



## IN THIS EDITION

New edition of *The Wakefield Companion*

The City of Adelaide Oral History Project 1978 – 2024

Conference Bursary Winner:  
Dr Susan Timpani

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*Cover image: (from left) Lord Mayor Dr Jane Lomax-Smith, Emeritus Professor Wilfrid Prest, Dr Sandra Kearney, Bernie O'Neil, and Dr Kerrie Round after the launch of 'The Wakefield Companion'. Story on page 7.*

*Photo supplied by Jane Lomax-Smith*

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# Editors' Letter

Looking at the wattles blooming in my garden, I am reminded that, despite the unseasonal rain and colder temperatures, spring has sprung in the region known by Kurna as Ngangkiparinga (Onkaparinga) or women's place by the river—which means another edition of *Word of Mouth*!

This edition brings us to the end of David Sweet's tenure as President, which spanned three years and countless meetings to establish new and innovative ideas to carry the SA/NT chapter forward, notably transitioning to online through the beginning of COVID. I met David years ago when he generously offered his time to a reading group to support Dante and I (and previous committee member, Karen McDonough) through our honours programs, through which we embarked on OH projects; mine that recorded histories of First Nations peoples' experiences with homelessness and Dante's of young people in the queer community. Just as we thanked him in our theses then, we thank him again for his unwavering support of our co-editorship. It is great to hear that David will remain on the committee, so that we can continue to draw on his wealth of experience as a passionate advocate for oral history and the voices it amplifies.

Incoming President Christeen Schoepf's first address is featured this edition and promises lots of new and exciting ventures for the SA/NT chapter! Christeen has been instrumental to our settling into this role, always with a laugh and hug when we manage to cross paths in real life, so we extend our congratulations on the appointment and offer our full support through the presidency.

There are also stories about some recent book launches, current projects from members, and an interview with Dr Susan Timpani who won our bursary award to attend the upcoming national conference in Melbourne. It is clear from this edition that Oral History is alive and well in our region!

Until next time,

Carly Heinrich & Dante DeBono

*We acknowledge Kurna as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection to the land, and thank them for caring for Country. We pay our respect to Elders, past and present, and extend that acknowledgement and respect to the First Nations people of other regions. Sovereignty was not ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.*

## About Oral History Australia SA/NT

***The objectives of Oral History Australia Inc. are to promote the practice and methods of oral history; to educate in the use of oral history methods; to encourage discussion on all aspects of oral history; and to foster the preservation of oral history records in Australia.***

Committee: David Sweet (President); Dianne Korare (Secretary); Carolyn Collins (Treasurer); Christeen Schoepf (Membership Secretary); Judy Bailey (Website); William Martin; Sally Stephenson; Enid Woodley; Skye Krichauff.

Annual membership fees:

Individual \$40; Institution \$65; Student/Unemployed/Pensioner \$30

Editors: Dante DeBono and Carly Heinrich, [editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au](mailto:editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au)

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# President's Report

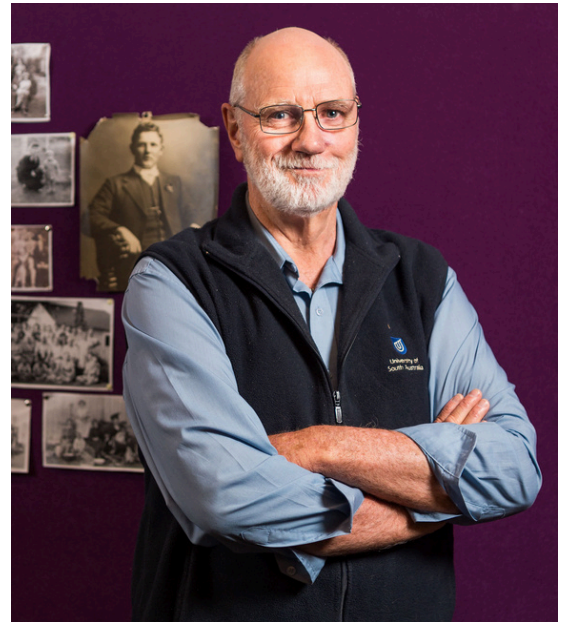
David Sweet

## Welcome

Following is an edited version of my final report as President of OHA SA/NT. I have enjoyed the three years as the President and feel that there have been significant and positive changes to our association. Resulting from a committee discussion, we opted for a fully online meeting for a number of reasons: more inclusive for non-city members; the cost of having a bricks and mortar venue if security, technology and associated costs had to be met; and people are time challenged to attend AGMs.

## Management

Volunteer organisations rise and fall on the dedication and enthusiasm of members and its management committee. OHA SA/NT is very lucky to have a wonderful group of volunteers taking on the diverse roles that drive its professionalism. Change is inevitable and I would like to extend my personal thanks to Sally Stephenson, who is resigning, for her many years of work as a committee member, treasurer, and oral history trainer. It is those like Sally who keep our organisation running.



*Dr David Sweet, photo supplied*

To the wonderfully supportive and committed committee members, Carolyn Collins (Treasurer), Christeen Schoepf (Membership), Dianne Korare (Secretary), Judy Bailey (Web and Internet), William Martin (NT) and Skye Krichauff (Conference), I thank you. Your support and professionalism have been greatly appreciated.

This is also a time for change and with this AGM we expect to welcome two new members to the committee: Dante DeBono, who has been our *Word of Mouth* Editor for the past 18 months, and Danni Reade from the South East and the joint 2023 History Council of SA's Excellence in Oral History Award winner.

With the changes to the committee, some of the processes will change as well. The Secretary will also look after membership in conjunction with the Treasurer, and oversee the web and online communications. There will be a sub-committee to manage the upcoming 2026 National Conference to be hosted in SA, and the training programs/workshops will be another working group.

There are four significant activities that your committee is working on that will have an impact on our budgets and funds. Consideration is being given to seeking grants, sponsorships, and other support to meet some of these costs. In no specific order, these projects include: the 2026 National Conference, the SA/NT web update, costs associated with the new edition of the *Oral History Handbook*, and the continuing project of digitising all past copies of *Word of Mouth*.

Since about 2009, SA/NT has had a digital recorder and equipment available for members to hire. With the rapid change in technology, users were having compatibility issues with this equipment. Higher-quality, smaller, and less-expensive digital equipment is now available. A Zoom (H4n) recorder (donated) with the associated equipment is now available for hire by members. Look for upcoming information about this in our newsletters and website.

### **Communications**

Once again, Dante DeBono, and Carly Heinrich have my admiration for the wonderful work they have done in producing two outstanding productions of *Word of Mouth*. With the brilliant support of Judy Baily on our website and email communications, members have been kept informed of all things 'oral history' locally, nationally, and internationally.

The changes to our website in conjunction with Victoria and Tasmania has not progressed as fast as expected, but the work behind the scenes is continuing. There will be changes in the coming few months.

Beth Robertson has retired from the State Library of SA and is expending some considerable retirement time in researching and drafting a complete re-write (6th edn) of the very popular *Oral History Handbook*. The incoming committee will continue working with Beth on this project. Initially, it was hoped to have it ready for the 2024 National conference in November, but for anyone who has published a book, deadlines are not always achievable.

### **Activities**

While actual formal meetings between our members have not been as prolific as pre-COVID, often other connections have been numerous and positive. The annual Christmas brunch in December 2023 was fun and enjoyable. Almost at the same time of our previous AGM, an informative and engaging workshop was held at the Gawler Institute. During the 2024 History Festival, OHA SA/NT had a promotional and informative day at the Barossa Festival. A number of contacts from this are being followed-up. Sally Stephenson organised a very interesting tour of the State Parliament Library. The records and history in its collection are remarkable.

Caroline and Christeen attended the AHA Conference at the Flinders University and spoke on oral history projects and promoted oral history. Our membership of the History Council of SA continues to be beneficial with the third Excellence in Oral History Award as part of the History Festival. Also, Christeen and I presented overviews of oral history and its benefits at the History Council's (HCSA) annual Regional Lecture in 2023 at the Whyalla Library. The keynote speaker of the Whyalla Regional Conference was committee member Skye Krichauff, who spoke on her project Frontier War Stories. This year's Regional Lecture will be in Mt Gambier, and a workshop is planned in conjunction with this.

During the past year, members and I have been interviewed on individual projects, given presentations across a number of oral history interests, on commercial and community radio, and the ABC. I have made myself available via email, phone, or in meeting with members and those interested in oral history. The questions and discussions have centred around digital equipment, ethics, and depositing oral history collections. I have also represented OHA SA/NT with the University of South Australia in its Living Library Project.



## **My Thanks**

When I stepped in to the President's role four AGMs ago, I said I'd do it for one year. That seems to have been extended somewhat. However, I am now passing on the President's role to Christeen who has been a major support to me and enthusiastic advocate for oral history for many years. I have thoroughly enjoyed these past years and have hopefully had a positive impact on oral history here in SA and the NT. With the great supportive team behind me, I have been able to lead introducing some changes, improved our marketing (the results are yet to come though), and establish an initial working group to plan for the 2026 National OH Conference here in Adelaide. Other initiatives have been discussed and talked about previously. I intend to remain on the committee as the Immediate Past President to support Christeen and I will also continue as the National Secretary until the Adelaide Conference in 2026.

***Thank you,  
David Sweet***

**President  
2021 – 2024  
OHA SA/NT**



# From our New President

Christeen Schoepf

In August, I was elected as the new President of OHA SA/NT. I am sure that most of you know me, or about me, as I have been around for quite a while now. But for those who don't, I thought I would tell a little about myself. I first became exposed to the world of oral history while studying at the University of New England (NSW) in the early 2000s where I took a unit with Associate Professor Janis Wilton (now OAM), who, at the time, I believe was President/Immediate Past President of the International Committee of Oral History. She was a passionate teacher who instilled the same in her students, juxtaposed with best practice historical thinking, questioning, and analysis, that continue to underpin my oral history practice and projects. I joined the Oral History Association soon after and was the Membership Secretary for about a decade. I work as an Historical Archaeologist with a focus on objects and material culture, and the notion that objects have lives and therefore stories, just as people do...they are born (created), have a life (used), and die (discarded or sometimes repurposed). But it is the inextricable relationship that exists between an object and its maker, and the investigation of these relationships through historical research, oral history, and other methods that gives new layers of meaning to the object as each person creates, shapes, moves, sells, gifts, disposes, or reuses the object. Some of these stories have appeared in past issues of *WoM* and the journal. I also record the memories of those who are living with Dementia and undertake commissions for local councils, organisations, and the public.



*Christeen Schoepf, photo supplied*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those committee members, who have recently retired from their long-term positions, for their hard work and dedication to our association. Firstly, David Sweet for his stewardship of our group as we moved kicking and sometimes screaming into this rapidly changing world of COVID, shutdowns, Zoom meetings, and technology such as AI. He has been a solid, fair, and supportive leader with a vast knowledge that has bode us well and kept us moving in the right direction when times were tough, personally and collegially. I well remember his comment that he would only take on the role for one year...and four years later, I have taken over the Presidency! I would also like to thank long-term, past Treasurer and committee person, Sally Stephenson, for guiding me through the early days of my time as Membership Secretary, and for the many workshops she facilitated. And to Di Korare, thank you for taking on the role of Secretary while also doing your PhD. I am hoping you

are aware how appreciative we were that you did so, and we are sorry that you have had to put both aside for now, but equally happy that you have remained on the committee. Thank you, thank you, thank you to you all. Welcome Dante DeBono to the committee proper. Dante has been co-editor of *WoM* with Carly Heinrich for two years and has now joined us. Welcome also to Danni Reade from Mount Gambier to our committee, and thank you, Judy Bailey from Barmera, for taking on the position of Secretary. We are now truly a regionally focussed group!

So, to the future...my hope for OHA SA/NT is that we travel as far and wide as we can, physically and virtually, to reach out to people like us who love to record the memories of people with stories to tell, experiences to recall, and history to preserve. We have already hit the ground running and have some exciting events happening in the next few months: another fabulous edition of *WoM*, an Introductory Workshop, a weekend of recording oral history at Anlaby, three speakers at the NZ Oral History Conference, and quite a few of us travelling to Narm/Melbourne for the Oral History Australia Conference. Some of us will also be travelling to Mount Gambier at the end of November to attend the History Council of SA Regional Lecture, and the next day we will be providing an Introductory Workshop at the Mount Gambier Library. Our new website is well on its way to completion and will be more user-friendly and informative. And of course Christmas is not too far off, so we will soon be planning our get together.

As for our most northern members...I will be there in the very near future to go through the archives, meet some of you, and to organise a workshop or two. We would also value some input on platforms such as *WoM*, or even a few lines for the online newsletter about exciting things that might be happening in your neck of the woods. Events occurring in the NT can also be placed on the website as other groups look for content for their own newsletters and blogs. Get in touch, we would love to hear from you all!

Finally, our own conference is now only two years away and we have been quietly meeting with people with whom we are forging strong relationships and partnerships, and although the next eighteen months will be busy, we are confident our conference will be a successful event.

So...thank you for having the confidence to elect me as President, I know the next few years coming into the conference might at times be stressful, but we have a dynamic and extremely talented group here at OHA SA/NT who are nothing but supportive of each other and the association. Most of all, we are friends. Thank you for coming along on this journey with us.

With warm regards,

**Christeen Schoepf**  
**President**





# The New Edition of *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History*

Bernard O'Neil

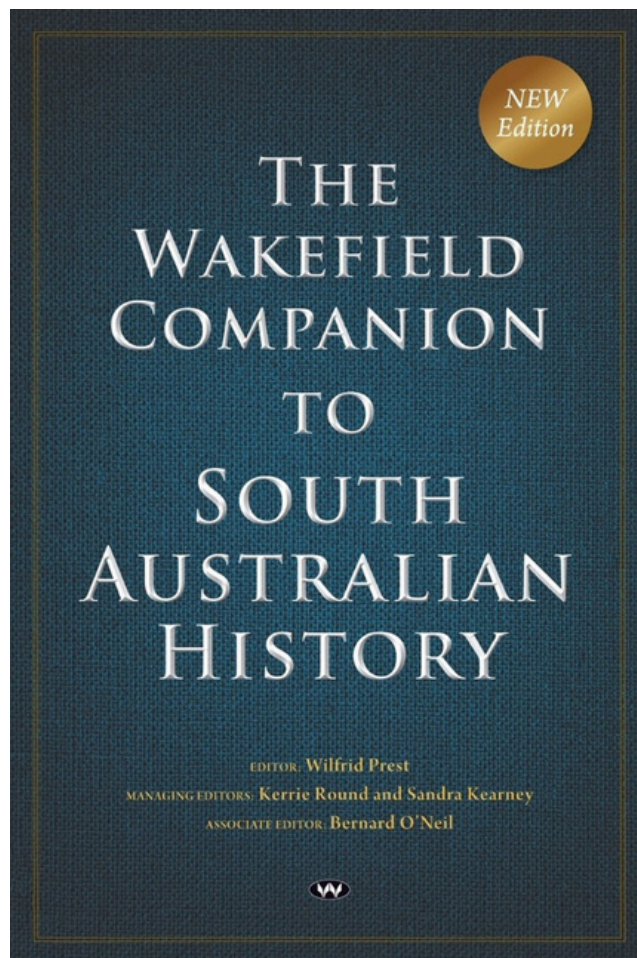
The closing event of South Australia's month-long History Festival on 31 May saw the release of the new edition of *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History* (ISBN 978 1 92304 255 1). Launched by the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Dr Jane Lomax-Smith, during festivities in the art deco Piccadilly Cinema (pictured on the cover), the heavy tome—even in paperback format—of 820 pages is beautifully typeset on good, low show-through paper, and includes a block of colour illustrations.

This expanded, revised, and updated volume of an innovative book first published in 2001—the first historical encyclopedia for any Australian state or territory—and never subsequently out of print, has been a long time coming. Much of the original text was digitised for the History Trust of South Australia's 'History Hub' website ten years ago, but the printed book remains indispensable as a compact, readily accessible reference source with its contents fixed and dated from a known point in time. Hence, the pressing need for a new edition of *The Wakefield Companion to South Australian History* in both print and e-book format persuaded the chief executive of the History Trust, Greg Mackie, and his colleague, Dr Kristy Kokegei, to seek the approval of the Minister of Education, John Gardiner, to commission Wakefield Press in late 2021 to undertake that task. The then Department of History at the University of Adelaide won the right to host the editorial team for the project, just as it had done for the first edition. Emeritus Professor Wilfrid Prest, the general editor of the first edition, was the driving force leading the editorial team of Dr Sandra Kearney, Bernie O'Neil, Dr Kerrie Round—who reprised her role as the inaugural managing editor—and two postgraduate student interns, Mary Harpas and Grace May Howe. In addition, the experienced staff at Wakefield Press were vital to ensuring the project's successful conclusion—Maddy Sexton as production controller and copy editor, Michael Deves' design and layout skills, and the unparalleled booktrade and local knowledge of publisher Michael Bollen, which proved to be an invaluable resource throughout.

Of course, the crucial element, the book's *sine qua non*, was the unpaid expertise and labour of its contributors. Whereas the first edition brought together the work of some 225 subject specialists, this compilation has mobilised more than 350 authors. The contributors comprise those whose work reappears essentially unaltered from the first edition; those who revised their first-edition material; those who revised and/or updated first-edition entries not written by themselves; and those who compiled entirely new articles. This remarkable gathering of talent represents a very broad spectrum of disciplines and topics—not just within the Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), but also embracing much Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts,

and Maths (or Medicine; STEAM). It constitutes one of the largest scholarly research and publication collaborations ever undertaken in this country. By contrast, the *Oxford Companion to Australian History*, first published in 1998 and minimally revised a few years later, involved 314 contributors.

Although a small editorial reference group was established at an early stage, contact with its members by email and telephone replaced the face-to-face meetings which were the standard *modus operandi* for the first edition. While that volume was compiled within eighteen months of the commissioning of contributions, the publication timeline for the new edition was even tighter. The existence of a first edition simplified, or indeed, obviated the need for numerous decisions about content and format. Just over half of the



original 671 entries did not require bringing up to date or other revision, but the new edition includes a substantial 285 updated entries, alongside nearly 150 entirely new ones, roughly two-thirds biographies and one-third thematic articles. Both new and revised entries had to be commissioned at a time when the pressures of working life have noticeably intensified, not least for the academics who constitute the bulk of the authors. Moreover, it was only to be expected that some of the original contributors would be unable for whatever reason to revisit their entries, but the process of identifying people with the necessary knowledge and expertise willing to revise or update someone else's work often proved far from straightforward.

Some features of the first edition have not been retained, including the chronology and the summary list of South Australians treated in the Australian Dictionary of Biography (now readily available online), while the list of entries and contributors precedes the subject index at the back of the book. As before, attempts to commission entries on some subjects proved unsuccessful, but who knows what the future holds in that respect!

This volume is an alphabetically organised guide and first point-of-call reference to significant events, institutions, people, places, themes and topics bearing on the history of South Australia. It seeks to provide an authoritative and comprehensive source of historical background information, presented in readily accessible language and format. While paying attention to distinctive, innovative, and unusual

elements in South Australian history, the Wakefield Companion also underlines the contribution made by South Australians to the broader national culture, polity and society. The history presented is broadly conceived, reflecting how over the past 30 years or so various forms of democratising ‘history from below’—notably social history, cultural history, women’s and gender history, Aboriginal history, environmental history, urban history, micro-history, local history and oral history—have both supplemented and enlivened more traditional branches of historical enquiry and writing.

As with the first edition, contributors receive no fee or recompense, apart from a complimentary copy of the published volume and the concomitant psychological rewards of participating in a major scholarly project; any accrued lending rights payments or royalties will be donated to the History Council of South Australia to support future research and publication in South Australian history.



*Emeritus Professor Wilfrid Prest (left), and Lord Mayor Dr Jane Lomax-Smith (right) at the History Festival launch event in the Piccadilly Cinema  
Photo supplied by Jane Lomax-Smith*

# Excellence in Oral History Award

Carolyn Collins

Congratulations to our very own Chris Schoepf who was awarded the Excellence in Oral History award at the History Council of SA award ceremonies on May 31.

Chris has published books for local historical groups, peer-reviewed journal articles, oral history discovery interviews, media interviews, and content for *Storytowns* podcasts. Her events and exhibitions include the curation of the 'Community Zone' at the acclaimed Spirit of Anzac events held in South Australia during the Armistice celebrations, over a dozen 'Cheer-Up Hut' recreations and associated events, and SA History Festival exhibits.

With a dedicated team, Christeen Schoepf has been a driving force behind the establishment of the 'Story-Lab' recording studio in the Pt Pirie Museum Complex to capture and save local oral histories.

Fantastic effort and well done, Chris!



*Chris Schoepf with HCSA President, Matt Fitzpatrick (left), photo supplied*



# The City of Adelaide Oral History Project 1978 – 2024

Madeleine Regan

## The history of the project

In 1984, the Adelaide City Council established an Oral History Project to record oral history interviews with people who had made a notable contribution to the City of Adelaide, as part of its concern to preserve evidence of Adelaide's past. The project had commenced in 1977 when historian John Tregenza recorded reminiscences of three former deputy town clerks of the City of Adelaide. In 1978, twelve interviews were recorded with former lord mayors and their wives, former councillors and senior staff members in a pilot project.

In 1984 the project coincided with preparations for the state's 150 Jubilee Celebrations in 1986, the national Bicentennial in 1988 and the City's own 150th anniversary in 1990. By 1990, the collection had broadened with sixty-one interviews recorded, including with elderly residents of the City. As the project developed, the memories of a wider selection of people were recorded, including Aboriginal people and residents and businesspeople from a range of cultural backgrounds.

In 1999, when 100 interviews had been recorded, the Council published a guide and index to the collection to facilitate access to them. The publication, titled *City Memory: A Guide and Index to the City of Adelaide Oral History Collection*, was authored by former OHA president and committee member Karen George, who was employed as the project's oral historian for about five years. George went on to win the



Adelaide City Archives  
Photo supplied by Madeleine Regan

prestigious national Hazel de Berg award in 2017, for extensive contributions to oral history.

In 2011, after ten years dormant, the oral history project was revived to coincide with the state's 175th celebrations, known then as the Oral History (Extension) Project 2011 – 2013. I was employed and recorded an additional 20 interviews with a wide range of people who explained their connections to, and memories of, the City. For example, I recorded interviews with two previous lord mayors, Steve Condous, the first Greek Australian to have been in that role, and Henry Ninio. I also interviewed Keith Altmann who had owned Popeye's on the River Torrens for about 50 years. Other people who had worked in the City included Dulcie Boag, who had volunteered at homeless service Hutt Street Centre for 33 years, and architect Newell Platten who ran his practice in the City, had worked as chief design architect for the South Australia Housing Trust, and was a resident.



*Adelaide City Archives  
Photo supplied by Madeleine Regan*

### **The current project**

In 2023, Lord Mayor Jane Lomax-Smith reinstated the project with a commitment to record a further 20 interviews with a wide range of people for the newly titled City of Adelaide Oral History Project 2024 – 2026. This will bring the total number of interviews to 148 in the collection. The Lord Mayor has been involved in the selection of candidates from five categories for the new stage of the project, those being: former lord mayors and lady mayoresses, former long-term employees, past long-serving elected members, people who have had a business over an extensive period, and long-time residents.

I began my current role at the Adelaide City Council in February this year, and I really enjoy the work of interviewing people about their lives, memories, and connections to the City. So far this year, I have interviewed Angela Condous about her role as Lady Mayoress (1987 – 1993) and as patron of The Advertiser Sunday Mail Foundation which raised more than \$20 million over 20 years. Another person I interviewed was Aunty Yvonne Agius, who has been co-chair of the Council's Reconciliation Committee since 2010 and a strong advocate for First Nations people in her working life. Driller Jet Armstrong, deejay and artist, has owned Rundle Street nightclub Sugar since 2002, was interviewed as a representative of long-time business owners in the City. And as long-serving (and current) employee of the City of Adelaide, Antonio 'Tony' Lepore reflected on his experience of working as a gardener for over 60 years. I am currently planning the next round of interviews.

### **Where are the interviews held?**

The recordings and transcripts of interviews are kept in the City Archives in Topham Mall. The State Library of South Australia also holds some of the interviews. You might be surprised about what you can find in the City Archives. In addition to the oral histories, you could also locate over six kilometres of records dating back to 1840. There are over 15,000 historic photographs, 22 million correspondence docketts, 8,000 maps, plans, and drawings, more than 400 paintings and artworks, and many other resources.

You can read more about the oral history collection in the City of Adelaide here:

<https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/community/creativity-culture/city-archives/oral-history-collection/>



# Barossa History Festival Tanunda, May 2024

Christeen Schoepf

This year the biennial Barossa History Festival was held in Tanunda where the whole town became the venue and visitors were encouraged to walk or catch the free bus to view what took their fancy from the huge program. The festival began on the Saturday, with tours of various historical places and a dinner held at the Vine Inn where SA History Advocate, Keira Lindsey, and Kathryn Schilling both gave fabulous presentations. Diners were entertained by the Liedertafel 1850 Male Voice Choir whose average age is well past retirement, but their voices were calming, beautiful, and poignant.

On the Sunday, Oral History SA/NT set up in the church hall alongside SA Genealogy and Heraldry Society, Pioneers Association, the Gawler History Team, and others. OHA SA/NT member, Paula Bartsch, is on the organising committee and came by to see us and make sure that we had everything we needed. Members from the Eudunda area, Dagmar and John Preusker, also spent some time with us, as did Susan Timpani. It was fabulous to see you all and catch up on current projects and issues. Some time was also spent with Gill Lee from the Gawler group discussing copyright and the importance of Consent/Permission forms. Most of the people dropping by were curious as to what we do and the nuances of oral history. It was a fabulous day and well worth making the trip.

See you in 2026,  
Barossa Valley!

*Dagmar and John  
Preusker (left), with Paula  
Bartsch and David Sweet  
Photo supplied by  
Christeen Schoepf*



**[You can watch some of the highlights on YouTube here.](#)**



# Conference Bursary Winner: Dr Susan Timpani

Carolyn Collins

Dr Susan Timpani has been awarded the 2024 OHA SA/NT Bursary to attend the biennial Oral History Australia Conference being held in Melbourne this November.

Susan, a nurse academic, will be presenting her paper on 'Experiences of International Nursing Students in SA during the COVID-19 Pandemic'. We asked her a few questions ahead of the conference.

## ***Q: How did you get involved in Oral History?***

A: My children tell me that Googling information about an individual that you know is stalking! I went ahead anyway and Googled the name of the Matron I trained under at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. At the age of 17, I had thought Matron Tanner was ancient. Now that I have reached my 'ancient' years, I was interested to find out how old she really was. I discovered that Matron had been a ripe old age of 60. In my search, I discovered that Matron Tanner had been interviewed as part of an Oral History Project conducted by Registered Nurse, Dr Joan Durdin. The collection can be found in the SLSA: [Dr Joan Durdin History of Nursing in South Australia OH17/75](#).

I contacted the library and booked a time to listen to the tape recording. I was hooked! I was also curious about the interviewer who had recorded 93 hours and 25 minutes of nurses' stories. I Googled Joan (as you do), who at that time (2017), was 95 years old. I was incredibly honoured to have the opportunity to interview her. In 2022, Joan turned 100 years old and she agreed to be interviewed again. The recordings can be found in the SLSA: [Interview with Joan Durdin \[sound recording\] / Interviewer: Susan Timpani OH1132](#).

## ***Q: Tell us about your Oral History work.***

A: In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and as a nurse academic, I witnessed the impact on international nursing students. I applied my knowledge and skills in oral history to record their stories. I want to go to the Conference to share the meaning of the stories the students told during the pandemic. While there were positive accounts, the recurrent theme was their disadvantage due to their Temporary Migrant status. The



students made themselves vulnerable to share stories about poverty, anti-Asian racism, and poor mental health. I have a responsibility to raise awareness about their experiences. They have entrusted their stories to me in the hope that future students will not face the same injustices. This project became the focus of my PhD and is available in the SLSA: [OH 1187 Experiences of International Nursing Students in SA during COVID-19](#). To make the recording accessible, they have also been edited and presented as a podcast at [Closed Borders PodBean](#).

***Q: What are you looking forward to at the OHA Conference?***

A: I want to be inspired and learn from other oral historians so that I can develop my vision for future OH projects. Most of all, I want to be in the presence of Alessandro Portelli who knows what social injustice really means.

***Congratulations Susan!***



*Dr Susan Timpani  
Photo supplied*



# New Book from our Member

Carolyn Collins

Oral History SA/NT congratulates member May Kuan Lim on the publication of her new book, *Reach Out, Build Up, Send Back: The Unfolding Story of the Overseas Christian Fellowship*.

Based on archival material, alumni contributions, and 70 oral history interviews conducted by May Kuan and her team, the book explores the history of the Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF), a student-run Christian fellowship group established in 1959 that meets on tertiary campuses around Australia.

The idea for the book came from the OCF Heritage Project, established in 2020 by several OCF alumni who wanted to preserve the group's history for future generations. May Kuan, a former WOM editor, was the team's lead researcher and writer. In 2020, she successfully applied for OHA SA/NT's Lizzie Russell Grant to help fund the project. 'We wanted to preserve and communicate the history of the OCF by creating a digital archive and publishing a book', she said.

To gather source material, the team put out a call for the donations of OCF-related material. From this, meeting minutes, camp booklets, photographs, and other memorabilia were accepted and digitally archived. However, minutes from 1970 to 2000 were missing. 'Oral history has been used to fill gaps in extant records, but more than that, oral history interviews have provided first-hand accounts and have been used in the retelling of the OCF story,' May Kuan said.

The end result is a comprehensive account of the OCF Australia from its formation in 1959 to 2022. Personal and local centre histories are interwoven into a unified narrative and key events are examined through the words and retrospection of the people involved.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges with May Kuan and her team having to pivot to online interviewing. To tell one unified OCF Australia story, the team also prioritised interviewing national leaders. Where possible they also paired up to conduct interviews, which May Kuan said made the work 'more enjoyable and collaborative'. Student members of the OCF were invited to accompany more experienced oral historians.

'We provided training in oral history basics, interview techniques and transcription conventions. There was a list of interview questions, which interviewers were free to expand. Priority was to listen to what interviewees found significant rather than to cover all questions,' May Kuan said.



To encourage engagement with the material, paid transcription work was offered to students: correcting AI-generated transcripts and producing timed summaries. Students were also invited to identify issues of significance from the interviews and any connection to the present time. 'Through their reflections as well as my own, I identified 24 issues or points of organisational change around which to structure the book,' May Kuan said.

In the interests of accuracy, May Kuan said individual oral histories were used only when corroborated by a second source. 'Multiple people often spoke about the same key events, but sometimes interpreted them differently,' she said.

'It was in investigating these differences that many valuable insights surfaced. This more mature understanding was hard won, as deep feelings often remained around complex issues. I gave interviewees my account prior to publication. If my account was challenged, I revisited the event, communicating more deeply with the people involved. Sometimes, this led to a more complete picture. At other times, I simply had to write my understanding of what took place, but provided multiple points of view, often through oral history excerpts'.

The book was launched at events held in Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong and is available both [online](#) and as a [paperback](#).

For more information on the OCF Heritage Project go to: <https://ocfaustralia.org/heritage/>



*May Kuan Lim signing copies of her new book  
Photo supplied*





## **Anlaby Spring Festival**

**19TH AND 20TH OF OCTOBER 2024**

**Open 10am to 5pm, both days.**  
**Last entry 3:30pm.**

Celebrate 185 years of history at Anlaby Station with our annual Spring Festival! Anlaby Station, located in Hamilton, SA, is the oldest Merino stud in South Australia and the second-oldest in Australia. Founded in 1839, Anlaby boasts a rich heritage, featuring one of the most intact Victorian-Edwardian gardens in the country.

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to immerse yourself in Anlaby's storied past and vibrant present. Enjoy access to our extensive grounds, free presentations, tours of our beautifully restored gardens, live music, and more. Secure your spot today and join in celebrating 185 years of Anlaby Station's legacy!

Day Pass tickets online are \$20 for adults, kids under the age of 16 are free. Two-day passes available for \$30. Prices are higher at the gate on the day (\$25 for adults).

At the request of Anlaby Station and local history group, Oral History SA/NT will be joining this fabulous weekend of celebration. Over the two days, we will be recording family memories and anecdotes of people attending who have ancestral or personal connections to the locality, as a contribution to the wider history of Anlaby and its people. We already have a few volunteers but if you are able to assist with recording on either day, please let me know ASAP at [christeen.schoepf@gmail.com](mailto:christeen.schoepf@gmail.com). Thank You!

# Membership Report

Christeen Schoepf

This is my last report as membership secretary, a role that I have had for almost a decade. The position will now be performed within the Secretary's role as there is a great deal of double and sometimes triple handling of the same transaction. In my time at the wheel, I began to compile a list of members interests if they had indeed completed and returned the membership form to me.

It has been interesting to follow the development and changing face of oral history projects. When I recorded my first interview the literature and teaching were all about so called 'history from below' and interviews were focussed on migrants, women and working-class memories. As time has passed, members interests and interviews have diversified accordingly. I am hoping to collate the numbers soon and I will relate the results via *WoM* once done. Some of the newer interests have been: environmental, STEM, cross-cultural, emergency services, railways, LGBTQIA+, podcasting, and labour projects.

Thank you everyone for your support during my time in the role. It has meant a great deal.

**Did you know** that as a member of OHA SA/NT you are entitled to be listed on our **online directory of oral historians?**

Oral History Australia SA/NT maintains a directory of oral historians who are able to undertake a wide range of paid consultancies or projects. Anyone looking to engage an oral historian can peruse the list and contact the members listed directly.

If you are a member of OHA SA/NT and would like your details added to the directory, please [fill in this application form](#) and forward it to [contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au](mailto:contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au).



# Welcome to our New OHA SA/NT Committee Members

## Danni Reade

For the past 15 years, Danni Reade has worked within the City of Mount Gambier Library, a role that has her surrounded by the world's most famous stories. However, it's the tales told by everyday people who wander into the Library's Historical Centre that captivate her the most.

Danni's background is in theatre, where she worked as an actor and producer before moving into broadcasting. She worked in both commercial radio and television across SA and NSW during the 2000s. Eventually, the 3:30am Breakfast Radio alarm began to wear thin, and an opportunity to join the team at the new multi-million-dollar Mount Gambier Library arose. Her task was to use her theatre background to create new and exciting literacy programs for children. After three years of reading picture books, singing songs, and being covered in glitter, the adult services team beckoned, and Danni stepped into the role of Local History Officer. The actor-broadcaster-children's entertainer-historian path was certainly unconventional, but for someone with a love of storytelling, it actually made a lot of sense.

For just over 10 years now, Danni has used her colourful array of skills and talents to share Mount Gambier's history in fun and engaging ways to the community —“Sometimes stories of grumpy old men in top hats can do with a bit of glitter too.” Her highlights include the creation of the Immersive Storytelling Project (combining oral histories and virtual reality software for people in aged care), the City of Mount Gambier's StoryWalk historic walking tours, the 2023 History Council of SA/Oral History Australia SA/NT Oral History Excellence Award-winning *Don't Overdue It* podcast (that you can read more about in this issue), the 175 Digital Timeline website, and presenting countless talks and workshops, from primary schools to National Symposiums across the country.

Danni is thrilled to join the Oral History Australia SA/NT committee to increase the visibility of the work being done in the far south-east corner of the state, expand her knowledge, and continue sharing stories with like-minded people.

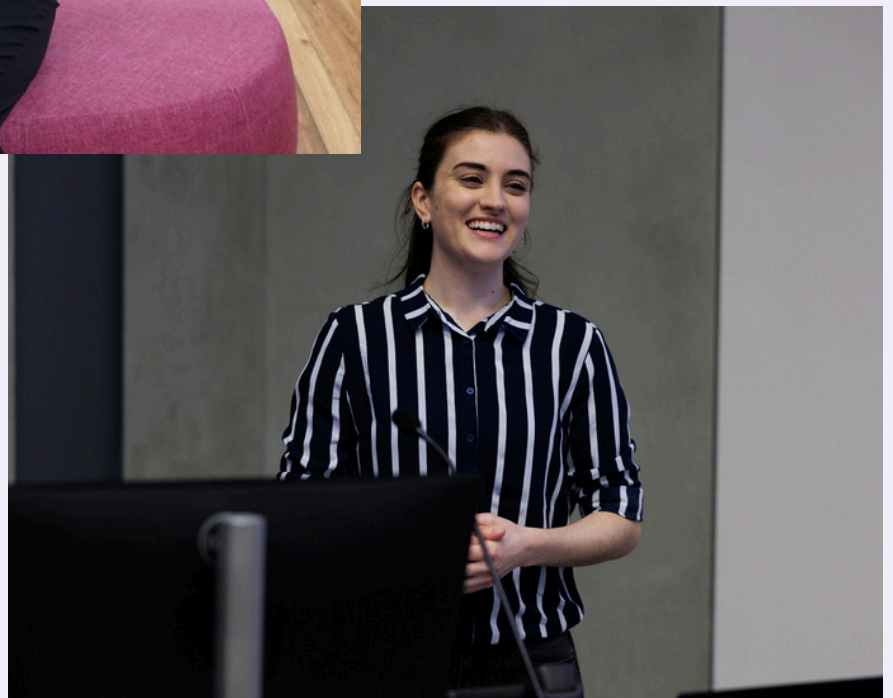




Our new committee members, Danni Reade (left) and Dante DeBono (below)  
Photos supplied

## Dante DeBono

Always seeking out stories with a genuine interest in people's lives, Dante DeBono enrolled in a double degree at the University of South Australia straight out of high school, studying Creative Writing and Journalism. It was the start of an academic career that has lasted her



going on a decade with no intentions to stop, currently completing her PhD that explores the revisionist potential of queer adaptations through creative screenwriting practice. As her formal research takes a detour, becoming a co-editor for *Word of Mouth* in 2023 allowed her to maintain ties to OHA SA/NT.

In 2017, Dante found oral history by chance in a university classroom. Not through her sub-major in history and culture, but a casual conversation with David Sweet who was teaching courses in public relations at the time. Dante was recruited alongside two other students to help launch the UniSA Oral History Hub (ohh...), and went on to complete her Honours thesis utilising oral history to explore the lived experiences of young bisexual Australians—work she presented in Launceston at the 2022 OHA National Conference.

While she has been privy to the occasional committee meeting over the last year, Dante is excited to officially be a member of the team and looks forward to contributing to our efforts to advocate for oral history methodologies.





# Meet our Members: Mypolonga History Museum

Christeen Schoepf

Mypolonga, derived from the local Aboriginal name reported to mean 'Cliff Lookout Place', was originally a swamp area about 15 kilometre north of the Murray Bridge. The South Australian government reclaimed the land and opened several thousand acres for fruit growing purposes. The township was eventually surveyed in 1915. The History Museum is housed in the Mypolonga Institute, originally a simple wood and iron building constructed in 1920 and extended with a new brick façade in 1928. Started in the 1970s, the collection consists of memorabilia, photographs, meeting minutes, family histories, and much more that reflects the vibrant heritage of the community. While there are some permanent displays in the Institute, the focus of the Mypolonga History Museum has been to document and preserve the photographs, documents, and artefacts related to the history of Mypolonga and its diverse local community, past and present. The aims of the Mypolonga History Museum are to:

- collect and preserve the history of Mypolonga and surrounding areas
- educate the community and others about our history
- honour our Mypolonga pioneers

The group have started the cataloguing and digitisation of their collection and are supported by the Rural City of Murray Bridge, who have also assisted with the installation of 'wayfinding' signs for the increasingly popular seven-kilometre History Trail. The Mypolonga History Museum has recently joined OHA SA/NT to support their current project which aims to record and compare the memories of people who experienced both the 1956 and 2022 flood events that affected Mypolonga. Eight interviews have been completed over several sessions, and a short introductory workshop was presented to the group so that they can begin to gain the skills required to continue the project going forward. Anyone who might know of others who lived in the Mypolonga area and have memories of the flood events is invited to contact the Mypolonga History Museum at [mypohistory@outlook.com](mailto:mypohistory@outlook.com)



*Mypolonga History Museum  
Photo courtesy of SA History Network*



*The effects of the 2022 flood  
Photo supplied by Jenni Llewellyn*



*Sandbagging at Mypolonga 1956  
Photo supplied by Jenny Thomson*



*Below the Army Duck often  
mentioned in memories of the  
1956 flood event  
Photo supplied by Jenny Thomson*



# Australian History Association Conference Flinders University, July 2024

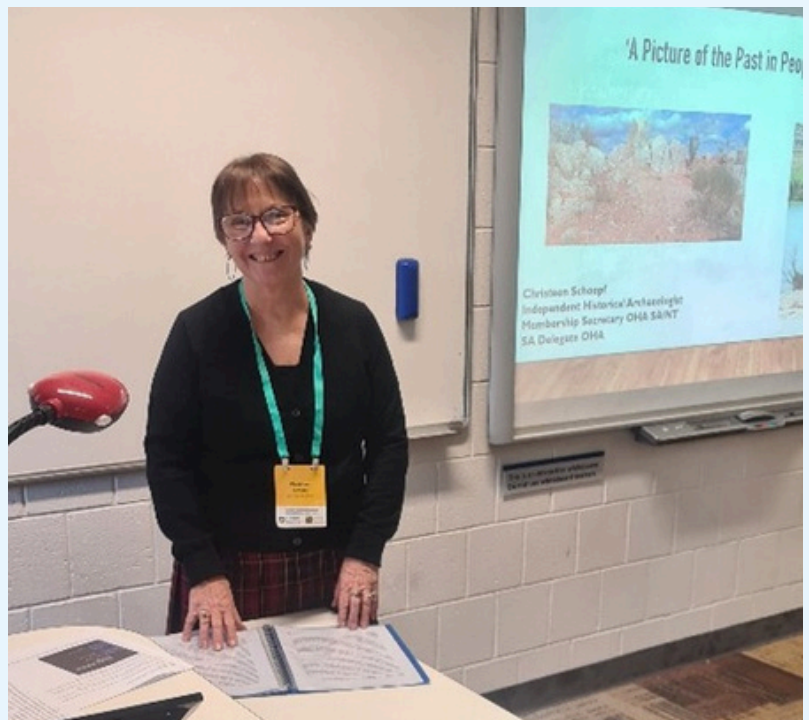
Christeen Schoepf

The 43rd Australian Historical Association Conference 'Home Truths' was hosted on 1–4 July at Flinders University, Adelaide SA. The call for papers reflected the difficulties, tensions and stresses experienced by historians:

*The search for truth and the dispelling of lies sits at the heart of popular understandings of the task of the historian. Our discipline aims to bring enriched understandings of the past that assist in confronting contemporary challenges. In a world where denial and doubt are viable political strategies, the perhaps impossible demand for the discipline to provide simple and actionable truths remains urgent and insistent. Whether at the centre of political debates or within the minutiae of grassroots community discussions, historians are seen as offering necessary complexity to the process of uncovering truth. Meanwhile, historians have their own complicated and contentious history with 'truth' and the possibility of a historically enriched way of knowing the present.*

OHA SA/NT were asked to participate at the conference and several streams were organised and filled. Unfortunately, illness and life meant that several that were selected to present could not attend, leaving a larger single session. This session, chaired by Christeen Schoepf and Carolyn Collins was fabulous, diverse and controversial.

Christeen Schoepf presented her work that broached family rhetoric, community narrative, and the law and how people in small communities are not always happy with the outcomes of a project. Mary-Ellen Ryan of CQU spoke of the 1985 Queensland Police raids on abortion clinics and the impact on the fight against AIDS. Rosa Campbell of the University of Edinburgh told us of her research into racism and the Australian women's liberation movement. Alexandra Mccosker of ANU presented her findings on the 'malleable, fallible and admirable uses of oral history'.



Christeen Schoepf presenting her paper at the AHA Conference  
Photo supplied by Carolyn Collins

# Leading Ladies: Mount Gambier's Political Pioneers

Danni Reade

In July, the Mount Gambier Library released an episode of its *Don't Overdue It* podcast, titled 'Leading Ladies: Mount Gambier's Political Pioneers'. This episode features an interview with the city's second female and current Mayor, Lynette Martin OAM, and explores the significant contributions of Mount Gambier's first female mayor, Lenore Bishop OAM.

When Lenore Bishop became the mayor of Mount Gambier in 1964, she unknowingly made history as the first female mayor in South Australia. This achievement, however, was neither her first ground-breaking accomplishment nor the last in her remarkable life. In 1959, Mrs. Josephine Laught, the first woman to serve on the Mount Gambier Council, retired. Recognising the significance of Laught's inroad into local government, Bishop believed that it should not be lost. A local newspaper headlined her mayoral candidacy with the phrase "Housewife in Election for Council Seat," and Bishop was subsequently elected to the North-East Ward of the City of Mount Gambier, a position she held for the next five years. Her success as a councillor led to her being approached to run for mayor in the 1964 local government elections.

Bishop lodged her nomination only thirty minutes before the ballot closed. At that time, no other nominations had been submitted, and she felt that a city of Mount Gambier's stature should not be without a candidate on the final day of the election campaign. Elected unopposed, Bishop thus became Mount Gambier's and South Australia's first female mayor. Unaware of the historic nature of her appointment, she later recalled receiving a "barrage of phone calls and media requests" in the hours following the election.

The responsibilities of the Mayor were numerous and varied. Bishop met with visiting dignitaries, presided over citizenship ceremonies, opened conferences, and served as patron of 27 organisations. One notable achievement was attending nine functions and delivering eight major speeches in a single day. Her tenure was particularly unique, as she simultaneously held the roles of both Mayor and Lady Mayoress. In addition to her regular

mayoral duties, she also attended balls, judged baby shows and hat parades, and even prepared supper for the council's fortnightly meetings. It became a familiar sight for locals to see the Mayor driving through town in her distinctive sky-blue Morris Mini, zipping from one event to the next.

In addition to her mayoral duties, Lenore Bishop became the first female member of the board of trustees for the Mount Gambier Institute Library. This appointment came after her initial nomination had been rejected a year earlier, solely on the basis of her being a woman. Bishop later played a key role in establishing Mount Gambier's first public library.

*Don't Overdue It* won the 2023 History Council of SA/Oral History Australia SA/NT Oral History Excellence Award. This episode is available to download from all leading podcast platforms including Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Amazon Music or [the Mount Gambier Library website](#).



*Mrs Lenore Bishop, Mayor of  
Mount Gambier, 1967  
Photo supplied by City of  
Mount Gambier Archives*



# Oral History Journal due out soon

The 2024 edition of *Studies in Oral History* will be launched at the Oral History Conference in November.

Edited by OHA SA/NT committee members, Dr Skye Krichauff and Dr Carolyn Collins, *Studies in Oral History*, is the journal of Oral History Australia (OHA), and includes peer-reviewed articles, reports, and reviews that reflect the diversity and vitality of oral history practice in Australia and around the world.

The peer-reviewed article section in the 2024 edition is focused on the theme of 'Working Lives and Workplaces' and has been guest edited by OHA SA/NT member, Associate Professor Paul Sendziuk, and PhD candidate Nicholas Herriot, both of the University of Adelaide.

The open-access, online publication is produced annually and is available through OHA's website for the benefit of OHA members and the broader oral history practitioner community.

Contributors are drawn from the ranks of academics and postgraduate students, through to institutional, community, and consulting oral historians. Contributions are also accepted from overseas authors.

The editors are now calling for contributions for the peer review and reports sections of the 2025 edition of the journal. The theme for this issue is the same as that of our 2024 Biennial Conference, 'The Power of Oral History – Risks, Rewards & Responsibilities'. Presenters at the conference are therefore encouraged to submit articles based on their conference presentations.

The deadline for submission of peer review articles is **17 January 2025** and for reports it is **30 April 2025**.

Go to the [Call for Papers, Issue 47, 2025](#).



# SA State Delegate Report 2023-24

Christeen Schoepf

Nationally it has been a busy year with online workshops, web development, and preparations for the National Conference to be held in Melbourne in November.

- Dr Anisa Puri is currently undertaking a project titled 'The Australian Oral History Directory Project'. The original publication (1990s) was "a first attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of Oral History endeavour in Australia. This remains the most recent national directory but there are hundreds of oral histories held by institutions and individuals across Australia, and these are not documented. Led by the Language Data Commons of Australia, the new project aims to produce an updated resource and create a digital oral history directory that increases the findability of existing oral history materials across Australia".
- The national committee have agreed to grant OHA members anywhere in Australia Online Training at members rates, no matter where the training is directed. Locals will be offered places first before a national call-out.
- I attended an online 'Train the Trainer' Teaching Oral History Course with members from other states that was facilitated by Al Thomson and Sarah Rood.
- OHA SA/NT was asked by the national committee to run an Oral History Stream at the Australian Historical Association's 2024 Conference held at Flinders University. Carolyn Collins and I considered the abstract applications and chaired the session. Two sessions were proposed but following the withdrawal of several participants due to illness, a larger single stream presented a fabulous range of papers and projects.
- The Victorian conference is fast approaching, for which there were 95 proposals that a committee comprised of members from each state vetted. From my perspective, the abstracts that I read have excited me, knowing that oral history is very much alive in Australasia. Six half-day training workshops have also been accepted, so it will be an extremely busy week for those of us attending.
- Website development has continued with Judy Hughes and her committee, which includes our own Judy Bailey, continuing to work on each state's nuances and expectations of what will be delivered once complete. Judy Hughes has informed me that she is hopeful that all states will be completed by October, but the almost complete portion being the OHV website could possibly be live by next week.

## 2024 Christmas Brunch

This year, our Christmas Brunch will be held on **Sunday, 15 December from 10am**, at Prices Fresh Bakery, Hillcrest.

There will be plenty of tasty treats to choose from. Join us for a chat and a coffee to see out the year.

**RSVP via email by 12 December:**

[contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au](mailto:contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au)

**Prices Fresh Bakery**

**464 North East Road, Hillcrest**

(Bus Route 271 or 273, Stops 23 or 24)





# Upcoming Workshops

OHA SA/NT aims to hold two introductory workshops each year, usually in Autumn and Spring, and other special interest workshops from time to time. But if you are part of a community organisation or have a group of friends who would like us to tailor a workshop especially for your needs, please get in touch. We usually need a minimum of 6 attendees to run a workshop.

The first workshop of this year was held at the State Library of South Australia in February. There will be an introductory workshop running at UniSA's Magill campus on October 12 ([click here to book a spot!](#)). We will also be holding a workshop in Mt Gambier in November.

We are currently finalising our workshop schedule for next year, so keep an eye on our website and e-newsletters for further details. If you would like us to email you about our next workshop, please get in touch to have your name added to our waitlist. And remember, members are eligible for discounted rates!

For more information, email us at:

[contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au](mailto:contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au)



*Attendees at Liz Harfull's workshop in September, 2022  
Photo supplied by Sally Stephenson*

# Do you have an oral history project to share with us?

Members of OHA SA/NT are always welcome to tell us about the work they're doing, or projects from the past that deserve to be shared. If you have a project that you think would be suitable for inclusion in an edition of Word of Mouth, please get in touch at [editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.com.au](mailto:editor@oralhistoryaustraliasant.com.au) or via our new postal address:

Oral History Australia, SA/NT  
PO Box 163  
Barmera SA 5345

## Oral History Handbook by Beth Robertson

Beth Robertson's Oral History Handbook is the bible for oral historians. First published by the SA Branch of the Oral History Association in 1983, it has been in print ever since, and is well established as the national standard. The author draws on more than 30 years' experience of practising and teaching oral history techniques and preserving sound recordings. In 2022, there was a steady demand for the handbook. In response, we have obtained more copies which are now available to order.

### Product details

Author: Beth M Robertson  
Format: A4 size, stiff paperback, 112 pages, illustrations  
Publication date: Fifth Edition, fifth impression, 2013  
Publisher: Oral History Australia SA/NT, ISBN:  
0646454447

### How to order

Details about ordering a copy can be found on our website: <https://oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au/the-oral-history-handbook-old-version/>

### Pricing

\$28 for OHA members (plus postage)  
\$35 for non-members (plus postage)

### The book includes chapters on:

- Introducing Oral History
- Preparing for the Interview
- Copyright and Oral History
- Developing Questionnaires
- Recording Equipment
- Digital Recording Standards
- Interviewing Techniques
- Summaries and Transcripts
- Funding for Oral History
- Guidelines of Ethical Practice
- Commissioning Oral History
- Recommended Reading

For more details, please email us at [contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au](mailto:contact@oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au)



# Oral History Australia - South Australia/Northern Territory

Oral History Australia is a non-profit body whose members practice and promote oral history. OHA South Australia/Northern Territory (OHA SA/NT) came to life just seven months after the national body was founded in Perth in July 1978. There are now associations in each state.

The aims of Oral History Australia SA/NT are:

- to promote the practice and methods of oral history
- to educate in the use of oral history methods
- to encourage discussions on all aspects of oral history
- to foster the preservation of oral history records in Australia
- to pursue common objectives and maintain links with other Australian oral history associations through membership of Oral History Australia Inc.
- to do all such things as may be incidental to the achievement of such aims

OHA membership benefits include:

- early access to the *Word of Mouth* newsletter, published twice a year
- access to the annual *Studies in Oral History* journal which contains papers given at the biennial conference or other papers considered of particular topical interest
- opportunity to publish peer-reviewed papers in Oral History Australia Journal
- access to members' resources on the [Oral History Australia SA/NT website](https://www.oralhistoryaustralia.com.au/south-australia-northern-territory)
- invitations to participate in events such as behind-the-scenes tours of exhibitions, talks and seminars
- discounts on publications, including the *Oral History Handbook* by Beth Robertson
- discounted registration for oral history workshops
- opportunity to apply for an oral history grant
- discounted hire of the Fostex digital recording equipment
- discounted registration for the biennial conference of Oral History Australia
- opportunity for professional oral historians to register in the online directory

## Connect with us



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