

## From the President



For most participants, our recent Melbourne conference ended on the final day of papers and events. Participants left with printouts of papers, notes they had taken, possibly some new ideas or skills acquired, new contacts, and hopefully fond memories of what they heard and the people they met. For the conference organisers, the conference will end after the final bills are paid, after the post-mortems on what worked and what could be added next time, and after the publishing of proceedings and the associated paperwork are complete.

For ANZSI Committee members, the conference hasn't ended at all! Instead it has generated a range of activities and tasks to be undertaken over the ensuing months. As well as the public sessions and activities, ANZSI conferences are an opportunity for Committee members from various states to meet face to face and discuss issues that would otherwise have to be handled remotely. We were particularly fortunate to have representatives from all our Branches at Melbourne this year, including the newly-formed New Zealand Branch, so that we could all exchange ideas to progress the business of the Society.

Our Education Subcommittee met informally over lunch on Saturday, 19 March, to discuss where we should focus our efforts in the future. The Conference enabled us to welcome new members and review our past activities. Everyone was interested in the mentoring schemes and how they fit into the education programs available for indexers. The Subcommittee heard enthusiastic reports on mentoring in Victoria and initial developments in New Zealand. This raised the issue of what is happening in indexing education in

Australia and overseas. Frances Lennie, past President of the American Society of Indexers, brought us up to date on current education initiatives of ASI, and we discussed the British Society of Indexers' courses which are now available electronically as CD-Rom products.

The Subcommittee decided to pursue two areas as priorities: to articulate the basic training requirements necessary for indexing so as to determine a core

**...three days of Conference meetings will keep the Committee busy on your behalf for the rest of the year!**

curriculum for our training courses; and to update information about our existing courses internationally to see whether any of these courses would be suitable for use by prospective ANZSI indexers.

On Sunday, 20 March, a half-day post-Conference meeting brought together the full ANZSI Committee: the Executive (President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer), elected Committee members; the Presidents of each Branch and the Web Manager ex officio. The Executive and elected Committee members are all from the ACT and meet monthly, but the ex officio members are usually unable to attend meetings because they live outside Canberra, so they participate by correspondence. Being able to have their direct input to agenda items is a great feature of Conference meetings, and we all had a most fruitful discussion.

High on the agenda was the Action Plan of the Committee for the next year. The widening of our Society to include a new Branch in a different country highlighted how much of our operating procedure is based on history, tradition and undocumented decisions. It was

agreed that we need to better document our operations, both to standardise processes and ensure consistent and transparent management of the Society. It was therefore agreed that the ANZSI Committee adopt, as a matter of priority in its Action Plan for 2005-06, the documentation of Society practices including:

- development of administrative guidelines to accompany the new Constitution, eg, disbursements and reimbursements, Branch yearly grants, Conference contractual agreements;
- upgrading or development of role statements for key Society and Committee positions, eg, Web Manager, newsletter editor, Committee chairpeople;
- establishment of guidelines and procedures for key Society activities, eg, prizes and sponsorships, mentoring and training activities;
- collection in one repository of the documentation for guidelines and procedures already in place, eg, the Society's library, registration processes, awards.

*(continued on page 3)*

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## Future deadlines...

... for June issue:	27 May
... for July issue:	24 June
... for August issue:	22 July

## Newsletter, Webmaster and Registration contacts

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This newsletter is published monthly 10 times per year, with combined issues for January/February and November/December. It is sent free to all members of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

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**

27 May for the June 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\$28 half year (July to Dec). Subscriptions to the Newsletter: \$40 p.a.

### **The Indexer**

*(international indexing journal)*

Maureen MacGlashan, Executive Editor  
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Ayrshire KA30 8AB, UK.  
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Cost: \$30 for AusSI members

### **Registration**

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or <www.aussi.org/proffissues/  
registration.html>

### **Indexers Available**

<www.aussi.org/IndexersAvailable>

## News and coming events

### ACT Region Branch activities

**Saturday, 21 May, 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.** Group mentoring session, with Lynn Farkas as mentor, in the ACT Heritage Library on the second floor of the Woden Public Library. The group will practise compiling index entries to early Canberra journals, dating from the 1920s. Four people have volunteered to attend, but any other members who would like to participate will be welcome.

**Wednesday, 22 June, 5.30–7.30 pm.** 'A Day in the Life of a Back-of-Book Indexer' — a panel session with Jean Norman, Michael Harrington and Barry Howarth, in the Friends' Room of the National Library of Australia.

*Edyth Binkowski*

### Victorian Branch: button up your overcoat ...

**Wednesday, 8 June, 6.00 for 6.30 pm.** **Exhibition of buttons** collected over a period of 20 years by a retired school teacher and craftsperson who goes by the unofficial name of Sally Buttons. The venue is ACER, 19 Prospect Hill Rd, Camberwell, and there were lots more details in the two previous newsletters.

Sally will join us for dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting, and we would love to have your company also. We will ask for a \$5 donation in aid of Camberwell North Disabled Scouts Troop. RSVP to:

Jenny Restarick, phone (03) 9528 2539, email <cliffres@connexus.net.au>.

*(Yes, we're running this notice yet again, but the event is getting ever closer!)*

*Jenny Restarick, Vice President*

### Victorian Branch: book indexing training

**Tuesday, 17 May:** Introductory indexing (covers basic indexing principles and techniques).

**Wednesday, 18 May:** Intermediate indexing (you index a 60-page technical publication using dedicated indexing software).

Both courses at Australian Council for Educational Research, in Camberwell.

Further information and application forms: contact Max McMaster, ph/fax: (03) 9500 8715; email: max.mcmaster@masterindexing.com.

### News from the New Zealand Branch

**T**he second Speakers' Meeting in Auckland provided the opportunity for a report to Northern members on the Melbourne conference. This was extremely well received and was followed by a lively debate.

The Mentoring Scheme has received a number of applications from potential mentees. Once the mentors are finalised, the first projects will go ahead.

Plans are under way for newspaper and historian/genealogist courses in Hamilton and Nelson and some further beginners' training in Auckland.

*Tordis Flath, President*

### Weasel words and beyond

**I**f you know of writer and historian Don Watson - author of *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart* and more recently *Death sentence: the decay of public language* and *Dictionary of Weasel Words*, there is now a website dedicated to his favourite topic, newspeak – the decay of public language, linguistic political chicanery, words that kill meaning and challenge sanity, and so on.

You can find it at <www.weaselwords.com.au/>. You can browse specific topics such as Education and Training, Job Ads, Government, Corporations or broad areas like Language Crimes, Plague Rats (!) and Weasel Words in general.

Those who can remember the introduction of Plain English into the Australian public service and boardrooms across the country about a decade ago, now weep at the aftermath. Guaranteed to while away precious indexing time and give respite when the proof pages are too numerous and too dense to contemplate going on (at around midnight or so...) You can also send in your best and worst examples of weasel words. Bruce Petty provides the cartoons. Enjoy!

*Madeleine Davis*

*(From the President, continued from page 1)*

The Committee also received the final draft of the Information Architecture (IA) for our website, prepared by Helen Skewes and the Web Project Team from the New South Wales Branch. The NSW Branch has managed this project through the stages of surveying user needs and preferences, developing an information architecture, and usability testing it with key interest groups (publishers, indexers, etc). Glenda Browne (who acted as NSW Branch representative) provided valuable insights into how the Project Team arrived at some of their decisions; she will forward the Committee's comments and suggestions to the Team. Concurrent with the IA development, the Team has been coordinating new content for the site; our Web Manager, Jon Jerney, has reserved a new domain name and is investigating possible new servers. The next steps involve graphic design of the site, then programming the site to integrate the IA, the design and the content. As you can see, a new website for the Society is still some way off, but is progressing well.

A number of other matters were covered in the meeting, but by far the one that generated most discussion was the mentoring program. Three branches – ACT, NZ and Victoria

– are in various stages of implementing a mentoring scheme. Each Branch is moving in a slightly different direction, with points of agreement and of disagreement. Some of the issues that sparked discussion were the charging of mentees and payment of mentors, the linking of registration and mentoring, prerequisites for joining the program or acting as mentors, and quality control of the program. The Branch Presidents undertook to exchange procedural information on their individual schemes (eg, application forms, explanatory handouts etc), determine the core processes that should be part of a mentoring program, and report back to the committee with suggestions for establishing Society-wide guidelines for this important initiative.

As you can see, the outcome of three days of Conference meetings will be keeping the Committee busy on your behalf for the rest of the year. I hope this behind-the-scenes report of the 'hidden' ANZSI Conference has given you a feel for the issues facing our Society and how your Committee is dealing with them.

*Lynn Farkas, President*

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## INDEXING : Engage, Enlighten, Enrich

Reflections on the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Conference, 2005

### View from across the Tasman—a conference whirlwind!

#### Day 1

**Keynote Speaker: Prof. Neil Archbold - 'Indexing: the user's perspective'**

Prof. Archbold was a very interesting chap. He is interested in fossils and shells; a collector of coins and a user of catalogues and indexes, including a 'Biography of Russian Scientists' which took 18 years to complete and dumbfounded the Russians. Especially amazing as Prof. Archbold doesn't speak Russian, I thought. He has been there but only speaks a word or two. Incredibly mind-expanding address.

There were concurrent sessions in the Bridge and Yarra Rooms; some of the sessions that I attended were:

**'Evidence-based Indexing' - Glenda Browne**

I found this talk one of the most interesting of the whole conference. Glenda talked about the way we make decisions in indexing and how they are based on authorities, traditions, perceived user needs and research into user behaviour. She talked at length about studies that have been done on indexing and some of the findings were quite surprising. A particular gem amidst it all that I noted down was the suggestion to put the introduction or explanatory notes at the end of each page or in the middle in a box so no matter where someone enters the index, the reader will see it. Much food for thought here.

**'Indexing archives for access' - Shauna Hicks**

This was about a database of records of immigration to Victoria from British lists called Prov Online (Public Records Office Victoria). It is sorted by name, age, year and ship and

contains records between 1852 and 1923. It includes 1,820, 743 names and took 20 years to compile (no wonder)! They encountered many difficulties including reading old handwriting; crumbled pages and faded ink; changes in spelling; abbreviations; illiteracy; foreign accents; and anglicising of names.

**'Mentoring scheme in Victoria: concept and development' - Max McMaster**

Max outlined how the mentoring scheme has been set up in Victoria to provide trainee indexers with experience. A book for indexing should be usually around 200 pages, complex and in-depth enough, needing an index, and potentially saleable.

Mentors should not do any indexing and only give advice and guidance. The mentor/mentee interaction time is around 4-6 hours during a 2-3 month period (6 weeks was found unrealistic). After the first 40-50 pages, an electronic copy goes to the mentor to detect any problems early on. Once the mentor is happy with the index, it goes to the committee for approval. Registration is independent of mentoring.

So far there have been 5 mentees and 4 mentors, using a variety of material including historical, newsletter and church lists. There has been difficulty finding enough mentors.

Victoria branch started the pilot mentoring scheme and the New Zealand and ACT branches are also starting their own mentoring schemes now. Technical Writers want to adopt a similar scheme.

*(continued overleaf)*

**'Mentoring scheme in Victoria: the mentee's experience' - Jane Purton**

Jane has indexed two books and one newsletter. Some of the issues she encountered were using modern terms for modern readers; getting the structure of the index straight in her mind; and using page numbers not locators. The benefits of the mentoring scheme for her were indexing real jobs without the performance anxiety, advice on business issues, one-on-one help, and making friends.

**Day 2**

**'Online annual reports' - Lynn Farkas**

I was quite intrigued by this topic as in New Zealand there is no requirement for annual reports of a certain size to be indexed. We would have a lot more work here in New Zealand if there was! I certainly didn't know that you can win an award for the best annual report! The Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) has been giving out Excellence Awards for 22 years with online awards going for 5 years. You have to be a printed award winner to be considered for an online award. Lynn has recently been asked to join the panel and has been emphasising the need for better indexing. There is a rigorous evaluation process and strict criteria to be met.

**'Spanning the centuries through newspaper indexing' - Cheryl Hamblyn and Delyth Sunley**

The McNab NZ Collection started as a gift of 4000 volumes which has now grown to 80,000. Newspapers were included in the original gift. The conditions of the gift were that it is free and open access to everyone, that it be added to, and that Mr McNab could still borrow his books.

The Dunedin Public Library began indexing newspaper clippings in 1936. In the 1940s enquiries doubled due to the Centennial and family history enquiries. In 1948, the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Evening Star* started being indexed daily onto slips of paper then written up by hand onto cards. The

index went online in 1993. Staff time takes 15–20 hours per week, indexing only local and regional stories or where things happen to Otago people. In 30% of enquiries, the index provides answers that can't be found anywhere else. There were 16,000 enquiries last year.

**'Contentious issues in indexing panel session' - Alan Walker, Francis Lennie and Max McMaster**

A great discussion this. Questions included how to treat scientific formulae; ship names; people well known under one name but mentioned in the text only under another; information supplied by the indexer but not in the text; undifferential locators in biography and history; complicated drug terminology; and affiliations in databases. I was a bit tired at the end of two long days but this discussion was quite sparky and kept my focus!

**Overall impressions of the conference**

If conference participants are a correct sample then indexers are generally older and female. Max told me once the average age of indexers is around 54. Looks about right.

The conference was amazingly well organised. The Victorian branch did it flawlessly! It was welcoming, not too formal, and efficiently run. I was impressed. Well done!

I found the conference inspiring, informative and certainly engaging. I would recommend that everyone tries to get to a conference at least once. What a wonderful opportunity to network with other indexers and meet like-minded people; to finally put faces to names; meet some of the committee, etc. Such an incredible array of different people doing such interesting things with their indexing skills.

I would have loved to see something on web indexing and the mysterious (to me) metadata that I still do not understand completely, but perhaps next time. It was a whirl and a rush, and I loved it.

*Tordis Flath*

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## A view from the ACT

**E**ight ANZSI members, all but two of whom had been to the conference, gathered in the Friends' Room of the National Library on 12 April, to share their impressions of how useful the conference had been.

Geraldine Triffitt, ACT President, thought it was a good conference, with a wide selection of papers and an interesting venue converted from old tramsheds, handy to the city. Seventy people attended, fourteen from the ACT, three of whom gave talks, and three of whom chaired sessions.

Shirley Campbell commented on Frances Lennie's Cindex workshop. She felt it was important to meet the creator of the system. Frances gave a broad brush presentation; she supplies excellent and prompt service to those using her system.

**Day 1**

Friday opened with the keynote speaker, Professor Neil Archbold. He gave a user's perspective, with examples of how he

used indexes to find information in geology and other sciences, not only in English, but in Russian and Chinese.

Then came concurrent sessions, Session A on indexing audio-visual material. Two members of the SBS Radio team spoke on indexing sounds in English and other languages for a multi-cultural broadcaster. They now have half a million tracks in languages other than English. Geraldine Beare had indexed *Punch* cartoons from 1890 to 1970 and Pathé newsreels in England, from 1919 to 1970. She has covered all the images in *Punch*, 250,000 in all, indexed under cartoonist, subject, colour, caption and locator. Indexing Pathé newsreels gave a multitude of headings and entries, covering world-wide news, using both American and English spellings. There was no hard copy, only computer discs for internal use and web availability.

Clodagh Jones was the last speaker in this group, on the industrial folk art of Tasmanian apple box labels. These were distinctive to each orchard, sometimes designed by prominent

artists. A private collector had the nucleus of the collection, but the editors of the book travelled throughout Australia to complete a catalogue of orchard history.

Session B began with one of the international speakers, Masoumeh Bagheri, discussing the development of thesauri in the 1960s in Iran, with the foundation of the Iranian Documentation Center, IRANDOC, the development of research centres and the Council of Scientific Research. Currently twelve Persian thesauri are available. Her sister spoke about indexing education in Iran, at present a course of two credit hours at Masters' level, part of the Master of Library and Information Science course.

Glenda Browne's talk on 'Evidence-based indexing' was voted one of the best at the conference. She feels we take certain reference material for granted as authorities, and should do more research into indexing and how users use indexes.

Sandra Henderson commented on Shauna Hicks' talk on indexing archives for access. The archives are huge collections, put together by various government departments; only recently have people become interested in access to them. This can cause difficulties in cases where the records are hand-written, perhaps with out-of-date spelling. Examples of some of the problems were shown on screen.

John Simkin spoke on the history of AusSI, of which he was a founding member, its aims and achievements, and suggested aims and objectives for future activity by the expanded society, ANZSI.

Geraldine then reported on the discussion on mentoring, by a mentor, Max McMaster, and a mentee, Jane Purdon. Max is currently the main trainer in indexing courses for ANZSI, and sees mentoring as a follow-on from his courses, possibly leading to publication and registration. He thinks both mentors and mentees should receive a small remuneration. Max will repeat his talk in July, to the Society of Indexers conference in England; their response to it will be interesting, as they have established courses and assessment procedures. Jane Purdon had been a registered indexer, but gone on to do different work, then came back to indexing, becoming a mentee to regain confidence.

Jean Norman commented on Cambridge University Press's XML system of indexing, where the typescript is indexed to the word, not the paragraph. The index can be produced in several ways, but the work is slower.

Shirley Campbell reported on the ANZSI Special General Meeting. This group formally approved the amendments to the Constitution, which have now been published in the newsletter. Some will go in as Administrative Decisions. One important point, now that we are allied with New Zealand, was on the form of meetings. 'A meeting need not be face to face, but may be electronic or in some other format.' All the amendments proposed by the ACT Region Branch were passed. Also, the recommended rate, one to cover the whole society, was set at \$55 per hour.

The conference dinner was pleasant and well organised, with a seating plan, one committee member at each table competitions and musical interludes. During the dinner Tordis Flath, the New Zealand President, was awarded the Indexers' Medal for 2004.

## Day 2

Saturday began with two Canberra speakers, Eleanor Whelan speaking about Australian input to the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) international database, and Tessa Wooldridge speaking about AustLit, the Australian Literature Gateway, a cooperative effort by eight libraries of literature of and about Australia, including the effects of overseas authors on Australia.

Lynn Farkas then discussed on-line annual reports; she is a member of a panel evaluating these.

Tordis Flath considered different ways of indexing journal articles. Glenda Browne has already contributed a report on this discussion, which was published in last month's ANZSI newsletter.

The next session dealt with indexing in the education field, with Margaret Findlay discussing contemporary indexing, Pru Mitchell and Fiona Marriner talking about the South Australian system, EdNA Online, and Emeline Haight talking about open access information.

Cheryl Hamblyn and Delyth Sunley, two New Zealand members, spoke on newspaper indexing, describing how this type of indexing can span the centuries and be important for local knowledge. Geraldine Suter discussed *The Argus* indexing project. *The Argus* closed back in 1957 and some parts had been indexed previously. The project to consolidate previous work is now web-based, though not full text, with participants from NSW and the ACT as well as the major Melbourne libraries.

Geraldine Triffit chaired a session on the indexing of indigenous materials. Nel Fredericks spoke of the projects undertaken by the State Library of South Australia, such as a register of births and deaths, various mission records and family collections. Dianna McClellan spoke on metadata for indigenous cultural heritage; she was involved in the Australian Indigenous Heritage Database Project at LaTrobe University. Her talk covered many topics and showed how subject headings and metadata could be used but weren't. AIATSIS was praised for its work.

Finally, a panel composed of Alan Walker, Frances Lennie and Max McMaster examined contentious issues in indexing. Questions covered filing chemical terms, the names of ships and their dates of arrival, qualifiers for names, the use of *passim*, and the number of locators needed.

Lynn Farkas, ANZSI President, closed the conference, but for the Committee things didn't stop there. On Sunday a half-day post-Conference meeting brought together the full ANZSI Committee to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the administration and future of our society. This meeting has been dealt with in detail by the President, in her column.

The consensus of the ACT group was that the conference was successful and useful. We just wished there had been even more opportunity for international input. Perhaps next time...

*Edyth Binkowski*

# From the literature and other thoughts

## *Sunday Life*

The *Sunday Life* I picked up at the Melbourne conference had a few interesting people pieces. John Water's quote (p. 21) could equally well apply to the indexing life: 'The insecurity that comes with being an actor is something I have learned to be grateful for. To do something by rote or with apathy is not the way I'd like to make a living. To have your alertness raised and all of your faculties primed for a job is exciting; you know you're alive.'

Bryce Courtenay writes of his time in advertising (p. 62): 'I used to think it was such a joy to do a 30-second ad or have the luxury of one minute. 'God,' I'd think, 'what could you do with that?' Maybe it's a reaction to that time that I now write 800-page books'. And we think we have space constraints!

## ...the word: newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA) Jan-Jul-Aug 2004

p. 9 The Society of Editors SA is developing a mentoring program for its members. The society gathers information on potential mentors and mentees, then matches and introduces them. As far as I can tell no money changes hands.

## ...the word: newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA) Jan-Nov-Dec 2004

Robyn Colman provides an 'Insurance follow-up' (pp. 5-6) from her survey distributed to editors last year. She received 18 responses from people who had been asked about insurance cover. Most negotiated their way out of the insurance or refused the work. Insurance types required were mainly professional indemnity and public liability, with occasional requests for workers' compensation, loss of income, and accident. Recommended firms were Greater National Group (Vic), Australian Better Business Insurance (SA), RACV, AOL Risk Services (Vic) and Hadrill Insurance and Bugg Goninon (Tas). Main recommendations for freelancers faced with insurance requirements were to try and negotiate. You can ask the client to do a risk assessment, and ask them to sign off on work you have done for them to say it is acceptable (so they take responsibility). You can also give different quotes with and without insurance.

This report was also published in *Blue Pencil* (December 2004, pp. 3-4).

## *Australian IT* April 13, 2005

Reports that identity thieves have stolen information on 310,000 US citizens from data broker LexisNexis are worrying. In addition, 'Rival data broker ChoicePoint announced that identity thieves had gained access to some 145,000 consumer profiles, while Bank of America said that same month that it had lost a shipment containing sensitive details of 1.2 million US government customers.'

## Cognatrix

Cognatrix, a thesaurus management package for Macintosh computers, has just been released. You can find the details at <[www.cognatrix.com](http://www.cognatrix.com)>.

## Offpress November 2004 (and others)

Don Watson and others have highlighted the modern descent into dismal prose. Or is it so modern? In *Plain English Part 2*

(p. 1-2), Paul Bennett provides three early quotes on plain English:

\* Thy remissness in writing seems to be due to the thing which makes thee obscure, that is to say, to elaboration. In future, write unaffectedly, clearly, with plain words, which saves trouble to both writer and reader. (Babur, the first Mughal emperor, in the mid-1500s, advising his son).

\* Speketh not in the heigh style, but so pleyn at this time, I yow preye, that we may understonde what ye seye. (Chaucer's host from *The Canterbury Tales* calling on the Clerke of Oxenforde to tell his tale).

\* As if plain words, useful and intelligible instructions, were not as good for an esquire, or one that is in commission from the King, as for him that holds the plough. (John Eachard, 1670.)

There is always a balance in good writing between overadornment and 'dumbing down'. Some say 'Less is more', but others that 'Less is a bore' – an occasional lapse into sesquipedalianism never hurt anyone! Beatrix Potter thought that children liked reading occasional big words in books. And Mary Poppins would back her up: 'Indubitably'.

It's not only big words that can be impenetrable. My recent *GST rulings update* (1 November 2004 to 31 January 2005) writes:

'The ruling explains:

- when a supply is made to a 'non-resident' or other 'recipient' of a supply that is 'not in Australia when the thing supplied is done' for determining when supplies of things (other than goods or real property) are GST-free'.

Paul Bennett (p. 9) also ranted against a packet of shepherds pie which provided the instruction: 'Simply add: 500g minced beef, 1 carrot [peeled and diced], 4 tbsp tomato sauce, 1 onion [finely chopped], 800g potatoes [peeled, cooked and mashed]'. So what was in the packet? Just the stock powder and spices!

## ...the word: newsletter of the Society of Editors (SA) Jan-Feb 2005

p. 8 ('With thanks to Nena, Kate, Dave...')

Q. How many editors does it take to change a light bulb?

A. Do we have to get author's approval for this?

Q. How many copy editors does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A. I can't tell whether you mean 'change a light bulb' or 'have sex in a light bulb'. Can we reword it to remove the ambiguity?

Q. How many artwork designers does it take to change a light bulb?

A. Does it have to be a light bulb?

Q. How many copy editors does it take to change a light bulb?

A. The last time this question was asked, it involved artwork designers. Is the difference intentional? Should one or other instance be changed? It seems inconsistent.

Q. How many proofreaders does it take to change a light bulb?

A. Proofreaders aren't supposed to change light bulbs, just highlight the error.

Glenda Browne

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