

Offpress

September 2007

Newsletter of the Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc. www.editorsqld.com

It's all a matter of word selection

David Hill reports on Paul Bennett's Australian word fest

With the business of the 2007 AGM assigned to the minute book, Paul Bennett got down to the business of addressing unfashionable Australian language. 'In going forward, I want to look at the way we've treated our language going backwards.'

He then led us on a tour of discovery through four centuries of the colloquial roots and etymology of some common (and not so common) Australian slang.

He presented us with a list of 50 slang terms and set us against each other in a contest to give each word's original meaning, the century in which it was first used (according to *The Cassell Dictionary of Slang*, edited by Jonathon Green), and its etymology.

While it's arguable that the promised prize of being able to buy the guest speaker a beer was the impetus for the enthusiasm that followed, it followed nonetheless.

This was more than just an interesting exercise in discovering the background of some of Australia's more colourful words: Paul encouraged us to adopt an endangered word. This is something Paul started doing with other editors long ago — adopt an endangered word, use it until it becomes a natural part of your language, and then encourage others to do the same.

In particular, he added the following words to the endangered list, and asked us to protect them from the lexical cane toads that threaten their existence.

bird	daggy	pig's ear
bloke	dinkum	ridgy-didge
bludger	dinky-die	snakes
bonzer	drongo	struth
bott	geek (take a)	sheila
cobber	perve	
crook	pig's arse	

We pass on Paul's plea to you all as a service to the editorial community: 'Take these words home, use them and spread them around'.

[The full list — with origins, meanings, etc. — is available on the SocEdsQ website. Ed.]

Quotable quote

If there are any of you at the back who do not hear me, please don't raise your hands because I am also nearsighted.

W.H. Auden (1907–1973) British poet (starting a lecture in a large hall)

inside out

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2007 AGM minutes

Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 5 September, 2007 at the German Club, East Brisbane

Robin Bennett, President, opened the meeting at 7.10 pm. Apologies were noted.

Robin thanked those present for coming along and remarked that it had been a *good year*, with good speakers, good workshops (both within the Society and also in the professional community), and thus was a year worth celebrating.

Minutes of 2006 AGM

Robin asked for a voting member to move that the minutes of the 2006 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record. Jennifer Beale moved, Kim Manning seconded; carried.

Business arising from the previous AGM minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes of the 2006 AGM.

Annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2007

Rebecca Campny, Treasurer, presented the annual financial statements for the Society to 30 June 2007. Rebecca moved that the statement of income and expenditure, assets and liabilities and auditor's report on the financial affairs of the Society as set out in the annual financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2007 be approved by the members; Moira Brown seconded; carried.

Elections

Robin Bennett conducted the the votes for the committee positions (excluding President). Robin reported that no nominations for any specific committee positions had been received and that all positions were open.

President

Kim Manning conducted the votes for the position of President. No nominations had been received for the position of President. Robin Bennett declared that she would be prepared to continue in this role; no other nominations were received from the floor. Jennifer Beale moved that Robin be re-elected as President; Kim Manning seconded; carried. Robin commented that the role was quite rewarding and she was happy to take it on again.

Vice-President

No nominations were received for the position of Vice-President. No Vice-President was elected. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to fill this position by appointment.

Secretary

Robin reported that Siobhan Barter was prepared to continue as Secretary but Robin did not wish to confirm this due to Siobhan's absence from the meeting; no other nominations were received from the floor. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to confirm this re-appointment as soon as possible.

Treasurer

No nominations had been received for the position of Treasurer. Rebecca Campny declared that she was prepared to continue as appointed Treasurer; no other nominations were received from the floor. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to confirm this re-appointment as soon as possible.

Training Officers

No nominations had been received for the position of Training Officer. Kerri Ullrich was not present.

*Life members **

Barbara Ker Wilson (2002)
Jan Whelan (2000)
Mary-Jane Bosch (2000)
John Collins (1993)
Laurie Muller (1993)

* year of award in brackets

She had previously advised that she was intending to resign formally as Training Officer but that she would stay on in an acting capacity until after the next training workshop in October. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to fill this position by appointment of one or two officers.

Kerri's tremendous efforts in this role were acknowledged by Robin with gratitude on behalf of the Society.

Speaker Secretary

Les Savage was not present but had previously advised that he was resigning as Speaker Secretary. No nominations had been received for this position. Jennifer Beale nominated Wendy Abernethy as Speaker Secretary; Robyn Heales seconded; carried. Wendy accepted the nomination and was elected to this position. Robin thanked Les for his enthusiastically professional efforts in the role.

Website Officer

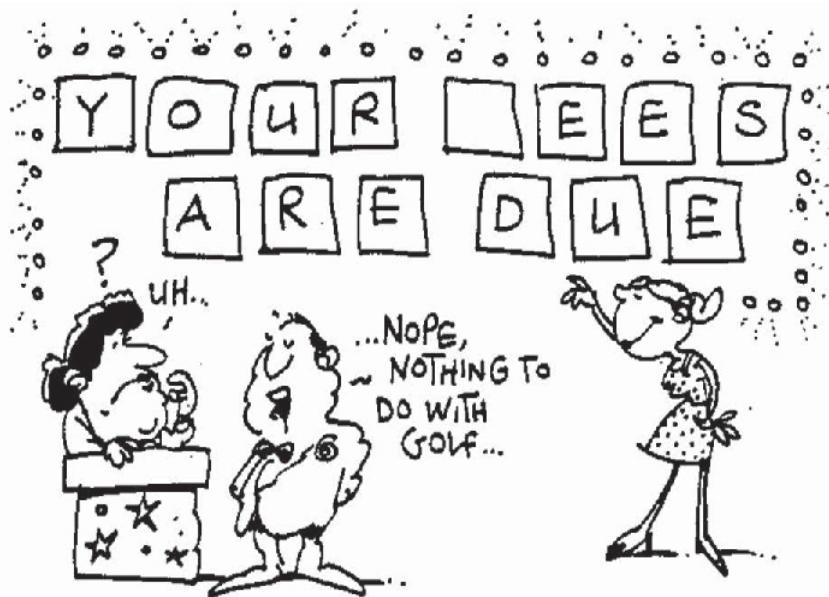
David Hill stated that he would be prepared to continue as Website Officer; no other nominations were received from the floor. Jennifer Beale nominated David Hill as Website Officer; Liz Cooper seconded; carried. David accepted the nomination and was re-elected as Website Officer.

continues double column page 4

Reminder: membership renewal

Unfinancial SocEdsQ members (you know who you are ...!) are reminded that the fabulous benefits of membership will be lost to them from now on if they don't manage to pay their dues during October.

The renewal fees are \$45, \$35 and \$20 (with the 50% rebate for distance members) for full, associate and student membership respectively. Please make cheques or money orders payable to the 'Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc.' and send them to the Treasurer at the return address listed on the newsletter. We look forward to your continued participation.



A lovely bit of 'Vintage Offpress' from Paul Lennon's skillful pen (November 1992).

October meeting: Roly Sussex

Professor Roly Sussex will chat with us at the 3 October meeting on the topic of 'Standardising and regulating languages: English versus the academies'.

There will be lots of examples about how English has multiple parallel models, and how we try to *finesse the plurality*.

Roly Sussex is Professor of Applied Language Studies at the University of Queensland and a regular guest on ABC Radio's popular *Language Talkback* program. His areas of interest include applied linguistics; the Americanisation of Australian English; community languages, their maintenance and survival, especially Slavic; intercultural communication; the interaction of information technology with language learning and teaching; the internet and intellectual cultures; intelligent learning systems, and information technology and research.

Roly last visited us in 2004, so come along to the German Club, Vulture Street, East Brisbane (be there for a 6.30 start if you would like to eat and network, otherwise by 7pm for the speaker) and find out what new things Roly has to impart.

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*Yukkopedia ...
a fab new word*

- Egyptian mummies that have been dead for 3000 years still have their fingerprints in tact.
- If you took all the nerves out of an adult's body and laid them end to end they would stretch 75 kilometres (47 miles). But the adult would not be pleased.
- Chinese leader Mao Tse Tung never brushed his teeth, giving as a reason that tigers never brushed their teeth either.
- It takes just over three kilograms (7 pounds) of pressure to tear off a human ear — don't try it!
- *Ambuyat*, eaten in Brunei, is made from pulp from the sago palm, stewed in water for several hours. The same mixture is made to stick the roof on a house!
- Sharks will eat almost anything. The stomachs of dead sharks have been found to contain bits of boats and vehicles and even a knight in armour.
- Ancient Romans made their dye from pigeon faeces.
- In the 1600s, spiders rolled in butter were recommended as a cure for malaria.
- Garry Turner of the UK once clipped 159 wooden clothes pegs to his face at the one time.

Source: Rooney, A. (2006). *1001 horrible facts: A yukkopedia of gross truths about everything*. London: Arcturus Publishing.

Committee members 2007–2008

President, IPEd delegate and Accreditation Board delegate

Robin Bennett
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Vice President
vacant

Secretary
Siobhan Barter
M: 0423 154 411

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Rebecca Campny
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Speaker Secretary
Wendy Abernethy

Training Coordinator
Kerri Ullrich
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Committee Member
Jennifer Beale

Website Officer
David Hill
davidmhill@ozemail.com.au

Newsletter Editor
Kim Manning
offpress@editorsqld.com

NB: This month it's mostly Century Old Style Standard regular 10.5pt on 11pt leading, with smatterings of Verdana, 10pt on 11pt.

Note: Copy deadline for the October 2007 issue of *Offshoot* is Wednesday, 10 October 2007.

2007 AGM minutes continued from page 2

Newsletter Editor

Kim Manning stated that she would be prepared to continue as Newsletter Editor; no other nominations were received from the floor. Robyn Heales nominated Kim Manning as Newsletter Editor; David Hill seconded; carried. Kim accepted the nomination and was re-elected to this position.

Ordinary Committee Members

Jennifer Beale declared that she was prepared to continue as an Ordinary Committee Member; no other nominations were received from the floor. Robyn Heales nominated Jennifer Beale for this role; Jill Morris seconded; carried. Jennifer accepted the nomination and was re-elected as an Ordinary Committee Member.

Appointment of Auditor

Rebecca Campny moved that Brian Tucker Associates be re-appointed as the Society's auditor for the financial year to 30 June 2008; Jennifer Beale seconded; carried.

Other business

Presentation to Robin Bennett

On behalf of the Management Committee and also the Society as a whole, Kim Manning presented a certificate and bottle of wine to Robin Bennett to announce that her 2004 'Order of the Grape' status was now 'plus "Bar"', in acknowledgement of Robin's 'above and beyond' efforts in her roles as Acting President, IPEd delegate, Accreditation Board delegate, and Society President in the last year.

President's retort

Robin Bennett welcomed the new and returning members of the Management Committee; she said she looked forward to working with them. Robin gave each committee member a token of appreciation and general members gave the incoming committee a round of applause.

IPEd Delegate/Accreditation Board delegate

Robin Bennett stated that she was prepared to continue in this capacity for the time being but that due to other commitments she was unlikely to see out the full 12 months. No nominations were received for these positions. Robin was re-confirmed as the Society's IPEd delegate and Accreditation Board delegate. Members present agreed that the Management Committee should seek to fill these positions by appointment at the appropriate time.

There being no further business the AGM closed at 7.25 pm.

Web wanderings

Have your say on one of life's oldest ponderings about origins:

<http://chicken-egg.redirectme.net/index.php>

Anagram heaven ... for those so inclined:

<http://wordsmith.org/anagram/hof.html>

A lovely collection of topiary figures (animals, mythical figures, even a miscellaneous category!):

<http://www.topiaryartdesigns.com/galleries.htm>

How unfriendly!

There has been a recent to-do over 'Angus & Robertson's demand that small- to medium-sized Australian publishers and distributors pay amounts said to range from \$2,500 to \$100,000 in order to have their books stocked in the chain's stores' (Sydney Morning Herald, 2007); angry reactions from the book industry and book buyers have been popping up all over the place.

Basically, A&R Whitcoulls Group commercial manager, Charlie Rimmer, sent Michael Rakusin, director of Tower Books, a very aggressive letter detailing changes to the supplier agreement between A&R and Tower Books.

This change was being foreshadowed (with a demand for payment and adherence to crippling new conditions) due to Tower Books being assessed as falling into a category of 'unacceptable profitability' for A&R. Rimmer's letter went on to patronise Tower Books' business acumen under the guise of helping Rakusin to plan his future promotional participation with A&R.

Rakusin replied to Rimmer with a letter that has supporters cheering his eloquence and professionalism. Tower Books' director has not yet had a response from A&R [as at early August sometime; this might have changed but I doubt it].

One memorable posting: 'Outrageous! What an entertaining reply. I like the fact that he references the Trade Practices Act and copies in the head of ACCC. Is A&R an Australian company? I wonder if Charlie Rimmer is in trouble this morning?'

A bit of web wiggling should bring up all sorts of information about recent A&R bullying ... be informed!

Accreditation exam workshop

A total of 20 people attended the accreditation exam workshop held in the Hamilton Community Hall on Saturday afternoon, 22 September. Three assessors were present (Paul Bennett, Jill Morris and Susan Addison).

People worked their way through part of the sample exam and then checked their answers against the markers' guide. Paul talked about the exam, the marking guide and what the assessors would be looking for; this was valuable for everyone present. There was some discussion about whether people should rewrite text and how flexible the assessors would be.

Those present seemed to find the workshop helpful and appreciated the opportunity to try the exam. Most of the participants were experienced editors, mainly members who rarely come to meetings; their attendance at the workshop was encouraging, as it suggests that this accreditation program will help us stay in contact with members we seldom see.

Everyone present was invited to 'sit' the full exam at home and pass on any concerns, questions or suggestions to Robin Bennett. All comments will be passed on to the Accreditation Board and the Assessors Forum; Robin will also prepare a list of questions and answers resulting from this exercise, for placement on the Society's website.

NOVEMBER MEETING ... BE THERE!

For the final general meeting of 2007 we are breaking away from the usual format and venue ...

night bowling!

There won't be any formal business conducted; it will be all about relaxing barefoot with colleagues over a barbecue and a bowling green. More info will be published in October's *Offshoot* and will also be available on the website a little closer to the event but, basically, pencil Saturday, 10 November, evening, and New Farm Bowls Club into your diary now so that you don't miss out on this chance to do something different with fellow members.

Website report

Over September (up to the 25th) we had 673 visitors to the web site, compared with 825 for the month of August. Sunday, 2 September was the busiest day on the site.

While 'society of editors' was the most popular search phrase and 'editors' the most popular search term people used to get to our site in September, we are currently ranked number two with Google for the search term 'carnivorous bees'! Special thanks to our June 2006 speakers, Marilyn Dorman, Sharon Nevile and Jennifer Wright, and to our reporter Susan Addison, for finding a way to bridge the gap between entomology and etymology.

A new word every month?

OUP and the Australian Dictionary Centre publish a 'word of the month' — you can subscribe to this informative new service via email: wordofthmonth.au@oup.com.

PEEPS!

(Episode 4)

The PEEPS! crew are having an animated discussion about how best to kick off their promotional campaign. The lone suggestion, Sophie's idea of nude skydiving, has been turned down by the other PEEPS! members.

'Come on you lot,' said Rodg. 'There has to be *something* we can settle on tonight. We're creative types — think!'

Burble, burble, murmur, murmur, etc.

'I have an idea.'

Everyone stopped and waited for Toby to continue. 'We could host a night bowling event at a central bowling green. It's a hip thing to do ... night bowling, that is. You get to do it barefoot and it's a lot of fun with the food and drink and lights and ... anyway, that's my suggestion.'

The committee continued to look at Toby; he squirmed a little.

Ellie and Anita spoke almost in unison: 'What a fab idea!'

Sophie, slightly miffed that Toby's idea was going to get support over hers, asked, 'Where's the PE promotional angle in that Toby?'

'We could invite some key polliies and publishing heads and business heavyweights with the carrot of free doc appraisals or consultation or something PE-related and maybe make it a prize grab via rolling a few down. The one who gets closest to the jack wins!'

Laughter, raised eyebrows, words of planning and consideration ... PEEPS! first event was on the cards all of a sudden.

Next time: Bowling, bowling, bowling ...

Get organised!

Josephine Brown, former SocEdsQ Offpress editor and all-round life go-getter sent an email to ABC books the other day, asking if they would be interested in her forthcoming book of organising tips, similar to the runaway best-sellers written by Shannon Lush on cleaning. More on that at a later date!

The working title is *Letting the cat out of the bag—a little bag of organising tricks to give you an easy life by eliminating some of the everyday hazards waiting to ambush you.*

Josephine envisages people thinking of a problem in one word, and looking it up in her organising dictionary. A typical problem is when you've lost your glasses and you're raging blindly around the house trying to find them, and the bus is coming. You'd look up either 'spectacles' or 'glasses' and you'd find the answer (and then you'd find your glasses).

She already has a fair number of tips, *but would love to know more!* What's *your* favourite tip for getting yourself and your family organised?

Not too many words ... under 40 would be good. Send Josephine your favourite tip, and she'll tell you how to organise things so that you never have glasses-*rage* again. And name you in the 'special thanks to ...' part of the book.

Josephine Brown

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jb@hireorder.com.au

A partial farewell from Les Savage

What do you do when someone at the AGM shocks you with the suggestion that you take over the role of speaker secretary? You accept, of course, with trepidation. That happened to me a year ago, when the then-Speaker Secretary Helena Bond quietly presented the idea.

This year, as speaker secretary, I made the same suggestion to Wendy Abernethy. Wendy wasn't quite as agreeable initially, but was persuaded by some other members at the recent AGM.

So Wendy will keep the ball rolling, with some encouragement from me. Please do welcome her and support her — and keep suggestions rolling in about what you'd like to see the Society do.

I've enjoyed my time in the role. I've got to know lots of you, and that's been a wonderful benefit. Thanks for your support and your feedback.

You've not heard the last of me, though, as I'll continue to be the email-sender for the Society — and I'll be at as many meetings as I can manage.

The Society has great potential; let's work together to make it happen.

Quotable quote

Never mistake motion for action.

Ernest Hemingway (1898–1961) American novelist

IPEd notes

News from the Institute of Professional Editors: September 2007

The Interim Council is making steady progress with the constitution. Currently, it is revising a preliminary draft prepared by Canberra law firm, Williams Love & Nicol. The task of reconciling our desired arrangements and our passion for plain English with the requirements of the Corporations Law is time-consuming, but we are confident that we will soon have a workable document to put before the membership. The aim is to post the constitution on the website <www.iped-editors.org> for comment by mid-October, a little later than was expected.

The revised schedule for the constitution will flow on to IPEd's activities. One result is that the first accreditation examination will probably not be held until mid-2008. Members are assured that they will receive at least four months' notice of the exam date.

The Accreditation Board is very active in its various areas of responsibility. One task is to draw up guidelines, procedures and cost estimates for smooth functioning of the accreditation scheme. There has been a good response to the issues paper that discussed the pros and cons of offering the accreditation examination online, and the board is collating the feedback from members on this topic in order to decide how to proceed.

Meanwhile the Assessors Forum has finalised the answer paper and marking guide for the sample exam that was presented at the national conference in May; thanks to Renée Otmar of Victoria and Paul Bennett of Queensland for their work on this. The sample exam has been posted on the website. Members can download it for a trial run, and then compare their answers with the ones posted. Members are urged to attend their societies' workshops that will be held during September and October to discuss their impressions of the sample exam and provide feedback regarding improvements.

The IPEd website has gone live in its new version, with improved design and extra features; more content will be added as it becomes available. The upgraded site is much easier both to use and to maintain — thanks and congratulations to Mike Purdy of Canberra who has put in countless hours on it, and to Rosemary Luke of South Australia and Rosemary Noble of Victoria. One feature of the site is an event calendar for listing societies' training courses and events of interest, such as public discussion of editing at writers festivals and on radio. (Recently members have made presentations at the Byron Bay and Melbourne writers' festivals and appeared on *The Book Show* on Radio National.) The calendar is compliant with the standard for calendar data exchange and you can subscribe to it as an RSS feed if you want to be notified of new postings. If you have any comments or suggestions about the website, please contact your IPEd delegate.

Janet Mackenzie
IPEd Liaison Officer

EDITING FOR THE WEB WORKSHOP

This workshop is designed to introduce editors to the topics, jargon and extra things they need to consider when producing or re-working content to be published online. The workshop will benefit anyone wanting to learn about (and try their hand at) editing internet-ready content, and will focus on those aspects of editing that are specific to the internet, such as cascading style sheets, meta-data, keywords and search engine optimisation.

The presenter, David Hill, has 17 years' experience producing and re-purposing content for digital publishing in communication, marketing and editorial roles for government, non-profit organisations and publicly listed companies.

When: Saturday, 13 October 2007, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Where: Brisbane Girls Grammar School, Gregory Terrace

Cost: \$180 members; \$230 non-members (lunch included)

Closing date is 6 October 2007. Places are limited. Enquiries: Kerri Ullrich, training@editorsqld.com. Program details and registration forms are available from <http://www.editorsqld.com/PD/training.htm>

MEAA: Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance



Information about the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) was provided to the Society's Management Committee by the MEAA; it is summarised here for members' perusal.

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) is the union working for people in the areas of media, communications, entertainment and the arts — and that includes the publishing industries. The MEAA is the only officially recognised body representing members on all industrial matters, including negotiating agreements and advising on contracts.

It uses its influence to lobby government and other industry bodies for strong and independent media, publishing and entertainment sectors, but would like to remind people that a union is only as strong as its members.

Recent changes to the *Workplace Relations Act 2006* may be affecting editors' professional relations in the area of individually negotiated contracts: the MEAA can help editors with contract negotiations.

For more information about MEAA services, membership fees and how to join: www.alliance.org.au or 1300 65 65 13. All membership fees are tax-deductible and discounts are available for members of Australian societies of editors.

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Your news and views

We welcome any contributions to our monthly newsletter. Copy deadline is one week after the general meeting. Please send articles, letters, book reviews, details of interesting web sites, anecdotes, snippets and quotes to the editor at offpress@editorsqld.com.

Treasurer's report

(Ed's note)

The financial figures for the period 01/08/07 to 31/08/07 were not available at time of publication. A comprehensive summary of the three-month period August to October inclusive will be published in the November issue of *Offpress*.

Results of Ozwords' competition no. 27

Following is the winning entry plus a few others in a competition to compose a sentence containing all 26 letters of the English alphabet, an Australian place-name, and the fewest possible number of letters.

1st prize: By Jove, six quilfers of Ingham win prize duck! (37 letters, M. Manoy, WA)

2nd prize: Big jackdaws vex the Quorn floozy MP. (30 letters, P. Harley, SA)

Honourable mentions:

Quick jump doth vex lazy Bowen frogs! (30 letters, G. Watson)

Schmaltzy jingles pique vexed fakir in Bowen. (38 letters, M. Kadd)

[Adapted from *Ozwords*, April 2007, with thanks to Helena Bond. Ed]

Membership information

The Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc. came into being in 1990 with the object of promoting the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information on matters of professional interest in the publishing industry, and to help in establishing and maintaining high standards of editing and publishing. Since that time, the Society has grown from a gleam in the collective eye of a few editors to a professional association of some standing. It has been involved in the development of the Diploma of Editing (Publishing) at TAFE, and the former Graduate Diploma of Publishing and Editing at Griffith University.

The Society holds training workshops and seminars for its members, and is responsible for producing the Register of Freelance Publishing Services (updated every few years, and containing entries for editors, designers, illustrators, layout experts and so on).

There are three levels of membership:

- Full membership: open only to people professionally engaged in editing and publishing; the membership

application must contain details of the applicant's experience and the names of publishing companies and organisations worked for. Annual fee: \$45

- Associate membership: open to anyone interested in the activities of the Society; there are no voting rights, and associate members are not eligible for election to Management Committee positions. Annual fee: \$35
- Student membership: open only to full-time students who cite their student ID number; there are no voting rights, and student members are not eligible for election to Management Committee positions. Annual fee: \$20

People who live more than 50 km from the Brisbane GPO pay half-fees. Application for membership is assessed by the Management Committee.

Visit the website or contact the Membership Secretary for an application form.

website: www.editorsqld.com; email: membership@editorsqld.com (please also include your postal address).