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Phone/Fax: (02) 9560 0102
email: gcousins@onaustralia.com.au
Webmaster/Editor: aussi@zeta.org.au

Editorial - eNewsletter

Hi! Earlier this month, I produced an Adobe Acrobat version of the October 1997 issue (587KB zipped) downloaded from the AusSI Web site. I sent a survey to 90 members with email addresses and received 30 responses giving this profile of user preferences:

Windows 3.1=14, Win 95=17, Mac=4, UNIX=2
format: text=13, HTML=18, Acrobat=13, Word=6
size: 10K=6, 100K=6, 200K=2, 400K=3, 800K=3
e-mail=25, Web=29, newsgroup=14, gopher=4
graphics: yes=9, may be=7
link: 14.4k=5, 28.8k=9, 33.6k=10, permanent=10
members: AusSI=24, ASI=2, SI=1, Genie=4
wanted eNewsletter=27

It appears that there is a growing avenue for distributing the newsletter via email, downloading it from or browsing it on the Web site.

The savings of distributing the Newsletter via email or download are high - in the order of 30% of $3000 = $1000 per year. Labour saved = 30 days per year.

Most PageMaker/Acrobat type files are large - over 400KB each. PageMaker with its richness can be used to produce the Acrobat and paper versions. If more members upgraded their systems we could have larger electronic editions with graphics.

On the other hand HTML is small but requires a lot of labour intensive editing or use of Word with Internet Assistant to mark up the HTML. The HTML eNewsletter could be stored on the Web site and accessed via password by members. Comments anyone? Send them in and we’ll do our best... :)

Dwight Walker, Editor/Webmaster

BACK-OF-BOOK INDEXING COURSE, ADELAIDE
March 21-22, 1998

An introductory back-of-book indexing course conducted by AusSocI will be held on March 21-22 1998 at the Writers’ Centre 187 Rundle Street, Adelaide. Included will be a half day workshop at NGAPARTJI Multimedia Centre providing hands on experience with a computer for each participant. Cost of course: $225 for AusSI and Society of Editors or Society of Technical Communicators members and concession ($250 for others). This includes morning and afternoon teas.

CHRISTMAS drinks 7:00 pm Friday 28th November and dinner 7:30 pm with the Society of Editors (SA) at Ruby’s Cafe, 255b Rundle Street, Adelaide.

Dates for your Diary
Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., Sydney
Tues 2 Dec Christmas Party, 7.00pm
Casa Asturiana (private room) 77 Liverpool St, Sydney, $35. Three course meal, wine and soft drinks provided. No BYO but can purchase own tipples at restaurant bar. RSVP by 25 November, (02) 9552 0039. Any partying indexers most welcome!

Thur 4 Dec, NSW Branch Lunch, Sydney
The NSW Branch Committee invites one and all to join them for lunch:
DATE: Thursday 4 December 1997
TIME: 12.30-2.00pm
PLACE: Duxton Hotel, 88 Alfred Street, Milsons Point (across the road from Milsons Point railway station on the Luna Park side)
COST: $19.50 (hot and cold buffet lunch including complimentary glass of champagne)
RSVP: by Friday 28 November to Madeleine Davis ph 02-94385354(w); 02-94397028(h); email: m.davis@matra.com.au
Come and meet the Committee, indulge in some witty, sparkling conversation, or just relax and take in the views of Sydney Harbour.

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INDEXERS’ MEDAL, 1997

JUDGES’ REPORT

Once again, this year, the Australian Society of Indexers offered its annual Medal for the most outstanding index to a book or periodical compiled in Australia or New Zealand. To be eligible for the award, the index must be in print and must have been published after 1994. While the index must have been compiled in Australia or New Zealand, the text to which it refers may have originated or be published elsewhere.

For the award of the Medal, indexes are judged at the level of outstanding professional achievement, thus sufficient material is required, both in quality and quantity, for appraisal at this level. The index should be substantial in size, the subject matter should be complex, and the language, form and structure of the index should demonstrate the indexer’s expertise, as well as serving the needs of the text and of the reader.

This year the panel of judges consisted of:

• Carmel Maguire, who is Visiting Professor in the School of Library, Information and Archive Studies, University of New South Wales;
• Janet Donald, who is an editor, librarian and information management consultant;
• Kingsley Siebel, who, after a long and distinguished career as a law publisher, is now an equally prominent indexer, and Vice-President of the Australian Society of Indexers; and
• Alan Walker, a full-time freelance indexer, who was awarded the Medal in 1989, and who coordinated the judging.

The entries this year were of a high standard, and included scholarly books, reference books and textbooks. No periodical indexes or indexes to technical documentation were submitted, unlike the last two years. Despite the overall good quality of the indexes, there was, unfortunately, no single book which stood out as displaying all the qualities appropriate for the award of the Medal. Nevertheless, we wish to highly commend three excellent indexes, listed here (in alphabetical order, by surname of the indexer):

First we highly commend Clodagh Jones, who is the only member of our Society who lives in Tasmania, for her index to *The Silence Calling: Australians in Antarctica 1947–97*, written by Tim Bowden (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1997). This book is the Jubilee History of ANARE, the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions, which was established in 1947. The book is a lively and interesting history, as one would expect from this author, and this index reflects these qualities. This is one of those (unfortunately, rather rare) indexes which is a good read in its own right. At times it is fascinating in its vulgarity—how could a reader resist following up the subentry under “huskies” which reads: “turds appear as mountains, 154”? The index is also unusually detailed, providing an average of thirteen lines of index entries for each page of text, and since it is a thick book, the index is also substantial—28 pages of three columns, or nearly 4,500 lines. As well as conveying the flavour of the text, the index entries are thorough and thoughtful, and demonstrate excellent index-craft in matters such as bringing significant words to the beginning of subentries.

We found some blemishes attributable to the indexer, but it is particularly disappointing to have to report that the index has not been well served by the publisher. While generous space has been provided, and the printing is clear and legible, there are some unfortunate basic editorial faults, such as not providing “continued” headings for entries which split over page breaks, and a peculiar system of indentation, which detracts significantly from otherwise good readability.

Second (alphabetically) is Max McMaster, a former winner of the Medal, whom we highly commend for his excellent index to *Exploring Central Australia: society, the environment and the 1894 Horn Expedition*, edited by S.R. Morton and D.J. Mulvaney. (Surrey Beatty & Sons, Chipping Norton, NSW, 1996). This is a multidisciplinary anthology of scholarly papers given at a symposium to review the Horn scientific expedition to Central Australia on its centenary. The papers are in conventional scholarly format, and include articles on history, anthropology, environment and biological sciences. There are many scientific names and expressions in Aboriginal languages, both of which present challenges to indexers. This is a highly professional index, outstanding in its detail, which will provide researchers with excellent access to the contents of the book. The judges had some reservations about the usefulness of the index for non-scientific users. The publisher has competently produced the index, in standard scientific format.

Finally, we highly commend Dorothy Prescott for her index to *A Guide to Maps of Australia in Books Published 1780–1830: an annotated cartobibliography*, compiled by T.M. Perry and Dorothy F. Prescott (National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1996). This handsome book is provided with no fewer than six separate indexes—not universally considered an advantage, but each index has been compiled in a thoroughly professional and scholarly way. They cover: Map titles, Titles of inset maps, Map makers and publishers, Geographical areas, Subjects, and Ships. Providing subject indexes to maps is notoriously difficult, and it good to find that it has not been ignored; the glory of these indexes, however, is the range of name indexes which provide the sort of reliable access which specialist bibliographers and cartographers will need, appreciate and rely on.

Congratulations to all three.

Alan Walker (on behalf of the judges)

[Note: A version of this report was given at the Katoomba conference. Since only one of the highly commended indexers was present, it is planned to make a presentation to all three at the Annual General Meeting of the Victorian Branch in March 1998.]
Glenda Browne writes:

As well as a chance to network with old friends, the 1997 AusSI conference gave us a chance to explore the possibilities of newer locations for indexing, particularly the Internet.

Alan Walker (with Bob Jansen) spoke about indexing a multimedia presentation, where he worked from a video of speeches. Graham Greenleaf spoke about a legal information service which uses a combination of manual (human) and automatic methods to organise their service. They store searches (for use with Internet search engines) and use targeted Web spiders to retrieve information to keep their service up to date.

Tony Barry gave an overview and update of the Internet, and spoke about potential niche markets for indexing services [especially metadata and search engines, Ed]. Richard Jones spoke about automated indexing and summarising software. Bemal Rajapatirana from the National Library of Australia gave a very clear overview of the concept of metadata, and the development of standards through the Dublin Core etc., and it seemed to us that there was potential work for indexers and freelance cataloguers here.

There were other sessions and workshops, including some that I missed (couldn’t get a babysitter for the whole time - this is a problem with both spouses being indexers!)

The general feeling seemed to be positive - that there were new roles for us to fill. It was good to hear of a few specific projects that are happening. If others are like me there is a feeling of having to find our feet, keep an open mind, target the sort of work we’d like to do and then try and get it. Jon and I drove home inspired, thinking about future directions we might take (but with a sneaking suspicion that it might be hard to find Web sites as interesting and pleasant to index as the books we currently do).

It was great to see a few overseas indexers there, and quite a number of Australians from interstate.

Spare of Lori Lathrop's workbook

When Lori Lathrop ran her Indexing Skills Workshop for Technical Communicators at the Katoomba conference, there were not enough copies of her workbook available for each participant to get one. Lori kindly left some spare copies in Sydney before she returned to the United States. If anyone who attended would like a copy of the workbook, please contact Alan Walker (by fax: 02 9368 0174 or email <alan.walker@syd054.aone.net.au>).

Jonathan Jermy writes:

The conference at Katoomba left me impressed with the Mountain Heritage Hotel and (as a local) determined to try the dining room again some time. I was out of sympathy with the keynote address, however, finding it a variant on the we-know-what's-good-for-you approach. So what if people spend more time having fun with computers than in productive work? If it wasn’t for fun there’d be no incentive to work at all, would there? And information can be fun, I hope.

I was also out of sympathy with John Simkin’s brave attempt to promote professionalism. The question for me is: “Who’ll pay for it?” and I don’t think John answered that. (If you’re in any doubt about the costs of professionalism, ask your doctor about AMA subscriptions.) Finding volunteers for yet more hours of free labour is surely not the answer.

Part of the problem with professionalism is defining our profession. While it was a great opportunity to meet people and discuss projects, the conference made it clear how little some of us have in common. As a part-time cottage industry indexer of books I have only a tenuous understanding of the high-powered corporate/University-funded whizkids who are grappling with the world of electronic information. (It makes me wonder how many hundreds of ‘knowledge engineers’ there are out there doing indexing without even knowing what it’s called.) I hope one day to use the tools they provide, but for pure pragmatic advice the workshop session was much more rewarding.

There was the usual proportion of speeches that went over time, sure-fire computer demonstrations that failed, and forecasts of wonderful things to come Real Soon Now.

And as for the theme - can we futureproof indexing? Do we even want to? Do we want to cling to a vision of one title, one profession, while around us the publishing environment morphs into unrecognisability? Some of us will seize our chances when the computers take over; others will bow out gracefully. In a world where computerised database searching is an everyday event, I hope that our information retrieval skills will remain in demand. But as Churchill said: “It is very difficult to make predictions; especially about the future.”

Society of Indexers (UK)

TRAINING IN INDEXING

Open-learning course for indexing books, periodicals, images and other information media.

Write to:

Training Administrator, Society of Indexers, Mermaid House, 1 Mermaid Court, London SE1 1HR, UK

Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter, Volume 21 No. 10, November/December 1997
Awards

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

AusSI’s MEDAL AND AWARDS

Dear member,

As the judges’ report for the AusSI Medal comments [p.2], no periodical indexes or indexes to technical documentation were submitted this year, and few have been submitted in the last three years. This leads me to remark on the appropriateness of AusSI’s awards to indexing, as it is at present practised in Australia and New Zealand. This matter is on the agenda of the National Executive, which is considering whether our system of awards can be developed to better reflect the range of activities to which our members devote their time.

What is our present system of awards?

The Medal

The Medal is our oldest award, and may be given to indexers of monographs or periodicals. It has never attracted many entries outside the categories of academic books, reference books and textbooks, and it has usually been awarded to the indexer of a scholarly monograph or reference work. This may not be surprising, and indeed is appropriate, since the award of the Medal requires a substantial index to a complex text. Nevertheless, indexers doing excellent work in other areas have commented that the requirements for the Medal do not easily apply to the work they do.

The Web Indexing Prize

Last year, and again this year, the Society has also offered a Web Indexing Prize, co-ordinated by our Webmaster, Dwight Walker. This attracted a large number of interesting entries last year (described in the April 1997 issue of The Indexer). This is an important initiative, since it recognises indexers’ efforts in a new sphere of activity, and (it should be noted) that it is, by its very nature, an international award.

Honorary Life Membership

This is also a most appropriate time to mention another AusSI award, with which members may not be familiar—for the very good reason that it has never so far been given. This is the award of Honorary Life Membership. According to our Constitution this may be bestowed on members in recognition of outstanding service to indexing and/or the Society. There can be no more than five Honorary Life Members at any one time, and no more than two nominations may be presented in any one year.

At the Katoomba conference, I was able to announce, with great pleasure, that two cases supporting the award of Honorary Life Membership have recently been made, and have been accepted unanimously at a meeting of the National Committee. The nominations must be presented to the next Annual General Meeting, for voting by members, where a two-thirds majority shall apply. The two nominees are both very long-standing members of the Society and long-serving members of the National Committee, when it was based in Melbourne. They are Jean Hagger, a distinguished former President, and Joyce Gillespie, who was National Treasurer for over twenty years, and still serves as Treasurer of the Victorian Branch. Full details of the nominations will be published in the next issue of this Newsletter, before they are presented to the Annual General Meeting, scheduled for 18 March 1998.

Extending the range

So, that is the range of our awards at the moment: the Medal, the Web Indexing Prize and Honorary Life Membership. In addition, of course, members may become Registered Indexers, after submitting work for assessment, but this is a form of accreditation, rather than part of the system of awards for excellence.

We have nothing specifically to recognise the achievements and contributions of (for instance) database indexers or CD-ROM indexers or indexers of genealogical material or children’s books or all sorts of other work which does not sit easily with the Medal criteria, which were designed to recognise outstanding work in the area of traditional book and periodical indexing.

Other professional organisations, including many in the publishing and information industry—as well as others outside it, such as dentists—have established very detailed systems of prizes and awards to recognise outstanding work and contributions to the profession. We do need to find ways of recognising and rewarding a greater variety of indexing achievement than we do at present, both for the sake of those hard-working and highly accomplished indexers, and also to publicise more widely the quality of our professional work. The National Committee would like to hear from you about how we might do this.

Alan Walker
President
30 October 1997
Conferences

1998 American Society of Indexers (ASI) Annual Conference celebrating its 30th Anniversary with the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC)

New Frontiers in Indexing

May 13-16, 1998
Cavanaugh's Inn, Seattle, Washington, USA

Building Your Business for Tomorrow

Prepare yourself for the future! Learn about the latest trends and important issues affecting Indexers, Writers, Editors, and Publishers.

Professional development is your key to success. Let experienced, insightful speakers from the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia introduce you to hot topics that help you stay on the cutting edge. You can’t afford to miss this conference!

Keynote Address:
Successful Freelancing

John Hedtke (http://www.oz.net/~jhedtke), an award-winning author of many articles and computer books (which he indexes himself), is an entertaining speaker whose personal philosophy of late is “If I were having any more fun, I’d have to be two people.” His philosophy is infectious. Be prepared to have fun!

A Few Conference Highlights

+ Bidding and Winning: Writing Successful Proposals
+ Certification Issues (panel discussion)
+ Creating Keywords for Online Help
+ Database Indexing
+ Editing Indexes
+ Facing the Text: Content Analysis and Entry Selection
+ Hiring and Training Legal Indexers
+ Indexing as a Career: Development Issues
+ Indexing CD-ROM Documents
+ Indexing Images: New Contexts, New Frontiers
+ Indexing in Multilingual and Multicultural Environments
+ Indexing Online Documents
+ Internet Searches: Cyber Indexes and CyberReality?
+ Medical Indexing
+ Scandals, Missing Persons, & Murderers: An Indexer’s Dream!

Preliminary Conference Agenda

Wednesday, May 13:
7:30 - 9:00 AM Registration Table open
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Full-day and half-day pre-conference workshops (including lunch)
Noon - 1:30 PM Registration table open
Noon - 6:00 PM Exhibitors Hall open
Sightseeing opportunities

Thursday, May 14:
7:30 - 9:00 AM Registration Table open
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Full-day and half-day pre-conference workshops (including lunch)
Noon - 1:30 PM Registration Table open
Noon - 2:00 PM Roundtable discussions (lunch included)
Noon - 6:00 PM Exhibitor Hall open
Sightseeing opportunities
6:00 - 8:00 PM Welcome Reception

Friday, May 15:
7:30 - 9:00 AM Registration Table open
9:00 - 10:00 AM Welcome / Keynote Address
10:00 AM - Noon General Session Presentations
Noon to 2:00 PM Roundtable discussions (lunch included)
2:00 to 4:00 PM Meet the Exhibitors Presentations
4:00 to 6:00 PM Chapter Leaders Meeting
Sightseeing opportunities
6:30 - 9:00 PM Awards Banquet with Murder Mystery Dinner Theatre

Saturday, May 16:
8:00 AM - Noon General Session Presentations
Noon - 2:00 PM Roundtable discussions (lunch included)
2:30 - 5:00 PM Post-conference workshops
Sightseeing opportunities

Conference Registration

Want a conference brochure and registration form? Call Lori Lathrop at +1-303-567-4447, ext. 28, or send an e-mail message to her (76620.456@compuserve.com) and request a conference brochure and registration form.
Conferences

REPORT ON “DIGITAL LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY ’97”:
a conference on transforming library services for the digital age, Sydney, Aug ’97

This two day conference promised more than it delivered in terms of digital library technology, although it was still very worthwhile from a government special library point of view. Most of the speakers were from academic and public libraries, however, in my opinion, the best presentation was given by Suzette Boyd, from Methodists Ladies College, Melbourne. Taking a broader perspective, it was reassuring to be in a forum with librarians discussing issues germane to the new information society, as identified by at least three major contemporary reports such as the Cutler report (1997), the Hilmer report (1993), and the Karpin report (1995). Papers from the public and State Library contingent ranged from the inspiring and witty through to the eminently practical. Mark Grosvenor of Blacktown City Library Service, talked about how to run two kinds of libraries, one traditional, the other electronic. He spoke about reengineering library services from a broader perspective than just information retrieval and document delivery, echoing themes discussed in management literature on “marketspace” (Rayport & Sviokla, 1995, p.75).

Later speakers reiterated that reengineering’s purpose should be to maximise the library’s investment in human resources, to free staff from mundane tasks. Deirdre Lowe of the State Library of Victoria, in her paper on “Becoming a library of the future”, demonstrated that Victoria is attempting to lead the way in more areas than just privatization and sporting events. She spoke about Intranets, VICNET and the redeveloped Trescowthick Information Centre. The latter showcases the State Library’s commitment to making electronic information available to users, via one-stop access to catalogues, CD-ROM and networked databases, as well as the Internet and EBSCO host home page.

Brad McGrath and John Stanton of Liverpool and Baulkham Hills Libraries, NSW, respectively gave a stimulating papers on “Document delivery, technology and customer self-service” and on “Developing an Information Strategy for your Library”, in which they suggested new strategies to enable end users to request directly from a holding library (for a fee as opposed to the current vouchers) and a case study outlining some homegrown methods more effectively satisfying the client needs. Using the model of his own Fairfield City Library, NSW, Kevin Brennan’s entertaining paper put a strong case for libraries to become a key part of their communities, both physically and digitally, using Web sites, training, community partnerships and other mechanisms. Chris Williams, Director of Library and Information Services at the State Library of NSW gave a talk on measuring for quality and effectiveness, and whether existing measures are adequate to improve efficiency in the current environment. Chris had collected a lot of statistical evidence for the paper, which highlighted points of general applicability, namely that focus groups can be used effectively. We also need to develop partnerships with related industries and firms that have tools to measure quality and effectiveness from the client’s perspective.

The academic library representatives gave excellent accounts of the thoroughgoing analyses they have performed in the area of digital libraries. Helen Knight’s practical discussion of “Utilising electronic resources, a working example” gave a “warts and all” description of a CD-ROM network at the University of Sydney (Cumberland College) Library. Delivered with a judicious use of humour, the lesson from this paper was that nothing ever works completely.

This was followed by another very practical paper on the collection of statistical data about the usage of electronic databases, by Peter Hyland, lecturer in Business Systems at the University of Wollongong, NSW, which showed that it is possible to obtain a lot of information about library service usage in an automated, non-intrusive manner.

Greg Kelleher of the University of New England, NSW, looked at “Library selection criteria for WWW resources” as one strategy for leveraging declining purchasing power, in this case for the serials budget. Greg acknowledged that any savings in obtaining serial titles over the Web could be offset by an increase in associated IT expenditure. An interesting paper, it went into some detail on selecting, cataloguing, accessing and archiving e-journals. The biggest problem is their archiving and preservation.

Jacqui Birchall and Neil Grant, both of Wollongong University, NSW, gave their paper on “Establishing a secure Web interface for database access”, a case study of their Library’s successful transition from standalone CD-ROM databases to Web interface access. Effective security using Fortes 101 and iKiosk is in place, and much useful information was obtained from a discussion group called Web4lib.

Hans Groenewegen spoke on electronic reserve (or short-loan) items. His own Monash University, Vic., has commenced an ambitious project in approaching publishers (over 1800 in Monash’s case) for permission to digitise and store articles, books and/or contents pages. Despite an interesting costing formula, half the publishers in Monash’s case did not respond.

Other papers were on copyright issues for libraries in the knowledge age, looking at issues such as copyright in hotlinks; copyright in the content of a website; framing; implied license; liability, and imaging and archiving; cataloguing internet resources; contract lifecycle management, and Margaret Hyland’s paper titled “People make it happen, automation won’t - managing your human resources in these times of change”, which could almost have been a case study in
management techniques advocated in the Karpin report. Salient points were that automation can create better library services, provided staff and their contributions are valued.

The paper by Suzette Boyd from the Methodist Ladies College (Melbourne) demonstrated the kind of competitive principles held dear by many in this age of corporatisation, and could have come straight from the pages of the Hilmer report. Titled “Towards the 21st Century in electronic library service provision”, it contained so many examples of innovative service delivery that it had me wondering whether there hadn’t been a typographical error and the title was meant to read “Towards the 22nd Century...”. The library has been turned around so that at present not only is the school library packed with staff and students, but parents and members of the local community also use the library.

Richard Marson, DEETYA, Canberra, ACT
<richard.marson@deetya.gov.au>

REFERENCES
Cutler report: see Information Policy Advisory Council.
Hilmer report: see Independent Committee of Inquiry into Competition Policy in Australia.
Karpin report: see Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills.

Date: Sat, 01 Nov 1997 05:51:03 +1100
From: Judy Webster <judyweb@st.net.au>

DW: Can you tell me how many genealogists also do local history?
JW: In a perfect world, the answer would be 100% — though of course a genealogist, by definition, is not the same thing as a ‘family historian’... which is what many of us prefer to be called nowadays. A good family historian cannot study family history without also studying some local history, because to do so would be to look at the family without putting them into their historical context.

DW: Genealogical indexes seem to be mainly databases. Indexers cannot seem to use their analytical skills on these.
JW: While this is true to a large extent, and computer programmes generally dictate the format of the index in those cases, there are still many indexes being compiled on cards and/or typed. With manual indexing, some training or skill is required even to compile those ‘genealogical’ indexes which consist of personal names only (and many do include placenames and other subject headings as well as personal names). The indexer requires some knowledge of how to handle and arrange (for example) foreign names, acronyms, surnames without given names (such as ‘Mrs. Bloggs’ or ‘stillborn son of John Smith’), Mc/Mac names, names with apostrophes, St/Saint, women’s maiden and married names, titles, and so on. Many family historians have no knowledge of the accepted methods of arranging these. It was for this reason that I was asked to write an article on indexing methodology, for a future edition of the newsletter of the Australasian Association of Genealogists and Record Agents.

9th Australasian Congress on Genealogy and Heraldry
Perth Congress 2000
‘Let Records Speak’
University of Western Australia
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Writing to the Editor
COPY DEADLINE: 31 January 1998

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