ACTIVE Voice edit



Newsletter of the Canberra Society of Editors

Volume 29 | **Number 3**

July August 2020

(Temporarily away) from the 'impossibly messy' desk of the President



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An ankle break has stranded me in Sydney. Fortunately, it's healing quickly, I'm nowhere near any hot spots, and I'm being waited on very satisfactorily. It will be difficult to adjust to making my own coffee again! The distance makes me very grateful for my portable job. Have computer, will edit anywhere in the world, usually, though now it's 'a few available places in Australia'. Freelance work is a joy.

We have had to return to webinars while I'm stranded, and we appreciated Dr Malini Devadas' July presentation about the Accreditation Exam and professional development more generally.

We have two excellent Pams scheduled next: Pam Hewitt in August (probably experienced already by the time you read this) and Pam Peters in September. Both are in Sydney, so they will present online. We may have an additional in-face presence in September, and we're reviewing the technicalities.

The AGM will be on Wednesday 28 October this year; we are negotiating with the Bookplate café at the National Library for the usual drinks, dinner and meeting. Please save the date!

Continue to think about whether to tackle accreditation this year. We have had two successful workshops already on 14 and 29 August, and another coming up in September. There is also a wait list for a possible second edition of the workshops on copy editing and grammar - see the professional development section for details.

CSE remains strong, and our committee has grown by one. Christine Belcher, whom some of you have met at general meetings, has taken on the Membership role. It's terrific to have Chris on our excellent and active committee.

The new digital edition of the Style Manual has been released to public Beta. Check in at stylemanual.gov.au and let the creators know what you think.

Thank you for continuing to support CSE. Stay strong and safe. Please tell us if you need any information or support from the committee.

Eris Jane Harrison AE President

The Canberra Society of Editors acknowledges the traditional owners of country in the Canberra region and their continuing connection to land, culture and community. The Society pays its respects to the elders of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people, past and present.

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News

Professional Development

We are now well underway with the series of training workshops for the Accreditation Exam, having held two successful and well-attended workshops so farthe copyediting workshop on 14 August with Cathy Nicoll AE and the IPEd exam preparation workshop on 29 August with Ted Briggs AE.

We are considering running a second copyediting workshop for anyone who missed out on this informative and practical training the first time, so make sure you join the wait list if you're interested.

The next scheduled workshop, the ever-popular Grammar in a Nutshell with Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE, is now full, but we have opened a wait list for this one too for anyone who may have missed out on this excellent opportunity.

While this is very useful training for anyone planning to do the Accreditation Exam, it is also a great refresher for anyone who just wants to brush up on their grammar skills and knowledge.

We have yet to determine dates for the repeats of these workshops, but it is important to register your interest as soon as possible so we can arrange the workshops in good time to support your exam preparation.

We are currently organising some other online training, possibly on Microsoft Word skills and/or digital accessibility (probably for October), so keep any eye out for further details soon.

Nigel Brew AE Professional Development Coordinator

Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) News

Accreditation Exam venues

The Accreditation Board has released additional information regarding venues for sitting the 2020 Accreditation Exam, to be held on 5 December. Read more here.

Interview with the CEO

Margaret River Press has published a blog featuring an article and video interviews with IPEd CEO Karen Lee. View the blog here: https://bit.ly/327Mwbp

Nominations open for the Mackenzie

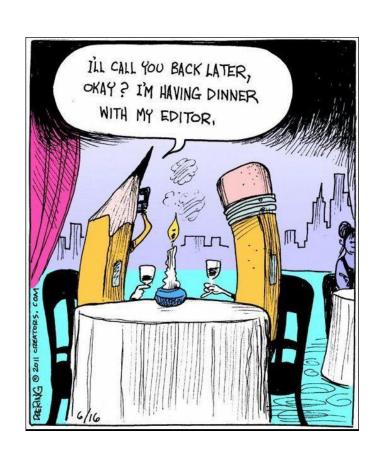
Nominations are open for the 2021 Janet Mackenzie Medal (the Mackenzie), to be awarded to an outstanding professional editor who has lifted the standard of the editing profession and/or given exemplary service to IPEd. For more details, please see the nomination guidelines, the nomination template, and an outline of the Janet Mackenzie Medal criteria.

IPEd objects to increased university fees for arts, humanities

CEO Karen Lee has written to federal Education Minister Dan Tehan, on the board's behalf, about the proposal to drastically increase university fees for students in the areas of the arts, society and culture, law, economics, creative arts and communications. You can read the full letter here. [PDF]

IPEd Editors Conference

The 10th IPEd Editors Conference is planned for Hobart, Monday 28 June 2021 to Wednesday 30 June 2021; the possibility of holding all or part of it online is under consideration.



Membership update

Message from committee Secretary Ngaire: First, I want to thank Kellie Nissen for all her work as membership secretary up to her resignation in June, which left us in very good shape to proceed in her absence. Second, I want to thank the 'bulge' of members renewing in July for their tremendous responsiveness to their renewal notices and for making my job as easy as it could be while I filled the membership secretary role. The committee thanks them/you for continuing to support the Society. Third, I want to thank Christine Belcher for coming forward to take on the role vacated by Kellie. Handover has only just begun, but I know you will appreciate Chris's work once she gets going. Welcome, Christine!

Incoming message from new membership secretary Christine: The large cluster of membership renewals which fall at the end of the financial year were a lot of work for Ngaire to administer but her heart was filled with joy at the 100 per cent renewal of members.

In the past we have welcomed new members in the newsletter, and with Deb Fleming now at the helm as editor we are reviving this practice. Welcome to CSE, to the following new members of the last few months:

Full members

Anne Isaac

Niki van den Heuval

Rae Luckie (former member – welcome back!)

Lulu Turner

Associate members

Sally Orwin

Alanah Kerec

Kathleen Austin-Gifford

Andrew Finegan

In the April newsletter we floated a members' corner/news section in our newsletter as a way to connect with each other. If you would like to share a brief 'about me', some news, some achievement, some failure, send along about 150 words to the membership secretary and I'll make it happen.

Christine Belcher FPRIA Membership Secretary



Website update

Earlier this year, the committee appointed a subcommittee to investigate options for a new website. We've been engaging with a number of possible providers and now have a promising option, but there are some details to check before we can make a definite recommendation.

If we make the right choices, a new website could offer many benefits, as well as providing a fresh look for our visitors. Here are some of the more important benefits that we hope to see:

- Members will be able to update their own details and check their current membership status, using a computer, smart phone or tablet. They will also automatically receive reminders when subscriptions are due and be able to pay them online.
- Members will be able to sign up and pay for workshops and other events on the website, using a computer, smart phone or tablet. They can then automatically be sent updated information before

- and after the meeting and be quickly checked in to the workshop on a smart phone.
- Full members will continue to have their own directory pages to advertise their services – and editing them should be much simpler!
- Expanded financial management capabilities will make it easier for our Treasurer to produce reports for our auditing requirements.
- The database associated with the website will enable us to greatly improve our administrative capabilities and should lighten the load for certain hard-working committee members.

At the moment, these benefits are yet to be realised, and setting up the new website will require some work. It won't happen overnight. But expect to receive further updates soon.

Howard Silcock
Website Manager

General Meetings

JUNE's meeting was our first hybrid in-person and online event, and members heard from Julian Fleetwood, Content Designer at the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA). Content design is about creating user-focused content that is easily accessible and clear. It enables users of government (and other) websites to find the information they need, to understand it and to apply it to their situations. Successful content displays information that is easily readable and navigable. Strategic use of headings, punctuation, plain language and images improves usability.

Julian recommended Sarah Richards' book, Content Design, and referred us to the DTA's 13 Digital Service Standard criteria: https://www.dta.gov.au/help-and-advice/digital-service-standard/digital-service-standardcriteria. The DTA advises government agencies designing and delivering services to ensure that the delivery is simple, clear and quick. There were several parallels with editing, many of the concepts were familiar to editors, and the bundling of particular skills into one role made sense. Julian's presentation provoked several questions and much lively discussion.

In JULY, we welcomed back Dr Malini Devedas with Accreditation: is it right for you right now? Malini's engaging and interactive presentation was designed not only to help members prepare for the Accreditation Exam on 5 December, but to decide whether sitting the exam was the right course for them.

Malini opened with a comment on the importance of finding a balance between over-confidence and paralysing fear, and proceeded to inform us all frankly on the benefits and potential costs of proceeding. Malini's key messages were:

- accreditation is good for raising professional standards and the profile of editing generally, promoting business, generating the confidence of editors and validating their skills
- accreditation is not for everyone, and is not essential for doing good work or building a worthwhile business
- having at least three years' professional editing experience is an important pre-requisite for the exam, as is having an aptitude for working under exam settings and having other editing qualifications – but none of these is compulsory, as anyone who can pay the fee can sit the test
- the exam is a test of copyediting competence not excellence, requiring only 80% under a time limit (unlike real life editing, which requires more like 100% taking the time it takes, however bad running over time is for business!)
- succeeding in the exam is all about managing time and stress, both in the preparation and sitting for it
- the failure rate has hovered around the 50% for a long time, so be prepared to cope with failure, and be aware that the most common reasons for failure have been having skills that are too specialized, having insufficient editing experience, going beyond copyediting into substantive editing (which for the record everyone is my problem) and making unstrategic choices in the knowledge section - i.e. have an exam strategy and stick to it!

From the discussion, it seems Malini's presentation helped participants be clearer about how to approach accreditation in general, and what to consider re sitting the 2020 exam in particular.

As a fairly recent member of CSE who has been working with my mentor, Elizabeth Manning Murphy, towards sitting the exam, I've come to the realisation that my skills and interests are really in substantive editing, and in writing. If I decide I need accreditation as a copyeditor, it will be because I am working as one and will have all that immersive knowledge and experience to bring to the exam. So for now, I'm doing the preparatory workshops as professional development and getting on with my life as a writer/editor (substantive 😊). Thank you Elizabeth and Malini!

For those still planning to sit the exam, Malini directed participants to the Secret Editors' Business Facebook group and, a subgroup of that, the Secret Editors' IPED Study Group. Participants were also directed to the Study Plan and other free resources on Elizabeth Manning Murphy's website, www.emwords.info.

Elizabeth Ganter, PhD

A big thank you to Eris for her summaries of the April, May and June meetings, and to Elizabeth Ganter who has offered her services to help with records from the meetings front. -Ed

Features

Introducing AMOS – the Australian Manual of Style

AMOS is a new online style manual, developed, produced and copublished by Biotext and Macquarie University.

Who is AMOS Intended for? It's designed to support readers in the professional and educational marketplace, taking its cue from the sixth edition of the government *Style Manual*. But AMOS addresses the needs of the writing professions in print and online, including content developers, editors and journalists, as well as publicists and communications staff. It provides for professional writers as well as writers-in-training, including junior public servants, university students and early career researchers.

A feature of AMOS is its sections on writing in different subject areas: academic fields such as arts, economics, law, science, and social science; and strategic communication in areas such as government writing, business and the media. AMOS's reach is thus much broader than the style manual being produced by the DTA, which focuses on government communication online, specifying the various standards and practices it requires.

AMOS innovates in its discussion of ENGAGING, the art of communicating effectively with different audiences – public and professional – how to connect with them and sustain their interest. There's structural advice on designing content for ease of access online: how to use extension devices (accordion folds, hamburger menus etc) on limited screen real estate. The advice in ENGAGING is based on current research, with practical advice on making content more accessible, readable and usable.

The multifaceted EDITING chapter covers what editors need to know in both general and scientific style when preparing MSS for publication. The punctuation section lays out the main conventions, and finer points of decision-making in hyphenation, apostrophes and foreign accents. Spelling conventions for Australian purposes and overseas (British/American) publications are indicated. The common rules underlying English spelling are discussed, ones that can be widely applied. A compact grammar supports readers with the essentials, plus an FAQ section on common grammatical issues.

The chapter on SHOWING is another feature of AMOS, designed to acquaint writers and editors with the uses of graphic elements, and to introduce them to information design principles. Skilful presentations of numerical data in graphs and table can be an aesthetic feature in reports, and highly effective in communicating research findings in academic papers and dissertations. The chapter offers helpful advice on making the most of photos, maps, infographics and videos, for print or online documents.

AMOS is written by expert authors from Macquarie University and Biotext, who bring teaching experience to help Australian writers and editors at whatever stage of their careers. AMOS includes a large and varied set of RESOURCES: downloadable quick guides, new online training units, and a hub for connecting with others at the frontline of Australian style and usage.

AMOS is user-friendly, with a strong structure for its more than 550 pages, plus supportive search functions and bookmarking for easy navigation. Being online it will be continually updated and expanded by the copublishers — with inputs from language research and professional practice in different fields — to keep abreast of Australian style.

Pam Peters DE

Emeritus Professor, Department of Linguistics, Macquarie University

We are very pleased to have Pam lined up to speak about the AMOS at our September general meeting. Keep an eye out for more details in your inbox. -Ed



That one's for our academic editors. -Ed

Grammar Gremlin No 2 – Say what you mean

In 'Grammar Gremlins' we look at parts of grammar that writers often get wrong, or that we editors aren't sure how to explain to writers who make the errors.

Don't just dangle there! Danglers, or to be more precise, dangling modifiers, are words or groups of words that are left, high and dry, nowhere near the things they are supposed to modify. 'A blush-making, naked, no frills mix of spice and wild passion, Tammy Blake holds nothing back in her first novel'. Oops! Are we describing Tammy or reviewing her novel? Danglers of various kinds create confusion for readers. Some less whacky confusions are common ambiguities:

'She told me how old James was.' What did she really tell me?

'The boss asked us if we could clear up after the protest which would show how much we cared about our neighbourhood.' What does 'which' refer to?

There are many forms of ambiguity. Here are a couple more:

'She gave her mother her coat.'

'Did you take my photo?'

Avoid them all. Make sure the reader will know exactly what the author means.

Learn more about ambiguity and about dangling and misplaced modifiers: Sections 8.4 and 8.6 Effective writing: plain English at work by Elizabeth Manning Murphy with Hilary Cadman, Lacuna Publishing, Sydney, 2014

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE



Did you know?



PanMacmillan Australia published the *Macquarie Dictionary Eighth Edition* on 28 July 2020. The new edition includes more than 3,500 new entries (such as *algorithmic bias, cancel culture, deepfake, influencer, schnitty, social distancing* and *zoodle*) and updates thousands more to 'reflect changing perspectives relating to the environment, politics, technology and the internet'. See this <u>Macquarie</u> <u>Dictionary blog article</u> for more information.

The former Editor of the *Macquarie Dictionary,* Sue Butler, has a new book coming out on 29 September 2020 called *Rebel Without a Clause*, billed as 'a fascinatingly idiosyncratic romp through the world of words'.

Both of these are contenders for that hard-to-buy-for-editor's Christmas wish list — the hard cover of the new dictionary is beautiful enough to be shelfart. -Ed

My True Shelf, with Elizabeth Manning Murphy

The 'My True Shelf' series features interviews with people who work with words, inspired by the way Zoom backgrounds are giving us a peek at people's bookshelves during lockdown.

Interview by Gina Dow



Elizabeth Manning Murphy in her study.

Inaugural Janet Mackenzie Medal winner Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE somewhat reluctantly agreed to reveal her 'True Shelf'. I was intrigued to know how the Canberra Society of Editors' revered grammarian stocks, maintains and disciplines her book collection.

We met in Elizabeth's comfortable apartment in Canberra's south. With Elizabeth clearly having downsized, my first question was whether she still buys books.

EMM: I'm a book buyer by necessity. If I have got to read something for a purpose, I buy the book.

GD: You don't case the shelves of second-hand bookshops?

EMM: I might occasionally case Berkelouw's, the famous antiquarian bookshop near Mittagong – but I head straight for the grammar shelves. I have two books in particular that I bought from there. Very much vintage, in fact, my copy of *Murray's English Grammar* dates from 1805.

I take it with me whenever I give a grammar class, and I wave it around. I even pass it around — with strict instructions not to drop it, or I'll lose a lot of pages. It's the oldest book in my current collection, and likely my oldest book ever.

I don't have much sentiment for books: if I don't want something any longer I throw it out. But I keep that one. I'm attached to it.

I'm getting the vibe that Elizabeth is a nonfiction person, so this may not have been so much of a question – but I ask it anyway. How does she arrange them? (I could have second-guessed the answer.)

EMM: I arrange them by usage, with the most-thumbed dictionary and style manuals within reach.

I am intrigued to know whether a nonfiction aficionado will have an actual favourite.

GD: Is your favourite book your most useful book?

EMM: In a sense. My own books that I've written are my favourite books - not an ego trip, but because I've learned from everything else that I've read and created a concentration of that knowledge. Clearly I've absorbed from others' works, but I couldn't tell you who wrote them.

GD: You've distilled everything for you, in a way that is useful for other people as well.

EMM: I've just turned it all into what I believe is plain language, and most people say that it is.

GD: You must have to deal with text in public service jargon – does it infect your head?

EMM: No! (laughter) I get pretty cranky sometimes but it doesn't bother me. I know what it is, and I tell them to stop it. Though, I look first at who the audience is. If something is being written for the general public it should not contain public service jargon. Or, if it does, it must have an explanation immediately after it. And not in the back of the book.

I ask Elizabeth whether her fondness for nonfiction and pragmatic books has led her to investigations into linguistics and the history of language.

EMM: Indeed. In fact I studied linguistics at the ANU in the 1980s and specialised in psycholinguistics which is about child acquisition of language, and later got interested in language loss in dementia.

I persuaded the university to give me six years initially to research my topic because I convinced them that people simply don't dement in three years. I added more time as things happened in my life that required time off. I finished up working on that research for nearly ten years.

My research papers are still in storage, and I have plans to write a slender guide for carers. If I stop some of my other projects - mentoring and so on - or reduce my editing commitments, I'll have time to do it.

Elizabeth's career as an author began in 1962, and she has written 18 books. Before her books, people had to rely on their school education to inform their writing. Elizabeth's early work can be said to be the precursor to the Style Manual.

EMM: I began my career as an author in the early 1960s, when I worked for Qantas as a secretary. In the course of my work, I noticed a lot of poorly drafted letters coming to me for my boss to sign. I talked to him about it and the upshot was that I moved to Staff Training where I then started grammar and writing style classes. I eventually wrote The Better Letter which was distributed to staff around the world.

My book production was driven by necessity. At one point I was running a business college in Ashfield, in Sydney, on my own. I started writing materials that would keep one class occupied while I taught another class.

This developed into a set of shorthand training books under the general title of Secretarial Projects for Pitman Publishing in London. Each was accompanied by a sound recording for students to practise to. The recordings are still in existence somewhere. I had become fed up with shorthand speed lessons being unrealistic, with a 'regular regular' pace. Students need something that is realistic, with pauses, varying speeds within the one segment, and side remarks that you won't include.

My latest books are Working Words and Effective Writing: Plain English at Work.

A scan of Elizabeth's bookshelf reveals her tried-andtrue companions, along with a framed 'honorary life member' certificate from the Canberra Society of Editors.

EMM: Closest to hand is Janet Mackenzie's book *The* Editor's Companion, and the other one that I love is The Australian Editing Handbook. Its co-author, Elizabeth Flann, was my first editor in Australia.

To satisfy the curiosity of CSE members as to Elizabeth's shelf contents, I can relate that I also spotted (at handy distance) The Chicago Manual of Style, The Cambridge Guide to Australian English Usage, Collins' A Book of English Idioms, Fromkin and Rodman's An Introduction to Language, Strunk and White's The Elements of Style, and the Concise Oxford. I also noticed An Outline of English Grammar, by local grammarian the late George Stern.

Our wide-ranging conversation over tea revealed several of Elizabeth's own interesting life stories and encounters.

Having met both the Queen and Princess Margaret, she was able to tell me that 'The Queen is tiny, but Princess Margaret was even tinier'. I also learned that Elizabeth's father was in the RAF, was fluent in Arabic, and met Lawrence of Arabia after World War One and Winston Churchill during World War Two. I even winkled out of Elizabeth that she once wrote an opera libretto because her good friend was a baritone and 'the tenors were getting all the leading roles'.

What a fascinating profile of Elizabeth and her shelves. Remember you too can send a picture and a short description to the Editor and share your best shelves! #shelfie -Ed

Mentoring? What's that?

Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE (with Ted Briggs AE, Chair of the IPEd Mentoring Program for editors)

We can't count the number of times we've been asked that question. It usually comes from people who are thinking of expanding their skills but don't know what kind of guidance they need. Is it like learning in a classroom or workshop, being coached full on to get up to speed in a specific topic, being in a tutorial group at a university, a quick consultation ... or what?

The quick answer is it's none of those. In our program, being mentored means being guided by someone who has knowledge and skills in an area of the editing profession that you aren't familiar with. It means being matched with a mentor who you'll get along with so that a friendship gradually builds up, and with it trust. No classroom, no timetable apart from what you and your mentor agree on, nobody else: just you and your mentor, and it's entirely confidential.

If that sounds like a good idea, do you have what it takes to be a mentee?

Are you prepared to give time to this adventure, to set some goals for yourself and to commit to doing what you and your mentor agree on - perhaps around learning some new skills or starting a freelance business, or anything at all that's related to editing?

Do you have some basic editing skills and a bit of experience as an editor? Perhaps through formal study of editing or writing or business management or anything else that's appropriate? Or through attending events run by your branch of IPEd or the Canberra Society of Editors? Mentoring is not teaching – your mentor will guide you in any reading or research you might need to do, practising new editing skills, building on existing skills like copy-editing or website building, or whatever it is you have asked for guidance in. But your mentor won't do any of it for you.

Are you in the right frame of mind to be mentored? Have you de-cluttered your mind so that you'll be able to give time to the mentoring sessions and the between-sessions practice or reading your mentor recommends? Have you learned how to listen, how to be flexible, how to develop projects, no matter how small?

Looking forward, are you willing to change your thinking and your practices if necessary following guidance from your mentor and plenty of discussion? Staying put in your present way of doing things isn't really very productive – be willing to listen and act on advice from your mentor and be game to try new approaches to even present workplace tasks, and of course to future projects.

Our program is certainly not a job agency, so we can't find work for you. However, being guided in ways to build your skills and your presentation in a CV, website and so on, may well go a long way towards helping your chances in the editing marketplace. You'll be amazed at how you can improve your way of working in your current job, your ability to take on additional editing tasks in your own time and before long start building your own freelance editing business, if that's your goal. But you have to be willing, ready and able to walk confidently into the future, with the belief that good mentoring will help you in many aspects of the goal or goals you have set for your mentorship.

What, me set the goals? Yes, you, the mentee, drive any mentorship. They're your goals, not your mentor's. Your mentor only has one goal – to help you achieve yours.

Ready? Set? Then go for it. Contact your local IPEd branch or the CSE to be put in touch with your local Mentoring Coordinator who will send you guidance notes to read and a very short application form to fill in. And the cost: currently \$250 for a mentorship, no matter how long or short it is. We think that's really good value. We hope you do too.

You can write to one of the names below if you don't know how to contact your local coordinator. Tell us which state or territory you live in and we'll put you in touch with the right person.

Ted Briggs AE, Chair, IPEd Mentoring Standing Committee tedbriggs@grapevine.com.au Elizabeth Manning Murphy DE emmurphy.words@gmail.com

Odd spot

Freelance journalist Cleuci de Oliveira (@CLEUCI) on 7 September 2018 posted a translation on Twitter of this correction from Brazilian news magazine Veja:

'The candidate likes to spend his free time reading Tolstoy, and not watching Toy Story, as originally

From https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2018/the-funny-the-weird-and-the-serious-33-mediacorrections-from-2018/.

Seems like that's a classic, either way! -Ed

Back Page Bloopers

I'm not an English major, but is "Ten words I can spell right are..." grammatically correct? Should it not be "correctly"?



I am not an english major either, but I thing "right" and "correct" are cinnamons

: **△ → ↑** 74 **↓**

Screen shot from Reddit,

https://www.buzzfeed.com/daves4/mistakes-spelling-errors

I shall have a 'thing' or two to consider next time I bake some synonym rolls. -Ed

Q: What's the difference between a cat and a comma?

A: One has claws at the end of its paws and the other has a pause at the end of its clause.

Knock, knock! Who's there? To. To who? To whom.



Q: What's the meaning of this?

A: It's a preposition.

Q: Is there a word that uses all the vowels plus y? A: Unquestionably!

Good on The Guardian (UK) for regularly publishing corrections, including the wonderful homophone corner. Here are some recent examples. -Ed

- 'After maybe half an hour, we were ready for the open water in a double skull, a vastly long and extremely fragile bit of boat' (Body & mind, 28 December, page 55, Weekend).
- '... the Guardian still arrives on our doorstep each mourning' (<u>Beauty and comfort make a dress perfect</u>, 13
 August, page 9, Journal)
- 'My wife cut my hair in the garden and she did such a good job that people accused me of having gone to an elicit barbers' (Experts reveal how the pandemic has affected them, 25 July, page 8)

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ACTive Voice

(Formerly 'The Canberra editor')
Volume 29, Number 3, July-August 2020
© Canberra Society of Editors 2020
ISSN 2200-6344 (online)
PO Box 3222, Manuka ACT 2603

ACTive Voice is available from www.editorscanberra.org.

Regular content includes news and reports of Society meetings, professional development, mentoring, membership, committee business, and features on diverse topics relevant to editing, including guest presentations, workshops, conferences, editor profiles, and more.

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