

Accreditation exam workshop

The NSW Accreditation exam workshop was held in September, amidst the APEC security lockdown of Sydney. Shelley Kenigsberg conducted the IPEd Accreditation Board workshop on the sample examination paper (see the August issue of Blue Pencil). Following is a summary of the issues participants raised.

Background

Accreditation is aimed at addressing the problem of lack of appropriate payment for editors and little recognition of what editors do. The constitution of IPEd is yet to be finalised, but once it becomes a legal body it will be able to accredit editors.

It is proposed that the accreditation exam would be held twice a year, six months apart. Candidates who fail the exam could sit the exam again, but would pay the full fee on both occasions. The Accreditation Board is aiming to keep costs for members applying for accreditation as low as possible. Accreditation is to be a cost-neutral exercise, but marking time, venue costs and online options need to be considered.

As editing is highly skilled work, the accreditation exam requires a high pass mark—80 per cent for every question.

The aim of the series of accreditation workshops being held around Australia

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three hours allowed.'**

by the individual societies of editors was to workshop the sample exam, which has replaced the original proposal of portfolio-based assessment, and obtain members' feedback.

The Accreditation Board is receptive to members' comments and appreciates that feedback at the workshop was aimed

at finessing the types and content of the exam questions to produce the best and most appropriate exam possible.

At the meeting attendees worked in groups to tackle some of the exam questions (Part 3: Questions 3, 4 and 7), and then there was time for discussion of those particular questions as well as more general feedback on the accreditation process. The following feedback concentrates on those three questions and some general issues.

General feedback

Feedback from several NSW members who attempted the sample exam (some with over two decades of experience) is that the exam couldn't be completed within the three hours allowed.

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Next meeting: Tuesday, 6 November 2007

How do you become an editor?

What makes an editor? Is it a matter of training? Luck? Good word skills? Elizabeth Flann will take a short historical tour through the nature and status of editing in Australia, leading to a discussion of the state of editing today with a focus on training and the many different challenges editors now face. Some questions to think about: What kind of training do editors need? How can editing skills be assessed? Are all editors' needs the same?

Elizabeth Flann is a co-author of *The Australian Editing Handbook*. She has worked in children's publishing, as commissioning editor and publisher in general and educational publishing, as senior editor and training editor, and as a freelance general, technical and script editor. She has served on the committee of the Victorian Society of Editors and has lectured in editing and scriptwriting at Deakin University, the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts. She is a member of the Assessors Forum, which is working with the Accreditation Board towards a system for assessing and accrediting editors in Australia.

Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, 6.30 p.m. for 7.00 p.m. Drinks and light refreshments provided. \$15 for members and students; \$20 for non-members and those who do not RSVP; \$7 for holders of a current concession card or student card. Non-members who book and do not show up must still pay.

Please RSVP to (02) 9294 4999 (voicemail) or the email address <editorbruce@optusnet.com.au> by Friday, 2 November 2007.

Next event: The Christmas Party! Tuesday, 4 December 2007; booking is essential.

Members said that as editors are used to checking their work the exam time should allow for this. It was suggested that more detailed signposts on the actual layout, would help too. Section 2 (where a copyedit was to be done on a manuscript excerpt) as it stands, was too long, and would benefit from being made shorter.

It was strongly felt that those devising questions and answers should be acknowledged experts in each area, and that the questions should reflect current standards of professional editing.

Many felt that, rather than provide a marking guide for Part 2, it would be more helpful to have a sample edit. However, it was generally held that the answers for Part 1 (copyediting of sentences, correction of errors of grammar, punctuation or spelling) were sufficient.

There were also some objections from members to certain topics within the exam paper. The response was that as an editor (especially in the small Australian market) you do have to work on subjects you are not personally interested in. In this, the paper reflects the real world of editing.

It was suggested that in Part 3 (Short-answer questions) the options be more distinctly categorised. This way, participants could make their selection of relevant questions more quickly and more successfully.

It was also pointed out that there are many editors who are not familiar with hard copy mark up and the suggestion was made that a guide to mark-up symbols be included.

Some noted that, though there had been discussion on the appropriateness of the question on plagiarism (Part 3: Question 1) it was still included.

It was suggested that with the addition of 'or any other acceptable answer' in

the marking guide, the board would demonstrate that it had allowed for a range of styles and answers and recognised that there were many ways to accurately perform a professional edit. This would be reassuring to participants.

Responses to Part 3: Question 3

Members agreed that the email wording should be kept short, and that the brief could be achieved by, for example, a very short email with an attached schedule. However, the answer would also need to allow for editors to explain their thinking behind the email communication and planning of the schedule (covering different amounts of scheduling and shepherding).

It was seen that not enough distinction was given, in the question, to the different levels of editorial responsibility—those of editors or managing editors—and it needed to be made clearer in the brief.

Members remarked that the scale of points for this particular question didn't seem to adequately reflect what a professional editor was required to do. Marks needed to be allocated for tone and politeness.

Corporate editors at the workshop felt that the question and its answers were unrealistic and didn't reflect their work. Those working as corporate project managers said they wouldn't tackle something this complex in an email. Nor would they, if writing an email, cover three topics in one message. Some suggested that, to simplify the job, their approach would be to give the department heads last year's copy—or supply a template rather than risk receiving too wide a range of texts in reply to their request.

Responses to Part 3: Question 4

Members commented that providing a word count for the extract used in the question would help with calculating the time to edit the whole manuscript.

Some suggested that certain vocabulary (such as 'assignment') was not appropriate for the target audience (six-to-eight-year-old children).

There was some discussion about whether the exam question should be set out in double or single spacing. The expectation associated with double spacing was that editors could do the mark up between the lines (with only rare use of margins). However, as some editors are unaccustomed to hard copy

Have your say

A series of workshops and meetings is being held around Australia by each of the societies of editors to give members an opportunity to do the sample examination (reproduced in the August issue of *Blue Pencil* or go to <www.iped-editors.org/node/85>) either in their own time at home, or within a workshop/meeting, and provide a collegial atmosphere in which to discuss their experiences, voice their concerns and give feedback to the board on the exam.

The Accreditation Scheme will be a significant way for editors to announce, to employers and prospective employers, that they have a high level of skill. Outcomes of having the imprimatur of IPEd are that accredited editors will gain greater recognition and understanding of their roles and tasks, identify for themselves areas of strength, and attract higher rates of pay.

Society of Editors members are encouraged to keep looking at the site for updates on accreditation and to provide feedback as there are still some months to go.

Accreditation Board

mark-up, it was said that the assessors would need to be explicit about what they expected from those doing the exam.

Responses to Part 3: Question 7

Members remarked that the tone of the question 7(a) was somewhat formal (some said 'pompous').

Question 7(c) about the use of 'ironic' created much discussion. Many were concerned that there would be confusion from the fact that even Fowler doesn't regard irony as a single definition term. It was suggested that the question on irony did not reflect everyday work, and that this was an examiner's pet peeve or a trick question rather than a reasonable test of editorial skill. It requires a specific piece of knowledge that some editors might not have.

Participants felt it would be better to test for more appropriate things. For example, test for a more common problem, such as sorting out sentences that are ambiguous or noun strings. Structure, reordering and adverbial phrases are also more common issues that could be addressed.

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NEW MEMBERS

**John Neil
Tracey-Jane Christie
Gaye Mietzke
Angelina Bandiera**

**NEW CORPORATE
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**Murdoch Books
(Book Publishers)**

IPed notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors (formerly CASE) October 2007

This has been a month of consolidating the initiatives that are under way. The new website is up and running at <www.iped-editors.org> and we welcome your ideas on how to improve it further—contact your society's IPed delegate.

The constitution was the main topic of a lengthy teleconference held by the Interim Council at the beginning of September. The council is very aware that it is laying the foundations for an enduring organisation and it is striving to provide a fair and flexible basis to enable IPed to meet the unknowable challenges that lie ahead. During the phone hook-up the delegates went through the draft prepared by the lawyers, together with email comments circulated beforehand, and considered the implications of every clause in detail. The process was so intense that the meeting had to be adjourned, both to give the delegates a rest and to get more legal advice; it reconvened the following week to complete the discussion. The resulting document is again in the hands of the lawyers to resolve final difficulties and questions. It will be available for comment on the website by the time you read this.

With so much effort going into the constitution, other council matters have taken a back seat for the time being. IPed's present financial position is reasonably sound. An indicative start-up budget is in preparation, and

the member societies will be kept up to date as financial projections are refined.

The accreditation scheme is making steady progress. The Accreditation Board's current activities include gathering numbers, estimating costs and preparing guidelines for the first examination. The sample exam paper is now available on the website together with its answer sheet and marking guide. Even if you don't intend to sit the exam, you will find it a useful refresher. The editors' societies around Australia are conducting workshops to gauge members' reactions to the exam questions and answers, and Western Australia has already reported on its workshop with some constructive and helpful ideas. [The report from the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. starts on page one of this issue of *Blue Pencil*.]

While the Accreditation Board takes responsibility for the administration and conduct of the scheme, the Assessors Forum concentrates on the content. As the feedback from the workshops comes in, the Assessors Forum will collate it and modify the exam paper accordingly. There was a good response to the issues paper on how to make the examination available on screen, and these comments are also being considered.

**Janet Mackenzie
Liaison Officer**

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Participants felt that any reference works mentioned in the exam text should have first been provided to prospective exam candidates on a reference list.

Members suggested that it would be helpful to have more options to choose from. (board reps remarked that it had been agreed by the assessors but that it had not been possible to devise extra questions by the time the board wanted to upload the sample exam. There will be a greater choice in this part.)

Further comments

The board noted that only three assessors were involved in writing the sample exam and that the process of refining it

was in train. Members remarked (and the board agreed this would happen) and a larger pool of assessors should be involved, with different questions being referred to a panel of editors who are experts in particular kinds of editing.

At this stage the fee for sitting the exam has not been finalised but figures of \$400 or \$500 per candidate were under discussion. Participants said they thought a lot of experienced people might avoid sitting the exam because of the costs.

Candidates also suggested the possibility of sitting a preliminary exam before signing up, as it is a lot of money to lose if you fail. (It was pointed out

Society's new direct deposit payment option

The society now offers three options for payment:

- 1. By credit card over the phone (or mail or email).**
- 2. By cheque.**
- 3. By using our new direct deposit facility, which is the most secure.**

Using your own bank's online funds transfer option, make the payment direct to our CBA account.

Account Name: Society of Editors (NSW)

BSB: 062172

Account Number: 00905083

Include your name and abbreviated payment description in the space provided, and that's it!

The account is checked regularly for deposits, but if you want confirmation of your deposit, please email <treasurer@editorsnsw.com> to receive a return email. This confirmation email will also serve as a receipt. If you need a paper receipt, advise your address in your email and one will be provided.

If you have any questions on this process, please contact the Treasurer, Owen Kavanagh, by email or phone 0418 440 151.

that the right of appeal still exists.) The system for marking could also be described for prospective examinees.

The Accreditation Board would appreciate more feedback, and the workshops being held nationally are a very significant help in that process.

As the APEC security measures meant that many NSW members were unable to make the September meeting, it is particularly important that members who still want to raise issues relating to the exam make themselves heard. Individuals are invited to add comments on the IPed website <www.iped-editors.org>.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

Order Form: Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

The *Editorial Services Directory 2007*, published by Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., is available.

It has all the usual features—freelance editors listed by Services Offered; by Types of Published Material they have worked on; by Subject (or Genre) specialities; together with a directory entry for each freelance editor of up to a page.

The price is \$20 per copy, which includes postage.

I would like to buy.....
copy/ies of *Editorial Services Directory 2007* @ \$20 per copy (postage within Australia included) for a total of \$.....

Name:.....
Organisation:.....
Address:.....
.....
.....
Cheque/money order, made out to Society of Editors NSW, enclosed for \$.....

Or please charge \$.....
to my credit card:

- Bankcard
- MasterCard
- Visa

Credit card number:

Expiry date:.....

Name on credit card:

Cardholder's signature:

.....

See page 3 for details on payment by our new direct deposit facility. Otherwise, please return the form and payment to the society at PO Box 2229, Rose Bay North, NSW 2030.

Tiered membership system

The newly introduced tiered membership system will work as follows.

Categories

This membership year (2007) the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc. will offer members the option of three categories:

1. Existing members (as at 31 December 2006) can remain an ordinary member at the current fee (\$70/75) with the current entitlements;
2. Existing and new members can become a professional editor member at the current ordinary fee with the current ordinary entitlements, provided you have two years experience in a paid editing role and can supply two letters confirming your experience; or
3. Existing and new members can become an associate member at a reduced fee (\$50) with reduced entitlements (an associate member cannot vote at an election, cannot become an office bearer and cannot be listed in the *Editorial Services Directory*).

Phasing in a new system

Within four years (before January 2011) all ordinary members will be asked to choose either:

1. Professional editor member status; or
2. Associate member status.

Four years should be sufficient time for those seeking professional status to gain professional experience if they do not already have it.

Experience

Professional editor members must have at least two years in-house experience as an editor or the equivalent freelance or part-time experience. For example, if you worked half-time as an editor for four years (part-time or freelance) then that would be an acceptable equivalent to two years full-time work as an in-house editor. Professional experience must be in a paid editing role. As professional members may have had career breaks, there is no limit on how long ago the professional editing experience was obtained. Professional editor members will be asked to provide details of their experience and two letters (in English) that can be checked by a subcommittee appointed for this purpose. The subcommittee will simply confirm the statements supplied by the third parties. The letters can just be a statement of the years of experience in an editorial role. See the Professional Editor Membership flyer for more information about requirements.

Corporate Associates

A new category of Corporate Associates is also available. Publishing companies and other businesses and organisations that support the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.'s aims can become Corporate Associates. For an annual fee of \$300, Corporate Associates of the society will receive five copies of *Blue Pencil* each month and one copy of the *Editorial Services Directory*, five free admissions to each monthly meeting and two free admissions to special events, such as the Christmas dinner. The usual member rates on professional development courses and workshops will apply to Corporate Associates for up to five attendees.

The Committee
Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

Christmas Party!

you are invited to

Encasa Restaurant

Address: 423 Pitt Street, Sydney

The restaurant is near Central Station, between Campbell Street and Goulburn Street, and there are plenty of parking spaces.

Time: 6.30 for 7.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 4 December 2007

Cost: \$42 a head

including drinks and a special Spanish banquet with: bread and salad; a large set range of seafood, meat and vegetable tapas; a choice of two desserts; and tea or coffee. Please inform us if you require a vegetarian menu.

The society will provide basic beer, wine and soft drink. Encasa is licensed if you wish to buy extra drinks.

Celebrate the festive season with great food, wine and door prizes!

We welcome corporate associates and non-members.

Booking is essential. You can pay on the night but you must book beforehand.

Please RSVP by Friday, 23 November 2007. Later bookings cannot be guaranteed as only 30 places are left.

Send in the enclosed booking form with payment details.

Freelancers do lunch, 2 November

The next freelancers' lunch will be held at Toast Cafe, Shop 3, 22-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills on Friday, 2 November 2007. Mains cost about \$14. The cafe is near the corner with Reservoir Street and is a five-to-ten-minute walk from Central Station and the Eddy Avenue bus stops.

The society organises these informal freelancers' lunches every second month or so. The invitation to lunch is cordially extended to other freelancers who work in the publishing industry. There is no need to RSVP. See you there!

Environmental responsibility in publishing and printing, Galley Club, 14 November

The Galley Club of Sydney will present a talk on 'Environmental responsibility in publishing and printing'. Speakers Tia Mayer from SOS Print + Media and Peter Cottam from CPI Papers will discuss what environmental responsibility involves and where you can make a start.

A growing group of consumers making buying decisions now about products made from sustainable materials. Find out about FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and other environmental accreditations. The talk covers FSC terminology; environmental accreditations and their pros and cons; FSC implications for you or your business; and what you need to know and do to use the FSC logo on products.

This seminar is relevant for all in production, publishing, finance, marketing and sales. It will be held in the Cap Room, Harbour View Hotel, 18 Lower Fort Street, The Rocks, on Wednesday, 14 November at 6.30 p.m. Register your interest by Friday, 9 November by emailing <jacquis@murdochbooks.com.au>. The cost for non-members is \$5. Galley Club members are free. Drinks and nibbles provided. For more details visit <www.galleyclubsydney.org.au>.

Publishers and Authors Bookshow, 17 and 18 November

The ninth Publishers and Authors Bookshow will be held on Saturday, 17 and Sunday, 18 November from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at the the main hall of Leichhardt Town Hall. Presented by the NSW Writers' Centre, the bookshow will showcase the work of participating Australian-owned publishers, small presses, niche publishers, self-published authors and short-run and POD printers, among others.

A program of talks will be held on the hour every hour. Speakers include people in the Australian writing and publishing industries, such as publishers, booksellers, agents, distributors, publicists, editors, manuscript assessors, artists and illustrators, self-published writers and others. Entry to the bookshow is free. Tickets to the talks program cost \$30 for two days or \$20 for one day for members of the NSW Writers' Centre. To purchase tickets to the talks program visit the website <www.nswwriterscentre.org.au>.

Events at Gleebooks in November

Throughout November various talks, discussions and launches with fascinating presenters will be held at Gleebooks (49 Glebe Point Road, Glebe). A few highlights are listed below. See the Gleebooks website <www.gleebooks.com.au> for more details, or phone (02) 9660 2333.

On 7 November, journalist Jana Wendt will discuss *A Matter of Principle*, her collection of interviews with people in the worlds of politics, society, art, sport, music and architecture.

On 8 November, Christopher Koch, award-winning author of *The Year of Living Dangerously* and *Highways to a War* will talk about his new book, *The Memory Room*.

Other speakers include John Clarke on 9 November at 6.00 p.m., followed at 7.00 p.m. by Julian Burnside in conversation with Anna Funder.

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2008 closing date, 14 December

Entries for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, worth over \$42,000, will close on Friday, 14 December 2007. Details and application forms for entries are on the website <www.trust.com.au>.

The Editorial Services Directory 2007 is now available

Members who have advertised their services in the *Editorial Services Directory 2007* should have received their free copy. Further copies can be purchased from Terry Johnston for \$20 (postage included). See the order form on page 4. Please send a cheque or money order to PO Box 2229, Rose Bay North, NSW 2030. Or, pay by direct deposit; details are on page 3.

Editors in Colleen McCullough's good books

The multi-talented bestselling author Colleen McCullough delivered a fabulous compliment to editors recently. She told interviewer Andrew Denton (24 September 2007 episode of *Enough Rope*) that, when writing a book, the editor 'is the only critic who can ever matter to a writer, because the editor is your only critic who ever sees it in a form which can be amended.'

CBCA Children's Book of the Year Awards, closing date 31 December

Submissions are now being received for the CBCA Children's Book of the Year Awards. Entries close on 31 December 2007 for the 2008 awards. Titles with a 2007 date of publication can be forwarded to the national office for consideration. Information and entry forms are on the CBCA website; or contact Christine Oughtred by email <co@deakin.edu.au> or by phone on 0409 688 717.



Letter to the editor

Thanks to Rhana and Matthew for their interesting comments ('Scientific Style', *Blue Pencil* October 2007). I'd like to add a point from my experience.

Of course clarity is important in scientific communication, but 'plain English' needn't mean dreary prose. Some articles in medical journals (particularly the *Lancet*, *British Medical Journal* and *New England Journal of Medicine*) are beautifully and elegantly written—a pleasure to read.

However, many authors of scientific papers have done very little writing since they left school, so I see the editor's role as helping them to develop a lucid, pleasant style. Getting professional help with a paper shouldn't just be about increasing the chances of getting it published. Done well, editorial input on the present paper means the author requires less help with the next one.

Expert analysis, tactful feedback and practical writing tips, tailored to suit the author's needs and with worked examples, are what I think an author is paying for when she or he hires an editor rather than a secretary.

Dr Kathy Kramer
Medical writer/editor

Call for contributions

Have you been to an interesting conference or event? We welcome your contributions to

Blue Pencil.

We would like to publish your articles, book reviews or letters. Please email the editor at <cje_editing@hotmail.com>.

Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007; Voicemail: (02) 9294 4999
<www.editorsnsw.com>.

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Your comments and contributions are welcome. Mail them to the Editor, *Blue Pencil*, Society of Editors (NSW) Inc., PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007, or email Catherine Etteridge at <bluepencil@editorsnsw.com>.

Copy deadline for the December issue is Tuesday, 13 November 2007

The views expressed in the articles and letters, or the material contained in any advertisement or insert, are those of individual authors, not of the Society of Editors (NSW) Inc.

Advertising rates

Full page, \$375; half page, \$200 (horizontal only); one-third page, \$125 (vertical or horizontal); quarter page \$100 (horizontal only); one-sixth page, \$75 (half of one column). Inserts: \$200 per hundred for DL-sized or A4 pre-folded to DL size. Circulation: approximately 375. Please note that the committee reserves the right to decide whether advertisements are appropriate for this newsletter.

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 is available in different categories.

Membership runs for a calendar year. The 2007 fees are \$70 for ordinary member or professional member renewals; \$75 for new professional members (\$45 if joining after 31 May); or \$50 for associate membership. Interested organisations can become corporate associates for \$300 per year.

To obtain a membership application form, phone (02) 9294 4999 or write to PO Box 254, Broadway NSW 2007.

Listing in the Editorial Services Directory

The society's *Editorial Services Directory* is available online at <www.editorsnsw.com/esd/>. New listings and updates can be added quarterly as follows:

- online only: July (deadline 30 June); October (deadline 30 September)
 - print and online: January (deadline 31 December); April (deadline 31 March).
- The cost is \$40 per year (\$20 for new listings received from April to September) in addition to the fee for membership of the society. New listings should be submitted using a template available from Cathy Gray at <esd@editorsnsw.com>.

Committee meetings

All members are welcome to attend the society's committee meetings, generally held each month. Please contact a committee member for details if you wish to attend the next meeting.

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Copy deadline for the December issue of

Blue Pencil:

Tuesday, 13 November 2007

Professional development

Effective writing: structure, style, and plain English

Discover techniques for writing clearly. Get your message across by organising your ideas, engaging your reader and developing an effective style. Learn how to:

- Communicate effectively
- Ensure the text hangs together
- Write in plain English to communicate clearly
- Use stylistic devices and punctuation to give your writing clarity—and punch
- Revise and edit to polish your writing.

Presenter: Pauline Waugh

Date: Friday, 16 November

Cost: \$195 members, \$265 non-members

Grammar essentials

Presenter: Pam Peters

Date: Friday, 15 February 2008

Cost: \$195 members, \$265 non-members

Smart marketing for freelancers

Presenter: Terry Johnston

Date: Saturday, 22 March 2008

Cost: \$195 members, \$265 non-members

Cancellation and refunds

The society will refund 100 per cent of the fee if you cancel four or more working days before the workshop, and 50 per cent if you cancel one to three days before. However, please note that there can be no refund if you cancel on the day of the workshop.

Regional members living more than 200 km from Sydney may receive a 40 per cent discount on the cost of the society's workshops (excluding computer-based workshops).

Payments for attending the workshops can now be made by direct deposit. See page 3 for details of our new direct deposit facility.

For more information about the workshops, email Pauline Waugh at <pauline.waugh@corporatecommunication.com.au>.

Have you used your free meeting voucher?

With just one meeting to go before the end of the calendar year it is time to dig out your free meeting voucher. All members were sent a voucher for one free meeting when they joined or renewed their membership to the society.

If you haven't been to a meeting yet this year you've missed some fabulous speakers, including Mark MacLeod on children's book publishing and Glenda Browne on indexing, who represent the best of their profession and who tailor their message to an audience of editors.

We have another great event before the Christmas Party, namely a presentation from Elizabeth Flann, the co-author of *The Australian Editing Handbook*. Make sure you don't miss out.