

Next meeting
Wednesday 25 July

Our AGM

July is the month for the Canberra Society of Editors' Annual General Meeting—the most important meeting of the year. It provides a forum for all members to talk about the society's aims and direction, and to nominate and vote for the committee for 2007–08.

The venue is the Macarthur Room at the Ainslie Function Centre, upstairs at the Ainslie Football Club. The Ainslie FC is centrally located at 52 Wakefield Ave, Ainslie, just off Limestone Avenue. You can find a map at:

<www.ainsliefc.com/wherearewe/>.

Members will be greeted with a drink of their choice (wine, beer, juice or soft drink) and snacks from 6.00 pm and the meeting will start at 6.30.

Stay on for the AGM dinner, one of the highlights of the society's year.

The dinner will be a buffet, with a range of cold and hot dishes, dessert, and tea and coffee to follow. The excellent wines were chosen by the society's wine buff. The all-inclusive price for dinner and wine is a very reasonable \$37 (additional or different drinks will cost extra).

Email <Ann.Parkinson@atrax.net.au> to reserve your place at the dinner, then please confirm your attendance by sending your payment of \$37.00 to reach the society **by 22 July** (cheques payable to **Canberra Society of Editors**), to:

Treasurer
Canberra Society of Editors
PO Box 3222
MANUKA ACT 2603

You may also pay by direct deposit: BSB 805022, Acct No. 0342 3503. Please put your initial and family name in the reference field. We have no facilities for credit card payments.

We look forward to seeing you!

Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

Vol 16 • Number 6 • July 2007

Our June meeting

The Splinter Sisters smash the stereotype

Fresh from their triumphs at the Hobart conference and Melbourne—and New York, if President Virginia Wilton is to be believed—the Splinter Sisters—the kinda gals that get under your skin—warmed the hearts of more than 25 members who braved a cold wet night to attend their performance.

Shelley Kenigsberg and Pamela Hewitt, both well-known NSW editors, gave a brilliant presentation of *Yarralumla loving—a literary musical*, built around the desire of brash would-be writer, Greta (Shelley, pictured above at left), to get her romance novel published. She meets redoubtable editor Loma (Pamela)



... in a club down in Manuka
Where she drank champagne
And her card said Loma—I work with words
L-O-M-A, la la la Loma.

Shelley's rich contralto contrasted pleasantly with Pamela's lyric soprano in the reassuring duet 'It's not too late':
I really think we can make it.../Though [your book] really does need some tweaking.

Although Greta would prefer to 'fake it', Loma insists that 'Little by little' the book can be saved:

It really matters what they say and what they do.
They need more drama just to drive the story through.
But you've got it happ'ning from just one kiss.
I don't believe that she could be in love like this.
Sounds crazy but it's true, an edit is the thing to do.

Upon hearing 'edit' the audience cheered—as much in response to the duo's musical talent and promotion of

our craft as, one suspects, to the convivial effects of the mulled wine, Turkish börek and other delicacies.

A dramatic high point came with Greta's anguished:

...you don't know what it's like, Loma, you don't know what it's like.

To want a contract, to need a contract, the way that I do!

The audience nodded to Loma's declaration that:

Publishing's a bitch, you have to make that pitch,

To win a big advance and get that cheque,

then erupted into a lusty chorus that would do

Monty Python proud:

So ... always work with an IPEd editor. [whistle]
Always work with an IPEd editor. [whistle]

The divas invited the by now foot-stamping, hand-clapping audience to join in the martial rhythms of the finale: 'This land is your land':

IPEd is yours now, IPEd's for sure now
From West Australia to the Apple Island
From the cool Blue Mountains to the tropic hinterland / IPEd is made for you and me.

Yarralumla loving was as much a musical tribute to the relationship between writer and editor and a commentary on the current state of fiction publishing in Australia as it was to the popular music of Barry Manilow, Neil Young, Toni Stern and Carole King, Dusty Springfield, Cher and Louis Armstrong.

Who said editors don't know how to have fun? The Splinter Sisters and their appreciative Canberra audience certainly smashed the stereotype!

Helen Topor

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From the President

At the June meeting of the committee, we multi-tasked—while discussing the usual matters of import, we were busy stuffing envelopes with renewal forms and with a form to enable you to nominate yourself, or someone else, for the committee, as a general member or an office-holder. We have had, as far as I can tell from clearing the post office box, a tremendous response, but I am in a state of suspense as I write this: how many nomination forms do the envelopes contain?

We're all busy, it seems. Yet a society like ours cannot survive unless a small proportion of its members are prepared to give up a small amount of their precious leisure time to help run it. And the more people who are prepared to do this, the less work there is for any particular individual. The rewards are nil, of course, in financial terms but can nevertheless be substantial—both professionally and personally. I urge you, yet again, to consider a more active involvement before the annual general meeting.

For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of my term as president has been the opportunity to take part in the wider community of practice we are establishing through the new national

organisation. On behalf of the Interim Council of IPEd, I have now briefed a lawyer and anticipate the draft constitution will be up on the IPEd website for comment by the end of this month. As soon as it's there, all members will be notified; please study it carefully and send comments to the IPEd delegate on the new committee.



A reminder that we are able to offer members a special discounted price (\$20.00) for the recently launched *Editors in conversation*, containing reflections on the issues that editors face today by eight Honorary Life Members, including our first President, Loma Snooks. Copies will be on sale at general meetings.

It only remains to thank all the members of the committee for 2005–06 and 2006–07 for their efforts and contribution over the past two years. There's an opportunity now for others to come forward and form a new vigorous committee to take the society forward. Our society is one of the strongest in Australia—let's keep it that way.

Virginia Wilton

IPEd notes July 2007

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

The beginning of July was the deadline for various activities of the Interim Council and its offshoots. If everyone keeps to their promises, by the time you read this not only will the website be transformed, but it will also contain several new items for you to think about.

The Communication Working Group and the Website Working Group are collaborating to finalise the revision of the website. The new version will incorporate several new functions and will be much more appealing and easier

to use. We hope it will be the channel for communication between IPEd and the members of the societies of editors, as well as presenting a professional image to the general public.

Following the members' overwhelming endorsement of the proposal to establish IPEd as a company limited by guarantee, the Interim Council expects to have a draft of the constitution available for comment. Members will then have one month to send their comments on the

(continued at right)

Institute of Professional Editors Accreditation Board (1 July 2007)

Editing examination: issues paper

Editor's note: This version has been heavily edited to fit it into the space available. Before commenting, please see the complete paper at <www.iped-editors.org/accreditation.html>.

The Institute of Professional Editors is preparing an accreditation scheme in which the first level of accreditation is achieved by examination. A demonstration of a sample exam at the IPEd national conference in Hobart in May 2007 was well-received and drew valuable feedback. Many expressed a preference for completing their answers onscreen rather than on hard copy.

This issues paper explores the ramifications of this response—both for refining the content and for using computers to complete the exam, bearing in mind that the IPEd Council and Accreditation Board are committed to making the administration of the examination cost-neutral while keeping costs for candidates as low as possible.

Attendance in person and confidentiality

Candidates must attend in person to prevent cheating—it will not be possible to complete the answer paper on-line at home. The Accreditation Board feels that editors who are serious about their profession will make the effort to be present at the exam venue. Candidates who feel they are disadvantaged by having to attend in person should contact the Accreditation Board, who will endeavour to find a solution for their particular circumstances.

Costs will be high if a new and exactly equivalent set of examination questions is produced each year, so the Assessors Forum will look at reusing some questions in later exams to reduce the costs of both setting and marking. For the sake of confidentiality, candidates will not be permitted to retain any examination material and may not complete the exam using their own laptops.

Refining the exam paper

Discussion of the sample exam paper raised various points to be addressed in preparing the actual exam paper:

- Greater efforts will be made to broaden the focus of the exam to include editors who work outside the publishing industry. Section 3, which offers candidates a choice of several short-answer questions, will be enlarged from eight to twelve questions to accommodate varieties of editing practice such as science, maths, technical editing and non-book work.
- Scenarios that include a hypothetical relationship with a client or author will provide more background and briefing so that candidates can better judge how to respond.
- The exam will be adjusted to reduce the amount of handwriting required on the answer paper. For instance, instead of writing a complete letter to an author, candidates may be asked to list the points they would make in the letter.

Implications of an onscreen exam

If the exam is to be done onscreen computer laboratories must be hired. This has implications for logistics and costs, when both Macs and PCs need to be provided. This may reduce the numbers who can sit the exam at any one time, and increase the costs per head. The answer paper from an onscreen exam may be Word files as email, disks or print, depending on the facilities of the venue.

Costs

Costs for an onscreen exam will certainly be higher. The quotes obtained by the Accreditation Board vary considerably, depending on factors such as whether the room is hired for a half-day or a full day, whether the cost of technical support is included in the hire of the lab, etc. Hiring two computer labs and a second invigilator to examine 30 candidates, plus technical support before and during the

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(IPEd notes continued)

draft to their IPEd delegate, and the Interim Council will consider the feedback and make any necessary revisions by the end of August. Work is proceeding on a business plan and an indicative budget for the newly incorporated entity.

The Accreditation Board is considering the reaction to its presentation of a sample editing examination at the national conference in Hobart in May. Many participants were concerned at the prospect of a handwritten exam and expressed a strong preference for doing it onscreen.

The Accreditation Board has prepared an issues paper to explore all the ramifications of moving to an onscreen exam, including an estimate of the extra costs of providing computers and technical assistance. The issues paper will be posted on the IPEd website, and members are encouraged to study it and respond via their Accreditation Board delegate. The Accreditation Board is also collecting

information about intentions to sit the exam; so far it seems that most members want to take the first opportunity and hope to sit in 2008.

Meanwhile, the Assessors Forum is working on the marking system for the sample editing examination that was presented at the national conference, and both the exam and the answers will be posted on the website. Members are invited to work through the sample exam in their own time. During the second half of the year each society of editors will hold a workshop so members can discuss their impressions of the exam and raise their concerns. The recommendations from these workshops will be taken into account in preparing the actual examination, which is expected to be held in March 2008.

Janet Mackenzie, Liaison Officer
<www.iped-editors.org>

Fiddly bits—the ethics of editing



Ethics is a serious matter, and unethical behaviour by just a few people can undermine the whole editing profession.

Some aspects of ethics are fundamental: I'll leave you to think about ethical considerations in your own area—specialised areas of editing, such as medicine and other sciences, have very special ethical rules.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines ethics as 'a system of moral principles, by which human actions and proposals may be judged good or bad or right or wrong; the rules of conduct recognised in respect of a particular class of human actions; moral principles, as of an individual'.

Ethical principles are laid down in many organisations and professions, and members are expected to adhere to them. They may be called code of behaviour, ethical guidelines, standards of conduct, and so on. They all boil down to a set of principles to help members do the right thing by their clients and fellow professionals. In the editing profession, there are many such principles—some written and some just 'understood' as 'the decent thing'.

In Australia, we have special obligations when editing students' papers and theses. These have been agreed between all the Australian Societies of Editors and the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies of Australian universities. We may not edit on-line, for instance—only on hard copy. Why? Students who have work edited on-line may simply accept the suggested corrections without deciding for themselves whether they are appropriate in the context or not. We may not perform structural edits, but must stick to what is covered by Standards D ('Language and illustrations') and E ('Completeness and consistency') in the *Australian standards for editing practice*. Structural edits, apart from broad recommendations for attention, are the province of the student's academic supervisor. And the student must acknowledge the editing and the editor in case the examiners wish to check the extent of editing performed. It is possible that the quality of the student's work could be greatly affected by the editor's efforts, and we need to remember that it is the student's original work that is being examined. These principles are available on the websites of all the Societies of Editors and on the IPEd website. If you are asked, as I have been, to edit papers for students of overseas universities, it is important to find out what degree of editing is allowable in the particular institution.

Some editors set out their ethical stance on their websites or in their expressions of interest in a job. This usually amounts to a short statement about confidentiality and privacy issues, work standards, policy on accepting or not accepting jobs, and perhaps their action in the event of a conflict of interest or other difficulty. It helps the client to get a full picture of the sense of professionalism of the editor.

Confidentiality—It should be obvious that an editor who is a member of a respected professional society of editors would

be trustworthy. However, authors are often understandably nervous about handing over manuscripts to total strangers. They need to be assured that you are not going to discuss their work with anyone other than the team working on it, and that if you don't want to undertake the work or don't get the contract, you will return or securely trash all the material sent to you. Clients are entitled to know that you don't pass on client details to anyone else for any reason. I have personally had to deal with people who have passed on such information, including mailing lists, without authorisation, and who think it is OK to chat about current jobs to other clients—this is unethical gossip.

Work standards—It is not possible to be skilled in all areas of editing, and your client is entitled to know that you have the necessary skills for the job under consideration. It is unprofessional to pretend to a client that you have a level of skill, or very specific skills, that you do not have. Own up, and be willing to develop skills on the job, but only if the client is agreeable.

Accepting or not accepting jobs—There are some jobs that are just not your cup of tea. If you are asked to quote for a job that you know you will hate or that you don't have time for or that you honestly don't know how to do, forget it. If the potential client has asked you to 'just cast an eye over this for typos' and you find that the document needs a major rewrite, be honest in your appraisal. You can't do a substantive edit on a proofreading budget. And it would be unethical to do merely the requested check for typos when you know that the manuscript will fall in a heap at the next hurdle—publication. You may decide to accept a job, in good faith, and find later that there is a conflict of interest. For example, editors are often asked to edit material that conflicts with their own view on a subject. It is not our business to try to 'correct' the client's views while correcting their grammar or their writing style. If you can't distance yourself from your own views, don't take the job on. The ethical thing to do is to immediately inform the client and offer to withdraw from the contract.

Meeting deadlines—Don't promise to keep deadlines that are not achievable for you. If you fall behind, you cause the whole publication process to fall behind. The ethical editor, faced with an honest delay because of sickness or a private emergency, will contact the client immediately, apologise, and offer to withdraw.

What is unethical behaviour?

There are other examples of behaviour that, as a professional editor, I consider unacceptable:

- Taking on work at a level at which you are not either qualified or experienced—We all have to start somewhere, but it is bad for the whole profession when you take on work which you have no hope of doing at a satisfactory level of competence. The client is unhappy, and is quite likely to complain to the society to which the editor belongs. The Canberra Society of Editors issues

a disclaimer in its *Register of freelance editors* because it can't be held responsible for the suitability or otherwise of an editor for a particular task. But this doesn't mean that unhappy clients won't make their feelings known to the society.

- Claiming expertise that you don't have—Bluff will get you nowhere in the long run. We all have to learn our craft the hard way, through training in editing, through working with a mentor until we are confident, through years of practice, working up from simple jobs to huge complex jobs. Clients can see through bluff.
- Actually working on a document and charging a fee for a job that you know is not up to scratch—This is downright dishonest, but it happens. I have had documents brought to me for re-editing after an 'amateur editor' has failed to find even obvious grammatical errors, spelling errors, typos etc. and has not given any advice on plainly necessary restructuring, page layout and placement of illustrations. That really bothers me.
- Quoting a very low fee (or even no fee) just to get a job is equally dishonest. It downgrades the value of editing as a whole. The only 'freebies' should be for your favourite local charity that has no money anyway. Everything else should be paid for at a businesslike rate. This includes student theses and dissertations. These days, funds are available to graduate students to help

them pay for professional editing—you should charge your regular fee. If you don't know what to charge, ask a senior editor for guidance and then work out what your effort is worth. Don't undersell yourself—most freelance editors undercharge, but it is possible to gauge the 'going rate' for various jobs and various levels of edit.

Janet Mackenzie, in *The Editor's Companion*, sets out a number of additional areas of concern that editors ought to be aware of, including that the editor has 'a three-way responsibility to the publisher, the author and the reader'—it is sometimes difficult to meet everyone's needs, but you need to try to keep a sense of balance throughout a job.

Ethics is an enormous subject. I hope this little bit of fiddling around the edges of it has provided something to think about next time you are asked to quote for an editing job that is a bit out of your comfort zone.

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References:

- Australian standards for editing practice*, 2001, Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE).
Mackenzie, Janet, 2004, *The editor's companion*, CUP, Melbourne.
Macquarie dictionary, 4th edition, 2005, Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, Macquarie University, NSW.
Register of freelance editors, 8th edition, 2006, Canberra Society of Editors, Canberra.

(continued from page 3)

exam and assistance during it suggests about \$2000 compared with about \$500 for the handwritten exam, so perhaps between \$70 and \$100 per person. The sitting fee is, of course, only one component of the exam fee, which must also cover the costs of administration, advertising, setting the exam and marking.

Disadvantaging those who don't work onscreen

Editors who work exclusively on hard copy may claim that an onscreen exam disadvantages them. Do we judge them as having failed Standard A5, knowledge of technology relevant to editing practice, and therefore having failed the accreditation exam? Do we attempt to accommodate editors who don't work onscreen? If so, should they be given extra time to complete the exam?

Compromise solutions

It might be possible to develop a compromise:

- Have some questions to be answered on paper and others onscreen; this is the process in exams conducted for various tertiary editing courses.
- Allow candidates to choose whether to sit the exam on paper, or onscreen with an extra charge to cover the higher cost; special care would then be needed in marking to ensure that neither group was disadvantaged.

These compromise solutions would provide flexibility for applicants but do not solve the problems of logistics and costs outlined above.

Other points raised

- The conference feedback included a question from an editor with a disability who would find it difficult to sit an exam in any form: special arrangements will be made for any candidate who suffers such a disadvantage.
- Some felt that the suggested 80% pass mark is too high. However, it will not advance the profession if we endorse the work of editors who are wrong more than 20% of the time.
- To reassure experienced editors who fear failure, the exam is designed to test basic editing skills—anyone with a tertiary editing qualification and a couple of years' experience should pass easily.
- One comment was: 'Don't try to please everyone and cater to all exceptions. It's better to move ahead and make decisions than be immobilised by critics'.

What do you think?

The Accreditation Board invites constructive responses and comments on this issues paper from members of the societies of editors. In the first place please contact your society's delegate by 15 August (for the Canberra society this would be either Larissa Joseph at <Larissa.joseph@gmail.com> or Chris Pirie at <cpirie@netspeed.com.au>, or email <vivienne@spressservices.com>).

Thinking about words—a taxonomy of taxes

... there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be taxed.

Luke ii, 1

But in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes

Benjamin Franklin, 1789



We can't blame it all on Caesar Augustus, but the fact remains that July is tax time, and a taxing time indeed for many of us. If you earn your income by editing or by any kind of writing, you are effectively taxed on your use of words, and that's an uncomfortable thought. So what about the words related to taxes? What, indeed, does that little three-letter word *tax* mean and where does it come from?

Taxes seem to have been around for ever. Classical Greece and Rome had consumption taxes and levied import duties. Rome had a head tax, based on the number in your household, and when more was needed the valuation was extended to your estate. Julius Caesar introduced a 1% sales tax. Egypt took a tenth—a tithe—of your produce. In the past, tax collection was often in the hands of 'tax farmers' who contracted for a share of the immensely profitable take. The system persisted in pre-revolutionary France, but was abolished in 1790. It was immensely unpopular and the great scientist Antoine Lavoisier was one of 28 tax farmers who were tried, sentenced and guillotined all on the same day, 8 May 1794. (Lavoisier was exonerated 18 months later . . . too late, alas.)

Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger introduced income tax to Britain in 1798 to pay for the Napoleonic wars, starting at tuppence in the pound on incomes over £60 and increasing to a maximum of two shillings on incomes over £200. It was abolished by his successor three years later, but introduced again in 1803, only to be abolished again in 1816 and brought back finally in 1842. In the Australian colonies, the first taxes were mainly customs and excise on imports and liquor, to pay for public works like the Sydney gaol or for the upkeep of the colony's orphans. Income tax began in the Colony of Tasmania in 1880, followed four years later by South Australia and in 1895 by New South Wales at six pence in the pound.

The verb is older than the noun. The old Latin word *taxare* had a number of different meanings: to censure, charge with a fault, and also to reckon, compute or make a valuation of. We may *tax* somebody with a misdemeanour, in the sense of accusing them. The sense of 'valuing' persisted for a long time, particularly in setting a maximum price for foodstuffs or assessing the taxable value of some goods or service. Medieval Latin introduced the meaning of imposing a tax, a compulsory contribution, and it was round about this time that the noun *tax* took on its modern

meaning. Initially the words *tax* and *task* were more or less interchangeable, and if you spend the morning digging in the garden you might consider that a pretty taxing task.

In the olden days it didn't have to be called a tax for you to be hit with it. The 14th century clergy in England were fortunate in having to 'paie no subsidie ne taxe', and that word *subsidie* was a term applied to indirect taxes of various kinds, very different from its present-day meaning. The early French kings likewise benefited from *aides et subsides* to cover their expenses, and found all sorts of excuses for imposing duty on everything in sight, particularly market produce and alcohol—the latter a pernicious practice that

has persisted to our time. Imposing? The modern French for tax is *impôt*, with synonyms *imposition* or *contribution*—that last, with its undertones of the voluntary, being in my view a masterpiece of euphemism. We'd certainly agree that taxes are an imposition, even if a necessary one.

Duty seems an odd choice of word for the tax on wines and spirits, but the word simply means an obligation, something that is *due* (that is, *owed*) to some person or some principle. *Duty* is levied according to a *tariff*, a word reaching us from the Italian *tariffa* that

initially meant something like a multiplication table or a ready-reckoner. *Tariff* is now a term applied to any price schedule, whether it's import duties or hotel rooms. *Excise* seems much more vicious, with its implications of something being cut out—the government taking its pound of flesh, perhaps. Samuel Johnson defined *excise* as 'a hateful tax levied on commodities', but its origins are more mundane, the word reaching us in 1494 from the early Dutch *excijns*, just meaning a tax. Smugglers in the 18th century were at war with the *excisemen*, who were stationed in the ports to collect the import tariffs. The smugglers were perhaps most notorious in the English West Country, particularly Cornwall, but people tried everywhere to avoid the excise. Robert Burns wrote a jubilant little ditty, 'The de'il's awa' wi' the exciseman'—dancing away with him and leaving them free to 'make their malt and brew their drink, and laugh, sing and rejoice, man'.

Thinking of Scots, the phrase 'getting off scot-free' has been explained on the air or in the newspaper at least three times in the past few weeks, so no one any longer has any excuse for thinking it has anything to do with Scotland. Nowadays it generally means that you have managed to avoid some unpleasant consequence or penalty, but



'Not easy to pay your taxes by computer ...'
'That's why they give you more time.'

originally it meant that you were exempted from paying your taxes. In the 15th century ‘scot and lot’ (or ‘shot and lot’, or ‘lot and scot’) was a parish assessment laid on subjects in Great Britain according to their ability to pay. The cry of ‘my scot’ or ‘my shot’ may still be used occasionally in a pub to announce that it’s my turn to pay for the drinks, but nowadays it’s more likely to be ‘my shout’, implying that I’ll call the order to the waiter. Nothing to do with taxes, but likely to be equally expensive if it’s a big round.

Contribution clearly has something to do with *tribute*, the homage that you bring to the feet of your ruler. Indeed the Latin origin means to give or pay, and not necessarily money—you can pay tribute (perhaps just a smile or a compliment) to somebody who has achieved something special, whether it’s scoring a winning goal or winning a Nobel prize. But tribute was originally the payment by a vassal state to ensure the continuing friendship or protection of a neighbouring sovereign, and you may choose to think that your taxes are going to support a beneficent government with a duty of care. If you do, I hope you’re right, but if not you’ll soon be able to say so at the ballot box.

And, by the way, the ‘tax’ in *taxonomy* has a completely different origin: the Greek word *taxis* means ‘an arrangement’ and *-nomia* ‘distribution’, adding up to

‘classification’. (In *taxidermy* you are re-arranging some poor defunct creature’s skin.) But your ride in a taxi is definitely a *tax* on your purse: the word *taxi* began as the French *taximètre*, abridged over the years for popular use, which since 1907 has meant a vehicle for hire furnished with a taximeter to measure distance and compute the fare.

Now I must rush off to see my accountant—back with you next month!

Peter Judge

Sources: The *Oxford English dictionary on CD* v. 3.0 and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2006 on DVD*. *Wikipedia* for the history of taxation in England at <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxation_in_the_United_Kingdom#History>. You can find a fascinating account of taxation in Australia by the people who take it off us at <www.ato.gov.au/corporate/content.asp?doc=/content/tax_history.htm>. The cartoon, for those who find taxes funny, is from <www.monolivet.org/dotclear/images/ImpotsHumour.jpg>. The quotation from the author(s) of Luke, whose gospel was written around 80–85 CE, may be confusing two tax censuses. The census ordered by Augustus Caesar is known to have been taken in 6 CE, but Christ’s birth in the reign of Herod the Great, if correctly dated to 4 BCE, must have coincided with an earlier census (*Oxford companion to the Bible*).

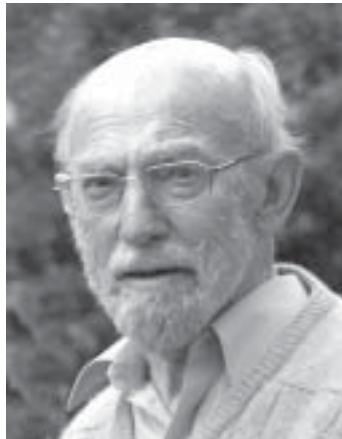
Vale Robert Hyslop, 1918–2007

Robert Hyslop was born in New South Wales in 1918. He grew up in Kurri Kurri, a mining town, spending holidays at his mother’s family vineyard in the Hunter Valley. His family and community gave him a strong belief in the value of education and an appreciation of literature, art and music. He attended Maitland Boys High School from 1931 to 1935.

He joined the Commonwealth Public Service in the Department of Defence (Naval) in Sydney in 1936, then moved to Melbourne in 1941, continuing his long association with the Navy Department. He married Dorothy Fleming in 1946 and lived in Upper Fern Tree Gully at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, where his two daughters, Gabrielle and Deirdre, were born.

The family spent 1958 in England where Robert attended the Joint Services Staff College before spending several months at the Admiralty. Back in Australia, the Hyslops moved to Canberra in 1959 and Robert was appointed Assistant Secretary, Department of the Navy.

He was a Public Service Fellow at the Australian National University (ANU) in 1968–69 and wrote his first book, *Australian naval administration 1900–1939* (1973). From 1970 to 1974 he was Deputy Secretary-General of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in Bangkok and he later served as Secretary of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, 1974–76. He concluded his career heading the Honours Secretariat in the Department of the Special Minister of State, retiring in 1981.



After his retirement he graduated with a Diploma of Art from the Canberra School of Art, majoring in sculpture. A Visiting Fellowship in the Department of Political Science, Research School of Social Sciences, ANU (1987–92) resulted in *Aye aye, Minister: Australian naval administration 1939–59* (1990), the sequel to his first book. Other books include *Dear you: a guide to forms of address* (1991); *Australian mandarins: perceptions of the role of departmental secretaries* (1994); *First encounter: communicating with institutions and organisations* (1994); and *A very civil servant: an Australian memoir* (1998). He has also published 17 articles, 14 entries for the *Australian dictionary of biography*, 43 book reviews for the *Canberra Historical Journal* and other periodicals, and 21 oral history interviews for the National Library and War Memorial.

He was a founder member of the Canberra Society of Editors and also a member of the Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI, now ANZSI), both of which he joined in 1992, working as a consultant editor and indexer and also involved in the committees for both organisations. He passed away peacefully at the Canberra Hospital on 5 July.

The society offers its sincere condolences to the family, who kindly prepared these biographical notes and provided the photograph. The list of Robert’s publications is reproduced with permission from the National Library’s website.

Biotext honoured in international competition

Last year Janet Salisbury's company, Biotext, entered a report they had worked on into the informational materials category of the Society of Technical Editors (Australian Chapter) competition for writing technical publications (*see* <www.stc-aus.org.au>).

The report was *Legislation Review: Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002* and *Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002* (commonly known in the media as 'The Lockhart Report'). Janet Salisbury was the technical writer for the 250-page report. Meg Heaslop (Biotext Brisbane) and Malini Devadas also worked on aspects of the writing, editing and page layout.

In January, Biotext received the good news that they had won 'Distinguished' and 'Best of Show' awards in the Australian Chapter event, making them eligible to enter the international stage of the competition. The international results finally arrived at the end of June and Biotext won an 'Excellence' award. This is the second highest award (the highest being 'Distinguished', as for the Australian competition). With very strong competition at the international level, the Australian organisers say that this is an 'excellent' result.

The judging criteria for the competition include: content and organisation; copyediting; visual design (if applicable); and overall presentation.

Congratulations, Biotext!

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Newsletter schedule

The next newsletter will appear in August 2007 and the copy deadline for this issue is 8 August.

The editor welcomes contributions by email to <peter.judge@bigpond.com>, using Word for Windows, for PC or Mac.

New members in June 2007

Canberra Society of Editors welcomes new full members Gina Bennett and Dr Anna Molan, and associate members Jennifer Brookes, Sandra Henderson and Graeme McLeod.

Come to the AGM!
(and the dinner)
See page 1 for details

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