

Australian and other indexers

John Simkin reminiscences at the 30th anniversary dinner of AusSI/ANZSI

I am no historian. Had the Society that position, the historian would be giving this talk. Lacking such a person it falls to me to be a kind of memory only because I am one of a couple of survivors of our earliest years. I lack the necessary objectivity to be an historian and have found myself tempted to create a fictional history because there is no one to contradict me. This I have resisted.

This Society, especially in its formative years, was created by members who were not young and in most cases decidedly elderly. If we want first hand reminiscences there is little time to gather it. This is our 30th anniversary. Although I come from a long-lived family, if I am still around for the 50th, I may have to resort to the Queen Mother's strategy in performing public duties as she approached her century, of sticking to the cutting of ribbons and the declaring of events open with no more than a dozen words and, in her case, of wearing beautiful hats. But when Geraldine Triffitt asked me to speak on the history of AusSI I was at a loss because, having written a paper on the subject for the 2005 conference and a reminiscence for the April newsletter, I thought I had nothing more to say. Then I started to think of the personalities involved in the history of the Society and of indexing in general and to mentally check those about whom I could say something. So, leaving out those whom I did not know well enough, here they are. First, four obituaries.

Peter Dawe, chief librarian of CSIRO, chaired our initial meeting and was our second president. He carried the air of Adelaide with him, by which I mean that he was a very proper gentleman. In the manoeuvres which led to his being made redundant by CSIRO he always acted impeccably. I remember urging him to fight for CSIRO Library to become a national scientific library, but his sense of propriety would not allow him to take such a radical and politically unpopular position.

Coryl Muntz, also from CSIRO, took over the editorship of the newsletter from me and introduced a professionalism into it which it had lacked up to that point. Coryl was a very private person, at least so far as I observed her, so I never got to know her well.

Kingsley Siebel, an honorary life member, vice president and New South Wales Branch president, has been missed

because of his expertise in legal indexing. I recall Kingsley as thoughtful and dapper.

Josephine McGovern was, of these four, the one I knew best. Apart from being president in 1988 and 1989, vice president in 1987 and 1990, she was a committee member for many years up to her death in 2001.

I valued her friendship and her companionship in travel through Europe and Britain and to conferences of the Society of Indexers in London, Chester and Edinburgh. On the surface our friendship was unlikely, as Josephine was dedicated to very particular religious observance and I have no such affiliations. I observed her demeanour in entering the Anglican cathedrals of England. To Josephine they were merely tourist attractions. By contrast, in Rome every church we entered was an occasion for prayer and contemplation. This is not to suggest that she was bigoted or narrow for Josephine was always tolerant and never ruffled. At meetings and dinners of the Society she adopted the role of unofficial hostess where she made members, especially new members, feel welcome and at ease.

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Peter Dawe ... chaired our initial meeting and was our second president.



Young John Simkin, back in 1985.

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Deadline for the August 2006 issue: 28 July

Newsletter, Webmaster and Registration contacts

Editor: Peter Judge
<newsletter@aussi.org>

Web Manager: Jon Jermey
<webmaster@aussi.org>
Website: <www.aussi.org>

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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

28 July for the August 2006 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\$55 per year; A\$30 half year (Jan to June). Student member A\$30. Subscriptions to the Newsletter A\$40 p.a.

The Indexer

(*international indexing journal*)

Maureen MacGlashan, Executive Editor
<editor@theindexer.org>

Cost: A\$35 for ANZSI members.

ANZSI Corresponding Member,
Glenda Browne <world@theindexer.org>

Registration

Michael Harrington
Ph +61 2 6248 8297
<secretary@aussi.org>
or <www.aussi.org/profissues/
registration.html>

Indexers Available

<www.aussi.org/IndexersAvailable>

Membership renewal

Members are reminded that the ANZSI financial year is now July–June so your membership subscriptions are now due.

This year we will not be sending renewal notices by post. Instead members have been notified by email and are directed to the membership renewal form on the website at <www.aussi.org/membership/index.html>.

This form can be downloaded, completed and returned with your renewal payment to the Membership Secretary at the address indicated on the form. Only members without email or those with bounced emails will be posted a renewal form.

If you have any questions about the renewal process, please feel free to contact the Membership Secretary, Joanna McLachlan, at <memsec@aussi.org>.

Alex George, botanist, editor, indexer Western Australian contact for ANZSI

Alex George is a botanist by profession but in recent decades has added editing and indexing to his activities. For more than 21 years he worked as a botanist at the Western Australian Herbarium, studying the classification of the native flora (particularly *Banksia*, *Dryandra* and *Verticordia*), his research resulting in naming many new species in these genera. From 1981 he spent twelve years in Canberra as Executive Editor of the *Flora of Australia* project with the Australian Biological Resources Study. In 1993 he returned to Perth where he has his own consultancy.

He has spent three 12-month periods at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, twice as the Australian Botanical Liaison Officer. Working with specimens collected by explorers such as William Dampier and Joseph Banks stimulated his interest in the history of exploration and discovery of the Australian flora. He has published some 150 botanical papers and written or contributed to a number of books.

Besides some 20 works published for the *Flora of Australia* he has edited 45 books and indexed 15.

Alex's other interests include conservation, photography, gardening, music, travel, reading and aviation (he held a private pilot's licence for 20 years). In 2000–01 he was President of the Royal Society of Western Australia, a society with members covering all branches of science.

Alex writes:

The Western Australian members of ANZSI have been quiet for some time but we are in the process of setting up a formal group. We have just a few members but shortly will get together to discuss our work and a program for maintaining regular contact.

The publishing industry here is the same as elsewhere – it is very active and, from an indexer's perspective, shows the full range from indexes that are very good through mediocre to non-existent.

In recent years I have written to several publishers to complain about the lack of an index, but the replies have also been non-existent. Whether we as a formal group will be able to make a difference remains to be seen.

Alex George

ANZSI website redesign <www.anzsi.org>

The ANZSI Committee is pleased to inform members that a tender for the redevelopment of the website has been accepted and Link Web Services in Canberra will commence work on the project in August. It is anticipated that the redesigned website will be functional

by the annual general meeting of the Society in October, at which stage the address of the website will change to <www.anzsi.org>. This is a truly exciting development. The cost of the project will be met jointly by Branches and the Society.

Joyce Gillespie remembers...

Memories of my involvement with the Society

As with many early members I came to the Australian Society of Indexers as a librarian. My position as National Librarian of the then Australian Society of Accountants (now CPA Australia) included production of an annual index to that Society's monthly journal *The Australian Accountant*, which I had been preparing since 1968.

Having heard from my former colleagues at CSIRO of the formation of a society of indexers I joined in 1975 hoping to learn from 'real' indexers. Although back of the book indexing was the major focus of early activities, I was asked by the first Treasurer, Joan Haughton, to take over the collection of membership subscriptions in 1976. (I have found because I have been associated with the Australian Society of Accountants everyone assumes I will be able to handle finances.) Thus I became Hon. National Treasurer from October 1976 to March 1997 and Treasurer of the Victorian Branch as well from 1990 to 1999.

For a brief period in 1982-83, due to the illness of the then editor Coryl Muntz, Vera Vicks and I compiled the newsletter together.

From 1979 to February 1994, with assistance of the Central library staff of the Australian Society of Accountants, I organized the printing, addressing, enveloping and posting of the newsletter. Following my retirement I continued to envelop and post the newsletter, using labels supplied by the Secretary, Ian Odgers, until the end of 1996 when the editor and distribution moved to Sydney.

From 1976 to 1997 I kept details of members (including former members) in a card file as a record of subscriptions paid. These cards also included details of subscribers to *The Indexer*, from which I prepared and forwarded address labels and payment for Australian members to receive their twice yearly copies to Mrs Barbara Britton, then Treasurer of the Society of Indexers in the UK.

This led to a delightful friendship by correspondence, which continues to the present day. These cards are now part of the Society's archives in the Latrobe Library of the State Library of Victoria.

From 1982 I also contributed to the compilation and amending of the Society's Constitution, including its extensive updating in 1996.

On a lighter note, I also had the pleasure of manning the front desk at the First International Conference in Marysville in 1995 and again for the Second Conference in Hobart in 1999, both organised by the Victorian Branch. Registering, meeting delegates, making sure they went to the right lecture rooms, had lunch and so on

were great fun, and I was glad to meet many Society members who had only been names on subscription forms before, as well as, of course, overseas visitors.

Although not a professional indexer myself I have really appreciated the opportunity to use my various skills to assist in the financial and administrative management of the Society, and was honoured to be elected as a Life Member of the Society in 1998.

Joyce Gillespie



Alan Walker, then President of AusSI, presents Joyce Gillespie with a certificate of Honorary Life Membership of the Society in 1998.

ANZSI calendar of forthcoming activities

Branch activities

Date of activity	Organiser	Name of activity	Venue & time	Contact details
26 July 2006	Vic Branch	Visit to Sensis	222 Lonsdale Street, Queen Vic Centre, Melbourne 5.45 pm.	RSVP: by 24 July to Jenny Restarick ph/fax 03 9528 2539 or <cliffres@connexus.net.au>
15 and 22 July 2006	NSW Branch	Book Indexing training course	Thomson Legal & Regulatory, 100 Harris Street, Pyrmont, Sydney	Lorraine Doyle <lorraine.doyle@thomson.com>
2 August 2006	ACT Region Branch	What's in a name?	Friends Room, National Library, 5.30-7.30 pm	Geraldine Triffitt <gtriffitt@netspeed.com.au>

National/international activities of interest

Date of activity	Organiser	Name of activity	Venue & time	Contact details
16-17 March 2007	ANZSI Vic Branch	ANZSI Conference	Rydge's Riverwalk, Richmond, Melbourne	Margaret Findlay <mafnd@bigpond.net.au>

(John Simkin reminisces, continued from page 1)

Joan Houghton, our first treasurer, came to indexing through her interest in local history in eastern Victoria. She soon had to give up her role with the Society because of her husband's deteriorating health.

Joyce Gillespie (then Korn) took over the position and held it with distinction until 1996. She is one of the first two honorary life members. To Joyce we owed, and probably still owe, our financial stability.

Jean Uhl, the first vice president, also had to relinquish the position because her son, a clever academic, suffered a periodic debilitating illness. Jean was our link with Godfrey Green and the Society of Indexers in Australia (1972-1975). She was also the author of a number of works of reminiscence and history including *Sailing ships, shipwrecks and crime in the 19th century*, based on Supreme Court records, Criminal Sessions, 1840s-1860s.

Jean Hagger, went from being the second secretary to fourth president and, although she went about it quietly and didn't want any publicity, was the driving force behind the establishment of the Medal award. Suggestions that the award should be named after her have met with a stern refusal. I knew Jean for many years in the library world where we had some agreements and amicable differences. On one occasion when I was engaged in giving a double lecture with a break between Jean reprimanded me for running over and robbing the students of their refreshment time.

After Jean had retired and when the RMIT began its courses in editing and publishing we saw a possibility of the College, as it was then, putting elements of that course with elements of librarianship to create a qualification for indexers. So she and I went to see what would now be the dean of the faculty. (I don't remember what the post was called then.) We were taken aback when we discovered that he, with a background in publishing, knew virtually nothing about indexing and why it could be an area of study. Jean is the other one of our first two life members.

The position of secretary has been held by some interesting people. One, the memory of whom brings pleasant thoughts is Sylvia Ramsden. On first meeting I was inclined to see Michael Ramsden as being rather serious. But on better acquaintance I discovered that he shares Sylvia's sense of humour. Of course I first knew Michael as a teacher and teachers have to maintain a certain amount of *gravitas*. Michael conducted the first introductory course for the Society in 1977.

Max McMaster hardly had time to draw breath as a member of AusSI before he was appointed secretary and then straight on to being president. All of us know him as one of the busiest, if not the busiest book indexer in the country, a teacher and generator of ideas and, almost incidentally a recruiter of many members to the Society.

Ian Odgers, another recruit from CSIRO and Max's successor as secretary, did his job quietly so as to be (I think he hoped) unnoticed. But those of us who benefited from his work in this role noticed him and appreciated his efficiency. George Levick, whose presidency covered our first international

conference, was another member from CSIRO. He gave courses over a number of years which showed him to be a fine teacher especially in the field of thesaurus development.

Michael Wyatt is a life member who was a vice president and for many years a stalwart of the New South Wales Branch until his dramatic career change. I recall Michael for two reasons. First, he seemed to have shed his New Zealand accent without any difficulty and second I enjoyed his sense of humour. Others have told me that he could be quite tough but I have always known him for his jolly laugh.

Dietrich Borchardt, librarian of La Trobe University and eminent bibliographer, always prefaced remarks about indexing with the assurance that he was not an indexer but had given it thought as an allied profession. I valued Dietrich's comments on education and qualifications for indexers. He and Jean Hagger, encouraged me in pushing my ideas of professionalism beyond the rather narrow confines of book indexing.

I am aware that the above list does not give any information about several others: Clyde Garrow, the first president, Winifred Mills, third vice president, Jennifer Pritchard (formerly Challis), third secretary, Stephen Lansdown, creator of early software (Index 4), Dorothy Prescott, map librarian and contact with the Society of Indexers in Australia, Jeremy Fisher, winner of the first Medal with his index to the 4th edition of the *Australian Encyclopaedia*, Geraldine Suter, newsletter editor, and Robert Croll, who did the sums which led to the Society setting the first recommended rate for freelance indexing.

Going beyond our Society, there are three other names I would like to recall because they influenced me. The first was the first Librarian of CSIRO. Ellinor Archer was born in Malaya and came to Melbourne as a girl. She was a graduate in botany working in CSIR (before it became CSIRO). When the library was set up in 1925 it was taken for granted that a woman would be the obvious choice for the position of Librarian. Women with science qualifications were rare in those days, so Ellinor got the job. She became one of the founders of the Australian Institute of Librarians in 1937.

In her position at CSIRO, Ellinor had very definite ideas on how to get the best out of a loose network of divisional libraries. She allowed the divisions to use whatever classification systems were considered suitable for their subject areas but insisted that all divisions supply catalogue entries (on cards) to the union catalogue held in East Melbourne. Lest you think I have wandered off the point Ellinor is included because she indexed the second edition of the *Australian Encyclopaedia* published by Angus and Robertson in 1958.

Then there was John Metcalfe, Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, as it was then, whose lectures on classification I attended in the early 1950s. To Metcalfe everything to do with the organisation of information was one discipline and that part which assigned descriptive words or

(concluded on next page)



Clyde Garrow, the first president

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Indexing Life

ANZSI Conference, Melbourne, March 15-17, 2007

Rydgges Riverwalk, Richmond, celebrating ANZSI's 30 years.

Scope themes

Book publishing /production	Professional issues for indexers
Historical and retrospective materials	Technical issues for book indexing
Indexing and abstracting for databases	Web indexing / Information architecture
Indexing electronic documents	Bibliography
	Language in indexing

Papers may be presented as full conference papers, or in forum (panel) sessions

Our keynote speakers for the conference will be:

Geraldine Beare, an eminent freelance indexer from the UK, and

Professor Pam Peters, Director of the Dictionary Research Centre at Macquarie University, and Editor of *Australian Style*.

Thursday 15 March will be devoted solely to professional development workshops.

As further details come to hand they will be posted on the ANZSI website <www.aussi.org>.

Are you interested in presenting a paper or joining a panel? If so, please go to the conference section on the ANZSI website <www.aussi.org>. Abstracts (200 words max.) should ideally be submitted at the same time as your application, but no later than **31 October 2006**.

(continued from previous page)

symbols to the information for identification was 'indexing'. This registered with me; I was just then discovering, without really understanding its implications, that my role was to be as an organiser of knowledge.

In passing he referred to famous predecessors – Kaiser, Ranganathan and others – but the one which caught my imagination was Paul Otlet with his Universal Bibliographic Repertory. There is an unhappy situation associated with this. By living in an Anglo-centric and particularly an Americanised and commercialised world we have ignored Otlet because he described his vision in French. He was a global thinker, peace activist, feminist and idealist, whose motivation was the enhancement of human life through international cooperation and universal access to knowledge.

Our present pattern has a crude technological basis with these two principles largely replaced by commercial considerations. A hundred years ago Otlet believed in making all recorded knowledge accessible and 72 years ago he wrote the formula. I look forward to a time when idealism is restored and the kind of world he envisioned can be achieved. Remember that Paul Otlet's vision of the future of the organisation of knowledge was written in 1934. Most indexers are not poets but Otlet surely was. Let him tell his story:

A radical assumption would consider that all knowledge, all information could be so condensed that it could be contained in

a limited number of works placed on a desk, therefore within hand's reach, and indeed in such a way as to ensure maximum consultability. In this the world described in the entirety of books would really be within everyone's grasp. The Universal Book created from all books would become very approximately an annex to the brain, a substratum even of memory, an external mechanism and instrument of the mind but so close to it, so apt to its use that it would truly be a sort of appended organ, an exodermic appendage ... Man would no longer need documentation if he were to become an omniscient being like God himself.

A less ultimate degree would create an instrumentation acting across distance which would combine at the same time radio, x-rays, cinema and microscopic photography. All the things of the universe and all those of men would be registered from afar as they were produced. Thus the moving image of the world would be established - its memory, its true duplicate. From afar anyone would be able to read the passage, expanded or limited to the desired subject, that could be projected on his individual screen. Thus, in his armchair, anyone would be able to contemplate the whole of creation or particular parts of it. (*The international organization and dissemination of knowledge*, selected essays of Paul Otlet, trans. Boyd Rayward (Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1990.)

John Simkin

The photos of Peter Dawe on page 1 and Clyde Garrow on page 4 were taken by your editor at Peter's farewell from CSIRO on 5 May 1988.

From the literature and other thoughts

Index it right

Information Today Inc <www.infotoday.com>, with ASI, has published *Index it right! advice from the experts Volume 1*, the first title in a series which aims to present best practices for a range of indexing project types. This volume, edited by Enid Zafran, includes chapters on philosophy, theology, biography, encyclopedias, art book and catalogues, plant names, computer industry publications and websites. The index is by Carrie Nearing.

Collections Australia Network (CAN)

I always enjoy reading about the unusual places the Victorian Branch visits – many, including the Herbarium – with apparently tenuous links to indexing. However, although filing a fern and indexing a book seem to be from different worlds, the Collections Australia Network doesn't agree – find it at <www.collectionsaustralia.net/institutions>. It provides much information on a range of collecting institutions: archives, art galleries, botanic gardens/herbaria, libraries, museums, and zoos/aquaria. Now, where should I file that aardvark?

Knowledge management a no-no

According to a few messages on the Taxonomy Community of Practice mailing list <groups.yahoo.com/group/TaxoCoP>, clients now recoil at the mention of the words 'knowledge management', as so many KM projects have failed to live up to expectations. The new buzzwords are 'knowledge transfer processes' and 'affinity systems'. KM is also being complemented by 'ignorance management', with Patrick Lambe using Donald Rumsfeld's famous pronouncement on known unknowns etc as a framework <www.greenchameleon.com/gc/category/C22>.

US copyright law in comic book format

Three people from the Center for the Study of the Public Domain at Duke University have written a comic to show features of US copyright law and fair use exemptions <www.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics/zoomcomic.html>.

Future of ebooks, or 'We need an embedded index'!

Most indexers shudder when they hear the words 'embedded index', but since we have been selling the second edition of *Website Indexing* <www.webindexing.biz> as an ebook we have discovered how useful embedding can be.

At this stage we have a standalone index which refers to pages in the print version. We have made a few minor changes, but had to make sure that these did not change the pagination. To update more fully in future we will have to reindex the book, and when we do so we will embed it to make sure that we have more publication options in future. As well as allowing easy updating, we could link the new index directly to the pages referred to, and will be free to change page format as required. This has been necessary to sell the book in print-on-demand format through online ebook seller Lulu <www.lulu.com>, which requires US-standard (letter) size books (a bit smaller than A4 – in this case we have got around

the problem by slightly decreasing the size of the pages). The book is also available at <www.informit.com.au> through RMIT Informit, who have done all the necessary formatting.

Ganfyd.org

Most indexers know Wikipedia <www.wikipedia.org> – the online encyclopedia which allows anyone to add, delete and edit content. Ganfyd.org is a wiki for medical content. It is different to Wikipedia in that only people qualified as medical practitioners in their own country can make changes to the wiki. This is still no guarantee of accuracy, but it does mean that the contributors are medically qualified. The site is aimed at medical practitioners, and advises people who are unwell to see a doctor.

The Ganfyd home page has 13 major categories, including public health, laboratory-based specialties, resources for trainees, and computers. You can also select 'Topics by Category' to see more specific topics. There is an index called 'Topics A – Z', but it only shows the first two letters of the topic, so you are better off going to 'List of All Categories' and typing in the first letters of the word of interest. This allows you to browse related topics. The list contains the topics in exact alphabetical order, so 'James Parkinson' is listed in the Js not the Ps.

Topics range from the simple (e.g., 'Ileum') to the complex (e.g., 'Get a note from your doctor'). There are disambiguation pages to clarify terms which may have different meanings or potential confusion (e.g., 'Inflammatory bowel disease'). Ganfyd can also be accessed in a textbook format, with a hierarchical table of contents. And if all else fails, there is a search box.

Glenda Browne

Open Publish, anyone?

Indexers might be interested in the **Open Publish** conference to be held July 26 to 28 at the Avillion Hotel, Sydney. Topics will include website design, content management systems, DTDs, XML, and a little bit on indexing. You can find more information at <www.openpublish.com.au>.

Glenda Browne

Move for the Society of Indexers (UK)

The Society now has new offices at:

Society of Indexers
Woodbourn Business Centre
10 Jessell Street
SHEFFIELD S9 3HY
Tel: 0114 244 9561
Fax: 0114 244 9563

SI (UK) Workshops

For all information and bookings, contact:

Society of Indexers <www.indexers.org.uk>

GAMES meeting – interim report

On 27 and 28 May 2006 a special ANZSI meeting was held in Canberra. The participants were Lynn Farkas, President; Glenda Browne, Vice-President; Shirley Campbell, Secretary; Penny Whitten, Treasurer; Tracy Harwood, Committee Member; Geraldine Triffitt, ACT Region Branch President; Jon Jerney, NSW Branch President; Max McMaster, Vic Branch President; Tordis Flath, NZ Branch President; Alan Walker, Immediate Past President; John Simkin, Chairman of the Awards Subcommittee; and Barry Howarth, former Committee Member. Sherrey Quinn of the ACT Region Branch was the facilitator for the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss revised guidelines and procedures for ANZSI committee positions and to update Society policy documents and their associated subcommittees where relevant. The guidelines included the committee positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Newsletter Editor and Web Manager. Policies for archives, awards, branding, communications, conferences, education, elections, endorsements, exchange of publications, expenses and honoraria, honorary life membership, mentoring, recommended rate, registration and reporting were discussed.

Much vigorous discussion and constructive debate ensued over the two days of the meeting, ably guided by Sherrey Quinn. The guidelines for committee positions were finalised, while some policies were endorsed without change but others will require further drafting. These will be finalised by the next annual general meeting of the Society in October. Members will be notified of any major changes in the near future via the *Newsletter* and the website.

Shirley Campbell, ANZSI Secretary

Vic Branch visit to Sensis

Our tour will be led by Steven Haby who will explain the role of the Indexing Team in managing and developing taxonomies, classification schemes and headings (Yellow Pages) across all business units of Sensis with examples of the various tools that are used (web and print based).

The Team is managed by Steven and comprises two other highly qualified librarians/technicians – Jennifer Gawne and Kathy Simpson, who are both ANZSI members and frequent attendees at our meetings and functions.

When: Wednesday 26 July at 5.45 pm (sharp), followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant;

Where: 222 Lonsdale Street, Queen Victoria Centre.

Participants will need to be in the main foyer on the ground floor by no later than 5.45 sharp to enable them to sign in and be escorted up to the meeting room. Light refreshments will be provided. Anyone arriving after 6.00 pm will need to ring Steven on 0407 827 242 to be given access to the building.

Numbers are limited

RSVP by Monday 24 July to Jenny Restarick

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ANZSI and Branch Committee contacts

ANZSI Committee

ABN 38 610 719 006
GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601
<secretary@aussi.org>

President: Lynn Farkas
Ph +61 2 6286 4818; fax +61 2 6286 6570
<president@aussi.org>

Vice President: Glenda Browne
Ph +61 2 4739 8199; fax +61 2 4739 8189
<vicepres@aussi.org>

Secretary: Shirley Campbell
Ph +61 2 6285 1006
<secretary@aussi.org>

Treasurer: Penelope Whitten
Ph +61 2 6241 4289
<treasurer@aussi.org>

Committee members: T Harwood, L Tunks

Branch Presidents (ex officio):

Geraldine Triffitt, Jon Jermey, Max McMaster,
Tordis Flath

ANZSI officials

Chairman of the Registration Subcommittee:
Michael Harrington
<secretary@aussi.org>

Webmaster: Jon Jermey
<webmaster@aussi.org>

Newsletter Editor: Peter Judge
<newsletter@aussi.org>

Membership Secretary: Joanna McLachlan
<memsec@aussi.org>

Chairman of the Awards Subcommittee:
John Simkin, <awards@aussi.org>

ACT Region Branch

GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601
<actbranch@aussi.org>

President: Geraldine Triffitt
Ph +61 2 6231 4975
<gtriffitt@netspeed.com.au>

Secretary: Edyth Binkowski
Ph/fax +61 2 6281 2484
<geoffb@webone.com.au>

Treasurer: Sandra Henderson
Ph +61 2 6262 1481 (w); +61 2 6231 0303 (h)
<shenders@nla.gov.au>

Committee members: L Farkas,
J Merrell, S Quinn, A Sloper, S White

New South Wales Branch

PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 1225
<nswbranch@aussi.org>

President: Jon Jermey
Ph +61 2 4739 8199; fax +61 2 4739 8189
<jonjermey@optusnet.com.au>

Secretary: Lorraine Doyle
Ph +61 2 8587 7229
lorraine.doyle@thomson.com

Treasurer: Glenda Browne
Ph +61 2 4739 8199; fax +61 2 4739 8189
<webindexing@optusnet.com.au>

Committee member: H Skewes

QLD contact

Contact: Moira Brown
Phone/fax +61 7 3893 1252; mob: 0416 097 629
<brown5moira@yahoo.com.au>

SA Group with SocEd (SA)

Contact: Susan Rintoul
Ph +61 8 8242 0666 (h); fax +61 8 8242 0333
<seaview@seaviewpress.com.au>

Victorian Branch

ABN 58 867 106 986
GPO Box 1251, Melbourne VIC 3000
<vicbranch@aussi.org>

President: Max McMaster
Ph/fax +61 3 9500 8715
<max.mcmaster@masterindexing.com>

Vice President: Jenny Restarick
Ph/fax +61 3 9528 2539 (h)
<cliffres@connexus.net.au>

Secretary: Karen Gillen
Ph +61 3 9808 1451
<karen_gillen@yahoo.com.au>

Treasurer: Margaret Findlay
Ph +61 3 9818 1760 (h)
<findlayhughes@connexus.net.au>

Committee members: J Forrest, J Purton,
J Simkin, C Tully, M Russell

WA contact

Contact: Alex George
Ph +61 8 9337 1655; fax +61 8 9338 9404
<a.george@murdoch.edu.au>

New Zealand Branch

<nzbranch@aussi.org>
President: Tordis Flath
Phone: +64 4 902 0371
<indexing@paradise.net.nz>

Vice President: Lynne Cobine
Phone: +64 9 838 4502
<lynnecobine@ihug.co.nz>

Secretary: Jill Gallop
Phone: +64 4 384 8282 (w)
<jmgallop@ihug.co.nz>

Treasurer: Jenny Hart
Phone: +64 9 3737 599 X88053
<j.hart@auckland.ac.nz>

Committee members: S Brookes, J Lawrence

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Australian and New Zealand
Society of Indexers
PO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601