

# THE CANBERRA editor

Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

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## From the CSE President and Committee

### CSE meeting with IPEd, 29 May 2017

IPEd has now been up and running for almost a year, and they invited CSE to meet for a chat.

Those present for IPEd were Karen Lee (IPEd CEO), Kerry Davies (IPEd Chair) and Julie Ganner (NSW Branch President—those CSE members who joined IPEd will mostly have been assigned to the NSW Branch). CSE was represented by Johann Idriss (President), Eris Harrison (Vice-President), Alan Cummine (Immediate Past President), Elizabeth Manning Murphy and Ted Briggs.

The meeting was informal, over lunch, and respectful on both sides. IPEd representatives updated us on progress and on ways IPEd is working to resolve some of the challenges that inevitably arise with a start-up. The Company Secretary and Administration roles have been more clearly defined, new financial systems are in place, and staffing appears to be stable at this point. They are optimistic about the future, in the light of some serious strategic planning, priority setting and system development undertaken recently. From the massive list of goals in the White Papers, IPEd is continuing to refine and to focus on the immediate possibilities. Karen has met with several key organisations, including the Australian Publishers Association, the Australian Society of Authors, the Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, and the Copyright Agency to promote IPEd and editors' interests. The Associations Forum is working with IPEd and will assist with reviewing the Constitution which is likely to lead to changes. The first IPEd AGM is to be held in Brisbane on the afternoon of Thursday 14 September 2017, during the [8th IPEd National Editors Conference](#).

IPEd would, of course, like CSE to become part of IPEd in the fullness of time. CSE's concerns were discussed, and we were assured that they will all be taken into consideration in the upcoming constitutional review. We emphasised that some of our concerns remain serious sticking points for our members and that some of these would require constitutional change. IPEd undertook to respond afresh to our list of outstanding issues.

CSE believes that our Society is operating very efficiently and effectively for members. We would, however, welcome a speaker from IPEd down the track, as changes are made, to inform our members of the situation and the options. Julie Ganner also agreed to visit when the time is right, to explain to CSE members some of the practicalities of being in an IPEd Branch.

The meeting was convivial and collegiate, and it was also informative and useful. CSE and IPEd will continue to cooperate on national issues such as academic-editing standards. While nothing will change structurally in the near future, those present agreed that progress is being made, and that the issue of CSE's possible future inclusion in IPEd was one for ongoing discussion, particularly following the planned constitutional review.

### CSE President and Committee

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**ADVANCING**  
OUR PROFESSION

8th IPEd National Editors Conference  
13-15 September 2017, Brisbane

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To see the program  
and to register,  
visit [here](#).

The much-anticipated program for the 8th IPEd National Editors Conference has been launched. In line with the theme of the conference, *Advancing Our Profession*, the program features three streams of presentations and panels across two days, preceded by a day of workshops.

In the *Building Alliances* stream, sessions include a look at the challenges of editing theses, an emerging leaders forum, the importance of building relationships, an indexers panel and a building alliances panel with guests from other industry organisations.

Under the *Professional Development* banner, there will be panels about mentoring and freelancing, as well as sessions on being an editee, working with contracts and postgraduate theses and a session by the recipient of the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship.

The final stream is *Technology*, which includes a look at baby boomers and millennials, the benefits of screencasting for editors and sessions on editing scientific and educational digital publications. It also includes a panel on accreditation for editors.

A highlight of this year's event is the inaugural Rosanne Fitzgibbon Editorial Award at the conference dinner. Known as the Rosie, the award commemorates the contribution to Australian publishing by the late Rosanne Fitzgibbon.

The conference's three keynote speakers are *The Courier-Mail* cartoonist Sean Leahy, linguist and regular ABC Radio guest Professor Roly Sussex and author and publisher Sophie Cunningham. More detail about their sessions will be announced in the coming months.

This year's IPEd conference is hosted by Editors Queensland. The conference will be held from 13 to 15 September 2017 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Early-bird registration is available until 13 July.

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## Membership

A warm welcome to the following new members!

### Full members

Kate Le Strange  
Leanne Manthorpe  
Terry Johnston

### Corporate members

Early Childhood Australia  
(Christopher Jones)

### Associate members

Isabella Edquist  
Malcolm Scott  
Penelope Royston

### Student member

Todd Herzman

Members joining after July 1 2016 have calendar year membership from the date they have paid their initial fees. Existing members as at July 1 2016 have a renewal date of 1 July; this means it's time to renew your membership.

Email reminders have been sent to all financial members. Thank you to all who have renewed so promptly.

### Linda Weber AE

Membership Secretary and  
Public Officer

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## IPEd National Mentoring Program

### Editing workshops available during the conference

During the conference, there's a workshop to suit any of your editing interests.

Workshops will be held on Wednesday 13 September at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre at Southbank. Early-bird workshop rates apply until 13 July.

The workshop schedule includes Dr Lisa Lines's class on how to use IPEd's *Guidelines for editing research theses* in a changing tertiary environment, including identifying the line between copyediting and rewriting a thesis for a student writing in English as a second (or third) language.

Belinda Pollard will impart her tips on how to make a tangible imprint in the virtual world. The workshop will help you navigate social media, work out how to attract your ideal customer, and tweak your online presence.

Hilary Cadman will present a workshop on EndNote for editors to help academic editors, and those interesting in getting into the field, learn about the fundamentals of the referencing software. Researchers commonly use EndNote to capture their publication outputs and source material.

Jackey Coyle's workshop will offer her key steps to managing yourself as an employee, including promotion, finance, and juggling your priorities.

Ann Bolch will show workshop participants how a fresh set of eyes can take a new view of a manuscript, identify the missing pieces and help your author add more flesh to their story through manuscript development. This workshop is particularly useful for editors of fiction.

Register for the IPEd national conference and workshops [here](#) and follow @IPEd\_Conf on Twitter for updates.

### Christine Atkinson

IPEd conference communications, Editors Qld

### Next steps for our program

Since we last met in these pages, there have been a couple of developments that we hope all readers will be interested in:

First, the 'management team' of the program has now been convened as a **standing committee of IPEd**, with Ted Briggs AE and Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE as joint chairs and remaining joint national coordinators of the program. The state coordinators around Australia comprise the rest of the committee. The resolution below was passed at IPEd Council's meeting in November 2016 and recently passed on to us in Canberra:

*Resolution: That the IPEd Mentoring Standing Committee be convened with its members consisting of branch mentoring coordinators of the mentoring program and jointly chaired by Ted Briggs and Elizabeth Manning Murphy as national mentoring coordinators.*

Second, our bid to host a **panel discussion about mentoring at the IPEd Conference in Brisbane** this year was accepted. Ted and Elizabeth will host the discussion on Friday afternoon, 15 September, with panellists consisting of two mentors of editors (Carolyn Leslie and Lorna Hendry, both from Victoria) and their respective mentees, Simone Beever and Kate Hawkins, plus Marisa Wikramanayaka (WA) joining the panel to discuss mentoring for writers. We hope that some of the state coordinators on the standing committee will be able to attend the conference and join in part of the discussion. In any event, coordinators plan to have lunch together on that Friday and as our presentation is

the last before afternoon tea, we hope conference delegates will take the opportunity to talk to us over a cuppa about mentoring and being mentored in our program.

### More about our state coordinators

In this issue of *The Canberra editor*, we are featuring two more state coordinators: Geoff Dawson, our ACT coordinator in the Canberra Society of Editors—always one of the smaller groups in Australia; and Louise Zedda-Sampson who looks after the interests of the program in Victoria—no mean feat as Victoria is the largest branch of IPEd. Here they are, in photos and words, for you to meet:

## Mentoring in the ACT

IPEd's mentoring program for editors is going strong with some new contacts in the ACT following up a talk that Elizabeth Manning Murphy and I gave to the CSE's general meeting on 22 February. If you missed the talk but you're interested in being mentored or offering to be a mentor, you'll be welcome. Any aspect of editing or related business topics is fair game (there are suggestions in the [Guidance Notes on the IPEd website](#)).

Prospective mentors attend a Skype workshop facilitated by the national coordinators. The workshop is free, and anyone interested in being a mentor in the program can attend. Existing mentors who'd like a refresher are also welcome. The workshop discusses what it means to be a mentor and runs through some case studies. We expect that there will be a workshop before IPEd's September conference.

If you're interested in being mentored or offering to be a mentor, or if you're an existing mentor and you'd like to attend a Skype workshop as a refresher (we'd encourage this), send me a quick email and I'll be happy to get back to you to discuss further.

### Geoff Dawson AE

ACT Mentoring Coordinator, and  
CSE Treasurer  
[geoffdawsoneditor@gmail.com](mailto:geoffdawsoneditor@gmail.com)  
0410 251 063



**Geoff Dawson** writes: 'I've had a varied career as a language teacher, a historic buildings specialist, and for many years a researcher, writer and editor in parliamentary committees. In 2014 I decided to go back to my first love, language. I now divide my time between freelance nonfiction editing and editing Hansard transcripts of the Australian Parliament. My special interests are making technical topics more accessible to general readers and teaching grammar in a way that is most useful to time-poor adults who want to improve their writing skills. If you're interested in being either a mentor or a mentee in the ACT, I'd love to talk to you.' To contact Geoff, email [geoffdawsoneditor@gmail.com](mailto:geoffdawsoneditor@gmail.com).



**Louise Zedda-Sampson** is a freelance writer and editor with a passion for clear communication and the written word. She has a Diploma of Professional Writing and Editing and writes fiction and nonfiction; her writing interests range from horror to history. Her editing interests have been an assortment of survivor stories, business documents, intergalactic wars, psychology papers, and fictional tales of the Aztec underworld. As the current IPEd Mentorship Coordinator for Editors Victoria and a former mentee, Louise sees the value in the Mentoring Program and enjoys the role of helping mentees and mentors to find suitable matches. Louise says, 'The mentoring program allowed me to develop my confidence and my skills. I had an excellent mentor, and without this guidance I would not be where I am today. I'm forever grateful for the kindness and encouragement shown by my mentor that has assisted me to be a better editor, and I enjoy helping others to obtain the same result.' To contact Louise, email [mentorship@editorsvictoria.org](mailto:mentorship@editorsvictoria.org).

We hope to bring you two more state coordinators next issue. Meantime, here are the email addresses of the rest of the team—wherever you are reading this article, do contact the coordinator in your state for information about the Mentoring Program:

Roberta Blake (Qld) [roberta.r.blake@gmail.com](mailto:roberta.r.blake@gmail.com)

Shannon Kelly (NSW) [shannon.tyler.kelly@gmail.com](mailto:shannon.tyler.kelly@gmail.com)

Catherine Schwerin (WA) [caschwerin@gmail.com](mailto:caschwerin@gmail.com)

Adele Walker AE (SA) [adeleanderson@aapt.net.au](mailto:adeleanderson@aapt.net.au)

Sheelagh Wegman AE (Tas) [wegmans@internode.on.net](mailto:wegmans@internode.on.net)

**Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE**  
[emmurphy.words@gmail.com](mailto:emmurphy.words@gmail.com)  
Joint National Coordinators

**with Ted Briggs AE**  
[tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au](mailto:tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au)



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## CSE March General Meeting

### Styling Style Sheets

CSE member, Dr Lisa Lines AE, delivered a lively and practical explanation of Style Sheets—their form, function and use. Lisa spoke to an exceptionally large group of attendees at the CSE General Meeting on Wednesday 29 April. Clearly, this was a topic of great interest to the mix of novice, intermediate and experienced editors who attended.

Lisa emphasised the importance of creating a Style Sheet, as a guide to both editors and authors. An editor can consult it if they are working on a long document to ensure consistency, and an author may use it as a guideline if changes to the text need to be made following the edit.

All style decisions should be included. Examples of choices that might need to be set out included: spaced en-dashes or non-spaced em-dashes; referencing styles, particularly for newish sources such as YouTube; use of shortened forms; any single word that seems to be a hazard in terms of spelling, hyphenation, capitalisation or italicisation; and any common author errors. Lisa discussed the benefits and disadvantages of using the Microsoft Word Comment function rather than the Style Sheet, and she handed around a sample Style Sheet which included a number of different recording areas. Several of these were discussed. Lisa promised to distribute an exercise for members, and this was distributed later via a broadcast email to CSE members.

Communication with the author will determine exactly how much information the author wants, but it is an editor's role to do everything possible to ensure that achieving consistency is easy. The author needs to be made aware that, if the style recommendations are rejected, they may need to search for instances that the Style Sheet use already exists, in order to change those to the preferred option.

Questions abounded, and the discussion continued to the point where we had to rush to leave the Library by the 8 pm deadline. Lisa is to be congratulated on a presentation that clearly hit the mark.

#### **Eris Jane Harrison AE**

CSE Vice-President

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## April General Meeting

### The ins and outs of EndNote

Dr Farid Rahimi—scientist, editor and overseer of *The Canberra editor*—was guest speaker at April's monthly meeting. He provided a detailed overview of EndNote X8, which is a very handy software package for managing research citations and generating bibliographies. Farid's talk was hands-on and heavily illustrated, so I've organised my notes as a series of tips rather than prose. Training videos are available on the [EndNote YouTube channel](#), so users may want to consult the videos for more information. Anyway ...

#### Getting started

To generate a new EndNote library, use menu items File > New. When you save your new library EndNote will generate two files with suffixes .enl and .data. It is important to keep these together.

To open an EndNote library use File > Open > Library.

#### Looking at an EndNote library

An EndNote library has four panes. The left column is the 'groups' panel, the top pane is the search window (search options include Boolean searches), the right pane shows details of the selected reference, and the rest of the screen displays the library contents.

Panes may be resized by grabbing and dragging their edges with your mouse.

You can click on column headings (e.g. 'Author') to organise/alphabetise the contents according to that column.

## So much style!

EndNote has over 6,000 styles to use to alter the layout of your formatted bibliography to suit the style of a target journal.

EndNote's default style uses hyphens rather than en-dashes for page ranges. You may want to find these and replace with en-dashes in your Word document.

It is possible to modify styles, but always use 'save as' rather than overwriting the original style in case you need the original style again in future.

## Sharing EndNote libraries

**Don't** share EndNote libraries via the Cloud or Dropbox as eventually files become corrupted.

You can export references to a travelling library from a Word document (note that some information, such as the abstract, will be missing). You can do this if someone gives you a Word document with EndNote field codes but you don't have their EndNote library. Once you've opened a travelling library you can alter styles.

## Populating your library with references

EndNote has three 'mode' buttons on the top left of the screen (beneath the File and Edit menus); these can be used to access your own and external databases. The middle mode button allows you to search online. Use a Boolean search to find references that fit your criteria, then highlight relevant entries and save to your local library. This will import all details of each reference, including abstracts.

Alternatively, you can search particular databases (e.g. PubMed) for your search terms, then use 'send to citation manager' and import into your library.

If you download data for a citation and the full text is publicly available (or you have a subscription), it will download the PDF as well as the citation data. You can then open the PDF from within EndNote.

To import a PDF file use menu items File > Import > File, browse to desired PDF, then import.

## Tidying up

To clean up library references use menu items References > Find Duplicates. Retain the more complete version of the reference.

If there are inconsistencies in your EndNote library (e.g. some journal names are written in full in some places and in other places they are abbreviated) you can import a complete Journal Term List via Tools > Open Term Lists. This can save a lot of manual cleaning up.

## Citing research in Microsoft Word documents

To insert a citation in a Word document, position your mouse cursor where you want the citation to go, click the EndNote tab, then click Insert Citation. This will bring up a box where you can search for the reference and insert it. Once the citation has appeared in your text, right mouse click the citation to bring up some options: you may want to edit the citation so that, say, particular details are excluded or added. Once you've added citations to your document in this way, they will appear in a reference list at the end of the document in the style you have specified.

The EndNote X8 tab in Word communicates with EndNote. Use this to choose styles.

Toggle field codes in Word to see the code sitting behind EndNote references.

*Don't* accidentally remove field codes by using 'paste text only'.

*Don't* make edits to formatted in-text citations or reference lists (in Word) as reformatting will remove them. Instead, copy the list without the final paragraph mark, then paste into a new document, to show references without field codes; or paste the text as unformatted text in a new document.

### EndNote Web

You can set up an account (free of charge) and share with others: [www.myendnoteweb.com](http://www.myendnoteweb.com).

### Getting help

EndNote's help file is extensive and searchable.

Want to try EndNote? Download a free 30-day-trial version: <http://endnote.com/downloads/30-day-trial>.

### Karin Hosking AE ELS

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## May General Meeting



### Entertaining Editing

The last night of Autumn was chilly, but those who stayed in front of the fire missed a very interesting CSE meeting. We heard from Allan Sko, who has the distinction of being the step-grandson of CSE's Distinguished Editor and Honorary Life Member, Elizabeth Manning Murphy, but who is also a serious achiever in his own right. Allan spoke about his association with BMA, the monthly entertainment magazine, and his progress from writer to editor and ultimately to owner/publisher.

Allan always wanted to be a writer, and finding work with BMA was a dream. After a few years, the editor left for the coast, and Allan was asked to take over. He enjoyed the work so much that he took a half share in the business and, when his partner wanted out, bought that partner out and became sole proprietor.

Allan is an entertaining speaker, and his slide show was full of detailed information and sound advice. He likes the magazine to have personality and flair, but there are style guidelines which writers are expected to follow. Almost all work published is original, which creates significant work for the editor in ensuring that tone, SPG (spelling, punctuation and grammar!), style and detail are consistent. Nurturing and educating writers is a big part of the job. The idea is to be positive about arts practice and, while giving fair reviews, to encourage local practitioners to create and to introduce and welcome far-flung creative visitors to the ACT Region.

InDesign and Photoshop are the essential tools of office, and Allan talked us through a model layout.

A lively question session created additional discussion around issues such as online publications, keeping star ratings consistent across a varied group of writers, and finding new writers and areas of interest. After the talk, we scoffed the rest of Mary's ginger cake and headed back to our warm hearths.

### Eris Jane Harrison AE

CSE Vice-President

A Big Thank You



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## The truth ... anything or nothing but

A hypothetical: you're very happy to be offered a well-paid job—nonfiction—especially as the cupboard is pretty bare, but when you start to read the copy, you find that it's far from nonfiction; in fact, it's a pack of lies aiming to delude the reader into believing the opposite of the truth. What do you do? Do you apply your best editing skills to make the lies as slick as possible? Do you give the job your worst shot because you're totally uncommitted to it, but you need the money? Do you return the job, telling the client, maybe in no uncertain terms, that you can't condone the promulgation of blatant dishonesty? Do you consult your colleagues to see what they think? There may be other possible responses, including nervous collapse.

The recent emergence of wide and intense discussion about post-truth, truthiness, alternative facts and fake news got me thinking about responses to such a scenario. My interest was further stimulated by reading in the Fairfax press, just before last Christmas, the obituary of one Seumas Phelan '[sub-editor extraordinaire who campaigned for rights of workers](#)'. Of Seumas it was written there that, among other things:

In an era when the skills and importance of sub-editors have been sidelined, Phelan's recent death reminds us that the subjunctive is not subjective. The reams of condolence emails and Facebook posts that followed his death were warily written—crafted and reread to ensure no grammatical or spelling errors—paying tribute to the perfection he sought to bring to print.

'Those were the days', many regular readers of the daily news would have been thinking. It's new world now, in which subeditors have been much more than sidelined; they are on the critically endangered list and there are no moves to save the species. It's hard to miss the all kinds of grammatical and vocabular horrors and howlers that are, as a result, now multiplying exponentially in printed newspapers and their online derivatives.

'Subbies' were the linchpins of newspaper production. They did the bulk of the in-house work needed to get out the daily edition, from writing, rewriting, editing and proofreading text, and fashioning headlines, to verifying information and story details and making sure that reports were accurate and did not compromise legality. Now that they're almost gone, who checks for truth? Has their demise contributed to the rise and rise of post-truth, simply by default?

Given the rapid news cycle, journalists submitting their stories might now often be under so much pressure that they are neither inclined nor have the time to make such checks. Perhaps they avoid stories where such checks would be needed, resulting in a dumbing-down of the news. This leads inevitably to the question: Does anybody care what's happening? That some agencies do as evidenced by the multiplication of in-house and standalone fact-checking units. One can take some heart from this, but it makes one think why the subbies were shafted in the first place.<sup>1</sup>

Where do publications editors in their various guises stand in all this? Many of us might see ourselves in a wider world of publishing as, to some degree or other, akin to the subbies. If indeed we are such—and have a future—are we committed defenders of the truth? Should we be? Section A4 of the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* deals with legal and ethical matters, but makes no mention of 'truth' or its analogues. Does this need attention, particularly in the current climate? Should our national body consider augmenting the standards to cover the issues raised here, or even perhaps develop a separate code of ethics or conduct for its members? Returning to our hypothetical and defining ethics as *the basis for choosing between conflicting responsibilities*, the drafting and promulgation of such a code might inform and provide reassurance to editors and their clients.

**Ed Highley**  
Honorary Life Member

1. At the beginning of April, Fairfax Media announced [yet another] restructure, this one aiming to save its editorial budget \$30m next year. According to one commentator, this would entail a 25 per cent reduction in the number of metropolitan editorial staff. The editorial director of the company said that an outcome of the reduction would be a cut in stories from 9,000 to 6,000 per month.



### Macquarie Dictionary, Seventh Edition

2017, Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, an imprint of Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Ltd

Printed: 1792 pages (ISBN: 9781742619811)

Macquarie online: \$120

Booktopia: \$83.25 (around when this newsletter published)

Review by Ed Highley, CSE's Honorary Life Member

#### Hail to the new *Macquarie*

The new edition of the *Macquarie Dictionary*—the seventh—published on the last day of February this year—is a thing of beauty twice over: it comes in two volumes, A–K and L–Z. When not being interrogated, the two return to intimacy in a robust but elegant slipcase.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* is promoted and subtitled as 'Australia's National Dictionary'. Who could dispute this, given its more than forty-year publication record? I'm nevertheless curious as to why, between the sixth and seventh editions, the title and subtitle have been transposed.

The new edition, sans slipcase, weighs in at just under four kilograms, about the same as the previous edition. Now, however, with two volumes, it becomes less of a weightlifting exercise to consult the good book. Some young and athletic authors, and editors keen to stay fit, may see this as a step backwards—there are always losers. The slipcase blurb reports that thousands of new words and senses have been added to the seventh. The seventh edition is at 1,792 pages, around 34 pages more than the sixth edition.

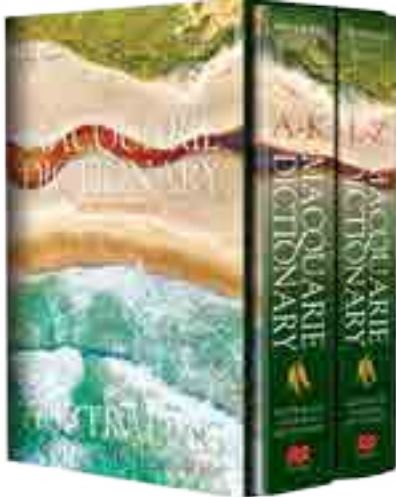
As for previous editions, the design is excellent. These volumes are all-round functional and pleasing to the eye. It's easy to find what you're looking for and, when you get there, access to the information is untrammelled. Typesetting was done in India; the printing in China. Well, they might have made the glasses, but the wine is ours.

The blurb reports that the seventh edition features, as well as the host of new words and senses already mentioned:

- a comprehensive record of English as it is used in Australia [I guess that is just what a national dictionary is meant to do]
- illustrative phrases, many from Australian literature, which show how a word is used in context
- words and phrases from regional Australia [is that another country?]
- extensive usage notes
- etymologies of words and phrases.

There is a foreword—after the contents, I regret—by nationally treasured author Kate Grenville who applauds 'The change in the publishing world that brought about the wealth of Australian writing that we now enjoy also produced the *Macquarie Dictionary* ... The dictionary gave a validity to Australian English that meant that it could no longer be swept aside by foreign editors'. Too bloody right, mate!

The Macquarie Word of the Year 2015 'captain's call' is among the new entries in the seventh edition, as are the honourable mentions for that year, 'lumbersexual' and 'deso', and the people's choice runners-up, 'keyboard warrior' and 'wombat gate'. I initially imagined that 'wombat gate' might refer to a scandal surrounding the failure of a politician to declare the gift of one of these portly marsupials, possibly hairy-nosed, on their register of pecuniary interests. It turns out that it's just a type of farm gate with a bit of a gully under it to let the lumbering beasties in and out during their nocturnal perambulations. Boring.



Production of the new edition was no doubt too far advanced for ‘fake news’, the 2016 winner, to make print. Perhaps by the eighth edition that scourge of the truth will be a thing of the past. One can but hope.

Some entries from earlier editions have disappeared—for example, that for Clarke Gable, star of, among other films, the classic *Gone with the Wind*. Interesting decision. Even-handedness applies, however: Vivien Leigh has also been blown away.

Two of my pet hates are the serial murder and unconscionable dilution of the meanings of the words ‘enormity’ and ‘dilemma’. I was delighted to see that their true primary definitions have been retained by the seventh-edition editorial team. Hyperbolic journos and pollies take note: the enormity of your sins has not gone unnoticed—stick to just the *big problems* guys.

The new edition will cost you between \$83.25 and \$120, depending on where you shop. With your purchase, you will also receive a one-year subscription to the Macquarie Dictionary and Thesaurus online. Awesome!

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## Book review

### **But Can I Start a Sentence with “But”? Advice from the Chicago Style Q&A ...**

By Elisabeth Thomas (With thanks to UCP for the review copy.)

University of Chicago Press, 2016.

ISBN: 9780226370644.

*Review originally published in Editors NSW Blue Pencil November 2016.*

In the last several years (in fact for the last 20 or so years, now that I come to check the publication dates), there has been a trend in publishing to go behind the pages of major or substantial ‘reference book’ tomes and explain their development, workings or content. While authors, including Simon Winchester, David Crystal and Ammon Shea, have explored aspects of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, local works have included Susan Butler’s *The Aitch Factor*, and earlier titles, on the *Macquarie Dictionary*, and Bill Ramson’s *Lexical Images: the Story of the Australian National Dictionary*. Other writers, such as Kate Burridge, Kel Richards, Bill Bryson and others, have written popular works on words and their origins more generally.

Internationally, across the same period, there has been a matching flurry of books for the general market on grammar and its workings. Regular short guides to the long manuals have been joined by works such as the successful *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynn Truss or Mark Treddinick’s *The Little Green Grammar Book*.

One only hopes that these publishing trends not only continue but also come to have some effect on the people actually reading these books then using and applying what they may learn.

In *But Can I Start a Sentence with “But”?* (I’ll call it *But* hereafter), we have something of a blend of such works. Like *The Aitch Factor*, it is a distillation of readers’ feedback to the editors of a reference work and the editors’ responses—but this time it is upon matters of working with style rather than (though not excluding) words themselves.

*The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS)*, published for more than 100 years by the University of Chicago Press, is up to its 16th edition (2010) in hardcopy while online, subscribers can access the 16th and 15th editions. CMOS started a ‘Q&A’ on their website in 1997, though before that time the editors did take telephone queries regarding style. Later, it was decided to compile a monthly column of the choice questions and the



replies. This then proved to be very popular, so despite availability online, there were calls for a collection.

A short foreword by Carol Fisher Saller (editor of the *CMOS* online Q&A) outlines why and how the book came to be.

The book is arranged in seven chapters with interesting, and apt, names like 'It's not so much an issue of correctness as of ickiness' and 'Aaargh! to argh! to aahhh!'. Each chapter is then split into more obvious sections on commas, numbers, formatting and so on. Dilemmas over the usage of proper nouns result in the most coverage at eight pages.

*CMOS* may be one of the major style guides for written communication on the planet, but the editors do not insist upon it as absolute. In fact, many answers pointedly emphasise the guide in style guide:

'What good is a rule that says you can't help the reader when it seems like a good idea?' (on abbreviations),  
and

'You never have to do anything that isn't helpful. If a style guide says you do—you need a better guide' (on initialisms).

The Q&A 'column' has been useful to both the enquirers for advice as well as *CMOS* itself. Comments received have prompted clarifications and heralded changes in style preferences in subsequent editions of *CMOS*.

The answers included in the book incorporate sensible, and at times funny, comments; and are likely to draw mutters of agreement from some, and stern disapproval from other—or even the same—readers.

To answer a serious style problem, you are perhaps more likely to refer to the *CMOS* (or your style manual of choice or necessity).

*But* can be useful as for a quick reminder about a style quandary of the moment: once read, any of the well-chosen examples may spring to mind as a clue when a relevant issue crops up.

It is excellent to see a nine-and-a-half page index in this small book of only 118 pages. If you are not just having a casual browse of *But*, and actually want to make a very quick check on a matter of style at hand, the index is a clear and well-constructed aid.

Even indexing itself is not neglected (as it so often is). A few pages look at 'back of book' problems. The foreword even refers to the index of the online site as 'a killer index'.

The University of Chicago Press editorial staff would be an interesting crowd to meet and chat with. They seek to give 'guidance' and do not condemn as wrong (well, only occasionally—and I expect you will agree with them).

Most answers do explain the stance the editors take, though often they refer back to the relevant section of the *CMOS* in full, so if your interest is particularly piqued on an issue, you will have to chase up a 1.5 kg hardcopy or access to the online version.

They will also readily comment when the problem is more a matter of bad writing that cannot be saved by punctuation or grammar.

The editorial staff will allow themselves the occasional gentle swipe at the questioner:

"Q. ...Me and a fellow copyeditor are at odds.

A. ...(PS I am averting my eyes from 'Me and a fellow copyeditor are at odds'—please tell me this is just your fun e-mail writing style, or if it isn't, that you aren't editing anything important to our national security.)"

I mainly use my hardcopy of *CMOS 16* to seek another opinion on a sticky point or to figure out why an American edited work may have taken a particular position.

*But* is certainly worth a read for interest and amusement, let alone brushing up on style matters, whether or not Chicago is your style.

Those raised across either ocean from CMOS's home may take exception to, or even umbrage at, a few, several or many of the recommendations made within these pages. But do not let that stop you from taking this little tome on the train or onto the lounge with a beverage of choice ... and enjoy agreeing ... or agreeing to disagree.

And should any reader (still) be wondering what position CMOS takes on the titular question: yes, you can.

To read more:

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/latest.html> free to non-subscribers

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/topicList.html> 36 topics

<https://twitter.com/ChicagoManual>

<http://cmosshoptalk.com/>



### **A warm message from the Professional Editors' Guild, South Africa**

The Canberra Society of Editors figures significantly in conversation among editors in

South Africa. Meeting with you this evening in person is indeed a privilege and a pleasure—thank you, Elizabeth, for making this possible. I bring warm greetings from our national organisation, the Professional Editors' Guild, affectionately known as PEG, and its Gauteng branch.

In recent years, the association between our two countries has intensified with our multilingual, multicultural identities as experienced in many different ways in our editing. We have challenges to share and address. May we continue to share ideas and benefit from this valuable connection, especially now that we have digital media supporting us.

Thank you ... and in Afrikaans, one of our eleven official languages: baie dankie.

**Joan Fairhurst**

26 April 2017

[joanfair@global.co.za](mailto:joanfair@global.co.za)

*Joan attended our April General Meeting and delivered this message on behalf of PEG.*

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*The Canberra editor* is distributed to over 140 members of the Canberra Society of Editors, and to state and territory editors societies, affiliated societies, and interested organisations.

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### Schedule for next newsletter

The next edition of *The Canberra editor* will appear in August 2017. The copy deadline for that issue is 15 August.

The editor welcomes contributions by email: [newsletter@editorscanberra.org](mailto:newsletter@editorscanberra.org).

All articles must be in .doc format.