Canberra Society of Editors Newsletter

Vol 16 • Number 3-4 • April-May 2007

From the President

The first column I wrote for this newsletter, in August 2005, began with the remark that this was an exciting time for professional editors because of the prospects for forming a national organisation as a peak professional body, and for putting in place an accreditation scheme.

I didn’t think that it would take so long from that point, but we—as a nationwide editing community—have finally decided to proceed and can now get on with the real job.

The tables on page 8 of this newsletter give the results (from all Australian societies of editors) of the vote on the two proposals. I thank all the members who voted and sent in their comments and commend you on the results from our society:

- More than 60 per cent of eligible members of the Canberra Society of Editors voted, one of the highest levels of participation of any of the societies.
- We contributed more than 28 per cent of the total votes cast nationally.
- Our vote was 96 per cent in favour of the motion to endorse the formation of IPEd and 81 per cent to endorse the accreditation proposal.
- Nationally, the result was 94 per cent to endorse formation of IPEd and 81 per cent to endorse the accreditation proposal.

To some extent higher participation in the decision in our society was due to the voting method we chose to adopt. Some of the societies that required members to attend meetings in order to vote had lower levels of participation in the decision. That is the only point that qualifies what is, on balance, a ringing mandate to proceed.

Many thanks also to those who wrote comments in the space provided on the ballot papers.

On IPED:

A long awaited reform. Thanks to everyone on the NOWG and others who contributed to the effort to see this initiative through.

This is an important move—delighted if it goes ahead. Great idea.

On accreditation:

I have been agonising over this issue but have finally decided to abstain as this is such a big change from the previous proposal that I feel I need more time and information to make a decision.

I voted against the previous proposal because it did not include accreditation by examination. [Yes vote]

However, I would have preferred to see the examination route shown plainly as the immediate course, and the portfolio option to be considered later. [Yes vote]

Exam proposal good, but I do not support the time-consuming and inherently problematic portfolio tier of the proposal. A portfolio system could also be disadvantageous to some good editors who have worked in one organisation for a long time e.g. in the APS & who as a result don’t have testimonials or a broad range of samples. It seems too subjective as well. Also, some material in one’s portfolio may not reflect the ‘battles’ lost by an editor in dealing with a client, or some publications may reflect badly on corporate style policy but not necessarily reflect the editor’s viewpoints on style. [No vote]

Lastly, extracts from a lengthy comment concerning the way accreditation may work (exam ‘impractical and inconsiderate’), suggesting ‘automatic accreditation’ system, and conveying a feeling of being ‘affronted that I might have to sit a test so that I can continue doing what I’ve been doing successfully for such a long time’. [No vote]

(continued on page 8)
At the time of writing, IPEd is forging ahead on all fronts as the national conference in Hobart in the second week of May looms as a deadline for various projects.

The delegates to the Interim Council have been working with their society committees to conduct a vote by their members that will endorse the formation of IPEd as a not-for-profit company. By the time you read this the verdict will be known. The national conference offers the Council a rare chance to talk directly with a large group of individual members, both to hear their concerns and to explain IPEd’s activities, and much thought is being given to the Council’s presentation for the plenary session on Friday 11 May.

As with any new organisation, many principles and practices have to be decided. A start has been made on a procedures manual to maintain the consistency and continuity of IPEd’s operations. Drafts have been prepared of various items—position descriptions for delegates and potential employees, policy on reimbursing expenses, guidelines for accreditation—and these documents are being discussed and refined.

Meanwhile the delegates to the Accreditation Board have been seeking endorsement from the members of the societies for the amended accreditation scheme, which includes a copyediting examination, and the Assessors Forum has been drafting, testing and marking a sample exam paper. Once the accreditation scheme becomes established, it is likely that the Board and the Forum will be merged or streamlined; at present, though, there is so much to be done that it is convenient for the Board to handle administrative and financial matters and report to the Council and the societies, while the Forum works on the content and standard of the exam.

The Education, Training and Mentoring Working Group is surveying training provision in all sectors: higher education, vocational, private providers, societies of editors and industry bodies. The working group has begun drafting an issues paper for circulation to members nationally, to identify gaps in provision, in terms of sectors, geographical coverage and mode of provision. The issues paper, which will be presented towards the end of the year, will also canvass a proposal for keeping the survey information up to date and a mechanism for working with providers in the future. The group is also investigating models for mentoring schemes. It will report to the conference at the Friday afternoon session on education and training.

The Communication Working Group is collating the results of its survey of clients’ perceptions of editors. It is also supervising the preparation of flyers containing background information on IPEd, assessment and accreditation, which will be placed in the Hobart conference satchels.

Janet Mackenzie
IPEd Liaison Officer

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**Apology**

The editor regrets that no newsletter was published in April.

The Anzac Day holiday fell on the day we should have held our usual April meeting, so there was no meeting to announce. There was almost nothing else to report and rather little in the way of contributions.

The Committee therefore made the decision to cancel the April issue and distribute this April–May newsletter instead. We apologise for any inconvenience.
Our March speaker

Barbara Knackstedt from BNI (Business Network International) showed us how to generate extra business through networking. Barbara has a rich background in many facets of communications and she described vividly what networking entails. For a reference Barbara recommended Truth or delusion—busting networking’s biggest myths by Ivan Misner which she donated as our door prize. Here’s my version of some of the points she made.

An image
When you go to the hardware store to buy a hammer and nails, you don’t really want the hammer and nails; what you want is to have the picture hanging on the wall. When you go to the Chamber of Commerce to network, it’s not the network that you want but peer support, education and more clients.

Types of networks
TV networks link lots of television sets to a source. Be it cable or wireless, it’s a one-way link. Computer networks connect lots of computers with two-way links. Neural networks link neurons, and our thoughts, in a multidimensional network, like a three-dimensional map with everything from small fire-trails to big eight-lane highway connections. Just as a dirt track becomes a highway from the growing volume of traffic, so do neural pathways develop from repetition. A once-only event with intense emotion can also generate such connections. This three-dimensional network supports our reticular activation network. It is the reason we can enjoy puns and why, when we drive out with our brand new car, we suddenly see so many like it on the road!

The key word is link. Networking links up people to give business and to get business. It nurtures relationships and trust.

Hunting versus farming
When I network I link with other people, repeatedly. From this repetition develops a relationship and, with time, trust. I go to network functions, not to hunt for a prey, but to cultivate a fertile environment (relationships) which will produce more business from which I can generate income. Good networking is definitely not hunting; it’s very much like farming.

Truth and delusions
‘I’m not a people person.’
Whether you think you’re an introvert or an extrovert, you, we all have two ears and one mouth, to be used accordingly! A good networker need not be a ‘people person’ at all. Improvement is possible, no matter how shy you might consider yourself to be. Become an ambassador, build trust. The ambassador greets guests at functions ‘Welcome to our event, whom would you like to meet?’ That way you get to know the newcomers as well as your fellow members.

How do you do that? Ask questions, and listen. A good conversationalist is one who listens well. Become a great conversationalist. And if you don’t know what questions to ask, here are ten that will turn you into the friendliest, most interesting and riveting conversationalist:

• How did you get started in your business, industry, profession?
• What do you enjoy most about being a ...?
• What changes have you seen over the years?
• What separates you from the competition?
• What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
• What do you see as the coming trends?
• What advice would you give someone starting out in your business, industry, profession?
• What is the funniest thing that ever happened to you as a ...?
• What has worked best at promoting your business?
• How can I help you?

Each question draws out various matters of interest to your interlocutor. The question about trends, for instance, will bring up issues that are uppermost in their mind, perhaps things causing them problems.

The ‘what was the funniest thing’ question gives you enjoyment and a mental picture of them. Your reticular activation network will snap it up and anchor that mental picture in your mind, so you’ll remember them. It’s a good strategy to use when you introduce yourself: a positive emotion attached to you will stick in their mind.

‘It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.’
No it’s not. It’s not who you know, it’s how well you know them. The more you know someone, the more you can give them.

So don’t just be a contact, be a connection. Would you give your car keys to someone to whom you give your email address, to a contact, or to someone with whom you have a genuine connection? Allow relationships to mature, turn contacts into connections and deepen the value of your relationships.

Neither is networking about collecting business cards. It’s about getting to know individuals. When you are given a card, write on the back of it something about the person you just met.

Networking practices
It’s simple but not easy. And it’s definitely net-work, not net-sit, net-eat or net-drink.

Review your current strategies. How many network functions do you need to attend, how often? How many new clients do you want? Set a goal for 2007: 10, 4, 2? How many clients did you get last year? You know that one definition of insanity is to keep doing what you are doing while expecting different results, so what changes do you need to make?

(continued on page 5)
Fiddly bits—the proposal and the quote

Groan! Yes, I agree, this is probably the most fiddly area that an editor has to deal with.

I wrote broadly about quoting in By the Way, January 2002 in The Canberra Editor, so this time I’m writing a sort of ‘running order’ based on a number of my own quotes.

Where to begin? First, read the ad for an editor carefully, or listen carefully if it’s a phone call. Watch for indications of what level of skill is required, what they think the document requires to make it readable/publishable. If there are actual selection criteria in the ad, make sure you can address every one of them confidently and succinctly. You may have to send for the selection criteria. What if there are no selection criteria? This is often the case with non-government organisations. In that case, get clues from the ad, and contact the organisation for further details.

Is it a government job? Government departments often, but not always, ask you to sign a standard government contract. These are ‘one size fits all’ so a lot of what’s in them does not apply to editors. Most government departments will listen to reason—put up a case for varying the clauses in the contract to suit you and the editing job, and they are likely to go along with you.

These contracts also often include a demand that you take out massive insurance. Again, if this seems unreasonable to you, put up a case for reducing the amount or cutting out the requirement altogether. I have done this on many occasions, and have found government departments and agencies very reasonable. If there is no contract, it is in your own interests to make sure that you get agreement in writing to your proposal for tackling the assignment. Then, if things go wrong, or if the job changes along the way, you have your proposal and their agreement to refer to when you need to write a supplementary quote. This is particularly important when working for friends—keep business on a businesslike footing.

Now it’s time to put in an expression of interest. This can be a quite general document—often just a letter saying little more than that you are interested and why (perhaps because the material is in your own field), and offering to quote for the job after you have been sent a suitable sample of the document. Never quote for a job before you have seen it. Some organisations want an hourly rate before anything happens at all. Resist giving this too early, but if you have to, give a range of rates and list some of the variables—level of edit that might be required, degree of complexity of the document, pressure cooker deadline, and so on.

When you receive a reasonable sample of the text, you can get started on the task of getting the job. First you need to assess the job for yourself—define it in terms of what you see needs to be done and why, no matter what the client might have said. Refer to last month’s article Fiddly Bits—Project Definition. This stage includes timing yourself to see how long it takes you to edit some sample pages. From this you can work out your hourly rate for the level of edit you deem necessary. Add on time and charges for administrative work, consultations, possible research and so on; and consider the level of difficulty of the job—charge more for a really difficult job than for a simple, straightforward job.

I believe the client is entitled to know how you propose to go about the work—I like to set out a step-by-step timeline for aspects of work—charting the project. A numbered list of steps might include:

1 rough hard copy check, listing grammatical and stylistic problems and inconsistencies
2 detailed analysis for discussion
3 planning consultation (it’s customary not to charge for an initial consultation)
4 on-screen edit using Track Changes
5 allowance of ‘x’ hours for additional consultations
6 amendments as necessary and send to client

Then I tell the client what IS included and what IS NOT included—I might include making extra copies of each section of the document for discussion with the client, and I might exclude checking a bibliography for anything other than spelling, typos and inconsistency of formatting (depending on the job, of course). You will end up with the number of hours you estimate for completion of the edit, a short list of inclusions and exclusions, and an estimate of how long overall you expect to take working on this job. Editing is an intensive activity that nobody can do for long at a stretch, so a task you estimate will take 40 hours will, of course, take more like two weeks, as you need to spread those hours over a longer time than two days.

When can you start? You need to tell them about your availability, and take into consideration any other jobs you are working on at present. Can you work on two or three jobs at once? Or do you need to wait until the present job is finished first?

A very important paragraph is your disclaimer. You are an editor and you are suggesting or recommending certain alterations that, in your view, will make the document more readable for the target audience. You need to tell the client that your alterations are recommendations only and that they are free to accept or reject any or all of them. But the client also needs to know that you will not be responsible for any repercussions should your advice not be taken, or should other alterations be made after you and the client have agreed that the job has been

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completed satisfactorily. Also use this paragraph to tell the client that, if the assignment alters significantly while in progress, you have the right to submit a revised quote to cover the additional costs you would incur.

Now you are ready to give the client your estimate of time required (broad or detailed) and your rate(s) for doing the work. Don’t be backward about hours—you are entitled to work at a steady rate, not breakneck speed, and you need time for all the extras (the fiddly bits), and the client has to be prepared to pay for them.

As to hourly rates, you may need to quote more than one rate for an assignment—one rate perhaps for copy-editing and another for project management, research and so on. Check with others doing similar work if you don’t know what rate to charge—this is a very difficult area for new editors. Don’t undersell yourself, but perhaps charge a little less than the industry average if this is your first job.

Set the actual quote out clearly, showing your basic rate, plus GST if applicable, and finally the total. Give a time limit, perhaps 14 days, for consideration of your quote.

Say how you propose to invoice (for example, on completion or monthly). Also say how you prefer to be paid—cheque or direct credit. Be careful about giving bank details in an email to anyone you are not sure of.

End with a polite, interested paragraph, mentioning the addressee’s name, and offering to give further detail if required.

Mail it or email it and get on with your current work—watching the letterbox won’t make the job come to you any faster!

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(Our March speaker, continued from page 3)

One of the best things you can do is to increase the diversity of your networks. There are four types of network organisations:

• those with strong contact, structure and systems, with high synergy, such as BNI weekly meetings
• those with casual contact, such as monthly breakfast groups, generally for hunters
• service organisations, such as Apex
• professional groups outside your immediate field, such as the graphic designers’ association.

With all of these you can build relationship and trust, for instance, by offering to be their secretary or newsletter editor. Givers gain, develop ways to contribute, make ‘how can I help you?’ your motto.

BNI’s system and structure

BNI has over 4000 chapters in 36 countries. It uses a franchised replicated system: a set structure, set agenda, only one person per business category per chapter to maximise synergy. BNI meets weekly, from 7.00 to 8.30 am, only 90 minutes per week.

Why then? One, because during business hours we do business; chapter meetings during the day don’t work because stuff happens! Two, because parking is easier.

BNI relies on the power of your story. You have one minute to illustrate how what you do can help other members grow their business. Give them an emotion-triggering picture of how you make a difference. Hang your picture in their mind.

Is it worth it? You could expect your 72 hours per year investment to return $20 000, about $275 per hour.

We take it for granted that people are nobody; until we talk to them. Talk to the person who pours the coffee. At your next dinner, sit next to someone you don’t know. Ask questions. See what happens.

As you can see, we all walked away with solid notions which we could apply in everyday life. In a nutshell, it’s not about networking, it’s about the picture on the wall, and yours in their mind!

Gil Garcon <edit@lizzy.com.au>

You can reach Barbara at <barbara@bni.com.au>

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors

Editors in Conversation (Australian Scholarly Publishing) was launched by Gina Mercer, editor, Island magazine, at the IPEd National Conference in Hobart on 10 May.

Honorary Life Members from Canberra, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia are featured, including Beryl Hill, Loma Snooks, Robyn Colman and Sheila Allison. This is the first publication in a planned series profiling Australian editors, edited by Kerry Biram, Diane Brown and Jenny Craig. Copies will be available for direct sale to all editors society members after the launch.

In 2007 our interview program with honorary life members will continue. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the Occasional Series 2007 program, please contact the convenor: Diane Brown <dianeb@netspace.net.au>.

OSAE 2007 working group: Kerry Biram, Diane Brown, Jenny Craig, Deborah Candy.
Thinking about words: euphuism and Mrs M

In place of desertion, the euphuism ‘stragglers’ was instituted to save face... From ‘The Anzac tale they don’t tell in schools’, Canberra Times, 21 April 2007

...and their flocks, but was also supposedly responsible for sudden unreasoning terror, hence panic.

And, finally, that malapropism? The term came into English around 1660, not from the Greek but from a French phrase mal à propos (inappropriate). However, nowadays we usually attribute it to Mrs Malaprop in Sheridan’s 1775 play, The Rivals. Poor Mrs M. was constantly trying to use sophisticated words and figures of speech, and instead finding a wrong word that made absolute nonsense. An example from the play is, ‘He’s as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile’, but many others have enjoyed the word play since. Thus, from the TV show Kath and Kim, ‘I want to be effluent mum!’ ‘You are effluent Kimi.’

And so I leave with the heartfelt wish that all you hard-working editors will remain euphemistic and continue to enjoy the effluence you so richly deserve.

Peter Judge

The table below forms an attachment to a letter I have signed as President of our society and co-signed by Barry Howarth, President of the ACT Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers. The letter is addressed to the Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It is the result of concerns I have heard from many of our members over the past two years, which are shared by our colleagues in the indexers’ society, whose initiative this was. The committees of both societies have had substantial input into the successive drafts of the letter. I would welcome any comment from CSE members on the issues and possible solutions outlined in the table.

Virginia Wilton

Possible improvements to the annual report production process

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<th>Issues/concerns</th>
<th>Possible solutions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of guidelines/advice for staff</td>
<td>PM&amp;C could produce guidelines to accompany the current requirements. These could include information on: how to organise contributions from within the department; who is responsible for various contents; developing and maintaining internal and external lines of communication; timetabling and approvals required; how to find and engage contract professionals; detailed requirements for editors and indexers re depth and style of work; and a checklist of key processes.</td>
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<td>PM&amp;C could explain the process/steps involved and produce a checklist/proposed timeline for annual report production.</td>
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<td>APSC could offer training (outsourced initially, if necessary) that includes information not only on mandatory requirements but also on the production side of annual reports and the work of the contract professionals involved.</td>
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<td>The annual report seminar run each year should be held earlier.</td>
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<td>Lack of priority assigned to annual reports</td>
<td>PM&amp;C or APSC should send out a note to all CEOs and annual report staff about the importance and role of annual reports.</td>
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<td>CEOs need to take a personal interest and impress on all staff that the annual report is a vital, flagship product.</td>
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<td>High turnover of staff</td>
<td>Provide incentives (monetary or otherwise) for staff to do the job initially and to make it a 2 or 3 year contract.</td>
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<td>Publicise and make greater use of the online networking forum for project managers/coordinators.</td>
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<td>Make it a condition of the job to produce a ‘learnings’ report before leaving</td>
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<td>If there is satisfaction with an annual report, encourage project managers to use the same contract staff again – this will help address the issue of ‘reinventing the wheel’.</td>
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<td>Lack of understanding re lead time/timelines</td>
<td>Explain to contributors the long lead time involved and the need to meet all deadlines throughout the process.</td>
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<td>Encourage the project manager to get the process started early – before July – so that timelines can be met.</td>
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<td>Explain that, because of the small pool of professional indexers available nationally, they must be engaged well ahead of time (this could also apply to other contract professionals).</td>
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<td>Timelines developed but not adhered to</td>
<td>Explain that if agreed timelines are not met, the whole process is at risk, including the editing, indexing, printing and tabling</td>
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<td>Advise corporate areas to organise photos/other images as early as possible so this doesn’t hold things up.</td>
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<td>Undue pressure on professionals and loss of income</td>
<td>Explain to staff from the beginning that editors/indexers do several reports, so if timelines aren’t met, the editing or indexing component may not get done. This puts the quality of the whole report at risk.</td>
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(From the President, continued from page 1)

The results of the vote show that, understandably, people feel more equivocal about accreditation than about IPEd. I urge all those who feel passionately about this issue to get actively involved.

As I said earlier, now the real work begins: finalising a constitution, legal incorporation and, in parallel, designing and setting up a workable accreditation scheme. The interim IPEd Council will be having two lengthy meetings before and after the national conference in Hobart next week (last week, by the time you’re reading this). I hope that I will have seen some at least of you at the conference, which promises to be a fascinating experience.

Virginia Wilton

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New members March–April 2007

Canberra Society of Editors welcomes as new full members Julian Fleetwood, Margaret Millard, Susan Moore and Charles Bostle. New associate members are Dr Chris Johnson and Brian Akhurst.

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Newsletter schedule

The next newsletter will appear in June 2007 and the copy deadline for this issue is 9 June.
The editor welcomes contributions by email to peter.judge@bigpond.com, using Word for Windows, for PC or Mac.

Onscreen editing workshop

This workshop had to be postponed because of the absence overseas of one of the speakers. It will now be held on 30 June. For details please see our web notice board at <www.editorscanberra.org/notices.htm>.