

## From the Editors

We are delighted to launch this first edition of *Studies in Oral History*, the renamed *Oral History Australia Journal*, which aligns with the launch of the new Oral History Australia (OHA) logo and website. Our journal has been re-designed, making it more accessible and more reader friendly for those reading from electronic devices, and is now open access which will extend reach and availability. We have also expanded our Editorial Board and created the role of Reports Editor. We would like to thank the OHA Committee's ready support for these changes, and acknowledge their approval of expenditure for the journal's redesign. We particularly thank Judy Hughes for her tireless work supporting many of these new initiatives.

In late 2020, when Victorians are only just easing out of COVID-19 lockdown and travel is limited, when we are all alert to the need to maintain social distancing and limit numbers at social gatherings, the thought of attending a large conference, in person, without wearing a mask, and mingling with people who have travelled from across the nation, seems almost like a distant dream. However, it was only 12 months ago that Oral History Australia's biennial conference was held in Brisbane, on Turrbal and Yugara Country. In alignment with the 2019 conference, the theme for this issue of the journal is 'Intimate Stories, Challenging Histories'.

Our peer-reviewed articles are based on presentations made during the conference, and Madeleine Regan and Chris Chevalier have written and recorded their conference highlights in the reports section, the audio file of which is available through the URL provided. By presenting part of their conference review as an interview, the authors have imitated the dialogic medium most frequently utilised by their readers.

Katrina Srigley travelled from Canada to attend last year's conference where she presented a moving and poignant opening keynote address. Throughout her address, Srigley's deep appreciation for Indigenous understandings of oral history theory, practice, form and politics was evident. Katrina spoke of the lessons learned and insights gained while working with the Nishnaabeg people on Nibisiing Nishnaabeg Country in Canada, and how she has drawn on these lessons to develop an ethical framework for oral historians who work with Indigenous people. The framework she has developed is based on the ethics of *zaagidwin* (love), an approach to story listening and storytelling that Srigley convincingly argues is a meaningful way to practice decolonial and indigenised feminist oral history; it 'requires practitioners to position themselves in relation to spirit, territory, knowledges, and people', and 'to unlearn in order to meaningfully learn from stories of the past'. This approach is extremely pertinent for non-Indigenous oral historians who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and we are grateful that Katrina kindly agreed to rewrite her keynote address for publication in this issue. We urge readers to immerse themselves in this powerful and beautiful piece.

Through her work with the Cambodian diaspora in Melbourne, Naomi Frost sensitively examines how, through oral histories, we can better understand the multi-faceted processes through which second-generation refugees inherit memories and trauma of the Khmer Rouge genocide. Frost's thoughtful analysis explores the generational negotiations and the non-verbal ways through which historical consciousness is formed, how information conveyed about the Pol Pot time is fragmented, and how silences are loaded with meaning. Frost also demonstrates how language and concepts are emotionally laden and culturally specific. For example, the concept of 'trauma' is not neutral or universal but a western construct drawn on by second generations (to make sense of their parents' experiences and reactions) but does not necessarily accurately or effectively describe the emotions felt by Frost's interviewees' parents. Because oral historians are by nature experts in hearing meaning through sound, we have introduced a new feature in this issue where our audience can listen as well as or instead of reading Naomi's article. We would like to thank Naomi for so generously agreeing to record an audio of her paper.

Oral history borders upon several other fields where practitioners interview people in order to construct meaning. Sometimes the boundaries between disciplines can be permeable or blurred. In their article, academics and journalists Lawrie Zion, Andrew Dodd and Matthew Ricketson discuss the similarities and differences between journalism and oral history. They argue that oral historians could learn from journalists' approach to controversial issues in interviews, particularly in an age when interviews are more readily accessible online, by offering third parties a right of reply.

Imogen Smith, Sasha Mackay and Helen Klæbe describe the process through which they developed a digital archiving system – the 'Digital Story Bank' – which works as a management tool through which a broad range of archival data, including oral histories, can be stored and readily retrieved. As the authors point out, many organisations become overwhelmed with historical data, the management of which is often dependant on one or two key staff or volunteers who, on leaving the organisation, take their knowledge of the material and stories of the organisation with them. And when archival material is stored in centralised collecting institutions, it is removed from the locale in which it was created and where it is most meaningful. The Story Bank enables data to remain in place, it is simple to use, inexpensive and does not require specific training. As such, information contained in this article will no doubt be of use for a broad range of organisations, associations and societies.

Kah Seng Loh shows how personal narratives enrich understandings of national history, and may challenge dominant narratives. His study of home cooking in Singapore interweaves food and family, public and private to illuminate intergenerational transmission within families, women's roles within home and nation, and the relationships between diverse cultural traditions and the Singaporean nation state. Cooking, he reveals, is never just a selection of ingredients combined to create a dish upon the table.

Following on from our peer-reviewed articles are the reports and reviews sections. This year we have a bumper reports section and we thank our inaugural Reports Editor, Imogen Smith, for her efforts in managing and editing such an array. Part of the reports section follows our normal practice of reporting on a variety of oral

history projects and news from across the country. In addition, this year we have a special COVID-19 section in recognition of how social distancing and travel restrictions have impacted on oral historians' work. This section features reports from a broad range of oral historians who reflect on how they have modified, transformed or abandoned their work in response to the pandemic.

Gemma Burden, our Reviews Editor, has again performed an exceptional job identifying books to review, inviting reviewers and editing their pieces. We hope this offers readers an introduction to a diverse range of some of the most exciting new research in oral history from Australia and internationally. We would like to thank outgoing Editorial Chair Francesco Ricatti for his contributions over the past three years. Francesco has worked hard to secure the best possible reviewers for our peer-reviewed articles to secure constructive feedback to help enhance the standard of this section. We welcome our new Editorial Chair Alexandra Dellios and look forward to working with her into the future. We also express our appreciation to all members of the Editorial Board who have lent their expertise in different areas of oral history to assessing and responding to articles.

Last year, Oral History Australia introduced two new awards to complement the Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History. We warmly congratulate the 2019 recipients of each award: Rosemary Block (the Hazel de Berg Award); Peg Fraser (the OHA Book Award); joint winners of the OHA Media Award, namely curators Anisa Puri and Shirleene Robinson (digital exhibition) and co-producers Catherine Freyne and Scott McKinnon and sound engineer Mark Don (two radio programs).

Plans are well underway for next year's biennial conference that is to be held in Launceston from 14-16 October. The conference theme is 'Troubling Times: Opportunities and Challenges'. We hope COVID does not prevent us meeting face to face, engaging with our colleagues and hearing about each other's research. In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this refreshed journal and find it readily accessible, visually appealing and intellectually stimulating.

Skye Krichauff and Carla Pascoe Leahy