia, 1996)
- 1998 Clodagh Jones *The journal of Annie Baxter Dawbin, July 1838–May 1868*, edited by Lucy Frost (University of Queensland Press, 1997)
- 1999 Max McMaster *Flora of Victoria, volume 4: Dicotyledons Cornaceae to Asteraceae*, editors, N.G. Walsh and T. J. Entwistle (Inkata Press, 1999)
- 2000 Madeleine Davis *Frank Lowy: pushing the limits*, by Jill Margo (HarperCollins, 2000)
- 2001 Trevor Matthews *Ecological pioneers: a social history of Australian ecological thought and action*, by Martin Mulligan and Stuart Hill (Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- 2002 no award
- 2003 Garry Cousins *Dark victory*, by David Marr and Marian Wilkinson (Allen & Unwin, 2003)
- 2004 Max McMaster *Biology: an Australian focus*, by Pauline Ladiges, Barbara Evans, Robert Saint and Bruce Knox 3rd edition (McGraw Hill Australia, 2005)

ANZSI ACT Region Branch: 'Show and Tell' meeting

Eleven members came along to this meeting, held in June in the Friends' Room of the National Library, where people spoke about the projects on which they have been working.

Shirley Campbell started off with her account of compiling a cumulative index for the annual journal of the Lu Rees Archive, held at the University of Canberra, with the curator, Belle Alderman, helpfully and actively involved in the decision making. Shirley had undertaken to index volumes 13–28, but as earlier indexes were unsatisfactory, she undertook to revise them as well. Categories indexed included titles of books and articles, book reviews; omitted were visitors, donations, obituaries, and annual reports. A style guide has been created for use in future additions to the index, and for journals and conferences.

Prue Deacon reported on the Cochran Review Data Base, dealing with research in therapy. Some research projects do not have enough evidence and cannot be included. Because the data base was suspended at some stage, and has been re-started, about 3000 records have to be upgraded and 500–600 new records have to be created. Prue is also on the Conference Committee for the 10th Conference on Medical History to be held soon in Canberra.

Jean Norman was one of the few people who spoke about book indexing. She has just finished work on a two-volume book on political and economic development in Africa, with vol. 1 on generalisations and vol. 2 on individual countries, each by a different author. Each volume has its own index, so Jean had to use a variety of headings in different permutations for each volume. She used subject headings with countries as sub-headings for vol. 1, and countries with different subject sub-headings for vol. 2.

Rae Lorenz spoke for the firm Biblioanalysis, which she runs with Colleen Mock. A number of their earlier projects are now being run in-house, but they are still involved in the Australian Geoscience Literature Project. This fits in with the American Geoscience Literature data base. It has a comprehensive manual for its use, something that is very rare now.

Eleanor Whelan described herself as a freelance indexer. She has been working on the Aquatic Science and Fisheries Abstracts, for which she gets input from various publications and organisations in Australia, though the managing body has changed several times over the years. Because of this, there is a backlog of

three years of Australian periodical literature waiting to be indexed.

Edyth Binkowski described the indexing of Allan Martin's papers on Australian history and politics, *The 'Whig' view of Australian history and other essays*. Her method is to over-index, to be sure of not missing any useful term, then to edit back to whatever the index's requirements are. She recalled one occasion when the author of the text had queried the use of a term only once in the index, saying he was sure he had mentioned it more than once. Edyth had found two more uses of the term. Barry said he used this method sometimes, but found it hard to edit back.

Lynn Farkas described improving the information architecture for an irrigation industry water portal format. A marketing consultant had already worked on this, but the results were not satisfactory, and Lynn was called in as second consultant. She had handouts which showed the original poor information architecture, and others which showed her better organised arrangement of headings and sub-headings, e.g. management, with several levels of sub-headings, also trading, and technology. What she had done was to create better access points.

Philip Jackson, who works in APAIS, described the general maintenance problem of linkrots, as well as the retrospective indexing of APAIS. When this was published annually, it covered the current year, but now the data base is expected to be comprehensive.

Barry Howarth talked about working on Judith Wright's letters (two volumes) and on vols. 3–4 of Donald Friend's diaries, both of which needed more comprehensive indexing than the usual books. With the Friend volumes (each with its own index) the publisher wanted it to be as uncontroversial as possible, with mentions of persons but not relationships, places and topics which would not cause legal action. Barry followed what the indexer to vols. 1–2 had done. With the Judith Wright volumes, also each with its own index, he could work on them the way he wanted to.

There were some questions on problems facing indexers in general, particularly on maintaining objectivity. An indexer might interpret terms, but should show no bias. The question was also raised of how many pages one could index in an hour. All agreed that 5–7 pages, perhaps 7–10 pages, even 10–12 pages would be reasonable.

Edyth Binkowski

Don't let your daughter grow up to be President

by Jon Jermey

ANZSI has now had two Council Presidents in seven months. Before we politely press-gang another hapless victim into this toxic position, perhaps it is time to consider the whole apparatus of our higher-level administration. Why are Council jobs so stressful, and where are the outcomes for all this agony?

When I took the job of President in 2006 I was already aware that the job was a poisoned chalice – tedious, time-consuming and largely thankless. But that doesn't explain why it's also so stressful. Hard work can be exhilarating – if it produces results. Unfortunately, the ANZSI Council – and its predecessor, the National Committee – produce very few results. The stress of the President's job lies in the fact that the incumbent gradually comes to realise that nearly all their hard work is going to waste. The mountain is labouring mightily, to produce – what? Not even a mouse. More of a microbe, really.

Ask yourself; just what has the ANZSI Council/Committee achieved for members since, say, 2003? True, there are the regular ongoing services like registration and the Indexing Medal, but these are largely self-running, and certainly don't need weekly or even monthly intervention. Likewise the Conference Committee. Let's take those as read. What members' benefits have come out of the Council in the last four years?

Well, there's the redesign of the ANZSI website, now moving into its fourth year with nothing to show for it. We have a New Zealand branch which took a great deal of effort to set up and immediately flatlined when the prime mover could no longer spare the time for it. We have an automated members list and Indexers Available, done on my own initiative when, after two years, the National Committee had been unable to find someone to take over the existing system. And a good deal of time has been spent on making new Council guidelines, position statements and other regulations, so that ANZSI now has, by my estimate, at least one page of rules for every three members.

Older members who are familiar with the Council may feel no surprise that simple initiatives should take so long to carry out, but to our newer recruits these time periods must seem like a bizarre joke. Four years to set up a website, when most of them have set up their own in a matter of days or weeks! Six weeks to arrange a meeting, in a world of email and SMS messages! Our Council members collectively put in at least twenty hours a week on the job. Anyone hiring an indexer for that time would expect to see some pretty impressive results. Why doesn't ANZSI get results? Why does everything take so long? No wonder Presidents give up in despair.

One immediate cause of the delays can be found in the vast number of rules and regulations which make it

extremely difficult to function at all, much less to achieve any changes. Here's a simple example: the President, as Chair of a Council meeting, is not allowed to propose motions. Why not? Who knows? The President is supposed to lead, but ANZSI Presidents must lead by stealth, joining with the Secretary in a kind of furtive double-act to get his or her ideas put forward. In this way a five-minute job turns into a three-hour email session. Multiply this rule by fifty or so, and we have a massively entangling web of bureaucracy. Administration requires checks and balances, they say: well, ANZSI has so effectively checked and balanced the President – and the other Council roles – that the incumbents can spend all their time simply meeting the administrative requirements of their position, and have none left over for actually *doing* anything.

I'm not criticising the system in general: no doubt it works well for organisations with thousands of members, and millions of dollars in assets. But ANZSI only has about 200 members, of whom forty or so are in any way active in the organisation. To try and sustain two levels of administration for 200 people is manifestly absurd.

Bureaucratic administration has another drawback: it attracts bureaucratic minds. Every Council draws a share of members who are more concerned with following formal rules than with actually achieving anything, and the current administrative structure permits them to have a field day. Cantankerous Councillors can tie down initiatives for weeks or months with nit-picking pettifoggery. Spending money, in particular, is regarded with deep suspicion, so that false economy assigns crucial jobs to volunteers, to be done piecemeal over months or years, rather than to paid professionals who could complete them in days or weeks.

The result is that genuine initiatives – and there are a few – move forward with agonising slowness. Money accumulates because it takes too much trouble to agree on how to spend it. Any decision that might ruffle the smallest feathers is postponed, debated at endless length and eventually sent off to a sub-committee for consignment to limbo. Since people who enjoy this kind of atmosphere are rare, when one of them is sick or absent there is no-one else to do their job, and progress grinds to a halt. Meanwhile endless paperwork creates the illusion of achievement. Like any bureaucracy with no real goals, the Council's main task has become making work for itself to do.

From my background on the Internet, where the prevailing philosophy is 'try it and see; fix the details later', I found this whole environment utterly frustrating. But it was also clear that to attempt reforms would take

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more time and effort than I could be bothered to spare. By the time I resigned in December I had come to realise that I could achieve more for the world in five hours on the Web than in five years as ANZSI President. Now the Presidency has claimed another victim. What can we do?

The solution is not to change the Council membership. New recruits will bog down in the same bureaucratic quagmire. We must address the underlying problem; and the underlying problem is that the ANZSI Council has outlived its usefulness.

When the National Committee – as it was – was set up in the 1970s there was no Internet, no email, no fax machines, no websites. Interstate phone call costs were measured in dollars, and overseas mail took weeks to arrive. There was a rich and valuable role for the Committee to play in representing members, coordinating information, training and quality control at a national level. Copies of the Newsletter from that period are full of discussion, questions and debate. The Committee's job, in short, was to facilitate communication between indexers, and it did it well.

That was then; this is now. In 2007, most of us need facilitated communication like we need a hole in the head. Discussion of technical issues takes place on INDEX-L; socialising occurs in a dozen other newsgroups and mailing lists. The Newsletter is mostly a set-piece for Council propaganda, and the ANZSI website is a largely static collection of administrative bumf. The Branches run the conferences, hold parties, organise training, take

initiatives. Ongoing services like Conferences, registration, awards, Indexers Available and the website largely run themselves. The Council mostly rubber-stamps, hands out funds, or raises difficulties. Its elaborate structure is – quite simply – no longer necessary.

I propose, therefore, that we take this opportunity to cut membership fees, abolish the ANZSI Council, and replace it by a communal website and an ANZSI mailing list. Unlike the Council, these will cost almost nothing to run – in fact, we could set them up and maintain them at no extra cost via the interest on currently accumulated funds. The website will provide a forum for formal discussions, advice, rules and recommendations. The mailing list will substitute for the Newsletter and allow for informal chit-chat. Those few decisions that have wider implications can be taken by an ad hoc committee of Branch Presidents. Services like registration, if we decide to keep them, can be carried out by one Branch as a service to the others; or – better still – spun off and run as self-funding businesses that can then be opened up to the wider community.

Or we can go round and round, stressing increasingly reluctant Presidents and Council members, until we finally run out of candidates, probably sooner rather than later. What's it to be? You decide. After all, you're paying for it.

You can read this article and comment online at <<http://ausindexerforum.blogspot.com/>>.

Jon Jermey

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