A Certain Style

Jacquie Kent is a well-known editor and writer. She is a life member of the society and has written the authoritative biography of 'the editor's editor', Beatrice Davis. At the October meeting Jacquie discussed the writing process and shared her insights into one of Australian publishing's most intriguing personalities.

Views expressed in this article are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Society of Editors.

Beatrice Davis was born in 1909. She was the chief editor of Angus & Robertson (A&R) at a time when it was the only big publishing company in Australia, from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. A&R were established in 1885. One of the founders, George Robertson, was a self-educated man who loved words and books. He believed that the way to better humankind was through education. A&R's first bestseller was Banjo Patterson's A Man from Snowy River in 1895, followed by works by Henry Lawson, Will Ogilvie, Adam Lindsay Gordon, and Norman Lindsay. All the great seminal Australian classics were theirs.

Beatrice was a bridge that spanned Australian writing from Miles Franklin to Tim Winton. She masterminded the careers of many authors, including Douglas Stewart, Thea Astley, Hal Porter and Xavier Herbert. Her heyday was the 1950s and 1960s before the other publishers were established or became well known.

I won the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship in 1995, three years after her death. The irony of the fellowship would have appealed to Beatrice enormously, as A&R never paid for her to go anywhere at any time. So there she was, her name being given to a scholarship that allowed people she'd never met to go to New York for three months.

The Society of Editors of Victoria had published a small monograph on her by Anthony Barker in 1990, two years before she died. When I returned to Australia, I thought someone should do something about Beatrice because, having been at the centre of Australian literary culture for 40 years, there must be a story more than the one Tony Barker told. I was intrigued by this slightly formidable grande dame who had quite a reputation, with a somewhat unsavoury side that was part of her legend.

It's difficult to do a monograph about someone who is still around. On the other hand, as continued on page 2
they say, biography lends a new terror to death, so I was in a better position when I decided to do the book. I had another advantage as a biographer—as well as being dead, Beatrice had no direct descendents which meant the 'gatekeeper factor' was going to be a fairly minor one.

I approached the State Library for funding to start the project and then embarked on 2½ years of reading A&R’s files in the National Library. This amazing repository of poems, account bills, phone messages, memos, cards and the like was a wonderful source of material. The collection was huge—in fact if you were to put the files end-to-end standing up, they would probably reach from the back of the Reading Room in the Mitchell Library out around the corner of Macquarie Street. The catalogued list alone is 60 pages long, while the uncatalogued list is about 30 pages.

...Beatrice was the kind of person who would give you the shirt off her back but also tell you that you’d better go and find a shirt of your own.

All through that correspondence I sensed that Beatrice was the kind of person who would give you the shirt off her back but also tell you that you’d better go and find a shirt of your own. She was unsentimental but intensely loyal. And some unspeakably dreadful people turn up in this story, people who badmouthed her behind her back.

A&R owned a lot of property in Sydney’s central business district. They were over-capitalised and vulnerable to two takeover attempts, the second of which succeeded. They really believed they had a permanent leaf on posterity and on Australian literature, which was what led to their downfall. And Beatrice was not immune to this. She never actually solicited works. For example, it was well known that Christina Stead was looking for an Australian publisher. She had approached A&R many years before but was rejected. Beatrice knew this but did not take advantage of the opportunity to mend fences. Hubris on both sides, perhaps, but other publishers were quite willing to step in thereby quickly stealing A&R’s market share. That sort of complacency would not happen today. The whole book-publishing landscape’s changed completely in the last 20 years, it’s too competitive, much tighter now.

After 2½ years of sifting through this material, I’d worked out the key people I wanted to write about. But I realised I knew very little about Beatrice’s private, non-literary life. She was the kind of person most of us have somewhere in our childhood—a rather sophisticated, immaculate relative or friend of the family who leads a life quite unlike most people. She wasn’t the kind of woman who’d take you to the Easter Show or into the kitchen after dinner—she never did anything like that, she was very formal. She was married to a much older man and actually wasn’t very good with kids. She had a couple of stepsons who were adults when she got to know them. Yet, curiously, she liked children’s writing.

I was lucky in that her family, her nieces and nephews, were very generous with their reminiscences and provided great photographs. The book is not entirely flattering to Beatrice in several respects but the family doesn’t mind a bit. However, there were certain things I didn’t peddle very hard, such as rumours that she drank a fair bit and was somewhat promiscuous. The family had a sense of ownership but only in that they wanted her to be presented in a realistic manner. I’m pleased to say they like the book which is a measure of their generosity.

Much has been made about something Beatrice once said to me after I’d written my first book. She said, 'Editors do not write books. Don’t write.' Was she being derogatory about the editing profession or just being ironic? At first I wasn’t sure and was somewhat taken aback by her comment but then decided it wasn’t intended as a put-down. What she meant was, you’re either an editor or a writer—you can’t be both, so make up your mind.

She was actually very nice to me. I once was married to Ken Cook, who wrote Work in Progress. When he died in 1987 she said to me, 'I’m sorry about your husband. It’s really hard when you have to bury them, isn’t it?’ Her manner may have been gruff but that was her way of empathising with me. I really became interested in her from that moment.

I’d started investigating Beatrice because I thought that her story was a job that needed to be done, a part of history that hadn’t been tackled. But as time went on I became partisan to her because, although she was not easy to like, I got to know her through her job. She’d write some terrible letters to authors and I’d think, ‘Oh, what a nightmare, what a terrible person.’ She was very tough in her dealings with writers and in bringing out their strengths, in fact hair-curlingly tough sometimes. Particularly on Ivan Salso, for example, when he was trying to change from writing boys’ adventure books to writing more challenging and interesting children’s books. She wrote extremely straight, tough editorial letters but only wrote them to people she knew could take the criticism. What she was saying was, ‘You’re better than this, you can work harder.’ And as far as I know, no one ever took anything like that amiss.

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You do get over the 'editor on your shoulder' bit but it takes a long time and you've got to keep fighting it.

Amis's memoirs, 'Importance isn't important. Good writing is.' That was Beatrice. I ended up with a great deal of respect for her. I didn't always agree with her but I thought, and still think, she was honourable.

Despite her prominence in the field, there were never any attempts to purloin her from A&R. She was far too entrenched. It was also a generational thing in that she was in her fifties and publishing was now full of hustling 25-year-olds. But when she was fired by A&R, Robert Sessions of Nelson's in Melbourne picked her up. He was very fond of Beatrice and I think the reason the book looks so attractive is partly because Bob wanted to do the right thing by her. She was 83 when she died. She worked up until about her late 70s. At the end, her eye for detail naturally was not what it once had been but Bob never let on.

When she would submit a manuscript, he'd have it discreetly re-edited by someone else.

The Nelson connection ended when they decided to concentrate on educational rather than fiction publishing. Beatrice then freelanced for several other publishers but finally retired due to failing health. She'd been a big drinker and heavy smoker all her life and ultimately died of emphysema. I hated writing the death bit—it was just awful.

It's hard to speculate, 50 years on, what sort of editor she might have been had she been alive today because the whole publishing game's changed so much. Given her qualities, she would undoubtedly be running some organisation. She was very much ahead of her time and place, interested in Australian literature at a time when no one else was. But quite a strange person in some ways.

Writing process and methodology
I didn't have a lot of experience writing biographies apart from a book I'd written called In the Half Light, a social history of Australia with a sort of oral biography from a kid's point of view. I thought I'd figured out the story I wanted to write about Beatrice, and how it should be shaped working on several assumptions. I wanted to make Beatrice as interesting as possible to as many people as possible, knowing that the result of having been edited myself. I've always thought of myself as a writer who had to earn a living. I was writing about a job I knew well and got on to the subject through the job. This is my 9th book. As an editor trying to write you are conscious of being judged and also judging yourself. You do get over the 'editor on your shoulder' bit but it takes a long time and you've got to keep fighting it.

It is tempting or difficult sometimes not to join in the fiction, not to fill in between the facts. But you make a pact with yourself that you won't invent or distort. The other thing you don't do is impute to the subject thoughts they couldn't possibly have had because they were born 50 years before you. You have to keep the language as neutral as possible and the style of writing transparent. Express an opinion overtly rather than through loaded language. When you say something that's your opinion, you should flag it as your opinion.

That's important and I think the book's more interesting if you do. More interesting for you anyway.

...you make a pact with yourself that you won't invent or distort.

Letters to the Editor

If you want to have your say or have something of interest to share with other members, we welcome your letters. Please send them to: <teri.brien@au.pwcglobal.com>
Authors and Editors

José Borghino, Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors (ASA), addressed our April meeting on the relationship between editors and authors, raising the profile of editing, and possibilities for collaboration between the ASA and the NSW Society of Editors (SOE).

In the interest of forming closer ties between authors and editors, José mooted the possibility of a joint ASA/SOE Christmas party, as well as the establishment of links between the websites of these two bodies, perhaps extending to the websites of editors societies in other Australian states and territories. He also suggested that representatives of the SOE consider submitting a feature article to Anne Summers and Chip Rowley, editors of the ASA’s journal, Australian Author, on editorial standards and the plight of editors in Australia and possibly worldwide. These suggestions, and the other possible joint ASA/SOE initiatives canvassed by José below, are being explored by the committee.

Changing attitudes to editing

When I was editing a book review magazine called Editions at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s I remember conversations with a number of authors about editing. To generalise, most of them were, if not scathing, then dismissive of the work of editors; they didn’t think that editors were necessary. They were talked about as somehow being part of the conspiracy amongst publishers to make things more difficult than they needed to be. That’s being over general and over the top, but it can be characterised as being part of the tone of things at that time.

I think that attitudes have changed appreciably since then, and most authors that I speak to these days are bewailing the lack of editorial input from their publishers rather than the opposite. Most authors would like to have someone within the publishing house to talk to them about structure, the way their work is progressing, and things such as characterisation and plot. Most of them would prefer to have more editorial input than less, so I think that things have changed. Unfortunately, they’ve changed in a kind of economy of scarcity rather than in a more positive way, which is what I’m concerned about.

I would rather that the discussion was about why X is a better editor than Y on certain types of books, and why publisher Z is the best publisher around because they have the best suite of editors on their books, instead of everyone walking around saying, ‘Isn’t it terrible that there aren’t enough editors.’ I think these attitudes apply to the whole gamut of authors—fiction and non-fiction authors, poets, etc.

The debate is not as focused as it could be, and it would be good to try to rectify that. It’s interesting because now more and more Australian authors are being published overseas and having their work edited by overseas editors, including the very interventionist American-style editors, and that’s also changing attitudes about what is possible.

Editing trends in Australia and overseas

I think there are fewer editors everywhere and that the days of the editorial lunch with your commissioning editor are gone. That’s happening less and less all over the world. It’s a matter of degree but I also think that in Australia the relative profile of editors and editing is lower than in the USA. In The USA most people could name three or four famous editors, famous for working with authors and making them better, bringing them to the public and to their own potential. But in Australia Beatrice Davis is only one who comes to mind, and that’s generations ago. That’s the difference between Australia and overseas—the relative position and importance of editing in the USA especially makes it a different place.

I think that more editing is better than less editing. I suspect that authors are getting better at self-editing, but that’s more out of necessity than anything else and they are doing it in the dark. If there were more people there to actually help them, I think that the standard of Australian literature would improve. There’s scope for more of all types of editing, not just the simple stuff but also the substantive.

Tapping the experience and expertise of members

When I took over at the ASA people mentioned to me the relative age of the membership being something of a problem. Basically, without putting too fine a point on it, the observation was that most of our members were older writers, and one of the things we tried to do was to attract many more young and new writers as members.

On the other hand, what I tried to do was also see the relative age of our membership—and the deep veins of experience within it—as in a sense an opportunity, as a kind of resource to be tapped. Because these are people who have been around for a long time, they know what authors can and can’t do in negotiating with publishers, they know the kind of pitfalls to avoid in dealing with publishers, magazines, bookshops, with whoever.

The mentorship program that we’re running is one way of recognising the value of—and using—that expertise and life experience. That’s why in our mentorship program it’s the mentor who gets paid, whereas the mentee doesn’t. In some mentorship programs the mentee also gets a small amount, but in ours we decided we wanted to concentrate on that part of relationship that added the value, and that’s very much the mentor side.

...most of them were, if not scathing, then dismissive of the work of editors; they didn’t think that editors were necessary.

ASA’s mentoring scheme

Our current mentorship scheme is an attempt to address what we see as a diminution of editorial support from publishers. We’ve recently expanded our mentorship program to include indigenous mentoring, so that we’ve now got 20 mentorships per year—15 non-indigenous and five indigenous mentorships, with assistance from the Australia Council for both programs.

Basically the way it works is that applicants are given a register of established authors and members of the ASA who are willing to act as

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Mentors. The applicants choose one of the mentors from that register and if their application for the mentoring program is successful, the ASA tries to connect the two together. We offer the mentor 20 hours paid work at $50 an hour to work with that mentee on their manuscript or work in progress. That work can be done face to face, over the phone, by mail, by email, by fax or by whatever combination of these the participants decide to use. After 20 hours if they want to continue that work, that’s fine, but the mentor’s payment is right word for this, but some kind of editor and author residential workshop for a week or two weeks, with two people going to Varuna and working through a manuscript.

That’s really the kernel of the suggestion, and obviously we would need to get some funding for that. Depending on how ambitious we wanted to be, we could maybe start off with one or two a year and work up to whatever the market demand might be. This is really a matter of the SOE deciding whether it’s interested in working on applications to the funding bodies. Besides the Literature Fund of the Australia Council, we could also consider approaching the Ministry of the Arts here in New South Wales, and maybe even the APA.

Raising the profile of editing
Rather than having panels at writers’ festivals where a number of authors pontificate about this, that or the other, I think it might be useful to try to use these sessions to raise the profile of editors—to have some kind of panel for discussion between an editor and an author about a particular text that they have worked on together. It would be a very touchy situation and obviously would require the two participants to trust each other implicitly—they would need to be able to talk about the possible pitfalls of the process without suddenly finding themselves in dangerous emotional and psychological territory.

But I think with the right people it would actually be a wonderful session and I and the ASA would be happy to work with the SOE in trying to convince either the Sydney Writers’ Festival or other writers’ festivals around the country to run something like that, and maybe also organise a regular session, say at Gleebooks or at Berkelouws in Leichhardt, where editors and authors talk about those sorts of experiences. I think that we’ve all been very delicate about the whole situation to the extent that editing has become a mystery, something that no one seems to be able to talk about and I think that is detrimental to editors especially. It makes authors look more in command than they sometimes are, so in one way it’s good for authors. But it’s not good for editors, and in the long term if it’s not good for editors then it’s not good for authors either.

This would be a good way of demystifying the editing process, making it explicit and known that there is such a thing. It is really a matter of picking the right people, people who you know will be able to handle that kind of exposure, because the author will obviously have to admit in some cases to having taken the advice of someone else because they knew better—that would be a really interesting moment. I can think of people who would be able to do it, but it would mean a lot of negotiation and the project discussed would have to be a book that had been successfully published—the more acclaimed, the better. There would have to be a sense of closure with the book, so that it could be looked at as a whole rather than piecemeal.

One of the other things that I’ve been talking about with a number of authors is the possibility of giving annual awards for editing. This would be a positive way of raising the profile of editors—by lauding something that’s really well done and showing just what can be achieved with good editing.

Membership Survey — we have the results!!!

The results of the 2001 Membership Survey are in. Thank you to all who responded. The feedback is invaluable in discerning membership interests and satisfaction with the direction we’re headed. I’d like to acknowledge the terrific work done by Robert Pearson in compiling and presenting this information. The text of the responses follows; additional tables (in full, glorious colour) can be viewed on the website.

Shelley Kenigsberg
President
Survey response

Approximately one-third of the membership—92 members—returned the 2001 survey. (More than half the membership—128 members—returned the 1999 survey, and 116 members returned the 1997 survey.)

The table below compares basic responder data with information from the membership database. It indicates that the survey responders provide a reasonably good representative sample of the membership.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living in metropolitan Sydney</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living in New South Wales outside Sydney</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living outside New South Wales</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing in-house</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editing freelance</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing both freelance and in-house</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not working as editor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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The survey response is weighted slightly towards members working as editors, and somewhat more heavily towards members working freelance. The percentage of responders working as editors is approximately 3% higher than the percentage from the database. The percentage of responders editing freelance is approximately 9% higher than the percentage from the database, and the percentage editing in-house is approximately 9% lower than the percentage from the database. This represents a weighting towards freelancers of approximately 14%. Given the mission of the society and the purpose of the survey, the approximately 3% weighting towards members working as editors can be ignored. The weighting towards freelancers is more significant and needs to be taken into account when interpreting the survey responses.

The percentage of members living outside New South Wales is under-represented by approximately two-thirds, but given their low total number this does not represent a significant weighting towards members within this state.

Characteristics of society members

Location

The percentage of responders living outside New South Wales (1%) is lower than in the previous surveys (4%). The percentage of responders living in metropolitan Sydney (79%) is approximately the same as in the 1999 and 1997 surveys (82%). Of the responders living outside Sydney, 26% said that the society is serving them adequately but 21% said it could be serving them better. Suggestions for improving service to members living outside Sydney are:

- have a website where members can post their profiles themselves
- have a forum line on the web [NOTE: the society does provide this service]
- in Blue Pencil, list useful websites and provide book reviews
- suggest a format for regional meetings, with a committee member attending
- hold regional workshops
- hold occasional weekend meetings
- provide regional members with contact details of other members in their region.

Type of work

Ninety-two per cent of responders are working as editors. This is approximately 12% higher than in the previous surveys. Fifteen per cent are also doing non-editorial work. The other listed occupations are proofreader, indexer, librarian, writer, publisher, design consultant, science consultant, teacher, academic, manager and NPWS ranger.

Work situation

Seventy-two per cent of responders work freelance and 28% work in-house (7% are doing both). The majority of responders (53%) work in book publishing. The most significant area of growth is web publishing—23%, up from 4% in the 1999 survey. The other areas of work, in order of importance, are educational publishing (36%), newsletters (29%), journals (27%) and magazine publishing (16%).

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Both private and public sector work is significant—33% of responders work for private corporations, 24% work for
government bodies (federal, state or local), 18% for government corporations or authorities, 16% for educational
institutions, and 8% for community groups.

Experience
The 2001 survey did not ask about years of work experience as an editor. Information from the member database
indicates that the experience of the current membership is similar to that of the respondents to the 1999 survey.

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<th></th>
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<td>Six to ten years</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than ten years</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
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</table>

Fifty-two per cent of the members with more than ten years experience have been editing for at least 20 years. Thirty-nine per cent of the responders to the 1999 survey were in this category.

Length of membership
The 2001 survey did not ask about length of membership. The figures below for 2001 are from the member database.
The 1999 and 1997 figures are from the surveys.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
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<td>Less than one year</td>
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<td>One to two years</td>
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<td>Three to five years</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than five years</td>
<td>28</td>
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How members were trained
Sixty-four per cent of responders were trained in-house. The same percentage was trained otherwise, with 34% being
trained both ways. Twenty-nine per cent have a degree or diploma in editing and publishing, and 32% developed their
skills through on-the-job experience.

Mentoring
Twenty-five per cent of responders said they were interested in being mentors and 35% would like to be put in touch
with a mentor. Forty-one per cent were not interested in being involved in a mentoring program.

Freelance rates
Hourly rates have increased substantially since 1999, but 10% of this can be attributed to the GST.

Proofreading (54 responses)
Hourly rates for proofreading are from $20 to $80, with 65% being in the $20 to $39 range and 83% being in the $20
to $49 range. The most common rate range is $30 to $39 (35%). Next is $20 to $29 (30%), then $40 to $49 (18%). No
responder charges less than $20, and 18% now charge $50 or more compared with 7% in 1999.

Copyediting (60 responses)
Hourly rates for copyediting are from $12.50 to $80, with 62% being in the $30 to $49 range and 77% being in the $30
to $59 range. The most common rate range is $30 to $39 (37%). Next is $40 to $49 (25%), then $50 to $59 (15%).
Only 7% charge less than $30, and 32% now charge $50 or more compared with 15% in 1999.

Substantive editing (53 responses)
Hourly rates for substantive editing range from $12.50 to $200, with 74% being in the $30 to $69 range. The most
common rate range is $40 to $49 (26%). Next is $60 to $69 (16%), closely followed by $30 to $39 and $50 to $59
(15%). Only 4% charge less than $30, and 55% now charge $50 or more compared with 33% in 1999.

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Other tasks
Rates quoted for other tasks are:

- Manuscript assessment: $25 to $300
- Writing: $35 to $200
- Layout: $12.50 and $60
- Desktop publishing: $35
- Databases: $16
- Indexing: $42.50 and $60
- Annual reports: $60 and $80
- Project management: $40 to $200
- Teaching: $200

Role of the society
This part of the survey was expanded in 2001 to cover:

- the four objects of the society stated in its rules
- participation on the Council of the Australian Societies of Editors (CASE)
- accreditation.

The responses were ranked approximately in order of the priorities assigned by the responders. Combining medium and high priorities for each item has a minor effect on the overall rankings. The rankings show that the society has a clear mandate to retain its current objects and provide services that support those objects. The highest priorities (around 70% ‘high’) were assigned to the four objects of the society. The next highest group (from 35% to 55% ‘high’) — inform members about trends and developments, inform members about issues affecting them, and provide a point of contact — comprises tasks related to education and sharing of information. Less than 8% of responders did not rank these items.

The next group (16% to 20% ‘high’) — developing and maintaining a code of practice for editors, explaining what editors do to the public, representing members about employment issues, and providing a social forum — comprises tasks not strongly related to the society’s objects. Approximately 15% of responders did not rank the first three of these items, and around 4% ranked them as unacceptable.

The lowest priority (2% ‘high’ and 16% ‘unacceptable’) was for provision of a mechanism to mediate complaints of members and those who contract member’s services.

Development of an accreditation program and participation on CASE were both assigned very low priorities (less than 10% ‘high’). There was also a small but significant core of opposition to both of these items, particularly accreditation, which received the highest ‘unacceptable’ ranking (17%).

The rankings for accreditation and CASE participation are somewhat surprising given the recent strong “yes” vote for the Australian Standards for Editing Practice. Whatever the reasons for the low rankings and the core of opposition, the members who support accreditation and participation on CASE will have to convince the rest of the membership that these activities should have a high priority before the society can justify expending any more of its resources on them.

Comments on the society’s role
The following comments were made on the society’s role. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many people made the same or a similar comment:

- the Australian Standards for Editorial Practice are not standards (2)
- I do not know what CASE’s aims are or what purpose it serves (2)
- the proponents of accreditation would not necessarily be appropriate or sufficiently open minded to take on the role of developing / implementing / maintaining an accreditation program
- accreditation criteria for editors are too open to debate — too subjective
- we should examine existing editorial courses and consider accepting them as accreditation
- accreditation is not appropriate for editors (we are not medical practitioners / engineers) (2).

Member satisfaction
Cost of membership
Most respondents (85%) said the cost of membership was about right. Only 2% said it was too high, and 12% said it was too low.

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Blue Pencil, November 2001
The newsletter
Approximately equal numbers were for and against having the newsletter delivered electronically. It might be possible to satisfy both groups and reduce costs by producing BP in hard copy only for those members who want a hard copy. Most respondents (88%) said they were happy with the newsletter. Eight per cent would like changes to format and content of the newsletter. The following suggestions were made for improving the newsletter. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many people made the same or a similar suggestion:

- I like the detailed reports on speakers at monthly meetings
- consistent application of house style (except for verbatim reports) for text and layout
- links to activities of other societies of editors in Australia and overseas (2)
- more short humorous items (2)
- more articles from members (2)
- articles from members explaining their various areas of work and methods (2)
- case studies of projects/jobs with problems and solutions
- small newsy items about industry projects and personnel
- more articles about electronic media (2)
- articles about job opportunities
- positions vacant (2)
- list useful websites (2)
- more short articles
- book reviews
- member activities
- more letters to the editor
- more reference materials.

Meeting members' needs
The responders' reasons for belonging to the society were ranked and compared with how well they feel the society is meeting their needs.

The rankings of the reasons for belonging are fairly similar to the previous surveys, but there are some notable changes. Improving knowledge and skills is ranked highest in importance (73%, up 16% from 1999), equal to keeping in touch with developments in the profession. Promotion through the Directory of Editorial Services is now ranked high by 38%, up about 14% from 1999, and meeting with people doing similar work is now ranked high by 39%, up 8% from 1999. Making contacts that could lead to work is down by about 10%, to 29%.

While some satisfaction rankings match the responders' needs fairly well, and others are only a little low, in the two areas highest ranked for importance (73%) the society is falling considerably below member expectations. Improving knowledge and skills is ranked high for satisfaction by only 30%, and keeping in touch with developments in the profession by only 42%.

Monthly meetings
Sixty per cent of respondents have attended monthly meetings, and 40% have not. The main reasons given for not attending monthly meetings were:

- too busy / other commitments (20% of the respondents)
- travel time / distance (20%)
- Tuesdays are inconvenient (14%)
- venue (Judicial Commission) was inconvenient (13%)
- topics were not interesting or relevant (13%)
- time is inconvenient (13%)
- only just joined (9%).

For most people (69%), the new venue (Mechanics School of Arts) makes no difference to whether they would attend meetings. Only 2% said they would be less likely to attend at the new venue.

Workshops
Forty per cent of respondents have attended courses or workshops, and 60% have not. The main reasons given for not attending courses or workshops were:

- times were inconvenient (20%)
- topics not relevant to work (17%)
- topics not of interest (12%)

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• too expensive (12%)
• too busy / other commitments (7%)
• travel time / distance (7%)
• haven't been a member long enough (4%).

There was a clear preference towards having courses and workshops on weekends. Most people either preferred weekends (43%) or said both weekends and weekdays were okay (28%). Only 10% preferred weekdays. There was a slight preference for full days (34%) over half days (30%), and 20% said either full or half days were okay. Only 9% preferred evenings.

Topics for meetings, workshops or seminars
The primary ranking of the following topics for meetings, workshops and seminars is based on the percentage of responders rating them high in importance. The secondary ranking is based on the ratings for high and medium importance combined. Topics ranked high by less than 10% of respondents are not included. The topics marked with an asterisk are subcategories of advanced use of word processing software.

The top 10 primary rankings are rated high by 32% to 45% of responders. The top 10 secondary rankings are rated high or medium by 62% to 68% of responders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Ranking</th>
<th>Secondary Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced substantive editing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertext editing and Web site design</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Handling annotations and revisions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Dealing with graphics and graphics files</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Customising software</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful freelancing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Preparing files for DTP software</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and punctuation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production issues</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to substantive editing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to onscreen editing</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* File formats</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Internet for editors</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush up your copyediting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal issues</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioning: trade/educational books</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and communication theory</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush up your proofreading</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential resources for an accreditation program
The 78 responders who were not opposed to accreditation were asked whether they would pay to be accredited and whether they would help with development, implementation and maintenance of an accreditation program. These questions were asked in order to determine whether sufficient financial and other resources were potentially available to support an accreditation program if accreditation was a high priority for members.

The responses to these questions should not be interpreted as indicating any specific level of priority given to accreditation by the members, and should not be used by themselves to justify an accreditation program. Fourteen people (18%) said they would help develop an accreditation program and 11 (14%) said they would help implement and run an accreditation program.

Fee to become accredited (38 responses)
Fifty people said they would pay a fee to be accredited. Of these, 38 stated how much they would pay. This represents 41% of all responders and 48% of those not opposed to accreditation. The amounts responders said they were willing to pay to become accredited editors range from $10 to $2,000. Seventy-nine per cent are in the $50 to $299 range, the most common being $100 to $199 (34%), followed by $50 to $99 (26%) and $200 to $299 (18%).

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Annual fee to maintain accreditation (38 responses)
The amounts responders said they would pay annually to maintain their accreditation ranged from $10 to $500.
Eighty-five per cent are in the range below $199, the most common being less than $50 (34%), followed by $100 to $199 (29%) and $50 to $99 (21%).

Expenditure on the Council of the Australian Societies of Editors (CASE)
Members were asked how much the society should spend on participation on CASE. These questions were asked partly to help determine whether members understood the financial implications of CASE participation.

The responses to these questions should not be interpreted as indicating any specific level of priority for CASE participation, and should not be used by themselves to justify society participation on CASE. They should particularly not be used to justify allocation of financial resources to CASE participation, which was given a very low priority compared to other society activities.

The questions covered both percentages and actual dollar amounts. Only 10 people quoted dollar amounts, which ranged from $300 to $20,000 per year and had very little correlation to the percentages quoted. The higher amounts are far beyond the society’s financial resources.

Per cent of annual income the society should spend on CASE (43 responses)
Thirty per cent of the 43 responders recommended spending minimums below 10% of annual income on CASE, and 74% recommended minimums below 20%. Most minimum recommendations (44%) were in the 10% to 19% range. Forty-five per cent recommended maximums below 20% of annual income, and 77% recommended maximums below 30% of income. Most maximum recommendations (35%) were in the 10% to 19% range, closely followed by the 20% to 29% range (30%).

Per cent of savings the society should spend on CASE (37 responses)
Twenty per cent of the 37 responders recommended spending none of the society’s savings on CASE. Forty-six per cent recommended spending minimums below 10% of savings on CASE, and 75% recommended minimums below 20% of savings. Most of the minimum recommendations (46%) were in the 1% to 9% range. Eighty-eight per cent recommended maximums below 30%, fairly evenly spread (about 20% each) across the ranges.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.
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Membership
Membership of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. is open to anyone working as an editor for publication (print or electronic documents), and anyone who supports the society’s aims. Membership runs for a calendar year. Fees for 2001 are $50 (new members); $45 renewals. For an application form, ph (02) 9294 4999, write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007 or visit the website.

Blue Pencil
The society’s newsletter, Blue Pencil, is published monthly, except for a combined January-February issue. Your comments and contributions are welcome. Please send any copy for December issue to: <teri.brien@au.pwcglobal.com>. The deadline for that issue is Monday 12 November.

Advertising rates
Full page $90; half page $50 (horizontal only); one-third page $35 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page $25 (horizontal only); sixth page $20 (half of one column). Inserts: $50 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 prefolded to DL size. Circulation: approx. 300.

Listing in the Editorial Services Directory
Listing costs $40 and is available only to members of the society. The fee covers listings in both print and online versions. The online version is updated every three months. Submit new entries in RTF format, using a template available from Cathy Gray at <cgray@mpx.com.au>. For existing entries, updates can be made to contact details only.

Committee meetings
All members are welcome to attend the society’s committee meetings. Contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.
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NOTICEBOARD

Plea for a Marketing Coordinator

The society urgently needs someone to fill this crucial role. Would you like to help shape and drive our marketing portfolio, take us into new areas and broaden our reach? If so, please contact Shelley Kenigsberg or any other committee member. We’d love to hear from you.

New Society Members

The society extends a warm welcome to the following new members:

- Patrick Cullen
- Eleanna Raissis
- Angela Damis
- Karla Whitmore
- Carmen Harbour
- Suzie Wynn-Jones
- Karen Leverington

Residential Editorial Program (REP) 2002

The REP is a five-day live-in training program aimed at mid-career editors who would like to enhance their literary editing skills through intensive workshops with highly experienced and respected industry practitioners. It is being offered at Varuna, the Writers’ House in Katoomba, New South Wales in March 2002. The REP is supported by the Literature Fund of the Australia Council. It is designed to complement the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship Program, and recognises editors’ needs for mentorships and advanced in-service training with senior members of the editorial profession and publishing industry.

Twelve participants, each with several years experience as an editor, will be selected on the basis of their applications. Participants or their employers will be expected to contribute toward the cost of the program, though there will be a limited number of scholarships available. For guidelines, application forms or further information please contact Rowena Lennox, Program Manager, by email at rlennox@shoalhaven.net.au. Applications close late November 2001.

Some useful URLs

You might want to check out these URLs:

- The ‘Librarians’ Index to the Internet’ at <http://www.lii.org> can be searched by all fields, subject, title, or description.
- The following surnames index is a collection of interesting links to Italian, Polish, German, Icelandic, Irish names, among others, with information on the origin of names, time lines, etc: <http://digiserve.com/heraldry/surnames>.