

Registration Process and Procedures

Review and Report

for the

**Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers
National Council**

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Registration Process and Procedures Review and Report for the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers National Council

1. Introduction and terms of reference

This report has been prepared in response to a brief from the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI) Council. The focus of the brief is on Registration process and procedures, not on the requirements to attain Registration.

The report on Registration processes was requested in the context of ANZSI work done during 2009–10: the Education Policy Committee report, a paper on database indexer registration and the work of the Promotions and Publicity Committee. It was recognised that coordinated efforts to promote indexer training, raise the profile of the Society, and extend Registration to indexers working with databases, websites and related information resources will have an impact of the Registration scheme.

Council is also concerned about issues such as:

- encouraging more members to apply for Registration and lifting the proportion of Registered members in the Society
- promoting Registration to publishers and editors as something they should look for in an indexer
- whether ‘Registration’ is meaningful terminology
- what can be learnt from past applications for registration and what are the implications for training
- how Registration of database indexers can be handled.¹

The terms of reference are to look at the Registration process, see what lessons we have learned from the past, and see what improvements can be made. As part of the terms of reference, the Council gave me a set of questions to be addressed; these are reproduced in Section 5.²

In addressing the brief I have set out the history and purpose of Registration and information about its current management and performance, before addressing the questions posed by the Council.

There have been numerous and long-running debates and philosophical discussion about ‘professionalism’ and indexer registration/accreditation/certification in our Society, in the Society of Indexers (SI) and the American Society for Indexing (ASI). I have referred to some of this material when relevant and where it can inform ANZSI’s approach to Registration, but otherwise I have adhered tightly to my brief.

¹ Email from Mary Russell (President) to Sherrey Quinn (Chairperson, Registration Committee), 30 March 2010

² Terms of reference and Registration discussion points from the ANZSI Council meeting of 8 April 2010 were set out in an email from Mary Russell to Sherrey Quinn, 9 April 2010.

2. History and purpose of Registration

2.1 History of Registration

The Australian Society of Indexers Registration scheme and Register of Indexers was established in the late 1970s. Sylvia Ramsden reported in *The Indexer* in 1977 that 'We are in the process of setting up a panel of experienced indexers with a view to starting a Register of Indexers'.

The scheme, to provide for a list of people competent in indexing, was presumably modelled on the SI Register which was first established in 1968 to replace the former Panel of Indexers. The SI scheme had a Register, a Board of Assessors, and rules and procedures for assessing the suitability of indexers to be added to the Register (Bell 1998). Clyde Garrow and Jean Hagger (1979) stated that the Australian Society of Indexers 'is planning to establish a Register of Indexers, somewhat similar in character and operation to that of the "parent" society'.

In readily-available ANZSI Registration records, the earliest year noted is 1983, but there are several members names without dates of Registration listed—these include Jean Hagger, an early member of the Society, who presumably attained Registration prior to 1983.

The Australian Registration scheme was most recently reviewed in 2006 at the GAMES strategic planning meeting.³ The Registration Policy and Procedure and Registration Committee guidelines were subsequently ratified at the ANZSI National Committee meeting on 8 October 2006 and published on the ANZSI website, where they have been available ever since. Members are referred to the documents from the general webpage on Registration (currently <http://www.anzsi.org/site/registration.asp>).⁴

2.2 Purpose of Registration

The purpose of Registration is spelled out on the Registration webpage:⁵

In the absence of formal courses leading to tertiary qualifications in indexing, the Society's Registration system acts as a credentialling standard for indexers who have demonstrated expertise and gained some experience in indexing. Registration performs a number of functions:

- It recognises the quality of an indexer's work as assessed by a panel of experienced indexers.
- It acknowledges the professionalism of an indexer through its requirement that only published indexes are reviewed.
- Having an index published attests to the indexer's ability to perform work under marketplace conditions, constraints and deadlines.

³ The GAMES Meeting held in May 2006 was attended by members of the then National Committee, all Branch presidents (ACT, NSW, NZ and Vic) and senior members of the Society. The meeting developed ANZSI's policy framework, which was subsequently adopted at the National Committee meeting of 8 October 2006. All policies and procedures were published on the ANZSI website. Reports on the GAMES meeting appeared in the *ANZSI newsletter* vol 2, no 6, July 2006 (p. 7) and no 7, August 2006 (p. 1 & 3). (GAMES stands for Guidelines, Archives and Mentoring for the Society.)

⁴ The 'Policy and Procedure on Registration' document (containing Registration policy, procedure and the Panel of Assessor's criteria checklist), the separate 'Registration Committee Guidelines', and the Applications Forms for Registration and Registration Renewal are available in the members-only ANZSI Documents area of the website: http://www.anzsi.org/site/anzsi_docs.asp

⁵ <http://www.anzsi.org/site/registration.asp>

- It assures potential clients that a Registered Indexer has met established criteria for acceptable indexing.
- It assures potential clients that a Registered Indexer has current indexing experience, through the requirement that Registration be renewed at set periods.
- The granting of Registration indicates a general level of competency, measured against accepted indexing practice and agreed criteria.

Although the web page indicates that Registration is for back-of-book indexers, it is actually for both back-of-book indexers and journal indexers, according to the Registration policy and procedures. This is discussed further in Section 5.

3. Registration procedures and assessment

3.1 Registration Committee

Registration processes and assessments⁶ are carried out by the Registration Committee, which comprises a Chairperson, a Panel of Assessors and a Receiving Officer who is not a member of the Panel of Assessors. The Panel of Assessors must be at least three in number including the Chairperson of the Committee and members must themselves be Registered Indexers or experienced database indexers.

Over the years many luminaries of the Society have served on the Panel. Currently the Committee has four members, including its Chairman and the Receiving Officer (Registration). Registration application correspondence, management and record-keeping are administered by the Receiving Officer (Registration).

Council receives quarterly reports on Registration statistics from the Receiving Officer (Registration).

3.2 Application and assessment

Applicants for Registration are asked to submit a published index of their choice. Currently only book indexes (including cumulative indexes to single journal titles) are assessed.

Requirements for submitting an index are given on the website. The index submitted must be substantial in size, and its subject matter complex. It must be an index to a work published by a commercial, academic or scholarly publisher or outside agency (that is, not self-published). Indexers are encouraged to include notes on relevant conditions or constraints that affected the compilation of the index. A non-refundable payment of A\$75.00 is made by the applicant to the Society at the time of application, to defray the handling and administrative costs of dealing with the application. This cost is reviewed from time to time.

Applications are assessed by members of the ANZSI Panel of Assessors against criteria established by the Committee and approved and promulgated by the ANZSI Council.

Each application is assessed by two members of the Panel of Assessors. In cases of tied judgements, the Registration Procedures and the Committee Guidelines provide for the Chairperson to have the casting vote. In practice, tied votes rarely happen; if they do a third Panel member is asked to assess the index, with the majority verdict being final. The Committee may invite any Registered Indexer to assist with assessment, for example if an index submitted for assessment is considered by the Committee to be outside the expertise of members.

The assessment process is anonymous, with applicants names known only by the Receiving Officer, in order to protect the applicant from favour or bias, and to maintain the objectivity of

⁶ Information in Section 3 is drawn from the Registration policy and procedures document.

the assessment process. Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply for Registration, but not within six months of the date of adjudication of their first application. Unsuccessful applications are not taken into consideration when assessing the new application.

Evaluation reports are written by Assessors for each application. Reports include the following:

- a. bibliographic details of the index and/or the work in which it appears
- b. comments against each of the registration criteria
- c. if necessary, additional comments on any other aspect of the index, including where appropriate a summary of dissenting opinions by Panel members.

Reports on successful applications are usually very brief. In recent years reports on unsuccessful applications have been very detailed, giving the applicant comprehensive and constructive feedback, under each selection criterion, on how the index might have been improved to meet assessment criteria and conform with standard indexing practices and conventions.

Registration is granted for a period of five years, and can be 'renewed for successive five-year periods by providing evidence of continued work in indexing' (paragraph 16, Policy on Registration).

3.3 Registration renewal

The five-year Registration renewal process was another outcome of the GAMES meeting. It was introduced to ensure that competency in indexing is maintained and to ensure that 'our Registration status continues to stand for good quality indexing' (Farkas 2006). Then-President Lynn Farkas pointed out that the approach is consistent with the trend in other professional societies to encourage members to maintain professional development. Subsequently the Registration renewal initiative was described in the President's Annual Report for 2007 as part of the Society's 'push for high standards in all fields of indexing, not just book indexing' (McMaster 2007).

The renewal process asked Registered Indexers to provide bibliographic details of two published works or equivalent, such as examples of web or database indexing, as evidence of continued work in indexing during the previous five years.⁷ Although ANZSI reserves the right to request submission of one of the items for re-assessment, no members were asked to actually submit an index for re-assessment.

In March 2007 there were 54 Registered Indexers. The results of the renewal process is shown in Table 1.

⁷ Application for Renewal of Registration form: <http://www.anzsi.org/UserFiles/file/Registration%20renewal%20form.pdf> No member was asked to actually submit an index for re-assessment.

Table 1. Registration renewal, 2007

| Registered Indexers | | Applications for renewal | | | Not interested in renewal (no longer indexing) | No response |
|---|---|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--|-------------|
| At 27 March 2007 (start of renewal process) | At August 2007 (end of renewal process) | Total | Successful | Unsuccessful | | |
| 54 | 44 | 45 | 44 | 1 | 5 | 4 |

The sole unsuccessful applicant nominated an unpublished index and was invited to nominate an alternative index but did not do so.

The Registration Committee Report to Council in October 2007 noted that ‘with only two exceptions the feedback was favourable and members indicated that the process was credible and necessary’.

The two exceptions were long-term indexers. One, who had retired and no longer did much ‘commercial or published’ indexing and so did not meet the renewal criteria, reluctantly did not seek renewal. Another, whose Registration **was** renewed, nevertheless felt that the process should not have been retrospective for long-term active indexers, but should have applied to indexers who became registered after the introduction of the renewal process.

The concerns about whether the expertise of long-time members (developed over years of active indexing) can be considered during renewal is addressed later in this report, in Section 5.13.

The next Renewal process is due in 2012 for indexers whose Registration was renewed in 2007. Indexers who have been registered since then will be invited to renew at five-yearly intervals from first registration – this process will see ‘rolling’ renewals from 2012.

4. Registered Indexers

4.1 Registered Indexer numbers

At 1st September 2010 the Society has 248 members (including unfinancial members who have until 30 September to renew). There are 42 Registered Indexers, or 17% of the total membership. All but four of the Registered Indexers are listed in *Indexers Available*.

Not all members of the Society are practising indexers: some are members because of a general interest in indexing, some have retired from indexing, some work in jobs which have an indexing component, and a small number are institutions (e.g. government departments).

A survey of members was undertaken by the ANZSI Council in 2007; there was a 52% response rate and detailed analysis of the results is presented in the *ANZSI Newsletter* (Russell, 2007). 56% of the respondents indicated they were freelance indexers; 18% do not index. 33% of the respondents are registered indexers; 37% are not registered and about 29% plan to be registered.

Although Registered Indexers represent only 17% of total membership, they would form a much higher proportion of practising members.

4.2 Applications for Registration since 2002

Table 2 shows Registration application numbers and success rate since 2002.⁸

Table 2. Registration application numbers and success rate, 2002–Aug 2010

| Year | Applications (total) | Successful | Unsuccessful | In Progress |
|------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2002 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 2004 | 1 | 1 | | |
| 2005 | 2 | 1 | 1 | |
| 2006 | 4 | 1 | 3 | |
| 2007 | 1 | - | 1 | |
| 2008 | 3 | 1 | 2 | |
| 2009 | 3 | 1 | 2 | |
| 2010 (to August) | 4 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Total: | 20 | 6 | 12 | 2 |

Twenty applications in eight years, with a 33% success rate for those finalised: hence Council's concerns about number of applications and the implications for training. For further discussion see the Sections below.

5. Registration questions from Council

The following subsections address the discussion points raised by Council.

5.1 Registration and the requirements to attain it are not being questioned.

The Criteria for Registration have served the Society well and are not in question for this report. Indeed, if the Registration Committee wishes at any time to amend them, its Guidelines include as number 6 in its list of duties to 'Regularly review and if necessary update the criteria for assessment'.⁹

During preparation of this report I discussed the criteria for assessment with present members and immediate past members of the Panel of Assessors. All agreed that for back-of-book indexing the criteria for assessment are still valid and appropriate.

Once the plans to implement database indexer registration come to fruition, the existing Registration Policy and procedure documents will need to be amended to encompass database indexing and to set out clearly, in separate parts, the procedures and criteria that relate to back-of-book indexing and other forms of indexing.

When that point is reached, the existing 'Criteria for Registration' would be re-labelled as 'Criteria for Registration (Book/Journal Indexing)', or similar, to distinguish them from the criteria for database registration.

⁸ Data supplied by the Receiving Officer (Registration). I don't know why there is a discrepancy between these figures and the Treasurer's figures (22%) quoted in the Education Policy Committee report, paras 8 to 10; perhaps they cover a different span of years.

⁹ Registration Committee Guidelines: http://www.anzsi.org/site/anzsi_docs.asp

5.2 How can we encourage more members to apply for registration?

The survey of members referred to in Section 4.1 indicates that there is potential for more members to become registered. However, there is a significant proportion of members that are not practising indexers. In addition there may always be members who have been indexing for a long time and see no advantage in being Registered. That is their choice.

Some suggestions to encourage more members to apply for registration are:

- promote to members the advantages of Registration, which include:
 - it is a benchmark for editors and publishers who have no experience of employing indexers
 - it is a benchmark for editors and publishers who want to ensure that the index they commission will be good quality
 - it indicates an indexer's ability to work under marketplace conditions, constraints and deadlines
 - it is an objective measure of the competence of an indexer
 - it indicates that the indexer has current expertise (through the Renewal of Registration process)
 - it helps an indexer sell herself/himself when marketing and in tendering for jobs
 - it indicates an interest in professional development and ongoing improvement of standards of work
 - it contributes to the image of ANZSI as a professional body.
- have a Registration drive which targets experienced but not Registered members and encourage them to seek Registration
- promote the Society and Registered Indexers to editors and publishers (see Section 5.3).
- set out Registration requirements more clearly in order to manage applicants' expectations and ensure that applicants do not seek Registration prematurely. (This will lift the success rate which should in turn encourage others to apply.)

5.3 How do we promote registration to publishers, editors, etc as something they should look for in an indexer?

The Promotions and Publicity Committee is addressing such issues.

I commend the following suggestions to the Committee:

- promote ANZSI, its standards and Registration as a whole; make it known in editing and publishing circles that ANZSI has standards and an accreditation process
- promote ANZSI, indexing and indexers by advertising in industry newsletters that editors and people in publishing read
- encourage indexers to raise the profile of Registered Indexers by using the expression in their stationery and correspondence, and when networking with editors and other publishing professionals.

Council and its Promotions and Publicity Committee need to consider whether promoting ANZSI's standards and its Registered Indexers might be seen by members not registered as promoting one group of members at the expense of others.

Such concerns might be allayed by a holistic approach to marketing the Society, by broadening Registration to include indexers other than back-of-book indexers, and by encouraging practising members to seek Registration.

5.4 Do we need to change the word ‘Registration’ to something like ‘ANZSI Qualified Professional’?

5.4.1 ‘Registration’ – meaningful today, or not?

The term ‘Registration’ dates from the period when the indexing societies sought to provide writers, editors and publishers with lists of people who were competent at indexing. SI had its Register, and AusSI followed suit with a Registration scheme (see Section 2.1).

Between 1944 and 1980 another Australian professional body, the Australian Library Association, also had a ‘Registration Certificate’ scheme, complete with syllabus and examinations, in which it assessed suitability of applicants for professional (‘Associate’) membership. Registration continued for another 19 years after LAA recognised the librarianship course at the University of New South Wales as conferring a qualification equal to its own (Whyte 1989, p. 81). Registration offered an opportunity for those who did not have a degree from an accredited course in librarianship to attain professional member status in the LAA. The LAA Registration scheme ceased when undergraduate and graduate courses in librarianship had become more numerous.

Today, the term ‘Registration’ is not necessarily very meaningful to those outside ANZSI. The term itself does not have connotations of assessment or ‘demonstrated competence’.

Some indexers do try to make it clear. ‘Registered Indexer’ is explained on the *Indexers Available* web page as those ‘whose competence has been assessed by a committee of the Society’. Some indexers, myself included, who use ‘Registered Indexer’ on our letterhead or in our tender responses for indexing jobs, also define its meaning for our clients. Frances Paterson writes about this in the most recent issue of the *ANZSI Newsletter* (September 2010)

5.4.2 Are there alternative terms?

What alternative term could we use? What does ANZSI do when it confers Registration on an indexer?

Its Registration Committee

certifies/attests/confirms/recognises/can testify

that the indexer has produced a published index that met a set of recognised, objective and published criteria.

The indexer has

given proof/proved/demonstrated/substantiated/

that he/she can produce an index that met those criteria.

However, ANZSI does not guarantee/endorse or even vouch for the quality of an indexer’s work:

‘The Society does not guarantee the quality of an indexer’s work through the granting of Registration, nor can it be held responsible for poor performance by an individual indexer’.¹⁰

So terms such as ‘guaranteed’, ‘warranted’, ‘approved’, ‘licensed’, ‘authorised’, ‘sanctioned’, by ANZSI are not appropriate.

¹⁰ Policy on Registration, paragraph 14

Can an indexer be ‘accredited’ by ANZSI? In day-to-day language, the terms ‘accreditation’ and ‘certification’ are often used interchangeably. The *Concise Oxford Thesaurus*, *Collins Thesaurus* and the *Macquarie Thesaurus* all include synonyms such as those I have used in the preceding paragraphs.

In Australia ‘accreditation’ is often done by government bodies, which accredit, amongst other things educational courses, translation services, nursing homes and so on. But other bodies also ‘accredit’.

5.4.3 What do other professional bodies do?

The Institute of Professional Editors has an accreditation scheme which entitles those who have passed the Institute’s exams to style themselves ‘Accredited Editor’ and use the post-nominals AE.

SI has recently implemented a new qualification-based membership structure, with tiered levels of membership each based on completion of certain indexing tests or criteria: Professional Membership: Accreditation (known as ‘Professional Member of the Society of Indexers (MSocInd)’); Advanced Professional Member (MSocInd(Adv)); and Fellowship (FSocInd).¹¹

The Education Policy Committee did consider the new SI arrangements in the context of its brief but was of the view that ANZSI, as a small organisation of approximately 230, should have a simple membership structure (paras 5 and 6 of the EPC Report).

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) also has a qualifications-based membership structure based on professional qualifications of members. It accredits library and information science courses. It also has a Professional Development (PD) program, which is optional for Associate (i.e. professional) members of ALIA, and is based on a points system (there’s a standard table of activities and PD points associated with them); members keep their own records of their PD activities and points and a random sample of PD members is audited each year. Those attaining the requisite number of PD points over a rolling three-year period are entitled to call themselves ‘Certified Practitioners’ and use the post-nominal CP in addition to their other ALIA post-nominals which indicate their type of membership.

The American Society for Indexing (ASI) does not run an accreditation system, although it does offer a range of training and professional development opportunities for members. Judging by comment on the Index-L email list over the years, accreditation has been a divisive issue, which from time to time generates a deal of acrimony.

Recently an organisation called the Institute for Certified Indexers (ICI) was established in the United States with the aim of certifying indexers, to ‘attest to the achievement of special knowledge beyond basic indexing techniques’, with re-certification required every three years. This organisation is a commercial venture and has no affiliation with any of the ‘national’ indexing organisations. Comment on this topic on Index-L was voluminous and generally critical.¹² An item about it, written by its founders (Zafran and others), appears in the September 2010 issue of the *ANZSI Newsletter*.

¹¹ Details on the ‘How to become an indexer’ page under ‘What qualification do I get?’ at: <http://www.indexers.org.uk/index.php?id=164>

¹² In Index-L archives (see <http://www.indexpup.com/index-list/faq.html>) search for the subjects ‘Certification’ and ‘Institute of Certified [sic] Book Indexers’ (April – May 2010)

5.4.4 What alternative term could ANZSI use, instead of 'Registration'?

So, what alternative term could we use? How can the label we use convey meaning to others?

Accredited indexer?

Accredited professional?

Certified professional?

Certified indexer?

Certified practitioner?

Qualified professional?

Do we prefix the chosen term with 'ANZSI'?

The Education Policy Committee canvassed the nomenclature issue during its deliberations but did not reach a common view, and made no recommendation.¹³ Discussion at the time focused on the suggestion 'Professionally Qualified Indexer' (or Professionally Qualified Database Indexer). Objections to that label and the term 'ANZSI Qualified Professional' which Council used in its question include that:

- 'professionally' implies degree status
- to change 'Registered Indexer' to 'Professionally Qualified Indexer' (or 'ANZSI Qualified Professional') would leave the Society with exactly the same issue – we would still need to explain what that phrase means, just as we do now for 'Registered Indexer'
- it's misleading. For example, someone who has completed a short training course may consider themselves a 'professionally qualified indexer' even if they have not applied for, or not attained, the standard that we now call 'Registration'
- it is possible for a person to work and behave in a professional manner, but still write a poor index that does not satisfy Society criteria.

I favour 'ANZSI Accredited Indexer' and I commend it to Council, but I think it is an issue that should be discussed among members.

Recommendation 1:

that

- a) 'ANZSI Accredited Indexer' be used instead of the term 'Registered Indexer' to identify members who have satisfied the credentialing process, and
- b) this recommendation and the term be canvassed among the membership and Branch views sought on it or alternatives.

Indexers who have attained what we now term Registration would be termed 'ANZSI Accredited Indexer', qualified as appropriate by '(Book/Journal Indexing)' or '(Database Indexing)'

In the meantime, we must address the lack of clarity of the term 'Registered Indexer' by explaining it better—on the public website, in the actual Register and in the application forms. This is something that the Registration Committee can progress without delay, independently of this report.

¹³ Report of the Education Policy Committee, 1st March 2010, Paragraph 17

5.5 Registration Committee isn't really a 'Committee' so is there another name that would be better?

In fact, the Registration Committee is a duly constituted committee of the Society, and its composition is set out in the Committee Guidelines:

Composition of Committee

1. The Registration Committee will comprise:
 - a. a Chairperson, who is also a member of the Panel of Assessors
 - b. a Panel of Assessors
 - c. a Receiving Officer who is not a member of the Panel of Assessors
2. The Panel of Assessors must consist of at least three members including the Chairperson of the Committee. Panel members must be Registered Indexers or experienced database indexers. Ideally, the Panel should have an uneven number of members in order to facilitate majority decisions. In cases where the Panel has an even number of members, the Chairperson will have the deciding vote.
3. The Registration Committee may select any Registered Indexer to assist with assessment of submitted indexes, and such an assessor is regarded as a co-opted member of the Panel of Assessors for the period of the assessment. However, the final adjudication upon any application must include at least two permanent Panel members.

Tenure of Office

Registration Committee members are appointed by the ANZSI Council. Appointments are renewed annually at the Annual General Meeting. There is no time limit on the tenure of any member of the Registration Committee.

Is there a better name than 'Registration Committee'? Yes, we could rename the Committee with a more explanatory name that describes what the Committee does. Renamed, the committee can still carry out Registration until the Society decides which term, if any, replaces it (see 5.4 above).

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the name of the Registration Committee be changed to the Credentials Committee.

This name has the following advantages:

- it explains what the Committee does
- it is independent of the name the Society might choose, if any, to replace 'Registration' as a description of an indexer who has met the Society's indexing assessment criteria
- it applies equally to back-of-book indexers and those who index databases and websites
- it can encompass different forms of credentialing if the Society decides to go that way.

I suggest that its terms of reference remain for the time being as they are for the 'Registration Committee' (subject to any changes necessary if the recommendations of this report are accepted). There is no need to change the name of the Panel of Assessors, though the Receiving Officer (Registration) would become the Receiving Officer (Credentials Committee). The terms of reference for the Committee would be amended appropriately

when the criteria and procedures for database indexer registration are settled (see Section 5.7).

Note: for convenience and in accordance with current practice I've continued to use the term 'Registration Committee' in this document.

5.6 What can we learn from past applications for registration? Does ANZSI need to offer more advanced training? What else?

5.6.1 What can we learn from past applications for Registration?

In preparing to address these questions I consulted present and past members of the Registration Committee. Whilst they acknowledged Council concerns that the Registration application pass-rate is low, there is a general consensus among Committee members past and present that unsuccessful candidates had applied too soon, before they had had sufficient practice in indexing and without sufficient knowledge of standard indexing conventions.

Assessors report that indexes submitted by unsuccessful applicants include:

- insufficient or poor subject analysis, including a focus on words rather than subject concepts
- focus on very specific topics and exclusion of general concepts – for example failure to include broad concepts for which chapter headings and sub-headings are clues which indicate the weight given to the topic by the author
- failure to gather and the related issue of poor synonym control (failure either to gather or cross-reference appropriately)
- ineffective use of double-posting, for example, failure to double-post eligible concepts, or inconsistent locators at each entry of a double-posted concept
- use of adjectives alone as headings, instead of nouns or noun phrases
- inconsistency in choice and format of headings
- numerous undifferentiated locators
- cross-references which point to non-existent entries.

Some of these errors are the result of poor editing; others indicate lack of familiarity with basic indexing practice.

Of course an index will not fail assessment if it contains a few minor examples of poor editing whilst otherwise demonstrating a good grasp of indexing practice – in this case the assessors' report would indicate the editing flaws, suggest how they could be amended, and accept the index.

The index will fail assessment if it demonstrates lack of knowledge of indexing practice and conventions, and/or includes systematic errors.

Committee members acknowledge that people come to indexing with different backgrounds and qualifications—from editing and publishing, from academia and research, from libraries and information services. They therefore have different levels of expertise. Some have attended training courses; some have on-the-job training and experience; some have theoretical knowledge; some have combinations of all of these.

Committee members expressed concern that some applicants have attempted Registration too early – before they have had any training, or enough practice after training, or without some basic knowledge which can be gleaned from the texts recommended on the ANZSI website. Some applicants appeared not to have read nor understood the Registration guidelines.

The Committee has the following suggestions to improve the standard of indexes submitted, and therefore the pass-rate:

- more detailed or more clear explanation on the website of how to prepare for Registration and what the Registration Committee expects, including recommending that the applicant attends a training course or undertakes one of the available distance education courses, reads indexes, reads the textbooks, practices, engages in professional development opportunities, etc
- include in the guidelines for applicants better advice on the best type of index to submit
- use the application form to reinforce the guidelines, by asking candidates to provide background information on training, reading, networking or tutoring they have done. (Applications are confidential)
- that a brief article which addresses misconceptions about Registration be included in the ANZSI Newsletter
- that applicants attention is drawn to the lists of prize-winning indexes on indexing societies' websites
- that examples of good indexes be listed on the ANZSI website (and linked, if the work is available online)

These are measures that can be implemented without delay, as they have no policy or nomenclature implications.

5.6.2 Does ANZSI need to offer more advanced training? What else?

No criticism of the Society's training courses is meant by the remarks above. However, most people undertaking training of any type need some time to absorb the lessons and put them into practice in the 'real world'.

It would be an advantage for the Society to have a coordinated approach to education/professional development (training, tutoring, mentoring) and credentialing (Registration).

The link between the Registration Committee and the Education Policy Committee is an important one for a coordinated and consistent approach to training and professional development, for identifying gaps and for forward planning. Fortunately the present membership of the Education Policy Committee includes the Chairperson of the Registration Committee, but this is more an accident of timing than deliberate planning. I believe this relationship should be formalised rather than left to chance.

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| Recommendation 3: |
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| that the Chairperson of the Registration Committee be an ex officio member of the Education Policy Committee. |
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If this recommendation is accepted this could be effected by an appropriate paragraph being inserted into the Guidelines for each Committee.

Measures to promote training and professional development are currently being addressed by Working Parties reporting to the Education Policy Committee.

The formation of a Working Party on Curriculum is a welcome initiative. Though the terms of reference of this Working Party are yet to be finalised, it is expected that it will undertake to ensure, at a high level, that the content of basic/intermediate indexing courses offered by ANZSI is reasonably consistent across branches, and that training gaps, requirements for

advanced courses and specialised materials or subject matter will be identified. It may also address the idea of tutoring. Lessons we have learned from Registration applications will feed into this process.

5.7 With Database Registration probably being made available how does the Committee suggest we handle assessment? It would make sense for them to be handled with one process rather than two separate processes. Is this a good idea?

During 2009–10 a paper on database indexer registration was prepared and circulated.¹⁴ I understand that this is now with a working party which will consider implementation issues and procedures.

The Registration Committee members believe that it would be appropriate to deal with database indexing registration as part of the overall Registration process, rather than establish a separate committee and have two parallel processes in our small society. Indeed, the current Policy on Registration foreshadows database indexer registration in Paragraph 9.

The Panel of Assessors would need additional members with database indexing expertise; the number of additional members appointed would depend on the database registration implementation approach. Some members have dual book indexing and database indexing experience; it would be an advantage to have several of these members on the Panel.

Recommendation 4:

that in preparation for implementation of the credentialing of database indexers:

- the Registration Policy and Procedures be amended where necessary to cover Registration [or new name] for both forms of indexing
- that the current 'Criteria for Registration [or new name]' becomes 'Criteria for Registration [or new name], Part A: Book and Journal Indexing'
- that a new section, 'Criteria for Registration [or new name], Part B: Database indexing requirements' be added
- that an appropriate Registration Application form for database indexer registration [or new name] be prepared
- that the webpage for Registration [or new name] be updated to reflect the changes
- that at the time database indexer registration is implemented the membership of the Registration Committee is increased to include members with database indexing expertise.

¹⁴ Database Indexing Registration, in the Council documents for 4 February 2010:
http://www.anzsi.org/site/council_mins.asp

5.8 With more applications (hopefully) it will become more likely that the subject being covered is beyond the expertise of the Committee, particularly if database indexing registration is to be handled as well. How will the committee handle this situation?

ANZSI has received an average of 2.5 applications for Registration per year since 2002, counting this year to August (Table 2).

Council appears keen to increase the numbers of applications for Registration. However, there is no way of estimating whether an increase in applications will make it more likely that some are beyond the expertise of the Panel of Assessors. The stated expertise of the current members of the Panel of Assessors (from Indexers Available) already covers a wide range of subject specialties including arts, agriculture, natural sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, education, politics, law, humanities, psychology, Indigenous issues, and sport. Materials expertise includes books, journals, reports (annual and technical), pictorial material, directories, technical manuals, loose-leaf material, metadata and databases.

The Registration Committee Guidelines (Composition of the Committee, point 3) provides for the Committee 'to select any Registered Indexer to assist with assessment of a submitted index'. This might be necessary, for example, if an index submitted for assessment is considered by the Committee to be outside the expertise of members, or if Panel members' workload does not permit assessment in a timely manner (see Section 5.10 for discussion of this point).

The members of the Panel of Assessors are sensible and mature people, as well as being experienced indexers; obviously they will seek additional assistance if an index submitted for assessment is felt to be outside their areas of expertise.

5.9 Should the Committee be expanded to improve the breadth of expertise available, and if so what would be the best way of doing this?

If the Registration Committee feels that the Panel of Assessors needs additional expertise, the current Registration Committee Guidelines provide a mechanism for this. It may seek assistance in the short-term, as discussed in Section 5.8. It may also add members. The Registration Committee Guidelines (Composition of the Committee, point 2) provides for a Panel consisting of at least three members, and suggests (but does not mandate) that an uneven number is most appropriate..

Clearly, members can be invited to join the Panel as needed. When the Committee needs an additional permanent member to add to the breadth of expertise, the Chairperson would identify one or more Registered Indexers with that expertise and arrange for Council to invite him/her/them to join the Panel. Alternatively, the Chairperson, with the consent of the Council, might call for an 'expression of interest' from members interested in joining the Panel.

It has been suggested that the Panel should be required to consist of a specified number of members with qualifications in each of a specified list of disciplines. I believe an approach like this is too rigid and has not been demonstrated to be necessary.

5.10 Applicants expect a quick response to their application, how can the response time be reduced to less than three months?

The Registration Committee is aware that the length of time taken to finalise assessments has been an issue at times.

Time taken to complete assessment depends on several factors: the workload of Panel members (all practising indexers who are working for a living, and give their time to the

Society free-of-charge), the time of year that the application is lodged; the number of people on the Panel; the fact that each application is assessed twice; and the fact that the majority of applications in recent years have not met assessment criteria, necessitating longer assessment reports than are necessary for successful candidates.

Recently there has been a concerted effort to reduce the time delay in assessments. The Committee's suggestions to better prepare applicants (Section 5.6.1) and a coordinated approach to training and professional development as advocated by the Education Policy Committee will assist this, in that there should be fewer unsuccessful applications, and successful ones are faster to process.

For some years the Panel of Assessors has been at the minimum level of three members. There have been more applications in 2010 than in any year since 2006, and I think it is time to add another member to the Panel. As Chairperson of the Registration Committee I intend to progress this with the Council separately from this report.

Three months is the timeframe laid down in the Registration Committee Guidelines ('Committee Procedures', point 6), and Registration Procedures (paragraph 8) and I don't think it is practical to reduce it, given that each application is assessed twice and it is necessary to move physical material around. However, the Committee is aware of the need for timeliness and members are seeking to balance timeliness with an appropriate level of feedback in their reports.

5.11 It would be a good idea to have an appeal process for applicants. What do you suggest?

At present there is an informal process for appeals. Unsuccessful applicants receive a letter from the Receiving Officer (Registration), accompanied by the assessment report. The letter always invites the unsuccessful candidate to contact the Receiving Officer if he/she has any questions about the assessment. In some cases, Assessors have advised the Receiving Officer that they are willing to discuss the index with the applicant if the applicant wishes. This offer is made via the Receiving Officer, to preserve anonymity. At least one applicant this year has taken up such an offer.

Very, very few applicants respond to the invitation to discuss their application further with the Receiving Officer or Panel members. Unfortunately, in the last few years some disgruntled applicants have aired their grievances in the pages of the *ANZSI Newsletter*, without prior consultation with the members of the Registration Committee. Some of these letters have revealed misunderstandings and errors of fact on the part of the writer. It has been the policy of the Registration Committee not to enter into arguments with unsuccessful applicants via the pages of the *Newsletter*.

I suggest, for fairness to applicants and fairness to members of the Registration Committee, that a simple appeal process would be appropriate, although I think it unlikely to be used very often, if at all. In making the recommendation below, I want it to be clearly understood that I am not casting any criticism on the members past and present of the Registration Committee. I am convinced that all members of the Registration Committee always follow due process, that records are kept efficiently and comprehensively and that assessments are done objectively, consistently and professionally.

An appeals process should be fair not only to applicants, but also to Committee members. An appeals process might prevent unwarranted assertions being published in the newsletter and might also provide a prudent, risk-averse Executive with assurance that due process is in place, and give it confidence to support or defend the work of the Registration Committee when it is necessary to do so.

Recommendation 5:

That a right of appeal and appeal process for unsuccessful applications for Registration or Renewal of Registration be implemented by adding the following provisions to the Registration Policy and Procedures document:

Registration

1. Unsuccessful applicants for Registration shall have a right of appeal.

2. The only grounds of appeal are that:

a) due process as set out in the Registration Procedures was not followed or

b) that the index assessment was unjust.

The appeal must provide evidence to support either assertion. Reference must be made to the criteria for assessment when providing evidence of an unjust assessment. Lack of timeliness in completing the assessment does not constitute grounds for appeal.

3. Notice of appeal shall be sent to the Receiving Officer (Registration) to be received not more than thirty days after the day on which, in the normal course of events, the notice of assessment would have been delivered.

4. The notice of appeal shall be accompanied by the scheduled fee [*to be determined – possibly at least equivalent to the Registration application fee*], a statement of the grounds for the appeal, a copy of the index submitted and the published item which it indexes.

5. On receipt of a notice of appeal the Receiving Officer shall notify the President of ANZSI and the Chairperson of the Registration Committee.

6. An Appeal Committee consisting of three members will be established to handle the appeal, assisted by the Receiving Officer (Registration). Membership of the Appeal Committee will comprise a member of the Council, a Member of the Panel of Assessors and an independent assessor who has the qualifications required for membership of the Panel of Assessors. The Council Member appointed to the Appeal Committee must be eligible to be a member of the Panel of Assessors (i.e. a Registered Indexer for the relevant type of material, book or database); the member of the Panel of Assessors appointed to the Appeal Committee must not be a person who was involved in the original assessment. The Appeal Committee will be chaired by the Council member.

7. The Appeal Committee will examine the grounds for appeal and take the following actions.

a) If the grounds for appeal are that due process was not followed, the Committee will examine the appeal case and the relevant Registration records to determine whether or not the process was valid.

(i) If the due process was found to have been followed, the appeal will be dismissed.

(ii) If due process was found to be lacking, then the Appeals Committee Chair will request the Receiving Officer to arrange for assessment of the index in accordance with the normal procedures, including anonymity provisions. The new assessment panel must not include persons who participated in the original assessment.

b) If the grounds of appeal are that the index assessment was unjust, the Appeals Committee members will consider the index and the assessment report. The independent member of the Appeals Committee will review the index and the original assessment report in accordance with normal procedures. This independent Assessor will report to the Appeals Committee within two months of receiving the index for

assessment. If the independent assessment is at variance with the original assessment, the other members of the Appeal Committee must also review the original assessment and the new assessment. The final decision on the appeal shall rest with the majority view of the Appeals Committee.

(i) If the original assessment was found to be just (that is, the index did not meet the assessment criteria and is manifestly unsatisfactory) the appeal will be dismissed

(ii) If the original assessment was found to be unjust (that is, the index did meet the assessment criteria) the appeal will be upheld.

In 7 (b) above, the assessor shall be empowered to consult a subject expert if necessary, but only in an advisory capacity.

Renewal of registration

8. Candidates whose application for Renewal of Registration has been unsuccessful shall have a right of appeal.

9. Evidence which supports Renewal of Registration normally would be bibliographic details of two indexes published in the previous five years. Evidence equivalent to two published indexes (eg examples of web or database indexing) will be accepted at the discretion of the Registration Committee. No assessment is usually involved. If required, the Receiving Officer will confer with the Chairperson of the Registration Committee regarding evidence submitted, and if necessary request additional information or initiate procedures for re-assessment.

10. The only grounds of appeal are that the decision to reject renewal was unjust. The appeal must provide evidence to support this assertion.

11. Notice of appeal shall be sent to the Receiving Officer (Registration) to be received not more than thirty days after the day on which, in the normal course of events, the notice of Renewal would have been delivered.

12. The Receiving Officer will notify the Chairperson of the Registration Committee that an appeal has been received.

13. If Renewal was rejected on the grounds of insufficient or inappropriate evidence being tendered, the Chairperson will convene a subcommittee of at least two members of the panel of Assessors not involved in the original decision to reject renewal, plus the Receiving Officer. They will examine the reasons for rejection of renewal and any new evidence tendered by the applicant. The majority decision will be final.

14. If Renewal was rejected on the grounds of a re-assessment, then the appeal will be treated as if it were a Registration application appeal (see above)

15. The Receiving Officer shall notify the candidate and the Chair of the Registration Committee of the outcome.

5.12 How best do we handle the situation where complaints are received about a particular Registered Indexer's work?

I think this scenario is unlikely. Market forces tend to apply in these circumstances: a client unhappy with an indexer's work will make sure they do not employ that indexer again; they might also commission another indexer to fix the unsatisfactory index or re-index it.

I suggest that, in the event of the Society receiving complaints about the work of a Registered Indexer, the provisions in paragraph 20 of the Policy on Registration are sufficient to address this, providing for unanimous decision of the Registration Committee and the Council to refuse or remove Registration status. A unanimous decision of the Registration Committee could not be reached until members had assessed the work of the indexer, which they would do in accordance with the other provisions of the policy. Presumably the Council would have confidence in the Registration Committee's advice and unanimously approve it (as required by paragraph 20).

In addition, now that ANZSI is to be incorporated (as a consequence of the vote at the recent AGM), risk of litigation has receded.

5.13 I [that is, a Council member] have problems with the possible scenario of telling a Life Member (or any other extremely experienced indexer) that, since they haven't indexed for five years, ANZSI will now strip them of their Registration and they can no longer call themselves a Registered Indexer. I [Council member] think this would be utterly insulting and hope I [Council member] never have to do it! This will happen with the present five-year re-registration process. We need to have one process for all members and can't have any exceptions. Can't members retire gracefully and still be called a Registered Indexer? So I [Council member] am going back to basics: why do we need five-year re-registration? Is five-year re-registration the only possible solution?

The reasons for Renewal of Registration are set out in Section 3.3. Recapping, the provisions were introduced to ensure that competency and currency in indexing is maintained and as part of the push for high standards in all fields of indexing. The approach is consistent with the trend in other professional societies to encourage members to maintain professional development.

I don't think I have read anywhere that Life Members or other experienced indexers are to be 'stripped of their Registration'.

If there are concerns that the Renewal process is unfair to Life Members then, there is a simple solution. Just as the Policy on Registration provides for circumstances when 'the winner of the Society's Medal is a member of the Society but not a Registered Indexer, the winner can apply for Registration and this will automatically be granted' (paragraph 8), the Society could extend the same courtesy to Life Members. By definition, Life Members are very experienced indexers who have made significant contributions to the Society and the profession. If they are also Registered Members why should they not be able to keep the title?

Recommendation 6:

That a paragraph be added to the appropriate sections of the Registration Policy and Procedures to say 'Life members who are Registered Members of ANZSI are exempt from the requirement to participate in the Renewal of Registration process, and may retain their Registered Indexer status.'

An alternative approach in which a previous Registered Indexer might style himself or herself 'Registered Indexer, xxxx to yyyy' was rejected during the 2007 renewal process. This is an option that could be explored in future if membership categories are reviewed.

For Registration Renewal applicants who have long-term indexing experience but are now largely retired from commercial indexing, the requirements for Renewal could be expanded to include teaching indexing, tutoring, mentoring and volunteer indexing. The requirements currently say 'evidence will normally be bibliographic details of two indexes published in the previous five years. Evidence equivalent to two published indexes (eg examples of web or database indexing) will be accepted at the discretion of the Registration Committee.'

Recommendation 7:

that paragraph 5 of the Renewal of Registration Procedures (in the 'Registration Procedures' document) be amended include 'Indexing teaching, tutoring, mentoring and volunteer indexing will also be considered as equivalent evidence for renewal purposes for long-term Registered Indexers, at the discretion of the Registration Committee'.

This recommendation addresses feedback from the 2007 renewal process, referred to in Section 3.3.

6. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

that

- a) 'ANZSI Accredited Indexer' be used instead of the term 'Registered Indexer' to identify members who have satisfied the credentialing process, and
- b) this recommendation and the term be canvassed among the membership and Branch views sought on it or alternatives.

(Section 5.4.4)

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the name of the Registration Committee be changed to the Credentials Committee.

(Section 5.5)

Recommendation 3:

that the Chairperson of the Registration Committee be an ex officio member of the Education Policy Committee.

(Section 5.6.2)

Recommendation 4:

that in preparation for implementation of the credentialing of database indexers:

- the Registration Policy and Procedures be amended where necessary to cover Registration [or new name] for both forms of indexing
- that the current 'Criteria for Registration [or new name]' becomes 'Criteria for Registration [or new name], Part A: Book and Journal Indexing'
- that a new section, 'Criteria for Registration [or new name], Part B: Database indexing requirements' be added
- that an appropriate Registration Application form for database indexer registration [or new name] be prepared
- that the webpage for Registration [or new name] be updated to reflect the changes
- that at the time database indexer registration is implemented the membership of the Registration Committee is increased to include members with database indexing expertise.

(Section 5.7)

Recommendation 5:

(Section 5.11)

That a right of appeal and appeal process for unsuccessful applications for Registration or Renewal of Registration be implemented by adding the following provisions to the Registration Policy and Procedures document:

Registration

1. Unsuccessful applicants for Registration shall have a right of appeal.
2. The only grounds of appeal are that:
 - a) due process as set out in the Registration Procedures was not followed or
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The appeal must provide evidence to support either assertion. Reference must be made to the criteria for assessment when providing evidence of an unjust assessment. Lack of timeliness in completing the assessment does not constitute grounds for appeal.

3. Notice of appeal shall be sent to the Receiving Officer (Registration) to be received not more than thirty days after the day on which, in the normal course of events, the notice of assessment would have been delivered.
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6. An Appeal Committee consisting of three members will be established to handle the appeal, assisted by the Receiving Officer (Registration). Membership of the Appeal Committee will comprise a member of the Council, a Member of the Panel of Assessors and an independent assessor who has the qualifications required for membership of the Panel of Assessors. The Council Member appointed to the Appeal Committee must be

eligible to be a member of the Panel of Assessors (i.e. a Registered Indexer for the relevant type of material, book or database); the member of the Panel of Assessors appointed to the Appeal Committee must not be a person who was involved in the original assessment. The Appeal Committee will be chaired by the Council member.

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(i) If the due process was found to have been followed, the appeal will be dismissed.

(ii) If due process was found to be lacking, then the Appeals Committee Chair will request the Receiving Officer to arrange for assessment of the index in accordance with the normal procedures, including anonymity provisions. The new assessment panel must not include persons who participated in the original assessment.

b) If the grounds of appeal are that the index assessment was unjust, the Appeals Committee members will consider the index and the assessment report. The independent member of the Appeals Committee will review the index and the original assessment report in accordance with normal procedures. This independent Assessor will report to the Appeals Committee within two months of receiving the index for assessment. If the independent assessment is at variance with the original assessment, the other members of the Appeal Committee must also review the original assessment and the new assessment. The final decision on the appeal shall rest with the majority view of the Appeals Committee.

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10. The only grounds of appeal are that the decision to reject renewal was unjust. The appeal must provide evidence to support this assertion.

11. Notice of appeal shall be sent to the Receiving Officer (Registration) to be received not more than thirty days after the day on which, in the normal course of events, the notice of Renewal would have been delivered.

12. The Receiving Officer will notify the Chairperson of the Registration Committee that an appeal has been received.

13. If Renewal was rejected on the grounds of insufficient or inappropriate evidence being tendered, the Chairperson will convene a subcommittee of at least two members of the panel of Assessors not involved in the original decision to reject renewal, plus the Receiving Officer. They will examine the reasons for rejection of renewal and any new evidence tendered by the applicant. The majority decision will be final.

14. If Renewal was rejected on the grounds of a re-assessment, then the appeal will be treated as if it were a Registration application appeal (see above)

15. The Receiving Officer shall notify the candidate and the Chair of the Registration Committee of the outcome.

(Section 5.11)

Recommendation 6:

That a paragraph be added to the appropriate sections of the Registration Policy and Procedures to say 'Life members who are Registered Members of ANZSI are exempt from the requirement to participate in the Renewal of Registration process, and may retain their Registered Indexer status.'

(Section 5.13)

Recommendation 7:

that paragraph 5 of the Renewal of Registration Procedures (in the 'Registration Procedures' document) be amended include 'Indexing teaching, tutoring, mentoring and volunteer indexing will also be considered as equivalent evidence for renewal purposes for long-term Registered Indexers, at the discretion of the Registration Committee'.

(Section 5.13)

Acknowledgements

In preparing this report I have discussed the Council's questions (Section 5) with Michael Harrington, Jean Norman, Barry Howarth, Frances Paterson and Shirley Campbell and I am grateful for their insights. Discussions with Glenda Browne, Max McMaster and Michael Ramsden during the compilation of the Education Policy Committee were also helpful. Michael Ramsden also shared his and Max's thoughts on Registration Committee composition and an appeals process with me; these were useful although I have taken a somewhat different line.

In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the assistance of Shirley Campbell, who patiently and efficiently answered my numerous questions about Registration procedures and statistics. Her records and corporate memory of the past eight years has been invaluable. But, as they say in books, any mistakes or misinterpretations are mine.

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Registration Committee Guidelines

Application Forms for Registration and Registration Renewal

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