President's Report for 2000

National Committee
The National Committee, based in Sydney, met eight times in the last twelve months. Although the majority of members live in Sydney, members often travelled from the Blue Mountains and Canberra to attend.

Membership
At the end of 2000 the Society had 196 financial members, compared to 194 at the end of 1999. The breakdown is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
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<td>NSW</td>
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<td>20</td>
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Medals and Awards
The AusSI Medal for the year 2000 was won by Max McMaster. Max now has the distinction of being a three-time winner of the Medal, and I congratulate him on this achievement. The Society's Web Indexing Prize for 2000 was awarded to Patricia Kennedy for her Subject Guide to the Queensland Environment and Protection Agency. Congratulations also to Patricia.

Newsletters
Glenda Browne continued as the Society's editor throughout 2000, and continued to produce a professional, timely and informative newsletter. Glenda resigned at the end of the year and we are sorry to lose her. We are, however, now lucky enough to have Frances Paterson as our new editor, and the newsletter is continuing to evolve in her capable hands.

Website
Jonathan Jermey continued to fine-tune and improve our website throughout 2000. In mid-2000 AusSI contracted with Westpac to allow for credit card payment of membership and other fees, and Jonathan set up several forms for these transactions on a secure server linked to the site.

Indexers Available
Michael Wyatt has maintained Indexers Available in 2000 and has produced a very user-friendly resource. Ninety-three, or nearly half, of our members now take advantage of this opportunity to advertise their services online, and I know from personal experience that publishers and authors alike find it a very useful resource.

Registration
Michael Harrington (Chair), Hilary Kent and Robert Hyslop have continued to serve as the Society's Panel of Assessors for Registration. My thanks to each of them for the many hours of work which they have contributed to this very important task.

Amendments
Delay in the assessment of indexes submitted for registration has been a problem for many years, and this year the National Committee introduced some measures which it hopes will reduce such delay, as well as underline the stature of the registration process. It is now necessary for applicants to have had at least two indexes published, in addition to the index being submitted for consideration. As well, if an index has not been assessed, for whatever reason, after a period of three months, the National Committee will now arrange for an alternative assessor, so that no applicant will have to wait more than four months for a result.

Registration for database indexers
Early in 2000 the Society established a subcommittee with a brief to look into the feasibility of establishing a process of registration for database indexers. That committee, comprising Margaret Findlay, Max McMaster, Sandra Henderson and myself, worked up a set of proposals which have been examined by the National Committee and returned, with suggestions, to the subcommittee.
AusSI Publicity Officer

Duties
AusSI has appointed its first Publicity Officer, Jon Jermey, whose duties on your behalf are to:
- Establish mailing list for AusSI (print and online)
- Manage advertising of Indexers Available
- Advertise Indexers Medal and Web Indexing Competition each year including posting/publicity of results on AusSI website, newsletter, ALIA Indexers, Index-I, overseas indexing newsletters, etc.
- Liaise with individual Branches about conference and workshop/seminars publicity
- Be responsible for all AusSI national publicity, including advertising registration of indexers, and one-off ‘advertorials’ in relevant journals and newspapers
- Advise the Webmaster of links that may be of benefit to the website.

Advertisements
An advertisement has been placed in the following publications for a trial period of three months as a test advertising campaign to see if it helps to generate more work for members:
- Society of Editors (Vic) Newsletter
- Society of Editors (SA) Newsletter
- The Genealogist
- Weekly Book Newsletter (‘Blue Newsletter’)
- ASA Bulletin (Australian Society of Archivists)
- Blue Pencil (Society of Editors NSW).

Survey of Members
AusSI wants members to let us know if these advertisements have helped generate work to see if we should establish such advertising as an ongoing budget item. We're asking you to keep track of your sources of work, other than regular clients, for the next three months, at the end of which time we'll survey you, probably through the Newsletter, to find out the results.

Feedback from Members
In order to direct our marketing to achieve the best results, we need to know how our members find work and - just as importantly - where they think they could find work, but don't. As Publicity Officer I am trying to increase awareness of the Society among potential clients. Any feedback on how a member obtained (or failed to obtain) a particular job will help me enormously. I would also like to know of any areas where new members for AusSI might be found. Please write to me directly at webmaster@aussi.org.

From the Webmaster
Where AusSI officials have changed positions or taken on new positions, please let me know your email addresses so that I can change the redirection on the website accordingly.

Chinese Indexers at Canberra Conference

With the help of a generous grant from the Australia-China Council, two Chinese indexers were funded to attend the ‘Partnerships in Knowledge’ conference in Canberra on 20-23 April.

The two distinguished Chinese indexers who accepted the invitation to attend were Mr Ge Yong-qing, from Shanghai, Managing President of the China Society of Indexers, and Mr Wei Hai sheng, Director of the Library of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau in Beijing.

'I will be delighted to welcome our Chinese colleagues to Canberra,' said Alan Walker, the President of the Australian Society of Indexers. 'It will be a high point of the conference to have the participation of two representatives of the world's largest indexing society. It will also give me a personal opportunity to repay some of the warm hospitality I received when I attended the China Society of Indexers conference in Dalian in 1999.'

Alan Walker
President
Australian Society of Indexers
Training
Jonathan Jerme has added a new directory 'Training' http://www.aussi.org/training/index.htm to the Aussi website which details ongoing indexing training in Australia and by correspondence or video. In particular the University of NSW is currently offering the following courses:
- Introduction to Book Indexing
- Indexing Web Pages and Documents Indexing Technical Material
- Computer-aided Indexing
- Analysing, abstracting and indexing documents for databases
- Indexing Photographs Indexing Moving Images
- Synonyms and taxonomies: thesaurus design for information architects.

Information about these courses and other web design/navigation courses can be found at http://www.silas.unsw.edu.au/silas/cshed.html

Develop your editing skills
The NSW Writers’ Centre is holding an 8-9 day workshop Develop Your Editing Skills over consecutive Sundays in late April, May and June. The workshop aims to develop participants’ knowledge in all aspects of the editorial process; and is suitable for those contemplating employment in publishing, those newly employed in publishing, and those in the publishing industry who wish to acquire additional skills and a broader overview of the publishing process.

For further information telephone (02) 9555 9757; or email workshops@nswwriterscentre.org.au; or visit the Centre’s website at www.nswwriterscentre.org.au.

Questionnaire
Taking advantage of the first joint national conference of indexers and editors, the conference organising committee decided to collect information that would be useful for participants and participating professional societies, and in organising the next conference.

The survey asks you about your professional priorities, your educational and employment background, and, in the case of freelance and self-employed indexers, your current rates. If you decide to fill it in, but choose not to answer all of the questions, the information that you do give will still be very useful. If you find any part of the questionnaire intrusive, there is no need to fill it in.

The organising committee’s aim in undertaking the survey is to provide useful data to publicise the levels and skills of indexers and editors, and to gather information that can be a basis for future advocacy work. The committee will compile the information and will make the results available to the professional bodies to circulate through their respective societies and branches. You can be assured that the information gathered about rates charged by freelancers will not be used as a basis for setting charges. It is included to provide information for practitioners about the professions, to discern any national differences in rates and, ultimately, to map trends.

Please return the completed questionnaire by 20 May to:
Conference Organising Committee
6 Logan Street
Narrabundah ACT 2604
committee for the preparation of some final recommendations.

Courses
The Society continued to hold courses in Melbourne and Sydney in book indexing and web indexing.

Introduction of the GST
The National Committee spent some time ascertaining the appropriateness of AusSI registering for the GST (eventually deciding not to), and also published guidelines for freelancers affected by the introduction of the tax.

Advertising & publicity
The National Committee also devoted time to considering ways in which we might market the society, and the skills of its members, better. We introduced an advertising budget, prepared by Madeleine Davis, appointed a Publicity Officer, Jonathan Jermey, and wrote to organisations similar to ours, offering them reciprocal membership. We have yet to see the results of these initiatives, but the committee feels it is appropriate for the Society to take a more proactive role in promoting itself and its members.

Recommended rates for indexing
On 26 October 2000 the National Committee voted unanimously to raise the hourly rate from $39.50 to $42, in line with CPI rises of 6.1%. The rise was effective immediately.

Members' library
Alan Walker was appointed as the Society's inaugural Librarian. Alan developed a collection development plan, and the National Committee established an annual budget for acquisitions.

International relations
Alan Walker continued as our International Representative and attended the international meeting held in Cambridge in mid-2000. By December 2000 all six indexing societies (Australia, Britain, Canada, China, South Africa, United States) had signed their first international agreement, and I would like to thank Alan for his contribution in helping to make this happen.

Appreciations
In addition to thanking the people whose specific contribution I have mentioned above, I would also like to thank deeply those members of the National Committee whose work in many ways constitutes the engine room of the Society: the Treasurer, Tricia Waters, the Secretary, Lorraine Doyle, the Minutes Secretary, Carolyn Kearney, and the Membership Secretary, Michael Wyatt. Thank you all.

Garry Cousins
President March 2001

Treasurer's Report

Balance brought forward from 1999 $12,178.15
Total income $16,697.05
Total expenditure $12,988.43
Total balance for year ending 31/12/00 $15,876.77
St George Bank term deposit $5,000.00
Westpac Money Market $5,000.00
Total funds $25,876.77

Anticipated expenses for 2001 are mainly for the newsletter, website, publicity (advertising the services of indexers in relevant societies' magazines) and providing a credit card facility for members.

Tricia Waters
Treasurer

Vale Josephine Mc Govern


We pay tribute to her longstanding dedication to the professions of both librarianship and indexing in Australia, particularly in Victoria, where she resided and worked.

The Victorian Branch Committee expresses its sincere sorrow and sympathy to Josephine's family and we know that, in future, we too shall miss her warm and gracious company and support at our committee meetings, public workshops and both local and international conferences.

Jenny Restarick
Victorian Branch

Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter
Dates for your Diary

Apr 27-29
Style Council, Sydney 2001
'From Local to Global English'
Conference website:
http://www.shlrc.mq.edu.au/style/
styleconf.html

May 1
'Professionalism in Editing'
What are the responsibilities of the editor, and the
Society, to employers of editorial services?
Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts,
280 Pitt Street, Sydney
6.30 pm for 7.00 pm

Jun 29-Jul 1
Sheffield (UK) Society of Indexers Conference 2001
'Indexing at the Cutting Edge'

From the Editor

In this issue of the newsletter, we have the Annual Reports from the National Committee, and the NSW and Victorian Branches, as well as the first ever International Agreement between indexing societies, and the second part of the report on the AUSSI Web Indexing Prize. The contacts on the back page have largely been updated, although not greatly changed. As Glenda Browne pointed out last year, there has been tireless dedication from a number of people in the Society for many years. Anyone who would like to get involved in the work of one of the committees will always be welcome, so do give it some thought.

All the best,
Frances Paterson

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During 2000, the Victorian Branch focussed its attention on activities for the members. A continuous program of events reflected this focus and included the AGM and annual dinner in March, three general meetings and five indexing workshops.

At our annual meeting on March 21 held in the popular and charming Graduate House, University of Melbourne, the reports from the President and Treasurer were presented. Joyce Gillespie was farewelled from the Committee after serving as Treasurer for 25 years. Max McMaster was awarded the Highly Commended Certificate of Merit (Australian Society of Indexers Medal Award 1999) by the Chair of the Medal Judging Panel, Geraldine Suter. The meeting concluded with a lively talk by Deborah Doyle of Living Proof on her experiences of book editing and conducting courses in writing and editing.

General meetings
During the year, we held three ordinary general meetings with excellent guest speakers.

GST: Be ready for July 1 2000.
On May 16, Wayne Dawes, Chief Finance Officer of Australian Council for Educational Research spoke on the components of the new tax system to be introduced into Australia on July 1 2000 and the implications for self-employed professions, such as indexers.

Where did you find that? Two electronic versions of letting your fingers do the walking!
On July 20, two city guide products were showcased. Neil Spiers demonstrated CITYSCOPE, a CD-ROM guide to commercial properties in Australian capital cities. Bernadette Vaughan talked about CITYSEARCH, which provides city-based lifestyle guides and online business directories.

Case studies and challenges for indexers
On 31 October, the first ever restaurant dinner meeting of the Branch was held at Da Vinc's Bistro in South Yarra. The panel of three dinner speakers discussed their own experiences and challenges in indexing. Geraldine Suter provided an overview of the *Argus* Indexing Project, mainly concentrating on how the first ten volumes were marketed to both Australian and overseas libraries. Max McMaster followed with a discussion of the challenges and problems he faced when indexing books on Aboriginal issues. Jenny Restarick spoke about biographical indexing, pointing out the differences between autobiographies, biographies and histories.

Workshops
Five workshops were held during 2000. In March and again in October, three-day 'Back of Book Indexing' workshops were conducted by Max McMaster. Also in March, Max conducted the one-day 'Abstracting and Indexing for Databases / Pictorial Indexing' course. In July, a one-day workshop on 'Web Indexing' was attended by 13 people and conducted by Gavan McCarthy, Helen Morgan and Joanne Evans of the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (ASTHEC). This is the first course for web indexing held by the Victorian Branch.

Hobart Conference
The papers presented at the Conference held in August 1999 in Hobart were collected and published in order to form a permanent record. Copies have been distributed throughout Australia and overseas.

Committee
The committee for the year 2000 consisted of Margaret Findlay (President); Max McMaster (Vice President); Jenny Restarick (Secretary); Ann Philpott (Treasurer); John Simkin; Josephine McGovern; Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, Geraldine Suter and Rose Mary Serong. This small and committed group worked consistently throughout the year in planning and organising meetings and workshops as well as coping with membership issues and responding to other matters raised by members and the National Committee.

Max McMaster and Margaret Findlay worked as a sub-committee with the National President and a representative from the ACT Branch, on the proposed *Registration of Database Indexers* which is now with the National Committee for consideration.

The President and Vice-President are members of the National Committee during their terms of office.

John Simkin, Geraldine Suter, Pam Jonas and Anne Bentley formed the panel for the judging of the Society's Medal. The Secretary provides administrative support to the panel. We welcomed three new members to the Branch Committee - Geraldine Suter, Ann Philpott and Rose Mary Serong.

On behalf of the Victorian Branch, I thank the members of the Branch Committee for their support, especially our Secretary, Jenny Restarick. I would also like to thank my employer, Australian Council for Educational Research for the use of its meeting rooms for Committee meetings, workshops and general meetings.

Margaret Findlay
President, 2000
The NSW Branch Committee continued to meet monthly in conjunction with the National Executive Committee's meetings held at the same time. The Blue Mountains group also met informally to mail out the newsletter each month and discuss various indexing issues.

Workshops
The NSW Branch held two workshops during last year.

HTML Indexer
The Branch organised a one-day workshop on HTML Indexer on Saturday 15 April 2000. The course was presented by Glenda Browne and was held in the brand new Computer Laboratory, Level 8, Law School Building, University of Sydney. The rate for hiring the venue was very reasonable and it is well worth using in the future.

Indexing annual reports
The NSW Branch also held a half-day workshop on indexing annual reports on Saturday 5 August. Michael Harrington who has had many years' experience in the area, including indexing the 4th and 5th editions of the AGPS Style Manual, presented the course. The training was held in the Board Room, Thomson Legal Regulatory Group, 100 Harris Street Ultimo. The venue was once again generously provided by Thomson's free of charge.

Both workshops were well attended.

Christmas lunch
The Branch Christmas Lunch was combined with that of the National Executive and held on Tuesday 12 December at Pyrmont's Restaurant located in Star City Casino with views overlooking Darling Harbour.

Madeleine Davis
NSW Branch President

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International Agreement

Agreement between the Society of Indexers, the American Society of Indexers, the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada, the Australian Society of Indexers, the Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers, and the China Society of Indexers (1999, Amended 2000)

All mention of Societies refers to Societies listed in Schedule A

1. This agreement between the Societies promotes the aims and objectives of the Societies and their members, and supersedes all previous affiliation agreements between the Societies.

2. The members of each Society shall enjoy the right to attend meetings and conferences of the other Societies and to purchase publications at the member rate. Members shall not have reciprocal rights to vote or hold office. Services specific to a Society, such as certification and registers of indexers, are not included in the reciprocal rights.

3. Societies shall refrain from actively seeking members in areas covered by other Societies, but each Society may accept membership applications from individuals outside their own area.

4. Each Society agrees to nominate an international delegate to represent its interests on matters of international import and to act as liaison with the other Societies. Each Society shall offer a discounted place at its conference to an authorised representative from each of the other Societies.

5. Each Society shall circulate an agreed number of copies of its newsletter to the other Societies. Individual members may subscribe to the newsletters of other Societies at a special rate.

6. The [British] Society of Indexers shall publish The Indexer on behalf of all the Societies. It shall remain the property of the [British] Society of Indexers.

7. The appointment of the editor(s) of The Indexer shall remain the responsibility of the [British] Society of Indexers. The management of The Indexer shall be the responsibility of the Editorial Board of The Indexer.

8. The editor(s) of The Indexer shall maintain the right to accept or reject contributions from whatever source, at their discretion.

9. Each Society shall make The Indexer available to its members according to its own rules and procedures.

10. The price of The Indexer for the members of the Societies shall be at a reduced rate as established by agreement of all the Societies. Price changes shall be notified by the beginning of July of the year before they take effect.

11. This agreement may be amended at any time by common consent. Review of the agreement will take place every third year, commencing in the year 2000.

12. The triennial International meeting shall take place at the conference of one of the societies. At each meeting the host Society for the next meeting shall be nominated.

13. Any Society may withdraw from the agreement on giving 12 months notice to the other Societies.

14. This agreement shall come into effect on its approval by the respective Societies, according to their constitutional procedures.

Schedule A

- American Society of Indexers
- Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers
- Australian Society of Indexers
- China Society of Indexers
- Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents
- Society of Indexers (referred to as [British] Society of Indexers)

3 December 2000

Thesaurus

From aiaINDEXERS-ALIA net-based and AusSI-supported indexing issues e-list

I am the Research Assistant on the High-Level Thesaurus Project based at the Centre for Digital Library Research. I have noticed your discussion on thesauri.

Someone mentioned starting a 'register for thesauri/termlists'. I can't say we're there yet, or that we are nearly there; however, we are aiming to put together a list of thesauri. At the moment it is alphabetically accessible: http://hilt.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/Sources/thesauri.htm

We hope to organise it according to subject in the near future with a brief description of what each thesaurus is. We do have a page of lists to other thesauri sites: http://hilt.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/Sources/resources.html

In case you were wondering, HILT is researching the problem of cross-searching and browsing by subject between communities (e.g. archives, libraries, museums, clumps projects etc.). It is a very large task; however, at the end of it, we do hope to be able to put forward some recommendations as to how this may be facilitated. If you wish any further info please consult: http://hilt.cdlr.strath.ac.uk/

Additionally, if you are interested and have any experience in the field we would be delighted to hear from you.

Regards,
Susannah Wake
HILT Research Assistant
Strathclyde University Library
Email: Susannah.wake@strath.ac.uk
http://hilt.cdlr.strath.ac.uk
Jonathan Jermey, Judge

Five entries were received for the 2000 Web Indexing Prize, won by the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency site index. The report covering three of the entries was published in the January/February issue of the AusSI Newsletter and here is the report on the remaining two.

History and Cultural Site for Milton Ulladulla

http://www.shoalhaven.net.au/~cathyd

Submitted by: Cathy Dunn

This is a large collection of links to pages relating to Milton Ulladulla, generally from a historical point of view. Most of the pages are on Cathy's own site, and taken together they represent a great deal of time and effort spent on accumulating material and working it up into Web pages. The home page links to at least 60 other pages, and while the layout is somewhat cluttered, the choice of colours and graphics works reasonably well.

However, it is not an index. Indexes don't just have a random jumble of headings, they have a logical sequence accessible to users; and sequence is lacking here. The main headings - 'Local History', 'Genealogy Research', 'Local Cemeteries', 'Convicts', 'Milton Ulladulla & Surrounds', 'Servicemen & Women' and 'Links' - are in no discernible order, and the entries within them are unordered too. Why are 'Budawang Aborigines' at the bottom of the Local History section? Why is 'Ulladulla Lighthouse' at the top and 'Tabourie Museum' in the middle?

There are inconsistencies here too: there are no fewer than five retrieval systems (two drop-down lists, a table of headings, a collection of 'latest additions to site' and a list of links grouped under headings) and the links in one system often don't match the links given in another. Neither do the links always match the title of the pages linked to. Material at the bottom left of the page doesn't seem to fit into any of these systems; it is a mix of awards, message boards and links to other material of local interest.

To quote the Prize Guidelines: The order of locators in a Web index need not be alphabetical, but it must be a rational and systematic sequence which caters to the users of the site. Given the historical slant here it might have been interesting to try a historical sequence for the home page; but alphabetical would have been fine. Just to step back and consider things from the users' perspective would have made a big difference.

Therapeutic Guidelines


Submitted by: James Reeve

Part of the spirit of the Web Indexing Prize is that readers of this report should be able to visit sites and make their own decisions about them. For that reason and for ease of judging, I have ruled out sites with restricted access requiring payment, subscriptions or passwords. Therapeutic Guidelines is a site displaying drug treatments for various conditions, but the non-paying public is only allowed access to a demonstration section where a fraction of the 'real' information is available. The real index may be large and impressive, but since I can't get to it I have to judge on the tiny demonstration index that I can get to.

Unfortunately I couldn't at first get to this either. Using the site index on a Windows PC involves downloading plug-in software for the browser - at 500kb this takes about two minutes - and the net result was that the browser displayed the index in a side panel and then crashed, over and over again, any time I made an attempt to use it. (Many plug-ins do this, making it hard for me to look favourably on any site that uses them.)

The second time around it worked, but I found the high-tech plug-in index no improvement over a simple framed alphabetical list of links. To find and get to 'endocarditis' from a linked list requires a) scrolling down; b) clicking on 'endocarditis'. Here it requires a) clicking on the 'index' tab at the bottom left; b) scrolling down; c) double-clicking on 'endocarditis'; d) clicking on 'prevention of endocarditis'. So the result of our 500kb download is that it takes two more clicks to get where I want to go, and another click to get back again. What's the advantage?

Finally, a third attempt to access the site resulted in a repeat of the browser crashing problems. This seems like a classic case of technology outstripping usefulness. But I should add that there were no obvious flaws in the index itself - when it worked.
Machiavelli, son of an indexer

Thanks to Helen Kinniburgh, a former member, for this snippet.

We were planning a trip to Europe last year and Florence was on the 'wish list' ... that was my excuse for rereading some of The Portable Machiavelli. The first page of the introduction notes that Niccolo Machiavelli was born in Florence on 3 May 1469.

Further:

The Machiavelli were an established middle-class family from the Oltrarno district of Florence, and its members had held an impressive number of offices in the city's government ... Niccolo's father, Bernardo, however, was not one of the more prosperous members of the clan, and Machiavelli could never hope to rival the wealth or influence of the greater patrician families of Florence ... But if Bernardo's means were insufficient to guarantee his son's access to economic and political power, his great interest in books, particularly the Latin classics, was perhaps a more valuable legacy. We know that he obtained [amongst others] a prized copy of Livy's history of republican Rome in return for laboriously compiling the printer an index of Livy's place-names.

It seems indexing was not a path to material riches in the fifteenth century. And, in case you are interested, the editors Bondanella & Musa cast doubt on the popular conception of Machiavelli as a deceitful, unscrupulous, political opportunist. My view is that the son of an indexer couldn't be all bad.