

Next meeting

'A preferential option for the poor': Magazines with a conscience

Wednesday, 14 March 2007

Retro Café

413 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

(Note different venue)

6.30 pm for 7.00 pm

Share in a delicious selection of finger food (including vegetarian). Drinks available at bar prices.

\$25 for members, \$20 for students, \$30 for non-members

The Big Issue and *Eureka Street* have occupied an important and distinct place in Australian publishing for many years, driven by social justice aims and offering a 'preferential option for the poor'. Their role is dramatically different to that of the mainstream media in many ways. Yet these magazines now face the same challenges other publishers face, particularly the need to determine their online or print presence. Join us to hear Alan and Michael discuss the historical role of their magazines and how they have approached the challenges of contemporary publishing.

About the presenters

Alan Attwood is editor of *The Big Issue*, a fortnightly current affairs and entertainment magazine sold on the streets by people experiencing homelessness or long-term unemployment. Previously a journalist for over thirty years, Alan covered events as diverse as the first free elections in South Africa, soccer in Northern Greece, political intrigue in Morocco, four Olympic Games and all four Grand Slam tennis tournaments. He is also the author of two novels: *Breathing Underwater* (1997) and *Burke's Soldier* (2003).

Michael Mullins is editor of *Eureka Street*, a monthly (and briefly bi-monthly) magazine now fifteen years old. *Eureka Street* is committed to telling stories from humane perspectives often lacking in other media. The publication is informed by a

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Catholic moral perspective and its world view is influenced by the outward-looking social mission of the Australian Jesuits. Michael was founding editor of Australia's most visited religious website CathNews.com, and previously worked as information officer for the Jesuit Refugee Service in Rome, and a producer at ABC Radio National.

PLEASE NOTE BOOKING DETAILS

The dinner meetings are organised by volunteer committee members – please assist them in this very time-consuming task by taking note of the following:

- Book with Marta Veroni – email preferred – at <bohemian@melbpc.org.au> or phone (03) 9383 6717.
- Book **STRICTLY before midday on Monday, 12 March**. Bookings received after this deadline will not be accepted.
- State if you are a member, student, ASTC member, AusSI member, APA member or a non-member.
- Give an email address or telephone number.
- If you need to cancel, please email Marta as soon as possible so we don't waste money catering for people who don't turn up.
- If you cancel after 7 pm on the day before the meeting, the Treasurer will contact you shortly after and ask you to pay as if you had attended.
- People who arrive on the night without a prior booking will be unable to attend.



IPEd Assessors Forum

First meeting, 2–3 December 2006, Melbourne

What a productive meeting!

Fourteen assessors from across Australia met in Melbourne to formalise the requirements for editors who wish to be accredited by IPEd. We covered a lot of ground over the two days, and the meeting ended with a fruitful outcome. In summary, we concluded that accreditation by portfolio submission is the ideal, but it's also a complex process that needs to be implemented gradually to ensure its efficacy and sustainability. For the meantime, we propose an initial, basic accreditation step involving a nationwide test of copyediting and other essential skills.

Problems foreseen with portfolio assessment

The Assessors Forum expected there'd be some problems in assessing applications by portfolio (prepared in accordance with current requirements):

- Detailed assessment criteria will be needed to ensure consistency across the system. The time taken to develop and approve these is likely to cause considerable delay in accreditation for Australian editors.
- Considerable time and costs are likely to be required to assess portfolios and for meetings of assessors panels. Assessment of individual applications and portfolios is likely to take about 20 hours per application. This translates into an application fee of about \$1200!
- There may be a 'logjam' with the first flush of applications, many of which may not meet the criteria for full accreditation and this will take up assessors' time unnecessarily.
- Initially, assessors may encounter difficulties in ensuring confidentiality of applicants.
- Applications and portfolios are likely to require considerable time to prepare.
- Applicants may need to submit more than one editing project to demonstrate a range of skills.
- The application limit of 100 pages is too high (should be 30–50 pages).

How do we feel about a base-level editing test?

The Accreditation Working Group had already ruled out a test because it could foresee problems in security, labour, remote sites and possible alienation of senior editors. The Assessors Forum, however, thought that these problems could be

alleviated by early planning and a good dose of creativity on our part. In contrast, the problems we foresee with portfolio assessment require a lot more thinking, planning and time.

We propose to devise a test made up of a manuscript sample and short-answer questions to test for basic copyediting skills. The test would not replace the portfolio, but rather would provide, simultaneously, a basic level of accreditation and the ability to roll out the accreditation scheme pretty soon – by mid-to-late 2007.

Problems foreseen with a base-level accreditation test

Even though we propose a base-level test, we can see that we may have to overcome problems with:

- coordination of the test across the different sites
- the need to provide remote and regional editors (and those with special needs) with equity of access
- departing from the model approved by vote of the state and territory societies and getting approval for a new model
- the need to set criteria and assign weighting to sections of Standards
- time taken to prepare tests, sample tests and answers and other support materials/activities (such as workshops).

Benefits of a base-level accreditation test

- Simple objectives: screen out people who are obviously not yet experienced enough to be called an editor, provide beginning/junior editors with a base level of accreditation (not possible under portfolio-only assessment), provide opportunity for an advanced-level portfolio assessment to be developed – career advancement, recognition for senior editors.
- Simpler to administer than portfolio applications; for example, it could be held on the same day around the country, with invigilators.
- Easier for applicants – less preparation time.
- Easier to ensure fairness and consistency.

How would the test work?

The test would be conducted once each year (initially at six-monthly intervals), on the same day in every capital city and at other approved locations. The possibility of email or web-based testing will be investigated to help editors who have difficulty reaching a set venue for various reasons.

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Want to find out more, tell us what you think?

If you'd like to find out more about the recommendations proposed by the Assessors Forum, or if you wish to comment on these recommendations, please see the IPEd webpage at <iped-editors.org> or contact your society of editors.

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

December 2006

The IPEd website <iped-editors.org> is gradually adding more items and developing more functions, thanks to the hard work of our expert web manager Mike Purdy. Take a tour to catch up with IPEd's achievements and recent initiatives.

An important document on the website describes IPEd's current structure and functions and lists the members of the Interim Council and the various working groups: in time, of course, this outline will be replaced by a formal constitution agreed on by members nationwide. Under the heading Accreditation there are nearly a dozen items; the Accreditation Board is working on several more, which will be posted as soon as the drafts are agreed. The site also provides *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* and the policy on editing theses developed jointly by IPEd and the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the site is its interactive capability, which enables editors across the country to join in discussions on matters affecting our profession. Editors Forum is a public space in which anyone may post a question or a comment. At present it contains a

brief discussion on methods of strengthening our societies; more contributions on this and other topics would be welcome. (The list comma, anyone?)

Another forum is Edwiki, which enables registered users to edit and comment on the documents it contains. At present these include a paper on setting up the national organisation of editors, and a questionnaire on the revisions to *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. It's easy to register, and we urge you to take part in these exciting developments that can defeat the tyranny of distance and bring editors together in a national conversation.

The website also hosts several forums with restricted access, which enable the Interim Council and the various working groups to perform their functions and to collaborate in drafting documents. This frees them from administrative tasks such as organising email, filing agendas and minutes, and keeping track of successive drafts. As IPEd volunteers develop expertise with these interactive methods, their workload will be reduced and their productivity will improve.

Janet Mackenzie
Liaison Officer

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IPEd Assessors Forum

The test would be marked 'pass' or 'fail' only – that means you'll be assessed as competent or not. Applicants who fail the test would be able to request a report on their performance.

How will editors be accredited?

An editor who passes the test would gain certification as an IPEd Accredited Editor. Accreditation at the advanced level would be through a portfolio, the requirements for which we plan to revise in the coming months.

So what happens next?

Our recommendations will be presented to the Accreditation Board, IPEd and the state and territory societies for consideration. We'll keep you posted through newsletters and the IPEd website.

Conclusion

By the end of the meeting we agreed to call this group the IPEd 'Assessors Forum'. In the spirit of IPEd and its predecessor, CASE, the Assessors Forum will work towards consensus in all decision making. We believe that the model we propose offers the best solution to ensuring that IPEd can offer all Australian editors a fair, consistent and economical accreditation scheme.

Award for Outstanding Service

The Society of Editors committee Award for Outstanding Service was presented to Marta Veroni at the December Christmas barbecue. The committee wanted to recognise and acknowledge Marta's enormous contribution to the Society over eight years of service.

Marta joined the committee in 1999 in the role of treasurer and held that position right through to 2003. Her remarkable talents were then transferred to the training officer role and she excelled in that position until very recently when she decided to hand over the responsibility to Melanie Dankel. Not content to sit idly by, she then volunteered to look into the viability of the Society employing a part-time administrative officer based at the Victorian Writers' Centre.

Marta's colleagues described her as:

- 'always steadfast and loyal, and just about unflappable.'
- 'She has the amazing ability to make things appear seamless and devoid of drama and hysterics.'
- 'Marta is a quiet achiever, 100% reliable, sensible, practical and down-to-earth. She was treasurer for four years and she has plugged away as training officer, handling complex arrangements and making them look easy. She has organised some wonderful training sessions too for our members and is an invaluable source of editorial knowledge.'

Proposal for establishing the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) as a legal entity

At a recent meeting in Adelaide, the IPEd Interim Council voted to present the following document to the members of each society for their endorsement by 1 May 2007. Once endorsed, the proposal will form the basis for the legal incorporation of the Institute, with a target date of 30 June 2007 for completing that process. The Society of Editors (Victoria) will be asked to endorse it at the March dinner meeting.

Rosemary Noble, Victorian delegate, IPEd Interim Council

This proposal is being submitted to members of all Australian societies of editors for their endorsement by 1 May 2007. It has been developed through extensive consultation over five years and is unanimously recommended by delegates to IPEd's Interim Council. Once endorsed, it will form the basis of the legal incorporation of the Institute, with a target date of 30 June 2007 for completing that process. Societies will then vote to amend their constitutions and join IPEd.

Aim

The aim of the Institute of Professional Editors will be **to advance the profession of editing**.

IPEd will pursue this aim in ways that:

- are effective, transparent and accountable
- complement and enhance the work of its member organisations, the societies of editors
- tackle the current needs of the profession
- develop and sustain a professional community of practice.

Functions

The functions that IPEd carries out will be regularly reviewed by its governing body (the Council). They will initially include coordinating:

- a national accreditation process
- the review and maintenance of editorial standards
- interactions with educational institutions
- initiatives such as a biennial national conference.

A detailed list of proposed functions is at Attachment A.

Over time, the Institute would expect, as a successful professional body, to discover and develop new functions and to find that some functions no longer serve their original purpose.

Business activities

Business activities consistent with the functions outlined above might include:

- **administration** that supports governance functions, funded by about \$30,000 a year from member organisations
- **accreditation**, a cost-recovery activity that is expected to generate significant revenue over the first five years

- **events promotion and management**, which includes special interest workshops and the national conference. This is the only business activity with the capacity to generate substantial surpluses. Council will develop a formula to share surpluses from these activities with member organisations, particularly the host organisations.
- **publishing** to support the Institute's functions as a standards-setting body and a professional community of practice that generates knowledge, and to support education and training by member organisations, universities and the training sector.
- **e-commerce** to aggregate, promote and provide convenient access to services of editors who belong to its member organisations.

This bundle of business activities is consistent with a turnover of between \$200,000 and \$800,000 a year, delivering substantial benefits to member organisations, and resourcing the governance and financial administration (including audit) requirements of a sustainable, national professional body.

Budget

Following the agreement of societies to become corporate members of the Institute, it will be possible to establish and refine a budget based on agreed initial and continuing contributions. An indicative five-year budget is given at Attachment B; the detailed spreadsheet that this summarises can be read at <www.iped-editors.org>.

Governance

Principles

1. IPEd Limited's **shareholders** will be member organisations that advance the profession of editing in Australian states and territories, and elsewhere.
2. The **governing body** of the Institute will be a Council comprising the delegates appointed as directors by each of the shareholders.
3. Shareholders will be obliged to make **annual** and **other contributions** at rates agreed by Council.
4. Each shareholder will appoint **a director** to the IPEd Council. Directors will have the rights and obligations of company directors.

5. Council will **consult** the shareholders before approving:
 - policies on matters of interest to the profession
 - strategic plans
 - operational plans and budgets for the financial year
 - returns or investments of surpluses from its operations.
6. Member organisations will not be able to **dispose** of their shares. A member organisation wishing to leave the Institute shall be obliged to sell its share to the Institute at a nominal fee.

Constitution

7. The constitution will define aims, functions, structure, roles and safeguards, including mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms.

Legal standing

The Institute will be a **not-for-profit company limited by guarantee**. The following information will be provided to the registering authority at the time of registration:

<i>Place of registration</i>	Australian Capital Territory
<i>Company name</i>	Institute of Professional Editors Limited
<i>Legal elements</i>	Limited
<i>Registered business name</i>	Institute of Professional Editors
<i>Type and class of company</i>	Public company limited by guarantee

<i>Governance</i>	The company will have a constitution (see below)
<i>Registered office</i>	Accounting firm (to be decided by Council)
<i>Office hours</i>	From at least 10 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 4 pm
<i>Principal place of business</i>	To be decided by Council
<i>Ultimate holding company</i>	No
<i>Appointment of office-bearers</i>	One director from each member organisation
<i>Share structure</i>	Ordinary
<i>Member organisations</i>	Canberra Society of Editors Inc. The Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc. Society of Editors (South Australia) Inc. Society of Editors (Tasmania) Inc. Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. Society of Editors (WA) Inc.
<i>Lodgement fee</i>	\$330.00
<i>Documents to be lodged</i>	Constitution

4 February 2007

Attachment A: Proposed functions

The national organisation seeks to serve all professional editors, student and emerging editors, and those interested in editing by:

- administering a national **system of accreditation**
- maintaining, updating and disseminating information on **professional standards**
- maintaining and developing the public **profile of the editing profession** in Australia and internationally on behalf of members, to prospective clients, prospective editors and the broader community
- coordinating collaboration between the member organisations in **national initiatives**, such as conferences, and the setting up of special interest working parties
- encouraging the **growth and development of the profession** by exchanging ideas with tertiary sector educators on new and changing industry practices; sharing knowledge and skills with educational institutions and public forums; and providing students and emerging and established editors with resources and publications
- **liaising with educational institutions** for the establishment or extension or modification of educational and training provision for editors
- advising **individuals and member organisations** on issues relating to editing and matters of editing practice
- taking the lead in coordinating national **promotional initiatives** to support growth of the profession
- establishing **awards** for outstanding editors, and seeking grants and sponsorships to support the organisation and its mission
- acting as the **representative 'voice'** of the profession in public statements or comments affecting editors or of interest to them
- forging **links** with related bodies nationally (such as the Australian Society of Authors) and internationally (such as other national editing organisations) to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills, cross-promotion and mutual support in shared interests
- undertaking other activities as determined by Council.

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Establishing IPEd as a legal entity

Attachment B: Indicative five-year budget

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Revenues	\$203,800	\$561,750	\$336,575	\$785,850	\$869,200
Direct costs	-\$91,678	-\$266,384	-\$199,876	-\$481,338	-\$686,915
Gross surplus/deficit	\$112,123	\$295,366	\$136,699	\$304,513	\$182,285
Expenditures					
Finance & risk management	\$15,988	\$29,825	\$15,792	\$28,617	\$23,394
Marketing	\$12,958	\$27,463	\$11,892	\$28,389	\$15,972
Staff & governance	\$47,675	\$68,420	\$45,895	\$69,500	\$48,985
Web services, IT & telephones	\$16,698	\$38,082	\$3,209	-\$1,146	-\$60,184
Premises	\$9,600	\$8,640	\$8,640	\$8,640	\$8,640
Total expenses	-\$102,918	-\$172,429	-\$85,428	-\$134,000	-\$36,807
Provisionings/contingencies	-\$6,365	-\$18,903	-\$8,294	-\$8,017	-\$15,277
Operating surplus/deficit	\$2,840	\$104,034	\$42,978	\$162,496	\$130,202

The Occasional Series on Australian Editors Update – February 2007

The Occasional Series working group has enjoyed a well-deserved summer break and we are currently planning our program of activities for 2007.

Last year we worked towards the publication of interviews conducted with state and territory honorary life members in conversation at the 2005 national editors' conference in Melbourne. *Editors in Conversation* will be published by Australian Scholarly Publishing and launched at the Institute of Professional Editors National Conference in Hobart in May. Honorary life members from Victoria, Canberra, South Australia and Tasmania are featured, including:

- Beryl Hill in conversation with Wendy Sutherland
- Loma Snooks in conversation with Renée Otmar
- Robyn Colman in conversation with Lee White
- Sheila Allison in conversation with Pamela Ball.

The 2005 conference panel, Some of the Finest: Honorary Life Members, will also be included in the publication.

An order form for book sales will be uploaded to the Society of Editors (Victoria) website, <www.socedvic.org>. Copies will be sold at the May conference and will also be on sale at Society meetings throughout the year at a special price for members.

Editors in Conversation would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors including The Centre for the

Book (Monash University), and the Society of Editors in Victoria, Canberra and Tasmania. We hope that *Editors in Conversation* will be part of an ongoing series of publications for the Occasional Series oral, print and digital archive.

Our working group will also host another event at the May conference. 'Shorts' will be a lively twenty-minute conversation featuring honorary life members from Queensland and New South Wales – Barbara Ker Wilson and Janette Whelan – to be facilitated by Robin Bennett, President, Society of Editors (Queensland). Check the conference website, <www.tas-editors.org.au/conference2007.htm>, for program updates.

In 2007 our interview program with honorary life members will continue. And we will seek publication of oral, print and digital material generated by the Occasional Series project, with a view to profiling Australian editors and more widely promoting the profession.

We are currently updating the OSAE page on the Society's website. If members have any ideas or suggestions for our 2007 program, we'd like to hear from you.

Diane Brown (convenor), Tel: (03) 9718 1358, Email: <diane@netspace.net.au>

*OSAE 2007 working group:
Kerry Biram, Diane Brown, Jenny Craig and Deborah Candy*

Dinner meeting report

Speaking frankly about permissions

Kirstie Innes-Will

On 7 February a large group of editors gathered at the English Speaking Union to hear Cara Gould and Gillian Cardinal speak about permissions. The large turnout reflected the timeliness of the event, changes in copyright having just taken effect.

Cara Gould works as Intellectual Property Manager at The Learning Federation, where her focus is on developing policy and systems for managing digital rights and licensing. Gillian Cardinal has extensive experience in permissions in educational publishing and is currently Image and Permissions Manager at Thomson Learning.

They are also founding members of the Australian Picture and Copyright Association (APACA). This relatively new organisation will work in a similar way to the Society of Editors, providing support and a sense of community for those working in picture research and copyright clearance, and hopefully offering a channel of support for novices to the field.

Cara pointed out the similarities between editing and permissions roles. In some smaller organisations both roles may even be performed by the same individual. Editors and permissions researchers often work very closely together and the relationship is ideally one of mutual support. As in the world of editing, triumphs are often quiet events – more often than not a triumph is defined as nothing explicitly going wrong!

Cara articulately outlined the ways in which things can go wrong in the world of permissions research, reminding us that when they do, they can go quite horribly wrong – with nasty flurries of letters between publishers and lawyers. Cara therefore stressed the importance of having agreed company policies in place when it comes to use of intellectual property, and ‘that these policies are applied consistently by individuals with appropriate training’.

The problem of what rights to obtain was raised: those further up the ladder may think it optimal to obtain worldwide rights in perpetuity for all editions, but the reality is that you jeopardise even opening a dialogue with the copyright holder if your claims are so unreasonable. Cara told us that the right tone, from the outset, is important in securing a favourable outcome.

It is also important that both parties understand what they are signing when a licence agreement is entered into. Legally, informed consent needs to occur, so when dealing with someone for whom English is a second language, for example an Indigenous person in a remote community, the terms used should be in plain English. It may also be necessary to spend more time than usual explaining things.

The audience laughed in sympathy when Cara said that she longed for the day when the average person has a basic understanding of copyright – most editors know how hard it is to explain copyright to authors who think they already know all there is to know on the subject.

Cara told us that Internet practices (such as clips on YouTube) and the way copyright infringements are policed are providing

lots of interesting analysis in copyright circles. She also warned that in digital publishing it pays to be careful with permissions, because plagiarism detection software is readily available. The Internet can be ‘a double-edged sword’: while there is a wealth of material, it can often be very hard to find an authentic copyright holder. Authors may mistakenly think ‘if it’s on the internet, it can go in my book’.

Another common misconception addressed by Cara is that of publishers whose first choice is for free or out of copyright material. Cara pointed out that while there are some circumstances in which this works, it may often be a false economy: a high-quality image which greatly enhances the product could be obtained from an established supplier for a reasonable fee instead of having a researcher spend hours of research time only to fail in the search or find a very poor quality version.

Cara then addressed the misconception that ‘if you’ve tried to contact the copyright holder at least three times, it’s legally fine to proceed with publishing an item’. This is as much of a myth as the popular notion that you can publish 100 words or less than 10 per cent of the work without seeking permission.

Cara closed by briefly addressing the recent amendments to the copyright act, which many permissions people are still digesting. She was understandably loathe to act as a surrogate lawyer and advised all of us to seek further legal advice if we had specific concerns. However, she outlined the general areas that the amendments addressed:

- Time-shifting and format-shifting (the amendment that allows you to copy a music CD to your iPod or record a TV show at home for later viewing)
- New fair dealing provisions for research and study (important for schools)
- New defences in the area of parody and satire
- Cultural institutions permitted to make copies of works for preservation purposes.

It was then Gillian Cardinal’s turn to address the gathering, discussing some of the greyer areas of permissions. The first of these is fair usage: the key point being that there is no such thing! How does one judge what a ‘substantial part’ of a work is? Even a small part may be important, essential or distinctive, as Gillian proved by quoting the first lines of Martin Luther King’s famous speech – a quote under one hundred words in length but which is instantly recognisable.

The safest approach, then, is to seek permission for all copyright material. However this would generate an enormous volume of work and most copyright holders take the attitude that ‘if it’s worth asking, it’s worth charging’. So most publishers will decide to follow a guideline based on the length of the extract (anywhere from 50 to 250 words). Gillian had several warnings for editors working with such an approach. Ten 100-word quotes scattered throughout a work constitutes 1000 words in total

– possibly a whole article. You may be wise to clear permission for a dictionary definition or one line of a poem. And while it is possible to paraphrase an original work, you must be careful that it does not, for example, closely follow the structure of the original – even that may be a copyright infringement.

In many instances, the final decision to publish without formal permission comes down to a risk assessment – that infamous paragraph on imprint pages does not provide any legal safety. The questions usually asked in such a risk assessment include ‘who is the copyright holder?’ and ‘how is it being used?’ It would be far less risky to use a quote from Martin Luther King in a history work than in an advertising campaign for Nike, for example. In general there are more problems in trade than in educational publishing.

Gillian then turned to the matter of moral rights, where her message was ‘acknowledge, acknowledge, acknowledge!’ Trouble over moral rights is potentially far worse than copyright and if a work is unacknowledged it could be argued that you are claiming it as your own. Gillian testified to how stressful such situations are. They are usually solved by the ‘pay to go away’ approach. Her appeal to publishers and editors was to inform the permissions staff of all usage and to employ experienced staff who are trained appropriately, because a risk is always being taken whenever you use someone else’s work.

The question and answer session that followed the talks was stimulating and informative, with Cara and Gillian responding to questions on such thorny issues as copyright on artwork pieces owned by museums and the copyright that may be inherent in the layout of a web page or the code of a computer program.

One member raised the issue of authors, especially teachers, increasingly using open-source sites such as Wikipedia to source material. Cara addressed this matter by asking: ‘who’s contributed and whose copyright might they be infringing?’ It may be impossible to know, so it pays to beware.

Several members expressed frustration that even authors who were experienced academics may be ignorant in the matters of copyright. Gillian and Cara pointed out that there can be confusion over the difference between plagiarism and copyright, and that the shift from producing academic work (under one set of guidelines and policies) to writing for commercial purposes can be a difficult one. Susan Clarke, Copyright Officer at Deakin University, was able to inform the Society, universities are very active in educating staff through group training sessions, one-to-one sessions, guidelines and policies made available online and so on. Such support, she says, has increased in the last five years.

The evident popularity of this convivial session bodes well for an ongoing relationship between the Society of Editors and APACA. Further information on APACA can be obtained at <www.apaca.org.au>.

If you inadvertently took a copy of *At the Typeface* from the entrance hall at last week’s dinner meeting and forgot to pay us, please send the \$25 to our post office address. We are sure you meant to pay for the book!

Training

Thinking of starting your own business? Looking for ways to improve your existing one? You don’t have to be an accountant to take advantage of super benefits and tax deductions. David Rey and Nerissa Kennedy will provide practical advice on financial management when running your own business. This session is ideal for existing small business owners or freelancers looking to start their own business.

Topics covered will include:

- what type of business structure you should use
- available tax deductions
- record keeping
- registering for GST
- recent changes to superannuation
- maximising your superannuation
- managed investments
- what to consider when refinancing.

David Rey is a Superannuation Services Manager at Just Super and has been in his current role since 2004. Previously he worked as a partner in a financial planning practice in Melbourne. David also brings five years’ experience in banking and finance and holds an Advanced Diploma of Financial Services in Financial Planning as well as a Bachelor of Commerce.

Nerissa Kennedy is an associate principal with WHK Manning & Perry. She is a qualified chartered accountant and a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. She has expertise in managing staff and client relationships as well as helping small and medium businesses with their planning and development.

When: 6–8.30 pm, Thursday, 29 March 2007

Where: Victorian Writers’ Centre, 1st Floor, Nicholas Building, 37 Swanston Street

Cost: \$15 Soc Ed, VWC, APA, ASTC and AusSi members, \$25 non-members, \$12 students

Light supper will be provided.

Please RSVP by Monday 19 March to <melanie.dankel@lonelyplanet.com.au>.

Submissions invited

Submissions for the Society of Editors (Vic.) *Newsletter* are welcome. Please send feedback, suggestions or submissions to *Newsletter* Editor Kirstie Innes-Will at <kirstieaiw@gmail.com>.

The Barbara Ramsden Award – and beyond

Some thoughts to provoke discussion

Jackie Yowell

Introduction

In early July 2006, Philip Rainford, President of the FAW, contacted the Society with an invitation to join in the revival of the FAW Barbara Ramsden Award (BRA). The Society's involvement would include co-sponsorship of the cash prize of \$500 and the provision of a judge or judging panel. After some deliberation the Committee enthusiastically agreed – members were keen to support any endeavour that would promote editors and editing.

But as the deadline for nominations to the BRA approached, people began to read the 'fine print', so to speak, in what the Committee had agreed to. There would be potentially up to 120 books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction submitted, and the timeline between receiving the books and having to judge a single winner would be extremely tight, falling as it did over the Christmas/New Year period. A panel of five judges was quickly assembled and we tried to clear our schedules for this onslaught of books to be read, discussed and 'judged' for their editing contribution.

We soon found out that, while there were administrative guidelines for judges of the FAW awards, there didn't seem to be any criteria for the actual judgment of the BRA – neither written nor 'understood'. So we did what any good panel of editors would do when faced with judging our peers: we panicked and set the cat among the pigeons by deciding first to try and work out a sensible process for

judging that would not only be transparent and fair, but also time-saving. However, by then the silly season was upon us and we had to face facts; we would be unable to achieve all of this by the required deadline. So the panel wrote to the FAW, explaining that, given that we had not yet received the books from the FAW, did not yet know exactly how many of what category had been formally entered for the BRA, had some uncertainty about criteria for assessment and had existing Christmas/New Year commitments to meet, we were not confident that we could make a properly considered judgement together in time. Naturally, we were disappointed to reach such a decision, but felt it was better for all parties concerned that we attempt to postpone the BRA rather than risk judging it inadequately, which would not reflect well on either organisation.

In the end, the FAW decided to go ahead with the award for 2006, given that they had publicised it and were already receiving nominations. There was disappointment and a degree of embarrassment all 'round, but the panel still stands by its decision. Jackie Yowell's article is a first attempt to pick up where we left off, and is a timely opportunity to open up some discussion on the future of the BRA as well as the vexed debate on editing, editors and awards. It is hoped that the societies will take up the discussion at monthly meetings; perhaps the IPEd conference in May will provide another forum.

Renée Otmar

The Barbara Ramsden Award, named after an eminent editor, recognises the role of good editing in Australian books of quality. Author and editor of awarded books each receive a fine plaque with a bronze relief of 'the Origin of Art, showing the creator at work, and a figure representing the forces that ensure its effective communication'. The Fellowship of Australian Writers initiated the Award in 1971 and valiantly ran it for over twenty years, when it fizzled out without much fuss. In 2006 the FAW decided to revive it.

Editors appreciated this token of public recognition – especially valued coming from a writers' organisation. But what meaning does the Barbara Ramsden Award have in 2007? What is known of it today in and beyond publishing circles, or among younger editors? What has the Award meant to the editing profession and to the literary community in the past, and what are its prospects for the future? What was the intention behind it, and how well was that achieved? Prompted by the revival of the

Award, these are questions some members of the Society of Editors (Victoria) are asking and talking over with the FAW.

To get one instant indicator of the Award's significance today, I turned to the Internet and googled 'Barbara Ramsden Award'. I found 70 references but minimal information on the history of the Award, and little to suggest its relevance to editing. Almost all the references to it were in lists of awards to particular authors or their books and only in two cases was an editor mentioned.

This shouldn't surprise us. Jim Hamilton, writer and editor (who dedicated himself to the FAW until his untimely death in 1993) initiated the Award when he was president of the FAW, and he stated 'The Award is a literary award.' Having written the rules himself, he affirmed that 'no attempt should be made by the judges of the FAW Barbara Ramsden Award to assess the exact nature of the editor's contribution to any of the books

entered for the award. ...It goes to the author ...and then, in recognition of the importance of the process of ensuring that a manuscript reaches readers, to the publisher's editor'.¹

The Barbara Ramsden Award is assessed as an add-on to the FAW's major awards – for best books in the categories of fiction and non-fiction (discontinuing poetry as a category in 2006). Application can be made by publishers or authors, and even self-published books are eligible. To allow those books judged as best to then contend for the Ramsden Award, the application requires only a further copy of the book and the name of the editor.²

So, quite clearly, the Barbara Ramsden Award is not an award *for editors or for editing* per se but for published works judged as being of exceptional literary standard – thereby, the Award suggests, implying effective creative collaboration between good writing and good editing. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, so to speak, regardless of who devised the recipe and who helped cooked the pud.

One might easily agree that a book of prize-winning standard should inherently demonstrate that it has been well edited. And any editor with the happy task of working on such a book would hardly fail to feel honoured were it to be awarded the Barbara Ramsden – even if that book had not been particularly challenging editorially. However, I personally knew editors awarded a Ramsden who had some doubts as to the deservedness of their awarded book in relation to other books they knew had been much enhanced by exceptional editorial input. (When I was honoured with Ramsden Awards, in 1987 and 1988 – each jointly with a colleague – I felt their detailed editorial work contributed as much as my broader input in manuscript development and structural editing.) Many excellent editors at work during the 1970s and 1980s did not happen to win the Barbara Ramsden Award, and so, by omission, their professional excellence went publicly unacknowledged.

For reasons like this the Barbara Ramsden Award was somewhat controversial among editors. While it was appreciated as the one and only editing award in existence, it couldn't reflect or distinguish the scale and quality of input from the editor. (The Beatrice Davis Fellowship exists, of course, but for a quite different purpose.) Indeed, when esteemed editor Wendy Sutherland received the Barbara Ramsden Award in 1984 she challenged its basis, saying 'Only those who have

access to a publisher's files can gauge the work that went into a book and find out if it was a "trash to treasure" exercise.'³

Where do editors and their professional organisations stand on the issue of an award for editing? The debate I have with my other self about the issue goes something like this:

Pushy editor: Who would ever know what editors do? They don't even get a credit on their books, as designers do.

Earnest editor: But editors should remain invisible. We are but handmaidens to creators. If they want to credit us, they do so in their Acknowledgements. Besides, it is our job to get the authors' words into print, to get the publishers' product ready for market.

Pushy editor: Yes, but editors are a lot more than aides to the author; the Ramsden acknowledges editors as 'the forces that ensure effective communication'. But who knows what is required for that? To get the author's words and intentions out there to readers? To shape the book to work successfully in the marketplace? To find and develop and champion new writers? To build publishers' lists and imprints ...?

Earnest editor: All just part of the job of nurturing creative production.

Pushy editor: Lots of people with jobs in 'creative production' get awards – editors of film, for a start. Come to think of it, everybody in the film business gets awards – down to wardrobe and make-up. And in many other arts too – set designers, dramaturgs, translators, curators, music arrangers ...

Earnest editor: But books are different. Siiiiigh.

Pushy editor: Don't make me laugh. The Australian Publishers' Association makes a great show of awards to designers, whose job is simply to make the book look good. In fact the APA awards everyone they can think of in the publishing industry – small publishers, independent booksellers, distributors. They even take turns to award themselves Publisher of the Year.

Earnest editor: Prizes will only make editors prima donnas. And where would that place the authors?

Pushy editor: If designers and distributors and dramaturgs can accept awards with suitably modest dignity, so can editors.

Earnest editor: Okay, okay. But how on earth could you design an editing award that is fair and true – one that genuinely reflects 'the best editing' being done? An award that goes to the editor who is truly doing the best work? Siiiiigh. Including those working on children's or educational or reference books – or not on books at all...? What about cases of editorial input from several different editorial minds at various stages – manuscript or text development, structural and copy editing, production editing, proofing?

1 Hamilton, Jim. 'The FAW Barbara Ramsden Award', *Newsletter*, July 1985, Society of Editors. In Mackenzie, Janet, ed. 2005. *At the Typeface: Selections from the Newsletter of the Victorian Society of Editors*. Society of Editors (Victoria) Inc. Carlton South. p. 180. A lively account of Barbara Ramsden is given by MUP publisher Peter Ryan on pages 260–2 of *At the Typeface*.

2 Information on the FAW Awards and their conditions is freely available from their website, in Issue 353 of *The Australian Writer* <www.writers.asn.au/?About_The_Fellowship:The_Australian_Writer>.

3 Wendy Sutherland is quoted in the article by Jim Hamilton cited in note 1.

Pushy editor: That's the point I'm trying to make: no one knows about all that stuff because what editors do remains totally invisible!

Earnest editor: Maybe that's why there aren't many awards for book editors? All I could find on the net were the British 'Imprint and Editor of the Year Award', sponsored by an accountancy firm, and in the US an 'Editing and Publishing Award' from the Association for Mormon Letters.

Pushy editor: Mmmmmmm. We know of editors who have conjured up entire books from scratch, so it can't be beyond them to devise an award that adequately recognises their worth. At least the FAW has had a try ...

Earnest editor: For goodness sake, an editors' award just ain't a priority when we should be busy getting the message out there that might help save the planet!

Even if editors resolve such debates, in enquiring into such an award we also need to answer bigger questions, like *what should be its purposes?* If the intent is mainly recognition that a good book requires good editorial input, the existing Barbara Ramsden Award attempts to do that already. However, if we see the purposes of an editing award more broadly, then a different kind of award must be considered. Could it acknowledge the scope, complexity and responsibility of the editorial role? For example, mediating the often conflicting needs of author, publishing organisation and reading public; or, in the context of the wider literary culture, monitoring standards of language, literature and communication; or championing new voices and styles? Could the award span notions of editing as both an art and a set of examinable skills? Could it reflect the skilled nature of good editing by presenting exemplary models? If it could show all of the above, it would do much to raise the profile of the profession.

What award could achieve all that!

Perhaps one that awards an editor rather than a book? Like the highly regarded Pixie O'Harris Award, established by the Children's Publishing Committee of the APA in 1994 for 'distinguished and dedicated service to the development and reputation of Australian children's books'. To be eligible, 'publishers, editors, booksellers and publicists need to have worked consistently in children's literature, demonstrated a commitment beyond the call of duty and developed a reputation for their contribution to the industry'.⁴

Perhaps editors need an award along similar lines, which could demonstrate the distinction of the editor through her/his body of work, possibly in the following ways:

- First, through a nomination process that indicates that the editorial collaboration has worked well for both author and publishing house. Nominations could be from two authors and two editorial peers (at least one outside the nominee's

own organisation), with further nominations counting favourably.

- Secondly, through the application process. Accompanying a couple of exemplary works could be a brief account of the editor's role in them, a list of recent other texts, and a note of the wider contribution beyond these. The point might be illustrated well by presenting the well-thumbed edited manuscript (or digital equivalent) alongside the impressive end-product publication.
- Third, through the assessment process, in which peer and client judgement of editing skills – broad and specific – would be as pertinent as the quality of the resulting book.
- Fourth, through effective publicity of the award, within the publishing industry and beyond, so that role and value of good editors may be better understood.
- All of this would take time and resources, so the award could be biennial or even triennial – with the presentation, ideally, being at a lively public event like a writers' festival.
- If visibility is an aim, it makes sense that eligible texts be those available in the general trade – generally categories of fiction, non-fiction or children's books. However, as more editors work in fields outside trade publishing than in it, any editing award would need, in due course, to take that into account (as is already done with designers' awards).

What of resources for such an award? It should not require much in terms of funds. Editors are used to modest material rewards, so the prize need not be primarily a financial one – though, for the same reason, that would be welcome. Sponsorship to fund the administration could be sought across the wide array of parties with interests in the quality of editing and editors. We could start with that energetic sponsor of awards for others in the industry, the Australian Publishers Association, or private-sector sponsors, such as major publishing houses, industry bodies like Bowker or Bookscan, as well as the all the state societies of editors. Others with interests include arts-support funds such as the Literature Board of the Australia Council and the CAL Cultural Fund, and institutions offering editing and publishing courses. Possibly support might be found among writers organisations such as the Australian Society of Authors and state writers centres; and even readers, via the writers festivals to which they flock.

Who could take on the auspicing and administration of such an award? Sponsors and the newly formed Institute for Professional Editors (IPED) could have a role. Presentation and publicity aspects could perhaps be taken on by the APA, as it already does this for design awards. Possibly state editors' societies and subsequently a national judging panel could share the work of the application process.

Amid the host of parties in and around the publishing industry with an interest in good editing are people who know and esteem the contribution editors make to Australia's literary culture, who are prepared to back that regard, and who will benefit from showing their support. Editors look forward to hearing from them.

4 Australian Publishers Association website <www.publishers.asn.au/awards.cfm?doc_id=330>

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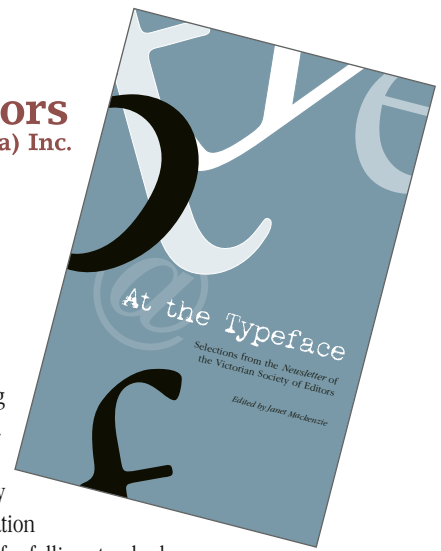
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At the Typeface

Selections from the Newsletter of the Victorian Society of Editors

Edited by Janet Mackenzie



The Victorian Society of Editors has long been a meeting point for Melbourne's intellectual and cultural life, and its monthly *Newsletter* has provided a forum for discussing books and ideas, the publishing industry, and the role and status of editors in Australia. *At the Typeface* is a selection from thirty-five years of the *Newsletter* with contributions from a wide range of authors, editors and publishers.

This book opens a window on the world of publishing. Watch as editors encounter computers for the first time at a training workshop in 1979. Hear colleagues reminisce about famous bookmen such as Andrew Fabinyi, Frank Eyre and Stephen Murray-Smith. Get the inside story on publishing events such as *Evil Angels* and *Spycatcher*. Tom Shapcott explains the ways of the Literature Board, Judith Brett resigns on a matter of principle, Louise Adler defends multinational publishers, Dinny O'Hearn is given a sitting ovation, Judith Rodriguez fails to meet famous writers and Richard Walsh questions the myth of the good old

days. Here is Beatrice Davis receiving her honorary doctorate and Barbara Ramsden being persuaded to accept an MBE. Editors pursue the mummy longlegs and freelancers do the vacation creep. A typesetter blames feminism for falling standards; a printer pleads for timely information; a production manager confesses to a life of lies.

At the Typeface reveals editors' professional life, described with the wit and intelligence of people whose business is words. The anthology is not only an entertaining read but also an important addition to the historical records of Australian publishing.

Janet Mackenzie helped to found the Society of Editors in 1970 and is an honorary life member. She is the author of *The Editor's Companion* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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