

IPEd Notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors

iped-editors.org

National Editors Conference, Sydney, 7–9 September 2011

A series of notes under this heading is produced regularly for the newsletters and websites of the Australian societies of editors to inform their members about IPEd activities. The notes can also be read on the IPEd website.

This is a special issue for participants in the 5th National Editors Conference. It summarises IPEd's major activities since the last national conference, held in Adelaide in October 2009. The notes begin with some historical and background information for those participants who might be unfamiliar with the Institute.

IPEd.

To advance the
profession of editing

A little history ...

The Institute of Professional Editors Limited (IPEd) exists to advance the profession of editing, by planning and implementing national initiatives—an accreditation scheme, promotion and communication campaigns, training and mentoring—and other activities to support Australian societies of editors and their members, and editors in general.

IPEd also supports biennial national conferences of editors, which have been held in Brisbane (2003), Melbourne (2005), Hobart (2007) and Adelaide (2009), and now in Sydney. The next IPEd conference will be in Perth in 2013. Each conference is organised and hosted by the local society of editors.

IPEd was launched at the 2005 national conference, as successor to the Council of Australian Societies of Editors (CASE), an informal body that had existed for many years. It was formally registered on 22 January 2008 as a public, not-for-profit company. Its primary initial aim was to develop and implement a national accreditation scheme for editors.

The Members* of the company are the societies of editors in the six states and Canberra. The Members financially support IPEd through an annual contribution proportional to the size of their membership. IPEd's only other substantive source of funds at the moment is accreditation exam fees, most of which are consumed in developing and running the exams.

IPEd is governed by a council comprising one nominee of each of the Members. The councillors have the status and obligations of company directors. The accreditation scheme is run by the IPEd Accreditation Board (AB), a committee of the IPEd Council.

* Capitalised to distinguish them from the members of the societies

Highlights: 2009–11

Third accreditation exam

The third accreditation exam was held in May this year. It was sat by 62 candidates, 85% of whom passed. That this was a significantly higher pass rate than the earlier exams is attributed to candidates preparing themselves better and receiving greater support from their particular societies through workshops and other means.

IPEd accredited editors can adopt the postnominal 'AE' and there is already evidence that this can provide an edge in obtaining editing commissions. There are now over 200 AEs around the nation.

The three exams held so far have been, for logistical necessity, pen-and-paper, whereas there is a clear desire among many potential candidates that they would prefer to take the exam onscreen, since that is how they now work, day to day, as editors. The IPEd Council and AB therefore prepared a discussion paper to canvass responses to a range of suggested options for the form of future exams. The closing date for responses was the end of August just past, and some preliminary analysis of them will be presented at an AB conference session on Friday afternoon. The paper can be found on the IPEd website.

Policy on editing research theses revised

During 2010, IPEd revised its policy on 'The editing of research theses by professional editors'. The policy was originally developed by CASE in collaboration with the Deans and Directors of Graduate Studies (DDoGS), and was endorsed in 2001. The revision takes account of the changing environment in which editors and students work, particularly in relation to electronic editing. The revisions were reviewed and commented on by IPEd's Member societies, and a final version submitted to DDoGS for approval and endorsement, which were obtained in November 2010. The policy is on the IPEd website and will be discussed in a Thursday afternoon conference session.

Transportable training introduced

Training and professional development are among the most important services provided by the Members of IPEd to their members, and all the societies have active programs of training courses and workshops. In running them, they draw heavily on the particular skills and experience held by their members. It will be no surprise that the larger societies are more blessed in this regard.

IPEd has compiled a National Training Register that not only lists the richness but also increases awareness among all members of the types of training being offered in their sister societies. Where a particular course or workshop originally held in one society is seen as desirable by the members of another society, IPEd will, where feasible, provide financial and other support for it to be run for that society's members. The first such event occurred during August just past: a course on advanced features of Microsoft Word originally run in Victoria was presented in Adelaide for members of the South Australian society.

2011 National Survey of Editors completed

At previous national conferences, Pamela Hewitt of the New South Wales society collected, via a survey form, information about the professional activities of participants. This year, at Pamela's invitation, IPEd took over the running of the national survey. The survey was conducted online during July and August this year. There were 345 responses, which are analysed and discussed in a separate document in your conference papers. They provide all editors with a valuable snapshot of the profession.

Website redevelopment progressed

IPEd began a major redevelopment of its website during 2010. This work is continuing, with the current focus on expanding the 'Resources for editors' area of the site, which is accessible only to members of the societies of editors who register to do so. Also in the

members-only area are forums to discuss topics of interest to editors, including topics discussed at this conference.

Traffic on the website has been steadily increasing. Between mid June and mid July this year, there were 1,740 visits, over 50% of them from new people. The average time spent by visitors on the site was just over three-and-a-half minutes. Also steadily increasing is the time taken to update and maintain the site, tasks which have so far, like the vast bulk of IPEd work, been done by volunteers. The IPEd Council has decided to appoint a paid, part-time web minder who has the requisite technical skills and familiarity with the discipline and business of editing. Details of the position will be advertised soon.

Reduced premiums for PI insurance

Many potential clients, particularly government departments and agencies, require editors to have professional indemnity (PI) insurance. This form of insurance has traditionally been quite costly. Over the past year or so, IPEd and some of its individual Members have been successful in negotiating, with Aon Risk Services Australia, discounted rates for PI insurance for editors who are full members of an Australian society of editors. Details are on the IPEd website.

Standards revision

The *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* (ASEP) are the foundation for editing best practice across the nation and the criteria against which candidates in the IPEd accreditation examinations are tested. The standards were drafted and first published a decade ago by CASE, IPEd's predecessor. Since then, there have clearly been big changes in the way that many, perhaps most, editors work. Among other things, advances in computing have established the efficiency and effectiveness of onscreen editing and online communication between editors, authors and clients. Against this backdrop, the IPEd Council and AB are progressing towards a new edition of the standards that will accommodate the realities of the digital age.

Awards

IPEd sponsors two awards recognising achievement in editing: the Barbara Ramsden Award for excellence in editing, in conjunction with the Fellowship of Australian Writers; and the Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship, which is supported by Australian publishers, the Australian Publishers Association, IPEd and other sponsors, with assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council (Literature Board).

The annual Barbara Ramsden Award recognises the author–editor partnership in the creation of a high-quality publication. The IPEd-appointed judges made the 2009 award to *Grand obsessions: the life and work of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin*, written by Alisdair McGregor, edited by Nicola Young and published by Penguin Lantern, and the 2010 award to *Night street*, written by Kristel Thomell, edited by Clara Finlay and published by Allen & Unwin.

The Beatrice Davis Fellowship, awarded biennially, allows the successful candidate to undertake a research project attached to the editorial department of one or more publishing houses or literary agencies in the United States (US) for up to 10 weeks. The fellow can thus garner knowledge and expertise in the largest book-publishing market in the English-speaking world. A further fortnight is allocated for professional development events and information sharing opportunities on the fellow's return.

The winner of the 2011–12 Beatrice Davis Editorial Fellowship is Jane Morrow, who has 12 years' editorial experience specialising in illustrated non-fiction, working for Penguin (on Lantern, Viking and Penguin lists), Elwin Street (London) and HarperCollins. She will spend her time in the US in multinational and smaller publishing houses, and with a literary agency, researching how editors of illustrated books adapt their practices to publish digitally as well as in traditional print form. In her research, Jane will concentrate on adaptations in digital publishing, especially in the field of illustrated books.

Alexandra Nahlous, Beatrice Davis Fellow for 2009–10, is one of the keynote speakers at the conference.

Digital publishing developments

On behalf of the profession, IPEd contributed to two surveys on this topic.

The first was conducted in early 2010 by the Book Industry Strategy Group. The group, chaired by The Hon. Dr Barry Jones AO, was set up by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research to examine the potential effects of digital technologies on participants in the traditional supply chain of the Australian publishing industry—authors, publishers, printers and booksellers.

In the second, and more recent, survey the Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) examined digital publishing trends in Australia. The results of that survey, compiled by CAL, can be found on the IPEd website.

While IPEd is keen and well placed to present the views of the profession in such surveys, there is something of a difficulty in doing so. In neither of the surveys described here was there mention of 'Editor' in the categories of respondent listed at the start of the survey form: 'Publisher' was the closest we could get and clearly we're not of them. So, the message is that despite making significant progress 'To advance the profession of editing', we still have some way to go to gain the recognition that we deserve as key, specialist players in the publishing chain and the communication sector, a goal that IPEd will continue to work towards.

[These notes were prepared by IPEd's Communication Committee.]

Contacting IPEd:

iped-editors.org
ipedsecretary@gmail.com
GPO Box 1461
Canberra ACT 2601