



INTIMATE STORIES, CHALLENGING HISTORIES

2019 Biennial Conference of Oral History Australia

Presented in partnership with the State Library of Queensland, 10-13 October 2019



ABSTRACTS

Friday 11 October 2019, 9.15-10.15

OPENING PLENARY

Gaa Bi Kidwaad Maa Nbsiing / The Stories of Nbsiing: Relational story listening and storytelling on Nbsiing Nishnaabeg territory (Katrina Srigley)

As feminist oral historians have well established, the act of sharing stories (challenging or celebratory) always involves degrees of intimacy, but what does this mean for a non-Indigenous historian listening to and learning from oral histories on Nbsiing Nishnaabeg territory? In answering this question, I will speak about the unlearning and learning journey that has given way to *Gaa Bi Kidwaad Maa Nbsiing*, a historical project developed in partnership with Nipissing First Nation, and reflect on the relational historical framework that has developed through our work. In interesting ways relational storytelling and story listening is rooted in Nishnaabeg ways of knowing and being, resonates with and challenges my training as a feminist oral historian, and has a great deal to teach us about how to collectively understand the past, challenge the present, and contribute to the future.

Friday 10:45-12:45

MAKING ABORIGINAL ORAL HISTORY

Working together in a shared history of Indigenous Sydney (Peter Read and Dennis Foley)

The themes of this recently produced monograph, *What the Colonists Never Knew: A History of Aboriginal Sydney*, are, in Dennis's words, "What the colonists never knew, and still don't, is that we practise our culture even though our numbers are fewer in each generation. Up till about 1900 men were still scarified (ie they carried ritual skin markings). In 1930-1940 the last law with scarifications was practised in Bexley and Wheeler Heights above Narrabeen. In the 1960s women regularly made their pilgrimage to the sea and to fresh water for ceremony, and boys like me were still being trained. In the 1980s, following two generations of illness, ceremony re-commenced, which gained strength in the late 1990s. Between 2000 and 2010 several people were introduced to their culture by the boys of the 1950s. The spirit in the land of the Gai-mariagal remains strong!" This work is based on interviews and site visits with more than 200 Sydney Indigenous people that Dennis and Peter have compiled over the last twenty years. In this talk we'll discuss how we worked together in this joint project.

Panel: Aboriginal Art: is it a white thing? Documenting cross-cultural influences in the production of contemporary Aboriginal art (Siobhan McHugh, Margo Neale and Ian McLean)

Art centres sprang up across remote Australia in the 1980s offering a way for Indigenous Australians to generate income while preserving and disseminating their culture. Meanwhile, 'blak' urban artists expressed themselves via subversive conceptual art. In both settings, Aboriginal artists interact closely with whitefellas, as managers, curators and critics, wheelers, dealers and volunteers. These cross-cultural collaborations were documented in a four-year interdisciplinary academic oral history project. The team visited three sites: Warlukurlangu Art Centre in the Central Desert Warlpiri community of Yuendumu, Buku Larrnggay Art Centre in the Yolngu community of Yirrkala on the tropical north coast, and the proppaNOW collective in Brisbane. Using extensive audio clips, this panel examines how the project explores contemporary Aboriginal art as a site of cultural exchange and conciliation. McHugh describes the complexities of interviewing across what Portelli calls the 'line of difference', Neale reflects on the nature of the crosscultural relationships and McLean analyses the

fresh art historical insights oral history provides. 70 hours of audio recordings were converted by McHugh into a crafted narrative podcast, Heart of Artness (artness.net.au), a distillation that has engaged a mainstream audience. But such a production takes skill, sensitivity and enormous amounts of time, as McHugh reveals.

Friday 10:45-12:45

ISSUES IN THE INTERVIEW

Putting the 'Visual' back into 'Audio-Visual Testimony': Body Language in Holocaust Testimony (Annabelle Baldwin)

Oral historians have long discussed the nuances of the 'audio' element of oral history interviews: pauses, inflections, pitch, tone, laughter, crying. But we very rarely include the visual in our analyses. As the use of film and video has increased in recent decades, especially for large scale oral history and testimony projects, more and more scholars are making use of audio-visual interviews. While we may acknowledge smiles, shrugs and hand gestures, we rarely discuss what they mean in the context of our interpretation of oral history interviews. This paper looks at how body language can add to our understanding of memories on sexual violence in interviews with Holocaust survivors. I argue that, when dealing with traumatic and intimate memories, our interviewees often say just as much with their bodies as they do with their voices.

Tangled Memories: Reflections on the Challenge of Dementia in Oral History Interviews (Christeen Schoepf)

"I have prepared what I want you to know for your project" Bob tells me as we meet for our preliminary interview and he hands me his notes. Bob has dementia. Bob was a retired solicitor and well-educated man who had lived an interesting life with his wife Judy and two children. He was slightly confused why I was there to discuss his life and why there were photographs of him all over the table. The family had thought that it would be a good idea to have Bob interviewed so that his fading memories could be recorded for his new grandson who would never hear Grandpa tell his stories personally. But Bob's memory was already moving fluidly between the then and the now by the time of our first meeting and it became obvious that the project would be a challenge. Bob's six hours of interview recorded over a year, were transcribed and turned into a narrative directed at his Grandson and published in a beautiful book with photographs accompanied by the recordings. This paper presents just some of the journey we travelled together and considers the ethical and methodological issues facing the oral historian interviewing people with dementia.

Panel: Intersubjective Interview Dynamics: gender, sexuality and matrilineal relationships (Carla Pascoe Leahy, Sarah Rood, Francesco Ricatti and Shirleene Robinson)

This panel brings together oral historians from professional history, cultural institutions and universities to discuss themes of intersubjectivity, insider knowledge and ethics in the interview process. Drawing upon oral history projects relating to marriage equality, migration and mothering, this diverse group of oral historians discuss some of the relationships and dynamics that lurk beneath the surface of an interview. Together, they will explore the emotional, ethical and epistemological implications of the interviewer's subject position in relation to the narrator.

Friday 10:45-12:45

ARCHIVING AND USING ORAL HISTORY

Oral history's place in the multicultural imaginaire of Australia's national and state libraries (Jodie Boyd)

In Australia's National and State Libraries, the acquisition or commissioning of oral histories is accepted as a method by which they can fulfil their representative missions as socially inclusive and culturally diverse institutions. In this goal, oral history has carved a space for itself as a method by which the stories and voices of 'traditionally' underrepresented or marginalised people and communities may have a presence in collections otherwise accepted as, among other deficiencies, largely Anglo-centric. In this vein, oral history projects which focus on underdocumented, minoritised or marginalised individuals, groups or communities commonly stake their value on the claim that such projects can work to fill the 'gaps' in the national (or state) story, contribute to a more complete historical record, or recover lost, overlooked or hidden histories. This paper considers oral histories as 'collections' within institutions which, in addition to their function as repositories of state and national history, are overtly situated as instruments of state social and cultural policy; that is, as tools of liberal

governance. This paper asks two questions: does the production or acquisition of oral histories by the Library work to reinforce the concept of a core Australian culture and history with a few 'gaps' to be filled. Or, do such collections construct a kind of heterotopic space in the Library offering counter-narratives and transformative possibilities, within the existing terms of the institutions?

Revisiting the City of Gold Coast's oral history collection to raise the volume of voices silently lining the shelves (Kyla Stephan, Lesley Jenkins, Cheryl Aubrey and Rachel Ford)

The Gold Coast Libraries Local Studies Collection is the custodian of oral histories made over many decades relating to the local region. In 1995 the previously dispersed heritage collections, including oral histories, of the former Albert Shire and Gold Coast City Council were combined with the merger of the councils. In the years that followed, the library lessened the collection of oral histories until it ceased entirely. In parallel, the City of Gold Coast's Office of City Architect, commenced, and increased the collection of oral histories by contracting oral historians and conducting oral history workshops. It took time and a supportive environment, but eventually copies of these recordings were deposited in the library to enable community access. In 2019, library staff decided to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire oral history collection following the transfer of the final instalment of oral histories commissioned by the Office of City Architect to the Local Studies Collection. This paper will address the value of knowing the history of a collection. It will demonstrate how staff and oral historians created an up-to-date overview of content to inform future collecting priorities and find new ways to raise the volume of the voices silently lining shelves.

Panel: Oral History at State Library of NSW: co-creation, collaboration, and impact (Maria Savvidis, Anne Hocking and Bruce Carter)

This presentation considers the impact of the oral history and sound collection at the State Library of NSW from three different interactions with it. We will follow the stages of creating and interacting with these oral histories – from the commissioning process, the interviewer's reflections on the interview, and experiences of the reader accessing and interpreting the oral history. By considering the significance and effect of oral history throughout its life cycle we are also giving a voice to the interviewer and Library researcher. For four decades the State Library of NSW has actively collected oral history and audio material and continues to collect and commission oral histories. Today, well over 10,000 hours have been digitised and are accessible online or onsite - as demand for access, interpretation and use of oral history increases. The Library's vast collection is diverse in its content, reflecting the shifts in both collecting focus and social change in Australia across the last 40 years. This research begins to unpack the interactions, relationships and impact of oral histories with the people that create and use them.

Friday 13:45–15:15

MAKING ABORIGINAL ORAL HISTORY

When camp dogs run over your maps: 'Proper-way' research in an Aboriginal community in the north-east of Western Australia (Rhonda Povey)

Commentary and classification have marked research relationships with Aboriginal people since the initial invasion of this country. Colonial relationships persist within institutional centres such as research spaces, as power relationships within colonial contexts continue to influence how research is conducted and interpreted. These practices have silenced and excluded Aboriginal living experiences and perspectives contributing to a legacy of mistrust within Aboriginal communities. This presentation explores what it means to 'tell a different story'. The power of Indigenous oral histories in supporting the purpose of decolonising post-invasion history lies not in extractive discourses of colonial practices, but in ethical and transformative practices of centering Aboriginal living experiences and perceptions. Using a story about camp dogs running over maps, the presentation describes an Indigenist approach to historical research in a remote Aboriginal community. The importance of valorising ethical practices and cultural safety is highlighted by explaining how Indigenous research methods and decolonised research design were used in the study. Furthermore, the presentation demonstrates how reframed Indigenous intellectual property rights and archives are dismantling what has been remembered, by whom, and for what purpose, arguing that these collaborative and emancipatory processes support the decolonisation of history and the telling of different stories.

The Reserve: A forgotten Indigenous story revived by oral history (Elaine Rabbitt)

'The Reserve', once a vibrant Aboriginal community in Broome Township was in danger of becoming a forgotten story. Formerly a campsite, the 1960s Anne Street development comprised tin dwellings housing extended families. In the 1980s this reserve style living was replaced by modern homes, built by the Western Australian Housing Authority, Homeswest. A former resident of 'The Reserve' and graduate of WA's nationally accredited oral history program conceived the idea of recording stories about 'The Reserve'. These personal narratives have attracted the attention of Broome artists to form the basis of an upcoming stage show, hopefully mirroring the success of Australia's first Aboriginal musical and later film "Bran Nue Dae". While 'The Reserve' oral history project is not a new approach to recording lives it is imaginative application of the spoken word transformed into song and dance creating narratives that inform and entertain. This paper will explore how oral history continues to generate space for stories to be remembered, re told and to inspire artistic productions.

Stories from Aboriginal and Islander Elders about life on Benarrawa (Kerry Charlton)

Benarrawa has worked in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since the late 1980s on culture and art festivals, awareness raising and reconciliation activities with local schools, educators and the wider community. Funded by a Brisbane City Council grant this oral history project has gathered the stories of ten Indigenous Elders from different backgrounds. Some have traditional connections to the area. All have lived or worked on Benarrawa (Oxley Creek) a site of early contact between Aboriginal Ancestors and Europeans, namely Oxley. It expands on Benarrawa's booklet written in 1998 about early local Aboriginal history aimed at recording the Elders' stories about being Indigenous, off the missions and living in the suburbs from the late 1950s on. These will become another resource. Some were interviewed individually. One was done Goori style with five male elders aged in their sixties and recorded together in a yarning circle on the deck of one's home at Inala. Well known to each other and comfortable to share in a relaxed and culturally safe space, the Elders shared rich stories about their lives, childhood, learning and living culture, school days, social sports, games, family, friendships, working and events significant to them.

Friday 13:45–15:15

CREATING COMMUNITY ORAL HISTORIES

Is it oral history, ethnography, digital storytelling or something in-between? Does it matter? (Janis Hanley and Joan Kelly)

It was suggested that someone do some interviews, seeing it was a significant anniversary. An oral history project formed, a grant applied for and an answer awaited. But what sort of project was it? Talk started next committee meeting: how should the project proceed? What if the grant didn't come through? The founders aren't getting any younger. Can we train up members to record the histories? Shouldn't some younger members be interviewed too? Who should do the interviewing? Perhaps younger members could interview older members? Is it more a conversation than an interview? Do we need audio and video? What happens with the recordings? Do we really need transcripts? Will participants be identified? There was still much to work out. Is the project capturing the history of the club, the individuals, or this anniversary? Is this an oral history, or a digital storytelling? What is the end product – who is it for? How does that change what we do? What is the aim again? These types of discussions are common for these projects. This paper explores what different disciplines, oral history, ethnography, and digital storytelling, lend to planning and conducting a process of recording interviews in a community group.

'Larna Me' (teach/tell me) and 'Dem Tull' (them tell) on Norfolk Island (Maree Evans)

There is a long tradition of 'Dem Tull' (them tell) and 'Larna Me' (teach/tell me) on Norfolk Island, giving voice to rumours, histories, traditions and culture, many of which intimately connect to places and people. In preparation for a new exhibition focusing on the cattle industry of the Island, the Norfolk Island Museums conducted more than 20 oral history interviews with members of the community as the industry is an essential part of life on the Island but limited records existed. Many of the interviewees conducted their interviews in 'Norf'k', the official co-language of the Island and recognised as 'endangered' by UNESCO in 2007. Bilingual interviews raise a number of complex issues. This is especially true for Norf'k, which is intimately tied to the physical landscape, history and culture of those speaking it. These important memories can be accessed by the Island's community through the Norfolk Island Museum Trust Collection and the content was also promoted at the beginning of 2019 through audio/visual displays and didactic panels used in the exhibition.

Oral History with Diverse Subcultures of East Texas (Paul Sandul, Lisa Bentley and Linda Reynolds)

East Texas is a vast region of the American South that lies in the heart of the American Bible Belt. It is mostly rural, poor, conservative, Christian, and white. Both the historical record and dominant memory reflect this. Yet, over the past decade, oral histories with diverse subcultures have sought to counter the dominant memory and history of East Texas and recover the memories of those left on the margins of East Texas society. Sandul will present a paper “Atheists in the Heart of the Bible Belt” to spotlight his oral histories with regional nonbelievers who have worked to form a sense of community and self amid this region of overt religious fundamentalism. Bentley will present “Whiskey River Take Me Home: East Texas Moonshining” to showcase her oral histories of local moonshining culture. She focuses on moonshiners’ vision of themselves and their illegal activity as a unique subculture not to be compared to the popular-cultural-driven image idealized in mass culture. Reynolds will present “African Americans in White East Texas” to discuss the problems associated with documenting and providing public access to interviews with African American community members, such as trust, sensitive topics, slander, and handling emotionally delicate events.

Friday 13:45–15:15

REMEMBERING MIGRATION

Confronting family myths: ethical and methodological challenges (Anne Heimo)

Like hundreds of other young Finnish men in the late 1950s, my father (born 1930), left for Australia to find work and prosper. All my life I have listened to exciting stories that he experienced during his years in Australia and later on at sea. In 2005, my father gave me a two-volume diary he had kept from September 1957 to December 1960. It was only after reading the diary that I realized, that I was not a sailor’s daughter, as I had always imagined. Another thing that astonished me was that he has mentioned nearly none of the stories included in his oral repertoire in his diary. To this day, I have not been able to ask him about the differences between his two life stories, the one he continues to tell about and the one represented in his diary. In my paper, I will discuss methodological and ethical issues my fathers’ two different life stories arouse. Which of his two life stories better represents the experiences of a young working class (Finnish) man with little formal education migrating to Australia?

Migrant Generations? Youth Migration and Generational Identities in Modern Australia (Anisa Puri)

This presentation uses life story interviews from the Australian Generations Collection to explore how young migrants, who arrived in Australia between 1946 and 2004, relate to popular sociological generational identities. Youth scholars argue that youth is often the most formative life stage, and generational theorists explain that generations are formed through shared and disrupted experiences of youth. Given that youth migration can be a profound, destabilising event, this presentation considers whether interviewees adopt migrant, ethno-specific or racially-based generational labels. How did youth migration influence the generational identities interviewees relate to, and how do such identities matter in their lives? Do interviewees communicate diverse cultural understandings of what constitutes a generation? Do young migrants actively create new generational identities? And how might these generational ascriptions enhance our understandings of the relationship between identity and youth migration to Australia, more broadly?

Resettlement of Displaced Persons and Accommodation in Camp Environments: A Pathway to Freedom, or ‘Just in Limbo’? (Jessica Strojka)

Following the Second World War, refugees that were displaced as a result of conflict became a global concern. Many of these Displaced Persons were resettled under the auspices of the International Refugee Organisation. Various East European Displaced Persons settled in Australia under this scheme, including Ukrainian, Polish, Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian refugees. A significant number of these post-war migrants were initially settled in Queensland. Based on an assessment of Polish, Latvian and Ukrainian refugees who migrated to Queensland with children after the Second World War, the paper will argue that violence, incarceration and encampment characterised the experiences of these Displaced Persons. Using oral history interviews conducted with DPs who were resettled in Queensland, the paper will show that displacement and trauma provided a deep, ongoing influence that impacted Displaced Persons’ perceptions of Queensland migrant hostels and resettlement. The perception of resettlement experiences in Queensland led to a compounded trauma that became increasingly representative of wartime experiences. These influences held an ongoing resonance during resettlement, influencing attitudes, memories and perceptions not only upon arrival at Australian migrant centres, but also throughout the ongoing resettlement process.

Friday 15:30-17:00

CREATING AND REMEMBERING MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

Remembering Migrant Rights and Ethnic Protest in Pre-Multicultural Australia (Alexandra Dellios)

In the 1960s and 1970s, before the official introduction of a multicultural policy, 'migrant rights' and 'ethnic protest' were familiar terms in the political landscape. Some migrant community groups dominated this space of protest and activism, bolstered by post-war chain migration. At the forefront were the Italian-Federation-of-Migrant-Workers-and-their-Families (FILEF), the Democritus League, and the Greek Welfare Society. They lobbied government for better pathways to citizenship, better housing and services, and better workplace conditions for NESB migrants. Sometimes these protests culminated in street protests, organised (but not always union-supported) stand-offs with employers, and sustained attacks on government inaction and ineptitude. This history of mainly left-wing activism has been subsumed by histories around government-administered (and ethnic-lobby backed) multiculturalism from the 1980s. Nonetheless, in some communities, there is a rich collective memory of this era of migrant rights protest. I explore these community memories, beginning with a few community groups still in existence (like the Democritus League) and their oral testimonies. How might we unpack this era of 'migrant rights' and 'ethnic protest' through the memories of a few from within the community? What alternative histories of a pre-multicultural Australia can these oral histories provide, and does this challenge accepted narratives about Australian multiculturalism?

The Queensland Atlas of Religion: approaching the intimate histories of faith, community and identity (Geoff Ginn)

This session has the dual purpose of introducing the QAR project and further developing its approach to studying religion through oral history. During 2018 a team of researchers based at UQ hosted a series of regional forums (in Logan, Townsville, Toowoomba, Gladstone and Brisbane) to connect with a range of faith communities across Queensland. In partnership with SLQ, this resulted in a large ARC Linkage submission (December 2018) to develop an online Queensland Atlas of Religion during 2019-2022. Our approach aims to connect with diverse faith communities in Queensland to capture and interpret aspects of religious belief, community identity and civic life across Queensland's history and contemporary social landscape. Modelled on the Queensland Historical Atlas (qhatlas.com.au) the project seeks to develop a rich and accessible account of Queensland's community heritage of faith and spirituality, with an emphasis on place, life stories, social activity and identity. Relationships between religion (understood as organised spiritual practice) and aspects of immigration, ethnicity and citizenship will be explored through interviews, documentary research and case studies. The conceptual and methodological challenges facing the project will be outlined in this session, and an opportunity presented to workshop and refine some of its key elements.

A childhood in Fascist Italy - Troubled times in Australia: Uncovering conflicted memories through oral histories (Madeleine Regan)

When Mussolini visited Treviso on 21st September 1938 a proud ten-year-old boy from a small village 30 kilometres away stood in a guard of honour to farewell il Duce. It was the sixteenth year of Fascist rule and across Italy the effects of the dictatorship were manifest in most aspects of family life. Para-military movements hosted in schools created a path of allegiance to Fascism relying on discipline, duty and physical education, and provided adventure beyond the family. This paper examines conflicted memories of two Italian Australians through oral history interviews recorded 70 years after they left Italy. Fascism shaped their boyhood, and as they came of age in Australia, Government policies that identified Italians as 'enemy aliens' during World War II resulted in new challenges and difficulties. As old men they remember and question the circumstances which formed their childhood in Italy and confronted them in Australia. Through the oral history interviews it is possible to reconstruct and examine some of the impacts of Fascism and emigration on family culture, and the troubling experience of the War years in Australia in the lives of two young Italians.

Friday 15:30-17:00

ORAL HISTORY AND WORKING LIVES

New Beats: Recording the life histories of Australian journalists in transition (Lawrie Zion and Andrew Dodd)

This paper will explore the outcomes of an oral history project developed by the ARC-funded New Beats research project in association with the National Library of Australia, that is examining the aftermath of journalism redundancies in Australia. Through our Linkage Grant partnership, four academic researchers, all of whom are former journalists, were commissioned to record “whole of life” histories of 60 journalists whose positions were made redundant since 2012. The collection captures the career and life experiences of a cohort who experienced the abrupt transition of journalism from a relatively stable profession in the last decades of the 20th century, to one that has been severely disrupted by digital-first strategies and the associated collapse of the traditional classified advertising business model. As well as discussing key themes to emerge from the interviews, the paper outlines how potential interviewees were recruited, what approaches we developed to recording their life experiences, and issues of positionality that arose from the deliberate decision to engage former journalists to conduct the interviews. The paper also reflects on the design of the forthcoming related project output, a thematic book based on the interviews that is scheduled for publication in 2020.

The path to journalism: Using pre-career memories to explore a working life (Judy Hughes)

In exploring a particular occupation or profession through the memories of individuals it can be tempting to confine interviews to reminiscences related only to working life. A life history approach to interviewing is more complex. It takes longer to prepare, conduct and review, but offers insights not readily available in a more focussed interview. This presentation looks at a study, which used life history interviews with nine Australian print journalists to understand the experience of journalists adapting to workplace change. It considers the value that childhood and early adult reminiscences provided to that study by considering issues of common personality traits, values and identity formation. Journalists are often perceived in terms of stereotypes: the brave and committed news hound overcoming barriers to uncover misdeeds through to the unscrupulous hack invading the privacy of the vulnerable. In order to understand the work of journalists—or any occupation—over time, it is revealing to look at an individual’s life before work and outside of work. Further, such understandings may assist in considering how members of a work group may face future challenges.

Aspiration and Vulnerability: Oral Histories of Economic Life Amongst Jakarta’s Middle Class (Sarah Kennedy Bates)

Rapid economic growth in Asia has been central to the emergence of a middle class on a global scale. 140 million people are joining the ranks of the middle class each year, with 88% of the next billion expected to live in Asia. We are thus at a watershed moment at which, the “majority of the world’s population, for the first time ever, will live in middle-class or rich households”. Indonesia’s capital Jakarta is one of the most striking sites of such social mobility. Since Suharto’s high-growth authoritarian regime (1965-1998), many of the city’s 30 million inhabitants have been integrated into and benefited from dense networks of skyscrapers, malls and financial capital. However, as a place of widespread informal work, housing insecurity, and as one of the most climate-exposed cities in the world, the middle class’ adjacency to poverty exceeds its mere physical coexistence amongst the urban poor. This paper traces experiences of economic transformation in Jakarta amongst its purported middle class success stories. Drawing on oral histories of intergenerational mobility, intimate narratives of aspiration and anxiety are juxtaposed with national and global histories of development, highlighting the production of vulnerabilities and the persistent threat of backward mobility in the lives of global capitalism’s supposed beneficiaries.

Friday 15:30-17:00

ARCHIVING AND ACCESSING COMMUNITY HISTORY

Creating a Digital Story Bank – A case study of a new way of managing corporate/local histories (Helen Klæbe and Imogen Smith)

Organisations with a rich history, like the South Bank Corporation, have an overwhelming amount of data, information and content (in electronic and paper-based formats) that has been kept, but perhaps not necessarily archived. When we look for a specific piece of information about an event, time or place, it is often too difficult to access in a timely manner. As such, QUT has created a Digital Story Bank for the South Bank Corporation. This summary index of primary material and developed story summaries details the history of the South Bank Corporation so it can be virtually accessible ‘at your fingertips’ on a corporate e-bookshelf. The selection of material is based on the South Bank Corporation timeline from 1992 to 2017, and is focused on key milestones, people and places. Unlike a book, each component can easily be read and interpreted, while also connecting to other story chapters and ephemeral data – all correlated on a master Excel database. The ‘story bank’ is not for

the public to read, but for South Bank Corporation to quickly and easily access documents and information relevant to historical milestones, people and places and to add to it as the story of the organisation continues.

Scaling up: working on large-scale oral history projects (Katherine Sheedy)

Over the last five years we've noticed and experienced a rise in large, stand-alone oral history projects commissioned by clients to record and document lived experience. These clients seek to create oral history archives without specific plans in mind for using the stories that are gathered, but with the potential for many different uses in the future. In recent years we have been contacted again by some of these clients and asked to work on specific projects using these archives, such as creating web content, including digital media. This is positive news for historians, but these projects can be challenging. What are the implications and responsibilities for us as oral history practitioners? Drawing on examples from our work with clients such as City of Boroondara, Royal Melbourne Hospital, St Mary's College, Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria, we will explore issues around the creation and use of large-scale oral history archives, including ethical considerations and questions of responsibility and accessibility.

The Oral History Hub (ohh...) at UniSA: A Work in Progress (Sue Anderson, David Sweet, Karen McDonough and Dante Debono)

The dilemma of where to house the many interviews that are undertaken by higher degree students in our University led to a discussion between a PhD student who had interviewed residents of a nursing home, her Head of School, Oral History Australia Secretary and UniSA lecturer, Dr David Sweet and then Oral History Australia President and UniSA lecturer, Dr Sue Anderson. It seems that the planets aligned to bring us all together under our various hats and the idea for the Oral History Hub – the ohh... – was born. Enthusiasm for the establishment of this archive for the benefit of students, academics and the wider South Australian community abounded. Support was received from many directions: a team of communications and marketing students offered their input to help brainstorm the setup and direction of the ohh... and an information technology Masters student volunteered his time to learn the software and upload donations of recorded interviews. Sue, David and two members of the communications team (and now oral history Honours students), Dante Debono and Karen McDonough, will share their experiences in bringing the ohh... into fruition.

Saturday 12 October 09:00-10:30

PERFORMING ORAL HISTORIES

The discipline of performance art can help audiences engage with oral history narratives in new and revealing ways (Stephanie Arnold)

Because art doesn't specifically state an intended meaning, it requires us to engage in imaginative thinking, this helps us look beyond our own worldview into the experience of others. This paper will explore three aspects of using live performance art to interpret oral history. Firstly, it will discuss the importance of art as an alternative way of exposing audiences to unheard and overlooked narratives. Secondly, it will discuss how compositional and artistic techniques (eg speech melody) can be used to reveal unspoken aspects of these narratives. Finally, it will examine the potential benefits that come from participating in these art works for performers, audience members and for interview participants. In considering these three aspects of using live performance art, the paper will refer to Stephanie Arnold's experiences during the process of developing her recent oral history performance works *Across the Water*, *These Tender Threads* and *Song & Story*. Each of these works combines edited fragments of oral history interviews together with music. The use of speech melody, repeated, edited phrases and musical imagery challenges audiences to listen not just to what is being said, but how it is being said, and to imagine and understand why it might be said.

Oral History / Aural History: Musical Memories of Queensland Jazz Heritage (Lauren Istvandy)

Collecting oral histories of first-hand experiences can be an excellent method for the creation of a nuanced understanding of local heritage, but what happens when that heritage takes the form of music? This paper explores a particular instance of tension in intangible cultural heritage preservation, where the historical record of local jazz music – the aural – has gone largely unrecorded, and can be most readily captured through stories and personal memories – the oral. Drawing on experiences from a two-year project that sought to better document the development of jazz in Queensland and to increase the quality and quantity of items, predominantly oral histories, held in the Queensland Jazz Archive, State Library of Queensland, this paper details some of the challenges and benefits of working with these dual forms of intangible heritage.

In doing so, the discussion will also turn to community involvement and the return of heritage stories to the community through interpretive performance and outreach.

On the airwaves – Sharing our unique stories (Sue Berman)

Auckland Libraries is the largest library network in Australasia with 55 Libraries spanning across Tamaki Makaurau – the greater Auckland region. One of seven strategic goals for Auckland Libraries states: “Tuaritia ā tātou pakiwaitara motuhake - Share our unique stories. We’ll gather, protect and share the stories, old and new, that celebrate our people, communities and Tāmaki Makaurau”. Heritage and Research Collections team play a key role in working with the community in meeting this goal. There is a focus on creating new and making accessible older oral histories as a critical method for capturing and celebrating the stories of people and place. This paper will share highlights from the oral history collection; illustrate methods of community engagement for capturing oral history – including work with mana whenua/ indigenous communities; discuss methods and tools for access and discoverability - including our new content management system Kura Heritage Collections Online, and podcasting as a platform for curating collections.

Saturday 09:00-10:30

REMEMBERING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

How Do I See Myself: Identity & Belonging in France (Louise McLeod Tabouis)

My Master’s (Anthropology) research project is about belonging in France. I am collecting stories from people who are not often listened to: people born of immigrant parents - from overseas French departments and territories, or elsewhere. My initial interest began when I wanted to focus on what it felt like to be French while regularly being asked your origin, because apparently you don’t look like you belong. My interviewees report fighting against a relentless feeling of not belonging, and some have chosen a multicultural identity, based on their origins, not where they were born, yet discrimination continues. France is the European country that has historically welcomed the most immigrants. In the past three years, this has become more apparent due to terrorist attacks and the attention these drew to citizenship and national identity. My interviewees, young men and women between the ages of 18 & 40, have told me how good it feels to share their story in a country that likes to talk more than listen.

Reticence and Racism (Margaret Ridley)

In 2009, Lenore Layman used reticence to describes four categories of interview silences. At the last International Oral History Conference in Finland, one panel session was devoted to silence in interviews. Daniela Koleva from Sofia University described a typography of silences. I know from my research and writing, that Australia has a cultural aversion to discussing racism. Some authors describe this as being part of “white fragility”. However, it extends to those who experience racism too. I wondered whether examining the Australian Generations Oral History Project interviews would evidence this reluctance to talk about racism. It may be that there is a collective silence or using Layman’s category, a “reticence in the face of public memory”. This paper will describe how racism is treated in Australia’s public discourse. It will draw upon scholarship about racism which describes the implications of this cultural aversion. Using the Australian Generations Oral History Project, a range of interviews from first- and second-generation Australians will be featured to see whether there may be a silence about racism.

‘But I wasn’t disabled as far as I was concerned’: Challenging the established disability narrative (Penny Harrison)

Disability history in Australia and Queensland at present lacks richness and diversity. The familiar depictions of people with impairments are as survivors and victims, passive players located in institutional and organisational histories. Using oral histories this paper explores the multilayered nature of schooling opportunities for children with disabilities in post-World War Two Queensland. It is important to recognise the experiences of people with disabilities as distinctive, adding their voices to those of other ‘outsiders’ whose viewpoints have not appeared in conventional schooling and children’s histories. Equally the use of oral history allows for a more intimate and nuanced understanding of how children with impairments and their families saw themselves and negotiated a place in the Queensland schooling system. Their voices challenge the established disability narrative.

Saturday 09:00-10:30

STIGMA AND SILENCE: ORAL HISTORIES OF HEALTHCARE

'I'm pretty sure he died here': memory, place and Australia's HIV/AIDS crisis (Geraldine Fela)

On January 22 1985 AIDS panic erupted in Warrnambool, a small coastal town on Victoria's South West Coast. Warrnambool's local paper the Standard carried the headline 'Local AIDS Suspect'. The article that followed broke the news that '[a] young Warrnambool homosexual' was the first Australian nurse to be 'identified as an AIDS suspect'. The young nurse, Paul*, was outed to the town by the newspaper report and lost his job. Paul moved to Melbourne where he continued to work as a nurse until he died in 1992. In the process of collecting oral testimony from HIV/AIDS nurses across Australia, I have talked to nurses in both Warrnambool and Melbourne who worked with Paul. In their testimonies there are inconsistencies in the stories they tell, particularly about his death. Drawing on Alessandro Portelli's exploration of the death of Italian trade unionist Luigi Trastulli this paper will explore the ways in which Paul's colleagues give meaning to his death. Paul's life and death shows the different ways HIV and AIDS was responded to across diverse localities and communities in Australia. (*Pseudonym used)

A Hospital near Home: local maternity care in Perth's Western Suburbs (Cate Pattison)

Established by midwives in their own houses, a 'lying in home' was once where many Australian women chose to have their babies. These began to close in the 1920s as tighter regulations were introduced, the sector consolidated and small suburban hospitals became popular places to give birth. This oral history project explores in-patient care in Perth's Western Suburbs in the 20th century, with a focus on two local institutions: Devonleigh Hospital and Matron Brand's Maternity Home. Recollections depict this once-dominant model of locally-based in-patient medical and maternity care from an era when family GPs often delivered their patients' babies at a mutually convenient local facility. Many women enjoy accounting their experiences of small private hospitals such as Devonleigh that offered respectability, comfort, familiarity and discretion; however it is the silenced and hidden stories of women's experiences around pregnancy that often remain unsaid and difficult to explore. Using oral history as a method to research sensitive issues can have its limitations ... but it can also unearth unexpected and hidden secrets buried in time, both scenarios presenting challenges for oral historians. Oral histories were commissioned by the Grove Community History Library and conducted in 2018.

Test-tube testimonies: creating an oral history of in vitro fertilisation in Britain and the wider world, c. 1969 - c. 1984 (Fiona Kisby Littleton and Susan Bewley – pre-recorded presentation)

The 40th birthday of the world's first-test tube baby, and the 50th anniversary of the commencement of the pioneering British research programme developed by Robert Edwards and Patrick Steptoe that facilitated this have recently occurred (2018, 2019). Around these milestones, official narratives concerning the origins and development of in vitro fertilization have proliferated. Emanating from witnesses developing or administering treatment, or exemplifying actually unrepresentative success, these have sculpted an authoritative and celebratory version of events for the historical record. This presentation describes our project which intends to critique these established accounts, through: fresher interpretations of familiar sources, wider international perspectives from contemporaneous programmes, more extensive searches for newer material as yet unmined or unknown and use of different historical methodologies. Most significant is our work to conduct an oral history unlocking the hitherto silent voices of the 280 original British patients for whom experimental treatment failed (and Australian and American women similarly volunteering elsewhere). This focus on the lifeworld – not laboratory – will reshape and rebalance the historiography, producing a more intimate, detailed picture of the experiences of ordinary people participating in one of the most extraordinary technological breakthroughs in recent medical history than has hitherto been possible.

Saturday 11:00-12:30

MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCE

'It's not the Heat, It's the Humidity': Punk and Post- Punk in 1970s and 1980s Brisbane (John Willstead)

This will be a 45min performance in which sub-cultural heritage is presented as entertainment. It uses personal histories and ephemera to illustrate the punk and post-punk scene in Brisbane in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There's some music, some singing, some photos and footage. A little profanity. Mostly amusing.

Saturday 11:00-12:30

REMEMBERING VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT: TRAUMA AND MEMORY

Constructed and Constrained Silences: Memories of Escaping Catastrophe in German-occupied Rural Tuscany, 1944 (Judith Pabian)

Early one morning in April 1944, German soldiers lined up the inhabitants of Monticchiello outside the village gate. Ten-year old Arturo watched as they set up machine guns opposite the villagers. The German officer emerged from the gate, speaking with a local woman. Less than five minutes later he called off his men and left without firing a shot. It would have been the first of many strategic, brutal massacres carried out by Nazi-fascist forces elsewhere in Tuscany later that year. For the Monticchiellesi, the question lingered - why did our village escape catastrophe? In a community with a rich storytelling tradition, popular interpretations of this historic episode suggest carefully constructed silences. In a village structurally confined by walls and emotionally confined by historical imperatives, certainties are created and ambiguities erased to conceal inconvenient possibilities. Empirically, I research the social, economic and cultural history of rural Tuscany, recent work in massacre studies and use new evidence I uncovered in 2018. Theoretically, I build on studies on everyday politics of life under authoritarian regimes to canvass various interpretations and illuminate specific oral history developments in Monticchiello. The paper contributes significantly to new analyses of the Tuscan massacres of 1944.

Interviewing the Second Generation: Transgenerational Memory in the Cambodian Australian Diaspora (Naomi Frost)

In the aftermath of Democratic Kampuchea, as Cambodia was named under Khmer Rouge rule, over half a million Cambodians sought refuge through immigration abroad. This paper addresses how Cambodian Australian families have remembered, forgotten, or transmitted narratives of their family histories to the second generation following displacement, starvation, suffering, and loss under the Khmer Rouge. Through a series of interviews with second generation Cambodian Australians in Melbourne, I consider the sources of memory production and transmission that inform the next generation's understanding of Cambodian history. In this paper, I look at how this period of history is communicated by the second generation in oral history interviews, and the tensions that interviewing the second generation presents in oral history practice. This paper considers how post-genocide memory production and transmission plays out within the Cambodian diaspora in Melbourne, and how these memories are further nuanced by temporal, spatial, or personal distance from family histories. An examination of the generational transmission of these family histories within the context of the Cambodian Australian diaspora illuminates the role of intersecting cultural identities, and the implications of personal, cultural, temporal and spatial proximity to historical events in the transmission of memory and family narratives.

'Home Sweet Home' and the Myth of Returning Among Spanish Migrants in Australia (Natalia Ortiz)

The aim of my work is to reconsider the meaning of migratory 'return' in an era of increasing transnational experiences while arguing for the impossibility of a final 'return home' for Spanish migrants with emotional links to Spain and Australia. My thesis proposes a new concept, 'emotional returnees', describing those migrants who are involved in multiple returns to both countries. I argue that the impossibility of an emotional and final return unsettles families for generations, turning the act of a final return 'home' into a myth. By drawing on different disciplinary strands of migration theory that deal with identity construction, the meaning of home, the challenge of distance and the myth of return, this work questions assumptions that transnational movements do not transform radically migrants' ideas of home. My thesis demonstrates that for many Spanish transnational migrants, 'return' would be better described as an ongoing journey rather than a final destination back 'home'. In my practice-based project 'Home Sweet Home', I have used a multi-methodological approach involving such investigatory approaches as fieldwork in two countries, visuals in the form of family films and photos, oral history, personal diaries, and a vast collection of new archival memorabilia.

Saturday 11:00-12:30

WOMEN'S HISTORY AND FAMILY LIVES

Rejecting the bright lights of the city: Why country girls stay (Nicolette Snowden)

The idea that country girls will inevitably leave in favour of the bright lights of the city, is a powerful stereotype in Australian culture, which assumes country girls live at a distance from a modern and engaging life. Australian rural studies tend to focus on the outmigration of girls from the country to the city, which can diminish the experience of many girls who stay and the compelling reasons for doing so. Researchers suggest that country girls often leave to escape small town macho culture and pursue employment or educative opportunities not available locally. Yet many girls stay and confront these forces, which suggests girls have considerable capacity and agency in constructing meaningful lives in the country. Stories from an oral history project about working-class women in eastern Victoria in the post-war decades, demonstrates that many young girls stayed in the country because they found legitimate and acceptable opportunities. Oral histories of country women illuminate the complex and intersecting factors of class, gender and rurality that impact young women's choices to stay or leave, and challenge cultural assumptions about country life.

'We weren't going to be able to run, nor did we need the sort of refuge that they ran in the city': Uncovering the Women's Refuge Movement in Regional NSW, 1974-2016 (Alexandria Hawkins)

On March 16, 1974, Australia's first feminist women's refuge, Elsie was established in Sydney by a group of passionate feminist activists and became the catalyst for the development of the women's refuge movement in Australia. The women's refuge movement made explicit for the first time the link between domestic violence and the need for refuge and has been the driving force behind the politicisation of domestic violence since the 1970s. This movement is now over forty-years-old. However, very little research has been done in charting how the women's refuge movement developed in rural and regional Australia. My study intends to address this gap in the literature by taking NSW as a case study and examining how the women's refuge movement was adopted and put into practice in rural settings. This paper will discuss the oral history interviews that have been conducted thus far with women who have worked and/or volunteered within these feminist organisations and will suggest that regional women's refuges had a unique set of structural barriers to overcome and as a result developed their own unique ways of assisting women experiencing domestic violence.

New Wave Dads? Oral Histories of Australian Fathers in the 1970s-90s (Alistair Thomson)

In response to second wave feminist politics, increasing economic pressures and rising rates of married women's employment, and the changing circumstances of intimate family relations, by the 1970s and 1980s some Australian men were beginning to take seriously a family role that transcended that of the breadwinner and engaged them more seriously in childcare and domestic work. Drawing upon Australian Generations oral histories recorded in the 2010s with Australian men who became fathers in the 1970s and 1980s, this paper will investigate the circumstances that encouraged or required some young fathers (though not all, and perhaps not many) to question the role of paid work in their lives and consider new ways of combining work and family life. What factors motivated or forced such role shifts, and what factors continued to work against men who challenged the breadwinner role? How did men who tried out new ways of combining work and family life experience their changing role; how were they impacted by the responses of employers, work colleagues, partners, family members, other parents and the wider society? What can we learn from their example to contribute to current debates about how men might best combine work and family responsibilities?

Saturday 13:15-13:50

LUNCH TIME PERFORMANCE

Wild/flower Women: Women who changed the world through art (Susan Davis)

In 1969 Caloundra was mission central for a group the Australian called 'the most militant of conservation cells. Those hardcore militants were none other than Caloundra artist/writer Kathleen McArthur and renowned Australian poet Judith Wright. They were responsible for spear-heading a campaign to have 100,000 protest cards sent to Queensland premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The story of the friendship between these two women and their shared love of Queensland wildflowers and natural heritage will be told as a form of verbatim theatre or oral history, the script wherever possible draws on the writings and poetry of Judith Wright and Kathleen McArthur. The script is performed as 'Lunch Hour Theatre' or 'Reader's Theatre' style presentation Kathleen promoted with monthly presentations at the CCSA hall in Caloundra from the mid 1970s. The 'Wild/flower Women' script reveals the trials and achievements of these pioneering artist/activists and serves to bear witness to the acts and achievements of these courageous women who we can still be inspired by today.

Saturday 14.00-14:30

LIGHTNING PRESENTATIONS: A SMORGASBORD OF ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

Reflections on the working lives of expatriate women educators at Port Moresby International School, Papua New Guinea, 1976-1999 (Dianne Korare)

This presentation will discuss an oral history and auto-ethnographic study of expatriate women in Papua New Guinea (1976-1999). Their story is set in the context of a newly independent country and the twenty-five years that followed. It will discuss the paucity of information written about international schools that catered for expatriate and Papua New Guinean students and how even less has been written about the role women played in those schools. Its significance as research is that it tells the often untold stories of women in education with the researcher as part of the story. This study will contribute to the important recording and analysis of the history of education in PNG and the events and issues that helped shape it. It will also encourage teachers to understand the importance of historical knowledge and self-reflection when working in another culture. It is significant that we learn from the experience of others.

The Life, Work and Legacy of Ethnobotanist, Dr Beth Gott - Documenting Traditional Ecological Knowledge in South Eastern Australia (Tess Holderness)

Ethnobotanist, Dr Beth Gott, who at 96 years of age, remains an Adjunct Researcher within the School of Biological Sciences at Monash University, has spent a lifetime exploring the traditional relationships between people and plants in South Eastern Australia. Dr Gott, creator and curator of Monash's Aboriginal Garden, is respectfully regarded as an 'elder' and 'Auntie' by many Indigenous people. She has always maintained that the knowledge she has documented (and thereby preserved) remains 'Aboriginal knowledge'. But why was Dr Gott's 'biological detective work' necessary, drawing largely from historical records to 'reconstruct' a picture of the traditional uses of native plants for food, fibre, medicine and tools? The answer lies in the challenging history of colonial-settler society and the disruption this caused to Indigenous lives, language, culture and connection to Country. Given the cultural genocide that occurred, the resulting record of traditional ecological knowledge inevitably remains fragmented, with knowledge also being 'lost in translation', via the Eurocentric lens that recorded the early observations, in English, and in a written rather than oral format. This oral history project provides the personal narrative behind Dr Gott's academic work, and describes a rich and sustainable traditional Indigenous relationship with nature and with Country.

Weaving Precious & "Intimate Stories" from an Indigenous Perspective & applying Fijian Language (Elisapeci Samanunu Waqanivala)

Weaving is a concept applied in Indigenous lifestyle. As Indigenous Peoples, weaving is us, be it mats, baskets, or thatched roofs for Bure. The concept expresses, "Intimate Stories" & "Challenging Histories" are interwoven. The scale vary, principles are the same. 2019: Yabaki ni Vosa-vaka-Lewe-ni-Vanua e Vuravura . To weave words; "Noqu Vosa, Noqu Talanoa ni Veigauna". Hearing Fijian words or English reminds me of jewels embedded in stories. Words used, stringing, weaving stories, as in Masi making. It evokes memories of the past. In my mind, 'the narratives shared are rich reminders of the 'pearls of knowledge' embedded in stories'. I have two Projects: 1) Indigenous Pacific Women Leaders, Movers or Shakers in Aotearoa; and 2) Treaty Times 30 Project on Te Tiriti O Waitangi. To record Translators who translated the TOW into different languages. My experiences revealed 'the story-tellers world'. It's charged, as I sit there watching reactions, body languages even silent moments, or tears. OHRC at Alexander Turnbull National Library New Zealand supports my work. I hire rooms and equipment. In my mind, Indigenous Knowledge captured is sacred, transported into a time capsule, and rearranged into my Ketekete or Basket of Indigenous Knowledge.

Saturday 14.00-14:30

LIGHTNING PRESENTATIONS: LOCAL & COMMUNITY HISTORY

Writing Compelling History through Voice, Historical Photographs and Photographic Image-Making (Eve Wicks)

The narrative of World War Two-displaced, disenfranchised Lithuanian immigrants to Queensland was explored through oral history research-led creative arts practice giving them a voice and allowing them to be seen, overcoming their silence. It concerned darkness endured under conditions imposed upon the Displaced Persons and Australia's assimilation policy, within a cycle of Lithuanian history from the fall to the lifting of the Soviet iron curtain. Resultant expressive, imaginative

writing, interwoven with oral history voices, was enabled through a cycle of informal and formal data gathering and interpretation processes. These were associated with participant observation, oral history interviewing, examining historical photographs, and photographing people and their historical and cultural memorabilia in home environments, Queensland landscapes of historical significance, and documents, the latter images created while undertaking archival research which underpinned this study. The narrative presented chapters comprising a multi-modal weaving of extended text, historical photograph and original image essays, enriched by voices in culturally and historically related poetry and song text, embedded in Lithuanian linen imagery. Oral history voices were given prominence through design and referencing features in text essays and presentation as poetic fragments.

Rewards for being a Freelance Oral Historian (Suzanne Mulligan)

I've been an oral historian for many years. At first, I interviewed family members with a small tape recorder before I knew anything about oral history. After majoring in journalism at University of Queensland and doing an oral history workshop, I began my oral history collection in 2002 with my first interviewee – a World War I veteran. I enjoyed the process of discovering the lives of a diverse range of people including war veterans, women who worked during World War II, a man who went to Antarctica in the 1930s, policeman, prison warden, rowers, a priest, a Paralympian, engineer, botanist, and more. I found these people through newspaper articles, referrals and meeting people who I thought had an interesting story. I received no payment for these interviews. Nevertheless, I conducted the interviews in a professional manner, following the ethical guidelines of Oral History Australia. I also did some interviews for which I was paid but these interviews then belonged to the department or company who requested they be done. My freelance practice brought me immense pleasure. I was privileged to hear their intimate stories through this process.

'I don't want to live in a gas field': environmental protest and collecting institutions (Anni Turnbull and Jo Kijas)

This paper will look at the way Galleries Libraries Archives and Museums (GLAM) institutions have used oral history collections to bring a different insight into environmental activism and protest history. Traditional methods of collecting protest materials such as anti-mining activities in the GLAM sector have been through material culture like posters, badges, photographs, costume and artworks and sometimes intangible forms like oral interviews. This paper will look at the changing nature of environmental protest and activism in NSW. With a particular focus on a series of anti-fracking oral histories conducted for the State Library of NSW over six months, from June to December 2017. Twenty people told their stories in fourteen interviews. They covered many parts of the state where coal seam gas (CSG) and unconventional gas mining had been challenged by communities up to 2017.

Saturday 14.00-14:30

STATE LIBRARY QUEENSLAND AND ORAL HISTORY

Amplify – Making Oral History More Accessible

How SLQ Uses Oral Histories (Gavin Bannerman, Director, Queensland Memory)

Saturday 14:30–15:30

REMEMBERING CATASTROPHES: ORAL HISTORIES OF FLOODS AND BUSHFIRES

'I mean they build a memorial for people who die in war and it was like a warzone': official commemoration and community recovery after a disaster (Scott McKinnon)

In 2003, bushfires in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) resulted in four deaths and the destruction of more than five hundred homes. In the following three years, the ACT government commemorated the disaster through anniversary events and, in 2006, the opening of a memorial site. This paper draws on oral history interviews with disaster survivors to examine the intertwining political and emotional meanings of memorialisation. While some survivors saw memorial acts and sites as a valued – and, indeed, necessary – element of individual and community recovery, others saw each commemoration as an unwelcome reminder of the fires and criticised a perceived lack of acknowledgement of the root causes of the disaster. Discussions of these sites and ceremonies raise larger questions about the operation of memory as an element of recovery

practices in the first years after traumatic events. In particular, the paper explores the capacity of collective and official commemorative practices to accommodate the uneven impacts of disasters and the varied processes of recovery among survivors.

Cities divided by flood (Margaret Cook)

Flood devastated the Southeast Queensland cities of Brisbane and Ipswich in 2011, drowning one man, inundating over 21,000 buildings and destroying tonnes of personal possessions. Thousands of volunteers armed with brooms and shovels headed to suburbs to help those flooded, their ranks ascribed the name “mud army”. In oral histories, and media accounts, the mud army is heralded as selfless saviours bringing the victims of flood help and hope. Flood memories emphasise teamwork, mateship; a society united by compassion. Yet the 2011 floods divided both cities. The floodwaters entered less than half of the suburbs, most were flood-free. Residents were divided into “us” (flood victims) and “them” (the saviours). The floods were permanently life-altering for those flooded, a transient involvement for helpers. This paper suggests the duality of experience contributes to the region’s continuing reluctance to seriously address floodplain management or modify development to accommodate inevitable future floods.

Saturday 14:30–15:30

TRAUMA, COMMEMORATION, RECONCILIATION

The significance of lived experience and other factors when analysing settler descendants’ historical consciousness (Skye Krichauff)

Stories of Aboriginal presence and land ownership in the colonial era are little known among current generations of settler descended South Australians. This paper sheds light on a range of factors that require consideration when analysing the absence of Aboriginal people in non-Aboriginal Australians’ historical consciousness. Comparing oral histories collected from descendants of early pastoralists and nineteenth century freeholders, it evaluates different ways the past is known and related to. Understanding the concrete workings of memory, it draws attention to the significance of lived experience (past and present) and the prevailing historical epistemology and the culture in which settler descendants are ensconced.

Remembering war in remote Australia: Frontier violence, public monuments and colonial forgetting (Cameo Dalley, Ashley Barnwell and Sana Nakata)

Violence and Aboriginal massacres on Australia’s colonial frontier are a history that is only beginning to be told. The fortification of the frontier in remote areas was reliant on a particular kind of violence, including by men returned from war conflicts. In this paper we explore the relationship between the deployment of frontier violence and its presence/absence in commemorative spaces in Australia. We draw from Michael Rothberg’s (2009) notion of ‘multi-directional memory’ to examine how wars are commemorated in relation to one another, and ask how ‘remembering and forgetting [are] constitutive of everyday life’ (Healy 2008: 9). Using oral history from a case study in the East Kimberley, we consider two public monuments in the outback town of Wyndham. The first is an RSL memorial for soldiers from four overseas deployments from World War I – the Malaya Emergency. The second is the Warri Dreamtime Statues, a public art installation funded by the Australian Bicentennial Authority’s National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program. Via these monuments, we discuss how the contemporary Aboriginal and kardiya (non-Aboriginal) community think about history in relation to each other, and relate this to broader approaches to memorialisation and the construction of national identity in Australia.

Saturday 14:30–15:30

MAKING ORAL HISTORY IN INNOVATIVE MEDIA

Altered lives - stories from women who live with HIV (Bronwen Gray and Alan Young)

The Altered Lives digital storytelling project was a creative collaboration between a group of New Zealand women who live with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and a team of artists, including communication designers, filmmakers and an oral historian/ writer. The intention was to use the project to counter the stigma that is attached to being HIV positive and

also to highlight the very specific issues living with HIV raises for women. It resulted in the production of a DVD, where the oral histories originally collected have been turned into short animations. The animations have been used to stimulate discussions in educational settings, at conferences and have also been shown in art galleries and exhibitions. For women who live with HIV, a lack of visibility and acceptance from the wider community leads to self-loathing eroding their self-esteem. Central to self-esteem is dignity, and Richard Horton, editor of *The Lancet*, has noted the potential importance of this as a health and human rights issue (Horton, 2003); Not only does this paper discuss issues related to stigmatization but also touches on some of the health benefits the project created for wider audiences.

Complicated is an understatement! Telling the stories of operational women from Melbourne’s Metropolitan Fire Brigade (Sarah Rood, Corinne Manning and Belinda Ensor)

This presentation will look at three different perspectives on a project with Melbourne’s Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB). In 2018 an exhibition was commissioned by MFB to celebrate 35 years of women in operational roles in the organisation. The exhibition which had significant oral history components was a collaboration between MFB, Way Back When, and filmmakers Tiny Empire Collective. There were multiple challenges in gathering content and curating this exhibition, some reflected the usual experiences faced by oral historians but others were unique to working in a dynamic, sensitive and politically charged environment. Representatives from MFB, Way Back When and Tiny Empire Collective will come together to share their experiences in delivering this ground breaking work. They will tease out the complexities, constraints and ethics of storytelling with MFB by discussing: the impact of workplace culture and politics on story gathering and telling, the difficulties of dealing with a broad geographic and shift-work-based community, gaining trust of a minority group that has been hesitant to speak out in the past, and the challenges of producing exhibition content that is in keeping with the interviewees’ wishes and the various stakeholders within the organisation.

CLOSING PLENARY – INDIGENOUS ORAL HISTORY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Chair: Sue Anderson

Lorina Barker, Kerry Charlton, Sadie Heckenberg, Katrina Srigley