

Life membership of Oral History Australia SA/NT 2015 Awarded to Allison Murchie



Oral History Australia SA/NT confers life membership on Allison Murchie for her positive contribution to the profession for over two decades.

Since 1990 Allison has worked tirelessly as a volunteer for the oral history cause. She has contributed hundreds of hours to the State Library of South Australia (SLSA) organising and summarising transcripts, listening to oral history recordings and writing summaries to enable better access. She has also recorded numerous interviews. When Allison undertook a backlog project for the Oral History officer it was calculated that she provided the equivalent of three months full time work which enabled oral histories to be made accessible for research and reduced the backlog of transcripts and cassette recordings to zero. Such dedication was extremely important for the collection and was greatly appreciated by the Collection Development staff.

In 2011 the Branch launched the *SA175th Oral History Web Gateway* to mark the 175th anniversary of the establishment of South Australia in 1836. It also coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Northern Territory. Twenty interviews were loaded onto the site and Allison prepared logs and transcripts for those interviews which were missing this paperwork. A terrific effort - as we who are not professional transcriptionists understand.

Allison can always be relied upon to attend meetings and support events. She has contributed to seminars such as the SLSA's *Wednesdays at 1. Speaking our lives: selected audio jewels from the J.D. Somerville Oral History Collection of the State Library*. Her articles in *Word of Mouth* have included *Jim Doyle a shearer's life* and a report on the 2013 Adelaide conference *She said, he said*.

Allison has been recording oral histories as a volunteer for over 20 years, with a particular focus on community activists, especially trade unionists, women, migrants and politicians. There are 128 entries in the SLSA catalogue for *Murchie, Allison*. Projects include: Working Women's Stories, More Working Women, Women's Suffrage Centenary Steering Committee, National Labour History, Welcoming Refugees, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History Adelaide Branch, Afghan Refugees, and Stories from the Zoo. (The Adelaide Zoo is another of Allison's volunteer commitments).



As a volunteer interviewer, Allison decides who she will interview and only records the lives of people she respects and admires. There are many whole-of-life interviews and she is renowned for long and comprehensive recordings which focus on a specific theme or time period in each hour. Individuals have included Inese Petersons who taught in a detention centre and was a post World X War Two displaced person; Ruth Russell a human shield in the Iraq War; Silver Moon an activist who protested at the Greenham Common women's peace camp; and Rex Munn a strong union man. The individuals are all courageous people with strong commitment to their beliefs. The intelligent selection of interviewees, on Allison's part, is evident when the interviews are selected for websites such as the *Australian Women's Register* and the SLSA's *SA Memory*.

Allison Murchie is a valued member of Oral History Australia SA/NT who deserves the honour of life membership.

Photo Credits

Above Allison Murchie, 2013, Photograph: Alison McDougall

Below Allison, August 2011, Photograph: June Edwards