

## 19th National Conference of Oral History Australia



# Fast Forward: Oral History in a Time Of Change

Perth, Western Australia: 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> September 2015

### CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The major focus of our conference is the influence of rapidly changing technology (experienced by us all) and its impact on recording and preserving oral history, on history research in general and community access.

The conference has been convened by the Oral History Association of Australia (WA Branch) on behalf of Oral history Australia with the generous support of the State Library of Western Australia and the City of Perth



CITY of PERTH

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

### **Dr Douglas Boyd**

Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky

A distinguished Oral Historian, folklorist and author; Doug Boyd is a recognised national leader in oral history, preservation, archives and digital technologies. He is known for his work regarding oral history and digital technologies, including his recent work on the OHMS system (Oral History Metadata Synchroniser) - an open source programme which synchronises text with audio and video online.

## OUR PRESENTERS

(in alphabetical order)

### **Clare ANREALLO**

PhD Candidate, University of Canberra

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#### ***Making Oral History Audible***

"The practice of curating oral histories lags behind the practice of creating them" (MacKay, 2007, p.22). From a technical perspective many oral history interviews demonstrate a poor understanding of audio production technology and techniques. Despite the high quality of digital recording technology used, recordings continue to suffer from an absence of good basic audio recording pre, location and post audio practice. Focus tends to be placed on the act of doing and accumulating historical data rather than producing audible, accessible, historical artefacts. Reflecting specifically on the National Library of Australia's Canberra Region Oral History Project (1990s) and The Centenary of Canberra History Oral History Project (2014), it is argued that if oral history is to be valued as equal to transcribed or other visual historical data, the specific contribution that oral history has to offer to history needs to be more explicitly celebrated and explored. This paper recommends that the foundations of this lay in the establishment of efficient, high quality audio production practice. Fine-tuned technical audio production intertwined with oral history methodology will produce a unique, more publically accessible, valuable oral history database and contribution to knowledge that is of equal regard to other forms of historical research.

**Clare Andreallo** is an audio practitioner and researcher. She is currently completing her PhD at the University of Canberra while lecturing and conducting practical workshops on sound media production at the UNSW. Her experience and educational background is a combination of technical and creative focused audio visual projects and occupations.

### **Kylie ANDREWS BA (Hons)**

University of Technology, Sydney

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#### ***Oral History and Collective Biography: Women in the post-war ABC***

This paper explores the role of oral history in relation to a collective biography of women who forged careers in the gendered arena of broadcasting at the ABC in the postwar era.

In constructing a feminist history of Australian media, oral history has played an important function filling in the gaps of knowledge of women's roles in producing public affairs content and providing alternative versions of mainstream, male-centric narratives.

Using case studies from the memories of ABC producers such as Kay Kinane and Joyce Belfrage, this paper illustrates oral history's application to the biographical process and the importance of 'purpose' to the manner in which each oral history can be contextualised. I examine the influence that the collaborative process has on the nature of each testimony, and outline how my own aims have varied: at times a straightforward data-collection to fill gaps in knowledge, at others an exchange of ideas encouraging dialogue with participants. For oral testimonies already in the public domain, I also reflect on 'the cultural politics of remembering', seen for example in the

diversity of one woman's testimonies over three decades, each undertaken with a different purpose and each framing her 40-year career with a different perspective.

**Kylie Andrews** has over 15 years' experience in film, television and audio production. Continuing her focus on history and media, her doctoral research looks at the ABC's postwar production environment. Previous work investigating the commissioning of national television histories won her the Frank Crowley history prize at UNSW in 2010.

### **Alison ATKINSON-PHILLIPS**

PhD Candidate, University of Technology Sydney

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#### ***Telling stories, bearing witness: public memorials and oral history***

Public memorials have long been understood as serving a political and pedagogic function.

However, while traditional memorials (including those using non-traditional forms) are designed for mourners left behind, an emerging genre of public memorials commemorate and lament lived experiences of loss or trauma. In an Australian, post-colonial context, public memorials are part of a repertoire of technologies used to bring challenging and previously silenced histories into the public sphere, including stories of child abuse, rape, forced separation of families and loss of land.

Memorials rarely 'stand alone', either physically or metaphorically, and this presentation will explore the ways memorials draw on and interact with oral history work in order to 'bear witness' to the stories of survivors. While these memorials, in common with traditional memorials, usually serve a mourning and healing role for survivors, this paper is focussed on their political function, as testimony which both addresses and constitutes a public. The paper draws on ongoing PhD research into Australian memorials that commemorate lived experiences of loss and trauma. Using local Western Australian and national case studies, I consider the layers of meaning created when oral histories are used in commemorative projects, and some of the ethical challenges this creates.

**Alison Atkinson-Phillips** is a PhD Candidate with the University of Technology Sydney, based across the country in Perth, WA. Her research project centres on public commemorations of lived experiences of loss and trauma. Alison's research project includes an online map of non-death memorials across Australia which can be found on her blog [www.notacelebration.blogspot.com](http://www.notacelebration.blogspot.com).

### **Lorina BARKER**

Lecturer, School of Humanities, University of New England

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#### ***Kundjikhah: Documenting the process of making a film for family and community***

This paper will discuss the process of making a short documentary film about the removal of the Wangkumara people from their homelands to government stations in northwest NSW. It considers the multiple subjectivities of a filmmaker, academic, family member and community insider and the impact of perceived positioning on the production. It emphasizes how film as a medium allows family/community access to the 'data' and how it compliments oral history interviews by privileging Wangkumara voices, stories and experiences. Film also provides an opportunity to ground the narratives in place and captures the interview process. This paper also highlights some of the challenges and the implications of cultural protocols and ethical guidelines.

The film, *My Grandmother's County* draws together the documentary evidence, including archival records and academic research both written and oral, with family/community members' stories, memories and experiences. It adds to existing literature about Wangkumara culture, history and forced removal in 1938 to the Brewarrina Aboriginal Station, known to the residents as 'The Mission' or 'Old Mission' and the Wangkumara walk-off in 1941-2. This film is both a personal and collective account of the impact of past government policies on the Wangkumara. More importantly, it retraces visually through film the journey home to Country (Tibooburra NSW).

**Lorina Barker** is a descendant of the Wangkumara and Muruwari people of northwest NSW, the Adnymathanha of the Flinders Rangers, SA and the Kooma and Kunja of southwest QLD. Lorina team-teaches in modern and colonial Australian history, Aboriginal history and family and community histories in the School of Humanities at UNE.

### **Dr Brenda BENTLEY**

Lecturer in Counselling at Murdoch University in the School of Health Professions  
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#### ***Enhancing the end of life with dignity therapy, a life review intervention***

In dignity therapy, a participant is invited to discuss things they wish to have remembered in a tape recorded interview. A transcript of the interview is created and the transcript is edited until a final document is produced. The document is given to the participant and they can share it as they wish or bequeath it to their loved ones.

This paper will provide an overview of dignity therapy, a brief psychotherapy shown to enhance the end-of-life experience for people who have a terminal illness. Dignity therapy is based on empirical research into the concept of dignity at the end of life and is designed to alleviate existential and psychosocial distress. It has also been found to moderate the bereavement experience of family carers.

This presentation will educate the audience about the research that led to the development of dignity therapy. It will present an overview of the steps of this brief therapy, and benefits will be reported. The presenter will share some of her experiences of delivering the therapy.

**Brenda** is a researcher and counselling psychologist specializing in mental health and wellbeing in end-of-life care. Brenda has developed an expertise in dignity therapy, which was the subject of her PhD research.

### **BERMAN, Sue**

Oral Historian - Tumu Kōrero Hītori-a-Waha Ngā Whare Mātauranga o Tāmaki  
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#### ***Glen Eden Stories —A community led place based collaboration***

What happens when you invite an oral historian with a community development background into a gaps analysis and visioning exercise in a western suburb of Auckland?

This paper explores both the richness and the challenges of developing a community led initiative with oral history and digital story telling as the keystone methods of exploration of and by the people and place — Glen Eden.

I will share voices and images from Glen Eden Stories while talking about the ins and outs of training and working with community volunteers; the basis for building successful collaborations; the weight of support given by local Council and Auckland Libraries in community led work; the dynamics of interpretation and website/video interpretation; and, the importance of archiving the treasured voices found in community.

**Sue Berman** is the Oral Historian for Auckland Libraries and is responsible for oral history project development and curatorial and collection management. She works collaboratively with internal and external partners producing innovative multimedia platforms. Recent projects include It Take a Village; Dominion Road Stories; Glen Eden Stories; and most recently More than a War— Remembering 1914-1918. She delivers oral history training and actively engages with the National Oral History Association of NZ (NOHANZ). She served as President in 2012/13. Sue has a long association with oral history and community development practice dating back to my first tape recorded project in 1993.

### **Anne BRAKE**

Manager, Community Engagement, National Trust of Australia (WA)

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#### ***Oral histories as a tool for community engagement and interpretation***

For too long oral histories have been seen as an add-on, or even a luxury, in the development of community engagement and interpretation programs at heritage sites. More traditional approaches to historical research have remained primary tools. This is particularly relevant to heritage places as voices (oral testimony) can add significantly to the understanding of the values of a place. Voices, giving a place to those whose lives and experiences don't appear in the written record and voices, quite literally, in corridors and rooms, even outdoor spaces, of our heritage sites.

The National Trust has been undertaking a series of oral history projects linked to their interpretation and education and learning programs. These are used in a variety of ways from web sites, through education programs, in publications and in exhibitions. Importantly, several programs to train community members to participate in the ongoing recording of oral histories have been held, creating vital partnerships between a heritage place and its community.

This paper will explore ways in which the National Trust has imbedded oral history into its approach to the management, interpretation and presentation of the values of its heritage places.

**Anne** has recently taken on the role of Manager Community Engagement at the National Trust. She has a strong interest in making information about the properties, projects and programs of the National Trust available and is keen to explore new strategies to engage a diversity of audiences.

### **Adrian BOWEN**

Librarian, State Library of Western Australia

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#### ***Oral history and copyright in a digital age***

Oral history is a unique medium in terms of copyright. In Australia, at least, there is uncertainty even around what copyrights may or may not exist in an oral history, and who might own these rights. These uncertainties influence various decisions about the oral history, including how access may be provided, what further uses may be made of the oral history, and even whether a participant may agree to be interviewed at all. In addition, oral histories are often bound by various additional limitations, such as access

and embargo agreements, informed consent practices and privacy concerns. These are separate to copyright, but can have similar influences.

With oral history an increasingly digital medium, and the ease of access and use which this brings, copyright and other limitations are increasingly pressing issues for oral historians, researchers, and other users of oral history alike. The purpose of this paper is to unpack the various potential layers of copyright, other rights and limitations in oral histories, and their implications for access to and use of the oral history. While uncertainty definitely exists, this can be navigated and managed, and need not be a barrier to good outcomes for interviewees, oral historians and researchers.

**Adrian Bowen** is a librarian at the State Library of Western Australia. From 2011 to 2012 he worked on the State Library's oral history digitisation project, developing copyright and access frameworks, and contacting and negotiating with rights holders. He now coordinates the collection and management of unique and unpublished Western Australian materials.

## **Bill BUNBURY**

Adjunct Professor History & Communications Murdoch University.

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### ***Including oral history in various forms***

In this presentation I would like to draw attention, through my own experience, as a radio documentary maker and author, of the many and varied uses and adaptations of Oral History that I have both practiced and encountered. They include not only the electronic media but written history, and not just recent written history; fiction and non-fiction; theatre and journalism, to cite but a few. Oral history has also affected interviewing techniques and perhaps, equally vitally, restored the spoken word, with all its variety and vitality, to parity with the written word. Oral history has also been, in my experience, an agent of empowerment, giving so-called 'ordinary people' their rightful role in history; not as mere recipients of great events but participants whose voices we need to hear and now can hear.

**Bill Bunbury** is a documentary producer and author with 40 years' experience. He has received 5 Radio awards including the 1996 New York Radio Festival Gold medal; Best history documentary 'TIMBER FOR GOLD' He has written 12 books on Australian social history and is currently Adjunct Professor History & Communications Murdoch University.

## **Simone COLLINS**

Public Programs Officer, Waverley Library

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### ***Eat, Pray, Naches\*: Jewish Community Stories Project captures local history for future generations***

Waverley Council's Cultural Programs is creating a project [Eat, Pray, Naches\\*: Jewish Community Stories](#) which aims to document, preserve, and celebrate the rich history of post-war Jewish Immigrants and their decedents. It will showcase people communicating their experience of life in the Bondi area through a website, exhibition and public programs.

This project framework is segmented into three categories to maximise community cultural development and social participation.

Community consultation has been the most helpful having over 100 meetings with researchers, community groups, key creatives and cultural institutions. However, a

challenge has been establishing the participant criteria as many Jewish immigrants have stories dating back to the 1900s as well as first generation stories from 90 -100 year olds.

We are now story gathering as we call for expressions of interest in the community (see below). Following this, we will conduct a series different style interviews which will be edited to form the main content of the project. This website material will include an online exhibition, interactive historical timelines, 'submit a story', school modules, searchable tagged story content, and local history research/resources.

A physical exhibition will take place at the Waverley Library to launch the project on the 28th August 2015 and will then travel to the rest of the community. A diverse range of workshops and public programs will be delivered following the launch.

For more information about the project please visit [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/eprn](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/eprn) and the survey is housed here: <http://svy.mk/1CMXeTo>

\* naches / nachas (נחם): pleasure, satisfaction, delight; proud enjoyment (Wikipedia).

**Simone Collins - Project Manager and Cultural Programs Officer** at Waverley Council who develops and delivers high quality events and programs. She is a third generation Jewish immigrant with Dutch descent. Oral history is a new passion and she lives, breathes and eats this project! Before joining the cultural programs team, she had a broad communications role at Waverley Council which included creating marketing strategies, sponsorships, community consultation and issues management.

## **Denise COOK**

PhD candidate, Murdoch University  
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### ***Voices from the Noongar camps in Fremantle and the Western Suburbs***

Despite the British annexation of their land, until at least the 1950s Noongar people continued to camp around what became Fremantle and the western suburbs, as well as in the remainder of the Perth metropolitan area. While staying close to traditional campsites, they lived where they could find vacant land or a sympathetic landowner, and where there was access to water, work and materials for building shelters.

As part of my PhD at Murdoch University I am writing a book about the Noongar camps in Fremantle and the western suburbs, focusing on the period 1930-1960. It draws heavily on oral histories with Noongar people and others who remember the camps. In undertaking this work I have followed Noongar cultural protocols. This paper will outline the findings of my research and discuss some of the methodological issues I faced.

**Denise Cook** has been officially recording oral histories since 1987, but actually her first was when she started high school years earlier, and interviewed other students about the change from primary school. That was enough to get her a one-off session on ABC radio, a great experience for a thirteen-year-old. Denise has worked on many oral history projects with Noongar and other Aboriginal people, such as recording the experiences of stolen generations children from Roelands Mission; Noongar Elders with connections to the suburbs of Claremont and Mandurah; and Elders from Noongar families throughout the southwest on the topic of "Living in Two Worlds" (Noongar and wadjela). Other oral history projects have focused on local histories and rail transport histories.

Denise has also worked in museums for many years as a curator, manager, and producing exhibitions and other forms of interpretation. In recent years, Denise worked for the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council on the Noongar history and culture website, Kaartdijin Noongar; and on a Noongar language project. Denise was on the OHAA (WA) committee for a number of years and was involved in setting up and running the digital equipment workshop.



## **Sharee CORDES**

Oral history consultant

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### ***Oral History on the iPad***

I don't own a laptop. We have an old dinosaur of a computer, but I also have teenagers, so my access is pretty limited. This leaves me with my trusty iPad - I use it for everything!

At the Wynnum Manly Historical Society we are conducting an oral history project about our local area. This is an ambitious project; we are recording oral histories, using extracts from the oral histories to turn into digital stories, and using these to create a digital history trail of the area - all on the iPad.

I believe that the iPad is a technology that can make these tasks more accessible for everyone. They are cheaper and more portable than laptops and the interface is faster and more intuitive. Further to this they can eliminate the need for a specialised digital recording device, although a few specialised pieces of equipment are still useful.

In this paper I will talk about the advantages and possible problems when using iPads in oral history projects. I will discuss practical aspects of the project including apps, microphones, scanners and audio quality and provide participants with practical information that will allow them to get started with oral histories on the iPad.

**Sharee Cordes** is an oral history consultant with her business 'The Story Collector' in Brisbane and is also the oral history co-ordinator for the Wynnum Manly Historical Society. She is currently studying for her Master of Museum Studies where she is researching the benefits of using oral histories and digital stories in museums.

## **Bridget CURRAN**

Local History Curator, City of Belmont Museum

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### ***Oral Histories in Local Government: Tensions and Opportunities***

The Belmont Museum is in a state of transformation. After over 30 years as a volunteer-run initiative of the local Belmont Historical Society, the management has changed and the Historical Society is now working with the City of Belmont to create a professional museum adhering to national standards, with aims and outcomes clearly built into its corporate plans. Included in those plans are an ongoing oral history program and a commitment to expand and experiment with new technologies.

The oral history program has become an essential tool in many unexpected ways, revealing new facets of local history that have been previously forgotten or neglected and providing a justification for opening new avenues of research and exhibition. By incorporating segments of oral histories in exhibitions and new media displays it has also changed the traditional nature of the oral histories themselves and with these new opportunities come some tensions in how oral histories should be recorded and used. The Local History Curator will discuss these tensions and opportunities in a presentation on the current use of local history at Belmont Museum, with reference to several projects including the new audio signage at Tomato Lake.

**Bridget Curran** is the Local History Curator at the City of Belmont and supervises the Belmont Museum's oral history project. With over 10 years' experience in research, writing and production for film and television she has a particular interest in new media and digital storytelling in a Museum context.

## **Margaret DAWSON**

President, Busselton Oral History Group (Inc.)

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### ***ANZAC Centenary Project***

The Busselton Oral History (Inc) began in 1985 as part of the Busselton Historical Society and has approximately 450 hours of recording consisting of 207 interviews on a wide variety of community topics including the development of the wine industry, Group Settlement, discovery of the Ngili Cave system, and shipping from the Busselton Jetty. There have been seven specific projects: Augusta Busselton Heritage Trail, Australia Remembers, Busselton Health Study, Busselton Oral History Group (Inc) 1985-2013, Busselton Wildflower Show, Development of Holiday/Tourist Accommodation Geographe Bay Region and the History of Ray Village. The interviews and transcripts are being prepared for online presentation.

In 2014 our Group undertook an eighth community history project to celebrate the Anzac Centenary and was successful in receiving a Lotterywest grant. An aim of the Project was to ask interviewees about their experiences in conflicts and what impact there had been on relationships, their work lives and health. Twenty four ex- service personnel were interviewed (23 men and one woman) to capture reflections on their experiences in fields of conflict from World War II to more recent conflicts. This paper outlines the process and outcomes of the project which culminated in a very successful presentation function hosted by the Busselton RSL.

**Margaret Dawson** is President of the Busselton Oral History Group (Inc), a member of the Busselton Historical Society and a committee member of the Busselton Settlement Art Project. She graduated from Claremont Teacher's College in 1960 and began recording local oral histories in 1985 including the soundtrack for three Busselton Historical Society historic film displays.

## **James DEVENISH**

On behalf of The University of Western Australia Historical Society

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### ***An Online Century for Oral Histories - Building an audio portal website for the digital generation***

Oral histories exist to be heard. Moving forward with its objective to improve access to history, the UWA Historical Society launched its audio website portal. Modern technology means oral histories can be captured and digitised for internet publication, to be heard and appreciated by the community. It also offers a way to deliver unlimited playback, on demand, from anywhere to anywhere by anyone. However, navigating academic catalogues and using inconvenient players were barriers for engaging non-specialist audiences online. With over 150 hours of interviews published by the Society, and a century of interviews from other online and offline repositories relating to the University, our challenge was to meet the needs of both curation and consumerisation. We present our solution for the digital mobile generation, based on a showcase format with convenient interactive features and a compact yet intuitive user interface. This was achieved through collaboration, supported by administrative processes and an open library repository to balance the traditions of archiving and intellectual property with the discoverability, accessibility and hyperlinking expected of modern applications in an environment where user expectations have changed. This digital interface means past,

new and future recordings from multiple sources are accessible through a single convenient website.

**James** has been a volunteer with The University of Western Australia Historical Society since its foundation, providing online services and logistical support for its day-to-day operations and projects. In his role as UWAHS's website developer, he discovered an appreciation for oral histories and has delivered the solution presented here.

**Dr Sara DONAGHEY**

Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in the Department of Communication Studies, Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand

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***Innovative approaches for changing times: exploring a visual representation of narrative data***

This paper invites us to open our interpretative frames of reference to new possibilities of presenting and understanding oral narrative. The study takes as its starting point a series of oral history interviews conducted with two generations of lesbian women to explore their identity and mutuality of their life experiences.

The paper presents two departures from conventional research practice. Firstly, the research design digressed from conventional interview norms by allowing the participant voices to occupy a position of greater prominence through a collaborative dialogue of co-creation; the ensuing conversation extended the concept of shared authority by foregrounding the narrators and diminishing the role of the researcher to one of facilitation and observation. Secondly, in terms of analysis, the narratives lent themselves to a variety of modes of appreciation and understanding. In this paper, we consider an innovative methodological approach based on a visual illustration of the emerging data. I have called this an 'interactional approach' based on a visual illustration of the emerging data.

**Sara** is a Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in the Department of Communication Studies, Unitec, New Zealand. She has a PhD in cultural heritage management and is a specialist in historical research and oral history narratives. She is currently developing collaborative projects that link undergraduate students, researchers, local government and the community.

**Dr Sara DONAGHEY** \* BA (Hons), PGCE, PGDipBus Admin, PhD (\* Lead researcher)

**Sue Berman**, BA, PGCert Research & Analysis

**Nena Seja** BA, MFA, Doctoral Candidate

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***Gen Y meets World War One: reflections on an interpretive transmedia project***

The centenary of World War One (WW1) is being marked by a range of nation-wide and international commemorative events. Our project brings to life personal narratives of the years 1914-1918 and sets them alongside contemporary, youth-driven responses to the commemoration of WW1, with a particular focus on stories from the home front. It features a singular collaboration between Unitec (in particular staff and students enabled in digital storytelling technologies), oral historians, heritage researchers and community archivists.

Bachelor of Communication students participated by creating digital stories from a range of primary sources; this includes archived collections - oral history narratives, letters, manuscripts and images; they were also trained in oral history interview techniques.

The conference presentation will highlight the student learning journey: particularly noting the growth in digital literacies demonstrated by student engagement in the project, the creative nature of their personal responses as they came to appreciate the power of story, the intergenerational dimension of the project as older generations shared their recollections with young people and the impact of community participation.

The project created an archive of unedited material for future researchers together with an exhibition, documentary and transmedia presentations contributing to the various online resources marking the centenary of WW1.

**Sara Donaghey** (see biography under her individual paper above).

**Sue** is the oral historian for Auckland Libraries. Her role as curator supports the creation, interpretation and management of oral history collections. Sue's work includes the teaching of best practice oral history and research skills. She supports creative digital interpretative work that encourages further interest and access to collections.

**Nina** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Communication Studies at Unitec. Her areas of specialization include human rights witnessing, social movements and social justice and their intersection with new media, documentary film and autobiography, and photojournalism related to war and political violence.

### **Sindy DOWDEN and Cate PATISON**

for the Grove Library, Peppermint Grove

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#### ***Village Gossip: themed interviews and digital curation***

The Grove Library in conjunction with historian Cate Pattison will showcase a contemporary approach to collecting and publishing oral history interviews within the Community Library sector.

The Grove Library is a recognised leader in utilising digital technology to deliver entertaining and educational projects. Winner of the Library Board of Western Australia Award for Excellence 2014 and a Highly Commended award at the Museum Australia Publication and Design Awards 2012, The Grove Library has commissioned several themed oral history projects utilising the dynamic skills of local historian Cate Pattison. Cate and Community History Librarian, Sindy Dowden will showcase how the themed projects are initiated and moulded into compilations designed to tell a story using audio bites. Harvested audio segments from the history collection are integrated into projects such as mobile applications, YouTube digital stories, interactive exhibits and iBooks.

**Sindy Dowden** is the Community History Librarian for The Grove Library situated in Peppermint Grove, Perth. Since commencing with The Grove in July 2011, Sindy has worked extensively on digital interpretations concerning the suburbs of Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove and Mosman Park and won State and National Awards for her work

**Cate Pattison** is a researcher who has developed her interest in social history since moving to the Cottesloe area. She conducts oral history projects for the Grove Library, and has written a book on the history of childhood in Cottesloe, supported by Lotterywest. Cate also takes on community history commissions from corporate and NGO clients, and is currently producing a book on the history of mental health accommodation services in Western Australia.

## **John FERRELL**

Oral Historian

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### ***South West Cattle Drives Oral History Project, 2013***

This project captured diminishing memories to preserve a record of historic local practice.

Since first settlement and until about 1980, farmers in the south-west of WA utilised leases on crown land to supplement the pastures of their home properties. Typically, dairy farmers drove their milkers to coastal runs in the summer months when feed was scarce on the farms. In that season, the cows were dry of milk, so could be left to fend for themselves in the bush until the first rains germinated new growth and milking could begin again on the farms.

Shires of Bridgetown-Green bushes, Manjimup and Nannup recently commissioned an oral history study of six families whose members could still give first-hand accounts of this practice. Apart from building an archive in local and state libraries, it was thought the project might give rise to stories that would be of interest to walkers or cyclists using bush trails that were to be developed to foster tourism. These trails will follow some of the tracks used by the cattle-men.

John Ferrell designed the project and completed interviews and transcripts. He will explain what was done and present a selection of material collected.

**John Ferrell**, a foundation member of OHAA and professional interviewer, has been undertaking oral history projects since the late 1970s for national, state and private bodies. A UWA graduate and former teacher of history, John is also a published writer.

## **Catherine FREYNE**

Historian, City of Sydney

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### ***Sydney oral histories***

The City of Sydney's oral history collection currently consists of 500+ recordings, the earliest of which date to the 1980s. A professional approach to curating, documenting and developing the collection was adopted in the early 2000s when Dr Margo Beasley was engaged as the City's Oral Historian. In late 2013, the City launched Sydney Oral Histories, a website to showcase the collection, delivering audio and transcripts for download. So far, 100+ interviews have been published online. Following Dr Beasley's retirement in 2014, the City of Sydney hired media producer Catherine Freyne as Historian with special responsibility for the City's oral history collection. In this paper, Catherine Freyne outlines her plans for the collection, the challenges and opportunities she faces, and the approach to oral history she brings as a producer of social history radio documentaries.

**Catherine Freyne** is a historian and media producer now working at the City of Sydney. She previously produced Hindsight documentaries at ABC Radio National. Other projects she has worked on include the Dictionary of Sydney, 80 Days that Changed Our Lives and Against The Tide: A Highway West. Catherine studied Australian history at UNSW. For her work in radio she has received two NSW Premier's History Awards.

## **Brenda GIFFORD**

Indigenous Oral History Coordinator, National Film & Sound Archive

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### ***Wrong Side of the Road Oral History Project***

The Indigenous Connections Team of the National Film & Sound Archive seeks to collect, connect and protect the wealth of Indigenous material held by the NFSA in close collaboration with Indigenous cultural custodians, as a living archive for future generations.

In June 2013 the Indigenous Collections Team of the NFSA undertook the Wrong Side of the Road Oral History Project. This was done in conjunction with the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) digitally restored version of the film Wrong Side of the Road screening at the 2013 Sydney Film Festival in Sydney.

The film Wrong Side of the Road was a dramatised documentary, an on the road film showing 48 hours in the lives of members of the Aboriginal bands, No Fixed Address and Us Mob, including the racism, hostility and harassment they received. The film is as fresh and relevant today as it was 34 years ago.

The bands became well known through the soundtrack from the film 'Wrong Side of the Road'. They were one of the 'first contemporary Aboriginal bands to be recorded'. They performed the anthemic songs We Have Survived and Genocide for the soundtrack album.

No Fixed Address and Us Mobs music gave voice to the Aboriginal communities' hopes, concerns and aspirations of that era. Their music and the film highlighted issues such as land rights, genocide and the issue of stolen generations even before the term was in use.

The project involved interviewing original cast members, including original band members from No Fixed Address and Us Mob. They shared their experiences and involvement in the making the film and the impact it had on their careers.

The project was important because it was a once in life time opportunity to get remaining Indigenous cast members and musicians together at the same time and record their recollections of the their time in the band, their music and their involvement in the film through a series of interviews.

The presentation will look at the Oral history Project undertaken by the National Film and Sound Archives Indigenous Connections Team.

## **Ross B GILMORE**

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### ***Chiropractic. Oral history interviews and research***

Chiropractic began in 1895, on the banks of the Mississippi River, in Davenport, Iowa. The first chiropractic practitioners arrived in Western Australia in the 1920's. In Australia, Western Australia set the pace in recognising this emerging health profession. The first:- to give legislative protection to provide treatment and advice, to recognise the use of diagnostic X-rays, exemption from other legislative Acts, to hold a

Honorary Royal Commission into the necessity for an Act to govern chiropractic services, and the first Chiropractors Act in Australia.

Other investigators have described these milestones, without acknowledging the contribution of early trained and untrained chiropractors who practiced in WA, before and during these events. Significantly, other researchers have not included the use of oral history interviews with local chiropractors. Following the Human Ethics Committee of Murdoch University approval of the oral history portion of my research, a number of interviews of senior chiropractors have been completed. They have links in practice from the 1930's, 40's, 50's, 60's, and 70's as chiropractors in Western Australia.

The link between oral history, legislative processes, social networks, and newspaper reporting of these events is explored in this presentation.

**Ross B Gilmore** has been a practicing chiropractor in Western Australia for thirty four years. He has served on various state and federal chiropractic associations, boards, committees, and councils. Ross has a Master's degree in chiropractic science paediatrics.

### **Elisabeth GONDWE**

Ethnographer/Researcher at the North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum  
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#### ***How does a community museum best capture and reflect the diversity of voices in the community?***

The North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum (NSIHM) is a small not for profit community run organisation. We are situated in the community that we attempt to reflect and engage.

The NSIHM has an active program of contemporary collecting. Capturing oral history is increasingly a method that the NSIHM uses. This paper will explore some of the recent oral history projects in light of the local community context. Museum staff and volunteers have identities and connections and are situated within the community. Equitable representation and inclusion of all demographics and voices in the community are ongoing issues. How do we effectively include a board cross section from our community in the governance of the Museum and in the stories we record?

This paper will outline and reflect on some recent oral histories and contemporary collecting projects that have been recorded with different groups in the Stradbroke Island community. It will attempt to critically evaluate the museums community engagement practice and ethics. In particular, it will examine the question, "How does a community museum best capture and reflect the diversity of voices in the community?"

**Elisabeth Gondwe** is currently employed as an Ethnographer/Researcher at the North Stradbroke Island Historical Museum. She has a M.A. in Cultural Heritage Studies in Anthropology and Archaeology. Elisabeth has lived at Dunwich Minjerribah/North Stradbroke Island for the past 15 years.

## **Lucy HAIR**

Research Coordinator, Centre for WA History, University of Western Australia

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### ***Full Circle Project***

In September 2014, some 60 British migrants were interviewed over a 3-day period as part of a collaboration between the University of Western Australia and the University of Hertfordshire.

Participants were interviewed by undergraduate students at UWA about their experiences of migrating to Australia and maintaining contact with family and friends back home. As part of this international initiative, the University of Hertfordshire will be interviewing the family members of those interviewed in Perth. Hence, this project has the capacity to capture the views of migrants as well as those 'left behind' in the UK. By recording different perspectives, this project will offer significant insights into experiences of migration.

In this paper, I will discuss the successes as well as the issues arising from such a large project. From finding participants to scheduling concurrent interview sessions, this large-scale oral history project presented many challenges.

**Lucy Hair** is the Research Coordinator, Centre for Western Australian History UWA. She has considerable experience in managing public history projects. In addition to managing commissioned history projects at the Centre, she has also worked as a consultant professional historian and spent several years working for the State Government advising on heritage issues.

## **Anthea HARRIS**

Local Studies Librarian, City of Nedlands

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### ***Oral histories and communities***

Oral history has long been part of the research for social sciences and anthropology and only recently made a respectable contribution to modern history. I've been exposed to it as a librarian, identifying people who might have something to say that is relevant to my collection policy. This has led to a focus on the individual and I am beginning to think that I should hark back to the roots of oral interviews and think about a whole community and how the individuals interact, not just one person's chronological history.

This paper will explore how this could be done, and the challenges faced along the way. Examples will be given of the Nedlands Primary School Centenary and the Alliance Française, community oral history projects within the City of Nedlands, as well as individuals' interviews. At the recent Public Libraries WA conference, the CEO of Dome Coffee described how his company aimed to provide community meeting places rather than serving the best coffee. Should oral histories seek to describe these communities and interviewers' questions be rephrased accordingly? Let family historians ask their relations about individuals. The general public and historians are probably more interested in communities.

**Anthea Harris** relishes her role as Local Studies Librarian at the City of Nedlands. Geochemistry Honours from Lancaster University in England led to computer programming for oil exploration in Australia. A Graduate Diploma in Library Studies from WAIT unlocked her skills of cataloguing and research, ready to write (about) history.



## **Dr Nikki HENNINGHAM**

Escholarship Research Centre, University of Melbourne

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### ***'You've just saved me thousands in therapy': the life narratives of press photographers 'just talking it through'***

In 2013, a team of scholars from the University of Melbourne and Monash University were funded by the Australian Research Council to produce the first national history of Australian Press Photography. Supported by the Oral History and Folklore Collection at the National Library of Australia, a key outcome of the project will be to build a collection of stories of 'snappers' who have worked in print media organisations from all around Australia.

This has been one of the most challenging, but methodologically interesting, cohorts I have had the pleasure to work with. On the face of it, talking to a bunch of (mainly) white, middle aged men might not seem all that interesting. But there are some generalisations to be drawn and questions raised that challenge this assumption. How do we help people who prefer their pictures to do the talking, find the words to tell their life stories? How do we make their life's work come alive through sound? And how do we respond to comments like, 'thanks for saving me thousands in therapy by allowing me to just talk it through'?

**Dr Nikki Henningham** is a historian interested in Australian women's oral history and writing the lives of the living for online publication. She has undertaken many oral history projects for the National Library of Australia's Oral History and Folklore Branch and is currently involved with interview programs that cover the lives of Australian Press Photographers, Australian Women Lawyers and Australian Paralympic Athletes. Based at the Escholarship Research Centre at the University of Melbourne, she has been building the Australian Women's Archives Project as the Executive Officer since 2003, and more recently completed work on the first online encyclopedia of Australian Women and Leadership. Dr Nikki Henningham received the National Archives of Australia's Ian McLean award in 2005 for her work in locating records relating the experience of migrant women in Australia.

## **Sally HONE**

Curator, Research and Discovery Branch, State Library of New South Wales

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### ***Collecting Diversity – New Oral histories at the State Library of New South Wales***

In late 2013 the State Library of New South Wales embarked on two new oral history projects, aimed at capturing the experiences of Sydney's and New South Wales' increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Over 40 people — particularly people of Islamic faith and members of the refugee community — have now generously shared their personal stories and rich insights for the Library's oral history collection. By focussing on these communities, the Library has sought to build on strengths in the collection and to fill gaps; previous immigrant oral history collections focussed on post- World War II immigration, but contemporary, shifting immigrant profiles were under represented. Furthermore, Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in NSW, and a collecting focus for the Library.

This presentation will explore themes and issues that surfaced in the process of creating these recordings. Identifying potential interviewees, establishing trust, gaining agreement to interview, arranging times and places, and negotiating permissions, presented challenges at time. The interviewers - two professional oral

historians - worked carefully and sensitively to ensure their interviewees gave full and open accounts of their experiences – navigating a maze of questions covering subjects such as asylum, resettlement, faith, discrimination, identity, education, and personal aspirations. Given political sensitivities, and contemporary media representations of Muslims and refugees, the importance of including these voices in the Library's collections is invaluable.

**Sally Hone** is a Curator at the State Library of New South Wales, specialising in oral history, and playing a key role in the Library's oral history digitisation project. She has held curatorial positions at the Australian National Maritime Museum and the South Australian Maritime Museum; previous public service and policy work included stints in arts administration and the Australian diplomatic service.

### **Dr Susanna IULIANO**

Acting Battye Historian, State Library of Western Australia

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#### ***Treasuring our stories: using the oral history collections of the State Library of Western Australia***

Since it began collecting oral histories in 1961, the State Library of Western Australia has amassed over 16,000 hours of recorded interviews with West Australians from all walks of life. The collection of these oral histories was driven in part by recognition of the need to record the stories of people who, because of their class, gender or ethnic origins, may not have otherwise left written record of their lives. The democratising impetus in capturing 'history from below' was also meant to encourage wider participation in the understanding and production of history. This paper looks at some of the recent ways in which the State Library of Western Australia has tried to make its oral histories more broadly accessible through exhibitions and programs. It also explores the challenges ahead in promoting the innovative and creative use of oral history to engage West Australians in making and understanding public history.

**Dr Susanna Iuliano** has worked in the field of migration studies and has used oral history to capture the stories of post-war Italian migrants. She is the Acting Battye Historian at the State Library of Western Australia and is responsible for programming and curation of content from the State Library's rich oral history collection.

### **Dr Mary Anne JEBB**

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#### ***Cite, sight and sound: keeping track of the storytellers***

This paper provides an overview of the changing and diverse nature of citation for material taken from recorded oral histories since the 1980s from quotations in text to sound bites in a digital world. It focuses on issues of authorship, ownership and permission in filmed oral histories and looks at citation as a means to keep track of the storytellers as their words move through the circle of recording, research, storing and production.

**Dr Mary Anne Jebb** is a Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. She is Investigator on the ARC project 'Hearing Histories of the Pilbara', and on the ARC Linkage project 'Serving Our Country: a history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence of Australia. Her books include *Emerarra: A Man of Merarra* (1996), *Blood Sweat and Welfare* (2002), *Mowanjum* (2008) and *Long Time: Deep History* (co-editor 2015). Sound productions and exhibitions include 'Noongar Voices' with Bill Bunbury (2012), 'Burlganyja Wanggaya Old People Talking' (2012) and 'Singing The Train' (2014).

**Farah KABBANI and Dr Pauline JOSEPH, MRIM**

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***Towards sustainable community-based oral history projects: A case study***

Community-based organisations located in our suburbs have a need for oral history recordings to capture and retain their culture, history and memories. However, most of these organisations are not resourced, skilled and/or funded to undertake such projects. On the other hand, local history librarians are tasked with capturing the history of their communities, which includes oral history recordings. This partnership has win-win outcomes for both community-based organisations and the libraries. The communities have the people, experiences, events and stories but lack the expertise and technical infrastructure to produce quality oral history recordings, which librarians have and can provide.

The Royal Perth Golf Club wanted to record the oral history of some of its long serving members but did not have the expertise or funding to embark on this project. One of the Club's archive committee members approached the City of South Perth's Local History Librarian for assistance on this project. The Librarian mentioned she is seeking opportunities for working with community groups in South Perth for oral history projects, thus was supportive of this request. This was the start of our partnership.

We present a case study of a sustainable community-based oral history project we commenced in May 2015. We outline the challenges, processes and lessons learnt from our partnership.

**Taina Tangaere MCGREGOR**

Oral History Advisor, Maori, Alexander Turnbull Library, New Zealand

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***Maori retaining their Histories and Cultural Practices***

Teaching the Ethical and Technical practice of recording oral histories from a Maori research perspective to community groups throughout the country is a rewarding vocation particularly when the outcomes of projects are far-reaching and on-going for the communities involved.

Land claims and language retention spurred tribal groups into research and training for recording their stories. A consequence has seen a flourish of community projects. I will present an overview on the following projects I've been involved with or trained and supported during the process. Included will be a selection of photographs and video clips.

1. Ngati Raukawa Trust – language restoration and maintenance;
2. Restoration & Conservation of habitat – EELS;
3. Maori Mental Health - Tuia Te Ao Maramatanga;
4. C Company 28 Maori Battalion –WWII.

Prior to employment as Oral Historian in the Oral History Centre of the Alexander Turnbull Library in 2001, **Taina** had worked at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research in the Maori Unit as a researcher in both Mainstream and Kura Kaupapa Maori – Total Immersion schools. Prior to that, she had taught Language and Culture in every school her five children attended till they went away to St Stephen's Te Aute Colleges for boys and Turakina Maori Girls Boarding Schools.

## **Dr Wendy MADSEN**

Central Queensland University

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### ***Using the past to strengthen the present: intersections between oral history and community resilience***

Community resilience is an emerging research and political interest, particularly in the wake of increasing natural disaster events over the past decade. However, it is a concept that has yet to gain the full attention of community oral history practitioners and historians. This presentation outlines a community oral history project focused on exploring community resilience within a small regional Queensland town after it was impacted by flood events in 2011. It draws out a strong social narrative of townsfolk being resilient in the face of adversity from the origins of the town in the 1920s. Synergies are explored between oral history and community resilience including the contribution of collective memory to supporting social narratives that emphasise resilience aspects such as embracing diversity and new ideas; social networks; and collaborative leadership and civic engagement. I conclude community oral history projects can play a role in supporting community resilience.

**Dr Wendy Madsen** has been researching the history of health for almost 20 years. Initially focused on the history of nursing, she has more recently shifted her interest to historical and contemporary community-based health promotion, including community resilience.

## **Bobbie OLIVER**

Associate Professor of History, Department of Social Sciences and International Studies, School of Media, Culture & Creative Arts, Curtin University

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### ***Wundowie, a unique town in the Valley***

The town of Wundowie, in the Avon Valley, has a rich history, involving its foundation and its adaptation to changing circumstances. Wundowie's significant aesthetic, historic, social and scientific value makes it a suitable site in which to study facets of Australian history, culture and society in the 20th century. Established to develop a local iron and steel industry during World War II, Wundowie was designed on Garden City principles, and it became home to European immigrant communities as well as locals and other Australians. The views and experiences of past and present Wundowie residents are central to this project.

This paper outlines an oral history project by Curtin University academics in partnership with the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Perth Branch, to collect people's memories of working or living in Wundowie. The project has two main aims: to collect and preserve a history of Wundowie and its industries, and to study its evolution from a wholly government-owned, steel town. Wundowie has survived the foundry being privatised and industries closing and remains a viable community. Our study aims to understand how Wundowie has avoided becoming a ghost town like many other rural mining and industries centres, and thus inform our knowledge of sustainability and resilience in rural Australia.

**Associate Professor Bobbie Oliver** teaches and researches History at Curtin University. Recent publications include *Lest We Forget? Marginalised Aspects of Australia at war and peace*, (co-edited with Sue Summers) Black Swan Press, Perth, 2014 and "The Peacemaker's Role in the Anti-Vietnam War

Movement", in Philip Deery and Julie Kimber (eds.), *Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Leftbank Press, 2015), 246-67.

## **Anisa PURI and Alistair THOMSON**

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### ***Making an Aural History eBook***

Drawing upon an archive of 300 life history interviews comprising 1221 hours recorded with Australians born between the 1920s and 1989, the Australian Generations project is experimenting with different media to highlight the aural qualities of our recordings. This presentation will showcase and discuss the aural book we are currently editing, *Australian Lives: An Aural History*. This will be an anthology in two parts. The first part will comprise 12 edited life histories, two from each birth decade. The second part will comprise shorter extracts from all project interviews arranged by thematic topics, and intended to highlight patterns and diversity in Australian lives across the past century. The book will be published simultaneously as a paperback and as an e-book. The e-book contains direct links to sections of the online interviews, which will enable readers to become listeners too. In our presentation we will explain how we are making the book, showcase the online aural links, and discuss technical, methodological and ethical issues posed by the e-book format.

**Anisa Puri** was the Project Officer of the Australian Generations Oral History Project from 2012 – March 2015. Since the project's conclusion, Anisa has been researching methods of archiving digital databases to maintain long-term functionality for the National Library of Australia. She is also the Events Coordinator of Oral History NSW.

**Alistair Thomson** is Professor of History at Monash University and Australian Generations project leader. His oral history books include: *Anzac Memories* (1994 and 2013), *The Oral History Reader* (1998, 2006 and 2015 with Rob Perks), *Ten Pound Poms* (2005, with Jim Hammerton), *Moving Stories* (2011) and *Oral History and Photography* (2011, with Alexander Freund).

## **Dr Elaine RABBITT**

Social historian

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### ***Oral History Accreditation: Gaining your certificate via 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL)***

The nationally accredited Australian oral history training course, 'Record and Document Community History' in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an innovation to support, oral history practitioners, including history teachers, to become qualified in the field.

If you have completed other oral history courses, workshops or interviews you can apply for 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL). RPL is a way of using your existing skills, knowledge and experience to gain your formal qualification. To be awarded RPL and your certificate one has to meet the performance criteria for the unit of competency AHCILM404A Record and Document Community History.

This presentation will promote the value of having a nationally recognised oral history qualification and explain the RPL application process based on prior learning and

experiences. Participants will be provided with a self-assessment questionnaire to ascertain their eligibility and given tips on how to make gaining RPL easy.

Students who gain RPL are issued with a Statement of Attainment that is recognised nationally under the Australia Training Framework (ATF).

<http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/AHCILM404A>

**Elaine Rabbitt** is a social historian with a PhD in Oral History, the training convenor for Oral History Australia and the president of the Broome Museum and Historical Society. Elaine has recorded many interviews with people from all walks of life and wrote the curriculum to gain national accreditation to teach AHCILM404A Record and Document Community History.

### **Bob REECE**

Emeritus Professor in History, Murdoch University

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#### ***Oral testimony in historical research***

In this paper, veteran Western Australian historian Bob Reece explores his experiences in a number of different research areas where oral testimony proved an unexpected and valuable bonus in his work. All this began in the mid- 1960s with his M.A. thesis research on the June 1838 'Myall Creek' massacre of Aborigines near Bingara in northern New South Wales. The local Bingara film projectionist took him to the stockyards site of the massacre, an event about which many of the local pastoralist fraternity were still in denial, and passed on the oral history of the massacre that he had collected from older residents. For his doctoral thesis on the end of White Rajah (Brooke family) rule in Sarawak in 1946, Professor Reece interviewed surviving pre-war Brooke government officers in the United Kingdom as well as members of the Brooke family itself. This was followed by work on the indigenous peoples' perception of Japanese rule in Sarawak, which took him to Japan and Borneo for more interviews. Two subsequent commissioned biographies, one of a Sarawak Chinese timber millionaire and the other of a senior Malay community leader, also involved extensive interviews. On another tack, his interest in Irish convict biography in the late 1980s took him into the heartland of County Tipperary and its legendary stories of the Connery brothers and other famous rapparees. In conclusion, he reflects on the paradox of historians creating their own sources.

**Bob Reece** is a graduate of the Australian National University where he also completed his Ph.D. in 1977. He taught History at Murdoch University from 1991 until 2010, apart from three years as Keith Cameron Professor of Australian History at University College, Dublin. Commencing with his book, *Aborigines and Colonists*, in 1974, he has published widely on Aboriginal History, Sarawak History and the Irish in Australia. His most recent book is *The Invincibles: New Norcia's Aboriginal Cricketers 1879-1906*.

### **Anmarie REID**

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#### ***“Way-finding Through Villages Unmade: Using Digital Technologies in Oral History Interviews with Migrants from England’s North East.”***

Instead of mounds of coal lined up along the Durham coast, there are now wind farms dotting the post-industrial landscape. Just as the coal mines destroyed the previously agricultural way of life 150 years ago, the mines themselves have now been removed. The black coal dust is gone from the beaches, the Argus butterfly is returning to the

denes, wild flowers are growing on the cliff tops where previously aerial conveyor belts had dumped colliery waste onto the beaches at Easington, Horden and Blackhall. The North East that my research participants left behind in the years following World War Two no longer exists, except in their memories and in their photographs. These changes are happening 'there' in north-eastern England and I am interviewing people 'here' in Australia: How can I convey a sense of all that has changed and all that remains to elderly people in the oral history interviews I conducted with them? How can we find our way through villages that have been 'unmade'? In this paper I explore how digital technologies enabled me to bring images of 'home' to the people whom I interviewed and how together we found our way to the places they left behind.

**Annmarie Reid** is currently completing her PhD in Australian Studies at the University of South Australia. Annmarie has taught high-school, undergraduate and post-graduate students in Education and Library Studies, but believes her return to her first love, History, is the best idea she ever had.

## **Stuart REID**

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### ***Absence makes the heart grow...?***

After a long break from oral history (though always an OHAA member) Stuart Reid is returning to the field with a major project for 2015-16.

The proposed paper is a reflection on how 15 years in a variety of Federal and State government policy roles has changed his perspectives on interviewing, particularly the interviewing of senior political and government officials.

Stuart will provide insight into ways of capturing memory in the political context by drawing on his experience of actual political and government processes. He will argue that an understanding of the interplay between the political and bureaucratic branches of government, and of the systems which inhibit and enable government action, can lead to more enlightening interviews.

The paper will draw on actual interviews conducted by Stuart for the WA Parliament's Oral History Project and for the National Library of Australia in the 1990s and asks the question 'If I knew then what I know now, how would the interview have been different?'

After working in news and current affairs in community radio, **Stuart Reid's** first oral history project was of workers at the South Fremantle Power Station as it was about to close. He worked on the National Library's project on what it was like to be young and unemployed in the 80s. Stuart also worked for many years as a freelance interviewer for the Battye Library, the National Library, universities, community organisations and the trade union movement. He wrote and presented the OHAA oral history training DVD 'Capturing the Past'. He coordinated the Oral History Unit at the Battye for a couple of years at the end of the 90s and was also National President of the OHAA during the same period. He then worked as policy advisor and speech writer in government. Since 2004, he has been working in consultancy roles assisting community agencies with establishment and refining of youth mentoring programs. In April 2015 he is starting work on a major oral history project looking into the anti-Vietnam War movements in WA.

## **Margaret RIDLEY**

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### ***Verbatim Theatre***

Verbatim theatre covers a spectrum of dramatic practice. Its relationship to oral history is that interviews are used in the production of dramatic work. Sometimes, the interviewees' words will be incorporated as recorded. They may be used less directly, being only one element inspiring the creative process.

Verbatim theatre covers a spectrum of dramatic practice. Its relationship to oral history is that interviews are used in the production of dramatic work. Sometimes, the interviewees' words will be incorporated as recorded. They may be used less directly, being only one element inspiring the creative process.

It has been suggested that verbatim offers a better vehicle for addressing serious subjects. Indeed, past works in Australia have addressed racism, class, institutional abuse, drug use, violence and natural disaster. Interviewing people who have had such experiences raises questions about their vulnerability.

David Burton is a Brisbane playwright who continues to employ verbatim in his dramatic practice. In *April's Fool*, David explored love, loss and choice. The work relied in part upon interviews with a community affected by the death of a teenager caused by illicit drug use. Currently, he is working on a play about the former Catholic community of St Mary's at South Brisbane. The community followed Peter Kennedy when his priestly licence was removed due to his refusal to follow the Archdiocese's doctrinal edicts.

This paper will be an account of the project focusing upon the experience of interviewees where a creative piece is fashioned from testimony.

**Margaret** has worked at QUT on and off for over twenty years. She started as a law lecturer teaching in the area of legal research. Her current role is in equity services. Her interest in oral history was sparked by her masters in cultural heritage. She has interviewed prominent lawyers including Leneen Forde.

## **Carol ROBERTS**

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### ***Abstract: 'Sharing history, sharing art: the artist and the historian in collaboration***

I completed an extensive research project for my Master of History in 2013 through the University of New England in Armidale (New South Wales, Australia) and the focus was on a collaborative art/history/tourism venture between pastel artist Greg Hansell, the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales (now Sydney Living Museums) and Hawkesbury Valley Heritage Tours (of which I am the owner and operator). Based on information from recorded oral histories and conversations with the artist, the aim was to explore the ways in which the paintings of a particular artist provided an entry point both for engagement with historic sites and for an understanding of sense of place in relation to the past and present. The purpose was also to evaluate how the exhibitions and the tours (which were outcomes of the project) provided opportunities to link art and history through the use of oral history, by engaging different audiences with the history of a particular locality.



My thesis explains specific methods and techniques used by the artist that have significant bearing on the ways in which he records and presents historic sites in his artwork, discusses the artist as historian and explores the nature of Hansell's paintings to establish that his artworks are an accurate record of heritage sites as they appear at the present time and as such are a form of public history.

Analysis and discussion about audience engagement and the specific heritage sites depicted in the paintings included discussion about what can or should be done to preserve heritage sites in the Hawkesbury area. The investigative process also revealed the significance of place in relation to people who live in or near the historic environment of towns, namely sense of place, connectivity and self-identity. These aspects are discussed extensively in relation to Greg Hansell's sense of place and attachment to the Hawkesbury area, because it is considered that they are integral to Hansell's relationship with the heritage sites represented in his paintings.

This study has shown that Greg Hansell's methods of recording history in his paintings firmly establish him as a public historian, delivering art as an important primary source for finding out about the past in the present. The paintings also prompt the viewer to consider the tenuous grip we have on tangible heritage and to also consider what can be done in the current situation to help preserve that heritage.

**Carol Roberts**, Member Professional Historians Association (NSW). Master of History (UNE Armidale, NSW), Bachelor of Arts (Australian History and History), Advanced Diploma Local, Family and Applied History, Associate Diploma in Theory of Music, Literature and Criticism from Trinity College of Music (London) and a Diploma in Community Cultural Development (CCD). Carol Roberts' research over recent years has focused on the links between art and history and the subject of her oral history interviews connected with her Master's thesis was Greg Hansell, pastel artist, who works in a studio at the rear of his property overlooking the Hawkesbury River in Windsor, New South Wales, Australia. Carol intends continuing her research through a PhD candidature. She has worked in government departments in the areas of senior management and cultural services and has contributed to community and arts organisations in her local area for many years. As well as being a qualified music teacher, Carol is an experienced historian who currently is the owner/operator of two businesses: Hawkesbury Valley Heritage Tours ([www.hawkesburytours.com.au](http://www.hawkesburytours.com.au)) and Advancing History (offering oral history, research, local and social history and cultural heritage services).

### **Dr Shirleene ROBINSON**

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#### ***Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories and Generational Narratives of Marriage***

Over the past three years, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories oral history project has recorded 60 oral history interviews with five generations of lesbians and gay men across Australia. The interviews have been recorded at a time when lesbian and gay Australians appear to be on the cusp of full legal equality. The introduction of same-sex marriage, already supported by a majority of Australians in a range of polls, will be the final legal discrimination to be remedied. This paper uses oral history interviews to investigate the narratives five different generational cohorts of gay men and lesbian develop to locate themselves in this ongoing debate about same-sex marriage. It reflects on the meanings that participants place on marriage and the way they are shaped by collective memory and broader public frameworks and cultural circuits. Do views on same-sex marriage cut across different generations or can we discern a generational sensibility on the topic? What is the role of gender in shaping views on

marriage? What has it been like to have personal and intimate partnerships be at the forefront of political and public debate?

**Dr Shirleene Robinson** is Vice Chancellor's Innovation Fellow in the Discipline of Modern History at Macquarie University. She is the author of *Something like Slavery? Queensland's Aboriginal Child Workers, 1842-1945* (2008) and editor of *Homophobia: An Australian History* (2008), along with a range of other work.

### **Dr Charles RYAN and Dr Marie-Louise McDERMOTT**

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#### ***Online oral history as plant-based cultural heritage***

Online oral history is an important element of the FloraCultures project, the first website ever created to focus on plant-based cultural heritage. By showcasing the many ways people relate to some 50 species of Australian plants native to the area around Perth's Kings Park, FloraCultures complements botanical sites such as Western Australia's FloraBase. FloraCultures taps into indigenous knowledge and practices, and highlights the way artists, writers, plant enthusiasts and insect lovers relate to those plants and plant-related artifacts (including oral history artifacts, coins, stamps, built environment and place names as well as artworks and literary works).

The website's audio and video recordings and transcripts are all linked to digitised newspaper articles, published poems, stories, books, online biographical material and artworks in museums, galleries and library collections. The strength and significance of this site for oral history thus arguably lies less in its content, than in its linked networks. FloraCultures is also considering podcasting to more widely share the voices of the people linked to the plants and plant-related artifacts on its site.

**Dr John Charles Ryan** of Edith Cowan University leads the (<http://www.floracultures.org.au/>).  
**Dr Marie-Louise McDermott** is a research consultant on the FloraCultures project.

### **Dr Elfie SHIOSAKI**

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#### ***Restoring broken connections: The legacy of early Noongar political activism in oral history***

The presentation discusses research on the significance of early Noongar political activism (1920-1930s). In particular, the research examines the work of Noongar civil rights activists William and Edward Harris, who established the first Aboriginal political organisation in Western Australia, the Native Union, in 1926 to campaign for equal civil and political rights for Aboriginal people. The movement gained national prominence when William Harris led the first deputation of Aborigines to meet with the Western Australian Premier Philip Collier in 1928 to demand the repeal of the 1905 Aborigines Act.

The research explores how Noongar civil rights activists are remembered in oral history – the legends passed down from one generation to the next, which provide counter-narratives to knowledge and understanding about Indigenous history recorded in the archives. These narratives of the past shape our present and future, by broadening our

understanding of contemporary Indigenous political identity and Indigenous models of political activism and by inspiring future generations of Noongar leaders in Western Australia who continue to campaign for their rights as the traditional owners of the southwest of Australia and justice.

**Dr Elfie Shiosaki** is an Indigenous Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Human Rights Education (CHRE) at Curtin University. Her research examines the significance of early Noongar political activism (1920-1930s). Dr Shiosaki completed a PhD (Political Science and International Relations) on nation-building in post-conflict societies in 2015.

### **Lynette SHUM**

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#### ***Teaching them to fish: Building a sound community in New Zealand***

In this paper I will discuss my role in helping community groups and individuals to record and archive oral history, and to find their own voices in doing so.

The Alexander Turnbull Library is part of the National Library of New Zealand and houses the nation's published and unpublished documentary heritage. The Library's two Oral History Advisers respond to requests and work with the community or individuals by providing training, advice and support to enable them to record their own stories. We also hire equipment and promote standards, and offer the community a place to archive and make available their precious recordings and other items so they can be accessible for future generations.

This presentation, which will include images and sound excerpts, will describe the ongoing process and relationships, and to illustrate this I will discuss our role in the Pakaitore Oral History Project. In 1995 the nation was gripped as a site in the provincial centre of Whanganui known to locals as [Moutoa Gardens](#) was occupied for 79 days in a protest by the local Maori over land claims. The occupation drew both support and opposition as it continued.

Twenty years later, a group including both Maori and non-Maori has been working on an inclusive project, looking both back to how the event changed the individuals and groups concerned, and forward to how they relate to each other.

I will refer to the historical context, the training and support we provide, and report how participants speak of the hope that acquiring these skills and working on this together gives them, and say that this work has the ability to heal and transform the community and the participants, across groups and cultures.

### **Franco SMARGIASI**

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#### ***Vastesi Migration to Australia***

This substantial community project was completed in 2013. It involved interviewing over 60 people (in some cases multiple interviews). Some people were also interviewed in the hometown of Vasto in Central Italy.

The interviews were recoded using both a voice recorder & video camera. A copy of the video version was given to the interviewees, and also lodged in the State Library.

The project was supported by Lotterywest. It was shown a couple of times on West TV and received favourable comments.

It was also presented at the Royal Western Australian Historical Society in 2013. Tradition was broken as the video was shown, rather than a paper being delivered. A paper has since also been written.

The video is now also uploaded on Youtube, and currently being placed in a new website on "Vastesi Migration" to make available stories and other documents gathered here in Australia worldwide, and encourage other Vastesi to upload stories from other parts of the world.

**Franco's** teaching career began in 1967 and spanned a period of 19 years in regional centres by choice, teaching in the humanities. He began making recordings in the 1960s of family, friends & others. Since 2008, he has been making documentaries of individuals (latest one on Tommaso D'Orsogna) and community groups, such as the migration of Vastesi to Australia.

### **David SWEET**

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#### ***Vida – a pastor's wife***

When recording oral histories, family photographs have not been a well-utilised resource. Many people have considerable collections of snap-shots squirreled away in cupboards and overflowing in photo-albums and shoeboxes. Each of these photographs is an inducement – a memory-maker. They prompt a rich and detailed oral history as a legacy for future generations however, they need to be interrogated and the stories recorded for their true worth to be realised. My research methodology commences with the traditional approach to oral history and then employs what I call 'photographic autoethnography'. This is where the research participant uses family photographs to tell their story. 'Vida – a pastor's wife' is such an example. Vida Heinrich was raised, went to school and married in Freeling (SA). She is the second eldest of five children to fourth generation (immigrant) German farmers. At twenty-one, in 1951, she married recently ordained Lutheran Pastor, Dudley Liebelt and moved to outback Queensland. The role of a pastor's wife in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not easy. Her family often survived on the generosity of parishioners who provided them with gifts of food. From Gin Gin, Queensland to country South Australia, Vida juggled the demanding and dual roles of mother and pastor's wife. This is her story recounted through the family photographs.

**David Sweet** lectures in communications studies at UniSA and has written for a range of business, educational and academic publications. His PhD (UniSA) researching the photographic legacy of Baby Boomers is under examination. David actively encourages others to record their oral stories using family photographs. He holds a Masters in photo-media (ECU WA). David is a Fellow of the Public Relations Institute of Australia and has been awarded the Australian National and the Police Overseas Service Medals.

### **Dr Robyn TAYLOR**

Professional historian

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#### ***Recording the history of disasters - and the right time to interview survivors***

On 29 December 2009, the rural town of Toodyay in the Wheatbelt region of WA experienced a catastrophic bushfire. At the time it was considered the worst bushfire in the state's history in terms of property damage.

In 2010 the Toodyay Bushfire Projects Group was formed with the intention of documenting the bushfire and the process of recovery. I was a member and being an

historian by profession, I was commissioned to undertake the project. We were assisted with a Lotterywest grant.

The project included oral history interviews. I was acutely aware of the dangers of refreshing bad memories and trauma, and not being qualified to deal with painful situations if they arose.

Fortunately an excellent series of video interviews with survivors had been undertaken. Apart from talking to two couples I personally knew, my interviewees were volunteers involved with fire fighting and the massive recovery process that followed.

When is the right time to interview survivors? Certainly it was easier interviewing one couple in the comfort of their rebuilt home and admiring the regrowth of their garden and surrounding bushland. They had left their home and precious belongings with only the clothes they were wearing.

**Dr Robyn Taylor** is a professional historian who works in the fields of history, fine arts, and heritage. From NSW, she moved to Perth in 1978. After a career teaching in tertiary institutions she set up her own consultancy. She lives with her husband in the historic town of Toodyay.

### **Malcolm TRAILL**

Public Programs Officer, WA Museum

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#### ***The National Anzac Centre: oral history interpretation for the modern era***

The National Anzac Centre was opened in Albany, Western Australia in November 2014 to coincide with the departure of Australian and New Zealand troops who would serve at Gallipoli and the Western Front.

The \$10.6m project, jointly funded by Federal and State governments, and run by the City of Albany and the Western Australian Museum, highlights 32 service personnel from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Germany and Turkey.

Visitors can follow their personal journeys via a digital card, which then opens primary documents, images and audio stories for the visitor to enjoy and consider. The oral history components are taken from diaries, memoirs, and official reports, and are brought to life by voice-over artists.

The stories are accessed via European-designed Audiopens, devised for individual use, with or without headphones. These state-of-the-art devices are durable, discrete and extremely effective in providing access to the often-heartbreaking stories that attach to each of the servicemen and nurse.

This paper looks into the design of the exhibition, and the important role that digital multimedia plays in the great success that the National Anzac Centre has enjoyed in its first year of operation.

**Malcolm Traill** has been Public Programs Officer at the WA Museum - Albany since 2009. He is a member of the Professional Historians Association (WA), convenor of the Great Southern Chapter of Museums Australia (WA), and is a former Battye Librarian at the State Library of WA.

**Cheryl WARE**

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***Utilizing oral history to retrieve gay men's memories of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, 1982-1996***

This paper sets out a new approach to studying Australia's histories of HIV and AIDS by using oral history to investigate how gay men remember, and construct narratives about living with HIV in the 1980s and 1990s. While scholars have conducted significant and valuable research into Australia's political responses to the epidemic, historians are yet to consider individuals' personal accounts about the epidemic from an oral history perspective. Celebratory histories of effective medication marginalise men's memories of living with HIV as a terminal illness. Oral history, as deployed in this study, provided interviewees with an avenue to remember, and reflect on highly emotional past events. This paper engages with men's memories of being diagnosed with a terminal illness, and facing multiple losses. In doing so, it considers the impact the narrator's present persona has on the way they remember their pasts, and how they reflect on the significance of past events. Many interviewees also attested to feeling as though their histories have been forgotten. This paper therefore demonstrates how the men's memories were shaped by the distance of time between the events, and the interviews.

**Cheryl Ware** is particularly interested in oral history and the history of medicine. She is currently investigating the changing social experiences of HIV-positive homosexual men between 1982 and 1996.