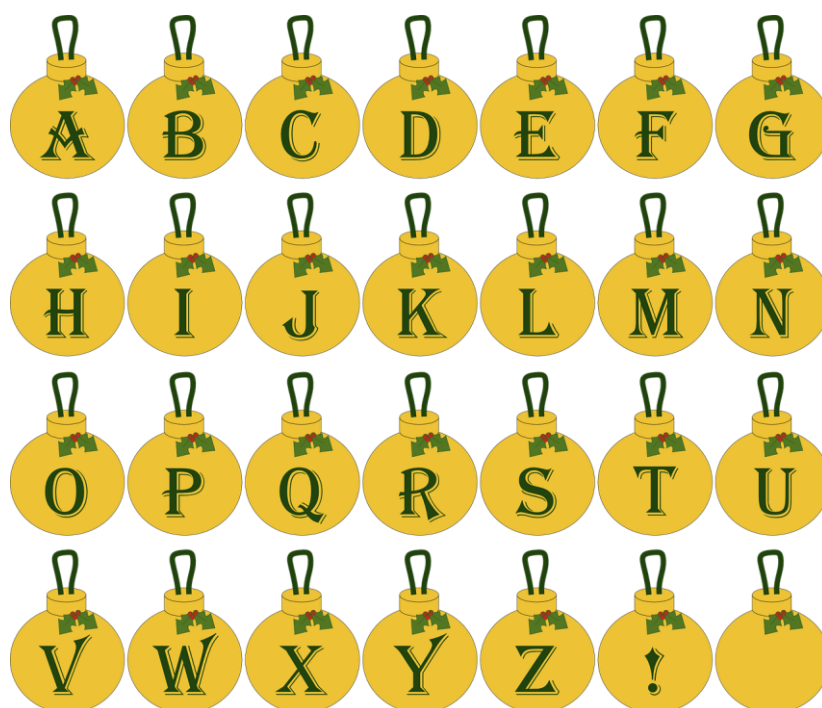Newsletter of the **Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Inc.**

Volume 18 • Number 6 • December 2022

Council update

Council last met on 17 October as the meeting planned for 28 November had to be deferred. Administrative matters, regular reports and ideas for some form of conference that could be held in 2023 were discussed.

Some other matters, such as the timetable for Council meetings for 2023, were dealt with via email. The conference working group did meet in November to further discuss a gathering in 2023 – leading to the announcement circulated to members and shown below.

A more information-laden Council update will appear in the next issue.

As always, copy is required for the Newsletter. Please send news, comment, technical tips or any items of interest to Elisabeth Thomas, editor@anzsi.org

ANZSI Council wishes all members and their families a safe and enjoyable festive season and a prosperous 2023.

Elisabeth Thomas, Council member and Editor

ANZSI Conference 2023

The last ANZSI conference was held in Canberra in 2015 (in conjunction with IPEd), and the last face-to-face professional gathering open to all ANZSI members was a symposium held in Penrose, in the NSW Southern Highlands, in 2017.

After this long hiatus, ANZSI is pleased to announce that planning is underway for a face-to-face conference to be held in **Spring 2023** in a **regional Australian city**; options for online sessions are also being explored.

The conference will provide the opportunity to meet and mix with like-minded colleagues, update and further develop your professional knowledge and grow your network. The workshops and panel sessions will support the professional development of newly-trained, early-career and established indexers.

Watch this space for more information coming soon. Details will also be posted on the ANZSI website as they become available.

Sharon Betridge, Conference Working Group

People

Presenting Dr Mary Coe

Congratulations go to Mary Coe, long-time ANZSI member and past-President, on completing her doctoral studies. Mary became a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in December – the degree awarded by the Faculty of Arts and Education at Charles Sturt University.

Dr Coe's thesis 'How readers make sense of active e-book indexes' is open-access and available at https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/en/publications/how-readers-make-sense-of-active-e-book-indexes

Well done, Mary! All that hard work over recent years and juggling life (with a move to the country), the universe and everything (including *The Indexer*).

Mary (centre) with her doctoral supervisors Philip Hider and Mary Anne Kennan.

(Photograph courtesy of Mary Coe)

Ed.

Report (part 1): 2022 International Indexing Conference, Berlin

The 'Continental Connections' International Indexing Conference was held in Berlin on 17 and 18 October 2022, with an ICRIS triennial meeting of international representatives on 16 October. I have reported on the meeting to Council, and information will be shared in the *ANZSI Newsletter* when the societies have confirmed the decisions made at the meeting. Thank you to ANZSI for sponsoring me as the ANZSI representative at the meeting.

Travels

I travelled with family members to Berlin: Jenny Browne also attended the conference [see Jenny's report in this issue], and Jon Jermey who spent the time exploring the city in greater depth. We all enjoyed seeing Berlin and found the story of the Berlin Wall and its remnants fascinating.

We took the opportunity to include visits to other countries, going via Dubai and Poland, and returning via warmer climes in Hungary, the former Yugoslavia, and Greece, finishing in Abu Dhabi. We are not great sport watchers, but by coincidence our last lunch in Dubai was at a Lebanese restaurant which was showing the Australia versus Tunisia football (see soccer) match.

Jon and Jenny at the Wall's East Gallery

Hadrian's Library, Athens

Warsaw University Library rooftop garden

Bookshop on Santorini

(Photographs courtesy of Glenda Browne)

Conference organisation

The conference had participants from Europe, North America, China, Australia and South Africa and included a mix of online and in-person presentations which were all live-streamed and recorded. There were 40 or 50 people attending in person. It was a stimulating, well-organised event.

The organisers were Caroline Diepeveen and Pierke Bosschieter from Netherlands Indexers Network (NIN), Ann Kingdom from the UK Society of Indexers (SI) and Jochen Fassbender from Deutsches Netzwerk der Indexer (DNI) / German Network of Indexers. Because none of the societies had a German bank account, payments were made via the German Society for Information and Knowledge (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Information und Wissen e. V., DGI). Two members of DGI attended the ICRIS meeting, and three attended the conference and their President, Monica Hagedorn-Saupe, opened the conference with Caroline Diepeveen.

Sessions were sponsored by ASI, ANZSI, ISC/SCI, le-tex (a publishing services provider, creating workflow tools), Klarso GmbH (software developers, and creator of Index Manager), River Valley Technologies (developers of an end-to-end publishing system, https://rivervalley.io/) and Liverpool University Press (publishers of *The Indexer*). There were also advertisements in the program from SKY Index and IndexExploit (http://www.indexbase.co.uk). As well as raising funds, sponsorships and advertisements play a role in alerting attendees to the work and products of various companies.

The hybrid nature of the conference helped attendees and speakers to attend without travelling to Berlin, including some who had planned to attend and then could not. One speaker had some connectivity issues, but fortunately could page through her PowerPoint presentation so we could follow along even when we could not hear her. Another speaker was unwell during the conference and gave her presentation weeks later. As with the other presentations, it was recorded and made available to registered conference attendees.

The technical part of a hybrid conference such as this one is very complex, and required a full-time technical support person, in this case Peter Greulich, the brother of organiser Walter Greulich, who did a great job. His software enabled him to change the display that in-person and online attendees saw on the screen. This display at different times included online presenters, in-person presenters, panellists, the session chair, people asking questions and, occasionally, the audience.

The conference screen set-up

Keynotes

In this first report I will discuss the keynote speeches, and for the next I will describe the other presentations.

The four keynote speakers made up a relatively large part of the conference. They were well chosen and gave us a taste of research that is not about indexing but is related to the context of indexing and the ideas we work with. Three were academics from Germany, the Netherlands and the UK, including the honorary president of SI. Most of them spoke to us via Zoom, although some had hoped to be there in person.

Sam Leith: Developments in publishing

Sam Leith, the Honorary President of the Society of Indexers, literary editor of *The Spectator* and host of 'The Book Club' podcast from *The Spectator*, spoke about developments in publishing. As a literary editor he works at the 'far end of process'. Many of the books he is sent don't yet have their indexes, as the proofs are sent before index has been completed.

Books are being published in the UK in greater numbers than before. Sam saw this as being due to two things, both related to the sales process. The first was the demise in 1992 of price maintenance (enforcement of a minimum retail price fixed by publishers) which allowed supermarkets to become bulk booksellers. The second was Amazon, and its solution to the logistics problem of book supply, which enabled more efficient sale of books in the long tail (those with small readerships), thus making it easier for publishers to take punts (although, interestingly, in Australia it is often said that publishers don't take chances anymore).

Ebooks have been developing since about 1992, when the first rocket book and ereader were created, although it took about 15 years for the first practical ebook to be developed. Ebooks now have their niche, but haven't wiped out physical books, which are especially handy for books with indexes [although we love indexes in ebooks as well!]

For millennials, physical books are now designed to look good on social media – Tiktok, InstaBook, and others. In publishing there has also been a trend in me-tooism, in which a hit book spawns many followers in the same genre. These may benefit from online algorithms which advise readers 'if you enjoyed this, you'll enjoy this'. His examples were Hedda McDonald's *H is for Hawk* (on dealing with grief by taming a hawk) creating a mini-genre of memoirs of nature interacting with mental health, and Rovelli's best-selling *Seven brief lessons on physics* which motivated every quantum physicist to write a book.

Urs Stäheli: What's in an index? Cultural and sociological perspectives

Urs Stäheli, a professor of sociological theory at the University of Hamburg in Germany, spoke on listmaking and lists as ordering devices. Jenny and I later saw some ancient Sumerian lists in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, which proved his point that this is an old cultural practice. For example, in the ancient world, Mesopotamians used lists to organise their gods.

Indexes are supplements to the books they address. It's a rare index that doesn't need its book. When the index can stand alone this is known as the emancipation of the supplement.

Indexers are mediators between textual and information order, performing 'hidden' transformative work. Culturally this transformation *can* be seen as loss of meaning.

Indexers have to be 'faithful readers' and 'unfaithful readers' at same time – we have to know the content very well (and be faithful to it), while also distancing ourselves from the existing structure/content.

Kiene Brillenburg Wurth: Tabularity and emptiness – who/what reads in the digital age?

Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, a professor of literature and comparative media at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, spoke on the history of reading/indexing, introducing us to the concepts of tabularity, and who/what reads in the digital age.

Tabularity refers to the arrangement of content on a flat (table) surface for convenient access. It increasingly visualises writing and accommodates fast/surface reading. Indexing is part of the tablular book and is a tool for reader(ly) activism.

Readers' rights include the right to choose their own access, and to read quickly and actively. Readers are co-creators because of tabularity – texts become tableaus to walk around, and readers get a bird's eye view from aids such as indexes.

In the move to new media, tabularity promotes machine activity (rather than reader activity/activism). Most texts today are read by machines.

Kiene also introduced us to the term 'scrollytelling', which describes online stories with audio and video effects triggered by scrolling the page. You can see an example in the 'Snow Fall' story from the *New York Times* at https://shorthand.com/the-craft/an-introduction-to-scrollytelling/index.html

Judith Flanders: A place for everything, and everything that came before

Judith Flanders, a social historian and senior research fellow at the University of Buckingham in England, presented a history of alphabetical order and other orders, noting that sorting and classification are hidden by simplicity and familiarity. We sort all the time – wallets have separate sections, as do supermarkets, where sorting is used to optimise sales and ease supply. When we shop, we unsort into our trolleys, and re-sort when we pack.

Hierarchical order was used for centuries where we would now use alphabetical order, eg. in tax registers and the *Domesday Book* but feels odd to us now. Many of our tools combine alphabetical order with other orders, eg. the Yellow Pages phone book volumes are geographical, then the order is occupational before it becomes alphabetical.

Ecclesiastical works have been ordered with the Bible first, followed by writings by church fathers and then lesser writers, finally arriving at pagan writers. Two hundred years ago Harvard University ordered achievements by the students' social position and wealth, then by whether their father had attended Harvard, and then by the students' own achievements.

In *The Indexing Companion*, we have a section on 'filing by importance', and quote Robert Dessaix on his assignments when studying in Russia:

'...the class paper we had to write on Dostoevsky was less 'free'; it had to be couched in strictly Marxist literary terms and the bibliography had to begin with the letter L for Lenin, then go on to M for Marx, E for Engels and only then to A, B, etc. No one minded or thought it odd. We were just giving unto Caesar'. (Dessaix R, *A mother's disgrace*. 1994)

In question time, Caroline Diepeveen wondered whether we are adventurous enough. While in general I am a great fan of alphabetical order, I can sometimes see the reason for alternatives. Some people have tried sorting subheadings in a computer index by the names of the tabs (File/Home/Insert/Design etc) and I have heard of an index organised from Z to A because Z doesn't get enough attention! (My sister prefers the spelling 'realize' to 'realise' for the same reason.)

Judith also pointed out that if one intelligence (person or computer) does both the sorting and searching, any method can be workable.

I didn't know what to expect from the keynote presentations, and they were all a pleasant surprise and an intellectual challenge.

The rest of my report on the remainder of the conference will follow in a later issue.

Glenda Browne

ANZSI Library

(Photograph: Karen Gillen)

The full list of holdings of both the Australian collection and the New Zealand collection can be viewed or downloaded from the members area on the ANZSI website.

If you wish to borrow any items from the library, or have any queries about loan conditions for either collection, please contact the relevant library officer:

Australia: Karen Gillen   New Zealand: Carol Dawber

Karen Gillen, Library Officer (Australia)

A Young Indexer on Tour

The 2022 International Indexing Conference in Berlin provided an excellent excuse to mix tourism and tutelage.
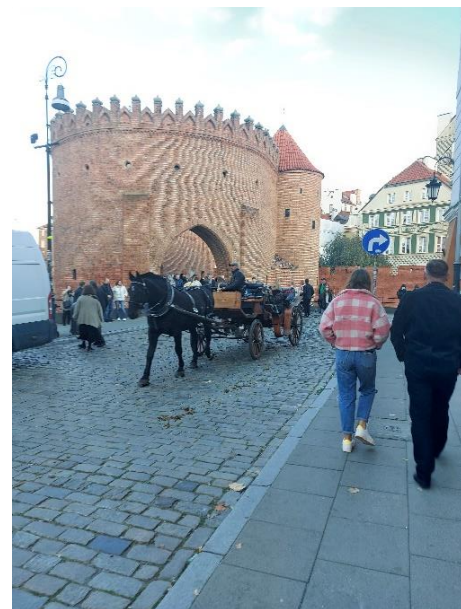
Arriving in Dubai in October…

Museum of the Future

Burj Khalifa

through Poland …

Wieliczka Salt Mine

On the streets of Warsaw

and on to Germany …

where the conference provided sessions on topics from the philosophical to the instructional.

Two sessions were ANZSI-sponsored:

'Indexing *The Indexer'* informed of the difficulties of indexing a long-running journal, and analysed the findings of the survey, emailed out to ANZSI members, on how to navigate these issues. 'E-book Indexing Update' provided helpful flowcharts demonstrating how to navigate creating indexes in Word, PDF, XML, HTML and EPub, so that a client's formatting requests can almost always be met.

While all of the sessions were informative, a few went on to have relevance later in our trip. Urs Stäheli discussed the role of lists throughout history and the role of list-makers in both distinguishing and connecting items. A visit to the Pergamon Museum evidenced that list making dates from the invention of writing, when a multitude of items were textually categorised created to "impose order on the cosmos".

A session detailing the translation of *Index, a history of the*, showed that translation is not a simple automatic process, especially when it comes to wordplay. This was evidenced when ordering a Pizzatasche, or, as it is known on the English side of the menu, a Pizza Bag.

Result of an urban planner
with a sense of humour?

From pizza bags to another staple
of German cuisine: Spaghetti Eis

(All photographs and captions courtesy of Jenny Browne)

The conference was a truly international event, with sessions on Chinese indexing, German publishers, and the International Indexing Dictionary – which perhaps will be of use in the remainder of our travels?

Jenny Browne

What's in *The Indexer*?

The December issue of *The Indexer* is available.

Did you know that the electronic version of *The Indexer* is available to subscribers in the last week of the month <u>before</u> the month of publication? Get ahead with your reading by subscribing.

More info at https://www.theindexer.org

The Indexer
The International Journal of Indexing

Volume 40.4
(December 2022)

Editorial
Mary Coe

Articles

Metatopic musings, Part 1. UK and US practices compared
Melanie Gee

Indexing the Joseph Smith Papers: a story of client–indexer collaboration
Kate Mertes

Indexing The Indexer, Part 3. A first look at the survey results
Max McMaster and Ann Kingdom

Indexing with Excel, Part 2. Checking indexing data
Walter Greulich

Conference Reports

'Past Perfect, Future Progressive': Indexing Society of Canada/Société canadienne d'indexation (ISC/SCI) 2022 conference
Ann Kingdom | Mary Coe

Indexes Reviewed
Christine Shuttleworth

Book Review
How Words Get Good: The Story of Making a Book by Rebecca Lee
Reviewed by John Silvester

The Indexer
The International Journal of Indexing
Vol. 40, No. 4, December 2022

Print ISSN 0019-4131
Online ISSN 1756-0632

Did you know that the indexes to the journal are available on
The Indexer website?

Search for content by category or using the author, title, and subject indexes.

Visit www.theindexer.org/indexes/

You can also search for content in the journal via the LUP website or through Scopus.

www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journal/index

LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY PRESS

@LivUniPress   liverpooluniversitypress   @LivUniPress

ANZSI events

For full details, follow a link (if included) or go directly to the **Events webpage**.
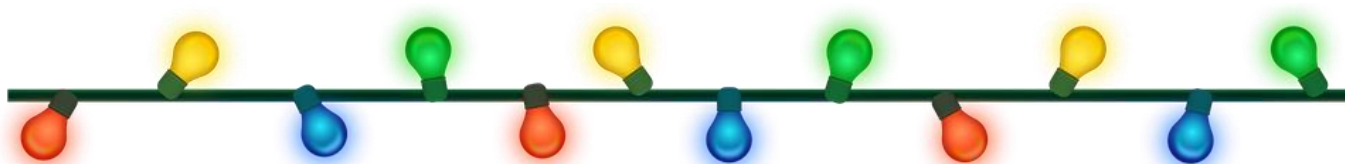
ANZSI Council meeting

6 February 2023 (TBC)

5:00 – 7:00 pm (AEDT), Zoom videoconference

ANZSI Council meeting

20 March 2023 (TBC)

5:00 – 7:00 pm (AEDT), Zoom videoconference

Contact information

General email: info@anzsi.org

[facebook icon] ANZSocietyIndexers

[twitter icon] @ANZSI_indexers

ANZSI Council 2022-23

President: **Madeleine Davis**
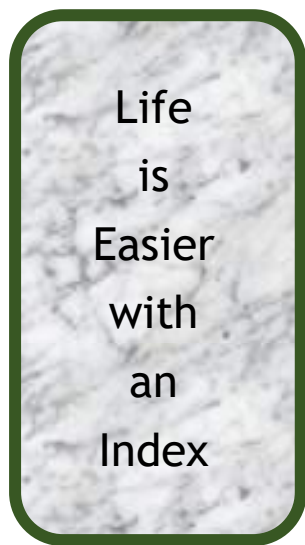
Vice-president: **Shirley Campbell**

Secretary: **Sherrey Quinn**

Treasurer: **Michael Wyatt**

Council members: Elisabeth Thomas, Marnie Hannagan and Sharon Betridge.

Group and regional contacts

Please consult the **ANZSI website** for details of regional and interest groups, and contacts.

Life is Easier with an Index

ANZSI newsletter

Newsletter

© Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Inc.

Editor: **Elisabeth Thomas**

Submissions may be edited for clarity, space and uniformity of style. Selection of content is at the discretion of the Editor / ANZSI Council.

Open the PDF with Adobe Acrobat Reader for best reading/printing view.

Opinions and statements expressed in the Newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

All photographs and images, unless otherwise stated, are Creative Commons CC0 'no copyright reserved'.

Schedule

The *ANZSI Newsletter* is published six times a year - in February, April, June, August, October and December.

Contribution deadline: second Friday of the month of publication.

Please email contributions to the editor, Elisabeth Thomas, at **editor@anzsi.org**.

Advertising rates

Please visit our **website**.