An innovative society needs indexers and editors

Professor Ian Chubb AO,
President of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee

Address to the 'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference held Canberra 20-23 April 2001

I know that part of the reason why I was asked to speak here today was because of your desire as a professional association to seek out more information about how to preserve and extend the professional training of indexing and editing through tertiary level study, including university level courses.

This desire is a very admirable one which I would like to encourage and I will do my best to impart some of the little I know about indexing and editing in Australia’s universities.

I have a somewhat broader main theme that relates to the wider importance of all professions to the development of Australia as a knowledge-based or innovative society — a theme which has encouraged me to entitle my speech 'An Innovative Society Needs Indexers and Editors'.

But allow me first to address some of the more particular issues of your conference as they relate to universities.

With respect to the theme of your conference 'Partnerships in Knowledge', universities have demonstrated that they are increasingly open to partnerships with professional organisations, whether this be through formal arrangements such as accreditation or more informal arrangements for the provision of continuing education and the provision of internships and work experience for their students.

The teaching of the theory and practice of indexing is incorporated into most information management degrees taught within Schools of Communication or Schools of Library and Information Studies.

At undergraduate level of course this area is developed in conjunction with broader educational aims. So this is an area in which universities already play a role.

I am not aware of the degree of specific interaction between universities and your two professional societies but I would say that undergraduate courses can only benefit from your greater input.

The situation at postgraduate level is somewhat different. There may be room for specialised courses, say at Graduate Certificate or Masters level.

However, these days it is difficult to secure HECS places for such courses and so their viability depends very much on the capacity to pay fees and obtain reasonable numbers.

Universities might also be interested in the development of specialised short courses in conjunction with your two societies. Having your professional endorsement would certainly be helpful in marketing any such courses.

The teaching of editing at undergraduate level is usually part of broader courses in professional writing.

For example, the University of Canberra has a Bachelor of Arts in Professional Writing and also a Graduate Diploma in Professional Communication (Professional Writing). Both, I am advised, include the teaching of editing skills. There are more specialised courses at Graduate Diploma level.

I noticed from the web while doing some background for today's event when I was looking for relevant courses being offered by universities that there is quite specific acknowledgment of cooperation between universities and the relevant professional associations and the industry in this area. Macquarie University, for Continued on page 45
New members
We warmly welcome the following new member to AusSI: Mrs Maryna Mews of Hawthorn, Vic.

Professional Development Weekend: 'A view from the Backbench'
The ACT Region Branch will hold a residential Professional Development weekend on Saturday and Sunday, 25-26 May 2002 at Ranelagh House in the Southern Tablelands town of Robertson. Longstanding members of AusSI may remember that Ranelagh House was the venue for the Branch's 1996 weekend workshop on Indexing in the Electronic Age. This time, the weekend will be inward- rather than forward-looking, with members sharing experiences and discussing issues of interest.

The focus of the weekend will be participatory: there will be few if any guest speakers. We have identified a number of themes for exploration and hope to further our understanding of our practices and profession through informal and open discussion. Themes to be addressed will include:

- Education and educational opportunities (including updates on activities from members of the newly-formed Education Committee)
- Members' Moments (which will encourage participants to share experiences and have their say about issues dear to their hearts)
- Business issues (covering such controversies as clearinghouses, cooperatives and other entrepreneurial enterprises); and
- The future of AusSI (what would members like from their Society?)

Time will be available for 'nuts and bolts' sessions, a Round Robin of current activities, and plenty of discussion, discussion, discussion! Coupled with great food, beautiful scenery and lovely grounds, the weekend should provide a good blend of professional input and plain fun.

The weekend will run from 10.30 Saturday to after lunch (about 1 pm) Sunday. Cost is $180.00 per person and includes accommodation on Saturday night and all meals. Transport to the venue will be provided for those arriving by train. We hope some of our members from interstate can join us to examine our roles and goals. Numbers will be limited, so please contact Lynn Farkas by email at Ifarkas@pcug.org.au for a registration brochure if you would like to secure your place at this event.

NSW Continuing Professional Development
The Continuing Professional Development 2002 schedule of seminars and workshops is available on our Web site http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/.

May 17 Introduction to Book Indexing
May 24 Computer-aided Indexing
May 30 Analysing, abstracting and indexing documents for databases
June 14 Indexing Web pages and documents
June 21 Synonyms and taxonomies: thesaurus design for information architects
Sept 6 & 13 Indexing and storing images and multimedia

Maureen Henninger
Coordinator of Continuing Professional Development
The University of New South Wales
M.Henninger@unsw.edu.au

Professional Development in Information Literacy and Searching Skills
Cunningham Library staff at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), will present two workshops at ACER, Melbourne in May 2002 and again in August 2002.

Workshop 1: Information literacy and searching
On the completion of this workshop participants will understand:
- how information is stored and organised
- where information is available within the subject discipline of education, human resource management and psychology
- how to develop a search strategy for online databases and the web environment
- how to select and retrieve information which deals with downloading, printing and emailing

Dates: Wednesday 21 August.
Cost $132 per session (inc GST).
Workshop 2: Writing, abstracting and referencing for journal articles and reports
On the completion of this workshop participants will understand:
- how to write abstracts for journal articles
- how to write references — APA, Harvard, Vancouver styles
- evaluating information
- how to manage references using bibliographic database management programs e.g. PROCTR, ENDNOTE

Dates: Wednesday 22 August
Cost $132 per session (inc GST)

Attendance at Workshop 1 and Workshop 2 can be made available for $250 (inc GST).

Course leaders: Margaret Findlay and Max McMaster.

Venue: ACER 19 Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell Vic 3124 Australia.

Please contact to reserve your place: Professional Development Unit, ACER, Private Bag 55, Camberwell Vic 3124. Tel: (03) 9835 7403; Fax (03) 9835 7498; email: workshops@acer.edu.au.

Margaret Findlay
Manager, Cunningham Library
Australian Council for Educational Research
findlay@acer.edu.au
http://www.acer.edu.au/library

News from the Society of Indexers
Training in Indexing: a great leap forward
The Society's distance learning course—which leads to Accreditation—will move into the twenty-first century later this year when the third edition is published, first in printed and then in electronic format. The electronic version will be identical to the printed version, but with the addition of hyperlinks to related material, bookmarks, tips and reminders, revision aids, and interactive exercises allowing students to check on their progress. Students will be able to buy the course units on CD-ROM or pay to download them from the members' section of the website. The course has been fully revised and updated, and now consists of four units rather than the previous five. The test papers will remain as stringent and wide-ranging as before.

The new units should begin to be available in printed format by April and in electronic format by June. A presentation of the electronic version is planned for the conference at Cheltenham in July.

Metadata training
CAVAL are conducting metadata training this year at various locations around Australia. If you would like a course to be held in Brisbane, please email Eve Cornish direct at CAVAL. They need at least eight attendees to make it viable. For further information go to http://www.caval.edu.au.

Eve Cornish
evec@caval.edu.au

Online review of Hazel Bell's Indexers and Indexes in Fact and Fiction
A good review of Hazel Bell's book by Robert Fulford can be found online at http://www.nationalpost.com/commentary/columnists/story.html?id=stories/20020319/377974.html

This has inspired a link from Arts and Letters Daily (http://www.aldaily.com) ('A good index is ... '), which should draw some more readers.

Libraries change lives!
Library and Information Week 20–26 May 2002
Library and Information Week (LIW) will be in the week of 20–26 May 2002. The national focus will be on success stories that, from users' perspectives, showcase how library and information services make a difference in a knowledge society.

On 1 March 2002, The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) launched a national archive of success stories. ALIA will use the stories in a major promotion during LIW. Libraries change lives! will showcase successes in research, learning, business and community, linking in with the ALIA2002 conference Powering our future: contribute to the information agenda http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/alia2002/
**Australian indexing in The Indexer**

**Edyth Binkowski**

In mid-2001 the ACT Region Branch received two back sets of *The Indexer*, which it had requested some time before. Members of the committee looked through the volumes for recurring topics to report on to the Branch. I must point out that the sets were by no means complete. Geraldine Triffitt went through these sets and her own to find references to indexing in Australia, but as she had another topic she wanted to discuss, I offered to complete the work on Australian indexing. I owe Geraldine many thanks for the preliminary work she did on compiling the references. I hope she won't mind being referred to as GT hereafter.

**Early volumes**

From the beginning, *The Indexer*, though the journal for Great Britain, promoted articles of interest to indexers in other countries, especially America, Canada, and Australia, and from vol. 8, no. 1, April 1962, it became the organ of the Society of Indexers and the American Society of Indexers.

At first the references to Australia are brief; the first mention is in vol. 3, no. 1, Spring 1962 when the National Library of Australia became a new member. Vol. 3, no. 2, p. 76 has a list of corresponding members including Australia. Vol. 3, no. 3, p. 88: the Chairman's address mentions setting up a chain of corresponding members including Australia. Mrs J B Miller is listed for Australia. In vol. 3, no. 4, she is listed again as Mrs J B Miller, and a reference made to her visit to the UK.

**Volumes 4 to 7**

Volumes 4–7 are missing from the Branch's collection but GT's copy of vol. 5, no. 3, Spring 1966 lists as a new member Mr H G Green, of Monash University. He was an important person in these early days of indexing in Australia, and was a research journalist and indexer of general and legal books. In vol. 7, no. 3, 1970–71, p. 123, Green has a note on indexing in Australia, mentioning indexing for Hansard and Debates, and an ad for a Parliamentary indexer. Vol. 8, no. 1, April 1972, pp. 2–5, Green writes the first article on indexing in Australia, 'Room for improvement in Australia'. Publishers see indexes as an additional expense but university presses have reasonable indexes. He mentions the lack of understanding of the value of an index, and of the art in preparing one, and that most indexing is not done by professionals.

**Volume 8 1972–73**

Vol. 8, no. 3, April 1973, pp. 140–144, has an article by Brenda Miller, presumably the Mrs B J Miller mentioned earlier, a school teacher with library experience on 'Indexing children's books' about books published in Australia. 1971–73, and how children need to be taught to use indexes, the need for accuracy and for indexing illustrations.

In the same issue p. 180 carries a report on the starting of the Society in Australia with a meeting of 40 personal and professional members at the home of H Godfrey Green in Glen Iris, Victoria. They formed the Society of Indexers in Australia, reported in the Council report for 1972–73.

Vol. 8, no. 4, p. 218 mentions 35 members.

The Branch's back set lacks vol. 9, nos. 2–4, vol. 10 and vol. 11 so the following information comes from GT's own set.

**Volume 9 1974–75**

Vol. 9, no. 1, p. 52: 'News of the Society' mentions a trickle of new members for Australia.


**Volume 10 1976–77**


Neither the Branch nor GT has vol. 10, no. 2, but the index to vol. 10 tells us that AusSI is now set up as an independent society, and mentions AusSI developments, p. 83.

Vol. 10, no. 4, October 1977. This issue of *The Indexer* has on its cover for the first time that it represents the journal of the Society of Indexers, the American Society of Indexers and the Australian Society of Indexers. Page 161 has an editorial on affiliation with AusSI and p. 195 sets out the terms of affiliation. Page 196 has a report on AusSI by Sylvia Ramsden and p. 199 mentions that it was formally constituted in Melbourne on 27 April 1976, and is cited in the Society of Indexers annual report 1976–77.

**Volume 11 1978–79**


**Volume 12 1980–81**

From this volume onwards there is a list of AusSI office bearers in each issue, together with American, Canadian and British officers. The location varies; sometimes they are in the text, sometimes on the cover, either inside or outside.

Pages 22–25: article by Clyde Garrow (CSIRO) 'A survey of Australian indexing: some observations' which gives the results of a survey of indexes selected by libraries, listing the major indexing services, indexing in progress and potential areas for collaboration.

Pages 29–33: article by Brenda Miller 'Indexing of children's books in Australia: a second look' which says the situation is still not satisfactory, with children having trouble using indexes.
Page 38 mentions the exchange of newsletters with AusSI.

Volume 13 1982-83
From this volume onwards there is a summary of the contents of each AusSI Newsletter in each issue.

Page 74: Peter Dawe sends a message of congratulations to the Society on its 25th anniversary and on p. 245 Jean Uhl contributes an obituary for Goryl Muntz, who died 18 February 1983.

Volume 14 1984-85
The contents of the AusSI Newsletter includes on p. 48 a mention of the setting up of the ACT Branch, on p. 116 mentions the creation of the Australian Art Index as an ongoing project, and on p. 199 mentions the new edition of the Australian Encyclopaedia and a talk by its indexer.

Vol. 14, no. 2, p. 153 is a guest editorial by Jean Hagger, 'What's an indexer worth?' in which she discusses the need for professional courses of training, and the recognition of performance as a registered indexer.

The contents of the AusSI become more detailed with this volume, and continue thus in future volumes.

Volume 15 1986-87
The only mention in this volume is that AusSI has established an indexing award, won by Jeremy Fisher, as well as newsletter contents and office bearers.

Volume 16 1988-89
Vol. 16 is missing from the Branch's sets.

Volume 17 1990-91
No. 1 only contains newsletter contents and office bearers; no. 2, p. 117 describes the Society of Indexers conference held in Edinburgh, April 1990, with a photo of the Australian representatives, and p. 119 mentions the AusSI Indexers' Award. There is no newsletter contents section. No. 4, (no. 3 is missing) pp. 275-277 summarises the contents of AusSI Newsletters, vol. 14-15, and includes an article by Kingsley Siebel, a critique of The Indexer's indexes, with a response.

Volume 18, 1992-93
This is full of Australian references. Also, up to this volume, a UK indexer had summarised the contents of overseas newsletters, but from now on, contributions are sent directly from the relevant country. No. 1, p. 37 announces the presentation of the AusSI Indexers' Medal to Geraldine Suter. Page 43 has a note on reports on contents of newsletters, as mentioned above, now headed Network Indexers and p. 45 lists AusSI events by Ian Odgers. Page 48 has further responses to Kingsley Siebel's critique.

Volume 19 1994-95
Volumes 19-20 are missing from the Branch sets, so again I thank GT for the use of her volumes.

Each issue has the usual section on AusSI activities and newsletter, and list of office bearers.

Vol. 19, no. 1, p. 45 has a brief paragraph on the AusSI indexing award, and no. 3, pp. 210-211 has a detailed report on the 1993 and 1994 awards and their recipients. No. 4, p. 320 mentions the 1995 conference and has an advertisement for the conference papers.

Volume 20 1996-97
With vol. 20 the format changes to quarto, still with the usual AusSI references.

No. 1, pp. 6-7 is an article by Dwight Walker on the AusSI Web Indexing Prize and how to qualify for this. Page 37 contains a paragraph on the AusSI Medal for 1995. No. 4, p. 177 has a guest editorial by Dwight Walker on the 1997 Web indexing award. Pages 178-181 are an article by John Simkin on professionalism; his abstract contrasts technical versus professional aspects of the practice of indexing and concludes that indexers must take professionalism seriously if they are to raise their own status or contribute to the development of modern information management. Pages 189-191: article on the same theme by Elizabeth Wallis. Page 194 is a letter by Lynn Farkas on developing a guide to indexing services. Pages 212-215 are a history of the various societies of indexers, including AusSI on pp. 213-214.

Volume 21 1998-99
No. 1, pp. 15-18 is an article by Dwight Walker on the Web Indexing Prize 1997, its entries and winners, and pp. 40-41 is a letter to the editor in response to John Simkin's article on professionalism, vol. 20, no. 4. From vol. 21, no. 3 onwards, the 'Network of Indexers' feature is replaced with 'Around the World'. Page 132 reports on a meeting of representatives, including AusSI, to develop an agreement for international cooperation. The meeting recognises the equality of all societies, with the Society of Indexers no longer the parent body. Page 133 lists various directories of indexers available, produced by various societies, including AusSI. In 'Around the World', no. 4, p. 184, the international agreement mentioned above has been accepted, and pp. 184-185 lists AusSI branch activities.

Volume 22 2000-01
No. 1 is missing, and no. 2 is an international issue, with articles covering many subjects. Pages 76-78 is the translation of a speech by Ge Yong-Qing, Vice-President of the China Society of Indexers, with an introduction by Alan Walker and his photo with members of the Society.

No. 3, April 2001 is guest edited by Australia, with an editorial by Glenda Browne, pp. 114-118, Alan Walker on John Locke's indexing of commonplace books, pp. 119-122, Glenda Browne on acknowledging 'the' in index entries, pp. 123-127, Madeleine Davis on building a global legal index, pp. 128-129 is an article on the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index and pp. 130-132 is Jonathan Jermy on locating files on computer disks. There are other contributions from UK correspondents, and on pp. 152-153 brief mentions of the Victorian Branch on accreditation of data base indexers, and of the joint conference held in Canberra, April 2001.

Volume 23 2002-03
Vol. 22, no. 3 is the last issue that I checked, as the talks we gave to the ACT Region Branch were in August 2001. All volumes show cooperation among indexers of all countries.
An experience to be treasured

Tricia Waters

I have recently had the most marvellous weekend in Canberra seeing The Treasures from the World's Great Libraries exhibition. It was my husband's and my second attempt to view the exhibition, so this time we called in to the National Library as soon as we arrived in Canberra at lunchtime on the Saturday to check out the queuing situation. The librarian told us people were camping over-night as tickets could not be booked, and people who had arrived at 5:30 am that morning had missed out!

So, armed with that information, we set our alarm for 2 am and drove to the National Library where we were 40th in the queue of people in various states of snoozing in sleeping bags and on chairs, etc. It was a lovely balmy night and we were entertained by a classical violinist busking and by various joggers from 3 am onwards (it's amazing what insomniacs must do). By the time dawn broke the queue had snaked twice around the whole building. At 6:45 am when the exhibition opened we were the first batch allowed in (only 120 people at a time) to see the most wonderful collection of original treasures.

As an indexer who spends many happy hours poring over dictionaries and thesauri, the highlight for me was seeing the contributions of Dr William Minor (from an asylum for the insane) to James Murray, the editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, and to see the painstaking way in which each word was considered in various contexts. My mathematical husband, Ian, was amazed to see Einstein's E=mc² equation in Einstein's handwriting, one of only two such manuscripts in existence. There were also a Gutenberg Bible in perfect condition; Captain Cook's log from the Endeavour; William Bligh's chart of the north coast of Queensland drawn after he had been cast adrift by the mutineers; Ned Kelly's letter describing the Victorian police in very colourful language and saying 'It takes a rogue to catch a rogue'; Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech; the original words to La Marseillaise; fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls with the text of the Ten Commandments; Charlotte Bronte's writing desk; Charles Dickens' manuscript of Nicholas Nickleby; music actually written in Mozart's and Beethoven's hand; Charles Darwin's scripts on the origin of species; and a wonderful letter from Groucho Marx to Mr Ross of The New Yorker: 'The $20.00 check came in very handy. I bought a Vicuna overcoat and a Cadillac Phaeton. The balance I handed over to Harpo for his hospital fund.'

I could go on and on. It was the most amazing collection of original items we will ever be likely to see. Some of them were 3000 years old! We could have stayed all day, but pangs of hunger, and the thought that there were hundreds more people waiting outside meant that we left reluctantly after several hours. We were deeply moved by the efforts of the librarians from the National Library who assembled the exhibition and by the generous librarians, from all over the world, who lent their treasures to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Library of Australia and the Centenary of Federation.
May 17  Introduction to Book Indexing at UNSW. Details http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/

May 20–26  
Library & Information Week  

May 24  Computer-aided Indexing at UNSW. Details http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/

May 24–26  
Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents  
Annual Conference and AGM 2002 http://www.indexingsociety.ca

May 25–26  
ACT Region Branch Professional Development Weekend at Ranelagh House, Robertson, NSW

May 30  Analysing, abstracting and indexing documents for databases at UNSW. Details http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/

June 4  Alan Walker on Trivial Matters of Indexing at Society of Editors (NSW) (details page 44)

July 16–18  
Conference 'The Cotswold Wayzgoose', taking the publishing process as its theme, Cheltenham, UK.

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May 2001
Michael Wyatt wrote to the A L I A list in April, as follows:

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission has recently granted a pay increase to librarians of up to 25 per cent.

In today's *Sydney Morning Herald*, Padraic P McGuinness slams this decision. "The skills ascribed to librarians by the IRC ... are those which will be acquired in the course of tertiary education in the humanities by almost anyone fit to get a degree; the skills are usually quite trivial matters of classification and indexing."

A L I A responded:

National Office has noted the column by PP McGuinness in yesterday's [2 April] *Sydney Morning Herald*. A reply was sent that day. It is reproduced below [see box]. Whether it will be published is beyond our control. In any event, Mr McGuinness' view is of little moment. The case has been 'run and won' and librarians have been the big winners. What Mr McGuinness thinks of the outcome of a major consideration by the body charged with determining wage cases in NSW [NSWIRC] is irrelevant. Members should be largely unconcerned by his views.

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**The Editor**  
*Sydney Morning Herald*  

Dear Madam/Sir

Padraic P McGuinness' tirade [SMH 2 April] against the Industrial Relations Commission and its decision to grant substantial pay rises to librarians is ill-informed.

Before railing against the IRC and feminism, Padraic would have done well to consult the Herald's own news columns. At page 30 of your Weekend edition a report on the case correctly tells us: "... employers said the decision was based on work value rather than gender equity because ALL parties had agreed that librarians were underpaid". Employers have accepted the evidence put before the NSW Pay Equity Inquiry that librarians are underpaid, despite their work value having increased substantially over recent years. Unless employers have suddenly taken to handing out pay rises purely for the warm glow it gives them, their statement would appear to destroy Padraic's argument at the threshold.

Many of Padraic’s other assertions are similarly inaccurate. One example: he asserts that 'it is only in the past 20 years that women have come to dominate [librarianship]' and ‘there is no evidence that salaries have been driven down by women entering it’. Yet evidence put before the Pay Equity Inquiry confirmed that as long ago as 1930 there was 85 per cent female employment in the State Library, but largely-unqualified men held the senior positions. Those men enjoyed salaries on a par with other professionals across the public sector. It was only when more women gained senior positions that relativities declined. Further evidence showed that in 1955, 83 per cent of female librarians held tertiary qualifications compared with only 60 per cent of men. Yet female librarians' pay was lower than that of male counterparts and was falling relative to other professions with which librarianship had previously had parity.

For Padraic's information, what actually happened was that as women came to dominate the librarian workforce, qualification levels increased but relative pay declined. I think it was Alexander Pope who told us: 'a little learning is a dangerous thing'. It remains as true today as it ever was.

Phil Teece  
Adviser, Industrial Relations & Employment  
Australian Library and Information Association

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**Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.**

Next meeting: Tuesday 4 June 2002  

Alan Walker on Trivial matters of indexing

At Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street  
(between Park and Bathurst Streets, near the Pilgrim Theatre and Pitt Street Uniting Church; the closest train station is Town Hall)

6.30 for 7.00 pm. Drinks and light refreshments provided.

$13 for members; $16 for non-members and those who don't RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) by Friday 13 May.
An innovative society
Continued from page 37

ever, it seems more appropriate than ever.

I suspect many of us may now be suspicious of the notion of national greatness and of power but in a hundred years time, whatever our new formulation, will our great-grandchildren or our great-great grandchildren be able to look back and say that in 2001 we still possessed lofty aspirations — or will they say we were content to accept a mediocre vision or worse, a mediocre outcome and a mediocre future for our country? A frank appraisal of the geo-political outlook suggests a less than cheerful prospect for Australia — unless we are truly good at what we do.

We have few natural allies.

We don't have a population large enough to sustain our quality of life with ease or to sustain our own producers, and so create work.

We are hardly a large enough market to be of critical interest to foreign producers.

And there is no natural reason (by contrast with any possible political reason) for Australia to be a significant part of dynamic international groupings.

If we are to prosper and to provide a quality of life worthy of our citizens we will need to look after ourselves.

And, just as our forbears embraced ambitious goals when they decided it was time the nation should begin to look after itself, so we will have to be unsatisfied with unambitious goals and average performances.

We have heard a lot about Australia as a Clever Country, or a Knowledge Nation, or an innovative society — and it is important that we continue to.

If I were asked to describe an intelligent country (or a knowledge-based society or whatever expression we use) I would argue that it would be one that is prosperous, civilised, culturally rich and socially just.

It is one that will be wisely governed and led; and one that will not let the circumstances of birth be a major obstacle to personal advancement because it will be understood that progress will come from the development and application of the talents of all the citizens.

It will be a nation with a focus on quality, and it will encourage and support high aspirations.

The intelligent country will generate new discoveries, develop its people and support all fields of learning. Some of these fields will, of course,
Order in the house!

On Tuesday 9 April a group of Victorian members of AusSI spent the night at Parliament House. We had been invited by the Parliamentary Librarian, Bruce Davidson, to view the Victorian Parliamentary Library and the fantastic range of services provided to members of Parliament. Much to our delight, we were also given a tour of this grand building.

Victoria's Parliament House is one of Australia's oldest and most architecturally distinguished public buildings. Its history spans 150 years and some of the most significant moments in Australia's growth as a nation. The Library was founded on 14 November 1851 when Victoria's newly created Legislative Council appointed the first Library Committee. Since then it has served three legislatures, operated in four locations, had 15 Parliamentary Librarians and offered its services to 1565 Members of Parliament. It has evolved from a gentleman's library to a modern information and research centre, delivering its services using the latest technology.

The Parliamentary Library blends a 19th century interior with 21st century information technology to provide Members and parliamentary officers with a substantial reference collection, access to major computer databases, research services and an environment for Members to work, browse or reflect on the day's business.

Completed in 1861, the Library consists of a central reading room, 12.2 metres square and rising to over 14 metres at its highest point, which is flanked by two smaller reading and work rooms to the north and south, each 14.8 metres long by 7 metres wide. Two recessed semi-circular staircases at each end lead to the first floor gallery.

The centrepiece of the Library is the central library table—massive, beautifully carved and ten-sided, which sits beneath an ornate brass and crystal chandelier suspended from an ornamental dome that covers the central reading room. The Library's extensive collection of over 70,000 books, periodicals and other items is kept in bookcases recessed into the walls of the ground, first and second floors. Newly designed wooden ladders have replaced the old (unsafe) originals.

In 1989 the Library began to develop its own databases on a variety of software platforms, including TITAN, CDS-ISIS and Inmagic, and nine of these were already running by 1993, the most important being Hansard. Internet access followed in 1995, a Parliament of Victoria website was developed by the Library and launched in June 1995, and in 1996 Victoria became the first parliament in Australia to make Hansard available to the general public over the Internet. More recently, the launch of Parlynet—the Parliament of Victoria's intranet—in March 1999, has provided the infrastructure necessary for the Library to develop electronic resources for the use of members and staff, whether they are located in the electorate office, at home or in the chambers.

Attention is therefore now much more closely focussed on providing information resources directly concerned with the Victorian political scene and material that its clients cannot find anywhere else. New opportunities for the Library have also arisen with the growth of the electorate officer clientele, in assisting them with research for members, providing information to answer constituent inquiries, and in training them not only to use the Library's physical and online resources effectively, but also in broader areas of information literacy such as Internet searching or statistical analysis.

Needless to say, our members had a wonderful time doing sample searches on the many and varied databases at our disposal. It was a fantastic tour and we are still in a state of total envy of and admiration for the beautiful surrounds of this workplace. We took Bruce out to dinner at nearby Rumbalara's restaurant where he continued to enthuse about this grand old building and the excellent Library services provided by his staff.

Jenny Restarick
President, Vic Branch

An innovative society
Continued from previous page

This is not a unique call on us. All nations depend increasingly on three critical elements: new discoveries, highly trained personnel, and expert knowledge.

It is obviously of crucial importance that as a nation we invest and invest strongly in cutting edge research but if we hope to benefit from what this investment may bring, we have to have the people who can exploit the discoveries from our research endeavours—the professional managers and finance analysts; and we need the philosophers and teachers, and the indexers and editors to help articulate and transmit new knowledge. Without knowledge in depth we can never be a knowledge society. A narrowly based innovative capacity is no capacity at all.

The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee has made this argument in detail in a major discussion paper Our Universities: Our Future. As well as arguing why we need such an approach, the paper explains how we have begun to fall down in our capacity to support an innovative society and the dangers our deteriorating capacity poses for Australia's future prosperity.

To be continued in our next issue
Glenda Browne

**Ancestor**
*vol. 26 no. 1, March 2002*
pp. 3-6

People have sometimes discussed the concept of recreating a book from its index. This issue of *Ancestor* has an article on a related topic: the use of a CD containing Chart’s index of heads of household from the 1851 Dublin City Census (Chart was an Irish historian). The census has been destroyed, but fortunately some of the information is retained in the index.

p. 32

‘In family history research, don’t trust ...’ It is interesting how much documentary error family historians find. Some of it is caused by clerical or individual error (one example given elsewhere was that of the last of 24 children in a family, who mixed up the birthplaces of his older siblings), but much of it seems to be deliberate. I’m sure there is a similar amount of intentional and unintentional error in other seemingly authoritative documents. I have read of censorship in official war histories where the whole truth about Anzac Day was unpalatable, and of paintings of early Sydney which were ‘prettied up’ to make settlement more likely. And that was in the days before digital distortion ... Let the viewer and reader beware!

**Keywords**
*vol. 10 no. 1, January/February 2002*
pp. 16-22

In ‘The gist of journal indexing’, Carolyn Weaver describes types of journal indexes, issues in index design, including controlled vocabularies, and practical details such as bidding for the job and managing your time. A very thorough coverage for the would-be journal indexer.

**In Cite**
*March 2002*
p. 16

The Australian Key Journal Index provides access to more than 82 titles and 215 602 records from scholarly and popular journals. Journals include the *Australian Women’s Weekly*, and date back to 1933. Access is free within Australia through the Scholarly Electronic Text and Image Service (SETIS) program at the University of Sydney (details not given).

**ALIA 2002 Conference Issues Forum e-list**

Kate Burnham and Margie Anderson both reported on the decision by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission to uphold the request by the Public Services Association for improved pay and better career paths for all librarians, library technicians and archivists employed by NSW government bodies. The wage rates are close to what was claimed, and could result in salary increases of up to 25 per cent. For more information see [http://www.labor.net.au](http://www.labor.net.au) [and page 44 - Ed.]

Hopefully this decision will have flow-on effects for librarians in other states, and for indexers around Australia.

**Automatic Indexing**

Michael Wyatt wrote as follows: ‘After the recent discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of automatic indexing, proofreading, editing, etc., I found timely an article that appeared in *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 30 March, reprinted from the New York Times.

“Computer scientists ... at Columbia University ... have created a software program for editing, summarising and writing called Newsblaster.” This program sorts and summarises news items on the Web, “analyses sentences to find the noun phrase, the verb phrase, the subject, the object, and ... [does] a comparison across them to find out how much of it is similar [and writes] its summary combining phrases from those sentences.” The article adds that the program “could not determine that an opinion column was not news and does not necessarily note opposing views on an issue”, but was “88 per cent accurate.”

The article ends by saying that the “program is still in the research phase, but ... ultimately the perfection of Newsblaster will hand human editing over to a machine.” Whether that prediction comes true or not, “dozens of software and news companies ... have expressed an interest in licensing the program”, presumably in the hope of getting rid of editors altogether. Once editors have gone, who’s next? Indexers?’
This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. It is published four times a year, with a combined issue for Jan/Feb. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

Copy should be sent to the editor by the fourth Friday of each month for publication in the middle of the next month. We are delighted to receive contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact us if you have any questions about suitable items for publication. The editor reserves the right to cut and edit material. If greater than one A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email in Rich Text Format, Word for Windows, or plain text (ASCII). Do not embed images in text files. If possible, submit line drawings in a vector format or as an EPS file. Camera-ready art and photographs can be scanned by the editor.

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The Indexer
(International Indexing Journal)
Christine Shuttleworth, Executive Editor
Flat 1, 25, St Stephen's Avenue
London W12 8JB
United Kingdom
email: christine@seaviewpress.com.au
Corresponding Editor (Aust/NZ):
Frances Paterson
phone (02) 6286 3259; fax (02) 6286 6570
email: newsletter@aussi.org

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National Committee
ABN 38 510 719 006
GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601
ph 02 6286 6570; fax 02 6286 6570
email: newsletter@aussi.org

President: Lynn Farkas
ph (02) 6286 3259; fax (02) 6286 6570
email: lynn.farkas@aoni.net.au

Vice President: Alan Walker
ph (02) 9368 0174; fax (02) 9358 5593
email: alwalker@aussi.org

Treasurer: Penny Whitten
ph (02) 6241 4289
email: treasurer@aussi.org

Committee members:
E Binkowski, P Deacon, S Henderson, R Hyslop, P Stone, S White

Registration Chairperson:
Michael Harrington
email: harrrigm@acun.com.au

Membership secretary: Michael Wyatt
email: memsec@aussi.org

Web Manager: Emeline Haight
email: webmaster@aussi.org

Newsletter Editor: Frances Paterson
email: newsletter@aussi.org

Publicity Officer: Jon Jermey
email: jonjermey@enquiries.csiro.au

New South Wales Branch PO Box 596, Royal Exchange NSW 1225
email: nswbranch@aussi.org

President: Caroline Colton
ph (02) 9568 4880; fax (02) 9285 7199
email: info@indexat.com.au

Vice President: Lorraine Doyle
ph (02) 8587 7229 (w), (02) 9876 4218 (h);
email: lorraine.doyle@thomson.com.au

Treasurer: Glenn Browne
ph (02) 4739 8189
email: glennbrowne@optusnet.com.au

Committee members:
M Davis, P Johnstone, T Matthews, F Paterson, H Skewes, D Ward, T Waters, M Wyatt

National and Branch Committee contacts

Website: http://www.aussi.org