

# Melbourne Indexers Bulletin

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## Summer holidays

Lots of good wishes to you all for the holiday season. Hopefully this includes a relaxing break.

*Melbourne Indexers Bulletin* will be back late January and the meetings will continue monthly starting early February. We are waiting to hear if our request to book the same room at Hawthorn Library for the first Thursday of the month was successful. We will add details to the website when we know.

If you are looking for some summer indexing reading, here are a few suggestions:

- Newsletters from other indexing societies are available via ANZSI website at <https://www.anzsi.org/member-area/international-newsletters/>
- ASI *See also* is available at <https://www.asindexing.org/category/newsletter/>
- Society Facebook pages can lead you to other items of possible interest. One recent example was the Chicago style workout on general rules of alphabetizing <http://cmosshoptalk.com/2018/09/25/chicago-style-workout-30-general-rules-of-alphabetizing/>
- Back issues of *The Indexer* are worth exploring (<https://www.theindexer.org/>).
- The items in the Melbourne Indexers Library are always keen to go out and about. Here is the link to the list <https://www.anzsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/MIB-Jun-2015.pdf#page=6>. Let me know if you would like to borrow something. I'll bring the library to the December meeting.

While the index to the next 20 years of *ANZSI Newsletter* is progressing well, there are still a couple of years to be indexed. Let me know if you are interested in indexing a year of issues.

Keep an eye out for any unusual indexes. Do share any examples you find.

Also, we welcome suggestions for topics for future meetings, or perhaps you would like to lead a discussion?

All the best for 2019

*Mary Russell*

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## November meeting: Show and tell

Show and tell meetings are fascinating. Everyone is encouraged to bring something along to show or discuss. As a result, you are not sure what the next person is going to talk about. This meeting was no exception. The diverse discussion included:

- A cookbook for two with an additional index with recipes grouped by total time to prepare under headings of 15, 20, 25 or 30 minutes.
- The dilemma of accepting a job and finding the language used in the text is more complex than you had anticipated. When you were not asked to provide a quote, nor given a budget, how do you reasonably charge for the job when you spent longer than anticipated grappling with the terminology used? Do you charge your normal rate for indexing a text of that size and wear the loss as learning experience?
- An example from *The Age Domain* where the contents page is headed 'Index'.
- The frustration of adding to a database index for newsletter articles where no attempt has been made to control keywords.
- An index to a biography of Elvis Presley proved to be a good example of the problems that can occur with an index in three columns in run-on style in a reduced font.
- A discussion on how indexing skills helped proofread a book with lots of names in Spanish.
- An example of a large bibliography set out in a column in Excel with additional columns for 10 common subjects. An X was used to indicate if the item covered the topic.
- Several papers at the Chinese indexing conference focused on indexing Chinese local chronicles. These chronicles have been compiled for more than two thousand years and are a rich source of local information. National standards have been developed for rules for compiling indexes. One talk covered compiling personal name and place name indexes. It was reassuring that the hassles indexers encounter with names are the same with Chinese names. Issues mentioned included unable to clearly read the name, typos and clarifying which person the name referred to. Another talk focused on compiling a product index of things produced in a particular local area. The complication was determining if items mentioned were produced in that area or brought in from another area.

*Mary Russell*

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## Stay True Index

Stepping onto an up escalator in a busy shopping centre in Singapore the word 'index' leapt out at me. It was part of the advertising along the side of the escalators. Intrigued, I returned down to learn

what it was about. The Stay True Index is a campaign to encourage Singaporeans to report misleading advertising (<https://staytrueindex.sg/>).



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## Importance of advertisements

Reading an extract from Richard Glover's book *The land before avocado*, I was reminded that advertisements in magazines can be just as interesting as the articles. Richard spent consecutive Monday mornings browsing the *Australian Women's Weekly* at the State Library of NSW. The extract in *The Sunday Age Sunday Life Magazine* (11 November 2018, pp 14-15) focused on the advertisements from the 1970s for pills such as Bex, Ford Pills and Vincent's Powders.

When indexing a newsletter or magazine, it is tempting to overlook advertisements. They are often repeated, and you may wonder at the benefit of indexing them. They can be a very useful source of history. Many historians are using the search facilities of Trove (<https://trove.nla.gov.au/>) to search for advertisements in early newspapers. They fill gaps such as where a business was located, contain early advertising slogans, feature people or artwork that is of interest or, as in this case, provide an interesting social commentary on the 1970s.

As something to index, advertisements can be challenging. What do you focus on? The item being promoted, such as Bex pills, is the easy bit. However, if you were indexing their advertisements in the 1970s in *Australian Women's Weekly* chances are you would have a long list of page numbers after the heading 'Bex, advertisements'. Adding slogans as sub-subheadings may help, but is that enough? Is the size of the advertisement important? How would you index them to make searching in the *Australian Women's Weekly* easier? With all these questions perhaps we should have a session discussing indexing advertisements next year?

Mary Russell

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## Upcoming December meeting

*Day:* First Thursday, December 6

*Venue:* Hawthorn Library meeting room 1 (called Glenferrie), 584 Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn

*Time:* 6.00 – 8.00 pm

*Topic:* Indexing handwritten journals

Even in this computer age, handwritten journals are still popular. Indexing these has a long history. This session will explore some of the methods, tools and terminology being used by those keeping journals today. Are there tips for professional indexers?

Carparking is available down the side of the building. If you are travelling by public transport there is a tram stop nearby, and Glenferrie Station is just a couple of tram stops away.

After the meeting we will go to a local restaurant for a meal (at own expense). For those travelling by public transport, there is always plenty of space in members' cars to enable us to all get to the restaurant quickly. You will also be well located for getting home afterwards, with the train station and tram stops just a short walk away.

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## Program for 2019

Details of the program for next year will be available in the new year. Confirmation of dates and locations will be added to the ANZSI website when available. In the meantime, here is a little of what we are looking forward to.

### Melbourne Indexers is turning 10!

In July, Melbourne Indexers, formerly known as The Victorian Indexing Club (The VIC) will mark its first decade with a celebratory lunch.

### How are military histories indexed?

Following the success of the session on indexing biographies, we will explore how military histories are indexed. How are units arranged in the index? Are ranks added to the names of people? How do you index battles and locations? While it is tempting to limit this session to books with an Australian focus, perhaps there are things to be learnt from other military histories. Spend some time browsing indexes to military histories and bring something to share to the session.

### Legal Indexing: Dark Art or Colouring-in by Numbers?

A certain mystique surrounds legal indexing, leading even many a seasoned indexer to back away in trepidation. But fear not! Although legal indexing certainly has its own set of structures and rules, it does not require any special higher powers or secret incantations. Moreover, even if an indexer does not wish to delve into legal indexing per se, they still need to know how to index the mentions of legal issues, statutes and cases that crop-up in non-legal texts.

To this end, in 2019, the Melbourne Indexers Group will be running a series of sessions that seek to demystify legal indexing. These introductory sessions will cover indexing legal matters in both non-legal and legal texts, as well as the basics of legal tabling.<sup>i</sup> There will be no need to bring along

crosses or any other talismans to ward off evil. Just come armed with a willingness to learn some new skills or share those you already have.

The date and location of the following sessions will be added to the ANZSI website (once they are available) and advertised in upcoming issues of the *Bulletin*.

#### *Indexing Statutes*

The focus of this session will be on legislation (both domestic and foreign statutes) and other legal instruments such as statutory instruments, international agreements, and international treaties or covenants. Precursory matters such as parliamentary bills and explanatory memoranda will also be covered. There will be an overview of how each of these is presented in the indexes to both non-legal and legal texts. This will include filing and presentation in Tables of Statutes, and tips for embedded indexing.

#### *Indexing Cases*

This session will focus on court actions—including civil, criminal and administrative cases from domestic, foreign and international jurisdictions—and how these are presented in the indexes to both non-legal and legal texts. Factors to be considered include the structure of legal case citations, filing and presentation in Tables of Cases, and tips for embedded indexing.

#### *Indexing Legal Texts*

This session will focus solely on legal texts and will provide an overview of the different types of legal texts, and the basic conventions (colouring-in by numbers?) of legal indexing with regard to appropriate content, vocabulary, headings, filing, locators, and presentation. This will include tips on updating indexes and embedded indexing.

*Karen Gillen*

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<sup>i</sup> For the uninitiated, legal tabling is a stand-alone skill, and refers to the compilation of separate listings (indexes, if you like) of statutes and cases that appear as tables in the front matter of legal texts.

Contributions to <i>Melbourne Indexers Bulletin</i> are welcome at <a href="mailto:melbourneindexers@gmail.com">melbourneindexers@gmail.com</a>
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