Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers

ANZSI Indexing Awards and John Simkin Medal: Award criteria

Note: These criteria are an extract from the *John Simkin Medal: Award criteria and procedures* policy document endorsed by the ANZSI Council on 31 May 2016 and reviewed in 2022-23.

Judging criteria

Indexes are judged at the level of outstanding professional achievement.

The Judging Panel reports to ANZSI Council. The panel may recommend:

- o the award of one or more Medals if one or more indexes have been assessed as outstanding, and/or
- o the award of one or more Highly Commended Certificates for indexes that are judged by the Panel to be excellent but do not merit a Medal Award, or
- o that no awards be made.

General criteria

The index

- o deals with complex subject matter
- o is substantial in size
- o embodies language, form and structure demonstrating the indexer's expertise as well as serving the needs of the text and the reader
- o is entirely the indexer's own work.

If there are numerous entries the judges may shortlist entries and give a more comprehensive assessment only to the titles shortlisted. The Judging Panel, at their discretion, may include the titles of and comments on shortlisted entries in the final report. The criteria listed below are intended to assist judges shortlist and evaluate candidate indexes.

Specific criteria

Accuracy

- o Accurate spelling
- o Correct punctuation
- o Correct alphabetical order of index headings (mains, subheadings and cross-references), or correct order of filing if arrangement is other than alphabetical
- o Accurate locators (locators at index headings match discussion in text)
- o Locators sorted correctly
- o Matching sets of locators for double-posted entries
- o Accurate cross-references
- o Correct entry element for compound names or names in languages other than English (cross-referencing used if necessary to assist the reader).

Comprehensiveness and consistency

- The index covers the metatopic and other topics systematically
- The index treats the subject matter in a consistent way
- No significant subject content is omitted
- The index as a whole is consistent and suitable for its audience.

Analysis

- The metatopic and other topics are analysed appropriately and logically
- Scattered pieces of like information are gathered
- Synonyms are handled by gathering and/or cross-referencing
- There are entry points for key concepts
- The number and level of subheadings to main headings is handled well: appropriate number; appropriate depth of treatment
- Subheadings exhibit parallel structure
- Excessively long strings of undifferentiated locators are avoided
- Over-analysis is avoided
- Double-posting is employed where appropriate
- Cross-references (*See …*) lead from alternate entry points to the relevant entry/entries
- Cross-references (*See also …*) lead to related topics
- Passing mentions in the text are not indexed.

Expression

- Index entries reflect the language of the text
- Main headings are nouns or noun phrases (no isolated adjectives as main heading)
- Main headings and subheadings are succinct
- Main headings and subheadings are precise
- Main headings and subheadings are unambiguous (glosses explain headings that are homonyms, similar or which might otherwise be ambiguous)
- Main headings have the key word/phrase first
- Subheadings have the key word/phrase first (unless a preposition is used for clarity; initial prepositions are usually ignored in sorting)
- The subject matter is dealt with even-handedly, with no apparent indexer bias
- Terminology is appropriate for the intended audience.

Usability

- A headnote explains special typefaces, special treatments, departures from convention, codes and abbreviations used in the index. The headnote should be clear and well expressed
- The index is clearly laid out and easy to scan
- Style (e.g., fonts, locator elision) is consistent throughout
- Relationship between headings and subheadings is obvious
- Heading turn-over lines are readily identifiable

- o Cross-references aid navigation without being excessive
- o Cross-references are valid (have targets, are not circular).

Other aspects which the judges may consider

- o Provision of concise and precise access to where information may be found serving both the new reader and the returning reader
- o Complexity of subject matter
- o Visual appeal; simplicity and elegance
- o Unusual challenges and how they were addressed.