

## Editorial

Two years ago, the Society undertook a survey of members to elicit their responses to a number of questions about the purpose, content and design of *Archives and Manuscripts*. A report on the results of the survey was published in the *Bulletin* in December 1998. Although only 14% of members responded, this low rate of response is not unusual for such surveys, and it can be assumed that those members with strong views did take the opportunity to respond on issues which mattered to them. Similarly, other members demonstrated their level of interest by not responding at all. As the new editor of this journal, I have spent some time analysing the responses to the survey, and this and future issues will reveal some new directions resulting from them.

As to the purpose of the journal, respondents presented a clear answer: 'to educate and inform' with other possibilities such as 'encouraging Australian archivists to publish', 'as a forum for scholarly communication' and 'providing information on members' activities' receiving far less support.

There was strong support for both Australian and overseas content, with relevance to the Australian audience rather than origin often being mentioned as a preferred determining factor. This issue includes two articles from overseas contributors, both of relevance to the Australian experience: 'The Tyranny of Listing' is the second part of Chris Hurley's 'The Making and the Keeping of Records' (the first part appeared in the May 1998 issue) and Albert Meijer's 'Anticipating Accountability Processes'.

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the whole recordkeeping continuum should be included in the journal, with several noting the lack of coverage of reference and access issues. In this issue, Mark Brogan surveys the creation, management, disposal and access of records of Internet service providers in his 'Frontiers in Recordkeeping'.

The suggestions about new content were particularly interesting to me. It is quite clear that respondents wanted more practical orientation: terms such as 'case studies', 'practical advice', 'grass roots archives', 'best practice', and 'practical application of theory' were common responses, as were requests for more of relevance to small archives. This issue addresses some of these concerns: Ted Ling's article on 'making good' – restoring leased premises – is an example of a how-to article giving advice to practitioners on issues which they may need to face. Further practical articles have been commissioned for future issues.

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Several respondents suggested that student papers be a regular feature of the journal. As a former member of the Mander Jones Publications Awards Committee, bemoaning the too few entries in the student category, I am supportive of the reasons for these suggestions. I have decided against a separately labelled section, as many articles derive to some degree from student work. This issue includes two articles which are based on work undertaken for postgraduate studies: Stephen Yorke's examination of the nature of community expectations in the appraisal of archives, and Danielle Wickman's consideration of perspectives of both researchers and records creators in the appraisal process.

This is Helen Yoxall's last edition of *Archives and Manuscripts* as News Notes Editor. She has been editing the News Notes section since the November 1991 issue. This has been a sterling effort appreciated by all editors over that time and the thanks of all members are due to her. Helen Morgan will be taking on the role from the November 2000 issue.

As commissioning editor, I appreciate leads from members, and would encourage members to pass on the names of potential authors and topics for articles. I am also happy to hear from potential authors directly: please note the new guidelines for authors which appear at the end of this volume.

Maggie Shapley