

OHA PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO AGM, 14 OCTOBER 2021

Oral History Australia is a national committee with membership comprising each State and Territory association, and a representative from each State and Territory association serving on the OHA Committee. Most of the activity of Oral History Australia occurs at the level of the State and Territory associations, each of which has an active committee that runs state-based events and activities. Indeed, one of the most gratifying segments of the bi-monthly national committee meeting involves reports from each state and territory about their innovative, inclusive and inspirational activities at the regional level.

Over the past year, the main activities at the national level have included:

Biennial OHA Conference in Launceston, October 2021 – postponed to October 2022

- By now you will all know that Covid restrictions required us to postpone our 2021 conference, which will be held in Launceston on 14-16 October 2022. It was generally agreed that it was better to postpone and hold a face-to-face conference in 2022 than to run an online event in 2021. Presentations that were accepted for 2021 will be rolled over to 2022 (subject to confirmation by each presenter), and there will be a new Call for Presentations. The conference theme will remain as Oral History in Troubling Times: Opportunities & Challenges. US oral historian Mark Cave will present the introductory keynote, and the closing plenary will be offered by a panel of Tasmanian Indigenous historians.
- Thanks to Oral History Tasmania, led by Jill Cassidy, for their previous and continuing work as host for the Launceston conference (in partnership with OHA, the College of Arts, Law and Education at the University of Tasmania, and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery). Thanks to OHA webmaster Judy Hughes for her work promoting the event, to Annemarie Reid for managing the Easychair conference proposal system, and to members of the National Program Committee for reviewing proposals: Elisabeth Gondwe, Alistair Thomson, Carolyn Connors, Scott McKinnon, Elaine Rabbitt and Linda Hunt (of UTas).

Oral History Australia Awards – 2021

- The **Oral History Australia Book Award 2021** is presented to joint winners:
 - *Many Maps, Charting Two Cultures, First Nations and Europeans in Western Australia* by Bill and Jenny Bunbury (UWA Publishing, 2020);
 - *In the Eye of the Storm: Volunteers and Australia's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis* by Robert Reynolds, Shirleene Robinson and Paul Sendziuk (NewSouth Publishing, 2021).
 - Two other books also made the short list: *Out of the Madhouse: from Asylums to Caring Community?* by Sandy Jeffs and Margaret Leggatt; and *Upheaval: Disrupted lives in journalism*, edited by Andrew Dodd and Matthew Ricketson.
- The **Oral History Australia Media Award 2021** is presented to:
 - *Stories of Strength: Songs and Stories from Anne Street Reserve 2021*, The Anne St Reserve Oral History and Concert Project, Produced by Big MAMA Productions, Gwen Knox, Broome WA.

- Citations for the winners will be available via the OHA website. Many thanks to OHA Book Award Judging Panel members Peg Fraser, Beth Robertson and Maria Savvidis, and to OHA Media Award Judging Panel members Elisabeth Gondwe, Anisa Puri and Hamish Sewell.
- The Hazel de Berg award is held over so that it can be awarded at the postponed conference in October 2022 – there will be a new call for nominations.

OHA Journal

- Editors Skye Krichauff and Carla Pascoe Leahy have implemented (with excellent support from OHA webmaster Judy Hughes) imaginative ideas for developing the journal, including the new title of *Studies in Oral History: Journal of Oral History Australia*, and a design revamp for the 2020 issue, Issue 42, Intimate Stories, Challenging Histories. Issue 43, 2021 ('Oral History, Place and the Environment') will be published to coincide with the October 2021 AGM
- thanks to Carla and Skye, to Judy, to chair of the Editorial Committee, Alex Dellios, to new and continuing members of the Committee, and to hard-working editorial team members: Reviews Editor Gemmia Burden and Reports Editor Imogen Smith (who stepped down early 2021). National Committee agreed to pay the cost of a copy editor to ease the workload of the journal editors.

OHA website

- Judy Hughes continues her terrific job keeping the national website up to date; coordinating with state and territory association websites to ensure shared resources and to avoid too much overlap or repetition; and coordinating national communications
- Judy coordinated a redesign of the national website (in conjunction with the recreation of the WA association website), which was launched in December 2020. South Australia / Northern Territory has adopted the new branding (though not the web format), and other state and territory association are encouraged to do so.
- we used the website to share ideas for remote recording during and after the pandemic

Oral History – Statement of Value

- in 2022 OHA Committee agreed on a Statement of Value which summarises what makes oral history so special and so valuable. The Statement of Value is on the OHA website at <https://oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/guidance/what-is-oral-history/>

Capitation fee

- Due to a stable and healthy bank balance, and reduced costs now the journal is fully online, the OHA Committee agreed to reduce the capitation fee for the current financial year from \$15 per head to \$10 per head.

Finally, many thanks to all our national committee members, who have been meeting regularly via Zoom (Jill Cassidy, Alex Dellios, Kyra Edwards, Elisabeth Gondwe, David Sweet, William Martin and myself), and to hard-working officer bearers David (Secretary), Kyra (Treasurer), Alex (Public Officer), Jill (Vice-President) and Judy (Web Officer). I understand that Alex is standing down as the NSW delegate (to be replaced by Maria Savvidis), and I want to especially thanks Alex for her thoughtful

contributions to the work of the Committee. Voluntary organisations only thrive because of volunteer time, effort and imagination, and in this regard OHA continues to be blessed.

Alistair Thomson, President OHA